Book Culture and Assembled Selves in the English Renaissance

by

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ABSTRACT

The rise of print book culture in sixteenth-century England had profound effects on understandings of identity that are reflected in the prose, poetry, and drama of the age. Drawing on assemblage and actor-network theory, this dissertation argues that models of identity constructed in relation to books in Renaissance England are neither static nor self-contained, arising instead out of a collaborative engagement with books as physical objects that tap into historically specific cultural discourses. Renaissance representations of book usage blur the boundary between human beings and their books, both as textual carriers and as physical artifacts.

The first chapter outlines the relationship between book history and assemblage theory to examine how books contribute to the assembly of the human subject in different ways for readers, owners, and authors and to lay a theoretical and historical foundation for reading cultural assemblages in later chapters. The second chapter studies how authors and sometimes printers attempt as makers of books to construct public identities through them. The chapter focuses on how Edmund Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and Isabella Whitney's poetry anthologies play with texts and paratexts in order to create the illusion of control over the resulting authorial persona, even while acknowledging that the book itself is a deterritorialized element of their own identities with particular agencies of its own. The third chapter investigates how Renaissance drama represents human beings using books to curate their identity assemblages both publicly and inwardly, particularly as depicted in the work of Thomas Kyd, William Shakespeare, and the author of *Arden of Faversham*. The successes and failures of these assemblages on

the stage reflect anxieties about the book as an agentive object in an assembled identity. The fourth chapter examines the prose work of Philip Sidney, Roger Ascham, and Fulke Greville, considering the obsession with travel books and writing as a reflection of wider notions about the permeability and possible contamination by foreign influences of the self constructed through books and writings related to travel.

DEDICATION

for my parents

Gregory Thomas Adams

and

Irmgard Seidl-Adams

who gave me my first books

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INTRODUCTION

In his anti-demonology tract *The Terrors of the Night* (1593), the highly ironic but also highly observant pamphleteer Thomas Nashe reflects in nauseating detail on how self-proclaimed conjurors use rubbish to dupe foolish customers. After describing how actual pieces of trash like toasted cheese and candle ends are converted into medicine, he observes that when they set up shop, conjurors "begin to get them a library of three or four old rusty manuscript books, which they themselves nor any else can read, and furnish their shops with a thousand *quid pro quos*, which would choke any horse, beside some waste trinkets in their chambers hung up, which may make the world half in jealousy they can conjure" (227). Unread and unreadable, the books nevertheless carry weight with the conjurors' clients, who see in the little library of incomprehensible books proof of the conjurors' access to supernatural forces. Nashe's bitter remarks about the charlatans' use of the semblance of learning suggest nicely the cultural power inherent in books as physical artifacts rather than carriers of textual information. The manuscript books serve to construct and inflect the identity of their owners and to regulate the social relationship between the conjurors and their clients. The books play both on general associations of books with learning and on a specific recurring link in fiction between books and magicians.

Nashe emphasizes the age of the books both by saying that they are old and by characterizing them as manuscripts. While the disconnect between manuscript and print culture is easily overstated — even today, in the age of computers and blogs, the practice of writing notes, diaries, and other personal documents by hand remains alive and well —

it is certainly true that the Renaissance was a time of substantial change in terms of how books were produced. The rise of the printing press in England in the early sixteenth century led to a sudden glut of books on the market. For the first time there were more books available to be read than there was time to read them all.[1] Libraries swelled to the point that the meaning of the word *libraria* stopped meaning a collection of books — once small enough to survey at a glance — and instead began to mean a designated space where books were kept (Summit, *Memory's Library* 16). As books became more widespread, they stopped being reserved solely for a small elite of *intelligentsia*. Pedagogical practices moved books and reading into a position of central importance for society as a whole, emphasizing the way that "language precedes and shapes character" (Enterline 27). This new focus had serious implications for both the method and aim of humanist pedagogy.[2] If language shaped the character of its speaker, then it could be harnessed — indeed, needed to be harnessed — to produce better citizens. The language that could best improve its readers was, naturally, classical Latin, which the Spanish

[1] See Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy"; Ann Blair, "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700"; Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England*; and Kathryn Murphy, "Robert Burton and the Problems of Polymathy."

[2] As Tony Davies and others have noted, humanism is really an invention of the early nineteenth century, referring to a self-consciously classicist approach to high school and university education (9-10). To speak of "Renaissance humanism" is thus in a sense anachronistic, much like the word "humanism" itself, although, confusingly enough, the word "humanist" did exist at the time, albeit in a very broad sense, to designate "all the serious students of the humanities" (Logan 614). In spite of its anachronism, however, the term can be used effectively to designate a new direction in teaching, one that emphasized rhetoric and grammar over logic and thus broke with Scholasticism. As a result, Renaissance humanists came into conflict with university scholars, whom they often criticized, but often found professions as lawyers, statesmen, clergymen, secretaries, and tutors. For more on the development of Renaissance humanism, see Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England*; William J. Bouwsma, *The Culture of Renaissance Humanism* and "The Two Faces of Humanism: Stoicism and Augustinianism in Renaissance Thought"; Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*; Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Cultural Heritage of Humanism" and "Humanism"; and Jennifer Summit, "Renaissance Humanism and the Future of the Humanities."

humanist Juan Luis Vives claimed could convert beasts to men (Enterline 13). Studying classical literature would make people morally better as well as intellectually, both as individuals and in their capacity as citizens.[3] Humanist writings often "aimed to improve both the individual and society, either with morally edifying and educational works, or with critical, even satirical works, which condemned human vices and the abuses inherent in ecclesiastical and social institutions" (Bots and Heesakkers 161), albeit always in the hopes of reforming rather than restructuring pre-existing social hierarchies.[4] A natural side-effect was an increase in the number of readers: while exact literacy rates remain difficult to pinpoint, the diversity and scale of the book market seem to indicate a large number of readers pursuing a variety of interests.

This increase in both textual content and physical texts resulted in a pervasive preoccupation with the relationship between the proliferating material object of the book and the human being.[5] Older metaphors of books as food to be consumed, as representative of the human mind, or as children to be born were repeated and reworked, blurring the distinction between human subject and the book. Book and human become entangled, each shaping the other's identity and sense of self. Sometimes the linking of

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[3] See Joan Simon, *Education and Society in Tudor England* and James Hankins, "Humanism, Scholasticism, and Renaissance Philosophy."

[4] Due to its awareness of — and dependence on — social hierarchy, humanism was not a socially revolutionary movement. Grafton and Jardine have critiqued it for establishing a cultural elite (*From Humanism to the Humanities* xiv), one that favored those already in power. Humanism adapted itself easily to support the political system in which it found itself, supporting absolute monarchies and republics with equal ease (Martines 107). At the same time, however, even the wealthiest schools ensured support for a handful of "poor students" (Enterline 15), suggesting a desire to expand the scope of the cultural elite.

[5] Michael Harris notes that estimates of sixteenth-century printing alone suggest that over 100,000 books were printed in Europe. If we assume a not-unreasonable average print run of a thousand copies per edition, then a hundred million books would have been produced in the first fifty years after the printing press, dwarfing any previous era in terms of book production (M. Harris 131).

human body and book was enacted physically as well: readers sometimes marked passages in their books not only with ink but also with the indentation of their fingernails (Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material* 205-08). This reaching into the book and putting the stamp of a physical hand on it — the marks of readers' thumbnails can still be found in their books today — was made still more literal through readers' sketches of hands in the margins pointing at significant passages, a convention taken over from the Middle Ages. Calling such hands "manicules," William Sherman has argued that they represent a physical intervention by the reader into the text, an attempt to "prevent the text from *getting out of hand*" (41). Sherman argues that this is more than mere wordplay but in fact taps into a long-running Renaissance conception of the hand as existing to seize hold of things and to guide thought. The reader was conceived of as interacting with the text physically, reaching into the book as he or she reads it and thus coming into direct contact with the physical text present.

This dissertation explores the ramifications of this link between humans and books, particularly in terms of books and bodies being linked to one another. In the chapters that follow, I investigate the relationship between the book and human identity construction in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as depicted in English literature. I frame bookish metaphors related to the self through historical bibliography, which offers us a sense of what the Renaissance readers, owners, and authors of books actually held in their hands, as well as through assemblage and actor-network theory, which offer productive ways of speaking about material objects in terms of their agentive possibilities. Rather than locating agency solely within the human subject, agency is

redistributed throughout the system, where human actions are both constrained and opened up by inanimate — but nevertheless agentive — objects. Identity construction, or rather, identity assembly is thus not merely a human endeavor but a collaborate process between animate and inanimate actors. This theoretical framework is particularly apropos to Renaissance understandings of the book, which heavily emphasize the way the reader is shaped by the books he or she reads even as Renaissance book practices emphasize books as being open to modification and reconfiguration by their owners. In studying Renaissance books, the twenty-first-century scholar is regularly confronted by the way they were constantly being shuffled around, repurposed, and reinvented by their readers. As much of the recent scholarship on Renaissance book ownership has emphasized, one of the great differences between the Renaissance reader and the twenty-first-century reader is that the Renaissance reader had a great deal more control over the texts that his book would contain.[6] Whereas today we almost invariably receive our books as cohesive units, Renaissance books were often sold unbound, i.e., in loose printed sheets without a cover, which had to be taken to a binder by the customer in order to be bound.[7] As a result, the Renaissance book-owner could often decide not merely appearance but also content for his books: provided there was not an insurmountable

[6] See for instance Adam Smyth, "'Rend and teare in peeces': Textual Fragmentation in Seventeenth-Century England"; Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature*; and Sarah Wall-Randell, "Leander's Index: Reading Desire in Marlowe's Hero and Leander."

[7] While this was initially assumed to be the case almost universally, i.e., that most books were sold unbound, Stuart Bennett has pushed against the hegemony of this view, arguing that there is little evidence for it beyond self-perpetuating academic opinion. Instead, he suggests convincingly that ready-bound books were quite common even in the 1500s and certainly by the time of the Restoration. For more on this, see Bennett's *Trade Bookbinding in the British Isles, 1660-1800*.

disparity in the size of the sheets involved, any set of texts could be combined into a single book.[8] In the Renaissance, to rephrase Roland Barthes, the author was not dead but was instead in the process of being born — that is to say, the notion of authorship as the key way to organize texts was starting to take hold.[9]

My project aims to bring traditional bibliographic scholarship into closer conversation with literary theory. I am interested in the physical qualities of books and how they affect the metaphors that can be built up around them. Books as physical objects are stealthy things, easily ignored in favor of the texts they contain, and I wish to showcase them as the active participants in cultural exchanges that they are. In this respect, I am building on the work of literary critics like James Kearney, Jeffrey Todd Knight, Sarah Wall-Randell, Jennifer Summit, Peter Stallybrass, and others, all of whom have worked to connect the Renaissance encounter with books as objects more closely to our understanding of their texts. In particular, I am influenced by Jeffrey Todd Knight's

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[8] Many binders and patrons would trim the pages of their books to provide more uniformity in size, which further distinguishes different printed copies of the same work from one another.

[9] Laurie Ellinghausen argues that authors became more recognizable as creative individuals during the Renaissance, a phenomenon that has led to an over-emphasis on the development of the autonomous individual during the period, much to the frustration of medieval scholars (11-12). Alexandra Halasz argues that Renaissance authors were at pains to develop their own authority in order to exert control over their texts in the marketplace (36-38); similarly, Douglas Bruster argues that it was towards the end of the sixteenth century that authors began to amass sufficient name recognition to become marketable celebrities (79). At the same time, however, once a text was produced, it was often out of the author's hands: within manuscript circles, as Arthur Marotti observes, composition seems to have constantly accompanied transcription (196) and in print, as Jeffrey Todd Knight has argued, printed books were often compiled into larger *Sammelbände* according to the tastes and interests of their owners (8-9). For more, see in particular Wendy Wall, "Disclosures in Print: The 'Violent Enlargement' of the Renaissance Voyeuristic Text"; Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, "The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text"; Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric*; Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*; Douglas Bruster, *Shakespeare and the Question of Culture: Early Modern Literature and the Cultural Turn*; Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567-1667*; David Scott Kastan, "Print, Literary Culture and the Book Trade"; Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature*.

Bound to Read (2013), which emphasizes the highly assembled nature of Renaissance books, arguing that being a book owner was a compiling act with profound ramifications for how texts were consumed, and Sarah Wall-Randell's *The Immaterial Book* (2013), which offers an intriguing examination of how characters in Renaissance romances encounter themselves through books in a dramatization of both the act of reading and the possibilities for self-reflection that it opens. My own project emphasizes the overlap between literary theory, particularly object-oriented criticism, and Renaissance ways of discussing the books they read, wrote, and owned. As Sarah Wall-Randell points out, books "are a unique class of objects in that they *are* both their physical reality, paper and ink, and the stories they contain" (130). The deployment of books as metaphors is tied to their physical configuration and design. By examining such metaphors with an eye towards the interconnected nature of humans and non-humans in the Renaissance, both with respect to physical book-artifacts and with the texts contained within those books, we may better understand the often fraught relationship between human subject and text.

Metaphors circling around the book are ubiquitous during the Renaissance, many of them drawing on metaphors already common in the Middle Ages. The grandest book metaphors include representations of fate as a book or that the universe itself is a book written by God.[10] The book could also be used to represent national events, as in Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV* (1597) where Archbishop Scrope is rebuked for not censoring the "lawless bloody book" of the rebellion (4.1.91), an allusion to his role both as a rebel and as an ecclesiastical censor. On a more personal level, books could be seen as

[10] For more on the book as representing fate or nature, see Frederick Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage* and Jesse M. Gellrich, *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages*.

representative of human faces and minds with the associated assumption that people could be read through careful observation.[11] Books were sometimes represented as a person's heart or conscience, recording their actions in preparation for divine judgment, drawing on passages from St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which characterized the heart as a place for God to write his new covenant (Kiefer 116-18). A fretful character in Elizabeth Cary's closet drama *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1613) trembles at the thought of his sin traveling to heaven where "doth sit an angel notary / That doth record it down in leaves of brass" (4.5.15-16), suggesting that no matter where or how something was done, there was an immutable book that stored the information. Books figure prominently in several metaphors associated with memory, which could be represented by a single book, a library, or even a little person constantly reading (Beecher 373).

Other metaphors for books included a bundle of flowers, drawing on a medieval monastic practice of carrying around bundles of pithy sayings called *florilegia*.[12] Such metaphors were sometimes expanded still further to represent books as gardens full of flowers, typically in conjunction with Seneca's famous characterization of the good reader as a bee flitting from flower to flower gathering honey.[13] On a similarly

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[11] See Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage* and Sarah Wall-Randell, "Leander's Index: Reading Desire in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*."

[12] For more on *florilegia*, see Earle Havens, "'Of Common Places, or Memorial Books': An Anonymous Manuscript of Commonplace Books and the Art of Memory in Seventeenth-Century England"; Randall L. Anderson, "Metaphors of the Book as Garden in the English Renaissance"; Adam Smyth, "Commonplace Book Culture: A List of Sixteen Traits"; Scott Huelin, "Reading, Writing, and Memory in 'Hamlet'"; and Martyn Lyons, *History of Reading and Writing in the Western World*.

[13] For more on the book as a garden, see Ann Moss, "Printed Commonplace Books in the Renaissance"; Anderson, "Metaphors of the Book as Garden in the English Renaissance"; and Joseph Wallace, "Strong stomachs: Arthur Golding, Ovid, and cultural assimilation."

gastronomic note, books were commonly viewed as edible: Francis Bacon famously compared different classes of books to different kinds of food, asserting that "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention" (439). Bacon's remark speaks to the number of books available for purchase as well as the sense that not all books were quite equal. Finally, there was a recurring metaphor of authorship as a form of pregnancy, both as representative of the difficulty of writing and as a way to explain the startling number of books available.[14] The metaphor could be used both positively and negatively: while Sir Philip Sidney characterized himself in the first sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) as "great with childe to speake, and helplesse in my throwes" (12), Thomas Nashe's *Anatomie of Absurdity* (1589) contemptuously referred to uneducated pamphleteers as "brainlesse Bussards, [who] are euery quarter bigge wyth one Pamphlet or other" (Sig. A1r). If books were not children, then they were often servants or emissaries sent into the world by their authors; in either case, they were part of the authors' household.

This list may grant some sense of the sheer number of metaphors derived from the book, but it is by no means complete. Books are particularly flexible vehicles for metaphor because of the frequent lack of distinction between books as objects and books as text: books are often synecdochically conflated with the texts that they contain. The

[14] For more on writing as a form of pregnancy, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, "A Womb of His Own: Male Renaissance Poets in the Female Body"; Elizabeth A. Spiller, "Poetic Parthenogenesis and Spenser's Idea of Creation in *The Faerie Queene*"; and Margreta de Grazia, "Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg, and Descartes."

density of book-metaphors during the Renaissance reiterates the importance of books as a site of both cultural concern and excitement; my project is influenced in particular by three metaphoric versions of the book: reading as a form of digestion and metabolism, the human being as a book that can (or cannot) be read, and books as the author's children. These metaphors emphasize the connection between human beings and physical books, whether by suggesting that the book is absorbed into a human subject's assemblage or that the book is perhaps autonomous but retains a familial connection with its originator. I bracket metaphors that characterize larger spaces or events as books because although such metaphors often have a bearing on human assemblages, to focus on them runs the risk of shifting our emphasis away from specific humans and books and onto a national or even global scale. Throughout my dissertation, I concentrate on the assemblage of the individual self through the configuration of human and book components within a particular context. I have therefore structured my project around comparatively intimate engagements between humans and books: the author who produces a book out of him- or herself and is thereby bound to it, the book owner whose book parallels his thoughts and actions, and the reader when he or she assimilates the book.

As my project is situated between historical bibliography and critical theory, my first chapter, "What is a Book?: The Assembled and Assembling Text," addresses the question of how we can best understand books both as physical artifacts and as tools for identity construction. The chapter outlines the relationship between book history and assemblage theory to lay a foundation for reading cultural assemblage. Focusing on territorializing and deterritorializing forces, which define the arrangement and boundaries

of an assemblage, I argue that the identity of both books and humans is determined by the configuration of their constituent elements and their relationship with the objects that surround them. Using the case study of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1596), I examine how books contribute to the assembly of the human subject in different ways for readers, owners, and authors. In all three instances, human beings retain agency but only alongside other equally agentive forces: the act of assembly cannot be isolated to any individual element but always originates out of a collaboration between different elements, both animate and inanimate. By seeking out, using, and producing different books, humans possess the capacity to guide their assemblage even if they cannot control it completely. The book in this respect serves as a means for human subjects to characterize themselves and determine the type of self that they construct.

Chapter two, "Authorship in the Margins," outlines the connection between the author and the book in terms of assemblage theory. Examining Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) alongside Isabella Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay* (1573), I consider how authors attempted to structure their public identities through their books. Spenser and Whitney endeavor to draw the reader into a coterie and in the process legitimize their publication of their works as part of a larger network of friends. The *Calender* and the *Nosegay* present a variety of narrative voices to fragment the sense of any individual part of the book being representative of the whole. As Whitney and Spenser play with the distinction between literary text and paratexts introduced during the printing process, they further erode a sense of unity within the text and instead generate a similar experience to a manuscript collection being circulated within a small group even

as they sell their books on the open marketplace. In examining the interaction between printed paratext and literary text, we may see how published books replicate the assembled quality of the author as a literary figure, consisting of numerous smaller parts that only become a whole by operating in aggregate.

My third chapter, "Territorializing and Deterritorializing Personal Identity," interrogates the connection between books and interiority as depicted on stage. Codex books are designed to protect their contents from outside harm and as an unexpected side effect also conceal them from outside view. The potential disconnect between a book's interior and its exterior was exploited by Renaissance dramatists: on the stage, information about books' interiors, much like information about characters' inner thoughts, was always heavily mediated. The chapter examines identities as the intersection between inner and outer selves, offering a sense of how humans can curate their selves by presenting different books to outside inspection. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1588), the anonymous play *Arden of Faversham* (1588), and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1601) all dramatize a disconnect between the physical appearance of a book and its inner contents which parallels the gap between a person's outer and inner selves. Books are presented as ways for their owners to edit themselves, changing their contents while attempting to retain control of their public faces. These fantasies of a wholly alterable self run into difficulties as the characters find themselves reverting to their original textual selves. I argue for a model of identity that presents the human assemblage as constantly showing traces of its former selves. The human subject is presented as constantly exerting effort in order to either continue previously existing

assemblages or to selectively remove undesirable elements. Book props on the stage serve as a complex metaphor for a self that is both open and resistant to change, both private and on public display.

My fourth and final chapter, "Reading and the Traveling Book," asks the question of what happens when we read, or, rather, what Renaissance writers argued happens when we read. Renaissance writers often worried that books possessed a terrifying potential to change their readers for ill as well as good; in this respect, their descriptions of reading books strongly resemble travel to a foreign country. The reader, although physically safe at home, is brought into dangerous contact with the origins of the book that he or she holds, becoming subject to the book's influence. This model of reading reflects not actual reading practices but rather a commonly expressed and deep-seated anxiety about the power of the book to shape those who come into contact with it. The book is incorporated into the reader's assemblage, a sense reiterated and reinforced by the Renaissance commonplace of reading as a form of digestion. Examining Philip Sidney's *The Defense of Poetry* (c. 1582), Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* (1570), and Fulke Greville's prose on travel (c. 1609), the chapter applies the theories of identity assemblage outlined in chapter one to Renaissance descriptions of reading practices to gain a better sense of how descriptions of travel and reading parallel one another. Humoral theory suggested that there was little distinction, medically speaking, between the environment and the human beings who lived within it; to travel to a foreign place was to absorb its qualities almost reflexively. There was a concern that books might similarly infiltrate their reader's assemblage and convey the intellectual qualities of their

place of origin. Reading, like traveling, carried with it great potential rewards but also ran the risk of moral damage as the reader/traveler assimilated the bad qualities of the book/country they visited. At the same time, however, books are also presented as the best way to filter outside influences, serving as a laboratory in which ideas can be examined and then finally incorporated into the human assemblage.

Running through all three of these human-book relationships is a sense that the book is possessed of its own agentive force, one that can be harnessed by human beings but cannot be brought fully under their control. Books may be subject to change by their users, but in the process of bringing books into their assemblages, humans are themselves subject to changes initiated by the books.[15] In considering human selves in relation to their surroundings, we may productively consider both how social identities are constructed as much by a particular context as in response to it and the degree of personal choice involved in any act of identity assemblage. While human selves are to some degree at the mercy of outside forces, they may also be controlled by selecting those outside elements they will seek out. By looking at how books factor into identity assemblage, we gain not merely a greater understanding of how texts shape the individual, but also how human subjects are neither static nor self-contained, arising instead out of a collaborative engagement with other objects, whether animate or inanimate, and particularly objects that tap into cultural discourse as books do. While broadly speaking this remains true today, it was doubly important during the Renaissance. Post-

[15] I here follow Bradin Cormack, Carla Mazzio, and William Sherman in using the word "use" to designate human interaction with books to indicate the wide array of possible ways that humans may engage with books. For more, see Cormack and Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory: 1500-1700* and Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*.

Reformation worries about agentive objects often focused on books because even as Protestant iconoclasts fought to separate religion from everyday objects, books were carriers of Scripture and thus idols *in potentia* themselves. Additionally, as Renaissance book-users customized the physical configuration of their books to suit their tastes and needs, the resulting books became linked to their owners' selves: they were designed with specific people in mind. Both in broad terms and on an individual level, Renaissance books were sites and tools of identity construction.

Fig. 1. Arcimboldo, Guiseppe. *The Librarian*. 1566. Skokloster Castle, Sweden.

WHAT IS A BOOK?: THE ASSEMBLED AND ASSEMBLING TEXT

The Italian painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527?-1593) is best known today for his composite art in which human figures are put together out of fruits, vegetables, and other household objects. The resulting portraits are structured around the conceit of piecing together a coherent image out of disparate parts. One of them, *The Librarian* (1566), uses not food but books and book-related accoutrements to create its subject.[16] Materially speaking, the painting depicts a stack of books on a featureless table, framed by a dark curtain on the side. Together, however, those objects form a representation of a broad, squat man, his chest made of stacked books topped with a bearded head wearing an open book like a hat. His right arm is crooked in front of him, its segments made up of angled books and its fingers — paper ribbons or bookmarks — reach out to clutch another book that may be part of his body or may be distinct from him. Indeed, the books' different angles and the gaps between them make it quite difficult to tell where the librarian begins or ends, a visual problem exacerbated by his cloak, which is in fact a curtain that extends up and beyond him. *The Librarian* literalizes the notion that books shape our characters by turning the librarian into a gathering of the books in his care. The ambiguity about where the librarian begins or ends actually enhances that notion, since it suggests that any book within the librarian's reach is, if not a part of him already, then a potential part, merely waiting to be absorbed into him. The curtain draped over the

[16] *The Librarian* is often identified with the court historiographer, Wolfgang Lazius, but as K. C. Elhard has noted in "Reopening the Book on Arcimboldo's *Librarian*," an unfortunate effect of this identification has been to dismiss the portrait as a cruel joke on a specific person rather than to consider it as an allegory of book collectors more broadly. Elhard suggests that the portrait critiques book collectors as foolish, citing the figure of the Book Fool in Sebastian Brant's *Das Narrenschiff* (1497) and noting that almost every book in *The Librarian* is closed, suggesting that he does not actually read them but contents himself with gathering them.

librarian's shoulder not only serves to smooth his angular side but also to offer the possibility that his body continues beyond what we can see.

Because of their rigid construction around right angles, the books in *The Librarian* stand out to a greater extent than the more rounded shapes of fruits or vegetables in Arcimboldo's other work. The components that make up the librarian are starkly visible as individual elements and as a result paradoxically emphasize the strength of the painting's imagery precisely because we recognize the figure as human nevertheless. The librarian is a man assembled out of books and although we cannot judge what any of these books contain within their fine leather covers, the allegorical implication seems clear, namely that these are valuable texts, placed in his charge precisely because their value. The book atop the librarian's head, the only one of the books to be open, even has numerous fine red threads hanging down from the pages, which may well be intended to represent tabs sewn into the pages to assist in finding a particular passage. The sheer number of these tabs and the manuscript quality of the text within suggest an important book. Whether this librarian is a reader or merely a custodian, he appears shaped and defined by the books in his possession. In presenting a man assembled out of books, Arcimboldo's painting offers an argument against a vision of a unified self where human beings as autonomous wholes that are independent of other elements. In place of such a model, the painting offers a self that is put together out of smaller things, which are themselves made up of still smaller things (i.e., paper, boards, leather, and so forth), a sense that is further enhanced by the blurred boundaries of the librarian in the portrait, which suggest that he is himself potentially a smaller part of a

greater whole. Arcimboldo's librarian is not reducible to the sum of his parts but requires their configuration in a particular way before he can take proper shape.

As such, the portrait invites us to consider identity as an assemblage, i.e., a particular configuration of objects both animate and inanimate that develops individuating characteristics through its current configuration. Under such a model of the self, the human subject is capable of change both through the addition or subtraction of elements from his or her assemblage as well as through the reconfiguration of the elements already present. Any assemblage-driven description of a human subject is necessarily highly contextual since he or she may be reconfigured (or may reconfigure him- or herself) in different situations, but at the same time a continuity is preserved as none of the individual parts that make up his or her identity are themselves essential to it. Moreover, just as the viewer of Arcimboldo's painting cannot easily find the division between the librarian and the books around him, so too is the human self open to his or her environment and possesses at all times the potential to incorporate other elements into him- or herself. The human self is presented as both temporally constructed and as open to outside elements, a representation that plays into Renaissance representations of how personal identity is continually shaped and altered by physical objects and humans' interactions with those objects, both deliberate and inadvertent.

By presenting humans as made up of nonhuman objects, Arcimboldo and his imitators articulated a notion that was also strongly present within Renaissance literature, both on the continent and in England. The idea that human identities might be assembled out of an interaction between humans and nonhuman objects runs through literary

representations of book use during the English Renaissance: books are presented as an integral part of the people with whom they are associated. My project aims to work through how books contributed to the concepts of the human self during the sixteenth century. Specifically, I argue that assemblage theory, particularly when taken alongside actor-network theory, offers insight into the relationship between humans and books by helping us think about books not merely as vessels for texts but also as material objects that take up physical space, manipulate the information they transmit, and join with human bodies in a larger amalgam of agentive forces. Post-Reformation anxieties about the potential for any objects to possess agency were heightened with respect to books, which were crucial to Protestant conceptions of religion and therefore ran the risk of becoming idols.[17] Coupled with the ever-increasing number of available books, this made books and their role in the development of an individual's self doubly important for Renaissance thinkers. In particular, I focus on three different ways the Renaissance book might interact with the Renaissance human subject: writing as a production of alternate selves, book ownership as curation and display, and finally reading as a physical connection with outside influences.

What is an Assemblage?

To begin, a definition: an assemblage is a quasi-unified whole constructed out of numerous smaller components. The assemblage is only quasi-unified because although it

[17] See James Kearney, "The Book and the Fetish: The Materiality of Prospero's Text," "Enshrining Idolatry in *The Faerie Queene*," and *The Incarnate Text*; Jennifer Summit, "Monuments and Ruins: Spenser and the Problem of the English Library" and *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England*; and Sarah Wall-Randell, "*Doctor Faustus* and the Printer's Devil."

is cohesive enough to be treated as a unit, its individual components remain visible and distinct from one another; as Graham Harman succinctly puts it, assemblage theory argues that "all entities result from a swarm of tinier subcomponents that do not melt into a seamless whole" ("The Assemblage Theory of Society" 170). A given assemblage's identity is localized not in any specific component or even a group of components but instead exists as an emergent property of all of its components co-existing in the same space and time, working both together and against each other. Like the related theoretical notion of construction, assemblage offers us a sense that things, identities, and concepts are put together out of smaller components, but whereas construction and its verb form *constructing* suggest a sense of completion, where something is built and then remains constant, assemblage and its verb *assembling* suggest the potential for reconfiguration. The word hints at the possibility of play, as the label "some assembly required" on a children's toy might. That sense of play is important to my discussion since just as such toys sometimes lend themselves to multiple assemblies, so too do cultural prospects and identities often arise from a variety of sources when taken in different combinations. In the pages that follow, I outline the position of assemblage theory within Renaissance studies and how it may profitably inform our understanding of the relationship between physical books and personal identity.

The word "assemblage" as a critical term takes its origins with the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they famously characterize the assemblage as follows:

> On a first, horizontal, axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand, it is a *machinic*

> *assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage* of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away (Deleuze & Guattari 88, emphases in the original).

Assemblages are thus not made merely of either matter or action, but are produced through a fusion of these two elements. In thinking of matter and action as existing along a single continuum, we may consider both how identities may be shaped by what is materially present in a situation as well as by how each action taken opens possibilities and places limitations upon future forms that the assemblage may take. In this way, assemblage theory shares social constructivism's sense that gender, social class, and myriad other identity markers are determined by both the human body as a physical element and the social performances in which the human body engages.

Books present us with assemblages on two levels, both in terms of being put together out of smaller components — paper, boards, covering material, sewing supports, and so forth — and in terms of being made up of texts, which are themselves made up of words and letters that only take on a greater meaning through their interaction with one another. The book assemblage manifests its agency by interacting and merging with the assemblage of the human subjects with which it comes into contact. A book may provoke new thoughts in its reader through its text, convey status to spectators through its fine binding, or draw attention to the supposed viewpoints of its author or owner. Conversely, given access to a book, a human subject may find a space to isolate and freeze specific thoughts by writing them down, expand and organize their memory by writing down commonplaces, articulate their resistance to ideas that they have

encountered through marginalia, or structure their future by noting their schedule on a calendar. Human and book merge through their interaction, eroding the clear distinction between human and physical object as each becomes more attuned to the other.

As Deleuze and Guattari's vertical axis of territorialization and deterritorialization indicates, however, no assemblage is entirely permanent: within any given assemblage, there are forces working towards its dissolution. Assemblages are constantly remaking themselves as new components enter or old components change into different states. As books age and are used, their covers come loose, paper becomes foxed, ink turns brown. The books' readers produce marginalia, correct errors within the texts, and repair structural damage; meanwhile, those readers themselves experience similar changes as their relationship to a book's contents shifts in the course of their alterations to the book's assemblage. During the Renaissance, a book's owner might have still more control over its assemblage as he or she would often decide which components were incorporated as the book was bound, both materially and textually. As a result a book that has been in use or circulation is no longer quite the same book that it was when it left the publisher's shop, though at the same time it most likely retains continuity with its original form. In this way, the assembled book — like any assemblage — pushes against its own integrity, changing into a new version of itself. Even as deterritorializing forces push a book towards decline, other forces work towards its continued survival so that, as Drew Daniel aptly puts it, "The coding and territorialization of an assemblage sustains its consistency across the ceaselessness of its own becoming" (11). While they are endlessly open to change, assemblages nevertheless retain a degree of permanence, able to maintain

continuity with past versions of themselves. To study an assemblage is necessarily looking at a single historical moment that has been frozen in time even as the assemblage itself continues onwards.

Inherent in this model of assemblages as the site of conflict between territorializing and deterritorializing forces is an emphasis on flexibility. Building on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Manuel DeLanda suggests that "unlike wholes in which parts are linked by relations of interiority (that is, relations which constitute the very identity of the parts) assemblages are made up of parts which are self-subsistent and articulated by relations of exteriority, so that a part may be detached and made a component of another assemblage" (18). DeLanda here emphasizes assemblages' modular nature where parts can easily be moved from one assemblage to another; I suggest that the self-subsistence of the parts additionally opens a space for a model of assemblages where the configuration of those parts becomes important. The order in which text appears in a book, whether in terms of a single work's organization or in terms of which texts appear in which order, may fundamentally reshape the book's identity. Similarly, the order in which books appear on a shelf may have a profound effect on how they are viewed: the books placed at eye level command greater attention, aesthetic groups of books by size may draw the eye in a particular direction, and so forth. In both cases, the components within the assemblage remain constant but their configuration may have profound effects on the assemblage produced.

Assemblage theory has proven particularly attractive for social scientists, offering as it does a way to understand how institutions can develop identities independently of

individual humans and how those identities can become autonomous and self-perpetuating. Within English literary studies, assemblage theory is often grouped with thing theory as both theories share an interest in the role that objects play within material culture. Specifically, both theories fall under the larger umbrella of object-oriented ontology (OOO), a movement concerned with object agency, i.e., the capacity of objects to influence, prevent, and cause behavior. The degree to which we are aware of this agency is, as Bill Brown notes, "when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the windows get filthy, when their flow within the circuits of production and disruption, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily" (4). In recognition of the way that nonhuman objects can move without human intervention or even control human action, object-oriented theorists prefer to abandon the person-object distinction in favor of the grammatically applicable term "subject," i.e., the source of the action in a given interaction.[18] The advantage of this convention is that it allows us to easily redistribute agency rather than insisting on it remaining locked up in a specific place throughout a given cultural encounter: human subjects need not necessarily be the only subjects within a given situation. Much the way that grammatical syntax allows agency to shift back and forth within a discourse, de-centering subjectivity in this manner allows us to consider the ways no one entity can truthfully be considered to control an entire situation but instead can only perform some actions which are in turn modified and mediated by the other subjects involved.

[18] See for instance Bill Brown, "Thing Theory."

Part of the drive behind object-oriented theories is a resistance to the Cartesian insistence on thought as the defining characteristic of things that matter: unable to think, objects fade into meaninglessness except in the sense that they can lend us insight into human beings (Yates, "What Are Things Saying?" 994). In place of such focus on human beings, object-oriented critics attempt to undermine the notion of humans as special and in the process connect human subjects more closely to the world that surrounds them. For Jane Bennett, to speak of the agency of nonhuman objects acts as a "counter to human exceptionalism, to, that is, the human tendency to understate the degree to which people, animals, artifacts, technologies, and elemental forces share powers and operate in dissonant conjunction with each another" (34). In doing so, Bennett attempts to harness critical theory to political ends: if humans are not exceptional, then we must reconsider our place within the universe as not its masters but as fellow denizens within it.[19] Within that framework, object-oriented ontologies move away from other theoretical models that have historically emphasized the human being as the center of political thought rather than the environment more broadly. As Ian Bogost puts it:

> OOO puts *things* at the center of being. We humans are elements, but not the sole elements, of philosophical interest. OOO contends that nothing has special status, but that everything exists equally—plumbers, buttons, bonobos, DVD players, and sandstone, for example. In contemporary thought, things are usually taken either as the aggregation of ever smaller bits (scientific naturalism) or as constructions of human behavior and society (social relativism). OOO steers a path between the two, drawing attention to things at all scales (from atoms to alpacas, bits to blinis) and

[19] Julian Yates has observed in his essay "Hello Everything': Renaissance/Post/Human" that part of the difficulty with terms like "posthuman" is often that it "seems to sponsor fantasies of escaping embodiment in some transcendent upload or translation" (17). In place of this chronological progression from human to nonmaterial posthuman — a progression that retains a dismissal of physicality — Yates advocates a focus on the equality of all levels of being where we consider the role of human subjects alongside inanimate subjects.

> pondering their nature and relations with one another as much with ourselves. (6)

This emphasis on the human as existing alongside objects rather than on a more elevated plane opens a space to study both human-object interactions as well as object-object relations. At its core, object-oriented ontology resists hierarchies, pushing instead for a broader sense of equality.[20]

Object-oriented ontology's call for this level of equality has found fertile ground in Renaissance studies. In their edited collection *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass called for a refocusing of attention upon objects rather than human beings, offering to speak on behalf of objects that otherwise spoke but were subordinated in literary criticism. Emphasizing the root of the word "object," i.e., "that which was thrown before," de Grazia et al. argue that we must "assign the object a prior status, suggesting its temporal, spatial, and even causal *coming before*" (5). Asserting that objects — or, rather, nonhuman subjects — exist before the human arrives on the scene grants them a position of power alongside the human subject rather than being merely tools for the human subject's ends. As de Grazia et al. ask, "in the period that has from its inception been identified with the emergence of the subject, *where is the object?*" (2). This call has been widely taken up: even writers not explicitly aligned with object-oriented ontology,

[20] Deleuze and Guattari's preferred metaphor for assemblages is a rhizome root structure, one that possesses no central core but is instead comprised of a broad, web-like structure that can replicate itself from any given point (6), thereby emphasizing the absence of hierarchies or valuation of individual components over others.

assemblage theory, thing theory, or actor-network theory have joined such critics in studying objects in conjunction with human subjects.[21]

Such work has not come without criticism. As Jonathan Gil Harris has observed, Marxist critics in particular often reject the "recent critical interest in the so-called lives of things—a recurrent phrase in work on material culture—as a fetishism guilty of 'magical' thought, insofar as it allegedly anthropomorphizes inert objects by lending agency to them" (6). Comparing such theories to the same kind of religious idolatry that Renaissance iconoclasm struggled against, David Hawkes for instance links them to the corrosive effect of the capitalist marketplace, noting that "if there are any points on which the history of ethics is unanimous, they are that it is wrong to treat people as things and evil to treat objects as if they were alive" (116).[22] Hawkes and other critics' frustration with object-oriented critics stems in part from the readiness with which object-oriented critics often assert that they will not privilege a given set of relations "merely" because they include humans as well as objects, an assertion that can easily be misinterpreted to suggest a dismissal of the human subject as an entity of interest.[23] Such alarm at human beings being sidelined is understandable, given our own status as human beings. Bogost

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[21] See for instance Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props*; Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda, *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*; Valentine Groebner and Pamela E. Selwyn, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts: Presents and Politics at the End of the Middle Ages*; Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England*; Victoria Silver, *Imperfect Sense: The Predicament of Milton's Irony*; Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit: Merchants in Early Modern Writing*; Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*; and Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure*.

[22] As Diana Coole and Samantha Frost observe, materialism has historically been a marginalized philosophical movement, particularly in the wake of constructivist social criticism, which Coole and Frost argue often leads theorists to wrongly dismiss empiricism (6).

[23] See for instance Graham Harman, "The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer: Object-Oriented Literary Criticism," 185.

is quick to remind us, however, "we need not discount human beings to adopt an object-oriented position—after all, we ourselves are of the world as much as musket buckshot and gypsum and space shuttles. But we can no longer claim that our existence is special *as existence*" (8). The human subject remains of interest to object-oriented critics, but remains so not because humans are intrinsically interesting. Rather, human subjects draw our attention because they tend to be involved in interesting relationships with one another and with other subjects.[24] As Paul Cefalu and Bryan Reynolds have argued, "Part of the goal of the new materialist work by early modernists has been to restore the primacy of objects without also assuming that such objects are fetishized by their bearers" (13). It is possible to acknowledge an object's power without necessarily assuming that this object is superior to a human or to dismiss the human subject's power: agency can reside in multiple places at once.

Renaissance authors may not have had a notion of object-oriented ontology or assemblage theory as such, but they were nevertheless aware of the powerful role that objects played in their lives.[25] Pamphleteers' invectives against the misuse of objects, clothing in particular, indicates a concern with the proper deployment of physical objects

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[24] Julian Yates has suggested that the Renaissance is particularly viable for an object-oriented critical approach because of the narratives that have been developed around it: regardless of how often the new historical narrative about the Renaissance origins of the modern subject is critiqued, "the story remains so consistent. No matter the date or locality, the structure of the modern subject persists, apparently waiting to be discovered" (*Error, Misuse, Failure* 4). Yates argues that the study of objects and their importance has been — and must continue to be — deployed in order to work against this trend. While it is understandable that our attention invariably drifts back to the human subject, Yates cautions against doing so at the expense of the nonhuman subjects arrayed within any given situation (*Error, Misuse, Failure* 207).

[25] Tellingly, many object-oriented critics working within the Renaissance begin with an account of the printed book as an easy illustration of their point. See for instance Cefalu and Reynolds, "Tarrying with the Subjunctive, an Introduction"; Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Age of Shakespeare*; and Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance*.

in relation to the human body.[26] Books specifically were implicated in religious and national debates and anxieties about sixteenth-century England's relationship with the rest of Europe: the origins of books and the purposes that they might pursue mattered in ways that they had not before. Books are implicated in a host of metaphors about identity construction and interpretation: even today, we often speak of "reading" culture, gender, or class as though human beings themselves were books on the shelf that we can examine. Nested within this metaphor of the human as something that can be read is an implicit sense of the human as being written, whether by the person in question, by cultural forces, or by a combination of the two. In this respect, books offer an apt image for the assembly of the human self, given how they contain text that is itself subject to emendation by readers' pens. In particular the Renaissance book, which was often seen as much as a writing surface as a vessel for text, offers a space where identity assembly can occasionally be seen almost literally as the reader adds ideas and stamps the book with his or her name and personality.

The Human as Assemblage

I argue that in examining human beings as assemblages, we gain a new sense of the human self as both constructed and constructing at all times. As the focal point for larger social forces like religion, nationalism, gender, or social class, the human subject is

[26] The 1620 pamphlets *Haec-Vir* and *Hic Mulier*, for example, debate cross-dressing and warn against the deleterious effects of a recent fashion for women to wear men's clothing. See for instance Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642*; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England*; Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*; and Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature Culture*.

surrounded by potential trajectories that he or she may follow. Human subjects may be subordinated to greater powers than themselves and social narratives may demand their compliance, but they remain subjects in their own right, capable of asserting their own individual identities and qualities in heterodox as well as orthodox ways.[27] Assemblage theory as applied to notions of the self can thus walk a line between determinism and free will, opening a space for us to consider in greater detail the ways that humans are shaped by cultural forces and experiences even as they possess the power to moderate and select those outside influences. As an assemblage, the human subject is perpetually under construction, existing within a balance of territorializing and deterritorializing forces, each working to push the individual into a different identity category.

To better conceptualize how identity is thus caught up in a negotiation between the human subject and the book subjects, I turn to actor-network theory, which focuses on the relations between different "actors" within a network, where an actor represents an agentive subject that may or may not be human. Like assemblage theory, actor-network theory approaches the world from the perspective of a flat, non-hierarchical ontology: just as assemblage theory avoids privileging a specific component to an assemblage above others, so too does actor-network theory emphasize the network as a whole. Different actors within the network are all accorded an equal place, whether they be

[27] As the French philosopher Michel de Certeau points out in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, individual consumers of culture follow their own paths, "their trajectories form unforeseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space. Although they are composed with the vocabularies of established languages (those of television, newspapers, supermarkets, or museum sequences) and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms (temporal modes of schedules, paradigmatic orders of spaces, etc.), the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop" (xviii). While he is speaking largely of modern modes of communication, his description is instructive in the ways that it highlights the interaction of ideology and the individual without insisting that one gains primacy over the other.

animate or inanimate, by virtue of their ability to affect the outcome of events. Whereas assemblage theory emphasizes the emergent identity, however, actor-network theory emphasizes the relations at work within the network. Since networks are more diffuse than assemblages, they lack territorializing forces beyond the interactions currently occurring between their actors.[28] In the model developed by the sociologist Bruno Latour, these interactions commonly involve the transmission of information. As Latour notes, actors may interrupt, divert, filter, and otherwise alter information transmitted through them, using as his example the twentieth-century computer, which appears innocuous until it breaks down, at which point it begins to transform the data stored within it, often into gibberish (*Reassembling the Social* 39). Latour terms those things or people that do not alter the information they transport "intermediaries" and those that do as "mediators" (*Reassembling the Social* 39). In so doing, Latour sets up a binary only half of which exists: true intermediaries are a Platonic ideal rather than a reality. Rather than introducing confusion into a perfect system of communication, the broken computer comes rather as a reminder of how the functional computer also shapes how we interact with information.

The lack of true intermediaries is precisely Latour's point: we cannot speak of interactions between two subjects without considering how they are connected. The codex book, for instance, breaks up its information into page-sized sections, which may inadvertently juxtapose different texts on facing pages and therefore work to build

[28] As Ian Bogost has observed, this tendency to focus on temporary connections rather than assembled entities pushes actor-network theory away from other object-oriented ontologies: the emphasis lies on which elements in a given situation are aligned with one another rather than on the sum total of those alignments (7).

connections between them; alternately, a damaged book may contain multiple fragments from the same text. The upshot of this is that we cannot safely assume that any element in a network does not change how the rest of the network functions. To incorporate a new element into an assemblage, if we follow Latour's observation about intermediaries, is necessarily an act of change to that assemblage, both because of the new information that has been introduced and because the new participant in the assemblage. A human subject who has incorporated a book into their assemblage, moreover, may act as a mediator of already mediated information as he or she quotes and rearranges elements of the book in a conversation or discussion. Moreover, the human subject may intervene physically into the book through marginalia, thereby reconfiguring the book's mediating role further.

Even without modification by an active user, the Renaissance book possesses a great potential to act as a mediator: more, in fact, than the computer, in part because, as Adrian Johns notes, book piracy was so rampant that for every authorized edition of a book, there could be up to ninety unauthorized versions (*Nature of the Book* 31), which were often riddled with inaccuracies and thus often distorted the information being transmitted. While Galileo, for instance, invested considerable care in producing accurate woodcuts of the moon for his *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610), pirated editions often simply rotated the same woodcut to represent the waxing and waning half-moons, potentially creating the impression that the moon's surface was inconstant (Johns, *Nature of the Book* 22-23). The book, which on the one hand helped make Galileo's reputation as a credible and thorough scientist, could block other scientists' attempts to build on his

insights. This difficulty is not unique to scientific books: it permeates all interactions with books, which in the process of carrying knowledge also shape behavior and thought. The encounter with the book as text is troubled by the presence of the book as a physical object, which draws attention to itself through the possibility of typographical confusion. Plato's complaint in *Phaedrus* that written words, if unclear, remain unclear unless their author clarifies them (*Phaedrus* 275d-275e) gains still more weight in a situation where even the author may be at a loss to explain the meaning of words that are ostensibly their own. Book pirates and honest printers alike produced books as quickly as possible, which given the exigencies of the print shop meant that some errors inevitably found their way into printed books.[29] The contingencies of the print shop exacerbate the mediating qualities already inherent in any kind of information transmission.

Latour's sense of omnipresent mediation thematizes how human subjects are assembled. As books and other objects are incorporated into an assemblage, they also bring with them connections to networks of ideas and ideologies. These ideas and ideologies never enter the assemblage wholly intact, however, but are always mediated, modified by the very components that bring them into play. They are then modified further as they interact with the other components of the assemblage, which emerges as more than the sum of its parts and almost inevitably puts its own spin on the ideologies that make it up. The human subject thus has a degree of control over what elements enter

[29] The expected type-setting rate for a practiced compositor left little time to double-check whether a given piece of type was the right one, which meant that if a type-case had been placed into the wrong box of his type-case, errors could creep in that might not be caught until the pages were actually being printed. The long *s* and the *f* are frustratingly similar, differing by a slightly longer bar on the one than the other, while the letters *b*, *d*, *p*, and *q* are similar enough to earn the nickname "the four demons." As a result of these circumstances, the first completely error-free book was not published until 1760, nearly three centuries after William Caxton brought the first printing press to England (Johns, *Nature of the Book* 31).

his or her assemblage, granted the choice to emphasize some components over others, to reject some and embrace others. This control is never total because of the human subject's assembled nature: made up as humans are of numerous smaller components, they can never be entirely certain that they have purged a given component or successfully assimilated another. Books, with their links to education and the formation of human selves, offer a space to consider this process of self-definition and self-mediation, particular in the Renaissance's historical context.

As Sarah Wall-Randell points out, books "are a unique class of objects in that they *are* both their physical reality, paper and ink, and the stories they contain" (130). When we discuss the book in relation to the human self, we are confronted by a hybrid thing that is both a physical artifact as well as an idea which can be absorbed into the memory and psychology of the people who use it. While other objects may also carry a social valence that can be internalized by the human, the book is special in that it is designed to operate within both realms. Renaissance writers were particularly attuned to this aspect of books because of the sudden influx of books and writing materials being made available to them. As printed books became more available and it became easier to produce manuscript books of their own, the role of the book as a tool for identity assemblage became visible in ways that it had not before.

Assembling The Renaissance Book

Renaissance books are both like and unlike the books we use in the twenty-first century. Renaissance book buyers enjoyed access to more books at far lower prices than

had been possible before: the printing press allowed for the circulation of ideas on a scale and at a speed that a purely scribal culture could never have supported.[30] With so many books on the market, readers were suddenly confronted with more books than they could feasibly read; the question of what was worth reading suddenly became more relevant than the question of what was available to read.[31] In this respect, the Renaissance book resembles the twenty-first-century book. At the same time, however, Renaissance books were treated quite differently. Marginalia tended towards the chaotic, so that as William H. Sherman has noted, "many of the notes left behind by readers bear no discernable relationship whatsoever to the texts they accompany," with Renaissance marginalia including "not just comments on the text but penmanship exercises, prayers, recipes, popular poetry, drafts of letters, mathematical calculations, shopping lists, and other glimpses of the world in which they circulated" (*Used Books* 15). The Renaissance reader encounters books not merely as something to read and perhaps comment upon, but also as possessing blank space on which they could write. A closer analogue to today's reading and writing experience is less the printed book so much as the blank notebook; as H.P. Jackson has observed, "early modern marginalia also perpetuated the practices

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[30] It is important to keep in mind, however, that the printing press did not simply supplant manuscript culture but that considerable overlap resulted. Manuscript miscellanies continued to circulate and early printers, starting with Gutenberg, did their best to imitate manuscript practices both in terms of appearance and in terms of what they were printing while scribes remained active both as secretaries and as a cheap alternative to print (Eisenstein 23, 66, 341).

[31] As Ann Blair notes in "Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700," a late fifteenth-century French royal magistrate might own sixty books, but Montaigne owned a thousand by the late sixteenth century and by the early eighteenth century, Montesquieu owned over three thousand (15). In England, Samuel Pepys's library contained three thousand books when he died in 1703, many of which were compilations of several texts, many of which were compilations of several texts that had initially been purchased separately. For more on information overload, see also Kathryn Murphy, "Robert Burton and the Problems of Polymathy."

associated with manuscript books: readers continued to add to books just as their ancestors had done" (46). Renaissance book owners were similarly more free in what their books would contain, assembling a book out of disparate texts.

The bound book as it was produced during the Renaissance tended to be a custom job rather than a ready-made product. Binding as a technical term describes books where pages are gathered and sewn onto their supports — typically cords or strips made of cloth or leather — which in turn are then woven through holes cut into the cover's boards: the covers are built up around the text-block.[32] In a bound book, covers and text-block become part of a unified whole. The book then is an assemblage that readily advertises its assembled nature: it can easily be broken down into the basic components of boards, covering material, structural supports, and text-block. Several of those parts can be broken down further, viewed as assemblages in their own right, particularly the text-block, which is comprised of gatherings of folded paper.[33] How the book is assembled in many ways determines which book we have: text-blocks can be assembled in different orders, not always at the expense of meaning, and thus alter which aspects of a book are highlighted; similarly, a different kind of covering material produces a different kind of book, which might be considered cheap or a luxury edition. Renaissance book-selling

[32] The alternative is case-binding, where the covers are prepared separately while the gathered and sewn pages are inserted after the fact. While the practice was prevalent in the Arabic-speaking world much earlier, case binding did not become prevalent in Europe until the nineteenth century (Kilgour 54). Today, this is the industry-standard for book production. As John Carter and Nicholas Barker note in their *ABC for Book Collectors*, "although the result, which is ready-to-wear not a tailored job, cannot compare to binding for durability, it is perfectly adequate for cloth-bound books. Today, indeed, casing is so much taken for granted that the words bound and binding — as in 'cloth-bound' or 'publisher's binding' — are used without regard to the important technical distinction between the two methods" (59).

[33] Those gatherings are themselves made up of one or more sheets of paper, each of which comprises several leaves (what everyday users of books often call pages).

practices granted readers considerable freedom in developing what their books would look like. However disparate the texts or writings that were assembled into a book were, after the binder had done his or her job, those texts would structurally become a cohesive whole by virtue of sharing covers and structural supports. The act of binding territorializes the assemblage, giving it boundaries in the form of covers, but it can be deterritorialized as well if desired. Books can be disassembled and reassembled in different configurations, often by simply tearing down of the book and subsequently rebinding it.[34] As books grew cheaper, simply cutting and pasting text from books into miscellanies became a viable alternative to copying out quotations by hand (Blair 25). Alongside such possibilities for deterritorialization is the introduction of new elements such as marginalia, whether as idle scribbles or directed commentary, which may additionally change the book as it is used.[35]

This potential for reconfiguration is characteristic of Renaissance book-ownership, particularly as the number of books available on the open market. With bookbinders unable to bind every book in a high quality binding, transitional bindings become increasingly common, bindings intended to protect a text long enough for it to be sold and then rebound by its new owner. The books that were thus produced were deliberately unfinished, their pages often untrimmed and their covers made of the cheapest material

[34] This is particularly visible in the case of the book-collecting bishop Matthew Parker, who paginated his books manually with red crayon and would often have to repaginate them, allowing us to trace his regular reorganizations of them both internally and externally. See Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read*, 44-45.

[35] When the early seventeenth-century collector Robert Cotton — responsible for preserving a great deal of medieval literature — was having his medieval manuscripts rebound, he was disinterested in retaining any marginalia, allowing his binders to trim them out, much to the chagrin of later bibliographers but of interest to the assemblage theorist given Cotton's recognition of his ability to alter the identity of his books as he pleased. See Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library*, 170.

available so as to both minimize cost and interference with the intentions of the book's eventual purchaser (Pickwoad 64). The *Sammelband* — several different texts collected into a single volume — was a staple of Renaissance book culture, one that is less visible today in part because later collectors have often disassembled books in favor of rebinding their component parts independently (Knight 61). In binding disparate texts together, Knight argues, the Renaissance reader became a compiler, interacting with his or her texts as a strange hybrid between reader and author. The reader of printed books does not perhaps change his texts as an editor today might, but may well decide to rearrange them in relation to one another. Putting different texts alongside one another both opens and closes interpretive possibilities through the interaction between the two texts. Texts that have been bound together into a single assemblage inevitably undergo a shift in identity as each text contributes its own character to the greater whole even as that character is reshaped by its juxtaposition with other ideas.

Even as people assembled books, they similarly assembled libraries out of and around those books. As printing presses continued to churn out more books and books taken from dissolved monasteries were incorporated into existing collections, libraries exploded out of the small rooms that they had once been confined to, requiring ever more space. Libraries could no longer be contained in a single room or even on a single floor: they began to demand buildings of their own.[36] The increase in books kept in libraries meant that book storage had to change: where once books been stacked horizontally in

[36] To take a dramatic example, when Sir Thomas Bodley began his work of re-establishing the Oxford University library in 1598, he took over the remnants of a theological collection given to the university by Duke Humphrey in the fifteenth century and expanded them both with his own collections and by soliciting donations. By 1605, the Bodleian Library had two thousand books; by 1620, five years after Bodley's death, it had sixteen thousand books; and by 1700, its holdings were nearly thirty thousand (M. Harris 143).

protective chests (*armaria*), they were now increasingly stored vertically on shelves in bookcases. Bookcases evolved out of large *armaria* that had been placed on their sides; as the need for space became more pressing, their doors were removed so they could stand closer together without leaving room for a hinge (Petroski 59). That storing books vertically was even an option speaks to the sheer number of books that were suddenly available: in order to store books vertically, there have to be enough books on the shelf to keep them from falling over. Similarly, whereas books had once been kept chained to their shelves or lecterns to keep them from being stolen, they were now increasingly left unchained and as librarians crammed more books onto the shelves, they began to be shelved with the spines facing outwards rather than the fore-edges, which might have been damaged (Petroski 86).

Even as some writers lamented that there were now too many books to read, libraries allowed greater access to the chief advantage of writing as a technology, namely an information retrieval culture, one in which rather than having to remember everything, people are able to draw on pre-existing written information. Not only does this circumvent the mutability of memory for the more static written format, but it also considerably expands the limits on what a given individual can know. Through association with the books available in a library, a human subject may come into contact with not merely the material objects present on the shelves but also with the human subjects responsible for the origins of those texts: at times, an assemblage may thus be unbounded by time or space, with one reader connecting and joining diverse authors. This larger assemblage is always subject to the mediation of the material books involved,

both in terms of their physical presence and the likely differences between them. Through the books they contain, libraries made people and objects not physically present become intellectually present on a scale that they had not previously been. Growing university libraries strove to make the most of this by emphasizing the utility of the books they purchased; duplicates and under-used books were sold to buy more useful titles (M. Harris 115). Renaissance readers, filling their commonplace books with ideas from libraries and circulating miscellanies, effectively miniaturized the libraries again, storing up the salient points they found in books for later use.

Libraries are themselves assemblages: in examining the effect of libraries, we are perforce confronted by the question which books are made available and why? As Konstantinos Staikos has observed, the architecture of early Renaissance libraries suggests that they were aimed less at the propagation of learning and more at the celebration of the manuscript treasures they contained (235). Early book collections were often motivated as much by a desire to show off wealth and artistic taste on the part of the collector as by any desire to accumulate learning.[37] In such a case, the books become part of their owners' assemblage not in terms of the knowledge they contain but in terms of the social cachet and prestige they convey: only a truly discerning collector would acquire such books and be willing to display them. Over time, libraries became more associated with private spaces, so that the Italian writer Leon Battista Alberti specified in his 1486 architectural treatise *De re aedificatoria* that there was a need for separate bedrooms for men and women as well as adjoining spaces for each gender: dressing

[37] I am grateful to Dr. Renzo Baldasso for his insights on this.

rooms for women, libraries for men (Jagodzinski 13-14).[38] Conversely, alongside this rhetoric about a private library and a solitary reader, "Renaissance writings on the history and theory of libraries generally stressed their value as public commodities" (Sherman, "The Place of Reading" 74). The assembly of a specific library might well serve as an attempt to develop and control a national identity: in Reformation England, efforts were made to both shift the focus from the newly dissolved monasteries over to manuscript libraries as well as to cull unsuitable medieval books from the nascent English library.[39]

The increase in book production that filled burgeoning Renaissance libraries — and would eventually produce the books that we use today — combined with manuscript culture to produce a climate in which books were made to be modified and altered. Bindings were often made to suit an owner's tastes and desires; printed texts might be combined with blank pages for manuscript production in the same volume; and a clean book was in many respects an unused book. Books needed to be assembled to be complete and even a fully assembled book was subject to change, whether through marginalia or rebinding. What was physically true of Renaissance books is metaphorically true of the people who used them; just as they put together their books to suit their needs and desires, so too were Renaissance people themselves put together out of a host of ideas, influences, and things. Books played an important role in these human

[38] Heidi Brayman Hackel has observed that women's books tended to be folded into their husbands' libraries but were occasionally kept as discrete units within those libraries. Some women aggressively marked books as theirs, not their husbands', and some English gentlewomen who had their own book closets as early as the 1550s (*Reading Material* 246).

[39] See James Simpson, "Ageism: Leland, Bale, and the Laborious Start of English Literary History, 1350-1550"; Jennifer Summit, "Monuments and Ruins: Spenser and the Problem of the English Library" and *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England*; and Philip Schwyzer, "Beauties of the Land: Bale's Books, Aske's Abbeys, and the Aesthetics of Nationhood."

assemblages, mediating and transmitting cultural forces between human subjects. For the rest of this chapter, I examine three facets of that role in the light of assemblage theory and object-oriented ontologies: reading as a direct connection between the reader's interior and exterior, book ownership as a means of social display where books are deployed to characterize a person socially, and authorship as a projection of an alternate self into the world. To provide a touchstone for this discussion as I assemble a theoretical apparatus for this dissertation, I turn to Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590/1596). Spenser's encyclopedic allegory thematizes the assemblage of the human self: in the "Letter to Raleigh," Spenser explains that "The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline" (714) and, indeed, each knight we encounter in *The Faerie Queene* develops to become a more perfect version of themselves. Books appear and reappear throughout the allegory, commenting on cultural moments and anxieties. These moments, scattered throughout the poem, work together to situate the book within the process of identity construction, shifting from one role to another in different assemblages.

Writing Books: Malfont and Busirane's Wicked Poetry

The production of books represents an extension of the author's identity through the creation of a new, semi-autonomous assemblage. Books are both judged by their author's reputation and will shape that reputation in their own right. John Milton declares in his famous anti-censorship treatise *Areopagitica* (1644) that "books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and

extraction of that living intellect that bred them" (720). Implicit within Milton's point that so long as a given book exists, its author remains alive and active — or, rather, that the author-persona generated by the book remains alive and active in such situation — is a sense that the book represents whom the author truly is. Any judgment of a book carries within it judgment of its author, offering both an opportunity and a danger for those bold enough to publish their work. I suggest that, oddly enough for an activity often confined to private rooms, writing a book is a public act as the published book — which has literally been made "public" — pushes the author into public view.

The distribution of texts through books carries the hope that that judgment will not merely be favorable, but will include a desire to read more by the same author. This was important on both an idealistic and a pragmatic level: authors both wish to be read more and authors wish to be paid more for new material. As David Carlson points out, early printing revolved less around printers satisfying a given demand but more about producing that demand in the first place (131). Printing was an expensive undertaking, requiring a massive initial investment in terms of both tools and raw material: for it to be profitable in comparison to simply hiring a scribe to produce a single copy, printers had to produce and sell many books.[40] In response to this profit-driven situation, Renaissance authors tended to affect an aristocratic disdain for print as a crass, mercantile medium, protesting that they wrote merely for amusement and not for profit even as they took

[40] Over time, the difficulty in maintaining both a print shop and successfully marketing the documents being printed led to a gradual eclipse of printer-publishers in favor of bookseller-publishers where the bookseller would commission print jobs in order to sell them. For more, see Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication*. For calculations about how much a print run of a given play might be expected to cost its publisher, see Peter W. M. Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks."

advantage of it.[41] As the print market grew, patronage, once the mainstay of authorial support, was gradually eclipsed by the market economy (Marotti 292). Instead of one wealthy patron, authors sought support from countless lesser patrons who, through their greater numbers, made up for their lesser wealth. Recognizing this, the irascible satirist Thomas Nashe included two dedications in his *Unfortunate Traveler* (1594), the first addressing a potential patron Henry Wriothesley and the second the reading public. The dedication to Wriothesley is comically obsequious, claiming among other things that at one point that "Unreprievably perisheth that book whatsoever to waste paper, which on the diamond rock of your judgment disasterly chanceth to be shipwrecked" (Nashe 251-52), which he soon follows up shortly with a pragmatic offering of his text to the general public: "Be it known to as many as will pay money enough to peruse my story" (Nashe 254). The two dedications together assemble a cheerful persona for Nashe the author as an amusing storyteller, one who takes few things seriously.

Nashe's persona is not identical with Nashe himself, of course. As Stephen Hilliard suggests in *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe*, Nashe is a protean figure whose works vary enormously because he was seeking employment and was consequently willing to change his style and persona on demand (8). In generating a persona for its author, books appropriate agency to themselves and become miniature, autonomous versions of their original authors, multiplying them. The original human subject who generated these autonomous assemblages may well find him- or herself called to account

[41] For more on the mercantile stigma associated with print, see J. W. Saunders, "The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Biases of Tudor Poetry"; Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric*; and Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book 1480-1880*. For an investigation of the blurring between coterie and professional poetry, see Steven Mentz, "Selling Sidney: William Ponsonby, Thomas Nashe, and the Boundaries of Elizabethan Print and Manuscript Cultures."

for the actions undertaken by these second selves. A similar desire underlies both the aggressive self-editing of authors like Ben Jonson and the requests by authors to have their writings destroyed after their deaths, namely a desire to keep control of the versions of the author that books proliferate. The author has less control over what happens with that persona once it is in place. Leaving aside the possibility of misinterpretation by a reader, Renaissance book transmission in particular lent itself to changes in the text: the roles of author, scribe, and reader overlapped with one another in Renaissance manuscript practices (Marotti 135). Textual changes were common, whether because a reader-cum-scribe had misremembered a commonplace phrasing and so had copied it down wrong or because he or she was deliberately altering or expanding the text. Even in the printer's shop, the author was only one of several people working to produce the book in question, as the seventeenth-century printer Joseph Moxon notes in his *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing* (1684). Moxon explains that although initially it had been unnecessary for compositors to be very learned, matters had changed so that the duties of the compositor had expanded to include proofreading:

> *by the Laws of* Printing*, a* Compositer *is strictly to follow his* Copy*, viz. To observe and do just so much and no more than his* Copy *will bear him out for; so that his* Copy *is to be his Rule and Authority: But the carelesness of some good Authors, and the ignorance of other Authors, has forc'd* Printers *to introduce a Custom, which among them is look'd upon as a task and duty incumbent on the* Compositer*, viz. To discern and amend the bad* Spelling *and* Pointing *of his* Copy*, if it be English*[.] (192)

It was the compositor and thus the print shop that carried final responsibility for what was eventually carried to market rather than the author, although Moxon is anxious to emphasize that compositor subordinate himself to the author, always attempting "to make his *Indenting*, *Pointing*, *Breaking*, *Italicking*, *&c*. the better sympathize with the *Authors*

Genius, and also with the capacity of the Reader" (212). While Moxon here implicitly advises the compositor — and with him, the printer — to do his best to vanish from the book he produces, his observation emphasizes the degree to which any book production in the Renaissance was invariably collaborative, even if it was focused around a singular author-figure.

While Spenser addresses such concerns most directly in *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579), recurring qualms about authorship run throughout *The Faerie Queene* as well.[42] He repeatedly stages malevolent or harmful author-figures, perhaps most explicitly in the encounter with the wicked poet Malfont, whose tongue has been nailed to a post in punishment for his libelous attacks on the Queen, "Both with bold speaches, which he blazed had, / And with lewd poems, which he did compile" (V.ix.25.7). Malfont's punishment presents a particularly brutal allegory of censorship, one that serves to exaggerate the trouble that Spenser might get into with his poem and seeks to avert harm by preemptively punishing a stand-in for the author.[43] The passage represents a self-conscious assertion of *The Faerie Queene's* limitations as a work: in establishing the punishment that Spenser deems appropriate for those who write slanderous poetry, Spenser emphasizes that if his own poetry should prove offensive, it is by mistake rather

[42] A. Leigh DeNeef suggests in his entry for "Bonfont, Malfont" in the *Spenser Encyclopedia* that Books IV through VI are all framed by worries of being misinterpreted, particularly Book V, which features the most overtly political allegory of the poem (101).

[43] Cyndia Susan Clegg notes in "Justice and Press Censorship in Book V of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*" that although Queen Elizabeth's government established its authority to control published writing early on with the founding of the London Stationers' Company and the 1559 Royal Injunctions, actual censorship efforts on the part of the government were comparatively limited outside of ecclesiastical matters. Clegg suggests that Malfont may represent not Spenser himself but Catholic agitators on behalf of Campion. For more on censorship in *The Faerie Queene*, see also David Norbrook, *Poetry and the Politics of the English Renaissance* and Jonathan Goldberg's *James I and the Politics of Literature*.

than on purpose. The figure of Malfont — although tangential to the action of Book V, canto 9 in the sense that none of the characters interact with him beyond noticing him in passing — appears in the spatial center of his canto as a reminder that Spenser is aware of the potential dangers of writing political allegory.

Running in parallel to Malfont as troublesome author-figures are the magicians, most of them evil, operating within Spenser's allegorical countryside.[44] Beginning with Archimago, the first magician in the poem, the magicians are presented as writers who use their books to change the world around them. Archimago summons his spirits by consulting his magic books and then, "choosing out few words most horrible, / (Let none them read) thereof did verses frame" (I.i.37.1-2). Archimago is presented not merely as a consumer but additionally as a producer of text, a representation that is taken further in Book III with Merlin and Busirane, both of whom are shown to be explicitly writing strange characters in order to compel their fiendish servants to obey them. The magicians in particular illustrate how Spenser commonly uses books both to reflect on his own literary endeavor and to figure "the writer of books … as dangerous an enemy or blocking agent as any more fantastic monster" (Gross 103). In the House of Busirane, we are presented with a particularly lavish representation of Busirane's writing that Britomart, as Brad Tuggler notes, is hesitant to destroy (143). While there is much to be admired in Busirane's work in terms of craftsmanship, that craftsmanship is critiqued and

[44] Even the good magician Merlin is sometimes troubling: as Matthew Fike notes in "Spenser's Merlin Reconsidered," Merlin seems problematic in his trafficking with fiends and the incomplete nature of the prophecies he gives to Britomart (92-93). Although when he appears in Book III, he seems to combine reason and faith in love (Cheney 19), Spenser additionally anticipates Merlin's eventual fall due to his love for the Lady of the Lake, suggesting that he is not fully chaste, a failing that is particularly troubling in a book based around chastity.

demonized (Eisendrath 152); in the process, Spenser's own writing and tendency to appear lost in a reverie of his own creation is implicitly questioned. Much the same way that Spenser has Guyon brutally destroy the Bower of Bliss at the climax of Book II, Spenser erases the contents of Busirane's house after the magician's defeat, seemingly to make amends for the poem's representation — and potential endorsement — of problematic sexuality. Here as with Malfont, Spenser reinforces the limitations of what his poetic book does *not* do, insistently defining its effect and with it his readers' sense of who he is.

Spenser's actions to attempt to limit his book's effect and keep it within particular bounds represent a simultaneous link and gap between himself and his book. On the one hand, the book serves as a bridge with other people, assembling a network of thinkers who are, however briefly, sharing the same thoughts. At the same time, however, the book acts autonomously and without necessarily consulting Spenser's wishes. It serves both as part of the larger assemblage of Spenser and his audience as well as a smaller assemblage with its own agenda and its own agency. Writing and publishing a book generates the bibliographic subject that I have argued engages with the human subject both as an alternate environment in reading and as a tool for self-generation. Spenser's anxiety to control *The Faerie Queene* is an act of territorialization, an attempt to bring it into keeping with his ideas of how it should be assembled. His early insistence with Archimago that the magician's horrible words should not be read illustrates a fear that his own books may be misread and he be condemned along with them.

Owning Books: Eumnestes's Library

When it is being read, a book acts in its capacity as a textual carrier and its physicality recedes from the reader's perspective in favor of a more abstract encounter with the text the book contains, however mediated that encounter may be by the book's art, formatting, or other elements inherent in its physical composition. During such encounters, the book reshapes the human subject reading it by incorporating or reinforcing new ideas into his or her assemblage. Even within the reading experience, however, a book's physicality comes to the forefront, both by offering its owner an opportunity to annotate, doodle, or otherwise engage with the book as a physical object as well as through decorations and additional paratexts. Illuminated or rubricated initials at the start of paragraphs might well draw the eye not merely as intelligible symbols, but as elements of an aesthetic assemblage. Taken further, the well-bound book itself when not in use could appear not merely as a carrier of textual meaning but as a piece of art, signaling to the viewer information about the taste and quality of its owner. As Samuel Pepys's famous anxieties about his book of pornography amply illustrate, the books that physically surround a person are often taken as a means whereby judgments about that person's character can be made. Books speak for their owner, who is assumed to have chosen, read, and fully digested the contents of the books within his or her collection. Further, during the Reformation, books could easily serve as markers of their owners' religio-political affiliation, indelibly marking unruly English Catholics by their presence

in their collections.[45] Which books you owned could well indicate who you were, both with and without your active collusion.

The Renaissance stage exploited the equation of books with their owners' characters by using book props as a means of character identification, especially with characters associated with contemplation, prayer, or melancholy (Dessen and Thomson 34). When the hapless King Henry VI in Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* (1592), for instance, is finally captured by the Yorkist faction, he is found carrying a prayer book, the book acting to drive home his monkish, contemplative demeanor. The acting company could thus shape the character's assemblage much the same way that the careful book owner might, putting a particular version of that character on display for the audience. Such conventions carry within them the potential for metatheatrical exploitation: when Hamlet pretends to be mad, he is quick to acquire a book and takes care to be seen reading it, explaining to Polonius that it contains, "Words, words, words" (2.2.192). Hamlet here chooses to deliberately invoke the stage conventions around book props to telegraph to the other characters on stage that he is a madman; his actual behavior is only marginally more erratic than it had been before. Hamlet's deliberate staging of his book usage may serve as an example of how book ownership includes a declaration of character and a space for self-definition through a careful decision. Presenting the correct set of books or treating a particular book in the correct way allows book owners to assemble a desired self. This is not to suggest, however, that the book is merely a passive player in a

[45] Catholic priests in particular were vulnerable to identification through their books as they needed access to a breviary — a book detailing daily Church services — in order to fulfill their priestly functions. Ten Catholic clerics imprisoned in 1615, for instance, were noted by the authorities to have only this one book in their possession. See *Private Libraries in Renaissance England*, Vol. 8, forthcoming.

displayed assemblage that can be presented and dismissed at will by the human subject. Once put into play, the book continues to work within the assemblage, pulling the other components into alignment with itself both textually but also physically: the book as an artifact requires attention as it consumes space. If it is small enough to fit into a pocket, then it takes up space that might have been dedicated to other objects; if carried in the hand or hung from the belt, then the person carrying it is immediately characterized by having a book to hand.

An apt illustration of the importance of the physical book can be found just off the Renaissance stage in the form of the playbook: having the playbook on hand was absolutely essential since the right for an acting company to perform, alter, and re-perform plays hinged on their continued possession of the playbook. Moreover, the playbook in the company's inventory had to be a very specific copy: "it was not customary for the Master of the Revels to keep copies of the plays he licensed; it was usual for him to write his licence on the company's manuscript, which was kept in the company archives" (Bentley 3: 37). As a result, the company had to be able to produce the authorized version with his license on demand; if they lost that book, they effectively lost their license to perform that play.[46] If there was legal trouble, the playbook could act to protect its performers, so that in 1557, when the Privy Council arrested a group of actors attempting to put on a play called *Sacke Full of Newes*, they were released the next

[46] In 1633, Sir Henry Herbert, then Master of the Revels and highly active in his office, noted that "The Master ought to have copies of their new playes left with him, that he may be able to shew what he hath allowed or disallowed" (Bentley 6: 31) but appears to be referring not so much to the office of the Master but a specific Master who may wish to be able to confirm his authorization after the fact. He additionally notes that "in former time the poets tooke greater liberty than is allowed them by mee," (Bentley 6: 31) and so calls for the renewed licensing of older plays.

day after the Council had had a chance to read their playbook and conclude that it was not as offensive as they had anticipated (Dutton 20). The playbook thus provided more than merely knowledge of a play, but also linked the actors' company to the censor, whose authorizing license was incorporated directly into the book itself. In this way, the book could take action on behalf of the acting company: it was not through human action that the arrested actors were freed but through the book, which indicated to the censors that their performance was, in fact, acceptable. Maintaining a collection of playbooks and being able to present them in good condition was effectively an act of self-curation in which the players' company were able to assemble an identity for themselves as legitimate, much the same way they might wear the livery of a noble's household to avoid prosecution as vagabonds. For all the mutability of the play-text, the playbook as an immutable object stood at the center of the stage company.[47] It shielded the company from outside critique and additionally served as the source of the prompt-books which allowed the actors to work in tandem to produce their performance though none of them possessed full knowledge of the play. Their re-creation of the play's text from these secondary books was authorized and protected by the playbook.

The development and curation of a book collection, whether professional, personal, or national, was empowering in that a new identity was available for the choosing but threatening in that a new identity would be assembled regardless of whether it was consciously chosen or not. A copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a sign of learning

[47] As Neil Carson notes, Philip Henslowe typically retained both costumes and playbooks as surety when the actors owed him money (32): by keeping control of such artifacts, he was in command of the two elements that were absolutely essential to perform the play. Henslowe thus placed himself in a position to control not merely his own identity as a legally operating theater manager but also the identities of his actors both on and off the stage.

when it is surrounded by other classical authors but a possible sign of hidden licentious tastes in the company of religious texts. Care had to be taken to keep the right books in sight both in terms of physical display and for intellectual development; the assembled library needed to be curated and tended properly. This curatorial nature of book collections is brought into focus in Book II of *The Faerie Queene* where we encounter a striking and detailed allegorical representation of a human body in the house of Temperance, culminating in a description of the head as a tower with three rooms, each containing a different wise sage who represent the ability to engage with future, present, or past. Eumnestes, the sage representing memory, is presented as ancient and half blind, much like his room, which appears ruinous but remains firm and strong. In Eumnestes' library, "all was hangd about with rolls, / And old records from auncient times deriud, / Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls, / That were all worm-eaten, and full of canker holes" (II.ix.57.6-9). Within this space, Eumnestes is found constantly reading and rereading his books, assisted by the little boy Anamnestes, who both fetches him more books and finds mislaid books for him in the library. Eumnestes's scholarly habits are evidently contagious, for once Guyon and Arthur have marveled at his tireless reading, they peruse his shelves and eventually begin to read themselves. Appropriately enough, each of them settles on a book related to his own people's history: Arthur choosing "An auncient booke, hight *Briton moniments*" (II.ix.59.6) and Guyon the parallel "*Antiquitee* of *Faery* lond" (II.ix.60.2). Each book leads up to the present day, including the most recent monarch of either people — Uther Pendragon for the Britons and Gloriana for the Faerie people — but where Guyon stops reading and leaves the book

behind as he goes to supper, Arthur is frustrated by a sudden break in his record, "As if the rest some wicked hand did rend, / Or th'Author selfe could not at least attend / To finish it" (II.x.68.4-6). Sarah Wall-Randell suggests that Arthur himself is unaware that he is in fact "the Author's self, both reading and writing his own story" while Spenser's reader can chuckle about the irony of Arthur wondering who the next monarch of England will be, delighting in the self-consciously meta-textual nature of early modern romance (Wall-Randell 26). Unaware though Arthur remains of his significance in the book that he reads, he nevertheless is moved first to awed silence and then to a patriotic declaration of his loyalty to Britain: the incomplete and unrecognized narrative of his ancestry spurs him on to further valor. Where Amoret is exposed to potentially harmful effects from a book, Arthur encounters inspirational literature and gladly incorporates it into his assemblage.

Arthur's response to the missing space in his book where his own feats will eventually be inscribed serves as a reminder to the reader that Eumnestes is not merely reading texts but contributing to them as well:

> This man of infinite remembraunce was,
> And things foregone through many ages held,
> Which he recorded still, as they did pas,
> Ne suffred them to perish through long eld,
> As all things els, the which this world doth weld,
> But laid them vp in his immortall scrine,
> Where they for euer incorrupted dweld (II.ix.56.1-7).

Eumnestes' constant additions to his records serve to emphasize books' ability to preserve ideas for future use, a theme that Spenser and other poets keen on gaining patronage were naturally eager to rehearse for their patrons' benefit. Judith Anderson has further suggested that the "immortall scrine," alongside Eumnestes's constant reading

and searching through his library for mislaid elements, serves as a reminder of the constant need to re-inscribe the truth (*Reading the Allegorical Intertext* 88). Even Eumnestes, whose memory is infinite, must constantly re-determine and reinforce the truth.[48] Eumnestes and Anamestes's constant cataloging and rediscovering of books present within his library — not to mention the addition of new material about recent events — constitutes an act of territorialization wherein old components of their assemblage are retained and reinforced. Eumnestes's labors represent a concerted effort to keep the assemblage of Alma's castle in working order; through their constant use, his books ensure that truth remains accessible for informed decisions.

Reading Books: The House of Busirane

As David Cressy has observed in his foundational study *Literacy and the Social Order*, Renaissance England saw a call for increased literacy from religious and secular authors alike (1). From the sixteenth century onwards, Cressy argues, the importance of literacy was urged as a necessary means to aid both the nation as a whole and the souls of individual readers, though the degree to which they were successful in propagating literacy remains doubtful (3-29). Cressy's skepticism as to the actual spread of literacy in the period has since come under critique as Margaret Spufford, Tessa Watt, Heidi Brayman Hackel, and others have drawn attention to the necessary limitations inherent in estimating literacy based on tracking the number of documented signatures: Renaissance

[48] Jennifer Summit has argued that the abrupt end of Arthur's book parallels the gaps and ruptures in recent British history stemming from the dissolution of the monasteries and the resulting loss of clarity about post-Reformation England's national identity (*Memory's Library* 126). As Protestant scholars gathered books that had once been Catholic property and sorted them in accordance with their conception of history, they were able to recreate a new British history.

teaching prioritized reading over writing, teaching reading first and sometimes eschewing writing entirely (Moulton xvii-xviii).[49] Brayman Hackel suggests that while the number of readers in Renaissance England remains uncertain, at least a basic level of reading appears to have been common ("Rhetorics and Practices of Illiteracy" 171). Many Renaissance readers likely evade scholarly detection because they left no permanent evidence of their reading practices.[50] Hovering behind such questions of literacy is the importance of the book as a textual receptacle capable of storing texts for subsequent consumption, a role that it could fulfill for those who were unable to read, as they might nevertheless keep a printed Bible on hand so that it could be read to them by literate visitors (Brayman Hackel, "Rhetorics and Practices of Illiteracy" 178). The act of reading opened up that receptacle to let the text come out, at which point the book takes on an active role during its encounter with the human subject.

Humanist pedagogy advocated an active, engaged form of reading where the reader took control of their textual experience.[51] In their landmark study "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine stress the active reader as someone always looking to harness reading to a specific goal (30). In

[49] As Tessa Watt points out, "it is likely that many more rural people could get through the text of a broadside ballad than could sign their names to a Protestation Oath" (Watt 7).

[50] The lack of standardization in textual transmission adds a further wrinkle to the question of literacy: numerous manuscript and printing typefaces circulated during the Renaissance, most of them requiring specialist training to read and write. Only professional secretaries and the highly educated were likely to be proficient in all the commonly used hands. Literacy during the Renaissance is therefore better phrased not as a simple "yes-no" question but rather as a question of what a given person could read. For more on different forms of textual literacy, see Keith Thomas, "The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England" in *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, and Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England*.

[51] See Eugene R. Kintgen, "Reconstructing Elizabethan Reading," for a detailed survey of reading strategies advocated by Elizabethan pedagogues to help readers take control of their reading.

Gabriel Harvey's scholarly reading, books on ancient events were taken as a means to engage with contemporary affairs (Grafton and Jardine 56), a task that he undertook not merely for himself but for his patrons. Drawing attention to the book-wheel, a peculiar sixteenth-century invention where several reading desks formed a rotating reading surface, Grafton and Jardine emphasize the way professional scholars read on others' behalf and partially removed themselves from the equation (48). The reader-for-hire served as a mediator between books and aristocrats, producing texts in collaboration with his books for his master to read in their place.[52] Within an increasingly book-rich society, Grafton and Jardine argue, there was a clear advantage to whoever could "focus the largest number of books on a problem or opportunity" (48). The books rather than the detached professional reader allow the problem to be solved or the opportunity to be seized. Within the scene envisioned by Grafton and Jardine, I suggest, is the sense of the scholar operating the book-wheel becoming a conduit for the books that rotate before him as they focus on a chosen task. The reader, situated on the outskirts of a rotating array of books, is physically immobile even as his mind runs through the wheel of books before him, entering different texts as the human-book assemblage works towards its shared goal.

The books' agentive properties on the book-wheel are mirrored in recurring worries that a reader was exposed to transformation by his or her books, not merely in the

[52] Grafton and Jardine suggest that the brief existence of a class of professional readers-for-hire who served as facilitators and guides for their masters in working through texts (35). This appears to have been in part a response to the information overload caused by the glut of books suddenly appearing on the book market and in part a recognition of aristocrats' inability to indulge in learning alongside politics. See also Lisa Jardine and William Sherman, "Pragmatic Readers: Knowledge Transactions and Scholarly Services in Late Elizabethan England."

positive ways recommended by humanists but also potentially negatively. A particularly famous example of these worries is presented by the French essayist Michel de Montaigne in his essay "On schoolmasters' learning" (1595), where he explains:

> both in that martial government [of Sparta] and in all others like it examples show that studying the arts and sciences makes hearts soft and womanish rather than teaching them to be firm or ready for war. … When the Goths sacked Greece, what saved their libraries from being burned was the idea spread by one of the marauders that such goods should be left intact for their enemies: they had the property of deflecting them from military exercises while making them spend time on occupations which were sedentary and idle. (162)

Montaigne's Goths here act very cannily to ensure that their defeated enemies remain easily defeated. If books are responsible for making the hearts soft, then leaving the Greeks' books intact is a tactical masterstroke. Unburned, the books will continue their work of making the Greeks weak, keeping them from martial exercise. If the books were destroyed and thus removed from the assemblages that the Greeks built, however, then the Greeks might develop new characteristics and become a military threat, possibly not merely to the point of being able to defend themselves but even launching a counterstrike against their former conquerors. In preserving the Greeks' books, the Goths manage to weaponize their enemies' preoccupation with study and turn it against them.[53]

Montaigne's anecdote arises out of a sense that people's character was determined by the texts they read, particularly the texts read early in their development. Humanist pedagogies strove to harness good precepts from classical literature to determine how people acted not merely by giving them greater knowledge but by informing how their

[53] Montaigne's anecdote was later taken up by other writers as a starting point for discussions both for and against reading; see for instance Richard Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* I, 301 (1621), and Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poetry* (c. 1582). For more, see chapter 4.

personalities were put together. Similar thinking governed the proliferating genre of conduct books, which offered a do-it-yourself opportunity for character development, at first aimed at the aristocracy but gradually also including non-noble citizens as well, offering them a chance to define themselves as social classes alongside aristocrats.[54] Conduct books like Baldesar Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1528), William Baldwin's *Mirror for Magistrates* (1563), and Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615) share a sense that the human subject could be reconfigured by the reader using a book rather than a human tutor for instruction. Castiglione argues that whoever would be a good pupil must not only do things well, but must always make every effort to resemble and, if that be possible, to transform himself into his master" (31), reinforcing a sense that the human subject is, if not precisely a blank slate, highly mutable. Books, whether read under the supervision of a tutor or independently, offered control over that development by acting as Latourian mediators of the world around the reader. Just as the book as a physical artifact shapes the human subject's engagement with the text, so too does the book as a textual object filter people's perceptions and interactions with the world around them. While the book's mediation of the world may serve positive ends, its agentive power often proved worrisome.

Books and the threat of what books might do recur throughout *The Faerie Queene*. Introducing the magician Merlin in Book III, Spenser comments that although Merlin

[54] For more on conduct books aimed at non-noble readers, see Tracy Adams, "'Noble, wyse and grete lordes, gentilmen and marchauntes': Caxton's Prologues as Conduct Books for Merchants" and Helaine Razovsky, "Remaking the Bible: English Reformation Spiritual Conduct Books." By the late seventeenth century, there had been an explosion of such texts for women in particular, offering to produce women who are valuable independently of family status or wealth but presenting the woman herself as a storehouse of virtue (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 10).

himself is long since departed, the stones still echo with the labors of fiends bound to his service, which cannot cease working until they either finish building Merlin's brass wall around Carmarthen or until Merlin himself comes to release them (III.iii.10-11). Merlin's magic is characterized as stemming from his writing, which compels the spirits to obey his commands (III.iii.14.7-9), a magic that continues to work without further contribution from its original author. This capacity on the part of written words to continue to act without their author to guide them is repeated later in Book III by the evil magician Busirane's book, which must be read in reverse — be un-read, as it were — before its effects can be alleviated. Kenneth Gross argues that the Busirane episode represents the potential "danger in reading a book, or in being absorbed by or identified with the story it tells" (Gross 104). Busirane's writing forces his prisoner Amoret to be at the center of a monstrous pageant celebrating cruel love, enacted in a house decorated with representations of perverse sexuality. Within the masque, Amoret is tortured and driven forwards by personified versions of the attributes associated with mistresses in Petrarchan poetry (Roche 340).[55] Amoret is trapped by Busirane's sadistic Petrarchan approach to writing, which arises physically out of her own wounded body as Busirane uses her blood to write his poetry. Amoret resists Busirane's book passively but is unable to escape until she is finally rescued by Britomart, an alternate version of herself who resists Busirane's preferred reading and instead substitutes her own.[56]

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[55] For more on Busirane's Petrarchanism, see also Judith Anderson, "Busirane's Place: The House of Rhetoric"; Lauren Silberman, "Singing Unsung Heroines: Androgynous Discourse in Book 3 of *The Faerie Queene*"; and Dorothy Stephens, "Into Other Arms: Amoret's Evasion."

[56] Britomart, herself transformed into a lady knight through her armor and weapons, is thus called upon to rescue a woman whose physical health is dependent on the proper use of an object, a book. Further parallels between Britomart and Amoret abound, who both represent different forms of chastity and are

The house of Busirane represents an allegorical externalization of his book's text. The castle's rich accoutrements, particularly the lavish Ovidian tapestries in his first room, situate Britomart's encounter with him within a re-reading of the *Metamorphoses* where the mortals appear to welcome the gods' sexual attentions.[57] As Cora Fox has observed, Spenser's narrator becomes increasingly lost in his descriptions of Busirane's art and more distant from his heroine Britomart's perspective, thereby becoming complicit in Busirane's schemes (73). Spenser's narrator, swallowed up by Busirane's book, emphasizes the perils of reading uncritically whereas Britomart, the more cautious reader, takes control of her reading experience.[58] Britomart is characterized throughout her encounter with Busirane's house as a reader of the allegory around her (Wofford 12) and remains resistant to the messages it attempts to impart and incorporate into her assemblage. Rather, Britomart enters the text by joining the masque of lovers and is thereby able to bypass the last of Busirane's defenses. Busirane himself is comparatively

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separated from their husbands. For detailed readings of the parallels between Britomart and Amoret, see Thomas P. Roche, Jr., "The Challenge to Chastity: Britomart at the House of Busyrane"; Mary Adelaide Grellner, "Britomart's Quest for Maturity"; Harry Berger, Jr. "Busirane and the War Between The Sexes: An Interpretation of *The Faerie Queene* III.xi-xii"; and Joanne Craig, "'As If But One Soule in Them All Did Dwell': Busyrane, Scudamour, and Radigund."

[57] This is particularly vividly depicted in the tapestry's representation of Jupiter's rape of Leda (III.xi.32): as Judith Anderson has observed, the stanza is ambiguously phrased to offer the possibility that Leda welcomes Jupiter's sexual attentions as she smiles at Jupiter's pride ("Busirane's Place" 136). Throughout the seductions and rapes, there is the suggestion of reciprocation on the part of the mortal, a reciprocation that Busirane hopes to impress upon his own captive. For more, see Anderson, "Busirane's Place: The House of Rhetoric" and Katherine Eggert, "Spenser's Ravishment: Rape and Rapture in *The Faerie Queene*."

[58] Britomart throughout *The Faerie Queene* demonstrates an increasing ability and proficiency in reading her surroundings. As Caroline McManus observes, Britomart's transformation from timid princess into a lady knight is a self-consciously literary decision based in "texts she has read or heard, rather than observed firsthand" (136). Britomart's adoption of her alternate persona models the imaginative act of reading, taking on an explicitly literary role (McManus 143). As the poem progresses, Britomart becomes increasingly more adept at recognizing social cues and adapting herself to meet them (Stump 105).

easily defeated, but his spells do not disappear until the book is read in reverse, healing Amoret's wound but also destroying the rest of the house. The book's bloody ink having been reincorporated into Amoret's body, the narrative space it created evaporates, leaving behind an empty house. While the book lasts, however, it locks characters into its narrative, surrounding them in a lascivious retelling of already erotic stories so that everything is filtered through Busirane's desires. Amoret is forced to choose between becoming the smiling, sexually open Leda of the tapestry or remaining a perpetually bleeding *blazon* figure, her heart exposed and her body incorporated into Busirane's book in the form of bloody letters. Britomart's capacity to resist Busirane's mediation represents the culmination of an entire poetic book of (mis)adventures based around reading the situations around her, a learning process that leaves her equipped to engage with Busirane's narrative as a critical reader.

Amoret and Britomart's encounter with Busirane's book presents a conflict between territorializing and deterritorializing forces. Busirane's approach to seducing Amoret is a forcible expansion of her assemblage where he immerses her in lascivious depictions of erotic love. Spenser allegorically depicts reading as an all-encompassing, physical experience by having Amoret — and later Britomart — be transported into the space of Busirane's book. The book and its message cannot be escaped so long as it is being read, with the implication that just as virtues might be imbibed by the reader, so too might vices.[59] The longer Amoret continues to read, the more firmly Busirane's book becomes part of her assemblage. Britomart's rejection of Busirane's love poetry

[59] As Rebecca Bushnell observes, any belief that books can change people for the good implicitly assumes that they can also be changed for the worse (118).

deterritorializes it from Amoret's assemblage, excising it and once again giving Amoret the freedom to choose. This is achieved by not merely ceasing to read the book but to actually un-reading and thereby destroying the book, a feat only possible within the bounds of an allegory. Amoret's body, broken open by Busirane's writing process, is sealed up again "as it had not been sor'd, / And euery part to safety full sownd, / As she were neuer hurt, was soon restor'd" (III.xiii.38.5-7). The return from the reading experience thus constitutes both a deterritorialization and rejection of the offensive material introduced into her assemblage by Busirane as well as a territorialization and reaffirmation of her original boundaries: now free of Busirane's book, Amoret is free to again resume her former life as a chaste wife, joining with her husband in a perfect embrace.[60]

Conclusion

Running throughout these different forms of book use are questions of territorialization: where are the borders between different assemblages and what forces are holding them together? At first glance, such questions may seem counter to assemblage theory's general rejection of clear distinctions between components of an assemblage and preference for a blurring of boundaries. I suggest that to think about territorialization is to think about the degree of permanence that any given configuration

[60] In the 1596 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Spenser rejects the ease with which Amoret's former assemblage can be restored in the 1590 edition. His changes to the end of Book III leave Amoret marked by her experience, remembering the injuries done to her by Busirane (IV.iv.5). By marking Amoret as fearful in the wake of her escape, Spenser stages the extent to which the solution to Busirane's book is a fantasy: what has been read cannot be simply read in reverse to purge it from one's memory. Amoret's behavior remains marked by Busirane's book.

for an assemblage may possess: what is the ontological inertia, as it were, of a particular assemblage? In thinking about identities as highly malleable, assemblage theory joins a host of other constructivist disciplines; granted the possibility of change through physical objects or actions, assemblage theory gives us a way to consider not only where such identities may come from but also how they are preserved and maintained on a daily basis. Renaissance treatments of identity and books both lend themselves well to assemblage theory, but only with the modification that identity is difficult to wholly overwrite once an element has been incorporated into its assemblage. Palimpsest-like, evidence of former components to an identity's assemblage remains visible even after their removal. In this respect, book structure and usage mirror the ways in which culture interacts with the individual: a book that has been fully used retains traces of that use afterwards, with marginalia permanently altering and rendering a text unique.

In curating their identities through the choice of books to retain, display, or conceal, human subjects may strive to work against texts and ideas that they have metabolized, presenting themselves in a particular light and doing their best to control the shifts in their assemblage caused by their interaction with texts. In moving to a more public environment, book owners can take control of how they are perceived, albeit never fully; their self-curating is always dependent on the components they have on hand: if they want to push their identity assemblage beyond those components, then they must present and incorporate new objects into their assemblage. Whereas the books a human subject has read may manifest their influence through his or her actions, the books that he or she curates into his or her assemblage are physically as well as intellectually present.

The books in question may be physically placed on display to signal a particular self or they may serve to constantly reinforce ideas that the human subject had metabolized and incorporated into his or her assemblage. Through their physical presence, books signal a self to observers but also remind the human subject they are attached to of that self: to carry a Bible around, for instance, does not merely signal piety, but is a constant reminder to its carrier of the piety that he or she ostensibly possesses.

For authors, the book carries away an alternate variant of themselves, becoming an assemblage in its own right that may only tangentially be linked back to its creator but is nevertheless imagined by those who encounter it to be identical with him or her. The act of authorial assemblage is the most public of all the forms of book usage I touch upon in this dissertation since it explicitly puts the author's ideas up for sale, but in being so very public it gives the author a chance to determine how they are seen without actually having to be seen. This accords a great deal of agency to the author and anticipates the rise of the author in subsequent centuries as a figure independent of the network of patronage. While the author never attains full control over his or her assemblage, which is susceptible to change at the hands of printers, scribes and readers, he or she nevertheless has a great deal of influence over it.[61] The author could take steps to shape their authorial assemblage both textually and physically through cooperation with the printer: the book as an artifact could visually allude to other texts and in the process associate the author with the authors of those texts.

[61] Printers and scribes might inadvertently alter the text or deliberately intervene to make improvements. Renaissance readers often modified their books and reconfigured them to suit their own desires as they sought a place for them within their own personal assemblage.

AUTHORSHIP IN THE MARGINS

A standing trope since at least Ovid's *Tristia* (*c*. 9-17) is the author addressing his or her book and bidding it to go out into the world and seek support for its author. While such set pieces are often conventional rather than sincere, they also represent an earnest reflection on the degree to which an author's fate can be bound up in his or her writing. A text, once completed, acts independently of its author's wishes even as it is seen to be representative of that author's person. As John Milton observes in *Areopagitica* (1644), the book is the child of the author's soul (720): like a child, the book might easily prove a source of pride or shame for its parent. Stakes were high: where a successful book might win patronage and comparative wealth for its author, a less successful book could cause its author to be arrested or worse.[62] In the absence of any firsthand knowledge about the author, the public's impression of the author would be based on the book, which acted autonomously from the author even as it was assumed to be representative of him or her. From the author's perspective, book production entailed the production of a partially autonomous assemblage of paper, ink, ideas, and views, one that served as an alternate version of the author's own self and might become incorporated with another person's assemblage as well. As the printing press was only profitable if many copies were produced, printed books were by necessity widely distributed rather than remaining linked to pre-existing social circles and thus were often the only actual point of contact

[62] Perhaps the most spectacular Renaissance example of an author being punished for his book is John Stubbe, author of *The Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf* (1579), a pamphlet arguing against the Alençon marriage. Stubbe, his publisher Hugh Singleton, and William Page, a member of Parliament who had attempted to distribute the pamphlet, were all arrested and Queen Elizabeth initially called for them to be hanged. They were eventually sentenced to have their right hands cut off and were subsequently imprisoned. Singleton was pardoned on account of his advanced age (Mears).

between author and reader. Successful authorial assemblage required the careful territorialization of positive attributes so that the books that spoke for authors would speak properly and without offense.

During the Renaissance, the author's ability to take control of his or her assemblage was always limited by the necessarily collaborative act of distributing the text or texts that did the work of actually assembling the identity in question. In manuscript, as Arthur Marotti has noted, the categories of author, scribe, and reader all overlap (135): the occasional nature of Renaissance text, building as it often did on commonplaces, meant that when poetry circulated in manuscript, it was often changed both inadvertently and deliberately by its collectors. Misattributions were common with poems being associated with the author into whose assemblage they fit best: John Donne has the dubious distinction of having more poetry misattributed to him than any other contemporary poet, particularly poetry that shared similar themes and often appeared alongside his own even when correctly attributed (Crowley 135). In print, texts were more stable once the typesetting process was complete but subject to change while the book remained in production.[63] Though the process was flawed and errors frequent, ultimately the printing press was designed for the production and distribution of a single specific text in bulk. The resulting book admitted to less variation than manuscript copies but even assuming that it was typeset precisely as the author first wrote it, it would still be unique from other versions of the text through what since Gérard Genette has

[63] Compositors reshaped manuscript text to better accommodate the exigencies of their job and alterations sometimes happened in the midst of the printing as a printer noticed an error, but their stated task was to preserve the text as they were given it. For more, see Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing, 1683–4* and chapter 1 of this dissertation.

been called the "paratext," namely the various elements, textual and otherwise, that surround and frame the text for the reader. In addition to preparing the book for readers' use, paratexts additionally serve to territorialize the boundaries of the book, uniting the multiplicity of stylistic elements within it into a single whole as a physical object. In this chapter, I examine the way two authors in particular, Edmund Spenser and Isabella Whitney, engage with paratexts in an attempt to build a particular identity for themselves. Just as paratexts within their books serve as a means to unite different textual elements, so do Spenser and Whitney's books operate to incorporate them into particular social networks. The books serve as a way to edit their authors' public personas and additionally to position their readers in a positive relationship with their authors: both producer and consumer of text are linked through the physical artifact.

Paratexts straddle the boundary between text and physical object. On the one hand, they are generally textual, the seemingly innocuous elements of a book that frame the main text, including titles, tables of contents, names, imprints, dedications, footnotes, font, and layout. At the same time, however, they are necessary and unique elements of the book as a physical object. As Genette points out, "the paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public" (1). No text can be transmitted without paratexts to accompany it, since any act of writing entails decisions about how the text will be structured visually. Without their paratexts, texts remain an abstract thought and are only given physical form as books through the paratexts. Additionally, paratexts perform an economic function by making books visible to particular customers, allowing books to effectively commodify

themselves in ways that other goods rarely do (Saenger 3): during the Renaissance in particular, books advertised themselves with busy, decorated title pages that drew the potential customer's eye towards them. The printer's ability to produce books was directly tied to his ability to sell them: the production of a single book could get expensive very quickly, even after the costs of establishing a print shop had been overcome.[64] Moreover, before books could be sold on the marketplace, demand for them had to be generated: whereas before the printing press, books were made either because they had been commissioned or for spiritual reasons, printers had to first create a demand for their goods if they wanted to sell enough of them to recoup their losses (Carlson 131). Particularly in the early days of printing, when books had to be assembled by hand, one letter at a time, and each copy of the book had to be put together by a binder who would likely never have seen the text before, paratexts were essential if books were ever to take shape. Printers used running titles and type ornaments to ensure that pages were all of uniform size, setting up a skeleton forme to frame their texts; binders relied on signatures and catchwords to help them put books together in the correct order (Smith and Wilson 3-4).

Even as texts could not be assembled physically into books without paratexts, the reader could not open a book without being greeted by them, often literally, in the form of a title page, introduction, dedication, or prefatory address to the reader. Paratexts acted as a way to usher him or her in and out of the book, advising him or her on how to

[64] For a step-by-step account of how much money printers had to spend to produce an edition, see for instance Peter Blayney's "The Publication of Playbooks."

read texts as well as establishing when they are finished.[65] Within the text itself, paratexts helped orient a reader to the part of the book they were currently in as well as helping to structure their reading through glosses and forms of reading advice. The reader might additionally contribute paratexts of his or her own, annotating the text which would affect other readers' approaches to this copy of the book. Renaissance paratexts might therefore arise from a variety of sources: the reader, the printer, the typesetter, and the author. Even fresh off the press, the printed book was the product of many hands rather than merely a few, with the printer's needs often in the forefront. Consequently, the bibliographer Fredson Bowers famously placed the chief focus on the printer's intentions, arguing that the goal of any bibliographical description must be to describe what he termed an "ideal copy," namely "a book which is complete in all its leaves as it ultimately left the printer's shop in perfect condition and in the complete state that he considered to represent the final and most perfect state of the book" (113). The author is non-existent in Bowers' definition; the admittedly fictitious "ideal copy" represents the printer's ambitions rather than the author's in recognition of how the author's desires often have little bearing on the book that is eventually sold.

Practically speaking, however, the author was the one under scrutiny when a book was read. In the Renaissance, while publishers could also be held responsible for their output, as the initial sentencing of John Stubbe's publisher indicated, the book was

[65] William Sherman has observed that although the study of paratexts is often confined to the beginning of books, during the first century of printing, much of the material now associated with "front matter" occurred at the end of the book rather than at its start ("The beginning of 'The End'" 65-66). The need to mark the end of a book stemmed from manuscript practices where separate texts might share not merely the same covers but also the same page; like many aspects of manuscript culture, this was carried over into print.

chiefly imagined as speaking for the author rather than the printer, that is to say, the book was not the printer's child but the author's. Authors' addresses to the readers were often structured around modesty *topoi*, explaining how the work in question had been sent to the printer's prematurely or without the author's consent.[66] Such defensive posturing represents a recognition of how authors' textual identities were only partially under their control: the physical book mediates readers' access to the author in a Latourian sense, filtering the information offered up about the author. By collaborating with the printer to produce appropriate paratexts, authors worked to control that mediation to present themselves to their best advantage. As much as the narrative voice of any particular text, the way that texts were packaged helped structure how the author was perceived.

In the chapter, I examine two authors who were most self-conscious in their manipulations of the paratextual aspects of their printed books: Edmund Spenser and Isabella Whitney. Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) is framed within a paratext that parallels a humanist edition of a classical text: the commentator E.K. provides introductions and glosses throughout the *Calender*, guiding the reader's experience of the text and (more importantly) of Spenser as a debuting author. The *Calender*, like Spenser's later *Faerie Queene*, works to establish Spenser within a courtly network, both in the hopes of securing patronage and in order to build a lasting sense among the cultural elite that Spenser is a poet worth watching and reading. Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay* (1573) attempts to establish Whitney as a professional poet for a public

[66] Such conventions were one of several printing practices that led to J.W. Saunders's famous outlining of "the stigma of print." See also Wendy Wall, "Disclosures in Print: The 'Violent Enlargement' of the Renaissance Voyeuristic Text."

unused to female authors without damaging perceptions of her feminity. Made up of diverse elements ranging from aphorisms to a mock-will, Whitney's miscellany collection heavily features a set of verse epistles, which act in concert with the collection's dedication and address to the reader, blurring the line between paratext and regular text in order to help Whitney take control of her identity assemblage and establish a charming and suitably demure identity for herself, one that was necessary if she wished to continue publishing her works. Taken together, Spenser and Whitney present two divergent ways that the use of physical books — and particularly the paratextual elements therein — opened opportunities as well as risks for the establishment of an authorial persona.

Edmund Spenser: Assembling the Learned Author

Edmund Spenser's experimentation with authorial voices within *The Shepheardes Calender* (1579) fragments the sense of textual unity even as the paratexts reinforces the figure of Spenser as an author. The twelve poetic voices within the *Calender* — eleven poet-shepherds and a framing poet-figure calling himself Immeritô — are juxtaposed with a glossator called E.K. who provides an introductory epistle for the poems as well as providing alternately helpful and obfuscating glosses throughout the cycle, drawing attention in the process to the artificiality of many of the conventions Spenser uses throughout the *Calender*. E.K.'s glosses are visually and physically different from the other texts within the *Calender*; the editorial apparatus, nominally a paratext, serves to territorialize the disparate voices into a larger assemblage, highlighting the skill of the

poet who developed and controlled all these voices. In the process, he situates *The Shepheardes Calender* — and, by extension, Spenser himself — within a network of humanist patronage and reiterating Spenser's self-proclaimed importance as an up-and-coming English poet. Three voices in particular draw attention to themselves within the *Calender* in order to stage this textual fragmentation: Immeritô, the shepherd Colin Clout, and the aforementioned glossator E.K. Immeritô sets up a baseline for the identity assemblage Spenser is at pains to generate throughout the text: suitably submissive and aware of his own limitations even as he winks at the conventions he deploys.[67] Colin Clout, identified within the text as a figure "under whose person the Authour selfe is shadowed" ("Epistle," 18), provides an alternative perspective on Spenser's situation as a poet in search of patronage and attempting to negotiate his position within that relationship, thematizing the potential for failure that Spenser as a poet faced at the start of his career.[68] Finally, E.K.'s often misleading commentary serves to further situate the *Calender* within the network of patronage and the court, reinforcing the poems' artificiality as a way of emphasizing their quality. In examining these three components of Spenser's authorial assemblage in particular, I argue that the printed book as structured by Spenser and his publisher builds an assemblage that gestures back to Spenser the

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[67] As Sherri Geller points out in "You Can't Tell a Book by Its Contents: (Mis)Interpretation in/of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*," even as the identity of E.K. is invariably the focal point of intense controversy, "Immerito is always simply Spenser" (24). Geller usefully suggests that we consider the figures of Immeritô and E.K. as both fictional and deliberately playing off one another in order to confuse the issue.

[68] In an attempt to minimize confusion, I will cite my quotations from the *Calender* as follows:

1. Quotations from the poems are marked "ll.", e.g., (To His Booke," ll. 1-2)
2. Quotations from E.K.'s opening "Epistle" are cited by page number, e.g., ("Epistle," 13)
3. Quotations from one of E.K.'s glosses are marked with E.K.'s line numbers in square brackets and the eclogue title, e.g. ("Januarye" [1]).

author while at the same time making it impossible to locate him within the text itself. No character in the *Calender* is Spenser alone: they make up Spenser only in aggregate and by being territorialized through E.K.

Spenser opens the *Calender* with a variant of the "Go forth, little book" tradition, doubling as both dedication to Philip Sidney and a modesty *topos*. "To His Booke" repeatedly reiterates the poet's modesty, beginning with a frank self-appraisal: "Goe, little booke: thy selfe present, / As child whose parent is unkent" (ll. 1-2). Spenser was at this point in his career genuinely "unkent" as a poet — he had anonymously published a few translated poems in Jan van der Noot's *A Theatre for Worldlings* (1569) but little else — and additionally is unknown within the context of the *Calender* as well, which does not contain his own name except perhaps in code. As Wendy Wall observes in *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance*, the book is characterized in this opening poem as a bastard, its author promising only in conclusion to 'name' himself and thus rescue his poem from bastardy after the text has been well received—when it is 'past jeopardee'" (236). The book is instructed to remain humble and seek protection from its patron, a sense of submissiveness enhanced by the poem's signature "Immeritô," a name offering no identifying mark for the author beyond his humility. Immeritô's instructions to his book, however, carry an additional charge:

> But if that any aske thy name,
> Say thou wert base begot with blame:
> For thy thereof thou takest shame.
> And when thou art past jeopardee,
> Come tell me, what was sayd of mee:
> And I will send more after thee. ("To His Booke," ll. 13-18)

Strikingly, rather than reminding people of his existence or trying to gain favor for its author, the book is instead instructed to act almost as a spy, checking to see what people think of him. The book is suddenly conflated with its author: Immeritô wishes to know what is thought of him rather than of his book. At the same time, Immeritô's promise to send more books after the first suggests a confidence that his modest name would appear to belie (Knight 122): he may be cautious enough to conceal his identity in case the *Calender* fails to impress, but he fully expects to produce and publish more poetry.

"To His Booke" is mirrored at the end of *The Shepheardes Calender* by an epilogue, where Immeritô expresses similar confidence in his work. Here, he proudly asserts that "Loe I have made a Calender for every yeare, / That steele in strength, and time in durance shall outweare" (ll. 1-2). Having asserted the staying power of his art, Immeritô then reverts to his earlier modest demeanor: he repeats his earlier instruction to the *Calender* to go out into the world, this time asking it not to attempt to match the great poets of the past.

> Goe, lyttle Calender, thou hast a free passporte,
> Goe but a lowly gate emongste the meaner sorte.
> Dare not to match thy pype with Tityrus his style,
> Nor with the Pilgrim that the Ploughman playd a whyle:
> But followe them farre off, and their high steppes adore,
> The better please, the worse despise, I aske nomore. ("Epilogue," ll. 7-12)

Immeritô closes his "Epilogue" with the same self-effacement with which he opened "To His Booke." Taken together as a framing narrative for *The Shepheardes Calender* as a whole, Immeritô's poems begin and end the *Calender* with declarations of modesty even as they declare their confidence in the quality of Spenser's work: "To His Booke" opens with modesty and shifts into pride whereas "Epilogue" opens with pride and then shifts

back into a modest request that the *Calender* not try to imitate great poets of the past but simply attempt to please.[69]

Given the regular citations of Chaucer as an exemplary poet within the *Calender*, it seems likely that Spenser is drawing on Book V of *Troilus and Criseyde*, where Chaucer briefly digresses from the conclusion of his narrative in order to ask his book to go out into the world and stresses that it should be modest and avoid provoking hostility. Anthony M. Esolen and Glenn A. Steinberg in particular have commented on how Spenser appears to base Immeritô's ironic humility on Chaucer (G. Steinberg 50).[70] Immeritô's request of the *Calender* that it "Dare not to match thy pype with Tityrus his style" is knowingly disingenuous, given his regular imitations of Chaucer's rustic style throughout the *Calender*. At the same time, Immeritô's regular addresses to his book allows him to use it to characterize himself even as he distances himself from it: it is the *Calender* that must take care to avoid comparisons with Chaucer and Langland, not

[69] The poets that Immeritô names specifically are notably English rather than classical or continental: Tityrus, typically a name for Virgil, is appropriated for Chaucer early on in the *Calender*'s editorial glosses ("Epistle," 13) while the Pilgrim-Ploughman is likely William Langland. Alison A. Chapman has suggested that the *Calender* deliberately emphasizes English literature as a source of inspiration alongside or even in place of the classics. Stephen K. Galbraith similarly suggests that the *Calender*'s typesetting in blackletter may have been a deliberate nationalistic choice, as blackletter, sometimes also simply called "English" type, was the typeface that the majority of English readers could read. For more on the identification of Langland in the "Epilogue," see Judith H. Anderson's entry on "Langland, William" in *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. For more on nationalistic elements within the design of *The Shepheardes Calender*, see Chapman, "The Politics of Time in Edmund Spenser's English Calendar" and Galbraith, "'English' Black-Letter Type and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*."

[70] For more on Spenser's debt to Chaucer, see Anthony M. Esolen, "The Disingenuous Poet Laureate: Spenser's Adoption of Chaucer"; Glenn A. Steinberg, "Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and the Elizabethan Reception of Chaucer"; and William Kuskin, "'The Loadstarre of the English Language': Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and the Construction of Modernity."

Immeritô, let alone Spenser himself. The *Calender* is charged with taking care, always at risk of being disavowed by its creator, should its reception not prove to his liking.[71]

Within the eclogues, Immeritô fractures into several voices. Editorial comments from E.K. inform the reader that the speaker of the first eclogue, Colin Clout, is particularly representative of the author himself. Colin appears in four of the twelve eclogues and is mentioned or quoted in three more, emphasizing his central position in the *Calender*.[72] His name serves as an explicit reference to John Skelton's poetry, reinforcing Immeritô's praise for English poetry in the "Epilogue."[73] Colin's juxtaposition with Immeritô as a gloomy poet offers an alternative career trajectory for Spenser as Immeritô, one that leads inexorably downwards rather than to the triumph of patronage. Through Colin, Spenser can safely articulate a threat of him ceasing his writing with the suggestion that it lies within the reach of a patron at court to make him continue his textual production.

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[71] S.K. Heninger, Jr., has argued that one of the reasons why Spenser's own name appears nowhere within *The Shepheardes Calender* may have been a defensive measure (49). Reasoning that the *Calender* was published four months after John Stubbs' disastrous *The Gaping Gulf* (1579) by Stubbs' printer Hugh Singleton and was dedicated to a prominent member of the Leicester faction, Heninger argues that it could have been easily seen to comment on the failed Alençon match and that much could have potentially gone awry. For more on potential links to *The Gaping Gulf*, whether intentional or not, see S.K. Heninger, Jr., "The Typographical Layout of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*" and Geller, "You Can't Tell a Book by Its Contents: (Mis)Interpretation in/of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*."

[72] Colin appears as a speaking character in "Januarye," "June," "November," and "December" and is discussed in "Aprill," "August," and "October." By contrast, the other three most common characters — Hobbinoll, Cuddie, and Thenot — appear in only three eclogues each, with Hobbinoll being mentioned in a fourth. By any measure, then, Colin appears to be the protagonist of the *Calender* as a whole even without E.K.'s endorsement of him as representative of the author.

[73] E.K. asserts as much in his first gloss on Colin, observing that Colin Clout "is a name not greatly used, and yet have I sene a Poesie of M. Skeltons under that title" ("Januarye" [1]). Theodore L. Steinberg argues that this assessment is yet another instance of E.K. misinterpreting what he reads (48), a reading that seems problematic given Spenser and Skelton's shared ambitions for an English poetry. For more on Skelton and *The Shepheardes Calender*, see Paul E. McLane, "Skelton's *Colyn Cloute* and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*"; Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender*; and Kreg Segall, "Skeltonic Anxiety and Rumination in *The Shepheardes Calender*."

Generally speaking, Colin appears to be the opposite of Immeritô, frustrated by repeated failure rather than confidently anticipating future success (Montrose, "Colin Clout" 264). Where Immeritô proudly announces that he has established his calendar to outlast time itself, Colin's first and last appearances in the *Calender* are both marked by demonstratively abandoning his poetry, declaring "So broke his oaten pype, and downe dyd lye" ("Januarye," ll. 72) and "Here will I hang my pype upon this tree, / Was never pype of reede did better sounde" ("December," ll. 141-142). Where Immeritô is evidently tied into a network of friends including the garrulous E.K., Colin spends much of his time alone. The juxtaposition between the two is further emphasized in their names: as Kreg Segall notes, "Immeritô" is a name that signifies absence whereas "Clout" implies a physical object (32). In spite of the seeming opposition between the two of them, however, they are linked in the sense that the Immeritô figure is also the author and creator of Colin, who serves as an alter ego for Immeritô. Immeritô cautiously instructs his book that, if "Asked, who thee forth did bring / A shepheards swaine saye did thee sing, / All as his straying flocke he fedde" ("To His Booke," ll. 7-9). Within the narrative developed by Immeritô and subsequently reinforced by the textual apparatus, Immeritô becomes Colin at the start of *The Shepheardes Calender*. Like Immeritô, the name Colin is evidently chosen out of modesty, as "also appeareth by the basenesse of the name, wherein it semeth, he chose rather to unfold great matter of argument covertly, then professing it, not suffice thereto accordingly" ("Epistle," 18). In playing the modesty *topos* to the hilt in both identities, Spenser works to reinforce the sense of himself as suitably humble. At the same time, however, Spenser emphasizes the distinction between

the two characters, territorializing the *Calender* into distinct sections. Immeritô and Colin may both be authorial voices, but each stands separately from the other. The text is broken up into discrete pieces both thematically — Immeritô does not appear within the eclogues — as well as narratively.

Colin is characterized throughout the *Calender* as generally unhappy, an unhappiness emphasized by his consistent association with the plaintive mode named in the *Calender*'s "Generall Argument" (23): Colin appears in all four plaintive eclogues. His emblems grow steadily gloomier, beginning with the at least partially optimistic "*Anchôra speme*" (Still [there is] hope) in "Januarye," shifting to "*Gia speme spenta*" (Hope utterly extinguished) in "June," and then growing worryingly suicidal with "*La mort ny mord*" (Death does not bite) in "November." Colin's final emblem in "December" is wholly missing, whether deliberately or due to a printer's error, an absence that chillingly suggests that Colin has actually killed himself. Colin enacts what Petrarchan love-poetry purports to describe, a self-destroying passion (T. Steinberg 53-54). In this respect, as in others, he moves away from being a character within a clear narrative and instead serves as a representation of how "how the poet-lover can and should act" (Mallette 28). Colin, more so even than Immeritô, appears an embodiment of literary convention, an abstract figure held up to present a fictional element up for display.

As an author-figure, Colin highlights one of the difficulties for any non-aristocratic poet: finding a patron. His explanation for why he intends to give up poetry hinges not on a want of inspiration but on his poetry's inability to move a specific person:

> Wherefore my pype, albee rude *Pan* thou please,
> Yet for thou pleases not, where most I would:

> And thou, unlucky Muse, that wontst to ease
> My musing mynd, yet canst not, when thou should:
> Both pype and muse, shall sore the while abye. ("Januarye," ll. 67-71)

As the other shepherds throughout the *Calender* repeatedly stress, Colin's poetry is superlative: the older shepherd Hobbinnoll repeatedly emphasizes his enjoyment of Colin's music, both to Colin directly ("June," ll. 49-51) and to other shepherds ("Aprill," l. 14). Cuddie's performance of a song by Colin causes Perigot to exclaim "O *Colin, Colin*, the shepheards joye, / How I admire ech turning of thy verse" ("August," ll. 190-92) and in "November" Thenot repeatedly presses Colin to sing and finally offers to pay him for the privilege of listening to him ("November," ll. 42-48). Colin has the good opinion of other poets, but this is not sufficient for him: he seeks the praise of Rosalind and as he cannot gain it, he sees little point in continuing. As Lin Kelsey and Richard Peterson have observed, the *Calender* is framed by the abandonment of poetry as embodied in Colin's pipes. In this respect, Colin acts not as a pastoral lover but as a poet in search of patronage: "Spenser's better-read contemporaries would have known, however, that while the pastoral lover may shred a wreath or two, nowhere does he break his pipe. This gesture—or more precisely the threat of this gesture—traditionally belongs not to the lover but to the poet threatened with neglect or loss of patronage" (Kelsey and Peterson 237). The paratexts' repeated insistence that Colin represents the author compounds the link between lover and poet: if Colin cannot win over his beloved Rosalind, what hope does the poet have of securing patronage?

Colin, in addition to his representation of the Petrarchan lover, adds in the frustration inherent in a poet attempting to break through in a genre associated with new poets (Montrose, "The perfecte paterne" 36). Even as Spenser begins his poetic career in

earnest through the *Calender*, Colin remains unable to move Rosalind and instead loses her to another shepherd, Menalcas, who "by trecheree / Didst underfong my lasse, to wexe so light" ("June," ll. 102-3). The glosses to the passage by E.K. indicate that Menalcas's name, like Colin, is a reference to a literary work (in this case, Virgil) but that the character of Menalcas is actually "a person unknowne and secrete, agaynst whome he often bitterly invayeth" ("June" [102]). E.K.'s vague use of the pronoun "he" leaves it unclear whether we are supposed to understand whether it is Colin as a fictional persona who inveighs against Menalcas or whether it is the poet Immeritô who complains about him. We are given no indication that Menalcas is himself a poet like Colin, merely that he convinced Colin's lady to turn away from him. Spenser repeatedly sought court favor both for monetary gain and to authorize his writing by association with an aristocrat. Association with a patron, even if the patron did not actually provide financial support, could serve to invoke their *ethos* (Richardson 93). As Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker observe, the *Calender* carries not its author's name but its patron's (6), announcing itself on the title page as "Entitled to the noble and virtvous Gentleman most worthy of all titles both of learning and cheualrie M. Philip Sidney." Spenser's hope would be that Sidney would make that declaration of allegiance factual, but until he did so, the book would at least benefit from being associated with him.

Helen Smith has suggested that we must avoid thinking of patronage as a tightly structured system, noting that "the fragmentary and occasional nature of gifts and dedications, alongside a recognition of the broader networks and structures which framed these relationships, suggests that patronage is better described as a network of

associations" (54). Even as Spenser's book represents an attempt by Spenser to situate himself within one of those networks, Colin's gloom over his inability to establish a stable connection between himself and Rosalind dramatizes the possibility of his career never taking off. The support of a coterie of fellow poets like the other shepherds does not appear to be sufficient to maintain Colin's spirits. By insistently marking Colin as representative of the author of the *Calender* as a whole both within the text proper and through the paratexts, Spenser reinforces his own dependence upon his potential patron. At the same time, he can present a chorus of voices praising his own work, whether through the other shepherd-figures' praise of Colin or by having his commentator E.K. assert the high merit of the *Calender* more generally. The different voices thereby combine to assert Spenser's subservience even as they urge his skill as a poet.

Taken on their own, neither Immeritô nor Colin Clout is clearly distinct from Spenser, though they are both distinct from one another: Immeritô is a recognizable, cheerfully highlighted convention of poetry and Colin is a statement of the difficulty of writing without patronage. Colin and Immeritô cannot be taken on their own, however, because of the constant intrusion into the text of E.K., a quirky and often pedantic commentator who prepares an introductory epistle for *The Shepheardes Calender* as a whole as well as providing an argument and lengthy glosses for each of the *Calender*'s twelve eclogues. As Thomas Cain observes in his introduction to the *Calender*, E.K.'s glosses often "raise unhelpful assistance to a new power": he provides definitions for both common words as well as difficult ones; his explications of poems often flatten ambiguity that the poems themselves struggle to produce; his explanations of classical

sources are often tangential and inaccurate (Cain 6). Much scholarly effort has been spent trying to identify E.K. as a historical person; the three main candidates that have been advanced over the years for E.K. are the Cambridge scholar Edward Kirke, Gabriel Harvey, and Edmund Spenser himself. If there is any consensus about E.K., it is that we must include E.K. in our understanding of the *Calender* as a whole and that if Spenser did not write or contribute to E.K.'s glosses, then he certainly appears to welcomed them into the assemblage of his book (Malpezzi 181). I therefore treat E.K. as a Spenserian persona in the sense that Spenser's book is structured by and around E.K. in juxtaposition with Immeritô and Colin Clout. If E.K.'s glosses were an addition by someone else, then they represent an addition that Spenser was willing to incorporate into his *Calender* in the full knowledge that it would change the book's reception.[74] E.K.'s glosses forcibly remind us of the existence of Spenser as an author, outlining the boundaries of the *Calender* to bind all of the other voices within the book into a single aggregate. His paratexts are visual distinct from the rest of the book and serve as a reminder that the *Calender* is a physical object as much as it is a literary compilation.

E.K. tells us comparatively little about himself beyond his friendship with Immeritô, whom he praises lavishly and expresses confidence that he will soon be well-

[74] Given the degree to which E.K. shapes the experience of reading *The Shepheardes Calender*, it seems likely that E.K. is at least partially an alias on Spenser's part. Objections to Spenser as E.K. often hinge on a reluctance to accuse Spenser of the self-aggrandizement that E.K.'s effusive praise would entail (Shore 231) or that Spenser would have been more cautious in seeking patronage (Heninger 49-50), but as Agnes Kuersteiner dryly observes, "Spenser knew how to write with enthusiasm about his poetry" (146). For more on attempts to identify E.K.'s identity, see Agnes D. Kuersteiner, "E. K. is Spenser"; Theodore L. Steinberg, "E.K.'s *Shepheardes Calendar* and Spenser's"; Heninger, "The Typographical Layout of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*"; Louis Waldman, "Spenser's Pseudonym 'E. K.' and Humanist Self-Naming"; Frances M. Malpezzi, "E.K., A Spenserian Lesson in Reading"; Geller, "You Can't Tell a Book by Its Contents: (Mis)Interpretation in/of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*"; Penny McCarthy, "E.K. Was Only The Postman"; and D. Allen Caroll, "The Meaning of 'E.K.'"

known and respected for his work ("Epistle," 13). He explains his own involvement in the project as stemming from a desire to draw attention to the writer's craft:

> … yet for somuch as I knew many excellent and proper devises both in wordes and matter would passe in the speedy course of reading, either as unknowen, or as not marked, and that in this kind, as in other we might be equal to the learned of other nations, I thought good to take the paines upon me, the rather for that by meanes of some familiar acquaintaunce I was made privie to his counsell and secret meaning in them, as also in sundry other works of his. ("Epistle," 19)

As Evelyn Tribble has observed, E.K. here states that he intends to disrupt the reading process, slowing rather than aiding the reader on his or her way through the text (73). E.K. justifies his slowing of the reader's progress both by asserting that it will heighten the *Calender*'s didactic effect — by learning to recognize the different elements that make up the *Calender*, English readers will learn to read other texts more deeply as well — and by claiming to be an authority on Immeritô's intent. This authority is quickly undermined, however: scattered throughout the glosses are passages where E.K. openly expresses theories rather than certainties or is forced to admit ignorance, as for instance in "November," where he notes that "the person of the shephearde and of Dido is unknowen and closely buried in the Authors conceipt. But out of doubt I am, that it is not Rosalind, as some imagin: for he speaketh soone after of her also" ("November" [38]).[75] E.K.'s difficulty in identifying Dido encourages the reader to search for hidden meanings even as it highlights one of E.K.'s weakest points, namely his assumption that there is a single correct answer to any interpretive question about the poem.

[75] For other passages where E.K.'s glosses express either ignorance or uncertainty, see also "Februarie" [92], "Aprill" [26], "August" [53], "September" [180-255], "October" [1], and "October" [47].

On the printed page, E.K.'s glosses are visibly distinct from the eclogues on which they comment, both in terms of being printed in discrete sections and in being in a different font. Where the eclogues are set in English blackletter, the glosses are set in roman type. Roman type was typically used to print Latin or French texts and consequently indicated a higher form of literacy (Galbraith 21). In choosing this typeface, Spenser's book signals the more advanced nature of the text here compared to the blackletter eclogues.[76] While nearly half of E.K.'s 501 glosses serve to define or clarify words, the remainder serve to model humanist critical approaches to the text. E.K. pinpoints rhetorical and literary conventions, commenting throughout on the figures of speech deployed. In "Januarye," for instance, he observes that there is "a prety Epanorthosis in these last verses, and withall a Paronomasia or playing with the word" ("Januarye" [61]).[77] He is also never hesitant to identify — and sometimes launch into a lengthy retelling of — classical antecedents, supplying quotations and etymologies where he feels they are needed.[78] Additionally, E.K. regularly comments on passages in the text,

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[76] As Louis Montrose, S.K. Heninger, Jr., and Steven K. Galbraith have observed, the layout of the *Shepheardes Calender* closely parallels the 1571 edition of Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*. When the *Calender* deviates from Sannazaro's *Arcadia* is the typesetting of the eclogues: Sannazaro's publisher uses roman font where Spenser's publisher Hugh Singleton used blackletter. Galbraith suggests that this deviation was motivated by nationalism, as Singleton certainly had plenty of roman type on hand (24-27). See Louis Adrian Montrose, "'The perfecte paterne of a Poete': The Poetics of Courtship in *The Shepheardes Calender*"; Heninger, "The Typographical Layout of Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*"; and Galbraith, "'English' Black-Letter Type and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*."

[77] For other glosses where E.K. pauses to identify a literary or rhetorical convention, see "Januarye" [1], [59], [60]; "Februarie" [63], [150], [176], [215]; "March" [33], [79], [116]; "Aprill" [65], [73], [104], [118], [120], [155]; "Maye" [61], [182], [61], [182], [189], [304], [305]; "June" [90]; "Julye" [1], [51]; "October" [14], [43], [78], [96]; "November" [30], [55], [73]; "December" [135]. In all, thirty-three of E.K.'s 501 glosses deal explicitly with rhetorical and literary tropes.

[78] See "Januarye" [1], [57]; "Februarie" [4], [25], [33], [35], [92], [102], [149], [215], [226]; "March" [[0]], [16], [17], [23], [40], [54], [79], [97]; "April" [26], [42], [46], [50], [69], [100], [104], [109], [122], [124], [82], [86-7]; "Maye" [57], [69], [92], [111], [142], [160], [174], [205]; "June" [1], [25], [43], [57], [68], [102]; "Julye" [12], [28], [33], [47], [59], [64], [73], [77-78], [85-86], [127], [143], [146], [147], [154],

either to provide a moment of literary explication or simply to comment on the quality of the text.[79] E.K.'s glosses draw the reader's attention to how he or she might possibly engage with the text at hand. The reader who is both able and willing to engage with the roman-type sections of the *Calender* is offered a sort of cheat sheet to double-check identifications.

At the same time, however, Spenser appears to be counting on readers' ability to recognize E.K.'s faults as a reader. E.K. is often quite amusing, whether because of his persistence in defining the word "belt" ("Februarie" [66] and "Julye" [177]) or his asides about the quality of the work, but his comically self-satisfied claims that he has successfully unlocked the meaning of the text are mainly possible because he oversimplifies the eclogues and tries to impose a single meaning on each. As Sherri Geller observes, E.K.'s paratextual intervention "decenters the eclogues, emphasizes the interpretive enterprise, and compels the reader to misinterpret or be confused by textual appearances" (25). E.K.'s analysis of the *Calender* serves as both an exhortation to interpretation and a reminder of how misleading the interpretive act can be. At the same

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[163], [179], [213]; "August" [19], [27], [89], [131], [138], [138]; "September" [10], [54], [76], [83], [151], [153], [162], [171], [204]; "October" [[0]], [21], [28], [32], [55], [65], [93], [100], [105], [111], [113], [114], [118]; "November" [13], [53], [55], [141], [145], [148], [164], [179], [186], [195]; "December" [4], [11], [40], [60], [87], [88].

[79] E.K. expresses his pleasure at particular moments in the *Calender* at "Januarye" 61; "Februarie" 42, 87, 238; "March" 97, "Aprill" 73; "October" 14, 87; "November" 73, 83, 153, 178; and "December" 25, 57, 58, 59, 73, 84, 84, 86, 127, 133, 151. Somewhat more surprisingly, E.K. also complains about two moments in "October", stating that he feels an instance of extended alliteration "to be more a fault then a figure, aswel in our English tongue, as it hath bene alwayes in the Latine, called Cacozelon" ("October" [96]) and later complains that the poet "seemeth here to be ravished with a Poetical furie. For (if one rightly mark) the numbers rise so ful, and the verse groweth so big, that it seemeth he hath forgot the meanenesse of shepheards state and stile" ("October" [110]). E.K.'s complaints serve to reinforce the distinction between Immeritô and E.K. and to reduce the suspicion aroused by his compliments that E.K. is solely an alternate mouthpiece for the poet.

time, as Michael McCanles aptly puts it, "It is part of the fiction of *The Shepheardes Calender* that E.K.'s glosses and commentary are not part of the fiction" (5). In explicating the *Calender* and itemizing its rhetorical machinery, E.K. seemingly strips away the effort that Spenser put into concealing his art, only to add an additional layer of art on top of it. E.K.'s glosses serve to poke gentle fun at the same humanist context that they emerge out of, parodying heavily glossed humanist editions. In the process, E.K. is situated within a context of humanist word games. Humanists often used coded or Latin pseudonyms (Waldman 21), a convention which some scholars have used to argue that the letters E.K. are an encoded form of Spenser's own name: E.K. may stand for "Edmundus Kalendarius" (Kuersteiner 148), "Edmundus Kedemon" (Waldman 25), and "Ec" as a visual pun on "Ed" (Caroll 172). Common throughout such interpretations, whether E.K. is Spenser or one of Spenser's friends, is a sense of play: Waldman points out that developing anagram versions of courtiers' names and puzzling over the identities of aliases was a fashionable game at court (27). Concealing the identity of E.K. beyond a few vague hints may have served to delight precisely the people from whom Spenser sought patronage.

Inherent in this sense of play is the sense that the reader is part of a circle of friends who can participate in the joke. The addition of E.K. to the other voices within the *Calender* draws attention to the textual quality of the book and teases the reader with access to a literary circle only to withhold that access by refusing to locate textual authority in any central space (Tribble 74-77). As Wendy Wall observes, the *Calender* imitates the humanist annotations of a classical text in part so that when it is published,

"it enters the public domain as if already engaged in a dialogue. It is formally packaged with the trappings of conversation" (238). E.K.'s regular references to his friendship with the author and commentary on specific passages stages a similar engagement with the text that a collector of a manuscript miscellany might have, in turn suggesting that the reader of the *Calender* has access to a comparable level of intimacy. The readers are encouraged consider themselves part of the ensuing text, chuckling at E.K.'s errors and invited by them to engage with the text. Taken alongside Colin's laments and Immeritô's cheeky humility, E.K. offers a sense that the text has been compiled for the benefit of other readers and of Spenser the author as a multi-layered, worthy candidate for patronage.

The Shepheardes Calender is designed to be taken as an aggregate of these voices. Colin in particular seems a very standard Petrarchan voice, taking on interest only through his juxtaposition with Immeritô and through E.K.'s constant asides about his poetry. E.K., arguably the most engaging voice within the *Calender*, is marginalized by his role as commentator: he cannot exist without having text to annotate. At the same time, however, Spenser works to break down the distinction between text and paratext: E.K. is inextricably tied into any reading of the *Calender* with the amusing side effect that, as Theodore Steinberg has observed, "Most critics have tended to agree that E.K. is often wrong in what he says, but of course they accept his statements when he agrees with their own ideas" (46). E.K. occupies a liminal position within and outside the text: on the one hand, his glosses represent an often faulty commentary on the text, but on the other, he is also part of the fiction that Spenser is generating of an editor intervening into

a literary text. Further, E.K. and the physical configuration of his paratexts serve to reinforce and counteract the multivocal quality inherent in the book as a whole: even as the textual structure of the *Calender* groups sections of the work into discrete units and territorializes individual eclogues as semi-autonomous assemblages, the physical structure of the book pulls all of them together into a single structure. E.K.'s glosses are not marginalia but are instead grouped into their own sections following each of the eclogues. The visual contrast between paratexts and poetry serves to reiterate the essential similarity between the different eclogues in spite of the differences between their narrative voices. The unity of E.K.'s commentary serves as a reminder of the book as a collective whole produced by a single author; his repeated assertions that there is one person responsible for the text territorializes the individual narrative voices into a whole made up of smaller, quasi-independent assemblages. Rather than being reduced to Immeritô, Colin, or some other voice, the *Calender*'s author is characterized as being himself multi-faceted and capable of generating a complex poetic structure.

Isabella Whitney: Assembling the Female Author

On some level, Spenser was already part of the network of patronage that he sought: he was friends with Gabriel Harvey, who in turn was associated with Sidney and other members of the Leicester faction at court. Each of the eclogues in *The Shepheardes Calender* has its own custom-made woodcuts that match its narrative closely. Woodcuts, however, were expensive and often reused from other books, so to find a book with custom woodcuts is surprising, particularly since neither Spenser's publisher nor Spenser

appears to have had the financial resources necessary to commission the work. As Steven Galbraith suggests, it seems likely that Spenser had a patron — perhaps Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester — who footed the bill for the customized art (30). Not all poets were so fortunate. In the second half of this chapter, I examine the poetry of Isabella Whitney, who like Spenser deploys a tangible authorial persona within her writing. Where Spenser uses Immeritô and E.K. to frame his poetry and build both a case for (continued) patronage and favor at court, Isabella Whitney produces a character named IS.W. who serves to authorize her writing by presenting her as suitably demure. Like E.K., IS.W. serves to undermine the clear demarcation between text and paratext, producing a fictional authorial assemblage that can act on her behalf but always maintaining plausible deniability of the character being identical with herself as the living author.

IS.W. is necessary to preserve a properly gendered identity for Whitney. Whitney is significant historically speaking since she is a first, namely the first woman author to publish secular poetry in England. As such, she moved into a traditionally masculine domain: as Margaret Ferguson succinctly puts it, printing was the diametrical opposite of the silence enjoined upon women (145). A woman whose works were printed might be said to have stayed at home physically, but she could hardly be imagined as remaining there, having deliberately engaged in public discourse. If publicly circulating writing could be seen as unchaste, then actually offering it for sale might easily be associated

with prostitution.[80] Some women avoided such stigma by printing their works either posthumously (Jones 36) or in the form of last wills and testaments written by women in childbirth (Wall, "Female Legacy" 38); still others restricted themselves to pious genres or acted as translators rather than creators in their own right (Ferguson 149). Whitney, on the other hand, wrote and published poems about eminently secular subjects: faithless lovers, financial difficulties, a desire for a stable economic status, and so forth.[81] Working with the printer Richard Jones — best known today for printing Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great* in 1590 but at that time comparatively new to the business (Felker xiv) — Whitney published two short poetry collections, *The Copy of a Letter* (1566) and *A Sweet Nosegay* (1573).[82] In them, she performs a delicate balancing act where she must continually work to avoid being judged immodest even as she hopes to entice readers with her style so she can make a profit. In order to justify herself as an author, Whitney must ensure that her book not only excludes undesirable qualities but also moves to place her within a particular relationship with her audience, situating her as part of a larger social assemblage even as it cultivates a particular spin on her personal identity.

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[80] For more, see Wendy Wall, "Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy," Kim Walker, *Women Writers of the English Renaissance*, and Laurie Ellinghausen, "Literary Property and the Single Woman in Isabella Whitney's *A Sweet Nosgay*."

[81] Whitney frequently laments the faithlessness of both a nameless lover and the city of London, which she is forced to leave in spite of her wishes, an experience that she equates with death. See in particular Paul A. Marquis, "Oppositional Ideologies of Gender in Isabella Whitney's *Copy of a Letter*"; Marilyn Sandidge, "Urban Space as Social Conscience in Isabella Whitney's 'Wyll and Testament'"; and Wendy Wall, "Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy."

[82] For more on Richard Jones as an editor of Marlowe's work, see Kirk Melnikoff, "Jones's Pen and Marlowe's Socks: Richard Jones, Print Culture, and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature."

The interplay of paratextual elements and text proper permeates *A Sweet Nosegay*.[83] The book is structured around four distinct sections, each of which presents its own structural characteristics. First, the front matter consists of a dedication to George Mainwaring, a Cheshire gentleman; a letter to the reader; and a poem written in commendation of the author by a T.B. This is followed by the second section, "A sweet Nosgay, Or Pleasant Posye: containing a hundred and ten Phylosophicall Flowers, &c.", which presents a series of short poetic maxims for the moral edification of the reader and concludes with a poetic farewell to the reader.[84] The third section is a collection of thirteen verse letters titled "Certain familier Epistles and friendly Letters by the Auctor: with Replies," many of them either discussing hardship or dispensing advice. Finally, the book closes with Whitney's most famous poem, the "Wyll and Testament," in which she announces that she must leave London due to financial troubles and bequeaths London to itself. When Whitney suddenly transitions from poetic life advice into a series of verse epistles, she breaks down the boundary between literary text and the life of the poet outside her capacity as an author. In the absence of a tradition of either epistolary fiction or printed personal letters, Whitney's active fictionalization of herself and her friends and family offers her a chance to generate a new self, one that hinges on internalizing extraneous writing into the text itself.[85] The entire book effectively becomes a request for

[83] *A Sweet Nosegay* survives today in a single copy, a partially damaged octavo of eighty pages, currently held in the British Library. For a full bibliographic description of Whitney's works, see Michael David Felker, *The Poems of Isabella Whitney: A Critical Edition*.

[84] I refer to this part of the book as "A Sweet Nosegay" and the book as a whole as *A Sweet Nosegay*.

[85] I see all of the epistles in *A Sweet Nosegay* as written by Whitney herself rather than being a transcript of actual correspondence. In line with this, I treat them as having been written with a poetic miscellany in mind. While it is possible that Whitney adapted letters previously written as part of a correspondence, as

financial patronage, one that the reader can provide by buying a copy for him- or herself and thus ensuring a future audience for Whitney's poetry.

Whitney's self-fictionalization is particularly difficult for modern scholars since we know very little about Whitney, biographically speaking. This is hardly surprising, given that the lower one is on the socio-economic scale, the less likely one is to have one's life documented. She is now widely accepted to be the sister of Geoffrey Whitney, himself a poet and the author of an emblem-book, *A Choice of Emblems and other Devises* (1586). If so, then she was originally from Coole Pilate in Cheshire but presumably was in London between 1566 and 1573 since she evidently met Jones and printed her poetry there. Given Elizabethan laws requiring single women to be incorporated into a household, she may well have been a maidservant there, as her poetry suggests (Lawrence 38-39). There is no mention of her in Geoffrey's 1600 will except possibly as a "Sister Eldershae," who receives a sizable portion of the estate and may therefore have been the oldest of Geoffrey's sisters, as Whitney is assumed to be (Fehrenbach 11). Averill Lukic suggests that Whitney married a Cheshire doctor, mentioned in Geoffrey's *Emblems* (403), though alternately it is also possible that she was dead or estranged from Geoffrey by then.[86] Beyond these tenuous points, we have little upon which to base an image on Whitney except her poetry, which conjures an image of Whitney as an impoverished maidservant working in London who finds herself

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Felker suggests (ci), we can better examine how Whitney used them to assemble a particular persona for herself as an author by seeing them as existing as part of a larger poetic project rather than a collection of pre-existing texts.

[86] For more on the possible connection between Isabella and Sister Eldershae, see Robert Fehrenbach, "Isabella Whitney, Sir Hugh Plat, Geoffrey Whitney, and 'Sister Eldershae'"; Michael David Felker, "The Poems of Isabella Whitney: A Critical Edition"; and Averill Lukic, "Geffrey and Isabella Whitney."

on uncertain economic footing and unable to secure permanent employment.[87] The line between Isabella Whitney, the historical author, and IS.W., the poetic persona, is blurred by the recurring use of the initials IS.W. throughout *A Sweet Nosegay*, appearing, as they do, on the title page and as a closing signature for most of the poems within the collection. In the interests of clarity, throughout the rest of this chapter I use "Whitney" to refer to Isabella Whitney as the historical person, about whom comparatively little can be known with surety, and "IS.W." to refer to the persona assembled by and for her poetic collection, a persona that might be historically factual but that we cannot confirm to be so. IS.W., assembled out of different narrative elements within the text, stands in for her creator Whitney, who is shielded from closer scrutiny by her poetic alter-ego.

The IS.W. persona is omnipresent in *A Sweet Nosegay*. While the title page of *A Sweet Nosegay* has been lost, we can safely assume that it would have resembled the title page of Whitney's other publication with Richard Jones, which announces proudly to the potential purchaser that this book contains "The Copy of a letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge Gentilwoman: to her unconstant Louer. With an Admonition to al yong Gentilwomen, and to all other Mayds in general to beware of mennes flattery. By Is.W." The extended title serves a threefold purpose: first, it gives the buyer a sense of genre and subject matter; second, it offers assurance that the poems in question are moral; and finally, it establishes a potential distinction between Is. W. the author and the speaker of

[87] Patricia Phillippy has situated Whitney's writing within the context of migrant female workers, who, as women outside the traditional household, were suspected of prostitution even as they were exposed to the sexual predations of their masters and fellow servants. For more on Whitney's poetry in the context of migrant female workers, see Patricia Phillippy, "The Maid's Lawful Liberty: Service, the Household, and 'Mother B' in Isabella Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay*"; Laurie Ellinghausen, "Literary Property and the Single Woman in Isabella Whitney's *A Sweet Nosgay*"; and Dana Eatman Lawrence, "Class, Authority, and the *Querelle des Femmes*: A Women's Community of Resistence in Early Modern Europe."

the poem. The letter is first attributed to a young gentlewoman but is then further described as being by Is. W., suggesting that the young gentlewoman may herself be a fiction "By Is. W." In the body of the book, Is. W. signs both the letter and the second text alluded to in the title, the admonition by the author, with a careful "¶ FINIS. Is. W." A similar signature appears in a few variations throughout *A Sweet Nosegay:* IS.W.'s signature appears thirteen times in all, namely after the dedication (sig. [A5]r), after the address to the reader (sig. [A8]v), after the titular nosegay (sig. [C6]r), after nine of ten epistles written by the character, and after the mock-will (sig. [E8]v). The signature at the end of the "Wyll" simultaneously is a signature at the end of the book, so that IS.W. can claim authorship of the entire book. IS.W. thus serves as abbreviation, pen name, and character within the narrative developed by the epistles, anticipating the epistolary fiction that would develop in later decades and assembling a fictional persona for Whitney the author.

Whitney takes steps early on in the *Nosegay* to head off any perception of her writing as provocative, following dedicatory letter with a suitably demure poem "The Auctor to the Reader." IS.W. is developed throughout the poem as a suitably modest woman in spite of her apparent presumption in publishing her poetry. IS.W. explains that during a bout of illness, she

> Had leasure good, (though learning lackt)
> some study to apply:
> To reade such Bookes, wherby I thought
> my selfe to edyfye.
> Somtime the Scriptures I perusd,
> but wantyng a Deuine:
> For to resolue mee in such doubts,
> As past this head of mine

To vnderstand: I layd them by, (ll. 5-12).[88]

In figuring IS.W. as a woman who recognizes her limitations and, rather than risking falling into error by thinking too deeply about theological matters beyond her understanding, stops reading the Scriptures altogether, Whitney lays the groundwork for a decorous author-figure. This recognition of her own limitations reappears later when IS.W. explains that although her nosegay may prevent psychological infection, it cannot cure an already diseased mind: "yf thy mind infected be, / then these wyll not preuayle: / Sir *Medicus* with stronger Carbes, / thy maliadye must quayle" (ll. 117-20). IS.W. repeats her self-conscious deferral to the explicitly male physician recurs later in the poem, asserting that "My Nosegay wyll increase no payne, / though sicknes none it cure" (ll. 167-68). In so doing, IS.W. expresses modesty not about her ability to write poetry but about the ability of her poetry to shape the characters of those who read it, claiming for her book only a preventative ability rather than an active, masculine capacity to reinvent the reader, thus keeping herself — and, by extension, Isabella Whitney — carefully sheltered from accusations of ambition.

After laying aside the Scriptures because of her own ignorance, IS.W. moves on to histories and classical authors, rejecting them because they remind her of the eternal nature of man's folly (ll. 20-24). She eventually finds solace in the writings of Hugh Plat, figured as a garden full of flowers, but even here Whitney is careful to defer responsibility, attributing her discovery of Plat's work to luck rather than personal endeavor:

[88] All line numbers are based on Felker's edition of Whitney's poems.

good Fortune was my guyde.
And though she euer hath denyde,
to hoyce me on her Wheele:
Yet now she stood me in some steede,
And made me pleasures feele
For she to *Plat* his Plot mee brought," (ll. 52-57).

In figuring herself as the accidental discoverer and re-arranger of pre-existing material (itself a translation of Seneca), IS.W. provides an escape route for Whitney the author: as Boyd Berry has observed, she could effectively hide behind Plat if her poetry should provoke offense (14). The metaphor of flower-gathering, useful as it furnishes the material for the title of the work as "A Sweet Nosegay," becomes doubly effective since, as Laurie Ellinghausen has observed, IS.W.'s characterization as gathering flowers presents her as industrious ("Literary Property" 6). As one of IS.W.'s repeated themes is a recurring complaint about her unemployment, presenting her as hard-working early on is necessary to avoid suspicions that her loss of position was perhaps justified. The image of the hard-working IS.W. in "The Auctor to the Reader" is later reinforced by the third epistle, directed to "two of her yonger Sisters seruinge in London," which consists chiefly of a numbered list of advice on how to be good maids.

Running in tandem with the work done in "The Auctor to the Reader" to ensure that IS.W. is not accused of forgetting her place are the epistles. While epistolary writing as an art form had been revitalized by humanists following Petrarch and Erasmus and there was a proliferation of Latin and vernacular letter-writing manuals in the sixteenth century, actual correspondences remained comparatively private.[89] Manuscript letters

[89] With the rise of humanism, epistolary writing underwent a renaissance of its own, drawing in particular on the works of Cicero. Medieval models were revitalized by an influx of newly printed Latin works, most famously through the writing of Erasmus. Latin-language and vernacular letter manuals were widespread,

had been circulated among a coterie of friends and were sometimes distributed to further political ends, but such distribution remained limited. Although sample letters were commonly included in writing manuals and the letters of continental writers like Aretino were published early in the sixteenth century (Guillén 92), in England, printed epistles came about slower. When letters were printed in England during the sixteenth century, they were typically religious or political propaganda, either as published sermons or as letters of news that reported what was occurring elsewhere (Schneider 187-211). Vernacular letter collections by private individuals did not regularly appear in print in England until the second half of the seventeenth century (Schneider 233).[90] As Wendy Wall observes, Whitney's *"Nosgay* counters the anxieties of print publication by presenting a book that replicates private textual circulation. By including letters sent between family members and friends and by referring to the text's place in a gift/patronage cycle, Whitney sets up the exchange system within the work" ("Female Legacy" 47).[91] IS.W.'s epistles invite the reader into her coterie, serving the dual purpose of shielding her from critique and of assembling a persona for herself as in need of their protection. As Laurie Ellinghausen has suggested, IS.W.'s letters make her seem less as

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although the degree to which such manuals were actually followed is a point of some debate. (See for instance Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters*; James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*; and Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*.) In England, vernacular letter manuals begin to appear in the mid-sixteenth century, starting with William Fulwood's *The Enemy of Idleness* (1568) and followed by others, most notably Angel Day's *The English Secretary* (1586), which was reprinted repeatedly until 1635 (Daybell 64-65).

[90] Eventually, in the early seventeenth century, the genre of the "found packet of letters" arose, where the author pretended to have discovered a set of letters without knowing the correspondents. The letter became available as a framework for satire and semi-fictional writing, as in the case of Nicholas Breton's *A Post With a Mad Packet of Letters* (1602) (Daybell 67).

[91] For a detailed reading of Whitney in the context of gift-exchange, see Jane Donawerth, "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange."

a member of any existing coterie but rather as being isolated, forced to communicate at a distance through letters rather than conversation ("Literary Property" 8). The reader necessarily becomes part of a coterie assembled by Whitney's poetry and thus implicitly takes her under his or her protection.

In addition to their broad role to allay suspicions about IS.W. by incorporating people into their coterie, the epistles also serve to offer a voyeuristic glimpse into her mind. Central to the conceit of the printed letter as both a propagandistic and a literary form is an assumption that "letters *necessarily* constitute a clear window on one's mind and intentions" (Schneider 211): the letter's description of events is imagined to be a wholly private thing, its writer unaware of the numerous people who are able to read his text after its publication. In this way, while letters were rarely wholly private, they were typically *perceived* as such, so that even if the actual acts of writing and sometimes reading the letters was actually deferred to personal secretaries, they were ostensibly to be seen only by the correspondents.[92] The voyeur becomes the confidante, part of the inner circle of friends in which a manuscript letter might have circulated.[93] Similarly, many letters, printed or otherwise, dispense with names after the initial salutation,

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[92] As Jonathon Goldberg observes in *Writing Matter*, secretaries were often seen as indistinguishable from their employers (265). In epistolary matters, secretary and employer form a collective assemblage, so that correspondence coming from one was treated as coming from the other as well; all that was necessary to make the letter come from the employer personally rather than merely from his desk, as it were, was his own signature at the end. While Erasmus advocated writing one's own letters for maximum privacy (Goldberg, *Writing Matter* 277-78), in practice it was common to write with a secretary and letters were rarely wholly private (Daybell 74). In outlining the requirements and services incumbent on the secretary, Angel Day explains that the word "secretary" derives from "*conseruator secret sibi commissi*, a keeper or confessor of the secret vnto him committed" (Day, sig. Nn1v-Nn2r), an etymology that, unlike many Renaissance etymologies, is still credited today.

[93] As Wall has observed, printers and authors often concealed the addressees of dedicatory letters by using initials or aliases, encouraging their readers to play word-games to attempt to work out the identity of the dedicatees ("Disclosures in Print" 50).

particularly if author and addressee are of an equivalent social rank. With such a scarcity of information about who the intended reader is supposed to be, it becomes easy for the reader of a published set of letters to imagine him- or herself as the intended recipient. IS.W.'s laments over her bad luck and poverty, which might have appeared purely conventional within a dedicatory epistle, take on a new dimension within her epistles because they seem out of place textually. What ordinarily might have appeared on the fringes as a paratext is moved into the center of the book and, as the border between text and paratext is blurred, the persona of IS.W. becomes tangible, developing into a full character rather than a temporary convention.

Within the thirteen epistles, two of the epistles in particular work to reinforce the demure, diligent image of IS.W. generated by "The Auctor to the Reader," namely the third and fourth epistles. The third epistle, "An order prescribed, by IS.W. to two of her yonger Sisters seruinge in London," consists of pious advice grouped into six numbered stanzas, which IS.W. introduces with the words

> Good Sisters mine, when I
> shal further from you dwell:
> Peruse these lines, obserue the rules
> which in the same I tell.
> So shal you wealth posses,
> and quietnesse of mynde:
> And al your friends to se the same,
> a treble ioy shall fynde. (ll. 1-8).

The rules in question are largely advice on how her sisters may best fit into traditionally subservient roles: they are to be quiet not merely mentally but also physically, avoiding gossip and excessive laughter (ll. 45-50), advice that is summed up with the phrase, "Be modest in a meane, / be gentyll vnto all" (ll. 53-54). The voyeuristic reader of her

correspondence is encouraged by the letter form to take what she says at surface level, adding a veneer of sincerity to her sisterly exhortations to virtue. IS.W.'s assertion that "Hencefoorth my lyfe as wel as Pen / shall your examples frame" (ll. 75-76) acts to suggest that her writing is not transgressive but remains within the bounds she assigns for her sisters: if anything needs to be brought into line with these suggestions, it is her behavior rather than her writing. As Jones has noted, IS.W.'s fourth epistle, "To her Sister Misteris A.B," works similarly, with IS.W.'s complaint at being unmarried "reassuring her readers that they are in the safe hands of a woman writer loyal to the bourgeois ideal of dedication to the household—although she foresees that role for herself, conveniently, only in the future" (39). IS.W.'s lament that she remains unmarried, particularly as framed in ostensible correspondence with her sister, encourages the reader to view her as a woman who has been forced into a liminal position between all the socially acceptable ones, someone to be pitied but not condemned.

IS.W.'s self-presentation as someone who would prefer to be married and thus be incorporated into traditional gender hierarchies additionally appears in her repeated inquiries about the marital state of others. The fifth epistle, "To her Cosen. F.W." anxiously inquires after F.W.'s health and adds that

> sore I long, to here if yet
> you are to wedlock tyde
> Yf so you be, God graunt that well
> both you and she it spend:
> If not when s'ere it haps, I wish
> that God much ioy you send. (ll. 3-8).

The letter acts to establish both IS.W.'s isolation — she has knowledge of neither F.W.'s health nor his marital state — and stresses IS.W.'s commitment to conventional marriage

with stated hopes for a happy union as well as suggesting that matrimony is inevitable. Similarly, the eleventh epistle, "To my Friend Master T.L. whose good nature: I see abusde" urges T.L. to "go chuse some vertues wife" (l. 14), with the suggestion that once he has a wife, the people who currently exploit him will stop doing so: "whylst you are in single state / none hath that right regard" (ll. 17-18). IS.W. here cleverly turns the tables on those who might critique her as a single woman by suggesting that the unmarried state is as inappropriate for men as it is for women, granting others a license to abuse them. Where women's virtue is unprotected, men are robbed of their wealth, an appropriate comparison given the etymology of "rape" from the Latin *rapere*, or to seize. In presenting IS.W. as having such views, Whitney the author assembles an impression of herself as subscribing to similar values, acting as a protection against critique for her publication.

The epistles are opened and closed by correspondence between IS.W. and G.W., the apparent head of IS.W.'s family. IS.W.'s first letter, "To her Brother, G.W.," sets the tone for the rest of the epistles: IS.W. complains that G.W. is often away from the city on business and thus she has no news of him. IS.W.'s isolation becomes a recurring concern throughout the epistles, particularly given that she has lost the protection of her former employment, as she notes towards the end of the poem: "The losse I had of seruice hers, / I languish for it styll" (ll. 31-32). IS.W. acts to remind G.W. that in her misfortune, "to friends I must appeale / (and next our Parentes deare,) / You are, and must be chiefest staffe / That I shal stay on heare" (ll. 13-16). Her request is not directly for monetary assistance but that G.W. "graunt / me when y^{t} you ar here: / To se you oft" (ll. 17-19).

On the surface, the letter asks instead for a reaffirmation of the bonds of family and community, an end to the isolation that could be so dangerous to a single woman in Renaissance society. Here, however, IS.W. is duplicitous, for the letter closes with the gift of "a simple token heare: / A smell of such a Nosegay as / I do for present beare" (ll. 26-28). The entire book of *A Sweet Nosegay* becomes entailed in the gift, which turns this letter to G.W. into not merely a plea for aid but a request for patronage. The line between literary text and paratext becomes blurred. Where does IS.W. end and Whitney begin? Is the book dedicated to Mainwaring or to G.W(hitney).?

G.W. does not respond until the twelfth epistle, "An other Letter sent to IS.W by one: to whom shee had written her infortunate state." He explains although he may wish to help her, he cannot, citing financial lack: "And to discharge the dutie that, belongeth to a frend, / whose welth, I wold to God wer such, as might your case amend / But luck preuenting euery meane, that might your harms redresse / Denieth power to me that do, a frendly mind possesse" (ll. 15-19). He does his best to comfort her with an assurance that things will eventually get better, dispensing platitudes that are reminiscent of IS.W.'s own attempts to comfort T.B. in the eighth epistle and of the entire structure of *A Sweet Nosegay* itself, which IS.W. noted in "The Auctor to the Reader" is not a cure for disease but chiefly a preventative measure. The maxims presented throughout *A Sweet Nosegay* cannot remedy a despair-inducing situation though they can perhaps allow their reader to weather that storm. Ironically, the same advice that IS.W. dispenses elsewhere in the miscellany has no apparent effect upon her state of mind: her final letter, which closes the epistle section of the miscellany, is a bare 15 lines long, counting the signature, making it

the shortest of all the epistles. It bears the bleak title, "IS.W. beyng wery of writyng, sendeth this for Answere" and after stating that she will place her trust in God, IS.W. announces

> now I wyll my writing cleane foresake
> till of my griefs, my stomack I discharg:
> and tyll I row, in Ladie Fortunes barge.
> Good Cosin write not nor any more replye,
> But geue mee leaue, more quietnes to trye. (ll. 10-14).

IS.W.'s statement that she will cease writing until she has better luck seems like a renunciation of all writing altogether, particularly given her regular assertions of how dire her situation is. The poem is followed immediately by Whitney's most famous poem, the "Wyll and Testament," which concludes *A Sweet Nosegay* by having IS.W. say farewell to London. The juxtaposition of "IS.W. beyng wery of writyng" with a text that so explicitly asserts the end of IS.W.'s time — whether in London or on earth — assembles IS.W. into more than a convenient speaker but into a living person.

In deploying a genre like the mock-will — i.e., a genre that deals, however fictively, with endings — Whitney turns her miscellany collection into a narrative around the character of IS.W. The reader watches IS.W.'s forays into poetry in the "Nosegay" even as they are voyeuristically privy to IS.W.'s pleas for help to her friends and family in the epistles. IS.W.'s renunciation of further writing in the final epistle and staged death in her mock-will bring the character's narrative to a close, at least, within the confines of the *Sweet Nosegay*. In fictionalizing herself through the character of IS.W., Whitney assembles an authorial persona who, much like Whitney herself, must take care to justify her writing to the audience by presenting herself as demure and properly submissive to authority. As the poetic miscellany continues, however, Whitney deploys

an epistolary fiction to not merely open renewed opportunities for IS.W. to emphasize her propriety, but also to blur the line between paratext and text itself. The verse epistles invite the reader to think of IS.W. as a friend whom they wish to protect; her requests for assistance from her family and friends become requests for assistance to the reader as well. This works in part because of the novelty of the form: vernacular private correspondence, real and fictional, would not be published with regularity in England for several years. Whitney's reader is thus catapulted into an unexpected genre, one that is recognizably fictional but difficult to reconcile with the rest of Whitney's book. IS.W. emerges out of the book as an engaging friend, one who might perhaps be able in future to publish further and be welcomed by her audience-coterie.

Conclusion

At first glance, the chief similarity between *The Shepheardes Calender* and *A Sweet Nosegay* is their replication of a manuscript miscellany through the use of multiple voices in the paratexts. The *Calender* uses E.K.'s glosses both to gently mock humanist annotation conventions and to draw the reader into a conversation about the text with the figure of E.K., whose pompous attempts to clarify the text may serve to amuse the reader even as they comically model the kinds of conversations that might take place about Spenser's poetry. The *Nosegay*'s epistles replicate a kind of writing most commonly found in miscellanies rather than published poetry collections, thereby drawing the reader onto the side of the author by positioning him or her as Whitney's friend rather than Whitney's customer. Further, by directly placing multiple voices within the text — and in Spenser's case, marking the different voices with different typefaces — both Whitney

and Spenser draw attention to the gap between the author as a living person and the author as a textual assemblage. E.K.'s insistence that Colin should be taken as shadowing the author and Whitney's use of her own initials for her repeated signatures within the text draw the reader's attention towards a singular author-figure, only for the other voices within the text to fracture the sense that any specific character within the narrative can be taken as representative of Spenser or Whitney. At the same time, Immeritô, Colin, E.K., IS.W., T.B., C.B., and G.W. replicate a circle of friends within which the text exists, one that the reader is invited to join on the author's side.

Both Spenser and Whitney were attempting to establish a dedicated audience, but both were operating in different positions. Spenser was already partially embedded in a literary network of scholars, political factions, and potential patrons through his university affiliation and relationship with Gabriel Harvey. The evident care that went into the publication of the *Calender*, both in terms of the typographical mirroring of a specific Italian book belonging to a potential patron and the customized woodcuts, is possible precisely because of his nascent membership within his desired audience. Consequently, his paratextual identity works to reinforce and expand his position within his textual network: E.K.'s overly detailed glosses constantly remind the reader of the breadth of Spenser's education and the quantity of the textual sources he is able to incorporate and reference throughout the *Calender*. By contrast, Whitney stood outside any comparable network. As an early secular woman poet, Whitney had to struggle not merely to be likeable, but also to remain suitably feminine in her writing. Her attempts to enter the economic network through the publication of a poetic miscellany required a

different engagement with the audience than Spenser's comically exaggerated modesty and self-deprecation: where E.K. can deliberately over-display his learning and praise Spenser to the skies, IS.W. must instead be deferential and excuse Whitney's writing as stemming from her current lack of a husband. In order to gain access to their desired social network, Spenser and Whitney must aggressively cultivate a proper identity assemblage, making an effort to include those components that will be beneficial — classical knowledge, engagement in the proper social circles, awareness of one's place — even as they block dangerous ones, particularly any readily apparent desire to rise beyond their class and gender. Producing this authorial persona entails a double territorialization: first to maintain the borders of one's own assemblage against undesirable qualities and second to include oneself within the larger social assemblage made up by the readers.

As a poet seeking to launch his career both by reinforcing already existing connections and by seeking out new patronage connections, Spenser's *Calender* serves to advertise confidence and humility simultaneously. Both of Immeritô's poems emphasize humility, whether in terms of being consciously unknown or by aspiring only to please his social betters, even as they assert Immeritô's ability to produce further poetry. The inclusion of E.K. serves to bind Immeritô, Colin, and the other shepherds into a single text and additionally recreates the annotated poetry books that young men at court were reading: they are invited to think of themselves as patrons of this developing talent and to welcome him into their social circle. As a woman poet trying to carve out a space for herself and her work, Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay* must establish her as feminine but not excessively so: in publishing her work on secular themes, Whitney enters a masculine

space and must assert her right to speak there even as she must beware of appearing too transgressive. To accomplish this, she imitates the kind of texts where a woman might speak without being judged: household advice, moral recommendations, and letters. These genres reinforce her feminity and allow her to lament her status as a single woman even as they also offer her a chance to invert traditionally male-dominated genres such as complaints about unfaithful lovers. They additionally let her determine her relationship with her readers: letters in particular would have circulated chiefly among friends and family. By providing both halves of a correspondence, Whitney's book lures her readers into viewing her as part of their immediate circle of friends. The *Nosegay* offers Whitney not as a scholar seeking employment but as a social dependent who must be protected; rather than suggesting that she should be brought to the court, the book develops Whitney as a friend who is owed some consideration. In the process, both Spenser and Whitney effectively invite themselves into the reader's circle of friends, a transition that will hopefully result in patronage either in a direct, personal way or indirectly through the marketplace.

Materially, both the *Calender* and the *Nosegay* visibly reenact the compilation inherent within the circulation of texts during the Renaissance. At first glance, Whitney's *Nosegay* appears to have been typeset in a very haphazard fashion, particularly the epistles. Each epistle is typeset in one of five fonts with little discernible pattern beyond no two consecutive epistles being set in the same font.[94] This radical difference between

[94] The five fonts used are English black letter, Pica black letter, small Pica italic, long Primer italic, and small Pica black letter. Generally each epistle uses only one font, although the final two epistles both change fonts after the first page break. For more on the different fonts used in the *Nosegay*, see Felker, pp. lvii-lxi.

the different epistles' typefaces reinforces a sense of difference between them, that they have been compiled from numerous physical documents into a single collection, much the way a manuscript miscellany would have been. Similarly, E.K.'s glosses are typographically distinct from the rest of the book and, as Jeffrey Todd Knight has observed, E.K. is set up as an "arch-compiler who maps the work, as a found artifact, into discrete sections" (135). The books' physical layout as an aggregate of texts put together parallels the eventual fate of the printed pages making them up, which would often be bound along with other books according to the tastes of the reader into a single *Sammelband*. In setting themselves up in this way to comment upon the eventual fate of their books, both Spenser and Whitney work to further draw their readers into a mutual assemblage where the reader hopefully will feel an attachment not merely to the poetry within the books but additionally with the personage implied to have written them.

Authorship as an act of assemblage is both a literal assembly of a single text out of smaller textual components — tropes, commonplaces, citations, original material — and a physical assembly at the printer's shop. The act of printing was an inherently collaborative one in which the author could well have input into the physical appearance of their books, particularly if they had proven successful in the past (Galbraith 28-30). Whitney appears to have established a working relationship with her printer Richard Jones, having contributed to at least one of his miscellanies in the past; Spenser was linked with his printer through shared political association. On a third level, thinking about authorship as assemblage allows us to consider the author as building a personality for him- or herself and literally sending it out into the world. Our sense of who Spenser

or Whitney were in the 1570s when they were publishing the *Calender* and the *Nosegay* is largely dependent on what they tell us about themselves in their poetic output rather than based on any factual information. The potential fictiveness of their identity assemblages may serve as a useful reminder of Bruno Latour's observation that facts are particularly true precisely because they have been constructed (90). All social identities being constructed — whether consciously or deliberately — the deliberately crafted quality of the writer's assemblage, whether as a proudly learned poet or as a demure woman in need of financial support from friends and family, paradoxically rings true because of the way it purports to offer a view of the writer's inner soul.

A commonplace during the Renaissance for authorship was pregnancy, a metaphor that includes both the difficulty inherent in writing and the sense that texts were autonomous from the their authors, able to go out and act independently of the authors' desires, who were nevertheless held responsible for their books' behavior. As Spenser and Whitney's example suggests, however, it was possible for authors to guide the development of the alternate assemblage not merely through the text itself but additionally through the physical make-up of the book. By playing with the distinction between text and paratext — Spenser by imitating scholarly glosses and Whitney by multiplying the dedicatory epistle — they cultivate authorial assemblages that suit their needs. Spenser can present himself as self-consciously talented while minimizing accusations of egotism; Whitney can characterize herself as honest and worthy of economic support. Both assemblages are dependent on an awareness and manipulation of bibliographic conventions; by imitating specific book forms and redeploying them in a

new configuration, Spenser and Whitney are able to control how their textual children will comport themselves and, more importantly, how that behavior will reflect on them as well.

TERRITORIALIZING AND DETERRITORIALIZING PERSONAL IDENTITY

In William Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1593), part of Richard's scheme to take control of the kingdom requires him to pretend that he has no interest in ruling while Buckingham manipulates the people into calling for Richard's rule in place of the youthful King Edward V. As Buckingham and Richard prepare for this final effort, Buckingham admonishes Richard, "And look you get a prayer book in your hand, / And stand between two churchmen, good my lord, / For on that ground I'll build a holy descant" (3.7.47-49). The moment is striking not merely in compounding Richard's villainy and reminding us that he — and to a lesser extent Buckingham — is a consummate manipulator, but in how it deploys the prayer-book as a means to power by the unscrupulous nobles. Earlier in the play, Richard had remarked that he was able to "clothe my naked villainy / With odd old ends, stol'n forth of Holy Writ, / And seem a saint when most I play the devil" (1.3.334-36); here, Richard stages just that saintly image of himself by bringing forth three props, one inanimate and two animate: a prayer book and a pair of bishops who remain nameless and speechless in the play, serving only to assemble an image of Richard's piety. Like the book, the bishops are "True ornaments to know a holy man" (3.7.99), that is to say, markers of a particular quality. The bishops themselves may be "true" but as the play demonstrates, they tell us very little about Richard's actual holiness. Richard himself is never seen with a prayer book again and his interaction with bishops or cardinals in the rest of the play is limited to political declarations in council; while he never takes any action that is openly hostile towards the church, his piety or invocation of church rituals is limited to this one scene.

The emptiness of Richard's gesture is filled by his book prop, which telegraphs his supposed piety to the crowd. Book props on the stage, however, were easily interchangeable, much like the human actors who carried them: while the presence of a book might well characterize a character, the actual contents of a book prop are as unreadable as the inward thoughts of the actor on stage. The codex book's covers, designed to shield the book's text from harm, necessarily shield the book's text from view as well. A single book might play dozens of roles over time, acting as a collection of Ovidian poetry in *Titus Andronicus* only to be transmuted into a prayer book in *Richard III* the following year. Books were cheap enough that they were not included in theater companies' inventories, suggesting that their cost was considered negligible.[95] Contents or even material configuration were largely unimportant: as Heidi Brayman Hackel points out, "cheap printed books, rather than historically accurate manuscript scrolls, were probably used in plays set in classical times" (29). On stage, all books were flattened semiotically so that although their importance to the audience's understanding of a given character is clear, actual significance needed to be explained. In revealing the artifice behind the prop book, the scene reminds us of Richard III's duplicity throughout the play where his soliloquies figure the audience not as a voyeur listening in on his

[95] Frederick Kiefer notes in *Writing on the Renaissance Stage* that there is not a single book listed in the inventory of properties owned by the Admiral's Men in 1598 (286). James Kearney similarly observes in *The Incarnate Text* that no prop books are included in Henslowe's diary (140, note 2). At the same time, however, these unlisted books might well wind up at the center of the narrative action, as they do in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1588), where Faustus's character is quickly and strongly characterized by his rejection of one book (the Bible) in favor of his necromantic texts. When Faustus on his deathbed frantically promises to destroy his books in a last, desperate attempt at salvation, his actions further reify the link between book and his soul (Kearney *Incarnate Text* 177). A book-free staging *Doctor Faustus* is difficult to imagine, though the actual contents of the books is irrelevant. See also Sarah Wall-Randell, "*Doctor Faustus* and the Printer's Devil."

private thoughts but instead as a silent interlocutor being addressed and manipulated: the book, by its very interchangeability, reminds us that all information that we receive on the stage is mediated by a hundred factors.

Even a small book prop requires an actor to dedicate at least one hand to its use and so the book is insistently drawn to our attention.[96] Although its meaning invariably needs to be explained, the book prop undeniably *has* meaning whenever it appears. The stage book nestles comfortably into the stage assemblage of a character's persona, drawing actions and words onto the stage to explain its presence. Like many stage props, the book characterizes the identity of the person it is associated with, but book props are special in that although their outward appearance is all that matters for the purposes of the stage, they are always imagined to have an inner life as well, even if it is accessible to the audience only through the mediation of the actors. The three plays that I read in this chapter —Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1588), *Arden of Faversham* (1588), and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1601) — thematize this essential mediated quality to the book as a textual vessel. In considering identity assemblage through books on the stage, we additionally gain a sense of the book as it might be used off the stage for similar purposes: books were sometimes acquired to be displayed rather than to be read, to create the impression that particular elements had been added to an individual's personal

[96] In his book on *The Stage Life of Props*, Andrew Sofer suggests fruitfully that the best distinction between a stage prop and a stage object is motion: objects that merely sit passively on the stage are not props unless actors manipulate them in some way. "Thus a hat or sword remains an article of costume until an actor removes or adjusts it, and a chair remains an item of furniture unless an actor shifts its position" (Sofer 12). While book props might fade into the background as part of the set, if they are attached to a specific person — which they customarily were during the Renaissance, serving as shorthand to tell the audience something about the character's personality — then they can never be part of costume but are always a prop in Sofer's active sense of the word and consequently draw our attention to themselves.

assemblage. In this respect, books serve to assemble public personas, both as a text presented as having had an impact on its reader and as a text that is incorporated into its owner's public appearance. The supposition by the Londoners is that Richard has read his prayer book and incorporated it into his assemblage, an idea that seems confirmed by his pious discourse with the bishops.

In the chapter that follows, I situate books within the debate about the boundary between private and public. As something that is put on display, public assemblages are developed on a daily basis; the human-book assemblage presented on stage thematizes how human subjects may take time to select, organize, and present a given version of themselves. Shakespeare's observation that Richard and Buckingham can deploy books and bishops to fool the crowd offers us a chance to consider the potential duplicity inherent in any act of identity construction. Further, the theater as a dramatic experience highlights the ambiguity behind any act of self-representation: the audience watching the performance is necessarily required to briefly forget that the characters they are seeing are not real and that any emotions or thoughts that the audience may become privy to are feigned. When Richard III presents his book to trick the crowd, we are dealing with (at least) three layers of identity: the pious self that Richard presents to the audience, the scheming self following along in Buckingham's script, and the professional actor underneath performing the part, not to mention the playwright who originated the lines spoken onstage. Books on the stage, like the human actors who carry them, are automatically assumed to have some kind of inner truth but their actual meaning is obscured and can only be accessed by the audience in a highly mediated way.

To properly consider how books might fit differently into public assemblages as opposed to private assemblages, it is worth pausing for a moment to think about the distinction between the two. During the Renaissance, the terms "private" and "public" appear to have been largely used to differentiate between matters that occurred within the household, comprised not merely of a family but servants as well, as opposed to the larger community (Orlin, *Private Matters* 4).[97] While the boundary between household and community was distinct in situations like the gendered expectation that women remain within the household rather than straying outside it, it was also very porous.[98] The household was tied into the community as a whole not only economically but also morally: churchwardens and constables were responsible for surveilling households to ensure that they did not violate religious and legal codes (Ingram 95-96). Motivated by preachers' warnings that God would punish communities that harbored sexual offenders (Warnicke 124), neighbors might well supplement these official investigations by spying on suspicious residents themselves to find proof of adultery or other scandalous behavior (Ingram 96). Lena Cowen Orlin notes in *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* that the boundary between households was additionally undermined by the gradual subdivision of

[97] The terms "family" and "household" were in fact often used interchangeably during the Renaissance, the assumption being that a couple would leave the family home and establish their own household with their own servants once they had gotten married (Ingram 93-94). This conflation between the family in the modern sense — a married couple and their children — with its immediate economic apparatus — servants and apprentices — blurs the line between private and public spheres, which may act as a source of confusion for twentieth-century scholars who consequently underestimate the amount of private space available to Renaissance people (Warnicke 126).

[98] For more on the expectation that women remained within the household, see in particular Retha Warnicke, "Private and Public: The Boundaries of Women's Lives in Early Stuart England"; Elizabeth Mazzola, and Corinne S. Abate, "Introduction: 'indistinguished space'" in *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*; and Mary E. Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature*.

buildings, particularly after the original owner had died in large cities like London (169). Houses might be split into multiple homes, each with its own household, but the division between the homes could well consist only of freestanding furniture or of a thin (and often poorly constructed) "paper wall" that amounted to little more than a screen (Orlin, *Locating Privacy* 169-70).

Architecturally, the Renaissance is marked by a transition away from large, multi-purpose halls and towards smaller rooms. Beginning in the 1570s and continuing until the 1640s, many houses, first in the south and then in the north of England, were redesigned in a phenomenon that W. G. Hoskins termed "the Great Rebuilding" (Orlin, *Locating Privacy* 96-97). While Hoskins and other scholars tended to associate this proliferation of spaces outside the public view with an increased desire for privacy in the modern sense of being unobserved, this may have been more of a side effect of an increasing interest in specialization.[99] Even within this increasingly subdivided household, however, actual solitude was comparatively rare. Though there were parts of the house expected to be closed off such as closets, dressing rooms, or counting houses, they were the exception rather than the rule. Mary Thomas Crane has suggested that ironically enough, "real privacy, especially for illicit activities, was, until well into the seventeenth century, most often represented as readily attainable only outdoors" (5). Personal privacy was more of a social convention than a fact: if a person wished to have a conversation without being overheard, they might move physically away from other

[99] Examining changes in the fashion of large country houses, Lena Cowen Orlin observes that "the medieval courtyard house, focused exclusively upon itself behind its self-enclosing walls, was in fact more private in nature than was the early modern compact house, which appeared eager to engage with viewers and was also needier of their approval and admiration" (*Locating Privacy* 106).

people by going into a corner or walking a little aside.[100] As Mary E. Trull suggests, privacy was "not freedom from observation but the exclusion of some and privileging of others" (5), a structuring of social interactions rather than a withdrawal from them. In this respect, privacy was as much an assemblage as selfhood, comprised out of social actions and the physical configuration of a space. It was only desirable under particular circumstances and was created when those circumstances arose.

Indeed, privacy was often perceived as a comparatively dangerous thing, judging by writers' admonishments about solitary behavior (Warnicke 129). Although personal closets offered the opportunity to lock oneself away from the rest of the community, to use them often could arouse suspicion (Ingram 96). Post-Reformation anxieties about the depth of England's commitment to the new Church of England increased a desire to know what people were thinking or doing.[101] The Reformation placed additional pressure on the possible disconnect between what Katherine Eisaman Maus calls "inwardness" and outer appearances.[102] As England shifted from Catholicism to Protestantism, then

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[100] See Mary Thomas Crane, "Illicit Privacy and Outdoor Spaces in Early Modern England"; Lena Cowen Orlin, *Location Privacy in Tudor London*; and Mary E. Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature*.

[101] As Eamon Duffy has influentially argued, the divide between Catholicism and the Church of England was abrupt rather than gradual or natural, meaning that "even after the iconoclastic hammers and scraping-tools of conviction Protestantism had done their worst, enough of the old imagery and old resonances remained in the churches in which the new religion was preached to complicate, even, in the eyes of some, to compromise the new teachings" (Duffy 4). For more, see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580*.

[102] As Ian McAdam warns, however, we should be hesitant to assume that hypocrisy was a unique problem to the Renaissance or those times following it (275). The capacity for appearances to be deceiving is a recurring problem throughout history and evidence of interiority can easily be traced back to Augustine, as David Aers points out (182). Part of the difficulty stems from the way that, as Linda Tredennick observes, studies of selfhood in the Renaissance remain bedeviled by Jacob Burckhardt's (in)famous claim that the birth of the individual can be found in the Renaissance (159), a narrative that seems to endure no matter how many times scholars attempt to demolish it (Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure* 2).

back to Catholicism, and finally settled into a Protestant faith, the faithful on either side could be under threat if they admitted their denomination, which Maus argues led Catholics and Protestants alike to conclude that one could innocently lie about one's faith to government investigators (22). The other side of interiority is deception, always a worrisome issue but a particularly vexing one in the religio-political wake of the Reformation. In the midst of such concerns, books take on a particularly important role: the books in someone's collection might say a great deal about their religious allegiances. Moreover, as James Kearney argues in *The Incarnate Text*, the history of the Reformation is in many respects a history of the book: Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, prided itself on being a religion of the book (21). Following Luther's call for a religion based on the principle *sola scriptura*, many Protestants were uncomfortably aware that books themselves could be implicated in a form of idolatry (Kearney, *Incarnate Text* 10).

Within *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Arden of Faversham*, and *Hamlet*, we are confronted by a shared fantasy about the contents of books being completely interchangeable. The three plays stage the misidentification, mutilation, and rewriting of books, each of which is intended to serve as a demonstration of how the human subject can be similarly reconfigured. At the same time, however, the plays also present books as able to resist attempts to change the assemblage within which they are incorporated, suggesting a kind of ontological inertia within the assemblages in question. Here books act as territorializing forces, allowing the assembled human self to retain its earlier configuration in spite of pressure to change. A book may be altered, sometimes quite radically but it invariably carries traces of its original state with it: palimpsests often

show the ghost of older writing within themselves. Assemblages containing books are necessarily tied to the physical rather than the purely abstract: the palimpsest offers a look at the connection between physicality as a way to consider the appearance of an assemblage and physicality as an indication of the components present within an assemblage. The presence of a book on stage signals a variety of things to the audience watching the performance; a book within the possession of a real or fictive person serves to structure that person's responses to different situations. A component of an assemblage in this respect serves two functions: both to telegraph a particular meaning for that assemblage and to determine the nature of the assemblage.

I begin with Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* where Hieronimo presents a book that the audience initially identifies as the Bible only to discover that it is a collection of Senecan tragedies comparable to the one that Hieronimo finds himself experiencing. Hieronimo's shift away from Christian to classical texts represents a deliberate choice to change his assemblage in terms of which models he will follow: his transformation into a revenger is a deliberate, agentive act. In the anonymous tragedy *Arden of Faversham*, we are offered a view of a character curating her self through the metaphor of a physical book. The adulteress Alice Arden fantasizes about mutilating a prayer book in order to present herself as a virtuous woman even as she schemes to murder her husband. Alice tries to put a new covering over her actions, an idea that the events of the play emphasizes is a false fantasy. William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* combines the questions of agency and privacy by having the melancholy prince attempt to completely rewrite himself through his table book. While Hamlet is stymied by his memory's refusal to allow itself to be

completely purged, his musings on how to take control of his memories act to open a view of the play as a whole as one full of carefully crafted assemblages. Throughout the three plays, books are linked with the self as externalizations of their owners so that what is done to the book is simultaneously done to the owner; at the same time, the books emphasize the difficulty in changing assemblages and how identity curation is necessarily an on-going process.

The Spanish Tragedy: The Agency of Books and Book-Users

Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) is heavily intertextual, quoting several Senecan tragedies directly as well as reworking the tropes of Senecan tragedy more generally.[103] In addition to exploring the connections between texts, the play emphasizes the link between texts and the human body, often in macabre terms: letters are written in blood, people are executed because of the absence of documents, and the play culminates in a murder-suicide by penknife. The focal point of much of this human-textual activity is the protagonist Hieronimo, who gradually progresses from skeptical reader to manipulative author over the course of the play. Hieronimo's deployment of a book at the halfway point of the action plays with the mediated quality of the prop book

[103] For more on the Senecan roots of the play, see in particular Michael Henry Levin, "'Vindicta mihi!': Meaning, Morality, and Motivation in *The Spanish Tragedy*"; B. L. Joseph, "*The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet*: Two Exercises in English Seneca"; George Braden, *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege*; and Eugene D. Hill, "Senecan and Vergilian Perspectives in *The Spanish Tragedy*"; and Jordi Coral Escolá, "Seneca, What Seneca? The Chorus in The Spanish Tragedy." For more on the genre of the revenge tragedy, see Fredson Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642*; Wendy Griswold, *Renaissance Revivals: City Comedy and Revenge Tragedy in the London Theatre 1576-1980*; Eugene D. Hill, "Revenge Tragedy"; Robert Watson, "Tragedy"; R.A. Foakes, *Shakespeare and Violence*; Gregory Semenza, "*The Spanish Tragedy* and Revenge"; and Bradley J. Irish, "Vengeance, Variously: Revenge Before Kyd in Early Elizabethan Drama."

and serves to emphasize the agentive properties of both Hieronimo and his book with respect to his assemblage.

Kyd begins to thematize this connection between human and text around the midpoint of the play when the plot begins to shift from the aftermath of the Spanish-Portuguese war and into the revenge plot. Hieronimo wanders the street, mourning his murdered son Horatio, and finds a letter dropped for him by Bel-imperia, which he recognizes as addressed to him and reads:

> "For want of ink, receive this bloody writ.
> Me hath my hapless brother hid from thee;
> Revenge thyself on Balthazar and him,
> For these were that that murderèd thy son.
> Hieronimo, revenge Horatio's death,
> And better fare than Bel-imperia doth." (3.2.26-31)

Despite the intensely personal nature of the letter — it is written not only by Bel-imperia's own hand but in her own blood — Hieronimo's first reaction is doubt. A veteran judge, Hieronimo immediately begins to search for a motive as to why Lorenzo and Balthazar would have wanted to kill his son and then proceeds to try to determine why Bel-imperia, even assuming that Lorenzo has killed Horatio, would accuse her brother. Given the violence of both Horatio's death and Hieronimo's reaction in the previous act, the audience might well expect Hieronimo to respond instantly. Instead, Hieronimo speculates that the letter may be a trap orchestrated by some third party, hoping to bring him into conflict with Lorenzo (3-2.37-43).

Fruitless though Bel-imperia's letter may appear within the play's narrative, it emphasizes the mediated nature of texts throughout the play. The play-text notes that the letter prop is written in "Red ink" to simulate blood and the letter itself announces in its

first line that it was written in blood rather than ink. Hieronimo is therefore primed to recognize that the letter he is reading will mean a particular thing, but is rhetorically savvy enough to become suspicious of how he is being manipulated. Hieronimo works to keep the letter from entering too deeply into his assemblage, choosing to investigate carefully rather than moving precipitously. As it happens, his suspicions prove fully justified: when Hieronimo does eventually accuse Lorenzo, he fails to convince him. Instead, Lorenzo outmaneuvers him and suggests to the King that Hieronimo has gone mad and should be stripped of his rank as Knight Marshal of Spain (3.12.85-98). Hieronimo's consequent care in handling Bel-imperia's letter as a potential trap presents a reader who strives to limit the negative effects that texts may have upon him.

Bel-imperia's letter additionally anticipates the second mediated text in the play, where Lorenzo's rascally servant Pedringano is tried for murder and cheerfully confesses, secure in the knowledge that Lorenzo has procured a pardon for him and sent it along in a box. The resulting scene is thick with dramatic irony — thanks to an inquisitive page, the audience knows that the box is empty — as Pedringano cheerfully banters with Hieronimo and the hangman to the bitter end, not realizing that no pardon is forthcoming.[104] The box, which the page impishly points at throughout Pedringano's trial, serves as a focal point for Pedringano's character during the scene: rather than the comparatively docile demeanor he displays at the start of the play, he jestingly asks

[104] Frank Ardolino suggests that Pedringano is not entirely mad to assume that he will escape punishment, given his origins in the *commedia dell'arte* figure of the wily servant Pedrolino, and that Kyd deliberately exploits the irony of the situation to further his depiction of a doomed world where men are shown to be the instruments of a relentless fate which is moving toward the accomplishment of justice" (340). For more, see Frank Ardolino, "The Hangman's Noose and the Empty Box: Kyd's Use of Dramatic and Mythological Sources in *The Spanish Tragedy* (III.iv-vii)."

whether he will face punishment and expresses his doubts. Attempting to draw the hangman into conversation Pedringano points out the page to him and tries to convince him of the importance of the box in his hands:

> PEDRINGANO Sirrah, dost see yonder boy with the box in his hand?
> HANGMAN What, he that points to it with his finger?
> PEDRINGANO Aye, that companion.
> HANGMAN I know him not, but what of him? …
> PEDRINGANO What hath he in his box, as thou think'st?
> HANGMAN Faith, I cannot tell, nor I care not greatly. Methinks you should rather hearken to your soul's health.
> PEDRINGANO What, sirrah hangman? I take it that that is good for the body is likewise good for the soul; and it may be, in that box is balm for both. (3.6.65-69, 74-79)

The hangman's lack of interest in the box stems less from his dedication to justice than it does from his ignorance of its context. The box is merely a box to him and Pedringano, rather than explain that the box holds a royal pardon, entertains himself with roundabout allusions as to what the box might contain. By the time he has become honestly frightened and begins to explain himself more fully, the hangman and Hieronimo's deputy execute him too quickly to hear him out.

Pedringano's empty box is never opened at Pedringano's trial because Pedringano assumes that the knowledge of its existence alone should be sufficient to give the hangman pause. Pedringano's miscalculation ironically causes another letter to be read: he dies with a letter to Lorenzo on his person that reveals Lorenzo's involvement in Horatio's murder. As Mark Jones observes, Pedringano's letter has to reach the wrong person to provide any kind of information, at which point "Hieronimo's agency becomes enmeshed in an intersubjective mechanism that will eventually bring about his own demise, to be sure, but also, and more important, that of the kingdom he serves" (130).

Having read the letter, Hieronimo does precisely what he was unwilling to do earlier based on Bel-imperia's bloody letter and challenges Lorenzo, only to be defeated by the cannier politician. As Frank Ardolino suggests, Pedringano's box resembles that of Pandora, its contents setting off a chain reaction of violence (337). Unlike Pandora, however, Pedringano's box does its damage by remaining closed and concealing that there is nothing at the core of it: were the box to be opened, then Pedringano's accusations against Lorenzo might appear the desperate ravings of a confessed criminal. As it stands, his letter speaks for him after the fact and gains credibility for Hieronimo in conjunction with Bel-imperia's previous letter. The empty box mirrors the covers of the book that Hieronimo will deploy a few scenes later: designed to protect its contents, the box conceals the absence of those contents. Pedringano's confidence that the box does in fact contain something of importance pertaining to himself mocks the audience's own confidence that they can easily understand other books that appear on the stage.

Shortly after learning to his sorrow that he cannot strike at Lorenzo and Balthazar directly, Hieronimo enters the stage with a book and declares:

> *Vindicta mihi!*
> Ay, heaven will be revenged of every ill,
> Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid.
> Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will,
> For mortal men may not appoint their time. (3.13.1-5).

At this moment, the audience may well conclude that Hieronimo has decided to leave his vengeance in the hands of heaven, particularly since he has found no support with the King when he accused his son's murderers. He philosophically quotes Romans 12:19, where Paul reminds the Christians that the Lord will enact punishment where it is appropriate. Romans 12:19 is itself a quotation from Deuteronomy 32:35, where the

Lord speaks warningly of both his capacity and intent to punish the faithless Israelites; in deciding to rely on divine judgment, Hieronimo both invokes a higher power that is certain to punish the guilty and remains within the non-violent bounds prescribed by Christianity, thus averting drawing divine wrath upon himself.

As with the bloody ink of Bel-imperia's letter and the box that Pedringano's hopes depended upon, however, the actual text of Hieronimo's book proves to be less relevant than the greater context. Hieronimo shifts from his pious Christian reflection to a more Senecan note:

> Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offered thee,
> For evils unto ills conductors be,
> And death's the worst of resolution.
> For he that thinks with patience to contend
> To quiet life, his life shall easily end.
> *Fata si miseros juvant, habes salutem;*
> *Fata si vitam negant, habes sepulchrum.*
> If destiny thy miseries do ease,
> Then hast thou health, and happy shalt thou be;
> If destiny deny thee life, Hieronimo,
> Yet shalt thou be assured of a tomb.
> If neither, yet let this thy comfort be:
> Heaven covereth him that hath no burial.
> And to conclude, I will revenge his death! (3.13.6-19)

The Latin passages that Hieronimo quotes are taken not from the Bible but from Seneca's tragedies, which were Kyd's models for *The Spanish Tragedy* itself, and so suddenly the statement *Vindicta mihi*, which might previously have been taken for a resolution to abstain from violence, becomes a declaration of what Hieronimo plans to do, namely claim vengeance for himself.[105] By abandoning thoughts of a just God who will attend to

[105] For a reading of Hieronimo's Senecan quotations specifically, see Scott McMillin, "The Book of Seneca in *The Spanish Tragedy*." McMillin argues that Hieronimo intentionally misreads Seneca, quoting self-destructive characters as a sign that he has already decided to die in the act of revenge.

his needs, Hieronimo commits himself to the dark world of Senecan drama.[106] The choice of drama over Bible represents a deliberate reconfiguration of his identity assemblage: no longer attempting to keep foreign textual influences out of his assemblage, Hieronimo deterritorializes his assemblage to replace Christian piety with revenge.

If, as Carol McGinnis Kay suggests, the play is fundamentally concerned with the deceptiveness of words (21), then this is most strongly thematized in this scene. Whereas prior to this moment the audience was always in on the joke, here the joke is on the audience: much like Pedringano's empty box, the book stages a particular set of textual content for the audience to believe, only to tear them violently away. As Knight Marshal, Hieronimo is technically responsible for the punishment of criminals and it would certainly be conceivable for him to seek solace in religion when he finds that he cannot do so within the confines of the law. Kyd briefly tricks the audience into misidentifying the book in Hieronimo's hands, assuming that he will continue to hesitate in carrying out the revenge that the play's ghostly chorus constantly promises. The revelation that the book is actually the carrier of a wholly different message draws on the prop book's protean nature — on stage, all books look the same — and reminds the audience that they do not, in fact, occupy a wholly privileged vantage point from which they can easily judge what is happening. The audience's engagement with the book is mediated by what Hieronimo tells them about it: just as we cannot know for certain what was inside the original book prop used during the production, so too can we not be entirely certain what sort of book that prop was supposed to represent. It could be a collection of Senecan

[106] For more on the anti-providential attitude underpinning *The Spanish Tragedy*, see Philip Edwards, "Thrusting Elysium into Hell: The Originality of *The Spanish Tragedy*."

tragedies or it could combine both Bible and Seneca by turning out to be a collection of sententiae about revenge. Regardless of what it contains, we can be certain that it is *not* a Bible, as Hieronimo's subsequent quotation of Seneca and determination to seek revenge indicate.

At the same time, however, Hieronimo is doing exactly what he appears to be doing at the start of the scene, namely seeking guidance from a book (Kiefer 245). The book's place in his assemblage, highlighted by its prominent visibility, remains constant throughout the scene: regardless of its meaning, the book is indeed at the heart of his decisions with regard to his son's death. During this particular scene, the book takes on an agentive role in Hieronimo's assemblage, both in terms of how he connects with the audience and how he interacts with the rest of the cast. Even as the book's contents can only be revealed through Hieronimo's discussion of them, so too is the audience's access to Hieronimo mediated through the interposed book, which structures Hieronimo's soliloquy and thereby structures the audience's capacity to engage with his thoughts. Hieronimo's speech is almost painfully intertextual, quoting several classical authors in Latin as well as English translation over the course of the scene. The book and its contents become indistinguishable from Hieronimo's mind, which is closed off to outside view, as is made clear by Hieronimo's subsequent resolution to "rest me in unrest, / Dissembling quiet in unquietness, / Not seeming that I know their villainies" (3.13.29-31). This blurring of lines between Hieronimo and his book is furthered by his change in tactics: whereas until now Hieronimo has demonstrated admirable self-restraint in his investigations and done his best to work within the system, he henceforth follows the

book's assertion that vengeance is his rather than God's or the state's. The brutality of the play's climax, inappropriate in a religious or legal context, goes back to this book and Hieronimo's deliberate staging of the sort of violence encountered in the plays that his book references.

Hieronimo's engagement with his book dramatizes the potential disconnect between the assemblage as something that is perceived within a social context and as a model for the human self. The audience's initial confusion about what book Hieronimo has in his hand is accentuated by the conventions of the Renaissance stage: when a character enters carrying a book, the book is invariably an important way for the character's identity to be signaled to the audience. The audience is therefore primed for Hieronimo to explain the significance of his book and then, just as the book's meaning has been satisfactorily explained, finds that the explanation was inaccurate. While Hieronimo is unaware of the audience's presence within the framework of the play, his behavior mirrors actual book ownership practices in that a book might be presented as a sign of the owner's self but, just as Hieronimo's book proves to be Seneca rather than Bible, might easily be deceptive. At its most extreme, this might result in so-called "large paper copies," which would be printed on a larger size and higher quality of paper than the rest of a given edition (Carter and Barker 139). The typesetting in such an copy would be identical to the small copy with the occasional exception of the title page, which would be reset to take advantage of the larger paper. Past the first page, however, the large copy book reveals laughably large margins with the text clustered in the center of the page. Such books were designed as much to impress from the outside as to be read,

conveying a sense of sophistication that could not be achieved by a smaller volume containing the same text. In this respect, Hieronimo holding up his book and spouting Christian virtues serves as an illustration of the sort of deception possible for anyone holding or using a book.

At the same time, however, the book serves as more than a façade for Hieronimo in deceiving the audience. His presentation of the book represents a deliberate decision to rethink himself in terms of Seneca rather than Christianity, drawing on a tendency within the play for characters to attempt to express truth through writing (Kiefer 245). Whereas before, Hieronimo was hesitant to allow the letter he received from Bel-imperia to control his actions, now he actively seeks an answer to his problem within the text. In so doing, he deterritorializes his assemblage in order to incorporate the Senecan book into it, making room for it by abandoning his earlier reliance on the court's laws. As it merges with his assemblage, the book takes on a greater share of the agency in its relationship with Hieronimo, mediating the audience's understanding of him just as he earlier mediated their understanding of it. As Hieronimo rapidly quotes several Senecan plays during the scene, the audience is assured that Revenge's regular promises to the ghost of Andrea are indeed correct and that a proper Senecan-style orgy of violence will soon ensue. Hieronimo's future behavior is partially scripted by his Senecan models, a situation that is ironically staged during the bizarre play-within-a-play in which he murders his son's killers, during which Hieronimo emphasizes the confusion of language already inherent in *The Spanish Tragedy* by having every character speak a different language. His spectators at the end of the play are forced to consult a book which

explains the action of what they see on stage, mediating their encounter with the events that progress before them in such a way as to conceal Hieronimo's true intent. For Kyd's audience, a similar experience takes place here with Hieronimo's book, albeit with less lethal effect.

The Spanish Tragedy is concerned with the degree to which inter-human interactions are heavily shaped and predicated on the objects that are used to transmit that information. As Hieronimo observes when he first receives Bel-imperia's bloody letter, the recipient of the text is vulnerable to the manipulations of whoever sent the document. The non-existent letter in Pedringano's box underscores this still further, much to the amusement of the audience. That irony is then inverted by Hieronimo's book, which forcibly reminds the audience that they too are receiving and processing texts and as such are vulnerable to manipulation by Hieronimo and Thomas Kyd. The most active thing that the audience can do is embrace Hieronimo's own observation that texts may be forged; in terms of actually understanding the material on stage, they are compelled to be passive. Agency on the stage resides in the text and the person who presents or manipulates the text rather than the recipient.

Arden of Faversham: What Is Between the Covers

Where *The Spanish Tragedy* examines books to explore the mediated quality of human-book interactions, *Arden of Faversham* (1588) stages book-use as a way to control how people are related to their community. The play is a true crime narrative depicting the murder of Thomas Arden of Feversham in Kent as told in Raphael

Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577).[107] As Richard Helgerson observes, Holinshed's decision to include a local murder in his *Chronicles* is less striking than his decision to include so much detail about it, spending "a full seven tightly printed folio columns, nearly five thousand words, considerably more than he gives many events of state" ("Murder in Faversham" 133). Prefacing his account with a brief summary, Holinshed also evidently feels under some pressure to explain why he is including this narrative, explaining that "there was at Feuersham in Kent, a Gentleman named Arden, most cruelly murthered and slaine by the procurement of hys owne wife. The which murther for the horriblenesse thereof, although otherwise it may seeme to bee but a priuate matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to thys Hystorie. I haue thought good to sette it foorth somewhat at large" (1703). Holinshed's acknowledgment that the events in Faversham really constitute a private affair even as he includes it alongside large-scale public events may serve as a useful reminder about the interpenetration of private and public in the period. Both the historical and theatrical versions of Arden's story place it in a peculiar position halfway between the political and the private. The Arden household is the focal point of community scrutiny throughout the play and in particular Arden's adulterous wife Alice, who works constantly to preserve an outer façade as a virtuous wife even as she plots to murder her husband.

[107] The play is often termed a "domestic tragedy." While the characteristics of the genre are contested due to it being a retroactive category created by literary critics rather than a historical one, the plays grouped under this category differ from other tragedies in that they does not concern themselves directly with the aristocracy. Instead, the domestic tragedy focuses on non-noble characters in their capacity as landowners, where the kingdom is analogically reproduced in miniature as the household (Orlin, "Domestic Tragedy" 371-73). For more on the genre, see Lena Cowen Orlin, "Domestic Tragedy: Private Life on the Public Stage."

Set in the wake of the dissolution of the monasteries, the play presents Arden as a wealthy gentleman who has been profiting from the recent religious upheaval by acquiring land. As such, the play's events are tied into the worries and concerns of the Protestant Reformation. Protestant concerns are brought to the forefront early on: the play is haunted by several seemingly inanimate objects that nevertheless possess sufficient agency to hinder, indict, or even kill the humans who come into contact with them. Poisonous paintings and crucifixes, considered and dismissed by Alice and her lover Mosby as a way to dispose of Arden, illustrate the power of objects to determine human agency. The toxic crucifix in particular calls to mind Protestant claims about Roman Catholic idolatry, turning a spiritual threat into a physical one. Object-centered concerns come to a head halfway through the play in the form of a prayer book owned by Alice: Alice's book thematizes both the role that books might play in personal piety and the possible religious insincerity inherent in living in a post-Reformation world. Arden has grown rich by acquiring monastic lands, an act that entails the stripping away of former religious trappings; similarly, his wife plots to substitute love letters for the contents of her prayer book, illustrating the great English Protestant fear that people's conversion from Catholicism only went skin-deep. Where the book prop in *The Spanish Tragedy* serves to thematize books' agency in determining the viewer's understanding of a person's assemblage, *Arden of Faversham* additionally situates the book as an integral part of the public-private distinction, in particular within a Reformation context.

Having established itself based on the principle of *sola scriptura*, Protestantism was heavily invested in books and book production. Just as humanists had preferred

private study to worldliness, so too did Protestants emphasize Bible reading as a defining personal experience (Trull 9). Personal, unmediated engagement with the Biblical text was deemed necessary and not surprisingly, Protestant groups throughout Europe set to work translating the Bible into the vernacular. In disseminating Bibles and other religious materials, the printing press proved an invaluable ally for Protestantism, as early Protestants and proto-Protestants were well aware.[108] Even as Protestants advocated Bible reading, however, they were understandably anxious about potentially incorrect conclusions that people might draw from it. Coverdale's "Great Bible" of 1539 was initially intended to have copious glosses for troublesome passages, each marked with a manicule hand pointing at the relevant passage, but disagreement about how precisely these passages should be glossed led to a radical repurposing of the manicules: the glosses were abandoned and instead the manicules were explained in the prologue as a sign of which passages the lay reader should *not* to try to interpret on his or her own (Sherman, *Used Books* 42-43). Catholic practices were quietly repurposed for Protestant ends, so that as Mary Hampson Patterson puts it, "we certainly see, for instance, standard vehicles of medieval devotionalism being hijacked by reformists to reach audiences caught in the transition between the traditional and new learning" (64). Indeed, direct access to the Bible was not always a possibility and so many early Protestants learned about Biblical passages not through direct access but from secondary sources (Patterson 71).

[108] Luther spoke of print as 'God's highest act of grace' (Houston 177) and as John N. King persuasively argues, the early Bible translator William Tyndale and his Protestant biographers, the writer-printer team John Foxe and John Day, were aware of the importance of print for the nascent Protestant movement and may have even propagated the linking of the two in the first place. For more, see John N. King, "'The Light of Printing': William Tyndale, John Foxe, John Day, and Early Modern Print Culture."

In post-Reformation England, books rather than ordained ministers tended to become focal points for spiritual matters. In the wake of Henry VIII's break with Rome, Christians on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide became increasingly invested in specific physical books. Catholics clung to their old books; Protestants often repurposed old, formerly Catholic materials rather than obtaining a new, wholly Protestant replacement, much to the chagrin of government officials seeking to standardize the new faith.[109] Catholics in Protestant England often needed their books to substitute for unavailable priests (Jagodzinski 28) while Protestants took the personal prayer book as an extension of the Bible. The decorated quality of Alice's prayer book — as we will see, it has a golden cover — is a reminder both of the esteem that holy texts held and of radical Protestants' concerns that they had thrown off the idols of Rome only to succumb to an idolatry of their own books. Paradoxically for a faith as vehemently opposed to the veneration of objects, Protestantism placed tremendous value on the act of reading, that is, the intellectual engagement with a physical object. Nor were Catholics slow to recognize this: as James Kearney observes, Thomas More countered the Reformation's insistence on text with questions about why a description of an event was less idolatrous than an image of it (*Incarnate Text* 22). Bibliolatry was a constant threat, particularly since, as Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker argue, "Protestant self-identity, we might say, was formed through a progression of readings and rereadings of the texts of Scripture, sermon and self" (11). Even as the good Protestant structured his or her thinking through reading,

[109] See for instance, Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*; Sherman, *Used Books*; and Alexandra Walsham, "Jewels for Gentlewomen: Religious Books as Artefacts in Late Medieval and Early Modern England."

there was the constant threat that in so doing he or she was no better than the Catholics who bowed down before saints' relics.

Part of the difficulty faced by Catholics and Protestants alike during the Reformation was determining the position of people they encountered, to see past the public exterior of a person to their private views. *Arden of Faversham* dramatizes this with the character of Alice Arden, who demonstrates a radical disconnect between her private and public personas. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus in criticism of the play on Alice's agency: where previous scholarship linked her with Arden's land as another form of property contested by Arden and Mosby or a broken part of Arden's household, more recent work has considered Alice as actively taking steps to gain control of her situation.[110] Unwilling to be contented with adulterous trysts during her husband's absences, Alice resolves to remove him entirely. In order to achieve this goal, Alice develops a variety of personas, adapting to match the various situations in which she finds herself.[111] To Arden, she is a faithful wife offended by his aspersions on her fidelity, skillfully allaying his concerns even after he encounters her arm in arm with Mosby and Mosby attacks him (13.77ff). To Arden's tenant Greene, she is the victim of domestic abuse, offering him a double incentive to get rid of Arden: Greene wishes not

[110] For more on land ownership and class disparity in the play, see David Attwell, "Property, Status, and the Subject in a Middle-class Tragedy: *Arden of Feversham*"; John Breen, "The Carnival Body in *Arden of Faversham*"; Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., "'Arden Lay Murdered in that Plot of Ground': Surveying, Land, and *Arden of Faversham*"; Randall Martin, "'Arden winketh at his wife's lewdness, & why!': A Patrilineal Crisis in *Arden of Faversham*"; and Michael Neill, "'This gentle gentleman': social change and the language of status in *Arden of Faversham*." For readings of Alice as part of Arden's property, see in particular Orlin, "Man's House as His Castle in *Arden of Feversham*" 77, Breen 14, and Sullivan 243.

[111] For more on Alice's rhetoric, see Carol Meijia LaPerle, "Rhetorical Situationality: Alice Arden's Kairotic Effect in *The Tragedy of Master Arden of Faversham*."

merely to recover the land that he feels Arden has unjustly appropriated but also to rescue Alice. As Julie R. Schutzman points out, Alice's social dexterity is shown chiefly by the ways she "constructs a fictional 'private life' and neatly exposes it to public view" (300). Alice develops a fiction of what happens when she and Arden are not under immediate scrutiny and then offers it up to be seen. Having made her abuse visible to Greene, Greene feels called upon to "be the man / Shall set you free from all this discontent" (1.512-13). Greene's impulse, though misdirected towards murder, is laudable as he tries to take steps to ensure that Arden does not mistreat Alice. As such, he acts in keeping with the expectation that everyone is at all times accountable to the community for their behavior and highlights the interpenetration of public and private within the play.[112]

These different critical ways of viewing Alice — i.e., as contested property or as agentive person — nicely draw attention to the play's many agentive objects. The murderers' plans heavily feature objects that are capable of acting of their own accord once they have been placed in Arden's orbit. Mosby's first suggestion is to enlist the aid of the painter Clarke to produce a toxic painting:

> For he can temper poison with his oil
> That whoso looks upon the work he draws
> Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,
> Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.
> Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,
> That Arden may by gazing on it perish. (1.230-35)

[112] For more on the private/public dichotomy in *Arden of Faversham*, see Catherine Belsey, "Alice Arden's Crime"; Sullivan, "'Arden Lay Murdered in that Plot of Ground': Surveying, Land, and *Arden of Faversham*" and "*Arden of Faversham* and the Early Modern Household"; Julie R. Schutzman, "Alice Arden's Freedom and the Suspended Moment of *Arden of Faversham*."

Once completed, the painting is envisioned as murdering all who come into contact with it, its materials merging with the viewer in a self-destructive act of assemblage. Mosby's description of the poisonous painting, however, places emphasis on sight rather than physical proximity. There is no suggestion that the air around the painting will be toxic; rather the poison is transmitted through the act of viewing the painting, that is to say, engaging with it intellectually. In this respect, the toxic painting parallels a book as affecting only the people who focus their attention on it but with the catch that the painting will naturally draw the eye to itself. Whereas reading requires an active choice on the part of the human subject, sight is involuntary. Particularly if the painting is of a visually attractive subject (pun intended), the human eye may well drift towards it without an active choice.

When Clarke eventually appears on stage, we learn that he also makes a poisonous crucifix that can blind those who see it before killing them by smell (1.612-15): this revelation moves the painter's productions into the suspicious register of Catholic iconography. Just as contact with Clarke's creations is lethal for the body, contact with Catholic religious paraphernalia is potentially lethal for the soul as it distracts the viewer from religious truth. Marguerite A. Tassi observes that Alice's fear of the image that Clarke can produce suggests that she is partially an idolater, having trouble distinguishing herself from her portrait (140). In part, the prospect of Clarke's work is the diametric opposite of idolatry: the power of the painting and crucifix is not imagined but very real, killing those people who engage with them. Clarke explains that he himself can only work on such poisonous objects by fastening his spectacles tightly

against his face and shoving a leaf of rhubarb up his nose (1.527-33). While the image may be comical, it reinforces the degree to which the paints and poisons in use are constantly reaching out to touch the humans who come into contact with them: like Alice herself, they are not quite willing to sit passively by and allow other people to use them but rather demonstrate an ability to act on their own. Human subjects and inanimate objects interact with one another and meld into a single unit with properties distinct from either: a person observing Clarke's paintings becomes a poisoned corpse, assuming that no spectacles or rhubarb are present to mediate that interaction.

Alice decides against commissioning the poisonous portrait in part because of concerns that the painting will slay her as well as her husband, noting to Mosby that "that is dangerous, / For thou or I, or any other else, / Coming into the chamber where it hangs may die" (1.2236-38). She instead asks Clarke for a more conventional poison to put into Arden's food and later for the poisonous crucifix. The crucifix never makes an appearance on stage — presumably Clarke does not have time to complete it — but the poison in Arden's broth marks the first of many attempts on Arden's life. Unlike the poisonous art that Clarke can apparently produce, the poison within Arden's broth is consumed in the process of taking effect, after which it disappears into Arden's body, where it is counteracted by a dose of mithridate medicine. The painting's malevolent power, by contrast, does not appear to be depleted through use, so that rather than running out of poison, the painting becomes instead inherently dangerous to approach. Mosby's suggestion that they cover the painting with a cloth and hang it in Arden's study is dismissed with a worry that "when the picture's drawn, / Arden, I know, will come and

show it me" (1.241-42). Unlike the poison in the broth, which can be directed at a specific person, the painting kills indiscriminately and independently of its creator's specific intentions, as Clarke's complex self-protection makes clear.

This concern with how objects interact with human beings is carried through later in the play in the moments leading up to the use of the prayer book. As the play progresses, Alice begins to have second thoughts about her plans to kill her husband. She tells Mosby that she wishes to return

> To my former happy life again:
> From title of an odious strumpet's name
> To honest Arden's wife — not Arden's honest wife.
> Ha! Mosby, 'tis thou hast rifled me of that
> And made me slanderous to all my kin.
> Even in my forehead is thy name engraven:
> A mean artificer, that lowborn name. (8.71-77)

Here as elsewhere, Mosby's lowborn origins are emphasized, now by Alice rather than Arden.[113] In imagining Mosby's name engraved on her forehead, Alice characterizes herself as inscribed with her sin and rendered socially readable, a document that has been marked with Mosby's signature for all to see. Moreover, this signature is inerasable, being engraved into her forehead rather than merely written there. Alice feels that she has been permanently altered by her association with Mosby, unable to ever again become truly honest even if she returns to Arden. Her chief hope is to be re-associated with honesty by losing the "title of an odious strumpet's name" and being once again linked with Arden. Alice's self-depiction as having a title engraved upon her body turns

[113] Arden's chief complaint about Mosby appears to be not that he is being cuckolded by him but that Mosby is not a gentleman, making his violation double in not merely an adulterer but also having the gall to seduce a woman of higher station.

her into a book open to public view, written with the marks of infidelity not merely to her husband but also her social class.

Alice's private identity, that is to say, the identity that is not on public display, is similarly textual, as the scene makes clear. Just as she imagines herself to marked with Mosby's name, so too does she characterize herself as being linked with the prayer book that she carries in the scene, "The holy word that had converted me" (8.117). Her desire to return to a virtuous life appears to be less motivated by a sense of fear at being judged immoral by the community as it is by the effect of her book, which here works to restore Alice's moral sense much the way that a priest or friar might have done in a different setting. It is something that she has read rather than something that she has thought that is figured as the reason for her repentance. Appropriately enough for the wife of a man who has grown wealthy through the acquisition of monastery lands in the wake of the Dissolution, Alice's morality is reawakened by a book. Just as Clarke's painting and crucifix are linked with both murder and Catholic iconography, Alice's decision to reform is resolutely textual and seemingly detached from the physical. Morality is rooted in texts, whether it be an accusing script on someone's forehead or a holy text that redeems.

Unfortunately, this linking of Alice's morality to her prayer book is carried through to its logical extension in the rest of the scene. Alice's good intentions do not last long and soon she begs Mosby to take her back, professing that

> If thou cry war, there is no peace for me;
> I will do penance for offending thee
> And burn this prayer book where I here use
> The holy word that had converted me.

> See, Mosby, I will tear away the leaves,
> And all the leaves, and in this golden cover
> Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;
> And thereon will I chiefly meditate,
> And hold no other sect but such devotion. (8.114-22)

The moment is telling in its biblioclastic qualities. Alice attributes her change of heart directly to the effect of the prayer book, suggesting that the change originated outside of her own volition rather than being a choice on her part. The book did all of the work in changing her and that change might potentially be reversed by simply removing the book from the scene. Alice's virtue endures only as long as the book itself is incorporated into her assemblage: remove the physical object and she reverts to her previous sinful behavior. Rather than focusing on the book as text as separate from the book as artifact — something that might be fully absorbed into Alice's assemblage independently of whether the book is physically accessible — Alice's treatment of the book turns it into a modular virtue vested in an object. The book, like the poisonous painting and crucifix, must be physically present in order to guide her.

As such, the scene carries a powerful iconoclastic charge: if the book possesses sufficient power that destroying it is a significant act, then the book represents an idol. Alice runs the risk of affirming the Catholic claim that Protestant devotion to books differed from Catholic use of iconography only in its focus, not in its nature. Her offer to destroy her prayer book taps into the sixteenth-century rash of book burnings across Europe: even as the printing press permitted the spread of printed texts, so too were those books burned by people on either side of the religious divide (Kiefer 52-53). Particularly in a post-Reformation context, the destruction of a book carries with it a repudiation not merely of the text but of the larger network of associations within which that text exists.

Burning a book is a conscious repudiation of its author and that author's associates, typically with the intent of substituting a different text in its place. In 1549, for instance, King Edward VI and his ministers ordered the seizure and defacing of all copies of old (Catholic) service books because many ostensibly Protestant subjects were still using their Catholic prayer books, crossing out offensive portions and marking them to be omitted during services (Sherman, *Used Books* 102). These books were in danger of competing with the Book of Common Prayer even if their texts were brought into agreement with it: by controlling the books in someone's possession, King Edward IV's government attempted not merely to control the religious identity of his subjects but also to prevent them from choosing which identity they wished to espouse. Strikingly, it was not merely that the Book of Common Prayer had to be the only book in use: deviant books had to be collected and destroyed altogether, for fear that their continued presence within churchgoers' assemblages would allow them to retain the old identity even as they pretended to pledge allegiance to the new one. In offering to destroy her book in favor of Mosby's letters, Alice demonstratively blocks herself from access to the prayer book's influence.

At the same time, destroying an idol runs the risk of reinforcing its power by emphasizing that there was something special about the object in question rather than dismissing it as a mere physical object. To commit an act of iconoclasm is thus itself an act of idolatry and it is perhaps for this reason that Alice quickly shifts from offering to burn the book to repurposing it (Williamson 391-92). She instead presents a fantasy of destroying only the book's contents and replacing them with Mosby's letters. Alice's

textual model of morality is here inverted into a textual immorality: rather than using the prayer book to keep herself dedicated to Protestantism and her husband, Alice will use Mosby's letters to make an idol of her lover and disavow any religion's ability to control her behavior. At the same time, by not burning the book, Alice attempts to use it to put a veneer of propriety over her actions: by filling the devout book's covers with her lover's temptations, Alice plans to hide within the archetypal good woman who spends her time in private devotion (Williamson 388). She intends to assemble a public persona for herself that she can use to conceal her private transgressions, creating a barrier between the public and private spheres that prevents other people from knowing her intent. Forced to judge her book — and, by extension, Alice herself — by the book's golden cover, the people of Faversham will have to accord her the title of "Arden's honest wife," assuming either that she has repented of her affair or that she was unfairly maligned from the start. All the while, Alice can meditate on Mosby's sexual advances, safe in the knowledge that she is judged as she wishes to be. Even as she metabolizes sinful texts, she will curate her book collection to develop a distinct and separate identity. Alice's fantasy of a wholly private reconfiguration of the book and thus of her personal identity is an extension of her earlier ability to negotiate how she is perceived, as she did with Greene.

In her plans for the prayer book, Alice promises to make physical the kind of social manipulation she has already been engaged in throughout the play. In making plans that involve the book's physical composition, however, Alice draws our attention to the prayer book as a artifact, which produces a host of new problems. From a

bibliographic perspective, her fantasy of easily exchanging the book's contents is impossible. The prayer book's pages are sewn to supports that, in turn, have been directly woven into the book's covers; to tear out the pages is as good an act of destruction as burning the book. One possible alternative if this were a "real" book would be for Alice to remove only some of the prayer book's contents, cutting or tearing out individual leaves but leaving enough of the book's original paper behind to maintain its structural integrity. The book would be converted into a carrying container, a paper and cloth box to conceal Mosby's letters. If this were the case, however, then some remnants of the original prayer book — and with it, Alice's repentance — would survive the procedure, something that Alice is keen to deny as she tries to win Mosby back. She insists, moreover, that she "will tear away the leaves, / And all the leaves," suggesting that every scrap of the book's original contents will be removed in favor of the letters, returning us to the original bibliographic dilemma that would prohibit a complete re-assembly of Alice's book as she desires. Potentially, of course, the book could be wholly disassembled and a new text-block constructed around Mosby's letters, but while this would allow Alice to meditate in public on her adultery, her secrecy would inevitably be compromised by the need to draw a bookbinder into her confidence. Her affair, previously only suspected, would be given documentary proof, a particularly alarming prospect given that love letters were occasionally considered legally binding enough to be interpreted as marriage contracts (Bound 1). As Mosby points out early on in the play (1.577-80), too many people already know about Alice's wish to kill Arden. Handing a bookbinder written proof of her indiscretions with Mosby would be inviting disaster,

particularly given that any bookbinder willing to deface a prayer book as Alice desires would hardly consider blackmail beneath him.

The physical difficulties inherent in replacing the contents of Alice's prayer book serve to underscore the difficulties she encounters in trying to fully control her identity. Alice thinks she can present the same exterior covers without revealing her interior thoughts, which seems impossible since her behavior is highly transparent. For all of her rhetorical prowess and ability to soothe away Arden's suspicions whenever they are aroused, Alice is never quite able to permanently dispel them. Moreover, her attempts to evade capture following Arden's murder meet with not even token success. Like Alice's concerns over the agency of the poisonous objects that she considered incorporating into her schemes, the book that she envisions mutilating stubbornly continues to assert its original identity as a prayer book rather than a pair of decorative covers that can serve to conceal whatever is placed between them. Changing the contents of her book seems as much an attempt to maintain control over herself as it does an attempt to fool outsiders; undamaged, the prayer book seems poised to intervene into Alice's assemblage again, something she cannot afford to allow if she is to carry on with her mission but also something that is beyond her control. Alice may wish to deterritorialize the book and reintroduce it to her assemblage in a new form, but the book is an assemblage in its own right and possesses territorializing forces of its own that resist Alice's manipulations. Alice's plans for self-assembly require constant interaction with the objects associated with her assemblage, just as her duplicitous relationship with her husband requires constant mediation and soothing of his worries. The prayer book's resistance to being

reconfigured replicates and informs the difficulties encountered by Alice throughout the play.

Where *The Spanish Tragedy* thematizes the mediated quality of books on the stage, *Arden of Faversham* focuses on the role that books might play in everyday life, particularly after the Reformation. The prayer book is a signal to others within a community both able and willing to judge the actions transpiring within individual households. Alice fears being seen as an adulteress, justifiably so given the harsh punishments a community might exact upon her: when Alice is found out at the end of the play, she is sentenced to be burned to death (18.31), a punishment that is shared only by the professional criminal Black Will (Epilogue.6). The prayer book, assuming that she were to fully bring it into her assemblage, would not prevent this surveillance but would serve to mediate it by marking Alice as the pious wife that the community expects her to be. Seen through the lens of the prayer book, Alice would be deemed, if not innocent, then at least reformed. It is perhaps for this reason that Alice abandons the idea of burning her prayer book — its absence might speak more eloquently than its presence — but rather considers how she might exploit the positive image that the prayer book generates. Her half-formed plan, never actually executed, dramatizes concerns about the holy texts people were using. A Catholic could well attempt to disguise a Catholic prayer book as a Protestant one; perhaps more worryingly, a former Catholic might attempt to cling to old books and therefore be liable to switch back to their old religion if they were given a reason to do so. Although formally controlled by the English government, Protestant reformers were understandably concerned that the new religion be seen as

more than a matter of state: souls were on the line. The ability of a book to remember its former contents — a problem partially illustrated by the technical difficulties in actually putting Alice's plan into practice — meant that a book's contents could not be as easily swapped out as either Alice or the reformers might like. Taken in context with the Reformation, Alice's prayer book indicates the importance of books within a personal assemblage both with respect to the public community at large and the individual's private sense of identity.

Hamlet: Rewriting the Table of Memory

Where *The Spanish Tragedy* uses the presentation of writing as both mediated and mediating in order to discuss questions of agency and *Arden of Faversham* thematizes questions of object agency and privacy through Alice's plans for her prayer book, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* links agency and privacy through Hamlet's use of a table-book. Mentioned early on in the play as part of Hamlet's response to his father's Ghost, Hamlet's table-book presents human memory as a point of intersection between physical books and human consciousness. The metaphor tempts us, as it does Hamlet, to view memory in the same way that Alice views her prayer book: its contents easily detached and replaced without touching or affecting the outer shell, so that Hamlet can easily erase old parts of his memory and overwrite them. As Hamlet quickly discovers, however, traces of his old memory remain behind since the book is less a metaphor for Hamlet's actual memory so much as it is a means by which he sifts and arranges the elements already present in his memory. The image of Hamlet's table-book at the start of the play

serves both as a physical metaphor for Hamlet's current state of mind and as a representation of the slow re-assembly of Hamlet's self in order to transform him into a revenger. Paralleling Hamlet's use of the book to shape his future self is a sense in which books are interposed to project public images of the self, whether by Hamlet himself or by Ophelia, whose prayer book is intended to depict her in a positive light. By examining how Hamlet, Ophelia, and Polonius all attempt to use books to their advantage, the play articulates a sense of personal identity as constrained by the physicality of the books used to inform it.

After hearing from the Ghost that his father has been murdered, Hamlet strikingly resorts to a metaphor of writing to assure the Ghost that he will remember its command:

> Remember thee?
> Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
> In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
> Yea, from the table of my memory
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
> That youth and observation copied there,
> And thy commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain
> Unmixed with baser matter. Yes, yes, by heaven.
> O most pernicious woman!
> O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
> My tables,
> My tables — meet it is I set it down
> That one may smile and smile and be a villain. (1.5.95-109)

Hamlet's characterization of his memory as a table refers to a series of book-related memory practices common during the Renaissance. First, there is the so-called "table-book," invoked by Hamlet's stated desire to erase his memory. Peter Stallybrass et al. have suggested that the tables Hamlet refers to in his speech, particularly at the end, are a set of table-books, notebooks equipped with a special mixture of gesso and glue that

could easily be cleaned of ink.[114] Hamlet's claim that he can erase his memory in its entirety echoes his earlier concerns at the ease with which Gertrude apparently forgot his father, a deficit he now proposes to turn to his advantage by eliminating anything extraneous to his memory of the King. Hamlet's metaphor assumes that forgetting is a deliberate act, redoubling the blame on Gertrude as not merely not remembering correctly but deliberately choosing to purge those memories, an assumption that Hamlet's own experience will problematize.

Second, Hamlet's reference to the "book and volume" of his brain calls to mind the table-book's larger cousin, the commonplace book. Popularized by humanist pedagogical practices, commonplace books developed out of classical reading practices.[115] Drawing on Seneca's famous recommendation that the reader should be like a bee flitting from flower to flower collecting nectar, commonplace books were imagined as not merely a storehouse of read texts but additionally as an engine of textual production.[116] Commonplace books ranged in size from a portable octavo comparable in

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[114] Table-books are the paper descendants of the classical wax *tabulae* that served a similar purpose in providing an temporary surface to store information for brief periods of time. When paper prices dropped sufficiently, such notebooks were eventually replaced fully paper variants without the erasable quality. See Peter Stallybrass, Roger Chartier, J. Franklin Mowery, and Heather Wolfe, "Hamlet's Tables and the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England."

[115] Renaissance recommendations for the use of commonplace books commonly refer to classical antecedents, but as Ann Moss observes in *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, the Middle Ages are part of the historical continuum between classical and Renaissance uses of commonplace books (22). One reason that the emphasis during the Renaissance may have been so overwhelmingly on classical precedents may stem from a difference in focus: as Earle Havens observes in *Commonplace Books*, medieval commonplacing emphasized religion instead of the rhetorical and literary foci of classical and Renaissance commonplace practices (19).

[116] Commonplace books' use as a means to dissect and appropriate rhetorical techniques faded only slowly, with John Guillory pinpointing a gradual shift to anthologizing, i.e., consumption rather than production, in the eighteenth century (9). For more on the role of the commonplace book as a means of textual production rather than solely a means of collection, see in particular Ann Moss, "Printed Commonplace Books in the Renaissance"; Havens, "'Of Common Places, or Memorial Books'"; Randall L. Anderson, "Metaphors of

size to the table-book to full-scale folio books too large to carry easily.[117] The commonplace book was able to keep permanently what the table-book could only temporarily hold.[118] Hamlet's description of the book of his mind containing large quantities of material suggests a commonplace book rather than a small table-book; appropriately enough for a scholar, Hamlet's mental book is evidently a textbook case of commonplacing: he has filled it with speeches culled from books and rhetorical forms, both of which would presumably stand him in good stead as either academic or ruler. Hamlet's metaphor opens a fantasy of a hybrid between the erasable table-book and the permanent commonplace book where he can replace his academic knowledge, introduced there through careful humanist pedagogy, with a focus on his father's vengeance.

Crucially, commonplace books served to inscribe the writer within a network of textual associations. As Randall L. Anderson observes, "the commonplace book produced with other readers in mind or, perhaps more accurately, it is produced with reference in mind, rather than merely collection" (252). Even without a citation, commonplaces serve as a reminder of the texts from which they have been extracted.

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the Book as Garden in the English Renaissance"; Kate Eichhorn, "Archival Genres: Gathering Texts and Reading Spaces"; and Adam Smyth, "Commonplace Book Culture: A List of Sixteen Traits."

[117] While smaller commonplace books were recommended for reasons of portability, there was no standard size. See Earle Havens, "'Of Common Places, or Memorial Books': An Anonymous Manuscript of Commonplace Books and the Art of Memory in Seventeenth-Century England" and Fred Schurink, "Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England."

[118] It is easy from a twenty-first-century perspective to assume that notebooks were disposable, but this does not appear to have been the case: commonplace books could be valued quite highly, as the will of the seventeenth-century gentleman Edward Pudsey indicates: Pudsey specifically included his commonplace books in his will, leaving them to his son (Schurink 466). Adam Smyth observes in "Commonplace Book Culture: A List of Sixteen Traits" that individual commonplace books were often used by multiple people, either at the same time or as part of a multi-generational project that could last for decades or even centuries (106).

The act of commonplacing carries with it the expectation of engaging with a society that produced those texts, one that taken to its extreme could result in "a literature which is a code of references and allusions understood only by an educated élite" (Moss, "Printed Commonplace Books" 515). Part of Hamlet's process of becoming a revenger requires him to detach himself from that network of associations, as the revenger himself is typically corrupted himself in the process of purging the society (Griswold 65). Rather than the merely asocial scholar that he was earlier in the play, Hamlet becomes an overtly antisocial disruption, first through his feigned madness and later through his killings. Hamlet instead begins to use books as a shield, imposing one between himself and Polonius that he contemptuously dismisses the contents of this book as "Words, words, words" to Polonius (2.2.192), stressing the degree to which he has been bombarded by texts as well as how impervious to textual meaning he has supposedly become.

Within Hamlet's metaphor, the commonplace book suggests permanence not merely because it, unlike a table-book, is not erasable, but also because the act of inscribing information into it requires him to contemplate the information included in his tables a second time, fixing them within his thinking in a manner that parallels twenty-first-century conceptions of short-term and long-term memory. Perhaps counter-intuitively, commonplace books were envisioned as actually strengthening memory. As Donald Beecher has argued, commonplace books redirected classical mnemonic devices from associating memories with imagined places (*loci*) to associating them with writing on the physical page (Beecher 379). Where the use of *loci* internalized a version of the outside world in order to better help the mind order itself, commonplace books

externalize portions of the human mind onto the written page. As Andy Clark and David Chalmers have famously argued, such instances require us to understand the human mind as extended into the world around the human being, so that even if human consciousness remains wholly internal, cognition can occur outside the human being's physical body (10). Clark and Chalmers offer an illustrative example of an Alzheimer's patient "remembering" a fact by consulting a notebook where the information is written, arguing that the using a notebook to remember is entirely analogous to remembering the information without an external aid (12-13). The commonplace book, properly used, serves not to wholly replace organic memory but to help the user determine which information comes to the forefront. Functioning as a kind of index, the commonplace book organizes quotations into distinct thematic categories, which in turn are supposed to serve as prompts for memories within their owner's brain (Yeo 122-23). The skillful user could use his book not only to track down specific books for full context but additionally to build a series of cognitive links to information he had stored in his memory.

Hamlet's book and volume dedicated entirely to remembering the Ghost presents an attempt to sever these cognitive links. In purging his tables of all extraneous materials, he will prevent it from triggering memories he no longer wants. Instead, the commonplace book will serve to constantly reinforce thoughts of his lost father, blocking out all "baser matter" and territorializing Hamlet's assemblage to exclude everything that does not fit with his program of revenge. Hamlet here parallels Alice Arden's dream of a book's contents being wholly interchangeable: where Alice hoped to establish a gap between private and public personas by rewriting her prayer book, Hamlet imagines that

he can wholly overwrite what he was before he encountered the Ghost. In this respect, Hamlet appropriates all agency within his assemblage to his human element: rather than allowing his commonplace book to guide his thoughts to memories that are not related to revenge, Hamlet will place the Ghost's commands in the center of his thinking.

The difficulty with Hamlet's fantasy is two-fold. First a commonplace book cannot be erased as easily as a table-book's pages.[119] The commonplace book, not being invented to be erasable, shows traces of everything it once contained, whether through ink-marks, indentations left by the pen, or the stubs of torn out pages. Even if he could erase or replace the commonplace book, however, Hamlet retains the memories that it was intended to point him to: the commonplace book was expected to guide rather than replace memory. Further, commonplace books were intended to serve as a way to emphasize judgment of the texts in place (Yeo 121-22); finding a commonplace suitable for collection required engagement with the text and the discarding of all things extraneous to it (Havens, *Commonplace Books* 8). If Hamlet's "tables" refer both to a table-book and a commonplace book, then there is a suggestion that he is writing his observations at least twice, which in turn necessitates him reading them multiple times. The process of repetition would anchor them within his assemblage beyond the survival of the book(s) in which they were noted. The commonplace book embodies the network of connections between different books that Hamlet has studied before encountering the Ghost, a network of which Hamlet is the focal point and that will exist as long as Hamlet

[119] It is debatable whether a table-book itself can actually be erased entirely: the wax or gesso used as a writing surface may well carry traces of its former writing, particularly if the stylus used to write upon it was applied too heavily and scratches the material beneath the writing surface.

himself does. As Michael Andrews suggests, Hamlet's mind more closely resembles a library than a single book and consequently can never hold only the Ghost's command: it is not that Hamlet has trouble remembering — even before the Ghost's appearance, Hamlet's mind dwells on his father — but that Hamlet appears unable to remember only one thing (261). His encounter with the Players quickly demonstrates that Hamlet is stuffed to the brim with text, able to quote speeches he heard only once, years earlier (2.2.430-44). It seems plausible that Hamlet transcribed the speech into his commonplace book at the time, a common enough practice, and in so doing the text has evidently become not merely physical but also permanently lodged within Hamlet's mind. It may not have been triggered by the commonplace book, but it was anchored there through Hamlet's book production.[120]

While Hamlet is a special case with regard to access to books — he is both a prince and a university scholar — his remark acts as a reminder of the greater number of books available at the time of the play's writing. In the early seventeenth century, information overload was becoming an increasing problem, one that could be partially mitigated by the use of commonplace books to filter other books and establish privileged connections. The commonplace book that Hamlet envisions wiping clean of associations stands in metaphorically for Hamlet's memory, but stands in literally as a method to organize the ideas that are already in his head. The "old saws of books" are never really erased, as his encounter with the Players indicates, but are at best pushed aside in favor of

[120] As Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass note in "The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays," plays did not merely find their way into commonplace books during performance: some published playbooks marked likely passages for inclusion in commonplace books with marginal symbols or a change in font (376).

other ideas more in keeping with the Ghost's command. Hamlet's difficulty, as Rhodri Lewis points out, is that memories cannot be destroyed by an act of will and the only way to truly achieve the kind of mnemonic oblivion that Hamlet promises would be through suicide (629-30). While Hamlet famously discusses suicide later in the play, it is not an approach that he considers here. Instead, he almost immediately returns to his tables and begins adding fresh information to them, namely the observation that "one may smile and smile and be a villain." Hamlet's turn from the permanence of the commonplace book back to the erasable table-book is worth pausing over not merely because it emphasizes the temporary nature of memory dramatized throughout the play (Stallybrass et al. 415-18) but also because of the way the table-book acts as a staging ground for the commonplace book. In the process of self-assembly Hamlet is currently engaged in, the intermediate step of table-book between thought and permanent memory represents a way for Hamlet to mediate his own thinking. The table-book presents a delay in the prince's thinking by requiring him to put his observation into words before he commits it to memory. Hamlet's use of books to filter his thinking moves allows him to cope with his potential memories by "'off-loading' them into a material object, the erasable 'tables' in which he scribbles his vow and his uncle's character" (Wilder 556). In putting his ideas into a Latourian intermediary like the notebook, Hamlet forces himself to pause over whether a given thought is indeed "meet [he] set it down" or not.

Obvious though the insight that villains too can smile may be, Hamlet's decision to make it the first thing he adds to his book alongside his memory of the Ghost suggests the direction that he intends to take his reconstruction of himself. Where Hieronimo

takes a literary text as the impetus to abandon Christian patience in favor of direct action, Hamlet demonstratively writes in his tables while he remains on stage and then allows the new text to take hold. Disconnecting his inner state from his outer state as Claudius has, Hamlet takes on his "antic disposition" (1.5.173), a disposition that closely resembles the gloomy one he adopted before and thus reinforces Hamlet's self-depiction as a book that can be overwritten without its covers changing much. His first appearance after meeting the Ghost has him enter with a book, allowing him to project a persona as a melancholy scholar who has finally snapped upon reading too much.[121]

Polonius's investigation of Hamlet's madness mirrors Hamlet's book-use with a book of his own: as part of his investigations into Hamlet's madness, Polonius prepares Ophelia to meet him with the instructions for her to

> Read on this book
> That show of such exercise may color
> Your loneliness. We are oft to blame in this:
> 'Tis too much proved that with devotion's visage
> And pious action we do sugar o'er
> The devil himself. (3.1.46-51)

Polonius seeks to deploy the prayer book as a distraction, focusing Hamlet's attention on it and Ophelia and thereby keeping him from noticing that Polonius and Claudius are watching him. Within the tableau of Ophelia and Hamlet, the prayer book serves to justify Ophelia's solitude, framing it within proper expectations: as Retha Warnicke observes, there seems to have been a general consensus among Protestant writers in early

[121] Hardin Craig has suggested that the book that Hamlet carries with him in this scene may be Jerome Cardanus's *De consolatione* (1576), citing the parallels between Cardanus's book and the later "To be or not to be" speech. The implication that Hamlet's most famous speech is itself a rephrasing of sentiments culled from books further suggests that far from making the Ghost's commandment the only concept within his brain, Hamlet is bent on assembling a series of texts around that central conceit.

Stuart England that "women should have solitary moments alone for prayer, reading, and meditation" (139). By presenting Ophelia as taking time aside to read alone, Polonius hopes to reiterate to Hamlet, whom he imagines to be in love with Ophelia, that Ophelia is a properly virtuous woman. Hamlet does indeed appear to recognize the prayer book as a sign of piety, requesting that Ophelia remember him in her prayers, indicating that Polonius's expectation that the book will color his response to finding Ophelia alone is justified.

Like Alice Arden's prayer book, Ophelia's book is intended to propagate a fictional version of her. Unlike Alice, however, Ophelia is not responsible for the deception, instead meekly following along with her father's plans. Her quiet obedience and attempts to return Hamlet's letters to him during the scene suggest that the prayer book's representation of her identity may actually be accurate: her behavior falls neatly into step with that one might expect of a woman taking the time to read her prayer book. As Elizabeth Williamson observes, this is part of the problem: taken along with Claudius's prayers in the chapel, Ophelia's prayer book stages the ease with which the gestures and props of prayer can be appropriated for deception (380-81). Ophelia is, willingly or not, an actress. Hamlet is placed in the same position as the audience in *The Spanish Tragedy* seeing Hieronimo's book: the book interposes itself between him and Ophelia. When Hamlet grows suspicious, he repurposes Ophelia's book into a sign that she is a deceiver and so belongs in a nunnery (3.1.122). The use of the prayer book in the scene reiterates Hamlet's own presentation of a book as being identical with the person

who carries it, both as something that can be deliberately orchestrated and as something that cannot escaped.

Polonius's ham-fisted attempt to deploy books to ensnare Hamlet offers an alternative to the way that Hamlet develops his sense of self, namely one where books are merely held forth rather than actually incorporated into an assemblage. Scott Huelin has suggested that Polonius's farewell to Laertes, when he showers the younger man with pithy advice, demonstrates an inability to use texts effectively: his advice to Polonius "suggests that he has, at least figuratively, turned in his commonplace book to a heading such as "Advice to Youth upon Traveling" (30). Polonius appears like a walking commonplace book, but where Hamlet attempts to use his book to control his thoughts and determine his next course of action, Polonius merely strings together a series of thematically related aphorisms. Taken separately, none of Polonius's advice to his son is foolish or inappropriate, but as an aggregate with no attempt to advance a larger argument, they come off as trite and ineffectual. The contrast between Polonius and Hamlet presents two alternate modes in which commonplace books (and books more generally) are used in the play: Polonius attempts to impose texts upon other characters while Hamlet attempts to force them into his assemblage. When Hamlet offers to write down the Ghost's commands, he is enacting literally what other characters are doing figuratively, taking notes for future remembrance. Hamlet's desire to write down what the Ghost has said suggests that he will keep the Ghost's words with him constantly, not merely mentally but physically as well.

In part, Hamlet's struggle to control the contents of his mind is a testament to how much work he has already done to arrange his mind in its current configuration. Hamlet cannot forget what he has learned because like a well-developed commonplace book, his memory is already heavily written upon. Hamlet's hesitation in killing Claudius seems to stem not merely from possible doubt in the Ghost's word but also in his inability to forget the commandments already present within his mind. Huelin points to the overlap between some of Hamlet's remonstrances to his mother and Matthew's Gospel, suggesting that the Bible remains powerfully present in Hamlet's memory (Huelin 40), as it does when he spots his uncle praying in act 3, scene 3. The Biblical injunction against murder must first be overwritten for Hamlet to coolly plan his uncle's death and never seems to fully erased: Hamlet's attack on his uncle seems less an act of vengeance for his father so much as a reflexive attack upon realizing that Hamlet himself has been poisoned (5.2.264). Hamlet must forget himself in order to become the revenger required by the narrative of the play, struggling not merely in terms of what he can erase but also what he can inscribe on himself: the Ghost returns later in the play and implores Hamlet, "Do not forget. This visitation / Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose" (3.4.100-1), after which, as Stallybrass et al. have noted, the Ghost vanishes out of the play and only Hamlet is left behind (419). This disappearance of the Ghost coincides with Hamlet's increasing directness: he kills Polonius and becomes much more dynamic, challenging Claudius's authority with an mocking demeanor, taking steps to eliminate Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and eventually dueling Laertes. By the end of the play, it appears that even if Hamlet has been unable to fully erase his earlier memories, he has at the very

least managed to put the Ghost's command into a central place within his book and thereby a central place in his identity assemblage, finally becoming the revenger he has been struggling to become throughout.

At the start of the play, Hamlet insists that his tables will be purged, only to turn around and recite a lengthy speech from memory. The contradiction inherent in Hamlet's desires and Hamlet's dithering throughout the play highlight the difficulty of the task before him. Although he begins the play already muttering against Claudius, the thought that Claudius might have actually murdered his father has apparently not occurred to him yet and his ire seems chiefly raised both by Claudius's incestuous marriage to Gertrude and his own inability to return to Wittenberg and his books. The Ghost's insistence that Claudius is a murderer requires time for Hamlet to fully assimilate, as emphasized by Hamlet's seeming inability to purge his table-book. Hamlet therefore must repeatedly work to affirm and support the commandment he has copied into the volume of his brain, deploying tricks like the Mousetrap play-within-a-play in order to repeatedly re-inscribe the Ghost's commands into his table-book. In so doing, he can develop an alternate series of mnemonic triggers in his mind so that the knowledge he has previously collected — and is unable to purge fully — will be supplanted by a stock of knowledge about villainy and how best to combat villainy.

Within *Hamlet*, books are used to represent both the interior and the exterior of the characters on the stage. Hamlet's representation of himself as a commonplace book stuffed with texts emphasizes the difficulty in rewriting the self. The production of a commonplace book is a far more important act than reading it: finding and isolating

commonplaces serves to build links between the writer and other texts surrounding him. The book serves as an index of the owner's memory rather than a replacement for it and so completely starting anew, as Hamlet hopes to do, proves difficult. Having characterized his mind in physical terms, Hamlet discovers that books are not as easily repurposed as his needs suggest: the table-book's surface may still show signs of its former use and the commonplace book, even if thoroughly cleansed, will likely show traces of its former contents. At best, the book can become a palimpsest, its new text visually dominant over the old text. Hamlet struggles throughout the play to bring his father's command to the forefront. Rather, he immediately supplements that command, which he swore to keep as the sole matter of his mental book, with a written admonition to himself to remember that appearances can be deceiving. Tellingly, the first way that he does so involves presenting a book alongside his enactment of mad behavior, but the same way that Polonius will attempt to fool him about Ophelia through the presentation of a prayer book alongside appropriately private womanly behavior. Mediating the interaction between the book's user and other people, the book in *Hamlet* serves to filter characters' sense of one another, revealing at the same time the degree to which those characters have incorporated those books into their assemblages.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with a brief moment from *Richard III*, where Richard and Buckingham orchestrate a particular book-human assemblage for the masses. There, Richard appears at the center of an assemblage consisting of himself, a prayer book, and

two bishops, who serve to mark him as a worthy claimant to the throne of England: learned, virtuous, and pious. Richard and Buckingham curate Richard's self as something to be seen, to be placed on display, rather than as anything true or consistent beyond this one scene. In this instance, assemblage theory merely codifies the reasonable assessment that the objects surrounding an individual determine how that individual is seen: clothes make the man by signaling his social class and personal wealth. Books, like clothes, signal information about the person who owns or interacts with, so that Richard (and, in *Hamlet*, Ophelia) can attempt to generate a given identity not merely through specific action but through specific presentation of a book-prop. Graft a book onto the outside of an assemblage, Richard and Buckingham suggest, and people will see the assemblage in the light of that book.

Richard's use of the prayer book as a prop draws our attention to the mediated quality of books on stage. The book could be blank and still have the same effect on the audience, provided that a particular meaning for it is offered. Once that meaning has been attached to the book, the book mediates access to its holder: Richard is holding a prayer book, therefore he must be a pious man. In this respect, Shakespeare's play (and the stage more generally) articulates a theme already present in everyday life, namely that books are often prized as much for their physical presence as they are for their contents. Few people upon entering a person's study will immediately begin opening their books to see what is inside them but most people will draw conclusions about their owner in terms of the size and physical quality of the books on the shelves. The assumption inherent in any such encounter is that the books are not always kept on display but have actually

been read and incorporated into the assemblage of their owner. A quotation from a book may speak more loudly than a physical artifact since it is assumed to have been completely absorbed into the reader's assemblage rather than remaining a physical prop. Understandably, Buckingham recommends that Richard not merely be found with the book on hand but be discussing its contents with two bishops. Taken in conjunction with the prayer book, the bishops' ostensible role as readers of holy books is emphasized and Richard's deception gains that much more weight.

Where Richard's duplicity in staging his reading is merely one of several schemes, Hieronimo's book in *The Spanish Tragedy* raises questions of agency within the reader-book assemblage. Within the narrative of the play, Hieronimo is unaware that he is being observed by the Andrea's ghost and Revenge; the confusion over the book he holds in his hand is as much his own as it is the audience's. Is "Vindicta mihi" a reminder of a divinely enforced justice or is it an exhortation to take matters into his own hands? The tension between Bible and tragedy, religious fatalism and personal action, is resolved over the course of the speech, during which Hieronimo deterritorializes Biblical verse from his assemblage and chooses to replace it with his book of Senecan drama. His decision to abandon the book in his mind in favor of the `physical book he carries represents a conscious rewriting of his identity. Hieronimo's book takes control of the situation that he has thus far been unable to master, pushing him to commit to his vengeance. In the process, Hieronimo's world increasingly resembles the Senecan text he is reading, staging the intertextuality of Kyd's stagecraft by having a character choose his genre. Once he has changed the book in his assemblage, Hieronimo begins to finally

take charge of the situation in which he finds himself, producing his own books to appropriate other characters' agency. His enemies obey the commands of his strange multi-lingual playbook, surrendering their ability to control or even properly interpret events.

Arden of Faversham presents a similar question about the contents of a book, but this time within a social environment. Alice has evidently been reading her prayer book and, like Hieronimo, has decided to change her behavior because of it. The prayer book takes on the role of a pre-Reformation priest and spiritual counselor, urging Alice to return to her proper social station. Unlike Hieronimo, however, who reconfigures his own assemblage to match the texts that he encounters, Alice reverts to her previous ways. Instead of changing herself, Alice fantasizes about changing her book so that it may function not as a part of her inner self but solely as a public front. As such, her plan taps into post-Reformation anxieties about duplicitous religious behavior: just as the book on stage mediated access to the character carrying it, so too might Protestant paraphernalia conceal a Catholic interior, both literally in the form of a modified Catholic prayer book and figuratively in terms of religious hypocrisy. The difficulty in altering Alice's book, much like Alice's own relapse into adultery, serves as a reminder of the difficulty inherent in fully changing an assemblage: rather than being subject to the whims of a human subject, the assemblage carries a kind of ontological inertia that resists change. In practical bibliographic terms, Alice's book cannot be simply changed in the manner she envisions; it would be easier to replace the book entirely with a new one. Her insistence that she can change the book's contents and thereby adopt a new public persona even as

she regularly fails to avoid suspicion stages the difficult inherent in keeping public and private separate in the Renaissance.

Much the same way that Alice attempts to replace her book's contents altogether, Hamlet tries to deal with the corruption he encounters in Denmark by writing a new version of himself. As Hamlet is quick to recognize, his new revenger-self can only exist if he purges other memories and ideas from his mind and replaces them with the Ghost's commands. Unfortunately for Hamlet, neither book nor memory can be perfectly erased but always bear traces of their former condition. Hamlet therefore deploys his tables not merely to attempt to erase his memory but to establish alternate ideas and memory triggers. Although he hyperbolically claims that only the Ghost's memories will exist within his mind, he then immediately adds an observation about exteriors not matching interiors, the beginning of an arsenal of not merely political tricks but also guidelines for his own thinking. Hamlet curates his assemblage through addition, bringing more and more elements into his memory in order to at least crowd out his previous self. The book Hamlet writes in during the beginning of the play draws attention to the way Hamlet must judiciously select what enters into his assemblage if he wishes to become the revenger he needs to be. As such, Hamlet's project juxtaposes the themes of both *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Arden of Faversham*: like Hieronimo, Hamlet intends to rewrite himself into an action-bent hero but unlike Hieronimo, he chooses to base this new self not on a pre-existing text but on a text that he compiles himself. His second addition to the text after the Ghost's command is of the gap between inner and outer, private and public, an

observation that he puts to use in his own plans as well as in judging the other characters he encounters.

Running through these texts is a sense of that the deployment of books as a metaphor for the self carries with it a sense that the human self is both malleable and yet retains traces of its former state. Rather than allowing specific elements of an assemblage to be easily jettisoned, connections to older versions of the assemblage are revealed. The human subject must exert his or her agency in order to either continue a previously existing assemblage or to selectively deterritorialize the borders of his or her assemblage. Books in particular serve both to inscribe a new self and as a means to invite others to read that self. Even as they offer insight into the character of the person associated with them, however, books are constantly mediated by their user. The user's behavior towards the book serves not merely to determine where and how the book fits into their assemblage, but additionally alters how the book is seen from the outside. Rather than locating agency in one or the other place, the heavy mediation of books seen on the stage invites us to consider agency as arising out of the interaction between different subjects within the assemblage. Neither human nor book is entirely in control.

READING AND THE TRAVELING BOOK

In his 1621 treatise *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton takes up Montaigne's anecdote about how the invading Goths weaponized Greek libraries against the defeated Greeks. The Goths leave the Greeks many books to read, assuming that the act of reading and study will leave them weak, effeminate, and unable to fend off future invasions. Montaigne's account serves to illustrate how books, irrespective of their content, may form the character of those who read them; Burton adds a medical diagnosis to his analysis of the incident:

> For (as Machiavel holds) study weakens their bodies, dulls the spirits, abates their strength and courage; and good scholars are never good soldiers, which a certain Goth well perceived, for when his countrymen came into Greece, and would have burned all their books, he cried against it, by all means they should not do it; "Leave them that plague, which in time will consume all their vigour, and martial spirits." The Turks abdicated Corcutus, the next heir, from the empire, because he was so much given to his book: and 'tis the common tenent of the world, that learning dulls and diminisheth the spirits, and so *per consequens* produceth melancholy. (I, 301).

In introducing melancholy into his explanation of why books should harm a human's disposition, Burton moves bookishness into a different register from Montaigne. Where Montaigne explains the weakness of scholars through neglect of their bodies, Burton situates reading within the realm of humoral discourse.[122] Rather than being characterized through a lack of physical exercise, reading produces a specific humor, one that inhibits martial energy. In discussing human-book interactions in terms of the

[122] Montaigne does not mention melancholy in his essay on schoolmasters at all, though he does suggest in a companion piece "On educating children" that a melancholy person may be inclined to bookishness, warning that a boy may be "over-devoted to studying his books because of a solitary or melancholy complexion" (184) and that it is important to vary a child's activities.

humors, Burton and other writers discussing the melancholy scholar trope implicitly shift books and reading into discussions of space and the environment. Humoral theory emphasized the notion that the human body is not discrete from its surroundings but constantly open to them, incorporating the food and even surrounding air into itself (Paster, *The Body Embarrassed* 9). As a figure characterized primarily through a particular humor, the melancholy scholar is located within a humoral relationship between individual and environment. Rather than having a clear-cut distinction between inside and outside, the humoral subject is liable to internalize their surroundings, whether deliberately through consumption or inadvertently through mere exposure. Such concerns were paralleled in Renaissance writers' anxieties about how books might alter their reader, possibly without the reader's knowledge or permission.

Gail Kern Paster has suggested that we consider the humoral body as a "Body without Organs," borrowing a term from Deleuze and Guattari (*Humoring the Body* 21), that is to say, a body that does not view different organs as clearly discrete entities but rather as areas of concentration of particular properties inherent in the body. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari use the idea of such a body — "a body populated by multiplicities" (30) — to represent deterritorialization taken to the fullest possible extreme, where the distinctions between interior and exterior melt away. Paster argues that the Body without Organs represents a way to model the humoral system's emphasis on change and penetrability, where the human psyche is inextricably linked with its physical make-up and agency is dispersed "from the body out into the

environment and back" (*Humoring the Body* 42).[123] If we consider books as both a material part of the environment that surrounds human subjects as well as metaphorical spaces in their own right, we can begin to see how the act of reading is not merely a failure to engage fully with their surroundings but is a detachment from those surroundings. Reading may cause melancholy both by socially isolating the reader and by enveloping him in an alternate environment where he is subject to foreign influences that he might not otherwise encounter.

As the division between Protestant England and Catholic Europe — Italy in particular — grew wider and the English became increasingly invested in marking continental Europeans as morally inferior to themselves, anxieties about travel to places abroad were supplemented by a fear that those places abroad might come to England.[124] Increased access to foreign books, whether in the original or in translation, made it possible for English readers to travel intellectually as well as physically, and therefore be transported without leaving England. Just as travel opened up new opportunities to establish connections with foreign thinkers, so too did books help incorporate the reader into a network that was no less influential for being wholly imaginary. Reading, in serving as a form of travel, might easily make everyone into a traveler and in so doing

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[123] For more on the interpenetration of human and environment in humoral thought, see Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*; Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*; Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring The Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*; and Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, Mary Floyd-Wilson (eds.), *Reading the Early Modern Passions*.

[124] For more on the definition of continental Europe and particularly Italy as morally inferior to England, see Mareile Pfannebecker, "Early Modern Limitrophies: English Representations of Travel to Italy" and Christopher Martin Thorpe, "Imagining Italy: A Sociological History of Visions of Italy and the Italians in England from 1450 to the Present day."

exposed everyone to the potentially malignant influences of foreign places. Books assembled their readers in much the same way that the foreign environment would. Readers had some degree of control if they read their books carefully and thus could at least partially mitigate the books' effects, but only partially. The act of reading entailed a digestion of the material within the book and thus an incorporation of the book into the reader's assemblage. To read was to be changed. While that change might perhaps be moderated by the reader's age and the stability of their identity assemblage, change was still an inherent part of the reading experience. Humanists sought to harness this possibility of change to improve the moral natures of their pupils, but in doing so remained concerned that books might limit thought or possibly undo previous virtue, a concern that further emphasizes the transformative power that books might hold.

Assemblage theory presents the human subject as the scene of a constant conflict between territorializing forces working to maintain its assemblage in its current state and deterritorializing forces working to alter it, whether by including new elements or expelling old ones, resulting in a new assemblage where the deterritorializing forces, depending on their nature, may be transmuted into territorializing forces or may continue to work at the erosion of the existing assemblage. Taken in concert with the humoral body, books present both a potential addition to the human assemblage as well as a site in which the conflict between (de)territorializing forces may continue. As a material object containing text, the book may be carried around and displayed; as a set of ideas contained within the material book, the book may be read, processed, and absorbed into its reader's behavior. Beyond this, however, the book additionally serves as a way for the space that

it was produced to reach the space where it is read. Whether they are writing about traveling to Italy or merely reading books that originated there, English pamphleteers voice concerns about human identities being radically altered by what they encounter. The Italian book was figured as a speedy trip to the continent, where the reader would be subject to the same noxious environmental influences that he or she might encounter there in the flesh, so that the book became a site of potential deterritorialization as well as an element that might potentially be incorporated. Serving as a projection of the original environment, the book becomes a kind of secondary environment that surrounds the reader and grants him or her a transformative experience.

In the process, the book-human assemblage is caught up in nationalist politics, xenophobia, and general cultural insecurity on the part of the English. Compared to other countries, England produced a comparatively small number of books during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the first English printing press was not established until 1476 (Kastan 84) and overall England was responsible for perhaps four percent of Europe's printed output between 1450 and 1600 (Pettegree 520). England was dependent on imported books and English scholars trying to build their reputations might well print overseas, as in the case of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which was printed abroad until its English translation in 1551 (Pettegree 517). Even as the English book trade was heavily dependent on foreign goods, English Protestantism framed itself in opposition to the Catholic continent. Association with the continent dangerous to the physical and moral health of the English character. This simultaneous attraction and repulsion is perhaps best exemplified in the English attitudes towards Italy, which was seen both as

the cradle of civilization and as the epitome of debauched decadence. Even Roger Ascham, whose anti-Italian diatribe was both typical and foundational for the period, grudgingly admitted that he esteemed the knowledge and learning available in Italy (60). English book-users were in this respect both bibliographically tied to the continent and concerned by the possibility of moral contamination that that association might bring. In this chapter, I examine the relationship between books, their places of origin, and the people whose identities they helped assemble.

Where books come from is closely tied to what books do. Writing about travel abroad, Fulke Greville emphasizes two kinds of books: locally purchased books that extend human senses beyond their immediate surroundings and books produced by the traveler as a way to selectively choose the knowledge and experiences that the traveler incorporates into his assemblage. Greville imagines books as filters for the human mind, objects that can be interposed between the outside world and the human subject to select those foreign elements that are absorbed. The humanist Roger Ascham's famous diatribe against Italy is quickly followed by an attack on Italian books, which move into England and bring with them the same dangers to the English character present in Italy. The easy way that Ascham shifts between traveling overseas and reading books from overseas emphasizes the degree to which books may serve as conduits for foreign environments. Booksellers are implicated in identity assemblage almost as much as book-buyers: the book market collectively introduces foreign elements into English minds and thus into the English national character. Sidney's investment in validating poetic writing engages in questions of how language constitutes and assembles the human self, characterizing

books wholly in terms of the texts that they contain. This property of textually based assemblage was carried through to his writing on travel, where he advises his brother Robert both of the advantages inherent in books over other forms of experiential knowledge and to take a protean attitude towards identity assemblage, blending in with the local environment. Sidney's sense of willing adoption of outside influences was a point of no little concern to his friends, especially the French humanist Hubert Languet, whose letters to Sidney act to emphasize the threat of the outside environment to the reader. Taken together, all three authors represent a model of identity assemblage that is tied in equal measures to books and the surrounding space, blurring the distinction between either. Physical books are presented both as ways for foreign elements to be controlled and for foreign elements to be incorporated into human assemblages. Moreover, particularly for young noblemen, contact with continental Europe, whether through travel or through books, was unavoidable. In Greville, Ascham, and Sidney's writing, books serve as a focal point for concerns about how the English might define themselves — both as individuals and as a nation — in relation to mainland Europe.

Fulke Greville and English Travelers to the Continent

Although the Grand Tour of continental Europe had not yet been institutionalized in the sixteenth century, educational travel to the continent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was more common than might have been expected, with Queen Elizabeth herself encouraging young men to go overseas to further their education

through travel (Warneke 42).[125] Sara Warneke argues that travel abroad was imagined to put the final polish on the aspiring young gentleman, preparing him for a future career at court (70) and ideally benefiting the commonwealth (45) as well, both in terms of providing more knowledgeable citizens and by providing an informal intelligence service. Running in parallel with this sense of travel abroad as an important part of a young man's development was a proliferation of writing about travel, so that by the end of the sixteenth century, there was an increasing number of printed travel reports, advice literature, and fictional representations of travellers to Europe available (Pfannebecker 2). Travel, particularly for aristocrats, was something to be documented and described.

Fulke Greville, today remembered chiefly as Sir Philip Sidney's friend and eventual biographer, includes a letter of travel advice in his *Certaine Learned and Elegant Workes of the Right Honorable Fulke Greville*, published posthumously in 1633.[126] "Of Travel" (c. 1609) — fully titled "*A Letter written by Sir* Fulke Greuill *to his Cousin* Greuill Varney *residing in France, wherein are set downe certaine rules and obseruations, directing him how he may make the best vse of his* Trauels" — is in many

[125] See also James M. Osborn, *Young Philip Sidney 1572–1577*, p. 3.

[126] "As Norman K. Farmer, Jr., has noted, the authorship of "Of Travel" is difficult to verify in spite of its appearance in Greville's works: it closely resembles letters written by Sir Thomas Bodley and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and may be derived from those letters. Greville Varney's brother was sufficiently incensed by news that the letter would be published that he complained to the printer in an attempt to have it be removed, suggesting that he at least took its attribution seriously. In his edition of Greville's prose works, John Gouws deliberately excludes "Of Travel," arguing that is likely not by Greville and would belong, in any event, in a collection of his letters rather than his prose works (xxx), only to include "A Letter to an Honorable Lady." Gouws comments that *Certaine Learned and Elegant* Workes "is a carefully produced book which bears every indication that as far as possible the author's wishes have been adhered to" (xxv). I argue that this care suggests that "Of Travel," even if it was not written by Greville himself, was perceived by the book's publishers as a necessary aspect of Greville's authorial assemblage. Paradoxically, Greville's possible appropriation of the text from another writer reinforces the points made by the letter (see more later in this chapter). For more on the possible authorship(s) of the letter, see Farmer, "Fulke Greville's Letter to a Cousin in France and the Problem of Authorship in Cases of Formula Writing."

respects a typical representation of travel writing in the beginning of the seventeenth century: Greville presents travel as an opportunity for self-improvement as well as a potential pitfall, particularly in a religious context. Alongside observations of how Varney may best profit from his time abroad, Greville additionally introduces book use as an integral part of getting to know a foreign land, both in terms of consumption and production. Books offer more permanence, both in terms of acquiring information and in terms of resisting corruption, than the experience of travel itself. Greville's characterization of both books and human minds is spatial in nature, blurring the boundaries between human, book, and environment.

Signed and dated "this 20. of *Nouember*, 1609," Greville's "Of Travel" presents itself as a letter written specifically to Greville Varney but with the exception of its opening paragraph, which refers to receiving a letter from Varney dated October 19, the rest of the letter is generic and suitable for almost any traveler in France. Greville alludes to a sum of money sent to Varney, but the precise amount is left physically blank, a gap in the text in which the reader can imagine any sum. Varney's name only appears in the title; in the actual text of the letter, the reader is addressed only as "Cousin," which might well denote an intimate friend rather than a specific familial relation.[127] Through the general rather than specific address, Greville takes on the persona of a stern but affectionate patron laying out a series of guidelines, guidelines that are immediately prefaced by a warning that "it is a vulgar scandall of *Trauellers* that few returne more

[127] Although I will not use Varney's name as the addressee of the letter, I will continue to use male pronouns both in the interests of grammatical clarity and because, as Sara Warneke points out, most sixteenth-century English travelers abroad were male (5).

religious than they went out. Wherein both my hope and request is to you, that your principall care be to hold your foundation, and to make no other vse of informing your selfe in the corruptions and superstitions of other Nations, than onely thereby to engage your owne heart more firmely vnto the truth" (Greville 295). The emphasis placed on needing to maintain a pre-existing foundation moves the letter into the register of territorialization: the traveler is warned to reinforce the boundaries between himself and the foreign continent, observing French customs primarily to remind himself of how France is *not* England. Later in the letter, Greville reinforces the distinction between France and England by recommending that while he is studying French history, the traveler acquaint himself with "their Wars, *especially with vs*" (297, emphasis mine). To be outside England is to be in a realm that, if not currently at war with England, is nevertheless figured as in opposition to England and worth studying especially because it serves as a reminder of how England is not subject to foreign corruptions and superstitions.

The English virtue that Greville is most invested in is Protestant piety. He stresses the bifurcated nature of the French country, which he describes as "*Bigarre* of two seuerall Professions," i.e., a motley patchwork of Protestant and Catholic factions, and charges the traveler to take care in discovering "the ordinances, progresse, & strength of each in reputation and party, and how both are supported, ballanced, and managed by the State, as being the contrary humours, in the temper, or predominancy whereof the health or disease of that body doth consist" (295-96). In ascertaining the religio-political landscape of France, the traveler may gain both knowledge about the extent to which

English interests may be received in France as well as gaining an opportunity "as a *Christian*, to consider both the beauties and blemishes, the hopes and dangers of the Church in all places" (Greville 296). Greville's allusion to religious factions as humors within the French body politic, coupled with an emphasis throughout "Of Travel" on the need to study and survey French customs for both interior and exterior benefits, underscores the interpenetration of human subject and surrounding environment. Particularly given Greville's concern that travelers may lose their religion abroad, we find a palpable sense of potential contamination throughout the letter. Greville remains wary of danger throughout his advice, warning his traveler that he runs the risk of wasting his time abroad either in excessive censure of foreign ways or by indulging "in an infectious collection of base *vices* and *fashions* of Men and Women, and generall corruptions of these times" (297-98). Greville's letter is in line with a sense among English writers that travel abroad could do more harmful than good, a concern that was steadily increasing during the second half of the sixteenth century (Warneke 58), though he attempts to keep an eye open to potential profit as well.

"Of Travel" explicitly links this harm with worldliness and engaging too much with his social surroundings. Greville warns that he knows the world "too well to perswade you to diue into the practises thereof, rather stand vpon your guard against all that tempt you therunto, or may practise vpon you in your conscience, your reputation, or your purse" (296). The inclusion of the traveler's reputation and financial resources alongside his conscience serves as a reminder that it is impossible to engage with the world — here, specifically French culture — without being somehow affected by it, if

only because worldly engagement has a monetary cost. The traveler cannot travel unchanged through France, yet that is precisely what Greville counsels him to do: the traveler must simultaneously remain attentive to his surroundings — his purpose abroad is, after all, to study and learn from them — without allowing them to alter him except to reinforce what he was before he left England. Rather than incorporating foreign elements into his assemblage, the traveler must aggressively territorialize himself, making himself an island of Englishness in a foreign space. Having come away from England knowing the implicitly Protestant truth, the traveler is expected to use contact with French culture as a means to commit himself to that truth again.

In order to achieve this paradoxical end, Greville offers books both as a means to limit the potential damage done to the traveler by the environment and as a pragmatic way to easily expand the scope of the traveler's explorations. "For the *Country*; though you cannot see all places, yet if as you passe along you enquire carefully, and further helpe your selfe with Books that are written of the *Cosmography* of those parts; you shall thereby sufficiently gather the strength, riches, trafficke, hauens, shipping commodities, vent; and the wants and disaduantages of all places" (296). Secondhand information, whether acquired by questioning others or through books, appears to be nearly as useful in acquiring information about a nation as actually visiting it. Books in particular are figured as giving access to a broad, universal map of the nation exceeding the scope of a single person's experience. The experience may be less thorough in its scope than actually going to see every place in a given country, but it is "sufficient," suggesting that

for Greville, the facts that are worth knowing about a foreign location are generally the ones that will be recorded and available for sale.

Given the value Greville places on the books that the traveler purchases in the course of his or her travels, one is almost invited to ask whether it is necessary to actually travel to a foreign space in order to understand it if sufficient books are on hand. A core component of Greville's travel advice is for the traveler to produce books himself: he exhorts the traveler

> straine your wits and industry soundly to instruct your selfe in all things betweene heauen and earth which may tend to *Vertue*, *Wisedome*, and *Honour*, and which may make your life more *Profitable* to your *Countrey*, and your selfe more *Comfortable* to your *Friends* and *acceptable to God*.
>
> And to conclude; let all these riches bee treasured vp not onely in your Memory, (where time may lessen your stocke) but rather in good Writings, and Bookes of accompt; which will keepe them safe for your vse hereafter. (Greville 297-98)

The book is presented as a storehouse where information can be accumulated and then deployed at will by the possessor, ensuring safety and permanence to the knowledge acquired by the traveler. Greville stresses the need for a journey to produce knowledge that will remain constant rather than becoming easily dated, counseling earlier in the letter against paying attention to local court gossip since it "may haply change before you come home" (297). The things worth learning are those that can be recorded and kept for later use in a commonplace book.

This recommendation for commonplacing is emphasized by the sententious quality found throughout "Of Travel." Farmer observes that much of the letter appears generic and possibly may have been taken entirely from the writings of another author; the inclusion of such writing within *Certaine Learned and Elegant Workes* reinforces the notion that the reader should feel free to copy and recontextualize those portions of the letter that seem useful to him or her. Already carried within a miscellany, the reader is invited to consider the letter not merely as a unified text but as a series of elements available for transcription into a commonplace book of his or her own. Renaissance

education emphasized the need for commonplacing not merely as a supplement for memory but also to hone the reader's judgment about which textual passages were worth recording in the first place.[128] Greville calls for a similar level of discrimination in observing the foreign climate, so that the traveler may recognize what qualities will lead him to virtue, wisdom and honor and which are best discarded as mere corruptions and superstitions. The reader's encounter with Greville's book, switching as it does between didactic poetry, prose letters, and drama, parallels a journey to France in that it invites the accumulation of information to be entered into the commonplace book. Greville's exhortation to his reader to write down what he sees abroad implicitly recommends that the reader begin by writing down what he sees in the physical book already in front of him.

Suggesting that books contain the information worth knowing — i.e., not court gossip but reliable information about the disposition of different factions and how the French government is designed — Greville's letter argues that books provide both permanence and relevance to the information contained within them. Information too changeable to be recorded becomes less valuable; encounters with foreign lands are worth dwelling on only if they can be physically written down and stabilized. The book as written, whether published for wider consumption or produced as a commonplace book for personal notes, necessarily abstracts a smaller portion of the environment it describes and consequently may well have a similar result on the person as its subject matter. As a result, the book takes on a new dimension as the product of someone's labor

[128] See William E. Engel, "Montaigne's *Essais*: The Literary and Literal Digesting of a Life" and Richard Yeo, "Notebooks as Memory Aids: Precepts and Practices in Early Modern England."

becomes crucial: somebody, perhaps a native Frenchman, perhaps a traveling Englishman, has written the book and thereby produced this alternate space. Books act to isolate elements of the environment they stem from, but in isolating and territorializing a particular portion of that environment, they do not become wholly safe, as the regular invectives by English writers against foreign books entering the English market indicate.

Running throughout "Of Travel" is a sense that books serve as a means to control and filter the environment around the reader. When Greville tells his traveler to acquire wisdom during his time abroad, he tells him that his best guide will be "the knowledge of the *Country* and the *People* among whom you liue" (296), yet he is quick to supplant actually seeing the country with books about the country. Whether transcribed into a commonplace book or purchased, the books supplant the nation by becoming spaces within which the nation's traits are replicated for private study. Contained within the book, the environment becomes manageable and the risks that Greville warns may ensue to his conscience, reputation, and finances are reduced, particularly with respect to the traveler's reputation and purse. The book is conceptualized as, if not an entirely safe space, then at least a safer space for the reader. The book can be interposed between him and the space it describes, thereby mediating his interaction with the space it describes. In becoming a secondary space, however, the book becomes subject to similar concerns as the environment. Although the traveler's purse may be safe, his reputation may still be altered if people know what he is reading and his conscience remains as vulnerable to change as it was before. Rather than reinforcing the edges of the reader's assemblage by removing him from outer influence, possession of the book necessarily acts as a

deterritorializing force and opens the assemblage up to include the book. Interior and exterior remain entangled rather than remaining distinct.

"Of Travel" thematizes the way books can supplement — and potentially replace — the experience of a (foreign) space for the traveler. Considering the encounter with the foreign as a form of territorialization — i.e., maintaining rather than expanding or contracting the boundaries of an assemblage — presents the traveler as carrying a portion of the places they have been with them. Greville's traveler is an Englishman in a French environment and runs the risk of coming back with undesirable portions of France clinging to his assemblage. Human subjects in an unfamiliar environment may either acclimatize, potentially stripping away their good qualities, or resist and reinforce their boundaries. In either case, we are shown a view of human assemblages as responding to encounters with the outside world, dynamic rather than static. Greville's letter serves as a primer on ways books should be used in tandem with both travel and the curation of a human self; it sets us up nicely both to consider Roger Ascham's more caustic examination of Italy in the context of education and book use.

Roger Ascham and Italian Books Traveling to England

When Fulke Greville discusses the use of books to help mediate English travelers' experiences of foreign environments, he focuses on the books that are produced and acquired abroad. The humanist and pedagogue Roger Ascham's concern with Italian books considers the impact of foreign books coming to England and bringing part of their original environments. The implicit question that Greville's writing raises about whether

it is necessary to leave England to explore France is an explicit worry in Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* (1570), where Ascham expresses a distaste for both the Italian nation and Italian books that have been imported to England. Ascham is commonly taken to represent a particularly vociferous example of increasing English distrust about Italian culture in the later half of the sixteenth century.[129] Ascham combines his worries about travels to Italy with a concern that Italy has already reached England and now threatens his pupils in two spaces: the court and the bookshop. The effect of the Italianate court and Italian books is depicted as a reorganization of Englishmen's assemblages, deterritorializing them so that virtues can be extracted and vices implanted in their place, a reconfiguration that Ascham fears can not easily be undone.[130]

Ascham structures approach to teaching in *The Schoolmaster* around "three special points: truth of religion, honesty in living, right order in learning" (11). In particular, his pedagogy is centered around a belief that not only a pupil's skills and knowledge, but also his or her basic inclinations are learned behaviors and as such implicitly fall under the schoolmaster's purview. Ascham argues that any child can be

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[129] Christopher Martin Thorpe argues that English attitudes towards Italy from 1534 until 1680 are characterized by a steady increase of negative visions of religious corruption and immorality that gradually supplant earlier, more positive images of Italian civilization and urbanity (54-57). For more on Italianate fashion and English responses to it, see George B. Parks, "The First Italianate Englishmen"; Sara Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England*; and Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*.

[130] While Ascham is quite effusive in his praise of Queen Elizabeth, whom he holds up as a model for young men to emulate in her mastery of Latin and Greek, he is generally speaking about male students throughout *The Schoolmaster*. With its emphasis on rhetoric and speech acts, a humanist education was aimed at public action, leaving little room for women. For more on humanism and women, see Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching*, especially 111ff.; Hilda L. Smith, "Humanist Education and the Renaissance Concept of Woman"; Catherine Loomis, "'Now began a new miserie': The Performance of Pedagogy in Nicholas Breton's *The Miseries of Mavillia*"; Chris Laoutaris, "The Radical Pedagogies of Lady Elizabeth Russell"; and Deborah Uman, "'Wonderfullye astonied at the stoutenes of her minde': Translating Rhetoric and Education in Jane Lumley's *The Tragedie of Iphigeneia*."

brought to enjoy learning: rather than being attributable to innate tendencies, "the matter lieth not so much in the disposition of them that be young as in the order and manner of bringing-up by them that be old" (34). While Ascham's assertion that the proper application of positive reinforcement will change even the most recalcitrant child into a studious scholar is heartening at first glance, it carries a dark side to it as well. If even desires are learned, then the tutor must contend with the threat of new, unsuitable desires being learned as well. To counter this threat, Ascham stresses the need for constant reinforcement of good precepts and through the cultivation of sound judgment on the part of the student so that when he or she is finally released from the schoolmaster's care, the good qualities that he or she has learned will be fully incorporated into his or her assemblage. Properly territorialized through humanist education, the resulting human subject will be resistant to moral corruption.

Ascham is particularly concerned by a sense that young English gentlemen are given too much license too early in their lives, noting that they are given full autonomy just when they are at their most vulnerable (40). Arguing that the virtues instilled in young men are extremely fragile and can be damaged very easily, Ascham inverts the paradigm of reading as digestion by imagining a purgation of good upbringing through an encounter with the corruption available in the court. Ascham warns that

> if we suffer the eye of a young gentleman once to be entangled with vain sights, and the ear to be corrupted with fond or filthy talk, the mind shall quickly fall sick and soon vomit and cast up all the wholesome doctrine that he received in childhood, though he were never so well brought up before. And being once englutted with vanity, he will straightway loathe all learning and all good counsel to the same. (39-40).

Education is correlated with diet and must be continual in order for it to be properly incorporated into the reader's assemblage. Once sinful matter has been imbibed, however, it appears to sour the student's stomach for virtue: the damage is irreparable not because virtuous matter could not be reincorporated, but because the student is unwilling to partake of virtuous material in the future. Ascham stresses the parallel between physical and mental diet, emphasizing that "good and choice meats be no more requisite for healthy bodies than proper and apt words be for good matters and also plain and sensible utterance for the best and deepest reasons" (Ascham 115). Continued health is contingent on the regulation of proper food; continued logic and virtue are contingent on proper intellectual nourishment.

This concern is later taken up in Ascham's famous and lengthy digression about the evils of Italy, both in terms of the general depravity present there and, more importantly, how the unwary visitor to Italy returns to England as an "Italianate" gentleman, chock full of vice.[131] While at first glance Ascham's diatribe seems tangential from his discussion of proper schoolroom pedagogy, as Melanie Ord has observed, it stands as "a test-case for Ascham's pedagogical concern to institute order and ground judgement" (203).[132] Ascham's frustration with Italianism is linked with his frustration with the court and the license granted to young men there, which may lead them away from the good habits they were beginning to develop under their schoolmasters' tutelage.

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[131] While the term "Italianate" was used before Ascham, Ascham is commonly cited as the first to use the term to refer to people rather than rhetorical style (Parks 200). For more on the use of the term after Ascham, see George B. Parks, "The First Italianate Englishmen" and Michael J. Redmond, *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy: Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage*.

[132] See also Robert M. Strozier II, "Theory and Structure in Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*."

Characterizing the court as a place of license, Ascham goes on at great length about his frustration with the fashion of young English gentlemen adopting Italian manners at court, excusing his digression by suggesting that "this whole talk hath tended to the only advancement of truth in religion and honesty of living, and hath been wholly within the compass of learning and good manners, the special points belonging in the right bringing-up of youth" (75). At the heart of his anti-Italianism is Ascham's appropriation of the story of Circe from *The Odyssey*, except that instead of Greek soldiers being physically transformed into animals, Ascham imagines once-virtuous Englishmen returning from Italy bereft of manners and learning: "I know divers that went out of England men of innocent life, men of excellent learning, who returned out of Italy not only with worse manners but also with less learning, neither so willing to live orderly nor yet so able to speak learnedly as they were at home before they went abroad" (63).[133] The transformative effect of a trip to Italy is not external, as Circe's was, but internal, a pressing concern since it meant that returning visitors to England might remain undetected and able to spread their newly acquired foreignness throughout the English state.[134] As Linda Bradley Salamon notes, for Ascham, health stems from physical unity, both in terms of individual humans and for the nation-state as a whole (10); to introduce

[133] For more on Ascham's reading of the Circe story, see Thomas G. Olsen, "Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, Italianate Englishmen, and the Protestant Circe"; Jürgen R. Meyer, "'Italianate Englishmen' and the Renaissance 'Humanimal'"; and Ryan J. Stark, "Protestant Theology and Apocalyptic Rhetoric in Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster*." For Ascham's anti-Italianism more generally, see Melanie Ord, "Classical and contemporary Italy in Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570)" and John Roe, "Machiavellian Dissimulation and Allegory: The Writings of Roger Ascham and Sir Philip Sidney."

[134] Mareile Pfannebecker argues that the association of Italy with vice and corruption stems less from a fear of continental Catholicism but more from anxiety about English Catholics: Italy had to become Catholic and depraved so as to reinforce a notion of England as Protestant and virtuous (21). Ascham and other anti-Italianate writers are thus less concerned with Italy than they are with a need to preserve a pure Englishness from corruption.

foreign matter into one person's assemblage meant to introduce disunity and confusion into the nation as a whole as the traveler returns and infects others with foreign behaviors. Frighteningly, such foreign material could reach England of its own accord rather than having to wait until an English traveler picked some of it up. Italian books were appearing on the English market in ever larger numbers.[135]

This sense of Italian books spreading through England is linked with a recurring concern on Ascham's behalf for how people can develop their moral assemblage. While he asserts at one point that living people have a greater impact "both to good and ill, then [sic] ill than twenty precepts written in books" (Ascham 55), the positive examples he offers are largely characterized in terms of loss and death.[136] Instead, Ascham places his emphasis on books. Thanks to the rise of the book market, many "fond books, of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London, commended by honest titles the sooner to corrupt honest manners, dedicated overboldly to virtuous and honorable personages, the easilier to beguile simple and innocent wits" (Ascham 67). Masquerading as and eventually supplanting the good books that Ascham hopes his

[135] It is unclear precisely which books Ascham had in mind, as he never deigns to provide titles (see below). The most immediate suspect, Machiavelli, was not printed in England until the 1580s, well after Ascham's death, and even then in Italian rather than English translation and with a spurious imprint indicating an Italian city. For more on the publication and reception of Machiavelli in England, see Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*; Redmond, *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy*; and Alessandro Arienzo and Allesandra Petrina, *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England*.

[136] Ascham names King Edward VI, the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Henry Maltravers, Queen Elizabeth, and the Cambridge scholars Sir John Cheke and Doctor Redman. The three aristocrats in particular are lamented rather than praised: If King Edward had lived a little longer, his only example had bred such a race of worthy learned gentlemen as this realm never yet did afford" (55), while Suffolk and Maltravers are "two such examples to the court for learning as our time may rather wish than look for again" (55), emphatically suggesting the lack of such examples currently at the court. Karen Cunningham suggests that the sole living example named, Queen Elizabeth, seems to be cited in part as a kind of shaming tactic for the men of the court, with Ascham drawing conspicuous attention to how this one woman should so outshine all men (Cunningham 219).

pupils will read, the Italian books bridge the spatial gap between England and Italy. Indeed, unlike the human carriers of Italian culture into England, Italian books are omnipresent: whereas "our Englishmen made Italians cannot hurt but certain persons and in certain places, therefore these Italian books are made English to bring mischief enough openly and boldly to all states, great and mean, young and old, everywhere" (Ascham 69). Italianate Englishmen are distinct from fully honest Englishmen and are limited in their predations to certain spaces, but Italian books are able to fully infiltrate England by becoming fully English. As a result, native English virtue threatens to be overturned throughout England to be replaced by vices "as the simple head of an Englishman is not able to invent, nor never was heard of in England before, yea, when papistry overflowed all" (Ascham 69). Rather than being flooded by Catholicism as an institution, England is now flooded by vice in the form of Italian books, effectively the same fate if not a worse one.

Ironically, the only specific example Ascham gives of an Italian book is unusually positive: if his students wish to appear courtly, then Ascham recommends they read Castiglione's *The Courtier*, newly translated by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, "which book, advisedly read and diligently followed but one year at home in England, would do a young gentleman more good, iwis, than three years' travel abroad spent in Italy" (55). Courtliness being the Italian forte, if there was any benefit to be found in Italian travel or Italian writing, it would be found there: however depraved or sensual Italian courts were depicted in English writings, the Italian ability to retain at least the appearance of virtue remains undisputed. As a result, therefore, travel to Italy was imagined to provide the

final polish for the English courtier even as moralists worried about the corruption that awaited young noblemen there. Hoby's translation of *The Courtier* offers a compromise, letting the Englishman stay at home and keep Italy at an arm's length by reading about it. Hoby's translation is presented as a kind of Italian concentrate that has been filtered for proper consumption by the English gentleman. While Ascham is willing to accept *The Courtier* as translated by Hoby as a shield between English readers and Italy, he is less sanguine about the other, unnamed Italian books.

Hovering implicitly behind Ascham's notions of the self is the book as a physical as well as intellectual object. Book production in England during the sixteenth century, as Ian Maclean drily puts it, "is a relatively small field to investigate, when compared with the output of Germany, Italy and France" (340). In 1500, there were only five printers working in England (Kastan 85) and it took until 1557 for the Stationers' Company, which included and regulated all English printers, publishers, and booksellers, to be established. Of a necessity, many books had to be imported and not merely books but also the raw materials to produce books: D. C. Coleman notes that in the 1540s, "there was probably no paper at all being made anywhere in the British Isles" (23). Good paper required a large and regular quantity of linen rags, a difficult resource to acquire in a country that, like England, mostly used and produced wool cloth. Such linen rags as were available were typically bought up and exported by foreigners, leading to considerable frustration on the part of papermakers operating in England.[137] Additionally,

[137] In 1585 the London stationer Richard Tottyl tried to petition both for a monopoly on making white paper in England and for the prohibition of the export of rags, which he cited as one the chief reasons that he and some of his fellow stationers had been unable to start a paper mill earlier (Shorter 16). Paper mills in sixteenth-century England rarely outlived their initial founders and were difficult to maintain: it took until

many early stationers were foreigners, brought to England to lend an experienced hand to English printing enterprises. When Ascham characterizes foreign spaces and ideas as inimical to English virtue, he problematizes commodities that are essential to both his profession and views: books in Renaissance England were by their very nature at least partially imported, whether as a finished good or merely in terms of materials or expertise. Books, which Ascham prizes so highly, carry with them a foreign contamination that they can introduce into the assemblage of the people who engage with them.

Compounding these difficulties, good reading practices in the Renaissance called for marginalia that in itself represented a permanent alteration of the book in question. Readers would underline, comment, draw hands in the margins, and even sometimes sew threads into the page to serve as tabs. Common to all these ways of interacting with the book is a sense of permanence: the book's pages could not be restored to their original state after the annotator has spent some time working on them. At the same time, moreover, the reader him/herself is changed in a similar way: what has been put into him or her cannot be easily removed. Furthermore, the act of reading carries within it an openness to the influences of the text in question. Even if the reader resists the ideas within the text, he or she is still interacting with them and incorporating them, however temporarily, into his or her assemblage. Part of Ascham's concerns revolve around a notion that the human subject carries traces of the assemblages of which he or she has been a part; thus if the Italian books are made part of his or her assemblage, the danger is that they will be permanently part of him or her, spoiling his or her taste for more

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the 1670s for white papermaking in England to become economically sensible (Coleman 54). For more on the difficulties faced by early English papermakers, see Richard L. Hill, *Papermaking in Britain 1488-1988*.

virtuous books. Ascham goes so far as to suggest an active plot on the part of Papists in poisoning Englishmen's minds, arguing that having found that they "could not by their contentious books turn men in England fast enough from truth and right judgment in doctrine," the papists "procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby overmany young wills and wits, allured to wantonness, do now boldly contemn all severe books that sound to honesty and godliness" (Ascham 68). Consequently, Ascham suggests, reading Italian books might as easily leave the reader with a recurring impulse towards vice even after a decided repudiation of those books. The act of travel, so dangerous and corruptive to young gentlemen, is replicated by the books that have come to England from Italy.

Where Greville argues that books may serve as a means to control, filter, and mediate the spaces around their users, Ascham characterizes books as an extension of those spaces. A book from Italy is equivalent to a trip to Italy, potentially multiplied in its effect both by virtue of being textual rather than physical as well as the ease with which the book can be used and reused. Books are the equivalent of years of time spent abroad and, moreover, are now available within England not merely via import but through native production. The Italian environment and, more importantly, the devious Italian vices that would otherwise be beyond the simpler English mentality are now being produced on English soil, eroding the boundaries between England and the continent. Against this, Ascham argues for a rigid territorialization of virtues, engraining proper ethics into the English until they reach the safe age of twenty-seven (Ascham 40). Only by reinforcing the edges and configuration of the human assemblage through regular and

carefully selected tutoring can continued virtue be ensured. Ascham's anti-Italianism and insistence that the human subject needs to be carefully tended and established in such a manner that it can become proof against outside temptations offers us a chance to consider Philip Sidney's arguments about how the Englishman abroad should comport himself and the entanglement of language with human identity.

Philip Sidney and the (In)Active Book

One of the challenges that Philip Sidney, himself an avid reader, faced in *The Defense of Poetry* (c. 1582) was a larger cultural ambivalence about books and reading in general.[138] Elements of this ambivalence appear throughout *The Defense* itself: in "Parody and Its Implications in Sydney's Defense of Poesie," Arthur F. Kinney has suggested that this semi-parodic opening suggests that Sidney is not entirely convinced by his own arguments in favor of poetry, that he parodies rather than rebutting poetry's adversaries directly in part because he partially shares their reservations about poetry, namely that it may lead to vice as easily as virtue. Similarly, Richard Helgerson has drawn attention to Sidney's deathbed request that the *Arcadia* be burned as a sign that he was not entirely comfortable with poetry as a force for good (128). Peter C. Herman has pointed out that when Sidney was asked for advice on which books a given person should read, both by his brother Robert and by his friend Edward Denny, he strikingly does not include any poetry in his recommended reading (14). Within *The Defense*, Sidney struggles against the broader cultural ambivalence about reading by asserting that reading

[138] The *Defense* was first published in 1595 but circulated in manuscript well beforehand.

constitutes a preparation for action rather than a withdrawal from it. In the pages that follow, I first consider the degree to which Sidney reinvents Montaigne's anecdote about the book-preserving Goths before concealing books as active agents. This in turn will provide a platform to discuss Sidney's writings on travel, both in terms of the effect of the environment on the human subject and how books may engage with their readers.

Presented with the argument that poetry is a waste of time since it is more concerned with "writing things fit to be done" rather than "doing things worthy to be written," Sidney responds with a scathing retelling of Montaigne's anecdote of the book-preserving Goths:

> Marry, this argument, though it be leveled against poetry, yet is it indeed a chain-shot against all learning, or bookishness (as they commonly term it). Of such mind were certain Goths, of whom it is written that, having in the spoil of a famous city taken a fair library, one hangman, belike fit to execute the fruits of their wits who had murdered a great number of bodies, would have set fire in it. "No," said another very gravely, "take heed what you do, for while they are busy with those toys, we shall have more leisure to conquer their countries." This is indeed the ordinary doctrine of ignorance and many words sometimes I have heard spent in it. (Sidney 38).

Sidney dismisses the original anecdote's moral that nations grow less valiant as they grow more scholarly by declaring it to be a sign of ignorance.[139] Whereas Montaigne presents the Goths as having sacked Greece in its entirety and leaving the books behind to continue the Greeks' distraction from military exercises, Sidney's Goths have merely conquered a single city and evidently intend to continue the invasion. The Goths' plan

[139] Some of Sidney's vehemence may well stem from his own bookish predilections: his contemporary and eventual biographer Thomas Moffett noted that even as a child, he preferred reading to physical exercise or even food, so that "in place of lunch and dinner he used often to imbibe sciences, liberal arts, and every kind of discipline" (qtd. in Osborn 11).

suggests that the citizens will continue to read books even as they are being invaded, revealing an impressive degree of trust in the scholars' absent-mindedness. The Gothic marauder who suggests the plan is comical in his gravity; the Goths who go along with it seem not merely unschooled but actively foolish.

In the course of the anecdote, Sidney adds the term "bookishness" only to set it aside in favor of the term "learning." In preferring "learning" to "bookishness," Sidney expertly moves books out of the line of fire by suggesting that they are Latourian intermediaries and therefore not heavily involved in the constitution of the human self. Rather than serving as toys that can distract the citizens from the invasion in progress, Sidney's books vanish from the direct line of sight. Agency is instead placed in the hands of the human subject engaging not with books but with knowledge directly. Countering the Goths' suggestion that reading can become so engrossing that it blocks our view of the world, Sidney argues that "it is manifest that all government of action is to be gotten by knowledge, and knowledge best by gathering many knowledges, which is reading" (38). Reading is shifted from being sedentary or distracting to being a prelude to action and in the process Sidney emphasizes the action of reading itself. Bookishness, that unhealthy devotion to books as opposed to the world, is dismissed in favor of the gathering of knowledge: books, if they figure at all, are vessels in which knowledge is stored and accessed rather than a force on their own that might shape the human subject. As a result, learning (and books as the means of learning) is figured as a direct engagement with the world and, in the case of poetry, a motivator of action.

In *The Defense*, Sidney's focus is on language and how it shapes the human subject. Books to Sidney appear largely important only as the vehicles that transmit the language he considers formative; his dismissal of "bookishness" — a word that emphasizes the physical object — in favor of the more abstract "learning" places the focus on human beings. By contrast, in his correspondence with his brother Robert Sidney, Sidney outlines an image of the book that contradicts the passive image of a book as merely a vessel for knowledge. Sidney's description of his books in his letters breaks down the distinction between book and person, expanding the human subject to merge with the books that he or she uses to filter and describe the world around him. In the process, Sidney characterizes book use as a deterritorializing experience where human and object partially merge. While Sidney tends to describe book usage and travel as a means to appropriate the best elements of the outside world for his personal assemblage, he feels obliged to argue against flawed book usage in the *Defense*. Furthermore, although Sidney, admitting in a 1579 letter to his brother that "my heresie is that the Englishe behauio*ur* is beste in England, and *the* Italian in Italie" (Kuin 880), seems to have been confident that he could control his response to foreign ideas, his friends were worried about what might happen to Sidney abroad both physically and psychologically. By reading accounts of books and travel in Sidney's life in tandem, I hope to outline further the sense already developed by my discussions of Greville and Ascham that these two kinds of encounters with the world beyond England were entangled in similar metaphors and a similar sense of the human and elements of the outside world —

whether they be books or environments — interpenetrating one another to the point where a clear distinction between them was difficult.

After Sidney's return to England from his own three-year tour (1573-1575), his brother Robert undertook a similar trip through Europe from 1579 until 1582, traveling mostly in Germany and France.[140] In a letter written from Leicester House in October, 1580, Sidney provides his brother with advice on the sorts of books he should read in order to improve himself while abroad, specifying that he should read historians in order, beginning with Greeks, Romans, and finally moving to current monarchies. Having read these books, his goal should be always to speak, "*non simpliciter de facto, sed de qualitatibus et circumstantijs factj*; [not merely of events, but of the characteristics and circumstances of events] and that is it which makes me and many others rather note much with o*w*r penn then w*i*th our Minde" (Kuin 1007, translation mine). Sidney expands upon this basic advice to write rather than remember with the recommendation that his brother develop and use a commonplace book both as a means to remember the information that he encounters in his historical readings and as a means to categorize it properly:

> that I wish herein, is this, that when yow reade any such thing, yow straite bring it to his heade, not only of what *Art*, but by yo*w*r *Logicall subdiuisions* to the next member and parcell of the *Art*. And so as in a table be it wittie word of w*hi*ch *Tacitus* is full, *Sentences*, of w*hi*ch *Liuy*, or *Similitudes*, whereof *Plutarch*, straite to lay it vpp in the right place of his Storehouse, as either Militarie, or more spetiallie defensiue militarie, or more perticulerlie, defensiue by fortification, and so lay it vpp. So likewise in Politick Matters, and such a little table yow may safelie make

[140] Although Robert Sidney was interested in traveling to Italy in the spring of 1581, he never managed to go to Italy. For more on Robert Sidney's continental travels, see Millicent V. Hay, *The Life of Robert Sidney*.

> wherwith I would haue yow euer ioyne the Historicall part , w*hi*ch is only the Example of some Stratageme, or good Cownsaile, or such like . (Kuin 1008).

Historical examples, Sidney argues, serve largely as illustrations of potential insights rather than as insights themselves: the task for the reader is to distill the most relevant points from them. Rather than being a passive act or even merely an act of selection, writing a commonplace becomes a means to systemize the information that he or she has encountered and to subdivide that information by type. The order that is imposed belongs primarily to the reader rather than the books that are read.

This inductive approach to reading, where universal principles are established based on particular instances, simultaneously distances the reader from the original book that is read and binds them closer to the production of their own book.[141] Sidney's emphasis that read texts should pass from their original book through the reader and into a commonplace book — rather than being stored in human memory, which he dismisses as a "confused trust" (Kuin 1007) — figures the human subject as a node between different books which cannot interact with one another directly but may do so through human intervention. The deferral of human memory to textual records emphasizes the degree to which the human assemblage is only partially flesh but extends further into the objects that surround him or her: in noting with the pen as well as the mind, Sidney and his cohorts invest part of themselves in their books. Perhaps not surprisingly, Sidney promises that although he currently writes "in greate hast, of Method without Method,

[141] Sidney was himself the veteran of long discussions and examinations of texts both in private conference with Gabriel Harvey, his family's kept scholar, and, unusually for someone of his rank (Osborn 19), during his time at the university in Oxford. For more, see Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action': How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy."

but with more leisure and studie (if I do note finde some Booke that satisfies) I will venter to write more largely of it vnto yow" (Kuin 1008): even the means of mediating between books is best taught through a book in the first place.

In urging Robert to practice his horsemanship, Sidney encourages him to do so through the lens of a book: "At Horsemanshipp when yow exercise it reade *Grison Claudio*, and a book that is called *La gloria del cauallo*, w*i*thall, that yow may ioyne the through contemplation of it w*i*th the exercise, and so shall yow profite more in a Moneth, then others in a yeare, and marke the bitting, sadling, and caring of Horses" (Kuin 1009). At first glance, it almost seems as though Sidney wants Robert to have the book on hand while he is actually riding. Sidney argues that the book, taken in conjunction with physical practice, will improve Robert's skill at over twelve times the normal rate, a similar argument to the one that Roger Ascham made in *The Schoolmaster* where he argued that reading *The Courtier* would improve a young man's skill at three times the regular rate. The connection between physical and intellectual life is doubled by Sidney's remark, immediately following his advice to incorporate reading into his physical exercise, that "I would by the way yo*w*r Wor*ship* would learne a better hand, yow write worse then I, and I write euell enough ; once again haue care of yo*w*r dyet, and consequently of yo*w*r Complexion, remember, *gratior est veniens in pulchro corpore virtus* [virtue is more pleasing when it comes in a beautiful body]" (Kuin 1009, translation mine). The immediate juxtaposition of physical exercise and the written word, handwriting and the diet, implicitly suggests that it is not merely Robert's virtue that will appear better if he is physically fit, but also that the virtue of his mind will appear better

if it is written in a beautiful hand. Even as Sidney waves aside the physical presence of the book so that it can be easily incorporated into exercise, he brings to the foreground the physical quality of the written word, which doubles as part of Robert's body. Text and the human body become harder to distinguish from one another, the boundaries between the two eroding.

The maintenance of boundaries between nations rather than between human and object was one with which Sidney and his contemporaries were personally familiar. As William J. Kennedy observes in *The Site of Petrarchanism*, Protestant England was entangled in a web of contradictions: even as "England's elite was asserting the nation's own religious and political sovereignty, its literary avant-garde turned to models of Petrarchism and other cultural forms associated with the decadence, corruption, and depravity of Catholic Europe" (165). The models for courtly behavior, as Ascham complained in *The Schoolmaster*, remained based in the Italian court both in terms of behavior. English courtiers prided themselves on speaking Italian and "every cultured Elizabethan learned at least a few words of Italian believing that it imparted polish and sophistication to their manner" (Warneke 114).[142] The "italic" hand was imported during the mid-sixteenth century and eventually supplanted English secretary as the dominant handwritten script (Gaskell 346-47).[143] Although the Italian dominance in the

[142] A prominent example of this is Queen Elizabeth herself: we have several holograph Italian letters written by her in a smooth, elegantly executed italic hand. For more, see Carlo M. Bejatta, "Editing Elizabeth I's Italian Letters." Writing to Sidney in January 1574, Languet expressed bemusement at the English obsession with mastering the Italian language, which he suggested was of comparatively little use for Englishmen as Italian power was declining (Kuin 102).

[143] For differences between italic and secretary hands, see R.B. McKerrow, "A Note on Elizabethan Handwriting," reprinted in Gaskell 361-67.

international book market waned after the fifteenth century, Italian stylistic and technical advances were taken up by northern printers (Pettegree, *Book in the Renaissance* 65-67). As Andrew Pettegree points out in "North and South: Cultural Transmission in the Sixteenth-Century European Book World," Italian printers' output accounts for nearly twenty-four percent of the books printed in Europe between 1450 and 1600 (520).[144] For any well-educated person in England, reading foreign texts were almost an inevitability; for anyone with political ambitions, mastery of continental (and particularly Italian) forms was essential even as English writers aggressively asserted English superiority to the decadent Catholic courts.

Sidney's own three-year tour of continental Europe was constrained by others' concerns that he might be somehow be corrupted by exposure to the Italian environment. Sidney was continually drawn towards Rome but equally continually warned off about going there by his friends, particularly the Protestant reformer Hubert Languet. Languet took an interest in the young Sidney when they met in Frankfurt towards the start of Sidney's continental tour and they began a lengthy, formative correspondence that would continue for much of the rest of Sidney's life.[145] Languet invested a great deal of time and energy into mentoring Sidney, writing weekly letters even when Sidney himself

[144] England's own contribution is somewhat more modest, amounting to 15,127 titles (perhaps four percent of the European total), most of them vernacular rather than scholarly (Pettegree, "North and South" 520). As Margaret Lane Ford observes, the truly successful printers in England were the ones who were savvy enough to print things peculiar to the English market rather than attempting to compete directly with foreign presses (228).

[145] For more on the correspondence between Languet and Sidney, see Andrew Strycharski, "Pedagogical Affect in the Early Sidney-Languet Correspondence" and Bradley J. Irish, "Friendship and Frustration: Counter-Affect in the Sidney-Languet Letters."

neglected to write back.[146] Languet was almost frantic in his insistence that Sidney stay away from Rome, suggesting in 1573 that a trip to Rome would be hazardous to Sidney's health: "I am not asking you to do anything for my sake that you do not think will be pleasant or useful for you: nor do I want you to be tied down by any promise to me, except the one in which you pledged yourself to take scrupulous care for your health and safety, and not to follow your overeagerness, or the idle talk of those who will make light of the dangers you would plunge into, should you come to those places we have often spoken of" (Kuin 42). In part, as James M. Osborn observes, this was likely an expression of concern that it would be dangerous for Sidney as a Protestant traveler to enter papal territory (111), but there is a striking quality to Languet's oblique phrasing, "the places we have often talked about." Rome is kept nameless, as though it would be safer to not even mention it.

Throughout his letters, Languet is at pains to highlight the extreme, almost magical capacity of the Roman court to confuse and deceive: "No wonder that the Roman court hypnotizes the spirit of the Young Prince [Rudolf II] with its incantations when it could so derange the Venetians (who want to be thought the wisest of all men) that they have allowed the Inquisition to be instituted in their city, not only against its citizens but even against foreigners" (Kuin 759). Juxtaposing Roman corruption with papal political success, Languet warns Sidney off a visit to Rome not merely in terms of personal safety but additionally in terms of his own psychology. Linking the establishment of the

[146] For more on Languet's long-term molding of Sidney's character, see Edward Berry, "Hubert Languet and the 'Making' of Philip Sidney" and Andrew Strycharski, "Pedagogical Affect in the Early Sidney-Languet Correspondence."

Inquisition in Venice — perhaps a warning against remaining in Venice much longer — with the Roman court's capacity to beguile, Languet suggests that an excursion to Rome may have more permanent aftereffects on Sidney than he might otherwise assume: the court could similarly establish itself in Sidney himself.

Running throughout Sidney's writing and Languet's concerns for his young protégé is a sense that the boundary between the human subject and his surroundings is tenuous at best. Languet worries that Sidney will let his guard down and absorb the evils of Italian society, which he will apparently imbibe simply by virtue of being present there. Although Sidney cheerfully discounts such possibilities in his advice to his brother, he shares Languet's sense that the human and his surroundings are intertwined, particularly with respect to the books with which he engages. Sidney is at pains to conceal the agentive properties of books in *The Defense of Poetry* because to admit that a book might possess the ability to shape the actions of its reader would carry with it the danger of books being condemned for the actions of those who read them. Instead, Sidney reconfigures reading into the acquisition of knowledge, leaving material books out of the picture and keeping agency squarely in the hands of the learned reader. Writing to his brother, Sidney ties the acquisition of knowledge directly into book usage and book production. The image of the riding reader created by his suggestion to his brother that he read Grisone's book similarly merges the book with a human assemblage to the point where it disappears from sight. Books, Sidney suggests, do not mediate human behavior — all information that is contained within a book remains untouched and is directly

accessible — but they do enable it, permitting action that was otherwise impossible through lack of knowledge.

Conclusion: Bookish Mobility and the Book Trade

The difficulty faced by Sidney and other English travelers to the continent, Italy in particular, is in part that it served as a reminder of everything that England was not and yet wished to be. Even Roger Ascham, irritable as he might be on the subject of Italian court culture, was at pains to affirm his respect for Italy (60). Italy's early dominance of the book market, although ebbing by the sixteenth century, had helped reinforce the cultural cachet that Italy had inherited from the classical past. English gentlemen were eager to appropriate Italian knowledge and abilities for themselves — Sidney's riding instructor, gently mocked at the start of *The Defense of Poetry*, was the Italian John Pietro Pugliano and the book of riding instruction that Sidney recommends for his brother is Italian — even as they derided Italy as hopelessly idolatrous and corrupt. As Protestantism established itself within England, anxieties about backsliding into Catholicism, heightened by Queen Mary's rule, combined with humoral ideas about the interpenetration of human and surrounding environment to suggest that Italian mannerisms were like a disease. Books were held up simultaneously as a way to filter and control the influx of foreign ideas and as a way for those ideas to travel across the border and to infect virtuous Englishmen.

Running through the writings of Greville, Ascham, and Sidney is a sense of a porous quality to the boundaries of the human subject. Greville's letter warns the would-

be traveler that he is liable to contamination through his encounter with French culture; Ascham suggests that upon contact with books or the court, the contents of a young man's mind may be forcibly wrenched from him; Sidney blurs the boundary between text and reader to offer a wholly unmediated encounter with the knowledge contained within it. Reading books is imagined as a form of (de)territorialization, of both bringing elements from the outside world into the human assemblage and of keeping the boundaries of that assemblage in place to prevent the introduction of unwanted material. The anxiety that runs throughout all of three writers, even the generally more optimistic Sidney, is a concern that this maintenance of the human subject may inadvertently allow the wrong elements to be incorporated into the human self. The production of commonplace books, recommended by both Sidney and Greville, moves the arena for human development outside of the human subject himself and into the book, which serves as an intermediate space. The book becomes a kind of antechamber to the human mind, a laboratory where ideas can be examined before incorporating them into the human assemblage. In the process, however, the human mind is extended into the material construct of the book, subject to being rewritten physically. The assemblage of the human self through books is a project of deliberate mediation, where books are used to form both a part of the resulting human self and a filter between the human self and the world around it, a world that might easily flood into the human mind otherwise.

CONCLUSION: RESITUATING THE BOOK IN RENAISSANCE STUDIES

In the dissertation thus far, I have discussed three different forms of book usage and how they represent the entanglement of the human subject within a broader network. In spite of their shared focus on the interaction between humans and books, these book usages diverge in their relationship to the rest of the network in broader terms. The author is almost perforce exposed to public scrutiny and his or her interaction with his or her book therefore carries with it a sidelong glance at the people who will use the book. Meanwhile, at the moment of reading, the human subject is comparatively isolated from public view but engages with the world beyond his or her private space almost solely through the book. Standing between these two extremes is the book as an owned object, acting both as a way for outsiders to understand the human subject associated with it and for the human subject to engage with the public sphere. In this respect, the book behaves differently based upon the degree to which its engagement with the human subject is visible to outsiders; the book's capacity to connect human subjects to other books and other people is (perhaps counterintuitively) strengthened when its contents are not directly accessed. In seeing someone reading a book, the myriad possibilities of what might be written in it all come into view simultaneously and the book-user is linked to several possibilities simultaneously, even if only one of them is actually physically present.

The texts and book uses that I examine over the course of this dissertation project present Renaissance representations of identity as being comprised of smaller pieces, sometimes working in harmony and sometimes failing to cooperate. Assemblage theory

offers a means to sort through the resulting identity models by offering a focus on individual configurations of both specific human-book assemblages and a space to think about how those assemblages of book and human contain almost in microcosm the larger social networks of thinkers and texts. Assemblage theory as a theoretical construct has a tendency to emphasize a lack of agency on the part of individual components within an assemblage: the human, object, or animal that is incorporated into an assemblage does so not because he, she, or it chooses to do so but because of the strength of territorializing forces. I suggest that books invite us to consider the potential volition of the human subject involved in an assemblage because their hybrid nature as both abstract text and physical object raises questions about the depth of a human subject's involvement with another object and the extent to which we can measure that depth. While the book as object is incorporated into an assemblage once it is observed by others, the book as text requires the human subject to choose to consume or produce its contents. Renaissance writers' attempts to frame their encounters with books in different ways — whether as a demonstration of intellectual kinship with a social group, as a potentially deceitful self-presentation, or as a wholly abstract, nonmaterial experience of learning (rather than bookishness) — emphasize this hybrid nature of books that both permits books' agency as objects and in the process opens up a space for human subjects to consciously choose the level of their engagement with them.

One way to think about this agentive potential on the part of books and humans within an assemblage comes from actor-network theory's emphasis on relationships rather than totalities. As Bruno Latour has argued, rather than asking whether someone

or something is linked or attached to other things, we should always be asking about the extent to which we value or privilege the attachments in place: "it is no longer a question of opposing attachment and detachment, but instead of good and poor attachments" (Latour, "Factures/Fractures" 22). Latour in particular argues against value-judgments on the autonomy of an actor and the degree to which the larger cultural context appears to remove any individual's capacity to be an individual (*Reassembling the Social,* 212ff.). Recognizing the inability of any individual subject to exist entirely detached from the rest of society, Latour instead argues that we must take into account the degree to which those attachments do or do not exert a pull on individual actors. If the force of all connections within a network need not be equally strong, then part of the question becomes how such connections may be strengthened or weakened over time, whether in response to changes in the situation or the gradual pressure of particular agents within the network. In thinking about networks as a conglomeration of relationships rather than all-encompassing gatherings of subjects, we are afforded the opportunity to consider shifts within the network as a whole.

As an object of analysis, the book highlights how actor-network and its emphasis on relationships has productive implications for our understanding of assemblage theory.[147] In its dual capacity as physical artifact and abstract text, the book serves as a strong mediating force within an identity assemblage and bringing its agency to bear as other elements of the assemblage interact. If we consider an assemblage as a gathering of

[147] Graham Harman has already observed that assemblage theory as it is currently conceived already seems to call out for an incorporation of Latourian actor-network theory: definitions offered up by assemblage theorists often place a greater emphasis on what an assemblage *does* rather than what an assemblage *is*, which in turn corresponds well to Latour's narrative of constant negotiation of meaning between different elements ("The Assemblage Theory of Society" 186-87).

relationships rather than a gathering of components, we may rethink territorializing and deterritorializing forces as not merely the forces that hold an assemblage together or pull it apart but additionally as the means by which elements within an assemblage are reshuffled and reconfigured. A large part of identity assemblage lies in the selection and cultivation of the correct connections, always with the caveat that no particular component within an assemblage is predominantly in charge. The human book user may establish relationships with a collection of books in order to develop a particular identity assemblage, but the books may well push that identity assemblage in a direction that the human subject may find undesirable. Assemblage theory opens a space for the decentering of agency from the human to an aggregate of human and inanimate subjects; incorporating Latour's focus on interrelations into assemblage theory additionally emphasizes the degree to which agency is not entirely surrendered to the assemblage as a whole but remains partially vested in the individual elements that make up the larger whole.

The distribution of agency not merely throughout the assemblage but also to its individual components has important implications for the capacity of those components to serve as deterritorializing forces and push the assemblage in different directions. While Manuel DeLanda highlights the autonomous quality of the individual components of assemblages (18), thereby commenting on how "no object is a seamless whole that fully absorbs its components" (Harman, "The Assemblage Theory of Society" 172), assemblages are still often treated as independent from their components. In part, this is because speaking of them in this way allows theorists to consider the enduring power of

social institutions which are made up of human beings even as they resist those humans' individual actions: the larger any entity is, the more easily it may ignore changes from any one point within it. In studying smaller assemblages like personal identity, however, the agentive potential of any individual component becomes that much more important. Our ability to speak productively about the capacity for an assemblage to reconfigure itself based on interactions between its components rather than the incorporation or exclusion of individual elements — as, for instance, might ensue during the re-reading of a book — depends on our ability to see assemblages as built out of relationships between components, each of which is inclined to push the assemblage's development in a different direction.

This is not to say, however, that the assemblage as a whole lacks agency either. As Graham Harman observes, "objects have a *definite character* that can change, be perceived, and resist" ("The Well-Wrought Broken Hammer" 195, emphasis in original). As with bureaucratic institutions, identity assemblages may behave differently from any one of their individual components, existing only in aggregate. I suggest that one of the aims of an identity assemblage is to preserve itself, that is to say, to continue to incorporate components that serve to reinforce specific aspects of itself: the bookish man craves more books, for instance. Assemblages may develop a kind of ontological inertia where the relationships between their components persist by virtue of their longevity: an assemblage may be territorialized not merely by individual forces but additionally by habit. Bearing in mind Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on assemblages being made up of actions as well as physical objects (88), we may see the assemblage of social identity

reifying itself through the steady repetition of acts that contribute to its own existence. To study individual identity in the light of assemblage theory is to view the human being as emerging in part out of the convergence of human body, inanimate objects, and behaviors and to consider that human subject as acting either to preserve itself or to radically reinvent itself through the alteration of those components.

Within this context, I suggest that the word "agency" in relation to books may best serve us as a means to describe the capacity of an object or subject to initiate or perpetuate change, which may take place within the assemblage or outside of it. By defining book agency in this way we must view assemblages as both locations where individual components may exhibit the ability to shape the assemblage and where the assemblage as a whole may act autonomously from individual components. Combining actor-network theory's emphasis on relationships with assemblage theory's sense of conglomerations of subjects as semi-cohesive wholes, we are granted a method of thinking about personal identities as comprised of connections between different elements whose relations to one another can shift and thereby give rise to changes within the assemblage as a whole. We may in this respect consider identity formation as a site where human subjects may respond to larger cultural pressures both consciously and unconsciously as expressed through their curation of the relationships within their assemblages.

Rather than seeing humans as wandering through the world drawing from texts and producing new ones, a focus on the book as an aspect of material culture forces us to think about the role that it and other objects may play in human interrelations beyond

their immediate utility. I argue that as they facilitate inter-human communication of ideas, books also interpose themselves as mediating forces: while human beings gain an alternate means to alter their personal selves by using books to transmit, store, and retrieve texts, in the process they necessarily become subject to the mediating quality of the book. The encounter between human and book may alter not only the nature of the text the book contains but additionally how the human subject is positioned in relation to other human subjects. The representation of book use during the Renaissance consequently carried with it a desire to frame the relationship between human and book in a way that was rhetorically useful within a given situation. Human-book interactions served as an act of identity-definition both socially and personally with the book serving as a physical focal point for a larger network of human interactions. Particularly in the wake of the Reformation and the ensuing proliferation of physical books that were integrally tied to religio-political identity, books came to represent how people recognized who they were and how they were related to one another.

Crucially, the Reformation offers a space to consider the interrelated nature of books and humans not merely within a religious context but additionally within a secular one. The resulting religious conflict primed Renaissance thinkers to view books as important to personal identity because of how books established connections between book-user, other books, and other book-users. Katharine Eisaman Maus has argued that the high visibility of English Renaissance concerns about inwardness stemmed from their worries about religious equivocation (*Inwardness* 15); I suggest that a corollary to this argument was that people became increasingly aware of their connections to people

outside their immediate environment, particularly as books became more readily available. In their capacity as texts, books were commonly conflated with either their authors or their authors' children; encountering a book in that respect meant encountering an author. As books linked their users to national — and often international — communities of books and book-users, the importance of framing encounters with texts in terms of desirable communities grew. The selection of book materials, whether in terms of what was written, owned, or read, carried with it a sense of attachment to those communities that would inevitably be judged qualitatively both by the book-user and by outsiders. The book-user's judgment, in turn, carried with it an awareness of public scrutiny of his or her choices, both in terms of which books were read and how much time was spent reading books in the first place. The assemblage of personal identity through books that I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation carried with it a host of rhetorical decisions intended to emphasize the quality of the attachments chosen by the human subject.

The importance of books within a Reformation context has been studied heavily by Fredrick Kiefer, Thomas Kearney, Jennifer Summit, and others, but notably there has been comparatively little sustained analysis of books through the lens of object-oriented agency with critics instead using the book as a useful illustration of the possibilities within such criticism and then moving to other objects.[148] I argue that a closer

[148] For the importance of books within the Reformation, see in particular Frederick Kiefer, *Writing on the Renaissance Stage: Written Words, Printed Pages, Metaphoric Books*; James Kearney, *The Incarnate Text*: Imagining the Book in Reformation England; and Jennifer Summit, *Memory's Library: Medieval Books in Early Modern England*. For more on the use of books to illustrate object-oriented ontology, Cefalu and Reynolds, "Tarrying with the Subjunctive, an Introduction"; Jonathan Gil Harris, *Untimely Matter in the Age of Shakespeare*; and Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance*, as well as chapter 1 of this dissertation.

examinations of the agentive potential of books and texts in particular may cast a new light onto questions of identity formation. The three forms of book use that I have examined thus far during the dissertation — writing, owning, and reading — each operate within a different sphere of human engagement not merely with the book itself but with other human beings. In each instance, a specific public is built and addressed around the interaction with human and book, whether through the generation of an audience in authorship, the private-public hybrid of book ownership, or the interaction with authors and other books entailed in reading. In the paragraphs that follow, I sketch out a sense of the ramifications of applying object-oriented ontology to the different forms of book use common during the Renaissance may have for our sense of book use and human identity more generally.

The dominant Renaissance metaphor of the book for authorship is pregnancy or childbirth, a metaphor that carries with it a sense of the book's capacity to act independently of its author's wishes and to nevertheless shape that author's appearance. Within this dissertation, I considered the book as an assemblage of elements that, among other things, produces an authorial persona for the author that controls how the author is seen, particularly within a patronage network. A focus on the book as an agentive object rather than a carrier for information may further lead us towards a greater focus on the bibliographic concerns of textual transmission: no book is produced solely by one hand but is invariably a collaborative process. Printers made myriad decisions alongside, in agreement with, and in opposition to their authors; book materials often had to be imported due to the exigencies of the trade, thereby linking Britain with overseas entities;

book sales and distribution tied sellers and customers into a larger network of negotiations. In this respect, seeing books as part of an identity assemblage draws our attention to the heavily assembled nature of not merely their own production but also the degree to which all trade goods were integrally tied into similar networks of production. The metaphor of childbirth for book production, which suggests the potential recalcitrance of texts and books to their owners' will, highlights both the origins of books as possessing a lineage of production as well as the degree to which books move out into the world and implicitly connect separate entities and households. Recognizing objects' agency thereby entails questions of origins for material culture on both material and cultural levels.

Renaissance metaphors about book ownership were less focused than metaphors for either writing or reading, but the sense that a book is reflective of its owner's person and habits remains strong. In this dissertation, I focused in particular on the role that the book plays on the stage and how it mediates supposed access to its carrier's inner thoughts. While the Renaissance stage offers perhaps the most easily visible instance of and other objects fulfilling such a role, it draws our attention to the performative capacity of objects to define their possessors' identities in ways that have already been commented upon by queer theorists but may additionally be enhanced with a view towards human identity assemblages as made up of numerous components that exist in an uneasy alliance with one another. Rather than treating such objects as props that induce the viewer to read the human subject in a particular way, I suggest that we view these objects as agents with their own missions within the larger human assemblage, each offering particular

options (and closing off others) for the assemblage as a whole. In theorizing both the individual objects and the assemblage as a whole as having the potential to define the human, we are offered an opportunity to read the human self as not merely a focal point for larger cultural forces nor as a wholly self-willed entity, but as a partially deliberate and partially accidental conglomeration of possible identities, all of them subject to influence from animate and inanimate components alike.

Reading was commonly characterized during the Renaissance as an act of digestion and absorbing matter into the human being. In the dissertation, I focused particularly on the overlap between travel and reading, both in terms of parallel description and as an expression of British concerns that they were inextricably linked to a continent that they perceived to be morally suspect and dangerous. In thinking about engagement with objects as a form of metabolism, where objects are absorbed into a human subject's assemblage, we may consider the degree to which Renaissance writers envisioned intellectual engagement with their surroundings in terms of a network of potential relationships. Reading in this situation represents an attempt to sort out the world as a whole through the mediating influence of books, which could be interposed between human subject and their surroundings, only for the books themselves to take on a crucial role in identity formation. I submit that we need to consider the ways that objects could be used as a means to filter and control the human subject's interaction with their surroundings, whether that involves a textual mediation or a social one.

The forms of book usage that I have discussed in this dissertation offer us a space to think about how humans and objects collaborate to assemble a personal identity. The

question is not whether human subjects have control over their identities but who and what else contributes to that assemblage. I have focused primarily on books not because they are unique in this respect but because of the way that, even more so than other objects used in this way, books are both receptive and resistant to change, reenacting within their covers the same kind of changes that may occur within the human subject's identity assemblage. The annotation, rebinding, and restructuring of books by their users models in a tangible, physical sense the degree to which human identity assemblages are subject to change through the influence of different elements within themselves even as the larger structure brings its influence to bear on individual components. The metaphoric influence of book structures has carried through to the twenty-first century: as critics, we often use book usage — and particularly reading — as a metaphor for our engagement with culture and identity as well as texts. If we are going to read human identity properly, then we must consider how that identity is structured. As this dissertation has shown, the human self is both a single whole and an assemblage of smaller objects; part of our reading must focus on the objects that help structure human identity.

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