

THE MATERIALITY OF DISGUISE IN THE KING'S MEN'S
REPERTORY, 1603-1625

By

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Abstract

The King's Men's use of stage materials placed the company at the forefront of disguise innovation on the early modern commercial stage. Analysis of their use of costumes, cosmetics, and characterisation shows how the King's Men used new technologies and built upon previous tropes and materials to innovative disguise drama. Yet, their disguise repertory remains unexplored. By interweaving material culture studies, repertory studies, and theatre history, this thesis tells the inextricably material story of early modern disguise drama in the King's Men's repertory. It provides insight into the heterogenous audience and the development of the stage to show that aiming for a singular, 'true' reading of an early modern play is decidedly antithetical to the early modern English stage. Throughout, I argue for the ambiguity of the early modern stage, showing that acknowledgement of uncertainty can illuminate, not obscure, our understanding of disguise drama and the questions of identity therein.

Chapter One, "[h]is patch'd cloake throwne off": the materiality of discovery scenes' explores the discovery, the moment in which the disguiser's identity is revealed. It demonstrates how disguise studies has, thus far, failed to engage with the material and phenomenological nature of the early modern English stage and the gaps in knowledge that stem from this, thus providing a methodological framework for the following chapters. Chapter Two, "[t]his smockified shirt, or shirted smock": gendered disguise and the ambiguity of costume', discusses the degendering of linen undershirts in the mid-1610s to explore how ungendered items of clothing are used to blur gender boundaries in depictions of gendered disguise. This chapter reiterates the argument underpinning recent work in trans studies: that gender performance does not equate to gender identity. Chapter Three, "[r]un your beard into a peak of twenty!":

age prosthetics as gendered disguise', approaches the beard from a material standpoint, considering the physicality of the prosthetic beard and the impact of beardedness and beardlessness on the social status of players. Through its consideration of masculine presentation, this chapter shows that 'gendered disguise' is not a term that is only refers to inter-gender disguises, but intra-gender disguises as well. Chapter Four, "[a] wrong done to beauty": staging beauty and disfigurement through cosmetic disguise', explores the use of cosmetics like pox stickers, artificial sunburn, artificial wrinkling, and umber. Early modern understandings of beauty and racial Otherness are at the heart of this chapter's considerations, as it seeks to demonstrate how critical race theory, material culture, and theatre history can inform and strengthen one another's arguments. Chapter Five, "[c]all in your crutches, wooden legs, false bellies": the props of representational disguise', looks beyond the predominantly visual focus of the previous chapters. Through consideration of sound and small representational props it explores the soundscape of the playhouse to demonstrate that disguise is not just a visual spectacle, but a multi-sensory, embodied form of stagecraft. Ultimately, this thesis shows that, by broadening our understanding of the sartorial significance of disguise materials and the ambiguousness of outward presentation, we can better recognise the heterogenous nature of an early modern theatre audience, and the uncertainty implicit in the plays written for them.

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List of Abbreviations

Playing Companies

? – playing company unknown

?[Company] – play has been tentatively attributed to this company

CoP – Children of Paul's

CQR – Children of the Queen's Revels

CCR – Children of the Chapel Royal

PM – Earl of Pembroke's Men

KM – The King's Men

KRC – King's Revels Company

LAM – Lord Admiral's Men

LCM – Lord Chamberlain's Men (later the King's Men)

LEM – Lady Elizabeth's Men

LSM – Lord Strange's Men (later split into the Lord Derby's Men and the Lord Chamberlain's Men)

PCM – Prince Charles' Men

QAM – Queen Anne's Men

QHM – Queen Henrietta Maria's Men

Other Abbreviations

OED – *Oxford English Dictionary*, online

PMLA – *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*

Wiggins – Martin Wiggins, with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533 - 1642: A Catalogue*, 12 vols (2012-)

Shakespeare – unless stated otherwise, all references to Shakespeare are from the Digital Facsimile of the Bodleian First Folio of Shakespeare's plays, Arch. G c.7

All quotes retain original spelling, with expansions and corrections in square brackets. Where 'i', 'u', and 'v' have been used, I have modernised. All dates, authorship, and company attribution are from Wiggins. For dates I have used his 'limits' rather than 'best guess'. Translations are my own, and are in square brackets besides the original, throughout.

INTRODUCTION

'Am I enough disguised?': discovering the materials of disguise in the King's Men's repertory



Fig 0.2 Glass display case containing various cosmetic devices from the 1700s, including cheek plumpers, eye brows, patches and two breast pads. Case from c.1880-1930. English. Sir Henry Wellcome's Museum Collection, London (A158810).

In the storage rooms of Sir Henry Wellcome's Museum Collection, amidst tongue scrapers, shaving bowls, and chamber pots, exists a somewhat out of place item: a glass display case with 'various cosmetic devices from the 1700s' (fig. 0.1), inside of which there are 'two cheek plumpers, eyebrows, patches, and two breast pads', all meticulously displayed and labelled.¹ Curiously categorised under 'Public Health &

¹ Science Museum Group. Glass display case containing various cosmetic devices from the 1700s, England, 1880-1930. A158810. *Science Museum Group Collection* [online].

Hygiene', the beauty display sits oddly with the many vaccinators and toiletries that the collection boasts. Where those vaccines sought to cure illness and the disposable lavatory seat covers and tuberculin tests prevented its spread, the items in this case were instead used to obscure any signs of degeneration on the wearer's body. By displaying these items, the case makes public the ailments that the items hid for their once-wearer: the patches to cover facial scars, the cheek plumpers to hide gaunt cheeks, the breast pads to feign the fullness of youth. The display demands that the viewer transpose these items onto the imagined wearer, the eyebrows sitting squarely in the top corners, the patches central on the 'face', with the two cheek plumpers ready to be inserted into the mouth, and finally, the breast pads sitting below. By making the underwear so prominent, the visual focal point of the display, the display perversely demands we imagine the body beneath. These items, which once sought to disguise the body, now blazon it, instead.

Visual culture demands sight; it wants observers, spectators, viewers. The nouns related to it predominantly centre sight: television, show, display, exhibition. Even 'theatre' stems from the Greek 'theasthai' meaning 'behold'.² Yet, the very ephemerality of theatre has meant that it has been notoriously difficult to reconstruct the 'beholding' required by early modern performance, particularly in the case of disguise. We are often told in a playtext that something is shown but are given little information as to what that may be. 'Am I enough disguised?' asks Peregrine in Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (KM, 1607), before worrying that he is *too* disguised, reminding his

<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co148335/glass-display-case-containing-various-cosmetic-devices-from-the-1700s-england-1880-1930-cosmetic-devices-cheek-plumpers-eye-brows-patches-breast-pads>. [Accessed 5 June 2024].

² 'theatre | theatre (n.), etymology' *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1553299259>>.

companions that '[a]ll my ambition is to fright him, onely.'³ In this moment, Jonson offers readers a tantalising reminder of the innately material nature of disguise: is this a comedic moment, relying on Peregrine's lack of change? Has Peregrine changed only his hat, or has he procured an entirely new costume? What of his hair, his beard, his skin? With no stage directions beyond his entrance, no reference in the scene as to what the disguise may be, readers are reminded of the limits of reconstructing this inherently material and sensory stage phenomenon from a playtext alone.

The Wellcome's display case and Jonson's *Volpone* together show disguise to be inarguably material. Where the items in the display case and those signified by Jonson allow the wearer to fashion an appearance for the public, they enable this by obscuring the body beneath, confirming Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass' understanding of Renaissance clothing's ability to imprint meaning on the wearer: '[c]lothes give nature to what previously had no nature; they take an existing nature and transnature it, turning the virtuous into the vicious, the strong into the weak, the male into the female, the godly into the satanic.'⁴ To change your appearance and not be recognised is a mistake; to change your appearance because you do not *want* to be recognised is a disguise. Disguise is the use of material objects – clothing, cosmetics, instruments – with the aim of obscuring one's identity. It is purposeful and intentional, and what that intent may be, whether to deceive, to escape, to marry, is secondary to the act itself. This thesis argues that disguise is an inherently material practice, such that on-stage disguises relied on the cultural resonances held by items off-stage. It asks: what were the practicalities of performing disguise on the early modern London stage? To what extent were the King's Men, a company with such a

³ Ben Jonson, *Volpone or The Foxe* (London, 1608), STC 14783, sig. M1v.

⁴ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 4.

high percentage of disguise plays in their surviving repertory, experimenting with advancements in disguise technologies? How can the surviving texts be used to reconstruct the distinctly ephemeral materials of disguise in performance?

Disguise was one of the most important tropes in the King's Men's repertory: before even accounting for revivals, some form of disguise is involved in at least 45 of the 101 plays in the King's Men's known repertory between 1603 and 1625 (44.55%).⁵ When we consider revivals (54 known revivals, 39 of which include disguise), disguise makes up a total of 53.85% of their known Jacobean repertory. Scholarship has long recognised the importance of disguise in the King's Men's repertory: Kevin A. Quarmby notes that 'the "Jacobean disguised ruler plays" are noticeably performed by only three companies: the Children of the Chapel/Queen's Revels, the Children of Paul's and the King's Men at the Globe'.⁶ Likewise, Bruce R. Smith has established that cross-dressing was a key component of the King's Men's repertory.⁷ Yet, despite the fact that disguise was such an integral aspect of their theatrical repertory, there has been no comprehensive study of their disguise plays.

Thus far, disguise studies have either surveyed disguise across the entirety of early modern English drama (as Victor Oscar Freeburg does in *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama* [1915, repr. 1965]) or have looked in detail at a single disguise trope (like Kevin A. Quarmby's *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his*

⁵ These numbers are my own calculation, based on Martin Wiggins' *Catalogue of British Drama*. In instances where original performance date is unknown, I use Wiggins' 'best guess'. To ensure that the numbers are not dramatically over-exaggerated, I have assumed that any plays for which only the title remains did not contain any instance of disguise. For further information see the appendix, pp. 373-9.

⁶ Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 8.

⁷ Bruce R. Smith, 'Making a Difference: Male/Male "Desire" in Tragedy, Comedy, and Tragi-comedy', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 99-116.

Contemporaries [2012]).⁸ By considering disguise in the King's Men's repertory, this thesis instead asks what this stage convention can tell us about the wider performance practice of their playing company. Should we be thinking of the King's Men not as 'Shakespeare's company' or 'Burbage's company', but as a company renowned for their skilful performance of disguise?

The frequency with which disguise appears in early modern plays has made it notoriously difficult to define. In *Disguise Plots*, Freeburg defined disguise as 'a change of personal appearance which leads to mistaken identity. There is a double test, change and confusion'.⁹ While I question Freeburg's use of 'mistaken' (instead perceiving disguise as intentional dissimulation), the material focus of Freeburg's definition is shared by this thesis (significantly, the material basis of disguise was forgotten by most scholarship on the topic prior to Peter Hyland's *Disguise on the Early English Stage* [2011]). Freeburg's survey of disguise tropes is foundational to the study of early modern disguise drama: its categories of disguise, detailed below, remain in use, and it provides one of the most comprehensive surveys of disguise on the English stage up to 1616. Yet, Freeburg's discussion of disguise is limited by its bardolatrous

⁸ For disguise surveys, see: Victor Oscar Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Blom, 1965); M. C. Bradbrook, 'Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama', *Essays in Criticism*, 2 (1952), 159-68; Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Leslie Thomson, *Discoveries on the Early Modern Stage: Contexts and Conventions* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018). For single trope studies, see: Peter Berek, 'Cross-Dressing, Gender, and Absolutism in the Beaumont and Fletcher Plays' *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900*, 44.2 (2004), 359-377; Paula S. Berggren, "'A Prodigious Thing": The Jacobean Heroine in Male Disguise', *Philological Quarterly*, 62.3 (1983), 383-402; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016); Bridget Escolme, 'Costume, Disguise and Self-Display' in *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 118-40; David J. Horner, 'Purging the Commonwealth: Marston's Disguised Duke and *A Knack to Know a Knave*', *PMLA*, 89 (1974), 993-1006; Peter Hyland, 'Shakespeare's Heroines: Disguise in the Romantic Comedies', *Ariel*, 9.2 (1978), 23-39; Thomas A. Pendleton, 'Shakespeare's Disguised Duke Play: Middleton, Marston, and the Sources of *Measure for Measure*', in *Fanned and Winnowed Opinions: Shakespearean Essays Presented to Harold Jenkins*, ed. by John W. Mahon and Thomas A. Pendleton (London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 79-98.

⁹ Freeburg, p. 2.

scope: he chooses 1616 – the year of Shakespeare’s death – as his ‘terminal’ date as, he believes, ‘[d]isguise appears frequently after that time but lacks novelty in dramatic method.’¹⁰ This thesis shows Freeburg’s claim to be resolutely untrue: the King’s Men’s Fletcher-centric repertory of the 1610s and early-1620s innovates consistently with disguise tropes, techniques, and technologies. Despite this, disguise scholarship has remained predominantly Shakespearean in focus, and the few studies that do include other playwrights often do so only to complement or assert Shakespeare’s apparent ingenuity.

Freeburg categorised disguise plots into five types: the female page, the boy bride, the rogue in multi-disguise, the disguised spy, and the disguised lover.¹¹ Freeburg’s terminology offers insight into the thematic and plot elements of disguise and is thus in line with the text-centric tradition of disguise studies. By using ‘the disguise situation’ as the ‘basis for the division of [his] material’ Freeburg influentially established the common disguise conventions, but even he recognises the futility of attempting to define by situation: ‘[a]ll women disguised as boys or men we shall call female pages, even though, for example, Bess Bridges masquerades as a sea captain, and not a mere page.’¹² Despite the questionable nature of these categories, they have remained in use across disguise studies, particularly in works that focus on a single trope, like Quarmby’s *The Disguised Ruler*. Given that this thesis is interested in the material components of disguise, rather than its situations, I have categorised the disguises with reference to these material aspects instead: gendered disguise, representational disguise, and cosmetic and prosthetic disguise. Distinguishing

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

disguise by material in this way shows how the different disguise tropes have more similarities than previously assumed.

Due to its Shakespearean focus, disguise scholarship has focussed on the two categories that recur most often in Shakespeare's canon: the disguised spy and the female page. Disguise scholarship often focuses on identity in particular, and thus defers to M. C. Bradbrook's 1952 definition: 'the substitution, overlaying or metamorphosis of dramatic identity, whereby one character sustains two roles. This may involve deliberate or involuntary masquerade, mistaken or concealed identity, madness or possession.'¹³ Hyland argues that Bradbrook's definition, while more sophisticated than Freeburg's, risks 'allow[ing] for such a degree of elasticity that it threatens to become meaningless.'¹⁴ Alongside the risk of meaninglessness, both Freeburg's and Bradbrook's definitions make questionable use of 'mistaken identity'. The phrase 'mistaken identity' suggests that the dissimulation is passive, as opposed to an active act of deception. In *Measure for Measure* (KM, 1603-4), Duke Vincentio is not accidentally falsifying his identity when talking with Lucio, nor are Antipholus and Dromio of Syracuse actively misleading the Ephesians when mistaken for their twins in *A Comedy of Errors* (?PM, 1589-93), yet under Freeburg's and Bradbrook's definitions both could be defined as disguise plays. As Hyland argues of 'masquerade', 'madness' and 'possession' in Bradbrook's definition, the use of the word 'mistaken' creates too broad a scope.¹⁵

¹³ M. C. Bradbrook, *Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 160.

¹⁴ Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Hyland's critique that Bradbrook's definition of disguise 'falsif[ies] the specific meaning of the word' is not without reason.¹⁶ Her definition has been used to warp the meaning of 'disguise' into an all-encapsulating term that covers physical disguise, mistaken identity, or any form of emotional or linguistic shift in the text. Many theatre historians use Bradbrook's broad definition of disguise in their brief discussions of the trope, and recent disguise studies tend to prioritise the theoretical and rhetorical elements of disguise even more than Bradbrook did. This is, in part, due to the textual focus of most disguise scholarship over the past century. Disguise studies has traditionally remained in the realm of literary analysis, offering theoretical readings of disguise plays. Lloyd Davis's *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (1993), for example, is concerned with the construction of character and the use of rhetoric to fashion identity, and is thus centred on the abstract meanings of the word 'disguise' rather than the act itself:

Disguise is an ethopoetic trope that enables connections between the social and the personal to be textually reproduced; and it is a meta-rhetorical figure that suggests the differential and representational processes that relate language to selfhood.¹⁷

His use of 'ethopoetic', a word which he defines as 'the making of character', ties his understanding of disguise to a conceptual and textual understanding of character.¹⁸ For Davis, disguise is an external representation of the character's internal struggle between the public and private self. He does not consider the material component of performing disguise, but instead thinks about how the disguise identity (as opposed to

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 11.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 11, p. 6.

the original identity of the disguiser) is produced by ‘theories of discourse’.¹⁹ Davis asserts that the material components of disguise equate to ‘a simple change of personal appearance’ and that the ‘more complicated notions of identity and motivation’ exist, instead, within the text.²⁰

Likewise, Quarmby’s *The Disguised Ruler* explores Elizabethan and Jacobean conceptualisations of the disguised ruler as a politically subversive figure. Quarmby’s and Davis’ readings may be useful in understanding the socio-political contexts of disguise, but they frequently remove the plays from their original context – the stage. In response to Quarmby’s argument that we should not read *Measure for Measure* as a commentary on King James, Eoin Price ‘wonders if the spectre of King James can, in fact, be fully exorcised (and whether it should be). It is demonstrably problematic to read the play as an allegory of the Jacobean court, but it is perverse to deny that James’s accession had an influence over the play’s composition and reception.’²¹ Price’s argument recalls a convincing, but unexplored, argument of Davis’: ‘in this interpersonal network the implications of disguise can soon pass beyond any one wearer’s intentions.’²²

In the last decade, Hyland and Simone Chess have shown that there is still a great deal of research to be done in disguise studies, especially regarding the performance context of the plays. Chess’s transfeminist literary analysis, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (2016) has shown that,

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 6

²⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

²¹ Eoin Price, ‘Review: Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), xvi+263pp., ISBN 9781409401599, £55.00’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, 82.1 (2012), 96-8 (p. 96).

²² Davis, p. 4.

MTF [male-to-female] crossdressers, because of their queer feminine presentations, are uniquely disruptive to the sex/gender system [...] Centering MTF crossdressing narratives—showing how they reveal queer and relational early modern gender—is an investment in recognizing and validating historical male femininities and an insistence upon queer femme visibility.²³

While only marginally engaged with disguise studies, Chess's work shows the extent to which disguise's engagement with identity can inform a reading of early modern gender performance that speaks to contemporary gender performance. The gender studies work of the 1980s and 90s, which largely focussed on Shakespeare's gendered disguisers, is deeply entrenched in the cultural understanding of gender and sexuality of its time.²⁴ Where this early work explored the homoeroticism and gender-queering of boy actors and cross-dressed characters, Chess's is instead positioned within trans scholarship and the 'stakes of gender labor and passing in life and, by extension, in literary representation.'²⁵

Trans scholarship provides a necessary background to the exploration of identity – gender identity in particular – throughout this thesis. I follow Sawyer K. Kemp's argument that study of trans identities on the early modern stage must 'de-center clothing entirely'.²⁶ Yet in order to do so, we must first, paradoxically, *re-centre*

²³ Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 175.

²⁴ See: Paula S. Berggren, "A Prodigious Thing": The Jacobean Heroine in Male Disguise', in *Philological Quarterly*, 62.3 (1983), 383-402; Phyllis Rackin, 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage', *PMLA*, 102.1 (1987), 29-41; Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38.4 (1988), 418-40; Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Winifried Schleiner, 'Male Cross-Dressing and Transvestism in Renaissance Romances', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19.4 (1988), 605-19; David Cressy, 'Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England', *the Journal of British Studies*, 35.4 (1996), 438-65; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: the Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

²⁵ Chess, *Male-to-Female*, p. 142.

²⁶ Sawyer K. Kemp, "In That Dimension Grossly Clad": Transgender Rhetoric, Representation, and Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies*, 47 (2019), 120-6, (p. 122).

clothing in our understandings of disguise. Consideration of the materiality of disguise enables us to destabilise the concept, challenged by Kemp, that every representation of crossdressing is a representation of trans identity. It is only by recognising that disguised gender *presentation* is removable and temporary in a way that gender *identity* is not, that scholarship can 'locate transgender identity in something other than clothing.'²⁷

What I have termed gendered disguise refers to one of the most prolific disguises in early modern drama: the use of gendered items of clothing, stage properties, and prosthetics – ranging from breeches and farthingales to swords and lutes to beards and false breasts – to alter the disguiser's gender presentation. Commonly referred to as 'cross-dressing', I instead use 'gendered disguise' to engage with both inter-gender disguises (female-to-male and male-to-female disguise [Chapter Two]) and intra-gender disguises (the varied kinds of feminine and masculine presentation that differentiate a person within their gender [Chapter Three]). While these disguises are often portrayed as binary, the use of the term 'gendered disguise' allows for the nuances of gender identity recognised by scholars of early modern gender, like Will Fisher, who has shown that '[i]n early modern England [...] sexual differences between men and women were [...] often conceptualized in terms of degree.'²⁸

Gendered disguise has had many names in its past: in 1915 Freeburg posited terms for two types of gendered disguise, 'the female page' and 'the boy bride', distinguishing the two by the character's sex rather than the type of disguise enacted.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁸ Will Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly* (2001), 155-87, p. 87.

Well into the 1980s, scholarship retained Freeburg's separation, as in Paula S. Berggren's "A Prodigious Thing": The Jacobean Heroine In Male Disguise', Phyllis Rackin's 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage' (1987), and Winfreid Schleiner's 'Male Cross-Dressing and Transvestism in Renaissance Romances' (1988), each of which uses gendered and sexed terms to refer to the disguiser. As recently as 2016, Chess's *Male-To-Female Crossdressing* has demonstrated that not only does scholarship continue to separate the two disguises, but it also prioritises female-to-male disguise over its less studied counterpart.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw an increase in scholarship on gender identity and the disguising of gender on the early modern stage as scholars engaged with gender studies, feminist studies, and queer studies. Jean E. Howard notes that scholarship of the late 1980s used 'discussions of crossdressing on the Renaissance stage [as] an important site for talking about the Renaissance sex-gender system in general and about the possibilities of transgressing or subverting that system.'²⁹ Much of the terminology still used to understand gendered disguise originated in the scholarship of Berggren, Phyllis Rackin, Mary Beth Rose, Jonathon Dollimore, David Cressy, Stephen Greenblatt, and Stephen Orgel. Terms like 'transvestism', 'transvestite disguise', and 'crossdressing' emphasised the character and narrative focus of these studies, which consider 'the ideological import of crossdressing [as it was] mediated by all the conventions of dramatic narrative'.³⁰ The opening sentence of Berggren's article on female-to-male gendered disguise – '[t]he Elizabethan transvestite heroines, a garrulous lot, provide a running commentary on their disguised

²⁹ Jean E. Howard, 'Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 38.4 (1988), 418-40 (pp. 418-19).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

state' – exemplifies how conceptual studies of identity have coloured this field of disguise scholarship for the last forty years.³¹

Where the terms 'transvestism' and 'transvestite disguise' have, for the most part, been removed from scholarly discussions of gendered disguise due to the term's problematic history, the word 'crossdressing' has remained. Yet the 'cross' in 'cross-dressing' imposes a binary between the material components of the disguise and the person acting as the disguiser, a binary that this thesis refutes. As Chapters One, Two, and Three demonstrate, while the materials of a disguise are markers of gender identity, those markers relate to the perception of the disguise, and are not necessarily indicative of the character's identity. The use of the term 'gendered disguise' thus shifts focus from the character to the costume.

This thesis thus owes a great deal to recent works in trans studies that have called for a separation of the gendered items of a disguise from the gender identity of the person wearing it. While there is incredible scope to read gender non-conforming and trans identities as being reflected in early modern characters, to perceive non-cisgender identity through clothing alone is to oversimplify the complexities of gender identity. This is suggested by Kemp when they argue that,

protesting too much at the convention of cross-dressing might break the illusion in a theatre which already relied on boys acting as women, but to read clothing and disguise as hallmarks of a proto-trans identity risks creating a binary between the body—which is “true” and essential—and the clothing that is “trans” but also deceptive.³²

³¹ Paula S. Berggren, “A Prodigious Thing”: The Jacobean Heroine in Male Disguise’, in *Philological Quarterly*, 62.3 (1983), 383-402 (p. 383).

³² Sawyer K. Kemp, “In That Dimension Grossly Clad”: Transgender Rhetoric, Representation, and Shakespeare’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 47 (2019), 120-6, p. 122.

This thesis uses the term 'gendered disguise' because it is very distinctly *not* about the wearer or their identity, but about that which they are wearing. It does not seek to fuse the identity of the disguise with the identity of the person beneath the disguise, but instead to view the disguise as removable.

This thesis takes a sensory approach to the material objects at its heart, considering the myriad meanings that could be inferred from seeing (or in some cases hearing) an item on stage, alongside the impact of its tactile experience on the player. How, for instance, would the feel of Cesario's costume or Viola's costume affect their player in *Twelfth Night* (LCM, 1600-2)? Would an experienced boy player hold themselves with more confidence in Viola's dress, having worn similar clothes onstage most days for years? Or would they feel more comfortable in the masculine garb that reflects what they are likely to wear at home? We will never know the answer to these questions, but asking them prompts recognition of the embodied, sensory, and material requirements of performance: the 'what if?' of material performance enables us to understand how its impact can reconfigure our understanding of the play.

Hyland's recognition of and opposition to the 'downplaying [of] the significance of disguise as theatrical spectacle' in *Disguise* is, therefore, a cornerstone of this thesis.³³ To Hyland, disguise is 'almost entirely a matter of performance', which 'allow[s] a virtuoso actor to demonstrate his skill'.³⁴ Hyland's book is primarily concerned with understanding how the early English theatre companies staged disguise, but he also asks a question taken up more substantially in this thesis: what different performances of disguise could have communicated to the audience.

³³ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 11.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Performance-centred readings of disguise tropes thus ensure an understanding of the ‘anxiety about the identity and stability of the self’ that disguising can cause, whilst also recognising the importance of spectacle and audience response.³⁵ Accordingly, this thesis utilises material culture analysis of performance to show how repertoires reflected company identity, what plays can tell us about actors’ skills beyond ‘type-casting’, and how the material uses of costumes and stage cosmetics reflected early modern anxieties regarding gender and race.

For disguise scholarship to move beyond theoretical interpretations, it must attend to the material and embodied practices of performance. Attention to the materiality of disguise alongside the playgoer’s perspective can provide new readings of what different performances of disguise communicated. The dominance of literary readings of disguise texts has left the practicalities of their staging marginalised – or even ignored entirely. Disguise can only be wholly understood if one accounts for the theoretical understanding of early modern identity inherent in a text *and* for the materiality of costume and discovery in its performance. When it comes to disguise studies, the costuming, the use of stage make-up, the stage properties, and the way that these stage materials inform our knowledge of the plays are often disregarded. Yet, at its core, disguise is material. It is reliant on symbolic meanings and mnemonic resonances of material objects on-stage, whether they be the fabric of a costume, the particular style of a beard, or the sound of an instrument. Thus, this thesis, too, focuses on the materiality of the stage and draws upon the material culture scholarship that predates it.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Disguise studies have often presumed that costumes and clothing signify in stable and transparent ways, making changes of identity through the removal of a disguise straightforward. Thus, Freeburg assumes that,

[t]he wearing of a mask or fantastic costume by a person would not naturally induce another to decide on his identity. On the contrary, it would suspend the decision until the mask was removed or some individual mark or manner betrayed the person.³⁶

In fact, material culture studies have shown that a change in appearance in early modern England was anything but 'simple': clothes were able 'to mould and shape [people] both physically and socially, to constitute subjects through their power as material memories' state Jones and Stallybrass.³⁷ Yet even those studies taking account of Jones and Stallybrass's work tend to assume that clothing signified straightforwardly and consistently. For instance, Robert I. Lublin asserts that '[c]lothing and theatrical apparel carried specific meanings that were well understood by playwrights, performers, and audiences of the time.'³⁸ Lublin's argument offers far too rigid and transparent an understanding of how clothing signified, which is not in line with the varied population of early modern London. Indeed, where scholars like Lublin have assumed that the mnemonic meaning of an item of clothing was shared between wearer and viewer, disguise drama consistently disproves that view.

³⁶ Freeburg, p. 3.

³⁷ Jones and Stallybrass, p. 2. See: C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the 17th Century* (London, Faber and Faber Limited, 1955); M. Channing Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936); Peter Stallybrass, 'Properties in clothes: the materials of the Renaissance theatre' in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 177-201; James M. Bromley, *Clothing and Queer Style in Early Modern English Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); Ella Hawkins, *Shakespeare in Elizabethan Costume: Period Dress in Twenty-First Century Performance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023).

³⁸ Robert I. Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 1.

Davis believes that '[t]he key issue [with disguise] is who controls the meaning of its disclosure, the wearer or the audience.'³⁹ In disguise drama, the mnemonic resonances of material objects on stage are resolutely unfixed. The use of costume to dissemble delegitimises sartorial signification as, by drawing attention to the falsity of the clothing, the playing company also break down the continuity between what is seen and what is believed. Moreover, while the playing company may have intended a particular meaning, what is actually understood depends on the individual playgoer. The unfixed meaning of stage materials naturally lends itself to disguise: the disguiser is not donning a fixed identity but obscuring the identity beneath. It does not matter how the other characters perceive the false identity, as long as they do not realise that it is a disguise. Thus, when Peregrine asks, 'Am I enough disguised?', the lack of information about the look and materials of the disguise are indicative of how secondary those elements are for Jonson: it matters less *how* Peregrine is disguised, than it does *whether* he is disguised.⁴⁰ Catherine Richardson has shown clothing to be a 'superbly flexible sign', and it is material culture analysis that leads Will Fisher to conclude that 'masculinity and femininity were often conceptualized as being malleable.'⁴¹ The flexibility and malleability of sartorial signifiers reflects the unstable relationship between outward presentation and personal identity so often present in disguise drama. Staged disguise encourages playgoers to question the relationship between clothing and character; it unravels the threads of 'material memories' woven into a costume and stitches uncertainty in their place.⁴²

³⁹ Davis, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Jonson, *Volpone*, sig. M1v.

⁴¹ Catherine Richardson, "'Havying nothing upon hym saving onely his sherte": Event, Narrative and Material Culture in Early Modern Society' in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Routledge: London, 2016), pp. 209-221 (p. 210); Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 6.

⁴² Jones and Stallybrass, p. 2.

Lauren Robertson has shown that recognition of the ‘uncertainty’ of the early English stage is key to understanding ‘the topsy-turvy world of disguise and counterfeiting.’⁴³ Likewise, Matthew Steggle, Roslyn Knutson, and David McInnis have demonstrated through their work on lost plays that the sheer amount of loss relating to the early modern professional theatres means that early modern theatre studies is undoubtedly affected by uncertainty.⁴⁴ Yet despite this lack, theatre history works like Tiffany Stern’s *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (2009) and Martin Wiggins’ *British Drama, 1533 – 1642: A Catalogue* (2012-) have demonstrated the abundance of information that can nonetheless be drawn from the few pieces of documentary evidence that remain.⁴⁵

This thesis shows that the ephemeral objects of the theatre can be partially reconstructed from the evidence of early modern material lives. In *A Day at Home in Early Modern England: Material Culture and Domestic Life* (2017), Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson argue for ‘the central significance of a much fuller understanding of the material qualities of domestic life to our comprehension of the structures of early modern patriarchal authority: [they] see that fullness in aesthetic, cultural, social, spiritual, interpersonal, and economic and political terms.’⁴⁶ In *Domestic Life and*

⁴³ Lauren Robertson, *Entertaining Uncertainty in the Early Modern Theater: Stage Spectacle and Audience Response* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), p. 155.

⁴⁴ *Lost Plays Database*, ed. by Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, Matthew Steggle, and Misha Teramura <<https://lostplays.folger.edu>> [accessed 12 June 2024]; *Lost Plays in Shakespeare’s England*, ed. by Matthew Steggle and David McInnis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Matthew Steggle, *Digital Humanities and the Lost Drama of Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2015); David McInnis, *Shakespeare and Lost Plays: Reimagining Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

⁴⁵ See: *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, ed. by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); *Re-thinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare’s England*, ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Clare McManus and Lucy Munro, ‘Engendering the Stage: Women and Dramatic Culture’, in *The Arden Handbook of Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama*, ed. by Michelle Dowd and Tom Rutter (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), pp. 181-99.

⁴⁶ Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, *A Day at Home in Early Modern England: Material Culture and Domestic Life, 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), p. 7.

Domestic Tragedy: The Material Life of the Household (2006), Richardson shows how a material understanding of early modern culture can translate the otherwise indecipherable aspects of the early modern English stage. Along similar lines, this thesis considers evidence such as surviving clothes, portraits, and household recipe books alongside surviving playtexts and other forms of theatrical evidence to illuminate the materiality of the stage and the functioning of its drama.

'Material culture always stands in a complex relation to the theoretical frameworks within which scholars work', Curtis Perry argues, since 'on the one hand, study of the material requires some such framework if it is to avoid [...] banality; on the other hand, returning to the material traces of medieval and Renaissance culture can offer ways to challenge and refresh our received wisdom and our theoretical assumptions.'⁴⁷ Accordingly, Lucy Munro has repeatedly proven how personnel changes and the technological and material advancements of the theatre impacted on playing companies, demonstrating the importance of considering how plays were performed when attempting to understand company practice.⁴⁸ Following from

⁴⁷ Curtis Perry, 'Introduction' in *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Curtis Perry (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), pp. ix-xxiv (p. x).

⁴⁸ See: Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Munro, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); Munro, 'Living by Other's Pleasure: Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*, and Theatrical Profit', *Early Theatre* 23.1 (2020), 109-26; Munro, "As it was Played in the Blackfriars": Jonson, Marston, and the Business of Playing', *English Literary Renaissance*, 50.2 (2020), 256-95. For further related reading, see: Reavley Gair, *The Children of Paul's: The Story of a Theatre Company, 1553-1608* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Eva Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (c. 1605-1619)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company, 1594-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); 129-38; Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Evidence for the Assignment of Plays to the Repertory of Shakespeare's Company', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 4 (1989), 63-89; Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company, 1594-1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1991); Knutson, 'Pembrokes Men in 1592-3, their Repertory and Touring Schedule', *Early Theatre*, 4.2 (2001); Knutson, 'Filling Fare: the Appetite for Current Issues and Traditional Forms in the Repertory of the Chamberlain's Men,' *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 15 (2003), 57-76; Harry R. McCarthy, "'M[aster] Monkesters schollars": Richard Mulcaster, Physical Education, and the Early Modern Boy Companies', *Early Theatre* 24.2 (2021), 31-54; McCarthy, *Boy Actors in Early Modern England: Skill and Stagecraft in the Theatre* (Cambridge:

Munro's work on the King's Men, this thesis consistently shows the materials of staged disguise to be integral to our understanding of identity in early modern England. It uses material culture to reconsider theoretical discussions of repertoires, adding a depth of evidence to the work of literary critical scholars to show the playtext to be ultimately inseparable from the materials that facilitated its performance.

In the vein of phenomenology scholarship, this thesis approaches the material aspects of performance from a sensory angle.⁴⁹ It embraces the uncertainty of material meaning and theatrical loss, to build on Robertson's claim that,

the theater rendered, more precisely than any other representational mode of the period, the very form of its culture into visible, exciting show. The duplicity of the theatre's representations – at once the thing itself and the mechanisms by which it was realized – synthesized oppositions into the prismatic singularity of ambiguous stage spectacle. Far from resolving this contradiction, these spectacles exaggerated it, and as a result, made it enticing: *Hamlet's* "questionable shape" "captivated" because it was a ghost *and* an actor; Hermione's statue in *The Winter's Tale* "intralred" because it was inert *and* alive.⁵⁰

The material components of disguise, more than representing character, represented ambiguity: playwrights used disguise to materialise abstract and culturally specific understandings of gender, race, class, and identity. By doing so, they demonstrated the unstable relationship between a person's self-identification and public perception

Cambridge University Press, 2022); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ See: Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Katherine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); *Shakespeare / Sense: Contemporary Readings in Sensory Culture*, ed. by Simon Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2020); *Shakespeare and Emotion*, ed. by Katherine A. Craik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Toria Johnson, "'The Sinewes of Truth': Binding Law and Emotion in Thomas Thomkins's *Lingua*", *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 54.1 (2018), 17-31; Johnson, 'To feel what wretches feel': reformation and the re-naming of English compassion', in *Compassion in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Feeling and Practice*, ed. by Kristine Steenbergh and Katherine Ibbett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 219-36.

⁵⁰ Robertson, p. 14.

of them. Stage disguise is paradoxical: it cannot be entirely understood through the disguiser's self-description, nor can it be entirely understood through the deceived onlookers' responses. Instead, we must attempt to look at it from both perspectives simultaneously.

In *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England* (1999), Bruce R. Smith shows the theatre to be a space that requires two 'dimensions' of listening.⁵¹ Smith argues that we should understand the early modern theatre space through the concept of 'free listening': Roland Barthes' term for 'a listening which circulates, which permutes, which disaggregates, by its mobility, the fixed network of roles and speech'.⁵² 'Free listening', states Smith, 'requires an acknowledgement of the physical presence of the speaker, the embodiedness of the sounds one is hearing, and it imparts a different kind of knowledge than seeing does.'⁵³ To apply this physical understanding of listening (or imagined listening, as may be the case when reading a playtext) to disguise is to acknowledge that disguising is almost entirely reliant on embodied senses – what the disguiser feels and how they move; what the observer sees, hears, and touches. Thus, the material and sensory elements of the disguise work simultaneously to construct character for both playgoer (the senser) and player (the sensed).

Previous disguise scholarship has generally been concerned with an abstract understanding of intention and perception within the world of the play, which presupposes a distanced and omniscient perspective. Yet Jennifer A. Low and Nova

⁵¹ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 340; Roland Barthes, 'Listening.', in *The Responsibility of Forms*, trans. by Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

⁵³ Smith, *Acoustic World*, p. 340

Myhill argue that, in order to understand fully early modern playgoer response, we must distinguish between

‘the audience’ as a collective entity that is brought into existence by the theatrical venue itself – the imagined audiences to whom characters so often speak in prologues and epilogues – and the ‘audiences’ as individuals who never cease to function distinctly and who never leave behind the peculiarities that will shape their responses as much as anything they see on the stage.⁵⁴

To embrace the instability of disguise is to read disguise plays in alignment with the uncertainty of playgoer response, an approach that reflects the ‘the variety of experiences and viewing practices that individuals brought to the early modern theater.’⁵⁵ Thus, considering the personal understandings of a disguise by individual playgoers enables an exploration of interpretations that rejects the ascription of ‘fixed’ meaning. We will never know how individual audience members viewed the disguiser, but, as this thesis will demonstrate, consideration of the cultural resonances of various stage materials can begin to show the range of possible interpretations that different playgoers might arrive at.

Theatre history’s turn to the material and sensory aspects of stagecraft over the last decade, when combined with attention to a company’s repertory, can provide key evidence about which elements of performance the company prioritised. The King’s Men’s use of new stage materials, like removable umber, and the experimental ways in which they approached older materials, like false beards, placed the company at the forefront of disguise innovation on the early modern public stage. Analysis of references to costumes, cosmetics, and characterisation throughout the repertory

⁵⁴ Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, ‘Introduction’, in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

shows how the King's Men used new technologies and built upon previous plots to create new and innovative disguises. Thus, this thesis's material readings of disguise plays builds on the foundations laid by studies of lost plays – which approach playtexts as fragmentary – and the interdisciplinary approach of recent repertory studies.

Repertory and audience studies have shown that no play exists within a vacuum. Material culture studies has shown us that each item on stage is imbued with mnemonic resonances, both from the repertory and from the wider cultural moment in which the play is performed. Disguise studies has shown that it is the text that shapes these resonances and tells the playgoers how they should be interpreting them. It is therefore through a methodology that combines material culture studies, repertory studies, and close reading that this thesis seeks to come as close as is possible to understanding these plays in the context of their original performances.

To understand how disguise was used on the early modern stage, theoretical readings of disguise must merge with performance-based, material readings of the company's repertory. Close readings of disguise plays performed by the Chamberlain's and King's Men suggests that spectacle, especially in moments of revelation, was integral to their performances of disguise – more so than it appears to have been for the other companies. Through analysis of their use of spectacle, among other techniques, this thesis shows that the King's Men's commitment to new and experimental tropes placed the company at the forefront of disguise innovation on the early modern public stage. Analysis of references to costumes, cosmetics, and characterisations throughout the repertory shows how the company used new technologies and developed on the old to create innovative disguise drama.

Chapter One, “His patch’d cloake throwne off”: the materiality of discovery scenes’ explores the material aspect of the moment in which the disguiser’s identity is revealed. Considering how the material meanings of clothing in early modern England directly impacted on the performance of a discovery, it shows that the material and abstract meanings of discovery were intrinsically associated by playwrights and playgoers, leading to the discovery requiring both verbal and material signifiers. By looking at the moment in which the material element of the disguise is removed from the player’s body to reveal another material signifier of character beneath, this exploration provides a foundation for the following chapters’ various discussions of the individual materials of disguise. By using a combination of material culture and sensory studies to explore discovery scenes across the King’s Men’s repertory, this chapter argues that readings of the playtext in isolation cannot capture the full, and inextricably material, story of early modern stage performance. We must also consider the material elements of the disguise and the guise beneath it: the costumes, props, cosmetics, and prosthetics with which these disguises were constructed. This chapter demonstrates how disguise studies has, thus far, failed to engage with the material and phenomenological nature of the early modern English stage and the gaps in knowledge that stem from this. The chapters that follow use the methodology set out in Chapter One to explore the individual materials of disguise in the theatre. Each chapter focuses on one material of disguise: costumes, small stage properties, cosmetics, and, finally, prosthetics.

Chapter Two, “This smockified shirt, or shirted smock”: gendered disguise and the ambiguity of costume’, discusses the degendering of linen undershirts in the mid-1610s to explore how ungendered items of clothing are used to blur gender boundaries in depictions of gendered disguise. By considering the multiple meanings available

from the material components of a costume, this chapter argues that discussions of gendered disguisers must also consider how the various and contrasting meanings of materials in early modern England could result in multiple interpretations of staged disguises: some that view the material elements of the disguise as cohesive with the disguiser's feigned identity, and some that perceive it as incongruous. Through discussion of Thomas Middleton's *The Widow* (KM, 1615-17) and the sartorial significance of linen shirts, this chapter reiterates the argument underpinning recent work in trans studies: that gender performance does not equate to gender identity.

Chapter Three, "“Run your beard into a peak of twenty!”: age prosthetics as gendered disguise', approaches the beard from a material standpoint, considering the physicality of the prosthetic beard and the impact of beardedness and beardlessness on the social status of players. Fisher has shown that 'sex was materialized through an array of features and prosthetic parts. A list of some of these parts would have to include the beard and genitals, but would also have to include clothing, the hair, the tongue, and weapons such as swords or daggers (to name just a few)'.⁵⁶ This chapter considers this materialisation of sex with reference to John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Double Marriage* (KM, 1620-3) to argue for a direct correlation between the King's Men's disguise-heavy repertory that necessitated malleability from the player's body in the form of shorn facial hair, and arguments about the effeminacy of players. Through its consideration of masculine presentation, this chapter shows that 'gendered disguise' is not a term that is only refers to inter-gender disguises, but intra-gender disguises as well.

⁵⁶ Will Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly* (2001), 155-87, p. 157

Chapter Four, “A wrong done to beauty”: staging beauty and disfigurement through cosmetic disguise’, explores the use of cosmetics to disguise, including pox stickers, artificial sunburn, artificial wrinkling, and umber. By drawing on the work of Andrea Stevens, Tanya Pollard, and Farah Karim-Cooper this chapter considers how cosmetic disguise, especially umber, was used to create the impacts of disguises more permanent than clothing and costume. With clothing and costume, one can easily alter and adapt the outward signifiers of identity, but cosmetics provided a more lasting form of self-display which was taken to imply a corruption of both outer and inner identity. This chapter demonstrates the cultural relationship between cosmetics and deception in early modern England through analysis of John Fletcher’s *The Pilgrim* (KM, 1619-21) and Thomas Middleton’s *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, 1621-2). Early modern understandings of beauty and racial Otherness are at the heart of this chapter’s considerations; with reference to the works of Dymphna Callaghan and Patricia Akhimie, it shows how staged umbering materialised early modern discussions of race and class through its engagement with candlelight, demonstrating how critical race theory, material culture, and theatre history can inform and strengthen one another’s arguments.

Chapter Five, “Call in your crutches, wooden legs, false bellies”: the props of representational disguise’, challenges Hyland’s assertion that change of voice and a change in demeanour may be ‘important and interesting, but subordinate to the central material process of disguising, which is the change in appearance’.⁵⁷ Looking beyond the predominantly visual focus of the previous chapters, this chapter considers how sound and small representational props could represent disguise too. The material properties of disguise indicate that all disguises are, at their core, representational:

⁵⁷ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 40.

they rely on the implicit meanings of the material components of the disguise to construct an identity. Yet some are more abstract than others. Gendered items – cod-pieces, skirts, even beards – function to construct inter-gender difference, but what of items that are explicitly associated with a profession, like a servant's blue coat, a sowgelder's horn, or a fool's coat? 'Representational disguise' here refers to the use of small stage properties or individual items of costume that represent (and often caricature) a profession. Unlike gendered disguise, representational disguise has had little scholarly attention, as exemplified by Freeburg dismissing the use of props in disguise as 'merely a symbol to represent a change'.⁵⁸ This chapter uses John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Beggars' Bush* (KM, 1613-22) to show that disguises constructed from props may have been symbolic, but they were no less impactful for their simplicity. It considers the soundscape of the playhouse to demonstrate that disguise is not just a visual spectacle, but a multi-sensory, embodied form of stagecraft.

⁵⁸ Freeburg, p. 121.

CHAPTER I

'His patch'd cloake throwne off': the materiality of discovery scenes

i. Introduction

In Thomas Middleton's *The Mayor of Quinborough* (KM, 1616-20), Simon, a tanner and elected Mayor of Quinborough, becomes frustrated by the gulling of the clown character in the in-text play 'The Cheater and the Clown', and decides to 'teach [the clown] to understand/ To play a Clown'.¹ Upon the entrance of the 'cheater', a character meant to pickpocket the clown, Simon declares,

Come on, Sir, let us see what your
Knaveship can do at me now,
You must not think you have a Clown in hand,
The fool I have committed too, for playing the part.²

While saying this, Simon 'throws off his Gown, discovering his doublet with a satten forepart and a Canvas back'.³ The specification of the costume's materials reflects the reciprocal relationship between visible garments and externally perceived identity as laid out in the Introduction to this thesis. Prior to this scene, the canvas back of his doublet was hidden by his mayor's gown and his front-facing appearance was that of

¹ Thomas Middleton, *The Mayor of Quinborough a tragedy* (London, 1661), Wing M1984A, sig. l2r.

² *Ibid.*, sig. l2r.

³ *Ibid.*, sig. l2r.

projected wealth and high social status, but as soon as the gown is removed and the canvas visible, his status is in decline.

In the play-within-the-play, Simon throws off the gown to signify that he is no longer the 'mayor' but the clown of the play-within-the-play, but by doing so, he materialises his role as the clown in *Quinborough*, as well. The discovery of the canvas, a type of coarse linen usually worn by labouring-class workers, is meant to materially signify the character's role of clown: 'clown' originally referred to labouring country workers who were parodied by playing company clowns like the farmer's son in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (KM, 1611), Costard in his *Love's Labour's Lost* (LCM, 1594-7), the gardeners in his *Richard II* (LCM, 1595-7), or the woodsmen in John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont's *Philaster* (KM, 1609-20).⁴ Simon's transformation from the wealthy, mayoral citizen signified by the satin front of his doublet and into the canvas clad clowning character indicated by the doublet's backing is reflected in the events that follow: the 'players' turn out to be frauds, 'The Cheater and the Clown' a distraction, all enacted to rob the mayor of his property, transforming him into a realisation of the very fictional clown with whom he was so frustrated.⁵

Quinborough's remarkably specific use of multiple clothes and cloths demonstrates how the revealing of items of clothing draws attention to the mnemonic resonances of their materials. To apply this to a discovery: if the disguise itself is almost entirely a function of the material signifiers of the clothing, then it follows that the discovery relies primarily on the removal of those signifiers and the revealing of

⁴ That canvas was the clothing of a labouring worker recurs in works from the seventeenth century: 'Sattin and silke was pawned long a goe,/ And now in canvase no knight can him knowe.' (Samuel Rowlands, *Humors Looking Glasse* [London, 1608], STC 21386, sig. A3v); a song about the poor soldier goes, 'My Velvet Coat and Scarlet/ Must turn to Canvas Suits' (Thomas Jordan, 'The Souldiers last Farewell', in *A Royal Arbor of Loyal Poesie, Consisting of Poems and Songs* [London, 1663], Wing J1058, sig. 2B4r).

⁵ Middleton, *Quinborough*, sigs. I2v-3v.

new signifiers (the costume beneath). This thesis begins where its subject ends: the discovery scene. This key moment sees the disguise removed and the otherwise unsolvable events of the plot resolved. It may seem odd to begin at the end, but it is the discovery scene that is, arguably, the most materially imbued moment of a disguise play, and thus provides the clearest illustration of the innately material and phenomenological nature of staged disguise. The removal and discarding of the disguise draw attention to its nature as a material and inanimate object.

The discovery in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* (KM, 1626) exemplifies this: when Canter Pennyboy, the disguised father of the prodigal Young Pennyboy, 'discovers himself' out of sheer frustration at his son's prodigality, '[h]ee points [to] his patch'd cloake throwne off' and discarded on the ground.⁶ Jonson's helpfully descriptive stage directions highlight something that disguise scholarship seems to have all but forgotten: for a disguiser to 'discover' themselves, they must first be materially concealed. Jonson uses two meanings of 'discover': the conceptual sense, to declare one's identity; and the material sense, to remove a physical cover (in this case, Canter Pennyboy's patched cloak, which signifies his role in disguise as his son's serving man). Not only is Canter Pennyboy here informing his son of his identity, but he is also literally uncovering the material signifiers of his social status that the cloak had previously hidden. In this moment, the two meanings of discover, the conceptual and the material, are inextricably bound together.

This chapter considers the discovery scene as the most distinctly material moment of a disguise play. It argues that looking at the physical moment of discovery

⁶ Ben Jonson, 'The Staple of Newes', in *Bartholmew fayre : a comedie, acted in the yeare, 1614 by the Lady Elizabeths seruants, and then dedicated to King Iames, of most blessed memorie; The diuell is an asse : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1616, by His Maiesties seruants; The staple of newes : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1625, by His Maiesties seruants by the author, Beniamin Iohnson.* (London, 1631), STC 14753.5, sigs. 2A1r – K2r (sig. H4v).

can show how readings of a playtext in isolation cannot capture the full, and inextricably material, story of early modern stage performance. We must also consider the material elements of the disguise and the guise beneath it: the costumes, props, cosmetics, and prosthetics with which these disguises were constructed. Through a material culture and sensory studies approach to discovery scenes in the King's Men's repertory from 1603 to 1636, this chapter demonstrates how disguise studies has, thus far, failed to engage with the material and phenomenological nature of the early modern English stage. By looking at the moment in which the material element of the disguise is removed from the player's body to reveal another material signifier of character beneath, this chapter provides a foundation for each following chapter's discussions of the individual materials of disguise.

First, this chapter considers existing scholarship on disguise and discovery scenes by scholars such as Leslie Thomson, Victor Oscar Freeburg, and Peter Hyland alongside early modern discussions of playing and disguise. It reframes the discovery scene as an inherently physical moment of performance, which relies on the covering and subsequent *discovering* of the body, exploring how these actions engage with multiple senses by conducting an etymological history of 'discover' across early modern literature. Building on the material culture work of Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden and Ruth B. Phillips, Robert I. Lublin, and Andrew Sofer, while engaging with phenomenologists like Jeffrey David Feldman, Paul Menzer, and Laura Jayne Wright, this section shows how existing work in other fields can provide a framework for research into disguise.

The second section explores a selection of discovery scenes, investigating moments in which the material element of the disguise is physically removed from the disguiser. I look at Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (? , 1595-96),

Jonson's *Epicœne, or The Silent Woman* (CQR, 1608-10; KM, 1636) and Staple, John Marston's *The Malcontent* (CCR, c.1603; KM, c.1604), and William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (LCM, 1598-1600). This section establishes some fundamental conventions of early modern discovery scenes, arguing that the plays indicate a convention of synchronised physical and verbal discoveries. It then turns to the discovery of Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure*, using the many other examples of discoveries in the period as evidence through which to question the editorial practice of inserting stage directions that imply the discovery of Vincentio's face. It shows how the imbued material meanings of clothing in early modern England directly impacted on the way a discovery was performed and perceived, and how an awareness of sartorial meanings and stage practices can shed fresh light on a scene as familiar as *Measure for Measure's* conclusion.

The final section is a case study of a somewhat unusual discovery scene in the King's Men's repertory: the discovery of Bellario's gendered disguise in Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *Philaster* (KM, 1609-20). *Philaster* is unique among disguise plays in that its two earliest printed texts have different endings. Q1 (often regarded as the 'bad' quarto) includes a discovery scene in which the disguiser, Bellario, 'discovers her hair', while Q2 includes a significantly longer discovery scene, in which the same character instead takes her father aside and informs him of her disguise while the other characters look on, unknowing.⁷ This section proposes the possibility that the so-called 'bad' Q1 text in fact preserves early performance practice, much like the 'bad' Q1 of *Hamlet*, the only version to include potential staging details like that of Hamlet leaping into the grave which a line in an elegy for Richard Burbage

⁷ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Phylaster. Or, Love Lyes a Bleeding* (London, 1620), sig. I4v.

(‘oft have I seen him leap into the grave’) shows to have been a memorable aspect of the play’s early staging.⁸

The section ultimately shows how *Philaster* uses the material signifiers of gender and sex to blur the boundary between disguise and disguiser in the discovery. It seeks to show that the prioritisation of the ‘authorial’ over the input of actors and playing companies into the form a performance took can harm our understanding of the early modern stage and its plays. By doing so, it argues that, whereas the final scene of Q1 *Philaster* has often previously been viewed as merely representing cuts from the ‘good’ Q2 text that weaken the scene, we can instead read Q1’s version as valid on its own terms and apt for early modern performance, since the material signifiers of character that are put in juxtaposition in this scene (‘women’s’ hair and ‘men’s’ clothes) add cultural depth to the discovery.

ii. ‘They pul off the shel and discover him’: (dis)covering as a physical phenomenon in early modern England

The aforementioned discovery of Canter Pennyboy in *Staple* is both a material discovery, the physical removal of his cloak unveiling the material signifiers of identity beneath, and an intellectual discovery, his son Young Pennyboy gaining new knowledge relating to the identity of his companion and the supposed death of his father. It points to an early modern understanding of ‘discovery’ in which the material meaning is entangled with the abstract, conceptual meaning. Canter Pennyboy’s discovery is not unique in its engagement with the literal process of uncovering; Thomson notes that there are ‘about 350 occasions in early modern plays [in which] a

⁸ John Payne Collier, *Memoirs of the Principal Actors in the Plays of Shakespeare* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1846), p. 53; William Shakespeare, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke* (London, 1603), STC 22275, sig. I1r.

character's disguise is removed on stage', while Alan C. Dessen and Thomson's *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* shows that 'discover' is used over seventy times when a disguised figure's disguise is removed.⁹ Their entry demonstrates how the language used in discovery scenes engages with the physicality of the action: 'They discover' (*Money is an Ass*, Thomas Jordan, KRC, 1628-35); 'Discovers himself' (*The Old Couple*, Thomas May, ?KM, 1630); 'discovers her hair' (*Phylaster*, KM, 1609-20); 'puls off his beard and discovers himselfe' (*Claracilla*, Thomas Killigrew, QHM, 1636-9); 'Heare the rest being departed Lodovico and Gasparo discover themselves' (*The White Devil*, John Webster, QAM, 1611-12); 'Here his father discovers himself' (*Staple*).¹⁰

Disguise scholarship's devaluing of the theatricality of discoveries is perhaps due to the shift in definition of 'discover' over the last 400 years. According to the *OED*, 'discover' meaning 'to uncover [something]' or 'to unmask oneself, to take off one's disguise [and] make oneself plainly visible', was primarily used in theatrical settings in the seventeenth century and is 'now rare', the most recent example given being from 1914 despite the entry last being revised in 2013.¹¹ The primary meaning of 'discover' relates, instead, to the disclosing of information: I.1. 'To declare or give away [a person's] identity'; I.2.a. 'to make known, divulge, disclose, reveal', I.2.b 'To reveal a

⁹ Leslie Thomson, *Discoveries on the Early Modern Stage: Contexts and Conventions* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 1; 'discover' in *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1640* ed. by Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 69.

¹⁰ Dessen and Thomson, p. 69; Thomas Jordan, *Money is an Ass a Comedy* (London, 1668), Wing J1047, sig. H1r; Thomas May, *The Old Couple a Comedy* (London, 1658), Wing M1412, sig. G1r; Beaumont and Fletcher, *Phylaster*, sig. I4v; Thomas Killigrew, 'Claracilla' in *The Prisoners and Claracilla. Two Tragæ-comedies* (London, 1641), Wing K452, sig. F12v; John Webster, *The White Devil, or, The Tragedy of Paulo Giordano Ursini, Duke of Brachiano with the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona the Famous Venetian Curtizan* (London, 1612), STC 25178, sig. K2v; Jonson, 'Staple', sig. H4r.

¹¹ 'discover (v., sense II.9.a.ii', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4621481229>>.

secret; to make a disclosure; to confess.¹² Likewise, the *OED's Historical Thesaurus* shows that 'discover' meaning to 'uncover/remove cover from' was in use between c.1381 and 1628, but only 'discover' meaning to 'find out', 'disclose', and 'make well known' remains in use today.¹³ Scholarship has thus far thought about the discovery in an immaterial sense because the material meaning is obsolete. The inter- and multidisciplinary methodology of this thesis returns attention to the material meanings of early modern disguise, renewing an understanding of the discovery scene that recognises the word's meaning in its early modern context.

This section will explore the early modern sense of 'discovery' as simultaneously meaning the literal uncovering of an object (the material sense) and the revealing of knowledge (the abstract sense). First, I explore the word 'discovery', considering the entangled relationship between the material and abstract in early modern England. Next, I consider the corporeal nature of playing, exploring how discussions of playing and players were intertwined with considerations of the senses and the body. This entanglement presents knowledge as constructed through sensory engagement with the material – through a combination of seeing, hearing, and touching – reflecting my multisensory approach to discovering and disguising. Existing scholarship on disguise and discovery scenes is interwoven throughout this discussion of the senses in playing and discoveries, to show how disguise studies have thus far failed to engage with the practical elements of discovery scenes. Upon laying out this context, the section will show how, together, performance studies and material culture

¹² 'discover (v.), sense I.1', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6451669130>>; 'discover (v.), sense I.2.a.i', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1684226683>>; 'discover (v.), sense I.2.b', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8569822176>>.

¹³ '01.12.05.03.05.04|01 (vt.) Uncover/remove covering from: remove (cover)', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=95502>> [accessed 20 March 2024]; '03.09.02.02|06 (vt.) Disclose/reveal: the presence/identity of.', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=181617>> [accessed 20 March 2024]

studies provide a method for understanding the material and phenomenological aspects of on-stage discoveries, aspects that have, thus far, remained hidden.

Despite the interconnection between the material (the literal and practical uncovering of an object or person) and the abstract (the discovery of previously unknown knowledge), most scholarship on discovery scenes has only engaged with the abstract understanding of 'discover', considering how the discovery scene 'link[s] character to concepts of representation and relate[s] selfhood to theories of discourse.'¹⁴ As Peter Hyland recognises in his survey of disguise studies: '[r]ather than looking *at* disguise [scholars] have looked *through* it; in seeking to find what disguise means they have generally ignored what it is or does, or how it is *seen*.'¹⁵ As the following will show, the discovery scene epitomises scholarship's lack of engagement with the practicalities of performing disguise. Part of this may be due to the relative newness of studying early modern theatre with a sensory and performance approach. As recently as 2011, Hyland maintained that, despite disguise being 'almost entirely a matter of spectacle' that 'depend[ed] upon the visual and aural presentation of performance', the text provides us with 'little access [...] to how disguise roles might have been performed', to the extent that scholarship has been predominantly constrained to literary studies or speculation.¹⁶ Such views are no longer dominant: the growing recognition in material culture studies that material objects are 'phenomenologically experienced' has led more recent theatre history and early modern performance scholarship to 'take account of the methods, approaches, and

¹⁴ Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 6.

¹⁵ Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 11. Emphasis his own.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

insights of sensory studies almost as a matter of routine'.¹⁷ *Shakespeare / Sense: Contemporary Readings in Sensory Culture* (2020) has shown how readily Shakespeare studies has responded to the call for sensory studies.¹⁸ It demonstrates how generative these approaches can be for the field, offering a breadth of approaches to Shakespeare and the senses that opens up an entire new form of analysis.

There is yet more that early modern studies can learn from sensory scholarship in other disciplines. For instance, Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth Phillips' edited collection that combines material culture and museum studies, *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture* (2006), posits a 're-consideration of the whole sensory register in relation to material culture' to demonstrate that 'a sensory approach to material culture has the potential for articulating emergent subjectivities which encompass reality, imagination and reason, difference and commonality.'¹⁹ Jeffrey David Feldman's chapter, in particular, explores how awareness of the 'absent body' in museum displays leads to the conclusion that 'the act of looking at [displays] proves insufficient as an analytical strategy for understanding them.'²⁰ To transfer Feldman's reading from museums to the stage, the

¹⁷ Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth Phillips, 'Introduction', in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth, Chris Gosden, and Ruth Phillips (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-31, (p. 4); Simon Smith, 'Introduction', in *Shakespeare / Sense: Contemporary Readings in Sensory Culture*, ed. by Simon Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 1-11 (p. 1).

¹⁸ For further reading relating to early modern sensory studies, see: Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); *Sensible Flesh: On Touch in Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth D. Harvey (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Jonathan Gil Harris, 'The Smell of *Macbeth*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 58 (2007), 465-86; Bruce R. Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558-1660*, ed. by Simon Smith, Jacqueline Watson, and Amy Kenny (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Simon Smith, *Musical Response in the Early Modern Playhouse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Laura Jayne Wright, *Sound Effects: Hearing the Early Modern Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023).

¹⁹ Edwards et al., p. 11.

²⁰ Jeffrey David Feldman, 'Contact Points: Museum and the Lost Body Problem', in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden and Ruth B. Phillips (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 245-67 (p. 246).

recent push for a more multidisciplinary approach to theatre history has demonstrated that reading playtexts without considering the phenomenological and material practicalities of the stage is, likewise, 'insufficient' for 'understanding them'.²¹

Andrew Sofer helpfully illustrates this insufficiency. While discussing stage props as signifiers of dramatic meaning, he notes that:

Text-based scholars, who tend to dismiss objects as at best embodied symbols or at worst as plot devices, have largely neglected this phenomenon - that is, when objects penetrate the critical radar at all. Invisible on the page except as textual signifiers, props seduce our attention in the playhouse as they become drawn into the stage action and absorb complex and sometimes conflicting meanings.²²

Sofer's consideration of stage props demonstrates the paradox of studying the material elements of an ephemeral art. As Tiffany Stern notes, 'playbooks, in manuscript or print, tend to hover between text and performance, containing aspects of both.'²³ Thus, when reading a discovery scene, we are reminded of the physical moment of performance – to use Feldman's words, of the 'absent body' that exists within the text – yet, the lone playtext generally leaves us with little indication of how that moment was enacted.

Sofer acknowledges that we 'must strive to see [early modern people] as they saw themselves, referencing and cross-referencing evidence from the period to reconstruct early modern bifocals that can move us closer to hearing and seeing the first performances of plays from the past'.²⁴ Since Sofer's *The Stage Life of Props* (1998), much has been done on the materialism of stagecraft. Robert I. Lublin's *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early*

²¹ Ibid., p. 246.

²² Andrew Sofer, *The Stage Life of Props* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 2.

²³ Tiffany Stern, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare's England* ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 1-14 (p. 5).

²⁴ Sofer, p. 7.

Modern Theatre and Culture (2011), *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (2016), and Ella Hawkin's *Shakespeare in Elizabethan Costume: 'Period Dress' in Twenty-First-Century Performance* (2022), have shown how clothing and material objects were intrinsically linked to character, to the extent that we cannot understand the character without acknowledging the costume. In particular, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage* argues that items of clothing signified character type, and that we must 'suspend our notion of characters entering the early modern English theatres as ciphers to be filled with the playwright's words, and instead [as] characters whose identities were already firmly established by their costumes.'²⁵ These studies point to the need for an analysis of discovery scenes that engages with the material elements of costume and its crafting of character, as well as to the role of the senses in the performance of these discoveries. The groundwork has been laid to explore discovery scenes (and staged disguise as a whole) as a material, sensory experience for players and playgoers alike.

To understand the material aspects of the discovery, we must first understand what was meant by 'discovery'. For something to be discovered, whether through the removal of costume or the revealing of information, it must first be intentionally hidden. Francisco Robertello's 1548 work, *In Aristotelis Poeticam Explicationes* (translated by Marvin T. Harrick) states that '[d]iscovery occurs when we are led from ignorance to knowledge of some matter, out of which springs either grief or joy – nearly always joy, for Discoveries are, with good reason, placed in the last part of a comedy, where the disturbance in affairs begins to subside.'²⁶ Robertello focusses on the metaphorical elements of a 'discovery' as a revelation of knowledge. Exploring scholarship on

²⁵ Robert I. Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 5.

²⁶ Francisco Robertello, 'On Comedy' in *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century*, trans. Marvin T. Harrick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 233.

disguise, Hyland shows that, thus far, scholarship ‘has devalued the theatricality of disguise by drawing it into some broader category of role-playing or of rhetorical or poetic transformation.’²⁷ The same can be said of discovery scenes. In *Discoveries on the Early Modern Stage*, Thomson attempts ‘a study of the dramatic use, treatment and staging of performed “discoveries”’.²⁸ She recognises that the disguise discovery is about the removal of a costume and states that these discoveries are ‘actions which the theatre is uniquely able to exploit visually and explore through language’.²⁹ Yet by focussing on how discoveries ‘are essential to the way a play dramatizes and explores such interrelated matters as deception, privacy, secrecy and truth; knowledge, justice and renewal’, Thomson prioritises abstract concepts and interpretations over theatrical experience and the practicalities of dramatic action.³⁰ As the above discussion of Jonson’s *Staple* demonstrated, the early modern stage interpreted the discovery much more literally and dynamically than Thomson assumes.

In early modern England the material and the abstract meanings of discovery were intrinsically linked. Henry Crosse uses ‘discover’ as part of an extended metaphor in the subtitle of his pamphlet on morality: *[w]herein is discovered, that although by the disguised craft of this age, vice and hypocrisie may be concealed: yet by tyme (the trial of truth) it is most plainly revealed*.³¹ Likewise, *The Argument of the Pastorall of Florimen with the Description of the Scoenes and Intermedij* (1635) a summary of a court masque, uses ‘discovery’ to mean the removal of a disguise and the discovery of the disguiser’s identity: ‘Florimene comes and knowing the desceit of

²⁷ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 11.

²⁸ Thomson, p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³¹ Henry Crosse, *Vertues common-wealth: or the High-way to Honour wherein is Discovered, that although by the Disguised craft of this Age, Vice and Hypocrisie may be Concealed: yet by Tyme (the Trial of Truth) it is most Plainly Revealed. Necessary for Age to Move Diligence, Profitable for Youth to Shun Wantonnesse: and Bringing to Both at Last Desired Happinesse* (London, 1603), STC 6070.5, sig. A1r.

Filene, complains of Florelle that she did unkindly in not discovering unto her his disguise'.³² Crosse's metaphor speaks to the eventual shift in meaning of 'discover', but his use of terms like 'disguised craft', 'concealed', and 'plainly revealed' foreground the material meaning that provides the foundation of his metaphor. *Florimen* further emphasises this conjoined meaning through its lack of clarity: the use of 'discover' both suggesting the finding out of Filene's identity, and the removal of his disguise to find out that identity.

The material meaning of discovery is prevalent even in early modern works that attempt to separate the physical and material from the intellectual and conceptual, demonstrating how fundamentally they were entwined in the period. John Wilkins' 'An alphabetical dictionary' in his *Essay Towards a Real Character, and a Philosophical Language* (1668) demonstrates that the inherent link between the material and abstract understandings of 'discovery' were still in use more than thirty years after *Florimen*. In his dictionary, Wilkins includes two types of action: 'AS. Action Spiritual', actions that are performed through mental exertion, and 'AC. Action Corporeal', actions that are formed by physical exertion.³³ Wilkins' terms are comparable to this study's use of 'the abstract' and 'the material', respectively. Wilkins defines 'discover' as an 'Action Spiritual' that means to 'Un-conceal', 'Reveal', 'Perceive (inc[eptive]', 'Uncover', 'Shew'.³⁴ To refer to discovering as an 'Action Spiritual' suggests the abstract usage akin to that of *OED*, 'discover, I.2.a', yet even as he reaches for the abstract, Wilkins' language of 'Shew[ing]' and 'Perceiv[ing]' more immediately speaks

³² Anonymous, *The Argument of the Pastorall of Florimene with the Discription of the Scœnes and Intermedii. Presented by the Queenes Majesties Commandment, before the Kings Majesty in the Hall at White-hall, on S. Thomas Day the 21. of December. M.DC.XXXV* (London, 1635), STC 11095, sig. B3v.

³³ John Wilkins, *An essay towards a real character, and a philosophical language* (London, 1668), Wing W2196, sig. 3A2r.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. 3E2v.

to the physicality of discovery: the removal of a costume and the revealing of the character beneath.³⁵ His understanding of 'discover' thus remains associated with the corporeal through the synonyms, 'perceive', for example, meaning 'to take in or apprehend with the mind or senses'.³⁶ Even while stating that discovering is an abstract action, Wilkins still cannot disentangle it from its material roots.

Alongside his alphabetical dictionary, Wilkins includes an early form of thesaurus that seeks to organise words by 'action', categorising depending on whether the words are used to refer to 'spiritual' (intellectual) actions, 'corporeal' (physical) actions, or a mixture of both.³⁷ 'Discovery' is included both in 'actions of the understanding and judgement' (the gaining of knowledge), and in 'mixed mechanical operations' (forms of physical labour).³⁸ In 'understanding and judgement', his synonyms for 'discovery' are 'detect, find, perceive, lift out, pick out, Invention, excogitate, Author, Inventor, tell, inkling, 'tis out', but he also includes 'discover' in his synonyms for the 'mixed mechanical operation' of 'uncovering': 'open, expose, discover, shew, reveal, naked, unmask, unveil'.³⁹ Under the entry for 'causing a thing to be known, or hindring [sic] it from being known' he includes 'SHEWING, disclose, detect, betray, reveal, discover, declare, demonstrate, remonstrate, render' and 'CONCEALING, Hide, Shelter, Suppress, Sculk, lurk, secret, Private, Latent, occult, underhand, close, clancular, clandestine in a corner, in hugger mugger, recess, retire, slink, mich, sneak, slip, or steal away, cloke, veil, hoodwink, mask, muffle'.⁴⁰ In doing so, he once more combines the abstract and the material: Wilkins' confused usage of

³⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. 3E2v.

³⁶ 'perceive (v.)', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1151578840>>.

³⁷ Wilkins, sig. 2G1r.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. 2G2r; *Ibid.*, sig. 2I2v.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. 2G2r; *Ibid.*, sig. 2I2v.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. F3v.

'discover' suggests that the shift toward an abstract understanding of the word was impacted by the early modern understanding that gaining knowledge was an inherently sensory task.⁴¹

When broken down, 'discover' naturally lends itself to a phenomenological meaning: the verb 'cover', means 'to put or lay something over (an object), with the effect of hiding it from view', and the prefix 'dis-', when used with a verb, means 'division, solution, separation, or undoing'.⁴² From the perspective of the observer, to cover something is to obscure it visually, thus making disguise seem a predominantly 'visual' act, rather than one that is engaged with the other senses. Thomson asserts that the discovery is 'a theatrical event that emphasises the visual, even and especially when the action is accompanied by exclamatory and explanatory dialogue' and, from the perspective of the playgoer, disguise does seem to be predominantly a feat of spectacle.⁴³ However, to consider the disguise as solely a visual act is to efface the fact that covering a person also engages the wearer's tactile and kinaesthetic senses: it is a multi-sensory phenomenon. This narrowly visual perspective has in turn been replicated in criticism: Hyland only briefly considers vocal and postural disguise in his *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage*, and ultimately detaches them from the material elements of the disguise, perceiving the change in the disguiser's demeanour to be 'subordinate' to the change in clothing.⁴⁴

To focus solely on the visual aspects of the discovery, then, is to do a disservice to the multisensory space of the theatre. While disguise scholarship has predominantly

⁴¹ Steven Connor, 'Admiring the nothing of it: Shakespeare and the senseless', in *Shakespeare / Sense: Contemporary Readings in Sensory Culture*, ed. by Simon Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 40-61.

⁴² 'cover (v.1), sense 1.1', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6217835495>>; 'dis- (prefix), sense 1.e', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1785964490>>.

⁴³ Thomson, p. 12.

⁴⁴ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 40.

focussed on the visual elements of the theatre, early modern playgoers would in fact go to the theatre to engage senses other than sight, as the character of Ratsey in *Ratsey's Ghost* (1605) reminds us when he requests of a group of players, 'let me heare your musicke, for I haue often gone to plaies more for musicke sake, then for action'.⁴⁵ In her exploration of the 'shifting and malleable sonic world [...] that can be created in the course of an early modern play' Laura Jayne Wright notes the affective potential of sound, understanding it to be 'a form of rhetorical persuasion, eloquent and flexible, articulate and emotive'.⁴⁶ Wright's description of sound as a 'world' that has the capacity to persuade and cause emotion, discussed further in Chapter Five (pp. 307-8), is echoed in the multisensory demands of the playgoer explored here in relation to discoveries.

In their field-changing call for a multisensory – rather than solely visual – approach to museology and material culture studies, Edwards, Gosden, and Phillips argue that 'objects function as social agents in a double dynamic that *both* extends human action *and* mediates its meanings'.⁴⁷ To apply this to the staged disguiser is to recognise that the material aspects of the disguise not only serve to cover the identity beneath, but in essence *become* the new identity. If 'the sensory and material call each other into existence', then the disguise's visual (and in some cases, as Chapter Five will demonstrate, audible) significance to the playgoers, and the tactile elements that impact on the player's proprioception (that is, their body's ability to sense movement, action, and location) together create an embodied performance. This performance is dependent, moreover, both on the material of the disguise *and* the

⁴⁵ Gamaliel Ratsey, *Ratseys Ghost, or, The Second Part of his Madde Prankes and Robberies* (London, 1605), sig. A3v.

⁴⁶ Laura Jayne Wright, *Sound Effects: Hearing the Early Modern Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), p. 3. Emphasis their own.

⁴⁷ Edwards et al., pp. 12-13.

change in the body's demeanour in reaction to the sensory experience of wearing that clothing.⁴⁸ Where Hyland's argument remains distanced and visual, like a theatrical spectator, I instead suggest that considering the sensory experience of the performer shows that demeanour and costume are intrinsically interlinked, the change in appearance not just enabling but enforcing a change in the player's demeanour.

With materiality and sensation in mind, I now return to *Canter Pennyboy* and his 'patch'd cloak' with an approach that considers the sensory response of both performer and playgoer. Doing so reveals a myriad of tactile constraints that would directly impact on the player's performance and, thus, the spectacle of the discovery. The additional layer to the player's costume – likely made of heavy wool given his disguise as a 'beggar' (Chapter Five, p. 298) – adds extra weight, while the use of a cloak to hide his identity from his son *and* the audience requires the player to remain consistently aware of how covered he is, this simple extra layer affecting his posture and impeding his movements.⁴⁹ When he throws off the cloak, then, the weight is visibly (and perhaps audibly, as the cloak drops to the stage) off his shoulders, the restriction of his movement gone. The player is given a kinaesthetic cue – to adapt his performance from being in disguise to being the revealed disguiser – that enables the playgoers to see both a new costume and a shift in the player's demeanour which, together, construct this 'new' character. To adapt Edwards, Gosden and Phillips' words on the relationship between museum object and audience, the disguise crafts a 'deep mutuality [that] exists between [the player's] sensory apparatus and [the] material thing'.⁵⁰ It is this mutuality that enables a physical change that mirrors the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Jonson, 'Staple', sig. H3v.

⁵⁰ Edwards et al., p. 5.

shift in power dynamic as Canter Pennyboy transforms from Young Pennyboy's serving man to his father.

To emphasise other sensations is not to dismiss the relevance of the visual in early modern disguise practice entirely, however. Indeed, the dominance of visual culture analysis in performance studies speaks to its prioritisation in early modern discussions of the theatre. In *The Trumpet of Warre* (1598), Stephen Gosson states that 'in publike Theaters, when any notable shew passeth over the stage, the people arise up out of their seates, & stand upright with delight and eagernesse to view it well'.⁵¹ According to this account, the playgoers' focus on spectacle implies that the visible moments of disguise – the removal of the costume and the signifiers of character through newly uncovered items of costume – are granted particular attention. As this chapter will go on to show, playwrights appear to have anticipated this and were inherently aware of the practical performance requirements for the playing company of their texts, since they often had their characters verbally refer to moments of discovery, and thus draw attention to the moment of spectacle.

The importance of visual engagement in the theatre is further emphasised in Henry Chettle's pamphlet, *Kind-Harts Dreame* (1593). He complains that,

[f]aults there are in the professors [players] as other men, this the greatest, that divers of them being publike in everie ones eye, and talkt of in every vulgar mans mouth see not how they are seene into, especially for their contempt, which makes them among most men most contemptible.⁵²

Chettle's words here imply a reciprocal voyeurism and exhibitionism between the public and the players: to be a player is to present oneself to scrutiny ('publike in everie

⁵¹ Stephen Gosson, *The Trumpet of Warre, A Sermon Preached at Paules Crosse the Seventh of Maie 1598* (London, 1598), STC 12099, sig. C7v.

⁵² Henry Chettle, *Kind-harts dreame Conteyning fiue apparitions, vvith their inuectiues against abuses raining. Deliuered by seuerall ghosts vnto him to be publisht, after Piers Penillesse post had refused the carriage.* (London, 1593), STC 5123, sig. E4v.

ones eye') and those that are not aware of this scrutiny ('see not how they are seene into') are the ones in whom he finds 'faults'. Yet Chettle implies that the relationship between player and playgoer is maintained even when the playgoer has left the playhouse. The use of 'in' throughout the above quotation suggests that the playgoers metaphorically possess the player: they are not simply spectators and auditors, but consumers, the play *and* the player being the product.

This concept of the playgoer as consumer is explored more literally by Paul Menzer. Considering the sensory focus of Chettle's imagined player-playgoer relationship in *Kind-Harts Dreame*, Paul Menzer writes:

Chettle's focus on the eyes and ears of the public introduces a queasy digestive metaphor implying that acting involves not only indecent exposure but also a reciprocal supply and demand between artistic production and the audience's appetite.⁵³

Nowhere is this 'indecent exposure' and 'supply and demand' between company and audience clearer than it is in discovery scenes. Not only is the player revealing the disguised character, but their own body, as well. Discovery scenes rely on the players visually exposing themselves in a way that theatrical commentators often argued invited voyeurism. The visual dominates in Chettle's analogy, his focus on the eyes and being seen emphasising the importance of spectacle as part of the player's performance: the removal of the outer layer of costume and the discovery of the costume beneath encourage the audience to examine the player for material signifiers and indications of the character's identity in the uncovered costume and the changes in their demeanour.

⁵³ Paul Menzer, 'Crowd Control' in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, eds. Jennifer Low and Nova Myhill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 19-36 (p. 25).

Early modern characterisations of uncovering as a form of indecent exposure were not limited to conversations on players and playgoers, and other early modern texts on the exposure of the body can provide insight into concerns relating to the all-consuming and voyeuristic relationship between player and playgoer. The concept that observation/exposure are perverse recurs throughout pamphlet literature and suggests the discovery makes the disguiser vulnerable *and* threatening. *A Just and Seasonable Reprehension of Naked Breasts and Shoulders* (c. 1635-78; trans. 1678) warns its readers against the sins of observing exposed skin. After stating that 'immodest' and 'lascivious' women 'by the shameful nakedness of their necks, arms, and shoulders, attack, wound and vanquish those who think themselves in safety [from sin]', the author of *Breasts and Shoulders* goes on to remind its readers of the dangers of observation⁵⁴:

[Christians] ought to make a Covenant with their Eyes, not only not to look upon Women, but not to look upon any thing, but to resemble [him] who never turns his Eyes either one way or other, but keeps them always fixed and direct at the mark; [...] he should refrain from looking upon those objects which are nearest to him, for fear lest his Heart should run after his Eyes, and his Mind insensibly straggle from the work he is about, and so forget whom he is praying to.⁵⁵

The concern in *Breasts and Shoulders* is with the visual, much like Chettle's discomfort about the public image of players. If we perceive the physical discovery as the exposure of the 'real' character, then the metaphorical discovery of knowledge that is entangled with it becomes the converting element with which *Breasts and Shoulders* is concerned.

⁵⁴ Anonymous, *A Just and Seasonable Reprehension of Naked Breasts and Shoulders. Written by a Grave and Learned Papist.*, trans. by Edward Cooke (London, 1678), Wing. B3463A, sig. B2v.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. C2r-v.

To return once more to Jonson's *Staple* and Canter Pennyboy's discovery after having discussed *Kind-Harts Dreame* and early modern concerns about exposure, draws attention to the similar ways with which both pamphlet and play consider adverse responses to exposure. Jonson's imagined, metatheatrical parody of a judgemental and unintelligent audience consists of the gossips who are outraged by Canter Pennyboy's discovery. In the intermission immediately following the discovery, the gossips react with shock and rage:

The fourth Intermeane after the fourth Act.

Tat[t]le. Why? This was the worst of all! the Catastrophe!

Cen[sure]. The matter began to be good, but now: and he [Jonson] has spoyl'd it all, with his Begger there!

Mirt[h]. A beggarly Jacke it [Canter Pennyboy] is, I warrant him, and a kin to the Poet.

Tat. Like enough, for hee had the chiefest part in his play, if you marke it.

Exp[ectation]. Absurdity on him, for a huge overgrown Play-maker! why should he make him live againe, when they, and we all thought him dead? If he had left him to his ragges, there had beene an end of him.⁵⁶

The gossips refuse to recognise Canter Pennyboy's status after his discovery: Censure continues to describe him as a 'Begger' while Mirth refers to him as a 'beggarly Jacke', 'Jack' being slang for a 'low/vulgar person'.⁵⁷ Expectation most clearly demonstrates the negative response a playgoer may have when the play subverts expectation, thus offering a similar exploration of judgement and exposure as Chettle. By asking 'why should [Jonson] make [Pennyboy's father] live againe', Expectation implies that Canter Pennyboy is not simply a disguised character, but an entirely different person to Young Pennyboy's father. The gossips seem incapable of separating the character or the player from the material components of the costume,

⁵⁶ Jonson, 'Staple', sig. H3v.

⁵⁷ '03.01.06.02.05.02 (n.) Low/vulgar person.', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=150168>> [accessed 11 April 2024].

going so far as to suggest that the character's rise in status is due to the player having some relation to the playwright. The discovery scene becomes the shedding of a character and the rebirth of another, and the exposure of the latter is surprising and horrifying to these caricatured playgoers. The gossips' contempt for Canter Pennyboy and for the playwright stems from the fact that his discovery reveals their inability until this moment to 'see into' his true character.⁵⁸

This section has identified how the use of material signifiers of identity in the early modern period meant that discoveries were inherently material and sensory. Discoveries relied on visual signifiers of clothing to provide foundational knowledge about character, both in terms of the mnemonic resonances of the material and its impact on the player's body. The clothing of the disguise on top and the character's discovered costume beneath impact on the player's posture, becoming a tactile cue for the player to adapt their demeanour and emphasise the visual difference between the character in disguise and the character out of disguise for the spectators. The early modern material and phenomenological meaning of 'discovery' provides a context through which we can understand the performance practice of discovery scenes. The following section turns to performance to explore how the material elements of the discovery are woven throughout the text, looking at the setting of the discovery on the page, references to the materiality of the discovery, and asking how these references have been and can be interpreted.

iii. 'Here his father discovers himself': reconstructing staged discoveries

Exactly when in a scene did the act of physical discovery take place, and how did this

⁵⁸ Chettle, sig. E4v.

align with the scene's dialogue? Thomson's *Discoveries* began the exploration into the early modern discovery, showing that, while disguise 'has been studied from various points of view', prior to her study 'disguises that are removed on stage have never been considered as a distinct category.'⁵⁹ Thomson's consideration of the conventions of the discovery in *Discoveries* was a timely intervention into the field of disguise studies, which had predominantly focussed on questions about the duality of identity when a person is in disguise. Yet, despite considering stage conventions, which presume a performance-based methodology, Thomson retains the literary critical approach used in disguise studies like those of Lloyd Davies, Kevin A. Quarmby and Simone Chess. Thomson's close-reading centred methodology stemmed from a realisation that,

Searching for the evidence of a disguise and then for the circumstances of its removal made me aware of how frequently little or nothing indicates what a disguise consists of. In the absence of stage directions, this is especially relevant when it comes to the removal of a disguise, because it is difficult or impossible to know exactly what is taken off in the act of discovery. It seems fairly clear, however, that the action was often a grand but simple gesture of removing a cloak or hood, mask or veil, wig or cap, all of which are not just easy to put on and take off but also involve visual business to do so.⁶⁰

Due to assumptions like Thomson's about the difficulty of reconstructing early stage practice, scholars are yet to give extended consideration to the question of exactly how these moments looked and sounded in early performance. Thomson recognises that there is 'visual business' involved in a discovery, but archival loss and the ephemerality of theatre result in her focussing on the discovery's 'thematic weight', or its literary use.⁶¹ The textual focus of Thomson's work has ensured that there is much

⁵⁹ Thomson, p. 11.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13 and p. 12.

still to be discussed regarding the materiality of discoveries. As the following will show, a repertorial and material study of discovery conventions offers crucial information about possibilities of early performance.

But how was a stage discovery performed? This section provides a survey of discovery scenes in order to explore how playwrights thread the spectacle of the discovery throughout their plays. Looking at discoveries across the King's Men's repertory indicates that playmakers – that is, the playwrights, playing company, and all who are involved in the play's production – recognised, conformed to, and sometimes destabilised the conventions and material components of staged disguise when plotting, writing, and publishing plays. First, this section will explore how and when discoveries happen in surviving manuscripts and printed texts. I compare discoveries in Jonson's *Staple, Volpone, or The Fox* (KM, 1605-6) and *Epicœne, or The Silent Woman* (CQR 1608-10; KM, 1636), and Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (?, 1595-96) to show that the verbal and physical moments of discovery were performed simultaneously.

Following this, the section considers the material and phenomenological elements of the discoveries in John Marston's *The Malcontent* (CCR, 1602-4; KM, 1604) and William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (KM, 1603-4), exploring how the detailed stage directions in *The Malcontent* and the structural considerations in the above listed plays can inform readings of the discovery scene in *Measure for Measure*. Upon establishing the differing meanings with which playhouses, costumes, and playtexts imbue disguise and acknowledging the variety of early modern performance conditions and theatrical effects, we can begin to see the influence that the King's Men's wider repertory had on the development of stagecraft in the company's discovery scenes. As well as establishing hitherto unrecognised aspects of early

modern performance practice, from unfamiliar scenes to something as well-studied as *Measure for Measure*, this section also shows how consideration of early modern stage conventions across a repertory can and should influence modern editorial practices, allowing for more informed stage directions that speak to the vagueness of early modern printed playtexts and performance manuscripts.

Consideration of the placement of stage directions in manuscript copies of discovery scenes, like that of *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, and in Jonson's meticulous printed editions, can provide insight into the synchronicity of verbal and physical discovery. Claire Bourne convincingly argues that the *mise-en-page* of playbooks – the layout of the print on the page – 'evoked many of the extra-lexical, meaning-making effects of theatricality, most of which we assume to have been lost or erased or ignored in the process of repackaging playtexts made for one media environment (the theatre) to suit a different medium: the printed book.'⁶² The stage directions in the margins of Jonson's printed playbooks demonstrate how the physical motion of the discovery is embedded into the text. Jonson's inclusion of the discovery stage directions suggest that the 'meaning-making effect' of the costumes are so integral to the disguise play that acknowledgement of it would impact on the reading experience beyond the playhouse.

The manuscript of *John a Kent* contains some stage directions marked by slashes in the page margins, which J. W. Ashton and Martin Wiggins have argued may suggest the manuscript's use in performance.⁶³ If the text does indeed reflect performance practice, then a consideration of these stage directions can help us to begin to construct an understanding of how playwrights employed the relationship

⁶² Claire Bourne, 'Typography After Performance', in *Rethinking Theatrical Documents In Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 193-215 (pp. 194-5).

⁶³ J. W. Ashton, 'Revision in Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber*', *Modern Language Notes*, 48 (1933), 531-537 (p. 531); Wiggins, 866.

spoken alongside the stage direction, indicating to the player that they should '[s]ute the Action to the Word,/ The Word to the Action' (*Hamlet*, TLN 1816-17) while giving them a general indication of when the discovery should happen. What is more, since the slashes accompany a two-line speech, the playwright gives the player a degree of flexibility in performance as to exactly when the action is performed, allowing for time to resolve costume difficulties, like difficult buttons or knots. John a Kent's physical removal of his disguise is thus simultaneous with his verbal discovery of his true identity, with just enough flexibility to allow for the practicalities of performance.

Likewise, the printed editions of Jonson's plays consistently include the discovery stage direction aligned with the verbal discovery. Jonson is recognised as having 'enhanced his authority over his texts' by including his stage directions and showing 'the clearest example of a theatrical convention translated into the realm of literature.'⁶⁶ By adhering to what Bourne describes as 'the particular design characteristics of playbook *mise-en-page*' the printed editions of Jonson's plays demonstrate Jonson's ideal depiction of the play in performance.⁶⁷ In *Staple*, *Volpone*, and *Epicæne*, Jonson positions the discovery stage direction in the margin alongside the in-text indication of discovery. In *Staple*, Jonson includes the stage direction in the margin, illustrated below:

<i>Here his fa-</i>	<p>P. Ca. But I shall stop it, Your worships loving, and <i>obedient father</i>, Your painefull <i>Steward</i>, and lost <i>Officer!</i></p>
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⁶⁶ David J. Amelang, 'From directions to descriptions: Reading the theatrical Nebentext in Ben Jonson's *Workes* as an authorial outlet', *SEDERI: Journal for the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies*, 27 (2017), 7-26 (p. 10).

⁶⁷ Bourne, 'Typographies After Performance', p. 194.

<i>ther disco- vers him- selfe.</i>	Who have done this, to try how you would use <i>Pecunia</i> , when you had her: which since I see, I will take home the <i>Lady</i> , to my charge, And these her <i>servants</i> , and leave you my <i>Cloak</i> , To travell in to Beggers Bush! ⁶⁸
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In *Volpone*, Volpone disguises himself and fakes his death, but when his co-conspirator and the benefactor of his will, Mosca, tries to steal his wealth, Volpone must discover himself. As is the case with *Staple*, Jonson includes Volpone's discovery in the margin:

<p><i>Volp.</i> They'll be ally'd, anon; I must be resolute: The <i>Foxe</i> shall, here, uncase. (<i>Mos.</i> Patron.) <i>Volp.</i> Nay, now My ruines shall not come alone; your match I'lle hinder sure: my substance shall now glew you, Nor screw you, into a family. (<i>Mos.</i> Why, patron!)</p>	<p><i>He puts off his disguise.</i></p>
<p><i>Volp.</i> I am <i>Volpone</i>.⁶⁹</p>	

Finally, in *Epicœne*, Jonson surprises audiences by discovering that the 'silent woman', Epicœne, is not only not silent, but also not a woman: the dauphine had disguised a boy as a woman and tricked Morose into marrying him. Jonson has the dauphine take off Epicœne's peruke (wig) alongside the verbal discovery:

⁶⁸ Jonson, 'Staple', sig. H3r,

⁶⁹ Ben Jonson, 'Volpone, or The Foxe', in *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London, 1616), STC 14752, sig. 2X3r-v.

He takes of Epi- *Daup.* Then here is your release, sir; you have married a boy: a gen-
enes perruke. tlemans son, that I have brought up this halfe yeere, at my great
charges, and for this composition, which I have now made with you.⁷⁰

Upon discovering *Epicæne*, the dauphine similarly removes Doctor Cutbeard and Parson Otter's disguises:

He puls off *Daup.* I thanke you, good Doctor *Cutberd*, and Parson
their beards, *Otter.* You are beholden to 'hem, Sir, that have taken this
and paines for you: and my friend, Master *Tru-wit*, who enabled
disguise. 'hem for this businesse.⁷¹

Through careful placement of the stage direction alongside speech, Jonson consistently indicates the specific moment of speech during which he intends the discovery to take place. In *Epicæne* and *Volpone*, Jonson includes the word 'here' in the line alongside the stage direction, and in *Staple* the stage direction notes that 'here' – against the line below '*obedient father*' – is where the discovery should happen. 'Here' can thus be assumed to indicate when the player is supposed to remove his disguise: a verbal cue for the stage direction.

A comparison between Jonson's meticulously printed texts and Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* manuscript suggests that playwrights consistently consider the physical moment of discovery in their constructions of the scene, the use of language like 'here' and 'welcome', and the act of naming ('John a Kent'; 'obedient father'; 'a boy'; 'Doctor Cutberd', and 'Parson Otter') indicating their recognition that

⁷⁰ Ben Jonson, 'Epicæne', in *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London, 1616), STC 14752, sig. D5v.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, sig. D6r.

the spectacle of the discovery is dramatically significant. Yet the combining of the physical and verbal elements indicates more than the playwright's recognition of the convention: it also suggests the need for a *combination* of auditory and visual signifiers in moments of narrative significance. The removal of external signifiers of character and the revelation of alternate signs beneath are mirrored by the character verbally announcing their discovered identity. This dual presentation ensures that the playgoers recognise the discovery.

The discovery conventions that this chapter has established through the above examples can further elucidate the performance of the discoveries in two of the King's Men's most often studied disguise plays: John Marston's *The Malcontent* and William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. These two plays have long been discussed alongside one another: Bridget Escolme regards them as 'the best known of that contested genre "the disguised ruler play"', and Quarmby perceives the two as being innately linked, *The Malcontent* being 'the disguised ruler play that most obviously predates Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*'.⁷² Likewise, J. W. Lever and Martin Wiggins see *The Malcontent* as a source for *Measure for Measure*.⁷³ In his *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* (2012-), Wiggins establishes his upper limit for the dating of *Measure for Measure* by arguing that it 'draws on and develops the "disguised duke" paradigm formulated in *The Malcontent*'.⁷⁴ Moreover, in *Shakespeare and The Drama of His Time* (2012), Wiggins notes further that

The Malcontent was one of the outstanding theatrical successes of its time [...] it was followed by a prodigious run of dark comedies using its central plot devices of disguised dukes, political displacement, and averted murder; these

⁷² Escolme, 'Costume, Disguise and Self-Display', p. 119; Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 21.

⁷³ J. W. Lever, 'Introduction', in *Measure for Measure, Arden Shakespeare: Second* (London: Routledge, 1967), pp. xi-xcviii (p. xlvii); Martin Wiggins, *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 107.

⁷⁴ Wiggins, 1413.

included Middleton's *The Phoenix*, John Day's *Law-Tricks* (1604), and of course *Measure for Measure*.⁷⁵

Wiggins' 'of course' recalls editors of the play who have long since taken for granted the relationship between *The Malcontent* and *Measure for Measure*, like W. David Kay in his New Mermaid's edition of *The Malcontent* and A. R. Braunmuller and Robert N. Watson in their Arden III edition of *Measure for Measure*. Both of these editions refer to the respective other play to explain the plot of their text without ever detailing the nature of the connections between the two plays.⁷⁶ Historically, the association between the two plays has been traced to narrative similarities, as exemplified by the introductions to the New Mermaid and the Arden III editions and by Wiggins listing *The Malcontent* as a 'narrative source' for *Measure for Measure*, but there is more to be said about the performance similarities that also join the two plays.⁷⁷ As the following shows, close analysis of the material aspects of the discovery in *The Malcontent* can enlighten us about the performance of the discovery scene in *Measure for Measure*.

In *The Malcontent*, Altofront, the usurped Duke of Genoa and title character, has remained at the court under the assumed identity of Malevole. Throughout *The Malcontent*, Altofront manipulates his fellow courtiers with the goal of restoring his rightful position as Duke. Initially written for the Children of the Queen's Revels at the Blackfriars Theatre in 1603 before being 'found' by the King's Men and performed at the Globe in 1604, *The Malcontent* shows the King's Men's growing realisation that

⁷⁵ Wiggins, *Drama of His Time*, p. 107.

⁷⁶ For example: 'Though Altofronto devises the fiction that Pietro killed himself in grief over Aurelia's infidelity, the primary tasks are to preserve Mendoza's victims and to lead them to repentance, just as Duke Vincentio in *Measure for Measure* prevents Angelo from harming others and engineers his public exposure and penance.' (W. David Kay, 'Introduction', in *The Malcontent*, ed. by W. David Kay, 2nd edn [London: A & C Black, 1998], pp. ix-xxxvi [p. xxii]); 'The tactic [Vincentio spying on Angelo and Isabella] partly resembles the way Malevole (the disguised Duke Altofront) seeks to reform his society [...] in Marston's 1603 *The Malcontent*.' (A. R. Braunmuller and Robert N. Watson, 'Introduction', in *Measure for Measure*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller and Robert N. Watson [London: Bloomsbury, 2020], pp. 1-148 [p. 142]).

⁷⁷ Wiggins, 1413.

disguise plays, and discovery scenes in particular, hold potential for moments of great spectacle.⁷⁸ Crucially, *The Malcontent* takes advantage of the Blackfriars' performance space, for which it was originally written, using music and candlelight to create a multisensory discovery. Acknowledging this is essential in establishing the differing theatrical effects of the Children of the Queen's Revels and the King's Men's performances of the play, especially considering that both the Children of the Queen's Revels' 1604 quarto and the King's Men's 1604 quarto include the same detailed stage directions in their discovery scenes.

The discovery scene and the play's resolution begin when Pietro, Altofront, and their confederates, Ferneze and Celso, disguise themselves as masquers in Mendoza's coronation masque: '*Cornets: The Song to the Cornets, which playing, the maske enters. Malevole [Altofront], Pietro, Ferneze, and Celso in white robes, with Dukes Crownes upon lawrell, wreathes, pistolets and short swords under their robes*'.⁷⁹ The use of spectacle to draw playgoers' attention to the stage is maintained after the discovery, the ongoing choreography directing the playgoers' focus. After revealing their identities to their respective dance partners, they discover their identities to the on-stage characters. The discovery is split, the four conspirators discovering themselves before Altofront then reveals himself to have been disguised as Malevole, as well:

Cornets sound the measure over againe: which danced they unmaske.
Men[doza]. Malevole? They environ Mendoza, bending their Pistolles on him.
Mal[evole]. No.
Men. Altofront, Duke Pietro, Ferneze. hah?
All. Duke Altofront, Duke Altofront. Cornets a flourish.
Men. Are we surprizde? what strange delusions mocke

⁷⁸ John Webster, 'The Induction to *The Malcontent*', in *The Malcontent, Augmented by Marston With the Additions Played by the Kings Majesties Servants Written by Jhon Webster* (London 1604), STC 17479, sig. A4v.

⁷⁹ John Marston, *The Malcontent, Augmented by Marston With the Additions Played by the Kings Majesties Servants Written by Jhon Webster* (London, 1604), STC 17479, sig. I2v.

Our senses, do I dreame? Or have I dreamt.
This two dayes Space? where am I?

*They seize up-
on Mendoza.*⁸⁰

The stage directions in *The Malcontent*, while helpfully descriptive, still leave room for uncertainty, awareness of which allows for a better grasp of the performance potentials of this discovery scene. This moment shows that, even in cases in which there is detailed description, much of our understanding of the discovery in performance is subject to interpretation.

In the children's performance, the candlelight in the Blackfriars would have caught and highlighted numerous features of the costumes specified or implied in the text: the white of the conspirators' robes, the gold of their crowns, and the light green of their laurel wreaths.⁸¹ These are all colours which Francis Bacon stated 'shew best by Candle-light', suggesting that the playmakers intended for the masque dancers to stand out in comparison to the other characters on stage.⁸² The costuming of *The Malcontent's* discovery scene thus takes full advantage of the theatrical effects that the Blackfriars provides.⁸³ While the other characters' costumes presumably would be caught by the light as well, the white of the conspirators' robes would appear particularly brilliant, drawing the audience's eyes to the masquers and suggesting that Marston wrote the discovery while conscious of how the material elements of the playhouse and the performance interacted with one another to produce spectacle. This

⁸⁰ Ibid., sig. l2v-l3r.

⁸¹ Ibid., sig. l2v.

⁸² Francis Bacon, *The Essays, or Councils, Civil and Moral, of Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban with a Table of the Colours of Good and Evil, and a Discourse of the Wisdom of the Ancients: to this Edition is Added the Character of Queen Elizabeth, Never Before Published in English* (London, 1696), Wing B296, sig. H4v.

⁸³ For further discussion of the theatrical effects in the Blackfriars' theatre, see: Sarah Dustagheer, *Shakespeare's Two Playhouses: Repertory and Theatre Space at the Globe and Blackfriars, 1599-1613* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse*, ed. by Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

is not to say that the later discovery at the Globe under the King's Men would have elicited no wonder in its spectators: the choreography and costume of this scene still works to entice the audience, but the King's Men would be less able to utilise the relationship between lighting and costume in the Globe's outdoor space. In both theatres, the matching white robes, crowns, and laurel wreathes would distinguish the conspirators from the other characters. Alongside distinguishing the conspirators from the other characters, the costumes would move with the dancing and draw the playgoers' eyes to the stage, helping prevent distraction while the masque and discovery are taking place.

The language used to describe the moment of the discovery, '*they unmaske*', shows that even detailed stage directions like those above can be interpreted in multiple ways. Unmask may be literal, referring to the removal of a mask and the discovery of the masquers' faces. However, unmask was also sometimes used as a synonym for 'discover', referring to the removal of a metaphorical mask, as is the case with the title of *The Unmasking of a Masse-monger Who in the Counterfeit Habit of S. Augustine hath Cunningly Crept into the Closets of Many English-ladies* (1626), a pamphlet warning readers against purchasing badly translated and prejudiced editions of Saint Augustine.⁸⁴ The entrance stage direction for the masquers offers a detailed description of their costuming, but there is no mention of masks beyond this word. Throughout the scene, 'maske' is used to refer to the 'masque': Prepasso notes that '*Mercurie presents the maske*' and the stage direction describes '*Cornets, which playing, the maske enters. Malevole, Pietro, Ferneze, and Celso in white robes, with Dukes Crownes upon lawrell, wreathes, pistolets and short swords under their*

⁸⁴ M. S., *The Unmasking of a Masse-monger who in the Counterfeit Habit of S. Augustine hath Cunningly Crept onto the Closets of Many English-ladies* (London, 1626) STC. 23473.

robes.’⁸⁵ To ‘*unmaske*’ in this context could nonetheless refer to the removal of masks, but, equally, in the absence of any reference to physical masks, it could mean the removal of the white masquers’ robes which cover their identifiable items of clothing and the weapons they use against Mendoza.

The earlier discussion of Canter Pennyboy’s discovery in *Staple* (p. 33, 45-6) contextualises Altofront’s double discovery. Mendoza initially recognises Altofront as Malevole before being corrected: ‘*Men. Malevole?/ Mal. No./ Men. Altofront*’.⁸⁶ This momentary misrecognition indicates that there must have been a visual or audible shift in the player’s presentation in this moment, like that of Canter Pennyboy. In his edition of *The Malcontent*, Kay even includes the stage direction ‘*Removing his disguise*’ when Altofront says ‘No.’ – a questionable choice, given that the masquers have already ‘*unmaske[d]*’.⁸⁷ The transformation from Malevole to Altofront was instead probably constructed from multiple signifiers of character, including costume, posture, and voice, much like that of Canter Pennyboy. *The Malcontent*, I.iv., includes a stage direction in which Altofront ‘*shifteth his speach*’ when returning to his Malevole disguise.⁸⁸ While the single syllable response ‘No’ is unlikely to provide enough change in speech pattern, accent, and/or tone of voice to indicate his identity, a shift in posture may assert his regality.⁸⁹ With reference to Marston’s *The Fawn*, Natasha Korda convincingly argues that ‘early modern playwrights and defenders of the stage emphasised fully embodied motion and action as defining features of theatre’.⁹⁰ Korda’s argument and her use of Marston, in particular, points to Marston’s recognition

⁸⁵ Marston, *The Malcontent*, sig. I2v.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

⁸⁷ Kay, p. 127

⁸⁸ Marston, *The Malcontent*, sig. B4r.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

⁹⁰ Natasha Korda, ‘Shakespeare’s Motists’ in *Playing And Playgoing In Early Modern England*, ed. by Simon Smith and Emma Whipday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 18-36 (p. 21).

of the player's "art" as being grounded in "motion" and is thus suggestive of the likelihood of its use in Altofront's discovery.⁹¹ Mendoza is still seeing Malevole's face, but the '*Dukes Crownes upon lawrell, wreathes*' acts as a material signifier of aristocracy which, when paired with the shift in voice and the use of embodied motion, constructs a recognisable image of Duke Altofront, not Malevole.⁹²

Beyond his assumption that a disguise is solely constructed through costume, Kay's editorial intervention likewise assumes that the spectator's focus is on Altofront. However, the text suggests that Mendoza is the focal point of the scene, despite his not being disguised. The characters '*environ Mendoza*' and point their pistols at him, leading the spectators' gazes along the conspirators' arms to him.⁹³ Alongside his becoming the visual focal point, he also has the bulk of the speech, further encouraging playgoers to focus on him as he reacts to the discovery. He emphasises his multi-sensory response by implying that the spectacle of the masque and the discovery overwhelms him: he references the feel of being '*seize[d]*' and '*environ[ed]*' and the sound of music and irregular speech patterns.⁹⁴

The multi-sensory nature of the discovery that so overwhelms Mendoza is further emphasised by the scene's soundscape. The conspirators '*unmaske*' at the end of a '*measure*' of the cornets, suggesting that the silence following the measure is the auditory cue for the discovery.⁹⁵ Upon Malevole's being recognised as Altofront, the characters on stage chant his name while the cornets sound '*a flourish*', providing a loud noise that cuts through Mendoza's confusion. The cornets raise intriguing questions about the play in performance: is the flourish Mendoza's cue? Or is 'Duke

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁹² Marston, *The Malcontent*, sig. I2v.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

Altofront' his cue and he is further 'surprizde' by the cornets? If the former, Marston carefully allows for the player to enact shocked silence throughout the scene prior to his enacted confusion. But, if 'Duke Altofront' is his cue, the repetition of this line and the cornet flourish function to cut Mendoza off repeatedly, creating, as Tiffany Stern and Simon Palfrey show of Shakespeare's repeated cues, 'mutually oblivious lines of thinking, with one character in one "mental space" and the rest somewhere different.'⁹⁶ The soundscape of the scene thus influences and instructs the confused mental state that the player must enact before they are seized upon, encouraging the player to perform a stuttered response or a silent response, each of which would speak to the character's confusion at the discovery.

The Malcontent showcases the types of theatrical spectacle frequently used to direct wandering attention back to the play, especially in discovery scenes that are crucial to the narrative. The detailed stage directions in the masque scene provide evidence of the ways in which playwrights and playing companies would use costume, movement, and sound to direct the audience's attention. The acquisition of *The Malcontent* by the King's Men at the Globe thus heralded a new form of discovery scene for the company, one that engaged with the spectacle and the materiality of theatre in the 1600s. Unfortunately, not every play survives in such a forthcoming printed text. Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, for example, lacks comparable stage directions for Duke Vincentio's discovery. Yet, consideration of other discovery scenes in the King's Men's repertory, such as *The Malcontent*, *Staple*, and *John a Kent*, alongside close attention to other evidence of early modern material culture, can nevertheless illuminate it. This is particularly significant because, as Thomson laments

⁹⁶ Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 163.

in *Discoveries*, so much of surviving early English drama is silent about staging detail.⁹⁷

In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke of Vienna, Vincentio, disguises himself as Friar Lodowick in order to learn about and resolve the problems in his dukedom. The discovery in *Measure*, like the discovery in *The Malcontent*, dominates the visual and aural sensescape of the scene. In *Measure for Measure*, V.i, 'Friar Lodowick' is falsely accused of treason toward and slander of Duke Vincentio. During his attempted arrest, the text implies that there is a physical altercation which results in Vincentio's discovery:

Luc[io]. Oh thou damnable fellow: did I not plucke thee by the nose, for thy spe[ec]hes?

Duk[e]. I protest, I love the Duke, as I love my selfe.

Ang[elo]. Harke how the villaine would close now, after his treasonable abuses.

Esc[alus]. Such a fellow is not to be talk'd withal: Away with him to prison: Where is the Provost? away with him to prison: lay bolts enough upon him: let him speak no more: away with those Giglets [Isabella and Mariana] too, and with the other confederate companion [Friar Peter].

Duk. Stay Sir, stay a while.

Ang. What, resists he? helpe him Lucio.

Luc. Come sir, come sir, come sir: foh sir, why you bald-pated lying rascal: you must be hooded must you? show your knaves visage with a poxe to you: show your sheepe-biting face, and be hang'd an houre: Will't not off?

Duk. Thou art the first knave, that ere mad'st a *Duke*. (TLN 2622-39)

The implicit stage direction between 'Will't not off' and 'Thou art the first knave, that ere mad'st a *Duke*' offers exciting potential for the discovery in performance. The surviving text suggests a focus on Vincentio and Lucio – the scene's physical movement and speech centres on the pair – but what actually happened between

⁹⁷ Thomson, p. 13.

them in early performances is uncertain. Is it just Vincentio's hood that is removed, or is the entire friar's habit displaced?

This section considers the performance potential for this scene, suggesting that we should reconsider contemporary editorial conventions relating to stage directions in the *Measure for Measure* discovery so that we may understand better what the implicit discovery could be indicating. The following will explore the extent to which Nicholas Rowe's influential textual intervention – the addition of the stage direction, 'Pulls off the Friars Hood, and discovers the Duke' in his 1709 *Works of Mr. William Shakespear* – is actually supported by the text before posing an alternative: that it is Vincentio's costume beneath the friar's habit, as opposed to just his face, that discovers him to be the duke.⁹⁸ The following does not seek to prove that either these or any other performance suggestion are definitive; rather it seeks to counter the assumption of many editors (that Rowe's interpretation is definitive) by demonstrating the breadth of staging possibilities for *Measure for Measure* that are compatible with the uncertainty that exists between the lines 'wil't not off?' and '[t]hou art the first knave, that ere mad'st a Duke' (TLN 2735-7).

A cautiously capacious approach to editorial practice would better reflect the multiple possibilities that analysis of early modern performance conventions suggest than does the past editorial tendency to overdetermine with a single choice. While there are no explicit stage directions in the 1623 Folio, since Rowe's 'Pulls off the Friar's hood and discovers the Duke', editors have routinely added this stage directions or similar to clarify the actions they see as implicit in the dialogue.⁹⁹ J. W. Lever's Arden Shakespeare Second Series edition of *Measure for Measure* (1967)

⁹⁸ William Shakespeare, 'Measure for Measure', in *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear; in Six Volumes. Adorn'd with Cuts. Revis'd and Corrected, with an Account of the Life and Writings of the Author*, ed. by Nicholas Rowe, 6 vols (London, 1709), I, pp. 259-70 (p. 265).

⁹⁹ 'Measure for Measure', in *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, p. 265.

repeats Rowe's direction verbatim, while A. R. Braunmuller and Robert Watson's 2020 edition for the Arden Shakespeare Third Series expand on Rowe and modernise 'discover' to 'reveals': '*Pulls off the Friar's hood and reveals the Duke. Angelo and Escalus stand.*'¹⁰⁰ Likewise, despite modernising much of the text and cutting the lines surrounding the discovery, Josie Rourke's 2018 adaptation, published by Methuen Drama, maintains Rowe's direction: '*(Pulls off the friar's hood, and discovers Duke)*'.¹⁰¹

Where editors have, to date, focussed on the discovery of the player's face, the previous section of this chapter has demonstrated that it is the costume, more than the player, that makes the discovery. In her chapter on the performance conventions of disguise in John Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* (KM, 1619-21), *The Malcontent*, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (KM, 1606-7) and *Measure for Measure*, 'Costume, Disguise and Self-Display', Escolme notes that the twenty-first century performance convention that assumes that 'intimacy and friendship will endanger the disguise' through facial recognition is 'one that Shakespeare is unlikely to have recognised.'¹⁰² With reference to Hyland's brief discussion of the use of voice and demeanour in staged disguise (see above, pp. 43-4), Escolme 'suspect[s] that, rather, a simple Friar's garb with a cowl that exposes the face plus the correct Friar-like vocal range and gestural vocabulary produced a figure that no one except the audience would recognise as anything but a Friar.'¹⁰³ The following builds on Escolme's recognition of the difference between early modern disguise convention and later traditions of theatrical naturalism by considering the discovery with reference not to

¹⁰⁰ William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, ed. by A. R. Braunmuller and Robert Watson (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), V.i.354.

¹⁰¹ William Shakespeare and Josie Rourke, *Measure for Measure*, adapted by Josie Rourke (London: Methuen Drama, 2018), V.i, p. 138.

¹⁰² Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 40; Escolme, 'Costume, Disguise and Self-Display', p. 122.

¹⁰³ Escolme, 'Costume, Disguise, and Self-Display', p. 122.

the obscuring of the face, but rather to the signification of clothing in early modern England. As Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass explain:

To understand the significance of clothes in the Renaissance, we need to undo our own social categories, in which subjects are prior to objects, wearers to what is worn. We need to understand the animatedness of clothes, their ability to “pick up” subjects, to mould and shape them both physically and socially, to constitute subjects through their power as material memories.¹⁰⁴

By understanding the disguise through representational costume rather than verisimilitude, then, we can begin to see a potential discovery that relies not on uncovering the player’s face but on the loss of the religious garb that constructs Friar Lodowick. Acknowledgement of the ‘animatedness of clothes’ emphasises the indeterminacy of the performed discovery in *Measure for Measure* and enables us to reconsider existing assumptions about the playtext that have hardened into pseudo-facts through scholarly repetition and editorial convention.

In order to establish what the text does *not* tell us we must first determine what it does. Regardless of the precise motions of the discovery, the physical action of the scene centres on Vincentio. The text indicates that the playgoers’ eyes are drawn to him by an increase in movement in the moments leading to his discovery. Despite the lack of explicit stage directions, the scene’s dialogue suggests movement as characters are commanded, and refuse to go, off stage (TLN 2627-33). Increased movement is suggested by Escalus’s multiple consecutive commands: ‘Away with him to prison’, ‘lay bolts enough on him’, ‘let him speak no more’, ‘away with those Giglets too’ (TLN 2630). Vincentio’s request to the provost, ‘stay Sir, stay a while’ (TLN 2632), similarly indicates motion on the part of the provost, while Angelo’s following line,

¹⁰⁴ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.

'What, resists he? help him Lucio' (TLN 2633), suggests that there is some form of struggle between Vincentio, the provost and, following this, Lucio. What that action consists of, however, remains open to interpretation.

Together with the increase in movement that draws the gaze to Vincentio, the scene's language continually calls attention to Vincentio's head and face:

Luc. Come sir, come sir, come sir: foh sir, why you bald-pated lying rascall: you must be hooded must you? show your knaves visage with a pox to you: show your sheepe-biting face, and be hang'd an houre: will't not off? (TLN 2634-7).

Despite beginning with the composed 'Come sir, come sir, come sir', Lucio's speech regresses until it consists of insults directed at Vincentio's continued resistance. The use of 'foh', 'an exclamation of abhorrence or disgust' and 'why you bald-pated lying rascall' shows Lucio's sudden increase in anger during the struggle.¹⁰⁵ The next question, 'you must be hooded must you?', suggests that Vincentio perhaps prevents the removal of his friar's hood, angering Lucio by his attempt to keep his identity concealed. The repetition of 'show', the earlier indicators of physical movement ('away with him', 'stay sir', 'resists he?'), and the references to Vincentio's 'visage' suggest an attempt to focus on the Vincentio actor's face in the moments leading to the discovery. As the aural and visual focus appears to be on Vincentio's head and face, editors of the text thus read Lucio's demands that Vincentio 'show' his 'face' and 'visage' as implying that Lucio is attempting to pull down the friar's hood.

However, further possibilities as to how the discovery was performed emerge if we consider Lucio's lines less literally. Following Vincentio's entrance as friar Lodowick shortly prior to his discovery, Lucio states 'here comes that rascall I spoke of,/ Here,

¹⁰⁵ 'faugh, (int.)', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9557287116>>.

with the Provost' (TLN 2566-7), implying that 'Lodowick' is recognisable even with another friar also on stage, perhaps due to his face being visible. Having earlier referred to Vincentio as 'goodman bald-pate' (TLN 2609-10), Lucio now calls him a 'bald-pated lying rascall' (TLN 2635), referring to his bald head despite Vincentio's apparently being hooded. 'Bald-pated' was a conventional insult for friars due to the practice of monastic tonsure, while the other insults relating to Vincentio's face, 'knaves visage' and 'sheepe-biting face' (TLN 2635-7) were also figurative, meaning to seem like 'one who deceives' and to behave 'in sneaking manner'.¹⁰⁶ The reference to Vincentio's 'bald-pate', alongside Lucio's demanding that the friar 'show' his 'knaves visage' and his 'sheepe-biting face' can thus be read as figurative requests that friar Lodowick make everyone aware of his treasonous nature, not literal requests to remove a hood. To consider this moment as stemming from generic insults relating to the perception of friars as deceptive and traitorous allows for new potentials for the performance of Vincentio's disguise and the discovery.¹⁰⁷ A metaphorical reading shows that it is not certain that Vincentio's disguise involved a covered face in the first place, meaning that the performance motivation for his and Lucio's struggle may not be discovering the face, but rather discovering the costume beneath, instead.

¹⁰⁶ '02.01.12.08.07|06 (n.) Knave', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=119571>> [accessed 5 June 2024]; 'sheep-biting (n.)', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1133226289>>; '02.06.13.05|03.01 (adj.) sheep-biting', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0), <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=139949>> [accessed 5 June 2024].

¹⁰⁷ As in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* [1588], when the devil Mephistopheles appears as a Franciscan friar (Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* [London, 1616], STC 17432, sig. B1v); Lewis Owen, *The Unmasking of All Popish Monks, Friars, and Jesuits. Or, a Treatise of their Genealogie, Beginnings, Proceedings, and Present State Together with Some Briefe Observations of their Treasons, Murders, Fornications, Impostures, Blasphemies, and Sundry Other Abominable Impieties. Written as a Caveat of Forewarning for Great Britaine to Take Heed in Time of These Romish Locusts* (London, 1628), STC 18998, sig. A1r; and fig. 1.3, Anonymous, *A Newe Secte of Friars called Capichini* (London, 1580), STC 4605, fol. 1.

3 A Newe Secte of Friars called *Capichini*.



These newe freshecome Friars being sprong vp of late,
doe nowe within Andwarpe keepe their abidinge:
Seducinge muche people to their damned estate,
by their newe false founde doctrine the Gospel deridinge.
Sayinge and affirminge, which is no newe false tidinge,
that all suche as doe the Popes doctrine dispise:
As damned soules to hell muste be ridinge.
For they doe condemne them with their newe found lie,
These be the children of the worlde counted wise:
whose wisedome is folly to God and his elect.
But let Sathan worke all that he can deuife,
God it is alone which the Gospel doeth protect.

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Fig 1.3 Single sheet poem entitled *A Newe Secte of Friars Called Capichini*, with woodcut illustration of the clothing of these friars. Original in British Library, London (STC 4605).

Likewise, we cannot be certain of how friars were depicted on stage, and whether this always involved hoods. Henslowe's costume inventory of 1598 includes two references to friar costumes, the first listed under 'Gone and loste':

*Item, j fryers gowne.*¹⁰⁸

The second in 'The Enventary of the Clownes Sewtes and Hermetes Swetes, with dievers other sewtes':

*Item, iiij freyers gownes, and iiij hoodes to them, and j fooles coate, cape, and babel, and branhowittes bodeys, [Branholt's bodice] and me len gowne and cape [Merlin's gown and cape].*¹⁰⁹

The second entry either indicates that the hoods are detachable from the gownes ('iiij freyers gownes, and iiij hoodes to [go with] them') or that a gown with an attached hood was note-worthy and thus, perhaps, unusual. Meanwhile, the first, lost, gown has no mention of a hood – suggesting either that there was a lone surviving hood; that a hood that is attached to a gown garners no mention (meaning the four hoods may in fact be worthy of comment because they *are* detachable); or that some depictions of friars were without hoods.

Depictions of friars show varying styles: fig. 1.3, a depiction of Friars Minor Capuchin (a type of Franciscan friars) depicts their hoods as being attached to knee-length cloaks worn over the top of their gowns, while fig. 1.4 – which depicts Saint Bonaventure, an Italian Franciscan bishop active in the 1200s – shows a hooded cape

¹⁰⁸ Philip Henslowe, *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. by R. A. Foakes, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 317.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

that drapes over his shoulders, with a seam down the centre front, suggesting that it may be removable. Difficult-to-remove hoods also appear in depictions of friars: fig. 1.5 has a cowl style hood that covers only the neck and shoulder blades, while fig. 1.6 depicts the hood as being attached to the friar's gown. The overhead cowl or attached hood would be trickier to remove fully on cue and would likely require the hood to be pulled down to uncover the face, rather than off the body entirely. The hooded cloaks in fig. 1.3 and potentially in fig. 1.4, meanwhile, would allow Lucio to pull the cloak off entirely, but fig. 1.4 would offer little to cover the costume hidden beneath the disguise. Crucially, these various images make clear that there may not have been one single version of a friar's costume, and that a 'hood' cannot be taken for granted.

Prior to the discovery, at the beginning of *Measure for Measure*, V.i, Vincentio enters in his duke's garb. He listens to the accusations against other characters and friar Lodowick, whom he has, unbeknown to the other characters, been personating throughout the play, before summoning 'Lodowick' and exiting. Eighteen lines later, Vincentio re-enters as friar Lodowick. The short time between his exit and re-entrance suggests that the change is likely to have been put on over the top of the player's duke costume, rather than being a full costume change. If Vincentio is in a cape like that which is depicted in fig. 1.3, this would allow for a discovery akin to that of Canter Pennyboy's in *Staple*, in which the discovery depends upon the material signifiers under the cloak, not upon obscuring and then revealing the face or head. If the Duke were in the kind of hoods and cloaks depicted in fig. 1.4, fig. 1.5, and fig 1.6, the discovery would instead be likely to rely on a material signifier under the hood, like a crown. Whereas the removable cloak in fig. 1.3 would depict the player as a figure of authority at the end through the discovery of the duke's entire costume, the discovery of a crown and the continued wearing of his friar's gown would materially reflect the

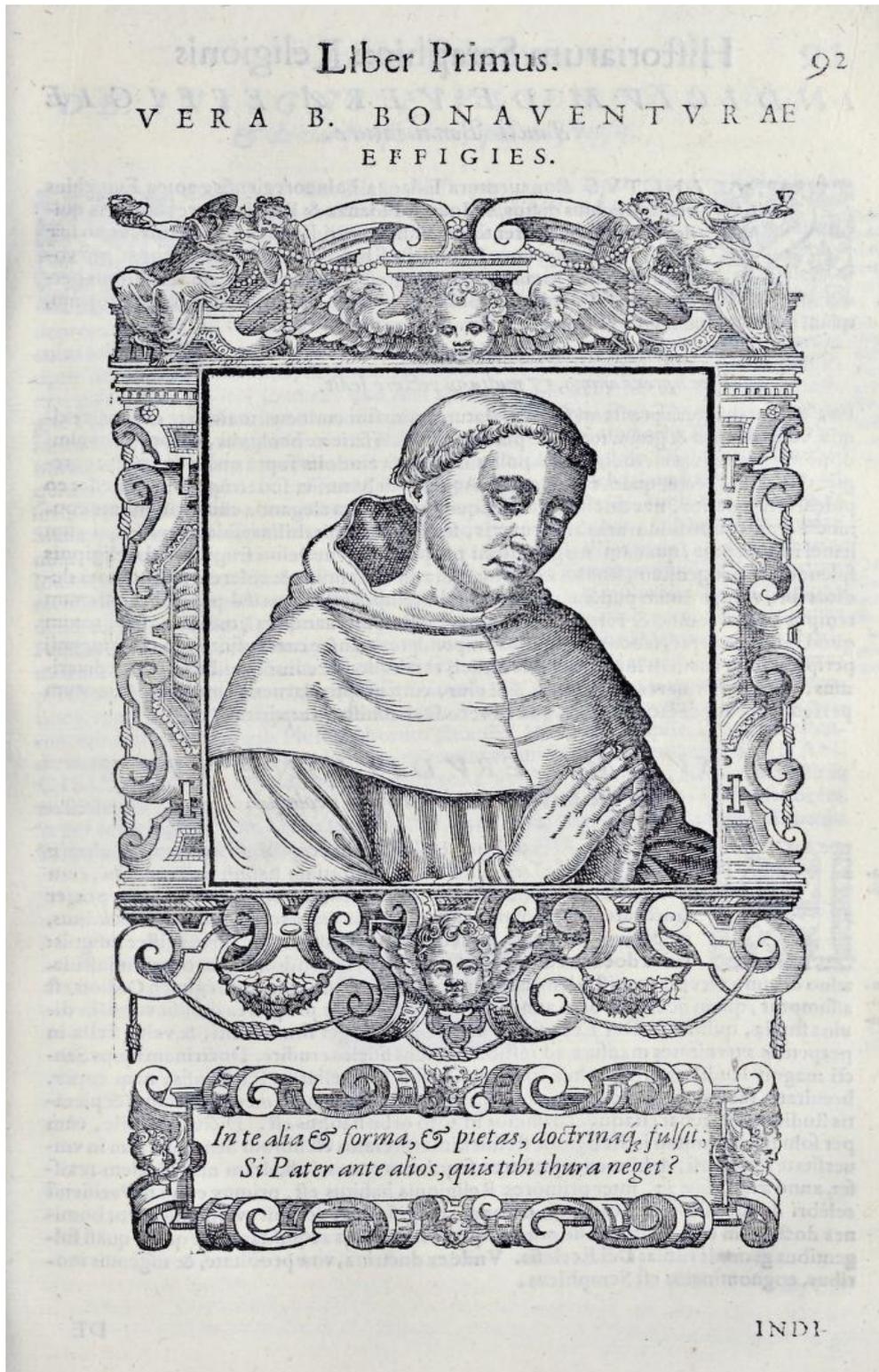


Fig 1.4 Saint Bonaventure, depicted in Pietro Ridolfi, *Historiarum seraphicae religionis libri tres* [The Three Books of the History of the Seraphic Religion] (Venice, 1586), p. 92.



Fig 1.5 Portrait of a Franciscan friar. Peter Paul Rubens, c.1615-16. Alte Pinakothek, Munich (347).

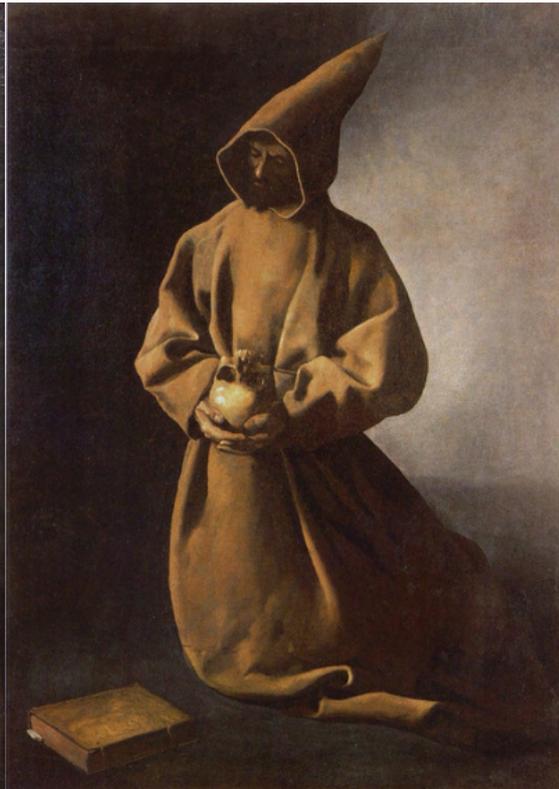


Fig 1.6 Saint Francis Kneeling. Francisco de Zurbarán, c.1635. Private Collection.

blurring of disguise and disguiser that Quarmby sees in *Vincentio*, and the concept of the divine ruler for which many have argued in relation to this play.¹¹⁰

Measure for Measure demonstrates the uncertainty that attention to the material aspects of disguise can bring to our understanding of a play. While a purely textual reading of *Measure for Measure* may seem to focus attention toward the face and head, suggesting that *Vincentio*'s hood is pulled down and the discovery centres on the player's face, consideration of repertory conventions and of character as being conceived through externally applied material objects like costume pieces unsettle this conclusion.

By looking at the placement and language of the discoveries in manuscripts like *John a Kent* and playtexts like those of Jonson, we can begin to recognise the

¹¹⁰ See: Quarmby; Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1986); Mary Anne McGrail, *Tyranny in Shakespeare* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2001); Beatrice Groves, *Texts and Traditions: Religion in Shakespeare 1592-1604* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

performance conventions of the discovery scene: a repertorial consideration of the discovery scene presents us with significantly more knowledge than scholars have thus far assumed. Analysis of the text alongside a recognition of the sensescape of the theatre and the material meanings of costume pieces show how the discovery scene used multi-sensory stagecraft to focus playgoers' attentions on this crucial moment in the play's narrative. The stage directions in *The Malcontent* and Jonson's discovery scenes emphasise the recognition of spectacle implicit in the playwright's text, suggesting that the writer remembered and actively considered the stagecraft of the discovery during the playwriting process. Yet, *The Malcontent* and *Measure for Measure* also show that the very act of recognising these performance conventions can challenge apparent facts established in the editorial tradition, requiring us to recognise the opacity of moments of staging previously considered transparent. To return to the material practicalities of performance is to open the text to further possibilities that fully recognise the culture in which the plays were written.

iv. 'Discovers her hair': materials of gender discoveries in *Philaster*

We have thus far considered the importance of costume removal in the discovery scene, looking at moments where characters reveal the costume beneath the outer disguise. Yet, where the above has explored material signifiers that are easy to cover and discover, other costumes may have been less pliant. Hyland notes that 'the elaborate structure of much early modern clothing was held together by far more cumbersome arrangements of hooks and wires and laces [than clothing today]' meaning that, for gendered disguisers – where the discovery is based on announcing the character's sex – the use of a costume change to discover becomes more

difficult.¹¹¹ This problem is exemplified in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, which allows 60 lines for Rosalind to change from 'Ganymede' back into her own clothing offstage, more than triple the number of lines allotted for Vincentio's offstage change from duke to friar in *Measure for Measure* (TLN 2543-61).

If a full costume change from male to female clothing (or vice versa) was not always practical, then how might a gendered disguiser be discovered? In the case of gendered disguises, the on-stage discoveries that survive through implicit or explicit stage direction have predominantly relied on discovering parts of the body, as in *Epicœne*, when the wig of 'the silent woman' is removed and she is discovered to have been a gentleman's son, and in the folio text of *The Honest Man's Fortune* (LEM, 1613; KM, 1625), which parodies the discovery of hair as a signifier of gendered disguise by having the gendered disguiser, Veramour, lift the skirt of his dress to reveal 'breeches, breeches' – a moment that initially implies the discovery of a fixed indicator of male sex, only to discover an unfixed indicator of gender, instead.¹¹² Following from Will Fisher's exploration of early modern discourse on bodily and facial hair in *Materialising Gender In Early Modern English Literature And Culture* (2006) (discussed further in Chapter Three), Lublin concludes that '[j]ust as breeches, beards, swords, and codpieces materially constituted masculinity on the early modern stage, so did long hair serve to assert the wearer's femininity.'¹¹³ Accordingly, the revelation of long hair could be used in gendered disguise discoveries. Yet, despite Fisher's work on the importance of hair in self-fashioning, Lublin's conclusion about depictions of gender

¹¹¹ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 24.

¹¹² Jonson, 'Epicœne', sig. D5r; Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Robert Daborne, with Cyril Tourner, 'The Honest Man's Fortune', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 5T1r-5X4v (sig. 5X4r), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 30 May 2024].

¹¹³ Will Fisher, *Materialising Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Robert I. Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 27.

on-stage, and Thomson's work on discovery scenes, there has been no in-depth discussion of the removal of wigs and discovery of long hair by female-to-male gendered disguisers. This section seeks to rectify this.

Keeping in mind the emphatically material elements of discovery scenes in the King's Men's repertory explored above, the following section offers a close analysis of one of the company's most revived plays: Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*. In Q1 of *Philaster* (printed 1620), the uncovering of long hair discovers the page, Bellario, to be the gendered disguiser, Euphrasia. The following will begin with an exploration of the role of hair in constructing gendered difference in the early modern period, looking at pamphlets on gender, pamphlets that reference hair, portraits, hair styling items, and references to the use of wigs in stage plays. It then briefly surveys the role of hair in gendered disguise plays across the Lord Chamberlain's and King's Men's repertory, including Julia's refusal to cut her hair in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (LCM, 1587-98) and the use of headwear in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* (KM, 1610-11). Finally, I undertake a close reading of the final scene of *Philaster* Q1 with reference to the above, to show how a material understanding of hair leads us to understand gendered disguise discoveries as reliant on fixed signifiers of gender, and in turn, to comprehend how this so-called 'bad quarto' is in fact entirely in keeping with the King's Men's discovery conventions, and thus potentially reflective of early performance practice.

Hair was explicitly gendered in the early modern period and writers often describe hair down to the 'hammes or heeles' as being innately female.¹¹⁴ Thomas Hall's *The Loathsomenesse of Long Haire* (1653) entreats 'the Long-Hair'd Gallants

¹¹⁴ Thomas Hall, *Comarum Akosmia The Loathsomenesse of Long Haire: or, A Treatise Wherein you have the Question stated, many Arguments against it produc'd, and the most material Arguments for it refell'd and answer'd, with the concurrent judgement of Divines both old and new against it. With an Appendix against Painting, Spots, Naked Breasts, &c.* (London, 1653), Wing H429, sig. D1r.

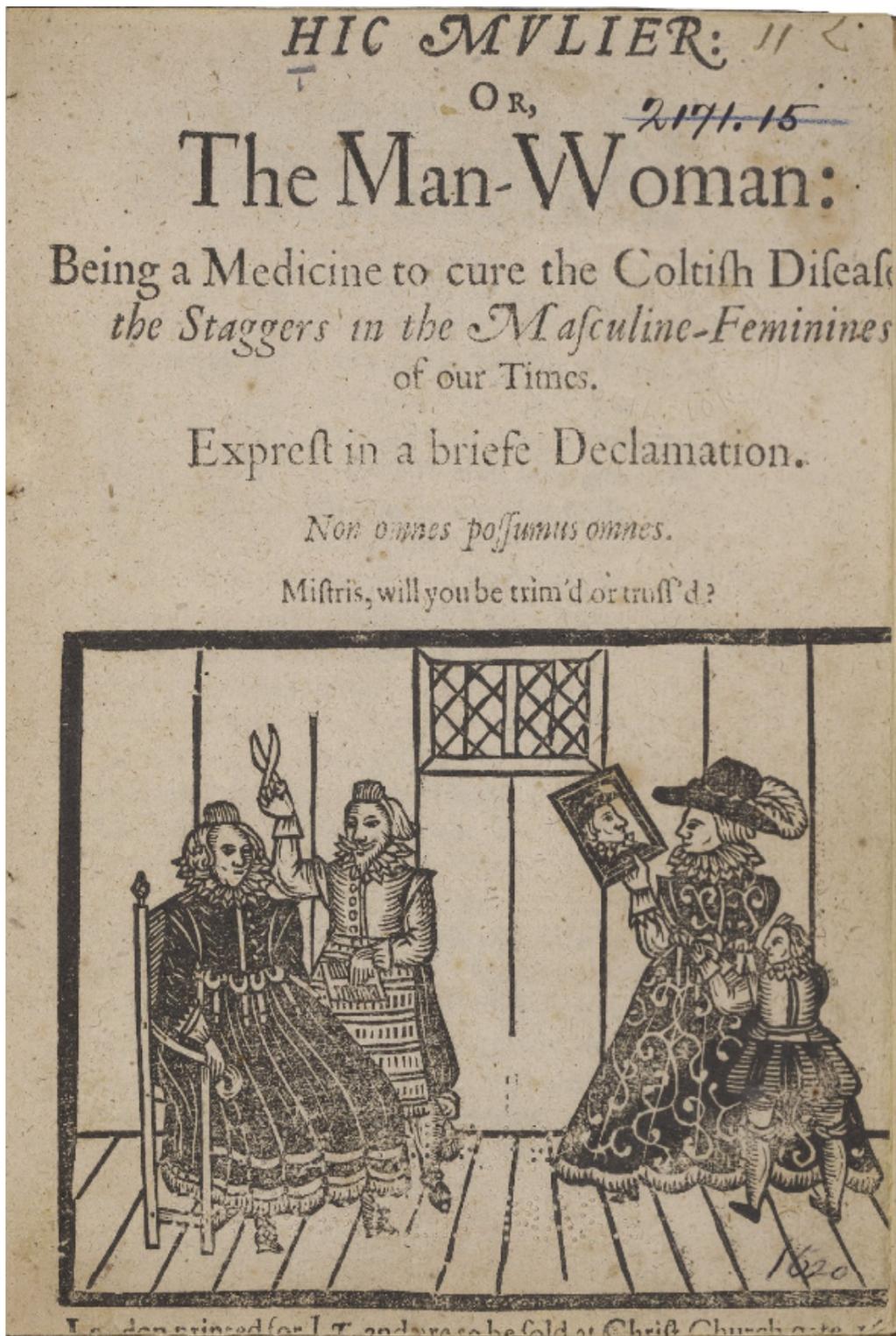


Fig 1.7 Title page of the anonymous pamphlet, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman*. The woodcut shows a person having their haircut by a barber, while another looks at themselves in the mirror and is dressed by a child, possibly the barber's apprentice. Anonymous, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to Cure the Coltish Disease the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times. Expressed in a Brief Declamation* (London, 1620), STC 13375.5, sig. A1r.

of these Times’, ‘to the Barbers, go/ [and] Bid them your hairy Bushes mow’.¹¹⁵ His ‘[t]hesis’ is that it is ‘unlawfull for any man ordinarily to weare Long Haire’, arguing that nature has proven that men should wear ‘cloaths (not Ruffianly haire) to cover their backs & shoulders’.¹¹⁶ Hall asserts that, while ‘short haire is a glory and ornament to man’, ‘long haire is a glory and ornament to a woman, because it was given her by God and Nature for a covering’.¹¹⁷ Likewise, Richard Richardson’s short pamphlet *A declaration against wigs or periwigs*, which argues against men wearing wigs made of women’s hair, notes that ‘[i]t was a shame [in Ancient Rome], for Men to have long Hair naturally like Women, among the *Greeks* and *Romans* too: For *Julius Caesar*, as I remember, was by his Foes called scornfully [*Puer comatus*] *Long hair-d Lad*, viz. in effect, a *Lass*’.¹¹⁸ These works present hair as a fixed signifier of gender identity, one that would enable players to demonstrate characters’ sex in contrast to external, unfixed signifiers of gender, like breeches. Thus, when in the Folio version of *The Honest Man’s Fortune*, the page Veramour lifts his skirts to reveal ‘breeches, breeches’ and announce himself as a male-to-female gendered disguiser, he parodies the concept of long hair as a signifier of a character’s sex with a reminder of the fixed signifier of male sex.¹¹⁹

Hall states that the Lord ‘expresly forbids the confounding of the Sexes (**Deut.* 22.5) by wearing of that which is not proper to each Sex’, an argument for which the anonymous pamphlet *Hic Mulier: or, The Man Woman* (1620) is often cited by those studying early modern gender.¹²⁰ Hair is an important element in the depiction of

¹¹⁵ Ibid., sig. A3r.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., sig. B4r-v.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., sig. C4v-5r.

¹¹⁸ Richard Richardson, *A Declaration Against Wigs or Periwigs* (London, 1682), Wing R1393, sig. A2r. Square brackets are Richardson’s insertion.

¹¹⁹ Field et al., ‘Honest Man’s Fortune’ (1647), sig. 5X4r.

¹²⁰ Select bibliography, in chronological order: R. Valerie Lucas, ‘“Hic Mulier”: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 12.1 (1988), 65-84; Jonathan Dollimore, ‘Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Marxist Humanism’, *New Literary*

gender non-conformity in *Hic Mulier*: the title-page woodcut (fig. 1.7) appears to show hair tucked up inside the hat, the caption asking ‘Mistris, will you be trim’d or truss’d?’.¹²¹ In its verb form, to ‘truss’ is to ‘tie, bundle, or stuff full’ of something, or to fasten up hair with pins or a net, suggesting that hair would have been pinned or ‘truss’d’ up for masculine-presenting women.¹²² If it is, to use Hall’s words, ‘a shame for [a woman’s] hair’ to be ‘polled or shorne’, then to tie up or ‘truss’ one’s hair allows the wearer to enact gender non-conformity temporarily.¹²³ This is exemplified in Shakespeare’s *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (?LCM, 1587-98), when Julia is told by her servant that she must ‘cut [her] haire’ to enact a gendered disguise; she, however, responds that she will ‘knit it up in silken strings, / With twentie od-conceited true-love knots’ (TLN 992-4). She styles her hair to present it as short without having to cut it, enabling her to retain this signifier of her gender identity for her return to being ‘Julia’ post-discovery. Thus, ‘trussing’ one’s hair would enable the wearer to retain that signifier of femininity, allowing for mutable masculine and feminine presentation that is required of on-stage gendered disguise.

Woodcuts from 1611 to 1662 that depict women in gendered disguise and gender non-conforming people appear to show long hair tucked into hats. The woodcut for the title page of Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* (fig. 1.8; PHM,

History, 21.3 (1990), 471-93; Rachel Trubowitz, “The Single State of Man”: Androgyny in “Macbeth” and “Paradise Lost”, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 23.3 (1990), 305-33; Tracey Sedinger, “‘If sight and shape be true’: The Epistemology of Crossdressing on the London Stage”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 48.1 (1997), 63-79; Sue Starke, ‘Love’s True Habit: Cross-Dressing and Pastoral Courtship in Worth’s *Urania* and Sidney’s *New Arcadia*’, *Sidney Journal* 24.2 (2006), 15-36; Kelly J. Stage, ‘The Roaring Girl’s London Spaces’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 49.2 (2009), 417-36; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (London: Routledge, 2016).

¹²¹ Anonymous, *Hic Mulier: Or, The Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to Cure the Coltish Disease the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times. Expressed in a Brief Declamation* (London, 1620), STC 13375.5, sig. A1r.

¹²² ‘truss (v.), sense 1.a.’ *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1020233623>>.

¹²³ Hall, sig. C4v.



Fig 1.8 Title-page of *The Roaring Girl*, depicting the title character, Moll Cutpurse. Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girle or Moll Cut-Purse* (London, 1611), STC 17908, sig. A1r.



Fig 1.9 Title-page of *The Maids Tragedy*, depicting Aspatia in FTM gendered disguise and Amintor attacking her. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maids Tragedy* (London, 1641), Wing B1594, sig. A1r.

1611), depicts the 'roaring girl' Moll Cutpurse (based on the real rogue, Moll Frith), whose non-binary gender expression throughout the play provides them with 'agency, destabilizing normative expectations of gender while confounding attempts to control [them]', as noted by Matt Carter.¹²⁴ The titlepage woodcut subtly alludes to Moll's gender non-conformity through material signifiers of gender. The reader is immediately and explicitly informed of Moll's sex: 'Girle' is in large writing across the top of the page, 'Moll Cut-Purse' below, 'Moll' being slang for a female sex worker; 'Cut-purse' meanwhile, means pickpocket, but also reminds the reader of 'cut' and 'purse', both slang for 'vagina'.¹²⁵ The person depicted on the woodcut, however, is masculine-

¹²⁴ Matt Carter, "Untruss a Point" – Interiority, Sword Combat, and Gender in *The Roaring Girl* in *Early Theatre*, 21.1 (2018), pp. 88-106, p. 88.

¹²⁵ Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, 3 vols (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), I (2000), 357; Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual*

presenting and surrounded by phallic symbols. The sword, held aloft (erect) in Moll's hand, in front of their crotch, creates obvious gendered imagery, almost to the point of parody when one notices the detail on the tip of the sword, while smoking was a predominantly male pastime. The title-page's text and image are seemingly disparate, reflecting Moll's non-binary gender expression.

It is Moll's hat-covered hair that best speaks to the fluidity of their gender expression in terms a seventeenth-century reader would recognise. Moll's hair is near-imperceivable in the woodcut beyond the curls peeking under the rim. Alone, the woodcut on the title page of *The Roaring Girle* doesn't appear to tell us much about hair in gender performance or gendered disguise, but comparison to other purpose-made woodcuts for plays suggests that the title page of *The Roaring Girle* may be depicting a fashion in depictions of gendered disguise. Tall hats like Moll's feature in the woodcut depicting Aspatia (fig. 1.9; Aspatia (I) is labelled) in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*. These woodcuts for *The Maid's Tragedy* and *The Roaring Girl* indicate a potential means of performing a hair discovery. The consistency across these woodcut depictions of gendered disguisers suggests a similar depiction of gendered disguisers on the stage itself, one that enables a dramatic discovery in which the hat is removed, and hair can tumble 'down to [the] hammers, or heels, so long as womens hair usually is'.¹²⁶

Consideration of hair as a signifier of gender can provide insight into the performance of gendered disguise discoveries in the King's Men's repertory, like the discovery in *Philaster*. Beyond its popularity, *Philaster* is unique in that it is the earliest surviving play in the King's Men's repertory to include a character who is disguised not

Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature, 3 vols (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), II (2000), 1116.

¹²⁶ Hall, sig. D1r.

just from the other characters, but from the audience too: Bellario, the page of Princess Arethusa. Upon becoming convinced that Arethusa is having an affair with Bellario, the usurped prince Philaster banishes Bellario and wounds Arethusa; as a result, Philaster is sentenced to death and Bellario threatened with torture. Prior to the discovery, the play appears to be a straightforward tragedy; it is only upon discovering that Bellario is in fact Lord Dion's daughter Euphrasia that the tragedy is averted. Bellario provides the first example in the King's Men's surviving repertory of a disguise of which the audience were not hitherto aware; a trope that seemingly became a staple in the King's Men's repertory (*The Widow* [KM, 1615-17]; *Beggars' Bush* [KM, 1613-22]; *The Honest Man's Fortune*; *Epicæne*).

Philaster was printed in quarto nine times between 1620 and 1687 and revived at least five times by the King's Men between 1612 and 1641, indicating a continued interest in the play by playgoers and readers alike.¹²⁷ Yet, as mentioned, there are two variants of the text, Q1 (printed 1620) and Q2 (printed 1622). The seven subsequent quartos all derive textually from Q2. Besides a few minor differences to the text, the main difference between the two substantive texts are their alternate endings. Q1 relies on the discovery of long hair to signify Bellario's role as gendered disguiser and daughter to Leon:

BEL[LARIO]. If to me ye speake Lady,
I must tell you, you have lost your selfe
In your too much forwardnesse, and hath forgot
Both modesty and truth, with what impudence
You have throwne most damnable asperitions
On that noble Princesse and my selfe: witness the world;
Behold me sir. *Kneeles to LEON, and discovers her haire.*
LEON. I should know this face; my daughter.
BEL. The same sir.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Freeburg, p. 13; Wiggins, 1597.

¹²⁸ Beaumont and Fletcher, *Phylaster*, sig. 14v.

In Q2, however, Bellario takes Dion (the equivalent of Leon in Q1) aside and verbally discovers his identity as Euphrasia, Dion's missing daughter:

Di[on]. But thou speak'st
As like *Euphrasia* as thou dost looke,
How came it to thy knowledge that she lives
In Pilgrimage?
Bel[ario]. I know it not my Lord,
But I have heard it and doe scarce beleewe it.
[...]
Di. Oh my shame, ist possible? draw neere
That I may gaze upon thee, art thou she,
Or else her murderer? where wert thou borne?
Bel. In Siracusa.
Di. What's thy name?
Bel. *Euphrasia*.
Di. O tis just, tis she,
Now I doe know thee, oh that thou hadst dyed
And I had never seene thee, nor my shame,
How shall I owne thee, shall this tongue of mine:
Ere call thee Daughter more? [...]
Ara[thusa]. What is discovered?
Di. Why my shame
It is a woman, let her speake the rest.¹²⁹

In the 1622 (Q2) printing, Thomas Walkley refers to the 1620 quarto as having had 'some dangerous and gaping wounds' in its printing, on which basis editors and textual scholars have often disregarded the alternative ending to the play and dismissed the authority of Q1, regarding it as a 'bad' quarto.¹³⁰

There are many theories about these 'gaping wounds': Alexander Dyce's, that Q1 was based on a manuscript for which the outer papers were destroyed and, as a result, an unknown author wrote the missing material; J. E. Savage's, that Q1 was a

¹²⁹ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Philaster, Or, Love Lies a Bleeding* (London, 1622), STC 1682, sig, L2r-v.

¹³⁰ Thomas Walkley, 'To the Reader.', in *Philaster. Or, Love lies a Bleeding.*, by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher (London, 1622), STC 1682, sig. A2r.

censored version of Q2; and Ashley H. Thorndike's, that Q1 was pirated using memorial reconstruction.¹³¹ Andrew Gurr, in the introduction of his 1969 edition of *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding*, edited from Q2, states that 'Q1 (1620) undoubtedly does present a text inferior in almost all respects to that of Q2 (1622).'¹³² Gurr regards Q1 as a 'botched text', and argues that it is likely the result of 'a clumsy, dictated transcript of the central part of authorial papers, by a scribe familiar with the play in performance', but that the 'beginning and ending were replaced by a hack, possibly the scribe, who had a perfunctory acquaintance with the story'.¹³³ Gurr's argument is questionable: if the problematic parts of the text were written by someone familiar with 'the play in performance', would the beginning and end not also be indicative of performance?

The editorial prioritisation of Q2 over Q1 is indicative of the frequent prioritisation of presumed authorial voice over potential performance history in varying editions of playtexts, as debates surrounding Q1 of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the source of Pollard's theory of 'bad' quartos, attest.¹³⁴ Q1 *Hamlet*'s inclusion of stage directions like '*enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her haire downe singing*' are suggestive of potential performance practice.¹³⁵ Moreover, as Deanne Williams shows in her chapter 'Enter Ofelia Playing On A Lute' and Charles Adams Kelly and Dayna Leigh

¹³¹ *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, ed. by Alexander Dyce, 11 vols (London: E. Moxon, 1778), I (1778); J. E. Savage, 'The Gaping Wounds in the Text of *Philaster*' in *Philological Quarterly* 28 (1946), 443-57; Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy and Philaster*, ed. by Ashley H. Thorndike (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1609).

¹³² Andrew Gurr, 'Introduction', in *Philaster or Love Lies a-Bleeding*, ed. by Andrew Gurr, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. xix-lxxxiv (p. lxxv).

¹³³ Gurr, 'Introduction', in *Philaster or Love Lies a-Bleeding*, p.lxxviii.

¹³⁴ For more on *Hamlet* and 'bad' and 'good' quartos, see: George Ian Duthie, *The 'Bad' Quarto Of Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941); Kathleen O. Irace, *Reforming the 'Bad' Quartos: Provenance and Performance in Six Shakespearean First Editions* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); John Jowett, *Shakespeare and Text*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Margrethe Jolly, *The First Two Quartos of 'Hamlet': A New View of the Origins and Relationship of the Texts* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2014); Christy Desmet, 'Text, Style, and Author in *Hamlet* Q1', *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, 5 (2016), 135-56; Christopher Marino, 'The Hybrid *Hamlet*: Player Tested, Shakespeare Approved', *Critical Survey*, 31 (2019), 26-42.

¹³⁵ Shakespeare, *The Tragicall History of Hamlet*, sig. G4v.

Plehn demonstrate in their article 'Q1 *Hamlet*: The Sequence of Creation and Implications for the "Allowed Book"', considerations of these so-called 'bad' quartos as performance texts show how they can instead 'reflect [multiple] different forms of theatricality'.¹³⁶

In her 2009 edition of *Philaster*, Suzanne Gossett argues that Q1 is based on a 'partially censored, theatrically abridged, performance version' that has been 'carelessly written and then badly printed'.¹³⁷ Gossett believes that although Q1 was printed earlier, its underlying copy-text was actually produced after that of Q2 and appears to have been a performance text used by the King's Men. She argues that it 'reflects performance in its tendency to put entrance stage directions a few lines earlier than needed, typical of promptbook texts'.¹³⁸ Q2, meanwhile, is – in the words of the stationer – 'set forth suteable, to [*Philaster*'s] birth', which Gossett takes to mean that it was printed according to Beaumont and Fletcher's authorial papers.¹³⁹ Gossett does not dismiss Q1 outright, however: where previous scholars have ignored Q1 as pirated and of no authority, Gossett's argument that editors and textual scholars must be open to the possibility of multiple factors in the differences between the two texts provides a transformative approach to engaging with *Philaster*'s variant texts. Editorial approaches to *Philaster* often focus on only comparing variant editions of the individual text, but consideration of discovery scenes across the Lord Chamberlain's and King's Men's repertory – particularly texts marked for performance like *John a Kent and John a Cumber* and *Epicœne* – alongside the material significance of hair, demonstrate that

¹³⁶ Deanne Williams, 'Enter Ofelia Playing On A Lute', in *The Afterlife of Ophelia*, ed. by K. Peterson (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), pp. 119-36 (p. 132); Charles Adams Kelly and Dayna Leigh Plehn, 'Q1 *Hamlet*: The Sequence of Creation and Implications for the "Allowed Book"', *Critical Survey* 31.1 (2019), 153-67.

¹³⁷ Suzanne Gossett, 'Introduction', in *Philaster* (London: Arden, 2009), pp. 1-102 (p. 86).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80; Walkley, sig. A2v.

the discovery in *Philaster* Q1 mirrors performance conventions in the King's Men's repertory. This insight strengthens Gossett's argument that Q1 is 'a partially censored, theatrically abridged, performance version', and thus perhaps reflective of elements of early staging practice lost in the Q2 text, then.¹⁴⁰

Despite being seen as a 'bad' quarto, Q1 remains a potentially significant source of evidence for studies of disguise and theatre history. The evidence of theatrical abridgement as indicated by Gossett lends more weight to the view that Q1 reflects early performance, suggesting playhouse editing of the text by the King's Men in order to include more spectacle than the more firmly authorial text, Q2, does. If approached as a text adapted for performance – perhaps stemming from a scribal transcript of the 1619 performance – Q1 reveals sophisticated stagecraft that demands the attention of playgoers and draws on fixed gender signifiers to mirror the stage conventions of other discovery scenes in the King's Men's repertory, such as those discussed in the previous section. Q1's stage directions indicate that Bellario's discovery was performed through action – Bellario '[k]neeles to LEON, and discovers her haire' – rather than words.¹⁴¹ The evidence of the other scenes explored above, then, allows us to see the stage direction in Q1 of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* as consistent with the wider discovery practice by characters in female-to-male gendered disguise.

The final part of this section suggests how the Q1 *Philaster* discovery might have worked in light of the above explorations of early modern understandings of gendered hairstyles, of hair-based discovery practices that texts and woodcuts preserve, and of evidence that Q1 *Philaster* is reflective of the King's Men's wider

¹⁴⁰ Gossett, 'Introduction', p. 80.

¹⁴¹ Beaumont and Fletcher, *Phylaster*, sig. l4v.

staging practices. In Q1, Bellario calls attention to the discovery, demanding that the spectators – both on- and off-stage – watch, before kneeling to ensure focus on his head and hair:

BEL[LARIO]. witsse the world;
Behold me sir. *Kneeles to LEON, and discovers her haire.*
LEON. I should know this face; my daughter.
BEL. The same sir.¹⁴²

Philaster was written between 1609 and 1620, meaning that the King's Men were in possession of both the Globe and the Blackfriars playhouses during its original performances, and the play is known to have been revived for court performance on multiple occasions, suggesting the potential for multiple performance spaces and angles from which the audience could see the discovery taking place. Fig. 1.10, the illustration of the Swan theatre shows spectators in a gallery above the 'mimorum aedes' (tiring house) and depicts the stage as being a raised 'proscœnium'. Spectators would thus look down at the action from galleries above, whilst spectators to the side of the stage would be at roughly hip height of the players depicted. Likewise, Tiffany Stern has discussed the ability to walk along the Globe's galleries and view a play from multiple angles.¹⁴³ Where gallery spectators would be able to see Bellario remove the hat or wig that covers the longer hair as they watch from above, by kneeling, the player can position his head as close to the direct sightlines of those standing around the stage as possible, thus foregrounding the hair and wig and ensuring that those spectators can also see the discovery being enacted.

¹⁴² Ibid., sig. I4v.

¹⁴³ Tiffany Stern, "'You that Walk i'th' galleries': Standing and Walking in the Galleries of the Globe Theatre", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 51 (2000), 211–16.

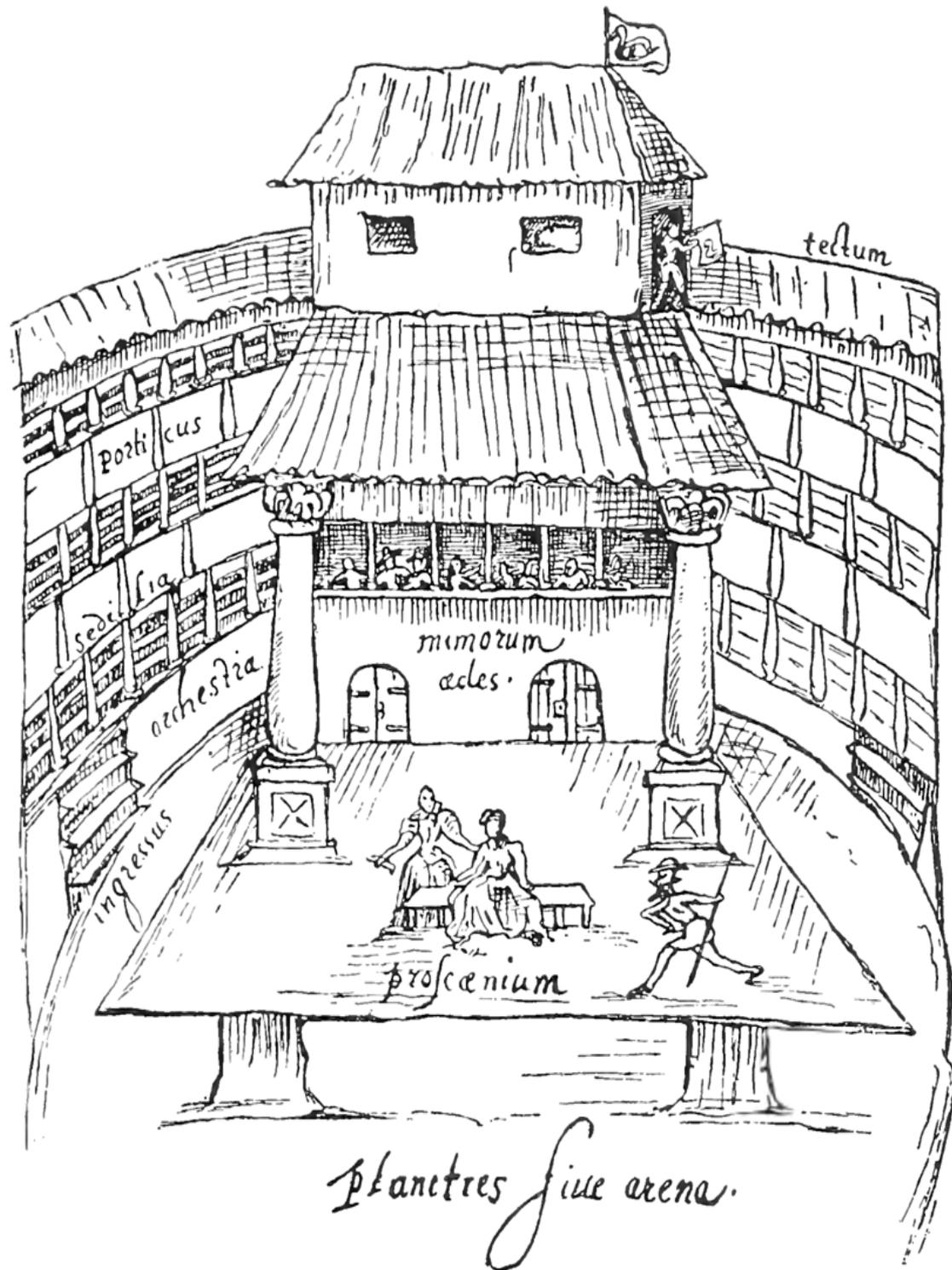


Fig 1.10 1596 drawing of the Swan theatre, London, by Aernout van Buchel after a drawing by Johannes de Witt. Shows the proscenium stage on stilts, with space for audiences in the galleries. Utrecht, University Library, Arnoldus Buchelius (UBU Hs. 842 [Hs 7 E 3]).

The physical demonstration of Bellario's real identity and the lowering of the actor's body closer to the audience members standing in front of the stage should negate the need to draw attention to the face and head. Yet, even if scarcely necessary, Leon does precisely this anyway ('I should know this face; my daughter'), in a manner similar to that of Lucio in *Measure for Measure* ('show your knaves visage with a pox to you:/ show your sheepe-biting face' [TLN 2636-7]).¹⁴⁴ This directing of attention suggests that every attempt is being made to ensure that the playgoers' focus remains on Bellario and the discovery. The playmakers seek to ensure that the playgoers witness the discovery, a priority further suggested by the frequent references to the face and head. Yet, despite this focus, it is not Euphrasia's 'face' that is discovered, but '*her haire*': it is primarily through this visual signifier that her identity is revealed.

The discovery of Bellario's hair depends upon the relationship between hair and gender outlined above, enabling a visual discovery akin to those discussed earlier in this chapter, without requiring Bellario to exit and change costumes. Bellario's repetition of 'sir' following the discovery ('witness the world;/ Behold me sir' and 'The same sir'), draws on the confused gender depiction of a character in masculine clothing with long, feminine, hair.¹⁴⁵ While the 'sir' is, ostensibly, an honorific directed toward Leon, the lines also indicate Bellario's shifting gender presentation pre- and post-discovery. 'Behold me sir' requests Leon's attention while also asking that he and the audience '[b]ehold me [as a] sir'. The line, '[t]he same sir', then, indicates that Bellario is the daughter that Leon has just recognised ('the same[,] sir') and '[t]he same sir' with whom Leon has just been speaking. Q1's Bellario becomes both Leon's

¹⁴⁴ Beaumont and Fletcher, *Phylaster*, sig. I4v.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. I4v.

'daughter' and 'sir', similar to the mixed gender signifiers on the title page of *The Roaring Girl*.

If *Philaster* Q1 is accepted as being reflective of the play's early staging, then it represents crucial evidence of the King's Men's staging practices in discovery scenes, rewarding attention to an early text that previous editorial theory and practice have left marginalised. *Philaster* Q1 shows how playwrights were able to use early modern signifiers of sex and gender to create dynamic, material discoveries in genres that otherwise appear incompatible with material discoveries. As in *Epicœne*, where the Dauphin removes Epicœne's wig to discover the 'short haire [that] is a glory and ornament to man', the removal of a hat or some form of hair covering to discover long hair signifies the discovery of a female-to-male gendered disguise.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the uncovering of hair creates a faster and more dynamic discovery scene than the 60 lines spent off-stage by Rosalind in *As You Like It*.

Lublin concluded that 'breeches, beards, swords, and codpieces materially constituted masculinity' and 'long hair serve[d] to assert the wearer's femininity'.¹⁴⁷ When Bellario is depicted in both, then, he straddles the binaries of gender in a way that not only demonstrates the innate materiality of disguise, but also exemplifies how this materiality functions to construct both disguise and disguiser (in this case, simultaneously). This discovery maintains stage conventions of materiality and physicality that we have seen in many other King's Men discovery scenes. The material signifiers of character utilised by the earlier examples of discoveries are mirrored by the uncovering of distinctly gendered long hair – hair that would enable spectators to recognise the disguise immediately. This immediacy is an important

¹⁴⁶ Hall, sig. C4v.

¹⁴⁷ Lublin, p. 27.

factor, given that it is not just a surprise discovery, but perhaps the first onstage gendered disguise discovery that playgoers would have encountered in a King's Men play.¹⁴⁸

v. Conclusion

The above discussed discoveries mostly use active verbs: 'pulls', 'thrown', 'puts', 'takes'. By doing so, each text demands that its reader imagine the dynamic moment of the on-stage discovery (whether that reader be the player or playing company reading the manuscript prior to performance, or the reader of the published text outside of the theatre space). For the comedy in *John a Kent* and *Staple's* premature discoveries to work, the playgoers must recognise the standard convention of discovery being broken: by recognising these outliers ourselves, we can recognise the discovery scene practices of the King's Men, and perhaps even of disguise plays across wider early modern drama. Thus, by considering discoveries with reference to the King's Men's disguise repertory we can begin to construct a deeper understanding of the company's performance practice and the ways in which playwrights engaged with the surrounding plays in the repertory.

Analysis of discovery scenes evidences the material and phenomenological nature of disguise in performance. Consideration of how the material meanings of clothing in early modern England directly impacted on the performance of a discovery shows that the material and abstract meanings of discovery were intrinsically associated by playmakers and playgoers, leading to discoveries that required both verbal and material signifiers. The numerous materially-focussed discoveries in the

¹⁴⁸ Beaumont and Fletcher, *Phylaster*, sig. 14v.

King's Men's repertory provide key evidence as to how texts with little to no indication of performance practice, like *Measure for Measure*, may have been performed, and allow us to question whether supposed 'bad' texts like *Philaster* Q1 may in fact reflect performance by the King's Men: material culture studies such as this one can thus offer significant insights into textual and editorial studies of plays. The methodology of this chapter, a combination of close reading, material culture studies, sensory studies, and performance practice, has further shown how a multi-disciplinary approach to disguise enables a closer understanding of the practicalities of performance.

To look at discoveries across the King's Men's repertory is to see how, while there were conventions to discoveries, there were also varied approaches to the performance of disguise that prove false the assumptions that scholars have thus far made about it. By taking the methodological framework established in this chapter, the following chapter, "This smockified shirt, or shirted smock": costuming gendered disguise', expands on this argument to show that the degendering of clothing items impacted on the performance of gendered disguise – a disguise type that, as this chapter has shown, can rely on costume to its detriment.

CHAPTER II

'This smockified shirt, or shirted smock': gendered disguise and the ambiguity of costume

There is another sort of Actors (writes Nazianzen) more unhappy then these, to wit, those who lose the glory of men, and by unchaste infections of their members, effeminate their manly nature, being both effeminate men and women, yea, being neither men nor women, if we will speake truely. For they continue not men, and that they should become women, they attaine not.¹ (William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix*, 1633).

i. Introduction

Disguise is inherently material: its success in performance is reliant on an understanding of how the symbolic resonances held by articles of clothing convince both characters and audience of a character's assumed identity. Chapter One showed Canter Pennyboy's tattered cloak and Duke Vincentio's friar's gown to be distinct signifiers of their assumed characters and to present a depiction of disguise in which it is the costume that moulds the character rather than *vice versa*. This chapter's epigraph, however, suggests a more unsettled relationship between costume and character, particularly in the case of the boy players performing female roles. In the epigraph, drawn from William Prynne's anti-theatrical tract, *Histrio-Mastix* (1633), Prynne argues that male players who perform female roles are 'both effeminate men and women' but, by being both, they are also 'neither men nor women'.² Prynne believes that the actor does not 'attaine' womanliness by wearing women's clothing, yet, the wearing of women's clothing also means that they do not 'continue' to be men:

¹ William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge, Or, Actors Tragædie, Divided Into Two Parts*. (London, 1633), STC 20464, sig. Z1r.

² *Ibid.*, sig. Z1r.

the portrayal of multiple genders in one person ultimately results in the portrayal of no gender.³

Prynne's paradoxical interpretation of the actor as both androgynous and agender exemplifies the early modern interpretations of gender to which Sawyer K. Kemp refers in their argument that the 'current mode of "finding" trans people in Shakespeare's work' results in the loss of 'the cultural specificity of early modern gender nonconformism'.⁴ Kemp argues that scholarship needs to focus on constructions of identity beyond clothing, an approach that allows us to better understand the staging of gendered disguisers, and to move beyond the limiting binary impositions that scholars have thus far placed on clothing. Helpful here, too, is Lauren Robertson's recognition that early modern playmakers 'put plays in contested relation to the formal resources of the theatre itself' to construct 'representations that were brazenly, even deliberately, at odds with the mechanics of [the] production': to apply this argument to gendered disguises is to acknowledge that it is the very uncertainty of clothing that enables the construction of the gender non-conformity that is so often perceived in these disguisers.⁵

Kemp's critique of the 'current mode of "finding" trans people in Shakespeare's work' highlights recent scholars' attempts to understand the 'identity' of the gendered disguiser by taking other characters' interpretations of their disguise as being congruent with the disguiser's identity.⁶ However, attempting to interpret a character's internal complexities from the position of the external observer in this way is not just

³ Ibid., sig. Z1r.

⁴ Sawyer K. Kemp, "In That Dimension Grossly Clad": Transgender Rhetoric, Representation, and Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Studies*, 47 (2019), 120-6 (p. 122).

⁵ Lauren Robertson, *Entertaining Uncertainty in the Early Modern Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), p. 3.

⁶ Kemp, "In That Dimension", p. 122.

problematic for the reasons Kemp outlines; it also misses the crucial evidence that these external observers actually supply about another aspect of the early modern theatre. This chapter argues that the adoption of an external perspective that focusses on potential meanings imbued in clothing enables us to realise the assumptions and interpretations of characters that *playgoers* may have held. Kemp has argued for the need to recognise the internal elements of character when reading characters as transgender; this chapter explores the inverse. It demonstrates that research into the external, material signifiers of gender, like clothing, shows seventeenth-century English society's perceptions of gender performance to be ambiguous and subjective: the wearer's intentions in fact had little bearing on each observer's interpretation of an item of clothing, and stage disguising repeatedly exploits – sometimes even depends upon – this ambiguity and subjectivity.

This chapter follows from the discussion of mixed gender signifiers in the final section of Chapter One by considering costume items that resist a fixed meaning, such as the linen shirt worn by female-to-male gendered disguiser, Ansaldo, in Thomas Middleton's *The Widow* (KM, 1614-17). To do so, this chapter first explores the depiction of gendered disguise, defined in the Introduction as a disguise which is constructed from gendered items of clothing (Introduction, p. 11). The first section engages with the work of material culture scholars like Ann Rosalind Jones, Peter Stallybrass, Janet Arnold, and Catherine Richardson to discuss the role of costume in constructing gender on stage. It then turns to focus on stage depictions of the gendered disguiser, drawing on the work of Simone Chess, Roberta Barker, and Jennifer A. Low while comparing Thomas Middleton's *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, 1621-2) with Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, Robert Daborne, and Cyril Tournier's *The Honest Man's Fortune* (LEM, 1613; KM, 1625). This

section ultimately shows that consideration of the material markers of gender alongside different types of gendered disguise enables an understanding of its staging that both conforms to and resists the binaries imposed by clothing, providing a contextual starting point for the consideration of costume and gender throughout the chapter.

In the second section, “‘Being both in smocks, they’d be taken for sisters’: shifting meanings of linen in early modern England”, I examine the importance of linen in the early modern period, with a particular focus on linen shirts. By developing on Arnold’s seminal article, ‘Elizabethan and Jacobean Smocks and Shirts’ (1977), and Arnold, Jenny Tiramani, and Santina M. Levey’s *Patterns of Fashion 4: The Content, Cut, Construction, and Context of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckwear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women, c. 1540-1660* (2008), this chapter joins works like Susan North’s *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (2020) and Natasha Korda and Eleanor Lowe’s chapter ‘In Praise of Clean Linen: Laundering Humours on the Early Modern English Stage’ (2021), to consider the ambiguity of linen and its unique relationship with playwrights. To do so, I analyse surviving linen undergarments; portraits that foreground linen clothing; John Fletcher and Philip Massinger’s *The Little French Lawyer* (KM, 1619-23); and Middleton’s *More Dissemblers Besides Women*. I demonstrate the myriad meanings that linen could convey to a seventeenth century audience, in order to destabilise scholarly perceptions of costume as having single fixed meanings. Stage depictions show linen conforming to and resisting the meanings imposed upon it: it signifies life and death, purity and sexuality, wealth and poverty, sometimes all at the same time, the particular meaning ultimately depending on the individual playgoer’s personal relationship with the material item.

The third and final section undertakes a close reading of the gendered disguiser, Ansaldo, and his entrance ‘in his Shirt’ in act III of Middleton’s *The Widow*.⁷ An unannounced disguiser – that is, one who is disguised from both the characters and the audience – Ansaldo ultimately shows the audience’s presumptions about his character to be false. Recognition of the ambiguity of linen enables a deeper understanding of how Middleton uses the material to reflect the instability of Ansaldo’s gender identity throughout the play. *The Widow* reveals how the mutable meaning of linen unsettles its ability to signify character, leading to depictions in which its use can either rely on or actively oppose the mnemonic resonances ascribed to costume by the playgoers.

By considering the multiple meanings that one could interpret from the material components of a costume, this chapter argues that discussions of gendered disguisers must also consider how the various and contrasting meanings of materials in early modern England could result in multiple interpretations of staged disguises: some that view the material elements of the disguise as cohering to the disguiser’s feigned identity, and others that see those elements as contradictory. This chapter thus takes the perspective of the observer, not to construct a single interpretation of any one gendered disguise, but instead to argue that the many meanings that individual playgoers could interpret from a costume piece were not a problem for playwrights, but rather anticipated in the very design of their drama. Indeed, this multiplicity is indicative of the ambiguity inherent not just in gendered disguise, but all early modern gender performance. A material culture understanding of a single item of costume can

⁷ Thomas Middleton, *The Widdow a Comedie, as it was Acted in the Private House in Blackfryers, with Great Applause, by his Majesties Servants* (London, 1652), Wing J1015, sig. E4v.

thus inform readings of gendered disguise that show playwrights working to reflect the ambiguity of gender through the many meanings of costume as a whole.

When Rosalind in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (LCM, 1598-1600) asks 'dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?' (TLN 1339-40) she unsettles the relationship between gender performance and gender identity. In this moment, Rosalind may be resisting Celia's simplified perspective that her identity is constructed by her clothing, but the gendered disguise that she wears is reliant on other observers doing just that: taking her masculine clothing as an indisputable sign that she is of male gender. This chapter asks, how might playgoers perceive the nuances of a gendered disguiser's outward presentation in a society in which so much of their perception of others was constructed by clothing? It argues that playmakers embraced the heterogenous nature of the early modern audience, and that searching for one single interpretation of a costume, a character, or a play is to misinterpret the early modern stage and its capacity to 'transform the frustration of uncertainty into the pleasures of entertainment'.⁸

ii. 'I am all the daughters of my father's house, and all the brothers too': ambiguous gender on the early modern stage

Gendered disguise can be found in 13 of the 45 'new' disguise plays in the King's Men's surviving Jacobean repertory (roughly 29%). When we include known revivals,

⁸ Lauren Robertson, *Entertaining Uncertainty in the Early Modern Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), p. 15.

it becomes 21 of 84 plays (roughly 25%).⁹ Gendered disguise's integral role in the company's disguise repertory has been noted many times in scholarship on disguise and gender: Paula Berggren's article, "'A Prodigious Thing': The Jacobean Heroine in Male Disguise' regards the 'grand line of "female pages," [as] the most trustworthy of all the disguised characters in Renaissance drama.'¹⁰ Berggren's language here, 'grand line', is suggestive of the female-to-male gendered disguiser's eminence in studies of disguise. This is partly because disguise scholarship 'had its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s when the cross-pollination of feminism and new historicism produced a wealth of critical interest in Shakespeare's disguised heroines' and partly to do with bardolatrous interest in the trope, Peter Hyland assuming that it is 'apparent from the frequency with which he used it that Shakespeare was particularly attracted to what has been called the "girl-page" device'.¹¹

Mary Beth Rose understands the prevalence of the gendered disguiser in Jacobean city comedies to be the 'best' example of 'city comedy's probing and original exploration of the link between sexual equality and social mobility' while Juliet Dusinberre similarly argues that Shakespeare used these characters to attempt to conflate masculinity and femininity.¹² Hyland, meanwhile, argues that '[i]n a very real sense the disguised girl is the audience's representative on stage.'¹³ These analyses

⁹ These numbers are my own calculation, based on Martin Wiggins' *Catalogue*. In instances where original performance date is unknown, it uses Wiggins' 'best guess'. To ensure that the numbers are not dramatically over-exaggerated, I have assumed that any plays for which only the title remains did not contain any instance of disguise. For further information see the appendix, pp. 373-9.

¹⁰ Paula S. Berggren, "'A Prodigious Thing": The Jacobean Heroine in Male Disguise', *Philological Quarterly*, 62.3 (1983), 383-402 (p. 384).

¹¹ Jennifer Panek, 'Review: Simone Chess. *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender Performance, and Queer Relations*. New York: Routledge, 2016. Pp xi, 196', *Early Theatre*, 20.1 (2017) 193-6 (p. 193); Peter Hyland, 'Shakespeare's Heroines: Disguise in the Romantic Comedies', *Ariel*, 9.2 (1978), 23-39 (p. 23).

¹² Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 47; Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), p. 1.

¹³ Peter Hyland, 'Shakespeare's Heroines', p. 28.

of the female-to-male gendered disguiser are inherently textual: Hyland, Dusinger, and Berggren all focus on literary critical interpretations of the disguisers' speeches to construct their arguments. Despite their different arguments, these scholars share a presumption that the gendered disguiser reflects an early modern cultural consensus: for Hyland the disguiser is the 'representative' of a collective 'audience'; for Rose, the disguiser reflects Jacobean social questions; for Dusinger, the disguiser is a joint depiction of early modern masculinity and femininity.¹⁴ Berggren's belief that the gendered disguisers are 'the most trustworthy' stems from the fact that many of them have speeches in which they consistently refer to their discomfort with masculine clothing, thus indicating the contrast between the characters' gender and the gender that their disguises signify.¹⁵ Yet, for Berggren to conduct a reading of the playtext alongside an awareness that 'dramatic costume can reveal the self it physically conceals', she has to believe in a scholarly understanding of individual costumes as recalling a single, fixed, mnemonic resonance for all playgoers.¹⁶

This section provides a critical and repertorial context for the chapter's material study of the gendered disguise trope. It details developments in early modern material culture studies and gender studies to consider how a multidisciplinary approach that engages with such methodologies and theories can illuminate the nuances of the gendered disguiser on the early modern stage. It shows that the long-standing critical construct that clothing has a single fixed meaning has been reconsidered in recent years, as material culture scholars have become more open to ambiguity in a manner reflective of the call for trans studies to 'locate transgender identity in something other

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28; Rose, p. 47; Dusinger, p. 1.

¹⁵ Berggren, p. 384.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

than clothing'.¹⁷ Then, it discusses two contrasting depictions of gendered disguisers: the page in *More Dissemblers*, whose clothes enact an impenetrable female-to-male gendered disguise despite the fact that the disguiser is 40-weeks pregnant, and Veramour in *The Honest Man's Fortune*, who is falsely assumed to be in female-to-male gendered disguise because of his beauty and effeminacy, and who can only disprove this by enacting male-to-female gendered disguise. With reference to Simone Chess's theory of 'queer residue' and Roberta Barker's analysis of the 'boy actress' – Harley Granville Barker's term for the young men who played women on the early English stage – this section explores how the contrast between clothing and the body imprint a lasting androgyny onto these two types of disguisers, destabilising the very concept that clothing constructs character.¹⁸ Following in the footsteps of Chess, this section thus combines the nuanced understandings of clothing and identity developed by contemporary scholars of material culture studies and gender studies with the field of disguise studies.

Amidst his goodbyes to his son, Laertes, Polonius reminds him to dress 'rich, not gawdie:/ For the Apparell oft proclaimes the man.' (*Hamlet*, TLN 516-7). He warns Laertes to dress appropriately to avoid giving false impressions, a warning which material culture studies of the 1990s and early 2000s took to be definitive. Scholarship on the material culture of the early modern stage has generally struggled with the ambiguity of disguise, often choosing to either ignore it completely or to simplify it, as exemplified by Bridget Escolme's statement that 'most disguises in the early modern

¹⁷ Kemp, "In That Dimension", p. 124.

¹⁸ Simone Chess, 'Queer Residue: Boy Actors' Adult Careers in Early Modern England'. *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 19.4 (2019), 242-64; Roberta Barker, "'Not One Thing Exactly': Gender, Performance and Critical Debates over the Early Modern Boy-Actress', *Literature Compass*, 6.2 (2009), 460-81; Harley Granville Barker. *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 2 vols (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1946), I, p. 14.

theatre simply work.¹⁹ Jones and Stallybrass' assessment of the visual signifiers of clothing as defining and embodying a person has long been retained by those considering the costume on the early modern stage: the 'phenomenon' of associating gender identity with outward presentation, observes Kemp, 'is a result of a genealogy of scholarship that has long been a study of transvestism, which is to say that it was primarily concerned with clothing, not identity.'²⁰ In their edited collection, *Dress And Gender: Making And Meaning* (1992), Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher affirm this presumed correlation between identity and material signifiers, defining a person's style as

a sign that the individual belongs to a certain group, but simultaneously differentiates the same individual from all others: it includes and excludes. This property of inclusion and exclusion is also carried over into the meaning of dress within the group. Dress is an indication of the general social position of the person in the society.²¹

Jones and Stallybrass's assertion that clothes 'embodied and determined a particular sexual identity' and Barnes and Eicher's simplification of dress as 'an indication of the general social position of [a] person' are reliant on items of clothing maintaining consistent and fixed meanings. These beliefs about dress are predicated on the assumption that the clothes would inspire the same mnemonic resonances in the observer as the wearer. By applying these beliefs to stage costume, then, scholarship has retained a predominantly collectivist depiction of the audience that can result in a deceptively uniform interpretation of a play.

¹⁹ Bridget Escolme, 'Costume, Disguise and Self-Display' in *Shakespeare's Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. by Farah Karim-Cooper and Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 118-40, (p. 119).

²⁰ Kemp, "In That Dimension", p. 122.

²¹ Ruth Barnes and Joanne B. Eicher, *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, Inc., 1992), p. 1.

The field of audience studies has recently begun to query this collectivist understanding of spectators to instead posit an individualistic approach that considers the multiple meanings that each playgoer could extract from a play.²² Nova Myhill and Jennifer A. Low note that '[m]ost critical discussion of the early modern theatre audience considers this audience as either a demographic entity or an object implied in the dramatic texts.'²³ Instead, they distinguish between the collective 'audience' and the heterogenous 'audiences': the 'individuals who never cease to function distinctly and who never leave behind the particularities that will shape their responses as much as anything they see on the stage.'²⁴

Eoin Price has since expanded upon Low and Myhill's distinction between the collective audience and the individual audiences through a consideration of the act of seeing sequential plays out of order. He argues that 'what counts as a new experience depends on the individual playgoer.'²⁵ The epilogue to John Ford's *The Broken Heart* (KM, 1625-33) would attest to this multiplicity of experience: 'Some few may cry 'twas pretty', states Ford in response to the generally negative response to his play.²⁶ Ford's distinction between playgoers ('[s]ome' may approve of the play, but others may not)

²² The heterogenous audience has been discussed in: Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, 'Introduction', in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-17; Mark Bayer, 'The Curious Case of the Two Audiences: Thomas Dekker's *Match Me in London*' in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 55-70; Eoin Price, 'Early Modern Drama Out of Order: Chronology, Originality, and Audience Expectations' in *Playing and Playgoing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Simon Smith and Emma Whipday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 161-79; Tanya Pollard, 'Audiences', in *Shakespeare and Emotion*, ed. by Katherine A. Craik (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 109-21.

²³ Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, 'Introduction', in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-17 (p. 2).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵ Eoin Price, 'Early Modern Drama Out of Order: Chronology, Originality, and Audience Expectations' in *Playing and Playgoing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Simon Smith and Emma Whipday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 161-79 (p. 162).

²⁶ John Ford, *The Broken Heart a Tragedy. Acted by the Kings Majesties Servants at the Private House in the Black-Friers* (London, 1633) STC 11156, sig. A3r.

speaks to the individual experiences of different audience members and the recognition of these individual responses by early modern playwrights. If an individual playgoer's experience with the wider repertory impacted upon the experience of a particular play, then their experience of an item of clothing or fabric outside of the theatre could alter their perspective of a character: the sartorial significance of satin will differ depending on whether looked upon by a wealthy playgoer or one unable to afford it, for instance, while both of these playgoers will have a different perspective again from a tailor who regularly works with the material.

Where earlier material culture scholarship often operated with models of fixed and universal signification in which 'apparel' does indeed 'proclaim the man', in recent years, scholars have finally begun to take note of the missing word: 'oft' (*Hamlet*, TLN 517). Evelyn Welch and Juliet Claxton's chapter 'Easy Innovation in Early Modern Europe', in *Fashioning The Early Modern* (2017), recognises varied patterns of use as well as particular significations when acknowledging that 'although [the items they discuss] were owned and used by both men and women, they rapidly took on gendered connotations, particularly in terms of their pictorial iconography.'²⁷ Likewise, in her essay for *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650* (2016) Richardson understands 'clothing as a superbly flexible sign [which uses] its materiality metaphorically', an argument mirrored by Helen Smith in her chapter on metaphors of clothing and nakedness in prefatory materials in the same collection.²⁸ In her introduction to this same collection, Richardson recognises clothing to be 'the supremely material form of material culture'

²⁷ Evelyn Welch and Juliet Claxton, 'Easy Innovation in Early Modern Europe' in *Fashioning The Early Modern*, ed. by Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 87-109 (p. 89).

²⁸ Catherine Richardson, "'Havying nothing upon hym saving onely his sherte": Event, Narrative and Material Culture in Early Modern Society' in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Routledge: London, 2016), pp. 209-221 (p. 210); Helen Smith, "'This one poore blacke gowne lined with white": The Clothing of the Sixteenth-Century English Book', in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Routledge: London, 2016), pp. 195-208.

because it 'is the quality of fabric and cut, the intrinsically tangible properties of the garment, which are the grounds of (often contested) meaning in this period.'²⁹ Richardson's reminder that the meanings of clothing were 'contested' underpins the potential separation in understanding between the wearer and the observer central to this chapter.

By considering the ambiguous meaning of clothing on stage, material culture scholarship of the last decade has shown that deferring to Jones and Stallybrass' argument that clothes 'mould and shape [early modern people] both physically and socially' can result in too binary a reading of costume and the construction of character.³⁰ Indeed, Jones and Stallybrass' claim is in part reflective of their focus: they avoid discussion of disguise in their consideration of gendered costume on the Renaissance stage and, by doing so, miss the opportunity to consider many moments that refute the idea of clothing as being a fixed marker of character. This avoidance has led to a presumption that gendered disguisers are entirely constructed from the clothing that adorns them (and are thus also deconstructed by its removal).

Jonson, according to Berggren, is a prime example of clothing reflecting character: his 'protagonists are master-disguisers', she argues, because 'they direct their virtuoso manipulations outward, toward others' perceptions of them, rather than inward, toward an exploration of what lies within.'³¹ Berggren focusses on *Epicœne* (CQR, 1608-10; KM, 1636) to develop this conception of Jonson as a playwright who 'never challenged a boy-heroine to differentiate, in the Shakespearean mode, between

²⁹ Catherine Richardson, 'Introduction' in *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650* ed. by Catherine Richardson (Routledge: London, 2016), pp. 1-25 (p. 8).

³⁰ Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.

³¹ Berggren, p. 386.

contradictory and complementary sexual identities simultaneously sustained. To do so would have been alien to his sense of human nature, masculine or feminine.³² Yet Berggren's assumptions regarding Jonson's 'sense of human nature' are based on a binary understanding of sex and gender that simply does not reflect that of early modern England, particularly not that of Jacobean London. The exploration of hair length in Chapter One and Chapter Three's consideration of beards and beardlessness each show the fragility of gender and gender signifiers: complaints about men's hair length shows that what we may take to have been stable signifiers of gender were much more flexible than critics such as Jones, Stallybrass, and Berggren have assumed.

Gender, instead, appears to have been perceived as relatively fluid depending on the observer. The epigraph to this chapter, Prynne's *Histrion-Mastix*, presents the player's gender as being permanently marked by his performances as women, for example: 'being both effeminate men and women [...] they continue not men'.³³ In her discussion of the 'boy actress', the apprentice players who performed as women, Roberta Barker argues that the 'boy' is never completely disentangled from the women he plays.³⁴ Although the boy playing Rosalind in *As You Like It* may distinguish himself from his character by stating 'if I were a Woman', he 'is still closely enough associated with his feminine role to "curtsy" rather than bow as he exits.'³⁵ Barker wonders, '[c]an [the player] be fully separated from his seductive female role[s]?', a question which, when asked of gendered disguisers, shows the 'disguise' to mark the disguiser in a way that often invalidates the authority of future clothing. When Orsino retains the use

³² Ibid., p. 386.

³³ Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix*, sig. Z1r.

³⁴ Barker, "Not One Thing Exactly", pp. 464-5.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 465.

of the name 'Cesario' in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (LCM, 1600-1), and states that Cesario shall only be 'Viola' 'when in other habites you are seene', he implies that 'Cesario' will continue to exist in some manner (TLN 2463-5). Simone Chess's term 'queer residue' is useful for considering the lasting impact that the disguise can have on the disguiser.³⁶ Much as the boy actresses retained resonances of their female roles after taking on male (adult) roles, so too does the gendered disguise continue to influence perceptions of the disguiser even after they are discovered – the disguise leaving residual traces of gender instability.

A comparison between *More Dissemblers Besides Women* and *The Honest Man's Fortune* shows the early modern theatre's inconsistency in regard to its depictions of clothing as gendered, and, therefore, the gender instability that gendered disguise could exploit. In *More Dissemblers*, V.ii, Latrocinio's unnamed page – really his pregnant former mistress in gendered disguise – goes into labour after over-exerting herself in a dance lesson:

Page. A Midwife, run for a Midwife.

Sinq[uepace]. A Midwife! By this light, the Boy's with childe.

A miracle! Some Woman is the Father.

The World's turn'd upside down, sure if Men breed,

Women must get, one never could do both yet.

No marv'l you danc'd close-knee'd the *Sinquapace*:

Put up my Fiddle, here's a stranger case.³⁷

In his confusion regarding the page's mixed gender signifiers, Cinquepace is unable

³⁶ Chess, 'Queer Residue', p. 243.

³⁷ Thomas Middleton, 'More Dissemblers Besides Women', in *Two New Playes. More Dissemblers Besides Women and Women Beware Women* (London, 1657), Wing M1989, sig. F5r.

to dissociate the page's sex from the male-gendered clothing. He continues to use masculine terms in reference to the page ('boy', 'men') but, by assuming that '[s]ome Woman is the Father', he equally imagines the page to be 'the mother', implying that the page is androgynous. This imposed androgyny continues throughout the play. Although the page returns in female-gendered clothing in the final scene, the reader never learns the gentlewoman-page's name and the characters refer to them only as 'the Gentlewoman', 'his Mother', and 'this Page'.³⁸ The continued use of 'Page' and the lack of a name is reflective of Chess's 'queer residue': the masculinity signified by the page's disguise leaves a lasting 'residue' that besmirches their feminine presentation.³⁹ Moreover, the page's lack of a name enforces a continued perception of their androgyny by us, as readers: as a nameless character, 'the page' continues to be known by a masculine title and will thus remain defined by the gendered aspect of their disguise even when the material components of it are removed.

In *The Honest Man's Fortune*, meanwhile, characters refuse to accept clothing as an accurate representation of gender. From his devotion to his master, to his beauty, to his simply being a page, Veramour appears to be a stereotype of the 'female page' often employed in female-to-male gendered disguises (the page in *More Dissemblers*; Bellario in *Philaster*; reversed in *The Loyal Subject* by Young Archas disguising as Lady Olympia's gentlewoman).⁴⁰ Throughout the play, multiple characters assume that Veramour is a disguised maid, and one such character, the gallant Laverdure, even attempts to pursue him sexually because of it:

³⁸ Ibid., sig. G1r-2r.

³⁹ Chess, 'Queer Residue', p. 243.

⁴⁰ Victor Oscar Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama*, (New York: Blom, 1965), p. 3.

Ent: Viramour

Laver[dure]: I follow Instantlye, yonder hee is, the thought of this
boy. hath much cool'd my affection to his ladye
& by all conjectures, this is a disguised whore, I
will try If I can search this mine, Page,

Vir[amour]: yo' pleasure sir,

Laver: thou art a pretty boy.⁴¹

Laverdure's misgendering of Veramour is centred on his attraction to the page, suggesting that Veramour's sartorial expression of gender is invalidated by 'feminine' beauty. Throughout the play, characters continue to misgender him based on stereotypically feminine or non-heteronormative traits, in a way that would encourage playgoers to share the presumption that he is disguised: the maid Charlotte does 'most dangerouslye suspect this boy to be a wench' upon seeing his affection toward and jealousy over his master, leading her to attempt to 'feelee' Veramour to determine if he 'be a boy or no.'⁴² Veramour's clothing is disregarded by those observing him, their understanding of his gender constructed in spite of, not because of, his own self-fashioning.

Ironically, Veramour must become a male-to-female gendered disguiser and discover himself as male in order to prove that he was never in female-to-male gendered disguise. It is not until the final scene that Laverdure (and, perhaps, the playgoers) discover that Veramour was, until now, never disguised:

⁴¹ Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Robert Daborne, with Cyril Tournier, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, transcribed by Grace Ioppolo (Manchester: Malone Society Reprints, Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 57, lines 1856-61.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 61, lines 2008-12.

Ent: Laverdure: & Viram: as A woeman:

Laver[dure]: this is the gentlewoeman,

Mont[aigne]: this, tis my page sir,

Vira[mour]: no sir, I am a poore disguisd ladye
That like a page hath followed full long, for love good sooth.

Omnes: a ladye.

Laver: yes. tis a ladye

Mont: It may bee so; & yet wee have laine together,
but by my troth I never found hir ladye

Lady Orle[ans]: why wore you boyes cloathes.

Vir. Ile tell you madame, I tooke example
by two or three playes, that me thought concearnd me madame
I tooke that habit,

Mont: why made you not me acquainted wth 't,

Vir: Indeed sir I knew it not my selfe
Untell this gent opend my dull eyes.
& by perswasions made me see it.⁴³

By joking that he 'tooke example/ by two or three playes, that me thought concearnd me', Veramour satirises the many plays in which 'the magical transvestism of The Pants is instant and absolute'.⁴⁴ Lady Orleans may perceive the gender of Veramour's clothing as absolute – they are 'boyes cloathes' – but other characters' presumption that these clothes are disguising a different gender identity also shows the required 'labour of constructing a habit (of clothes but also manners) that "passes."⁴⁵ *The Honest Man's Fortune* shows that gendered disguise was emphatically not

⁴³ Ibid., p. 88, lines 2875-91.

⁴⁴ Kemp, "In That Dimension", p. 122.

⁴⁵ Field et al., *Honest Man's Fortune* (2011), p. 88, line 2884; Kemp, "In That Dimension", p. 122.

constructed through clothes as fixed signifiers, but rather involved a significantly more complex understanding of how clothing and gender presentation intersect.

Gendered disguise has long been perceived through the lens of modern gender binaries that assume a cohesion between identity and outward presentation (Introduction, p. 16). Yet, as Roberta Barker has shown, ‘efforts to fix the boy-actress’s meaning generally reject important strands of [the boy’s] own period’s testimony in order to emphasize a single perspective that appeals to our own.’⁴⁶ By trying to project a fixed meaning onto the gendered disguiser we risk missing the nuances of their many representations on stage. Scholars of gendered disguise have thus far neglected to attend to the nuances of clothing and, by doing so, have constructed a presentist understanding of disguise plays and disguisers. How would our perception of gender non-conformity in Shakespeare’s works be impacted if we ‘de-center clothing entirely’, wonders Kemp in the conclusion to “‘In That Dimension Grossly Clad’: Transgender Rhetoric, Representation, and Shakespeare’.⁴⁷ We might look to *The Honest Man’s Fortune* for one possible answer to this question, since its characters reject the maleness signified by Veramour’s clothing and instead insistently perceive him as female. Veramour’s misgendering provides a dilemma for a study of disguise and materiality, then: how can costume be significant when narrative tropes like the ‘female page’ rely on its dismissal? The contradictory nature of the body and costume in *The Honest Man’s Fortune* exemplifies Robertson’s understanding that, ‘interspersed in [the] reliably conventional moments [of early modern drama] were those that deliberately frustrated spectators’ abilities to apprehend the action unfolding before them’.⁴⁸ By exploring the nuances and ambiguity of clothing, the following will

⁴⁶ Barker, “Not One Thing Exactly”, p. 461.

⁴⁷ Kemp, “In That Dimension”, p. 124.

⁴⁸ Robertson, pp. 3-4.

show early modern drama to challenge the ‘absoluteness’ of sartorial signifiers and to experiment with and parody playgoer assumptions regarding character.

iii. ‘Being both in smocks, they’d be taken for sisters’: the shifting meanings of linen in early modern England

‘To study menswear or women’s fashions in isolation could lead to faulty conclusions,’ states Amanda Wunder in her chapter on fashion in the court of Philip IV of Spain, ‘for the fashions of the opposite sexes communicated quite opposite impressions’.⁴⁹ The gendering of clothing indicated by Wunder’s analysis of Spanish portraiture is founded on markers particular to the Spanish court, which suggest that it did, indeed, impose a gender binary on its courtiers. Yet, in contrast, the English stage shows a far less fixed interpretation of gendered clothing in the 1610s and 1620s, suggesting that the study of a single category of evidence, be that clothing or portraits or commercial drama, can lead to biased conclusions. This is best illustrated by the shirt and the smock: linen undergarments worn under the clothing of almost every person in early modern England, save the absolutely destitute, to protect their outer garments from the sweat and filth of the body.

The most detailed studies on the construction of linen undergarments to date are Janet Arnold’s 1977 article, ‘Elizabethan and Jacobean Smocks and Shirts’ and her *Patterns of Fashion 4: The Cut and Construction of Linen Shirts, Smocks, Neckw-*

⁴⁹ Amanda Wunder, ‘Innovation and Tradition at the Court of Philip IV of Spain (1621–1665): The Invention of the *Goilla* and the *Guardainfante*’ in *Fashioning the Early Modern: Dress, Textiles, and Innovation in Europe, 1500-1800*, ed. by Evelyn Welch (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 111-134 (p. 132).



Fig 2.1 A man's white linen shirt embroidered with black silk thread, c.1585-1620 (l), a woman's white linen smock embroidered with black silk thread c.1610-20 (r). Fashion Museum, Bath.

ear, Headwear and Accessories for Men and Women c. 1540 – 1660. 'Smocks and Shirts' explores the sartorial significance of linen undergarments with reference to surviving garments and portraits, and is expanded upon in *Patterns of Fashion 4*. The most influential discovery in 'Smocks and Shirts', however, relates to the distinction between the two pieces of clothing:

one major difference which divides [shirts and smocks] into two groups is immediately obvious when comparing the flat pattern shapes. The specimens in the first group are shirts [fig. 2.1, l] made from the width of the linen with straight side seams. Those in the second group are smocks [fig. 2.1, r] shaped by gores [triangles of fabric used to shape a garment] starting from a point just above the waist, widening slowly over the hips down to the hem.⁵⁰

Arnold continues that the 'gored smock fitted a woman's figure, accommodating the hips, while the straight sided shirt was made for a man, often with extra gathering at the neck allowing for chest and shoulder muscles.'⁵¹ Arnold's work has had a lasting impact on our understanding of linens as being absolute and obvious in their gender distinctions, yet it is worth remembering that, prior to Arnold, it was 'difficult to distinguish between extant specimens of shirts and smocks for both were straight two-piece garments', leading to assumptions that, 'except for size, a dangerous criterion, one cannot distinguish between men's shirts and women's shirts'.⁵² If the shirt and smock needed to be deconstructed and reconstructed in order for their differences to be made apparent to later scholars, we cannot be certain that playgoers seeing a character in their linen undergarments would have been able to distinguish a shirt from

⁵⁰ Janet Arnold, 'Elizabethan and Jacobean Smocks and Shirts', *Waffen- und Kostümkunde*, 19.2 (1977), 89-110 (pp. 89-90).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁵² M. C. Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 189; J. L. Nevinson, 'English Embroidered Costume' part I, *The Connoisseur*, XCVII,1 (1936), 25-9 (p. 26).

a smock and a smock from a shirt. Indeed, to turn once more to *More Dissemblers*, Middleton's play shows the gendering of the two to be less than absolute.

In I.iv of Middleton's *More Dissemblers* the page requests that manservant and the play's clown, Dondolo, wear their master's shirt to air and warm it. Usually a duty for one's page, *this* page cannot risk changing into the shirt and being revealed as disguised and pregnant. Dondolo reluctantly agrees, but, in the process, discovers that the 'shirt' (a man's undershirt) is actually a 'smock' (a woman's undershirt):

Dondolo. Give me the shirt then, I'll warm't as well I can too.
Why look you Whoreson Cockscomb, this is a smock.

Page. No 'tis my Masters shirt.

Dondolo. Why that's true too,
Who knows not that; Why 'tis the fashion Fool,
All your yong Gallants here of late wear smocks;
Those without Beards especially.

Page. Why what's the reason Sir.

Dondolo. Marry very great reason in't: a yong gallant lying a Bed with his
Wench, if the Constable should chance to come up and search, being
both in smocks, they'd be taken for Sisters; and I hope a Constable
dare go no further: And as for the knowing of their Heads, that's well
enough too; for I know many yong Gentlemen, wear longer hair then
their Mistresses.⁵³

The page's initial response to Dondolo, 'No 'tis my Masters shirt', imposes a binary onto the linens that is emphasised by the page's use of the masculine title 'master'. The binary which the page observes in the clothing is further underlined, moreover, in

⁵³ Middleton, 'More Dissemblers', sigs. C1v-2r.

their using 'shirt' to correct Dondolo's use of 'smock', demonstrating the gendered connotations of either word. Yet despite the page's attempted binary constructions of gender, Dondolo's response, 'why that's true too' destabilises the item's meaning for the page and the playgoers. Its mutability demonstrates that costume does not simply impose meaning onto its wearer and instead shows that its meaning relies on the observer's pre-existing knowledge – knowledge that, in this instance, Dondolo has but the page does not.

Dondolo's explanation that it is 'the fashion' for 'yong Gallants here of late [to] wear smocks' is suggestive of the degendering of the linen undergarment; it is, at the time of *More Dissemblers*, shifting from being a signifier of gender to one of style. Yet, even Dondolo's attempt to reinscribe the smock as a marker of fashion over gender relies upon the garment's retained capacity to signify gender to certain observers. The 'yong Gallant' wears the smock as a form of gendered disguise, intending for he and his mistress to 'be taken for Sisters': to fool the constable, it must continue to signify womanliness to that constable. Yet this is only part of the explanation that Dondolo offers: by presenting as female so that he may lie 'a Bed with his Wench', the gallant is, in fact, using the feminine coded object to display his masculinity. A man's wearing of a smock thus becomes a complex signifier for both genders: it signifies his virility and masculinity through the suggestion of his having a mistress, but only because of the smock's ability to present him as female. In this moment the linen both is and is not a marker of femininity, it is 'a smock' *and* it is their 'Masters shirt' and, like the actor discussed by Prynne, by being both, it is also neither.

Wunder argues that we need to look at contrasting depictions of clothing to reach accurate conclusions, this section takes that one step further by arguing that we cannot understand the many interpretations of an item of clothing by looking at just

one interpretation of it.⁵⁴ It uses the ambiguity of linen to explore Richardson's arguments that a representation must be 'sufficiently "recognisable" to the majority of the audience [...] that a rough consensus about its meaning can be reached', and 'that representations negotiate [...] differences [in interpretations altered by gender or social status] through a particular kind of flexibility.'⁵⁵ This section explores how an acknowledgement of ambiguity can unsettle our perception of costume as a fixed signifier of character and provide a context to considerations of gendered disguises like those discussed above. To do so, this section first examines the importance of linen in the early modern period, demonstrating the myriad meanings that linen could convey to a seventeenth-century audience with reference to surviving items of linen clothing, pamphlets, and portraits. Then, it examines linens within the theatrical world, looking at the portrayal of linen in 'master feild's pictur in his shurt', the c.1615 portrait of player and playwright Nathan Field. By focusing on this portrait alongside staged depictions of linen, this section shows that playmakers had a unique relationship with the many meanings of linen which they would use to manipulate their public and private images. Throughout are interwoven discussion of linens on stage, including the discussion of shirts and smocks in Middleton's *More Dissemblers* alongside Shakespeare's *Henry IV part II* (LCM, 1596-1600) and John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Little French Lawyer* (KM, 1619-23).

In *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (2006), Richardson reconstructs early modern perceptions of domestic spaces to consider their impact on playgoer responses to the domestic tragedies of the 1590s and 1600s. Her consideration of early modern descriptions of

⁵⁴ Wunder, p. 132.

⁵⁵ Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 8.

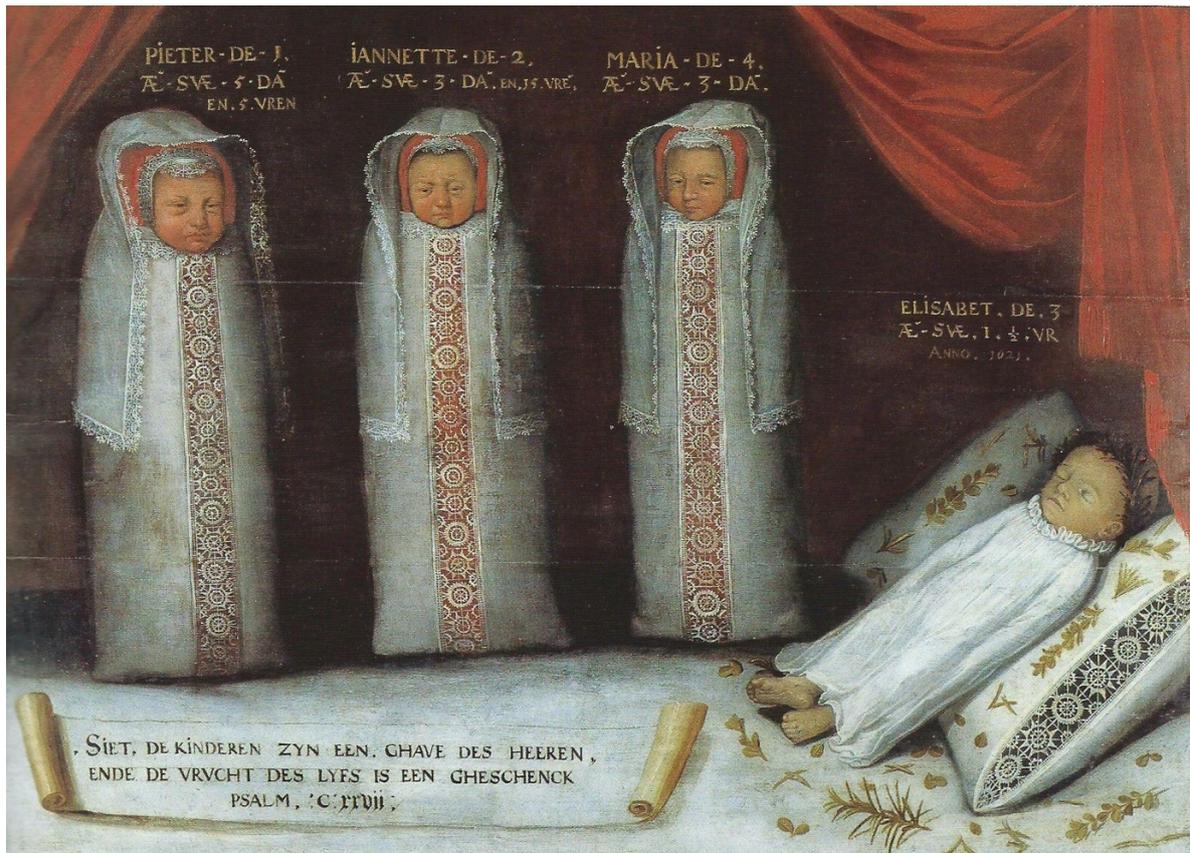


Fig 2.2 *De Dordtse Vierling* [*The Dordrecht Quadruplets*]. Unknown artist, 1621, Dordrechts Museum, Netherlands (DM-989-639).

the household that are 'sensitive to differences of construction, colour and fabric, to the qualities of light and the ways in which sound moves between spaces' suggests that stage reconstructions of the domestic space typically had an incredibly rich 'understanding of the social and moral information which those descriptions carry with them.'⁵⁶ But what if we focus in even closer than the domestic space? What can consideration of a single material – the linen from which the shirt/smock is constructed – bring to our understanding of these garments on stage, and how can this, in turn, influence our readings of the gendered disguiser?

To understand the variety of meanings that spectators could infer from the depiction of linens on the stage, we must first unpack the explicit and implicit meanings

⁵⁶ Richardson, *Domestic Life*, p. 4.

of linen through analysis of contemporary works that elucidate its early modern cultural resonances. The shirt/smock in *More Dissemblers* reflects a consistent characteristic across depictions of linen: ambiguity. This ambiguity stems from the pervasiveness of linen in early modern English society, a fabric so integral to a person's life that even 'Death wil leave you nothing but your Shirt.'⁵⁷ At birth, babies were dressed in an early form of nappy called a tailclout, a shirt, and then swaddled in a 'band' – all made of linen – and, at death, the deceased were buried in a linen shroud. The birth portrait of the Dordrecht quadruplets (fig 2.2) depicts three of the quadruplets, Pieter (painted at 5 days old), Jannette (painted at 3 days old), and Maria (also painted at 3 days old), all swaddled in linens with the lace caps visible on their foreheads (fig. 2.3) indicating the layers of linens that are hidden beneath their swaddling bags (akin to a sleeping bag for a swaddled baby).⁵⁸ Lying beside the three, on an embroidered pillow and surrounded and crowned by rosemary is Elisabet (painted posthumously, at 1 day old), depicted in her burial shroud. The above portrait, in its tragic contrasting of birth and death linens, exemplifies the ubiquity of the material throughout one's life. The placement of the quadruplets, on their birthing bed which is also, poignantly, quadruplet Elisabet's death bed, reminds the observer of linen's place in life: after being born on linen sheets, a child is wrapped in linens, spends every day falling asleep, waking up in, and wearing linens, and, at death, is shrouded in a linen winding sheet.

Recognition that linens held such contrasting resonances depending on context

⁵⁷ Le Sieur de la Serre, *The Mirroure which Flatters Not*, trans. by T. C. (London, 1639), STC 20490, sig. E7v.

⁵⁸ While *Dordtse Vierling* (*The Dordrecht Quadruplets*) is a Dutch painting, English portraits like *The Cholmondeley Ladies* (c.1600-10) shows the two sisters, lay in a bed, to have swaddled their babies in similar items.



Fig 2.3 Swaddling band, 1600-25. Italian. The lace cloth on the forehead is similar to that which is depicted under the hoods of the Dordrecht quadruplets. Victoria and Albert Museum (B.879-1993).

enables nuanced readings of early modern drama. Take, for example, Shakespeare's *The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth (2 Henry IV)* (LCM, 1596-1600), IV.iv, in which Prince Hal mistakes his dying father's sleep for death:

There lyes a dowlney [sic: i.e., 'downy'] feather, which stirres not:
Did he suspire, that light and weightlesse dowlne
Perforce must move. My gracious Lord, my Father,
This sleepe is sound indeede: this is a sleepe,
That from this Golden Rigoll [the crown] hath divorc'd
So many English Kings. (TLN 2486-9)

In this moment, Hal watches a feather by his father's face and, not seeing it move, assumes that his father has died. His (in fact correct) belief that his father was asleep before noticing the feather enables Hal to explore his father's supposed death through the longstanding metaphor of the final sleep. The visual components of the scene – Henry IV lying sleeping in bed in his nightshirt with 'hollow' eyes (TLN 2455) – are reminiscent of the imagery found in seventeenth-century deathbed portraits, like fig. 2.2. When we consider two of the meanings that a linen nightshirt worn in a sickbed could convey, then, that of sleep and that of death, we see that the playwrights were using these dual resonances to encourage the audience to also infer Henry IV's death. The material resonances of the linen transform Hal's error from a moment of tension – as we wait for Henry IV to awake – to a solemn moment of mourning as we watch the grief of a son who missed his father's last breath.

2 Henry IV is just one example of the way that linen could be imbued with any number of meanings. Playing companies could use the material to communicate a great deal of information about characters to a seventeenth-century playgoer – information that may not be immediately intelligible to us today. A further example, given the commonality of swaddling, is the potential use of bundles wrapped in linen

swaddling bands to stage babies in plays like Thomas Middleton's *More Dissemblers Besides Women* and John Fletcher's *The Chances* (KM, 1616-25); another is the use of linen sheets to represent shrouds, and so ghosts and death, in Thomas Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (KM, 1611) and Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (? , 1610-11); and a whole set of further examples might be drawn from a linen shirt's capacity to represent anything from sleep, to death, to sexual virility, to absolute innocence. Indeed, as the following exploration of linen garments will demonstrate, the whiteness of the linen, the excess of lace, and even the type of lace – cutwork (where holes are cut to create the pattern) or bobbin (lace made by braiding threads) – were recognisable indicators of status and wealth both on- and off-stage.⁵⁹

Georges Vigarello, the historian of cleanliness and the human body, separated linen clothing into two categories which have been widely adopted by material culture historians: invisible linens and visible linens.⁶⁰ 'Invisible linens' refer to items of clothing that were hidden from the public eye, like those depicted in fig. 2.1, a man's shirt (l) and a woman's smock (r). 'Visible linens' are the external items of clothing that a person may use to indicate wealth and status. These include sleeve ends, collars, bands, and ruffs. With reference to inventories and estate books, Susan North has shown that the cleanliness of linen (often referred to as its 'whiteness') was often indicative of a person's class or social position: a clean linen shirt would imply that a

⁵⁹ For more on status and linens see: Catherine Richardson, *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Rebecca Quinton, *Seventeenth-century Costume* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums, 2013); Eleanor Lowe and Natasha Korda, 'In Praise of Clean Linen: Laundering Humours on the Early Modern English Stage' in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016) pp. 306-21; Hester Lees-Jeffries, "'Thou Hast Made this Bed Thine Alter": John Donne's Sheets' in *Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 269-287.

⁶⁰ Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness: Changing Attitudes in France since the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 48-9.

person had multiple shirts that were frequently laundered, and thus signify disposable income.⁶¹

Beyond being an indicator of wealth, the cleanliness of one's linens were figurative reflections of the cleanliness of one's soul. The average early modern person's perspective on the relationship between clean linens and inner virtue is addressed in detail in North's *Sweet and Clean?* North notes that although Vigarello's categorising of linen clothing holds true, 'the aversion to water and washing that Vigarello described' in his history of cleanliness 'is not characteristic of early modern England'.⁶² North explains how cleanliness was instead perceived as an indicator of character, and that people were often judged by the whiteness of their visible linens, an argument that Korda and Lowe have developed in reference to the stage.⁶³

Visible linens were used as a symbol of cleanliness and wealth by the wearers, but that visible linens were viewed as honest indicators of a person's character by all observers must be questioned. For example, invisible linens were placed directly against the wearer's body for considerable lengths of time and would therefore become imbued with the wearer's smell, sweat, and filth. Yet visible linens could sometimes be detached from invisible linens or outer clothing and could therefore be changed and cleaned with greater frequency to 'disguise a shirt or shift that had not

⁶¹ Susan North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 239-42.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 118; Eleanor Lowe and Natasha Korda, 'In Praise of Clean Linen: Laundering Humours on the Early Modern English Stage' in *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Catherine Richardson, Tara Hamling, and David Gaimster (London: Routledge, 2016) pp. 306-21.



Fig 2.4(a) Sailor's garments, linen shirt and slops with linen cotton patches, 1600-1699, Museum of London Docklands (53.101/1a).



Fig 2.4(b) Details of sailor's shirt showing patched underarm.

been changed for several days or longer.’⁶⁴ Where visible linens were self-manipulated indicators of class and cleanliness, then, invisible linens provided a supposedly honest insight into a person’s real character, their cleanliness mirroring the supposed cleanliness of a person’s soul. North notes that ‘[i]n the early modern scale of sense and morality, smell stood in the centre between the intellectual sight and hearing, and the “brutish” taste and touch. It distinguished not only the clean from the dirty, but also good from evil.’⁶⁵ The association of cleanliness and smelling ‘sweet’ with being ‘good’, and filth with ‘evil’, indicates the moralisation of wealth and physical labour in the period. Surviving account books show that the ability to afford frequent laundering and fresh linens was a privilege for the middling sort and upper classes,

⁶⁴ North, p. 138.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

granting them visual proof of moral superiority over the lower classes.⁶⁶ The working class, who would have been able to afford fewer shirts and less frequent, if any, professional laundering, would also have accrued more filth from working. Fig. 2.4, a rare example of a working man's linen shirt, has marks of tar because its owner, a sailor, has touched greased ship ropes; it also has areas patched with linen of different colours and materials, suggesting the wear and tear of daily use. The contrast between this shirt and those in fig. 2.1 reveal how the class differences of the wearers were visible in the linens: fig. 2.4, with its patched fixes and the brown material that hides stains, was worn to protect its wearer's skin from the sun and filth of working at sea, while fig. 2.1, meanwhile, shows linens made to be displayed. As Arnold notes, the embroidered chest of the linens 'were intended to show when worn during the day but would also have been displayed to advantage in bed when the wearer was propped up against the pillows.'⁶⁷

A person's 'sweetness' or the cleanliness of their linens thus acted as a metaphorical depiction of goodness within a literal depiction of class. This moralisation of clean linens is apparent in Abraham Cowley's University play, *The Guardian* (Trinity College, Cambridge, 1641), in which the soldier Colonel Cutter mocks his love rival, the poet Dogrel, for being '[t]he very embleme of poverty and poor poetry [who] had not so much linen about him as would make a cuff for a Batlemew-fayr-baby.'⁶⁸ The insult to Dogrel's linens is two-fold: by drawing attention to his lacking a shirt, Cutter is reasserting the 'poverty' of Dogrel *and* he is suggesting that Dogrel lacks morals, later

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 239-42.

⁶⁷ Arnold, 'Smocks and Shirts', p. 90.

⁶⁸ Abraham Cowley, *The Guardian, a Comedie Acted before Prince Charls, His Highness, at Trinity-Colledg in Cambridge, upon the Twelfth of March, 1641* (London, 1650), Wing C6673, sig. B1r.

stating: 'if whoring, drinking, cheating, poverty and cowardice be qualities, he's one of the best qualified men in the Christian world.'⁶⁹

We cannot assume, however, that the association between cleanliness and morality was held by all. Perhaps because of the class-influenced background of clean linen's virtuousness, the relationship between visible clean linens and virtue was contested. John Taylor's satirical poem dedicated to linen and laundresses, *The Praise of Clean Linnen* (1624), mocks the association of clean linen with honesty:

Besides, a shirt, most magically can
Tell if its owner be an honest man:
The washing will his honesty bewray,
For, *the lesse soape will wash his shirt*, they say.⁷⁰

Taylor's sarcastic use of 'magically' indicates a contested view of linens, reflected on the stage when the inferred meanings of clothing and materials were equally reinforced and disparaged. This conflicted stage representation has been traced by scholars such as Lowe and Korda, who argue through a materially informed discussion of humoral comedies that the London playing companies used the staging of clean linens to establish the civility of players and to mock the supposed credibility of external indicators of civility. While clean linen could be used to indicate the goodness of a character, it could also be used ironically to mock or belittle those who excessively credit linen's virtuousness.

⁶⁹ Ibid., sig. B1v.

⁷⁰ John Taylor, *The Praise, of Cleane Linnen with the Commendable Use of the Laundresse* (London, 1624), sig. B1r.

The dispute over whether cleanliness is reflective of virtue is staged in Fletcher and Massinger's *The Little French Lawyer*. In this play, the wealthy Sampson expresses concern about fighting the eponymous lawyer-turned-street-brawler La-Writ after seeing him in his undershirt: 'tell me this, why should I mix mine honour/ With a fellow that has ne'r a lace in's shirt?'.⁷¹ The lack of lace indicates to Sampson that La-Writ is of a lower social class, causing Sampson some concern regarding their association. For Sampson, the 'foule shirt[ed]' La-Writ is an inferior person, both in terms of his class and his morals.⁷² La-Writ belittles Sampson's belief in linen's material significance, arguing that the expensive cutwork lace on his victims' shirts had little impact on their swordsmanship:

This shirt, five times, victorious I have fought under,
And cut through squadrons, of your curious Cut-workes,
As I will doe through thine.⁷³

La-Writ both defines his victims through their shirts and trivialises the concept of reading a person through clothing. For La-Writ, the wealth and status indicated by his enemies' shirts are meaningless when compared to his actual triumphs over them. The pair present their respective understandings of honour through sartorial signs: for Sampson, honour is a courtly concept embodied in appearance and status, whereas for La-Writ, his honour is demonstrated through his physical skill and strength. Their

⁷¹ John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, 'The Little French Lawyer', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. H2r-L2r (sig. K2r), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 6 June 2024].

⁷² *Ibid.*, sig. K2r

⁷³ *Ibid.*, sig. K2r.

contrasting views on shirts suggest that sartorial significance was not, in fact, understood consistently by every early modern person.

These few lines in *The Little French Lawyer* demonstrate the complexity of reading linens on the early modern stage. They show linen to have been an integral and well utilised material on the stage, often able to provide signifiers of character traits depending on the playgoer. However, these signifiers needed to be recognisable to the playgoers, meaning that not only did the play have to make explicit the intended interpretations of costume, but also had to rely on the playgoer accepting and adhering to those interpretations. La Writ and Sampson are the play's comic relief; thus, by making them the voice of sartorial significance in the play, Fletcher and Massinger ridicule the concept that linen can be used as a measure of one's values and, therefore, the use of costume as a marker of character. Character and personage could be, and often were, defined through the visible linens that a character wore, but those same definitions would only have been afforded as much consideration as the wearer and spectator allowed. This allowance of meaning is the core problem with simply viewing staged linens through the analyses that the play's characters supply. While some spectators may have viewed the cleanliness and intricacy of a character's shirt as a simple indicator of the play's social hierarchy, others perhaps recognised a myriad of meanings in a character's shirt, while others, still, may have not considered the shirts at all.

But what of those who would have had a uniquely intricate understanding of the relationship between clothing and character: the playwrights and those involved in the theatre who recognise clothing to be a fundamental element of crafting characters on the early modern stage? The portrait of Nathan Field, *master feild's pictur in his shurt*



Fig 2.5: master feild's pictur in his shurt on a board in a black frame filited with gould an Actour. Unknown artist, c. 1615. Dulwich Picture Gallery, London (DPG385).

[...] *an Actour* (fig. 2.5), dated to c.1615 by Tarnya Cooper, is the only known surviving image of a player in a shirt and analysis of it can provide key insight into the meanings playmakers attempted to convey by staging linens.⁷⁴ In the portrait, the player and playwright Nathan Field is depicted wearing a linen shirt with a blackwork lace trim. Cooper has noted that 'Field's appearance suggests an orchestrated or artful informality': he is depicted in his undergarments, constructed from linen thin enough for his skin to be seen through it (note the skin tones on his right upper arm and above his hand).⁷⁵ The delicate material, the blackwork stitching (also depicted in fig. 2.1), and the lace trim, together indicate that the shirt is expensive and suggest the sitter's social position as a Gentleman of the middling sort. The detailed lace work on the collar and folded sleeves on Field's shirt are the areas that would be visible under a doublet, publicly demonstrating his wealth, class, and respectability, while the bright, clean white of the invisible linens 'signif[y] inner cleanliness and virtue'.⁷⁶

Beyond its uses in depicting character traits, stages of life, and the play's social hierarchy, '[t]he staging of clean linens in the public playhouses [...] counter[ed] claims that theatres were vehicles of both physical and moral filth and contagion'.⁷⁷ By having the visible linens, the collar and sleeve ends, clearly connected to the shirt, the painter suggests that the outward, public image that Field presents is the same as that of his true nature, as indicated by the invisible linen. Field holds up a raised hand to cover his chest, creating a barrier between himself and the portrait's viewer. John Bulwer's *Chirologia or the Natural Language of the Hand* (1644) states that this gesture was intended to 'swear or call to God to witness truth' and is therefore 'testimony of our

⁷⁴ Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 184-5.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁷⁶ Korda and Lowe, p. 308.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

conscience [...] that no mentall reservation doth basely divorce our words and meaning, but that all is truth that we now protest unto', leading Cooper to suggest that Field is 'bearing witness or testifying [to his] own virtue'.⁷⁸

The respectability and virtue of players and the theatre was a subject with which Field was personally engaged: in a letter to the Reverend Thomas Sutton dated 1616, roughly contemporary to Field's portrait, Field admonishes Sutton for his public shaming of players during a sermon. Field accuses Sutton of 'point[ing] at me and some other of my quality [players], and directly to our faces in the public assembly [...] pronounc[ing] us damned', and states that he therefore 'seek[s] to wipe off those [...] blemishes [that] made us [the players] blush'.⁷⁹ Field's portrait seeks, through visual representation, to claim respectability just as his letter does, since the displaying of his player's body in a white linen shirt removes the mnemonic resonances of clothing and costume. By removing any outward clothing that may be reminiscent of the costumes that Field has worn on stage, such as a doublet or jerkin, Field thus isolates his person from the stage, removing the 'blemish' of the anti-theatricalists' accusations of the theatre's dishonesty by presenting himself in his shirt. The decision to be portrayed in his shirt demonstrates how the shirt can be used to create a self-fashioned image of honesty and purity. The shirt both removes Field from the theatre and becomes a costume itself, made to demonstrate Field's (and the theatre's) purity in the face of accusations like that of Sutton.

⁷⁸ John Bulwer, *Chirologia, or, The Natural Language of the Hand. Composed of the Speaking Motions, and Discoursing Gestures Thereof. Whereunto is Added Chironomia: Or, The Art of Manuall Rhetoricke. Consisting of the Naturall Expressions, Digested by Art in the Hand, as the Chiefest Instrument of Eloquence, by Historical Manifesto's Exemplified Out of the Authentique Registers of Common Life, and Civill Conversation.* (London, 1644), Wing B5462 & Wing B5466, sig. G4r; Cooper, p. 185.

⁷⁹ Nathan Field, "Letter to Revd. Mr. Sutton (1616)." in *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook*, ed. Tanya Pollard (Blackwell: Maldenma, 2004), pp. 274-8 (pp. 274-275).

By placing Field's portrait in a theatre historical context, its attempts to demonstrate Field's virtue in the face of anti-theatricalists become clear. However, consideration of the different mnemonic resonances of linen offers additional analyses. The artist may be indicating Field's virtue through the linen's whiteness, but the exposure of his linen shirt and chest simultaneously enables the viewer to sexualise him. Field is effectively exposed in his portrait, and his wary and stoic expression could be read as his discomfort at being caught in his private attire.⁸⁰ The virtue expressed by the whiteness of his linen shirt alongside the sensuality of the exposed skin together give an erotic innocence to the Field portrayed, then. North has shown that 'being seen in one's linen undergarments was considered another form of nakedness and similarly associated with humiliation and shame', but there was of course a difference between full nudity and the 'nakedness' of being in one's shirt.⁸¹ The shirt was viewed as a form of 'second skin', evident in the 1638 English translation of *The Sonne of the Rogue, or, the Politick Theefe*, which makes frequent reference to the two types of nakedness. In the tale, the narrator states that he stripped a victim until he was 'naked in his shirt'.⁸² Later in the story, however, the narrator mentions that he 'made [his victim] goe into it *starke naked* to the skin, because I [the narrator] had neede of a shirt'.⁸³ To be 'naked in [one's] shirt' was therefore a type of controlled nudity: while Field is 'naked' in his shirt, his dignity is preserved by his linen. The performed nakedness therefore reflects the exposure of players on the stage discussed in Chapter One (pp 46-8): his body may be exposed to the spectators' gaze, but it is done in a controlled manner. The visibility of his skin implies Field's desirability and sensuality as an objectified body on

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 88.

⁸¹ North, pp. 12-13.

⁸² Carlos García, *The Sonne of the Rogue, or the Politick Theefe with the Antiquitie of theeves. A Work No Lesse Curious then Delectable*, trans. W.M. (London, 1638), STC 11550, sig. L1v.

⁸³ Ibid., sig. L3v.

the stage while the raised hand expresses his uncertainty and obstructs the viewer's visibility. Yet, by partially obscuring himself, his exposure becomes even more obvious. Field's exposure in his undershirt and his attempt to cover himself suggests a non-reciprocated voyeurism on the part of the viewer.

A brief diversion to Jenny Tiramani's original practice notes for costuming at Shakespeare's Globe adds further evidence to the voyeuristic potential of this portrait. The notes relate to an embroidered nightshirt from the 1580s to 1590s (fig. 2.6). As fig. 2.6. shows, the red and green silk, and the silver and gold gilt wrapped threads that embroider the shirt suggest that it belonged to a wealthy gentleman. The shirt has some stains but remains mostly cream, which Jenny Tiramani takes to mean it may not have been laundered often; this, alongside 'wear and tear on side splits/tops and bottom of necking oprning [sic]' makes her suggest, '[w]ould be worn over other shirt?'⁸⁴ The hesitancy implicit in her question mark leaves this open to question: it may have been worn over another shirt, or could be just one of a wealthy gentleman's numerous sleep shirts.

Its design is extremely similar to Field's: both have square-edged collars with a slit-cut neckline that extends to mid-chest; the necks are held in place by a thread (on Field's a silver and black bandstring, similar to a ribbon; on fig. 2.6 a pair of plaited red silk threads ending with gold beads); the embroidery extends down the arms and to just below the chest on both; and they both have a lace (likely needlework) trim. The necktie and folded collar and sleeves that are shared by Field's shirt are elements which led Tiramani to wonder, '[c]uffs caught back – could be original – if so was it a

⁸⁴ London, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, SGT/TIR/A/3/1.



Fig 2.6 Man's linen nightshirt embroidered with red and green silk and silver and gold gilt wrapped threads. The collar and cuffs are folded down. c.1581-90. Museum of London Docklands, London (28.84).

nightshirt?’⁸⁵ The association between the shirt and a person’s private chambers is implicit, as when Janet Arnold wonders if the 1632 portrait of Sir John Eliot is depicted in his shirt ‘because he was suffering imprisonment [in the Tower of London] and illness’.⁸⁶ Field’s shirt may not be a night shirt but the association between shirts and bedwear nonetheless enables the imagined viewer to perceive Field’s portrait as a voyeuristic insight into the private space of the bedroom.

Field’s portrait has any number of potential interpretations: is Field, here, ‘master Field’ stripped of all theatrical resonance? Or is he ‘master Field [...] an Actour’, depicted in character as a tribute to his theatrical legacy? Does the linen depict him as a shining symbol of virtue in the face of anti-theatricalist slander? Or is he an object of sexual fantasy, the shirt offering a tantalising reminder of the bedroom? Perhaps both are subtly intended: the portrait could protect him from the accusations of filth relating to the theatre while also demonstrating his awareness of his own position in the public eye through the exposure of his undergarments. The many meanings of linen imbue its depictions with ambiguity, providing us with an insight into the uncertainty with which playgoers approached a performance. Even where playmakers may have intended a particular a costume to have specific resonances, the playgoers’ interpretations could differ wildly from these intentions. Yet, as the following section will show, Middleton – a playwright with an affinity for interweaving the materiality of the stage into his plays (discussed further in Chapter Four) –

⁸⁵ SGT/TIR/A/3/1.

⁸⁶ *Sir John Eliot (1590-1632)*. Unknown artist, 1632. Port Eliot, Plymouth (A7). Janet Arnold with Jenny Tiramani and Santina M. Levey, *Patterns of Fashion 4: The cut and construction of linen shirts, smocks, neckwear, headwear and accessories for men and women* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 25.

employed this uncertainty to materialise the malleable relationship between clothing and gender in gendered disguises.

iv. 'I think it be a shirt, I know not well': the depiction and deception of shirts in *The Widow*

The remainder of this chapter considers the gender distinctions between a smock and a shirt to argue that recognition of linen undergarments as being 'gendered' in tandem with an understanding of linen as an ambiguous and malleable sartorial sign results in better understanding of how the heterogenous seventeenth-century audience perceived gendered disguisers. Chapter One showed the discovery to be reliant on the removal of one sartorial or bodily signifier and the discovery of another beneath (gentlemen's clothing in Jonson's *The Staple of News* [KM, 1626]; hair in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* [KM, 1609-20]). In Middleton's *The Widow*, however, the disguiser (Ansaldo, really the disguised gentlewoman Martia) is stripped of his disguise and left in just a linen shirt. This section explores how Middleton uses costume (or a lack of it) to unsettle audience and character interpretations of Ansaldo. It argues that the ambiguity of linens is reflective of the flexible, unfixed notions of gender and identity prevalent in early modern London.

The Widow provides one of the few extant examples of unannounced disguise: a disguise of which the audience are not informed prior to the discovery. Yet whilst relatively uncommon across all surviving disguise plays, the unannounced disguise trope is particularly prevalent in King's Men plays of the 1610s; alongside *The Widow*, unannounced disguise plays like Jonson's *Epicæne*, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, Fletcher and Massinger's *Beggars' Bush* (KM, 1612-22), and Fletcher's *The*

Loyal Subject (KM, 1618) use and misuse the representative meanings of costume to manipulate the spectator's assumptions. The unannounced disguise trope is contentious in disguise scholarship. In *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama* (1915), Victor Oscar Freeburg assumes plots containing them were unpopular:

Whether such surprise is good dramaturgy may be a question of taste. But I think the average spectator would rather be given certain dramatic causes and conflicts with a chance to guess at the outcome, than watch the unfolding of a dramatic story which ends with the disconcerting revelation that he had all the way through been ignorant of the cardinal fact in the story.⁸⁷

Freeburg's consideration of 'taste' speaks to Low and Myhill's discussion of the 'audiences' as 'individuals who never cease to function distinctly and who never leave behind the particularities that will shape their responses as much as anything they see on the stage.'⁸⁸ However, his assumption regarding the 'average spectator' may have more to do with his own 'taste' than the historical evidence, given the unannounced disguise's stage history: *The Widow* was performed at least twice, once c.1615-17 and once c.1634-41; *Philaster* was performed at least four times between 1612 and 1641; *Beggars' Bush* at least five times between 1622 and 1641; and *The Loyal Subject* also five times between 1618 and 1636.⁸⁹ The trope was popular enough for the King's Men to reuse it throughout their commercial and court repertoires, and their obtaining and reviving of *Epicæne* in 1636 suggests that the play was one that complemented their repertory.

⁸⁷ Freeburg, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Low and Myhill, p. 2.

⁸⁹ See Appendix, pp. 373-9.

Hyland argues that, in plays where the audience are aware of the disguise, the playgoers ‘had a shared intimacy with the disguiser [...] and so the moment of immediate revelation [is] like the punchline to a shared joke, a moment of release for which the spectators have been waiting.’⁹⁰ The unannounced disguise plays, however, lack this shared intimacy. To explain their popularity, Hyland ultimately concludes that it must have been their dramatic novelty, suggesting that it is ‘probably prudent to assume [that] members of the audience might guess (rightly or wrongly) at the possibility that a character was in disguise’, yet, ‘in most cases [playwrights] did hope to keep the disguise as a climactic surprise, otherwise why would they not make it explicit?’⁹¹ Undoubtedly, the novelty of the trope was part of its appeal, perhaps as part of the King’s Men’s wider attempt to innovate and subvert expectations in their new commissions of the 1610s and 1620s. Yet the wider contexts of material and sartorial history and gender presentation that this chapter has traced reveal a further purpose, as this section will argue: the unannounced disguise also provided playwrights with a form through which to explore the instability of self-fashioning.

The sartorial aspects of gendered disguise have led those working on disguise and gender studies to consider the trope as an avenue through which to explore ‘signs of gender struggle’, whether announced or unannounced.⁹² Moreover, Ezra Horbury’s 2022 article, ‘Transgender Reassessments of the Cross-Dressed Page in

⁹⁰ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 60.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹² Jean E. Howard, ‘Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 39.4 (1988), 418-40 (p. 419). For more on this, see: Laura Levine, *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Mary E. Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Mary Trull, ‘Keeping Boys and Men: Marvelous Pageboys in Romantic Comedies’, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 19.2 (2017), 1-36; Ezra Horbury, ‘Transgender Reassessments of the Cross-Dressed Page in Shakespeare, *Philaster*, and *The Honest Man’s Fortune*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 73.1 (2022), 100-20.

Shakespeare, *Philaster*, and *The Honest Man's Fortune*' recognises that the unannounced gendered disguiser is a clearer predecessor to depictions of transgender characters than gendered disguises of which the audience are aware: Bellario in *Philaster* may be 'imitating' masculinity, for instance, but '[i]mitation should not be taken as evidence of inauthenticity, as the masculinity of early modern boys is built on mimesis'.⁹³ Thus, the playwrights depicting Bellario as unequivocally male prior to the discovery are not necessarily 'gull[ing]' the playgoers, as Freeburg suggests.⁹⁴ Instead, they are drawing attention to the imitative nature of gender performance and the role of the observer in constructing the character's gender. Thus, foregrounding the role of the playgoer in interpreting what is in front of them and keeping in mind that costume was not always an immediately recognisable or accurate signifier of character, we can turn to *The Widow* for a practical example of how a playwright like Middleton used the unannounced disguise trope to consider the instability of self-fashioning.

By keeping Ansaldo's disguise from the audience, *The Widow* makes obvious the role of external observation in the construction of gendered disguise and the potential to misinterpret sartorial signs. The play includes multiple narratives in which characters are proven foolish for accepting clothing as a marker of character without question: by believing that a person in a 'blew cote' is a servant, Ansaldo ends up robbed, stripped, and bound; by taking someone in a barber surgeon's hat to be a legitimate barber surgeon, Martino loses two healthy teeth and the contents of his purse; by assuming that Ansaldo's shirt is a marker of his masculinity, Philippa's hopes for an affair are dashed and her intended lovers (Francisco and Ansaldo) marry one

⁹³ Ezra Horbury, 'Transgender Reassessments of the Cross-Dressed Page in Shakespeare, *Philaster*, and *The Honest Man's Fortune*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 73.1 (2022), 100-20 (p. 110).

⁹⁴ Freeburg, p. 13.

another.⁹⁵ The theatrical practice of taking costume as a fixed sign of character is continually challenged in *The Widow*, and in no scene is this more evident than in act III, when Ansaldo enters ‘*in his Shirt*’.⁹⁶

The title page of *The Widow* records that the play is printed ‘as it was acted at the private house in Blackfriars’, the King’s Men’s indoor playhouse.⁹⁷ Unlike the King’s Men’s sunlit outdoor theatre, the Globe, the Blackfriars was lit using candles and potentially a small amount of filtered daylight through its windows. Martin White notes that, while there was a relatively ‘constant stage state [of lighting], with the illusion of darkness being achieved by actors and audience “supposing it to be dark”’, there was, still, some degree of flexibility in lighting in the indoor theatres.⁹⁸ With evidence from both children and adult company plays, White concludes that a ‘dramatist writing for an indoor playhouse [...] knew he had the facility to adjust the lighting states, if only to a limited degree’, meaning that ‘variations in mood were [supported] by appropriate changes in the light levels’.⁹⁹ Much of *The Widow*’s act III is spent in ‘darkness’: Ansaldo mentions that ‘[t]hat light in yonder Window’ (Philippa and Violetta above the stage) is the only light he can see; likewise, when Francisco leaves Philippa’s house he bids ‘farewell’ to ‘Light’, and Violetta states that she will ‘bring [Ansaldo] to light presently’.¹⁰⁰ As the colour white ‘shew[ed] best’ by candlelight, Ansaldo’s white linen shirt would reflect the candlelight, making it one of the brightest points on the darkened stage.¹⁰¹ The use of lighting would thus make Ansaldo and the

⁹⁵ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sigs. E2r-3r, H1r, and H4v.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. E4r.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. A1r.

⁹⁸ Martin White, *Renaissance Drama in Action* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), p. 273.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 273-4.

¹⁰⁰ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. E4r-F1r.

¹⁰¹ Francis Bacon, *The Essays, or Councils, Civil and Moral, of Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, Viscount St. Alban with a Table of the Colours of Good and Evil, and a Discourse of the Wisdom of the Ancients: to this Edition is Added the Character of Queen Elizabeth, Never Before Published in English* (London, 1696), Wing B296, sig. H4v; Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. E4r.

shirt the visual focal points of the scene, ensuring that playgoer attention remains on the shirt and demanding that they seek to interpret it.

Ansaldo's white shirt acts as a blank canvas onto which characters project their own desires. The young gallant Francisco sees 'a prodigious thing' whom he fears may be the ghost of his father, while the maidservant Violetta sees a 'sweet Gallant' and a potential sexual partner for her mistress, Philippa.¹⁰² Berggren perceives Ansaldo as being 'shorn of all outward marks of identity', viewing him as 'genderless' and 'an image of the unbound self as moral being, subject to no constraints of role but an impersonal service of the good'.¹⁰³ She argues that the other characters regard Ansaldo as a moral guide, his semi-nudity making him a 'cipher [whose] phantom presence awakens the distraught consciences of Middleton's prospective sinners.'¹⁰⁴ Attending to the many possible meanings of a linen shirt similarly suggests that Ansaldo is indecipherable. Yet this is not because he has all outward marks of identity shorn, as Berggren claims; rather, this section argues that the linen shirt offers *too many* indicators of identity, confusing any attempts to interpret his character. Middleton continually challenges spectators to doubt the symbolic meaning of costume in *The Widow*, a challenge that is reinforced by Violetta and Francisco's sartorially informed interpretations, or misinterpretations, of Ansaldo's character.

Berggren's analysis of Ansaldo – that he is 'an image of the unbound self as moral being, subject to no constraints of role but an impersonal service of the good' – is similar to the interpretation of the Field portrait as a reflection of his moral virtue.¹⁰⁵ In Berggren's reading, Ansaldo's white shirt demonstrates his inner virtue, its

¹⁰² Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. E4v and sig. F1r.

¹⁰³ Berggren, p. 391 and p. 393.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

cleanliness acting as a 'self-evident signifier [...] of what lay within: a purity of not merely body but of spirit'.¹⁰⁶ Looking beneath the shirt further legitimises this reading of Ansaldo as honest: the discovery of the player's body (its aspect more visible beneath a shirt than it would be under the tailored form of seventeenth century fashions) and the character's apparently being male implies that the body beneath the shirt should be taken as legitimate. The real body is synonymous with the performed body.

Yet, Middleton warns against this interpretation. Ansaldo worries that 'everyone will fear or doubt me now' and, when describing Ansaldo to her mistress, Violetta briefly questions whether his garment was a shirt in a moment not dissimilar to that in *More Dissemblers*:¹⁰⁷

The slaves had stript him to th'very shirt Mistris,
I think it was a shirt, I know not well,
For Gallants wear both [shirts and smocks] now adayes.¹⁰⁸

Violetta's uncertainty regarding Ansaldo's shirt is demonstrative of the unfixed nature of costume in *The Widow* and the unfixed nature of Ansaldo's gender presentation. Violetta foreshadows the discovery of Ansaldo's gendered disguise by wondering if it is a shirt or a smock, but her acknowledgement that '[g]allants wear both now adayes' functions to obscure the disguise further by identifying this item of clothing as non-gendered. Where a garment with a more fixed gendered meaning – a farthingale or a codpiece, for instance – offers a clear symbol of gender, the cultural degendering of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 308.

¹⁰⁷ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. E4r; Middleton, 'More Dissemblers', sigs. C1v-2r.

¹⁰⁸ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. F1v.

the smock enables Middleton to continue to hide Ansaldo's disguise even while displaying it outright.

Violetta's uncertainty regarding the construction of the undergarment (a straight cut shirt or a gored smock) reflects Francisco's fearful reaction to Ansaldo:

'Life, what should that be? a prodigious thing
Stands just as I should enter, in that shape too,
Which alwaies appears terrible.
What ere it be, it is made strong against me
By my ill purpose.¹⁰⁹

Francisco's language characterises Ansaldo as indecipherable: he repeatedly questions 'what' Ansaldo is and refers to him as 'a prodigious' – unnatural – 'thing'. He dehumanises Ansaldo, using neutral pronouns ('it') and nouns ('thing') to analyse Ansaldo as a material object. Yet, his mention of '*that* shape too,/ Which *alwaies* appears terrible' and his later wonderings, 'may't not be the spirit of my Father' or a 'wicked mans own shadow', suggest that Francisco recognises the linen shirt but perceives it to be a symbol of ghostliness.¹¹⁰

Francisco's analysis of Ansaldo's shirt is embedded in the theatrical representation of linen on stage. Known for its use covering bodies to ready them for burial, linen and linen shirts were frequently used to depict death or indicate near-death or ghostliness on the stage: in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, Languabeau Snuffe '[p]ulles out a sheete, a haire, and a beard' to be taken for 'the Ghost of olde

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., sig. E4v.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., sig. E4v.

Monferrers'.¹¹¹ Likewise, when Henry IV roams the halls in his nightgown in *2 Henry IV* and Lady Macbeth sleepwalks in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (KM, 1606-11), the linen nightwear is reminiscent of the linen shrouds of the buried, discussed above (pp. 121-2), reflecting their close proximities to death. We can thus see Francisco as a parody of the long line of characters who are haunted for their moral wrongs when he interprets Ansaldo's shirt as a signifier of ghostliness; these characters include, most famously, Macbeth's haunting by Banquo in *Macbeth*, Brutus' haunting by Caesar in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (LCM, 1599), and the Lady's haunting of her murderer, the Tyrant, in Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* (KM, 1611). On the somewhat more ridiculous end, we can include *The Atheist's Tragedy*, in which (alongside multiple scenes involving 'real' ghosts) 'Charlemont rises in the [ghost] disguise and frights D'amville away' to 'redeeme [Castabella] from the arme of lust'.¹¹² Francisco's interpretation of Ansaldo as a ghost is therefore related to his own concerns about committing a moral wrongdoing by having an affair with Philippa. Seeing the ghostly figure of Ansaldo means Ferdinand 'dare not' commit 'his pleasant sin' for fear of 'the sting' that will follow.¹¹³

Where Francisco's interpretation of Ansaldo's shirt leads him to forgo the infidelity he was about to commit, in the case of Violetta, it simply spurs her on more. Upon seeing Ansaldo in his shirt, Violetta's immediate response is sexual, and she focusses on Ansaldo's body and semi-nudity. As with the Field portrait, which Cooper suggests may be for a 'private audience: perhaps a personal patron or an intimate friend', there is a clear correlation between Ansaldo's shirt and sensuality.¹¹⁴ Violetta

¹¹¹ Cyril Tournear, *The Atheist's Tragedie: Or, The Honest Man's Revenge* (London, 1612), STC 24147, sig. H4r.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, sig. I2r.

¹¹³ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sigs. E4v-F1r.

¹¹⁴ Cooper, p. 185.

focusses on Ansaldo's body, beauty, and semi-nudity to encourage interest from Philippa:

Viol[etta]. I've often heard you say, ye'ad rather have
A wise man in his shirt, than a Fool featherd,
And now fortune has sent you one, a sweet young gentleman,
Rob'd ev'n to nothing, but what first he brought with him,
The slaves had stript him to th'very shirt Mistris,
I think it was a shirt, I know not well,
For Gallants wear both [shirts and smocks] now adayes.

Phil[ippa]. This is strange.

Viol. But for a face, a hand, and as much skin
As I durst look upon, hee's a most sweet one.¹¹⁵

Violetta focusses on the semi-nude body that the shirt uncovers, or at least as much of it as she 'durst look upon'. She is dismissive about the shirt to the extent that she cannot recall if he wore a shirt or a smock, but her attraction to Ansaldo is intrinsically tied to the garment, since she worries that the clothing that she has loaned Ansaldo will 'spoil him'.¹¹⁶ The shirt ensures that Ansaldo's player is naked in a controlled setting, allowing Middleton to include Violetta's excitement and engagement with Ansaldo's 'nudity', sexualising the character without entirely exposing the player to the audience. Violetta therefore engages with the early modern association between linens and nudity by sexualising Ansaldo through frequent reference to his skin and shirt.

¹¹⁵ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. F1v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. F1v.

However, it is not only the exposure of Ansaldo's body that interests Violetta: it is also his 'sweet[ness]'.¹¹⁷ Violetta notes that Ansaldo's desirability lies in his cleanliness and virtue and her recurrent adjective for Ansaldo, 'sweet', relates to the relationship between cleanliness and purity. North notes that 'sweet' was 'the ubiquitous adjective for anything that smelt clean. "Sweet and clean" is the expression that appears repeatedly to describe the desired state of not only bodies and clothing, but also air and houses.'¹¹⁸ Building on North's observation, this 'sweetness' or cleanliness of Ansaldo's is precisely what makes him 'desired' by Violetta. By representing his inner purity, Ansaldo's white shirt serves as an indication of his physical purity. Violetta's reference to his nakedness at birth, 'nothing, but what he first brought with him', exemplifies the desirability of his purity by subtly acknowledging his virginity – a trait shared with Philippa's previous sexual interest, Francisco.¹¹⁹ This association between Ansaldo's sweetness and Violetta and Philippa's attraction to him is further demonstrated when we consider that the word 'sweet' often had erotic connotations, due to the relationship between eroticism and the sense of taste that Simon Smith has explored with reference to 'sweet' music and the senses.¹²⁰ Violetta views Ansaldo's shirt erotically, consistently using suggestive and sex-adjacent language to describe him. Although Violetta's focus on Ansaldo's body suggests a dismissiveness of the shirt, her focus on Ansaldo's nudity and the sexualisation of his virtue are tied to the meanings elicited from the shirt and the 'sweetness' with which it is imbued.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., sig. F1v.

¹¹⁸ North, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. F1v and sig. I2r.

¹²⁰ Simon Smith, 'A Taste of "Sweet Music": Writing (Through) the Senses in Early Modern England', in *Literature and the Senses*, ed. by Annette Kern-Stähler and Elizabeth Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023), pp. 302-19.

Ansaldo worries that 'all will doubt [him] now' due to the relationship between shirts and indecency. Upon seeing Ansaldo in his shirt, however, Violetta notes that he is a 'sweet young gentleman', demonstrating some meanings that the audience can infer from these clean linens: from 'clean' to 'attractive' to 'morally good' to erotically exciting.¹²¹ Violetta's description of Ansaldo as 'sweet' draws attention to his physical appearance – the player is attractive and the linen shirt clean.¹²² Yet, while Violetta's analysis of Ansaldo is largely positive, we have seen that Francisco instead fears that Ansaldo may be the ghost of his father sent to castigate him for his attempted affair with Philippa, the white linen and ethereal glow reflecting the imagery of ghosts. Middleton layers the various meanings that linen had in the seventeenth century, each interpretation of Ansaldo's character being reliant on each character's personal understandings of linen.

How might a playgoer respond to Ansaldo in his linen shirt? Would they feel an empathetic chill when they see Ansaldo enter the darkened stage in the thin material? A shudder of fear at his ethereality, like Francisco? Or perhaps even a shiver of attraction like that of Violetta? The multiple potential interpretations of linen in turn complicate interpretations of Ansaldo, foregrounding the uncertainty of sartorial signs on the stage. Ansaldo could be a figure of virtue, sexuality, terror, or any mixture of the three. The spectators are encouraged to think of Ansaldo beyond the confines of costume: the linen shirt should indicate potential character traits, but other characters' misinterpretations suggest that Ansaldo's costume and outward presentation are not accurate reflections of his character. Indeed, Ansaldo is continually being re-costumed and verbally transformed to reflect the desires of the characters and assumptions of

¹²¹ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. F1v.

¹²² *Ibid.*, sig. F1v.

the audience. The shirt presents multiple potential meanings, meaning that the depiction of it and Ansaldo lack any one fixed meaning. By including contrasting analyses of Ansaldo and his linen shirt, Middleton demonstrates how costume can misrepresent a character: the meanings imbued in the linen shirt are integral to the crafting of other characters' analyses of Ansaldo, but that they create an accurate image of Ansaldo's character is not the case.

v. Conclusion

The original practice costume archive at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre separates the 2002 *Twelfth Night* costumes for Cesario into two boxes: 'Cesario 1' and 'Cesario 2'. 'Cesario 1' is the clothing in which Michael Brown first appeared in I.i, including a green satin dress, a bodice, two sets of blackwork embroidered cuffs and collars, a pair of wool socks, and a plain, white linen smock with a simple lace trim on the collar. 'Cesario 2' meanwhile, contains the Cesario disguise worn by Brown from I.iii onwards – the white and black doublet, breeches, and cape, a set of cream stockings with black trim, two black shoes with black satin ribbon, and two ribbons. Missing from 'Cesario 2', however, is a man's shirt. Brown's rehearsal notes suggest that the smock in 'Cesario 1' was worn throughout the production. The lack of a shirt offers an intriguing thought experiment: how does our understanding of *Twelfth Night* change if we imagine Viola's smock beneath Cesario's clothing? Did the smock's low neckline mean that Brown was more aware of the texture of the doublet's lining than Rhys Meredith was in Sebastian's high-necked shirt? Was the smock harder to tuck into breeches than the shirt? Was it uncomfortable? Itchy? Is this how his 'Cesario' retained some of 'Viola'? Could he better embody Cesario's feelings of 'monstrousness' when wearing a woman's smock and a man's doublet? Or was the silk lining of the doublet pleasant

against the skin? Did the feeling add an element of sensuality to his sexually charged interactions with Orsino and Olivia? Does his wearing a smock rather than a shirt really matter from the perspective of a modern audience?

While the feel of the smock would have had a very real impact on the subtleties of Brown's performance, the Globe's costuming decision is unlikely to have shaped how audiences understood Cesario in the early twenty-first century. In fact, the smock was shown to the audience: the Globe 'removed the panels at the front of the tiring house so that the audience can see the actors getting into their costumes' and Brown recalls going to the tiring house 'in my smock (a long vest) and stockings' before performances.¹²³ Yet, to see and be aware of the smock beneath the doublet is unlikely to have significantly impacted how a modern audience without knowledge of the sartorial significance of clothing understood the disguise – even Brown himself simply thinks of it as 'a long vest'.¹²⁴ For an early modern audience, in contrast, this knowledge would have had a lasting impact on their interpretation of Viola and the extent to which she retains her female gender identity.

By analysing the various interpretations of Ansaldo's shirt, this chapter has shown how Middleton purposefully includes multiple interpretations of Ansaldo's linens to raise doubt regarding the relationship between costume and character: Ansaldo's shirt is not accurately interpreted by the characters on stage, and the gentleman's clothing in which he first appears is not an accurate reflection of his gender either. The spectators are thus encouraged to think of Ansaldo beyond the confines of costume: the linen shirt should indicate potential character traits, but other characters'

¹²³ Michael Brown, 'Rehearsal Notes 4', *GlobeLink Adopt an Actor 2002*, Shakespeare's Globe Archive, GB 3316 SGT/ED/LRN/2/15/3, p. 1.

¹²⁴ Shakespeare's Globe Archive, SGT/ED/LRN/2/15/3, p. 1.

misinterpretations suggest that Ansaldo's costume and outward presentation may not be accurate reflections of his character. This re-evaluation of Ansaldo and the implicit meanings of his disguises is only possible by reading the play while considering performance materials and other performed bodies in tandem. A recognition of clothing as having unfixed meaning can ultimately lead to a more nuanced understanding of disguise and character on the early modern stage. In early modern England, no one playgoer would have interpreted a play or character in precisely the same way, and by broadening our understanding of the sartorial significance of clothing we can better recognise the heterogenous nature of an early modern theatre audience, and the complexities and ambiguities of the plays written for them.

CHAPTER III

'Run your beard into a peak of twenty!': age prosthetics as gendered disguise

'Neither will I meddle with our varietie of beards, Beards of which some are shaven from the chin like those of Turks, not a few cut short like to the beard of marques Otto, some made round like a rubbing brush, other with a pique de vant (O fine fashion!) or now and then suffered to grow long, the barbers being growen to be so cunning in this behalfe as the tailors. And therefore if a man have a leane and streight face, a marquesse Otttons cut will make it broad and large; if it be platter like, a long slender beard will make it seeme the narrower; if he be wesell becked, then much heare left on the cheekes will make the owner looke big like a bowdled hen, and so grim as a goose'¹ (Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1587).

i. Introduction

The terms 'neckbeard', 'hipster beard', and 'pornstache' hold very particular resonances to many twenty-first century readers. The scraggle of wiry hair that is absent on the cheeks but descends from chin to throat; the large, thick, and well-groomed beard so often capped with a stylised twirled moustache; the thick chevron shaped moustache famously worn by actor Tom Selleck but notorious for its role in adult films of the 1970s: each form of facial hair equates to a particular type of masculinity. In particular, the neckbeard has developed into a shorthand for describing a certain type of man, whether he wears the style or not:

Neckbeard is a pejorative term used to describe an overweight male Internet user who [...] is defined by his social peculiarities. More than just social awkwardness, however, such a character is often malicious online, engaged in trolling and other antisocial behaviour. Obesity, unkemptness, bad skin, a lack

¹ Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles Comprising 1 the Description and Historie of England, 2 the Description and Historie of Ireland, 3 the Description and Historie of Scotland* (London, 1587), STC 13569, p. 171.

of personal hygiene, junk food consumption, and misogyny are attributes commonly associated with [the neckbeard].²

So much is encapsulated by this term – a man’s health, diet, social skills – all defined by his facial hair. To refer to a man as a ‘neckbeard’ is not simply to diminish his masculinity, but his entire character.

Attached to and stemming from the body, facial hair has a long history of defining a man’s public image. In seventeenth-century England, it was a clear signifier of a man’s social and economic position. Different styles of beard were reflective of different models of manhood, and writings about beards framed the beard’s external portrayal of masculinity as an intrinsic link to a man’s constitution. As Eleanor Rycroft explains in *Facial Hair and the Performance of Early Modern Masculinity* (2020), ‘facial hair register[ed] intra- as well as inter-gender differentiation among men, and [was] perceived to be connected to a biological modality prior to gender performance’: it not only distinguished men from boys and women, but also provided insight into a man’s humoral state and social status.³ Yet despite, or perhaps because of, the use of the

² Lauren Rosewarne, *Cyberbullies, Cyberactivists, Cyberpredators: Film, TV, and Internet Stereotypes* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 43.

³ Eleanor Rycroft, *Facial Hair and the Performance of Early Modern Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2020), p. 12. Early modern masculinity studies, a sub-field of gender studies, has had an excitement of interest in the last twenty years, see: Coppélia Kahn, *Man’s Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1981); Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour Sex and Marriage* (London: Routledge, 1999); Bruce Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robin Headlam Wells, *Shakespeare on Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Queer Masculinities, 1550-1800: Sitting Same-Sex Desire in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Katherine O’Donnell and Michael O’Rourke (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Will Fisher, ‘The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54.1 (2001), pp. 155–8; Jennifer A. Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Lisa Celovsky, ‘Early Modern Masculinities and “The Faerie Queene”’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 35 (2005), 210-47; Fisher, ‘Staging the beard: masculinity in early modern culture’ in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 230-57; Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Todd W. Reeser, *Moderating Masculinity in Early Modern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Keith M. Botelho, *Renaissance Earwitnesses: Rumor and Early Modern*

beard to distinguish between types of masculinity, the fashioning of beards led to contention: if facial hair was perceived to be offering a 'biological' representation of one's masculine identity, then to fashion one's beard – to change from one style to another – was to depict a falsified version of oneself.

In the epigraph to this chapter, Raphael Holinshed expresses concerns about barbers and beard fashioning. These concerns centre on facial hair's ability to alter the shape of a man's face, a 'marquesse Ottons cut' – an unknown cut perhaps in the style of Holy Roman Emperor, Otto IV – being able to make a 'leane and straight face' seem 'broad and large', for example.⁴ Not only could facial hair style signify character, then, but it also seemingly altered facial composition: barbers become 'cunning' as beard fashioning provided the potential to deceive and disguise.⁵ Holinshed's comparison between barbers and tailors associates facial hair with the clothing discussed in Chapter Two: to restyle one's beard could obscure and confuse the public perception of a person as much as could a change of clothing. However, it is not only the use of beard fashioning to deceive that outrages Holinshed. His deprecatory comment about the pique de vants (a beard shaped into a long point, otherwise known as a 'stiletto beard'), 'O fine fashion!', references the well-documented distaste for materialistic gallants, while his comparison of a round beard to 'a rubbing brush' used for household cleaning, associates the style with feminine household tasks.⁶ Holinshed depicts beard fashioning as deceptive and emasculating, demonstrating how facial hair informed perceptions of gender – and how integral it was to the

Masculinity (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Mark Albert Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); *Governing Masculinities in the Early Modern Period: Regulating Selves and Others*, ed. by Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁴ Holinshed, p. 171.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171; 'rubbing brush (n.)', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4812042094>>.

performance of masculinity on stage. An understanding of facial hair as fundamental to the construction of masculine identities on stage underpins this chapter's account of another crucial disguise material in the King's Men's repertory: false beards.

The first section of this chapter considers the importance of the beard in seventeenth century London, drawing on medical pamphlets, books of witticisms, and portraits to determine the then-relationship between beardedness and masculinity. With reference to Will Fisher's *Materialising Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (2006), Jennifer A. Low's *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (2003), Alexandra Shepard's *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (2006), and Rycroft's *Facial Hair*, this section explores how the mutability of beards illuminates the mutability of gender presentation. It thus expands on Chapter Two by arguing that, if beardedness and beardlessness offer insight into the gender nuances of early modern England, their use in staged disguise should be considered a form of gendered disguise. It considers types of beards and the masculine image with which they are associated, alongside references to false beards and shaving, to argue that the concerns tracked in this section regarding beards and self-fashioning show beards to be associated with disguise not simply because they obscure facial features, but because of their capacity to perform entire personas, as well.

The second section discusses the use of false beards throughout the King's Men's repertory alongside surviving portraits of the King's Men's players and playwrights to consider the role of the beard in constructing masculinity on- and off-stage. Crucially, the need for different styles of facial hair in the theatre, particularly in disguise plays, may have required players to maintain the short beards seen in their portraits. Reference to anti-theatrical pamphlets and their arguments regarding the

'effeminacy' of the theatre alongside analysis of portraits shows how facial hair functioned to corroborate and contradict anti-theatricalist arguments, simultaneously.⁷ This section argues that the malleability required by disguise, and thus the players' maintaining short beards, materially substantiated the claims of anti-theatricalists regarding the 'effeminacy' of playing.

The final section draws these discussions together with a close reading of John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Double Marriage* (1620-3), III.i, in which Sesse – an elderly sea captain – disguises himself by shaving. This scene demonstrates how playwrights used false beards in their plays with careful attention to their impact on the growth of players' facial hair. Despite the well-documented relationship between masculinity and beardedness, scholarship has yet to consider how false beard disguises are used to construct and deconstruct intra-gender differentiation. The reading of this scene through the gendered aspects of facial hair reveals the false beard to be constructing a disguise identity – an alternate gender identity – rather than merely obscuring the visage beneath.

This thesis has so far focussed on the costumes and wigs used in disguise, and will go on to explore cosmetics and props, all stage items that are easily alterable and removable with little to no impact on the player himself. By focussing on false beards and 'shaving' scenes, however, this chapter shows how disguise performance can impact a player off-stage. These scenes rely on the player having shaved his actual beard in order to 'shave' his false one: he emasculates himself off-stage for the sake of his character's emasculation on-stage. This chapter follows Fisher's argument that 'boy' was perceived as an alternate gender to 'man' and 'woman' to show that, while

⁷ William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge, Or, Actors Tragædie, Divided into Two Parts*. (London, 1633), STC 20464, sig. 3G3v.

a shaven character is emasculated by the removal of his beard, he is not ‘feminised’ but instead ‘boyed’.⁸ It thus extends Chapter Two’s claims by arguing that the use of a false beard to disguise a character’s age was another form of gendered disguise. Recognition of intra-gender differentiation between forms of masculinity alongside the inter-gender differentiation in female-to-male and male-to-female gendered disguises shows the nuanced understanding of gender in early modern England.

ii. ‘Shaving their beards, and becoming effeminate in their speech’: facial hair and masculine image

Fisher states that ‘[f]acial hair often conferred masculinity during the Renaissance: the beard made the man’.⁹ Beards were intrinsically linked to masculinity in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries, ‘the Learned and Famous’ Italian philosopher Giovanni Francesco Loredano going so far as to state that a man is ‘almost unworthy the name of man, that hath no beard’.¹⁰ The relationship between beards and masculinity has been well documented in scholarship: Fisher, Rycroft, and Mark Albert Johnson have all offered detailed studies on the beard as a marker of different forms of male identities, much of which is informed by Bruce R. Smith’s *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (2000). Likewise, work on stage properties, playing company repertoires, and gender performance often consider the beard’s use to distinguish character.¹¹

⁸ Will Fisher, ‘The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54.1 (2001), pp. 155–87 (p.155).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁰ Giovanni Francesco Loredano, *Academical Discourses upon Several Choice and Pleasant Subjects*, trans. by J B (London, 1664), sig. A1r, D5v.

¹¹ See: Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

That beards were integral to masculine image and beardlessness was effeminate or emasculating was a common belief throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but what did it mean to be 'effeminate' because of one's beard? Rather than considering masculinity and effeminacy in binary terms, as scholarship so often has, this section explores how the multiple modes of masculinity that were indicated by beards instead speak to the ambiguity of gender performance outlined in Chapter Two. As Shepard has demonstrated, '[t]o discern the full complexity of the working of gender in any society we need to be as aware of the gender differences *within* each sex as of those *between* them.'¹² This section discusses the importance of facial hair in differentiating and determining the various stages and types of masculinity in late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth century England. First, I explore the ways in which beards were perceived to determine status in early modern Puritanical tracts and natural history writings (a contextual background that will also be important for the chapter's later exploration of facial hair in theatrical disguise). I then consider the role of facial hair in constructing nationalist ideals of masculinity, with reference to two portraits of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham from 1616 to 1628. I discuss the different types of facial hair style and the masculine identities associated with them to demonstrate the range of ways that facial hair could be used to influence a viewer's perception of a person. Consideration of works that reference types of beards, their implicit meanings, and the propriety they signified, offers insight into the use of false beards and what it meant to wear a beard that was not 'natural'.¹³

¹² Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 2.

¹³ Thomas Hill, *A Pleasant History Declaring the Whole Art of Physiognomy Orderly Uttering All the Speciall Parts of Man, From the Head to the Foot* (London, 1613), STC 13483, sig. 2G3v.

Fisher has noted that, of the three-hundred-and-fifty surviving Tudor portraits of men collated by Roy Strong, there are 'over three-hundred-and-twenty in which the sitter is depicted with facial hair', suggesting that facial hair's ubiquity transformed it into a type of social currency, providing its wearer/grower with social status through apparent indication of virility.¹⁴ This social currency was embedded in patriarchal ideas of the masculine ideal. As Fisher states,

[i]nsofar as early modern writers [...] reiterate the common fantasy that facial hair is bipolarly arranged (that 'men are lone bearded' and 'every female beardless doth remaine'), they can be said to participate in the ideological process whereby beards are made to materialize sexual difference.¹⁵

The 'common fantasy' that Fisher refers to can be found across early modern literature that relates to facial hair, particularly in the works of writers who view themselves as anthropologists like John Bulwer or Sir Francis Bacon. In *The Historie of Life and Death* (1638), Bacon offers a few 'divers causes' as to why the lives of 'living Creaturer[s]' are of differing lengths, number nine of which is that '[s]low comming to perfection, both for Growth and ripenes, signifies long life in al creatures, for teeth, private haire, and a Beard, are degrees of maturity or ripeness preceding Manhood'.¹⁶ For Bacon, while facial hair does not indicate full maturity, its absence signifies the person's inability to surmount the 'degrees of maturity'.¹⁷ Rycroft understands from Bacon's treatise that '[b]oys' beardlessness may have connected them to discourses of adult male beardedness, but both boys' masculinity and that of adult men was

¹⁴ Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard', p. 158; Roy Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 2 vols (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1969), II.

¹⁵ Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard', p. 166

¹⁶ Francis Bacon, *The Historie of Life and Death with Observations Naturall and Experimentall for the Prolonging of Life* (London, 1638), STC 1157, sigs. C10v, D9r-v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. D9v.

subject to distinct sets of assumptions, discursive constructions, and cultural values'.¹⁸ Rycroft's reading of Bacon positions boys as a separate gender from adult men, developing from Fisher's argument that 'boy actors would have been as much in "drag" when playing the parts of men as when playing the parts of women.'¹⁹ The beard's involvement in constructing identity was, as this chapter will show, akin to the use of gendered clothing in constructing gendered disguise: a social construction perceived to be biologically definitive.

Though the beard was associated with adult masculinity, that is not to say that *any* beard was held as a generic symbol of idealised masculinity. There was much concern regarding the fashioning of beards, particularly when adopting non-English fashions. In *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (1558, English trans. 1658), Dutch Physician Levinus Lemnius implores

all men [to] take notice that oft-times it is not good for men in perfect health to have their Beards and hair shaved close to their skins, or to have their heads long washed. For too much use of it weakens the forces, and makes men effeminate and unmanly; also it resolves and extenuates the spirits and native heat, and draws from the heart great part of boldnesse and courage in undergoing dangers, though sometimes to rub the head with some coorse cloath, to stroke the beard, and to soke it with some moist abstergent matter, is good.²⁰

Lemnius' argument relies on the idea that hair and facial hair in its natural form reflects a man's innate masculinity. Rycroft shows that Lemnius' reference to the 'spirits and native heat' follows an Aristotelian conception of bodily make-up, in which beards are

¹⁸ Rycroft, p. 23.

¹⁹ Fisher, *Materializing Gender*, p. 87.

²⁰ Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles of Nature* (London, 1658), Wing L1044, sig. 2N1r.

viewed as 'an excremental by-product of the manufacture of semen in the testes'.²¹

The beard thus embodied a man's virility; the fashioning or shaving of it at best disguised his inherent masculinity, and at worst emasculated him altogether.

Lemnius is also concerned with the potential for men to become 'effeminate and unmanly' by shaving, a correlation on which early modern disguise drama often capitalised. Gendered disguise plays like *Twelfth Night* (LCM, 1600-2) and *Philaster* (KM, 1609-12), comment on the perceived masculinity of facial hair and the emasculation of being perceived as having a lack. Bulwer states that '[s]having the Chin is justly accounted a note of Effeminacy, flagitious, as appears in Eunuchs, who are [...] smooth and produce not a Beard, the sign of virility, and therein not men'.²² Thus, when Viola chooses to disguise herself as 'an Eunuch' to serve Duke Orsino, the eunuch disguise would enable the player of women's roles to maintain a 'smooth' lip (TLN 271), as illustrated by Feste's prayer that 'Jove [would] send [Cesario] a beard' (TLN 1209-10). Viola's eunuch disguise suggests that beardlessness was as much an indicator of gender as facial hair: its use to depict boys and eunuchs was an early modern shorthand for a queer gender identity, meaning facial hair could be integral to the performance of gendered disguise. Eunuchs appear with greater frequency in English drama of the late 1620s: Lodowick Carlell's *The Famous Tragedy of Osmond The Great Turk* (KM, 1622), John Stephens' *Cinthia's Revenge* (? , 1613), and William Hemings' *The Fatal Contract* (KM, 1629-38) all depict characters in servile court positions or acting as messengers who are described as 'eunuch' in the speech

²¹ Rycroft, p. 41.

²² John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: man transform'd: or, the artificiall changling historically presented, in the mad and cruell gallantry, foolish bravery, ridiculous beauty, filthy finenesse, and loathsome loveliness of most nations, fashioning and altering their bodies from the mould intended by nature; with figures of those transfigurations. To which artificiall and affected deformations are added, all the native and nationall monstrosities that have appeared to disfigure the humane fabrick. With a vindication of the regular beauty and honesty of nature. And an appendix of the pedigree of the English gallant.* (London, 1653), Wing B5461, sig. 2D4v.

prefixes and *dramatis personae* but are only referred to as such in dialogue *after* their initial appearances. This points to a visual shorthand for stage eunuchs, distinguishing them from other servants, and *Twelfth Night* suggests this was beardlessness. If Cesario is 'an Eunuch', Shakespeare is not simply excusing the player's lack of a beard, but rather using its lack to depict gendered disguise beyond the simple binary of 'cross-dressing'.

Eunuchs were often depicted as servants, indicating that there was a further hierarchy of power between the bearded and the beardless beyond distinctions of age or gender. The supposed power implied by facial hair appears to have been well exploited: following an assault on tavern staff and the theft of the tavern's beer by Cambridge students in 1593, the ensuing investigation revealed the perpetrators had disguised themselves with false beards 'like players berds'.²³ In his study of masculinity in early English drama, Christopher Marlow writes that this incident 'represent[ed] attempts by young men to assert the power that their culture promises they will inherit one day, but not yet'.²⁴ The students' use of beards to disguise themselves adds depth to Marlow's argument. The attempt to assert dominance over the tavern in their own youth is mirrored in their falsifying maturity by the wearing of fake facial hair, the beards not only disguising their faces, but also depicting them as socially, economically, and sexually mature. That most of the workers were likely 'drawers' or 'tavern-boys' – that is, the tavern's apprentice tapsters and servants – whose beards would have been

²³ Christopher Marlow, *Performing Masculinity in English University Drama, 1598-1636* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 38.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

policed through systematic regulatory practices of apprentices that included the removal of facial hair, further positions the students as dominant.²⁵

The beard is unique among the material components of self-fashioning that this thesis considers in that it stems from the body rather than being applied to it, meaning that the wearer must be able to grow a beard in order to fashion it. Lemnius emphasises this bodily origin when cautioning his readers against having ‘their Beards and hair shaved close to their skins’, arguing that it is such ‘use’ of one’s beard and hair that ‘weakens the forces’.²⁶ Fisher terms beards as ‘prostheses’, items that are ‘integral to the subject’s sense of identity of self, and at the same time resolutely detachable or “auxiliary”’.²⁷ Certainly, this detachability fits with the false beards used and then discarded by the Cambridge students. Yet, as Fisher himself recognises, a real beard is a part of the body, complicating this detachability: ‘if facial hair was thus ideologically central in the construction of masculinity, it was also crucially prosthetic. In other words, hair both is and is not a part of the body.’²⁸ Where the false beards of the Cambridge students were able to contrive masculinity, any ‘use’ relating to the real beard is facilitated by the presumed masculinity that enabled that growth. Indeed, it is the physical manipulation and fashioning of the beard that Lemnius has in mind when warning his readers of ‘too much use’: employing and adapting the natural growth of facial hair to construct a specific mode of masculinity. Lemnius thus presents the fashioning of the beard as a way of disrupting innate masculinity. To fashion the beard

²⁵ David Ruiter, ‘Harry’s (in)human face’, in *Spiritual Shakespeares*, ed. by Ewan Fernie (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 50-72 (p. 52). The apprentice tavern worker is referenced in William Shakespeare, ‘The First Part of Henry the Fourth with the Life and Death of Henry Sirnamed Hot-Spurre’ (TLN 1016-1026); Thomas Jordan, *Tricks of Youth, or, The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon with the Humours of Woodstreet-compter a comedy, as it was publickly acted nineteen days together with extraordinary applause* (London, 1663), Wing J1067, sig. A4r; John Earle, *The Character of a Tavern with a Brief Draught of a Drawer* (London, 1675), Wing E87, sig. A2r.

²⁶ Lemnius, sig. 2N1r.

²⁷ Fisher, *Materializing Gender*, p. 26.

²⁸ Fisher, ‘The Renaissance Beard’, p. 168.

is to transform the beard into a prosthetic by 'detaching' (trimming) and shaping the natural growth.

Surviving writings appear confused about exactly what was regarded as a natural beard: though having '[b]eards and hair shaved close to their skins [...] makes men effeminate and unmanly', Germans, for instance, were deemed 'too indulgent' of their masculinity for having overgrown beards.²⁹ Indeed, nationalist English writers tended to problematise any beards that were not reflective of English fashions. Men were encouraged to fashion their beards in such a way as to emphasise their 'nature', but fears circulated regarding self-fashioning's potential to disrupt the beard's depiction of innate masculinity. Considering the ways in which different styles of facial hair symbolised different stages and types of male maturity, Rycroft compellingly argues that,

[t]he forms taken by head and facial hair fracture along the lines of age, occupation, and class, as well as gender, and so resonate with cultural meaning. Put simply, hair speaks. The treatment of facial hair registers intra- as well as inter-gender differentiation among men, and is able to convey differences between male identities particularly powerfully because, however artificially contrived, beards are perceived to be connected to a biological modality prior to gender performance, differentiating facial hair from external additions such as clothes, jewellery or cosmetics.³⁰

The many different beard styles acted as indicators of a man's socioeconomic status, from the 'spade beard' worn by soldiers, to the bushy 'round beard' of elder and religious men, to the 'stiletto beard' favoured by James I and his courtiers.³¹ Rather

²⁹ Lemnius, sig. 2N1r; Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, sig. 2F2v.

³⁰ Rycroft, p. 12.

³¹ Holinshed, p. 171.

than being a straightforward symbol of masculinity, facial hair mirrored a contrived patriarchal hierarchy that pitted forms of masculinity against one another.

Holinshed's distaste for barbers in this chapter's epigraph (a complaint absent from the 1577 chronicles), expresses a sentiment growing amongst pamphleteers in the 1580s, reflective of an increasing trade in beard paraphernalia and new beard fashioning trends.³² In *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), Philip Stubbes writes that barbers 'have invented such strange fashions of monstrous manners of cuttings, trimmings, shavings, and washings, that you would wonder to see'.³³ Writers concerned with barbers and the 'strange fashions' of facial hair argued that altering one's hair and facial hair was 'against the light of Nature', an argument ultimately motivated by fear of self-fashioning and falsified depictions of the self.³⁴ Attached to and stemming from the body, facial hair provided a supposed indicator of intrinsic masculinity, yet its potential for stylised self-fashioning might disrupt its ability to signify in this way. Barbers are depicted as 'cunning', which, while meaning 'skillful', also implies trickery and deception, tying beard fashioning to disguising.³⁵

Works discussing beardedness emphasise the importance of wearing one's beard 'properly', describing beards that do not fit the Anglicised ideal with derision without clearly determining that ideal. 'SCENE XII. Beard-haters.' of Bulwer's *Anthropometamorphosis* (1653) focusses on 'Beard-haters, or the opinion and practise of diverse Nations, concerning the naturall Ensigne of Manhood appearing

³² Rycroft, p. 9.

³³ Philip Stubbes, *The Second Part of the Anatomie of Abuses Containing the Display of Corruptions, with a Perfect Description of Such Imperfections, Blemishes and Abuses, as Now Reigning in Everie Degree, Require Reformation for Feare of Gods Vengeance to be Powred upon the People and Countrie, Without Speedie Repentance, and Conversion unto God: Made Dialogwise by Phillip Stubbes* (London, 1583), STC 23380, sig. G8r.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. G8v.

³⁵ Holinshed, p. 171; 'cunning (adj.), sense V.a.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/5483695451>>.

about the Mouth'.³⁶ Likewise, Holinshed derides foreign beard styles like the French style of 'pique de vant' (stiletto beard) and those that are 'shaven from the chin like those of Turks', and Stubbes complains about 'the French cut, another the Spanish cut, one the Dutch cut, another the Italian'.³⁷ Holinshed's, Bulwer's, and Stubbes' complaints suggest that the fashioning of facial hair was particularly concerning for those seeking to prioritise and promote English beards as the nationalist ideal.

Facial hair was an indispensable accessory for members of the military, as exemplified by the beard style referred to as a 'captain's beard', worn by Captain Face in Jonson's *The Alchemist* (KM, 1611).³⁸ Beardedness indicated a man's combat ability, as explored by Jennifer A. Low in *Manhood and the Duel* (2003). Through a discussion of emasculating loss in combat, Low suggests 'two [alternative] ways of conceiving manhood: manliness in opposition to womanliness and manliness in opposition to boyishness'.³⁹ She argues that, since the losing combatant was emasculated not by being feminised, but 'boyed', such loss in combat was understood in terms of an age-based gender difference between man and boy rather than through the man-woman gender binary more familiar to us today.⁴⁰ The loser is metaphorically returned to a pre-pubescent (and pre-bearded) state, while the winner's own masculinity is secured, as implied by the verb 'bearded' meaning 'to defy, defeat, affront'.⁴¹ Furthermore, that the captain's beard is named for a military title holds obvious resonances with early modern martial masculinity, but the 'stiletto beard' – named for the sharp, stiletto dagger with which it held visual similarities – is likewise

³⁶ Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, sig. 2D2r

³⁷ Stubbes, *Second Part of Anatomie*, sig. G8v; Holinshed, p. 171.

³⁸ Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (London, 1612), STC 14755, sig. L1v.

³⁹ Jennifer A. Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 71.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁴¹ 'bearded (v.), sense III', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4160046703>>.

suggestive of the relationship between the external symbol of manhood (the beard) and success in combat as epitomising that masculinity. Following Fisher's argument that 'boy' is an alternative gender to 'man', the difference between beardedness and beardlessness can thus be understood as a gender distinction that opposes masculinity to femininity *and* manliness to boyishness.



Fig 3.1 George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Studio of William Larkin, c.1616. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 3840).



Fig 3.2 George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham and Lord High Admiral. Daniel Mytens, the Elder, c.1619. National Maritime Museum, London (BHC2583).

Surviving portraits of George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, from before and after his promotion to the military position of Lord High Admiral demonstrate the ways in which differing modes of masculine identity were communicated through the fashioning of beards. Villiers was Master of the Horse, Lord Lieutenant of Buckingham, Kent, and Middlesex, and Lord High Admiral of the English Navy, yet is primarily remembered for being King James' favourite. Comparison of the 1616 portrait of

Buckingham (fig. 3.1) and the 1619 portrait marking his promotion to Lord High Admiral (fig. 3.2) show how imagery functioned to alter the viewer's perception of his masculinity and his ability to lead. In the 1616 William Larkin portrait, Buckingham is surrounded by lavish, pink silks and wearing rich clothing. The shading emphasises Buckingham's legs, while his beardlessness emphasises his smooth complexion, arched brows, and red lips. Despite being 24, an age at which Bacon and Lemnius alike argue is well within the bounds of adult masculinity, Buckingham's lack of facial hair is suggestive of emasculated youth and the 'effeminate' aspect of which so many Puritan writers complained.⁴² His sword is likewise hidden behind his tassels and gown, suggesting the partial concealment of his masculinity.

The 1619 portrait by Daniel Mytens the elder, depicting Buckingham's ascension to Lord High Admiral (the ceremonial head of the Royal Navy) aged 27, partially mirrors the 1616 painting: the silk backdrop, pose, feathered hat, and white satin clothing common to portraits of gentry are retained. The clothing, lace collar, and sleeves appear to be the same in both portraits too, but, despite these similarities, there is a marked difference in Mytens's depiction of Buckingham compared to Larkin's. His eyes appear deeper-set and his brows straighter, his nose stronger, and, crucially, he is bearded. Buckingham's '[b]eard, the sign of virility', styled in stiletto or 'dagger' fashion in combination with his sword entangles Buckingham's ascension to military leader with symbols of militant male masculinity.⁴³ His arm rests on his sword (his hand is close enough to grab it) and it can be seen behind him on the left. The positioning of Buckingham's sword – almost horizontal rather than down at his side – is suggestive of virile masculinity on display, not hidden as in the 1616 portrait. The Buckingham

⁴² Bacon, *Life and Death*, sig. R8r-v; Lemnius, sig. 2O2r.

⁴³ Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, sig. 2D4v.

portraits thus offer insight into the gendered difference between bearded men and beardless youths – a difference that allowed boy players to perform femininity affectively and effectively, and adult players to play widely outside their age-range, as discussed further in the following section.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the beard's ability to indicate a man's social status and innate masculinity, the use of beards to construct masculine image was a source of contention: if facial hair was perceived as offering a 'true' representation of one's masculinity, then to fashion one's beard was to depict a falsified representation of one's masculinity or an emasculated version of oneself. Early modern writers do not seem to recognise the inconsistency between arguing that cutting one's beard 'makes men effeminate and unmanly', and suggesting that excessive beard length is 'too indulgent'.⁴⁴ 'Effeminate' as an adjective comes from the Latin '*effeminatus*', meaning to 'imitate a woman in appearance or behaviours'.⁴⁵ The verb to 'effeminate', meanwhile, comes from '*effeminare*', meaning to deprive one of male characteristics, emasculate, to destroy the manly vigour of, to unman'.⁴⁶

The Jacobean writer of the body and natural history, Thomas Hill, attempts to explain why those who style their beards and those with naturally unkempt or unstylish beards are perceived as lesser than those whose beards grow neatly in his *Pleasant History Declaring the Whole Art of Physiognomy Orderly Uttering all the Special Parts of Man, from the Head to the Foot* (1613). He distinguishes between attractive and unattractive beards, suggesting that much of the argument surrounding beards and

⁴⁴ Lemnius; Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis*, sig. 2F2v.

⁴⁵ For a reading of theatrical effeminacy that considers this binary understanding of effeminacy, see Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization 1579-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴⁶ 'effeminate (v.)', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8877376985>>.

men's masculinity is related to the external observer perceiving the bearded subject as aesthetically pleasing:

The beard decerned comly, and well fashioned, doth innuate [insinuate] such a creature to be of a good nature, of reasonable conditions, congruent to all things and manured after his bringing up. Contrariwise judge of those which have the bearde not seemely formed, or evill fashioned in the length, as appear thin [sic: potentially 'appeareth in'] the gelded persons, which after these are deprived of their genitors [sic], be then greatly changed from the nature of men, into the condition of women.⁴⁷

Hill suggests that those who have 'evill fashioned' their beards are 'gelded' or castrated, the cutting of their beards acting as a form of emasculation. His discussion of 'the gelded persons' refers to eunuchs, who are viewed as existing outside of the imposed gender binary, suggesting that to not suit a beard was perceived as being equally emasculating to not being able to grow a beard (see above, pp. 163-4). 'Condition' in early modern England could mean 'nature, character, quality', but it also meant 'a particular mode of being of a person or thing; state of being'.⁴⁸ A 'condition' or 'state' of being implies temporariness, as opposed to the permanence of 'nature'. Thus, Hill's argument that the manly 'nature' turns into a womanly 'condition' implies that the facial hair fashioner is 'imitating' a woman and 'depriv[ing]' himself of 'male characteristics' like the natural beard. The trimmed beard becomes a sign of gender ambiguity rather than of femininity. Hill's use of '*nature* of men' and '*condition* of women' mirrors the language of gender ambiguity discussed in Chapter Two (pp. 119-20): the beard's use as a signifier of masculinity, emasculation, and the modes

⁴⁷ Hill, sig. H5r-v.

⁴⁸ 'condition (*n.*), sense II.12,' *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7785452080>>; 'condition (*n.*), sense II.9.a,' *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9220572966>>.

between the two thus enables its on-stage use as a form of gendered disguise, as is explored further below.

Hill also includes a moral aspect to his distinction: opposing a 'comly' and 'well fashioned' beard with an 'evill fashioned' one. He further moralises the beard later in *Physiognomy*, in his 'breefe rehearsal' or summary of the key points from each section. Hill focuses on the distinction between the naturally formed beard and the 'fashioned' beard, 'The beard unseemly [sic: an error for 'seemly', Hill's 1571 *The Contemplation of Mankind*, from which this is drawn has 'The beard seemly formed'] formed, to be of a good nature, of a naturall cause: the beard unseemly fashioned, to be of an evil nature, of the contrary cause.'⁴⁹ He moralises both the style of the beard and its 'nature', i.e., whether it is as grown or whether it has been fashioned by a barber. Consideration of the concerns regarding the immorality of beard fashioning alongside Rycroft's argument that 'the forms taken by head and facial hair fracture along the lines of age, occupation, and class, as well as gender, and so resonate with cultural meaning', suggests that these concerns relate to the falsified, performed 'mode' of masculinity disguising the sinister 'true' masculinity of the wearer.⁵⁰

Upon considering the differences between 'biological maleness' and 'masculinity', Bruce R. Smith concludes that 'masculinity must be *achieved*. It is not a natural given.'⁵¹ This section's investigation instead suggests a hybrid early modern view: the natural growth (and appropriate maintenance) of a beard suggested that a man had achieved absolute masculinity, even while the style of that beard (and the

⁴⁹ Hill, *A Pleasant Historie*, sig. 2G3v; Thomas Hill, *The Contemplation of Mankinde Conteyning a Singuler Discourse After the Art of Phisiognomie, on All the Members and Partes of Man, as from the Heade to the Foote* (London, 1571), STC 13482, sig. 2G4v.

⁵⁰ Rycroft, p. 12.

⁵¹ Bruce R. Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 2.

manner by which it was styled) was a mutable, constructed symbol taken to correspond to his performance of gender identity. To change one's beard was an act of constructing one's masculine image, one's gender identity, but this meant that it was as subject to criticism and concern as clothing (if not more so, given that it involved the altering of a part of the body rather than items distinct from it). Facial hair was not just an identifiable part of a man's face, but *the* identifying feature: character and facial hair were so closely interwoven as to be almost indistinguishable and early modern pamphlets reveal an entire language of facial hair that spoke to a man's public image. Yet, it is this very capacity for constructing identity that made it so integral to the early modern stage, as the following will show, beards were intrinsic markers of character, providing a visual shorthand for character-types that the King's Men's disguisers then readily deployed. Yet simultaneously, as the next section also explores, the utilisation of false beards in disguise drama had a direct impact on the perceived masculinity of players.

iii. 'While the grasse growes the horse did starve': beard(lessness) in the King's Men's company

A joke in the 1640 book of witticisms, *Jocabella*, equates the growth of a player's beard with the closure of the theatres and the player's ongoing financial instability:

A Gentleman meeting a stage player in a sicknes time, who had formerly plaid womens parts; told him he was growne grave, and that he began to have a beard; the other answered, While the grasse growes the horse did starve;

meaning, because there was then no playing, and therefore he did let his beard grow.⁵²

The player explains that the loss of his source of income has resulted in his growing the beard, suggesting that he views the growth of his beard as a symbol of his financial instability. He has 'growne grave', meaning 'solemn' or 'wearisome': the circumstances of his unemployment – 'sicknes time', or plague – are suggestive of the morbidity central to the joke.⁵³ Yet, while the player views his beard as a solemn marker of his current unemployment, the gentleman appears to perceive it as a sign of emotional maturity, showing that the player has 'growne grave' in the sense of becoming dignified or influential.⁵⁴ The implication for an active player, then, is that the shaving of his beard, a necessity for his roles, would impede upon the public perception of his masculinity: by shaving to perform women on stage, the player is emasculated off-stage, too. The solemn proverb to which the player refers emphasises the problem with which he is faced. When Hamlet refers to the same proverb (TLN 2139-40), he is acknowledging that his father must die in order for him to become king: for one positive to occur there must be a negative, for the player's beard to grow there must be no performing, to perform he must lose his beard. It is this implicit context that makes the growth of a beard in plague-time indicative of a player's maturing: it supplies a previously absent social capital despite being a side-effect of the loss of financial capital. The beard in *Jocabella* represents the differing perspectives of the self and the

⁵² Robert Chamberlain, *Jocabella, or a Cabinet of Conceits. Whereunto are Added Epigrams and Other Poems*, by R. C. (London, 1640), STC 4943, sigs. D5v-6r.

⁵³ '02.02.08|09 (adj.) Important: grave/serious', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=125579>> [13 June 2024].

⁵⁴ 'grave, (adj.), sense I and (n.) sense V.3.a.', in *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1009623418>>.

other when constructing outward symbols of masculinity, then: what is, to the player, a sign of his degradation in plague-time is one of betterment to the gentleman.

Jocabella indicates the kinds of physical alterations that players would make for their work. As Rycroft notes, ‘if a lack of facial hair indicates immature masculinity on the stage, then it also indicates a lack of social, economic, and sexual status beyond it.’⁵⁵ When we discuss the materiality of disguise and the physical requirements of the player on stage, we are also contesting the impact that prosthetic and cosmetic disguise items had on the player off stage. Yet, despite facial hair’s importance in constructing character, the ways in which the need for malleable facial hair on stage impacted upon players’ masculinity off stage has yet to be explored. A stage beard required the player to be either completely shaven or to maintain a short beard, which, as the following will show, would have had a direct impact on the public perception of his masculinity. This section considers beardedness and beardlessness across the King’s Men’s disguise repertory to understand how the relationship between character and facial hair established in the previous section transferred to the stage. It next explores the need for players to shave to perform these roles alongside cultural attitudes to shaving. Finally, it analyses surviving portraits of King’s Men players, asking how the need for malleability in facial hair impacted the offstage depiction of players. To what extent were the concerns regarding players and their effeminacy related to anxieties about the fashioning of beards?

⁵⁵ Eleanor Rycroft, *Facial Hair and the Performance of Early Modern Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 2021), p. 66.

Surviving documents show false beards to have been common and varied objects on the early modern stage. An Oxford University production in 1604 required eighteen false beards, each of which is distinguished by colour and/or character:

- 1 blewe hayre and beard for Neptune.
- 1 black smooth hayre and beard for a magitian.
- 1 white hayre and beard for nestor [...]
- 2 hermeits beards the on graye thother white[...]
- 3 beards one Red one blacke th'other flexen.
- 10. satyers heads and berds.⁵⁶

Likewise, the Revels Office purchased 29 prosthetic beards in 1572-3 and 22 in 1573-4.⁵⁷ Fisher takes this as evidence that 'there was a lively market for, and traffic in, false beards', and that 'it is likely [that] false beards were used with some regularity on the stages in London'.⁵⁸ Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson note beards in 42 distinct stage directions, and state that they are 'usually linked to disguise'.⁵⁹ The fact that 31 of these instances involve disguise of some kind demonstrates the importance of facial hair in the crafting of ulterior masculine identities. Yet, despite their obvious links, scholarship on beardedness and beardlessness neglects disguise. Rycroft, Fisher, and Albert Johnston focus on the implicit meanings of beardedness and what it conveyed about a man both on- and off-stage. Existing scholarship on facial hair mirrors the philosophical, textual, and sociocultural analyses that characterise existing disguise scholarship, and has likewise engaged little with the material and sensory

⁵⁶ Will Fisher, 'The Renaissance Beard', p. 163.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁵⁹ Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 22-23.

aspects of wearing prosthetic beards on stage. This section instead approaches the beard from a material standpoint, considering the physicality of the prosthetic beard and the impact of beardedness and beardlessness on the social status of players whose repertory relied so heavily on disguise.

‘An essential part of theatrical presentation’, false beards were almost certainly worn by every player at some point in their career, especially in a disguise-heavy repertory like that of the King’s Men.⁶⁰ Given the frequency of staged disguise, it is unsurprising that beards are one of the most frequently mentioned props in early modern plays. Fisher’s chapter, ‘Staging the beard: masculinity in early modern culture’, covers the importance of beards being staged both on and off the body. While discussing *Sir Thomas More*, he notes that the play ‘calls attention to the malleability of identity materialized through this prosthetic part [the beard]’, demonstrating playwrights’ and playing companies’ careful considerations of the way in which the beard constructs and deconstructs identity.⁶¹

As is the case with *Jocabella*, most anecdotes relating to players’ facial hair and shaving focus on players of women, the most famous being that of Restoration actor and playwright Colley Cibber, who recalls a performance for King Charles II being delayed as the player Edward Kynaston, then playing the Queen, ‘was not shav’d yet’.⁶² Given boy players’ obvious need for false beards, little has been published on the use of false beards in adult companies by adult players. Fisher’s work focusses primarily on children’s companies, highlighting the importance of false beards in

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶¹ Will Fisher, ‘Staging the beard: masculinity in early modern culture’ in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 230-57, (pp. 250-1).

⁶² Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, With an Historical View of the Stage During His own Time: Written by Himself*, ed. by Byrne R. S. Fone (New York: Courier Dover, 2000), p. 71.

companies in which the players are unlikely to have already grown beards. Rycroft, meanwhile, focusses on the implicit meanings of beards rather than the materiality and malleability of facial hair and false beards in performance.

While the Lord Chamberlain's Men and King's Men did somewhat engage with beards as props and prosthetics, as indicated in *Twelfth Night* when Feste potentially uses Sir Topaz's false beard to switch between himself and Sir Topaz in conversation (TLN 2003-10), there is little explicit beard disguise in the surviving Shakespeare-dominated repertory of 1595 to 1611. It is in the children's companies where false beards played a more metatheatrical role, as the beards were obviously fake given the age of their players. 'Boys, youths and young men alike lacked a beard, the possession of which signified adult status,' Lucy Munro states in her study of the Children of the Queen's Revels playing company, 'therefore, even for the "young man" performing as a mature adult or old man meant that he was assuming an age – and concomitant social standing – he did not possess.'⁶³ The children's companies performed in plays that used false beards as detached objects as well as attached prosthetics, as when Balurdo enters 'with a beard, halfe of, halfe on', complaining that 'the tiring man hath not glewd on my beard halfe fast, enough. Gods bores, it wil not stick to fal off', in John Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (CoP, 1599).⁶⁴

The children's company playwrights' engagements with false beards as material objects is particularly important, as it is three playwrights with children's company backgrounds, Thomas Middleton, John Fletcher, and Ben Jonson, who began to play with this concept in the King's Men's Jacobean repertory. It is in the Fletcher-

⁶³ Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 41-2.

⁶⁴ John Marston, *Antonios Reuenge. The second part.* (London, 1602), STC 17474, sig. C3v.

dominated repertory of the mid-1610s that the King's Men actively draw attention to false beard as a prosthetic item for disguise, when Occulto in Middleton's *The Widow* (KM 1615-7) ensures that the thieves have 'the Blew cotes and the Beards' to disguise themselves during their highway robbery, and army Captain Putskie in John Fletcher's *The Loyal Subject* (KM 1619) discovers that he is the Gentleman Briskie probably by removing his captain's beard on the line '[b]ehold thy brother here'.⁶⁵ Likewise, when confronted about his identity in Jonson's *The Alchemist* (KM 1611), Surly uses his beard as defence: 'Sur[ly]. *Por estas honrada's barbas*— [For these honest beards]/ *Sub[tile*]. He swears by his Beard.'⁶⁶ Much like Marston's metatheatrical jokes about false beards – 'the tiring-man hath not glued on my beard half fast enough' – Surly's swearing by his beard is a metatheatrical joke for the audience: his promise is as false as his beard.⁶⁷

The importance of beards in communicating and crafting masculine character provides insight into some of the ways the determining role of facial hair could be manipulated. Rycroft has demonstrated that beards are frequently described in depth in criminal warrants that do not seem to consider the possibility that the perpetrator might shave or otherwise alter his beard.⁶⁸ In a 1606 warrant for three Catholics, the beard is perceived as one of the predominant recognisable features:

Description of the severall parties above named.

John Gerrard, alias Brooke, of stature Tall, and according thereunto well Set:

⁶⁵ Thomas Middleton, *The Widdow, a Comedie* (London, 1652), Wing J1015, sig. E4r; John Fletcher, 'The Loyal Subject', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 3C4r-3G1v (sig. 3G1r), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* < <https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647> > [accessed 30 May 2024].

⁶⁶ Jonson, *The Alchemist*, sig. l4r.

⁶⁷ Marston, *Antonios Revenge*, sig. C3v.

⁶⁸ Rycroft, p. 1.

his complexion Swart or Blackish: his Face large: his Cheekes sticking out, and somewhat Hollow underneath the Cheekes: the Haire of his Head long, if it be not cut off: his Beard cut close, saving little Mustachoes, and a little Tuft under his lower Lippe: about fourtie yeeres olde.

Henry Garnet, alias Darcy, alias Farmer, of a middling Stature, full Faced, Fatte of body, of Complexion faire: his Forehead high on each side, with a little thinne Haire coming downe upon the middest of the forepart of his Head: the Haire of his Head and Beard griseled: of Age between fiftie and threescore: his Beard on his Cheekes cut close, on his Chinne but thinne, and somewhat short: his Gate upright, and comely for a Fatte man.

Oswald Tesmond, alias Greenway, of meane Stature, somewhat Grosse: his Haire blacke: his Beard bushie and browne, something long, a broad Forehead, and about fortie yeeres of age.⁶⁹

The writer suggests that John Gerrard may have 'cut off' his long hair but gives no indication that the Catholics' beards would or even could be changed to hide their identities. While the descriptions of their bodies are basic, naming only their general height and body shape, the descriptions of their hair and beards are highly detailed suggesting the assumed reliability of facial hair in identifying criminals.

The assumption that facial hair is a reliable, fixed feature occurs in staged disguise, too: early modern stage disguisers are often regarded as equally unrecognisable upon altering their facial hair. Jonson's *The Alchemist* follows three comen, Subtle, Face (an alias for Jeremy), and Doll, as they attempt to con various Blackfriars residents. *The Alchemist* highlights the role of malleable facial hair in crafting a disguise: Surly's disguise as a Spaniard relies on the dyeing of his beard; Jeremy, the housekeeper, is unrecognisable to his neighbours when he grows the

⁶⁹ King James I, *By the King: It is so manifest to the world by all our proceedings hitherto towards those subjects of ours, which doe professe the Romish religion...* (London, 1606), STC 8387, fol. 1.

Captain's beard that transforms him into Face. To prove Subtle and Face to be conmen, Surly disguises himself 'like a Spaniard' pretending to seek their help searching for a wife and is likewise undetected.⁷⁰ Jonson provides a detailed description of his disguise through Face and Subtle's mockery of 'Don John':

Sub[tle]. He looks in that deep Ruff, like a Head in a Platter,
Serv'd in by a short Cloke upon two Tressils.

Fac[e]. Or, what do you say to a Collar of Brawn, cut down
Beneath the Souse, and wriggled with a Knife?

Sub. 'Slud, he does look too fat to be a Spaniard. [...] Don,
Your scurvy, yellow, Madrid Face is welcome.'⁷¹

This exchange details the easily adaptable elements that much of the disguise is built upon: costume accessories and the application of cosmetics.⁷² The adaptable elements, however, simply function to complement the key aspect of his disguise, his beard. When Surly is discovered, we are told about the more permanent aspects of his disguise: 'Who would ha' lookt it should ha' been that Raskal Surly? He had dy'd his Beard and all.'⁷³ Surly's dyeing his beard for the sake of a brief disguise may be excessive, but it ensures that the disguise remains sound. Facial hair's capacity to convey differences between male identities makes the beard the central aspect to his

⁷⁰ Jonson, *The Alchemist*, sig. I3r.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, sig. I3r.

⁷² For more on the use of cosmetics as disguise in *The Alchemist* see Lucy Munro, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: the King's Men* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 51-82.

⁷³ Jonson, *The Alchemist*, sig. L1r.

disguise: it transforms Surly into a new person, while the relating accessories provide a general sense of the disguise's character.

The above examples from Middleton, Fletcher, and Jonson point to a repertory that placed great emphasis on beards. How might these roles have been performed? Focusing on the cultural importance of beardedness, Rycroft has argued that, in adult companies, parts are written with players' facial hair in mind.⁷⁴ Some plays do suggest an attempt to write characters suited to a player's facial hair, or lack thereof, such as Benedick's 'Lord Lacke-beard' jibe at Claudio in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (LCM, 1598; TLN 2225) and Flute's feeble beard in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (LCM, 1594-8; TLN 298). However, there is another explanation for players having such facial hair in the first place: that they were expected to adapt their appearance to suit their roles. While Rycroft has argued that the then-Lord Chamberlain's Men had some beardless players in their company (as is possibly the joke when Flute mentions his beard 'comming' [TLN 298]), I argue that adult players were more reliant on false beards than has previously been assumed. Although there is potential for parts to be written for players' particular physiognomy, serious thought should be given to the alternative idea that players were required to change and adapt their facial hair, forgoing the social capital offered by a beard in favour of the financial capital gained from being able to physically adapt for performance; after all, 'while the grasse growes the horse did starve'.⁷⁵ The sheer number of plays performed in a single week and the potential for last minute changes to a repertory indicate the need for a player's appearance to be relatively flexible. It may have been more practical for a player to maintain short or close-shaven facial hair and wear a false beard for roles

⁷⁴ Rycroft, p. 51.

⁷⁵ Chamberlain, sig. D6r.

that required fuller facial hair than to have roles written with his particular facial hair in mind or to change it regularly for different roles.

The rude mechanicals in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (LCM, 1594-8) further support the possibility that players must alter their beards for performance. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bottom considers the multiple different false beards he may wear and, by implication, would be able to wear (TLN 339-345). His ability to do so suggests the professional player's ability to wear them, too: after all, he himself requests to play both Pyramus and Thisbe, suggesting his ability to theatrically present as either gender (TLN 301-5). When Quince responds, 'and then you will play bare-fac'd' (TLN 347), he thus draws attention to the requirements of a character on the player: for Bottom to play 'bare-fac'd', he must be beardless, and for Bottom to be beardless, so must his player. While the King's Men's stage used false beards to signify masculinity and character-type, the very frequency with which false beards were used meant that players may have been required to forgo the patriarchal social capital granted by beardedness.

How might it have impacted the perception of the King's Men's players away from the stage if they maintained minimal 'real' facial hair in order to play roles involving the wearing – and sometimes the removal – of false beards? One answer is suggested when Chrisogonus in *Satiromastix* (LCM & CoP, 1601), Dekker's parody of Ben Jonson, is referred to as a 'thin bearded Hermaphrodite': here, Dekker is presenting Jonson's thin beard as a signifier of his lack of masculinity.⁷⁶ Although Dekker's insult was part of the increasingly personal war of the theatres, and must therefore be read

⁷⁶ Thomas Dekker, *Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet as it hath bin Presented Publikely, by the Honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his Servants; and Privately, by the Children of Paules* (London, 1602) STC 6521, sig. D1r.

with some scepticism, it does gesture at the disparagement that players hazarded by shaving or trimming their beards for performance.

Effeminacy is a common complaint regarding players: a variant of the term 'effeminate' occurs three times in Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579), eight times in John Rainolds and William Gaiger's *Th'overthrow of Stage-Playes* (1599), twice in the anonymous *A Short Treatise Against Stage-Playes* (1625), and 376 times in William Prynne's *Histrion-Mastix* (1633). Prynne's many accusations of 'effeminacy' are mostly references to the women's roles being played by boys. He actively associates this effeminacy with the shaving of beards, for these youths, as *Jocabella* suggests, had to maintain a shaved face. However, Prynne's complaint also echoes Bottom's suggestion that players were required to shave for adult roles:

One being a yong man hath his haire combed backward, and effeminating nature in his countenance, apparell, pace, and such like, strives to deduce it to the similitude of a tender Virgin. Another on the other side being an old man, having his haire and all modesty shaven off with a razor, standing by girt [i.e., with support], is ready to speake and to act all things.⁷⁷

Prynne states that the 'yong man' must 'effeminat[e] nature' to perform as 'a tender Virgin' or woman, while an 'old man' must have 'his hair and all modesty shaven off with a razor' so that he can perform as any or 'all' characters. He here suggests that the shaving is not restricted to the boy players who 'plaid womens parts': the adult player must remove his own hair in order to perform being people of alternate ages, and, as the following will explore, must, perversely, therefore shave his beard to enable him to depict alternate forms of masculinity with false beards.⁷⁸ Rycroft's work on

⁷⁷ Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix*, sig. 3G3v.

⁷⁸ Chamberlain, sig. D6r.

'greybeards and the decline of manliness' has shown that 'the equation of elderly men with grey hair is far more typical than a connection with baldness, although there are still many occurrences of hairlessness in drama'.⁷⁹ She demonstrates that the stereotypical depiction of old age on the early modern stage appears to have been manifested with white and grey hair, and that a long, unkempt beard was used to indicate the impotence of old age in contrast to the well-kept beard as a sign of the virility of youth.⁸⁰

Reading Prynne alongside other antitheatrical works confirms the suggestion that the shaving of a player's facial hair is just as likely to have occurred in order to play adult men as it is to play women. While describing the falsity of theatre, Gosson draws attention to the use of false beards by referencing shaving, '[b]ut if you [...] Rippe up the golden Ball, that Nero consecrated to Jupiter Capitollinus, you shall have it stuffed with the shavingses of his Beard'.⁸¹ The stage property of 'the golden Ball' is constructed from the shavings of 'Nero's' beard; thus, the staging of Nero is constructed by the shaving of the player's beard. As explored above, the fashioning of beards was often depicted as effeminate by Puritanical writers. Yet if we read the 'effeminacy' of theatre with reference to shaving, we begin to see the word as meaning 'emasculating' rather than 'feminising' – relating to the ability to construct alternate modes of masculinity through the removal of the player's beard and the wearing of false beards.

⁷⁹ Rycroft, p. 152.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁸¹ Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse, Conteyning a Plesaunt Invective Against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Jesters, and Such Like Caterpillars of a Comonwelth; Setting Up the Hagge of Defiance to their Mischievous Exercise, Overthrowing their Bulwarkes, by Prophane Writers, Naturall Reason, and Common Experience: a Discourse as Plesaunt for Gentlemen that Favour Learning, as Profitable for All that Wyll Follow Virtue* (London, 1579), STC 12097.5, sig. A2v.



Fig 3.3 Portrait of Richard Burbage, player. By unknown artist (possibly Richard Burbage), early seventeenth century (pre-1619). Dulwich Portrait Gallery, London (DPG395).



Fig 3.4 Portrait of John Fletcher, playwright. Unknown artist, c.1620. National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 6829).



Fig 3.5 Portrait of Francis Beaumont, playwright. By Charles Fullwood, 1904, copied from original of 1616 at Knole House, Kent. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford-upon-Avon (SBT 1994-19/102).

Surviving portraits of players often depict them with minimal or cropped facial hair, a fashion somewhat unusual when compared to other portraits of adult men in the period.⁸² The beards shown in portraits of King's Men players in the 1610s, including Nathan Field (fig. 2.5, p. 132), Richard Burbage (fig. 3.3), and William Shakespeare show facial hair styles somewhat outside of the early-seventeenth century English norm. While their beards are portrayed in different styles, they are all close cut, allowing each player to wear a larger false beard. *Antonio's Revenge* showed that the false beard is sometimes 'glued' on, potentially making it difficult to apply on top of facial hair. Comparison with portraits of playwrights John Fletcher (fig. 5.4) and Francis Beaumont⁸³ (fig. 5.5), depicted with a stiletto beard (common on

⁸² See: Roy Strong, *Tudor and Jacobean Portraits*, 2 vols (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1969), I & II.

⁸³ Lucy Munro, Gordon McMullan, Lucia Bay, and Irene Jacobs, 'Procuring audience: A rediscovered portrait of Francis Beaumont.', in *TLS. Times Literary Supplement*, 5938 (2017), 16-17.

courtiers and gentry) and a spade beard (a hyper-masculine style that is likely the 'captain's beard' discussed above) respectively, suggests that the shorter beards were a style particular to players, rather than the wider theatrical community. The short beards allow the player to adhere publicly to the social standard of masculinity as far as possible, while remaining adaptable for performance.

The King's Men's disguise plays draw attention to the player cutting his beard by using shaving as a way of disguising. Despite Face's surprise at Surly's changing his beard for the sake of his disguise, in IV.vii of *The Alchemist* the audience discover that Face's beard has been a disguise throughout the entire play. Upon hearing that his master, Lovewit, has returned to London and the house, Face returns to the role of 'Jeremy, the butler':

Sub[tile]. What shall we do now, *Face*?

Fac[e]. Be silent: not a word, if he call or knock.
I'll into my old shape again and meet him,
Of *Jeremy*, the Butler. I' the mean time,
Do you two pack up all the Goods, and purchase,
That we can carry i' the two Trunks. I'll keep him
Off for to day, if I cannot longer: and then
At night, I'll ship you both away to Ratcliff,
Where we'll meet to morrow, and there we'll share.
Let *Mammon*'s Brass and Pewter keep the Cellar:
We'll have another time for that. But, *Do!*,
'Pr'y thee go heat a little Water quickly,
Subtle must shave me. All my Captains Beard
Must off, to make me appear smooth *Jeremy*,
You'll do't?

Sub. Yes, I'll shave you, as well as I can.

Fac. And not cut my Throat, but trim me?

Sub. You shall see, Sir.⁸⁴

Face blurs the boundary between disguise and alternate identities. The identity he has had throughout the play, Face, is revealed to have been the disguise as he returns to his 'old shape'. However, his phrasing suggests that Jeremy is the feigned persona, 'Face' ends up being a 'mask' and by shaving the beard, he is putting his actual face on display. Yet, he consistently uses language that positions Jeremy as a costume: 'I'll *into* my old shape'; 'make me *appear* smooth Jeremy'.⁸⁵ Likewise, in asserting possession over the beard ('*my Captains Beard*') Face explicitly associates it with himself. Rather than simply returning without the beard, the explicit reference to being shaven and Face's mention that '[a]ll my Captains Beard/ Must off' indicates the beard's importance in communicating masculine identity, making it the defining feature of Face.

There is some irony in Face's 'disguise' requiring him to shave his beard. Face's disguise as 'smooth Jeremy' is the player's actual face, since in order to play the role in the first place, the player would have had to maintain short facial hair. *The Alchemist* assumes that a player must either fashion his own beard to suit a certain role or maintain short facial hair for the regular wearing of false beards, then. Face, and, to an extent, Surly with his mid-play beard change, imply that players were expected to adapt their facial hair for performance—the onus being on the player to suit the role, rather than the role to suit the player.

That character was determined through facial hair style necessitated the frequent use of false beards and restricted the growth of players' facial hair. The performance

⁸⁴ Jonson, *The Alchemist*, sig. L1v.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. L1v.

of different modes of masculinity through beards relied on the removal of one's own, the player's face becoming a blank canvas on to which different styles could be applied. These restrictions have a direct impact on the reading of disguise scenes involving facial hair. The following section presents *The Double Marriage*, III.i as a case study about how the meanings of beards and beardlessness discussed above were translated on the stage. In this scene, the elderly sailor Sesse disguises himself by shaving his beard, providing an example through which to consider the interplay of false beards and real facial hair in crafting disguises.

iv. 'Your friends cannot discern you': transformative facial hair in *The Double Marriage*

This chapter has considered how beards were used to construct a man's social image and, in turn, how the practicalities of false beard use had a direct impact on the public perception of players' gender identity. The forms of masculinity symbolised by facial hair styles suggests that staged disguises that included false beards did so to construct intra-gender differentiation between men. In John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Double Marriage* (KM, 1620-3) III.i, the deposed Duke of Sesse – now a pirate – must disguise himself as a much younger man to follow his daughter, Martia, after she escapes to Naples with two of his prisoners. Much like Face's return to 'smooth Jeremy' in *The Alchemist*, Sesse's disguise requires the player to remove what is in fact his prosthetic beard in order to suggest he has been shaven.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Jonson, *The Alchemist*, sig. L1v.

The Double Marriage, III.i, demonstrates the role of false beards in depicting a man's character and age, and so shows how the player's own facial hair could be used in performance. Fletcher and Massinger even highlight the King's Men's skill in prosthetics through a detailed description of the change in Sesse's facial hair and its impact on perceptions of him. Crucially, approaching Sesse's shaving as a gendered disguise – an adult man presenting himself as a youth – makes clear that false beard disguises are about the identity implied by the beard, rather than the obscuring of the face beneath it, as critics have often assumed. Building on the previously discussed evidence relating to false beards, *The Double Marriage*, III.i, suggests, too, that the King's Men used false beards as standard character signifiers, and not just when characters assumed disguises. This means that parts were unlikely to have been written with reference to a player's pre-existing facial hair or age, but that, instead, false beards and beard fashioning allowed for flexibility regarding character-type and playing age.

This thesis has thus far discussed the importance of the visual in disguise drama, from the physical shift in posture when a disguiser discovers himself (Chapter One) to the myriad meanings that playgoers can discern from seeing linen (Chapter Two). Sesse's disguise in *The Double Marriage* relies on the multisensory elements of the stage to emphasise the visual: it demands that playgoers acknowledge the visual aspect of Sesse's disguise through the players' use of language and touch. Most of the dialogue in *The Double Marriage*, III.i, focusses on Sesse's physical appearance, while implicit stage directions suggest that the characters are touching or gesturing toward one another's faces. Attention is drawn to the characters' physical appearances from the beginning of the scene:

Enter Sesse, Master, Boatswaine, Gunner.

Ses[se]. How do I look?

Mast[er]. You are so strangely alterd,
We scarce can know you, so young againe, and utterly
From that you were, figure, or any favour;
Your friends cannot discern you.

Gun[ner]. This Jew sure,
That alter'd you is a made knave.

Ses. O! a most excellent fellow!

Gun. How he has mew'd your head, has rub'd the snow off,
And run your beard into a peak of twenty!

Boat[swain]. Stopt all the crannies in your face.

Mast. Most rarely.

Boat. And now you look as plump, your eyes as sparkling,
As if you were to leap into a Ladies saddle.
Has he not set your nose awry?

Ses. The better.

Boat. I think it be the better, but tis awry sure;
North and by East. I ther's the point it stands in;
Now halfe a point to th'Southward.

Ses. I could laugh,
But that my businesse requires no mirth now;
Thou art a merry fellow.⁸⁷

The sight-centric nature of this scene emphasises that the visual element is integral to any disguise drama, but especially to a scene heavily reliant on prosthetics and physical appearance. Yet it is the language informing playgoers to look that emphasises the importance of this sense. Considering how 'ears and eyes were

⁸⁷ John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, 'The Double Marriage', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 5C3r-5F3v (sig. 5D4v), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 30 May 2024].

expected to interrelate in [an early modern] playhouse', Simon Smith concludes that *Hamlet* (LCM, 1600-2) 'invites playgoers repeatedly to engage with its precise visual design through active, judicious, and critically reflective looking'.⁸⁸ Chapter One considered how the tactile elements of a disguise can act as a physical cue for the player to alter his demeanour (p. 45); consideration of *The Double Marriage* with reference to the 'invit[ation]' to playgoers that Smith sees in *Hamlet* shows that, here, the tactile and aural aspects of the scene are cues to the playgoers instead. The first line of the scene, '[h]ow do I look', asks the audience to assess Sesse visually, to which the master responds by drawing further attention to Sesse's appearance. This moment in *The Double Marriage* reveals playwrights using their text to emphasise the visual elements of a disguise: 'look', 'figure', 'discern' all express the need to observe Sesse's disguise actively.

In the passage quoted above, the boatswain and the gunner detail the prosthetics and cosmetics used to create elderly characters in the very way that they describe their removal: Sesse has had his hair 'mew'd', meaning 'changed or renewed', and the 'snow' 'rub'd off', suggesting in fact the removal of a wig or flour being dusted from his hair; 'all the crannies in [his] face' have been filled, suggesting cosmetics wiped clean; and his nose is now 'set [...] awry', indicating the removal of a false nose.⁸⁹ Indeed, the removal of the prosthetics is explicitly shown by the boatswain's reference to the position of Sesse's nose, 'North and by East. I there's the point it stands in;/ Now halfe a point to th'Southward', offers the player playing the boatswain the option to touch or tug the nose. By doing so, the boatswain draws attention to Sesse's face and to its

⁸⁸ Simon Smith, 'Hamlet's visual stagecraft and early modern cultures of sight' in *Shakespeare / Sense: Contemporary Readings in Sensory Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 110-32 (p. 112).

⁸⁹ 'mew, (v.) sense II.1.b.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7128227142>>.

lack of facial prosthetics: in order for Sesse to disguise himself by feigning youth, the player has in fact returned to his own, natural youthfulness by removing the prosthetics that make him seem elderly. Here the scene deliberately and comically draws attention to its own material staging, emphasising the King's Men's skill in disguise both through prosthetics and cosmetics and the player's own features.

The multiple references to Sesse's shortened beard and youth mirrors the typical language of female-to-male gendered disguise seen in Orsino's comments on Cesario's 'smooth' lip and Feste's wish that 'Jove in his next commodity of hayre, [would] send [Cesario] a beard' (*Twelfth Night*, TLN 1209-10), and the beardlessness of boy players, shown by Flute's unwillingness to play a woman's part for fear of having to shave his nascent beard (*Dream*, TLN 298). Sesse's disguise thus uses the differences between forms of masculinity to construct a kind of intra-gender disguise, demonstrating how the 'effeminacy' of players explored in the above section could be exploited through facial prosthetics to enable the performance of multiple forms of masculinity, whether across a repertory, or, as here, in a single play.

By referring to Sesse as 'young *again*', Fletcher and Massinger allude to the metatheatricality of the prosthetics: Sesse the character is young again, and the player is no longer presenting himself as older. The characters' discussion of Sesse's disguise offers some suggestions as to the performance practice for age disguises and the general performance of elderly characters: greyed hair, facial cosmetics, and a prosthetic nose; and, of course, a beard that is here 'shaved' to represent youth. Rycroft shows that, 'while a grey beard was potentially a marker of wisdom, respect, and authoritative manliness, it was also often associated with peevishness and

diminished judgement.⁹⁰ Where the colour and shape of a man's beard was seen to reflect his vitality and virility, the long, grey beards of elderly men were perceived as indicating their inability to care for their beards and, as an extension of that, their inability to provide and care for themselves and others: in Marston's *The Malcontent* (KM, 1604) Pietro's disguise after he has lost the throne and shown his inability to rule involves adopting a hermit's beard.⁹¹ Sesse's disguise, involving the shaving and maintenance of his beard, evokes his need to control and maintain his household through the pursuit and capture of his daughter.

While critics often emphasise children's companies' impactful use of prosthetics to perform age, such performance of age in adult companies is often either presumed to be achieved through the player's own age or ignored altogether. Yet Munro reasons, '[w]e are mistaken if we exaggerate the differences [regarding performing age] between the child and adult companies, particularly after 1604, when the physical dissimilarities [between companies] were becoming less pronounced.'⁹² From *The Double Marriage*, III.i, we can infer that, even in adult companies, the player's age did not always determine the characters he played, instead, mutable cosmetics and prosthetics like hair and beards signified character type over the player's own age and appearance. *The Double Marriage*, III.i, indicates that a repertory as disguise-heavy as the King's Men's required players with significant casting flexibility: character and disguise hinged on the symbolic use of costume, cosmetics, prosthetics, and props rather than the player's body. Sesse's disguise in *The Double Marriage* thus challenges Rycroft's assertion that characters were written with players' facial hair in

⁹⁰ Rycroft, p. 150.

⁹¹ John Marston, *The Malcontent, Augmented by Marston with the Additions Played by the Kings Majesties Servants Written by Jhon Webster* (London, 1604), STC 17479, sig. F4v.

⁹² Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, pp. 41-2.

mind: whether written for a younger actor with minimal facial hair, or for an older player required to shave for the role, Sesse requires the player to have malleable facial hair, and the ability to wear an easily removable false beard on top.

The removal of the false beard is a central element of Sesse's disguise in III.i. The gunner's description, 'a peak of twenty', likely a reference to the minimal facial hair of a youth, draws on the relationship between beard styles and the ages of manhood in Bacon and Lemnius. 'Peak' may, therefore, refer to the small, pointed beards of youths referred to by Rycroft as 'lover's beards' or it may refer to the peeking of hair from the chin.⁹³ We cannot be sure if the 'peak of twenty' is a particular style, but the reference to age suggests a general association between the style (or the lack) and men in their twenties. As Bacon showed that facial hair was thought to appear after puberty in one's late-teens to early-twenties, and given the beard restrictions on apprentices aged twelve to twenty-one, minimal facial hair must have been used in Sesse's disguise.⁹⁴ The following discusses what the different styles of facial hair indicated by 'peak of twenty' – beardlessness or a small beard – may signify to the audience, and how these are engaged with in the remainder of the scene's speech.

The youth indicated by Sesse's shortened facial hair is further played on in the boatswain's comment that 'you look as plump, your eyes as sparkling,/ As if you were to leap into a Ladies saddle.'⁹⁵ There are multiple potential meanings that can be inferred from 'leap into a Ladies saddle', all of which relate to the relationship between beards and masculinity. While ostensibly referencing Sesse's youthfulness ('stopt [...] crannies' meaning the filling of Sesse's wrinkles or the removal of the player's ageing

⁹³ Rycroft, p. 97.

⁹⁴ Bacon, 'Essays', sig. F1r-v.

⁹⁵ Fletcher and Massinger, 'The Double Marriage', sig. 5D4r.

makeup; see Chapter Four, p. 252), 'leap into a Ladies saddle' can also be read as being as much a sexual innuendo as it is a comment on the emasculating act of shaving. Rycroft expands on Munro's description of 'sexually liminal adolescent players' and Victoria Sparey's explanation that 'awaited beards are often framed as promising vitality [where] the wait itself appears to be a source of titillation', to show that 'hot vigour' of the early twenties would be materially represented by the style of beard: 'incipient beards signal sexual promise'.⁹⁶ As beardedness was so closely related to virility and sexual viability, the white beards of the elderly were frequently associated with impotence, as is often heavily implied in stage portrayals of marriages with large age gaps, such as in Middleton's *The Widow* (KM, 1615-7), or Middleton, Rowley, and Massinger's *The Old Law* (PCM, 1618-9). The return to youthful vitality through the dyeing of Sesse's hair appears to have been a common trope in the staging of elderly men, as in *The Old Law*, when Lysander dyes his hair to relive his youth and marry a much younger woman.⁹⁷

The potential sexualisation of Sesse is reminiscent of the impact that aging was believed to have on the body's humours, as Alexandra Shepard shows: '[t]he hot vigour of youth [was] approached as a continued source of instability which could overpower the brain and hinder capacity for rational action'.⁹⁸ Shepard notes that mature 'manhood was associated with moderation and constancy' and 'the passionate impulses and emotions associated with [youthful heat and moisture] were less likely to distract men from their appropriate callings or divert their minds from reason.'⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, p. 47; Victoria Sparey, 'Performing Puberty: Fertile Complexions in Shakespeare's Plays', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 33. 3 (2015) 441–467, p. 448; Rycroft, p. 42.

⁹⁷ Thomas Middleton, William Rowley, and Philip Massinger, *The Excellent Comedy Called, The Old Law, or, A New Way to Please You* (London, 1656), Wing M1048, sig. F3v.

⁹⁸ Shepard, p. 53.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Threatened on one side by the potentially chaotic heat of youth, manhood was also quickly overshadowed by decrepitude in later years, which was approached in terms of an undesirable decline. Although occasionally associated with gravity and authority, old age was more often depicted in terms of lost capacity, specifically caused by diminishing heat, and it was frequently likened to a return to childhood.¹⁰⁰

By going from his lengthy beard to a 'peak of twenty', Sesse thus moves between the 'lost capacity [...] caused by diminishing heat' to the 'chaotic heat of youth', avoiding 'the normative ideal of temperate, reasoned control' between them.¹⁰¹ This shift is suggested just prior to his disguising himself. Sesse is told by the surgeon that,

Sur[geon]. You'l never heale sir,
If these extreames dwell in you, you are old,
And burn your spirits out with this wild angers.

Ses[se]. Thou liest, I am not old, I am as lusty
And full of manly heat as them, or thou art.¹⁰²

By disguising his age, Sesse visibly moves from an infirm, elderly captain no longer able to control his 'wild angers' or his daughter, to a man capable of enacting 'a father's vengeance'.¹⁰³ Sesse's ability to 'leap into a Ladies' saddle' is therefore not perceived to be tied to his actual age, but instead to his outward presentation of age – the imitation of youth bringing with it regained strength.

The purpose of Sesse's disguise is twofold: to enable his entry into Naples undiscovered, and to restore his authority over his daughter. The youthfulness

¹⁰⁰ Shepard, p. 57.

¹⁰¹ Shepard, p. 57 and p. 53.

¹⁰² Fletcher and Massinger, *The Double Marriage*, sig. 5D3v.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, sig. 5D3v.

indicated by his shortened and dyed beard returns him to what Bacon referred to as 'the full years of Strength and Agility'.¹⁰⁴ The initial use of prosthetics to stage the elderly Sesse, and their removal for his disguise, aligns the player with existing narratives that suggest beard fashioning had a direct impact on one's masculinity. They also show playwrights utilising the impact that the requirement of false beards had on a player's gender performance. *The Double Marriage* playfully engages with discussions about facial hair and beard fashioning by demonstrating the King's Men's skill in prosthetics and the staging of elderly characters, and by utilising the player's existing facial hair as a disguise.

The removal of the prosthetics to create Sesse's disguise provides another example of the theatrical ambiguity that has been highlighted throughout this thesis: what, exactly, are the playgoers being invited to see? There are two potentials, that the playgoer is seeing the player's actual facial hair (his actual gender presentation) or that this is another false beard and, therefore, another imitation of a mode of masculinity. The uncertainty about whether this is the player's beard or another false one is reflective of the act of disguising and the indeterminacy of identity acknowledged by M. C. Bradbrook in her definition of disguise: 'the substitution, overlaying, or metamorphosis of dramatic identity, whereby one character sustains two roles.'¹⁰⁵ Whether the player wore his own facial hair when disguised as young Sesse, or wore a small false beard, the play relies on a reversal of assumed disguise conventions: the disguise is not constructed by Sesse obscuring his face, but by his showing his face and removing his most defining characteristic – the beard. The use of false beards in *The Double Marriage* thus reflects in dramatic form the very

¹⁰⁴ Bacon, *Life and Death*, sig. R8v.

¹⁰⁵ Muriel C. Bradbrook, *Shakespeare and the Use of Disguise in Elizabethan Drama*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 160.

restrictions that disguise-heavy repertoires like that of the King's Men imposed on the company's players – and specifically on their close-cropped faces.

v. Conclusion

In the index of *Children of the Queen's Revels*, Munro uses the term 'age-transvestism' to describe the performance of different ages in the children's companies.¹⁰⁶ 'Transvestism', here, stems from the word's root meaning ('trans' meaning 'across' or 'change' and 'vestite' meaning 'clothing'), the use of a word now associated with 'dressing in clothes conventionally associated with the opposite sex' foregrounding the inherent materiality through which the perceived intra-gender differences between men of different ages are constructed.¹⁰⁷ Where gender studies, and masculinity studies in particular, has taken as read that 'gender identities in early modern England were neither static nor given, but the product of social interaction', disguise studies has yet to catch up.¹⁰⁸

As this chapter has explored, both disguise and gender performance are constructed by social exchange, and the multiple modes of early modern gender presentation enabled the theatrical performance of intra-gender disguises as well as inter-gender ones. Fisher showed that gender was constructed by material parts – handkerchiefs, codpieces, beards, hair – from the very same categories as those with which characters construct disguises: linen, clothing, prosthetics, wigs. But these prosthetics had an impact on the real player.

¹⁰⁶ Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, p. 253.

¹⁰⁷ 'transvestism, (n.) sense 1.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9915420089>>.

¹⁰⁸ Smith, *Shakespeare and Masculinity*, p. 2.

Upon recognising the nuances of gender presentation in early modern England, we must also recognise that gendered disguise was perceived as equally complex. False beards were an integral prosthetic in a repertory as disguise-focussed as the King's Men's and their use can inform our understanding of early modern gender presentation and, perhaps, shed light on some of the gender discourse that recurs in anti-theatrical tracts beyond current scholarly assumptions that antitheatricalist concerns regarding gender presentation were centred on boy players, alone. This thesis returns to the concept of the malleable body in the following chapter, which shows cosmetics – much like prosthetics – being used by playwrights who treat the player's body almost like a prop.

CHAPTER IV

'A wrong done to beauty': staging beauty and disfigurement through cosmetic disguise

i. Introduction

'Art counterfeits chance', writes Ovid in book III of *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love), marketing his cosmetic recipe book, *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* (The Art of Beauty).¹ His recipes sought to teach women to apply cosmetics so as to emphasise their best features, showing how 'a touch of the hand can give or deny beauty'.² By promoting his recipes as a way of 'rescu[ing] impaired beauty', Ovid endorses cosmetics as beneficial, perhaps even necessary, as the stem word for *medicamina* (cosmetics), *medicam* (medicines), would imply.³ Yet, despite Ovid's favourable views on cosmetics, translators of *Ars Amatoria* and *Medicamina Faciei Femineae* from the sixteenth-century to the twentieth employ the words 'counterfeit', 'change', and 'false' in reference to beautification, insinuating that the art is one of deception and surreptitiousness.⁴ The implication of deceitfulness is mirrored in early modern English slang: the application of cosmetics was variously referred to as to 'trick' and to 'smudge' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵ Even our contemporary term, 'make-up', implies fiction, the *OED* suggesting that its etymology has progressed from fictionalised story, to theatrical make-up, to our contemporary usage for cosmetics

¹ Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, in *Ovid The Art of Love and Other Poems*, trans. by J. H. Mozley, 3 vols (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1929), III, pp. 128-29, in *Loeb Classical Library*, <https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.ovid-art_love.1929>

² *Ibid.*, pp. 126-27

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁵ '02.02.18.02 (vt.) Beautify (the person)', in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd ed., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=135513>> [accessed 11 June 2024].

more generally.⁶ This chapter considers the relationship between disguise and the application of face cosmetics – known as ‘painting’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – to demonstrate the precise, even subversive ways in which the stage’s cosmetic disguise engages with wider attitudes and practices of cosmetics. It does so through a material and sensory approach to cosmetic disguise in the King’s Men’s repertory from 1599 to 1621.

While scholars have considered the ramifications of the relationship between beautification and deception in the seventeenth century in regard to staged depictions of women and cosmetic rituals, few have explicitly engaged with cosmetics in relation to staged disguise. Tanya Pollard and Farah Karim-Cooper both refer to face painting’s capacity to obscure, but neither consider its application in disguise plays, instead focusing on plays and scenes that depict women applying cosmetics for beautification. The standard practice of such scenes is to stage beautification as a signifier of vanity and pride. Yet, attention to cosmetic disguise reveals that its depiction of cosmetification subverts this stage trope: painting is instead used to disfigure beauty and externally depict the rebelliousness within. Cosmetic disguises use pox marks, umbering, and painted wrinkles to place the disguised skin in opposition to the white, youthful, unblemished skin that was the conventional standard of beauty.⁷ By presenting the disguiser as visually marred, cosmetic disguise engages with concepts of cosmetics as corruptive and obscuring, thus putting it in direct contrast with the disguiser’s beauty to make the disguise the inverse of the disguiser.

⁶ ‘make-up (*n.*), sense II.3.b’, *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6847587243>>; ‘make-up (*n.*), sense II.4.a’, *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4510225261>>.

⁷ Farah Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 17-20.

Cosmetic disguise is uniquely gendered: it is almost always used by female characters in a way that responds to the early modern perception that women's cosmetics and face painting supposedly obscured their outward imperfections while revealing their inward impurities. Crucially, cosmetic disguise simultaneously corroborates and contradicts such early modern perceptions of cosmetics: cosmetic disguisers are shown to be exaggeratedly beautiful heroines, who disfigure themselves – a term then meaning 'to disguise [...] temporarily' and 'to change the appearance [...] in a way judged to be negative' – to escape distressing circumstances and resist the patriarchal pressures upon them (it is not for nothing that many of these heroines are escaping enforced marriage).⁸ While these characters are the play's heroines, this resistance is not coded as straightforwardly positive: in actively opposing figures of authority by disguising themselves, the outward corruption of their beauty is presented as concomitant with the inner corruption of their propriety. The disguiser's character arc is reliant on a moment of apparent moral and physical contamination that complicates binary narratives of cosmetics or character being morally 'good' or 'bad'. As we shall see, the cosmetics used in such disfigurement take many forms, including pox marks, artificial sunburn, artificial wrinkling, and especially 'umber' or brownface, placing early modern racialised and classed understandings of beauty and Otherness at the heart of this chapter's considerations.

The first section of this chapter analyses anti-cosmetic tracts and household recipe books to explore how early modern views about cosmetics implicitly engaged with theatrical disguise. Authors of anti-cosmetic tracts obsess over the artifice of cosmetics, describing women who wear make-up as dissemblers and monsters, while

⁸ 'disfigure, (v.), sense II,' *Oxford English Dictionary* [online], <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1961284388>>.

authors of cosmetic recipes depict beautification as a requirement for women, necessary to obscure their perceived imperfections. I draw on Farah Karim-Cooper's, Tanya Pollard's, and Patricia Phillipy's work on early modern arguments about the moral and physical dangers of the use of cosmetics. In doing so, this section investigates the innate relationship between cosmetics and disguise to show how 'cosmetic materiality' – the idea that the prosthetic properties of cosmetics grounded them in the material and artificial – paints disguise as an inherently material practice.⁹

The second section of this chapter explores cosmetic disguise on the stage. As Karim-Cooper and Pollard have shown, the stage most certainly used cosmetics and beautification in depictions of vanity, as in Webster's *A Cure for a Cuckold* (PCM, 1624), John Fletcher's *The Double Marriage* (KM, 1620-3), and Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (CCR, 1600). Yet, through discussion of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (LCM, 1598-1600), Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* (KM, 1619-21), and the anonymous play *The Telltale* (?KM, 1622-40), this section shows that disguise plays more often use cosmetics to conceal a character's fairness (and with it, her virtuousness). Through these plays' depictions of cosmetic disguise as disfiguring and scenes of discovery that depict the disguiser's return to the early modern idealised standard of beauty (that is, white, glistening paint and rouged lips and cheeks), cosmetic disguise reflects the cultural emphasis on beautification illustrated by the authors of anti-cosmetic tracts and recipe books alike.

The second section's discussion of the innovative use of cosmetic disguise in *The Pilgrim*, provides a context for the third and final section of the chapter, which explores how Thomas Middleton's *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, 1621-2)

⁹ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 69.

utilises the low visibility of umber under candlelight to represent the cosmetics' disfiguring effects. *More Dissemblers* includes one of the earliest examples (perhaps even the earliest example) of removable umber on the public stage when Aurelia, the play's heroine, disguises herself as a gypsy to escape imprisonment by her father. Aurelia's disguises function to obscure her beauty through cosmetic disfigurement, contrary to the usual reading of cosmetics on stage, in which cosmetics function to hide 'monstrousness'.¹⁰ Disguised, she is then put in direct contrast to the 'shining' beauty of others and of her non-umbered self, demonstrating the way that the material difference in cosmetics was used to signpost beauty in moments of cosmetic disguise.¹¹

This chapter overall shows how playwrights working for the King's Men, particularly Fletcher and Middleton, innovate in their use of cosmetic disguise as a form of material stagecraft. Where Fletcher shows the mutability of disguise cosmetics on the player, Middleton shows precisely how cosmetics of disguise interact with and react to the surrounding stage space. The two playwrights show an emphatically material engagement with cosmetics, providing space for a sensory and performance driven reading of the plays that emphasises the impact that cosmetic innovation had on the staging of disguise.

ii. 'Tricking up': cosmetic deception in the seventeenth century

The belief that face-painting's capacity to conceal made it a signifier of the unknown and thus to be feared recurs throughout early modern anti-cosmetic tracts, and indeed

¹⁰ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 17.

¹¹ Thomas Middleton, *Two New Playes. More Dissemblers besides Women and Women beware Women* (London, 1657), Wing M1989, sig. F6r.

much scholarship has been written on the depiction of cosmetics and painting as deceitful. This first section contextualises stage practices by exploring the early modern idea that cosmetics were applied to hide ‘monstrous’ imperfections – whether those be scars from venereal disease, signs of aging, acne or even just freckles – and how their use became a signifier of ‘idle, unnatural, sinful, hideous and monstrous’ women.¹² It considers anti-cosmetic works alongside household manuals and writings that position painting as beneficial to show that, despite the works’ difference of opinions, each revolves around the same central themes of female authority, theatricality, and disguise. By considering these themes, this section showcases the relationship between cosmetics and the theatre, both when using cosmetics on stage and in the use of cosmetics to obscure and construct identity.

For anti-cosmetic writers, a major concern about the painting of women’s faces was the observers’ consequent inability to discern the painted woman’s true emotions. This is famously shown in portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, who, both when sitting for portraits and in public appearances, had her face painted with cosmetics to ‘distance herself from her subjects by carving herself out as a featureless icon behind a cosmetic mask’, as in fig. 4.1, in which her cosmeticised white face appears flat and faultless, in contrast to her darker, shaded hands.¹³ Early modern women’s idealised, smooth, whitened faces crafted through facial cosmetics – cosmetic whiteness – were likened

¹² Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 37.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.



Fig. 4.1 Coronation portrait of Queen Elizabeth I. Unknown artist, c.1600-1610 (copy after an original of c.1559). National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 5175).

to a mask: Thomas Tuke states that cosmeticised faces ‘appeare thus masked [...] with these antifaçes’.¹⁴ Just as Elizabeth used such cosmetics to create her inscrutable iconography, for the women of the middling sort, so too did cosmetics become a mask behind which to conceal their true and (to the mind of anti-cosmetic writers like Tuke) sinful intentions. As Josie Schoel notes, ‘cosmeticized surfaces are superficial, falsifying, masking, beautifying, material, and symbolic. Simultaneously concealing and revealing, the painted visage can be interpreted as a site of resistance and subterfuge, or as an advertisement of vanity and conspicuous consumption.’¹⁵

This reading applies to the theatrical application of cosmetics just as readily as to household uses, as shown in a poem by Edmund Spenser exploring the emotional response to seeing someone known to the playgoer caricatured on stage. In this poem, Spenser describes the playing of historical figures as depicting ‘kindly counter under Mimick shade’, contrasting the ‘kindly’ countenance of the figure being represented against the player’s caricature.¹⁶ Since Spenser depicts the original, real figure as benevolent, the shade – the unsubstantial image of the original – becomes a symbol of malice, acting as a mask used to obscure and hide the very person it is imitating. His use of ‘under’ is suggestive of a mask, while the derogatory term ‘[m]imick’ was often associated with the imitative and deceptive nature of cosmetics, as in James Howell: ‘[n]ot by feign’d Art [painting], but Nature wed, No simpring smiles, no mimic face’, and the deceptive nature of players, as in William Prynne’s *Histrio-*

¹⁴ Thomas Tuke, *A Discourse Against Painting and Tincturing of Women Wherein the Abominable Sinnes of Murther and Poisoning, Pride and Ambition, Adultery and Witchcraft are Set Foorth & Discovered. Whereunto is Added The Picture of a Picture, or, the Character of a Painted Woman.* (London, 1616), STC. 24316a, sig. B3v.

¹⁵ Josie Schoel, ‘Cosmetics, Whiteness and Fashioning Early Modern Englishness’ in *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 60.1 (2020), 1-23 (p. 10).

¹⁶ Edmund Spenser, *Complaints, Containing Sundrie Small Poems of the Worlds Vanitie* (London, 1591), STC. 23078, sig. F2r.

Mastix: '[w]hat shall I speak of mimicall Actors'.¹⁷ By describing the figure as being hidden 'under Mimick shade', Spenser draws on the above discussed concerns about the falsified outer image and the theatrical use of cosmetics to depict a character's selfhood as separate from the player. Spenser's use of 'Mimick' and his consideration of the real identity being hidden 'under' the feigned draws together the metaphorical theatrical construction of identity and the role of cosmetics in obscuring and reconstructing character.

As Spenser's poem implies, a painted mask brought with it concerns about how far image is a constructed, unreliable indicator of identity, concerns which could have lasting implications on a person's perceived autonomy of selfhood. While discussing Aaron's assertion in *Titus Andronicus* (?PM, 1584-94) that '[c]ole-blacke is better than another hue/ In that it scornes to beare another hue' (TLN 1688-9), Dympna Callaghan writes that the 'temporary emulsion' of whiteness 'is characteristically subject to black inscription: it can be defaced. Black, in contrast, can neither be written on, nor can it be returned to white.'¹⁸ In *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* (2006), Karim-Cooper uses Callaghan's argument to assert that the male wish for cosmetic whiteness was founded in its enabling him to transcribe his own desires onto the female face. Yet, the fact that this whiteness is crafted through cosmetics and can thus be recrafted by them, suggests the wearer's ability to erase any text a man may

¹⁷ James Howell, 'To Mr. B. Chaworth: On my Valentine Mrs. Francis Metcalf (now Lady Robinson) at York. A Sonnet' in *Epistolæ Ho-elianæ* (London, 1650), Wing H3072, p. 159; William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge, or, Actors Tragædie, Divided into Two Parts*. (London, 1633), STC 20464, sig. 2V4r.

¹⁸ Dympna Callaghan, *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 80. For more on cosmetics as writing, marking, or staining the face and the racial implications of this, see: Miles P. Grier, *Inkface: Othello and White Authority in the Era of Atlantic Slavery* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2023); Ian Smith, 'The Textile Black Body: Race and "Shadowed Livery" in *The Merchant of Venice*,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race*, ed. by Valerie Traub (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 290-315; Andrea Stevens, *Inventions of the Skin: The Painted Body in Early English Drama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); V. M. Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

prescribe to her: Karim-Cooper's very reference to Thomas Tuke's anti-cosmetic concern regarding the early modern woman's ability to 'blot out' and 'write' her face argues against her reading of Callaghan's work.¹⁹ Where blackness grants authority by preventing one from being written on, cosmetic whiteness allows the wearer to erase absolutely the existing 'text' of the face. The painter is thus granted complete (and, in the eyes of anti-cosmetic writers, dangerous) authority over how her face is read: when Olivia in *Twelfth Night* (LCM, 1600-02) states that the 'divers scedules of my beautie' will be 'labell'd to my will', she plays on Cesario's disbelieving 'if God did all' (TLN 517-8; 508. Emphasis my own). Just as the cosmetics to which Cesario alludes would allow the wearer to 'write' her face, so too does Olivia's imagined inventory of her features provide her with another form of authorial power over the beauty which she claims is 'in graine' and will 'endure winde and weather' (TLN 509).

Olivia's 'in graine[d]' face brings to attention even more probing concerns that anti-cosmetic authors had about the masking nature of cosmetics, concerns that go deeper than the mask and under the skin itself. In *Drugs and Theatre in Early Modern England* (2005), Pollard explores the idea that cosmetics were believed to contaminate the soul. While predominantly considering cosmetics as literal contaminants, with reference to their murderous usage in *The Devil's Charter* (KM, 1599-1607) and *The Revenger's Tragedy* (KM, 1604-7), Pollard also explores the early modern belief that cosmetics functioned as metaphorical contaminants: 'concealing true faces behind false, they undermined the trustworthiness of bodily signs, leading to a broader crisis of semiotic reliability.'²⁰ With reference to Puritan clergyman John Downname's argument that cosmetics are 'a spiritual pollution' that could contaminate others,

¹⁹ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 147.

²⁰ Tanya Pollard, *Drugs and Theatre in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 88.

implying that the early modern English viewed cosmetics as an aggressively destructive infection, Pollard concludes that ‘the fatal powers so often ascribed to cosmetics are linked not only to the material nature of the paints themselves, but also to the bodies and objects associated with them.’²¹ Downname’s belief in the spiritual harms brought about by cosmetics shows that painting held both metaphorical and literal implications of corruption: the act of painting is ascribed to vanity, while the paint’s closeness to the skin and its ability to seep into and in some cases semi-permanently stain the skin suggests the depth to which the painter is corrupted.

The actual corruption of the chemicals and concerns around them seeping into skin blurred into concerns about how painting could lead to metaphorical and moral corruption. The wearing of cosmetics thus brought with it an implication of ethical corruption: writing about women’s painted faces, Thomas Drayton believes that ‘shee’le please men in all places: For she’s a Mimique, and can make good faces.’²² Like Olivia in *Twelfth Night* and Spenser in *Complaints, Containing Sundrie Small Poems of the Worlds Vanitie* (1591), Drayton differentiates between painting a ‘feign’d’ image and the ‘[n]atur[al]’ face.²³ He depicts deception beneath the cosmetic layer: the painter becomes the ‘[m]imique’ as the cosmetics transform them into a mere imitation of a person and strip them of their humanity. Drayton thus states explicitly what Shakespeare’s Aaron and Spenser merely implied in the above-referenced passages, showing the bluntness with which more outspoken anti-cosmetic writers wrote.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²² Thomas Drayton, ‘of tincturing the face’, in *A Discourse Against Painting and Tincturing of Women Wherein the Abominable Sinnes of Murther and Poisoning, Pride and Ambition, Adultery and Witchcraft are Set Foorth & Discovered. Whereunto is Added The Picture of a Picture, or, the Character of a Painted Woman.*, by Thomas Tuke (London, 1616), STC. 24316a, sig. B2r.

²³ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r.

Drayton refers to a '[m]imique', a word also used in reference to players, as we saw in Spenser's poem quoted above, and as appears in Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*: '[w]hat shall I speak of mimicall Actors'; 'so mimicall in their gestures [...] so Player-like in their deportment'.²⁴ Thus, Drayton highlights the associations between playing and women's painting in a way which implies that theatrical conceits like disguise could be perceived as almost inhuman. These are associations that are especially poignant in Philip Stubbes' *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583). Often cited by theatre historians for its disparaging comments about players and plays, *The Anatomie of Abuses* likewise concerns itself with the sins of female beautification. By way of reference to a mythology often associated with players, Stubbes complains that 'Proteus, that monster, could never change himself into so many forms and shapes as these women doe.'²⁵ Stubbes presents women as being as fickle as the prophetic Proteus, who would change his shape to avoid having to speak the truth, his use of 'that monster' making clear that this comparison is meant to be derogatory. He goes on to argue that:

a woman thorow painting and diyng of her face, sheweth her self to be more then whorishe. For (saith hee [Saint Cyprian]) shee hath corrupted, and defaced (like a filthie strumpet, or brothel) the woorkmanship of GOD in her, what is this els, but to turne trueth into falshoode, with paintyng and sibbersawces. wheras the Lorde saieth, *Thou canst not make one haire white or black.*²⁶

²⁴ Prynne, sigs. 2V4r, 3E2v.

²⁵ Philip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses Containing, a Discouerie, or Briefe Summarie of Such Notable Vices and Imperfections, as Now Raigne in Many Countreyes of the World: but (Especiallye) in a Famous Ilande Called Ailgna: Together, with most Fearefull Examples of Gods Judgements, Executed vppon the Wicked for the Same, Aswel in Ailgna of Late, as in Other Places, Elsewhere. Very Godly, to be Reade of All True Christians: but Most Needefull to be Regarded in Englande. Or, The Anatomie of Abuses. Part 1* (London, 1583), STC 23377, sig. F5r.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. F1r.

Stubbes' language paints cosmetics as theologically and materially vile. By using 'slibbersawces' (slibber-sauce), meaning 'a compound or concoction of a messy, repulsive, or nauseous character, used esp. for medicinal purposes', in place of 'cosmetics' or 'paints', Stubbes evokes feelings of disgust toward the application of cosmetics.²⁷ Anti-cosmetic authors used slibber-sauce's dual meaning of cosmetics and medicines to associate the painted face with sickness, as in George Hakewill, '[a]nd for the face they [Italians] used so much slibber-sauce, such dawbing and painting, that a man could not well tell, [...] May it a face or else a botch [tumor] be call'd?'.²⁸

The relationship between cosmetics and medicines is considered by Pollard, her *Drugs and Theatre in Early Modern England* including a chapter on painting amidst its chapters on poisons and narcotics. By placing cosmetics in association with medicinal and recreational drugs, Pollard shows how early modern concerns about the artifice of cosmetics differed from those relating to clothing and other material items, wherein 'changes can be undone by removing the threat, [while] the chemical properties of face-paints evoke an uneasy sense of permanence.'²⁹ Thus, when analysing cosmetic disguise, one must take into consideration cosmetics' perceived ability to corrupt physically. If the capacity to remove the clothing and false hair discussed in previous chapters implies a complete separation between disguise and

²⁷ 'slibber-sauce (n.), sense 1', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2892034550>>.

²⁸ George Hakewill, *An Apologie of the Povver and Prouidence of God in the Government of the World. Or An Examination and Censure of the Common Error Touching Natures Perpetuall and Uniuersall Decay Divided into Foure Bookes* (London, 1627), STC 12611, sig. 3C1v.

²⁹ Pollard, p. 84.

disguiser, then the corrosive nature of cosmetics suggests that the cosmetic disguiser remains, in some way, irreversibly transformed, either physically or morally.

We know now that the mercury sublimate used in white paint would leech toxic chemicals into the skin, but, while in various plays the cosmetic revengers discussed by Pollard utilise the toxic nature of cosmetics in their violent actions, much of the early modern concern around the contaminative nature of cosmetics was instead related to moral corruption and the fear of foreign contamination. Stubbes implies this in the above quote through his protest regarding cosmetics' ability to 'turne truthe into falsehoode', which associates them with the deceptive aspects of disguising, and in his use of 'turne' and 'make', which suggest cosmetics' transformative capabilities have a permanence.³⁰ It is further implied through the language relating to those who use cosmetics: John Bulwer's recurring portmanteau 'painter-stainer'³¹, which occurs four times in the second edition of *Anthropometamorphosis* (1653), insinuates that the use of cosmetics irreversibly stains the wearer through the association with 'primitive [...] barbarous Painter-stainers'.³² As the second section of this chapter will show, cosmetic disguise on stage transfers this concern with foreign contaminants to the home: the use of cosmetics disfigure the disguiser physically, while the defiance of social expectations and the development of international trade of cosmetics signifies their internal corruption.³³ Most often used in drama by young, courtly women to escape patriarchal control and marry without their father's approval, such disguising

³⁰ Stubbes, *Anatomie of Abuses*, sig. F5r.

³¹ Stubbes' term is drawn from the term for a member of the Company of Painter-Stainers'. Painters would apply paint to wood, while stainers applied it to cloth. That the cloth would be significantly more difficult to change in cases of mistakes speaks to concepts of cosmetics as disfiguring, as explored further in this chapter.

³² John Bulwer, *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd: or, the Artificiall Changling Historically Presented, in the Mad and Cruell Gallantry, Foolish Bravery, Ridiculous Beauty, Filthy Finenesse, and Loathsome Loveliness of Most Nations, Fashioning and Altering their Bodies from the Mould Intended by Nature; with Figures of those Transfigurations*. (London, 1653), Wing B5461, sig. 3Z4v.

³³ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, pp. 152-3.

ultimately functions to bring an unapproved foreign body into the court (via cosmetics) and family (via marriage to her preferred, but unapproved, suitor).

Yet, while Pollard's work sheds helpful light on the English nationalist perspective of cosmetics as foreign contaminants and their depiction on the stage, it does not offer us the full early modern picture and we must remain aware of the multifariousness of early modern playgoers, especially given one of the core arguments of this thesis: that each playgoer had an individual response to what they saw on stage (Introduction, pp. 20-2; Chapter Two, pp. 140-2). By predominantly relying on anti-cosmetic writings and tragedies, Pollard's work offers a partial view, which prioritises the beliefs of Puritan and nationalist anti-cosmetic writers. A reading of cosmetic disguise solely based on her analysis would position the disguiser's permanent change as a marker of personal decline, yet this is not necessarily the case. Many cosmetic manuals and surviving depictions of women using cosmetics suggest that much of the early modern English public held a significantly more lenient, perhaps even positive, perception of cosmetics and their usage. The idea of cosmetic painting as an art recurs in household recipe manuals, which often include sections on cosmetics. Likewise, the 'Books of Physick and Chyrurgery' listed by the bookseller William London in his *A Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England* (1658) almost always include cosmetic recipes.³⁴ In an introduction designed to promote his inventory, London defines 'Books of Physick and Chyrurgery' as summarising 'a Noble Science, that's of so general a use to mankind [...] with the Virtues of each Vegetable,

³⁴ William London, *A Catalogue of the Most Vendible Books in England, Orderly and Alphabetically Digested; Under the Heads of Divinity, History, Physick, and Chyrurgery, Law, Arithmetick, Geometry, Astrologie, Dialling, Measuring Land and Timber, Gageing, Navigation, Architecture, Horsmanship, Faulconry, Merchandize, Limning, Military Discipline, Heraldry, Fortification and Fire-works, Husbandry, Gardening, Romances, Poems, Playes, &c. With Hebrew, Greek, and Latin books, for Schools and Scholars. The Like Work Never Yet Performed by Any.* (London, 1658), Wing L2850, sig. G3v.

all which demonstrate the usefulness of this Art', suggesting cosmetic recipes were seen as more worthwhile and beneficial than anti-cosmetic authors like Stubbes would have his readers believe.³⁵

One book in particular, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* (English trans., pre-1562), which London simply refers to as '*Alexis Secrets*', appears to have successfully defended itself against anti-cosmetic arguments to become a staple of household instructional manuals. That *Alexis Secrets* is one of very few books listed for which London does not include a blurb or even a full title is suggestive of its immediate recognisability by those browsing the catalogue. The 'vendible' in London's catalogue's title, alongside his shortened title and the reprinting of its English translation in 1562, 1568, 1595, and 1615, suggests the continued influence of *Alexis Secrets* and its endorsement of cosmetic use on readers and, by extension, an overwhelmingly favourable perspective on cosmetics by the recipe book-buying public.

The question of favourable versus critical perception is a complex one: multiple authors note the irony of keeping the application of cosmetics hidden from the very men for whom they were applied. The full title of *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont* is suggestive of the open secret of cosmetics: the use of 'secret' implies a conspiratorial nature to the publication, while the quarto's multiple publications and translations suggest the recognisability of the book and thus the commonality of its recipes. The confidentiality of cosmetics was well-established and publications often implored women to hide their use of cosmetics. Ovid recommends women 'let no lover find the boxes [of cosmetics] set out upon the table' as their 'looks

³⁵ Ibid. sig. G3v.

are aided by dissembled art', and, in John Donne's satirical poem 'A Paradox of a Painted Face', Donne implores women to '[d]eceive me with such pleasinge fraud, that I/ Fynd in thy art, what can in nature lye.'³⁶ 'A Paradox of a Painted Face' urges appreciation of the act of painting, viewing the metaphorical and literal pains that the poem's subject endured to beautify herself as a show of devotion to her beloved. It does not satirise the women who wear cosmetics, but the men who appreciate cosmeticised faces and yet are enraged at the concept of being deceived by paint: those men who 'Pigmalion's painted statue [...] wold love,/ Soe it were warme or soft, or could but move'.³⁷

This paradox – that women must emulate a type of beauty that could only be constructed from cosmetics, but that they must do so without the use of actual cosmetics – became the focus of numerous satires and criticisms, often by Donne. John Manningham copied one of Donne's 'paradoxes and problems' on women's painting into his commonplace book:

*Paradox. That paynting is lawefull. Fowlenes is loathesome; can it be soe that helps it? What thou lovest most in hir face is colour, and this painting gives that; but thou hatest it, not because it is, but because thou knowest it is. Foole, whom ignorance only maketh happie. Love hir whoe shewes greate love to thee by taking this paynes to seeme lovely to thee.*³⁸

³⁶ Ovid, pp. 132-33; John Donne, 'XXI. A paradox of a painted face' in *The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), I, pp. 456-60 (p. 457, lines 15-6).

³⁷ Donne, 'A paradox of a painted face', p. 459, lines 83-4.

³⁸ John Manningham, *The Diary of John Manningham, of the Middle Temple 1602-1608*, ed. by John Bruce (London: Nichols and Sons, 1868) p. 134; John Donne, 'II. That Women ought to Paint', *Paradoxes, Problemes, Essayes, Characters Written by Dr. Donne, Dean of Pauls; to which is added a Book of Epigrams; written in Latin by the Same Author* (London, 1652), Wing D1867, sig. B4r.

In this paradox, Donne criticises an imagined critic of women's painting as a '[f]oole, whom ignorance only maketh happie'.³⁹ His reasoning here and in 'A Paradox of a Painted Face' – that beautification can only be good as it serves to bring about visual delight – shows that anti-cosmetic complaints were not universal. Not only were there clearly many who enjoyed the stylised face created by painting, but some actively admired the process of beautification as an art.

Many positive framings of cosmetic use come from the theatre, as in John Webster's induction to *The Malcontent* (KM, c. 1604), in which Burbage retorts '[s]hall we protest to the Ladies that their painting makes them Angells' in defence of the company's alterations to the play's text.⁴⁰ Theatrical defences of cosmetics have obvious motives, given that all the female characters, if not all the characters, were painted. Karim-Cooper's *Cosmetics in Shakespearean and Renaissance Drama* has done much to reframe our understanding of the early modern fascination with cosmetics, arguing that depictions of cosmetics on stage did not simply show 'the moral denigration of feminine rituals of beautification'.⁴¹ Instead, Karim-Cooper reads the corruptive nature of cosmetics and their implicit danger as part of what made the theatre so enticing:

[t]he use of poisonous ingredients in various compounds intrigued most dramatists and attracted them because of the seductive allure cosmetic spectacles had over contemporary audiences. [...] [D]ramatists, while reflecting

³⁹ Manningham, p. 134.

⁴⁰ John Webster, 'The Induction to *The Malcontent*', in *The Malcontent, Augmented by Marston with the Additions Played by the Kings Majesties Servants Written by Jhon Webster* (London 1604), STC 17479, sig. A4v.

⁴¹ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 2.

the anxieties about cosmetic materiality, nonetheless celebrate the visual dynamic that is crucial to their material imaginings.⁴²

While Karim-Cooper here considers the dramatists' views of the cosmetic materiality of the theatre, even anti-cosmetic writers appear to have begrudgingly accepted cosmetics as a necessity in the theatre. Often despising playing as much as painting, anti-cosmetic writers frequently compared the two in order to explore either art's sinfulness. William Prynne mocked women who 'adorne themselves like comicall women, as if they were entring into a Play-house to act a part'; John Bulwer believed that 'in adorning and setting forth the Body [painting] differs nothing from the ostentation of Stage-plaies'; William Cave implores Christians to 'leav[e] fucus's [a wash or colouring for the face] and paintings, and living pictures, and fading beauty to those that belong to Playes and Theatres.'⁴³ Although Cave means to separate Christians from the immorality of the theatre, his words here speak to players' skill in painting.

A frequently cited quotation from John Webster depicts 'the player' as one who is 'much affected to painting, and tis a question whether that make him an excellent Player, or his playing an exquisite painter.'⁴⁴ Thought to allude to Richard Burbage due to its pun on 'painting' being read as a reference to Burbage's ability as a portrait artist, Webster's remark likewise draws attention more generally to the importance of cosmetic materiality when playing. '[M]uch affected to painting' alludes to the use of face painting on stage and the concept of playing as 'portraying' a person: he is 'much

⁴² Ibid., p. 68-9.

⁴³ Prynne, sig. 2F2r; William Cave, *Primitive Christianity, or, the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel in Three Parts* (London, 1675), Wing C1599, sig. E1v; Bulwer, sig. B2r.

⁴⁴ John Webster, 'An excellent Actor', in *Sir Thomas Overburie his Wife with New Elegies upon his (Now Knowne) Untimely Death: Whereunto are Annexed, New Newes and Characters, Written by Himselfe and Other Learned Gentlemen*, by Sir Thomas Overbury (London, 1616), sigs. M2r-3r (sig. M2v).

affected to painting' and much effected *by* painting. The player was required to transform his persona both metaphorically and literally when playing; like the 'living pictures' mentioned by Cave, Webster's player becomes both artist and art. In light of the wider cultural attitudes to cosmetics sketched in this section, we can next turn to consider the staging of cosmetics, considering the material practicalities of staging scenes of cosmetic disguise, from the creation and application of the cosmetics to their removal and the disguiser's discovery.

iii. 'Rescue impaired beauty': constructing and obscuring beauty in the King's Men's repertory

Cosmetics were implicitly linked to disguise by their obscuring of the face and the concealment of their application. Observing that painting took place within a woman's private chamber, but that the display of the painted face occurred in public spaces, Karim-Cooper explains:

Significantly, the meaning of the actual paints becomes heightened when we realise that they are the material link between the private and public domain. A woman paints or is painted within the secret walls of her chamber and she shows her face in the public sphere. The paradox of cosmetic paint is that it simultaneously conceals and displays.⁴⁵

This contrast between women in the domestic sphere and women in the public space mirrors the literal concealing of the face. In the case of the stage, this paradox is further complicated: the paint is applied in the private space of the tiring house and very publicly displayed to the audience, but it also serves to conceal the boy player's

⁴⁵ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 35.

masculinity while displaying the artificiality of theatre and the boy's gender performance. Cosmetic disguisers therefore needed to be distinguished from the standard theatrical depiction of women (which was also achieved through stage cosmetics), as the playmakers needed to show the cosmetic disguisers not obscuring for the sake of beauty and gender performance but obscuring to construct a new identity. This section investigates the practical elements of cosmetic disguise in a space that was itself reliant on the use of cosmetics. The comparison between anti-cosmetic works and instructional manuals shows that, despite the authors' differences of opinion, these works all share the same central themes of female authority, theatricality, and disguise.

In the following section, I will first discuss gendered disguise as an increasingly outdated trope on the late-Jacobean stage in order to explore some of the potential reasons the King's Men pivoted away from gendered disguise and toward the more technically complex cosmetic disguise. I then use the wider cultural ideas about cosmetics and female beauty established above to consider how cosmetic disguise is presented as disfiguring the disguiser in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and the anonymous *The Telltale*. Finally, I suggest different ways in which the multiple cosmetic disguises in Fletcher's *The Pilgrim* may have been enacted, demonstrating the remarkable material and practical uses of cosmetic disguise in the King's Men's playing company. Discussion of recipes and anti-cosmetic tracts alongside these scenes of cosmetic disguise demonstrates the clear differences between staging beautification to construct character and the application of cosmetics to obscure character and construct disguise.

Returning to Stubbes' Proteus myth in the context of staged disguise can provide us with a pragmatic reading of the cosmetic disguiser that opposes Stubbes'

concerns about deception. Proteus's omnipotence and ability to foretell the future while being incapable of lying is the driving plot behind most myths involving him, his mutability providing him with a defence against those who would capture him to take advantage of his knowledge. In a similar vein, cosmetic disguise functioned to conceal and ensure female characters' safeties. As this section will explore through analysis of *As You Like It* and *The Pilgrim*, the use of cosmetics to disguise is thus not about deception but defence. Where the previous section considered the similarities between cosmetics for beautification and for playing through their shared aims of concealing and constructing character, this section seeks to demonstrate how cosmetic disguise reconfigures the link between cosmetics and beautification. When performed by female characters, cosmetic disguise mirrors the reasoning behind the female-to-male gendered disguises explored in Chapter Two: to ensure the physical and sexual safety of the disguiser. However, there is one distinct difference: where gendered disguise retains the disguiser's beauty, leading to the sexual confusion for which the trope is notorious, cosmetic disguise disfigures the disguiser's beauty. This clear distinction from the gendered disguise trope, which, by the 1610s was becoming somewhat stale (Chapter Two, pp. 141-2), thus served to highlight the innovation of the cosmetic disguise spectacle that the King's Men were now displaying.

Drama of the 1600s combats the assumption that gendered disguise will protect the disguiser, the disguise instead often instigating moments of sexual harassment and physical danger. The gendered disguise trope was well established by the 1600s, and, as explored in the previous chapters, playwrights thus began to experiment with it: *The Loyal Subject* (KM, 1618) and *Epicœne* (CQR, 1608-10; KM, 1636) depict male-to-female gendered disguises and unannounced disguises; *The Widow* (KM, 1615-17) and *Philaster* (KM, 1612-22) likewise include unannounced disguises; and in *More*

Dissemblers Besides Women the disguiser is heavily pregnant while disguised as a page. As a further subversion – or even parody – of the gendered disguise trope, non-disguised but emotive page boys were similarly feminine-coded to imply a disguising that was not in fact taking place at all. This can be seen in *The Honest Man's Fortune* (LEM, 1613; KM, 1625), when Veramour, the page, is sexually harassed by the gallant Laverdure, who incorrectly assumes that Veramour is a disguised maid due to his being 'a pretty boy' (Chapter Two, pp. 112-15).⁴⁶

Gendered disguise plays consistently include a discussion of the disguiser's complexion in order to suggest the disguiser's often-feminine beauty, as in *Twelfth Night*, *The Widow*, and *Philaster*. Conversely, men disguised as women are routinely described as being unattractive to signal their residual masculinity, as in *The Loyal Subject* when Petesca states that the gentlewoman Alinda – actually Young Arcas disguised to escape his father's enemies – has a 'manly body' and 'strong' hands.⁴⁷ While demonstrating different variations on the gendered disguise trope, the disguises in the above plays fail to conceal the character's beauty and/or femininity effectively (or lack thereof in the case of *The Loyal Subject*), and, therefore, do not protect the disguiser from unwanted sexual advances and even lead to the harassment of non-disguised characters, as in *The Honest Man's Fortune*. In *Twelfth Night*, Cesario is the recipient of unwanted attention from Olivia resulting in threats of violence from Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Duke Orsino; in *The Widow*, Ansaldo is robbed and stripped by thieves, after which he must fend off the advances of Violetta, Philippa, Brandino,

⁴⁶ Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Robert Daborne, with Cyril Tournier, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, transcribed by Grace Ioppolo (Manchester: Malone Society Reprints, Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 57, lines 1856-61.

⁴⁷ John Fletcher, 'The Loyal Subject', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 3C4r-3G1v (sig. 3C4v), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 30 May 2024].

and Francisco; in *Philaster*, Bellario is banished to the woods after being accused of seducing Arethusa; and in *The Loyal Subject*, Alinda loses her position at court, and thus her refuge, after being propositioned by the duke.

Peter Hyland argues that, after 1609, a shift towards unannounced disguises meant that gendered disguise became 'deprive[d...] of any possible metatheatrical meaning' as playmakers 'sacrifice dramatic irony in the course of the play'.⁴⁸ By losing this dramatic irony (the audience's knowledge of the disguise), unannounced disguise plays force upon spectators a 'radical revision' of gendered disguise, offering 'a metatheatrical climax that exposes the fraudulence of theatre'.⁴⁹ This is particularly the case in *The Honest Man's Fortune*, in which Veramour pretends to be 'a poore disguisd ladye that like a page hath followed full long, for love' in order to embarrass Laverdure for his continued sexual harassment.⁵⁰ Laverdure's obsessive pursuit of Veramour, whom he will 'haunt [...] like thy granams ghost', mirrors the futile attempts to romance characters in gendered disguise by Phoebe in *As You Like It*, Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, and Fitzdottrel in *The Devil is an Ass* (KM, 1616).⁵¹ Yet, where early modern audiences were aware that the gender of these characters meant that those pursuits could never succeed, the false implication that Veramour is in gendered disguise in *The Honest Man's Fortune* suggests Laverdure's eventual success. But the discovery is that there is no disguise: Veramour states that he 'tooke example by two or three playes, that me thought concearnd me [so] I tooke that habit' before admitting that he 'knew not [that he was disguised] my selfe untell this gent opend my

⁴⁸ Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁵⁰ Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Robert Daborne, with Cyril Tournier, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, transcribed by Grace Ioppolo (Manchester: Malone Society Reprints, Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 88, lines 2878-9.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 66, line 2178.

dull eyes. & by perswasions made me see it'.⁵² While satirising the gendered disguise trope, Laverdure's certainty that Veramour is disguised – a certainty that was probably mirrored by audience members – and the attraction that led to his certainty, is reflective of the overuse of and resulting presumptions about gendered disguise as a plot device by the late 1610s.

Plays in the King's Men's repertory at this point showcase multiple attempts to reinvigorate the gendered disguise trope, as outlined above. Yet, by the 1620s, innovation in cosmetics enabled companies with disguise-heavy repertories, like the King's Men, to expand the performance possibilities of female disguisers. Previously, due to the permanency of the dye, umbering to disguise characters created problems regarding discovery scenes and repertory building. It was not until 1621 that playing companies had access to an easily removable umber that would allow for dynamic discoveries. The first use of this invention, Ben Jonson's masque, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (Marquess of Buckingham's household, 1621), includes an epilogue explaining, somewhat, the development of the concoction:

You have beheld (& with delight) their [the Gypsies'] change,
And how they came tra[n]sform'd, you may think it strange,
It being a thing not toucht at by our Poet,
Good *Ben* slept there, or else forgot to shew it;
But least it prove like wonder to the sight,
To see a Gypsie, as an *Æthiope*, white:
Know, that what dy'd our face was an oyntment.⁵³

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 88, lines 2885-7, 2889-91.

⁵³ Ben Jonson, 'The Masque of the Gypsies', in *Q. Horatius Flaccus: his Art of Poetry. Englished by Ben: Jonson. With Other Workes of the Author, Never Printed Before*, by Horace, trans. by Ben Jonson (London, 1640), STC 13798, pp. 44-104 (p. 103-4).



Fig 4. 2 Image of a person with stained hands after handling fresh black walnuts. Anonymous. <http://råfrisk.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RF_120823_BlackWalnuts1.jpg>: archived at *Wayback Machine, Internet Archive* <https://web.archive.org/web/20190318011914/https://xn--rfrisk-iaa.se/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RF_120823_BlackWalnuts1.jpg> capture dated 18 April 2019 [accessed 12 June 2024].

Andrea R. Steven's discovery of John Rumler's invention of a recipe for blackface cosmetics that could be 'fetched off with water and a ball', using a mixture of 'walnuts and hog's grease', provides insight into how Jonson and the masque performers managed this trick, and thus, the possibilities for the performance of racial disguise more widely post-1621.⁵⁴ The walnuts dye the skin, as in fig. 4.2, while the 'hog's grease' acts as a protective moisturiser that prevents the walnut dye from seeping fully into the skin and staining it, a method still used by those who pick black walnuts today.⁵⁵

Where the gendered disguise trope does little to obscure the beauty of its disguisers, resulting in continued sexual advances from other characters, cosmetic disguise masks the disguiser's beauty, allowing them the safety refused to the gendered disguiser and enabling alternate plots to those typical of gendered disguise plays. The capacity to enact racial disguise and its discovery through cosmetics therefore offered new performance challenges to players of female characters. That the cosmetic disguiser's character is reliant on a moment of apparent moral and physical contamination (the application of paint) complicates the narrative rendered thus far in disguise scholarship: that interwoven questions of morality and identity exist only in ruling class male disguisers.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Andrea R. Stevens, "Assisted by a barber": The Court Apothecary, Special Effects, and *the Gypsies Metamorphosed* in *Theatre Notebook*, 61.1 (2007), 2-11 (p. 5).

⁵⁵ Jonson, 'Masque of the Gypsies', p. 104; leslienewp, 'Chiming in on the hand moisturizing convo!', *r/CleaningTips, Reddit* (2019) <<https://www.reddit.com/r/CleaningTips/comments/16e6wdo/comment/jzu17xb/>> [accessed 12 June 2024].

⁵⁶ For examples of this reading, see: Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Alexander Thom, "Figures of Exclusion" in *Mucedorus* (c. 1591)', *Law and Literature*, 33.1 (2021), 49-72; Alexander Thom, *Office and Duty in King Lear: Shakespeare's Political Theologies* (Cambridge: Springer, 2024).

Shakespeare's *As You Like It* includes both gendered disguise and cosmetic disguise, showing how each disguise functions differently for its disguiser and the differing implications on identity held by either disguise type. In *As You Like It*, after Rosalind is banished from the court by her uncle, the duke, she and her cousin Celia plan to escape to the Forest of Arden:

Ros[alind]. Why, whether shall we goe?

Cel[ia]. To seeke my Uncle in the Forrest of *Arden*.

Ros. Alas, what danger will it be to us,
(Maides as we are) to travel forth so farre?
Beautie provoketh theeves sooner then gold.

Cel. Ile put my selfe in poore and meane attire,
And with a kinde of umber smirch my face,
The like doe you, so shall we passe along,
And never stir assailants. (TLN 553-61)

Celia's lines put her 'umber smirch[ed]' face, the cosmetic disguise, in opposition to the '[b]eautie' that will put her and Rosalind in danger. That Celia's disguise functions to obscure her beauty through umbering draws attention to the stereotypes of English beauty implicit in cosmetic disguises. She believes that umbering will prevent 'assailants' from being 'stir[red]', meaning 'excited', 'rouse[d] from rest or inaction', and 'wield[ing] or brandish[ing] a weapon', the multiple meanings encompassing both sexual and physical assault.⁵⁷ Celia implies that it is her and Rosalind's whiteness on which their beauty hinges, and therefore it is their skin that they must conceal.

⁵⁷ 'stir (v., sense 1.9.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3883978898>>; 'stir (v., sense 1.5.a.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online]

Rosalind suggests a more combative approach, crafting a disguise with multiple weapons not to disinterest assailants but to frighten and threaten them:

Ros. Were it not better,
Because I am more then common tall,
That I did suite me all points like a man,
A gallant curtelax upon my thigh,
A bore-speare in my hand, and in my heart
Lye there what hidden womans feare there will,
Weele have a swashing and a marshall outside,
As manie other mannish cowards have,
That doe outface it with their semblances. (TLN 562-70)

Rosalind chooses gendered disguise for the ability to wield a weapon. Since gendered disguise was so embroiled in tropes of romantic pursuit, playwrights often ensure that the character's archetypal feminine beauty shines through the disguise, as with Cesario's 'smooth, and rubious' lip in *Twelfth Night* (TLN 271). Rosalind's masculine costuming gives her the capacity to protect herself with its props—her 'gallant curtelax' and 'bore-spear'—and relies on her ability to perform masculinity accurately. The two disguises and the disguisers' reasonings for them are demonstrative of how either type of disguise would impact upon the play's plot. Cosmetic disguise functions to conceal Celia's beauty, while gendered disguise enables Rosalind's protection of her own. In its comparison of these two disguises, *As You Like It* presents gendered disguise and cosmetic disguise as passive and active, respectively.

(2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9677035775>>; 'stir (v.), sense I.1.c,' *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/6080126555>>.

Cosmetics disguise Celia through the obscuring of her features: here the disguiser remains passive, relying on the visual elements of the disguise to conceal her. Gendered disguise, however, offers the disguiser minimal concealment: it is not the act of disguising that ensures her safety, but the disguise's masculine props, the spear and curtelax, that do. The disguise thus requires the disguiser to be active, or at least reactive, in her use of the props for protection. These different functions are mirrored in the names that each chooses for her disguise:

Cel. What shall I call thee when thou art a man?

Ros. Ile have no worse a name then Joves owne Page,
And therefore looke you call me Ganimed.
But what will you be call'd?

Cel. Something that have a reference to my state:
No longer Celia, but Aliena. (TLN 571-6)

Celia's choice, 'Aliena', derives from the Latin for 'stranger', 'foreigner', or 'outsider', associating her disguise with her newfound exile and showing the disguise to be the thing that 'Others' her. That Celia's disguise name means 'stranger' foregrounds her disguise's ability to disconnect disguiser from disguise completely. This disconnect is further suggested by her choosing her pseudonym for its 'reference to [her] state'. 'Aliena' is, ostensibly, chosen to allude to her exile from her home, her statelessness. Yet, her 'state' also references her then-attributes. When disguised, Celia's features and attributes are no longer recognisable; her physical states, like her name, become alien.

Beyond the external changes to which Celia's name choice refers, 'Aliena' is also suggestive of an internal change brought about by her umbering. To go from 'Celia', a Latin name recalling 'heavenly' (from the Latin *caelum* to *caelestis*) and 'blind' (from the Latin *caecus* to *Caecilius*), to 'Aliena', echoes cultural perceptions of the corruptive effect of cosmetics. The name 'Celia' emphasises the character's pre-exile existence, a spiritually pure character unseeing of the corruption within her father's court until his disparaging of Orlando: '[m]y Fathers rough and envious disposition/ Sticks me at heart' (TLN 393-4). If, as Downname stated, cosmetics were indicative of a 'spiritual pollution', Celia's use of cosmetic disguise in her renouncement of the court would mean that the literal corruption caused by the toxic materials in cosmetic paints reflect Celia's metaphorical corruption (as a patriarchal culture would see it) as she rebels against her father. As such, her new perception of the corrupted court that leads her to adopt her disguise becomes reminiscent of Eve's gaining of knowledge and being cast out from Eden as a result. When Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It*, there was no easily removable umber available. The audience would thus have recognised the semi-permanent nature of the dye on Celia's (and her player's) skin. This permanence in turn reflects the continuance of Celia's internal rebellion as she abandons the court for Rosalind: like Eve and the generational curse of pain as punishment for and as a reminder of her knowledge, the permanency of the dye symbolises Celia's retention of her knowledge of the corruption of the court.

While 'Aliena' reflects the transformation brought about by cosmetic disguise, both physically and mentally, Rosalind's choice, Ganymede – a mythical figure described by Homer as 'the loveliest born of the race of mortals [whom Zeus abducted] for the sake of his beauty' – refers to Rosalind's retention of her beauty while

disguised.⁵⁸ Where the application of semi-permanent dye implies the immutability of Celia's disguise, a fixed change, the removable nature of clothing suggests the mutability of Rosalind's, assuring the audience that she can return from 'Ganymede' to 'Rosalind' with ease. Thus, the choice of 'Ganymede' can be read as a reference to the stability of Rosalind's character while in disguise: her beauty and femininity remain. Unlike *Twelfth Night's* Viola, who worries about her disguise's ramifications for her identity ('As I am man,/ My state is desperate for my maisters love/ As I am a woman (now alas the day)' [TLN 667-9]), Rosalind never shows any true concern about identity. Indeed, she retains a distance between herself and her disguise: '[g]ood my complexion! Dost thou think, though I am caparison'd like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition?' (TLN 1339-40). Peter Hyland recognises that when 'Ganymede' roleplays as 'Rosalind' for Orlando, '[Rosalind] puts herself in a position to play her own part and yet keep at a distance from it; the audience, at the same time, appreciates fully the nature of her control'.⁵⁹ Yet as well as the 'control' recognised by Hyland, the roleplay also emphasise the ineffectuality of Rosalind's disguise.

As You Like It positions gendered disguise and cosmetic disguise in direct opposition. In doing so, it shows the different ways in which each form of disguise functions for its disguiser: where cosmetic disguise absolutely conceals, gendered disguise enables the disguiser's beauty to shine through and instead offers them practical tools of protection. Much of this is due to limits imposed upon cosmetic disguise by the permanence of umber, both in terms of plot – for Rosalind to remain a viable romantic option for Orlando and to regain her position as future Duchess she

⁵⁸ Homer, *The Iliad of Homer*, trans. by Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), book XX, lines 233–235.

⁵⁹ Peter Hyland, 'Shakespeare's Heroines: Disguise in the Romantic Comedies', *Ariel*, 9.2 (1978), 23-39 (p. 34).

cannot be permanently marked by the cosmetics – and in terms of spectacle: a discovery is not possible when the disguise is irremovable. Yet, as the following will show, even after the invention of removable umber, the paint retains its association with permanent staining. In doing so, the following shows how it provides playwrights with a tool through which to consider the im/permanence of cosmetic disguise and disfigurement.

Making use of the innovation in cosmetic technology that *As You Like It* could not, the anonymous play *The Telltale* presents umbering as a means of staging disfigurement. Having escaped jail after being falsely accused of infidelity by her husband, the duke, Victoria must disguise herself to get to Castle Angelo and safety. However, on the way she is made aware of ‘disordered soldiers’ waiting ahead:

Vict[oria]. Couldst thou but free mee from their violence

Julio. t shall Cost mee the setting on elce & yet that face of yo^{rs}

victo. what of that prithee, rather then my bewty should play the villaine and betray myne honor unto their lust, like to that brittaine matrone thus would I mangle yt

offers to cut her face

Julio. not for a Cow god save her I know a trick worth two of that

umbers her face.

victo. what wilt thou doe

Julio. do? Nothing but what I have Cullor for. so & they bee in love wth yo^r bewty now hange mee.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Anonymous, *The Telltale*, eds. R. A. Foakes and J. C. Gibson (The Malone Society Reprints: Oxford, 1960), pp. 54-5.

Victoria's umbering is explicitly contrasted with her beauty and paralleled with her plan to 'mangle' or 'cut her face'. Yet, with Rumler's recipe, umbering implicitly provides Victoria a way to 'disfigure' her beauty without the permanence of the cutting, Julio even expressing his absolute certainty that the soldiers will not 'bee in love wth [Victoria's] bewty now'. Cosmetic disguise thus encapsulates the two early modern meanings of disfigure: 'to disguise [...] temporarily' and 'to change the appearance [...] in a way judged to be negative'.⁶¹

Through its use of removable umber as a symbol of disfigurement, *The Telltale* mirrors the implications of permanence in Celia's use of semi-permanent umber, playing on the material resonances of umber that, while no longer accurate, retain some association through the above discussed Puritanical depictions of cosmetics. In a sense, this scene of disguising and disfiguring mirrors Hakewill's earlier pun on 'slibber-sauce[s]' as both healing medicine and harmful cosmetic: by painting Victoria, Julio 'save[s]' her and prevents her harm, while the act of 'mangl[ing]' her beauty physicalises the internal corruption implicit in the wearing of cosmetics. The materialisation of cosmetics' harmful effects through the staining of the disguiser's whiteness – presented as the disfigurement of her beauty – was a key tenant of cosmetic disguise, shown comprehensively in Fletcher's *The Pilgrim*.

One of few solo-authored plays by Fletcher, *The Pilgrim* combines all of Fletcher's common King's Men tropes to the point of parody: gendered disguise, wayward daughters, controlling fathers, and groups of rogue comicks. To these it also adds substantial use of cosmetic disguise. *The Pilgrim* provides two rare examples of

⁶¹ 'disfigure (v.), sense I.a.', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9245390535>>; 'disfigure (v.), sense II', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2023), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1961284388>>.

female multi-disguisers in the form of Alinda, the play's lead, and Juletta, her maid. Upon discovering that her would-be husband, Pedro, has disguised himself as the play's eponymous pilgrim and left the city, Alinda escapes her disapproving father's household disguised as a boy. Alphonso, her father, attempts to follow and apprehend her, but is foiled again and again as Alinda shifts disguises as quickly as he can discover them, changing from a pox-patched and bandaged boy, to a sun-burnt she-fool, to an old woman, and, finally, a shepherd.

Alinda alters her disguise almost as soon as she meets someone she recognises, always prior to their discovering the disguise in which she had been hiding. 'Some disguise roles', argues Hyland, 'were apparently written to display the virtuoso abilities of specific actors'.⁶² This can most certainly be said of Alinda, whose continually shifting disguises enabled the King's Men to display their company's cosmetic skill, and the apprentice player to display his 'virtuoso abilities' before he matured to playing adult roles. Moreover, Alinda's cosmetic disguise mirrors the prop-based representational disguise performed by semi-comic groups of players discussed in Chapter Five (pp. 305-7). The similarities in the skill sets called for suggest that experience with cosmetic disguise could be an aspect of training for apprentice players in preparation for the comic caricature of representational disguise acting they would need if they were to move on to the comic roles like that of *The Winter's Tale's* Autolycus and the shephard clown, *Beggars Bush's* Higgen and Prigg, and *The Widow's* Latrocinio and company (see: Chapter Five, section iv).

The Pilgrim is a distinctly visual play; for, as we shall see, Alinda's disguises are formed through a mix of physical movement, cosmetic materials, and stock

⁶² Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 2.



Fig. 4.3 Beauty patches from c.18th century, The Wellcome Collection / Science Museum Group (A158810).

costume. This predominance of the visual is even encountered on the playtext's page, where the reader is consistently informed of the cosmetic nature of Alinda's disguises through other characters' descriptions of her (most always after the playgoer would have seen the disguise): Julio describes her as looking like '[a] Boy his face in patches', while Rodrigo mentions that Alinda's She-fool is 'a handsome thing, but horribly Sun-burnt'.⁶³ *The Pilgrim's* reliance on report and rumour means that, while the cosmetic nature of Alinda's disguise translates to readers, when concerned, as this thesis is, with the material particularities of early performance, any account of the precise materials used in its original staging depends upon comparisons with wider cultural techniques and conventions of cosmetic use. The dating of *The Pilgrim* is uncertain, Wiggins placing it some point between 1619 and 1621 while its first recorded performance was at Whitehall in January 1622. This means that the play exists on the boundary of Rumler's advancement in cosmetic technologies. The Whitehall performance was six months after *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd*, but

⁶³ John Fletcher, 'The Pilgrim', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 5F4r-5I3r (sig. 5H3r), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 10 June 2024].



Fig. 4.4 Double portrait of two women with face patches, c.1650. Unknown artist. Compton Verney, Compton Verney Art Gallery.

potential earlier performance would not have had access to those materials. Given the significant ramifications that dates placing it either before or after Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd* would have on the play's staging, its uncertain chronology asks us to consider multiple ways in which the cosmetic disguises may have been performed and how these performances may have changed over the play's history.



Fig. 4.5 Portrait of Charles, 9th Lord Cathcart, c.1753-55, Manchester Art Gallery (1981.36).

The first of Alinda's cosmetic disguises, '[a] Boy his face in patches' is the easiest of her disguises to reconstruct.⁶⁴ Black velvet patches – also known as 'mouches', the French for 'flies', as they looked like small black flies around the face – were initially used to cover smallpox and venereal scarring, but later became a fashion accessory (fig 4.3). Where fashion patches appear across portraits, woodcuts, and literature of the seventeenth century, large patches, used to cover large wounds and scars are less commonly depicted. The display case from which fig. 4.3 was taken, is a collection of women's beautification products (seen in fig. 0.1), including false eyebrows, fabric cheek fillers, breast pads, and patches, demonstrating the patches foremost purpose as being for beautification rather than coverage (with the caveat that these two reasons often went hand-in-hand). By the mid-seventeenth century, when fig. 4.4 was painted, patches were used 'not to cover something up but rather show something off. The contrast [was] thought to make the skin look beautiful and to draw attention to certain parts of the face, like the eyes'.⁶⁵ Fig. 4.5, meanwhile, depicts the portrait subject wearing a larger patch, the like of which would be used to cover injuries or large scarring.

The first material reference we have to Alinda's gendered disguise is that '[s]ome stubborn Master has abu[s]'d the Boy,/ And beaten him'.⁶⁶ While, initially, this reads as a movement-based moment, Alinda's cries of '[o] my bones' and '[m]y back, my back, my back' suggesting her feigning agony and impeded movement, much as

⁶⁴ Ibid., 5G4v.

⁶⁵ Kimberly Chrisman Campbell, quoted in Hunter Oatman-Stanford, 'That Time the French Aristocracy Was Obsessed With Sexy Face Stickers', *Collectors Weekly* (2017) <<https://www.collectorsweekly.com/articles/sexy-face-stickers/>> [accessed 10 June 2024] (para 4 of 23).

⁶⁶ Fletcher, 'The Pilgrim', sig. 5G4v.

does Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* (See Chapter Five, pp. 299-305), we are shortly thereafter made aware of the corresponding costuming:

Rod[erigo]. No, no *Alinda*
You cannot cozen me againe in a Boyes figure,
Nor hide the beauty of that face in patches,
But I shall know it.

Jul[etta]. A Boy his face in patches?⁶⁷

Due to the abundant evidence of patches as fashion accessories, patches are often discussed for their capacity to highlight beauty, yet here Roderigo accuses Alinda of hiding her beauty underneath the patches: she uses them to obscure rather than to emphasise. Given that Alinda's use of patches seems to have been to hide the fact that 'the Boy' had been 'beaten' by a former master, she may potentially have worn the larger style of patch seen in fig. 4.5, used to cover injuries and scarring. There is a clear distinction between the staging of these patches in moments of disguise and their use to signify courtliness and beautification.

Upon her patch disguise being discovered, Alinda exchanges clothing with a drunkard she-fool in the woods and enters 'as a foole' who is said to be 'a handsome thing, but horribly Sun-burnt'.⁶⁸ The language here, 'horribly Sun-burnt', suggests that the cosmetics in Alinda's fool disguise are specifically made to disfigure her. 'Burnt' suggests damage to the skin, recalling how the patches in her previous disguise were

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. 5G4v.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. 5H2r, 5H3r.

meant to 'hide the beauty of [her] face' and show that she had been 'beaten', while 'horribly' indicates the intensity of the cosmetic colouring.⁶⁹

'Sun-burnt' had mixed meanings in early modern England: it could refer to the redness caused by extended time in the Sun, today's meaning of 'sunburn', thus suggesting the use of rouge, or it could refer to what would now be described as 'tanned', suggesting the use of umber. In both cases, however, it symbolised Otherness.⁷⁰ The OED's definition and earliest examples for sunburnt – '[o]f a person or person's face [...] inflamed, discoloured, blistered, etc. by over exposure to the sun; tanned, reddened' – show the duality with which this term was used: '[i]n þryste [thirst] & hunger sunne brente & broun In all þer lyf for all þer swynke [physical labour]' (1500) and '[t]he one sonburned another blacke as a pan.' (1506).⁷¹ Where the first quotation combines 'sunne brente & broun', suggesting that the sunburn is viewed as a form of browning, the second distinguishes between the 'sonburned' subject and the 'blacke' subject.

In his *Anthropometamorphosis*, Bulwer confusedly theorises on potential reasons for racial difference, stating that many before him have posited theories on the subject:

Why some men [...] should first acquire and still retain the glosse and tincture of blacknesse they who have strictly enquired into the cause, have found no lesse darkenesse in it, than blackness in the effect it selfe, there arising unto examination no such satisfactory and unquarrellable reasons as may confirme

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. 5H3r, 25G4v.

⁷⁰ 'sunburnt (adj.), sense 1.a', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3389439668>>; 'sunburnt (adj.), sense 1.b', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3736897921>>.

⁷¹ 'sunburnt (adj.), sense 1.a', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3389439668>>.

the causes generally received, which are but two in number, that is, the heat and the scorch of the Sun, or the curse of the God on Cham and his Posterity.⁷²

While those before him had decided that the sun's effect on race is one of two 'satisfactory and unquarrellable theories', Bulwer disagrees, stating that it cannot be the case when those who 'live among the most cold Mountaines of the Moone [are] black', likely referring to Inuit, known of by the English after three Inuk from the mountainous Qikiqtaaluk Region of northern Canada were kidnapped and brought to England by Martin Frobisher in 1576.⁷³ Bulwer's refutation of the theory that blackness was the result of 'the heat and the scorch of the Sun' indicates toward its pervasiveness: in order to successfully posit his own theory, he must first dispute the most common theory.

The theory that the sun resulted in racial difference would thus indicate that white sunburnt working-class labourers were of a different racial category to the white ruling class, culminating in sunburn being read as a combined signifier of class and racial Otherness. The audience would have been well versed in the racial nuance of class distinctions in a period in which there was 'a system of social differentiation that involve[d] distinctions of class as well as race and, indeed, intermingl[e] these two categories', according to Patricia Akhimie.⁷⁴ David Sterling Brown has recently developed on this idea in *Shakespeare's White Others* (2023), arguing that Shakespeare's characters who do not fit into the template of the 'ideal white self' – the 'white other' – 'disrupt the common understanding of the Black/white racial binary'.⁷⁵

⁷² Bulwer, sig. 3P2v-3r.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, sig. 3P3r.

⁷⁴ Patricia Akhimie, *Shakespeare and the Cultivation of Difference: Race and Conduct in the early modern world* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 2.

⁷⁵ David Sterling Brown, *Shakespeare's White Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), p. 1.

In this system, notes Arthur Little, whiteness 'belongs to the elite' and, thus, not the travelling 'she-foole' whom Aurelia is impersonating.⁷⁶

The implication of racial difference in Aurelia's disguise, alongside its specifically being that of a 'she-fool', offers a potential link to the gypsy (Egyptian) and rogue disguises that will be discussed in Chapter Five. Beggars and vagabonds were accused of 'running away from their own colours' and altering themselves physically with umber or tan to join gypsy and traveller troupes, the colour simulating the racial difference that associated them with gypsies.⁷⁷ The association between gypsies and travelling professions was well documented, as in Samuel Rid's pamphlet on juggling:

these fellowes [Gypsies and rogues] seeing that no profit comes by wandring, but hazard of their lives, doe daily decrease and breake off their wonted society, and betake themselves many of them, some to be Pedlers, some Tinkers, some Juglers, and some to one kinde of life or other, insomuch that Jugling is now become common.⁷⁸

The 'fool' element of Aurelia's she-fool disguise holds an association with the travelling 'Juglers' and entertainers, implying that she was supposed to resemble the stereotype of a gypsy in the period.

The choice of 'Sun-burnt' rather than 'reddened' or 'tawny' combined with the uncertain dating of the play thus presents us with a reconstruction problem. Alinda's

⁷⁶ Arthur Little, *Anti-Racist Shakespeare: Twelfth Night | Shakespeare & Race (2021) | The Globe*, online video recording, YouTube, 7th October 2021, <https://youtu.be/lg1R46guBeY?si=FFXo_WnXjgwCqzYm> [accessed 10 January 2024].

⁷⁷ David Cressy, 'The Trouble with Gypsies in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 59.1 (2016), 45-70 (p. 59).

⁷⁸ Samuel Rid, *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemaine wherein is Deciphered, all the Conveyances of Legermaine and Jugling, How they are Effected, & wherein they Chiefly Consist. Cautions to Beware of Cheating at Cardes and Dice. The Detection of the Beggerly Art of Alcumistry. &, the Foppery of Foolish Cousoning Charmes. All Tending to Mirth and Recreation, Especially for those that Desire to have the Insight and Private Practise Thereof* (London, 1612), STC 21027, sig. B2v.

disguise is removed during the play, meaning that its cosmetic elements must have been reversible. If Wiggins is correct in his composition date of 1619-21, the 'Sun-burnt' skin is likely to have been staged as the reddening of Alinda's face with (removable) rouge, since removable umber was not yet available. Yet crucially, if *The Pilgrim* was written for its first recorded performance at Whitehall in January 1622, six months after Rumler's invention, Alinda's 'Sun-burnt' skin may instead have been one of the earliest uses by a professional playing company of removable umber as a cosmetic disguise. In what follows, I consider the potentials for either rouging or umbering, showing the ways in which racial difference may have been performed, and how the developments in cosmetic technologies transformed performance possibilities after 1621.

Rouging to suggest sunburn and thus racialised difference is a cosmetic technique the use of which is indicated across a range of evidence for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century performance. The plot for *The First Part of Tamar Cham* (LSM, 1591) includes reference to an unnamed 'red fast fellow' ('Enter the Nagars: Tho: Rowley: and the red fast fellow. '), likely meaning 'red-faced fellow', playing 'nagars' in the play's final scene.⁷⁹ Martin Wiggins hypothesises that this may have meant 'Nagays' or the Nogay people near Mongolia, where *Tamar Cham* is theorised to have been set, the term being used to describe non-white characters differentiated from the 'ollive cullord moores' who enter directly after.⁸⁰ Given that 'red fast fellow' comes immediately before the description of the 'ollive cullored moores', the red face could, perhaps, be saying that whoever has a red painted face will be playing one of 'the Nagars', referring to the player's make up rather than to the player having a naturally

⁷⁹ 'Tamar Cham, Parts 1 and 2', in *Lost Plays Database*
<https://lostplays.folger.edu/Tamar_Cham,_Parts_1_and_2> [accessed 10 June 2024].

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

red face. The lack of a name for this player suggests that he would presumably have been a hired man, while the above-discussed association between 'sun-burnt' skin and racial difference implies that this red face may have been an attempt to stage a visual distinction between the 'Nagars' and the 'ollive cullord moores'.⁸¹

Recipes for reddening the face appear throughout household and cosmetic manuals, *Alexis Secrets* including four recipes for a red colour for the face at various costs, two of which 'continueth long upon the face':⁸²

Another kind of red, very good for the face, easier to make, and with lesse cost. Take two onces of fish glew very cleare, and steepe it in white wine the space of five or sixe daies until it be very soft, then take Brasill [brazil: a brownish-red wood used to make red dyes and pigments] that is good and of a good colour well scraped or cut into small pieces, then steepe it in well water, so that the water be above it more than the bredth of a hand and a halfe: This done, botle it together with a small fire; assaying evermore the colour upon a paper, until it bee to your fantasie. And before you take it from the fire, put to it for everie glasse full of the saide colour, an once of rawe roch alome [a type of white mineral in crystals] beaten into powder, and gum Arabick [a water-soluble gum used as a binding agent], as much as three or foure beans. Then take it from the fire, and keepe it in a viol verie close stopped: and so shall you have an exquisite thinge.⁸³

Most rouge recipes use either brazil wood, sandalwood, or coccum dye as their pigment. *Alexis Secrets* is a particularly helpful example due to the great detail he includes in his recipe; because he remarks upon this recipe being of 'lesse cost'; and, crucially, because it uses 'fish glew', a high tack glue which remains reversible with

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Girolami Ruscelli, *The Secrets of the Reverend Maister Alexis of Piemont Containing Excellent Remedies Against Diverse Diseases, Wounds, and Other Accidents, with [t]he Maner to Make Distillations, Perfumes, Confitures, Dyings, Colours, Fusions, and Meltings*, trans. by William Ward (London, 1595), STC 312, sig. K5v-6r.

⁸³ Ibid., sig. K6r.

hot water years after its application, meaning it would be of great use in theatre spaces, where players must change facial hair and prosthetics on a moment's notice (see Chapter Three).⁸⁴ The use of fish glue as a base in Piémont's recipe, and the use of brazil wood over more permanent coccum dye, suggests that the red paint is likely to have been easily removable, meaning that a similar recipe may have been used to symbolise racial difference prior to the development of removable umber.

Rumler's recipe for removable umber, meanwhile, would brown the skin. Through a mixture of 'walnut oil and hog's grease', Rumler created a recipe that would lightly umber the wearer's skin without permanently staining it.⁸⁵ Fig. 4.2 showed the staining effect that handpicking walnuts has on the hands, often dyeing them so heavily that it can take weeks for the hands to return to their original skin tone. Those who use and make natural clothes dyes like walnut dye recommend coating the hands in moisturiser or oil before picking and working with walnuts, as the moisturiser acts as a natural barrier and prevents the walnut dye from seeping into and staining the skin. The hog's grease in Rumler's umbering recipe would have acted in a similar fashion, preventing the umber from closely binding itself to and semi-permanently dyeing the skin. Fig. 4.6 shows a 'natural tanning lotion' created using a mixture of walnuts and coconut oil, a recipe strikingly similar to Rumler's of walnuts and hog's grease. As the screenshot shows, the presence of the oil to prevent the dye from staining the skin makes this mixture much lighter than the walnut dye alone, creating an artificial tan colour similar to that described above.

⁸⁴ 'Fish Glue', in *Preservation Equipment* <[⁸⁵ Jonson, 'The Masque of the Gypsies', p. 103.](https://www.preservationequipment.com/Catalogue/Conservation-Materials/Adhesives/Fish-Glue#:~:text=Fish%20glue%20used%20for%20a,and%20has%20excellent%20remoistening%20properties.> [accessed 6 January 2024].</p></div><div data-bbox=)



Fig 4.6 Screenshot of YouTube video. The Herbotheary Natural Health, 'Black walnuts natural dye and tanning lotion experiment', online video recording, YouTube, 9th September 2023
 <https://youtu.be/VOQ2Zw_311w?si=wJzmP1oXwDBITkvF&t=505> [accessed 10 June 2024]. Image shows an arm that has a patch of darker skin resulting from the mixture of walnuts and coconut oil.

Upon Rumler's recipe of walnut oil and hog's grease enabling the easy removal of umber, the King's Men's performance of brown-skinned characters dramatically increased. Umbering and cosmetic disguise no longer had the permanency implied by Celia's umbering in 1600. 1st January 1622 is the first recorded performance of *The Pilgrim*; this court performance was exactly a year prior to the court revival of Jonson's *The Alchemist* (KM, 1610, court rev. 1st January 1623), and roughly contemporary with the earliest performances of *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, lic. prior to 30 March 1622; court rev. 6th January 1624), *The Sea Voyage* (KM, lic. 22nd June 1622), *Osman the Great Turk* (KM, lic. 6th September 1622), and *The Spanish Curate* (KM, lic. 24th October 1622; court perf. 26th December 1622).⁸⁶ Each of these plays require some form of umbering: *More Dissemblers* and *The Alchemist* both use umber as a

⁸⁶ Wiggins, 1621, 1993, 2020, 2022, 2025.

disguise (Aurelia disguises herself as a Gypsy using umber, while Surly is said to have a 'yellow, Madrid face' when disguised as the Spanish Don), while *The Sea Voyage*, *Osman*, and *The Spanish Curate* all include non-white characters (the islanders; Osman and the Tartars; the Spanish curate and Egla).⁸⁷

While the first known performance of *The Pilgrim* pre-dates this repertory trend by a minimum of six months, this same court performance nonetheless sits comfortably six months *after* the invention of removable umber for Jonson's masque, *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd* (1621). The new cosmetic technology clearly dictated a change in the way in which race was depicted, which would have impacted the Whitehall performance of *The Pilgrim*, whether it was newly written for that court performance with Rumler's recipe in mind, or whether it was an earlier play conceived before the development of removable umber yet newly able to take advantage of it in 1622. Focusing on this court performance, we can imagine the King's Men's then-resident playwright, John Fletcher, using Alinda's 'Sun-burnt' disguise as a means of testing the performability of removable umber, this cosmetic technique constituting a form of spectacle. Given the subsequent increase in performance of brown-face, it appears that this test was successful. Indeed, as the final section of this chapter will show, by the time of Middleton's *More Dissemblers* the King's Men had mastered the use of this innovative concoction in moments of spectacle.

Remaining with *The Pilgrim* for now, after Alinda's disguise as a she-fool is discovered by her father, her final cosmetic disguise uses theatrical cosmetic

⁸⁷ Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (London, 1612), STC 14755, sig. L3r; Lucy Munro, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: the King's Men* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), pp. 51-82.

techniques to depict Alinda and her maid Juletta, with whom she has just reunited, as old women:

Jul[etta]. pray ye put off this fooles coate;
Though it have kept ye secret for a season,
Tis known now, and will betray ye; your arch enemy
Roderigo is abroad: many are looking for ye.

Alin[da]. I know it: and those many have I cozen'd:

Jul. You cannot still thus.

Alin. I have no means to shift it.

Jul. I have: and shift you too. I lay last night
At a poore widows house here in the Thicket,
Whether I will conduct ye, and new shape ye,
My selfe too to attend ye.⁸⁸

Juletta's turn of phrase here – that she has means to 'shift' or change Alinda's coat and 'shift [Alinda] too' meaning she can transform her – suggests a transformation that encompasses both costume and the body underneath.

Much like the 'beaten' youth and the 'horribly Sun-burnt' fool, the old women disguises are depicted as monstrous, hence why Roderigo instantly stutters in fear upon seeing them:

Rod[erigo]. Who are these?

Ped[ro]. What.

Rod. Those there, those, those things that come upon us,
Those grandame things, those strange antiquities.
Did not I say these wo[o]ds begot strange wonders?

[...]

⁸⁸ Fletcher, 'The Pilgrim', sig. 511r.

They show as if they were mortall,
They come upon us still.

[*Ped*]. Be not afraid, man,
Let 'em be what they wil, they cannot hurt us,

Rod. That thing ith' Button'd-Cap lookes terribly.
She has Guns in her eyes, the devils Ingeneer.

Ped. Come, stand, and let's goe meet 'em.

Rod. Goe you first.
I have lesse faith: when I have said my Prayers—

Ped. There needs no feare, haile reveren'd dames.⁸⁹

Roderigo's strong reaction suggests there is a visual monstrosity to the disguises. Yet, beyond the allusions that Alinda and Juletta have the appearance of 'terribl[e]' and 'strange wonders', the only textual indication of the actual cosmetics used is Roderigo's later comment that '[t]hat little devill has maine need of a Barber,/ What a trim beard she has?'⁹⁰ In a paper reflecting on how the bodies of elderly women in early modern drama reflect the post-modern artistic movement of anarchitecture, Saraya Haddad noted the correlation between damaged bodies and witchcraft allegations, the deformed body signifying inner corruption, much like the perception of cosmetics discussed in section ii.⁹¹ Haddad's research into the representative meanings of the ruined body imply that in staged depictions, the elderly – in particular elderly women – were often exaggeratedly grotesque or monstrous, engaging with this chapter's consideration of cosmetic disguise as an enactment of early modern perceptions of women's facial disfigurements. Following Haddad's suggestion, by

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. 512r. Editorial interventions my own.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. 512r.

⁹¹ Saraya Haddad, 'Anarchitecture and Mother Sawyer's Broken Body', unpublished paper delivered at the seminar 'Shakespeare Institute Postgraduate Researcher Seminar' (Stratford-upon-Avon: The Shakespeare Institute, 10th February 2022).

drawing on age-related disguises and depictions of the elderly in John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *The Double Marriage* (KM, 1620-3) and William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (LCM, 1597-1602) and *Macbeth* (KM, 1606) we can theorise what Alinda and Juletta's old women disguises may have looked like.

In *The Double Marriage*, when the sea-captain Sesse's daughter runs away to his enemy's island, he must disguise himself as a young man to retrieve her. As discussed in detail in Chapter Three (pp. 192-201), Sesse's hair and beard are dyed, and 'all the crannies in [his] face' are '[s]topt', so he 'look[s] as plump, [his] eyes as sparkling,/ As if [he] were to leap into a Ladies saddle.'⁹² That the 'crannies' in Sesse's face are '[s]topt', or filled, suggests that staged depictions of the elderly involved some cosmetic imitation of wrinkles, which Sesse's player is able to remove between his exit as old Sesse and entrance disguised as a youth. Alinda and Juletta's feigned wrinkles would thus act in a similar way to the patches and rouge or umber of Alinda's previous disguises, which obscured their faces with paint.

Witchcraft was often represented through bodily difference: when Mother Sawyer in *The Witch of Edmonton* (PCM, 1621) questions why the townspeople view her as a witch, she concludes that it is because she is 'deform'd'.⁹³ The use of beards or stubble to depict witches and elderly women recurs across early modern drama, as is the case with Falstaff's disguise as the witch of Brentford, which hinges on his beardedness: '[b]y Jeshu I verily thinke she is a witch indeed,/ I espied under ther

⁹² John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, 'The Double Marriage', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 5C3r-5F3v (sig. 5D4v), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* < <https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647> > [accessed 30 May 2024].

⁹³ William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton a Known True Story, Composed into a Tragi-comedy by Divers Well-esteemed Poets* (London, 1658), Wing R2097, sig. C3r.

muster a great beard.’⁹⁴ Similarly, the weird sisters in *Macbeth* are said to ‘be Women, [a]nd yet [their] Beards forbid [Banquo] to interpret [that they] are so.’ (*Macbeth*, TLN 131-3). Roderigo’s mention that Alinda or Juletta has ‘a trim beard’ thus draws upon stage conventions in which facial hair on elderly women transforms them into gendered Others and associates them with witchcraft. The use of cosmetic disguise to present as elderly women – perhaps even witches, given Roderigo’s fear – would therefore be reliant on the application of a false beard, ensuring the covering of one or both of the pair’s faces.

Despite making use of many cosmetic disguises – and indeed despite successfully remaining unrecognised while disguised as an old woman – Alinda’s final disguise, from which she makes her concluding discovery, is as a shepherd, without obvious call for cosmetics. While Alinda’s shepherd disguise in V.vi. may be unnecessary in terms of the plot, its use as her discovery disguise suggests that cosmetic disguises remained impractical for discoveries. Alinda’s discovery appears to be akin to the hooded discoveries discussed in Chapter One:

Musick. Enter *Alinda, & Juletta like Shepherds*.

Seb[astian]. A short, and sweet Meditation: what are these here?

Alin[da]. Haile to this sacred place,

Jul[etta]. They are all here, Madam:

No violence dare touch here; be secure:

[...]

Seb. 'Tis she sure.

Cur[io]. 'Tis certainly.

⁹⁴ William Shakespeare, *A most pleasaunt and excellent conceited comedie, of Syr John Falstaffe, and the merrie wives of Windsor* (London, 1602), STC 22299, sig. F2v.

Ped[ro]. Ha! doe I dazell?

Rod[erigo]. 'Tis the faire *Alinda*.

Gov[ernor]. What wonder stand these strangers in?

Rod. Her woman by her,
The same Sir, as I live,

Alph[onso]. I had a daughter,
With such a face once: such eyes and nose too,
Ha, let me see, 'tis wondrous like *Alinda*,
Their devotion ended, I'll marke 'em and neerer.
And she had a Filly that waited on her:
Just with such a favour,
Doe they keepe Goats now?⁹⁵

The use of a hood for this discovery is only implicit in *The Pilgrim*, V.vi: Sebastian's initial question, 'what are these here', followed by the exclamations of shock and Alphonso's focus on 'such a face [...] eyes and nose', suggests that Juletta's 'be secure' was followed by the pair removing their cloaks or hats and discovering themselves to the collective characters. Even in the absence of a stage direction or explicit reference, comparison with other discoveries in the King's Men's repertory and John Fletcher's canon would support the possibility that the hood device was repeated in *The Pilgrim*.

The discovery scene in *The Pilgrim* in fact mirrors the discovery of Bellario in Fletcher's first play for the King's Men, *Philaster* (pp. 85-6), revived in 1620 and printed in 1620 and 1622. The similarities between Dion/Leon's inability to recognise Bellario in gendered disguise and Alphonso's uncertainty regarding Alinda's disguise – despite the other characters recognising 'the faire Alinda' almost instantly – suggest Fletcher's (and perhaps the King's Men's) hesitance to rely upon a new disguise technology in

⁹⁵ John Fletcher, 'The Pilgrim', sig. 5I2v.

the play's discovery scene. The on-stage discovery of Alinda thus represents a cautious approach to discovery spectacle, drawing upon established staging techniques already common in both the King's Men's and Fletcher's repertory rather than depending upon a form of cosmetic disguise still in the process of being established on the commercial stage.

The Pilgrim shows us the developing inclusion of cosmetic disguise in the King's Men's disguise repertory. Innovation in cosmetic recipes allowed Fletcher to engage with the conventional belief that the use of beautifying products was in some way deceptive by having Alinda disguise herself through cosmetic disfigurement, using something that was somewhat commonplace in the theatre – cosmetics – to create new modes of spectacle. Yet despite showing innovation in the application of cosmetics in the body of the play, Fletcher avoids their use in the discovery scene, V.vi., to ensure a dynamic, if commonplace, discovery for the audience. We see, in *The Pilgrim*, the hesitance to commit fully to the use of cosmetics in disguise and discoveries as well as the limitations of the public stage compared to court masques, even as these technologies and recipes became more widely available. The likely choice of the then-common 'hooded discovery' (Chapter One) in a play so engaged with the innovative use of cosmetics in disguises is suggestive of self-imposed limits on innovation in staging cosmetic disguise spectacle early in its performance history.

Cosmetic disguise gives female characters the capacity to disguise without presuming a plot based on sexual misunderstandings, as is the case with gendered disguise. In their turn from gendered disguise to cosmetic disguise in plays such as *More Dissemblers*, *The Pilgrim* and *The Telltale*, the King's Men thus continued to pivot away from disguise as only being concerned with identity toward disguise as a performance technique used to enact moments of visual spectacle, a pivot that this

thesis has shown began with on-stage discoveries. Spectacular discoveries that, as the next section will show, were greatly enhanced by the invention of removable umber.

iv. 'All the girls that shine above me': Seeing skin in *More Dissemblers Besides Women*

So far this chapter has contextualised cosmetics and cosmetic disguise through wider cultural attitudes to cosmetics, and through shifting stage practices from the late 1590s to the early 1620s. In light of these attitudes to cosmetics and the conventions of their theatrical use, this final section explores how the materiality of cosmetics engaged with other materials of performance, such as stage lighting. Through discussion of Middleton's *More Dissemblers Besides Women*, one of the earliest uses of removable umber on the public stage, I consider how Middleton engaged with the materiality of removable umber to depict racialised understandings of beauty through the umber's material properties. We have already seen Fletcher experimenting with this potentiality in *The Pilgrim*, yet crucially, where Fletcher did not depict the cosmetic discoveries or draw close attention to moments of cosmetic disguise in the text, Middleton actively and repeatedly highlights the visual spectacle of cosmetic disguise through his language. In doing so, he displays his and the King's Men's command of the material components of disguise performance, incorporating the new technology of removable cosmetic disguise as part of the King's Men's commitment to innovative staging practices in the 1620s.

Based on his chronology, Martin Wiggins has suggested that *More Dissemblers* is significant as the first use of removable umber on a public stage. Yet, as the previous

section discussed, these dates are uncertain, as numerous plays make use of the technology in the aftermath of *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd* and their exact sequence is difficult to establish given the limited surviving records of public-stage performance. I argue that, considering that the text which we have dates from 1657 and that the first recorded performance of the play was 6th January 1624 at Whitehall Palace, the playtext that we have feasibly reflects the text as performed after the invention of removable umber. Regardless of the play's exact chronology, then, this chapter argues that *More Dissemblers'* greatest significance lies not in the dating of its conception, but in what it can tell us about how materially-engaged playwrights like Middleton made precise, dramatically key use of the performance of umber discoveries as a form of visual stagecraft when writing for professional players and public audiences, especially when working with a company already noticeably focussed on the material spectacle of disguise.

Middleton presents gendered disguise as unoriginal and comically unconvincing in *More Dissemblers*. Through parody, he implies that gendered disguise is trite, outdated, and implausible, and in doing so, positions gendered disguise in direct contrast to the innovative use of cosmetic disguise. In *More Dissemblers*, the pregnant former lover of Lactantio has disguised herself as a page to follow him in his travels (discussed in detail in Chapter Two), while Aurelia (Lactantio's current lover) also disguises herself as a messenger boy in an attempt to escape her father and be with Lactantio. In their gendered disguises, both Aurelia and the page are recognised almost immediately: upon seeing the page, Lactantio states in an aside, '[t]hat's she, she's come:/ I fear not to admit her in [my Uncle's] presence'.⁹⁶ Aurelia's gendered

⁹⁶ Thomas Middleton, 'More Dissemblers Besides Women', in *Two New Playes. More Dissemblers Besides Women and Women Beware Women* (London, 1657), Wing M1989, sig. B4v.

disguise, meanwhile, is likewise seen through by her father in less than twelve lines.⁹⁷ When her father discovers her and she is imprisoned, Aurelia next umbers her face to disguise herself as a gypsy and successfully escape from his command.

Much like Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Middleton's *More Dissemblers* presents gendered disguisers as retaining their beauty while the cosmetic disguiser, once 'handsome', becomes 'uglines it self'.⁹⁸ In *More Dissemblers*, the comedy of the page's gendered disguise relies on the obvious contrast between the clothes and the body beneath to present gendered disguise as improbable, the feminine beauty of the disguiser shining through the disguise and resulting in various moments of sexual threat (see above pp. 225-7). Meanwhile, Aurelia's cosmetic disguise is said to disfigure her, and thus to reveal her duplicity outwardly through the use of corruptive cosmetics and the disfiguring of her beauty. This disfigurement is ultimately used to emphasise her 'real' beauty (which is to say the cosmeticised stage beauty of the boy actor) through the disguise's removal and the reapplication of white paint in a final scene in which she concedes to marry the suitor approved of by her father.

In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare compares gendered disguise with cosmetic disguise without implying that either is more or less successful in disguising than the other. Instead, the two disguises reflect the two disguisers' contrasting roles in the play's plot, positioning them as active and passive in accordance with their characters, their reasons for disguising, and their respective role sizes. When Shakespeare wrote *As You Like It* around 1599-1600, the basic premise of theatrical gendered disguise was relatively novel and extremely fashionable. By 1624, the earliest known performance of *More Dissemblers*, gendered disguise was over-played and frequently

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B5v.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. E5v.

parodied (see: Chapter Two, pp. 141-2). Where plays like *Epicœne*, *Philaster*, and *The Widow* progressed gendered disguise by adapting the trope, other plays – including *More Dissemblers* – instead used conventional depictions of gendered disguise to contrast and emphasise the originality of new forms of theatrical disguise, including cosmetics.

Middleton presents the gendered disguise trope as farcical: the page is nine months pregnant during the play, giving birth in V.ii, yet all characters bar Lactantio remain oblivious to their disguise. The page follows the stereotype of female-to-male gendered disguise, yet that stereotype is represented as implausible since the disguise is so easily detectable, both through the obvious pregnancy and Middleton's conventional description of a character in gendered disguise:

L. Card[inal]. My kinde Boy; the prettiest Servant
That ever man was blest with; 'tis so meek,
So good and gentle, 'twas the best almsdeed
That ere you [Lactantio] did, to keep him. I have oft took him
Weeping alone (poor Boy).⁹⁹

Through his recycling of the disguised page description (as in *Philaster* 'but ever when he turn'd his tender eye upon um [picked flowers], he would weepe as if he meant to make them grow againe, seeing such prety helplesse innocence dwel in his face'), Middleton presents gendered disguise as tired and conspicuous.¹⁰⁰ He caricatures the obliviousness of characters gulled by gendered disguise. Not only do none of the character's recognise the page to be heavily pregnant, but they are equally ignorant

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Phylster Or, Love lyes a Bleeding* (London, 1620) sig. C2v.

of a myriad of other signs: confused by the page's frequent crying, the Lord Cardinal notes that 'th'unkindness of a word / Melts him into a woman'; Donaldo recognises the page 'wouldst have made a pretty, foolish Waiting-woman, but for one thing' but immediately after reflects on the mutability of gender presentation with reference to shirts and smocks (Chapter Two, pp. 116-21); Cinquepace removes the page's trousers and sees them go into labour, yet still exclaims '[b]y light, the Boy's with childe. / A miracle! Some Woman is the Father'.¹⁰¹ The page disguise is presented as comic, the genre signposted by the clowning characters with whom their scenes are shared – characters who are portrayed as absurd and self-interested – being implausibly and comically oblivious to her disguise.

The ridiculousness of the heavily pregnant Page's ability to go unnoticed is further demonstrated by Aurelia's gendered disguise being immediately discovered by her father:

Father: Nay, and that be the Language, we can speak't too: Strumpettikin,
Bold Harlottum Queaninisma, Whoremongeria.
Shame to thy Sex, and sorrow to thy Father.
Is this a shape for reputation?
And modesty to mask in? Thou too cunning
For credulous goodness!¹⁰²

By having the page's gendered disguise function perfectly in the play's comic subplot and Aurelia's near-immediately fail in the main plot, Middleton presents gendered disguise as an improbable fiction. In contrast, Aurelia's cosmetic disguise wholly

¹⁰¹ Middleton, 'More Dissemblers', sig. D2r, C1v, F5r.

¹⁰² Ibid., sig. B5v.

obscures her face and, as the following will show, allows the opportunity for a more spectacular discovery that focusses entirely on her beauty. Middleton thus demonstrates cosmetic disguise's potential to create more feasible and spectacular disguises and discoveries, in contrast to the gendered disguise, that was somewhat stale by the 1620s.

When, in IV.i Aurelia enters disguised 'like a Gipsy' to escape imprisonment by her father, she contrasts her current guise with her former 'handsome[ness]'.¹⁰³ Escaped, she soliloquises about the success of her disguise and her imminent return to beauty: '[t]his shape's too cunning for 'em', 'I knew not how to bear my self', 'bring me to my former face again'.¹⁰⁴ Initially, Aurelia dissociates herself from her disguise, her use of demonstrative pronouns ('this shape') and need to be brought 'to [her] former face' is suggestive of her enforcing a metaphorical distance between disguise and disguiser.¹⁰⁵ As the speech continues, however, the boundary between the disguise and the disguiser blurs: she notes that she acted with more honesty 'then some/ Of my Complexion', and fantasises about when she shall 'see me somewhat cleanlier' and 'when I am handsome'.¹⁰⁶ The first person pronouns suggest her growing relationship with the disguise: it is no longer an abstract 'shape', but 'my Complexion', the use of 'my' presenting the cosmetics as a kind of second skin.¹⁰⁷ Her phrasing 'see me somewhat cleanlier' emphasises this, as Aurelia no longer needs someone to 'bring' her to her face, but instead recognises her physical proximity to the disguise through her need to remove this new epidermal layer, the umber.¹⁰⁸ Aurelia's

¹⁰³ Ibid., sig. D8v.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., sig. D8r-v.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., sig. D8v.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., sig. D8v.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., sig. D8v.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., sig. D8v.

disguise soliloquy suggests the perceived corruptive nature of cosmetics through the growing association between her self-perception and her outward show.

We have already seen that cosmetic disguise relied on the disguiser's disfigurement; that is, a temporary transformation regarded as negative. This is evident both in *The Telltale's* umbering being used as a substitute for cutting, and implicitly in Alinda's sunburn and pox marks in *The Pilgrim* that are both associated with skin damage. Similarly, in *More Dissemblers* just as in *The Telltale* and *As You Like It*, umbering is explicitly depicted as disfiguring the disguiser. Besides Aurelia putting her umbered face in negative comparison with her 'former face' in the passage just quoted, the implication that umbering is meant to be disfiguring consistently shows in the language of other characters, the Duchess's waiting woman, Celia, calling Aurelia 'uglines it self' and the Duchess regarding her as 'beastly'.¹⁰⁹ Middleton builds this negative comparison through character's language throughout the play, increasing the number of insulting remarks to a maximum in the discovery scene, V.ii. In doing so, he foregrounds the material contrast between the umber and the white paint upon the faces of the boys playing Aurelia and the Duchess respectively to emphasise the striking visual difference between these two types of cosmetics.

Despite the wider cultural debates as to whether women using cosmetics should be perceived as attractive or deceitful, on the stage cosmetics were most often used as a clear signifier of a character's beauty. As Karim-Cooper explains, 'Cosmetic bases in early modern England were thick and shimmering, sometimes laced with silver or pearl, and sometimes a powdered complexion was glazed over with a mixture of egg whites or oil', likely using a recipe akin to those in *Alexis Secrets* which will

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., sig E5v, E6r.



Fig 4. 7 Actress being painted with white cosmetics made from a recipe of chalk, blended with pigment and almond oil. 'Early Modern Make-up a demonstration with commentary by Dr Farah Karim-Cooper,' in *The Chamber of Demonstrations: Reconstructing the Jacobean Indoor Playhouse*, dir. by Martin White (Bristol: Ignition Films for the University of Bristol, 2009) [DVD].

create 'lustre', 'faire skinne', and a 'glistening face'.¹¹⁰ While Karim-Cooper only discusses the use of gloss to depict ghosts or ephemeral characters, beautiful female characters are also often described as 'shining' ('Let her shine [...] gloriously', *A Midsummer Nights Dream* [LCM, 1594-8; TLN 1087]; 'Come *Cressida* my Cresset light,/ Thy face doth shine both day and night', *Histrion-mastix* [?, 1600-3]; 'On the faire cheekes of Vice still fixe their eye./ Because her face doth shine', *Old Fortunatus* [LAM, 1600]).¹¹¹ It is thus likely that the glisten of gloss was visual shorthand for beauty. One recipe in *Alexis Secrets* promotes itself as being '[t]o give a glosse or lustre, and colour to the saied Silvered water.':

Take the yealks of twelve egges the same daies they be laied, and beate them rawe, then distill them in a Limbecke [alembic, a distilling apparatus]

¹¹⁰ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 178; Girolami Ruscelli, sigs. J8v-K2r.

¹¹¹ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 178; John Marston, *Histrion-mastix, or, the Player Whipt* (London, 1610), STC 13529, sig. C4r; Thomas Dekker, *The Pleasant Comedie of Old Fortunatus as it was Plaid before the Queenes Majestie this Christmas, by the Right Honourable the Earl of Nottingham, Lord High Admiral of England his Servants* (London, 1600), STC 6517, sig. H4r.

with a little fire, putting a little muske at the mouth of the saied Limbecke, and then weate [wet] a small piece of cotton in the said water, and so rubbe your face with it, and let it drie of it selfe: and this is a verie perfect thing.¹¹²

The egg yolk mixture would create a hard gloss across the skin, creating the illusion of dewy, shimmering skin in the light. Fig. 4.7 shows how white paint would glisten: the paint, made from a mixture of chalk, blended with white pigment and almond oil, naturally reflects, creating a shine where the model's forehead, cheekbone, and nose are caught under the light. Its use on stage, particularly in the candlelit indoor theatres, would result in players' faces shimmering, drawing attention to this visual signifier of beauty. This shimmer shown in fig. 4.7 would be even brighter under the candlelight of the indoor stage, meaning that boys playing female characters – particularly characters noted to be beautiful – would have shimmered, drawing the eyes of playgoers.¹¹³ Crucially, this would mean that when skin appeared comparatively matte, as when using umber (as in fig. 4.2 and fig. 4.6), it would, conversely, signify a lack of beauty.

Taking into consideration the visual contrast between glistening white cosmetics culturally coded as beautiful and duller umbering culturally coded as the opposite, then, Aurelia's cosmetic disguise would not only activate early modern playgoers' internalised perceptions of race, but also impact upon their visual perception of Aurelia's player on stage. When asked if Andrugio loves her in V.ii, the disguised Aurelia states that he 'done love me / 'Bove all the Girls that shine above

¹¹² Girolami Ruscelli, sig. K2v.

¹¹³ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 178.

me.’¹¹⁴ Enraged by Aurelia’s response, the duchess sends her off-stage and soliloquises:

A wrong done to Beauty,
Is greater then an injury done to Love,
And we’ll less pardon it; for had it been
A creature whose perfection had out-shin’d me,
It had been honorable judgment in him,
And to my peace a noble satisfaction:
But as it is, ’tis monstrous above folly!¹¹⁵

Beyond being metaphors for the character’s beauty, the phrases ‘shine above me’ and ‘out-shin’d me’ are literal references about Aurelia’s umber not reflecting the light upon the early modern stage. Here, Middleton employs his knowledge about how the materials react under light to construct a visual symbolism for beauty on stage, showing his complete command over how the material properties – in this case the relative visibility – of removable umber can be employed on the professional stage.

69 lines after exiting, Aurelia returns to the stage as herself, her disguise removed, including its cosmetic elements. Upon discovering that Aurelia was merely *disguised* as gypsy, the duchess concedes that she is ‘younger, fairer’ than herself.¹¹⁶ With fairness meaning ‘a lustre that is comparable to silver’, the duchess’ response suggests an offstage reapplication of the glistening white paint or egg wash as well as the removal of Aurelia’s umber. This reapplication of fresh cosmetics would indicate to the audience that her beauty surpasses that of the duchess, whose make-up will

¹¹⁴ Middleton, ‘More Dissemblers’, sig. F6r.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. F6v.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. F7v.

potentially be fading and smudged from wear.¹¹⁷ Entering in fresh, shimmering cosmetics, attention would be immediately drawn to Aurelia, her physical change being more impactful than that which can be done with a change of clothing. Her cosmetic disguise and its removal off-stage thus enable the King's Men to emphasise Aurelia's beauty in the discovery scene. When Middleton uses the off-stage costume change for the page subplot in *More Dissemblers*, he highlights how spectacular the later cosmetic discovery is, demonstrating the material potential of removable umber and cosmetic disguise. Tested in *The Pilgrim* and played with across the 1621 to 1624 repertory, the use of cosmetic disguise in *More Dissemblers* represents the King's Men showing their mastery of this new disguise material.

v. Conclusion

'[L]east it prove like wonder to the sight,/ To see a Gypsie, as an *Æthiope*, white', writes Jonson in the epilogue to *The Gypsies Metamorphos'd*, going on to explain that the removable umber was nothing more than an advancement in stage technology.¹¹⁸ With his epilogue's explanation, and his unwillingness to describe this cosmetic disguise discovery in the printed text beyond the stage direction, '*[t]he Gypsies changed*', Jonson downplays the removable umber's dramatic potential beyond its novelty.¹¹⁹ As such, he seeks a separation between his text and the materials of stage performance. Yet, cosmetic disguise is insistently, inherently a material practice, reminding us that early modern masques and commercial drama alike employ a

¹¹⁷ Karim-Cooper, *Cosmetics*, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Jonson, *The Masque of the Gypsies*, p. 103.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

stagecraft that goes beyond language. When read in isolation, even the most detailed playtext cannot capture the materiality of early modern stage performance.

To take Andrea Stevens point that ‘dramatists use paint to focus questions about what lies “within” or behind a character’s disguise or adorned surface’ a step further, this chapter has shown that dramatists used the perceivably corruptive nature of cosmetics in scenes of cosmetic disfigurement to indicate an inalterable internal change to the disguised character.¹²⁰ Initially, cosmetic disguise – especially umber – provided playwrights with a tool through which to consider questions of permanence and identity that the removability of clothing disallows. With clothing and costume, one can easily alter and adapt the outward signifiers of identity, but cosmetics offered a more lasting form of self-display which implied a corruption of the outer and inner identity.

Yet, with the development of removable umber came depictions of cosmetic disguise and racial disguise that enabled the playwright to play with cultural identities and with stage materials in ways that disavowed these ideas of permanent transformation. In *The Gypsies Metamorphos’d*, the novelty lay in simply seeing the umber removed; in *The Pilgrim*, the novelty lay in seeing the variety and mutability of cosmetics; in *More Dissemblers*, however, Middleton and the King’s Men show a comprehensive understanding of how the use of these cosmetics can be woven into disguise drama, drawing upon wider cultural perspectives on cosmetics and skin with close precision as they did so. Middleton embraces the relationship between the text as heard and the cosmetics as seen, fully considering the visual impact that this

¹²⁰ Andrea Stevens, ‘Cosmetic Transformations’ in *Shakespeare’s Theatres and the Effects of Performance*, ed. Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 97.

innovation in cosmetics and the traditional use of cosmetics on stage can have on the writing and performance of disguise.

CHAPTER V

'Call in your crutches, wooden legs, false bellies': the props of representational disguise

i. Introduction

On the title page of his 1608 pamphlet, *The Belman of London*, Thomas Dekker states that what follows will be '[p]rofitable for Gentlemen, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, Masters of Housholdes, and all sorts of servants to mark, and delightful for all men to reade.'¹ Written as much to entertain as it was to inform, Dekker's *Belman* explains the intricacies and social ranks of criminal vagabonds from the perspective of a bellman – a town crier known by the bell he would ring before his announcements. Using the bellman's role as one who relays news to present the pamphlet's narrator (and therefore the pamphlet itself) as legitimate, Dekker introduces his readers to the world of vagabonds through a highly fantastical description of the vagabonds' 'Quarter dinner', a quarterly annual dinner of their guild and a parody of similar events by and for the London livery companies.² The vagabonds enter in a procession, wearing 'han[d]some cleane linen', before their leader ceremonially initiates or 'stall[s]' a new rogue, a type of vagabond who would con victims through the use of disguise and sleight-of-hand:

a pot of Ale being put into his hand, he made the young Squier kneele downe, and powring the full pot on his pate, uttered these words.

¹ Thomas Dekker, *The Belman of London Bringing to Light the Most Notorious Villanies that are Now Practised in the Kingdome. Profitable for Gentlemen, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, Masters of Housholdes, and All Sorts of Servants to Mark, and Delightfull for All Men to Reade*. (London: Nathaniell Butter, 1608), STC 6482, sig. A1r.

² J. Aubrey Rees, *The Worshipful Company of Grocers, An Historical Retrospect, 1345-1923* (London: Chapman and Dodd, Limited, 1923), p. 19; Dekker, *belman*, sig. C1v.

I doe stall thee to the Rogue, by virtue of this soveraigne English liquor, so that hence forth it shall be lawfull for thee to Cant (that is to say) to be a Vagabond and beg, and to speake that pedlers French, or that Canting language, which is to be found among none but beggers.³

The initiation of the new rogue exemplifies Dekker's depiction of begging as a fantastical lifestyle choice. Only a select few are invited while those on the outside, like Dekker's readers, have only indirect access through these pamphlets.

Dekker's was the first vagabond pamphlet to use metaphoric language connecting vagrancy explicitly with playing and the stage. His bellman narrator watches the events of the quarter dinner while hidden above, 'a Spectator of the Comedy in hand, and in a private gallerie be-holde[s] all the Actors'.⁴ The theatrical metaphor thus highlights the vagabonds' theatricality and their similarities to players. Like a player's many costumes, a vagabonds' myriad of jobs were depicted as a changing wardrobe of disguises throughout early modern literature, while concerns about vagabonds using spectacle to intrigue and distract their victims can all too easily be extended to players' performances. Dekker's comparison of players and vagabonds thus simply makes explicit what was already implicit: the shifting guises and performative nature of vagabond criminals brought with them clear similarities with the skills and habits of stage players.

Drawing on Dekker's metaphor, this chapter provides a history of the association between vagabonds and players, giving a full context to the vagabond's eventual on-stage depiction as the 'rogue' – a semi-villainous comic disguiser – and the rogue's influence on the development of a new disguise technique that employed

³ Ibid., sig. C2r.

⁴ Ibid., sig. C1r.

the use of a single prop to represent and caricature a given profession. This technique, outlined in more detail below, I term 'representational disguise'. In tracing the history of this technique, this chapter challenges Victor Oscar Freeburg's assertion that disguise developed in a constant pursuit of realism on stage that 'advanced in three steps':⁵

First, there was only a change of name, but no change at all in appearance. Second, there was a partial change of appearance, or merely a symbol to represent a change. Third, there came a consistent attempt to make the disguised person really look his part in detail. Thus the acting of disguise parts developed from the mere pretending of children at play, to the art of the well-equipped and practiced mimic.⁶

Freeburg views the use of 'a symbol to represent a change', like a prop, as a stepping stone to 'a consistent attempt to make the disguised person really look his part in detail' by use of a full costume change or prosthetics.⁷ However, Freeburg's self-imposed limitation of 1616 confines him to only brief discussions of the works of Fletcher, Middleton, and Field – whose disguise plays Freeburg believes 'lack [...] novelty' – overlooking playwrights whose experimentation with and parodying of disguise tropes and materials was complex and sophisticated *because* of its decidedly non-representational nature.⁸ A consideration of a playing company's full disguise repertory, as offered by this thesis, shows that representational disguise was an advanced technique that fully engaged with the multi-sensory elements of early modern stagecraft. The technique also led to the comic multi-disguising rogues becoming a staple of the King's Men's repertory for over a decade.

⁵ Victor Oscar Freeburg, *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), p. 18.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This chapter argues that rogues and vagabond performers were a key source for representational disguise and, therefore, had a major influence on the King's Men's repertory from the mid 1610s onwards. It begins by exploring the relationship between begging and disguise, looking at how rogues are depicted as disguisers and performers in vagabond pamphlets, juggling pamphlets, and anti-begging laws. With reference to the works of historians of roguery, Craig Dionne, Steve Mentz, Patricia Fumerton, and Linda Woodbridge, this first section excavates the foundation on which the association between vagabonds and players was built.

The second section develops on the previous section to show how the King's Men played and parodied vagrants and rogues in their plays. It considers the descriptions of rogues in William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (KM, 1611), Thomas Middleton's *The Widow* (KM, 1615-17) and *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, 1621-22) with reference to the pamphlets discussed in section one to reconstruct the depiction of rogues on stage. The relationship between roguery and theatricality becomes obvious when comparing Dekker's vagabond pamphlets to the staging of rogues in the King's Men's repertory, suggesting that rogue pamphlets were direct sources for these depictions.

The last section of this chapter focusses on the depiction of staged roguery and representational disguise in John Fletcher and Philip Massinger's *Beggars' Bush* (KM, 1613-22), III.i. In *Beggars' Bush*, III.i, the eponymous beggars disguise themselves in various vagrant professions to rob a group of Boors (drunk peasants). Using props that signify their altering professions and identities, the beggars engage with visual and auditory stagecraft to construct a multi-sensory spectacle of disguise for the audience. This final section challenges the ocular-centric approach to materials of disguise in Freeburg and Hyland's works to argue for a multi-sensory approach to the

stage materials of disguise, one that encompasses the auditory landscape of the theatre as explored by Bruce R. Smith and Laura Jayne Wright.

Discussion of representational disguises can help us understand anew the wider role of disguise in early modern stagecraft. In this chapter, I show disguise's significance not only as a literary technique, used by playwrights as shorthand for a character's inner turmoil, but also as a production technique, providing cheap and simple spectacle for the playing company. Thus, the influence of profit on the production of plays went hand-in-hand with the dramatic intentions of the playwright – especially in the case of company playwrights like Fletcher.

ii. 'They cary both health and hipocrisie about them': the spectacle of roquery in early modern England

Dekker's imagined spectacle of the vagabond world that opened this chapter was part of a long history of associations between vagabonds, gypsies, and beggars and spectacular rituals, disguises, and song. From Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Commen Cursetors Vulgarely called Vagabones* (1567; 1573; 1592), through Robert Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage* (1592), to Samuel Rid's *Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridewell* (1610), pamphlets recurrently depicted vagabonds as occupying an alternative, spectacular, and sometimes dangerous society.⁹ As this section will

⁹ Many of the rogue pamphlets written after 1600 draw from Robert Greene's cony-catching pamphlets (which, itself, is an imitation of Harman's), including Dekker's. For work on Greene's pamphlets, see: Linda Woodbridge, 'The Peddler and the Pawn: Why Did Tudor England Consider Peddlers to Be Rogues', in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 143-70; Karen Hefland Bix, "'Masters of Their Occupation": Labor and Fellowship in the Cony-Catching Pamphlets', in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 171-92; Ari Friedlander, *Rogue Sexuality in Early Modern English Literature: Desire, Status, Biopolitics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

show, the depictions of vagabonds and vagabond society were constantly developing and shifting over the forty-two years between Harman's pamphlet and Dekker's. Yet, despite these changes, the theatricality of the vagabonds' reliance on disguising was a consistent characteristic that only became more prominent over time, eventually making the rogue ripe for portrayal on the early modern stage.

In 1572, Queen Elizabeth I passed 'an acte for the punishment of vacabondes, and for relief of the poore and impotent', otherwise known as the Vagabonds Act 1572. Following on from Henry VIII's 1531 'Act directing how aged, poor and impotent Persons, compelled to live by Alms, shall be ordered; and how Vagabonds and Beggars shall be punished', the Vagabonds Act 1572 was lengthened to encompass unlicensed performers:

all Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes and Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towards any other honorable Personage of greater Degree; all Juglers Pedlars Tynkers and Petye Chapmen [sellers of cheap printed objects, like ballads] [...] shalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vacaboundes and sturdy Beggars.¹⁰

The addition of 'Comon Players' marks the beginning of an association between roguery and theatricality that, while implicit in the 1560s, had become a staple feature of rogues by the time they were depicted on the Jacobean stage.

Printed amidst the ongoing criminalisation of vagabonds, beggars, and gypsies, Thomas Harman's anti-begging pamphlet, *A Caveat for Commen Cursetors* is the earliest surviving publication that attempts to categorise sects of vagabonds.¹¹ Harman defined his subjects through their varying deceits and deviances, ranging from

¹⁰ Elizabeth I, 'An Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, and for Relief of the Poor and Impotent', London, Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1572/14Eliz1n5.

¹¹ David Cressy, 'The Trouble with Gypsies in Early Modern England', *The Historical Journal*, 59.1 (2016), 45-70 (p. 46).

acts of physical strength, to lies and deception, to sleight-of-hand. In doing so, he created a pseudo-thesaurus of vagabonds from which readers could learn the 'leud lyfe and pernicious practises' of vagabonds and (hopes Harman) 'spedelye helpe to amend that [which] is amysse' with the country.¹² One prominent category of this thesaurus was the 'Roge':

Many of them [rogues] will go fayntly, and looke piteously, when they see, either meete any person, having a kercher as white as my shooes tyed aboute their heade with a short staffe in their hand, halting, although they neede not, requiri[n]g almes of such as they meete, or to what house they shal co[m]e. But you may easely perceiue by their colour, y^t they cary both health and hipocrisie about them, whereby they gette gaine, when others want that cannot fayne and dissemble.¹³

Harman's is the earliest surviving use of 'rogue' as meaning 'vagrant', and much of our understanding of what was meant by a rogue is, therefore, based upon his definition.¹⁴ Harman emphasises the material and physical elements of roguery: the rogue is identified by the filth of his clothing and the 'faynt' and 'halting' manner with which he walks. Disguise is implicit in his description: he describes how rogues 'cary [...] hipocrisie about them' and 'dissemble' – a word then synonymous with disguise.¹⁵ Harman's particular focus on the rogue's outward image meant that, unlike other sects of vagabond he describes, rogues were immediately recognisable and easily imitable, making them easily depictable on stage.

¹² Thomas Harman, *A Caveat for Commen Cursetors Vulgarely called Vagabones* (London, 1567), STC 12787, sig. B1r.

¹³ Harman, sig. C1r.

¹⁴ Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz, 'Introduction' in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 1-2.

¹⁵ '02.01.12.10.02 (v. refl.) Disguise oneself,' in *The Historical Thesaurus of English* (2nd edn., version 5.0) <<https://ht.ac.uk/category/?id=120338>> [accessed 8 December 2022].

The language used by Harman to describe the rogue's dissembling is similar to the ways in which anti-theatricalists were to describe players, as in *A Refutation of the Apology for Actors* (1615):

a just man cannot indure hypocrisie; but all the acts of Players is dissimulation, and the proper name of Player (witnesse the *Apology* [for Actors] it selfe) is *hypocrite*: a true dealing man cannot indure deceipt, but Players get their living by craft and cosenage. For what greater cheating can there be then for money to render that which is not moneys worth.¹⁶

The similarities in language between *A Refutation* and *Caveat* are stark: 'hypocrisie'/ 'hypocrite', 'dissemble'/ 'decept'/ 'dissimulation', but starker yet are the similarities between the characteristics described. I.G.'s argument that there is no 'greater cheating' than earning money by playing or 'dissembling' presents playing as a form of cozening: acting is akin to the way rogues would 'get gain' through performative sickness. This comparison thus enables a reading of Harman in which rogues are kinds of non-professional players. Likewise, as both descriptions highlight the role of deceit ('when others want that cannot fayne and dissemble'; 'a true dealing man cannot indure deceipt') players, like rogues, are categorised as being antithetical to honest citizens; this is reminiscent of players and rogue both being classified under the umbrella term 'vagabonds' in the Vagabonds Act of 1572.¹⁷

These similarities were furthered by developments in the meaning of 'rogue' by the time *A Refutation* had been printed. Despite the specificity of Harman's description, by the 1590s, his depiction of rogues had been somewhat distorted: no longer

¹⁶ I.G., *A Refutation of the Apologie for Actors. Divided into Three Brief Treatises-wherein it is Confuted and Opposed all the Chiefe Groundes and Arguments Alleaged in Defence of Playes: and Withal in Each Treatise is Deciphered Actors, 1. Heathenish and Diabolical Institution. 2. Their Ancient and Moderne Indignitie. 3. The Wonderfull Abuse of their Impious Qualitie.* (London, 1615), STC 12214, sig. I1r.

¹⁷ Harman, sig. C1r; I.G., sig. I1r; HL/PO/PU/1/1572/14Eliz1n5.

specifying a vagabond who feigns illness, 'rogue' became a generalised term for any vagabond who utilises disguise and counterfeiting, making the rogue even more closely related to players. The influence of Harman's pamphlets granted the term 'rogue' such visibility that it became a synecdoche for 'vagabond', becoming increasingly generic in meaning, as in John Cowell's 1607 legal dictionary: '[i]t signifieth with us an idle sturdie beggar, that wander[s] from place to place without passport'.¹⁸ This generalisation meant that any person who held multiple occupations or travelled for their occupation risked being identified as a vagrant. The similarities between depictions of players and rogues categorised in the Vagabonds Act of 1572 and Harman's pamphlet were not only sustained well into the 1600s, but even developed. Rogues came to embody a generalised and unclear image of vagrancy, defined not by destitution, but by intangible materiality – by clothing and items that insinuated a shifting identity.

Describing rogues as 'vagrants who used disguise, rhetorical play, and counterfeit gestures to insinuate themselves into lawful social and political contexts', Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz imply that roguery was a performative art.¹⁹ In fact, it would be all too easy to incorporate Dionne and Mentz's above examples, 'disguise, rhetorical play, and counterfeit gestures', onto a description of a player.²⁰ Yet, despite these similarities between roguery and playing, Dionne and Mentz's edited collection, *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* (2004), considers 'rogue' to be a 'catchall term for a variety of social outcasts, from rural migrants to urban con artists' and avoids

¹⁸ 'Roag (Rogue)', in *The Interpreter: or Booke Containing the Signification of Words Wherein is Set Forth the True Meaning of All, or the Most Part of Such Words and Termes, as are Mentioned in the Lawe Writers, or Statutes of this Victorious and Renowned Kingdome, Requiring any Exposition or Interpretation: a Work Not Only Profitable but Necessary for Such as Desire Thoroughly to be Instructed in the Knowledge of Our Laws, Statutes, or Other Antiquities*, ed. by John Cowell (London, 1607), STC 5900, sig. 3M2v.

¹⁹ Dionne and Mentz, p. 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

the associations between players and vagabonds that are more obvious to theatre historians.²¹

Before the building of the first permanent theatres players had historically travelled across counties and countries in order to perform, and had traditionally been regarded as vagrants and vagabonds, the Vagabonds Act of 1572 explicitly including players in its list of offenders.²² Despite this, the only mention of players in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* comes in Patricia Fumerton's chapter, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible: The Economics of Disguise in Early Modern Rogue Pamphlets': 'the reader/ viewer [of Harman's pamphlet] might read not the professional actor but [the casual labourer] in [his description of] variously assumed work roles'.²³ That Harman miscasts genuine economic migrants as dissemblers is central to Fumerton's argument that we should reframe what we take rogues to be, and recognise them as a classist depiction of itinerant workers, a worker, usually a physical labourer, who works short-term contracts and then moves on to work elsewhere. She argues that Harman, who was an educated, upper middling sort gentleman, had skewed his account of working class labourers.²⁴ However, rather than entirely reframing the narrative to eliminate associations between roguery, disguise, and multiple employment as Fumerton advocates, we should instead reconsider how the theatricality of roguery outlined above led to rogues, players, and actual itinerant workers (and thus disguises, costumes, and genuine uniforms) to become indistinguishable from one another. This is a key consideration in this chapter, and the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²² 'Theatre, 1576-98', *ShALT Shakespearean London Theatres* <<https://shalt.dmu.ac.uk/locations/theatre-1576-98.html>> [accessed 29 December 2022].

²³ Patricia Fumerton, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible: The Economics of Disguise in Early Modern Rogue Pamphlets', in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 193-210 (p. 201).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

next section will show that it was this 'indistinguishability' that led to the construction of the stage rogue.

The broadened meaning of 'rogue' and its association with disguise led to county officials worrying that those who travelled or worked multiple professions, like seasonal players or merchant peddlers, were criminals.²⁵ The legitimacy and intentions of non-local sellers were called into question, officials like Somerset justice Edward Hext worrying that:

beinge abroade [wandering people] all in general are receavers of all stolen things that are portable, as namely the Tynker in his Budgett, the pedler in his hamper, the glasseman in his baskett, and the lewde proctors which carye the broad Seale and Grene seale yn ther bags, Covers infynytt numbers of felonyes.²⁶

There is some validity to Hext's concerns: as the travellers had come by their goods outside the local parish, there was no way to ensure the legitimacy of the items being sold or the manner through which the seller procured them. However, Hext does not express anxiety about the items themselves, but the 'Budget', 'hamper', 'basket', and 'bags' in which the items are carried. Hext is expressly concerned with the vagabonds' capacity to conceal. That Hext's vagabonds supposedly conceal and carry stolen goods between different counties while in the guise of various professions is reminiscent of the disguise-based conmanship about which Harman's readers were

²⁵ Fumerton, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible', p. 197.

²⁶ Edward Hext, 'Edward Hext, Justice of the Peace in Somerset, to Burghley on the increase of rogues and vagabonds, 25 Sept., 1596.', in *Tudor economic documents*, ed. R. H. Tawney, 3 vols (London: Longmans, 1963), II (1963), pp. 342-3.



Fig 5.1 'A very antient Sett thereof, in Wood, with the Words then used by the Cryers', in Samuel Pepys Cries of London collection. <<https://spitalfieldslife.com/2015/09/01/at-samuel-pepys-library/>> [accessed 12 June 2024].

warned. Even when not explicitly in disguise, rogues are in some way concealing or dissimulating.

A c.1620 image of *The Cries of London* (fig. 5.1) demonstrates, through the similarities between the peddlers' clothes, that a peddler's title is reliant on their wares, meaning that the peddler can 'change' or disguise 'profession' with ease. For the most part, the male peddlers wear similar, simple, clothing – a doublet, a pair of breeches, and a hat. Any 'disguise' is therefore constructed through his wares: is it the lantern and pole that distinguishes the lamplighter from the town crier, not fashion.

Hext's association of rogues and dissimulation is not confined to wares; he is equally concerned by rogues' apparent impersonation of citizens:

stout roages [...] have intellygens of all things intended against them, for there be of them that wilbe present at every assise, Sessions, and assembly of lustices and will so clothe them selves for that tyme as anye shold deame him to be an honest husbandman, So as nothings ys spoken, donne, or intended to be donne but they knowe it.²⁷

Hext is clear that the rogues of which he complains are not 'honest husbandm[e]n' – leasehold farmers – but are disguising themselves as such. Yet, as husbandman simply meant a farmer that leases their land (unlike the slightly better-off yeoman, who owned their land), it is unlikely that a husbandman's dress would be significantly or noticeably different to that of a wanderer or itinerant worker. We must then wonder whether Hext's supposed rogue is in disguise, or if it is simply the appearance of an obviously labouring class stranger. Through this questioning, we can begin to see in

²⁷ Hext, p. 345.

Hext's letter a concern not about actual rogues, but about the indiscernibility (and thus potential for rogue criminality) of workers without permanent place or profession.

Hext's concerns about rogues and vagrant workers in disguise or dissembling are intrinsically tied to the economic shifts in the late sixteenth century. The association between roguery and multiple occupations escalated between the 1570s and the 1590s as the implementation of permanent shops and marketplaces was threatened by competition from cheaper peddlers and itinerant workers; the Vagabonds Act of 1572 even made vagrant workers and merchants a subcategory of vagabond, perhaps, as Linda Woodbridge suggests, out of anxiety about commercial success.²⁸ The image of the disguising, dissembling, and untruthful rogue was thus reinforced by attempts to counteract the commercial competition from itinerant workers. Permanent shopping infrastructures meant that peddlers and vagrant workers were no longer strictly necessary.²⁹ Yet, Fumerton and Woodbridge both concluding that, despite attempts to quell itinerant workers, members of the labouring poor continued to supplement their incomes through multiple occupations, not unlike workers in the contemporary gig-economy³⁰:

mariner, hatmaker, servingman, artificer— could be “played” by a vagrant laborer in earnest. They typify a new economic network, a “vagrant” economy, constituted out of multiple, serial, and itinerant employment that may well have unmoored class, gender, and even historical identities. But if the displaced workers of such a vagrant economy necessarily *speculated* in different roles, they were not, nor could they afford to be, *role-playing*.³¹

²⁸ Linda Woodbridge, 'The Peddler and the Pawn: Why Did Tudor England Consider Peddlers to Be Rogues', in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 143-170 (pp. 149-151).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

³⁰ Fumerton, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible', p. 194; Woodbridge, p. 151.

³¹ Fumerton, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible', p. 194.

Fumerton's argument draws attention to the class conflicts that underscore Hext's argument and general concerns around vagabonds. Hext's supposed disguise was, on occasion, likely to represent a change in occupation by the labouring poor, rather than a means of deception *per se*.³² Fumerton concludes that '[r]ogues have a certain invisibility to them (as did the labouring poor). Ironically, such invisibility is made visible when it is reimagined as a disguise.'³³ There was, therefore, a separation between the reality of the labouring poor, working in a proto-gig economy, and the imagined world of pamphlet rogues, full of theatrical disguising and entertaining feats of magic. The shift to permanent shops, the Vagabonds Act of 1572, and the concern of county officials like Hext supplied a falsified image of the rogue as theatrical disguiser that would ultimately lead to their often-comic depiction on the stage. By regarding itinerant workers as disguised rogues, giving them visibility, Hext transforms the life of the labouring poor into a spectacle.

Players did not escape these concerns about the dissembling of vagrant workers: outside London, the association between vagrancy and players continued well into the 1610s, unpatroned (and therefore illegal) troupes of players perpetuating the poor reputation of playing. The status of players as workers was 'vexed and problematic', states Tom Rutter, and even the language associated with the profession – 'play'; 'player'; 'playing' – elicits ideas of leisure rather than labour.³⁴ Further demonstrating the impact of this uncertain status on players, Lucy Munro's article on the influence of financial shares on the Children of the Queen's Revels' performance practice argues that the singing of ballads in the company's plays 'stage [...] the

³² *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

³⁴ Tom Rutter, *Work and Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 27.

commercialization of the boy singer's "art" in the playhouse, as he is pulled further away from the divine service of the chorister or the "recreation" of higher-status boys [who are trained in singing]', suggesting that the very act of singing ballads on a commercial stage lowers the status of the boy player and singing as a form of performance.³⁵ To work as a player can thus be perceived as a non-professional or recreational occupation, due to the relationship between 'art' and recreation (music, poetry, and private performance), and as diminishing the status of these recreational activities of the elite through their commercialisation.

The Vagabonds Act of 1572 explicitly required companies to acquire the patronage of a member of the aristocracy or gentry for permission to tour, somewhat elevating the status of some forms of commercial performance.³⁶ However, this elevation in status did not pertain to unlicensed players like the Simpson troupe, a group of Catholic provincial players 'never legally licensed to perform.'³⁷ The Simpson troupe provides an infamous example of the contrasts and similarities between the licensed companies of the London stages and the unlicensed travelling troupes. An amateur company who imitated the organisation and structure of the professional London companies, they were the kinds of players from whom the King's Men distanced themselves through parody (most famously in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* [LCM, 1594-8]). Examining this troupe gives insight into the criminal reputations of vagrant players that, as this chapter will go on to show, moved stage depictions of

³⁵ Lucy Munro, 'Living by Others' Pleasure: Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*, and Theatrical Profit', *Early Theatre*, 23.1 (2020), 109-26 (p. 120).

³⁶ HL/PO/PU/1/1572/14Eliz1n5.

³⁷ Siobhan Keenan, 'The Simpson Players of Jacobean Yorkshire and the Professional Stage', *Theatre Notebook*, 67.1 (2013), 16-35 (p. 18).

vagrant performers from the comic amateurs of the 1590s and early 1600s, to the more sinister stage rogues of the 1610s.

The legal travails of the Simpson troupe emphasise various likenesses between provincial players and vagabonds and showcases the concerns that may have surrounded London professional companies. Fined as ‘comon players of Enterludes vagabonds and sturdy beggars’ in January 1616, the players of the Simpson troupe held multiple professions, including shoemakers, cordwainers, and weavers, like the rogues who so threatened Hext’s county.³⁸ Despite being players by trade, the Simpsons, much like the London companies, would indenture apprentices under a guild trade and train them to be players. Unfortunately, the Simpsons’ apprentices were, apparently, not always wanting be trained as players: in 1610, Thomas Pant, apprentice to Christopher Simpson, took legal action to be freed from his apprenticeship because ‘he hath not bene employed in his occupation [shoemaking] according to the Covenantes of his Indenture made betwene him & his said Mr’.³⁹ The court case paints a predatory image of the ‘obstinate & convicted popishe Recusant’ Simpson and his exploitation of Pant by training him ‘for iii yeres last past in wandring ye Contry & playing of Interludes as a player’ and his indenturing of him despite the Popish Recusants Act of 1605 forbidding Catholics from acting as a guardian, in this case an apprentice master.⁴⁰

The language in Pant’s case, that he has been ‘wandring ye Contry’ further relates the Simpson troupe to the rogues described by Harman and Hext.⁴¹ Hext worries about ‘the Infynyte numbers of the Idle wandrynge people’ who are ‘abroad

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

practysinge all kind of villanye’, while Harman states that ‘without feare [the rogue] woulde wickedly wander’.⁴² By using language relating to roguery in his legal case, Pant constructs a narrative that feeds into the concerns surrounding itinerant workers discussed above: this ensured his freedom from his indenture (he was successful). Yet, this narrative only worked because of the preconceived concerns about wandering players discussed above. Despite functioning in a similar way to the professional theatre companies of the London stage – particularly in bringing in apprentices through guilds but training them in playing – being unlicensed, the Simpson troupe epitomised concerns about vagabonds and travelling players alike. Discussion of the Simpson troupe is suggestive of the fragility of players’ social status: beyond the permanency of their performance spaces and the licenses, there is little to distinguish between the provincial players and London companies. Both involved players trained under the guilds, both brought in apprentices in under these other guilds, and both toured the country to perform. Yet, their differences led to the King’s Men performing the roguish feats of Autolycus in front of the King’s court not a year after the Simpson troupe were defending themselves criminal court. Through this legal case, we can begin to see some legitimacy in arguments that players were using, to borrow I.G.’s words, ‘craft and cosenage’ and their association with roguery.⁴³

While the provinces worried about itinerant workers and travelling players, in London the rogue was becoming more a figure of entertainment than something to be feared. Disguise was a way of transforming ‘rogues’ from frightening criminals to the spectacular figures seen on the Jacobean stage. Dekker’s *Belman* emphasises the spectacle of roguery through its detailed description:

⁴² Hext, pp. 341-42.

⁴³ I.G., sig. l1r.



Fig 5.2 Woodcut from titlepage John Taylor's poem, *The Praise, Antiquity, and commodity of Beggery, Beggers, and Begging* (London, 1621), STC 23786, sig. A1r.

no Puritaine can dissemble more then [a rogue], for he will speake in a lamentable tune, and crawl along the streetes, [...] his apparel is all tattered, his bosome naked, and moste commonly no shirt on: [rogues] wander up and downe in that piteous maner, onely to move people to compassion, and to be relieved with money.⁴⁴

Dekker's imagined rogue has keen insight into the meanings of materials and how best to use them to 'dissemble'. The described clothing, in such a materially attuned culture, would be an immediate signifier of his abject poverty. As Chapter Two explored, to have no shirt was unthinkable: a sign of absolute destitution to Dekker's readers. Yet the rogue purposefully chooses to wear no shirt as a way of eliciting

⁴⁴ Dekker, *The Belman of London*, sig. D1v.

pathos from his victims: 'not that they are driven to this miserie by meere want, but that if they had better cloathes given them, they would rather sell them'.⁴⁵ He disguises not by concealing but by revealing.

Dekker's rogue is entirely characterised by his clothing and exaggerated physical movements and sounds, making him immediately recognisable and easily imitable. The beggars depicted in fig. 5.2 are near perfect realisations of Dekker's description. As seen on the beggars of 'Beggars Bush' (l) and the 'Wandering Begger' (c), the tattered and patchwork clothing of the rogue draws the eye, creating a spectacle that ensures that the rogue captures the attention of his victim. Written only three years before the King's Men's most well-known rogue, Autolycus, appeared on stage, the exaggerated destitution of Dekker's rogue was integral to creating a character-type that would be immediately identifiable by readers, and, later, audiences.

Yet, beyond simply making the rogue imitable, Dekker presents the rogue as a performer, the phrase 'speak in a lamentable tune' enhancing these performative resonances. Dekker evokes ideas of song or musicality by using 'tune', turning the rogue's begging into a pseudo-busking. The use of 'lamentable' further solidifies his rogue's association with musical performance, the English Broadside Ballad Archive showing 1,634 ballads that include 'lament' or variations (16.5% of its holdings) and 811 that have 'lament', 'lamenting', or 'lamentable' in their titles. 'Lamentable' was often used in ballad titles to exaggerate the ballad's emotional selling point, making the rogue's complaints seem melodramatic. In less than half a sentence, Dekker draws together Harman's use of 'fayne' and 'dissemble' with his explanation that the rogue

⁴⁵ Ibid., sig. D1v.

will 'requir[e] almes of such as they meete, or to what house they shal co[m]e' to cast rogues as figures of entertainment and solidify their association with spectacle.⁴⁶

Dekker's contribution to the discussion around rogues as performers appears to have had a lasting impact on its readers, furthering their association with sleight-of-hand and feats of spectacle. In 1612, *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemaine* by Samuel Rid sought to teach readers 'The foppery of foolish cousoning Charmes', promoting his work through its association with the increasingly entertaining rogues.⁴⁷ Rid was an active voice in the vagabond pamphlet genre, writing a rebuke to Dekker's *Belman* entitled *Martin Mark-all, the Beadle of Bridewell* (1610) that sought to give an honest account of the history of roguery. In *Martin Mark-all* Rid states that

[t]hese volumes and papers [*belman of London*], now spread everie where, so that everie Jacke-boy [apprentice] now can say as well as the proudest of that fraternitie, (will you wapp for a wyn, or tranie [trine] for a make,) [a canting or begging term meaning 'will you lie with a man for a penny, or hang for a half-penny'].⁴⁸

While he is likely somewhat exaggerating for effect, Rid's depiction of the popularity of *Belman* tells us of the recognisability of Dekker's rogue. By the 1610s, then, the common image of a rogue is presumably that of Dekker's caricature. In fact, as this chapter goes on to show, it is Dekker's vagrant spectacle of a tattered, crawling, lamenting rogue that playing companies depict on stage.

⁴⁶ Harman, sig. C1r.

⁴⁷ Samuel Rid, *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemain* (London, 1612), sig. A1r.

⁴⁸ Samuel Rid, *Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridevell; his Defence and Answere to the Belman of London Discovering the Long-concealed Originall and Regiment of Rogues, when they First Began to Take Head, and How they Have Succeeded One the Other Successively Unto the Sixe and Twentieth Yeare of King Henry the Eight, Gathered Out of the Chronicle of Crackeropes, and (as they Tearme it) the Legend of Lossels* (London, 1610), STC 21028.5, sig. A2r. Square brackets my own.

The vagabond pamphlets that described rogues and the varying vagrant occupations that worried officials provide insight into their costuming on stage; juggling pamphlets provide insight into the kind of theatrical spectacle that these stage rogues performed. Juggling pamphlets were like sister publications to rogue pamphlets. Dekker's rogue pamphlets and Rid's *Martin Mark-all* had given its readers the "what" of roguery. *The Art of Jugling* instead looked to the "how". Unlike begging pamphlets, which were ostensibly for protection, the tricks included in *The Art of Jugling* were '[a]ll tending to mirth and recreation, especially for those that desire to have the insight and private practise thereof.'⁴⁹ *The Art of Jugling* was a how-to manual for juggling and legerdemain – explaining how to perform 'the nimble conveyance and right dexteritie of the hand' to deescalate fears concerning magic and witchcraft.⁵⁰ Popular enough to have been reprinted only two years after its initial publication, Rid's manual taught readers how to perform the tricks commonly employed by rogues and vagabonds.

Yet, despite the commercial popularity of these pamphlets, those enacting the tricks still risked being viewed as rogues, especially when they were players. Rid warns his readers about legerdemain's association with vagrancy:

these fellowes [vagrants and gypsies] seeing that no profit comes by wandring, but hazard of their lives, doe daily decrease and breake off their wonted society, and betake themselves many of them, some to be Pedlers, some Tinkers, some Juglers, and some to one kinde of life or other, insomuch that Jugling is now become common.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Samuel Rid, *The Art of Jugling or Legerdemaine wherein is Deciphered, all the Conveyances of Legermaine and Jugling, How they are Effected, & wherein they Chiefly Consist. Cautions to Beware of Cheating at Cardes and Dice. The Detection of the Beggerly Art of Alcumistry. &, the Foppery of Foolish Cousoning Charmes. All Tending to Mirth and Recreation, Especially for those that Desire to have the Insight and Private Practise Thereof* (London, 1612), STC 21027, sig. B2v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v.

Rid states that peddlers, tinkers, and jugglers were not current rogue ‘professions’ but the professions of rehabilitated rogues, seeming concerned about the public image of juggling. In doing so, he removes ‘juggling’ – then used to refer to ‘sleight-of-hand magic’ – from its criminal context, instead depicting it as a legitimate occupation for those eschewing roguery. Informing his readers that juggling has become ‘common’ and is frequently performed by former rogues, Rid reveals how to juggle in order to show that, ‘if these things be done for recreation and mirth, & not to the hurt of our neighbour [...] then sure they are neither impious nor altogether unlawfull’.⁵² Rid crafts an argument not dissimilar to those regarding the respectability of players (Chapter Two, pp. 133-5); *The Art of Jugling* reframed juggling, removing it from its criminal context to present juggling as an honest, and skilful, act of entertainment – when performed in the right circumstances and for the right reasons, at least.

Roguary was being refashioned in the late 1600s and early 1610s. Pamphleteers attempted to define rogues, wrote in character as rogues, and profited from the fictionalised depiction of rogues, all of which strengthened the rogue’s association with disguise. There was both a fascination with the concept of roguery – a source of profit for writers of vagabond pamphlets – and a general fear of its reality, demonstrated by anti-vagabond laws and the private papers of county officials. From Harman’s initial depiction of rogues as vagabonds who ‘fayne and dissemble’, depictions of rogues became increasingly theatrical. By 1610, the fictionalised rogues now associated with disguise and feats of spectacle were ready for transferral to the stage. As the following section shows, stage depictions of rogues drew together the

⁵² *Ibid.*, sig. B3r.

above-discussed theatricality of roguery and its association with disguise and criminal vagrancy to create dynamic and comical villains.

iii. 'All tottered like coll pixci': staging roguery

Many of the defining characteristics of rogues relate to outward appearance and the materiality and theatricality of rogues would have made their depiction on stage exceptionally simple, especially for playing companies with ample resources, like the King's Men. Derek Dunne has explored the impact that licenses had on early modern drama, surveying the depiction of forgeries and their relationship with begging and performance licenses in his article 'Rogues' License: Counterfeiting Authority in Early Modern Literature' (2017).⁵³ This section similarly surveys the rogue in early modern drama, yet, where Dunne is interested in the rogue's impact on literature, I consider their impact on staging and spectacle through a consideration of costuming and stage properties. This section argues that rogue pamphlets and juggling pamphlets were direct sources for onstage roguery, both in terms of the physical depiction of rogues and the actors' required skills, like juggling and singing. It considers the rogue's depiction on stage, analysing references to costume and props in the anonymous *The London Prodigal* (KM, 1603-5), Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* (CoP, 1605-8) and *The Widow* (KM, 1614-17), and William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (KM, 1611).

When Dekker employed the association between roguery and playing in his pamphlets, he evoked the supposedly dangerous troupes of vagabond players

⁵³ Derek Dunne, 'Rogues' License: Counterfeiting Authority in Early Modern Literature', *Shakespeare Studies*, 45 (2017), 137-143.

outlawed in the Poor Laws. Yet, unlike the reactionary defence to antitheatricity outlined in Chapter Two (pp. 133-5), here the King's Men instead utilised and trivialised the associations between playing and roguery by making rogue characters a source of comedy. Much like the depiction of amateur players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the King's Men's rogues were often exaggeratedly comic. The rogue is consistently involved in comic scenes, often sharing the stage with the play's clown (Autolycus and the clown in *The Winter's Tale*; Dondolo and the company of gypsies in *More Dissemblers Besides Women* [KM, 1622-4]). By making their rogues comical, the King's Men make spectacle the prevailing characteristic of their rogues, diffusing their dangerous criminal elements.

Between 1603 and 1610, literary London – the London writers, readers, and performers of pamphlets, ballads, and plays – discussed roguery but did not perform it, their characters and narrators always observing or commenting on roguery without actively partaking. Plays frequently referenced roguery and the public's increasing knowledge of it, the bawd, Frances, in Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters*, notes how,

[e]very part of the world shootes up daily into more subtilty: the very spider weaves her calves with more art and cunning, to entrap the flie.
The shallow ploughman can distinguish now,
Twixt simple truth and a dissembling browe.
Your base mechanick fellow can spy out
A weakenes in a L.[ord] and learnes to floute.⁵⁴

Published the same year as Dekker's *belman*, Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* indicates that there was widespread discussion of roguery in the early 1600s and

⁵⁴ Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters as it hath bin Lately in Action by the Children of Paules* (London, 1608), STC 17888, sig. A4r.

1610s. Frances implies that the ubiquity of roguery meant that even those typically viewed as having a 'shallow' intellect were able to perceive and enact confidence trickery. Frances complains that rogue pamphlets have embedded a knowledge of conmanship and trickery into the general population, a complaint that may seem a little ironic in the mouth of Frances when we consider that, without these pamphlets, Middleton would likely not have had the knowledge of roguery to write her.

The stage mirrored this newfound knowledge: characters like Duke Pietro in *The Malcontent* (CQR, 1603; KM, 1604) and Edgar in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (KM, 1606) disguised and presented themselves as vagabonds without engaging in roguery or cony catching, while others, like Moll Cutpurse in Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (PCM, 1607-10), were based on infamous vagrant performers but, likewise, performed no acts of roguery in the play itself. Playwrights discussed roguery, drew inspiration from famous rogues, and had their characters physically resemble rogues, yet staged acts of roguery (that is, juggling, feigning injury, or peddling for money) were yet rare.

One tentative depiction of roguery comes in the anonymous play, *The London Prodigal*. Attributed to William Shakespeare and the King's Men on the title page of its 1605 quarto, *The London Prodigal* depicts Flowerdale, the play's prodigal, narrowly escaping a life of roguery after being ostracised from society. Upon having gambled his money away, Flowerdale gladly takes to begging, therein meeting a rotating cast of citizens who pity and berate him for this occupation:

Enter an ancient Citizen.

[*Flowerdale*]. Sir I beseech you to take compassion of a man,
One whose Fortunes have beene better then at this instant they seeme
to bee: but if I might crave of you so much little portion, as would bring

mee to my friends, I should rest thankfull, untill I had requited so great a curtesie.

Citizen. Fie, fie, yong man, this course is very bad,
Too many such have wee about this Cittie,
Yet for I have not seene you in this sort,
Nor noted you to be a common begger:
Hold theres an Angel, to beare your charges,
Downe, goe to your Friends, do not on this depend,
Such bad beginnings oft have worser ends. *Exit Citi.*

Flow. Worser endes: nay if it fall out
No worse then in old angels I care not,
Nay now I have had such a fortunate beginning,
Ile not let a sixepennie-purse escape me.⁵⁵

Flowerdale's entreaty to the citizen draws on the kinds of rogue tactics explained in rogue pamphlets. This suggests that, even if the playwright and audience present had not read these pamphlets, such tricks were notorious enough to be recognisable on stage. Flowerdale's lie, that he needs money to 'bring [him] to [his] friends' was a common tactic used by rogues, Harman notes that some 'walke sturdely about y^e cou[n]try, & faineth to seke a brother or kinsma[n] of his'.⁵⁶ The scene shows Flowerdale learning cozening, figuring out what works ('I have had such fortunate beginnings') and what does not ('[t]his is villainous lucke, I perceive dishonestie,/ Will not thrive').⁵⁷

We see here the beginnings of the rogue's on-stage depiction as a disguiser. Flowerdale opens his entreaty in prose to present himself as being of a lower social status than he is, returning to verse only after the citizen has left. His change from verse into prose only occurs when he is actively begging, and the shift in form mirrors

⁵⁵ Anonymous (attributed to William Shakespeare), *The London Prodigall as it was Plaide by the Kings Majesties Servants* (London, 1605), STC. 22333, sig. F3v-4r.

⁵⁶ Harman, sig. C1r.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. F4r-v.

Harman's warnings that rogues 'looke piteously, [only] when they see, either meete any person' and Dekker's that they will 'speake in a lamentable tune', implying a shift in demeanour and voice.⁵⁸ Considering Andrew Gurr's suggestion that the default accent for players was the metropolitan, that is, the accent of native Londoners, Peter Hyland logically concludes that '[a]n actor taking on a disguise would often need to modify the tone or timbre of his voice or assume an accent [possibly by] a shift to a regional or provincial accent, or in special cases a foreign one'.⁵⁹ Hyland's argument is grounded in examples from John Marston's *The Malcontent* (CQR, 1603; KM, 1604) when Malevole 'shifteth his speach', and Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher's *The Coxcomb* (CQR, 1612; KM, 1622) when Antonio reminds himself 'now for my language' when returning to his disguise as an Irishman.⁶⁰ For spectators attuned to recognising a disguise through a change in voice or posture and aware of the rogue's use of deception and disguise, Flowerdale's shift in speech would be a clear indication of his attempt at roguery.

Eventually made aware of his wrongs, Flowerdale forgoes roguery, returning to his family and honest society: 'I hope to win his [his father-in-law's] favour,/ And to redeeme my reputation lost', '[h]eaven helping me, ile hate the course [roguery, drinking, and swearing] as hell.'⁶¹ *The London Prodigal* warns its audiences that prodigality will eventually lead to roguery, presenting roguery and begging as the last

⁵⁸ Harman, sig. C1r; Dekker, *belman*, sig. D1v.

⁵⁹ Peter Hyland, *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 39; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 12.

⁶⁰ John Marston, *The Malcontent, Augmented by Marston with the Additions Played by the Kings Majesties Servants Written by Jhon Webster* (London, 1604), STC 17479, sig. l2v; Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, 'The Coxcomb', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 2N1r-2P4r (sig. 2N4v), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 12 June 2024].

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, sig. G3r, G4r.

resort of the 'degenerate' and 'lycentious'.⁶² Yet, while *The London Prodigal* depicts Flowerdale's near descent into roguery, showing his attempts at rogue techniques, it stops short of visually identifying Flowerdale as a rogue through costuming.

The London Prodigal presents an early depiction of the kind of rogue and cony-catching tricks made known in popular cony-catching pamphlets. Similar depictions irregularly continued (Edgar's Poor Tom disguise in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (KM, 1605-6) mirroring the 'Poor Toms' described by Harman; the various feats of cony-catching by the five gallants in Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (CQR, 1605-8) reflecting that which Greene describes in his cony-catching series), until, in 1610, there was a sudden influx of staged rogues. The popularity of rogues in print meant that rogue and cony-catching characters were appearing in more plays and holding longer and more important roles, such as Face, Subtle, and Doll Common in Jonson's *The Alchemist* (KM, 1610) and Snuff in Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy* (? , 1610-11). Yet, while these plays include conning characters, it is not until Shakespeare's Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* that we have an instance of a visually identifiable rogue on stage actively performing roguery as described in Dekker and Harman's pamphlets.

The depiction of Autolycus appears to have inspired a trend of rogues and beggars on the King's Men's stage: after him came the gypsies in Middleton's *More Dissemblers Besides Women* (KM, 1621-4); Latrocinio and his gang of thieves in Thomas Middleton's *The Widow*; the disguised gentlemen in Massinger and Fletcher's *The Little French Lawyer* (KM, 1620); and the beggars in Fletcher's *Beggars' Bush* (KM, 1616-22) to name a few. The post-1611 rogues performed comic songs, disguise, sleight-of-hand tricks, and tumbling to con other characters, creating a comic

⁶² Anonymous, *The London Prodigall*, sig. E2v.

spectacle out of roguery. It is not for nothing that Autolycus's first victim is the Clown of the Bohemian countryside in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*; that Middleton's 'Chief Thief' Latrocinio enters entertaining the gendered disguiser Ansaldo in *The Widow*, mirroring the gendered disguiser and clown pairing we see in *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, *The Roaring Girl*, and *Love's Cure*; and that Higgen in *Beggars' Bush* enters singing bawdy songs.⁶³

When Autolycus first enters in *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iii, his costume ensures that he is immediately recognisable as a rogue. He is referred to as being in so few 'loathsom...' 'ragges' that the Clown notes that he 'hast need of more rags to lay on [him]' (TLN 1690-6), a near-exact realisation of the type of rogue described by Dekker: 'his apparel is all tattered, his bosome naked'.⁶⁴ We can see a similar costume in fig. 5.3, the drawing of *Beggars' Bush*'s Clause on the title page of *The Wits, or Sport upon Sport* (1662), who wears layers of shredded clothing. Likewise, Canter Pennyboy in

⁶³ Thomas Middleton, *The Widdow a Comedie, as it was Acted in the Private House in Blackfryers, with Great Applause, by his Majesties Servants* (London, 1652), Wing J1015, sig. E1v.

⁶⁴ Dekker, *belman*, D1v.



Fig 5.3 Detail of the title page of *The Wits*, showing Clause. Anonymous, *The Wits, or, Sport upon Sport, Part I* (London, 1662), Wing W3218, sig. A1r.

Jonson's *The Staple of News* – 'Canter' referencing 'cant', the artificial language spoken by rogues – is noted to wear a 'patch'd cloake' in Jonson's stage directions (see: Chapter One, pp. 30, 45-6, 55-6).⁶⁵ In the interval performance of *Staple*, the gossip Tattle comments, 'I cannot abide that nasty fellow, the Begger [Canter Pennyboy], if hee had beene a Court-Begger in good clothes; a Begger in velvet, as they say, I could have endur'd him.'⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ben Jonson, 'The Staple of Newes', in *Bartholmew fayre : a comedie, acted in the yeare, 1614 by the Lady Elizabeths seruants, and then dedicated to King Iames, of most blessed memorie; The diuell is an asse : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1616, by His Maiesties seruants; The staple of newes : a comedie acted in the yeare, 1625, by His Maiesties seruants by the author, Benjamin Iohnson*. (London, 1631), STC 14753.5, sigs. 2A1r – K2r (sig. H3v).

⁶⁶ Jonson, *The Staple of Newes*, sig. 2C2r.

Tattered clothing appears to have been a key signifier of rogues; Simon Forman's recollection of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* indicates that it is this aspect of his costuming that made Autolycus immediately recognisable as a rogue:

Remember also the Rog[ue] that cam in all tottered like coll pixci [Autolycus]/. and howe he feyned him sicke & to haue bin Robbed of all that he had and howe he cosoned the por man of all his money. and after cam to the shep sher with a pedlers packe & ther cosoned them Again of all their money And howe he changed apparrell *with* the kinge of bomia his sonn [Florizel]. and then howe he turned Courtiar &c/ beware of trustinge feined beggars or fawninge fellowse⁶⁷

He notes that Autolycus 'came in all tottered [tattered] like coll pixci [colt pixie]' – the latter being a creature from English folklore that takes the form of a ragged and malnourished grey horse that would lead travellers astray and often to their deaths.⁶⁸ Forman's eliciting of this mythical monster, the colt pixie, is indicative of the mnemonic resonances of a rogue costume. Forman associates the tattered rags of a rogue with mythology of misguidance and threat, the costume acting as a materialisation of the warning Forman ends his entry with: 'beware of trustinge feined beggars'.

After describing Autolycus's entrance costume, Forman goes on to describe his various disguises. Reminiscent of Harman's explanation that '[t]here be of these Roges Curtales wearing shorte clokes, that wyll change their apparell, as occasion serveth.', Forman's entry suggests that material items are central to each of Autolycus's scenes.⁶⁹ Where Forman primarily discusses the events of the play when

⁶⁷ Simon Forman, *The Booke of Plaies and Notes therof per forman for Common Pollicie* (1611), Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 208, fol. 202r, in *Shakespeare Documented* <<https://shakespearedocumented.folger.edu/resource/document/formans-account-seeing-plays-globe-macbeth-cymbeline-winters-tale>> [accessed 12 June 2024].

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 201r.

⁶⁹ Harman, sig. C1v.

discussing *The Winter's Tale*, the focus on costume and props in Forman's description of Autolycus presents him as an intrinsically material character.

Where Forman's description focusses on the visual, the playtext itself reminds us of the auditory elements of Autolycus's roguery, particularly his musicality. Like Dekker's reference to music, 'lamentable tune', Autolycus enters with an explicit direction that he is '*singing*', immediately associating him with music (TLN 1640).⁷⁰ This association is continued by other characters' descriptions of him, the Clown's servant predominantly associating him with sound:

Ser[vant]. O Master: if you did but heare the Pedler at the
doore, you would neuer dance againe after a Tabor and
Pipe: no, the Bag-pipe could not moue you: hee singes
seuerall Tunes, faster then you'l tell money: hee utters
them as he had eaten ballads, and all mens eares grew to
his Tunes. (TLN 1971-6)

The servant's musically-focussed description of Autolycus draws on the association between vagrants and music. Considering that 'music was widely believed to command notice above other sounds in early modern England', Simon Smith argues that 'playhouse songs [...] were expected to focus attention upon the stage [...] marking and even conveying a key narrative development'.⁷¹ Forman's diary entry on *The Winter's Tale* corroborates this idea: his predominant memory of the play is of Autolycus's actions, suggesting that the musical character arrested more attention and formed a more lasting memory than other elements of the play. It is worth noting that Autolycus's musical scenes pre-empt a major narrative development: his cozening of

⁷⁰ Dekker, *belman*, sig. D1v.

⁷¹ Simon Smith, *Musical Response in the Early Modern Playhouse, 1602-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 2.

the clown occurs immediately before Florizel and Perdita's first romantic exchange and his peddling songs lead to his exchanging of clothes with Florizel (thus allowing Florizel to escape and wed Perdita). The attention-grabbing music clearly worked, given that Forman notes that 'the kinge of bohemia his sonn [Florizel] married [Perdita] & howe they fled into Cicillia to Leontes' and that Autolycus 'changed apparrell *with* the kinge of bomia his sonn', the narrative developments preceded by Autolycus's songs. Given *The Winter's Tale's* notorious and dramatic shift in tone between the tragic winter of Sicily in I.i-III.iii, and the comedic spring of Bohemia in IV.ii-VI.iii⁷², the musical rogue helps to revive the audience after the emotionally heavy events in Sicily and engage their attentions in moments of narrative importance.

As we have seen from the evidence explored in the previous section, rogues were inherently linked to materiality and the representation of character through outward appearance, much like stage disguisers. The first rogue in the King's Men's surviving repertory, Autolycus can be seen as a prototype for later depictions of rogues and vagabonds. The surviving sketch of Clause from *Beggars' Bush* (fig. 5.3) and a stage direction describing Canter Pennyboy's 'patch'd cloake' in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* (KM 1625) follow the tattered clothing described in *The Winter's Tale*, acting as an immediately recognisable material signifier of a rogue.⁷³ Yet, rogues must also be visually distinguishable from beggars and other types of vagrant, a distinction that the King's Men achieved by engaging with the rogue's role as disguiser.

Autolycus's entrance as a peddler in IV.iii, brings us back to the question on which Fumerton's work was centred: can the rogue's multiple occupations be considered disguises? The entrance provides an example of the minor, prop-related,

⁷² The annual sheepshearing that the feast of IV.iv is celebrating traditionally occurs in spring.

⁷³ Jonson, 'Staple', sig. H4v.

changes that stage rogues would undertake, Forman recalling his 'pedlers packe'.⁷⁴ References to rogue disguises in playtexts suggest that the disguises were profession-based, characters disguising themselves as sow-gelders, servants, and peddlers. Stage rogues typically disguise themselves through using props and simple costume pieces that falsify a profession: 'representational disguise'. Where, as previous chapters have shown, most disguises required full costume changes to effect outward displays of social status or gender, representational disguises did not. Related primarily to on-stage roguery, representational disguises often depicted professional identities associated with rogues and vagabonds. This means that the disguise itself was incidental to the rogue identity, as when the soldiers in Fletcher's *The Loyal Subject* (1618) sardonically peddle 'brooms', 'powders', and 'potato's' [sic], in a scene reminiscent of the cries of London in fig. 5.1.⁷⁵ These representational disguises were included because of their association with roguery, for the ease with which they could be performed, and to add an extra element of spectacle to the scene. Moreover, despite the incidental nature of representational disguise and on-stage roguery, representational disguise was clearly popular with playgoers, being included in 33.8% of the disguise plays in the King's Men's Jacobean repertory after its first appearance in 1610.⁷⁶ Representational disguise appears to have been highly profitable for the company given the frequency with which plays including it appear in the repertory and in revival, presumably because it was relatively cheap, since it did not require expensive costumes. The cries of London illustrations (fig. 5.1) and Hext's letter showed how peddlers and other vagabond professions would likely be differentiated

⁷⁴ Forman, fol. 201r.

⁷⁵ John Fletcher, 'The Loyal Subject', in *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen* (London, 1647), Wing B1581, sigs. 3C4r-3G1v (sig. 3E3v), in *Digital Beaumont & Fletcher* <<https://openpublishing.psu.edu/digital-beaumont-fletcher-1647>> [accessed 30 May 2024].

⁷⁶ Figures my own, drawn from Martin Wiggins' *Catalogue*.

by their wares rather than their clothing, ensuring that the King's Men need not invest large amounts of money in new costumes: players need only change small elements of their costumes to come across as different people. By looking closely at disguise plays including these minor, quick disguises, then, we can gain greater insight into disguise as a generator of revenue for the King's Men.

Autolycus embodies the earlier depictions of rogues in vagabond pamphlets in a comic caricature of roguery that actively engages with the innate theatricality of rogues. Tellingly, the surviving King's Men plays involving rogues never include the rogues disguising as professions or personalities that would necessitate a change of clothing or the donning of cosmetics. Rather, the characters typically use a disguise that involves only a prop or single costume piece: Autolycus uses a 'pedlers packe'; the thieves in *The Widow* use the blue coats of servants; and in *Beggars' Bush*, Higgen, Prigg, and Clause enter, respectively, 'like a sowgelder' – a vagabond hired to castrate farm animals – a juggler with 'three [cork] balls', and an aqua vitae man, with a barrel of 'brand-wine'.⁷⁷ Each of these disguises can easily be achieved via a single representative item. Moreover, many of them, especially Autolycus's pack and the various items used by characters in *The Loyal Subject* mentioned above, recall similar depictions in the c.1620 *Cries of London* woodcuts. The disguises are easy to create and wear while providing an audience the spectacle and humour of caricature, especially for a play like *Beggars' Bush* that was performed for a court audience whose contact with peddlers or rogues would have been minimal or non-existent.

Disguise was a well-established trope in the dramatisation of roguery, most disguises relating to a visually identifiable profession. In Thomas Middleton's *The*

⁷⁷ Forman, fol. 201r; Middleton, *The Widow*, sig. E1v; John Fletcher, Phillip Massinger, and collaborator, *The Beggars' Bush* (London, 1661), Wing B1583, sigs. B3v-B4r.

Widow, both scenes involving the gang of thieves include a form of representational disguise. In III.i, the thieves enter, waiting for their chief, Latrocinio to rob his next victim:

Enter Occulto, Silvio, and two or three other Thieves.

Occulto. Come, come, let's watch th'event on yonder hill;
If he need help, we can relieve him sudainly.

Silvio. I, and with safetie too, the hill being watcht Sir.

Occulto. Have you the Blew cotes and the Beards?

Silvio. They'r here Sir.

Occulto. Come, come away then, a fine Cock shoot evening. *Exit.*⁷⁸

This introduction to the play's rogues immediately draws on the association between roguery and representational disguise. The blue coat of a servant was so recognisable that servants were referred to as 'blue coats', as in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (LAM, 1599), 'Serv[ant]. O swounds no./ *Firke.* Blew coate be quiet, weele give you a new liverie else', suggesting that the 'blue coats' were intended to be a representational disguise.⁷⁹ Before the audience have even seen Occulto or Silvio wearing the disguises the characters are associated with the kind of professional disguising with which the Hext letter was concerned.

Embodied through their materiality and dissembling, stage rogues provided the opportunity for the King's Men to test the limits of disguise. Knowledge of roguery and its use of disguise became commonplace through pamphlets, which meant that disguise enacted by onstage rogues was accepted and expected. Yet, the disguises needed to reflect the destitution of vagabonds. The disguises would be restricted by

⁷⁸ Middleton, *The Widdow*, sig. E1v.

⁷⁹ Thomas Dekker, *The Shomakers Holiday. or the Gentle Craft with the Humorous Life of Simon Eyre, Shoemaker, and Lord Maior of London* (London, 1600), STC. 6523, sig. I1v.

the rogue's ability to access and transport any given disguises. The King's Men were, then, restricted to the 'disguises' (or alternate professions) undertaken by actual rogues, like those described in Hext's letter. Rather than undergoing full costume changes to disguise themselves, rogue characters could simply don props to transform themselves from beggars to peddlers. Moreover, analysis of rogue disguise with reference to the shifting interpretations of roguery and to the comparability of players and vagabonds demonstrates that disguise on the seventeenth-century stage was not always for philosophical purposes – that is, 'because it alluded to the fluidity of identity' – as argued in works by Karim-Cooper, Freeburg, Quarmby, Thomson, and Davis; it was equally significant to the commercial appeal of early modern drama for its capacity to provide cheap and profitable comic spectacle.⁸⁰

iv. 'Winde a Sowgelders horn within': the sound and gestures of representational disguise in *Beggars' Bush*

The previous sections of this chapter have detailed the rogue's relationship to disguise and his eventual depiction on the stage. This section looks at staged roguery and representational disguise in *Beggars' Bush*, III.i to demonstrate what the wider picture sketched in this chapter can uncover when looking at comic disguises through a materially-focussed lens. Analysing rogues through their disguises provides insight into the comedy of rogue scenes and indicates the knowledge that the playwright,

⁸⁰ Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Disguise and Identity in the plays of Middleton' in *Thomas Middleton in Context*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 279-286 (p. 279); Freeburg; Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Leslie Thomson, *Discoveries on the Early Modern Stage: Contexts and Conventions* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018); Lloyd Davis, *Guise and Disguise: Rhetoric and Characterization in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

player, and company needed to have in order to create and perform these scenes. The following section looks at *Beggars' Bush*, III.i, to consider the multi-sensory nature of representational disguise. It questions Freeburg's definition of disguise, 'a consistent attempt to make the disguised person *really look* his part in detail', and Peter Hyland's assertion that disguise was 'almost entirely a matter of *spectacle*' (emphases my own), both of which prioritise the visual elements of disguise over the way with which it engages with other senses. *Beggars' Bush*, III.i, illustrates how representational disguise was performed and the implicit meanings that the disguises communicated to playgoers, ultimately showing that the simple-to-enact disguises – their inclusion, primarily driven by audience demand – can bear the complexity of analysis that scholars have previously reserved for gendered and ruler disguises.

III.i of *Beggars' Bush* – a scene believed to have been written by then company playwright Fletcher – depicts Higgen and Prigg distracting and pickpocketing a group of drunken 'boors' or Dutch peasants and then returning to steal the boors' coats. The culturally familiar views of rogues explored above are traceable in Fletcher's portrayal of juggling and vagrant professions, while the scene's mere existence in a playtext written for the professional stage imbues the depiction of roguery with the very theatricalism on which pamphleteers had previously drawn. The scene even engages with alternative auditory and visual elements of rogue disguises – beyond song and costume – to demonstrate how the King's Men's performance of disguise was not limited to the symbolic resonances of clothing.

Hyland claims that '[corporeal] aspects of disguise [voice change and change in demeanour] are important and interesting, but subordinate to the central material

process of disguising, which is the change in appearance.’⁸¹ However, analysis of *Beggars’ Bush* and its rogue disguises suggest that, in representational disguise, sound and demeanour were proportionate to the material props. Moreover, Higgen’s disguise relies on its auditory elements to ensure playgoers recognition. Where Chapter Three discussed the auditory and tactile aspects that draw attention to Sesse’s disguise (pp. 194-5), the following shows the rogues’ disguises in *Beggars’ Bush* to be constructed by the multisensory aspects of the theatre. The abundance of visual, aural, and tactile comedy in *Beggars’ Bush*, III.i, epitomises comic rogue scenes standard in the King’s Men’s repertory, illustrating that, despite the minimal costuming of representational disguises, rogues and their disguises were fully embodied through crafted soundscapes and gestures.

Bruce R. Smith’s seminal monograph, *The Acoustic World of early modern England* (1999), explores the physiology and phenomenology of sound and acoustic spaces in early modern England. Bruce R. Smith demonstrates how sound requires both passive and active response from the listener:

there are two quite distinct ways of attending to sound [from the listener’s standpoint]: one that focuses on the *thereness* of the sound, on the sound-producer; and one that focuses on the *hereness* of the sound, on the physiological and psychological effects of sound on the listener. Both dimensions are present all the time, and we can readily shift focus from one to the other.⁸²

Through the recognition of these two ‘dimensions’ of listening, we can perceive the playgoer’s response to theatre as simultaneously being determined by the signifiers

⁸¹ Hyland, *Disguise*, p. 40.

⁸² Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 7.

on stage and by their own preconceived understanding of these signifiers. Thus, to consider the use of sound in a disguise through Bruce R. Smith's binary of hereness/thereness is to consider how the disguise relies on observation – the production of sound demanding that the person hearing attends fully to the producer so as to recognise their disguise, as the following will explore – and how it also relies on preconceived associations with those sounds (sonic memory) – the noise recalling mnemonic associations that help to construct the disguise.

Laura Jayne Wright further demonstrates the role of sonic memory in the construction of character and place in *Sound Effects: Hearing the Early Modern Stage* (2023). Expanding on R. Murray Schafer's term, 'soundscapes', Wright recognises sound as 'a vital unit of meaning on the early modern stage' that is 'integral to the creation of dramatic place'.⁸³ Wright employs the term 'soundgrams' to explore sounds familiar to an audience that can thus be used to contextualise a scene through a common theatrical motif, like a flourish heralding the entrance of a ruler.⁸⁴ The following reads Higgen's representational disguise in *Beggars' Bush* with reference to Wright's 'soundgram' and Smith's argument about sound as requiring both active and passive listening to argue that the disguise is constructed through the mnemonic resonances inspired by the sowgelder's horn.

The scribal manuscript of *Beggars' Bush* – likely descended from a prompter's book⁸⁵ – opens III.i with a stage direction to 'winde a sowgelders horn within' shortly before Higgen's entrance as a sowgelder:

⁸³ Laura Jayne Wright, *Sound Effects: Hearing the Early Modern Stage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023), p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁸⁵ Wiggins 1799.

Actus tertius

Enter three, or foure Boores

A table kans, and stooles

sett out.

1 Boor. Come, English beer hostesse, English beer byth' Bellie

2 Boor. Stout Beere, boy stout, and strong beer. soe sit down lads and drinke mee upsy-Dutch

Winde a Sowgelders horn within. (Enter Higgen like a sowgeldr. Singing: and Piper:⁸⁶

The sowgelder's horn was a large, semi-circle shaped horn (fig. 5.4), blown by sowgelders prior to their castrating farm animals. The horn served as a signal that the upcoming animal noises were not caused by an attack. That the horn being blown in *Beggars' Bush* is included in the theatrically derived manuscript but not the folio (which instead simply includes the direction, '[e]nter Hig. like a Sow-gelder, singing.') along with the instructions for the set design indicates that the horn is a production, rather than a literary, feature. This means that the role of the horn should be considered

⁸⁶ John Fletcher, Philip Massinger and collaborator, 'The beggars' bush [manuscript] J.b.5.', fol. 17v, in *LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection (LUNA)* <<https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/s/004fnx>> [accessed 7 March 2023].



Fig 5.4 Marcellus Laroon, A sowgelder, *The Cryes of the City of London Drawne after the Life*, 1687. <https://spitalfieldslife.com/2014/12/03/marcellus-laroons-cries-of-london/> [accessed 12 June 2024].

specifically with regard to its use in performance: what is signified by sight of the horn? What is signified by the sound of the horn? How would a player engage with the horn in performance? It is through addressing these questions that *Beggars' Bush* demonstrates the practicality and multifunctionality of representational disguise.

A sound now largely forgotten in the wake of industrialised farming, the noise of a sowgelder's horn was much like that of a curved hunting horn (fig. 5.5), which emits a single, loud, note when played. The sowgelder's horn was well known for its ear-piercing sound. Many uncomplimentary references to it appear throughout the drama, poetry, and non-fiction of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: '[m]usique loud before was born,/ As loud as a Sow-Gelders horn'; '[s]ound, Sound the Sow-Gelders Horn! [...] O the brave Din'.⁸⁷ Samuel Pepys even goes so far as to curse the sound on the 1st July 1667:

Up betimes, about [4] o'clock, waked by a damned noise between a sow gelder and a cow and a dog, nobody after we were up being able to tell us what it was.⁸⁸

As Pepys' entry shows, the sound of the horn was well known enough to be identified by sleepers, without actively seeing or knowing 'what it was' that had occurred.

The specific sound of a sowgelder's horn was the most recognisable aspect of a sowgelder, meaning that the disguise relied on sound before sight. The blowing of the sowgelder's horn was, therefore, an integral element in the King's Men's development of a sowgelder disguise. The sound of the horn functions as an auditory

⁸⁷ R. M., *Scarrondies; or, Virgile Travestie a Mock-poem being the Second Book of Virgils Aeneis Translated into English Burlesq: being a Continuation of the Former Story* (London, 1665), Wing M2455, sig G3v; Colby Cibber, *The Rival Queans* (Dublin, 1729), p. 18, III.i.220-2.

⁸⁸ Samuel Pepys, 'Monday 1st July 1667', in *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* <<https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1667/07/>> [accessed 12 June 2024].

disguise, indicating the upcoming entrance of a sowgelder before Higgen is visible to the playgoers. Thus, Higgen is disguised before he even steps on the stage. I suggest, then, that representational disguise is multi-sensory, the simplicity of the disguise – crafted through holding or donning a single prop – being secondary to the disguiser's ability to encapsulate a character-type using that object.



Fig 5.5 Curved brass hunting horn or 'Demilune horn', French, c. 1620 - ca. 1690. New York, The Met Museum, acc. no. 2020.4.

Aside from the sowgelder's horn as a component of a sowgelder disguise, the sounding of a horn can be heard throughout the King's Men's repertory, especially in relation to the soundscapes of comic scenes. The construction of this soundgram likely stems from the frequent use of trumpets to indicate the entrance of someone important and to signify the beginning of a new play. In a chapter on the 'epitexts' of performance – that is, the performances that took place before a play began and after its end – Tiffany Stern notes that, on the early modern stage,

the signal that told spectators to stop talking and look to the stage was primarily aural. A trumpeter, or sometimes several trumpeters, 'heralded' the start of a play with two or three sharp blasts – or even, sometimes, an entire 'flourish' (fanfare) – on his, or their, instruments.⁸⁹

If the trumpet signified that 'something momentous and authoritative was about to happen' then the sowgelder's horn parodies that signal, marking the start of a comical farce in which the beggars play *for* the boors, putting on a performance, and play *with* the boors, manipulating and mocking them for their own amusement.⁹⁰ The horn acts as a poor imitation of the trumpet: while the abrupt sounding of it still ensures that playgoers' attentions return to the play after an act break, unlike the competently played trumpet, the sowgelder's horn can blow only one, abrasive note. Even the look of the horn is parodic, its curved body speaking to the warped nature of the rogue's performance. The '*wind[ing of] a sowgelders horn within*' conveys particular metatheatrical meanings that go beyond the appearance of Higgen's disguise. It indicates the beginning of a new act and parodies this beginning as it sets up the comical pseudo-play within the play.

Beggars' Bush co-author Philip Massinger once again includes the sowgelder's horn in *The Picture* (KM, 1629) when the play's fool, Hilario, uses one to startle the morose Sophia into joy:

Corisca. Ill newes Madame,
Are swallow-wing'd, but what's good walkes on crutches:
With patience expect it, and ere long
No doubt you shall heare from him.

A sowgelders horne blowne. A post.

Sophia. Ha! What's that?

⁸⁹ Tiffany Stern, 'Before the Beginning; After the End', in *Shakespeare and Textual Studies*, ed. by M. J. Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 358-74 (p. 359).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 359.

Corisca. The foole has got a sowgelders horne
As I take it Madam.⁹¹

A few lines later, Hilario enters 'with a long white hayre and beard, in an anticke armour, one with a horne before him.'⁹² In his monograph, Simon Smith notes that playhouse songs draw attention to the stage in moments of dramatic importance, but he goes further in an article on the use of trumpets, arguing that the sound of a trumpet or flourish acted as an indication of upcoming spectacle.⁹³ Where Simon Smith notes that Shakespeare undermines expectations for spectacle with his stage direction '[f]lourish. Enter the Kinge sicke', Massinger parodies it by including a warped version of a flourish using a sowgelder's horn, followed by the entrance of a clown.⁹⁴ The sowgelder's horn parodies the trumpet, setting up Hilario's mockery of pomp in *The Picture*, when he enters, armoured, in procession. It elicits Hilario's incoming disguise while also interrupting the serious events on-stage to indicate the incoming shift to a clowning scene. Much like Hilario's use of the sowgelder's horn, the horn in *Beggars' Bush* directs attention to the upcoming spectacle, while registering it as one of clowning, rather than political pomp.

While the sound of the sowgelder's horn was well known and the foundation of the mnemonic resonances of the disguise, its look was equally recognisable and often associated its wearer with bawdiness. Fig. 5.6, taken from the popular pamphlet *The Witch of the Woodland* (1655), depicts a sowgelder, left, and Robin the Cobbler, right. Like the Cries of London illustrations, the woodcut indicates that, beyond the horn, the

⁹¹ Philip Massinger, *The Picture a Tragæcomædie: as it was Often Presented with Good Allowance at the Globe, and Blackefriers Play-houses, by the Kings Majesties Servants* (London, 1630), STC 17640, sig. D3r.

⁹² *Ibid.*, sig. D3v.

⁹³ Simon Smith, '>>Flourish. Enter the King sicke<< Exploring Kingship through Musical Spectacle in *Richard III*', *Zeitsprünge*, 17 (2013), 84-102.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

sowgelder is not obviously distinguished by his clothes. As the woodcut is somewhat tangential to *The Witch of the Woodland*, a graphic realisation of Robin's offhand wish 'that some honest Sow-gelder had done his office upon me', the illustrated horn ensures a clear depiction of the events and characters: Robin is not simply being attacked, he is being gelded by a sowgelder. This recognisability of the horn as a signifier for castration creates a visual pun within *Beggars' Bush*, III.i. Geld, meaning 'to castrate (a man or male animal)' likewise referred to the paying of money (as in 1640 'West Putford [was] gelded after thirty shillings') and was a variant of 'gilded' (to cover in gold leaf).⁹⁵ By using '[b]oor' rather than 'peasant', Fletcher puns on 'boar' the term for a male, uncastrated swine. By being disguised as a sowgelder and robbing the boors, Higgen gelds the boars. The horn is the centrepiece of the sowgelder's depiction, a visual signifier on an otherwise undistinguishable costume.

Higgen's sowgelder disguise and the detailed stage directions relating to it provide a template which we can use to analyse representational disguises for which less information survives, like Prigg, Higgen's fellow vagabond in *Beggars' Bush*. Prigg provides an example of how reading a scene with consideration of representational disguise can elevate understanding of comic characters even in instances where little indication of the disguise's materiality survives. Mirroring Higgen's representational disguise, Prigg's role indicates consistent theatrical uses of this form, demonstrating exactly how the King's Men intricately engaged with the multi-sensory performance through representational disguise.

⁹⁵ 'geld, (v.2), sense II,' Oxford English Dictionary [online] (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1325568959>>.

Here *Robin* for his former Letchery
Doth suffer in his members grievously.



Fig 5.6 Woodcut from L.P., *The Witch of the Woodlands, or the Coblers New Translation* (London, 1655), Wing P3391, sig. B2v.

Beggars' Bush III.i implies that Prigg, enters disguised as a 'juggler', but the manuscript and printed playbook simply state '[e]nter Prig. and Ferret'.⁹⁶ While, today, a juggler indicates someone who throws and catches juggling balls and beanbags, in seventeenth century England, 'juggler' was a catch-all phrase for anyone who performed sleight-of-hand magic and comic tricks.⁹⁷ Juggling was known as a vagabond art, leading to its being explicitly criminalised in the 1631 Order for the Suppression of Vagabonds, passed shortly after the King's Men's 1630 performance of *Beggars' Bush* at the Cockpit in Court and still in place during their 1636 Hampton Court performance. Likewise, the suppression of vagabonds in the Vagabonds Act of

⁹⁶ Fletcher, et al., *Beggars' Bush*, sig. B3v; 'The beggars' bush [manuscript] J.b.5.', fol. 18v.

⁹⁷ 'juggler (n., sense II', *Oxford English Dictionary* [online] (2024)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1148581248>>.

1572 focusses on unlicensed players and performers, naming '[a]ll ffencers, Bearewardes, Common players of Interludes and minstrels wandring abroade, All lugglers [...] wandring abroade'.⁹⁸ Prigg's juggler disguise drew on associations with vagabonds, much like Higgen's sowgelder disguise, yet rather than evoking the crudeness of roguery, Prigg's disguise draws on the criminal elements of roguery.

The performance of juggling and similar feats of roguery on-stage came after juggling manuals like *The Art of Jugling* were readily available, suggesting their potential use to inform performance. As these tricks were now readily available, the King's Men no longer had to rely solely on costume and disguise when performing rogue characters. In fact, the King's Men appear to have been staging juggling and sleight-of-hand trickery by rogues as early as *The Widow* (1615-17), potentially first performed only a year after the first reprint of *the Art of Jugling* in 1614. That Occulto's sleight-of-hand trickery in *The Widow* so closely coincides with the reprint of *The Art of Jugling* is suggestive of the juggling pamphlet's impact on the staging of roguery. Juggling pamphlets were fundamental to the construction of the stage rogue: players could learn sleight-of-hand tricks from *The Art of Jugling*, while Harman's and Dekker's pamphlets provided clear and consistent depictions of rogues which were easily replicable on the stage.

Jonson's *Staple* references a character named 'Hokos Pokos', who wore 'a Juglers jerkin, with false skirts. like the Knave of Clubs'. Through this reference we can begin to construct the potential costuming for Prigg's juggler. A satirical poetry collection by Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Clubs* depicts a knave – a figure in a deck of cards as well as a male attendant and 'a cunning unscrupulous rogue' –

⁹⁸ HL/PO/PU/1/1572/14Eliz1n5.

THE KNAVE OF Clubbes.



Printed at London for W. Ferebrand, and are to be
sold at his shop in Popes-head Pallace.
1609.

Early English Books Online, Copyright © 2019 ProQuest LLC
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Fig.5.7 Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Clubbes* (London, 1609), STC 21387, sig. A1r.

interacting with various courtiers. Characterisations of the Knave of Clubs presents them as a cozener, like in Rowland's poem '[t]o Fustis Knave of Clubs', dedicated to someone who 'for [his] notorious swaggering life', has 'bine christened [nicknamed] knave of Clubs'⁹⁹:

Thy tricks, and feates thou hast at cards,
To cut upon a Knave,
That let a man drawe where he will,
Thy picture he shall have.
Thy haunting of the Dicing-house,
To cheate a living theare.¹⁰⁰

By comparing the juggler's jerkin to the Knave of Clubs, Jonson indicates ideas of conmanship with which, warned Rid, juggling was historically associated. That the 'Juglers jerkin' was associated with criminal jugglers and with the cheating Knave of Clubs implies that it was an immediate visual symbol of rogue disguises. But what, exactly did this jerkin style look like, and can it be included within the rubric of representational disguise?

The title page of Rowland's pamphlet, shown in fig. 5.7, depicts the Knave of Clubs wearing a Henrician jerkin, a tight-fitting man's jacket that skirts out at the hips, otherwise known as a skirted jerkin. The skirted jerkin was largely out of fashion by the 1560s, as demonstrated by Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies' depictions of the Henrician jerkin (fig. 5.8) and the Jacobean jerkin (fig. 5.9), which primarily differ in their skirts (or lack thereof). Despite this, the skirted jerkin appears to have remained

⁹⁹ Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Clubbs* (London, 1609), STC 21387, sig. A2r.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, sigs. A2r-v



Fig 5.8 Detail from *The Field of the Cloth of Gold*, showing a man in a skirted jerkin or Henrician jerkin, which sits at his knees. Artist unknown. London, The Royal Collection. Taken from Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor* (London: Batsford, 2006) p. 19.



Fig 5.9 Silk jerkin, dated c. 1610-25. Suggestive of the fashion in men's jerkin fashion around the time of the composition of *Beggars' Bush*. British. New York, The Met Museum. Acc. No., 2018.113.

a staple in depictions of the Knave of Clubs. *Playing Cards*, by W. Gurney Benham, shows that the card was depicted with the Henrician style jerkin in packs from 1567 through to 1750.¹⁰¹ The 'Juglers jerkin' can be assumed to be a Henrician style skirted jerkin, then, which, if Tattle is to be believed, was constructed by attaching a 'false skirt' onto a short jerkin. Prigg's representational disguise was likely, then, to have been a false skirt attached to his jerkin, associating him with the out-of-fashion Knave of Clubs and his roguery: in essence, a form of historical costume.

Without explicit stage directions to indicate how Prigg's disguise was performed, we must instead turn to seventeenth century juggling manuals and III.i's

¹⁰¹ W. Gurney Benham, *Playing Cards* (London: Benham & Company, 1931), p. 35.

implicit stage directions for clues. The two surviving juggling pamphlets, *The Art of Jugling* and *Hocus Pocus Junior* (1634), provide a consistent depiction of jugglers, on which Fletcher and the King's Men appear to have drawn in the development of Prigg's disguise. *The Art of Jugling* states:

Remember that a juggler must set a good face upon that matter he goeth about, for a good grace and carriage is very requisite to make the art more authentically.

Your feates and trickes then must be nimble, cleanly, and swiftly done, and conveyed so as the eyes of the beholder may not discern or perceive the trick, for if you be a bungler, you doth shame your selfe, and make the Art you goe about to be perceived and knowne, and so bring it into discredit. [...] You must also have your words of Arte, certaine strange words, that it may not onely breed the more admiration to the people, but to lea[d] away the eye from espying the manner of your conveyance.¹⁰²

Hocus Pocus Junior similarly describes a juggler's disposition:

First, he must be one of a bold, and audacious spirit, so that he may set a good face upon the matter.

Secondly, he must have a nimble, and cleanly conveyance.

Thirdly, he must have strange termes, and emphaticall words, to grace, and adorne his actions, and the more to astonish the beholders.

Fourthly, and lastly, such gesture of body as may leade away the spectators eyes from a strict and diligent beholding his manner of conveyance.¹⁰³

While the author of *Hocus Pocus Junior* may have had access to the earlier pamphlet, these similarities suggest a consistency in the juggler's demeanour over a period of 22 years, requiring little adaptation by the later author. In both pamphlets there is a clear focus on the juggler's body and expressions. They each refer to his having a

¹⁰² Rid, *The Art of Jugling*, sig. B3v

¹⁰³ Anonymous, *Hocus Pocus Junior. The Anatomie of Legerdemain; or, the Art of Jugling Set Forth in its Proper Colours, Fully, Plainly, and Exactly; so that an Ignorant Person May Thereby Learn the Full Perfection of the Same, After a Little Practice* (London, 1634), Wing H2282AB, sig. A4v-B1r.

‘good face’ – good being synonymous with ‘honest’ – and emphasise the need for ‘nimble’ and ‘cleanly’ actions, focussing on the importance of gestures. Much of the juggler disguise, then, would likely have been enacted through physical movements, suggesting the importance of Prigg’s demeanour.

While descriptions of jugglers are predominantly focussed on physicality, a juggler’s props also hold importance, as shown by those involved in Prigg’s disguise. During the scene, Prigg performs two of his four tricks with a set of three balls:

Here are three balls,
These balls shall be three bullets,
One, two, and three ascentibus, malentibus,
Presto, be gone: they are vanish’d.¹⁰⁴

The cork balls and sleight-of-hand tricks visually engage the audience. *Hocus Pocus* reminds its readers that ‘[t]he Operator [juggler] thus qualified must have his Implements of purpose to play withall’, the most important of these being ‘foure Balls, made of Corke about the bigness of small Nutmegs.’¹⁰⁵ *The Art of Jugling*, too, notes that ‘the playes and devices [of the ball] are infinite’ and recommends ‘practis[ing] first with the leaden bullet’ before moving on to ‘balls of Corke’.¹⁰⁶ Likely drawn from legerdemain manuals, perhaps even Rid’s, Fletcher suggests that the boors must imagine that the ‘balls shall be three bullets’ twice in III.i, indicating his recognition of the importance of cork balls but his misinterpretation of the fact that bullets were used to *practice* hand movements, and were not, as Prigg shows, involved in the trick. The

¹⁰⁴ Fletcher, et al., *Beggars’ Bush*, sig. B3v.

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous, *The Art of Legerdemain Discovered*, sig. B1v.

¹⁰⁶ Rid, sig. B4r.

use of the cork balls as the representational prop means that, like the sowgelder's horn, the disguise itself is somewhat related to spectacle and performance.

The cork balls allow Higgen, Prigg and Ferret to enact a fundamental rogue technique: pickpocketing. When Prigg enters, Higgen tells the Boors to '[m]ark him well'.¹⁰⁷ Prigg's role as juggler, who *Hocus Pocus Junior* notes must be skilled at 'lead[ing] away the spectators eyes', distracts the boors from the pickpocketing:¹⁰⁸

Prig. Now these three, like three bullets, from your three noses
Will I pluck presently: feare not, no harme boyes,
Titere, tup atule.

1 B[oor]. Oh, oh, oh

Prig. Recubans sub fermine fagi.

2 B[oor]. Ye pull too hard; ye pull too hard.

Prig. Stand fair then:
Silvestram trim tram.

3 B[oor]. Hold, hold, hold.

Prig. Come aloft bullets three: with a whim-wham:
Have ye their moneys?

Hig[gen]. Yes, yes.

1 B. Oh rare Jugler.

2 B. Oh admirable Jugler.¹⁰⁹

The cork balls act as the crux of the scene, used to distract the boors in a comic, and mildly gruesome, manner while Higgen and Ferret pick their pockets. Much like Higgen's sowgelder horn providing a secondary sensory element to the disguise

¹⁰⁷ Fletcher, et al., *Beggars' Bush*, sig. B3v.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, *Hocus Pocus Junior*, sig. B1r.

¹⁰⁹ Fletcher et al., *Beggars' Bush*, sig. B3v.

through sound, Prigg's juggling balls provide a tactile element to the disguise. The balls enable Prigg to touch and move the Boors' faces, ensuring that his fellow rogues can pick their pockets without notice.

Prigg's juggler disguise strikes a fine balance between juggling as an entertaining spectacle and a criminal tactic. While the King's Men perform juggling for the entertainment of their audience, they never go so far as to portray it favourably. Rather, they retain and even emphasise its association with distractions that allow for theft. Yet, beyond these ties to roguery, the mention of stolen cloaks also reminds us as readers of the visual nature of the scene. While we can read and imagine the juggling and pickpocketing, the mention of the cloaks demonstrates that rogue scenes, like representational disguise, are an inherent aspect of comic spectacle. They are included for the entertainment of the spectators, the disguises functioning as mnemonic devices to spark associations between the on-stage happenings and figures of comedy and entertainment within the wider seventeenth-century culture.

Beggars' Bush, III.i, demonstrates that representational disguise involves three distinct elements: a visual marker (prop), a linguistic marker (speech), and, finally, a secondary sensory marker. Higgen's sowgelder disguise reflects this through his carrying of the horn itself (the visual); his introductory song, 'have you any work for the sowgelder, hoa', and the Boors referring to him as 'sow-gelder'; and the sounding of a sowgelder's horn, creating a disguise that uses both sight and sound.¹¹⁰ The sowgelder's horn represented a recognisable disguise associated with vagabonds, while providing a comic function and reflecting the player's demonstrated musical talent. For Prigg, meanwhile, the cork balls, his 'certain strange words', and the tactile

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, sig. B3r.

engagement with other players provide spectacle through representational disguise, while also ensuring an engagement with the criminal aspects of roguery.¹¹¹ What appears simple in the playtext – ‘Higgen enters as a sowgelder’ or ‘[w]ill ye see any feats of activity,/ Some sleight of hand, legerdemain?’ – required careful consideration of the sensory signifiers of rogues in production. The disguise itself, signifying a vagrant profession, ensures Higgen’s association with roguery while its lewdness draws on the earlier sensationalised depictions of rogues. Higgen’s disguise exemplifies the multitude of uses for single props or costume pieces in representational disguise. A simple way to engage multiple senses, representational disguise engaged with materials of disguise beyond the ‘change of appearance’ that has generally been the focus of disguise scholarship to date.

v. Conclusion

In *Beggars’ Bush* and other plays, representational disguise is used to portray a situation in which players can perform comic spectacle while remaining within the confines of their characters. As this chapter has demonstrated, representational disguise was integral to performing roguery successfully. Not only were the material elements of roguery frequently referenced in vagabond pamphlets, but also, as Forman’s diary shows, costume and props had a memorable impact. The spectacle of roguery – performed through the frayed costumes, disguises, sleight-of-hand trickery, music, and feigned physical ailments – draws visual attention to rogue characters. The playgoers are brought into the world of roguery by showing them how the rogue tricks

¹¹¹ Rid, *The Art of Juggling*, sig. B3v.

are performed and presenting the rogues' victims as comic fools – characters to laugh at rather than pity.

Close analysis of rogue scenes and representational disguise demonstrates that, while comic rogue scenes are not often praised for being intellectually stimulating by readers (scholarship often overlooking the comedic Higgen and Prigg in favour of the more psychologically complex Clause) they required an abundance of skill and knowledge on the part of their players. Representational disguise was not simply the donning of a hat, but rather a form of complex gesture- and sound-based performance akin to what we now term 'character acting' (that, sometimes, also involved the donning of a hat). It may have been implicitly included for comic spectacle and its popularity amongst patrons, rather than as a reflection of a character's psyche or a way to forward the play's story, but that does not detract from its importance in the King's Men's disguise repertory nor its complexity in performance.

Existing scholarship's focus on ruler disguises and gendered disguises as reflections of inner turmoil and deeper psychological meanings has led to simplified accounts and even neglect of representational disguise. An important element in scenes involving large amounts of comic skill, analysis of representational disguise scenes and their frequency reinforces the argument that disguise was an integral, and likely profitable, element of the King's Men's repertory. Analysis of representational disguise provides a new avenue in disguise studies, one which takes this form seriously. Not a simplistic and early form of disguise, but one that engaged the more representative and multi-sensory elements of early modern stagecraft.

CONCLUSION

'Not to see a friend through all disguises': the irresolvable ambiguity of disguise

In the discovery scene of Philip Massinger and John Fletcher's *A Very Woman* (KM, 1621-5), Don Pedro reacts with embarrassment and misery at not recognising Don John:

[*John.*] I thought to cheer you up with this short story,
But you grow sad on't.

Ped[ro]. Have I not just cause,
When I consider I could be so stupid
As not to see a friend through all disguises;
Or he so far to question my true love,
To keep himself conceal'd?

John. 'Twas fit to do so
And not to grieve you with the knowledge of
What then I was.¹

Pedro's grief over his failure to recognise John reflects a presumption that has been long held by disguise scholarship: that disguises on the early English stage simply work. When considering rogues, Patricia Fumerton concludes that 'invisibility is made visible when it is reimagined as a disguise.'² The observer's awareness of a disguise is key to its construction, as the disguise relies not on the sartorial signifiers but on the observer's acknowledgment and acceptance of them.

The philosophical questions of identity and the self around which disguise studies has centred itself are illuminated by study into its material properties.

¹ Philip Massinger and John Fletcher, 'A Very Woman', in *Three new playes; viz. The bashful lover, Guardian, Very woman. As they have been often acted at the private-house in Black-Friers, by His late Majesties Servants, with great applause* (London, 1655), Wing M1050, sigs. N6r-T6v (sig. T4r-v).

² Patricia Fumerton, 'Making Vagrancy (In)visible: The Economics of Disguise in Early Modern Rogue Pamphlets', in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 193-210 (p. 204).

Consideration of the material components of disguise show that concerns regarding identity do not end with the playwright, but are, in fact, interwoven into the fabric of disguise performance, constructed by everyone involved in the performance process. The construction of the disguise may begin with the playwright, but its realisation relies on the players and the playgoers. Pedro wonders how he could not 'see a friend through all disguises', but it is, in fact, his inability to recognise John that constructs the disguise. In the Introduction to this thesis, I argued that we should rethink the relationship between the playgoer and the player as the 'senser' and the 'sensed', to apply this to Pedro and John is to recognise that John's disguise sought to muffle Pedro's senses.

Thus, disguise did not 'simply' work, rather, it was a complex form of multi-sensory performance that relied heavily on players' skill, existing and developing stage technologies, and the playmakers' awareness of these assets. It used mnemonic devices to spark associations between the on-stage happenings and wider seventeenth-century culture, requiring the playmakers to remain constantly attuned to potential varied interpretations in their audiences. Analysis of disguise evidences the material and phenomenological nature of the King's Men's plays: the material meanings of clothing in early modern England directly impacted on staged disguise, showing that the material and the abstract elements of character were intrinsically associated by playmakers and playgoers, alike. Yet, it also shows the heterogeneity of the early modern audience, drawing on a myriad of cultural associations to invite response from a variety of playgoers. By broadening our understanding of the sartorial significance of disguise materials and the ambiguousness of outward presentation, we can better recognise the heterogeneous nature of an early modern theatre audience, and the uncertainty implicit in the plays written for them.

Consideration of the heterogenous audience has shown that aiming for a singular, 'true' reading of a disguiser is antithetical to the early modern English stage. Rather, acknowledging the ambiguity of the stage has shown that uncertainty illuminates, not obscures, our understanding of disguise drama and the questions of identity therein. Disguise has long been taken as the assumption of a new, if temporary, identity, but this assumption is reliant on viewing the disguiser as entirely reflective of how observers perceive them, thus assuming that identity was clear and fixed. This thesis has instead shown that there was a noted distinction between one's identity, and the external perception of them, suggesting that identity – gender identity, racial identity, class identity – was constantly in flux, depending on the cultural associations of the observer.

Disguise is an emphatically material practice, and recognition of this demonstrates that early modern commercial drama employed a stagecraft that goes beyond language and proves that reading playtexts in isolation cannot inform us of playwright's, playmakers', or playgoers' intentions or interpretations. A repertory as disguise-focussed as the King's Men's informs our understanding of early modern self presentation and sheds light on early modern discourses on gender, race, class, and on constructs of the self. Recognition of disguise materials provides a nuanced understanding of identity in early modern England, one that shows that early modern writers and playmakers were acutely aware of the opposition between external perceptions of identity and a person's internal understanding of themselves.

Yet disguise on the seventeenth-century stage was not always used 'because it alluded to the fluidity of identity', it was equally significant to the commercial appeal

of early modern drama.³ It was useful for its capacity to provide cheap and profitable comic spectacle and to ignore that is to forget the influence of the playgoers on the plays. The influence of profit on the production of plays went hand-in-hand with the dramatic intentions of the playmakers. The repetition of popular disguise tropes; the representational use of props and costume; the recycling of disguise materials: each of these create mnemonic resonances that construct an image of the King's Men as players of disguise, but they also show an awareness of their own commercial success and continued commercial viability, and the role which disguise played in that.

This thesis has shown that the story of the development of disguise materials on stage is one that is inextricably bound with the story of the King's Men's Jacobean repertory. By providing insight into the use and development of these disguise materials, I hope to have shown that there is significantly more to be said on the materiality of disguise. Questions yet remain: how do playtexts reflect disguise's materiality on the page, and how does this differ between playwrights? Is there a marked difference in the performance of disguise by companies other than the King's Men? Does the King's Men's post-1625, and post-Fletcher, repertory reflect the practice outlined in this thesis? This thesis has been a stepping stone toward an understanding of the early modern stage that embraces its embodied, material elements, an understanding that recognises that the play is not simply the text.

³ Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Disguise and Identity in the plays of Middleton' in *Thomas Middleton in Context*, ed. by Suzanne Gossett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 279-286 (p. 279).

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Appendix: Disguise in the King's Men's repertory, 1603-26⁴

Play	Evidence of earliest performance by the King's Men	Known revivals
<i>Sejanus' Fall</i> , Ben Jonson.	Stated to have been 'first acted in the year 1603 by the King's Majesty's Servants' in 1605 Folio. Licenced for performance by Edmund Tilney, c. 1603-4.	c.1604 at the Globe; reported to have been in the repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars, 1609-42.
<i>Measure for Measure</i> , William Shakespeare.	At Whitehall Palace, 26 th December, 1604.	
<i>The Malcontent</i> , John Marston, revised by John Webster.	c.1604 Printed in 1604, 'with Additions played by the Kings Majesties servants.'	28 th February, 1635 at the Blackfriars.
<i>The Fair Maid of Bristol</i> , anonymous.	Performed in the Hall at Hampton Court, February 1604/5.	
<i>The London Prodigal</i> , anonymous (attributed to William Shakespeare).	Printed in 1605, '[a]s it was plaide by the Kings Majesties servants.'	
<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i> , William Shakespeare.	c.1604-5 likely date of earliest performance.	Reported to have been in the repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars, 1609-42.
<i>King Lear</i> , William Shakespeare.	At Whitehall Palace, 26 th December, 1606.	
<i>Volpone, or The Foxe</i> , Ben Jonson.	c.1606-7; implied by prefatory information in the quarto to have been on the stage prior to its printing in 1607.	c. 1615-19; c.1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court; 27 th December, 1624 at Whitehall Palace; 19 th November, 1630 at the Cockpit in Court; 27 th

⁴ Data is taken from Martin Wiggins' *British Drama, 1533 - 1642: A Catalogue*, with Catherine Richardson, 12 vols (2012-).

		October, 1638 at the Blackfriars; 8 th November, 1638 at the Cockpit in Court.
<i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i> , Thomas Middleton.	Printed in 1607, 'As it hath beene sundry times acted, by the Kings Majesties Servants.'	
<i>The Miseries of Enforced Marriage</i> , George Wilkins.	Printed in 1607, 'As it is now playd by his Majesties Servants.'	
<i>The Merry Devil of Edmonton</i> , Thomas Dekker.	At court between Christmas 1612 and 9 th April, 1613.	3 rd May, 1618 at court; 15 th February, 1613 at the Cockpit at court; 6 th November, 1638, at Richmond Palace.
<i>Philaster</i> , Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher.	At court between Christmas 1612 and 9 th April, 1613.	Pre-1620 at the Globe; c.1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court; 14 th December, 1630 at the Cockpit in Court; 21 st February, 1637 at St James's Palace; c. 1641.
<i>The Alchemist</i> , Ben Jonson.	September 1610, in Oxford.	1610 in London; at court prior to 20 th May, 1613; c.1616-19, including Nathan Field as Face; 1 st January, 1623 at Whitehall Palace; 1 st December, 1631; 18 th May, 1639.
<i>Cymbeline, King of Britain</i> , William Shakespeare.	1611, seen by Simon Forman between 21 st and 29 th April.	1 st January 1634 at the Cockpit in Court.
<i>The Winter's Tale</i> , William Shakespeare.	15 th May, 1611. Seen by Simon Forman.	5 th November, 1611 at Whitehall Palace; at court between Christmas 1612 and 9 th April, 1613; 7 th April, 1618 at the Banqueting House, Whitehall; c.1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court;

		18 th January, 1624 at Whitehall Palace; 16 th January, 1634 at Whitehall Palace; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Maid's Tragedy</i> , Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher.	Licensed for performance by Sir George Buc before 31 st October, 1611.	At court between Christmas 1612 and 9 th April, 1613; c.1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court; c.1625-30, Second Folio cast list includes players who were all active in this time span; 9 th December, 1630 at the Cockpit in Court; 29 th November, 1636 at Hampton Court; 1632-1642 Stephen Hammerton played Amintor.
<i>The Second Maiden's Tragedy</i> , Thomas Middleton.	Licensed for performance 31 st October, 1611.	
<i>Cardenio</i> , William Shakespeare and John Fletcher.	At court during the Christmas 1612-13 season.	8 th June, 1613 at Lord Mayor Sir John Swinnerton's house in Aldermanbury.
<i>The Widow</i> , Thomas Middleton.	c.1615 likely date of earliest performance.	c.1634-41 performed at Blackfriars, 'with great applause'.
<i>Love's Pilgrimage</i> , John Fletcher and potential collaborator.	c.1613-25 likely dates of earliest performance.	1635, licensed for revision; 16 th December, 1636 at Hampton Court.
<i>Beggars' Bush</i> , John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and collaborator.	c.1616 likely date of earliest performance.	27 th December, 1622, at Whitehall Palace; 30 th November 1630 at Cockpit in Court; 19 th November, 1636 at Hampton Court;

		1st January, 1639 at Richmond Palace.
<i>The Witch</i> , Thomas Middleton.	1616, 'ignorantly ill-fated' performance at the Blackfriars.	
<i>The Devil is an Ass</i> , Ben Jonson.	1616, at Blackfriars.	
<i>The Chances</i> , John Fletcher.	c.1617 likely date of earliest performance.	c.1627, potentially revived for performance with additions to prologue and interpolations in text; 30th December, 1630 at Cockpit in Court; 22 nd November, 1638 at Cockpit in Court.
<i>The Queen of Corinth</i> , Philip Massinger, Nathan Field, and John Fletcher.	c.1616-19, likely date of earliest performance.	
<i>Thierry, King of France, and his Brother Theodoret</i> , John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Collaborator.	c.1621, 'divers times acted' by the King's Men at the Blackfriars.	
<i>The Knight of Malta</i> , John Fletcher, Nathan Field, and Philip Massinger.	c.1618, likely date of earliest performance.	c.1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Loyal Subject</i> , John Fletcher.	November 1618, licensed for performance by the King's Men.	1633, revived in a new version; 10th December 1633 at Whitehall Palace; April 1634 at Blackfriars, seen by John Newdigate; 6 th December 1636 at Hampton Court; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.

<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Philip Massinger and John Fletcher.	c.1619-20, likely date of earliest performance.	22nd November, 1628 for Sir Henry Herbert; 24th October, 1630 at Hampton Court; 27th November, 1638 at Cockpit in Court.
<i>The Little French Lawyer</i> , John Fletcher and Philip Massinger.	c.1620, likely date of earliest performance.	Reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Mayor of Quinborough</i> , Thomas Middleton.	1620 appears on a Revels Office list of plays considered for court.	Reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642; 1661 titlepage claims it had been 'often acted' at the Blackfriars.
<i>Women Pleased</i> , John Fletcher.	c.1620-1, likely date of earliest performance.	
<i>The Island Princess</i> , John Fletcher.	c.1621, likely date of earliest performance.	26 th December, 1621 at Whitehall Palace; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Wild-Goose Chase</i> , John Fletcher.	c.1621, likely date of earliest performance. Early audience included Fletcher.	24 th January, 1622 at Whitehall Palace; 6th November 1632 for Sir Henry Herbert; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642 and said to have been acted 'with singular applause' at the Blackfriars on the 1652 titlepage.
<i>More Dissemblers Besides Women</i> , Thomas Middleton.	6 th January 1624 at Whitehall Palace, as late substitution for planned masque.	Reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Duke of Milan</i> , Philip Massinger.	'[O]ften acted' by the King's Men at the Blackfriars by 1623.	

<i>The Pilgrim</i> , John Fletcher.	c.1621, likely earliest date of performance.	1st January, 1622 at Whitehall Palace; 29th December, 1622 at Whitehall Palace; reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>Anything for a Quiet Life</i> , Thomas Middleton (attributed to John Webster).	c.1622, likely earliest date of performance.	Performed at the Blackfriars before 1662.
<i>The Double Marriage</i> , John Fletcher and Philip Massinger.	c.1622, likely earliest date of performance.	Reported as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Spanish Curate</i> , John Fletcher and Philip Massinger.	Autumn/Winter 1622 at the Blackfriars, audience included Sir Edward Derring.	26 th December, 1622 at Whitehall Palace; 6th December, 1638 at Cockpit in Court; 7th January, 1639 at Richmond Palace.
<i>A Very Woman</i> , Philip Massinger and John Fletcher.	'[L]ong since acted' in 1634.	'[O]ften acted' at the Blackfriars by 1655.
<i>The Maid of the Mill</i> , William Rowley and John Fletcher.	1623, licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, 29 th August.	29 th September, 1623 at Hampton Court; 1st November 1623 at St James' Palace; 26th December, 1623 at Whitehall Palace.
<i>The Lover's Progress</i> , John Fletcher, revised by Philip Massinger.	c.1619-24, likely earliest dates of performance.	13 th May, 1634 at the Blackfriars, audience included Queen Henrietta Maria; 21 st May, 1634, audience included Edward Boteler, Sir Humphrey Mildmay, Lady Jane Mildmay, Nan Mildmay, and Sir Henry Skipwith.
<i>A Wife for a Month</i> , John Fletcher.	1624, licensed by Sir Henry Herbert, 27 th May.	9 th February, 1637 at St James' Palace; reported

		as having been in repertory of the King's Men at the Blackfriars before 1642.
<i>The Honest Man's Fortune</i> , Nathan Field, John Fletcher, Philip Massinger, and Robert Daborne, with Cyril Tournier.	1625, revised for the King's Men.	
<i>The Staple of News</i> , Ben Jonson.	February 1626.	19 th or 20 th February, 1626 at Whitehall Palace.
<i>The Telltale</i> , anonymous.	c.1622-40. Wiggins has 1626 as likely earliest date of performance.	