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Making Death a Miracle: Audience and the Genres of Martyrdom in Dekker and Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr*

In 1620, audiences at the Red Bull might have witnessed the martyrdom of a 'blessed virgin' who died 'aiming / At an immortall crowne, and in his cause / Who only can bestow it'[1] or, perhaps, 'illusions of the Diull / Wrought by some one of her Religion, / That faine would make her death a miracle' (4.3.188–90). These descriptions come from the same character, and apply to the same events, of which the theatre audience is also a witness – the decapitation of Dorothea, the title character in Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr,* and the 'heavenly music' (4.3.187) that accompanies her apotheosis. For Theophilus, the chief persecutor of Christians, later converted by gifts Dorothea sends him from the heavenly kingdom she has attained, the difference between these positions is the difference between pagan and Christian understanding, and the true narrative of martyrdom supercedes the false narrative of theatrical illusion. For the theatre audience, the situation is more complicated.

On the stage, representations of physical suffering and torment are understood by the theatre audience to be simultaneously authentic and counterfeit. Dorothea is supernaturally protected from repeated attempts at rape and torture – a sign of both divine protection and careful stage management. Her tormentors repeatedly ascribe her imperviousness to torture to 'counterfeit' clubs and slaves who 'forbeare to hurt her' (4.2. 99, 114), attempting to use the theatrical to undercut the miraculous. In calling attention to this contradiction, *The Virgin Martyr* suggests the possibility of a reading that recognizes the differences between these viewing practices without presenting them as either true or false. In its representation of Dorothea's martyrdom as simultaneously spiritually authentic and theatrically constructed, the play suggests that either interpretation depends upon the audience's choice of the type of spectacle they are witnessing rather than the inherent nature of the event itself. The understanding of interpretation as a product of the conventions of genre rather than the transparent significance of the spectacle raises important

questions about the nature of the relationship between spectator and spectacle on both the public stage and the public scaffold.

The antitheatrical writers of the 1570s and 80s, particularly Stephen Gosson and Antony Munday, consistently locate the threat of the theatre to its audience in the absolute power of the spectacle over the spectator. As Laura Levine argues, in Gosson's formulation of the relationship between spectator and spectacle, taken to its logical end, 'watching leads inevitably to "being" –to [the audience member] assuming the identity of the actor'.[2] Beyond this, the spectacle is monolithic; the actions and words of players are not 'ended at the outward sense,' but 'slip downe into the hart, and … gaule the minde, where reason and vertue should rule the roste'.[3] The early attacks on the theatre would hotly dispute the very concept of theatrical competence – the audience's ability to recognize 'certain organizational and cognitive principles which, like all cultural rules, have to be learned'[4] – arguing as they do that response to theatre is not a learned but an involuntary behavior. This formulation of spectacle not only renders the theatre profoundly threatening, but also insists on the stability and transparency of the meaning of examples, thus rendering the scaffold profoundly efficacious; exemplary punishment depends on a similar assumption that the spectacle can be read in only one way.

In practice, neither the stage nor the scaffold ever offers the stable univocal spectacle that the antitheatrical writers so anxiously envision. This appears particularly clearly in competing accounts of executions that might be understood as either martyrdom or judicial punishment for heresy or treason. Either interpretation must explicitly resist the other, making it impossible to fully separate the categories of martyr and traitor. Saint Augustine's explanation of how one might identify a martyr touches the heart of both the epistemological and representational problems of martyrdom: 'Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa': it is not the pain, but the cause that maketh the martyr.[5] This distinction suggests one of the most basic interpretive contests in public punishments; the judicial authorities determine the punishment, the executioner inflicts the pain, but who shall judge the cause, and how? An omniscient deity to whom the hearts of the condemned were open might have no trouble sorting the true martyrs from the false, but the witnesses to whom the pain was readily apparent did not have access to this certainty about cause. The contest between catholic and protestant ideologies in early modern England was played out most spectacularly on the pyres of Smithfield and scaffolds of Tyburn between the judicial authorities who called their victims heretics and traitors and the convicted men and women who maintained to their last

breath (and sometimes, according to their chroniclers, beyond) that they died for their true faith, but the result of this contest was measured in the response of the crowds that gathered to watch these punishments and to decide if they had seen justice or martyrdom.

Because martyrdom at the hands of state authority is identical to public punishment, its reception determines its practical impact: whether the Marian heresy executions of 1555 serve as 'exemplary punishment … to intimidate others' or 'harden[] many hearts … it is said that several people of this place wished to enter the fire of their own accord to die with those who were being burned'[6] or whether Edmund Campion's severed head displayed on London Bridge in 1581 was seen as an exhortation to avoid his crime, or if 'His head set up so high doth call for moe/ To fight the fight which he endured here'.[7] Cause, here, is in the eye of the beholder, manifest only through the spectacle of the martyr's body in agony, which is simultaneously deterrent and exemplary, simultaneously a sign of the power of the state and of its limits, simultaneously a mark of its audience's impotence as actors and its importance as witness.

While the body of the traitor or martyr on the scaffold is subject to intense scrutiny, the absolute and supernatural integrity of Dorothea's body in *The Virgin Martyr* prevents her being made a spectacle of Roman authority. Her imperviousness reverses the usual epistemological problem of martyrdom; in her case causa is manifested more clearly than poena, making the status of the authorities that attempt to control the story her body tells more subject to interpretation than her body itself. The scaffold inverts itself, not only in significance – becoming the site of Dorothea's 'coronation' (4.2.137) as a martyr rather than 'thy first entrance into hell'(4.3.66) which her persecutors envision – but also in function, most explicitly when Theophilus and the governor, Sapritius, becoming infuriated with her tormentors' inability to beat out Dorothea's brains, beat and hang them instead, and when Theophilus, after his conversion, frees all of the Christians and is put to death on the engines he designed to torture them. As the scaffold becomes an increasingly unstable site of the production of meaning within the context of the play, the spectacle of Dorothea becomes increasingly stable – less an object to be interpreted than an index of her various audiences' viewing practices.[8]

Towards the end of the fourth act, Dorothea is decapitated by the Roman authorities. This execution takes place on stage, in full view of both the theatre audience and most of the characters in the play, but Dorothea locates its significance not in the immediate visual experience of her spectators but rather in the textual and oral transmission of the narrative of her death:

> Although you are unmoved to see my death,
> Hereafter when my story shall be read,
> As they were present now, the hearers shall
> Say this of Dorothea with wet eyes,
> She liv'd a virgin and a virgin dies. (4.3.174–8)

The position of the theatre audience in Dorothea's figuration is uncertain. On one level, they are part of the plural 'you' to whom Dorothea's speech is addressed, but on another level, they are those who watch 'as they were present now'. The audience in the theatre, not quite absent and not quite present, is simultaneously figured as seeing 'unmoved' and hearing 'with wet eyes'. It is only Theophilus's narrative of Dorothea's death – which explicitly creates a place for the theatre audience in his invocation of 'every private head in this large room' (5.2.99) – that reconstructs the theatre audience as her designated audience of the future. Dorothea's martyrdom is represented as having very little effect on the characters who witness it, becoming meaningful as martyrdom only through its narrative later in the play. The suggestion that the visual experience of Dorothea's execution has less effect on her viewers than its subsequent recording and retelling suggests that spectacles may have less influence on their viewers than the expectations that those viewers bring with them.Outside the theatre, the rhetoric of public punishment or martyrdom constantly asks its spectators to choose one view as true and the other as false based on the epistemology of the body of the accused. Edmund Campion's body manifests either his 'feare … and terror'[9] or his 'meek[ness] and sweet[ness]'[10] in the face of death; if the first, he dies a traitor, if the second, a martyr. But the representation of Dorothea's body in *The Virgin Martyr* allows for multiple readings simultaneously, based not on Dorothea's body, which reveals nothing, but through the generic conventions of martyrdom and the stage play.

Julia Gasper's reading of the play situates it firmly in both the context and the genre of the protestant historiography of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, and suggests that Dorothea's martyrdom would have been understood in the same militantly protestant terms that Foxe insisits the martyrdoms he describes must be.[11] Gasper argues that *The Virgin Martyr* is a piece of 'atrocity propaganda'[12] in response to the union of catholic forces against the County Palatine's claim to the Bohemian crown in 1619, presenting the Diocletian persecutions, which Foxe describes as 'so horrible and grievous, that maketh the pen almost tremble to write upon it, so tedious that never was any persecution before or since comparable to it',[13] and of which Dorothea is a

victim, as analogous to the activities of the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand. Her claim that the play's escalating level of violence is meant 'to galvinize the audience into active support of the Protestant cause in Europe at that very moment',[14] suggests that the power of the play is its transparency – that 'the propaganda aspect of the play would have been its most observable feature to its original audience'.[15] While Gasper's reading of the play in terms of contemporary events is frequently compelling, the persistence with which the pagan characters undermine Dorothea's claims of sanctity by interpreting the miraculous as theatrical suggests a more complex position for the audience than the one Gasper envisions.

Although Dorothea's death and subsequent miracles convert Theophilus and lead eventually to his martyrdom, witnessing the truth of both Christianity and Dorothea, they have no effect at all on Sapritius or Diocletian who persecute the Christians with unabated vigor. Dorothea's pagan spectators are largely 'unmoved to see [her] death' (4.3.174) because they understand her as 'Christian slut' (5.1.41) rather than 'blessed virgin' (5.2.106); but if her theatrical audience is similarly unmoved, as Dorothea suggests they are, the reason is more closely related to theatrical than religious belief. The outward sign of Dorothea's death as martyrdom is the sound of 'loud musicke', which Sapritius identifies as 'heavenly music' but Theophilus calls 'Illusions of the Diuell / Wrought by some one of her Religion, / That faine would make her death a miracle' (4.3.187–90). After his conversion, understanding Dorothea's death as being, rather than being made, a miracle, he explains his previous understanding of the music: 'I then hard it with sinfull eares' (5.2.137–9). The contradiction between Theophilus's two understandings places the theatre audience in a position to recognize the truth of both readings: that of the faithful which will accept Dorothea's music as heavenly and that of the experienced theatregoer who well knows how staged it was.

This notion of the sinful ear, which will hear the music of Dorothea's apotheosis as illusions, and understand her death as the manufacture of miracles, challenges both the Roman government and the theatre audience; on the political level, the possibility of hearing with either a sinful or a sinless ear suggests that Dorothea's execution will not necessarily serve as the example of the consequences of being a Christian in the Roman Empire that Diocletian had in mind.[16] But more significantly, Theophilus's 'sinful' understanding of the music as 'Illusions of the Diuell / Wrought by some one of her Religion, / That faine would make her death a miracle' (188–90), is, except for the suggestion of the demonic, quite literally true as a description of theatrical practice. The music comes from the musicians' gallery as surely as it does from

heaven, and is a means of making Dorothea's execution a miracle as surely as it is an indication of its being one. The point here is not that one must decide between these alternatives, but that both exist and are defined not as true or false understandings, but understandings based on different sets of interpretive convention.

In considering the status of the dramatic representation of a martyrdom on the stage, two models of the rhetoric of martyrdom in early modern England seem particularly important: Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, which resists the narratives of heresy and criminality the Marian authorities attempt to use the punishments of the condemned to illustrate, and the official protestant accounts of the executions of catholic priests in Elizabeth's reign, which resist the conventions of catholic martyrdom that they expect to find at work in both their victims and their audiences. The conventions of and the competition over martyrdom in these texts emphasize the instability of public punishment, and the role of the audience in determining the status of the event it has witnessed.

Public execution in early modern England, as was the case in much of Europe, was designed as an example, staged to show the spectators the power of the state.[17] In England, beginning in the reign of Henry VIII,[18] the cooperation of the victim was more necessary than in most other countries because one of the expected components of the procedure was a speech given by the condemned 'to satisfy the world' of their spiritual state. The ideal scaffold speech involved a confession of guilt, both of the particular crime for which the condemned was to suffer and of a sinful life; an admission of the justice – indeed, the mercy – of the punishment; the asking and granting of forgiveness to all involved; the hope of salvation through the mercy of Jesus Christ, expressed in terms consistent with the theological doctrines of the Church of England; and a request for the prayers of the assembled. This declaration by the condemned prisoner actually happened, at least according to the pamphlets that circulated after the executions in sensational cases, rather more often than one might expect.[19]

The production of the spectacle of treason requires the confirming narrative of the traitor; this dependence creates a space for the conventions of martyrdom to appear. The Marian persecutions, as described by Foxe, attempt to foreclose this possibility by presenting their victims not as traitors but as heretics, whose dying speeches confirm their heretical beliefs, thus, the justice of their executions. But because the executions to which Foxe devotes the most time and space are those of protestant divines, usually burned in their own communities, their scaffold speeches, when they are permitted to

make them, retain the form of a sermon that a preacher would make to his congregation. The condemneds' status as heretics in the narrative of the authorities, and as godly preachers in their own, competes for the audience's acceptance. Foxe's narrative of 'the martyrs of our time'[20] assumes they are martyrs in the kingdom of heaven, but works to make them martyrs in the kingdom of England – a position that can only be assured by their being viewed in these terms both by those who originally saw their executions, and by Foxe's own readers. Huston Diehl argues that 'the martyrs occupy center stage in Foxe's divine theatre, providing 'the martyrs occupy center stage in Foxe's divine theatre, providing "a lively testimony of God's mighty working in the life of man," however, their martyrdom must be witnessed in order to be meaningful'.[21] But not all witnesses see the same thing; in 1555 the imperial ambassador Simon Reynard writes to the Emperor Charles, 'it has been seen how constant, or rather stubborn, these heretics prove at the stake'.[22] The distinction between constancy and stubbornness is a difference in the understanding of the 'cause' for which these people died, the difference between heretic and martyr.

The descriptions of martyrdom in *Actes and Monuments* are often concerned with the interactions between the audience and the martyr; many of the illustrations commissioned for the book represent a particular scene of execution, 'martyrs at the moment of death, surrounded by spectators who stand or sit around the scaffold, watching the proceedings like the audiences of a stage play'.[23] Diehl argues that the illustrations Foxe commissioned 'use a range of rhetorical strategies – revolutionary in their impact – to disrupt the devotional gaze'[24] in ways that prevent the reader from having a purely visual (potentially idolatrous) relationship with the image of the martyr, and instead require him or her to witness the martyrdom of these men and women through the mediating power of Foxe's combination of text and illustration. The reader's understanding is thus potentially superior to that of the original spectators, who seem to have had a considerably greater range of responses than Foxe's rhetoric is willing to allow his readers. Phrases like 'surely it moved hundreds to teares, in beholding the horrible sight. For I think there was none who had not cleane exiled all humanitie and mercy which would not have lamented to behold the furie of the fire so to rage upon their bodies',[25] in the description of Ridley and Latimer, require that the reader become one of the pitiful beholders through the experience of the text rather than the event it describes. Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* is the work most responsible for establishing the protestant discourse of martyrdom in early modern England

in which the narrative purporting to provide access to the martyr's inward state replaces the physical relic as the primary evidence of sanctity.[26]

Narrative and audience are what make possible the distinction between what is termed constancy in a martyr and obstinacy of a traitor; Elizabeth's government explicitly insisted in accounts of both trials and executions that the catholic priests and their supporters who died on the scaffold died not as heretics but as traitors – not for 'their cause, which they falselie gave out to be religion',[27] but for 'greevously offend[ing] God, her Majestie, and this whole land: thou commest hither to dye, not as a martyr, but as a traitor, for high treason'.[28] While the catholics executed in Elizabeth's reign were usually encouraged to speak to their audiences, their refusal to follow the conventions of the treason execution was used by their opponents as proof of their depravity and their ineligibility for the martyr's crown. Given that the desired scaffold speech involved something along the lines of the Earl of Essex's profession that 'I never was, I thanke God Atheist, not believing the worde and Scriptures: neither Papist trusting in mine owne merits, but hope for salvation from God only, by mercy and merits of my savior Christ Jesus',[29] the moment at which the authorities on the scaffold requested a profession of faith was almost universally the moment at which the state's spectacle broke down: at Edmund Campion's execution, he denied the crime, and being 'exhorted to praie with the people in English; naie, to do so he was desired howbeit he would not. He said his pater noster in Latine, and desired all those of the household faith to saie one Credo for him'.[30] The profession of catholicism, the insistence on praying in Latin rather than English, as the authorities requested, and the request that only catholics in the assembled crowd pray for him, was the condemned's attempt, often with quite good success, to rewrite his treason conviction as martyrdom by defining part of the crowd as catholic, and asking for their witness as part of the community of the faithful rather than as part of the body of the state threatened by 'treason'. The account of the aftermath of Campion's execution printed in Holinshed's *Chronicles* complains of 'certaine enemies to the state politike and ecclesiastike, greatlie favoring them, and their cause, which they falselie gave out to be religion … in so much that speaking of the daie whereon they died, they blushed not to intitle them martyrs'.[31]

While Foxe's martyrology rejects 'the scope of supernatural manifestations associated with the death of the martyr, and, subsequently, with his relics or shrine',[32] catholic martyrologists accept the value of relics, extending the contestation from the significance of dying speeches to the significance of physical signs – the dead as well as the dying body. The Marian punishment

for heresy, particularly as Foxe describes it, allows for a display which is ended with the life of its subject. Foxe's narrative preserves the moment of holy dying and ignores the physical aftermath. But the Elizabethan punishment for treason involved not only the spectacle of its subject going to death, but also the display of his head and quarters on the city gates. As Elizabeth Hanson argues, 'Catholics … shared with the English authorities a need to imagine a corporeal location for a person's truth (or treason)'.[33] The poems at the end of the catholic account of Campion's martyrdom suggest that the corporeal remnants of his body, as much as his speech and demeanor on the scaffold, can be read as manifesting his sanctity:

> His quarters hong on every gate do showe,
> his doctrine found throgh countries far & neare,
> his head set up so high doth call for moe
> to fight the fight which he endured here.[34]

While evidence of causa differs significantly between catholic hagiography and protestant martyrology, both faced the necessity of explaining causa from the perspective of the condemned, not the executioner, and encouraging the spectators to see with those eyes. The official, protestant pamphlet describes the just and legal executions of 'Edmunde Campion Jesuit, Ralfe Sherwin & Alexander Brian seminarie priests, being condemned for high treason against her majesties most royal person as also for traitorous practices, touching the subversion of the true and undoubted religion here maintained, with the bitter ruin and overthrow of this realme of England'[35] but a secretly printed catholic account of the same execution promises its readers 'a lively image of resolute martyrs, constantly professing their faith & belief, resolutely disclaiming from all treasons and treacheries falsely intendid against them: and loyaly behaving themselves towards our queen and country. Who as they were in their lives lanterns of piety and vertue, so in their deaths made themselves patterns and examples for all good christian subjects to follow'.[36] Both accounts imagine their readers as loyal English subjects, but the catholic pamphlet shifts the location of 'treasons and treacheries' from the priests to their accusers, with the priests, not the queen, as the victims of this treason.

On some level, all of these accounts treat martyrdom as an epistemological problem; how is causa to be known? Is the suffering body an index of constancy or of stubbornness? Is the speech of the dying man or woman a last testimony of faith or a vainglorious attempt to earn the earthly reputation for the martyr's crown? Competing accounts of the same execution or martyrdom suggest that these questions are unanswerable – or answerable with absolute

certainty that depends not on the heretic, traitor, or martyr's beliefs but those of their audience. But these accounts also suggest that martyrdom is as much a representational problem as an epistemological one; how is causa to be displayed? I would argue that *The Virgin Martyr* offers a ways for its audiences, both contemporary and modern, to explore that question through its representation of public punishment, the resistant body, and the conflicting imperatives of watching three genres simultaneously: the execution, the martyrdom, and the stage play.Unlike the executions of Marian heretics or Elizabethan traitors which offer a judicial model of spectatorship as an alternative to the discourse of martyrdom, the persecutions of Christians in *The Virgin Martyr* are consistently divorced from legal procedure and instead associated with the personal and, in Dorothea's case, the theatrical. Spectacular punishment in Diocletian's empire no longer serves a deterrent function, and is not designed to do so; the play begins with the emperor proclaiming that exemplary punishment – 'examples to strike terror/ In others though far of[f]' – is only necessary in 'growing Empires,'

> but when a State
> Is raysde to her perfection, and her Bases
> Too firme, to shrinke, or yeeld, we may use mercy
> And do't with safety. (1.1.236–42)

Indeed, mercy seems safer than terror, given the understanding of exemplarity suggested in Angelo's assurance to Dorothea after the murders of Caliste and Christeta that 'These martyrs but prepare your glorious fate, / You shall exceed them, and not imitate' (3.2.133–4) and Theophilus's prayer after his conversion: 'Teach me what I must do, and to doe well. / That my last act, the best may Parallel' (5.1.171–2).

The Virgin Martyr has drawn considerable attention for its demonstrations of pain;[37] less, I think, because the demonstrations of violence are beyond what might be expected in a tragedy from this period than because of the frank delight characters, particularly Theophilus, have in inflicting it. But paradoxically, these tortures serve only to represent the inefficacy of violence within the play. Torture and death confirm rather than threaten Christian authenticity. The conversions from Christian to Pagan, and more frequently, Pagan to Christian, are never brought about through torture or the threat of bodily harm, but through rhetoric. When Artemia orders the execution of Dorothea, other characters, more experienced with Christians, take Dorothea at her word when she tells Artemia that 'you lose ten times more/By torturing me, than I that dare your tortures' (2.3.162–3), and urge her to 'Let not this

Christian *Thing*, in this, her pageantry/ Of prowd deriding, both our Gods and Caesar,/ Build to herself a kingdome in her death' (2.3.171–3). The unmaking of torture and death only offers Dorothea means to attain 'a kingdome'.

If the punishment of Christian bodies is neither a successful means of creating apostates nor 'examples to strike terror/ In others' (1.1.238–9), what is it for? How can the staging of the destruction of Christian bodies be understood by its audiences, both represented and theatrical? Dorothea's body, the target of most attempts at destruction, is singular because it cannot be tortured; attempts to force it to demonstrate either her persecutor's power or her place in their narrative makes spectacles not of Dorothea, but her tormentors. The resistance of her body to performance and to signification is most revealing in the attempts Sapritius makes to transform her body into the story he wants it to tell, first through rape and then through torture.[38]

Sapritius arranges the rape ostensibly as a means of curing his son Antoninus's lovesickness, but as his subsequent actions suggest, more as a means of asserting control over Dorothea by watching her become outwardly what he asserts she is inwardly; not virgin but 'coy strumpet.' Leaving her for Antoninus to have his way with, Sapritius withdraws with the Doctor and Macrinus to 'unseene, be witnesse to this battry, / How the coy strumpet yeelds' (4.1.78–9). But unable to either control the scene or interpret it to conform with his expectations, Sapritius resolves to punish both Antoninus and Dorothea's refusal to produce the spectacle of rape he is now determined to see by having Antoninus watch a slave 'In hot lust bath[e] himselfe, and glu[t] those pleasures / Thy niceness durst not touch' (4.1.121–2). Sapritius's fury with his son, his refusal to acknowledge kinship with the 'gelding' (4.1.111) who will not accept his offer of Dorothea's virginity, stems from his desire to see a particular event enacted – one that will confirm that Dorothea is a 'thing' (4.1.149) an object that can be made 'to play the Whore' (4.1.126). The expectation in which Sapritius is most disappointed is not Dorothea's resistance but Antoninus's; as a viewer, he attempts to identify with the tormentor, rather than the victim, because the tormentor is the producer of the scene, what is to make the victim conform to his expectations. And indeed, Dorothea herself offers no physical resistance, only the plea

> Kill me,
> And heaven will take it as a sacrifice,
> But if you play the Ravisher, there is
> A Hell to swallow you. (4.1.98–101)

Sapritius's actors refuse to take the roles he has assigned them; Antoninus will no more 'play the Ravisher' than Dorothea will 'play the Whore'; the British slave will not, to free himself from Roman bondage, 'drag that Thing aside/And ravish her' (149–50). Sapritius's abject failure is a measure not of Dorothea's physical or rhetorical powers – she says nothing to the slave and responds to his continued refusal to harm her with an observation that 'That power supernall on whom waites my soule, / Is Captaine ore my chastity'(4.1.161–2) – but of the integrity of her body which resists the gaze that will make her a whore as thoroughly as it repels assaults on her virginity. Sapritius's desire not only to have Dorothea raped but to see the rape himself suggests the story he would have her body tell, and under what circumstances. Sapritius's frustration is the frustration over his own lack of power as a spectator; his inability to show both himself and the world that Dorothea is not virgin but strumpet. But the theatre audience shares Sapritius's experience of Dorothea; she remains impenetrable.[39]

In this context, her beating in the next scene continues the rape attempt. Upon Dorothea refusing to sacrifice to Jupiter, Theophilus and Sapritius settle in to chairs erected for the purpose to watch her former servants beat her to death. But although Hircanius and Spungius gamely attack her until they are out of breath and barely able to lift their arms, they are quite unable to obey Theophilus's command to 'beat out her brains'; instead 'her face / Has more bewitching beauty than before'(4.2.94–5) and Dorothea pronounces herself 'fainting in no limbe' (92). The spectacle of her beating becomes a similar, and similarly futile, attempt to see her as an object that can be transformed into the sight her observers desire. The scene differs significantly from earlier versions of the Dorothea legend in that it involves no visible damage to her at all; in Osbern Bokenham's Middle English *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, Sapritius 'Commanded his torturers to beat her lovely face to a pulp with bats and staves. And when she was beaten beyond recognition, they locked her in a dark cell for the night',[40] but she became beautiful again by morning. The version of events in *The Virgin Martyr* relocates the miracle from ministering angels in the prison to the physical failure of torture; the miracle is no longer Dorothea's recovery, but her maintenance of the integrity of her body.[41] Attempts to identify with the tormentor leave the audience, Sapritius and Theophilus, as unsuccessful as the torturer who cannot make 'an eye start out / With these . . . nor the bridge of her nose fall' (4.2.97–8).

While Sapritius sees torture primarily in terms of its effect on its victim, a means of reshaping the victim to his own desires, Theophilus instead imagines

torture in terms of the pain it inflicts on its spectators, even when these are identical to the torturers: 'my hand [has] / Set downe a Christians execution/ In such direful postures, that the very hangman / Fell at my foot dead hearing but their figures' (2.2.71–4). He praises Harpax, his demonic secretary, as the

> engine of my wishes, thou that steeldst
> My bloody resolutions, thou that armst
> My eyes gainst womanish teares and soft compassion,
> Instructing me without a sigh to looke on
> Babes torne by violence from their mothers breasts
> To feede the fire and with them make one flame:
> Old men as beasts, in beasts skins torne by dogs:
> Virgins and matrons tire the executioners,
> Yet I unsatisfied thinke their torments easie. (1.1.57–65)

Theophilus understands his lack of tears and sighs to be the product of instruction; the lack of this training in how to look is presumably what makes the damned prefer suffering their torments to watching the ones he has devised, what makes torturers fall down dead at 'hearing but their figures'. One of Diocletian's measures of loyalty is how his subjects receive the persecutions of the Christians: 'I protest he is not *Caesar's* friend/ That sheds a teare for any torture that/ A Christian suffers' (5.2.89–91). Given that Theophilus gauges his tortures as much through their effect on the torturers as on the tortured, he is one of the few who can be 'Caesar's friend' because one of the few impervious to the spectacle of Christian suffering. This imperviousness is specifically a product of Harpax's instruction, and Caesar's demand for this response is in effect a demand for this demonic way of seeing. Upon learning of Dorothea's execution, Diocletian asks to hear Theophilus tell 'the manner how she suffered', and Artemia assures him 'Twill be delivered/ with such contempt and scorne, I knowe his nature, / That rather twil beget your highnesse laughter / Then the least pittie' (5.2.59–62) – a promise that Theophilus's narrative will conform to Diocletian's generic expectations rather than those of the Christian characters (or audience).

But Dorothea's gifts prove more powerful than Harpax's teachings or threats, and Theophilus, converted to Christianity himself, produces a new vision of Dorothea's death: something much closer to what Dorothea herself had envisioned on the scaffold than what Diocletian had expected. In her final speech before being decapitated, Dorothea distinguishes between the witnesses 'unmoved to see my death' (4.3.174) and those who will weep to hear her story read 'hereafter' (4.3.175). Theophilus moves from the position

of part of the 'unmoved' crowd that sees the death of a 'Christian slut [as] well, /A pretty one' (5.1.41–2), to a member of the Christian community that demands 'that attention, / As you would here an embassie from heaven … for the truth delivered, / Both how and what this blessed virgin suffered' (5.2.103–6). The version of Dorothea's death that he delivers to Diocletian is precisely the narrative Dorothea imagines future generations reading, and Theophilus's new understanding of her death as martyrdom inaugurates a new practice of reading death within the world of the play.

Diocletian responds to Theophilus's claim that Gracchus Cornelia, Seneca's wife Paulina, and Brutus's Portia, the Roman exemplars of female virtue, 'With this [Dorothea's worth] [are] not to be mention'd', with the astonishing claim 'Why they did die, Theophilus, and boldly. / This did no more' (5.2.120–1). Where Diocletian equates these figures though the equating of their deaths, the outward signs of their devotion, Theophilus makes Augustine's argument – not poena but causa – claiming that 'They out of desperation / Or for vaine glory of an aftername / Parted with life' (5.2.121–3) while Dorothea's lack of worldly attachments, of which her virginity is the outward sign, removes the possibility of such motives. Instead she, 'aiming / At an immortal crowne, and in his cause / Who only can bestow it … uncompelled / Changed this life for a better' (5.2.128–30, 135–6). The claim that Dorothea's death was 'uncompelled' is on its face a curious one; she is, after all, executed as a heretic, and that she views her death as her coronation does not eliminate its punitive aspect. But Theophilus's narrative represents a transformation not only in his own beliefs, but in his methods of understanding the world. Compulsion becomes for the first time a category to be judged from the victim's point of view, not the torturer's. What the failure of Dorothea's punishments to affect her body represents in physical terms, Theophilus's interpretation of her death as 'uncompelled' represents in cognitive terms. But Theophilus's interpretation of Dorothea's state of mind which differentiates her from the Roman matrons can only be determined through faith. Dorothea's death, in other words, is martyrdom because it looks like martyrdom to Theophilus.

Dorothea's execution, the moment at which her body finally cooperates with her tormentors, produces a wide variety of interpretations. As a dramatic event it is stable, static; the physical limit of Dorothea's punishment is the stage direction 'Her head struck off' (4.3.179). But if the spectacle is stable, the relationship of its audiences to it is less so. While Theophilus and Sapritius continue to see Dorothea through her torturers' eyes, Theophilus vowing, 'I, my selfe, thy hangmans part could play' (4.2.136), the scene offers, for the

first time, alternative models of viewing the scene. When Antoninus and Macrinus come to the scaffold, the former sees 'the place where vertue is to suffer, / And heavenly beauty leaving this base earth, / To make a glad return from whence it came' (4.3.1–3); the latter simply 'that Dorothea / This houre is to die here' (4.3.5–6).

Dorothea's final speech appeals to the judgment not of her Roman spectators, 'you [who] are unmoved to see my death', but her future interpreters:

> Hereafter when my story shall be read,
> As they were present now, the hearers shall
> Say this of Dorothea with wet eyes,
> She liv'd a virgin and a virgin dies. (4.3.174–8)

The textual and verbal production of Dorothea's death is understood to be more rhetorically efficacious than the sight of her actual decapitation. Just as Dorothea's body has refused to perform and signify the various meanings her torturers have attempted to impose upon it – particularly Sapritius's attempt to have her raped so that her body will accord with his image of her as a 'coy strumpet' – so it refuses the signification of martyrdom, deferring this meaning as something that can only be produced through text and narrative.

Because the pagans consistently remind the theatre audience that the miracles that surround Dorothea are theatrical tricks, the clearest sign of how to read Dorothea's death, the appearance of Dorothea's servant Angelo in angelic form to comfort her on the scaffold, is potentially the most troublesome. Theophilus's final narrative of Dorothea's death includes 'Legions of ministering Angels to beare up/Her spotless soule to heaven' (5.2.131–2), but he never sees this spectacle. When Angelo appears 'in the Angels habit' (4.3.113 s.d.), visible only to Dorothea and the audience, his appearance is the first supernatural manifestation of the play, and while readily intelligible in its reference to the morality play tradition, is still a curiously literal moment in a play that in its insistence on Dorothea's violent contempt for idols and ceremony, and in the absence of any sort of ritual observance of Christianity, presents Dorothea's martyrdom in Foxean, protestant terms.[42] And while the morality play elements of *The Virgin Martyr* are readily apparent when considering the play retrospectively, Angelo's appearance is the first instance of the presentational conventions of the older style of drama in a play that has until this point been dominated by the more representational style; Angelo's appearance disconcertingly shifts the genre of the play from the representational to the presentational. As Dorothea herself observes, 'put off

thy divinity, so look'd my lovely Angelo' (4.3.132–3), and Angelo responds, 'know I am the same' (4.3.133). This sameness insists on some level that Angelo's divinity is a costume that he can put on or take off, that like the producer of the music, Angelo too is one of her sect that would make her death a miracle.

While none of the play's critics go so far as to read Dorothea in Diocletian's terms, the level of disagreement over what kind of a martyr she is suggests the significance of the staging of her execution as an index to the generic understandings of her interpreters outside as well as within the play. Louise Clubb reads the play as a catholic 'tragedia sacra' with an explicitly catholic martyrdom at its center, a view which Cyrus Hoy endorses.[43] More recently, critics led by Julia Gasper[44] have read Dorothea as a militantly protestant figure. The representation of Dorothea's martyrdom pulls in two directions; on the one hand, the scene of her death with Angelo 'in the angel's habit' (4.3.113 s.d.) and the sound of 'heavenly music' (4.3.187) presents a spectacle that is unequivocally that of holy martyrdom, which can be understood in terms of catholic hagiography, particularly in the context of Theophilus's vision of the company of martyrs awaiting him the last scene. But this type of spectacle is the object of constant suspicion from the pagan characters, suggesting that the only certain understanding of Dorothea's death as martyrdom rather than theatrical trick depends on Theophilus's Foxean narrative rather than the spectacular effects of the morality tradition. This contest between narrative and spectacle as the guarantor of truth is played out in both the differences between protestant, Foxean conventions of martyrdom and catholic hagiography and the assumptions of an audience that understands the theatre in primarily visual or verbal terms.

The Virgin Martyr is one of the eight plays known to be part of the repertoire of the Players of the Revels, the remnant of Queen Anne's Company which, following the death of its patron, lost its place at Christopher Beeston's Cockpit and moved to the less profitable Red Bull in 1619, already enjoying (perhaps unjustly) a reputation as a site of 'violence and vulgarity' both on and off the stage, popular with apprentices who preferred spectacle to poetry and valued a repertoire that became increasingly archaic as the century progressed.[45] The induction to *Two Merry Milkmaids*, written for the company in the same year, suggests an interest in working against this reputation and encouraging their audience to experience the plays in terms of 'sence and words' rather than spectacle:

> This day we entreat all that are hither come,
> To expect no noyse of Guns, Trumpets, nor Drum,
> Nor Sword and Target; but to heare Sence and Words,
> Fitting the Matter that the Scene affords.[46]

In this context, the focus on the divergence in the possible understandings of martyrdom in *The Virgin Martyr* is particularly interesting, coinciding as it does with a divergence in the type of theatrical conventions being deployed. While the scenes involving the figures of Roman authority, written predominantly by Massinger, are typical of the theatre of the 1620s in being more representational than presentational, other parts of the play are heavily influenced by the earlier morality tradition, most strikingly in the presentation of an angel and a devil who begin the play as Dorothea and Theophilus's apparently human servants but perform supernatural actions with increasing frequency as the play goes on, culminating in Angelo's pyrotechnic banishing of Harpax, who 'sinkes with lightning' (5.2.238 s.d.) as the Christian characters who have been martyred throughout the play wait, wearing white robes, to receive Theophilus into their company. Dorothea also saves from the gallows but is betrayed by her two comic servants, Hircanius and Spungius, who represent lechery and gluttony. Hoy suggests that Dekker, despite (or perhaps because of) having just been released from seven years in debtors' prison, 'knew the audiences of the Red Bull from the past',[47] and contributed the morality-influenced scenes on this basis.

This reading of the play's supernatural elements serving only to appease an unsophisticated audience mired in archaic convention implies a clear prioritizing of Massinger's scenes over Dekker's[48] – that is, prioritizing the way the pagan characters understand the world over the way the Christian characters do. While the association of devils with Red Bull plays[49] of the early 1620s suggests the familiarity the audience might reasonably be presumed to have with the morality play conventions that suddenly start to manifest in the fourth act after three acts of predominantly representational drama, this association makes them more theatrically competent, not less; this is a group equipped to see the generic shift involved in Angelo's appearance 'in the angel's habit' (4.3.113 s.d.).

Dorothea's persecutors, with the exception of Theophilus late in the play, cannot make this shift, and instead attempt to understand and expose the miraculous in terms of the stage. In his first attempt to kill her, Theophilus has Dorothea tied to a pillar and beaten by her former servants, but her 'tormenters weary/In torturing me, and in my sufferings/I fainting in no

limbe' (4.2.90–2). When the clubs fail to harm Dorothea, impatient that 'her face/ Has more bewitching beauty than before' Sapritius wants to 'view the cudgels, are they not counterfeit' (4.2.99) – a moment that calls the audience's attention to the fact that they are: that Dorothea's appearance of sanctity which it experiences is brought about by precisely those theatrical tricks that the pagan oppressors in the play suspect. Theophilus's claim after checking the clubs that 'these have the power downe to fell gyants' (106), proven by Spungius and Hircanius's less than stoic response to their own beatings, cannot eliminate the theatre audience's knowledge that the difference in response has less to do with the actual force of the beatings than in what each is designed to convey. The moments that most insist on the authenticity of Dorothea's appearance of sanctity within the play simultaneously emphasize its falseness.

While the visual representation of the miraculous in *The Virgin Martyr* is always related to stage convention, the narrative production of Dorothea's martyrdom is not. Dorothea's own insistence on her death as having an affective response on the readers and hearers of her story, who 'shall/ Say this of Dorothea with wet eyes,/ She liv'd a virgin and a virgin dies' (4.3.176–8), which it does not have on the watchers, who 'are unmoved to see my death' (4.3.174) – is the logical conclusion to the Foxean conventions of martyrdom in which the text replaces the relic, the narrative replaces the miracle, and the hearer replaces the spectator. Within this context, Dorothea's death produces a narrative, which reshapes the conventions of Roman virtue, and a body, which is cast out to 'be to Vultures and to Dogs a prey' (4.3.194).

Like Dorothea's martyrdom, Theophilus's death marks a split in the genre of the play itself, which has two distinct ending speeches that bring the play to two distinct endings that occupy the same space but do not touch. Upon Theophilus's death, Angelo triumphantly banishes Harpax: 'Haste to thy place appointed cursed fiend,/In spite of hell this soldier's not thy prey,/ Tis I have wone, thou that has lost the day' (5.2.237–8), but Diocletian vows that 'I stand unmov'd and will go on, / The persecution that is here begun, / Through all the world with violence shall run' (5.2.240–2). In Christian terms, and in terms of the morality play conventions the play invokes, Theophilus's death is a triumph. The play ends with the spectacular banishment of evil by good, as Harpax 'sinkes with lightning' (5.2.238 s.d.) through the trap at Angelo's command. But in terms of the political drama that Diocletian occupies, this is meaningless. The final spectacle the play offers is of both the overlap between these discourses and the fundamental separation between these positions.

The play's ending depends entirely on which set of conventions the members of its audience choose to see and hear with. In its representation of multiple readings of the same event, and how these readings can be used against each other, the play suggests that even the most apparently stable spectacle cannot compel a universal response, but relies on presenting signs of its genre to invoke a particular set of viewing conventions. In presenting signs of spiritual authenticity in explicitly theatrical terms, *The Virgin Martyr* puts its audience in the position of recognizing the truth of both the pagan characters who argue that the seemingly miraculous events surrounding her torture and execution are counterfeits and the Christian characters who claim that Dorothea's death is true martyrdom. In so doing, the play suggests that 'making death a miracle' is finally an interpretive rather than a performative act and that the body on the scaffold is not the only available object of interpretation.[50]

Notes

1 Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger, *The Virgin Martyr* (5.2. 106, 128–30). All citations are from *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* ed. Fredson Bowers, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 19583-61). Further references will appear in the text.

2 Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization from 1579 to 1642* (Cambridge, 1994), 13.

3 Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), ed. Edward Arber (London, 1869), 32.

4 Kier Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London and New York, 1980), 87.

5 St.Augustine, *Epistles* 89.2. Quoted in Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Fools, Martyrs, Traitors: The Story of Martyrdom in the Western World* (New York, 1997), 117. The translation appears in *A True Report of the inditement, arraignment, conviction, condemnation, and Execution of John Weldon, William Hartley, and Robert Sutton* (London, 1588; STC: 25229), in which the minister reprimands Weldon: 'Thou thinkest (peradventure) to gaine among Papists ye name of a Martyr: but remember, it is not poena but causa quae facit martyrem, not the punishment but the cause that maketh the martyr' (C1). The very existence of this exhortation suggests the impossibility of causa being manifested as unambiguously as this statement claims it must be.

6 *Calendar of State Papers Spanish*, vol.13 (London, 1862–1954), 138 and 148.
7 *A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and prieste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan priestes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581* (London, 1581; STC: 4537), F4.
8 Larry S. Champion offers a fairly typical assessment of Dorothea: 'such a static figure is simply not dramatically compelling' ['"Disaster With My So Many Joys": Structure and Perspective in Massinger and Dekker's *The Virgin Martyr*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 1 (1984), 201]; I would argue that the drama of *The Virgin Martyr* lies less in its title character than in her observers.
9 Raphael Holinshed, *First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London, 1587; STC: 13569), 1322.
10 *A true report . . Campion*, C2v.
11 For a detailed study of Foxe's use of martyrs of the primitive church to provide a context for the Marian persecutions, see John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature, 1564–1694* (Cambridge, 1993), 33–46.
12 Julia Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove: The Plays of Thomas Dekker* (Oxford, 1990), 157.
13 John Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes most speciall and memorable* (London, 1610; STC: 123056), 69.
14 Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove*, 158.
15 Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove*, 164.
16 Many earlier versions of the Dorothea legend focus on the conversions that her imperviousness to pain bring about, and Theophilus's success in converting the entire city of Caesarea with his preaching. Conversion in *The Virgin Martyr* is much more a matter of individual process than a mass activity.
17 See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979) and Peter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the evolution of repression: from a preindustrial metropolis to the European experience* (Cambridge, 1984).
18 J.A. Sharpe argues for the scaffold speech expected at all public executions being 'a sixteenth-century innovation, a humble equivalent of the custom of Tudor monarchs of turning treason trials into elaborate set pieces: every public execution was therefore, a spectacular reminder of the powers of the state, doubly effective because of its essentially local nature'. *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1983), 142.
19 See Lacey Baldwin Smith, 'English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15 (1954), 471–98 and J. A.

Sharpe, '"Last Dying Speeches": Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past and Present* 107 (1985), 144–67.

20 John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, np 'The utilitie of this storie'.

21 Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage* (Ithaca, 1997), 192. Diehl's quotation is from Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, ed. Stephen Reed Cattley (London, 1837–1841), vol 1, 521.

22 CSP Spanish, 148.

23 Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*, 187. Diehl's discussion of Foxe's interest in constructing his readers as witnesses, in part through the illustrations and in part through a focus on the witnesses to the executions within *Actes and Monuments*, is principally concerned with establishing protestant vs. catholic ways of seeing (185–93). While this is an important argument, my sense of how spectatorship and generic convention interact is based less on religious models of interpretation than on the audience's recognition of its own instrumentality.

24 Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*, 47. While Diehl's reading seems to me a very insightful interpretation of the larger images which illustrate particular martyrdoms, most of the illustrations of the Marian martyrs in *Actes and Monuments* are smaller images of one or two bodies in flames which seem more iconographic than iconoclastic.

25 Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, 1607.

26 Knott, in *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature,* discusses how Foxe established the terms of English protestant martyrology as a category entirely distinct from hagiography, and how later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dissenting protestant groups used and transformed Foxe's text and methods to support their positions. See also the first chapter of Catharine Randall Coates's *(Em)bodying the Word: Textual Resurrections in the Martyrological Narratives of Foxe, Crespin, de Bèze and d'Aubigné* (New York, 1992) for a discussion of how Foxe distinguishes between hagiography and martyrology by shifting the focus from the martyr's body to the text he or she produces.

27 Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1329.

28 *A True Report . . . Weldon*, C2.

29 John Stow, *The annales of England* (London, 1605; STC: 117881), 1407.

30 Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1328–9.

31 Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1329. See also the executions of Thomas Ford, John Shert, & Robert Johnson (Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1344).

32 Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom*, 42.

33 Elizabeth Hanson, 'Torture and Truth in Renaissance England', *Representations* 34 (Spring 1991), 68.

34 'A Dialogue betwene a Catholike, and Consolation', *A true report . . Campion,* F4. See also 'Upon the death of M. Edmund Campion, one of the societie of the holy name of Jesus' in the same text, E2–F1v.
35 Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1327.
36 *A true report . . Campion,* A4–A4v.
37 Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove*, 157–8, Karen Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage* (New York:, 2000), 46–53.
38 For a discussion of the treatment of Dorothea's body in these scenes in a broader context of violence against women in the drama of this period, see Bamford, *Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage*, 46–53.
39 Bamford characterizes Dorothea as 'an almost wholly passive victim' (*Sexual Violence on the Jacobean Stage*, 49) in this scene; while I agree with her reading of Dorothea's lack of agency, passivity implies a sort of pliancy that Dorothea's success in resisting signification complicates.
40 Karen A.Winstead ed, *Chaste Passions: Medieval English Virgin Martyr Legends* (Ithaca, 2000), 112. The translation is Winstead's.
41 More contemporary accounts of Dorothea's martyrdom, including the one from *Flos Sanctorum* which Gasper has persuasively suggested as Dekker and Massinger's most immediate source, relocate the miracle to Dorothea's ability to endure pain, rather than either the imperviousness of her body or the cures of ministering angels: Dorothea is 'buffet[ed] on the face, which disfigured her favour in the sight of men; neverthelesse, she remained beautiful in the sight of God, for that she suffered this reproach for his sake'. Alfonso Villegas, *Flos Sanctorum*. K.E. trans. (London, 1609; STC: 24730), 52. For Gasper's argument for *Flos Sanctorum* being Dekker and Massinger's source, see 'The Sources of *The Virgin Martyr*', *Review of English Studies* 42:165 (1991), 17–31.
42 Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove*, 158.
43 Louise Clubb, "*The Virgin Martyr* and the *Tragedia Sacra*", *Renaissance Drama*, 7 (1964), 103–26. Cyrus Hoy, *Introductions, notes, and commentaries to texts in* The dramatic works of Thomas Dekker, 4 vols. (New York, 1980–3), iii.181–8).
44 Gasper, *The Dragon and the Dove*, 36–9. Several other articles suggest that *The Virgin Martyr* has no coherent religious agenda and only uses martyrdom for tragic or pathetic effect. See Peter F. Mullany, 'Religion in *The Virgin Martyr*', *Komos* 2:3 (Mar. 1970), 89–97 and George R. Price, *Thomas Dekker* (New York, 1969), 90–98.
45 G. E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* (Oxford, 1968), vol 6, 238. The chapter entitled 'The Reputation of the Red Bull Theatre' runs from 238–47. Andrew Gurr argues that this applies much more to the period after

1630, but agrees that despite the similar repertoires of the Red Bull and the Cockpit, exemplified by Beeston's frequently shifting companies between the two theatres between 1617 and 1630, 'their reputations diverged … The Red Bull's reputation for overdoing … stayed with the Red Bull tenants even though the actual players transferred every few years to the Cockpit.' *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge, 1987), 174. The reputation thus seems based more on typical audience than on either company or repertoire per se. Gurr also argues that Bentley's discussion of 'The Reputation of the Red Bull Theatre' takes a fairly small number of criticisms of the theatre too seriously and ignores the long association between the Red Bull and the Cockpit (*Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 183).

46 *The Merry Milkmaids*, Induction 1–4. Quoted in Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* vol 6, 242. Bentley suggests that this represents an attempt to reform the Red Bull stage from its 'traditional noise and vulgarity' and Gurr's more general discussion of the idea of 'auditor' vs. 'spectator' in the period provides a helpful context for this induction (*Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 85–97). The playwright most associated with privileging the aural over the visual is of course Jonson, but Gurr offers evidence that 'Dekker and Heywood explicitly made the same point, and Marston, Beaumont, and others implied it' (*Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 87) and that 'it seems to have been more of an issue at the Red Bull and Hope ampitheatres in the period 1610–1614 than anywhere else' (*Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 93). See also Dekker's 1612 dedication of *If This Be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is In It* to the Queen's Men at the Red Bull and the prologue to that play. (Bowers, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, vol 3).

47 Hoy, *Introductions, notes, and commentaries to texts in* The dramatic works of Thomas Dekker, 198.

48 Hoy assigns responsibility for the play as follows: 'Massinger's undoubted scenes are the whole of Act I; III.i; III.ii; IV.iii; V.ii. Dekker's undoubted scenes are II.i; III.iii; IV.ii. Four scenes (II.ii; II.iii; IV.i: V.i) are essentially Dekker's, but each contains traces of Massinger' (*Introductions, notes, and commentaries to texts in* The dramatic works of Thomas Dekker, 193).

49 Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 6, 243.

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