TEXTS TO CONDEMNE US

A study of the prose works of Thomas Nashe

Rob Shooter
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Texts To Condemne Us, a study of the prose works of Thomas Nashe, was written over a period of four years, off and on, between 1985 and 1989. It tries to take account of all the previous critical work on Nashe that I was aware of, but was substantially complete before the appearance of Lorna Hutson's Thomas Nashe In Context (Oxford 1989). Had I the benefit of that book's thorough-going research into the socio-economic background to Nashe's work I would, perhaps, have been able to deepen and broaden some aspects of my own argument. I do not think, however, that I would substantially have altered its lines of enquiry and conclusions, although I could not have been quite as didactic about the 'failings' of early criticism in my first chapter!

In fact, Professor Hutson's analysis of the ways in which economic pressures led Elizabethan writers to propagate a 'generall reformation of manners', her analysis of polemic against drink, gaming, play-going and sartorial ostentation as a general condemnation of 'unthrifty consumption', strengthens the argument of my first few chapters. We agree that Nashe's abandonment of 'the protestant-humanist notion of learning for profit' can be seen:

> even while he was busy sifting the provident profits of poetry from its licentious abuse in the didactic Anatomie Of Abuses <I assume that Hutson refers to The Anatomy of Absurdity here>

Where I borrow the phrase 'the polemic western self' in chapter 3 to describe the authorial and moral self-possession which Nashe's later writings question and reconstruct, I may have used Hutson's argument that poetry was seen as the educator of the 'vir virtutis - the man in full possession of himself'. The instructive text, praised in The Anatomie of Absurdity 'creates in its readers the capacity for self-government' - a key concept in my analysis of Nashe's deviation from his polemic context.

In writing this thesis I have, however, made extensive use of Mikhail Bakhtin's work on the carnival elements in Rabelais, and of Foucault's analysis of pre-capitalist economies of power and punishment in Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison (tr. Alan Sheridan, London 1977).

Bakhtin's excitement of discovery in Rabelais And His World (tr. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge Mass. 1968) furnished me with an important
framework on which to hang my own shabby architecture. The thesis as a whole, but particularly the chapters on Pierce Penilesse, The Unfortunate Traveller and Lenten Stuff, depend on the Bakhtinian notion of carnival. From Bakhtin I assume the mediaeval existence of a carnival anti-world of all things turned upside down. This world is prodigal, grotesque, spendthrift (in Hutson's vocabulary), egalitarian and immensely productive. It is bound within strict limits but is itself a world of limitless interiors. It celebrates the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions and is a temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order. Its characteristic mode of understanding the world is through laughter and its corporeal vocabulary of grotesques and freaks tentatively suggests that man's condition is time without eternity.

Foucault's philosophy convinces by the elegance of its insight. I have assimilated his analysis of the public execution, constituting its own egalitarian rituals of performance and affording a limited role to the people, to insights derived from Bakhtin. I am particularly indebted to Discipline And Punish: The Birth Of The Prison for my analysis of narrative and torture in The Unfortunate Traveller, the most fascinating of all Nashe's works. With the help of Discipline And Punish I was able to amend the Bakhtinian analysis of carnival with which I began the thesis. In Nashe's texts, the grotesque mocks and is sponsored by the official world of hierarchical discipline. Within its lawlessness, the aegis of the prince is clearly visible and its laughter is always accompanied by a punitive violence.

With the help of these theoretical constructs, I have tried to suggest a specific order and pattern, giving birth to Nashe's grotesque imagination, where previously there was thought to be only the monsters of 'themelessness'.

No less important to the construction and eventual completion of this thesis was the patience and enthusiasm of my supervisor, Dr Henry Woudhuysen. I would like to thank him for ideas, comments and practical advice on the best use of my time. I would also like to thank my wife, Dinah Pattison, for negotiations conducted on my behalf with the Amstrad PCW 8256 on which this work was written, edited and printed.
1 In quoting Nashe's texts I have referred in all places to Ronald B. McKerrow's *The Works Of Thomas Nashe*, originally published in 5 volumes between 1904 and 1910, revised by F. P. Wilson in and published in Oxford, 1958. The first figure refers to the number of the volume, the second to the page number: for example, 1; 252.

Quotations from McKerrow retain original spellings and punctuation, except that modern typographical conventions are observed in the use of i and j and u and v.

2 Bracketed numbers in smaller type refer to notes.

3 The notes refer to a number of publications by their initials. These are:

- **AJP**: American Journal Of Philology
- **BJS**: British Journal Of Sociology
- **EIC**: Essays In Criticism
- **ELH**: English Literary History
- **ELR**: English Literary Renaissance
- **ES**: English Studies
- **HLQ**: Huntington Library Quarterly
- **JEGP**: Journal Of English And Germanic Philology
- **JELH**: Journal Of English Literary History
- **JHII**: Journal Of The History Of Ideas
- **JNT**: Journal Of Narrative Technique
- **JWCI**: Journal Of The Warburg And Courtauld Institutes
- **MLN**: Modern Language Notes
- **MLR**: Modern Language Review
- **NQ**: Notes And Queries
- **PMLA**: Publications Of The Modern Language Association Of America
- **RES**: Review Of English Studies
- **SEL**: Studies In English Literature
- **SF**: Studies in Philology
- **SS**: Shakespeare Survey
- **SSF**: Studies In Short Fiction
- **TLS**: Times Literary Supplement
- **YES**: Yearbook Of English Studies

ns after a journal abbreviation stands for new series.
Paradoxically, though Nashe's pamphlets are commercial literature, they come very close to being, in another way, 'pure' literature: literature which is, as nearly as possible, without a subject. In a certain sense of the verb 'say', if asked what Nashe 'says', we should have to reply, Nothing. (1)

C.S.Lewis's weighty judgement established a dominant tradition in criticism of Nashe's works. G.R.Hibbard's ground-breaking study depicted a writer fascinated by word-games, a minor author of some genius who never fully realised his talent, for 'a work such as Lenten Stuff has no significance outside itself'. (2) The biographer of this Nashe, Charles Nicholl, admits to disappointment that 'so much talent' is 'squandered on essentially negative utterance'. (3) The brilliance of the writing is widely recognised, but an inability to reconcile a 'commonly felt unity of mood and attitude' with 'an inexplicable themelessness' has been felt by most critics. (4)

The Nashe of this dominant tradition is unable to train his gift for language to the service of narrative meaning: the ostensible theme is merely an occasion for the performance. (5) Nashe consciously 'let style replace argument in his writing' for his 'linguistic virtuosity' could not disguise the fact that he 'has very little to say'. Therefore, 'his interest...lies almost entirely in his style'. (6)

Neil Rhodes' study of the grotesque in Nashe's works usefully places the author in a wider cultural and social context, but it does not formally break with Lewis's emphasis. Despite the missing theme the language displays a 'unity of mood and attitude', a peculiarly Elizabethan, 'coalescence of contrary images of the flesh: indulged, abused, purged and damned'. (7) Nashe's 'alertness to the possibilities of metaphor' is fully recognised and it is his exploitation of the possibilities of language which forms 'the essential subject matter of the prose'. (8)

More recently, Jonathon Crewe has turned from the criticism of the prose to the undeclared motives behind the critic's 'judicial severity'. Nashe's missing theme is now made the conscious strategy of an anti-world
distinguished 'by its simultaneous antagonism and parasitism upon an absent ideal'. (9) Nashe's work is still characterised by 'Themelessness, verbal excess, nullity, marginality, scandalousness and sinister encroachment, (10) but these qualities are placed in the context of a traditional, moralist critique of rhetoric.

Crewe still errs, however, in an inadequate consideration of the cultural background to Nashe's 'scandal of authorship'. I hope that this thesis will be able to make use of Crewe's insight, without transferring the author to an a-historical deconstructionist universe.

I would argue that Nashe's work is distinguished by a consistent theme, which fully accounts for a 'unity of mood and attitude'. These speedily botched up and compiled pamphlets are the product of 'a complex social accommodation', (11) which finds expression in recurring insights, scenarios and themes, in precisely the same way as any other imaginative work. My thesis will attempt to deconstruct the popular mythology which has grown up around the inexplicably themeless works of Thomas Nashe.

I begin by placing the apprentice works in the context of a sixteenth-century debate over the 'right use of auncient poetrie'. The Anatomy of Absurdity reiterates the fears of conservative and puritan critics that the license afforded the comic writer, allied to the mass printing press, would infect the reading public with 'desires of revenge and innovation' against the existing social order. It criticises 'pagan' poetry and rhetoric and advances a theory of reading in which the reader penetrates the surface entertainments of language to reach the moral sentence beneath. The writer's duty is identified with the martial past and imperial future against the pleasure of the present.

Nashe never abandons the conservative politics of The Anatomy of Absurdity. At the same time, however, his prose reaches towards a grotesque vision of human affairs, which ignites the 'extemporall vaine' praised as the writer's true glory in the preface to Menaphon. The dutiful sobriety of The Anatomy of Absurdity is progressively dismantled.

The contradiction is resolved in Nashe's use of carnival motifs and his acceptance of the Morality Play Vice as a model for his narrative

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protagonists. I follow Bakhtin's study of Rabelais in seeing the institution of carnival as a mirror image of mediaeval legal authority. Nashe's scurrility gives satisfaction to 'desires of revenge and innovation' harboured by the reader, but does not formally emancipate itself from the ideal of authority which it serves.

The limitations which carnival places upon itself and the discomfiture inflicted upon the Vice within the Morality Play structure Nashe's pamphlets. The narratives of the Vice become 'textes to condemn us' in which the motives of the narrative protagonist are revealed and purified.

The spectacle of punishment - the image of divine or human wrath - is therefore the theme at the centre of Nashe's work. It provides a moment in which the subordination of body and senses to spiritual authority seems to be ended and in which, therefore, the sinner is flattered in an active destiny. But it is also a moment in which the sins inevitably become the punishment which the law ordains. The highly ritualised ceremonies of public drama and public execution - occasions at which the people took a limited and self-limiting role in its own definition - are the models for Nashe's grotesque fictions.

Each of Nashe's pamphlets identifies one of the specific ways in which discourse becomes a legal text of human transgressions presented before a power of judgement and punishment. In The Unfortunate Traveller that power is the secular authority of the prince and the literary standard of a Petrarchan ideal. In Christ's Tears over Jerusalem it is explicitly identified as divine, whereas in Have With You to Saffron Walden it is the all-too-human reading of Gabriel Harvey which represents a judicial court, and a court overthrown. In The Terrors of the Night Nashe superstitiously locates the nexus of power and punishment within the act of speech itself, though by Lenten Stuff it is his aristocratic and bourgeois critics who wield powers of interrogation and punishment over his text.

The recurring cycles of license and reimposed authority, transgression and punishment, are presented with peculiar force and insight in Nashe's work, but the genesis of the typical Nashean plot - texts to condemn us - can be found in two models. One is the popular model of the Morality Play
Vice, the other is the office of carnival satirist, to which I now turn.

Early writers of English satire repeatedly asserted that their purpose was serious and their methods restrained. When such writers were also clergymen and theologians, then it seems likely that the Renaissance satirists 'served as vigilant policemen and social teachers to an entire community'. (12) Swift considered that satire was first introduced into the world in order to control those

whom neither religion, nor natural virtue, nor fear of punishment were able to keep within the bounds of their duty. (13)

Pope exulted to see men safe from God, the Bar, the Pulpit and the Throne, 'yet touch'd and sham'd by Ridicule alone'. (14)

In the 'shame culture' of sixteenth-century England, social behaviour was modified and controlled by sanctions against public reputation:

In such a culture the poets are truly creative. By their encomium they create honor; they make good names. But they are also truly destructive, for their satire eats away honor, which is to say, it destroys life itself. (15)

Nashe's most complete literary triumph was to make infamous the name of a rival. In literally 'making bad names' for Gabriel Harvey (Galadriel Hobgoblin, Gamaliel Howliglass etc), Nashe wields the authentic power of the satirist..

Reformation politics saw the employment of caricaturists like Arcimboldo or the brothers Caracci. Arcimboldo's portraits deliberately distort the features of notable individuals for the purposes of laughter and mockery, depicting leading church figures such as Calvin made out of fish's heads and chicken pullets. (16) The quality of Nashe's grotesque portraits is visual in the same way, deliberately assembling the incongruous and un-aesthetic into images which mock or subvert expectations of human form and artistic decorum.

The arts of satire, caricature and grotesque invective were widespread in late sixteenth-century England. Spenser's Blatant Beast is a vision of many things, but it also demonstrates powers traditionally associated in Ireland with the poet-satirist whose words can order life and death. Sidney's Apology for Poetry ends with a curse on those who 'cannot heare the Planet-like Musicke of Poetrie':

I will not wish unto you...to be driven by a poet's verses (as Bubonax was) to hang himself, nor to be rhymed to death, as is said to be done
in Ireland. (17)

Irish poets were also said to be able to rhyme rats to death; Ben Jonson
connects Archilocean iambics and Irish rat-ryming in the verse appended to
Poetaster, (18) while there are numerous references to rat-ryming in
Shakespeare. Rhymes composed against Martin Marprelate also make reference
to this legendary practice. (19)

The art - or magic - of the satirist was rendered suspect by its
association with Imperial England’s colonial enemies in Ireland. Moreover,
powers over life and death claimed by the satirists might proceed from God,
but could also come by illegal and sinful means, as Reginald Scot’s The
Discoverie Of Witchcrafte maintains. (20) Renaissance attitudes to satire
usually deferred to the essay by Aelius Donatus prefaced to practically all
editions of Terence printed in England and on the Continent in the
sixteenth century and Donatus assumes that the writers of old Greek comedy
abused their freedom so scandalously that they had to be restrained.
'Satyra' was devised to avoid legal prohibition without destroying the
author's freedom to criticize. (21) The 'satyrical disguise' which Nashe
dons at the beginning of The Anatomy of Absurdity in order to 'wander
abroad unregarded', is both self-concealment and self-advertisement.

Donatus also reports that the satirist was allowed to attack the
faults of the citizens,

in whatever harsh and savage manner he chose to adopt. But he was
forbidden to identify any writers by name. (22)

In the 'private Epistle of the Author to the Printer', affixed to Pierce
Penilesse, Nashe complains of 'mis-interpreting' politicians, who analyse a
work for recondite allusions to eminent persons:

In one place of my Booke, Pierce Penilesse saith but to the Knight of
the Post, I pray how might I call you, & they say I meant one Howe, a
Knave of that trade, that I never heard of before. (1; 154)

In the touchy world of Elizabethan politics such an accusation was highly
dangerous and Pierce Penilesse, Nashe's greatest popular success, also
proved to be a bane to the rest of his career.

The satirist also attracted suspicion due to his ambiguous position as
a semi-independent estate of the realm. Aretino was 'no timorous idle
server of the commonwealth wherein he dwelled' (2; 265), but his version of
literary blackmail, in which princes would buy a good opinion with gifts of
money and possessions, contributed to the defamation of his name after his
death. Spenser's View of the Present State of Ireland noted that the fear
of being 'made infamous in the mouthes of all men', (23) was a powerful
weapon in the hands of the Irish 'bards'.

The satirist represented a possible outlet for popular hatred of
oligarchy and clerical abuses. Thomas Langley's version of Polydore Vergil
mixes approval and disapprobation, when it defines satire as:

a Poesie, rebuking vices sharply, not regarding anye persones...(It) is
very railing, onely ordained to rebuke vice,

but then stresses its literary derivation from 'uplandyshe Goddes, that
were rude, lascivious and wanton of behaviour. (24) The writer assumes the
mask of the satirist to discover folly more effectively and avoid the ill
will of the fool, but the satirist's licensed disregard of social rank is a
precarious privilege.

The ambiguously defined freedom to attack aristocratic vice as well as
popular vice, was based in the mediaeval institutions of carnival. Dryden's
reconstruction of Roman theatre describes how:

The actors with a gross and rustic kind of raillery, reproached each
other with their failings; and at the same time were nothing sparing of
it to their audience.

This commerce between the stage and the audience was accompanied by the
transgression of social barriers:

all kind of freedom in speech was then allowed to slaves even against
their masters; and we are not without some imitation of it in our
Christmas gambols. (25)

Roman Saturnalia endured and mutated into many popular mediaeval festivals.
Within the strictly limited bounds of carnival, a space was provided for
popular protests and rebellion. Within it, the unendurable weight of
religious and feudal power was temporarily lifted.

The licensed riot of carnival informs Nashe's work and his most
popular pamphlets offer a kind of democracy within their text for 'losers'
to speak. Nevertheless, popular dissent is strictly controlled:

the people of these communities institutionalise ridicule for the health
of their communities. (26)

The expression of popular resentments and creativity worked to restore
official hierarchies. Literary satire and carnival achieved their limited
degree of autonomy, precisely because they provided a release valve for
otherwise dangerous demands. Rather than enforcing the will of the state directly, they disguised and 'sweetened' ideology with laughter.

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The Vice in the mediaeval Morality Plays undertakes a complex role which allows the expression of dangerous energies and at the same time works to reinstate the authority of the divine word of command. The comic Vice is essential to the didactic function of the play, for he makes the audience 'act out our conspiratorial engagement with him' and 'our dissociation from him'. (27) The promise of mirth, provided by the Vice, was used to attract an audience. Within the play, however, he served as the channel through which the audience learnt a sense of its own moral purpose:

What engages the spectators is the representation of the very vices that it is in the play's business to make them reject. (28) A knowingness of vice, isolated and imprisoned in the audience by individual guilt and shame, is liberated and transformed through comic publication.

In this way, a gathering of individuals is transformed into a moral community directed by a specific intelligence. C.L.Barber, in Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, (29) identifies a community of pleasure (and acceptance of that pleasure) between the comic prankster and the audience which has gone on holiday in going to see him, but this is a community which the play's didactic purpose must break and reform in a different image. It is essential that 'though the vices may have the last laugh, they never have the last word'. (30) Virtue must be seen to triumph, expounding the lesson which the audience is to draw from the spectacle.

The adoption of the Vice solved the problem which Nashe's apprentice works set for him: how to find the authentic spirit of improvisation and inspirational language praised by orthodox canons of rhetoric. Abandoning the Lylyean formality and euphuism of The Anatomy of Absurdity, Nashe was able to develop the 'extemporall vein' of his imagination by constructing a narrator-reader relationship within the written text which parallels that of the Vice-audience relationship in the Morality Plays. The structure of Nashe's texts imitates that of the Morality Play, the Vice's identification of the common weaknesses of the audience and initial
alliance with the spectator, being succeeded by his punishment. Play and
game are accepted as such and a reductively moral interpretation of the
text is resisted.

Nashe's complex use of the Vice-hero in his texts will be brought out
in detail in each chapter of this thesis. For the remainder of this
introduction, I will briefly describe the general features exhibited by
Nashe's pamphlets which are indebted to the Morality Play example.

Firstly Nashe's protagonists construct active alliances with the
reader. A landscape familiar to the reader is built within the fictional
environment. The monstrous city of Pierce Penilesse, for example, recalls
the suburbs and slums of Elizabethan London. Jack Wilton, travelling across
a Europe which could have been no more than a catalogue of exotic place-
names for the average reader of The Unfortunate Traveller, makes it
recognisable by references to Jane Turwin and 'Pissing Conduit' - we
inhabit not the journey but the parochial gossip of the capital city.

The reader does not simply accompany the author in his narrative but
is asked to approve the direction of the text, as the Vice-narrator
carefully encourages the appearance of an oral performance, which might be
altered at any moment in response to the wishes of the reader. Critics such
as Neil Rhodes have seen in these moments evidence of the fundamental
instability of Nashe's vision:

This tale must at one time or other give up the ghost, and as good now
as stay longer. I would gladly rid my hands of it cleanly if I could
tell how...What is there more as touching this tragedy that you would be
resolved of? Say quickly, for now is my pen on foot again. How John
Leiden died, is that it? He died like a dog... (2; 241)

In fact, the passage owes just as much to the invocation of the reader's
active part in the text, as it does to the clown's terror of the preacher.
The professional author takes pleasure in this passage in advertising his
skill at plot, genre, incident and atmosphere.

The presence of this audience is assumed to be both continuous and
critical. The Terrors of the Night, like the Anatomy and Pierce finds its
narrator on the defensive. The rhetorician of that work strives to
anticipate the objections and queries of his audience in order to complete
his argument: 'I doo not deny but...Some will object unto mee...But you
will aske why...Shall I impart unto you a rare secrecy...?.' (1;362-3). The
narrator of Pierce Penilesse is concerned to justify the title of his book to dissatisfied readers:

Is it my Title you find fault with? Why, have you not seen a Towne surnamed by the principall house in the towne, or a Nobleman derive his Baronrie from a little village where he hath least land? So fareth it by me in christning of my booke. (1; 240)

Just as in polemic the presence of the absent opponent introduces a dialectic into the positions taken by the rhetorician, so Nashe's audience is a vital component in the precipitate style he develops. The perceived or invented tastes, demands and requirements of the reader become essential to the performance put on by the narrator. The narrator's production of his text from long negotiation with his reader is directly indebted to the Morality Play Vice's fraternisation with his audience and his comic aesthetic of improvised performance.

The Vice-narrator's relationship with his audience depends, therefore, upon the quality of his performance. Lack of spontaneity, eloquence or originality is immediately punished:

Should we (as you) borrowe all out of others, and gather nothing of our selves, our names should bee baffuld on everie Booke-sellers Stall, and not a Chandlers Mustard-pot but would wipe his mouthe with our wast paper. Newe Herrings, new, wee must crye, or else we shall bee christened with a hundred newe tytles of Idiotisme. (1; 192)

The power of judgement vested in the reader is born out of commercial realities - the writer who depends for his living on his writing is necessarily at the mercy of his readers. The casual and tyrannical nature of this authority looks back to the audience's judgement of the Vice and forward to the repeated torments of Jack Wilton at the end of The Unfortunate Traveller.

There exists in Nashe's works an awareness that the writer can neither enforce the interpretation he desires of his works, nor reserve the right to speak entirely to himself. When the artist's invention fails him he is exposed to the ridicule of his audience. Nashe's texts conceal a dynamic in which all listeners are also speakers, and all speakers are both readers and being read. The immediate power of the speaker to enforce a dominant mood, to ensure his interpretation of words and events, is qualified. The reader's new leisure affords a scrutiny and critical freedom to test the performance of the author.

-12-
Nashe's Missing Theme

The narrator's vulnerability to his reader is formally satisfied in Nashe's texts, which recognise various forms of authority. If it is true, as Oscar Campbell argues, that figures in satire had finally to be discomfited and deflated - 'If not forced to endure some sort of humiliation, they would not have served as salutary warnings' (31) - then by extension the satirist must be subordinated to some higher authority. As it was the fate of Marlowe to be identified with the atheism his theatrical creations expounded, so the satirist is often consumed by his satire, identified with the defects of character his satires attack. (32) In his most popular creation, Pierce Penilesse, Nashe too, became a victim of his own satire.

The discomfiture of the Vice proceeds from a recognition by the audience of the temporary authority that he has enjoyed over them, now seen as abusive. The Vice assumes an alliance - speaking 'like unto like' - which the audience is brought to reject. The Vice's humour liberates suppressed 'desires of revenge and innovation' but this material can only be recognised, not condoned. The mortification of the Vice is necessary for the audience once again to suppress its understanding of what the Vice has brought into communal consciousness. The democracy of carnival first appoints, then removes him from office. The narrator's embarrassment in Nashe's fictions is directly rooted in popular opposition to didacticism and sermonising and is a form of the renaissance topos which Ian Donaldson calls 'the discomfiture of the judge'. (33) It is an important feature of carnival laughter that it is also directed at those who laugh. (34) Inversions of role and identity, in which a speaker's accusation is turned against him by his opponent, are characteristic in Nashe's work. They satisfy an instinct for revenge 'against those whose authority we habitually respect and fear'. (35)

The satirist and the Vice, like the public executioner, occupy a position neither of the law nor of the people. In diagnosing the vices of the individual and of society, the satirist was everywhere confronted with the same suspicion, that his uncanny understanding of vice was evidence of complicity in it:

An easie matter... to prognosticate treasons and conspiracies, in which they were underhand inlincked themselves... (1; 362-3)
Such 'Conycatching Riddles' as Nashe's own beast fables in Pierce Penilesse are designed to uncover in the interpreter his own faults, but also trap the satirist in the interpretation.

For these reasons, Nashe conceives of the imagination in works like The Terrors of the Night as a form of punishment:

In the daye time wee torment our thoughts and imaginations with sundry cares and devices; all the night time they quake and tremble after the terror of their late suffering, and still continue thinking of the perplexities they have endured. (1; 355)

The narrator's helplessness in his own text draws together the themes I have been describing. The satirical imagination, the Vice's laughter, are both 'texts to condemn us', exposing the narrator to the judicial severity of the reader.

The final authority over the text is the divine reader Himself. The satirist's suspect powers over language are deliberately placed within the purview of a greater authority. Pierce Penilesse refers to 'Lactantius', who claims

the divels have no power to lie to a just manne, and if they adjure them by the majestie of the high God, they will not onlie confess themselves to be Divels, but also tell their names as they are. (1; 240)

The writer may deceive, or attempt to deceive his human audience, but his true nature is known to the ultimate reader. Moreover, the agent of divine authority in this last respect is not the narrator but the reader. The Vice-narrator is repudiated by the audience he has tempted and which now prefers the most extreme means of punishment and purification.

After a fierce attack on Richard Harvey's Lamb of God, the narrator of Pierce Penilesse recollects himself to ask:

what doe you thinke of the case ? am I subject to the sinne of Wrath I write against, or no, in whetting my penne on this blocke ? (1; 199)

The narrator appears as both satirist-executioner (writing against sin, 'whetting' his pen like an axe on the block), and as condemned prisoner, 'subject' to the sin of wrath which he inadvertantly reveals to be his own.

The closing pages of Pierce Penilesse provide a model for later performances in which mortification of the vice, the narrator's justification of his aesthetic performance, and the satirist's execution of his office all combine:
what, an Epistle to the Readers in the end of thy booke? Out uppon thee for an arrent blocke, where leamdst thou that wit? O sir, holde your peace: a fellow never comes to his answere before the offence be committed. Wherfore, if I in the beginning of my Book should have come off with a long Apologie to excuse my selfe, it were all one as if a theefe, going to steal a horse, should devise by the waie as he went, what to speake when he came at the gallows. Here is a crosse waie, and I thinke it good heere to part. (1; 241)

The author's eloquence becomes a mock-crime which is not complete without trial and punishment at the hands of the readers. The Vice allows himself to be dramatised in the metaphor he has himself proposed, becoming an exemplary victim who will allow the audience to fulfill its transformation into moral congregation.

Nashe's famous inability to end a work must now be seen as the reluctance of the criminal to come to justice: the 'answer' he can expect is the answer proper to an offence committed. Pierce Penilesse ends with the invocation of the famous satirist Aretino:

that might strip these golden asses out of their gaiie trappings, and after he had ridden them to death with railing, leave them on the dunghill for carion. (1; 242)

The last pages contain moralising encomiums to prospective patrons and praise of 'heavenlie Spenser' - a last word rather than a last laugh. The abrupt final sentence of Pierce -

And so I breake off this endlessse argument of speech abruptly (1; 245) - is the finality of death, a different kind of sentence. The writer's suspect eloquence, the satirist's ambiguous understanding of sin, must fall silent before the true judgement of divine authority. The moment at which the body and its discourse are silenced by the execution of judgement upon them, is the moment to which Nashe's imagination constantly returns.
The people's ignorance, coupled with its potential power, became a particularly urgent issue for Elizabethan England. The state's abandonment of traditional religion and the unsatisfactory compromise of official Anglicanism, aggravated the risk of 'apostasy'. (1) Economic upheavals in the early Elizabethan period created a reservoir of discontent in the rural population. An anonymous writer observed in 1589 that:

The Chronicles of Englande, and the daylie enclosures of Commons in the Lande, teach us sufficiently, howe inclinable the simpler sort of the people are to routes, ryots, commotions, insurrections, and plaine rebellions... (2)

The population of London increased rapidly during Elizabeth's reign and a pool of 'masterless men' formed. Sections of this class were literate, and the fears of social conservatives were increased by the ease and speed with which subversive ideas could be disseminated on a large scale. The invention of printing, the great European voyages of exploration and an increase in the pace of technological innovation all helped reinforce the fear of a world turning upside down and an imminent seizure of power from one class, by another.

In response to these perceived changes, the idea of dissidence changed. It became no longer an aristocratic privilege, a confrontation between an unworthy King and his nobility or a form of election by trial of strength. Instead, it was seen almost as a natural calamity - 'the shattering of polity by insensate popular forces completely alien to it'. (3) The scale and severity of judicial punishments increased with this high level of class conflict, without managing to suppress it altogether. (4)

The power of the word to control pre- and anti-societal behaviour was therefore at a premium. Cicero's De Inventione emphasised the importance of eloquence in producing civil order: organised society only became possible when people could be persuaded that the primitive state of violent competition benefited no one. (5) Menenius Agrippa and Sidney's Pyrocles both calm seditious multitudes with speeches informed by a rhetoric 'very fit for a speech to many and indiscreet hearers', and many other dramatic works contain scenes in which a riotous mob is shamed by an effective
speech. (6)

The main instrument of social control was the parish Church, but secular orators and writers were not exempt from this kind of national service. Writers were safe enough if they restricted political comment to an elite readership by the use of allegory or scholar's Latin but popular literature expressing political or economic discontent was strictly policed. (7)

The penalties for writers breaking these strictures were real and severe. The Actaeon myth expressed the desire of the state to reserve political discourse to a social elite and arcane language, (8) but Actaeon's injuries were borne by living writers who trespassed against the powerful. Spenser's seditious poet Bonfont has his tongue nailed to a post and is renamed Malfont, but John Stubbes suffered the amputation of his hand. (9)

There still remained two great occasions on which large numbers of 'indiscreet hearers' were suffered to gather: the public execution and the theatre. Both of these occasions were designed as exemplary procedures in the exercise of hierarchical power, and then redesigned by their audiences as people's ceremonies.

The numbers of people attending popular plays gave sufficient offence in some quarters. The City Fathers in London protested against the founding of theatres because they drew large crowds and the attendant problems of fire, filth and possible social unrest. The argument of plague was also used by the Lord Mayor and aldermen of London who 'feared their inability to control large crowds'. (10)

The purpose of the theatre was to inculcate the civic virtues which the pastor also taught. Yet contemporaries feared that the theatre had become a festival of pagan values, a saturnalia in which restraints on animal behaviour were abandoned. The puritan assault on theatres as anti-churches was fleshed out by Philip Stubbes' observations of an orgiastic sexual licence:

I have heard it credibly reported...by men of great gravitie and reputation, that of fortie, threescore, or a hundred maides going to the wood over night, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home again undefiled

These orgies were consecrated to a rival worship:
And then they fall to daunce about it, like as the heathmen people did at the dedication of the Idols. whereof this is a perfect pattern, or rather the thing itself. (11)

In fact, the theatre and the occasion surrounding the public scaffold had been subsumed into an older tradition, that of the mediaeval festivals of license.

Opposed to the official ceremonies of state order and public morality was the carnival, celebrating temporal liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. (12)

From a unexceptionally conservative defender of the status quo, Nashe becomes a figure on its fringe, testing the tolerance of church and political authority to fictions which exemplified the kind of license described by Bakhtin.

By his insistent oralisation of his texts and his use of jest-book humour, Nashe allows his audience to make of his texts the same kind of carnival ceremony as the theatre and execution. His text is radical beyond its own intentions because 'it allows readers to participate in the production of meanings'. (13) Nashe's earliest work under his own name, repudiates such a populist fiction in favour of conventional solemnities.

Nashe's apprentice works are indebted to a debate whose terms were already well rehearsed. A distrust of 'pagan' art and rhetoric as old as Christianity was given new intensity in Elizabeth's reign by the arguments of the 'School of Abuse' and by the scurrilous and openly subversive writings of the Marprelate authors. The anonymous word - unplaced by social degree - threatened to overturn the necessary subordination of pleasures to duty which alone ensured a healthy society and man's immortal soul. The Anatomy of Absurdity seeks to define and fulfill the 'right use of auncient poetrie' in defending social hierarchies and institutions against dissidence and license.

The Anatomy uses themes and language borrowed from two works of the school of puritan critics who attacked poetry and drama for their adverse effects on the well-being of a commonwealth, Stephen Gosson's The Schoole
of Abuse, and Philip Stubbes' Anatomy of Abuses. Both were themselves indebted to the earlier concern of Tyndale and Coverdale about 'histories & fables of love and wantones, and of ribaudrie' which 'corrupte the mindes of youth'. (14) Ascham followed their example in The Scholemaster (1570), with its invective against romances guilty of 'carrying the will to vanitie' and seducing the mind 'with ill opinions and false judgement in doctrine'. The allegations were also familiar from works by a host of other writers, including John Fields, Gervase Babington, William Rankins and Henry Chettle. The works of Ascham, Gosson and Stubbes each went into several editions. (15)

Nashe's career begins with a commitment to the conservative, anti-Ramist values of Ascham. The Anatomy of Absurdity advances a court humanism associated with Whitgift, which opposes a pattern of conformation to the pattern of reformation espoused by the Puritans. (16) Nashe's preface to Menaphon explicitly rejects the 'threadbare wittes' who 'talke most superficiaallie of Pollicie' (3; 313), and his career accepts the orthodoxy of his day.

The order which language maintains in this set of beliefs, reflects and guarantees order within society as a whole:

For marke all ages: look upon the whole course of both the Greeke and Latin tonge, and ye shall surelie finde, that, when apte and good wordes begin to be neglected, and the properties of those two tonges to be confounded, then also began ill deedes to spring: strange maners to oppresse good orders, newe and fonde opinions to strive with olde and trewe doctrine. (17)

As Jonathon Crewe notes, it is impossible to understand Nashe's later reputation as 'virtuoso, innovator and scandalous wit, without first noting the intense, mythological burden which language was made to carry as servant of social order and political propriety under the late Tudors. (18)

Accordingly, the Anatomy attacks the conventional targets of the 'School of Abuse'. Romances in particular are accused of attempting to restore to the world 'that forgotten legendary license of lying' (1; 11) and:

alluring even vowed Vestals to treade awry, inchaunting chaste mindes and corrupting the continenst. (1; 10)

The terms of Nashe's polemic deliberately recall previous efforts in the same vein, stressing the imagery of a path of virtue and contrasting that
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haven of safety and continence with images like that of an ocean, in which direction and hope are lost. (19)

Nevertheless, the author makes quite clear that he is not attacking poetry or learning in itself, only its abuse. In his partial defence of poetry, literature is to be judged according to its usefulness to the state, and its effect on public morality. Nashe again follows Gosson, who summarises his own position in the following passage:

The right use of auncient Poetrie was to have the notable exploytes of woorthy Captaines, the holesome councils of good fathers, and vertuous lives of predecessors set downe in numbers, and sang to the instrument at solemne feasts, that the sound of the one might draw the hearers from kissing the cupp too ofte; the sense of the other put them in minde of things past, and chaulkt out the way to do the like. (20)

Studies such as Eleanor Rosenberg's show that patronage laid equally influential emphasis on the nationalist value of poetry, its criterion being 'not art but utility and its chief end not pleasure but national self-consciousness'. (21)

Poetry and fiction were to be closely controlled lest they should make the nation effeminate: both were tirelessly contrasted with military exploits in order to subordinate them in a hierarchy of virtuous activities. When Nashe later looks for a metaphor to convey the danger of allowing fiction to contaminate reality, he chooses that of an army whose discipline has degenerated, leaving it a rabble. Duty and pleasure are contrasted in such a way as to demonstrate the inferiority of pleasure. The immediate delights of the flesh are rebuked by the example of the military past which prescribes the direction of the future. The moment of the present, is resigned to the body and bypassed.

Gosson's argument gives a limited role to writers who 'are in auctority, and have the sworde in their handes to cut off abuses'. Otherwise the arts are figured more or less consciously as the devices of traitors. The impulse of The School of Abuse works to exorcise the indefinite images of enemies within, to define an enemy which once identified can then be disposed of. Thus:

I cannot think that city to be safe that suffereth the enimie to enter the posterne. (22)

is implicitly a Platonic exile of poetry, beyond the pale of civilisation, whose unity of purpose it corrupts and confuses.
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The reasons for this suspicion can be seen in those artistic innovators, who, despising 'the good rules of their ancient masters'
run to the shop of their own devises, defacing olde stampes, forging newe printes, and coining strange preceptes, Phaerecrates, a comical poet, bringeth in Musicke with her clothes tattered, her flesh torn, her face deformed, her whole bodie mangled and dismembred. (23)
The freedom of the writer is annexed both to social and political innovation and to pre-societal rites which celebrate the desires of the body. Linguistic virtuousity, superabundance in metaphor, are both examples of a failure of reason and argument to control the licentiousness of language, parallel to the catastrophic failure of church and state authority over the desires of the multitude. There is a direct relationship to political action, for the mob was easily led astray by intemperate rhetoric.

The power of rhetoric to move men to rebellion was directly related to its pagan sources. The polemic against poetry invented a version of the fabled and pre-christian past in which literature was seen to be tainted by its pagan origins:

Every streame hath a taste of the spring from whence it flowes, sweetes, or sower...every play to y worldes end...shall carry that brand on his backe...which the devil clapt on...that is, idolatrie. (24)
Critics attempted to allegoricise the works of poets like Virgil and Ovid. At the same time however,

writers like Juvencus, Prudentius, Sedulius and Arator were intended to replace Virgil, and the De Amicitia Christiana of Peter of Blois was placed on a par with Cicero's De Amicitia. (25)

Puritan opposition to classical learning was widespread. (26) In his preface to Astrophil and Stella Nashe imagines the 'sun' of Sidnay's poetry dispersing pagan confusion.

In The Anatomy of Absurdity, therefore, Nashe is careful to 'christianise' his borrowings from the classical authors he admires. The 'generall Deluge'(1; 28) in Ovid's poetry is compared to the 'very like things set downe in Genesis' (1; 29), in order to establish 'that deeper divinitie is included in Poets intentions' (1; 29), which should not be rejected as though they were lacking in all wisdom. Nashe does not rashly extend the sanction of custom to obscenity, commending the wit and learning of Ovid and Virgil rather than their 'wantones' and 'lust'. If it is true
that 'out of the filthiest Fables, may profitable knowledge be sucked and selected',

Nevertheless tender youth ought to bee restrained for a time from the reading of such ribauldrie, least chewing over wantonly the eares of this Summer Corne, they be choaked with the haune before they can come at the karnell. (1; 30)

Imagery which compares the reader to the bee which sucks honey 'out of the bitterest flowers and sharpest thistles', and to the agricultural husbandman producing a crop, ensures that Nashe's ideal will combine the twin suggestions of human craft and industry, and be seen as being in perfect accordance with the disposal of nature.

It therefore enables Nashe to censure those who would dismiss poetry altogether without enquiring further into its secrets. Such critics 'resemble they that cast away the nutte for mislike of the shell' (1; 27) - a metaphor which had a long currency in the renaissance as a defence of pagan poetry. In using the metaphor, Nashe again signals an acceptance of literary precepts codified by morality: the analogy ranks two poetic functions, for to be content with surface delight alone is childish. Seeking the inner wisdom - necessarily, therefore, Christian and moral - is the true duty of every reader. (27)

Following Gosson in particular, Nashe complains that the writers of romances merely affect the show of mixing pleasure with moral profit, and that 'in their bookes there is scarce to be found one precept pertaining to vertue, but whole quires fraught with amorous discourses' (1; 10). At the beginning of his career Nashe subscribes to an aesthetic which is entirely conventional, and in which a rhetorical hierarchy exists without comment: matter and content come before style and language.

For if The Anatomy of Absurdity explicitly praises a conventional aesthetic in which profit is to be won by means of a craft which produces moral readings beneath the illusory pleasure of textual appearances, so too it provides a version of the society in which those readings have meaning. The imagery in which Nashe produces his account of reading - the bee sucking honey from wild flowers, the nut stripped from the kernel, the husbandman tending crops - all attests to a value in considered and temperate crafts, and links such craft to a natural order which is itself based on a principle of temperance and moderation. The attack on puritan
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agitation within the church of England therefore, likens the 'innovations' of the puritans to 'greene fruite', which, 'beeing gathered before it be ripe, is rotten before it be mellow, and infected with Scismes' (1; 37).

The 'abusive enormities' which Nashe attacks are not allowed to infect the author: rather than Nashe's invectives being evidence of his own malice, the satirist in fact speaks on behalf of a nature which is itself outraged by the assaults made on it by 'unnatural' puritans, readers and writers of romances etc. The danger presented by such things is real and unmetaphorical, reversing priorities which are inscribed in nature, as though 'tender youth' should be choked by chewing the ears of the corn before they have the maturity to reach the kernel. This unnatural reversal of priorities is most apparent in the puritans, whose teaching makes the 'sacred preservative' of the gospels into a 'pernicious poison...increasing his damnation by the ordeyned meanes to salvation' (1; 32).

The heart of Nashe's treatise is thus the 'old Question' he propounds between the 'Stoics' and 'Peripaticians', whether it is better to have moderate affections or none at all. Nashe confesses himself a 'professed Peripatician' (1; 27), and devotes much of the later half of his text to compiling textual and cultural evidence in support of his conclusions. The indictment of textual abuses leads inevitably to a discussion of the physical health of philosophers and writers, the diet of philosophers being spartan (mainly bread and water it would seem) but virtuous. The author culls examples from the apocrypha surrounding Diogenes, Plato and Cato, and from the civilisations of Rhodes, Rome and Persia (1; 38-9), in order 'to shew by the comparison, how farre we exceede them in excesse, whose banquets are furnisht with such wastefull superfluitie' (1; 39). Habits in text and social custom should both follow the same imperatives of temperance and restraint.

The attack on the writers of romances which begins The Anatomy of Absurdity outlines the consequences of this ethic's breakdown. It is conveyed through highly charged and emotionally loaded imagery, which stresses bestial fertility, excess, surfeit - rational human values submerged in animal origin:

It fareth now a daies with unlearned Idiots as it doth with she Asses, who bring foorth all their life long; even so these brainlesse Bussards, are every quarter bigge wyth one Pamphlet or other. (1; 9)
Literary production and poetic imitation were often figured as an act of paternity in the renaissance - one thinks particularly of Ben Jonson and his 'sons' - and though the trope is rather abused by Nashe (for example, Harvey's pamphlets are his bastards), it is at least honoured in the breach. Here, however, human fatherhood, the passing on of acquired wisdom and learning, is reduced to the seasonal oestrus of irrational animals.

As Gosson and Stubbes do, Nashe claims to detect evidence of a monstrous and bestial idolatry, accusing authors of writing merely to flatter their mistresses (1; 11 and 1; 34):

wherefore they may be aptlie resembled to y Aegyptian Temples, which without are goodly and great, their walles arrising unto a huge height, with statelie Marble turrets, but if you goe in and looke about you, you shall find for a God, either a Storke, a Goate, a Cat, or an Ape. (1;34)

If such men were only to consider, Nashe continues, they would 'reject all superfluitie as sinfull, and betake themselves to a more temperate moderation in each degree of excesse.' The interior world of the grotesque is condemned and feared.

Sexuality, which should be controlled by reason, gives way to animal lust. As primal taboos and social imperatives are dissolved, language, which obeys the same laws, becomes:

a confused masse of wordes without matter, a Chaos of sentences without any profitable sence, resembling drummes, which beeing emptie within, sound big without. (1; 10)

The organisation of an army becomes a confused mass, the rhythm of its movement collapsed into mere noise. As in the comparison of absurd authors to she-asses, the author again presents a phantom pregnancy, 'big without' but 'emptie within'. Though the Bussards of the print are fecund, a succeeding comparison suggests that they are 'voide of all knowledge' and merely 'endeavour continually to publish theyr follie' (1; 9-10). The reader is presented with the implicit suggestion of a satanic parody of reason which is simultaneously terrifying and comic, a paradox within creation, whose substanceless assault is both terrifying - the noise of an army, the fecundity of numbers without number - and comic, for it has no reality of duration or essence.

Nashe extends his critique to each mode of social and cultural behaviour, all of which are subjected to the authority of the state. Thus the imagery of sexual license in The Anatomy of Absurdity is accompanied by
recommendations of frugality in the diet. Elizabeth issued proclamations controlling the eating of meat as well as against subversive books, while Stubbes attacks 'diversity' of meats in the diet as an invasion of the body's integrity and links the poison of subversive books with the infection of the body by corrupt meats. Bakhtin observes that laughter was related to feasts and was therefore limited by the days allotted to feasts, but that such occasions also coincided with the permission for meat, fat and sexual intercourse. Philip Stubbes' Anatomy of Abuses details popular ceremonies of excess in drink at the public theatre. Nor should the substantial and traditional link between free speech and food and wine be forgotten. (28) Nashe himself attacks those 'who affirme that no man can write with conceit, except he take counsell of the cup'.

Where, in the Rabelaisian Nashe of the later works the act of writing is linked to delight in food and drink, in The Anatomy Of Absurdity Nashe follows carefully the School of Abuse's warnings against superfluity:

The Lord willed that they should be ordinarie meanes to preserve the state of our bodyes a time, whilste we live and sojoume in this vaste wilderness of the worlde. (29)

Rather than the enjoyment of food becoming a pleasure in itself, a minor art of civilisation, it is seen merely as a means of preserving life, a view closely linked to the religious injunction to see existence in this world as temporary. Notably, Stubbes' argument diverts attention from the pleasure of the present and into a consideration of man's duty to the future.

It is for this reason that the consideration of customs in the eating of meat is cut short by the moral narrator:

But why stand I so long about metes, as though our life were nothing but a banquet ? (1; 42)

The disquisition on variety of meats in the diet threatens to overpass the bounds which the argument has set. The Anatomy Of Absurdity stresses an ethic of restraint and temperance, subordinating the body's pleasure in its present health to its duty to the uncertain future and preferring a rational narrative of meaning to the clown's agitation. In the 'Leviathan' episode of the same work, however, the imaginative pressure of the spectacle of divine wrath suggests a counter-ethnic in which the ideal is mocked and sustained only by the parody of carnival license.
In only one passage of The Anatomy of Absurdity does the narrative achieve an eloquence which most resembles the style familiarly associated with Nashe. It presents both a vision of the grossness of the flesh, and enacts the infection of reality by fiction.

Nashe's explicit argument is to prove 'that deeper divinitie is included in Poets intentions' (1; 29), by connecting the 'generall Deluge' in Ovid, Lucian and Plutarch, with the parable of Noah's ark in Genesis. The attempt to discipline the imagination in the contemplation of divine judgement enables the author to present an imaginative spectacle in which the surpassing of boundaries reforms the text which describes it.

The passage begins by describing how 'the springs brake foorth and overflowed their bounded banks' (1; 28). Fields and mountains alone cannot satisfy this 'usurping furie',

but Citties wyth their suburbs, Townes with their streetes, Churches with their porches, were now the walke of the waves, the dennes of the Dolphin, and the sporting places of the huge Leviathan: men might have fisht where they sold fish, had they not by the suddaine breaking foorth of the showres been made a pray unto fish: the child in the cradle could not be saved by the embracings of the dying mother, the aged Cripple removing his weareie steps by stilts, was faine to use them in steade of Oares, till at length his dismaied gray haires despairing of the sight of any shoare, gave place to death, and was swallowed uppe in the deepe, and so the bellie of the Whale became his grave. (1; 29)

The text has found a mode which can be recognised as authentically Nashean. The pleasure in detail cannot hide the fact that it is irrelevant to the purposes of argument, which is to prove that Ovid's poetry (and by extension therefore, the art of the poet in general) prefigures and reconstitutes the revelation of the divine contained in the scriptures. The commentary which should explicate the details offered by the imagination signally fails to do so. The vignettes of 'the child in the cradle' or the 'aged Cripple' are present neither in Ovid nor in Scripture, and refer not to the ideal truths of moral allegory or divine revelation, but purely to themselves as elements in an act of imagination. The style which Nashe will develop in Pierce Penilesse of grotesques based on the seven deadly sins of the allegorical sermon but in excess of what perfunctory commentary is offered on them by the author, is anticipated in the sheer pleasure which Nashe takes in his depiction of catastrophe. Pleasure has emancipated.
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itself in effect, if not in an explicit ideology or aesthetic, from moral
duty as conveyed in argument.

If the passage does not function as explication of allegorical
sentence, it does enact several features of the popular renaissance
imagination. The world turned upside down of carnival tradition can easily
be seen in the absurdist touch of fishermen made prey in a city of fishes.
That 'the bellie of the Whale became his grave' is, in this context, not
allegorical proverb as such (the Leviathan as Satan, or pride swallowing
mankind), but a grotesque image which exists in its own right without
having to refer to ideology or interpretation. The passage celebrates not
the god of scripture, nor even the exalted position of the poet in moral
revelation, but human ingenuity in the face of his own terror and the
monstrous threat of the physical universe which is a feature of the
grotesque genre.

Nashe does in fact draw a moral from the passage, but the effect of
imaginative development beyond the requirements of argument - placing a
volume within the precincts of a pamphlet as he will later describe it - is
to separate imagination from interpretation, The description becomes a
spectacle complete in itself, resisting interpretation as an intrusion. The
passage anticipates, in this respect, the grotesques of Pierce Penilesse,
divorced from their allegorical justification and expressing quite
different demands and desires.

The Anatomy Of Absurdity ends in the implicit awareness that the moral
narrator and his text have somehow become divorced from each other. The
final pages speak of the need to 'exact of our straying thoughts a more
severe account of their wandering course', and of the narrator's difficulty
in suppressing within himself extreames to which he is 'led captive by his
owne inclinations... overcome by his wicked cogitations' (1; 43). By ending
in the hope 'that we dwell not so long in Poetry that wee become Pagans',
(1; 49) Nashe unavoidably underlines the prophecies of the 'School of
Abuse' that just such a transformation was to be feared. (30)
Nashe's first appearances in print took place in the guise of jobbing journalist - the literary critic, professional friend and opinion-monger of the prefaces he contributed to Greene's Menaphon and Sidney's Astrophil and Stella. These works praised a hierarchy which Nashe himself constructed. His censures and approvals of other writers were necessarily covert manifestoes for the ideal writer he wished to become.

The aesthetics of the School of Abuse proved unable to supply this 'extemporall veine'. An authoritative and hierarchical politics emphasised a corresponding aesthetic in which eloquence was subordinated to a functional literalism. Hyperbole in metaphor and imagery was seen as 'pagan' poetry in opposition to the argument of Christian reason.

A rival and older theory of poetic creation was transmitted to the Renaissance from the classical texts of Quintillian. (1) The importance of preparation is not to be under-estimated and, indeed, is the necessary prerequisite for inspiration. But the poet's 'affability' is 'unlike the pursuit of other studies' for it partakes of a 'divine afflatus':

It is not learned, perceived, or acquired by conventional education; but is introduced, impressed and imparted by heavenly inspiration. We are not educated in it, but born to it; not instructed in it, but imbued with it; not shaped to it, but formed by it. (2)

In this tradition, the language of the poet is seen as something which controls rather than is controlled, which precedes and constitutes poetic identity rather than being its expression. These insights will recur throughout Nashe's works, notably in The Terrors of the Night and in The Unfortunate Traveller's praise of Aretino.

Therefore, Nashe's preface to Greene's Menaphon, otherwise an archetypically conservative piece, pleads:

give me the man whose extemporall veine in any humour will excell our greatest Art-maisters deliberate thoughts; whose inventions, quicker then his eye, will challenge the prowdest Rhetoritian to the contention of like perfection with like expedition. (3; 312)

Nashe's search for this 'extemporall veine in any humour' unifies his work. It also dooms the euphuistic experiment of the Anatomy of Absurdity and ensures the increasingly controversial nature of his work.
The theory of inspiration and improvisation is inseparably linked in Quintillian with the idea of 'copia',
the amassing of a treasure (reading, imitation, lexical accumulation, and the modes of figurative translation)...considered in the perspective of its eventual expenditure, that is to say, of mastery, the exercise of rhetorical power. (3)

Nashe aligns himself with those writers whose interest 'lay in the coinage of words rather than in the structure of sentences'. (4) Elizabethan manuals of rhetoric emphasise this econo-linguistic imperative, for the expanding commercial and political geography of late Tudor England finds expression also in the habitual search for neologism by its writers. (5) Nashe, the 'Columbus of tearmes' participates in this colonisation of language. His texts are accumulations of verbal matter rather than narratives structured by argument and, in this, they arouse the fear and hatred of the School of Abuse.

The preface to The Terrors of the Night sees its task in terms of exploiting natural wealth: Mistress Carey's virtues have enabled the author to 'extract' many 'fervent vowes and protestations of observance' (1; 341). Nashe uses the concept of discovering the fabled passage to the Indies through the grace of his Lady. Style and language are conventionally subordinated to the subject they must accurately describe. The writer's task is to extract a profit which is properly defined by his subject. If his language is to gain praise, then this is really a praise of the virtues of the subject.

Nashe's actual practice in The Terrors Of The Night increasingly reverses these priorities. Instead, he discovers and defends the interior world of an inexhaustible wealth of invention derived from carnival. My purpose in this chapter is to examine how Nashe begins the process of its discovery.

In the Anatomy of Absurdity, Nashe chooses not the popular knowingness of the Vice, but the 'majestie' of rhetoric, for 'Amongst all the ornaments of Artes, Rethorick is to be had in highest reputation' (1; 45). More specifically, he writes in the highly formalised rhetoric of Lyly's Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit:
Euphuism was a popular form with the aristocratic patrons Nashe wished to attract and - equally significantly - was in accord with the analogical and hierarchical cosmology that justified the social order.

The Anatomy Of Absurdity, therefore, opens with the grand image of Zeus choosing exemplars of beauty, an imitation of divinity in the shaping of forms and a claim of jurisdiction over human affairs.

The Anatomy struggles to obey the rhetorical virtues of learning, argument and copia. Customs, countries and authors are formed into encyclopaedic displays: 'Reade over all Homer' (1; 15), 'Cicero testifieth in his Tusculanes' (1; 25), 'I could send you to Ovid' (1; 28), 'Plutarch also recordeth' (1; 29), 'It was a custome in Greece' (1; 17), 'in some Countries therefore...' (1; 15). At times the method becomes palpably absurd, and the proper names reduce to incantation:

But perhaps Women... will object unto me Atlanta, Architumna, Hippo, Sophronia, Leaena: to these I will oppose proude Antigone, Niobe, Circe, Flora, Rhodope.... (1; 11)

The argument spreads widely as Nashe seeks to demonstrate the agile marshalling of conventional wisdom which is one of the hallmarks of rhetoric.

The rhetorical imperative of copia is certainly in evidence here, but there is little sense of its mastery by an authoritative narrator or narrative. There is rhetorical plenitude, but no sign of the grotesque fertility which Nashe will introduce into his prose. There are reported transformations, of women who have 'more shyfts than Jove had sundry shapes, who in the shape of a Satyre inveigled Antiope; tooke Amphitrios forme, when on Alcmena he begat Hercules' (1; 16), but little sense of the muscularity and sinewy skill of that language which transforms itself in perpetual pleasure, praised, for example, by John Berryman.

Indeed, the prose of the Anatomy is almost entirely bare of metaphor, its craft subdued and mechanical, producing genealogies of restraint rather
than pagan saturnalia:

to Danae he came in a shower of gold; to Laeda in the likenes of a Swan;
to Io like a Heyfer; to Aegine like a flame; to Mnemosyne like a Sheep-
hearde; to Proserpina like a Serpent... (1; 16)

and so on. Though Nashe's work has been discussed in terms of a
'precipitate' style, attesting to the power of contingency to pre-empt the
narrator's authority, The Anatomy of Absurdity demonstrates that Nashe's
'extemporal vein' was the product of much labour and experiment. In this
early work, there is an almost palpable sense of duty about a prose which
is tied to the achievement of rhetorical principles.

The Anatomy Of Absurdity is 'oralised' in the way described by Walter
Ong, (11) but in formal debate rather than the complicity of Vice and
audience. Flattery of the reader, which will be knowingly parodied in The
Unfortunate Traveller ('gentle readers' are enjoined to be gentle since the
narrator has called them so), is here performed conventionally ('so shall
the discreet Reader understand the contents by the title': 1; 11). The
imagination is submitted to the sensibilities of an undefinable reader: 'I
do not elleage these examples, to the end I might condene...but to shew by
the comparison...' (1; 39).

The narrator displays not only learning but wisdom. He undertakes the
roles both of prosecuting counsel and judge in settling the 'old
Question...whether it were better to have moderate affections, or no
affections ?' (1; 27). He diligently practises an ability to argue on both
sides of a question, much praised in manuals of rhetoric (12): the 'loyall
Lucretia' is balanced against the 'light a love Lais', 'a modest Medullina'
goes into the scales with 'a mischivous Medea' (1; 11).

Again, however, the apprentice author falls into gesture. In seeking
to counter the arguments of Renaissance feminists by reminding them that
for every heroine history has provided a less exemplary female, he leaves
the reader with an argument whose terms, exactly balanced, negate each
other. The thoroughness with which Nashe exposes the 'nakedness' of
puritans, writers of romances and so forth, cruelly reveals the
imperfections and inconsistencies of his own text. 'Post not rashlie from
one thing to another, least thou maist seeme to have seene many things, and
learned fewe' (1; 43), counsels Nashe, whose pamphlet does precisely that,
(13) and again 'Perswade one point throughlie, rather than teach many things
scatteringly' (1; 46). The author condemns those who borrow without understanding from the works of others, but his own discourse is rigid with imperfectly digested borrowings.

The use of Euphuistic rhetoric is bound up with Nashe's hopes of winning the aristocratic patronage which promised financial and political security. (14) At the same time, the institution of patronage was a powerful guarantee that the writer would adhere to the standards of political order expected of him, having 'unquestionably' a more direct effect upon authors in inducing conformity of opinion than had the laws promulgated by the Tudors. (15)

The decorum enforced by the hoped-for aristocratic audience also contributes to the stasis of The Anatomy of Absurdity. Nashe amends his argument at crucial points to avoid controversy or offence, adding a careful postscript to an attack on hypocrisy, for example: 'neither doe I speak this to the disgracing derision of vertuous Nobilitie, which I reverence in each respect' (1; 35).

Hence The Anatomy of Absurdity is a work whose narrative imagination is firmly controlled by an anxious narratorial persona, operating within his text as the policeman of certain 'manifest truethes' which may not be called into question. Where the voice of censorship fails, there is its silence - 'But least in praying of learning...I should bring manifest truethes into question...I will cease to prosecute the praise of it...' (1; 35). If Nashe's professed object in the Anatomy is freely to satirise the various faults of his times, then that aim is checked and countered at every step by the necessity of conforming to a principle of temperate argument which can offend no individual or social group:

least in laying foorth their nakednesse I might seeme to have discovered my mallice, imitating Ajax, who objecting more irefully unto Ulysses flattery, detected him selfe of folli'. (1; 26-7)

The satirist's vulnerability circumscribes The Anatomy Of Absurdity. As a consequence, the work fails to achieve a persona that could give it coherence and stability, (16) and signally fails to achieve the eloquent style proposed in the preface to Menaphon.

iii

The formal rhetoric and explicit argument of The Antatomy of Absurdity
demand an authoritative narrator. Nashe directs the text, coercing the reader, rehearsing themes. In The Terrors of the Night, however, the narrator gives way to the 'afflatus' of the text which shapes its own narrative.

In the terms of the School Of Abuse, The Terrors of the Night reveals the increasing precedence of 'pagan poetry' over Christian narrative in Nashe's fictions. The author's aim in this 'speedily botcht up and compild' pamphlet (17) is no longer to display learning, but to entertain. Where the Anatomy contains Leviathan within narrative, The Terrors of the Night prepares the abandonment of the moral author and Christian narrative which can be seen in Pierce Penilesse.

Gosson's underlying purpose in The School of Abuse is to make language proclaim a moral purpose to which it is subordinate, and the narrative the superiority of the authorial persona. Gosson's similes are designed to exhibit his rationality:

I wil beare a low saile, and rowe neere the shore, lest I chaunce to bee carried beyonde my reache, or runne a grounde in those coasts which I never knewe. My only indevour shalbe to shew you... (18)

Imagery takes care to situate itself within strict boundaries, to avoid the possible revelation of a knowledge reserved, either by mystery of state (coasts I never knew) or by the author himself. The interiority of the writer is carefully denied: all that is revealed is all that was seen.

The Gossonian text's similes are self-consciously epic in form, self-contained, consistently applicable and applied. No room is left for the ambiguity which calls the reader into the existence of the text. The reader is required not to participate and judge, but only to assent. The language of The School Of Abuse declares what it is able to do by first establishing what it cannot allow itself. The pleasure of verbal elaboration is permissible only in as far as it strictly advances the argument.

Nashe however, begins in The Terrors of the Night to listen to the divine 'afflatus' praised by John Rainoldes. Quintillian argues that:

If, however, some brilliant improvisation should occur to us while speaking, we must not cling superstitiously to our premeditated scheme... (19)

Nashe's typical narratives - volumes within the precincts of pamphlets - habitually seek out and accept the moment of inspiration. They are
imaginatively consistent but argumentatively disjointed, rhapsodic constructions rather than one-track paths.

Where then, Gosson advances an irresistible moral argument, Nashe seems to be constantly catching up with the imaginative implications of his text:

Feare (if I be not deceivd) was the last pertinent matter I had under my dispensing; from which I feare I hath strayed beyond my limits: and yet feare hath no limits, for to hell and beyond hell, it sinkes downe and penetrates. (1; 376)

The narrator reconstitutes himself within his text by means of a verbal pun, transforming an admission of loss of control into a formula which situates himself within that loss. Far from distrusting the interiority of language, he utilises its resources. His narrator might be compared to the shipwrecked sailor who decided that the rock which sank his ship was, after all, his destination.

Gosson draws on a wide range of sources, but the detachment of epic argument, isolates them from the possibility of transforming influence:

And because I have been matriculated my self in the schoole where so many abuses flourish, I wil imitate the doges of Aegypt... (2D)

The anthropological pressure of the spectacle is effectively subordinated to the paramount argument. The purpose of his extended comparison is always to detach the reader from the prospect of strangeness and pleasure, and return the reader to the moral sentence; to exhibit the wonders of the imagination only in order to discount them by, and in favour of, moral instruction.

These priorities are reversed in Nashe's characteristic figures. For instance, the demons in The Terrors Of The Night have:

faces far blacker than anie ball of Tobacco, great glaring eyes that had whole shelves of Kentish oysters in them, and terrible wyde mouths, whersof not one of them but would well have made a case for Molenax great globe of the world. (1; 379)

The details of the image are individually vivid, yet they cannot be conceived as a whole - or perhaps the whole they make is inconceivable. The reader is thrust into the midst of the spectacle, unable to comprehend it intellectually - it is logically impossible that each one of the 'terrible wyde mouths' could swallow the 'great globe of the world'.

The imaginative pressure of Nashe's work overcomes the ostensible purpose of exposition and results in figures of terror and torture,

as if a man should be rosted to death, and melt away by little and
little. whiles Phisitions lyke Cooks, stand stuffing him out with herbes, and basting him with this oyle and that sirrup. (1; 373)

Where Gosson deconstructs his imagery to reveal the reassuring presence of argument, of the literal world in which the 'phisitions' could only represent, Nashe's embellishment describes a world in which physicians are cannibals preparing men for death.

It is this refusal to reduce spectacle to literal argument which makes Nashe's texts both comic and alarming. His digressions, like his grotesque imagery, enact the overthrow of what Richard Lanham has called the 'polemic western self'. (21) The absence of any 'single orchestration' of reality in Nashe's new prose, dispels the fear of failure and nonconformity engendered by any such single version (22) and gives rise to laughter. It emphasises pleasure in the trivial, various and sensual, but also horrifies the rational mind.

It also anchors the prose in the present moment. Quintillian's praise of inspiration goes on to say

For although we need to possess a certain natural nimbleness of mind to enable us, while we are saying what the instant demands...our mental activities must range far ahead and pursue the ideas which are still in front... (23)

In Quintillian's ideal placing of argument within inspiration, the 'mind's eye' must urge its gaze forward, 'keeping time with our advance', but enabling the author to structure his thoughts and avoid incoherence.

Gosson's presence of mind does indeed look forward and back. The present operations of language are given a past foundation and future purpose in his text, by the argument which the narrative undertakes. Thus, the present purpose is sustained by its place in a logical and temporal narrative, an unfolding providence which reiterates and does not parody the divine narrative.

Carried away by his own vision of 'the hideous roaring of his waters when the winter breaketh up' Nashe loses his subject in The Terrors of the Night and finds himself stranded in Iceland:

A poyson light on it, how come I to digress to such a dull, lenten, northern clime, where there is nothing but stock-fish, whetstones and cods' heads ? Yet now I remember me: I have not lost my theme so much as I thought, for my theme is the terrors of the night, and Iceland is one of the chief kingdoms of the night, they having scarce so much day there as will serve a child to ask his father blessing. (1; 360)
As in the earlier passage in which fear has no bounds, Nashe converts a moment of imaginative dislocation, into further scope for invention. The opportunism of this imagination - Nashe finds his theme in a chance verbal suggestion - implicitly subverts Quintilian's recommendation of inspiration grounded in the past and future tenses of argument.

In Nashe's new Muse, the 'theme' becomes merely an efflorescence of the spectacle of language, which lacks present purpose, because it is not part of a narrative. The absence of the author from his own text is partly a comic device, as will be seen in Pierce Penilesse. The Terrors Of The Night's evasion of its narrator 'as it pursues and displaces its own moment of presence', (24) is also a consequence of an exclusive concentration on the present operation of language. Thus, Pierce Penilesse is a series of extended digressions and Nashe claims to have named the pamphlet as a nobleman would take his title from his smallest landholding. The whole of Jack Wilton's story in The Unfortunate Traveller is a low-voice digression from the proposed heroic theme of Henry VIIth's triumphs in France, and in Lenten Stuff the theme itself becomes literally a 'red herring'.

The Terrors of the Night anticipates Nashe's discovery of his 'true' theme, the one to which all his works advance. For Richard Lanham, this is also the real subject of rhetoric itself:

man's tremendous resources of verbal pleasure, his endless ability to metamorphose one emotion into another by means of the word. (25)

The dominant mood of The Terrors Of The Night is not one of pleasure enjoyed, however, but that of pleasure shadowed by the unstated condemnation of a 'paganism' which must be extirpated in order to bring 'a truly Christian heart to our reading'. (26) My purpose in the remainder of this chapter is to describe the consequences of Nashe's subversion of rhetorical injunctions and how he comes to terms with the pagan seduction of his new and grotesque imagination.

The confident critic in the preface to Astrophil And Stella was able to penetrate the fog of pagan confusion with the aid of the 'sun' of Sidney's poetry. In The Terrors Of The Night, the text is home to:

The Robbin-good-fellowes, Elfes, Fairies, Hobgoblins of our latter age, which idolatrous former daies and the fantasticall world of Greece
ycleaped Fawnes, Satyres, Dryades, & Hamadryades. The merry pranks of these pagan demigods include the ability to lead 'poore Travellers out of their way notoriously (1; 347). Nashe's narrator becomes one such 'poor Traveller', led astray by his decision to accord precedence over the past and future duties of narrative to the present pleasure of verbal invention. The prophetic warning of The Anatomy Of Absurdity that poetry might make a pagan of the writer seems to have come true in The Terrors Of The Night.

And just as Nashe's new fiction transforms the duty to divide narrative consciousness between present purpose, past foundation and future conclusion, so it subverts other rhetorical procedures. In the De Ratione Studii Erasmus establishes the principle that 'words come first, but subject matter is more important', (27) and the discussion of language is accompanied in Renaissance and classical sources by repeated warnings against the pernicious effects of 'empty' verbal copia. (28)

The copia against which Erasmus and his classical forbears warn is a quality of invention which overrides the distinctions between 'true' and 'false' representation, a concept at the heart of rhetorical teaching in the renaissance. It is a linguistic surface which 'renders with equal colour and evidence the face of real things and of imaginary things':

the real and imaginary are allowed to slide together and contaminate one another; the things which appear in the verbal surface have discarded the signs of their provenance and are happy to masquerade as words. (29)

For reforming Puritans, this sliding of distinctions was a moral, not merely an aesthetic ill, an 'idolatrous confusion between sign and thing signified'. (30)

The turmoil of the imagination in The Terrors Of The Night is represented by an imagery which recalls the case made by the School Of Abuse against pagan poetry:

Our cogitations runne on heapes like men to part a fray, where everie one strikes his next fellow. From one place to another without consultation they leap, like rebells bent on a head. Souldiers just up and dowe they imitate at the sacke of a Citie, which spare neither age nor beautie: the yong, the old, trees, steeples, & mountaines, they confound in one gallimaufrie. (1; 356)

As in the 'Leviathan' passage of The Anatomy Of Absurdity, formal design is itself encompassed by the imagery it is supposed to maintain. Just as Will
Summer will liberate himself from the plot of Summers Last Will and Testament, or Pierce and Jack Wilton achieve a precarious autonomy from the designs of their author, so the narrative above is inadequate to the turmoil it describes.

A sober distinction between different categories of those whose job it is to enforce the law is made but then disappears: these enforcers of the law are themselves gathered into the unrestrained passions and violence they seek to moderate. There seems to be no difference in behaviour between 'soldiers' - agents of a lawful power - and 'rebels', those who seek to usurp power by violence. Nashe's syntax declares the confusion of which it should speak. There is no logical connection between 'the yong, the old' and 'trees, steeples & mountaines'; instead the list is compiled 'without consultation' and is a true 'gallimaufrie'.

This subtle modification of the very structure of the sentence by its subject recurs in Nashe's effective exploitation of grammatical ambiguity and of puns: both point to a realm in which the distinction between language and reality is abolished, and in which things exist in the same medium of the imagination. In Pierce Penilesse Nashe describes a kitchen no bigger then the Cookes roome in a ship, with a little court chimney, about the compasse of a Parenthesis in proclamation print... (1; 167)

In this aside, both 'things' and the 'signs' which supposedly represent them are given equal standing within a fluid and fluent universal medium. Nashe will dramatise this confusion between sign and signified and call into question the nature of social hierarchies in the companionship of Jack Wilton and the Earl of Surrey.

The rhetorical 'sliding of distinctions', with its attendant implications of an ontological and social absence of authority, is also a key to the understanding of Nashe's grotesque portraits. These 'anti-figures', of which Pierce Penilesse provides the fullest gallery, dissolve the body into an 'unreadable' sequence of verbal figures'. (31)

The grotesques reconstruct the 'polemic' human image, combining elements of the familiar to make something which is not only unfamiliar, but inconceivable in its own terms. A single orchestration of reality is replaced by a combination of disparate elements:

For besides nature hath lent him a flaberkin face, like one of the foure winds, and cheekes that sag like a womans dugs over his chin-bone, his
apparel is so puft up with bladders of Taffatie, and his back like biefe stuft with Parsly, so drawne out with Ribands and devises, and blisterd with light sarcenet bastings, that you would thinke him nothing but a swarme of Butterflies if you saw him a farre off. (1; 177-8)

The unflattering national portrait of the Dane mixes sex and other human and animal characteristics, combines animal with vegetable, clothes which dress the man with dressings prepared for food. Each new element in the comparison not only asks the reader to make the connection in the similarity but also to unmake the portrait that is being assembled. By the time of the last comparison - to a swarm of butterflies - the human figure is both present and impossible.

The opacity of Nashe's new language is immediately striking: the text lingers on the surface of its own invention, in defiance of rhetorical injunctions to help the reader to the allegorical kernel. (32) This language habitually draws attention to itself, and its practitioner is, in Stanley Fish's term, a 'bad physician' whose words:

- are not seeds spending their lives in salutary and self-consuming effects, but objects, frozen into rhetorical patterns which reflect on the virtuosity of their author. (33)

Where the good style is transparent, looked through rather than noticed, Nashe's grotesque vein is its opposite: deliberately excessive, a style which is meant to show and be admired. The effect on the reader is disturbing, for though the 'syntactic connection' of the images is clear, their relationship cannot be confidently resolved. The reader:

- is left only with the juxtaposition itself, with the tension and uneasiness that is caused by an entirely novel realignment of his visual perceptions and anticipations of physical reality. (34)

The similarity of a Danish drunkard to a swarm of butterflies exists for the reader not because he is accustomed to making it, but because the page presents it to him.

Renaissance rhetorical theory, as we have seen, characteristically emphasised the 'apparent disappearance' of language (35), so that, in Quintillian's words 'it may seem that...the reader has seen not read'. (36) Word and text imitate, re-present and thereby subordinate themselves to thing and world, just as in society as a whole, licentious pleasure is subordinated to moral duty. Though it is 'self-evident' that in any discourse words

always interpose their opacity between the reader-listener and any
conceivable experience of things seen, (37)
it is also evident that Nashe's new prose marks a different level of such opacity. In The Terrors of the Night and Pierce Penilesse the hierarchical system of subordinations enforced in rhetoric is deliberately broken down. In this different sense, the shocking anti-rhetoric of Pierce Penilesse is also 'unreadable' by conventional theories of rhetoric.

These monsters of incongruity mark Nashe's break with the School of Abuse. Their 'quasi-parodic misappropriation of ideal forms' (38) implicitly subverts the subordination of rhetorical pleasure to moral duty accepted by the Renaissance, justifying Erasmus's argument that the beauty of achieved rhetoric is the malignant appeal of paganism. The fact that Nashe cannot wholly evade the implications of this argument results, in The Terrors Of The Night, in an opposition of imaginative spectacle and the precariously maintained sense of the author's own textual identity:

unceissant is the wheeling and rolling on of our braines; which everie hower are temprung some newe peece of prodigie or other, and turmoyling, mixing and changing the course of our thoughts. (1; 378)

In the short pamphlet produced for the Careys, the narrator - a displaced author - is morally appalled by the implications of a text which produces unstable and monstrous images at every turn. As G.R. Hibbard has said, the imagery of The Terrors of the Night is 'like some self-generating organism' whose sentences 'multiply and proliferate from page to page'. (39) From Pierce Penilesse on, Nashe conceives of the text not as a system of signs which corresponds and is subordinate to an ideal reality, or a reality of material things, but as a medium in which all things have precisely the same status. The guiding principle of this brave new world is the pleasure of language in its own productions.
The repudiation of rhetorical decorum was necessary for Nashe to write a comic work in which popular fears are confronted and defeated. The Terrors Of The Night deals with the credulity of an audience accustomed to 'strange and true reports' of monstrous prognostications and prodigies of nature. Here, however, the disturbances in nature which are the signs of God's wrath are transformed into comic miniatures and domestic commodities:

what makes a dog run mad, but a worme in his tung? and what should that worme bee, but a spirit? Is there anie reason such small vermine as they are, should devour such a vast thing as a shippe, or have the teeth to gnaw through rough yron and wood? No, no, they are spirits, or els it were incredible. (1; 350)

A fine weight of excess makes Nashe's version of the 'world possessed with devils' a comic one, whose satirical attack is directed against its own generic form. In a brave new world of mercantile prosperity there is no reason to postulate such unlikely creatures as devils, to explain the rusting of iron, or the rotting of wood. The detection of such creatures in Westminster Hall, the flames of a fire, or even in the 'bite' of Tewkesbury mustard, provokes the reader's scepticism rather than requiring his innocent credulity.

Nashe's use of the 'Indian wonders' - a geography of marvels popular throughout the Middle Ages (1) - is also lighthearted:

In India, the women very often conceive by devils in their sleep. In Iceland, as I have read and heard, spirits in the likeness of one's father or mother after they are deceased do converse with them as naturally as if they were living. (1; 359)

The comedy of The Terrors of the Night is open and obvious: at the same time it would not be comic without the incitement of a real anxiety. Often, in the pamphlet, 'seriousness slides into mockery in the manner of a tall tale', (2) but the mockery is never without an undercurrent of seriousness.

The universe of The Terrors Of The Night is thronged with devils and diabolical effects. 'Everything is full of devils, in the courts of princes, in houses, in fields, in streets, in water, in wood, in fire'. (3) Nashe's version reads:

there is not a roome in anie mans house, but is pestred and close packed with a campe royall of divels... Infinite millions of them will hang
swarming about a worm-eaten nose. (1; 349)
The gratuitous detail of the worm-eaten nose establishes the speaker's tone of voice and his comic intention. Nevertheless, the passage is very close to its serious antecedents. Luther, for example, warned that several demons pursue each human being. Just as a man who plunges into the sea is wholly surrounded by water, above and below, so demons flow around a man from all sides... (4)
The Terrors Of The Night anticipates a supercession of the Middle Ages by the modern world, but the sources it develops into comedy are still only semi-obsolescent.

Both Pierce Penilesse and The Terrors of the Night derive their laughter from an exploitation of disappearing fears. The Knight of the Post tells Pierce of a 'second kind of Devils' which have

commission to incense men to rapines, sacriledge, theft, murther, wrath, furie, and all manner of cruelties. (1; 230)

but his tale does not impress Pierce. The solemn agenda which the book proposes to its readers (it takes the form of the Seven Deadly Sins), is evaded at crucial moments, and solemnity is replaced by laughter. My purpose in this chapter is to describe how Nashe confronts and exorcises by laughter a fear of the divine and the political, but at the same time constructs 'texts to condemne us' which reassert a vengeful authority.

ii

By the time of The Terrors Of The Night, the genre of the 'Indian Wonders' had been transformed. The moralisation of pagan classics, such as Ovid's Metamorphoses, was accompanied by increasingly ingenious interpretations of the monsters and prodigies which previously had been enjoyed for their own sake. The marvels began to be used for satirising contemporary issues and failings - an event which perhaps presages Nashe's own grotesque depictions of 'Pride' and 'Greediness' in Pierce Penilesse. (5) The monsters and related phenomena of the 'Indian Wonders' were now seen as evidence of 'the unfathomable wonders of God, which he has created with a particular significance' as an 'admonition and a horror for mankind'. (6)

A reversal in the vision of the monstrous returned a pagan fear of the monster as a foreboding of evil. Where the 'superstitious Middle Ages'
found a legitimate place for the monstrous in the divine scheme,
the 'enlightened' period of humanism returned to Varro's 'contra
naturam' and regarded them as creations of God's wrath to foreshadow
extraordinary events. (7)

Hysteria against witches and popular belief in the arts of invoking demons
became current and interest in the magical powers of language - the
supposed ability of the Irish satirists to 'rhyme' men and animals to
death, for example - was renewed. Theatres were seen by the 'School of
Abuse' literally as anti-churches consecrated to a rival worship. Players
who counterfeit as gods are, in Gosson's argument, not merely perpetuating
idols, 'they are themselves idols or false gods'. (8)

The changing perception of monstrous events and births is part of a
greater shift in the understanding of evil. Demons were no longer
responsible for the failure of the crops or for individual cases of civil
dissent. Instead, a new model of the Adversary's onslaught against mankind
was gaining ground, in which a psychological struggle was accorded greater
importance than catastrophe in nature. (9) Observing the change in catholic
confession after the Council of Trent, Michel Foucault remarks on a new
precision. The nature of the offences were to be:
pursued down to their slenderest ramifications: a shadow in a daydream,
an image too slowly dispelled, a badly exorcised complicity between the
body's mechanics and the mind's complacency: everything had to be
told. (10)

In protestant cultures such an intensification of confession was the more
direct for being essentially unmediated by church or priest. The late
sixteenth century sees a proliferation of literary 'anatomies': God's
surveillance seen as an anatomising gaze before which nothing could be
concealed, certainly not the 'guilty interiority' of the satirist. (11)

The popular superstitions driven from the field of natural disaster,
penetrated into each human being, inciting thoughts and deeds which could
neither be wholly suppressed nor fully articulated. A great paranoia was
engendered by the intensification of the need for greater surveillance of
the inner dominion, of which men became increasingly aware. It was no
longer enough simply to enforce obedience of body and word; the private
thoughts of the sinner must also be made to declare themselves. The
attraction of conjuring - personal negotiations with a host of lesser
potentates than the one God - the epidemic of witch-trials, the polemics of
Gosson and Stubbes - were all symptomatic recognitions of the new world opened up within the individual psyche.

The dislocation of rhetoric in The Terrors of the Night and the insufficiency of literary form parodied in that pamphlet, lead Nashe into a consideration of the author's psychology. The mind, with its undisclosed fears and weaknesses, is seen as a text to be read. Words acquire an interior condition: they do not simply represent but in certain circumstances may become that which they denote. It is possible to reach to hell in their 'bottomless' sense.

With uneasy jocularity the narrator condemns 'witches' who use the name of god in their 'hellish adiurations' but join to it 'such a number of damned potestates' (1; 359). He is unable to name Lucifer in 'the names importing his mallice...least some men shuld think I went about to conjure' (1; 346). The critical presence of the reader is accompanied by the potential judgement of a greater power.

Satan is present in the names which identify him: he is also present in man's innermost thoughts. If 'the divell can transforme himselfe into an angell of light' (1; 347), how then can he be identified and resisted? If his appearance can be changed 'as quicke as thought' (1; 349), how can he be expelled from thought?

Nashe's fascination with the outmoded imagination, whose rheumatic forms expose something of human psychology to the critical gaze, moves inevitably into a consideration of the human mind, the true progenitor of 'Indian Wonders' and 'Tewkesburie' demons. Like the prognosticators of treason, 'underhand inlincked themselves' (1; 363), the narrative consciousness of The Terrors of the Night finds itself a player in the same spectacle. The devil is merely a rhetorician

Farre more nimble and sodaine...in shifting his habit, his forme he can change and cogge as quicke as thought. (1; 349)

This Lucifer is compared to the Roman conspirator Catiline, of whom it was said 'with the turning of a hand he could turne and alter his countenance'. The devil's real nature seems to be no more than that of an eloquent orator, or the genius of language itself - an extemporall vaine.

The Terrors Of The Night provides a text to an imagination whose direction imitates not the author's conscious intention but the undeclared
imperatives of an imaginative spectacle at which the author himself is only a further spectator. Imagery in the work reveals the identities of god, devil and man becoming ever more difficult to disentangle, and this uncertainty displaces the writer from the text of his imagination: he becomes uneasy in its presence. Metaphor in The Terrors of the Night consistently isolates a divided self:

So uncessant is the wheeling and rolling on of our braines, which everie hower are tempring some newe peece of prodigie or other, and turmoyling, mixing, and changing the course of our thoughts. (1; 378)

The writer becomes an unwilling collaborator with an imagination which exacts a different kind of independence from that he has allowed it. The work's typical imagery is either of punishment and torture, or of displacement - the author lost in his own text.

The Terrors of the Night is a satirical work, which analyses the nature of guilt and punishment. It begins by indicting the general guilt of humanity, recorded in the 'black book' of the devil (God's executioner) and ends in sentence pronounced upon notable hypocrites.

The nature of that guilt is conventional: it is the propensity of man's soul to turn to the 'desires of revenge and innovation' which the Anabaptists elevate to the level of a religion and the vanity of a Philip Stubbes or Richard Harvey who imagine they can speak with divine authority or knowledge. It is finally the vice of language itself, in which the Christian author must impose his authority over a pagan impulse to sinful pleasure, leading reason and argument astray into licence and 'feyned' or 'counterfeited' destinations.

Therefore the uneasy balance between ridicule and humour on the one hand, and self-distrust on the other - which the narrator sometimes seeks to reconcile by disclaiming any judgement of his text at all - corresponds to the unresolved status of evil in the divine providence, and the writer's own ambiguous service: does he follow pagan poetry or Christian argument?

Images of reading and textuality permeate The Terrors of the Night. Evil enters the world at night, for men believe that they are shielded from the eye of heaven. But the night is also man's dungeon (1; 345) and 'the Divells Blacke books, wherein hee recordeth all our transgressions (1; 345). The beginning of the pamphlet paints a melancholy picture of mankind isolated from its true redemption in heaven and prey to the faults and
weaknesses of its flesh. The devil records the folly of men in their crimes and in their thoughts:

The table of our hart is turned to an index of iniquities, and all our thoughts are nothing but texts to condemne us. (1; 345)

The Terrors Of The Night presents a complex record of the author's thought processes, a fiction whose essential character is defined by an awareness of guilty complicity in pagan discourse.

The narrator's imprisonment in his text is a kind of Dantesque wandering abroad, an inferno of punishments ambiguously real or imagined. The mind itself is the source of these torments: as a text it must be read by the interpretative arts of torture:

There is no man put to any torment, but quaketh & trembleth a great while after the executioner hath withdrawne his hand from him. In the daye time wee torment our thoughts and imaginations with sundry cares and devices; all the night time they quake and tremble after the terror of their late suffering, and still continue thinking of the perplexities they have endured. (1; 355)

The insistent collocation of inopportune or insubordinate texts with violent physical punishment is a major theme of the work. As the passage above shows, this violent punishment is not enforced: the sin becomes its own punishment. The sinner's crime is a torment which, like Milton's Satan, he inhabits.

The pamphlet wavers between two worlds. The scepticism of the age - expressed in Marlowe's alleged comments about the reality of religious precepts (12) - finds its expression in The Terrors Of The Night. Charles Nicholl, commenting on Nashe's rationalist interpretations of dreams, observes that an 'almost obsessive antipathy to occultism, the great Elizabethan obsession' remains constant throughout Nashe's career. (13) The Terrors Of The Night borrows material from the Earl of Northampton's A Defensative Against The Poison Of Supposed Prophecies, an attempt to discredit spurious prognostications. (14) The Terrors supplies a commentary on the foolishness of allowing oneself to be imprisoned in one's own 'senses and thoughts.

Nashe is unsure of whether he supports a secular position, or asserts the material existence of hell. Pierce Penilesse poses the question of whether spirits were real, or merely inventions of the human mind. The Terrors Of The Night doubts the existence of 'the spirits of the aire':

-46-
they are in truth all show and no substance, deluders of our imagination & nought els. (1; 353)

Such spirits have no other material existence than 'as by the unconstant glimmering of our eies is begotten'.

Lucifer appears in The Terrors Of The Night as an eager student of the works of Machiavelli:

Therefore in another place (which it cannot be but the divell hath read) This Machiavellian tricke hath he here in him worth the noting. (1; 347)

And of course, the Devil is the most eager reader of his own 'Blacke Booke', the darkness in which evil deeds are done and in which our thoughts become 'texts to condemne us'.

The precedence of the human over the metaphysically super-human is approached but never finally confirmed in The Terrors Of The Night. In making the mind itself the locus of guilt and punishment, Nashe both intensifies the surveillance of power and implicitly calls its sanction into question. The 'terrors' of this work, like the imaginary anatomisation of Jack Wilton in The Unfortunate Traveller, imply that the 'lord known in executing judgement' relies ultimately for his sanction on the agreement and participation of those judged.

Lucifer also makes his appearance in the more vital theological role of divine servant. In this role he is made part of God's providence:

Neither in his owne nature dare he come nere us, but in the name of sin, and as Gods executioner. Those that catch birdes imitate their voyces, so will hee imitate the voyces of Gods vengeance, to bring us like birds into the net of eternall damnation. (1; 348)

Men are trapped by their own imaginations, like birds fooled by the hunter's imitation of their voices. Nashe's exact meaning is significantly unclear here: is Lucifer's office officially sanctioned, or is it a parody of God's justice? Does his existence participate in the scheme of things, so that he really is God's executioner, or is his imitation merely the means by which men condemn themselves?

In practice the two interpretations fuse: like the vice, Satan acts as a kind of catalyst by which men expose their own wickedness. The interrogation of fear discovers whatever vice is hidden in the sinner: 'Dreames to none are so fearfull, as to those whose accusing private guilt expects mischiefe evry hower for their merit' (1; 358).

If this is true then the narrator's own text threatens to become a
text to condemn him, a table of his iniquities. The satirist's vocation is
turned against him and the merciless and objective judge of evil is shown
to be implicated in precisely that which he opposes.

iii

The Anatomy of Absurdity was predicated upon the writer's duty to the
state: 'Can Common weales florish where learning decaies ?' (1; 36). The
writer's presence in his text, directing and restraining the passions which
seek to find expression in language, is not only analogous to the prince's
rule of his kingdom, but actually assists in the maintenance of good order
throughout the kingdom of the real. The infection of reality by the
imagination - the myth of Tlon, Uqbar, Tertius, Orbis - is a recurring
theme of Nashe's. The Anatomy of Absurdity, for instance, speaks of the
writers of romances as though they were architects within the real world,
rather than of a distinct realm of the imagination.

The transparency of the linguistic medium encouraged by rhetoric was a
means to attain the end of moral instruction. The parson was a patron or
'pattern' whose image mediated between divine and human orders:

And in this system of hierarchical representation, the mediator partook
of something of the divine lustre of the Deity: medium and message were
inseperable. (15)

Hence the fallibility of the individual was partly masked by the image of
divinity in him.

Following Gosson's example Nashe conceives of the text as evidence of
the writer's moral countenance.

that which we thinke let us speake, and that which we speake let us
thinke; let our speeche accord with our life. (1; 46)

The sentiment was current: Bishop Cooper's Admonition found 'certain provefe
of a loose boldnesse of minde' in any 'boldness directed against the State,

For, sermo est index animi. that is, Such as the speech is, such is the
minde. (16)

The writer's domain is firstly the amendment of his own soul: the writer is
also a reader like any other reader of his words, accustomed to 'make use
of my Anatomie as well to my selfe as to others...' (1; 42). For Gosson and
other polemicists of the School of Abuse there exists an uninterrupted
transparency between the imaginative sub-text and the explicit ideology of the work, between the author and his text.

In The Anatomy of Absurdity the author's accuracy with respect to his own imagination corresponds essentially to his public duty of morality as citizen of the commonwealth:

Our learning ought to be our lives amendment, and the fruites of our private studie ought to appeare in our publique behaviour. (1; 43)

As it is constructed, the text unwrites itself: its task is not to generate its own pleasure, a pleasure which can only be produced from the text and which only exists in it, but to re-generate the reader's awareness of himself as a member of a moral community.

Nashe never completely abandons this sense that a text provides a process of instruction for its reader. The works after Pierce Penilesse, particularly The Unfortunate Traveller, are constructed around popular vice figures whose misfortunes are increasingly a means of making the reading audience into a cohesive social group. Not quite a congregation, nor only a carnival crowd, but at different times asked to be both, and eventually forming in miniature a society which includes elements of both.

The Anatomy of Absurdity adopts an aesthetic in which the text is a direct transcription of the author's own private morality. Consequently, after attacking the structural motives of the romance, the narrative is able to use the texts of the School of Abuse as evidence of the undeclared psychological motives of their authors. The writers of romance manipulate a genre which enables them 'to be more amiable with their friends of the Feminine sexe' (1; 11).

The Anatomy of Absurdity also includes a more subtle attack on the Puritan author Philip Stubbes, an example of men who make the Presse the dunghill whether they carry all the muck of their mellancholicke imaginations, pretending forsooth to anatomise abuses and stubbe up sin by the rootes...who, wrestling places of scripture against pride, whoredome, covetousnes, glutonie, and drunkennesse, extend their invectives so farre against the abuse, that almost the thing remaines not whereof they admit anie lawfull use. Speaking of pride as though they were afraid some body should cut too large peniworthes out of their cloth of covetousnes, as though in them that Proverbe had been verified...of glutonie, as though their living did lye upon another mans trencher. (1; 20)

In the pun on Stubbes' name, Nashe asserts that the Puritans have only
discovered their own licentiousness, in claiming to expose that of others. He does not abandon the rhetorical insight that the language which a man uses inexorably reveals his character, but by a rhetorical inversion turns Stubbes' argument back on him. The hypocrisy of the fallible writer, hiding behind the respect due to his office, is anatomised. Nashe's argument at this point resumes Sidney's criticism of Gosson in An Apology For Poetry, which observes of 'all that kind of people who seek a praise by dispraising others' spend many 'wandering words' in a verbal assaults which 'stay the brain from a through beholding the worthiness of the subject'. (17)

In identifying the faults of the Puritan writers, Nashe also knows that his own invectives will be taken as evidence of his moral state. The counsel of temperance and moderation in The Anatomy of Absurdity is thus given added force. Nashe's argument conforms,

least in laying forth their nakednesse I might seeme to have discovered my mallice, imitating Ajax, who objecting more irefully unto Ulysses flattery, detected himselfe of follie. (1; 26-7)

In uncovering the faults of others, the satirist may also reveal his own complicity in that which he attacks. Nashe's texts move carefully around these traps.

In Pierce Penilesse for instance, Nashe begins the long flying with Gabriel Harvey with a reply to Richard Harvey's unfriendly notice in The Lamb of God. Nashe specifically ridicules an unfortunate episode in which Harvey's study of astrology led him to predict grave consequences of a particular conjunction of planets. In 1583 the 'strange wonders' resulting from the 'unusual adultery of planets' failed to materialise, with the result that the writer found himself publicly pilloried:

The whole university hissed at him; Tarlton at the theatre made jests of him; and Elderton consumed his ale-crammed nose to nothing in bear-baiting him with whole bundles of ballads. (1; 197)

The genre of Harvey's 'strange wonders' - massively popular throughout these years (18) - is strongly criticised by Nashe in both Christs Teares Over Jerusalem (explicitly) and The Terrors of the Night. Harvey is merely stupid, otherwise 'in trueth they are naught els but cleanly coyned lyes...devised to gull them most groselie' (2; 172).

The exploitation of an unsophisticated and uneducated audience by such reports is Nashe's immediate target. In this sense he takes the side of the
people who were to make Pierce Penilesse such a great popular success. Their victory of laughter over fear expressed

mystic terror of God, but also a victory over the awe inspired by the forces of nature, and most of all over the oppression and guilt related to all that was consecrated and forbidden'. (19)

In the ribaldry which followed Harvey's discomfiture can be discerned this triumph of human scale over the permanent aggression of nature, death and divine judgement. The affair even gave birth to a new mini-genre, the mock-prognostication, written by pseudonymous authors with names like 'Adam Fouleweather'. (20) Nashe is aware that the people are able to prosecute their own interests and shared this popular reaction to the solemnity and terror of the eternal's jurisdiction over human affairs.

In the description of the slaughter of the Anabaptists in The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe develops the insight. The Anabaptists claim to be able to influence, or at least foretell, the course of events. It is a 'generall received tradition' among them,

if God at any time...did not condiscend to their requests, to raile on him and curse him to his face...so that they did not serve God simplie, but that he should serve their turnes. (2; 239)

After 'daring' God with their prayers the Anabaptists receive his sign in the heavens that they will be given victory. Having resigned themselves to the contingency of fate they are brutally slaughtered. Again, Nashe portrays satirists (the Anabaptists 'raile' on God) who interpret the divine language in the light of their own needs.

In all these examples then, Nashe proposes a common analysis. Harvey is made an object of ridicule because he allows his own desire for fame to manipulate his astrology. In the moral discourse of Christs Teares the Astronomers assign causation to the 'regiment and operation of planets,'

They say Venus, Mars or Saturne are motives thereof, and never mention our sinnes, which are his chief procreatours.

God, persecutes the Anabaptists because
they had not forsooke their owne desires of revenge and innovation, they had not abandoned their expectation of the spoiles of their enemies.

As Harvey conceals his vanity within a learned discourse of the signs of stars and planets, so the Anabaptists conceal their desires within a theology of inspiration which brings them news of 'heaven, hell and the land of whipperginnie' (2; 233). In Nashe's anti-Puritanism, those who
claim to have a privileged understanding of mankind's weaknesses, merely project their own sins and passions onto a mirror they do not recognise.

But Nashe himself is a reader of his own text, all the more self-conscious since he is a writer accustomed to looking at a work of fiction as a performance, with its own rules and structures, rather than as transcription of natural or divine authority. Nashe's texts conform to Margaret Rose's definitions of parody as possessing a double nature: the text does not speak simply, but within its own discourse it reads from another text. The ultimate purpose of this duality is the re-examination of the text's own consciousness in the light of its reproduction of the parodied text. (ZI)

Nashe congratulates himself on his performance in ridiculing Richard Harvey - ' have I not an indifferent pretty vein in spur-galling an asse ? ' - but then questions himself anxiously on the legality of the performance:

Tell me, what do you think... Am I subject to the sin of Wrath I write against, or no, in whetting my pen on this block ? (1; 199)

Nashe's figure here is remarkably concentrated: he is not only the executioner, 'whetting' his pen as though it were the axe which will finish off the luckless Harvey, but also, in the double meaning of 'subject', the victim himself. In charging Harvey with blindness to his own desires, Nashe uncovers his own and is forced to appeal to the jurisdiction of the reader.

To recapitulate then: Nashe develops an early and characteristic awareness of the text's economy of power. The Anatomy Of Absurdity presents two fables of authors discovered in their own devices. The Terrors Of The Night analyses the judicial authority of the text and its readers over the narrator. The reader is allowed a power of intervention in the discourse of the text which, in certain circumstances, may become a text to condemn. Both writer and reader may expose, in their readings of the fable, their own 'desires of revenge and innovation'. In Pierce Penilesse, Nashe develops new strategies to deal with this vulnerability, by enfranchising a sceptical reader and purposefully publicising the writer's own devices.
In Pierce Penilesse, his biggest popular success, Nashe turns decisively to popular models in preference to the formal rhetorical ideals of The Anatomy of Absurdity. The adoption of the Vice-narrator enables the text to oralise itself fully, leading to a temporary resolution in the war between between pleasure and duty, fought in The Anatomy Of Absurdity and The Terrors Of The Night. Argument and theme are scandalously missing from the work, which instead presents a history of digressions shaped by the appearance of dialogue, a popular form with Elizabethan pamphleteers for the ease with which the writer could take it up or abandon it. (1) The rhetorical formality and consistent narrator of the The Anatomy of Absurdity are abandoned for a loose structural framework which allows Nashe room for digression and corresponds more closely to the narrator's voice.

The real theme of Pierce Penilesse is this accommodating and democratic style, which enables the reader's 'desires of revenge and innovation' to be heard and satisfied. In this chapter therefore, I examine the operations of the democratic text, concluding with the author's restitution and formal acknowledgement of the authority from which his work accepts licence.

I shall begin by looking at the function of the exchange of 'letters' between publisher and author which was prefaced to the second edition of Pierce Penilesse. Although this dialogue may have been added to the main text opportunistically, it does clarify something of Nashe's aims and achievements within the pamphlet.

If, in The Anatomy of Absurdity Nashe is concerned with the decorum of styles appropriate to the moral nature of their authors, finding any style deceitful and hypocritical where it is used to conceal the actual countenance of the writer, Pierce Penilesse frees itself from the necessity of corresponding to a moral author. The dedication of the The Anatomy of Absurdity, stylised and conventional, is a fitting preface for a serious and dignified work about to enter upon the public stage. Pierce Penilesse replaces it with the sophisticated comedy of a business-like note of 'The Printer to the Gentleman Readers', and 'A private Epistle of the Author to
In this pointed exchange of views the printer explains to the reader that he has been 'bold to publish... in the Authors absence', notwithstanding the fact that it is 'strange', 'somewhat preposterous', 'uncouth' and makes an 'unwonted' beginning 'without Epistle, Proeme, or Dedication' - though these may be found 'inserted conceitedly in the matter' (1; 150). For his part, the author replies by lamenting that he is 'thus unawares betrayed to infamie', and complains that the work is both 'uncorrected and unfinished' since it lacks 'certayne Epistles to Orators and Poets to insert to the later end' (1; 153).

The reluctance of writers to enter print was a common gesture of the time, since mass publication supposedly betrayed an indecently plebeian haste to make money from one's art. (2) Stubbes, for example, claims to have been persuaded against his initial judgement, and by unnamed 'friends', to bring his work before a larger audience. (3)

There is contemporary evidence of the several and unscrupulous ways by which publishers got manuscripts into the printers' shops and on the stalls, in an age before effective copyright. (4) It is possible, therefore, that the author's complaint to the printer - 'you know very wel that it was abroad a fortnight ere I knewe of it' - is literally true: Nashe really is a prisoner of his publisher's commercial greed. In this reading, Nashe's ideal text is pre-empted by the contingent power of commercial reality.

H.S. Bennett, discussing unauthorised publication and the prejudice against print in the late sixteenth-century, is more wary, for:

When we turn to the protestations of a professional author we have to be even more on our guard. (5) Nashe's subsequent remarks in the flyting with Gabriel Harvey, do not suggest that the author was unduly troubled by the popular nature of commercial publication and it would seem that his dismissal of Pierce Penilesse as 'a meer toy, not deserving any judicial mans view' (1; 153), need not be taken entirely seriously. Pierce Penilesse clearly represents Nashe's wholehearted embrace of popular and populist literature as a suitable vehicle for his talents. He has a professional interest in maintaining the extemporal appearance of his work, but the reader would be
'ingenious' to trust appearances, 'for he is in control all the time'. (6)

The internal evidence of the text does not support a literal reading of the preface. The textual strategies of Pierce Penilesse present a coherent picture of the 'world turned upside down' of carnival tradition, in which the theme of commercial tyranny is consistently developed. If the preface does describe an actual state of affairs, then its actuality corresponds exactly with the concerns of the fiction itself. If the author really was absent from the book's publication, then the absence of the author and his replacement by an autonomous text, soon became a favourite conceit of Nashe's - unless we are to assume that Have With You To Saffren Walden really was written by a committee of Nashe's squabbling friends.

The printer's peremptory supplanting of the author from his text is consistent with the strategies worked out in The Terrors Of The Night. Nashe celebrates, even if ironically, the new possibilities offered by the printing press to the writer, and the exchange of letters between 'author' and 'printer' represents a version of Renaissance comic licence. In the 'private Epistle' Nashe announces the temporary and strictly limited eclipse of authority by all the forms of saturnalian pleasure. That such an eclipse is presented with mock horror, as 'the over-spreading of Vice and suppression of Vertue' (the title-page of Pierce Penilesse), should not fool the reader. As mass-circulation literature of all ages has shown, the condemnation of vice, even accompanied by the most ferocious protestations of disgust, often becomes an ambiguous invitation to celebrate its motley. The comic grotesques which Nashe will create in Pierce Penilesse show to the reader a reflection of his own desires, translated into the conventional moral vocabulary, but only imperfectly erased by it.

The new comic universe of Pierce Penilesse is a means of freeing within the author the vein of eloquence which the preface to Menaphon praised so highly. This comedy is largely enlightened; of all Nashe's works Pierce Penilesse best fits Bakhtin's description of the grotesque as the people's victory over fear. The absence of the author does not signify a horror adrift from all notions of significance and reason - as in The Anatomy of Absurdity and The Terrors Of The Night it did - but merely the relaxation of a too-rigid decorum, the overthrow of an unbearable power. Although the persona of the victim grows steadily in force and detail, the
liberation of pre-societal 'desires of revenge and innovation' does not, in this work, culminate in the impressive horror of The Unfortunate Traveller.

If the preface is a strategy towards achieving the 'extemporall vaine' then the license given to suppressed desires within the text, necessitates a suspension of hierarchy in the book's interface with society. Nashe adopts this comic and satirical mask in order to speak eloquently of things which the moral author of the The Anatomy of Absurdity could not conceive of, or countenance, and that unwelcome ghost must be dismissed from the banquet. The author of Pierce Penilesse re-enters his text therefore, not in the dignified tones of an artist addressing the patron whose favour measures the immortality to be conferred upon him, but in the accents of mock outrage and private humiliation made public. His place is taken by Pierce, a voice which takes on the attributes of popular hero.

The preface enacted the writer's social contract. Before the age of printing a patron would be expected to be deeply involved in the production of a work, since it had been written at his request. (7) The Elizabethan reader, expected to find in the forefront of most books the name of a patron, and beneath it a letter which in various ways emphasised the importance and the function of a patron as the writer understood them. (8)

In return for protection against such enemies as the writer might have or be expected to make, the patron was rewarded with the immortality of poetry. The dedication was thus a key component in the symbolic maintenance of social order in the architectonics of poetry or prose fiction.

The preface to Pierce Penilesse reflects the passing of this ontological stability and the author's recognition that the text was now able to exist before it was given value or function by aristocratic patronage. Printing itself removes the text from the hierarchy of forms. Nashe's pamphlet is made doubly shocking by the fact that it does not simply ignore or repudiate the patron:

The devil... becomes a kind of antipatron, to be cajoled and abusively flattered by a crazy speaker. (9)

Nashe's familiarity is sanctioned by the patron's infernal nature but derives its force from an invocation of the hierarchy it abuses.

The comic distortion of these patterns in Pierce Penilesse marks a far-reaching shift in the writer's status. The controversy over printing in
Elizabethan literary England reflected a more general ambivalence towards the social role and status of the writer after the invention of printing:

No traditional institutions or systems pertaining to rank, priority, and degree took their existence into account. They wavered between the lofty positions of arbiters of taste and inspired 'immortals' and the lowly role of supplying, for favor or for payment, commodities sold for profit on the open market. (10)

The writer was trapped between the gentility of aristocratic patronage and the commercial pressures of earning a living from his writing. (11) This inevitably led to a tension in writers between an 'ideal conception' of the writer's function and a 'practical awareness of what was demanded for success'. (12) In abandoning the literally Olympian position of The Anatomy of Absurdity (Nashe sees himself as Zeus surveying human beauty) for the cry of 'Newe Herrings newe', Nashe elects one answer to the writer's dilemma. The decline of the old landed aristocracy and therefore of feudal social relations which enforced this crisis, (13) led Nashe at least to a popular audience in the literate classes below the aristocracy. (14)

Nashe's multiple authorships, his abruptness in ending a pamphlet (particularly, of course, in Pierce Penilesse) all indicate that the author is performing before a radically different social audience. For Gosson, the ending of the work is a matter for subtle discrimination:

(lest I seeme one of those idle mates, which having nothing to buy at home, and lesse to sell in the market abrode...) I wil heere end. (15)

His nervousness at such moments is due to his proximity to power and the necessity to influence its decisions in the desired way without indecently exceeding one's licence. To end, after having said no more than enough, rather than overrunning one's limits, is a mark of the moral writer's self-possession in the presence of authority. In Pierce Penilesse Nashe parodies social entrance and departure before a superior, and the abandonment of the dedication precedes the abandonment of a responsible rhetoric. The comic preface is balanced by the 'abrupt' end to the 'endlesse argument' of Pierce Penilesse.

Pierce Penilesse therefore, leads Nashe to a new role as writer,
becoming his most successful invention. Three editions in its first year were followed by editions in 1593 and 1595 and the appearance of three sequels. Pierce himself became a 'cult' figure in popular mythology. (16)

Nashe's achievement was to construct a work 'quintessentially modern'. The mixture of styles, 'restless shifts of tone, secular morality, 'the relishing of ambiguity and quiddity' (17) and the comic innovation were all condemned by the School of Abuse, but proved the work's most popular features. What impressed the printer (or whoever wrote the preface):

was precisely the fact that the elements of which Pierce Penilesse is composed did not appear in the expected order, or in the expected places, but were 'inserted conceitedly in the matter'. To him the apparent disorder of it was one of its main attractions. (18)

Many title-pages did, in fact, make reference to formal devices employed in the pamphlet (19) and Pierce Penilesse obviously profited from this very fact as a selling point.

Pierce Penilesse deliberately highlights that amoral pleasure involved in the reading of literature, which the School of Abuse attempted to deny or discipline. Its many typographical extravagences - indexes, tables of contents, elaborate chapter headings, marginal notes and the use of different types (20) - emphasise the function of fiction as play rather than moral instruction, governed by a special morality. They satisfy a public taste for innovation excoriated by Stubbes' Anatomy Of Abuses. (21)

The invention of printing enabled a new range of possibilities which emancipated the author from the constricting presence of the patron and the ideology he enforced. The new pamphlet form, with its 'accomodating shapelessness', (22) dismissed the authoritative narrator and made its own techniques and mysteries public. The mysteries of the mediaeval crafts - the 'underworld of learning' of alchemists, apothecaries, goldsmiths and glaziers - all emerged into view at this time. (23) Along with them, the writer called attention to the tricks of his trade with the pride of a professional whose work is appreciated when it is judged.

The cry of 'Newe Herrings newe' raised in Pierce Penilesse expresses a new relationship between the writer and the reader, in which both have to come to terms with new responsibilities and benefits. A generation of writers, The Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels, (24) became public figures known by familiar names, responsive not to the private demands of an
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aristocratic patron but to a wider, more egalitarian audience. The writer's status depended not on the influence of his patron but on his continuing ability to produce goods sought after by his audience. Where scribal colophons had to come last, the 'new promotional techniques' employed by printers 'entailed a significant reversal of social procedures':

contribution to the celebration of lay cultural heroes and to their achievement of personal celebrity and eponymous fame. (25)

The writer asserted his authority but that authority was democratically based, relying on the favour of an audience which demanded ever greater innovation.

Nashe as author - the eloquent sign of a directing social intelligence - is missing from the structure of Pierce, whose 'Epistle, Proeme, or Dedication' is 'unwontedly' (the printer's judgement),

inserted conceitedly in the matter; but Ile be no blab to tell you in what place. Bestow the looking, and I doubt not but you shall finde Dedication, Epistle, & Proeme to your liking. (1; 150)

The writer is the enemy of the text, the agent of imposed moderation over the unlicensed imagination. The imagery of textual interpretation as a form of torture runs throughout Nashe's works: the author resists analysis of his literary text as he would interrogation of his physical self. Yet the terms of that defence are the writer's apparent innocence, not rejection of unwarranted power. The author declares everything - as Gosson admits his early folly in order to render his moral transformation more humanly convincing, as Jack Wilton exposes all his 'wickedness' that it might be used for the benefit of the reader's honesty - in the monarch's service.

If the author must make such a vital and complete anatomy of his own work, if he must authorize all that he is aware of in the text, then he has two options. Either to write nothing which might give offence, or to engineer his own absence and thus to plead ignorance of 'unauthorized material'. Such strategies are developed for the first time in Pierce Penilesse.

The text of Nashe's fictions now adheres to the imagination rather than to the moral author, or to 'mis-interpreting politicians'. The printer does not doubt that the reader will find epistle, proem and dedication within the text of Pierce Penilesse - 'but Ile be no blab to tell you in what place.' For him to give the reader help in detecting Nashe's insertion
of epistle and dedication into the text would be like informing to the king's spies. The printer defends the text as an interior kingdom with its own time, morality, and economy of rights. Where in The Anatomy of Absurdity Nashe accused the puritan Stubbes of finding his own sin in everything, here the structure of the text is the invention of those who look. By implication the fiction does not reveal in its order the signs of hierarchy, the aegis of the king, but rather the satisfaction of suppressed desires and demands.

The crucial phrase is 'to your liking' - aesthetic and political hierarchies are replaced by the carnival award of merit to those whose performance deserves it. The work is to be judged not according to moral profit - the kernel within the nut - but by the simple pleasure of language. Allegory, the aristocratic skill of close reading which discounts appearances in favour of an esoteric concealed truth, is replaced by the comic grotesque. The transformations of language are everything and the distinction between surface and depth is abolished.

A text democratic in this sense, removes meaning from the word's representation of a-priori truths to the extemporal and individual readings of its reader, thus enabling the author to maintain his innocence. The author's intentions, his placing of 'Epistle, Proeme, and Dedication' within the text, remain unknown: each reader re-places them to his own 'liking'. The beast fables which caused Nashe so much trouble, are deliberately designed to encourage and elicit a multiplicity of readings. In the complex strategies devised by the writer, the reader may discover his own needs and obsessions.

iii

The absent dedication establishes the character of Pierce Penilesse. Nashe's fiction is enclosed by the contingent power of actuality - but actuality is merely another form of fiction. Rather than a text authorized by a consistent narrator or competent protagonist, Pierce Penilesse presents a multi-layered vista of effects in which the actual text of the supplication to the devil is contained within Pierce's dialogue with the Knight of the Post, and that dialogue is itself enclosed by the exchange of letters between printer and author. The usually well-defined boundaries
between fiction and reality are erased, or at least rendered problematic.

The fiction takes responsibility for itself, denying a moral author. Pierce Penilesse, like The Unfortunate Traveller, uses a pun to establish its characteristic voice, in Pierce's case on the phonetic identity in Elizabethan english of Pierce and 'purse'. (26) Pierce Penilesse is at once both individualised and emptied of identity: he is assured the immediate sympathy of the reading audience, but also dehumanised. The reader is offered a recognisable, but unauthorizable version of mundane reality, in which motives are wholly commercial.

In this world of playful impossibilities, the silence which surrounds those things whose wordlessness is assumed and counted on as the basis of everyday reality, is broken. Everything speaks: the purse which is the real but unacknowledged legislator of men's actions presents its supplication. Latin tags assume a malcontent character and are to be heard disputing the ills of the world. The grotesque allows a temporary interregnum in which the victims of the social and metaphysical order may speak:

I, I, weele give losers leave to talke: it is no matter what Sic probo and his pennilesse companions prate, whilst we have the gold in our coffers: this is it that will make a knave an honest man, and my neighbour Cramptons stripling a better Gentleman than his Grandsier. (1; 160)

Gold is figured as the real power in men's lives, the sole arbiter of value to make men knaves or honest. But it is a power which can be used to make men as good as gentlemen and erase class distinctions. The incipient theme of the 'world turned upside down' is acknowledged in Nashe's next, familiarly emblematic figure, 'a trim thing when Pride, the sonne, goes before, and Shame, the father, followes after'.

Pierce's playfulness with fictional conventions implies the suspension of more serious laws. True to its spirit of reversal the text presents the task of its eloquence as the restoration of true power to its throne,

By which meanes the mightie controller of fortune and imperious subverter of desteny, delicious gold, the poore mans God and Idoll of Princes (that lookes pale and wanne through long imprisonment), might at length be restored to his powerfull Monarchie, and eftsoon be sette at liberty to halpe his friends that have neede of him. (1; 166)

The commercialisation of human motives was increasingly attacked by conventional moralists. Like print, it threatened a levelling of hierarchies and distinctions and a refusal or inability to play the moral
censor. In pretending that gold must be restored to its proper place, Pierce prepares the legislator's refusal to make this restoration.

Comic grotesque of this sort recreates not only a particular kind of social ritual - which might be called carnival or satiric licence - but a whole economy of power and desire. The subversive attraction of the mode is that it says what has been thought but which may not be spoken. 'Losers' are given leave to acknowledge 'desires of revenge and innovation' because they are presented as fantasies. The moral justification which upholds society is threatened but not overturned: on the contrary, it is reaffirmed. But the play-mode preserves the powerful attraction of social hierarchies overturned. If gold is 'the poore mans God' then this is understandable - the crimes born from poverty are excusable and may even lose their taint of crime.

That gold should be the idol of rich men and princes is, however, wholly abhorrent - at least to the poor. Envy and hatred of the rich by the poor might, if undirected, become rebellious or revolutionary. Pierce Penilesse makes space for it by making the poor the vehicle for the moral duty of society as a whole. The greed of the poor is justified by their poverty; that of the rich rendered wholly indefensible by their privilege.

The comedy of Pierce Penilesse releases subversive energies, but harnesses them. It enlists in support of the status quo the voices of those who have least to gain from its continuation. If fear and suffering 'in their religious, social, political and ideological forms' were clearly impressive, the consciousness of freedom 'could only be limited and utopian'. (27) Anthropological evidence suggests that this 'failure' to achieve a conscious ideology of opposition, is written into the structure of carnival. Ritual periods of license in archaic communities, providing opportunities for protest against established social order,

are not normally intended to call that order fundamentally into question, but tend instead to strengthen and preserve it. (28)

If authority should be weak, the community will often suspend the annual rites of rebellion. (29) An acute sense of the necessity of hierarchical distinctions is expressed paradoxically in ceremonies which give the people its fill of an alternative ideal of democratic anarchy. (30)

In the Estates satire of Mediaeval England - particularly in
Langland's Piers Plowman whose title is echoed in that of Pierce Penilesse - this call to duty is accomplished by presenting the envy of the poor as a moral demand within the capacity of society to recognise and effect. 'Estates literature' stressed the importance of the masses in god's ultimate plans for the world. In the political theory of George Buchanan, for example, the poor act as a kind of moral repository during the times when the vices of the rich force public virtue into exile. (31) It is the poor in Pierce Penilesse who act to restore the providential and compassionate destiny which gold attempts to subvert, giving them the heady sensation of acting as the agents of god. The reader is made a legislator in a way which parallels and avoids the millenarian, quasi-revolutionary path of late Mediaeval peasant sects. (32)

Thus it is true that the passage seeks to equate rich and poor through the agency of the catalytic vice: gold exposes the greed of the highest and lowest alike, uniting them in idolatry of wealth. But it does not enact the destruction of such distinctions, merely places them in abeyance. The carnival grotesque provides a license for the articulation - in images not ideology - of the demands of the poor, but also attempts to recall the rich to their responsibilities. It is hardly a revolutionary genre in twentieth-century terms, for its world turned upside down is always eventually righted, and is always presented in terms which mingle an intense attraction with an equally intense disgust.

The comedy of Pierce is radical in the sense that it reorganises the superstructure of society by reference to the moral first principles which the hierarchy is supposed to represent. It restores, but only after identifying an abuse and examining the claims of rival groups. In this sense it justifies the principle of hierarchical society to the poor. The abuses of the nobility may be condemned, but never the institution of nobility. Gold is a tyrant whose tyranny invokes and justifies the existence of the good monarch. In the same way Jack Wilton will reign as carnival king, suffered for the bounty he brings but deposed for his abuse of his position. Pierce Penilesse directs the outrage of the poor to seek restitution in the consoling fiction of the absolute and benevolent monarch. The moral censure of the poor is invoked not in the service of their own demands, but in order to restore the equitable providence which

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the greed of the great has subverted.

Therefore, the assault on newly-prestigious positions of authority - lawyers, merchants, usurers - depicts gold not as the guarantor of freedom, but in perpetual bondage,

unfortunate gold (a predestinat slave to drudges and fooles) lives in endless bondage ther amongst them, and may no way be releast. (1; 168)

Like the 'unfortunate traveller', gold's apparent freedom is in fact the merest subjection to every man, no matter how deficient his personal qualities. The poor man's freedom is revealed to be the slave of greediness, a semi-allegorical figure, who is also a lawyer. Gold is captive to social groups who have usurped their eminence, captive also to vices of avarice and envy. To pursue it actively is to pursue not one's freedom but one's own subjection. Nashe's theology of active desire, equating the pursuit of salvation with the approach to damnation, can be seen in this sense as a social instrument, counselling the poor to a patience which waits upon providence. The haste which seeks the compensation of its own 'desires of revenge and innovation' is firmly condemned.

For Gabriel Harvey, in his great battle with Nashe, Pierce Penilesse reveals only the breakdown of authority in all its forms. He refused to acknowledge that the grotesque does not abolish political and divine authority, but reconstitutes them along with the authority of the serious text. The evidence of licence blinded Harvey to the evident conservatism of Nashe's professed attitudes and beliefs. Nashe's targets, the Puritans whose creed attempted to secularize some of the functions fulfilled by carnival, and the newly emergent commercial classes whose wealth was founded only in the exercise of their wit - not on the land of England - demonstrate such a sensibility. The old nobility, with its seigneurial assumption of responsibility towards the peasantry, is contrasted throughout Nashe's work with a commercial and professional class whose vices are directly harmful to the people over whom they dishonestly assume social superiority.

Pierce Penilesse is, then, an intensely political work. It is not necessary to decode its precise contemporary meanings - and modern decipherings have tended to be contradictory anyway - to develop an
understanding of the satisfactions it offered to its original readers. A political franchise is extended in all the various strategies developed in the work. In the beast fables the reader acquires the aristocratic satisfaction of secret knowledge shared. The representation of the enormities of vice provides a disguise for the covert appreciation of its motley. The attacks on usurers, merchants and lawyers satisfy a popular grudge against bourgeois figures of authority.

This freedom of speech accounts for the popularity of the pamphlet. Pierce assumes the functions of a spokesman for the people. With the usual formal hierarchies abolished within the text, what is left is the 'plain speaking' of social equals. Pierce's rhetoric assumes his right to speak, introducing opinion without asking permission:

If a simple mans censure may be admitted to speake in such an open Theater of opinions, I... (1; 193)

The speaker of this sentence doesn't wait for the confirmation of a superior before speech, but ritually identifies an essentially democratic forum. The metaphor of a 'theater' is precisely chosen, for the attacks of puritan enemies of drama, identify it as an occasion which was, in the late sixteenth century, almost wholly converted to use as a people's ceremony.

When the folk hero, Pierce, attacks a fallen world for making an idol of gold, or complains that 'a far greater enormity raigneth in the hart of the Court' (1; 168), he is making the reader - if only within the text - into an acknowledged legislator. The despised millenarian desires of the poor become legislation. He flatters the reader that he is the corrector of the abuses committed by others, especially by the socially great. The popular attraction of Pierce Penilesse is precisely this improved degree of freedom offered to the reader over his own thoughts and actions. The resentment created by the discipline of church and state over the individual is converted into the reader's own act of accommodation with the agencies of cultural power.

If the speaker in Nashe's pamphlets is figured as the reader of his own text, then the reader is also converted into a speaker. The democracy which gives 'losers' leave to speak, and was derived by Nashe from the Morality Play Vice, flatters the act of attention by the reader which gives birth to the text. (Pierce/Purse Penilesse exists only in the act of

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speech.) He becomes, if only for a moment, self-begot, self-taught, almost self-invented. His reform of society does not proceed from self-interest, but justifies itself through the moral principles which other social groups are perverting. Alone among a gallery of grotesques, vices, and 'moechanicall men', the reader is individualised and unrestrained, heir to all the roles which Renaissance humanists posited for man.

The elasticity of Nashe's prose provides the reader with a voice, a script and a means of intervention in the worlds denied him. The courtier, living otherwise all the yeere long with salt Butter and Holland cheese in his chamber, should take uppe a scornfull melancholy in his gate and countenance, and talke as though our commonwealth were but a mockery of government, and our Maiestrates fooles, who wronged him in not looking into his deserts, not imploying him in State matters, and that, if more regard were not had of him very shortly, the whole Realme should have a misse of him, & he would go (I mary would he) where he should not be more accounted of? (1; 170)

The passage resumes an earlier attack in The Anatomy of Absurdity against meddlers in commonwealth affairs. The invective against 'grosse braind Idiots...suffered to come into print...when better things lie dead' (1; 159), suggests that Pierce Penilesse dramatises those questions about the role of literature raised more conventionally in The Anatomy Of Absurdity..

But where that earlier work failed in its solemnity to convey an actual sense of the way in which political malcontents reveal their true selves in their demands for reform, Nashe's new prose style both suggests the actual form such complaints take, while at the same time imposing the censure of the majority against them. The courtier's words are represented but not spoken; he is allowed to speak but interrupted where the author thinks it necessary, described but mocked by the description. His threats are taken seriously in the effects they may have on civil peace, but are trivial in themselves. His parting sally reveals - with the help of the author's transforming question mark - how deformed his moral countenance is to the moral eye. The narrator assumes - as all propaganda assumes - the prior agreement of its audience, and the assumption becomes in itself one of the chief means of securing that agreement.

The use of reported speech and gesture converts the reader into a speaker, fostering the illusion that he deploys the interrogatory powers of interruption and description, that he is present at the spectacle of the
courtier making ridiculous and scornful allegations. The absence of the moral narrator allows the author the freedom, of defining the characteristics - and even role - of the reader before the latter is able to fill it himself. (33)

The reader finds his apparent freedom in such techniques; in reality his speaking voice is as carefully crafted by the author as all the other elements of the text.

Nashe attacks those who exploit the gullibility of an audience, and his texts construct an audience with the critical ability to repudiate the Vice and - equally importantly - its own gullibility (the necessary accomplice to the Vice). Nevertheless, the reader's responses are firmly demarcated. Rather than a dangerously subversive work, Pierce Penilesse offers a far more subtle defence of hierarchical society than could be expected from an explicitly 'serious' work. The disarranged and licentious form of the pamphlet, carefully established by the introductory letters, is a crafty deception. Throughout the work, passages of fancy and grotesque portraits of marvellous eloquence are accompanied and qualified by justifications addressed:

To them that demaund, what fruiites the Poets of our time bring forth, or wherein they are...necessary to the state. (1; 193)

It is clear that Nashe was not evading the questions preferred by the School of Abuse, but in Pierce Penilesse wrote a work whose comic license is defined by a sense of duty to the state.

iv

The comic writer, rendered suspect by his satire, is obliged to show behind the temporary licence of carnival, the forms, hierarchies and laws of the conventional world to which he gives his assent. (34) In the episode dealing with Charles the Friar, Nashe shows the limits to the satirist's freedoms. The defence of plays, which forms the centre-piece of Pierce Penilesse, articulates a philosophy of carnival as a kind of release-valve for the official society which sponsors it.

The contradiction between rival privileges of state and satirist were resolved in favour of the state. The Anatomy of Absurdity acts as its own censor, grimly observing that,

Such kinds of poets were they that Plato excluded from his Common
wealth, and Augustine banished ex civitate Dei, which the Romans
derided. and the Lacedaemonians scorned, who wold not suffer one of
Archilocus booke to remaine in their Countrey; and amisse it were not,
if these which meddle with the Arte they knows not. were bequethed to
Bridwell, there to leame a new occupation. (1; 25)

Nashe modifies the significance of the allusion even as he appears to
reaffirm its usual interpretation. For Gosson, Stubbes or Harvey the poet
is banished for moral indecorum or political subversion. Nashe's bad poet
is banished for an aesthetic failure, and the crimes which condemn him are
not political but failure in the performance of his craft.

The power of the satirist's art in a shame culture must be controlled
by the strategies of a self-conscious narrator, who not only judges in the
office of satirist, but also passes judgement on the passing of judgement:
the sinister qualities of the satirist...are counteracted by the
author's absorbing them...into a larger structure and ridiculing them as
well as the object of his attack. (35)

It is this process which Pierce Penilesse observes in the episode of
Charles the Friar (1; 190-1).

Charles Nicholl has supplied a putative identification for the main
players in this drama, (35) but a biographical reading obscures the textual
significance of the passage. Nashe's text is in judgement of Charles, who
is marked by the contempt of society and the afflictions produced by the
satirist - 'a face so parboyled with mens spitting on it, and a backe so
often knighted in Bridewell' (1; 190).

Charles is the very embodiment of the caricature poet of the 1590s,
that principle of disorder which found its way into society through
licentious writers. In his imagination the signs and counters of an
aristocratic culture are melted down into a Boschian anti-world:

Noblemen he would liken to more ugly things than hiimself... to gilded
ches of beefe, or a shoo-maker sweating when he puls on a
shoo...another to a Spanish codpissee; another, that his face was not yet
finished, with such like innumerable absurd illusions... (1; 190)

The ingenuity of these portraits is indistinguishable from Nashe's own. He
is a demonic alter-ego of his creator, railing against those subjects Nashe
could not allow himself ('the court I dare not touch') and breaching those
rules of decorum which Nashe kept. It is 'impossible for any shape or
punishment to terrifie him from ill speaking'.

The friar's downfall comes when he is challenged to a 'railing duel'

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and the balance of power is found to favour his aristocratic opponent:

being challenged at his own weapon...he so far outstript him in villainous
words, and overbandid him in bitter tearmes, that the name of sport
could not perswade him patience nor containe his furie in any degrees of
jeast. (1; 190)

The vein of eloquence opened up by Charles partakes of the divine, or at
least its parody, for his taunts are 'innumerable'. Yet he is unable to
control his imagination and bound it within sport. Because of that failure,
he loses the licence granted him and becomes a danger to be suppressed.

Nashe censures his doppelganger's inability to differentiate himself
from the artifice of detraction. Where the School of Abuse insisted on an
absolute identity between the moral author and his text, Nashe is led to an
aesthetic which separates the moral author from a text designed to expose
immorality. Charles inadvertently reveals his own besetting sin - the
excess of rage in his railing. Being spiritually and physically ugly
himself, he estimates the moral countenance of others after his own
appearance. It is fitting that 'his own weapon' should be the cause of his
over-reaching himself, for Charles' sin is, in itself, the only appropriate
punishment.

The imprisonment of Charles within his own rage demonstrates the
limits of the satirist's freedom. The defence of plays is intended to show
the value of the popular writer to the security of the crown and illustrate
that the licence given to the satirist is a different form of duty.

The gathering of large crowds at public theatres offered both great
opportunities to the state and presented it with great dangers. Official
proclamations were concerned to regulate and define the ideological work of
the theatre. An Act of Parliament of 1543 does not question plays whose
business is

the rebuking and reproaching of vices and the setting forth of vertue;
so allways the saide songes, playes, or enterludes meddle not with the
interpretacions of Scripture, contrarye to the doctrine set forth...by
the Kinges Majesty. (37)

Concern at the theatre's extension of licence in speech was a familiar theme
of the School of Abuse. Stubbes objected that 'filthie playes and
enterludes' derided the word and passion of Christ. (38) Plays were also
found intolerable as they 'gird at the greatest personages of all estates',
and 'cut the reputations throat of the more eminent rank of Citizens with
corroding scandals'. (39) The depiction of the noble-born and powerful on stage was considered to undermine their authority and strike 'at the head of Nobility, Authority, and high seated Greatnesse'. (40) In defending plays, Nashe deliberately addresses the basic complaint that any representation of great persons on stage demeaned their reputation and diminished their authority.

Pierce Penilese proceeds to a theoretical discussion of the nature of drama by way of a warning to scholars against sloth, 'the chiefest cause that brings them in contempt' (1; 210), and the depiction of a soldier-poet much resembling Sir Philip Sidney. The Arcadian pursuit of love poetry is compared to the proper office of a soldier:

Is it the loftie treading of a Galliard, or fine grace in telling of a love tale amongst Ladies, can make a man reverenst of the multitude? Such arts are 'the false glistering of gay garments' but the multitude, delight to see him shine in armour, and oppose himself to honourable daunger, to participate in voluntary penurie with his Souldiers, and relieve part of their wants out of his own purse. (1; 210)

The structures of hierarchical power in Elizabethan society are imaged as theatrical spectacle, a view which will emerge equally strongly in The Unfortunate Traveller, in Jack's short career as a peer of the realm and in Cutwolfe's brave defiance of the executioner.

Poetry is not only an effeminate activity, but a private one. It damages the state because it removes the noble leader from the ceremonials of apparent power which command the allegiance of the 'multitude'. The rituals of power are not physically removed from the common people. Rather the aegis of the king is corporeal and personal; he involves himself with the affairs of his followers, relieving their wants out of his own pocket.

The imagery participates in the distinction of silence and noise characteristic of Renaissance politics, for 'scismatics are clamorous alwayes; it is a perpetuall note to know them by'. (41) The multitude are invoked by the rituals which enact power, and they are required to give consent to their own subordination; the hierarchies of power do not, however, depend on their assent. In the well-ordered state the presence of the people is a silent agreement with the super-human example in gesture and speech of their leaders. Only the anonymity and silence of the people is required.

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Since power is represented and becomes real in a theatrical ritual of appearances, 'the pollicie of Playes is very necessary' (1; 211). This necessity is arcane rather than revealed, opposing the 'pollicie' in plays to the crude literalism of 'some shallow-braind censurers (not the deepest serchers into the secrets of government)' (1; 212). Plays do not cause idleness, as the puritan critics claimed, but are a means of controlling the effects of such inevitable idleness.

The afternoon - 'idlest time of the day' - is inhabited by 'men that are their owne masters', whom Nashe identifies as courtiers, captains and soldiers. These men 'wholy bestow themselves upon pleasure' which could be gaming, whoring, drinking, or seeing a play. Since no power may prevent the choice of one of the four,

Is it not then better...that they should betake them to the least, which is Playes ? (1; 212)

Plays are no such 'extreame' as the other, more disreputable activities with which they share a clientele, 'but a rare exercise of vertue'.

There is a certain waste of the people for whom there is no use but war, the Nashean narrator blithely continues,

and these men must have some employment still to cut them off...If they have no service abroad, they will make mutinies at home. (1; 211)

If the 'affayres of the State' do not offer such opportunities for employment,

it is very expedient they have some light toyes to busie their heads withall...which may keepe them from having leisure to intermeddle with higher matters. (1; 211)

Pierce Penilesse is, by its author's own description, just such a 'toye'.

Thus Nashe establishes a first defence of plays on the premise that they, uniquely, can attract the masterless men on whom conventional sermons or moral exhortation are useless. (42) Plays socialise this anti-social group in two ways. Firstly, because the time in which mischief could be done is spent in ways harmless to the body politic, if not to the immortal soul of those concerned:

It is good for thee, 0 Caesar, that the peoples heads are troubled with brawles and quarrels about us and our light matters: for otherwise they would look into thee and thy matters. (1; 214-5)

Rather than exposing the motives and actions of the powerful to a critical gaze, plays in fact hide them from view.
Yet Nashe changes the direction of his argument, disclaiming the triviality of plays and insisting instead on their military virtue. Plays represent in memorable form the triumph of national virtue and the overthrow of the vicious enemies of the tribe. It is a glorious thing, to have Henrie the fifth represented on the Stage, leading the French King prisoner, and forcing both him and the Dolphin to swear fealty. (1; 213)

The aesthetic of the heroic individual exalts the monarch over the mass of the people but at the same time offers the people a vicarious satisfaction to desires subordinated by hierarchical social organisation. The spectator, powerless in his everyday life, is given the illusion of power over an exemplary enemy.

The unquestionably glorious sight of English virtue triumphing over a monstrous national enemy, is contrasted with the railers who demand to know 'what do we get by it?'. Their hidden motive is found to be 'execrable luker, and filthie unquenchable avarice', completing the text's overthrow of the 'gold' it proclaimed as monarch. It is also the outward sign of political radicalism:

They care not if all the auncient houses were rooted out, so that, like the Burgomasters of the Low-countries, they might share the government amongst them...and be quarter-maisters of our Monarchie. (1; 213)

Players and theatre companies were often protected or privileged by royal decree and their defence was considered by puritans to involve a defence of monarchical tyranny. (43) Republicans saw in the drama of courtly ceremonial and the loyal ceremony of stage plays and religious rituals the corruption of the popular imagination and the tyranny of tradition which ensured the voluntary enslavement of the masses. (44)

The success of the play is measured by Nashe in the degree of identification it receives from its audience. Modern scholarship suggests that the skill of companies in presenting individual battle on stage was highly valued, and the spectacle of bloodshed was also presented with as much verisimilitude as possible. (45) Though the theatrical representation of large battle scenes may more often have provoked the spectators' derision than its admiration, Nashe is in no doubt as to the capacity of the Elizabethan drama to move the feelings of its audience. 'Brave Talbot' triumphs again on the stage before the tears of spectators 'who, in the
Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding' (1; 212).

The vehemence of Nashe's attack at this point on the 'clubfisted Usurer', suggests that this is not merely entertainment, but - like the original Greek tragic drama - a ritual of the state's foundation. The enemy of the stage which portrays Talbot's bleeding body becomes the enemy not merely of drama but of the state, and is conscripted into the ritual taking place on stage. The death of Talbot becomes his actual murder, just as the artistic representations of Christ's passion served to convict all Jews of his continuing and corporeally actual murder.

The kind of spectacle represented by Talbot's bleeding body does not simply incite its audience to individual grief or anger, but disciplines its response as an organised community. Plays strengthen the enduring myths of national identity by personifying them on stage and acting out before the gaze of the multitude their triumph over enemies.

That State or Kingdome that is in league with all the world, and hath no forraine sword to vexe it, is not halfe so strong or confirmed to endure, as that which lives every hours in feare of invasion. (1; 211)

In this way, carnival and popular theatre fulfill their duty to the moral and political health of the commonwealth.

Plays also enact a communal judgement on internal enemies. If the public spectacle of the drama acts as a kind of recruiting sergeant, calming and organising public passions, then there is a 'malicious eye' which makes the reader 'more vigilant over our imperfections than otherwise we would be' (1; 211), and which corresponds to a national psychomachia:

In Playes, all coosonages, all cunning drifts over-gylded with outward holinesse, all stratagems of warre, all the cakerwormes that breede on the rust of peace, are most lively anatomiz'd: they shew the ill successe of treason, the fall of hastie climbers, the wretched end of usurpers, the miserie of civill dissention, and how just God is evermore in punishing of murther. (1; 213)

The play is not just a representation of evil discovered, but corresponds to the anatomising eye of the divinity, before which all vices are uncovered. The necessary representation of vice on stage does not 'encourageth any man to tumults or rebellion, but layes before such the halter and the gallowes' (1; 214). Rather than plays threatening social order by gathering the mass of 'masterless men' together, as puritans
feared, plays in Nashe's argument, sublimate otherwise dangerous passions into a representation of the just society re-ordered and restored.

The description of Talbot's wounds, 'fresh bleeding', suggests a conflation of the two kinds of popular ceremony, theatre and execution. Both rituals were intended to impress an ideology on those sections of the population least amenable to more conventional methods. The suggestion of the execution assumes a more disturbing significance in the subsequent development of Nashe's work. The 'bones to gnawe upon' (1; 211), cast before the 'masterless men' of the urban proletariat, become in The Unfortunate Traveller more than the 'light matters' which Nashe appears to offer them. In later works the democratic space offered by Nashe's text risks the liberation of increasingly inhumane 'desires of revenge and innovation' and the comedy of Pierce Penilesse is made to preside over an art of 'unbearable sensations'.
The preface to Pierce Penilesse abolishes the moral narrator demanded by the Gossonian text, in order to provide a greater comic freedom for the absent author. In this abolition, the boundaries between fiction and reality become blurred and fiction pronounces its own autonomous status. The grotesques of Pierce Penilesse exhibit that 'sliding of distinctions' feared by the School of Abuse as a consequence of surrender to 'pagan' poetry. The inexplicable nature of these monsters, neither real nor wholly fictional, resembling the human image but failing to compose it, based in allegorical tradition but evading interpretation, reveals the operations of a new aesthetic in Nashe's texts.

The grotesques guy and parody the literalism of the School of Abuse. Is there not any doubt, asks Philip Stubbes, rhetorically, that books which 'corrupt mens minds' are:

not invented & excogitat by Belzebub, written by Lucifer, licensed by Pluto, printed by Cerberus, & set a-broche to sale by the infernal furies themselves... (1)

Stubbes' outrage was shared by others, notably R.W. in Martine Mar-Sixtus, who complained that,

We live in a printing age, wherein there is no man either so vainely, or factiously, or filthily disposed, but there are crept out of all sorts of unauthorised authors, to fill and fit his humor, and if a man's devotion serve him not to goe to the Church of God, he neede but repayre him to a Stationers shop and reade a sermon of the divels...

The passage goes on to complain of the 'counterfeiting and cogging of prodigious and fabulous monsters...as if they laboured to exceede the Poet in his Metamorphosis'. (2)

Pierce Penilesse, literally 'a sermon of the divels', appears under the name of an 'unauthorised author' absent from both his text and the printing of the book and addressed 'To the high and mightie Prince of Darknesse, Donsell dell Lucifer'. Nashe's grotesque portraits 'import' into the text elements of a fantastic license in a 'quasi-parodic misappropriation of ideal forms'. (3) For Gosson and the School of Abuse, the comprehension of impossibilities which the grotesque enforces, its incredible matter and actions, must necessarily 'result from Satan, who is
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Untruth'. (4) Gosson's 'terrible monster made of browne paper' (5) becomes the 'paper monster' of Pierce Penilesse. Nashe's grotesque figures parody, by their own display of imaginative excess, the guilty and complicit excesses of puritan rhetoric.

The core of Stubbes's condemnation of fiction in general, and the theatre in particular, is the idea of the literally corporeal existence of evil. In a passage which Nashe remembered and extended in his own Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem, Stubbes attacks the fashionable psycho-social explanation for the fear of hell as,

metaphorically speaches, onely spoke to terrifie us withall...But certen it is, as there is a God that will reward his Children...so there is a Hell, a Materiall place of punishment for the wicked and reprobat. (6)

Marlowe, Nashe's friend and literary collaborator, was accused of holding such opinions and Nashe's own prose is preoccupied with the question. Jack Wilton's captivity in Zadoch's cellar for instance, is presented as a duration in hell. The pains suffered there are given with anatomical detail, but are wholly creations of Jack's imagination.

Pierce Penilesse addresses the theme head on, questioning the Knight of the Post eagerly about the nature of hell and its torments. The Knight of the Post replies,

Of the sundrie opinions of the Divell, thou meanest, and them that imagin him to have no existence of which sort are they that first invented the proverbe, Homo homini Daemon: meaning thereby, that that power which we call the Divill, and the ministring Spirits belonging to him and to his kingdom, are tales and fables, and meere bugge-beares to scarre boies. (1; 227)

The devil which the Knight then goes on to describe is merely a common term for the failings in human psychology and society. From the 'rancor, grudg and bad dealing of one man toward another' to the servant robbing his master, such vices are to be blamed not on extra-human interventions, but on a more immediately human cause. The sceptical reading of 'Indian wonders' in The Terrors of the Night is present in Pierce Penilesse also.

Significantly, Nashe makes the Knight of the Post reveal that 'Plato was called Daemon, because he disputed of deepe Common-welth matters, greatly available to the benefite of his Country' (1; 228). If a material hell was anywhere on earth in the late middle ages, it was in the ritual of the public execution which made graphically clear to the population making
'holiday' to watch the pains of the tormented, the precise fate of those who 'disputed of deepe Common-welth matters' without appropriate license.

Like Jack Wilton, Pierce is a great inventor of diabolical torments with which to torture himself. His questions to the Knight of the Post enquire after the location and nature of hell, and ask for judgement on the opinion of 'some phantastical refyners of philosophie' (1; 218), that 'hell is nothing but error'. It is his own version of hell - deliberately and insistently physical - that commands the reader's attention. Pierce asks,

whether it be a place of horror, stench, and darknesse, where men see meat, but can get none, or are ever thirstie and readie to swelt for drinke, yet have not the power to taste the coole streames that runne hard at their feet...and he that all his life time was a great fornicator, hath all the diseases of lust continually hanging uppon him, and is constrained (the more to augment his misery) to have congresse every houre with hagges and olde witches: and he that was a great drunkard...to carouse himselfe drunke with dishwash and Vinegar, and surfet foure times a day with sower Ale and small Beere... (1; 218)

These punishments are distinguished by their appropriateness: they are the punishments of a satirist acting on behalf of a popular decision. They represent the crime in its punishment, encoding the vice as victim of its own devices. The freedom of the vice is revealed to be an absolute subjection, just as gold, the idol of both people and prince, is actually the servant of even the commonest. The delight in detail - small beer and vinegar - subverts the juridical intent of the argument, advertising folly without presenting a wholly convincing imaginative condemnation.

Like Jack Wilton and the narrator of The Terrors of the Night, Pierce convinces himself of the reality of what is merely his imagination: in so doing, he makes himself its object and victim The Knight of the Post is scathing of those who contend that hell is simply man's fear:

We, that to our terror and grieves do know their dotage by our sufferings, rejoice to thinke how these sillie flyes plaie with the fire that must burne them. (1; 218)

The ambiguous status of hell - metaphysical and unseen, yet at the same time present in public execution and the 'permanent aggression' of disease and war - is a key to understanding the force of Nashe's grotesque portraits. They make vice imaginatively corporeal and at the same time fantastic. they seem to support a hierarchy of appearance and reality in
which human wit and ingenuity is subordinated to a literal authority, but make the artist's wit a measure of judgement. They present for condemnation, but provide a space for pleasure.

The first infernal character that Pierce encounters in his search for the devil is:

an old, straddling Usurer, clad in a damaske cassocke, edged with Fox fur, a pair of trunke slops, sagging down like a Shoemakers wallet, and a shorthe thrid-bare gown on his backs, fac't with moatheaten budge; upon his head he wore a filthy, course biggin, and next it a garnish of night-caps, which a sage buttten-cap, of the forme of a cow-sheard, over spread very orderly: a fat chuffe it was, I remember, with a gray beard cut short to the stumps, as though it were grimde, and a huge, woorme-eaten nose, like a cluster of grapes hanging downewardes. (1; 162-3)

Here is the world of the people: familiar, domestic, unheroic. An allegory of idea is replaced by the material existence of later sixteenth-century England: damask cassocks, shoemakers' wallets, button-caps and thread-bare gowns. The usurer's power over the poor is reclaimed by his reduction to a common level of material and physical existence.

This 'popular conquest' of the world, a delight in the specificity of things and the diversity of appearances, offers the reader the triumph of eating forbidden fruit. The grotesque:

drew the world close to man, to his body, permitted him to touch and test every object, examine it from all sides, enter into it, turn it inside out, compare it to every phenomenon, however exalted and holy, analyse, weigh, measure, try it on. And all this could be done on the one plane of material sensual experience. (7)

The hierarchies of social intercourse are replaced with the single plane of sensual experience, the 'single orchestration of reality' by an eloquent multiplicity of things, drawing man closer both to body and world. The text suspends the polemic human image by its use of extravagant and fantastic comparisons to describe the usurer's diverse and various body. The portrait knits together heterogenous and incongruous materials in a fiction which exists because of them, rather than necessitating them.

Pierce enquires of this likely-looking vision if he has had any news of the party he is looking for, and the usurer replies that Lucifer is home sick with the gout, but otherwise:

hee is busie with Mammon, and the princes of the North, how to build up
his kingdome, or sending his spirites abroad to undermine the maligners of his government. (1; 163)

It is a feature of Nashe's grotesque comedy, that - as has been remarked of science-fiction - the introduction of the impossible necessitates the absolute plausibility of all other elements of the text. The fantastic nature of this encounter is controlled by the matter-of-fact narrative tone and the recreation of a strongly realistic world. Lucifer is not so much a tone of fear within the psychology of a culture, as a prince much like other princes, taking council with the great nobles of his dominion and encompassing the suppression of dissident voices. Fantastic elements are mixed with a haberdashery of mundane details, reconstructing a particular social moment and place, and making Nashe's grotesque quite different from the 'strange and true reports' of marvellous births and events in nature which it superficially resembles. In Nashe's grotesque the demonic is made trivial.

Nevertheless, this familiarity can be disquieting. The implicit suggestion that the reader has seen this before, acts in a similar way to the Vice's attempt to make the audience his accomplice. Reportage of dress and political gossip may make the fantastic familiar, but it may also open up a door through which the fantastic infects the familiarly real. The specifics of dress are enumerated not in order to reveal the human image, but in their own right. The usurer beneath the shabby disgust of his old clothes does not exist: instead the imagery depicts a 'garnished' dish, and the reader 'sees' not a 'woorme-eaten nose' but the cluster of grapes. As L.B.Jennings writes,

A far reaching distortion is revealed in the grotesque products of the imagination; the deepest foundations of our being are interfered with: the stability and constancy of the human form. (8)

The elements of a recognisable portrait are all there, but their combinations defy visualisation: are we to see the grapes or the nose, the usurer or a heap of old clothes? The polemic force which reduces sensory data to logical narrative in Gosson's prose, is here baffled by writing in which contraries remain in force without being resolved.

Two conflicting impulses find expression in Nashe's grotesque portraits: the exhilaration of the imagination at play and a fear of its unpredictability; pleasure in release from the authority of suffering and
the anxiety that the forms of such pleasure are merely portents of authority's restoration. The grotesque's 'fantasies of mixed humour and fear' express not simply a common perception that 'the total human experience is beyond logical ordering', (9) but a dialectic between contradictory forces which has yet to find a synthesis.

The combination of fear and laughter is traced by Neil Rhodes to the specific historical circumstances of Elizabethan culture. Rhodes suggests that the insistent physicality of Nashe's prose is rooted in the offices of clown and preacher:

The Elizabethan grotesque derives from the unstable coalescence of contrary images of the flesh: indulged, abused, purged and damned. (10) Though both clown and preacher share a tendency to render life in physical terms, their motives are dissimilar. Their combination in the same text results in an unresolvable ambiguity of tone: 'the clown mocks the preacher, but the preacher terrifies the clown. (11)

In the conventional moral universe of the preacher or the School of Abuse, the grotesque is an explicit depiction of moral deformity: the physically monstrous expresses God's judgement on the hopeless and unrepentant sinner. The gallery of caricatures contained in Pierce Penilesse is, therefore, explicitly that of the seven deadly sins and its social types are indebted to conventional treatments. (12)

In Pierce Penilesse the ostensible occasion for the text succeeds only imperfectly in controlling the spectacle of the imagination. Nashe, has applied and 'specialised' his Vices so vividly that they begin to over-step the confines of their exemplary function. Sin and vice are too intrinsic to Pierce's literary performance for him to sustain any censorious attitude convincingly. (13) Little of the 'plodding mediaeval humility' is left. Instead, the reader is supplied with 'fantastic, soaring rhetoric and obviously exaggerated pictures of sin'. (14) Nashe defies 'the prevalent idea at this time that physical and moral deformity are interdependent'. (15)

The marginal commentary tends to support this argument. Some comments are simply descriptive: 'The description of Greediness' (1; 166) for instance, or 'The pride of pesants sprung up of nothing' (1; 173). What Charles Nicholl calls the 'specialisation' of Nashe's vices, comes out in the notes for types such as 'dame Niggardize', which do not confirm and

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label a common type, so much as provoke the reader's curiosity into finding out what actually is summarised by the name. In this respect, Pierce Penilesse is descended not from the heroic satire of Langland, but from the late Morality Play in which the comic elements associated with the Vice 'almost swamp the moral scenes'. (16) Self-admiring remarks such as 'Marke these two letter-leaping Metaphors good people' (1; 181), are clearly part of the Vice's performance and the author's business not moral instruction, but 'news of the maker in the marvellous aptness of his wit'. (17)

The use of the Seven Deadly Sins and other secularised versions of sermon forms was commonplace in this period, providing,

a ready-made and reliable formula for many a pamphleteer who wanted to castigate contemporary vice in a comfortably traditional manner. After beginning as something quite different, Pierce Penilesse is 'magnetically attracted to the pattern of the Sins'. (18)

Use of the Sins, though still commonplace, had begun to suffer a sea-change. Like the dedication and preface 'inserted conceitedly into the matter' of Pierce Penilesse, the Sins appear in works of the time 'rearranged, with new interrelationships, and ingenious subdivisions'. (19) Pierce Penilesse, with its new figures and complex relationships, displays this new pattern of the imagination. Vainglory is made a second son of Pride and atheism, discontent and contention the others. Avarice, normally a sin in its own right becomes a branch of ambition.

Nashe admits as much - or rather proudly advertises his ingenuity - in the Knight of the Post's comment on,

the maddest Supplication that ever I sawe; me thinks thou hast handled all the seven deadly sinnes in it, and spared none that exceedes his limits in any of them. It is well done to practise they witte, but (I belevee) our Lord will cun thee little thanks for it. (1; 217)

The Seven Deadly Sins provided a formulaic framework within which the imagination of the writer increasingly sought its own satisfactions. The ostensible form of a moral code is treated as pretext of occasion, the groundplot of a profitable invention.

Even the writers of secular sermons compromised the moral purpose of the form. The preachers who had most to say on social and economic subjects were the most popular authors of their day, but writers like Arthur Dent drew their audiences 'with what can only be called racy descriptions of
Often these assertions of moral or utilitarian value stand out as blatantly spurious justifications of pamphlets whose main interest and raison d'etre are quite other; authors of sensational news pamphlets, for instance, make moralistic excuses for providing flagrantly unimproving anecdotes, and racy accounts of London low-life are similarly prefaced. (21)

The model for secular satire may have been the sermon, but it did not preach an uncompensated ideology of social passivity. The desires of the poor were acknowledged and partially accommodated.

Nashe's description of Greediness, therefore, takes the form of an allegorical pageant: he inhabits an 'ugly habitation' before whose entrance sit 'Famine, Lent, and desolation' (1; 166). Their part is to play a Chorus in the Tragedy of Hospitality, to tell hunger and poverty theirs no relief for them there.

In this early part of the portrait imaginative construction is relevant to didactic purpose. Pierce then begins to describe how Greedinesse is attired in a Capouch of written parchment, buttoned downe before with Labels of wax, and lined with sheepe fells for warmenes: his Cappe furd with cats skins, after the Muscovie fashion, and all to be tasseld with Angle-hookes, in stead of Aglets... (1; 166)

The specificity of the description identifies particular appearances. The delineation of greed's psychology, linking the mundane world with a theological psychomachia, gives way to an accusation agreed upon by audience and writer. Rather than linking spiritual and physical planes, the ideal with the material, Nashe's imagery merely secularises its targets: it breaks with the allegorical in order to concentrate on the material and mundane. The allegory of vice serves rather as pretext than as origin of Nashe's imagination.

Thus, curiosity and social comment co-exist within the image with which Pierce concludes his description of Greediness:

But of all, his shoes were the strangest, which, beeing nothing els but a couple of crab shells, were toothd at the tooes with two sharp sixpennie nailes, that digd up every dunghil they came by for gould, and smarld at the stones as he went in the street, because they were so common for men, women, and children to tread upon, and he could not devise how to wrest an odde fine out of any of them. (1; 166-7)

Alongside the comic ridicule of excessive greed - conceivably a form of moral sentence - the reader is invited to marvel at a strangeness above and beyond what it represents in the allegory. Two levels of attention are
demanded; not only the thing revealed by its sign, but also the splendour of the sign itself.

By the time Pierce describes Greediness's wife, Dame Niggardise, allegory has definitely become subordinate to the pleasure of description. Dame Niggardise is given nearly equal prominence with her husband, and again the details of dress come to the fore:

a sedge rug kirtle, that had beene a mat time out of minde, a course hempen raile about her shoulders, borrowed of the one end of a hop-bag, an apron made of Almanackes out of date...and an old wives pudding pan on her head, thrumd with the parings of her nailes, sate barrelling up the droppings of hir nose, in stead of oyle, to saime wool withall, and would not adventure to spit without halfe a dozen porrengers at her elbow. (1; 167)

In the caricature of Niggardise the revelation of imperceptible truth in the description of what is perceived is replaced by the persistence of appearances. The argument does not demand Niggardize's existence, for she merely duplicates features already made apparent by Greediness himself. The substitution of allegorical comment by abuse suggests that the mechanisms of carnival are being invoked and that the pleasure of performance has usurped the privileged position of argument and reason - a point which the Knight of the Post's verdict on the 'maddest Supplication' makes very well.

Descriptions such as those of Greediness and Niggardise provide a strongly realistic portrait of the poor, covering themselves with old newspapers, saving money by making aprons from out-of-date almanacs. Despite much overt theorising in Pierce Penilesse about the superiority of moderation and temperance over excessive passions, these grotesques do not provide a warning against the present of desires satisfied, in favour of the postponed pleasures and immediate duties of christian and classical teaching. The picture of 'Maister Dives' shows,

a belly as big as the round Church in Cambridge, a face as huge as the whole bodie of a base viall, and legs that, if they were hollow, a man might keepe a mill in eyther of them. (1; 200)

Didactic purpose (the portrait is preceded by Pierce's rehearsal of the gluttony of Roman emperors), is leavened with admiration for Gargantuan and super-human exploits.

The repudiation of perspective and decorum in the grotesque portraits of Pierce Penilesse is also a celebration of the human body as a revelation of the divine. The 'unreadability' of the grotesque suggests not only the
discovery within Pantagruel's mouth of a whole new world, but the Song Of Songs. In Solomon's song is found an imagery whose individual components are perfectly clear and suggestive, but which composes an image that cannot be visualised as a whole. This divinity cannot be encompassed but only known in each of its elements. The human image - the single, literal fact - is broken down by a popular resistance to all forms of imposed authority, into a multiplicity of signs and an eloquent polyphony of competing voices. I shall now examine the economy and landscape revealed in this deconstruction of the human form, and their significance in the competition between clown and preacher, popular resistance and popular acquiescence to authority.

iii

The place is that of the city, 'particularly... the metropolis with a polyglot people'. (22) The rapidity of Elizabethan England's urbanisation lead to a moment: of profound dislocation and loss. The city emerges...as a place of deficiency and negation...The more prolific the city, the more the privation is felt. (23)
The commercialisation of human relationships in the city provides a setting both for The Unfortunat Traveller and Pierce Penilesse, whose London is ruled by the Devil,

so famous a Politician in purchasing, that Hel (which at the beginning was but an obscure Village) is now become a huge Cittie, whereunto all Countries are tributary. (1; 161)
The size and growth of London, its bewildering range and variety of peoples and languages becomes the typical image for the confusion of values which is seen as threatening the very foundations of Christian order. The invectives of the School of Abuse against variety and innovation, taken over by Nashe takes into his satirical vision of a corrupt society, may be seen as a partial recognition of the new realities of the city.

When Nashe comes to describe a particular vice he does not figure it as a penetration of a heart of darkness, or in terms of psychological interiority, but as an exposing of hidden corruption, a journey into the urban heart:

These are but the suburbes of the sinne we have in hand: I must describe to you a large cittie, wholy inhabited with this damnable enormitie.
Where an authoritative narrator and a prose disciplined by argument enable Gosson to control the chaos of reality, the satirist's text reflects imaginatively his subject. The diversity of the city becomes a variety and 'innovation' within the text, most keenly felt in the grotesque visions of Pierce Penilesse.

Nashe's pamphlets exhibit the rhapsodic structure and extemporaneous or spontaneous composition which Robert Elliott has argued is generic to satire, (24) its fiction 'casuistic, its consistency changing with every moment'. (25) The proper and equivalent form for the abundance of 'satura' is that of the picaresque journey which allows for 'independent satires within a frame, permitting a catalog form' and whose 'accumulation of encounters' conveys something of the crowded city. (26)

Although such a description is most obviously true of The Unfortunate Traveller, Pierce Penilesse also presents a sequence of individual anecdotes and character sketches contained within a 'frame' of this kind. In Pierce Penilesse the frame is Pierce's search for the devil, in Lenten Stuff a guided tour round Great Yarmouth, in Have With You To Saffren Walden a mock life of Gabriel Harvey. These structures are purely opportunistic and Nashe often speaks out of character within them, a tendency akin to the propensity of his imagery to exceed the bounds of its narrative construction.

As the constituent elements of Pierce's grotesques always remain partially autonomous of the main structure, so its encyclopaedias of laughter do not pretend to be necessary to any argument. If Dame Niggardise presents a sequence of 'unreadable' verbal instructions, then a 'novel' such as The Unfortunate Traveller does not apologise for remaining less than the sum of its parts: 'what appears to be a man's life... is in fact a series of discrete relationships. (27) Both the narratives of the pamphlets and the grotesque portraits knit together heterogeneous and incongruous materials in a fiction which exists to give them an occasion, rather than necessitating them. Characteristically, Nashe's grotesques are able to make use of materials not usually contained or rendered aesthetically useful within artistic structures. (28)

Such an effect suggests the fertility of relationships and the
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material weight of the urban economy they reveal is one transformed by the expanding commercial and intellectual vistas of the late sixteenth century. The, literally, unimaginable aspect of some of the portraits contains glimpses of the far-flung geography of an age which saw the establishment of trading companies to Turkey, Russia, Africa and the Barbary Coast. (29)

In the details of Russian caps, in the comparisons to Dutch cheese and travel to the fabulous Indies, a physical world of irreducible appearances is celebrated. Pierce's condemnation of gluttony speaks of the gourmet as:

a Haberdasher of Wilde-fowle, or a Merchant venturer of daintie meate, that sels commodities of good cheere by the great, and hath Factors in Arabia, Turkey, Egipt, and Barbarie, to provide him of straunge Birdes, China Mustard, and odde patterns to make Custards by. (1; 200)

The aesthetics of pleasure are condoned by a new world of various lands beyond the tyranny of custom. The traditional 'free world' of the interior grotesque (the world inside Pantagruel's mouth in which custom and habit are turned upside down), here fuses with the brave new world whose fabulous inhabitants - Red Indians, Eskimos and Negroes - were already known in Elizabeth's England. (30)

Gosson's attacks on poetry, following Ascham's example, express a deep mistrust of the explosion of cultural trade between England and the continent, which he saw as 'able to sweep whole Cities' into the Devil's lap. (31) In anxious descriptions of England's vulnerable and exposed position can be seen a political reflex which tries to restore a vanished but mythical golden age of monolithic authority before the expanding commercial, geographical and intellectual vistas of the late sixteenth century. Nashe's fear of the 'importing' of terms in The Terrors of the Night then, is also an identification of this fear of being 'swamped' by continental errors.

The heterogeneous composition of the grotesques, their obsessive amassing of materials, no matter how incongruous, contains another political meaning. In the drama of the period can be observed what Aristotle calls 'chrematistics' - pure acquisition for its own sake - penetrating all human relations. The expanding economy of the Elizabethan age led to a cultural backlash from conservatives like Ascham (who condemned Italian cultural influence) and Ben Jonson, who saw the implications of the profit motive as ominous, 'involving a violation of
nature's order of hierarchical relation and productivity. (32)

This switch in the economy of money and goods may be seen to parallel Nashe's own search for an 'extemporall veine', a language which would be an infinitely variable exchange medium to 'reap profits'. (33) The grotesques, with their rhetorical 'sliding of distinctions' construct an aesthetic of correspondences which are not guaranteed by their representation of actually existing things. The word enters into a:

limitless process of equivalences, representations that nothing will ever stop, orient, fix, sanction... (34)

What is important and obvious about the grotesque portraits in Pierce Penilesse is that their representation of moral first principles, is less important than the ingenuity of the writer's connections between things and the facility of his metaphors. The writer is suspected - as Marlowe was - of a form of moral counterfeiting. The boast imputed to Marlowe, that he had 'as good a right to coine as the Queen of England', (35) resonated throughout many spheres. Such 'counterfeiting' was both contrary to nature, resulting in the 'prodigious and fabulous monsters' complained of in Martine Mar-Sixtus, and threatened the hierarchical politics of Elizabethan society: the grotesques of Pierce Penilesse are, in that sense, directly linked to Jack's counterfeiting of aristocratic identity and privileges in The Unfortunate Traveller.

It can be seen that the apparently meaningless fancy of Nashe's grotesque portraits is intimately connected with the cultural and social movements of the late sixteenth century. As Philip Thomson observes, it is no accident that the grotesque mode in art and literature tends to be prevalent in societies or eras marked by 'strife, radical change, or disorientation', (36) or that late Elizabethan England should help define Nashe's work in this vein. (37)

Nashe's grotesque, like that of Rabelais, reflects and ambiguously welcomes a change in man's experience of the world. The 'vertical awareness' of social, literary and metaphysical hierarchies gives way to a 'horizontal' awareness of journeys in the world's geography and time. Like Bakhtin's Rabelais, the fiction of Pierce Penilesse, with its marriage of this 'horizontal awareness' of the new world to a folk culture of laughter, is an expression of the 'growth of historic man'. (38) Gabriel Harvey's
title for Nashe - the 'Columbus of tears' - salutes Nashe's boldness in
coining neologisms but also recognises the hostility of Pierce Penilesse to
anything which restricts the generosity of humanism.

The grotesque portraits of Pierce Penilesse, then, are not simply
evasions of a moral code, but substitute a popular morality for a
hierarchical one. Though clearly derived in part from the 'Indian wonders'
investigated in The Terrors Of The Night, the grotesques do not enforce the
awe of their readers which the wonders need to assume. Sir Walter Raleigh
asserted his belief that there were headless people along the Caora river
'with their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middles of
their breasts', giving as reason for his belief the fact that 'such a
notion was written of by Mandeville'. (39) Nashe's description of the usurer
with 'a huge worm-eaten nose' frees the reader from the authority of the
text.

Where the 'strange and true reports' of prodigies in nature usually
end with ritualised proclamations of belief and trust in the might of the
lord, Nashe's grotesques are not propaganda for an authoritative power
which will release man from suffering and fear. They are not 'monstrous' in
the original sense of the word, (40) not portents of calamity, of authority
about to punish the wicked. Their effect does not depend on what is
signified, but on the quality of the imagination displayed and the
stylishness of the rhetorical performance. Rather than enslaving the
reader, their effect is to liberate his critical intelligence: they are
victories over fear and awe. The subject of the grotesques is the human
imagination which produced them and which, by extension, produced Indian
wonders, folk-demons and a 'material place of punishment', Hell.

Where the 'Indian wonders' attempt to convince the reader of their
truth and reality they must necessarily 'strive to blur the awareness of
the reader as to the presence of a medium': the text attempts to hide its
own effects. Nashe's prose, however, like most parody 'can only operate
when awareness of the reader is at its peak'. Its method is the parodic
method of calling attention to artifice, 'the device of laying bare the
device'. (41)

The apparent decadence of Pierce Penilesse's use of the Seven Deadly
Sins motif - commentary replaced by advertisement, allegory by
entertainment - can now be seen as a different kind of strategy and a different kind of freedom offered the reader. The author's boastfulness - 'Marke these two letter-leaping Metaphors good people' (1; 181) - is a way of making the reader into his own judge and abolishing the tyranny of the directing narrator. The grotesque is, at least in embryo, a popular victory over fear:

over mystic terror of God, but also a victory over the awe inspired by the forces of nature, and most of all over the oppression and guilt related to all that was consecrated and forbidden. (42)

Pierce Penilesse achieves this victory by liberating interpretation rather than enforcing meaning.
The Unfortunate Traveller is undoubtedly Nashe's most celebrated literary work and has attracted far more critical attention than any other of his pamphlets. Walter Davis salutes Nashe's 'implicit rejection of the rhetorical tradition which subjected life to intellectual form', (1) but goes on to convict the pamphlet of a lack of design 'in which causation is contained in the beginning of the narrative, and within each of its basic parts'. (2) Nothing, asserts Davis, can hope to account for the unaccountable horrors of Cutwolfe's execution.

Richard Lanham has found a 'vertigo' of unfulfilled and deflated expectations, (3) while other critics have focused attention on the discordant nature of The Unfortunate Traveller's narrative. The 'multiple settings of his tale' and dramatic narrative shifts have caused some critics to see a 'harassed' Nashe, 'occasionally pleased by his ingenuity but not entirely in control'. (4)

In fact, The Unfortunate Traveller re-defines the freedom offered by Pierce Penilesse to its reader as the Vice's temptation. Encouraged by the Vice-hero, Jack Wilton, to judge metaphysical and political hierarchies solely as performance, the reader of The Unfortunate Traveller is taught to repudiate that temptation. The Vice is mortified by a literal reality and a 'Gossonian' narrative purpose is re-imposed upon the licentious discourse of the Vice.

Travel, for the Elizabethans, was almost always unfortunate. Ascham denounced foreign travel as a source of corruption rather than education, and Italy as the most dangerous place of all. (5) Returned travellers were ridiculed for affected foreign manners and dress and suspected of having contracted atheism or papism. (6) Pierce Penilesse's despair and loss of faith in his own country, precedes his desire to travel and decision to sell his soul to the devil. The pervasive symbolism of the pilgrimage of life (7) permeates The Unfortunate Traveller, which compares travelling with the exile of the Israelites and represents spatially what the fallen condition signifies temporally - exile from man's true home and original state (8): 'The divel and I am desperate, he of being restored to heaven, I
of being recalled home' (2; 303). In The Unfortunate Traveller, Nashe's narrator is once again stranded in pagan poetry and led astray notoriously by the imported spirits of laughter.

The traveller's suspect desire to cross borders of language, dress and custom is used by Nashe as a means to explore the imaginative possibilities offered by printing technology. The discourse of the Vice in The Unfortunate Traveller represents a further move away from a literal representation of things and towards an 'infinitely variable exchange medium'. (9) The rhetorical 'sliding of distinctions' identified in The Terrors Of The Night is now explicitly extended into hierarchical social relations.

In his play, Summer's Last Will and Testament, Nashe established in dramatic form the narrative model for The Unfortunate Traveller. The piece de resistance of this play is its 'hero' Will Summer, the 'ghost' of Henry VIII's jester, who 'enlivens' a masque format 'with a Rabelaisian commentary'. (10) Will is supposed merely to deliver the prologue, but in order to be 'reveng'd upon 'the Idiot our Playmaker', he stays on stage:

Ile sit as a Chorus, and floute the Actors and him at the end of every Sceane: I know they will not dare interrupt me, for feare of marring of all. (3; 236)

Summer effectively usurps the authorial voice, becoming the master of ceremonies and assuming an equivalent status to reader and audience. His entertaining denial of his fictional status is carefully scripted to give the appearance of improvisation and hence free-will. The ambiguous pun on the meanings of 'page' - courtier and paper - announces a similar freedom for Jack Wilton.

The escape of Will Summer from the tyranny of author and moral narrative, suggests - perhaps deliberately - the escape of vice from the stage in the form of political rebellion,

as it happened at Windham in Norfolk in the time of Edward the 6. where at a Stage Play (according to a drunken custome there used) the horrible rebellion of Ket and his complices, by a watch word given, brake out, to the troubles of the whole kingdom. (11)

The violence with which The Unfortunate Traveller mortifies the Vice and enforces the morality of a lord 'known in executing judgement', is directly related to the unpredictable consequences of unregulated fiction of which the School of Abuse warned. In Pierce Penilesse's phrase, Jack's adventures
are merely 'faults escaped in printing', but those faults have far-reaching consequences and implications. The bloody end of The Unfortunate Traveller - the anatomisation of Jack by his own fears, the torture of Cutwolfe and Zadoch - can only be understood as the proper punishment for an act of rebellion threatening all political and metaphysical order 'to the trouble of the whole kingdome'.

In my discussion of The Unfortunate Traveller I intend to analyse in detail the 'rebellion' of Jack Wilton, the methods by which he establishes an alliance with the reader, the narrative's re-establishing of a moral providence, and Jack's final mortification. To begin with, however, I would like to look at the initial consequences of the page's new prominence.

ii

Jack's existence as pun - both page of print and Page of the King's Court - indicates the functions of parody:

to criticise the unreflexive use of illusion in propaganda as well as in fiction proper, to offer new insights into the communication of discourse...to create new texts from old... (12)

The Unfortunate Traveller continually intrudes the necessary 'intervention of language' and makes 'the communication of discourse' a prominent source of ambiguity.

This was already a characteristic theme in Nashe's work. His suspicion of those who claim that their discourse is without mediation by their own desires - directed against Gosson and Richard Harvey - becomes in The Unfortunate Traveller an arsenal of effects. The rhetorical ideal of the 'disappearance' of language before its subject, 'so that it may seem that... the reader has seen not read', is replaced by the deliberate mediation of language. Language is no longer 'overlooked', in Terence Cave's phrase, (13) but becomes a self-declaring opacity. In this sense, the subject of The Unfortunate Traveller is 'news of the maker in the fantastic aptness of his wit'. (14)

In Pierce Penilesse the intervention of language took the form of the author's disappearance from his text by means of a well-advertised prefatory quarrel with his publisher. Language declared itself as technology between writer and reader. The grotesque portraits of Pierce advertised the author's skill and the 'surface' of their language, rather
than the moral 'kernel' hidden within. The author's petulance over the printer's 'forwardeness' in 're-publishing' Pierce, both exploits a spectacular materialisation of language and manipulates it to give the appearance of a naive and uncomplicated discourse. It attempts to create a sceptical reader, but scripts that reader's scepticism for him.

The device also enables the author to resign his privileges to an intermediary, like the 'good fellow' in Pierce Penilesse, employed to deliver the 'handsome Supplication' (1; 161). In The Unfortunate Traveller Nashe reverses the polarities of the text, posing himself as intermediary between the text's protagonist and the audience for his misadventures:

A proper fellow Page of yours called Jack Wilton by me commends him unto you. (2; 207)

Depending on the speaker's emphasis of these clauses, Jack Wilton may either be named by Nashe ('called Jack Wilton by me') or merely commends himself to the reader by his mouthpiece, Nashe ('by me commends him unto you').

The significance of this introduction cannot be over-estimated. The personal courier, delivering letters from potentate to potentate in Pierce Penilesse and the escaped Vice of Summer's Last Will And Testament both expose Nashe's awareness of the political consequences of his 'extemporall veins'. The transparent window between message and recipient, writer and reader, text and reader, is abolished. The figures which emerge in its place are both commanding and subservient - account must always be taken of their own motives and advantage. Where the authoritative text proclaims an unmediated reality, parody emancipates the reader by exposing its own devices. The role of the parodic hero is to unwrite himself in his own chronicles, effaced in favour of the newly restored perceptions of the reader. That of the Vice is to assist his audience to a greater awareness of its spiritual need.

Jack's position at court is precisely defined by Nashe, for it underlines the dual prominence of the 'page':

I was the first that brought in the order of passing into the Court...If anie Prentise or other came into the Court that was not a Gentleman, I thought it was an indignity to the preheminence of the Court to include such a one, and could not be saved except we gave his Arms Passant to make him a Gentleman. (2; 228)

Jack's control of access to the king and his office, is no simple
transparency but is guided by his own mercenary and selfish motives.

His early adventures reveal a cynical appraisal of the political consequences of the 'disappearance' of language. The gulling of the cider tapster relies on his use of the name and virtual presence of the king, illustrating both the king's distance from the lives of his subjects and the immediacy of the power he could wield. Jack's tyrannical misappropriation of this power reveals its nature, as the cider merchant begs Jack to 'expire the miserie of his unspeakable tormenting uncertaintie' (2; 213). Here, if only in abbreviated and prefatory form are, all the torments to be suffered by Cutwolfe - the torture to which he is subjected, the silence which is imposed on him. It is no accident that Jack's callous jest puts his dupe in 'this hell of suspence' or that his position in the camp is that of a carnival king ('there did I...raigne sole king of the cans': 2; 209). Like any tyrant Jack's power is demonstrated through fear and the imposition of his will.

The cider merchant is a typical carnival victim, a grotesque whose obsessive common denominator is cider. Nashe's word-play is typical of jest books of the sixteenth century, which are remarkable for,

taking a word at face value to an absurd extreme without regard to reality or common sense. (15)

and whose importance in this form of comedy steadily increased. (16) On hearing that the King is displeased with him, the cider merchant exclaims:

Nay then...questionles some Planet that loves not Syder hath conspired against me. '2; 215)

His misfortune is rendered ridiculous by its comparison to a Homeric dissension within heaven itself. His willingness to evade responsibility for the disasters caused by his own foolishness, is the abiding sin of all Jack's dupes. The Vice alone, in the early pages of the pamphlet, refuses to call on a god constructed in his own image, preferring to rely on his own wit, and observing tartly that heavens will not always bear witness when called upon to do so.

The cider-merchant's simple-mindedness is circumscribed by cider: he is a creature composed of it. Bergson's theory that laughter is a social sanction against loss of flexibility in human affairs, the consequence of a taboo against the inanimate realm of death, would seem to be supported by events in the early part of The Unfortunate Traveller. Jack represents a
principle of wit, of liveliness: he makes things happen. Like the Howleglas of the jest-books he is 'consistently inconsistent', (17) fulfilling a humanly typical assortment of roles. His victims are distinguished by their mono-dimensionality.

Jack cannot be reduced in this way. Like language itself, he 'disappears' within the plausible eloquence of his voice. Although the induction plays on the twin meanings of 'page', Jack is not described to the reader until long after the reader has learnt to identify his voice. He exists not so much as a person, but as the foolishness of his dupes personified. The intervention of the 'scourge of god' remains invisible to its victims, because their sin is its own punishment.

Jack's defining characteristics are his commercial aggression and his wit, which seeks an object and is a reductive discourse in which self-aggrandisement is linked to the destructive embodiment of others. Both equate and level social barriers, and here Jack's ambiguity is his freedom: like the ubiquitous page itself he is welcomed by all and his credentials are never checked. His plausibility is his passport so that the gulling of the cider merchant, for example, is accomplished by the declarative self-importance and disinterestedness of his language.

The anonymity of the page and of a rhetoric which dishonestly attempts to conceal the private motivations and ideology of its speaker is identified in the person of Jack Wilton. Where Jack's essential character is invisible to his victims, however, it is perfectly obvious to the audience which he also attempts to gull, and whose surveillance will eventually lead to his mortification. Though the cider merchant seems oblivious to it, the reader easily identifies Jack's virtual presence in the language of his 'jest':

the King saies flatly, you are a myser and a snudge, and he never hoped better of you. (2; 215)

Colloquialism and slang announce Jack Wilton's misappropriation of the king's authority.

To sum up, the opening pages of The Unfortunate Traveller describe a protagonist whose scourging of his dupes is a version of the reader's relationship with a text. Jack uses language as a weapon, insisting on a disinterestedness which is used to rob and deceive. The moral universe
inhabited by Jack is one split 'between rhetorical cleverness and moral action', (18) displaying a tendency for idea and action to separate within the world of the book. (19) The word-play employed by Jack, rather than pointing beyond itself to a stable outer world or asserting a fixed perspective on it, operates in a purely verbal universe where wit is the only rule. (20)

I will now turn to Jack's attempt to make of the reader both an accomplice to his wit and a further victim.

iii

The Induction to 'The Dapper Monsieur Pages of the Court' invites the reader to adapt Jack's adventures to his own purposes and entertainment. The Reader is addressed as Jack's executor, bequeathed 'for wast paper here amongst you certaine pages of his misfortunes' (2; 207). Jack's tale is told for the reader's pleasure, but that reader has only to use the paper for purposes such as stuffing mustard pots if he doesn't like it. The flattering conjunction of power without responsibility predisposes the reader to accept this proposal.

Jack's rhetorical opening question (in the modern sense), 'which of us al is not a sinner ?', is the key to Nashe's strategy. Jack is quite obviously descended from the comic 'Vice' whose interaction with the audience was such an important part of the Morality Play's success. The attitude of the Vice towards the audience was aggressively intimate, even physical, 'jostling' the play's spectators, 'taunting' them about their attitude towards him and inviting the audience to join him in his activities. (21) The audience was made a participating actor in the play which the Vice attempted to usurp, and made also to act out a self-consciously conspiratorial engagement with him. Like Jack Wilton, the Morality Play Vice is an intermediary between stage-world and audience-world, a minor rebellion.

The Vice's freedom is neither permanent nor real and he is eventually reclaimed by the text. The audience is made to realise that they must trust the less attractive moral lessons of the play's text and structure, corresponding to the moral providence of the god-author, rather than the charming, but wicked voice and character of the Vice. It is my argument that the form of The Unfortunate Traveller is basically that of the
Morality Play, and that its stages correspond to those of the Morality Play. These are: the initial freedom of the Vice, his intimacy with the audience, his escape from the text and his final subordination to text, in which the audience is taught to trust the lessons of moral spectacle rather than the plausible lies of the Vice.

The reader whom Jack addresses, is always, in Cynthia Sulfridge's phrase, 'a person with whom Jack assumes the right to take certaine liberties'. The oral characteristics of Jack's discourse:

are part of an effort...to bring the reader into a close interaction with Jack Wilton, to blur the distinctions between the reader's world and the narrator's. (22)

Jack speaks of events with which the reader will be familiar (Henry VIII's wars), he lards his speech with folk heroes and heroines (Henry and Jane Trosse) and situates himself in the immediately recognisable environment of a plebeian London: 'I thought verily my palat had bin turned to pissing conduit in London' (2; 213).

Not only that, but Jack speaks as though his narrative is taking place at the same moment in which the reader is reading it: whatever would halt the flow of an oral delivery halts Jack as well. The narrator steps outside the narrative in order to tell the reader to fill in necessary details with his own imagination ('sleepe an houre or two, and dreame that Turney and Turwin is wonne': 2; 227), or to gloat over 'the excellence of my wit' (2; 225). His initial, parodic entrance is 'interrupted' when he takes another drink - 'soft, let me drinke before I go anie further' (2; 209).

These interruptions are artfully imitated from Rabelais (23) - the setting of the public inn, for example, creates the proper ambience for a creature of basic habits. They help to create and maintain the illusion of the Vice's escape from his own textuality and his dominance over the reader. Where it is ordinarily in the reader's power to control the flow of the written word, to pick up and put down the book and use its pages as he sees fit, here:

the power of interruption seems to lie elsewhere, as it would if the reader were involved in a conversation. (24)

Frequent parentheses and interruptions, the 'easy manipulation of pauses', (25) leave speech and discourse suspended, apparently confirming the dependency of the reader on the narrative which Jack controls. These
interruptions habitually concern themselves with the mechanics of physical replenishment because this is a form of self-affirmation and self-aggrandisement for Jack. The reader's world thus becomes confused with that of the text, while the Vice-hero separates himself from it by means of the carefully contrived realistic illusion that both narrator and audience are present on an equivalent plane.

Jack's commentary does not simply delineate his own presence. Allusions to features of contemporary London - Jane Trosse, Mother Cornelius' tub, Banks's horse, the Ballad of the Whipper - help to create a normative fictional audience whose concerns approach those of the persona and whose point of view is the same as his. (26)

The fictional part played by the audience is not only more important than that played by Jack, but eventually comes to supplant it.

Thus Jack's introduction of himself designates an audience which will take responsibility for him, and his commentary is a masterpiece of assumed collusion. He interrupts himself to ask and wait for his audience's opinion on important matters ('What...do you thinke an ingenious infant of my yeeres might enact': 2; 209), liberally uses proverbial language to illustrate his points, and shows himself a master of the demotic knowledge which unites a fraternity ('at the verie name of syder I can but sigh, there is so much of it in rhenish wine now a daies': 2; 210). The impression of conspiracy between Vice and reader is carefully fostered by reference to spies and 'informers' (2; 210), and a dissenting, popular code of values is pitted against the fearful legality of church and prince:

yet where it is not to be had the king must loose his right: want cannot bee withstoode, men can doe no more than they can doe... (2; 210)

The necessities imposed by poverty are recognised. In this world 'the king must loose his right' and Jack's appreciation of the fact alligns him with the concerns, poverties and desires of the designated reader.

It is a world ruled by money, and Jack is both master and servant, as gold was in Pierce Penilesse and as he will be later, with Surrey:

But povertie in the end partes friends; though I was prince of their purses & exacted of my unthriftie subjects as much liquid allaigance as any kaisar in the world. (2; 210)

Official legality is far removed and its hierarchies do not obtain. Its titles are usurped and rendered harmless by mis-application to popular
villains, or the most common of professions - an innkeeper who waters his wine for instance: 'There was a Lord in the campe, let him be a Lord of misrule if you will'. Jack's commentary proposes a re-evaluation of rank and privilege, in which conventional hierarchies are revealed as fictions played out by those whose interests are confirmed by the game.

The opening pages of the book enact this reversal of order and hierarchy in a magnificent tour-de-force. The first paragraph opens in typical Nashean style by proposing a subject which will then be rigorously excluded from the text, making of the actual narrative an extended digression or parenthesis:

About that time that the terror of the world and feaver quartane of the French, Henrie the eight (the onely true subject of Chronicles), advanced his standard against the two hundred and fifty towers of Turney and Turwin, and had the Emperour and all the nobilitie of Flanders, Holand, & Brabant as mercenarie attendants on his ful-sayld fortune, I, Jacke Wilton, (a Gentleman at least,) was a certain kind of an appendix or page belonging or appertaining in or unto the confines of the English court; where what my credit was, a number of my creditors that I cosned can testifie: Coelum petimus stultia, which of us al is not a sinner ? Bee it knowen to as many as will paie mony inough to peruse my storie, that I folowed the court or the campe, or the campe and the court, when Turwin lost her maidenhead, and opened her gates to more than Jane Trosse did. There did I (soft, let me drinke before I goe anie further) raigne sole king of the cans and blacke jackes, prince of the pigmeis, countie palatine of cleane strawe and provant, and, to conclude, Lord high regent of rashers of the coles and red herring cobs. (2; 207)

I have quoted this long passage in full, because it reveals the sustained imaginative and thematic consistency of Nashe's prose in The Unfortunate Traveller.

The passage enacts in one movement the reversal of degree which announces the domain of carnival. The king of history and legal authority, Henry VIII, is replaced by the king of carnival, Jack Wilton, who instals himself amid a grotesque parade of heterogeneous things. The courtly style and epic material of the paragraph's assured beginning is progressively collapsed into the speaking voice of Jack Wilton. A magniloquent opening period, mimicking the bombast of the heraldic style in inflated metaphors, over-insistent alliteration and pedantic verbiage, is dissipated by digression, the addition of dependent clauses, and a delight in 'low' punning. (27)

Jack interposes himself between reader and text, imposing a commentary
on the heroic narrative of Henry VIII (the ostensible subject of The Unfortunate Traveller), which comes to be given precedence. Military prowess and national valour, 'the onely true subject of Chronicles', are usurped by a carnival domain. Literary and political hierarchies are turned upside down and Jack's digression becomes the plot itself.

The progression to Wilton's persona is accompanied by parodic rites of passage. This new or parallel social order is based not on rank and birth, but the democracy of money ('Bee it knownen to as many as will paie'). The heroic individuality of Henry VIII, whose name is a terror throughout the world, is replaced by the emblematic figure of 'Jane Trosse', evidently a notorious whore and who is, therefore, literally the 'res-public', the public thing. The characteristic imagery of warfare is shown to be sexually based, so that the comparison between the two activities cannot be avoided and must be resolved in favour of the carnival world. The nobility of France, Holland and Brabant, are implicitly compared with the nonsense titles which form the grotesque procession of the closing sentence. There is even a suggestion that their essential function is no different to Jack's, since they, like him, are merely 'mercenary attendants' on Henry's fortune. The values proclaimed in the ranks and titles of the aristocracy are similarly mocked in the chief concerns of the carnival king: the animal comfort of clean straw to lie on, and plenty of good food to eat.

Jack's occupation of the space reserved in a 'serious' text for commentary, reverses conventional priorities. Rather than an explication of the spiritual significance of narrated events, the commentary which Jack Wilton supplies is determinedly 'low-life' and reductionist in effect. Its main aim seems to be not to profit the reader but to build up a picture of the boastful Jack's own character, the page come into prominence.

At this point of the text the comparison between the two worlds is all to the advantage of the parody world. The grandiose rhetoric of the opening descends to Jack's vulgate: by implication, history is included in the grotesque present rather than vice-versa. The measured pace of the chronicle is resumed into the infinite ferility of the grotesque, a kind of 'language stew' whose elements include legal formulae, comic reconstructions of Latin tags (the pun on 'Tendit ad sydera virtus'), slang drawn from gambling ('a cunning shift of the seventeenes'), and which comes
to include the epic voice which began the work, now revealed to be parody. Stylistic unity, imposed by an authoritative narrator, is abandoned in favour of a 'polyphonic' orchestration of styles. As the 'represented word appears alongside the representational word', (28) a new sliding of distinctions is observable, this time between the high and low styles appropriate for different subjects.

The fraternisation between Jack and the reader is not, therefore, purely an entertainment. It leads the reader into the possibilities of the world turned upside down, in which kings are exhilaratingly absent and the common man is everyone his own monarch. The Marlovian emphasis in 'I, Jacke Wilton' and the placing of 'Jack' beside 'Henry' is an assumed, indecent intimacy between a servant and his master. The placing of Jack Wilton's name among the tokens of history (kings of England and great European battles), implies a radical democratisation of privilege. It both reduces Henry's name to the same level as that which Jack operates on ("There was a Lord in the campe, let him be a Lord of misrule if you will"), and elevates Jack's, who 'moves with equal facility in two spheres, the elite and the plebeian'. (29) Jack's tale implies that the supposedly authoritative world of rank and kingship depends on the sufferance of the people, a conclusion also suggested by the apparently trivial manipulations of sentence order ('I folowed the court and the campe, or the campe and the court'), which also reverse social order.

The self-assertion conveyed in his ringing declaration of identity, 'I, Jack Wilton', is a direct challenge, one which the text must pardon even as it renders it unthinkable. The aegis of the king is not absent. Jack pays for his carnival reign with his mortification by the executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch, but even in these early pages, carnival accepts its licence and its limited survey.

The superior claims of the hierarchical world are never denied: Henry is the 'onely true subject of chronicles', a judgement not explicitly questioned, though Jack's whole career infringes upon it. His parody is subversive, but it is not a politically conscious assertion of independent identity. The very terms in which he presents himself mean that he is dependent on that which he mocks. 'A gentleman at least' means of course, that Jack is no gentleman, that he does not assent to the validity of the
rank, but also that his mockery is impelled to recognise the fact. The Marlovian echoes of this passage (30) comically confirm Marlowe's tragic conclusion, that such splendid independence is necessarily doomed.

Like the kingdom discovered in Pantagruel's mouth, the interior world into which Jack sets out, contains in miniature most of the features of the world which is left behind when the book is begun and pages turned. The saturation of imagery drawn from the court in these early pages, (a bartender compares himself to a prince, characters' lineages are traced, courtiers debunked, Jack is crowned King of the Drunkards), mocks the prince's authority without overturning it. His authority is temporarily usurped - and therefore fulfilled under the licence of carnival - by Jack himself. Jack is a partial version of the jest-book's 'innately wise common man' who outwits kings as wise as Solomon. (31)

Thus 'wit is the only rule', but its monarchy is characterised by the figure of the absent king. Jack's revenge on the cider merchant is not simply selfish, but is performed on behalf of all that coterie who are used to complain about watery beer or wine. Jack suggests to his dupe, 'such victualls or provision as you have, presently distribute it frankly amongst poore soldiers' (2; 215), and the next day:

we had a doale of syder, syder in bowles, in scuppets, in helmets...Wee made five peales of shot into the towne together of nothing but spiggots and faucets of discarded emptie barrels: everie under-foot soldior had a distenanted tun, as Diogenes had his tub to sleepe in. I my selfe got as manie confiscated Tapsters aprons as made me a Tent as big as anie ordinarie Commanders in the field. (2; 216)

The result of Jack's deception of the merchant is a state of satiety, even of excess, equivalent to the holiday carnival's relaxation of strictures on drinking and the eating of meat.

The method of Lenten Stuff, the praise of the red herring out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance, is here revealed to be the carnival celebration of the mundane. A paradisal state ensues from Jack's jest: war is replaced by battles conducted with the corks from emptied bottles and the occupation of a town is merely a Bacchic rout. In this world turned upside down, the poor and 'underfoot' common soldier lives in his commanders' tents in a state superior to that of the nobility. The confusion of excess apparent in Jack's festival is typical of the millenarian fantasies of the poor and disinherited, (32) who now come into
their own kingdom, awash in a womb of cider, living a life which philosophers could not better. Jack's jests enable the common soldier to 'enjoy the spoils of his enemies', as Nashe will later put it in his description of Anabaptist ideology. In this case, however, the spoils of victory are the tents of the officers and a carnival celebration of victory in class conflict replaces triumph over the national enemy. The satirist's office to increase the fertility of his people, (33) is fulfilled in the plenty Jack brings: his infringement of legality is condoned because of it.

Jack's opposition to the monopolies of power earns him the support of the people. As Margaret Rose points out, a majority of writers have attributed the thesis of revenge to parody. Bakhtin's critique of carnival, Freud's remarks on parody and the pun, both suppose, that the supersession of imitation in parody could liberate censored or sublimated beliefs in its audience through criticism and laughter. (34)

In the millenarian state established by Jack Wilton, the people's 'desires of revenge and innovation' against the power of the state are satisfied without struggle or bloodshed. Jack, however, must be punished in order to ensure that carnival is subordinated to the law.

Millenarian movements made conflicting, even contradictory demands. For every Anabaptist revolution of the sort at Munster, there were several chiliastic fantasies in which the poor and dispossessed looked to a figure of authority. Jack's festival of plenty is not a repudiation of monarchy and hierarchy, but an example of its perfection, a true kingship. His narration of the end of his reign, 'But in conclusion, my welbeloved Baron of double beere got him humbly...to the King' (2; 216), limits criticism to the cider merchant, who is metaphorically accused of usurping the monarch's right of judgement and punishment. Though Jack is 'pitifully whipt for my holiday lye', the King and his court 'made themselves merrie with it manie a Winters evening after' (2; 216). The conclusion of Jack's brief reign is not regretted or resisted: on the contrary it brings the festival to an inevitable end and gives it meaning, for without law-day there is no holiday. Jack's 'holiday lye' is tacitly approved by the 'real king', who recognises that Jack's actions strengthen his authority.

The carnival ritual of decrowning legitimate authority and appointing a mock-prince is examined by Nashe in Jack's and Surrey's exchange of rank
and name, (35) but the whipping concludes the early part of Jack's story. He is not allowed again the same appearance of providential favour as he assumes in his reign of cider. The sudden plenty which the 'poor soldiery' enjoy, may appear to them as manna from heaven, but the reader can see exactly how Jack accomplishes the feat, by means of strategies which may be justified, but nevertheless complicate his sympathy for the vice. The cruelty of Jack's pranks will be an important element in the reader's eventual disengagement from the Vice-hero.

iv

Jack's usurpation of Henry VIII's chronicle introduces a polyphonic style which parodies aristocratic modes of literary discourse even as its presiding genius overturns the hierarchies of social and political authority. A two-fold impulse is at work:

on the one hand, a mimetic exuberance, a sheer delight in reproducing the cadences and elegances of the more artificial styles as an end in itself; on the other, a searching scepticism towards the attitudes implicit in these styles. (36)

Nashe's craftsmanship and his admiration for the object of his parody may be seen in Surrey's sonnets, capable of hoodwinking the casual reader. (37) His scepticism expresses itself in the insistent reduction of the ideal to a grossly physical reality in Jack's discourse and in an obsessive concentration on 'the exclusive relevance of the particular'. (38)

In The Unfortunate Traveller, the allegorical imperative, adding detail to detail, resuming a multi-layered narrative in successive levels of instructive pleasure, mysteriously fails. The description of Surrey's horse begins promisingly enough,

pounced and bolstered out with rough plumed silver plush, in full proportion and shape of an Estrich. On the breast of the horse were the fore-parts of this greedie bird advanced... (2; 272)

The ostensible subject of comparison is swallowed by prose which reveals nothing so clearly as the obsessive craft of the writer. It is the task of describing the illusory ostrich (painted upon the horse's armour) which is preferred over that of the supposedly 'real' horse.

The description of Diamante shows signs of a similar 'forgetfulness'. 'A pretie rounde faced wench', with black eye brows, a little mouth, a sharp nose - in short a perfectly recognisable human face - is attached to
the body of a huge and monstrous bird:

as fat and plum...as a plover, a skin as slike and soft as the backe of
a swan...Like a bird she tript on the grounde, and bare out her belly as
majesticall as an Estrich. (2; 261)

The central importance of the human image, the ideal form which allegory
seeks, is disregarded. The proper subject is engulfed by the details which
should compose it and the author's delight in linguistic transformation is
allowed precedence over his duty of representation. A unity of image and
impression is replaced by 'an inventory of separately observed qualities...
a series of disconnected sensuous details'. (3) The vividness with which
the details are apprehended, obscures the view of the whole.

In Surrey's poems, Nashe identifies a discourse lost in the
intricacies of its own method. The imagery of the sonnets is both violent
and bizarre:

If I must die, O let me choose my death:
Suckle out my soule with kisses, cruel maid,
In thy breasts christall bals embalme my breath,
Dole it all out in sighs when I am laide.
Thy lips on mine like cupping glasses claspe,
Let our tongs meete and strive as they would sting. (2; 263)

A simple action - the kiss - is lost in the detailed mechanics of its
operation, and a system of similes which are appropriate individually
become incongruous - violently so - taken together. What remains is the
paraphernalia of crystal balls and cupping glasses, not the human motion of
embrace and kiss.

Surrey's wooing of Diamante is most probably indebted to Rosador's
wooing of the disguised Rosalind in Thomas Lodge's romance and may also
echo Marlowe's forceful style. (40) Jack comments that Surrey 'assaults' her
with rhymes, an appropriate metaphor for the sonnet's expression of a
violent sexuality,

and because it reinforces Jack's point that Surrey is so enamoured of
his poetic fancy that the only assault he can make is a verbal one. (41)
Jack congratulates himself on his more successful methods: 'My master beate
the bush and kepte a coyle and a pratling, but I caught the birde (2; 263).

All these descriptions demonstrate the inability of the ideal to
encompass the violence of the real. Surrey's Petrarchan vision is comically
innocent of the violent images in which it is couched. The poem becomes
comic when it is read in the light of a sexual and violent world which it
does not comprehend. In this reading, the tortures symbolise aspects of the sexual act, leading to the familiar Elizabethan pun on orgasm as death. This layer of meaning forms an invisible commentary on the poem's Petrarchan pretext, of the kind Jack promotes in his usurpation of the 'only true subject of Chronicles'. Jack's imagery is appropriate, considering the description of Diamante as a huge and grossly sexual bird. By implication, this is Jack's world and he has learnt the arts of survival and prosperity unknown to Surrey.

Surrey, in Jack's opinion, constructs perfect but unrealisable worlds and seduces himself with the power of his own poetic discourse:

I persuade my self he was more in love with his own curious forming fancie than her face; and truth it is, many become passionate lovers onely to winne praise to theyr wits. (2; 262)

The imagery of the Petrarchan sonnet is shown to have become so specialised as to have only an imperfect relation to reality. As The Unfortunate Traveller's opening passage implies the precedence of carnival fertility over the single and myopic vision of authority, so Jack's proverbial wit asserts its superiority over Surrey's failed representation. The polyphonic grotesque of The Unfortunate Traveller constructs an imagery whose components enjoy a perfect democracy, and in which the precedence given to the subject is abandoned.

The sonnet is only one of a number of occasions on which Nashe satirises a speaker and a discourse irretrievably lost to each other, culminating in the impressive idiocy of Vanderhulke's oration. In these parodied literary languages the ingenuity of comparison and metaphor is artificially impressive, but the human image is lost. They divide and anatomise a human subject in much the same way as Jack, Cutwolfe and Zadoch are tortured. The violence of this literary comedy presages the actual violence done to Cutwolfe and Zadoch.

In breaking the bond of immediacy between speaker and auditor, the page exacerbates a 'distancing' effect between the speaker and what is said. 'Commonly that which is portentive in a king is but a frivolous fancy in a beggar' (1;362). Conversely, the most frivolous fancies of a king or nobleman are made portentive by virtue of the power that they wield. Surrey's discourse is made so fantastic, however, that it becomes an artefact in its own right. Rather than declaring the authority of the man
in his office, it displays only itself and exposes its speaker to the anatomisation of ridicule.

The prince's discourse is no longer authenticated by the prestige of his rank. Rather than revealing authority, it advertises an essential anonymity. Surrey is 'farre Metamorphozed... from my selfe' (2; 243) and 'unexpected' love stories emerge,

from a mouth out of which was nought want to march but sterne precepts of gravetie and modestie. (2; 245)

The military metaphor of 'march' alludes to the accusation that poetry enfeebled and made effeminate. It recalls a deaf Surrey to his duty.

The relationship between Jack and Surrey brings together the themes of carnival transformation and linguistic critique of obsolescent languages. Their adventures are clearly indebted to the topos of 'the world turned upside down', with its suggestive analysis of power relationships. But that analysis is prepared for by the textual criticism of an aristocratic (Petrarchan) language which now fails to support aristocratic claims.

Jack and Surrey exchange the appearances of master and servant, Surrey appreciating the possibilities of licence offered by the transformation:

By the way as we went, my master and I agreed to change names. It was concluded betwixte us, that I should be theEarle of Surrie, and he my man, onely because in his owne person, which hee woulde not have reproched, hee meant to take more liberty of behavior. (2; 253)

Surrey descends into Jack's world in the assumption that nothing is permanently altered. The licence given to carnival does not, evidently, threaten Surrey with a permanent demotion in rank.

The two concoct a plan to rob Tabitha the Temptress's husband. Posing as Surrey, Jack is allowed to lay hands on his real master: 'my servant, or my master, which you will, I tooke roughlie by the coller' (2; 257). In carnival, what matters is not the a-priori claim to rank, but the skill with which any given social role is played. The temptation Jack offers to the reader is the illusion of mastery over aristocratic pretensions: the audience is encouraged to judge the social system as it would a play. Implicit in this strategy is the conclusion that there is no essential justification for the function of aristocracy.

Jack's understanding of being the Earl of Surrey is, therefore, a theatrical one. He makes a triumphal procession through Italy, travelling, by no other name but the yong Earle of Surry; my pomp, my apparel,
traine, and expence, was nothing inferior to his, my looks were as loftie, my wordes as magnificall. (2; 267)

When Jack and his courtesan are surprised by Surrey, Jack's description of their imposture emphasises spectacle rather than substance: the picture they hope to present at supper together is that of 'Anthonie and Cleopatra, when they quafte standing boules of Wine spiced with pearle together'.

Jack's performance deliberately activates the fears of the School of Abuse that the fiction created by public performance would be strong enough to dissolve identities and social caste. Acting the faults of great men, 'feigned to bee replenished with vice and passion', breeds a 'slight regard of theyr authoritie'. (42)

Yet, if Jack intends the reader to take the hint that he and Surrey are essentially equal, the apparent democracy offered to the reader is severely constrained. While Surrey's elaborate Petrarchan courtship of Diamante-Geraldine is shown to be ludicrous, direct attack on Surrey is avoided. The Earl demonstrates his essential nobility by counterfeiting 'most daintily' his role in the elaborate plot concocted to rob Tabitha's husband. His imposture as a page proves a failure when, at the sight of Geraldine, he can 'in no wise refrain', but must deliver to her an impromptu sonnet, even though 'he had tooke upon him the condition of a servant' (2; 254). For once, rhetorical principles are upheld, and Surrey's language reveals his true nobility.

Jack's performance is controlled by the presence of Surrey. Even when receiving a mocking pardon from Jack (Surrey begs on his knees and Jack 'very mildly and gravely gave him audience'), the Earl is granting his licence to a courtly entertainment. The repeated implications in The Unfortunate Traveller that political hierarchies depend on the acquiescence of the people, do not lead to this acquiescence being withheld. The radical implications of Nashe's critique, the absence of a-priori value revealed by Surrey's Petrarchan discourse, are held in check by this willing carnival subordination to authority.

It is only when Jack travels in state as the Earl of Surrey, without Surrey's permission and - most importantly - his presence, that the Vice oversteps his bounds. As Jack travels in state through Italian cities, he hears news of the real Surrey. The narrative follows the real Earl's point
of view, so that it is Surrey who is troubled by a ghost:

by the waie as hee went, hee heard of another Earle of Surry besides
him-selfe, which caused him make more hast to fetch me in, whom hee
little dreamed off had such / arte in my budget, to separate the shadow
from the bodie. (2; 267)

It is as though Jack is troubled by his imposture, accepting his
subordinate status as 'shadow' to Surrey's substantial reality. The mimesis
which 'necessarily entails the absence of that which it purports to
represent', (43) is rendered unnecessary and undesirable in the presence of
the real. In the encounter with Surrey a crisis is reached in which the
page must either emancipate itself fully from the 'pure duty of
representation', (44) or resubmit itself to that duty.

The encomium which Jack delivers is a display of ingenuity designed to
win Surrey's mercy by its value to him as entertainment. It is essentially
a dedication, part plea for mercy, part blackmail, in which the wielder of
elocution acknowledges the power of the patron in return for certain signs
of favour - but here 'inserted conceitedly in the matter'. So Jack
proclaims that 'under your colours all my meritorious works I was desirous
to shroud'. Surrey receives his ritual self-abasement with an equally
revealing comparison, that he is:

well pleased thou shouldest bee the ape of my birthright, (as what noble
man hath not his ape & his foole?). (2; 269)

Jack's submission recommends a proper relationship of writer to patron
which Nashe had deliberately abandoned with Pierce Penniless.

Jack's unwarranted assumption of Surrey's name - which he uses only as
a kind of gorgeous display - is an infringement on his own birthright as
much as Surrey's. He regains his freedom of carnival mockery only in
submission to authority, and the resignation of Surrey's privileges enables
him to renew possession of carnival privilege. The symbiosis of ideal and
parody is restored. His cunning deployment of eloquence resumes its proper
function as entertainment of the lord, protection against the violence of
his displeasure and sometimes, perhaps, its incitement. Surrey's laughter
is benevolent, signifying that judicial authority has decided against
corporal punishment, and Jack seizes his opportunity: 'I, hearing him so
pleasant, began to gather up my spirits' (2; 268).

But the significance of Surrey's laughter should not be mistaken.
Rather than a replacement for physical punishment it can be its surrogate, or even another form of violence. Henry VIII's 'making merrie' with Jack's 'holiday lye' is accompanied by punishment of the body and Surrey's forgiveness is an essential manifestation of the same authority which will enforce Jack's mortification in the executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch.
Jack's commentary is directed at an audience which he hopes to make his accomplice. Parenthetical jokes and constant reference to a body of shared knowledge and opinion help to establish the illusion of a present audience in alliance with the Vice-hero.

His initial relationship to this audience is familiar and tyrannical. Nevertheless, the Vice is indebted to the audience he patronises for his very life-blood. It is the simple act of reading and the reader's approval, which give Jack life. In seeking this approval, Jack's early jests necessarily constitute the reader as a court of inquiry. It is the reader's critical attention which finally repudiates the spell cast by the Vice, demanding instead his mortification.

The repudiation of the Vice entails a corresponding restoration of authority and privilege to the 'onely true subject of Chronicles', ousted by the carnival 'king of the cans' in the novel's opening passage. The public execution, which forms the climax of The Unfortunate Traveller reclains authority from the usurped forms of parody and carnival and invests it with a renewed legitimacy. Like the triumphal entry of the king into a conquered city which begins The Unfortunate Traveller, it is only one 'of a series of great rituals in which power is eclipsed and restored'. (1) The purpose of this chapter is to outline how the Vice-hero's mortification prepares a restoration of authority.

Three inter-related processes work to discomfit the Vice and restore the world to its right senses. Jack begins to lose the freedom of his insubstantiality and is increasingly confined to a single identity. He begins to suffer the physical pains and cares of a common humanity. The grotesque body is the celebration of carnival's satiety and excess, but it also exhibits the aegis of the monarch - terrestrial or heavenly - who has power to inflict punishment upon it.

Secondly, he loses control over the text, which now enforces a providential narrative and becomes a text to condemn him. Finally, Jack's jest-book charm, his reign as Carnival King, gives way to a revelation of his moral complicity with the cruelty of sin.
At the beginning of the book, when Jack wields most power, he is merely a disembodied voice, so plausible that the reader forgets to insist on his appearance. His gulling of the mechanical Captain employs eloquence to bring about a physical pratfall:

Then I discours of the qualityes and properties of him in every respect, how, like the Woolfe, he must drawe the breath from a man long before he bee seene, how, like a Hare, he must sleepe with his eyes open... (2; 219)

Jack's insistent flattery dupes the captain with his own vanity, for, 'the eye that sees round about it selfe, sees not into it selfe'.

The reader's enquiry - created by Jack himself - sees into the motives of both Jack and the captain, however. Jack is allowed to condemn himself in his own words. His reply to the cider merchant, when begged for mercy, reveals the extent of Jack's inhumanity. He is:

by nature inclined to Mercie (for in deede I knewe two or three good wenches of that name). (2; 213)

Jack's wit reveals that his carnival 'reign' is an imitation without understanding and begins now to alienate the reader from him.

The Vice's anonymity within the eloquence of his language ensures that the captain is willing to resign his judgement to Jack's proverbial imagery, not realising that he will be its victim. The catch is reeled in with absurdly self-important comparisons - Ajax, Ulysses, Nestor, Diomed. The captain is flattered with the implication of a similar apotheosis, (within the satirist's gift), should he accept Jack's offer.

The comparatively restrained and intelligible catalogue of heroes is succeeded by a 'stream-of-consciousness' whose proverbial wisdom has little immediate relevance to the plot, but which includes an entire world:

Blinde men have better noses than other men: the bulls horns serve him as well as hands to fight withall: the Lyons pawes are as good to him as a pol axe... (2; 221)

The deployment of these folk sayings, without application to a specific situation, is intended not to illuminate and lead safely through the mazes and snares of language, but to confuse and entrap. It demands that the listener assent to language as sound, wisdom in its totality - in other words the authority of the speaker. Language 'acquires the status of an autonomous principle to which the poseur demands unwavering allegiance' - a strategy of 'conscious exaggeration'. (2)
Yet the language with which Jack gulls the captain and the cider merchant reinforces sentence on him. The 'generative rather than... restraining' power of language at work here, is that of the 'extemporall veine' to which the writer gives himself up. Its ambiguity and autonomous force, however, belong to the vice of 'amphibology' and condemn its user in the same way that treason is a 'self-consuming act'. (3)

This process is emphasised the gulling of the Switzer captain. Jack leads him astray 'most notoriously', a formula which recalls the folk-goblins of The Terrors of the Night. The more sinister elements of Jack's nature come out when he appears to the captain 'in the forme of a halfe crowne wenche' (2; 225), an ability to change shapes which recalls the Satan of The Terrors Of The Night.

Jack's knavery is at its height, and there is a complex theology and penology behind his statement that:

My masters, you may conceave of me what you list, but I thinke confidently I was ordained Gods scourge from above for their daintie finicalitie. (2; 226)

Jack's power to gull obeys a moral imperative which is revealed in spite of him and is in the service of his audience:

as freely as my knaverie was mine owne, it shall be yours to use in the way of honestie. (2; 217)

His deceptions are not arbitrary, nor without a rudimentary justice. This may be expressed in the form of carnival redistribution of wealth, as in his gulling of the cider merchant, but it may also be defended on conventional moral grounds. Jack is able to play the part of divine scourge because his trickery reveals the more offensive knavery of his dupes and forces them to amend their ways, if they can recognize in their humiliation the moral lesson. Jack functions as a text into which his victims read their own 'desires of revenge and innovation' and in which they are condemned and punished. He is a 'catalyst' who remains essentially unchanged, but whose activities expose the moral failings of others.

The fulfillment of the Morality Play involves the audience's recognition of its own human weakness, its repudiation of sin, and its acceptance of the divine monarch's authority. When the purpose of the Morality Play is fulfilled - this being the reintegration and improved understanding of its moral countenance by the audience - the licence
afforded the Vice is removed. The Vice is given independent life in order that the audience recognize their own power to overcome the vice in themselves. The punishment of the Vice, no matter how cruel and wrathful, is evidence of God's compassion. It is an insubstantial punishment, despite its corporeal savageries, for once the Vice is recognised and repudiated and divine authority restored, the sinner is redeemed.

Thus, The Unfortunate Traveller subjects Jack to various cruelties which are at once horrifyingly real and wholly imaginary. When Jack is 'anatomised' and mutilated, it is not by Zacharie's knife, but by Jack's own vivid and imaginary fears:

"0, the cold sweating cares which I conceived after I knewe I should be cut like a French summer dublet. Me thought already the blood began to gush out at my nose: if a flea on the arme had but bit me, I deemed the instrument had prickt me... Not a drop of sweate trickled down my breast and sides, but dreamt it was a smooth edged razer tenderly slicing downe my breast and sides." (2; 305)

The description is both completely, grotesquely, physical and at the same time wholly imaginary. Notably, Jack both 'conceives' the torture and is 'dreamt' by it. His predicament is his ambiguous status as page-courtier and page of writing and is enforced by the reader whose approval subjects him to further torments, for,

"if herein I have pleased anie, it shall animat mee to more paines in this kind." (2; 328)

The pains Jack imperfectly evades in the narrative will be repeated each time the book is read.

Jack has been suffered to carry out his predatory schemes because he is - though not in the sense he assumes - ordained the 'scourge of god'. His function as a text to discover the sins of his dupes, his ambiguous status as page and Page, enabled him to conceal himself within the operations of language.

After his submission to Surrey, however, Jack gradually loses control of the narrative, passively observing events rather than initiating them. The plausible voice which assumes the alliance of the reader at the beginning of the book, undergoes an enforced materialisation: the scourge of the flesh is made increasingly vulnerable to its weaknesses.
The process begins with the reader's rebellion over a lack of 'realism' in the text's temporal geography. Jack is forced to choose between a duty of representation and the anonymous, unprincipled subversion of his wit:

I must not place a volume in the precincts of a pamphlet: sleepe an houre or two, and draame that Turney and Turwin is wonne, that the King is shipt againe into England, and that I am close at harde meate at Windsore or at Hampton Court. What, will you in your indifferent opinions allow me for my travell no more signiorie over the Pages than I had before? (2; 227)

As always with Nashe, ambiguity of syntax is crucial to the text's meaning. Jack seems to apologize for his free manipulation of narrative time and geography, but then attempts to compel another such transition. The transformations begun by 'Sleepe an houre or two' are returned - evidently by the reader's resistance - to the imperative 'I must not'. The function of this syntactical ambiguity is to emphasize that a struggle for meaning has been resolved in favour of the audience and that Jack's 'signiorie' over the pages has been rescinded by the reader.

Jack's 'disagreement' with the reader at this point, is not simply a device on Jack's part to unsettle the reader, as Cynthia Sulfridge suggests. (4) Jack's 'unexpected maneuvers' in changing character, attitude and manner represent the Vice-hero's protracted negotiations with the fictional audience he attempts to make his accomplice and are integral to The Unfortunate Traveller.

The balance of forces in these negotiations shifts decisively to the reader and the end of Jack's 'signiorie over the Pages' results in further concessions to the audience:

For your instruction and godly consolation, bee informed, that at that time I was no common squire, no undertrodden torch-bearer; I had my feather in my cap...my French dublet gelte in the bellie as though (like a pig readie to be spitted) all my guts had bin pluckt out; a paire of side paned hose that hung downe like two scales filled with Holland cheeses; my long stock that sate close to my docke, and smothered not a scab or a leacherous hairie sinewe on the calf of the legge... (2; 227)

Jack both exults in his finery and recognises that it scarcely conceals the vulnerable flesh beneath. (5) Most importantly, he has been compelled to give this description and in doing so, surrenders much of his freedom. Though the grotesque portrait hides as much as it reveals, it subjects Jack to the same interrogatory powers of language that he has used on others as
'god's scourge'. What has seemed to reveal the duplicity of his victims while preserving Jack's invisibility, is now revealed to have been part of a long process in which Wilton has progressively unveiled his own character to the audience on whose support and attention he depends. The grotesque, carnival imagery of Jack's self-portrait sets him up as a comic scape-goat. The comparison of himself to a pig prepared for spitting, and the premonition of his guts spilling from his belly, accept or provoke the torments which the text has in store for him.

This precipitates a narrative which, beginning with Jack's materialisation, continues through the horrors of Marignano to the execution of Cutwolfe. From this moment, the narrative slips away from Jack, contradicting his directions and making them irrelevant to the reader who was once his accomplice. Jack is not unwilling but unable to let the plot change him: his resilience in the face of death and suffering is neither a 'willed ignorance', nor 'a kind of humility'.

His self-description, though it is still marked by the carnival of transformation and play, is nevertheless a confinement of freedom, a response to narrative rather than its cause:

His wit, compounded initially of equal parts of verbal play and practical jokes, gradually confines itself to the passive, purely verbal function of narration. (6)

The lord known in executing judgement enforces the limitations of Jack's commentary and is more and more shown to be a god of the literal, a vengeful reality which must efface the plurality of transformations brought about by Jack's wit. In the executions of Zadoch and Cutwolfe, the transformations of flesh are sealed within the prison of the tormented body, a confinement which threatens Jack throughout The Unfortunate Traveller.

In the same way as Jack 'scourged' the cider merchant or the mechanical captain with their own vices, The Unfortunate Traveller begins to confront Jack with images of his own character. The narrative begins to take precedence over Jack, unfolding 'a sequence of events governed by a cruel pattern of retribution'. (7) A providential narrative, punishing the excesses of the Vice, becomes dominant. Earlier, Jack proclaims 'I live in hope to scape the rope' (2; 222), but folk wit becomes reality:

I had the knot under my eare, there was faire plaie, the hangman had one
halter, another about my necke was fastned to the gallowes, the riding
device was almost thrust home, and his foote on my shoulder... (2; 295)
Words may prevaricate and delay, but they no longer initiate events. Jack's
escape from his predicament must await the mercy of the narrative.

The compassion which Jack denied his subjects is relocated within
narrative, which brings an Aretino or Surrey to free Jack's wit. The
audience tempted by the Vice with a false image of its own power is now
disabused of the notion. Although the reader exercises his own power over
Jack, giving him life and condemning him to torments, The Unfortunate
Traveller now enforces the lesson of a providential narrative dispensing
punishment or pardon.

The sweating sickness which follows Jack's self-portrait is the first
important event in the plot which Jack has not initiated or controlled. A
new mood of melancholy, if not yet of moral urgency creeps into the text:

I must not discover what ungodlie dealing we had with the black jackes,
or how oft I was crowned King of the drunkardes with a Court cuppe; let
mee quietly descend to the waining of my youthfull daies, and tell a
little of the sweating sicknes, that made me in a cold sweate take my
heeles and runne out of England. (2; 228)
The carnival-satirical king, whose job it is to increase fertility and
bring prosperity to land and people begins to be overtaken by the course of
seasons which will bring his reign to an end.

iii

From being at Turwin 'a demy souldier in jest' Jack now declares
himself 'a Martialist in earnest' and is involved in the battle of
Marignano,
a wonderfull spectacle of blood-shed on both sides: here unweeldie
Switzers wallowing in their gore, like an Oxe in his dung, there the
sprightly French sprawling and turning on the stained grasse like a
Roach new taken out of the streame: all the ground was strewed as thicke
with Battle-axes as the Carpenters yard with chips; the Plaine appeared
like a quagmyre, overspred as it was with trampled dead bodies. In one
place might you beholde a heape of dead murthered men overwhelmed with a
falling Stede in stead of a toombe stone, in another place a bundell of
bodies fettered together in their own bowells; and as the tyrant Romane
Emperours used to tye condemned living caytives face to face to dead
corces, so were the halfe living here mixt with squeazed corces long
putrifide. (2; 231)

Jack's particular brand of bloodthirsty enthusiasm can be heard in his
description of the battle as a 'wonderfull spectacle'. The Vice's 'attitude of easy irresponsibility and... faith in chance' fosters an interpretation which seems 'chaotic or randomly composed'. In reality, however, the structure of events 'reveals a moral pattern based on pride and punishment'. (8) The audience is encouraged to distinguish its own reactions from those of its parodic guide through this inferno.

Jack's tour of the battlefield is notable for its coolness, habitual attention to detail, and lack of overt moral comment - qualities which will be demonstrated more dramatically at the execution of Cutwolfe. The aptness of the metaphors assumes the foreground of attention, usurping moral and emotional response for Jack, highlighting it for the reader. These images seem to be in direct opposition to the actual significance of what has taken place. The picture of animal husbandry and domestic industry appears at first glance, violently incongruous with the reality of human slaughter.

This apparent contradiction is resolved when the passage is read more carefully. For the battle is not presented as a complete breakdown of law and sanity but as another ritual of the enforcement of the king's order. The scene of carnage is rigidly ordered: compared to basic human activities of self-preservation and industry (hunting animals and keeping them), and presided over by a semi-monarchical figure of authority (the Roman Emperor). Even death is pictured as part of an ordered existence; a falling horse conveniently provides a tombstone for 'murthered men'. Death is so much part of life that the living and the dead can be seen as shackled together. This may be horrible, but it is not an arbitrary horror: images drawn from the Roman custom of bodies 'fettered together in their owne bowells', indicate that death comes on the order of the terrestrial or divine monarch. The sweating sickness is 'god's scourge' and war is the king's. The violence of death is not diminished, but its 'permanent aggression' is integrated into the ritual fabric of human life. Death triumphs over individual men, but it is only an instrument of the 'lord known in executing judgement'.

 Appropriately enough, then, the horror of Marignano, ends with an explicit ritual of power restored to the prince. Peace is concluded, and the city of Milan surrendered to the French king 'as a pledge of reconciliation' (2; 232).

 -118-
The Anteroom Of Torture

iv

The slaughter of the Anabaptists reveals another kind of 'scourge of god', 'the violence of long babling prayers... of tedious invective Sermons without wit' (2; 234). The Anabaptists are literally the scourge of god:

If God at any time at their vehement outcries and clamors did not condiscend to their requests, to raile on him and curse him to his face, to dispute with him and argue him of injustice for not being so good as his word with them, and to urge his manie promises in the Scripture against him, so that they did not serve God simply, but that he should serve their turnses. (2; 239)

The narrative presents Jack with an image of his unreformed life. Both he and the Anabaptists see themselves as the scourge of god. Both attempt to manipulate events through varieties of language, Jack by his wit, the Anabaptists by means of prayer. The Anabaptists who have 'not forsooke their own desires of revenge and innovation' (2; 239), are directly related to the Jack Wilton whose carnival reign satisfied the desires of the poor 'underfoot' soldier.

Both are dishonest and dissembling in their self-appointed offices. The Anabaptists serve God only in so far as he serves their turns, while Jack (the licenced fool of Henry VIII and Surrey) uses his position to extortionate ends. As the Anabaptists invent an audience for their demands, cursing God 'to his face', so Jack invents an audience whose demands for entertainment accompany and licence his crimes. As Jack claims a special commission from King Henry, in order to gull the cider merchant, and justifies his jests by claiming to be 'ordained Gods scourge from above', so the Anabaptists justify their heresy by claiming to be in constant touch with God on a private hot-line: 'why, inspiration was their ordinarie familiar, and buz'd in their eares like a bee in a boxe everie hower what newes from heaven, hell, and the land of whipperginnie' (2; 233).

Jack's carnival reign, the casual cruelty of his holiday lies, invokes the 'desires of revenge and innovation' condemned in the Anabaptists:

The Unfortunate Traveller is structured upon a fantasy of revenge, protection by the elite, and a rise to wealth and security. (9)

Not only does Jack escape most of the misfortunes which threaten him, but he also triumphs sexually over four rivals of higher rank: Juliana prefers him over her husband, the count, and to the Pope himself, but he also steals Diamante from both Castaldo and Surrey. It is a mistake to suggest
that evil is being punished in all cases, for these figures 'share not evil, or goodness, but a dominant position over Jack'. (10)

But the reader should not assume that Jack 'gets away with it'. The Unfortunate Traveller invites its readers to enjoy the vicarious satisfaction of their 'desires of revenge and innovation' and Zadoch's scourging of Jack's courtesan, 'from top to toe tantara', is a classic example. But it also, clearly indicates a legitimate power overriding the illegitimate power exercised by Cutwolfe, the Anabaptists and Jack himself. The 'fairy-tale regularity' with which 'the rich and powerful' are always on hand to help Jack out, for instance, does not simply endorse the reader's desires, but affirms the power of pardon vested in the prince.

The trouble which both Jack and the Anabaptists experience in keeping their convenient creations in order, reaffirms this point. The Anabaptists' god refuses to keep to the script he has been given, breaking promises in the Scripture and not being as good as his word. Although Jack's relationship with the reader is congenial at the beginning, entertaining them with drinking stories, reminiscing about places in common, he too finds his audience expressing opinions of their own and he is refused 'signiorie' over the pages (2; 227). Jack's use of rhetoric as a weapon and the Anabaptists' manipulation of prayer, are turned against them. Jack's wit sets in motion events which he cannot control, inaugurates a universe he does not understand and incites the punishment of a power he cannot withstand. The fate of the Anabaptists is a warning to Jack.

Though the agent of their destruction is the Imperial army, the Anabaptists deal with the messenger of a higher power. Their heresy provokes the god of vengeance to an extreme punishment, so that:

Dame Famine came amongst them; wherreupon they were forst by messengers to agree upon a day of Fight, when according to their Anabaptisticall errour they might al be new christened in their owne blood. (2; 232)

Although the day of judgement which the Anabaptists receive is not that which they expected, they are ironically 'new christened in their owne blood'. The rhetoric of their heresy has blinded them to reality, which is submission to higher powers. Their crime is not only indecorous familiarity with god, but repudiation of social degree as well: 'they would vaunt there was not a pease difference betwixt them and the Apostles...and with God there is no respect of persons' (2; 233).
Jack, who seems to have acquired the training of a rhetorician, identifies a contradiction in their doctrine, in which 'some little diversitie' lurks, 'that Peter wore a sword, and they count it flat hel fire for any man to weare a dagger'. The remorseless analysis of the language of the 'Anabaptisticaall heresie' precedes their physical examination, as it does in the bishops' examination of the suspected Martinists, Barrow, Greenwood and Penry. (11)

The description of the slaughter of the Anabaptists contains by now familiar elements. Jack persists in seeing the battle as an example of carnival, comparing it to a bear-baiting contest and praising it as 'well perfourmed'. His attitude owes much to the tortores of the Corpus Christi drama, who turn a literal violence into 'a sequence of formal games...a changing metamorphosis of play'. (12) It is the context of the game which prevents them from realising exactly what it is they do.

The real lesson of the spectacle, however, is that God's judgement on the heretics paradoxically unites the law with his own love for a sinful humanity:

Pittifull and lamentable was their unpitied and well perfourmed slaughter. (2; 240)

The Munsterians now change their appearance: though appearing as wolves in their heresy, they become more like 'sheepe brought innocent to the shambles' as they are butchered. The act of physical destruction reveals not the violent rage of the deity, but his love for those who have opposed him. Their physical chastisement brings them again into his protective power: from being wolves (Satan was often seen as a wolf preying on the divine 'flock'), they become the sheep of conventional Christian imagery. As butchered sheep they once again enter the hierarchy that their heresy had denied. (Man was given jurisdiction over all beasts in the garden of Eden.) The Imperial troops can, therefore, be justifiably compared to 'a father that weepes when he beateth his childe, yet still weepes and stil beates' (2; 240).

It is technique that it is all important here - the fact that the slaughter is 'well perfourmed'. The Imperials 'prosecute' the 'lamentable massacre' 'not without much ruth and sorrow', yet,

their swordes, theyr pikes, their bills, their bowes, their caleevers slaw, empierced, knockt downe, shot through, and overthrow as manie men

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everie minute of the battell as there falls eares of corne before the sythe. (2; 241)
The syntax of the sentence makes it appear as though the human agent is entirely absent, as though it is merely the swords and pikes which are doing the killing: there is a dissociation of cause and effect, from human authority to mechanical agent, from divine authority to human agent.

It is now Jack who turns in disgust from an inhumane narrative, and the audience which seems to insist on its completion:

This tale must at one time or other give up the ghost, and as good now as stay longer; I would gladly rid my handes of it cleanly, if I could tell how, for what with talking of coblers, tinkers, roape-makers, botchers, and durt-daubers, the mark is clean out of my Muses mouth, & I am as it were more than duncified twixt divinity and poetrie. What is there more as touching this tragedie that you would be resolved of? say quickly, for now is my pen on foote againe. How John Leyden dyed, is that it?...For his companions, doe they trouble you? (2; 241)

Despite the apparent innocence which enables Jack to avoid explicitly recognising the moral sentence, or identifying between himself and those whose punishment he is made to witness (Leyden is hanged, just as Jack will be brought to the scaffold), there is more in his remarks than convention. There is, in fact, a real resistance to the power which 'duncifies' him between divinity and power, resistance to a moral spectacle whose real lesson is political domination by means of terror, over the audience that gathers to make holiday at the occasion.

The 'uncontrollability of events', (13) which Rhodes identifies, can now be seen as the Vice's awareness of events controlled by hostile powers. Just as Cutwolfe's tongue will be torn from his mouth to prevent him blaspheming in his agony, so here the mouth of Jack's Muse is stopped by fear. As the carnival king Jack is the representative of the people, who,

never felt closer to those who paid the penalty than in those ritual intended to show the horror of the crime and the invincibility of power; never did the people feel more threatened, like them, by a legal violence exercised without power or restraint. (14)

Jack, whose essential being is no more than the plausible voice of sin, is deprived of the words with which he creates himself by this spectacle. His reaction to the slaughter of the Anabaptists clearly suggests this interpretation, for his text is figured as a body likewise condemned, ready 'to give up the ghost'.

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The incongruity of the Vice within the text is brought abruptly into prominence with the rape and suicide of Heraclide. Jack's freedom to act is reduced to a helpless voyeurism and though Richard Lanham claims that 'this change from actor to narrator of violence has never been satisfactorily explained', (15) the episode is consistent with the pattern I have established. The Vice who 'escapes' providence in the manner of his great prototype, Lucifer, is reclaimed by morality and his licence revealed to be firmly dependent on authority, his knaveries authorized by the monarch, divine or temporal.

The immediate cause of his downfall is the criminal Esdras, again a version of Jack. Not only are his robberies committed against households ravaged by plague, but he is described as:

a notable Bandetto, authorised by the pope because he had assisted him in some murthers. (2;287)

Esdras is ambiguously related to the king's unacknowledged champion, to the anti-Martinist pamphleteers first authorized, then repudiated by the Anglican bishops, to the Lucifer who is god's executioner in The Terrors of the Night and to Jack Wilton who apes all these roles. As Jack is used by the narrative providence of the Christian universe, so now - mysteriously - is Esdras. Jack himself is suffered to witness the spectacle of rebellion and punishment, locked inside an upstairs room, unharmed and able to describe everything that follows: 'I, thorough a crannie of my upper chamber unseeled, had beheld all this sad spectacle' (2; 295).

The debate between Heraclide and Esdras 'authorizes' the text's voyeurism on the spectacle of rape by situating it firmly within a moral framework. Like Jack's villainy, like Cutwolfe tortured to death, the audience is required to use what they see in the service of their honesty. That Jack, from his voyeur's vantage point, is unable to do so, helps to accomplish the dissociation of audience from Vice which has been a feature of The Unfortunate Traveller.

Esdras's speech deals with questions of authority and its sanction of violence: he is aware, and makes Heraclide aware, that he is 'countenanced and borne out by the pope' (2; 288). His robbery of houses and violence against the inhabitants is explicitly likened to that of a conquering
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gen - Heraclide's is the eighth house 'that hath done homage unto me, & here I will prevaille, or I will be torn in pieces'. While Heraclide pleads for her life, Esdras is depicted 'sitting in his chaire of state' (2; 290).

Esdras's heretical misappropriation of orthodox doctrine is of an entirely different order to Jack Wilton's carnival coronation and usurpation of the right to wage war against his enemies. The aegis of the king is never absent from Jack's exercise of his parodic wit and his activities are, in the final analysis, dependent contributions to the king's power. They are rituals of the eclipse and reaffirmation of power. Esdras's activities, despite his 'licence' by the pope (who is himself of course, in Protestant mythology, a satanic parody of the monarch of heaven and earth), warn of the consequences of a parody which succeeds in emancipating itself from the service of the ideal.

Heraclide's reply picks up these essential points and carefully dissociates them from true doctrine. Esdras is not free to commit his crimes with impunity, but in reality is no more than a servant of god's providence, 'ordaind to be a worse plague to me than ye plague it selfe'. (2; 288). Because he is human and, therefore, possesses free will, his part in the design does not free him from the guilt of his crimes. The plague is 'death playing the Provost Marshall, to execute all those that will not be called home by anie other means' (2; 289), but Esdras is a satanic parody of this servant.

Heraclide is able to identify and repudiate Esdras even in the language with which she submits to him as god's executioner:

If thou beest of more power than God to strike me speedily, strike home strike deepe, send me to heaven with my husband...thou art some devil sent to tempt me. (2; 288)

Esdras is merely 'deaths usurper'. When he declares that he has a 'charter above scripture' and she must yield, Heraclide replies:

How thinkest thou, is there a power above thy power? if there be, he is here present in punishment, and on thee will take present punishment. (2; 289)

This prediction is already true in the description of Esdras pulling the struggling Heraclide by the hair, 'like a traitor that is drawn to execution on a hurdle' (2; 291). Because it is true in the narrative, it is therefore providentially true, for the author's presence in the narrative
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imitates that of god's justice at all moments of his creation. Though the image of the prisoner applies properly to Heraclide and her plight, 'twixt life and death', is that of a prisoner under execution, the text will avenge her unjustified death.

Heraclide's acceptance of guilt concerns itself with a crisis of representation. She declares to Esdras that the anger of god is 'showne unto thee in the knitting of my browes' (2; 289) and after the rape,

she hastely ran and lookt hir selfe in hir glasse, to see if her sin were not written on her forhead. (2; 294)

Her rape is the demonstration not merely of an excessive punishment, but rather a moral spectacle designed to aid the spectators' faith and which declares itself in the marks of the monarch's power. It is also a trial by ordeal, one which Heraclide comes through triumphantly.

The narrative at this point manages both to suggest the extent of Heraclide's suffering and to undercut the reader's willingness to experience it with her, by the use of a deliberately exaggerated rhetoric. The reader is instructed in an appropriate response:

Let not your sorrow die, you that have read the proeme and narration of this elegiacall historie. Shew that you have quick wits in sharp concept of compassion. (2; 292)

The signposting of 'proeme and narration' and 'elegiacall historie' is symptomatic of the way in which violence is aestheticised throughout The Unfortunate Traveller. The appeal to stock response appears to heighten the reader's emotional identification with the text, but in fact is used to more easily manipulate the reader's reactions.

Heraclide's long philosophical debate on her guilt and its best means of expiation ends not tragically, with the catharsis of pity and terror which the reader has been prepared for, but in bathetic comedy:

So (throughlie stabd) fell she downe, and knockt her head against her husbands bodie: wherwith he, not having been aired his ful foure and twentie howres, start as out of a dreame. (2; 295)

The narrative undercuts the instructions given by the narrator, and Heraclide's passionate eloquence becomes spectacle and performance: the expectation of tragedy becomes instead a comedy of errors. Heraclide's husband is revived, but the wrong man is arrested for her murder.

At this crucial moment, the identity between the narrator's representation of events (rhetorical, high-style, tragic), and the events
themselves (low-style, comic), breaks down. Like Surrey, the narrator is missing from his preferred mode of discourse. The absence of the narrator seems doubly alarming because it is paralleled by the absence of the avenging god whom Heraclide explicitly invokes, but whose tardiness seems to confirm the earlier comment of the text that 'heavens will not always come to witnes when they are cald' (2; 259). Heraclide's heroism is brutally succeeded by unanticipated effects, in the same way, perhaps, as the Anabaptists receive an ironic 'baptism of blood'.

Yet Heraclide's actions, though comic, are also redemptive, leading to her husband's revival and establishing her own good name. The narrative which makes her death the cause of her husband's revival may be bathetic but it seems to be providential, and the sleeping god who apparently deserts Heraclide will awake to vengeance. Indeed, he is already present in the omniscience of the narrative.

Arrested wrongfully for the crime, Jack is tested both by secular powers and by those of heaven. With the arrest 'beginneth my purgatorie' (2; 295), and shortly afterwards a 'tumble on a sodaine into hell' (2; 303). In Zadoch's cellar, Jack is to be anatomised, so that Zadoch becomes a parody of god's judgement and the satirist's, uncovering that which was hidden, seeing into all places. Jack's situation is explicitly compared to that of the condemned souls awaiting the day of judgement, 'lockt... up in a darke chamber till the day of anatomie'. His meditations on the prospect of dying are a theology of fear:

- therres no such readie way to make a man a true Christian, as to perswade himselfe he is taken up for an anatomie. (2; 305)

His release is a stage in the bringing to justice of Heraclide's ravisher.

Heraclide's death and Jack's imprisonment confirm that the narration of the Vice-hero, Jack Wilton, has been overtaken by a providential narrative. The bathetic shifts in tone which alienate the reader from Heraclide's own heroic and self-referential account of the rape, prepare him for the spectacle of Cutwolfe's execution. The reader's alliance with the Vice, his enthralment by the stratagems of the Vice, is succeeded by the objective viewpoint of the audience at the execution.

Jack's freedom as Vice is at an end. Events have increasingly confounded his understanding:

Not only has the text metamorphosed from a blithe jest-book into a
horror story, but the narrative voice is behaving as if it had not. (16)
As the plot turns from farce to horror and cruelty, Jack does not mature
with his own experiences, as his audience must do. The Vice's demand for
equivalent status, for his recognition by the audience within themselves,
ultimately fails because he lacks a moral dimension, unable to become human
through exercise of the functions of compassion and justice. An ideology of
conformity to the prince and to the 'polemic western self', reasserts
itself The spectacle of bloodshed at Marignano, the slaughter of the
Anabaptists and the rape of Heraclide, are steps on this path and culminate
in the horrific executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch.

The element of compulsion is finally underlined in Jack's theology of
travel. The page, which once enjoyed complete 'seignorie' over the pages,
spanning time and space, is now truly The Unfortunate Traveller. Jack's
bemused but incurious acceptance of his endless bad fortune, is merely part
of the history of travel, which is not the action of a free will but the
misfortune of one condemned. Nashe's typical travellers are Cain and the
Israelites, cursed by life in a strange land. The traveller is a carnival
figure of mockery and humiliation, who,

must have the backe of an asse to beare all, a tung like the tail of a
dog to flatter all, the mouth of a hogge to eate what is set before him,
the eare of a merchant to heare all and say nothing. (2; 297)

He has not one master but thousands and his real master, in the 'highest
step of thraldome', is the un-christian compulsion of exiled travel itself.

If Jack emerges unscathed from the horrors which he encounters this is
not merely a saving incomprehension:

The key to his invulnerability lies in his switch from an active to a
passive role, from participant in events to narrator of events. (17)
Jack is saved from himself, participating in events which he can only
recount and not alter. The providential narrative which dispossesses him,
uses each misfortune as another step in the moral education of his readers.

The changes in the nature of Jack's narration point to this necessary
end and take their place in a gradual process of the Vice's confinement,
inaugurated by Jack's self-portrait. Jack's wit, his jokes, puns and
transformative metaphors, give way to a simple aesthetic of the word.
Language subordinates itself once again to a duty of representation; its
imitation does not attempt to liberate itself from its conditions of

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licence. The play of carnival does not lead in the history of Jack Wilton to emancipation and self-fashioning, but to 'enslavement to forms of necessity experienced as alien to the self'. (18) It is these monstrous 'forms of necessity' - the executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch - to which I now turn.
Violence permeates The Unfortunate Traveller. Its punishments include: whipping (2; 216), breaking on the wheel (though in fact the victim breaks down on being shown the instruments) (2; 224), a sweating sickness in which cooks are 'cashiered' into 'kitchen stuff' and an old woman wipes her chins away (2; 228-9), 'a wonderfull spectacle of bloodshed', in which the penal practises of the Roman emperors are glanced at (2; 231), the 'pitiful' slaughter of the Anabaptists, which appears like a bear being killed by dogs (2; 240), the rape and suicide of Heraclide.

If Jack finally escapes death, several imaginary ends are nevertheless prepared for him, including 'dauncing in a hempen circle' (being hung for Heraclide's murder) (2; 296), being anatomised alive by Zadoch the Jew, or worn down to the bones by Juliana's sexual abuse and popped like a turd into the privy (2; 314). Surrey's sonnets include images of being crushed and stabbed to death and having one's eyes burned out by 'searing yrons' (2; 263). Jack's courtesan is 'scourged... from top to toe' and Zacharie's outburst of rage commences with the image of a man's guts exploding from his belly (2; 310).

All this, it should be noted, comes before the book's two most famous and compelling scenes of torture, whose ingenuities have led at least one critic to call them 'the very definition of sadism'. (1) It is hard to disagree with those critics who argue that 'the idea of the dissolution of human flesh seems to spark his (Nashe's) imagination', (2) or that 'it is in torture and death, especially when death comes in terror, that he finds his truest inspiration'. (3)

Where Agnes Latham was once able to write that the book was 'designed to leave its readers giddy, gasping, and weak with laughter, as though they had just come off a switch-back', (4) modern critics have stressed the apparent pessimism and confusion of the The Unfortunate Traveller. Its catalogue of horrors are seen to:

- play no structural part in the narrative, nor... supply any help to ethical or religious teaching. (5)

The reader's anticipation of literary, emotional, moral and epistemological
certainties is systematically broken down within the text, so that the book's final statement is of 'a lack of inherent form or meaning in the universe'. (6) Other critics speak of a 'chaos' within the bounds of Nashe's fiction and of a violent and disordered world. (7)

Perhaps for these reasons, the work failed to emulate the popular success of Pierce Penilesse. Despite Nashe's close attention to political events, (8) and his parodies of current literary fashions, (9) there were only two editions of The Unfortuante Traveller in its year of publication and no more after that.

The failure of the Elizabethan book-buying public to take Jack up on his offer may indicate that for them, as for modern readers, the comedy of violence is not always one that can be comfortably tolerated. (10) But perhaps more mundane reasons for the book's lack of success must be found. Bennett's research indicates that the popular pamphlet dealing with the ends of criminals and traitors could usually rely on finding a ready audience. Writers such as Samuel Rowlands built a career out of the kind of sensational violence expressed in The Unfortunate Traveller. (11)

Though revulsion from the horrors of Cutwolfe's execution, for example, is part of the experience of reading The Unfortunate Traveller, the 'judicial severity' of some critics is misplaced. The 'inhumanity' of these scenes of torture and execution plays an integral part within the text and must be placed within an historical and socio-economic context.

This context was the overwhelming presence of casual and repeated violence in the Renaissance world, and specifically in late Tudor England. Everyday life, inured Elizabethan people to what we could now probably deem unbearable sights: people dying from the plague in the streets, or being burnt at the stake, or executed at Tyburn and the traitors' heads adorning the south gate of London Bridge, not to mention their quartered bodies that were boiled and sent off as a warning to... remote districts...

It is hardly surprising that 'all this unspeakable violence found its way into the writings of Thomas Nashe'. (12)

To this political violence must be added the 'permanent aggression' of disease, hunger and periodic epidemics. (13) The later years of Elizabeth's reign saw repeated waves of the Black Death and the prevalence of venereal disease, typhoid, diptheria, anthrax, cholera, TB, and ergotism, all of which might reach the proportion of epidemics. The two main remedies for
most ailments were the letting of blood and purging of the intestines by means of tartar emetics and sharp cathartics. (14)

During these years too, fighting in Ireland, Scotland, France and the Low Countries was almost continuous. At home the shift from a feudal agricultural system to a capitalistic pasturage system, meant that a general rise in the population of England, resulted in the pauperisation of large sections of the countryside. In the cities, strikes by journeymen for higher wages and lockouts by their masters became increasingly common.

The increase in crime caused by these problems was answered by magistrates with ever-increasing severity. From being a supplementary, if often-used punishment, ritual mutilation now became commonplace, prescribed whenever judges were convinced that the offender was a danger to society:

Torture...developed after 1468, and under the Tudor sovereigns the rack was ever creaking to extort confessions. The 'common' criminals were treated with the utmost severity; in 1530 an Act was passed by which all poisoners were to be boiled alive. Burning was the penalty appointed for heresy, high and petty treason... The right hand might be taken off before hanging for aggravated murder, or a man might be hung in chains, and left to perish. There was the drawing and quartering in some executions, and ordinary hangings were exceedingly numerous. Men lost their hands for exporting sheep and for libel, and there was branding etc, for perjury, and sometimes for persistent vagrancy. (15)

The prevalence of the economic coercion described above, and the intensely public nature of such punishments (during Elizabeth's reign as many as three or four hundred vagabonds were said to be executed at a time), meant that it was 'now no novelty among us to see men slain, hanged, quartered or beheaded. (16) No novelty indeed: one estimate places the numbers executed by Henry VIII at 72,000. (17)

The literature of the period was metaphorically soaked in the blood of this constant natural and political slaughter. The aestheticisation of violence resulted in a vogue for 'spectacular representations of massacres' in European courts of the sixteenth century. (18) Sir Philip Sidney, cited admiringly by Nashe and eulogised as the epitome of the courtier-poet, 'seems exceptional in the sadistic comedy he tried to extract from scenes like that of the painter' in the Old Arcadia'. (19) Nashe's parody of Petrarchanism and the tournament scene in The Unfortunate Traveller, identify a violence which is not at odds or out of place in the complex codes of aristocratic chivalry, but on the contrary is produced by them.

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Plays like Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's Thyestes render their horrific subject matter in 'culinary detail', grotesque violence, particularly cannibalism, being a constant theme in the period. Sword-play and executions were presented with precise technical details and 'animal blood in concealed bladders was used freely' to give extra verisimilitude. Actual instruments of torture were sometimes brought on stage. (20) John Bereblock's description of the fight between Palemon and Arcite, in a play before Elizabeth at Oxford in 1556, relates how:

at the third onset, when not only the movements of their bodies and the parrying of their swords, but even their wounds and blood are visible to everybody. Palemon sinks to the ground and lies prostrate before his victorious cousin. (21)

Nashe's description of Talbot's wounds, 'fresh bleeding' in Pierce Penilesse, is evidently less fanciful than it might otherwise seem.

To sum up, the familiarity of death led necessarily to rituals which incorporated it into life. Torture was not 'an extreme expression of lawless rage', (22) but a political technique in the service of the state - as the decision of the House of Commons to ask Elizabeth's permission to devise an even more painful torture for Dr William Parry makes plain. (23)

What we should now think of as 'natural disasters' were for an Elizabethan merely the sign and form of the divine displeasure, in an era in which 'the implied link between misfortune and guilt was a fundamental feature of the mental environment'. (24) Deception and violence may 'dominate Nashe's world', but The Unfortunate Traveller's language reveals a complex structure to this violence, a deliberate and artful 'manipulation of disruptive forms'. (25)

In the previous chapter I tried to outline how the comedy of the early, jest-book parts of The Unfortunate Traveller is structurally and thematically consistent with the episodes of war and slaughter which follow. The violence in the work,

is present from the beginning, and... increases in seriousness and barbarity fairly steadily. (26)

Jack's 'Palace of Laughter', his carnival reign, is the ante-room to the torture of Cutwolfe, and the culmination of horrors undoubtedly prepares
the reader for the worst (which he is not spared). The executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch are the last acts in the mortification of the Vice. They restore an authority which has been mocked and parodied, but has not been absent.

Jack is brought to the execution by chance. Rather than directing the narrative, he meekly follows it:

& one day hearing of a more desperate murtherer than Caine that was to be executed, we followed the multitude, and grutcht not to lend him our eyes at his last parting. (2; 319)

The tyrannical individuality which led him to view the people as his own, is now entirely absent. He is no longer the instrument of discipline but part of the crowd which is disciplined.

Jack's representation of events is exemplary: Cutwolfe's execution shows how 'Strange and wonderfull are gods judgements' and Jack explicitly links the spectacle with Heraclide's unrevenged rape and suicide. His own 'invulnerability' he now attributes not to his own wit, but to the:

even ballanced eie of the Almightie: he it is that when your patience sleepeth, will be most exceeding mindful of you. (2; 320)

The text of this sermon is literally expounded in the flesh of Cutwolfe. His conclusions are presented as a 'glose' upon the text which will prove and develop the same argument (2; 320), that text being Cutwolfe's body.

Cutwolfe's oration is complex and ambiguous and parallels other structures of crime and punishment within the text. Appropriately enough for a 'more desperate murtherer than Caine', it is largely a tale of wanderings which suggests Jack's own. For Cutwolfe, it is a metaphysical journey, almost an 'enlesse Muse', which proves that, 'the farther we wade in revenge, the neerer we come to y throne of the almightie' (2; 326). To this end he has pursued the murderer of his brother, that Esdras who raped Heraclide, 'from Rome to Naples, from Naples to Caiete...from Caiete to Syenna, from Syenna to Florence' and on accross Italy (2; 321). Cutwolfe's murder of Esdras completes his theology that 'There is no heaven but revenge' (2; 324), a statement which converts revenge into the highest state of being imaginable, parodying the christian ideal. Again, Nashe presents a parody which has ostensibly liberated itself from the service of the ideal.

Cutwolfe is quite aware of the theatrical status of his last speech,
which he delivers as an 'insulting oration', propounding a strongly
Marlovian self-portrait: 'My bodie is little, but my minde is as great as a
gyants' (2; 320). Like all the villains in this work, his crimes are merely
the outward expression of heretical doctrine, but again the parody is
reduced and destroyed by the re-assertion of the ideal.

Cutwolfe's murder of Esdras parallels his own execution. As Cutwolfe
is allowed an 'insulting oration' so he himself had made Esdras speak an
'oration' of 'blasphemous abjurations' (2; 326). Where Cutwolfe kills
Esdras directly after this speech in order to make his revenge complete,
'that he might never speake after, or repent him', so the executioner
allows Cutwolfe to condemn himself in his own words but then 'his tongue he
puld out, least he should blaspheme in his torment' (2; 327).

The parallels between the execution of Cutwolfe and Cutwolfe's murder
of Esdras are intended to identify Cutwolfe's version as parody and to
reclaim the monopoly of vengeance which he attempted to usurp. The violence
visited on Cutwolfe is not an imposed violence but a manifestation of
Cutwolfe's soul, of the kind practised by the executioner and the satirist.
His torment is an image of hell, and is itself prefigured in his
obsessional pursuit:

Looke how my feete are blistered with following thee fro place to place.
I have riven my throat with overstraining it to curse thee. I have
ground my feet to powder with grating and grinding them together for
anger when any hath namde thee. My tongue with vaine threatres is bolne,
and waxen too big for my mouth: my eyes have broken their strings with
staring and looking ghastly, as I stood devising how to frame...my
countenance whe I met thee. (2; 324)

Cutwolfe is really framing his countenance not for Esdras, but for the
executioner, and god's executioner, death. The face he practises is that of
his death mask.

Cutwolfe explicitly recognizes the holiday which his audience have
made of his impending torture and death. He rises to the occasion as would
any actor and there is more than a hint of admiration in the text for the
aplomb with which he plays his last role. Nashe's source may be the
execution of William Hacket, who addressed his hangman with the words:

Ah thou bastards childe, wilt thou hange William Hacket they king?

Hacket's subversive speech, like that of Cutwolfe's, is answered by the
crowd, which 'cryed out mighty to have him cut downe presently, to be
Nashe takes from this source the gargantuan pride of the criminal and his attempt to reverse hierarchy, making of his execution a popular coronation.

The public execution may be considered as another of those rituals which revealed the eclipse and restoration with renewed vigour of the king's power, yet it afforded a certain freedom to all of the key protagonists. For the condemned man, this paradoxical freedom lay in the excellence of his last performance. The crowd which gathered to witness his sufferings, also gathered to hear:

an individual who had nothing more to lose curse the judges, the laws, the government and religion. The public execution allowed the luxury of these momentary saturnalia, when nothing remained to prohibit or to punish. Under the protection of imminent death, the criminal could say anything and the crowd cheered. (28)

The unpredictability of the public execution ensured its popularity. Incompetence in dividing the body of the prisoner might provoke the crowd to vent its anger on the executioner, or a messenger might arrive with a royal pardon (in which case the tragedy would become a romance, as it does in the ballad of 'Wiltons wantonness'). It was even possible that the multitude might free a particularly popular prisoner, and perhaps the 'escape' of Will Summers and Jack Wilton from dramatic spectacle or narrative might be considered this kind of temporary defiance of anatomy and execution. Cutwolfe's execution draws on this tradition even as it legitimizes the monarch's excessive power.

Superficially, Foucault's account is contradicted by the details of Nashe's description. Cutwolfe's oration 'outragiously incenses' the crowd (2; 327), and it is the executioner they cheer on, not the criminal. Yet the many pamphlets dealing with the execution of criminals or traitors, must have been written with the knowledge that nothing that was seditious or offensive to the Queen had any chance of being given permission to print. (29)

It would have been improper and dangerous for Nashe to have shown popular support for Cutwolfe's defiance and, one suspects, alien to his own prejudices. Though Nashe's grotesque expresses popular mockery of authority, it serves to reintegrate dissent into society. What Foucault calls the 'whole aspect of the carnival, in which rules were inverted, authority mocked and criminals transformed into heroes', (30) can find only
suppressed or residual expression in Nashe's text. For this reason, the people's latent power of intervention is not explicitly invoked.

Despite these limitations, Nashe is able to use alternative strategies to suggest the carnival element of the public execution. He alludes to tinker and cook, for instance, because they would be the most important members of any such carnival ceremony. (31) Cutwolfe's oration certainly rails at religion and state and Jack is able to justify his reporting, claiming that it is,

not so naturall for me to epitomise his impietie, as to heare him in his owne person speak upon the wheele where he was to suffer. (2; 320)

Jack divests himself of responsibility for the blasphemies which follows, but his careful disclaimer enables them to be heard.

This has been a common technique throughout The Unfortunate Traveller. Jack's voyeurism of Heraclide's rape is dismissed with disgust:

Conjecture the rest, my words stick fast in the myre and are clean tyred; would I had never undertooke this tragicall tale. (2; 292)

but this has not stopped him from giving a perfect account of the rape. Similarly, the cider merchant is gulled with the ominous and patently untrue words that:

I have spoken too much already...O would I had no tong to tell the rest... it grieves me so I am not able to repeat it. (2; 213)

Cutwolfe's tongue is torn out so that he might not blaspheme in his torment, yet he has already been allowed to give vent to blasphemies so complete and unredeemed that the gesture seems first irrelevent, and then suspicious. The description propagates a spirit of dissent by the simple expedient of pretending to report it.

The outcry of the 'holiday crowd' at Cutwolfe's 'insulting oration' is not simply moral outrage. Cutwolfe ends bravely:

All true Italians imitate me in revenging constantly and dying valiantly. Hangman, to thy taske, for I am readie for the utmost of thy rigor. Here-with all the people (outragioysly incensed) with one conjoyed outcrie yelled mainly, Awaie with him, away with him. Executioner, torture him, teare him, or we will teare thee in peeces if thou spare him.

The executioner needed no exhortation hereunto, for of his owne nature was he hackster good inough. (2; 327)

A clear indication of popular values set against legal authority can be seen in the speech. Behind Cutwolfe the residual figure of the criminal as
outlaw, a popular hero of the Robin Hood variety, can be glimpsed. Momentarily, he becomes not a simple murderer but the embodiment of a different set of values, 'constancy' in revenge (which was after all in the name of his brother), and a theatrically valiant death, in which nothing is regretted, nothing given away to the powers of his destruction. This is the code of 'true Italians'. Rather than a 'whining penitent slave, that shal do nothing but cry and say his prayers' (2; 320), Cutwolfe makes good his boast of defiance at the beginning of his speech. He is punished not for his crimes, which he admits and celebrates, but for usurping the power of the king to make war, for preferring a private code of honour over the dishonourable pretensions of the law.

It is Cutwolfe who claims a triumph in determining the moment of his execution, boldly ordering the executioner as though he had 'signorie' over him. In the carnival scale of values which judges according to the skill with which the role is taken, Cutwolfe has in fact established his right to this prerogative and claims a little of the aristocratic dignity he parodies. In his grand gesture to the hangman - 'I am readie for the utmost of thy rigour' - can be seen something of the chivalry of the champion of one contending army meeting the champion of another. (32)

The people are not incensed morally: Nashe's description measures the force and enthusiasm of their cry. Their instructions to the hangman, like Cutwolfe's rhetoric of defiance, do not represent their submission to the excessive force of the king's power and to their own fear, but reclaim the ritual of punishment. If the poor could not be heard in the courts of law - physical punishment and torture were increasingly reserved for the poor, while the upper classes were merely fined (33) - then the public execution was an arena,

where the law was manifested publicly, where they were called upon to act as witnesses and almost as co-adjudicators of this law.

The public execution offered a chance for the poor to intervene physically in the punitive mysteries of power and their instructions to the executioner 'redistribute its effects'. (34) The crowd's roar is not a condemnation of Cutwolfe, but recognition of his unbroken spirit, their instructions to the executioner reclaim what is happening and conquer the fear which is intended to discipline them.
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The spectacle of Cutwolfe's end is aimed at carnival and at the Vice. Cutwolfe's proverbial language encapsulates the spirit of carnival, mocking and overturning distances of human rank and between the human and the divine. Cutwolfe's occupation is that of cobbler - 'Coblers are men, and kings are no more'. The terms of his wit deliberately recall Jack's colloquial assaults on degree: 'There was a Lord in the campe, let him be a Lord of misrule if you will.' (2; 210).

Both Cutwolfe and Jack are versions of the same figure, 'accomplices in some forbidden but magically potent act'. (35) Though Jack escapes the fate of Cutwolfe, because he uses his wit as a verbal rather than a physical scourge, (36) Cutwolfe's execution is intended to exorcise the satirist's freedom of speech. (Hangmen were charged with the burning of books as well as the administration of corporal punishment.) (37) My purpose in this section of the chapter is to investigate the function of the executioner in The Unfortunate Traveller and to suggest some of the ways in which the execution of Cutwolfe becomes a commentary on Nashe's preoccupation with the 'extemporall veine'.

Like Jack Wilton, the executioner was a scourge of god, whose methods complicated sympathy and alienated him from his fellow men. He exercised paradoxical powers: the tool of secular and divine judgement, but also gaudy and innovative. Renaissance depictions of the executioners show swashbuckling characters in colourful and bizarre clothes, often carrying a heavy sword - a badge of office which was also a privilege of nobility. The executioner was commonly seen as violating other taboos besides that against violence - he was considered a notable Don Juan for instance. (38)

In the same way as the new breed of professional writers whose cry was 'Newe herrings newe', the executioner had entered popular mythology. The best known practitioners of the art acquired nick-names which summarized and advertised their particular speciality. (39) Nashe's treatment of the executioner in The Unfortunate Traveller, clearly betrays 'the admiration of one artist for another', as Hibbard shrewdly points out. (40)

As 'the devil's vicar', the professional executioner was an indispensable embarrassment. In order to fulfill the law, he stepped outside its boundaries and 'was at once accepted and ostracised'. He held a
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The satirist was a kind of executioner. Writers were hired to use Marprelate's indecent example against him, and the classical flyting is also an example of a violent art which takes place under the protection of the monarch and for his entertainment. The physical torture inflicted upon Cutwolfe are not just intended to break his body but also,

by the scar it leaves...or by the spectacle that accompanies it, to brand the victim with infamy. (42)

The public executions of The Unfortunate Traveller become a different type of grotesque. Like all Nashe's grotesques, they are intended to bear witness to the aegis of the monarch, expressed in mutilation and physical distortion.

Nashe's praise for the executioner's craft suggests the model of literary performance:

At the first chop with his wood-knife would he fish for a man's heart, and fetch it out as easily as a plum from the bottom of a porridge pot. He would crack neckes... etc. (2; 327)

The exploration of an 'art of violence' and the connection of 'destruction and skill', (43) is couched in a vocabulary which draws from various crafts and disciplines. The tools of torture and the grammar of their use are listed in the same way as any other craft. (44) Cutwolfe's execution represents an 'apogee of artful performance'. (45)

The executioner's art is intuitive. It deals with hidden depths and things concealed or beyond reach, which are as fragile as eggs and as difficult to perform with. It is identified also with the technical precision of the surgeon, whose occupation demanded manual strength and skill, and whose surgery was often considered in terms of torture: 'The complete assimilation of the two activities implies common proceedings'. Nashe's surgeon-executioner follows the procedure recommended in contemporary manuals of surgery, fixing the body in the best position for anatomy, performing his 'operations' in the order of medical tradition, flaying the body in surgical order and using the 'pincers' and 'pricks' of the surgeon.

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The alchemist's art - the 'torture' of metals by heat and chemical substances, their 'death' and eventual resurrection - provides Nashe with the technical vocabulary for his description of Zadoch's torment. (46) Both alchemist and surgeon supplied metaphors for the satirist's anatomising gaze, bringing hidden things to the surface, revealing what had been concealed. In the same way, rhetoric explicitly relied upon the presence of an enemy and taught that hidden meanings must be investigated and revealed - a form of torture condemned by Nashe in Strange Newes. (47) All are assembled in the all-embracing knowledge of the divinity; as an exhortation against treason puts it, 'God will have that most detestable vice both opened and punished'. (48)

Alchemy's futile attempts to turn base into precious metal promised the adept a new way of forcing treasure from the earth and supplies Nashe's 'extemporall veine' with much of its resonance. Similarly, the 'torture' of interpretation aimed at freeing the wealth of meaning from the text. The terms in which the executioner's craft is described in The Unfortunate Traveller - particularly his speed - insistently recall those of the 'extemporall veine'.

Just as the the rhetorician's true test is in improvisation and inspiration, the executioner's art lies in an extempore effusion of the kind Quintillian defined. Craft can prepare the artist for his task, but his response to the demands of the moment and the audience cannot be prepared. The baton which Cutwolfe passes to the crowd is taken up by the executioner in the skill with which he operates. The execution is a performance art and the performer works in collaboration with the audience. The satirist's art is in 'the fineness of a stroke' and its aim, in Dryden's phrase, to make the malefactor 'die sweetly'. (49) An unskilful executioner disappointed the crowd of the spectacle it had come to see and offended its sense of aesthetics. He risked being punished himself, perhaps even being tried for murder. (50) Nashe's emphasis on the executioner's skill in The Unfortunate Traveller is far from gratuitous.

It was not simply in response to socio-economic imperatives, that methods of execution became more brutal in the Renaissance. It could be argued that they evolved as any folk art evolves, in response to their audience's 'desires of revenge and innovation'. The executioner's art is a
more sophisticated version of the 'spontaneous reprisals with which the community strove to repay... criminals in kind'. (51) The crowd's intervention in the execution could be humane and generous, but it could also ensure a greater ferocity, for 'the masses who witnessed executions were constantly demanding new sensations'. (52)

Nashe surely hoped that The Unfortunate Traveller would appeal to these popular tastes. Barbara Milliard notes that in Dekker's prose elements of the macabre were combined with a social criticism that aimed 'to exploit... social anxiety and unrest'. The 'misshaped lives' of people displaced by war or economic catastrophe 'made fascinating reading for those buying at the stalls in Saint Pauls'. (53)

In the figure of Cutwolfe, Nashe offers the reader the profane excitement of the Marlovian hero's blasphemy and the romance of those who act outside the law. But he adds to it the pleasure of punishing others for the undared, unspeakable rebellion against god and king:

Outlawed criminals, even more than the witches or the Jews, were the legitimate prey of anyone anxious to satisfy a lust for cruelty which the interests of society had forced him to hold in check. The great variety of punishments gave a maximum compensation of this kind. (54)

Zadoch is punished as much for being a Jew as for his specific offences. Like Marlowe's Jew Of Malta, he is 'not only everything orthodox Elizabethans were against, he is everyone'. (55) Nashe's recompense of his readers emphasises that the attraction of the outlaw is the fascination of the victim, not of the victor. Cutwolfe's execution offers a 'maximum compensation' to the reader, because his blasphemies justify an excessive punishment, but also because their report disseminates an otherwise unspeakable defiance.

Hence, The Unfortunate Traveller's elaborate art of torture is produced by the audience. It is their 'desires of revenge and innovation' which are satisfied by the compensatory violence visited upon Cutwolfe. The executioner's skills are equal to those of musician, alchemist and surgeon and his art is a product of civilisation, not barbarity. It is a language with its own tradition and evaluation, as sophisticated as that of Petrarchanism which, significantly enough, it greatly resembles.
The executions in The Unfortunate Traveller ambiguously overlay a moral text with carnival technique and ingenuity. Moral instruction competes with an undeclared motive - the compensation of numerous poverties in the art of torture. The yoking together of the disparate images of dismemberment and popular pleasures, in the torture of Zadoch and Cutwolfe, means that the war between pleasure and duty - even if the pleasure is sadistic - must once again be considered in Nashe's prose.

For a modern reader, unaccustomed to a penal code of advertised force, whose 'humane' reactions are founded in a reticent penal code, the executions are merely horrific:

Normally we depend upon the structure of a text both to provide outlets for, and to defend us against our more primitive impulses. A text which does the former while failing to do the latter can be a very uncomfortable experience for the reader. (56)

Cutwolfe's grisly fate uncovers suppressed 'desires of revenge and innovation' in the audience which gathers to make holiday at the spectacle and, by implication, in the reader. Nashe's aggressive comedy lowers learnt inhibitions 'so that the pleasure of our primal instincts can be liberated. (57) The 'impersonal medium' of the new technology of print offered group support for antipathies previously isolated or suppressed. (58)

Modern critics have been unable to find moral purpose in the cruelties of The Unfortunate Traveller. Typically, Ann Rosalind Jones writes of the book as an 'open ended' work, which Nashe refuses to round off as an 'exemplary tale'. Indeed, where his contemporaries,

use torture or murder as the outcome of a sustained action, with didactic intent... Nashe... has no structural or ethical purpose in detailing the ravages of plague and warfare, or the fantastic refinements of his executioner's art. (59)

In fact, The Unfortunate Traveller presents a coherent critique of power and its enforcement.

Horror and cruelty play a functional role in Nashe's work and that role is, 'as in the case of the moral exemplum... essentially moral'. (60) Pamphlets of the genre, though 'over-full of... horrifying scenes at the gallows', (61) contained clear religious and political theses, against rebellion and in praise of the status quo. Jack's villainies, the slaughter of the Anabaptists and the execution of Cutwolfe are offered as moral
exempla from which the fictional reader is expected to benefit.

Capital and corporal punishment - even in the extreme forms employed against Cutwolfe - were not only permissible, but divinely sanctioned:

Vengeance is lawful and virtuous as far as it tends to the prevention of evil...fear of punishment is greater than the enticement of sin.

The anti-Martinists stressed a doctrine of obedience in which 'Whoever resisteth power, resisteth the ordinance of God'. (62)

Luther held that rulers should be prepared to use every means of torture against dissent:

The hand that holds the sword and strangles is no longer a human hand, but the hand of God. It is not man but God who hangs, tortures, beheads, strangles, and makes war. (63)

The brutality of Cutwolfe's death is a transparency through which the hand of God - the 'lord known in executing judgement' - can be seen. The consideration of 'these bloody and mournfull Tragedies', may by their examples, strike astonishment to our thoughts, and amazement to our senses, that the horror and terour thereof may hereafter retain and keep us within the lists of charity towards men, and the bounds of filial and religious obediance towards God. (64)

The execution of Cutwolfe, like the slaughter at Marignano and the butchering of the Anabaptists is based one the use of fear as a political instrument with a specific disciplinary end.

Huston Diehl challenges the view that grotesque violence in Jacobean or Elizabethan literature had no moral significance. (65) The execution was an ideal vehicle for propaganda, for:

The Stage feeds both the eare and eye, and through this latter sense the Soule drinks deeper draughts. Things acted possesse us more, and are, too, more retainable than the passable tones of the tongue. (66)

Theatrical imagery conveys the dramatic and ritual significance of the violence in The Unfortunate Traveller: the rebellion of the Anabaptists is a 'tragedy' and its bloody ending a 'catastrophe' (2; 241). Jack also refers to the 'truculent tragedie of Cutwolfe and Esdras' (2; 327).

The ideology of excess necessitates a dispassionate description. Though the 'fantastic refinements' of the tortures are closely based on techniques actually available to Renaissance torturers, the ease with which Cutwolfe is dispatched is incredible. It is dreamlike, implicating a human presence though its vistas are empty of figures, and it is an action unmediated by the ordinary constraints of chance or human incompetence and
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fallibility. What is remarkable about the two executions,

is the incompatibility of tone with content, and of vehicle with
tenor...Nashe presents the executions with a casual, documentary-like,
matter-of-fact tone which is completely at odds with the physical
horrors and morbid excesses of the execution itself. (67)

This discrepancy, which 'drags the reader's feelings in opposite directions
at once', (68) is first of all a description of the Vice's incongruity in
the narrative. The narration of Cutwolfe's torments is forced upon Jack,
who 'neither seeks nor wholly comprehends the spectacle of crime and
punishment'. (69)

At the same time, it is an effect of the prince's power. It must be
infallible to be wholly effective and it can not be criticized by those
whom it must subdue. The details of horror reveal the authority to which
they answer: a lord known in executing judgement. The disproportionate
violence of Cutwolfe's torments corresponds to the extent to which moral
consequences outweigh in their severity the immoral wit of the Vice.

The imagery of interpretation in the executions points to moral
process, for judicial torture was both an art and a means of interrogation,
a 'torture of the truth'. In anatomising the condemned man's physical body
the object was to uncover the spiritual source of his sin, and reveal its
nature. The mixture of chemicals with which the torturers baste Zadoch,
'smarted to the very soul of him, and searcht him to the marowe' (2; 315).

Even the theatricality of the execution - 'with the same instruments,
the same gestures' (70) - serves the end of moral instruction. The
reproduction of the crime in the punishment, communicated the essential
message that the divinity 'overthroweth the ungodlye in their owne
devises'. (71) Zadoch's tortures recapitulate his crimes. He plans to leave:

balls of wild fire in a readinesse, and... traines of gunpowder in a
hundred severall places of the citie to blow it up. (2; 315)

The conflagration assumed in his crime is represented in his punishment by
the 'fire-workes' tied to his privy members, the great bonfire lit around
him and the 'small oyle fire' which consumes him from the feet up.

In this way Zadoch's specific crime is advertised to the inhabitants
of Rome, but the execution also records the abiding sin of wrath behind it.
The mixture with which he is basted recalls the description of Zadoch's
mighty outburst when he learns of the Pope's confiscation of his goods:

his eies glared & burnt blew like brimstone and aqua vitae set on fire
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in an egshell... (2; 310)
Again, there is the same emphasis on fire and burning and the explosion of Zadoch's bowels from his body - although here only a metaphorical explosion - 'discovers' Zadoch's sin to the reader.

Like the denizens of Dante's Inferno, Zadoch's punishment is merely part of the condition of his sin. Violence is not imposed on him, it is part of his existence. The details of the executioner's craftsmanship display not an outrageous crime, an excess of force committed against a defenceless body, but a catalyst which helps conclude Zadoch's damnation.

In the same way, Jack Wilton's career as Vice discovered and advertised the pretensions of his dupes. The excessive, insupportable violence which rips apart men's bodies is the expression of a proportionately awesome and inhuman deity.

v

The audience at the public execution attended an event designed to enforce obedience to church and prince by the discipline of fear. Over this text, however, a popular version of carnival was built, offering a 'maximum compensation' for desires of revenge and innovation against those powers. The Unfortunate Traveller does not leave open the outcome of the dynamic opposition contained within the executions, but enforces the resolution of carnival, expressed in Jack's mortification.

Sir Philip Sidney's An Apology for Poetry considered the highest distinction and duty of a poet to lie in the architectonics of the poem. The historian, 'captived to the truth of a foolish world', is forced to be 'many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness', for that is what history has shown. If the poet presents wickedness, however, he does so only to make virtue shine more brightly:

Well may you see Ulysses in a storm, and in other hard plights; but they are but exercises of patience and magnanimity, to make them shine the more in the near following prosperity.

The historian, implicated in time and process, must record the partial conclusions of God's design, without being able either to anticipate its triumphant outcome, or to look into its hidden places. The poet imitates the providential design as a whole and,

if evil men come to the stage, they ever go out... so manacled as they
l little animate folks to follow them. (72)

Though Nashe's pamphlets are notoriously lacking in architectual design, The Unfortunate Traveller partially redeems this 'fault' in Nashe's authorship. As Jack Wilton loses control of the narration of events, the narrative reveals itself to be providentially just. The disturbance of Jack's sinful wit is controlled, and the executions of Cutwolfe and Zadoch answer the crimes apparently licensed against innocence and virtue in the course of the narrative.

Nashe's conception of the poet's responsibility agrees with Sidney's. In Pierce Penilesse he defended the use of plays:

all coosonages, all cunning drifts over-guylded with outward holinesse, all stratagems of warre, all the cankerwormes that breede on the rust of peace, are most lively anatomiz'd: they shew the ill successse of treason the fall of hastie climbers, the wretched end of usurpers, the miserie of civill dissention, and how just God is evermore in punishing of murther. (1; 213)

The Unfortunate Traveller shows the ill success of treason and civil dissension (the slaughter of the Anabaptists), the wretched end of usurpers (Cutwolfe, like Jack and Esdras, usurps the king's monopoly of prosecuting war against his enemies), and God's justice in punishing murder (Esdras's assault of Heraclide). Where Cutwolfe is quite open in his villainy, Zadoch and Zachary rely on stratagems and 'coosonages'. Just as Pierce's defence of plays answers doubters of a providential justice, uncovering things hidden by human dishonesty and deception, so the executions of The Unfortunate Traveller uncover a plot against government, and answer Heraclide's despairing call to justice. They demonstrate that there is a power stronger then Esdras's and that it is present on earth in judgement.

The spectacle of dismemberment drives Jack inward to discover a soul and a conscience. The 'insatiable curiosity' which gathers the people at Cutwolfe's execution, operates in the service of a providential narrative. In the art of the execution,

one could decipher crime and innocence, the past and the future, the here below and the eternal. It was a moment of truth that all the spectators questioned: each word, each cry, the duration of the agony, the resisting body, the life that clung desperately to it, all this constituted a sign. (73)

The lure of 'innovation' and of arcane knowledge made public is fastened firmly to a moral lesson: the form which the sufferings of the condemned
took on earth indicated the torments reserved for him in the next world. The flesh in which the soul is housed is exposed to the view of both the audience and the criminal himself. 'In this horror',

left they him on the wheele as in hell; where, yet living, he might beholde his flesh legacied amongst the foules of the aire. (2; 327)

Hell is not metaphorical: Philip Stubbes' triumphant warning to the 'atheisticall' poet is fully confirmed in this description. The mockery of forms gives way to the ferocity of a vengeful god, whose unmediated presence erases the provocation of the sinner and the comprehension of the audience in its power and fury.

Renaissance art designed the execution so that the death sentence would reveal a 'vicarious consignment to hell'. (74) The execution:

anticipates the punishments of the beyond; it shows what they are; it is the theatre of hell; the cries of the condemned man, his struggles, his blasphemies, already signify his irremediable destiny. (75)

The suggestion that the episodes of violence in The Unfortunate Traveller 'play no structural part in the narrative, nor...supply any help to ethical or religious teaching', (76) is clearly false and the execution of Cutwolfe is structurally and ideologically consistent with what has gone before.

But more than the tormented imprisonment of the criminal in his own nature, the effect of the execution is to imprison the audience within its own fear. The spectacle of brutality, which serves the ideological purpose of the monarch, comes to be seen as evidence of a chaos in nature which only the monarch's monopoly of power can withstand and control. The sight of Cutwolfe's body, broken on the wheel, leads to a dramatic sermon by Jack, encompassing the text in its rhetorical and narrative determination:

Unsearchable is the book of our destinies. One murder begetteth another: was never yet bloud-shed barren from the beginning of the world to this daie. Mortifiedly abjected and danted was I with this truculent tragedie of Cutwolfe and Esdras. To such straight life did it thence forward incite me that ere I went out of Bologna I married my curtizan, performed many almes deeedes; amd hasted so fast out of the Sodom of Italy, that within fortie daies I arrived at the king of Englands campe...where he with great triumphs met and entertained the Emperour and the French King, and feasted many daies. (2; 327-8)

The spectacle of excessive power leads Jack to embrace the power whose violence he has witnessed.

Jack is 'mortifiedly abjected' and he hastens to end his narrative of misdeeds and misfortunes and place himself under the protection of the
The Lord Is Known In Executing Judgement

king. The king, whose mantle Jack symbolically steals at the beginning of The Unfortunate Traveller, is here restored to his privileges and monopolies, feasting with his equals. Narrative is reoccupied by the doings of the great and powerful - 'the onely true subject of Chronicles', as Jack puts it at the very beginning of the book. Even the apparently arbitrary figure of forty days conveys a considered effect: Jack's temporary freedom is now resumed within a figure rich in symbolic resonances (the forty days of the great flood and, even more suggestively, the forty days of Christ's temptation in the wilderness).

Social convention resumes: his licencious sexuality is brought within marriage and his vices confined within 'almes deedes'. The effect of this hasty normalisation is to make of the great bulk of the tale we have just read, an interruption in the normal scheme of things, an interregnum in which certain amusing hypotheses were considered and developed, but then - as is their nature - abandoned as unworkable. Jack is at pains to emphasise the circular structure of his tale in order to emphasize this point:

And so as my storie began with the King at Turney and Turwin, I thinke meete here to end it with the king at Ardes and Guines. (2; 328)

No time has passed, nothing essential has occurred, or at least nothing worthy of chronicling. The price paid for the royal protection is that the subject should resign his own subjectivity in favour of that of the king's.

The true story of The Unfortunate Traveller (as we were told at the beginning) was that of Henry, of martial deeds and epic emotions: what we have read are merely 'faults escaped in printing', a fantasy which can have no independence in itself. Jack's farewell, to 'as many as wish me well' indicates the essential triviality of the Vice's affairs: to those who do not return his sympathy, he can have no existence.

The words which have made up the unfortunate traveller (and The Unfortunate Traveller), are to be discounted by the reader's newly-won sense of moral discrimination. The closing pages of the book resume rhetorical procedures which the reader has learnt to view with mistrust because of their abuse by Jack, who again speaks to the readers:

with all the excess, the alliteration, the parallel structure and rhetorical adornment that he favored (when) he gulled the captain. (77)

At the end of the book, however, this 'melodramatic' diction is made appropriate. Jack no longer controls the narrative: he is controlled by it.
Jack's parodies do not permanently damage or call into question the rituals of power. Indeed, Jack is himself an important player in those rituals, as is Cutwolfe. Carnival does not lead to a world turned permanently upside down, but returns one in which the prince's monopoly of judgement and violence is immeasurably strengthened. Jack's misappropriation of rhetorical procedures is finally made appropriate by their use in the description of execution.

The end of The Unfortunate Traveller sees the exorcism of a subversive property within language, a revenge of the literal upon the metaphoric, Luciferian word which transforms and metamorphoses things from their proper station. The 'passable tones of the tongue', which should serve man and therefore are trusted, which can 'uncustomed' cross boundaries with ease, which present themselves as truth whilst preferring in secret a hidden purpose, are searched out and destroyed by the art of the executioner. In the naming of names, the precision of technique and instrument which marks the executioner's despatch of Cutwolfe, is a perfect representation of things in words. The elements of which the body is composed are named and enumerated in an unchangeable, mnemonic spectacle by a language which destroys once and for all the possibilities of misrepresentation. From fantastic flights of innovation, Jack lapses into short sentences of conventional moral wisdom. Parody, mockery and misrepresentation of reality in jest, give way to actual events, the performing of 'almes deedes', marriage and travel: the triumph of the literal world over the transforming powers of the word.
Chrs Teares Over Jerusalem, published immediately after The Unfortunate Traveller, reprises the themes of its prophane predecessor. Once again, pride is punished with an excess of force, but in this case the 'lord known in executing judgement' is a terrible and compassionate Christ who brings Jerusalem low, yet weeps for its pain.

The warning to a city of newly-increased wealth became a popular genre in the later years of Elizabeth's reign, as the population grew ever more conscious of the uncertainty of the succession. The fall of Antwerp in 1587 and the plague in 1592 brought forth a profusion of popular ballads and pamphlets. Notable examples include the play A Larum for London, or The Siege of Antwerpe, John Stow's Annales, as well as Greene's and Lodge's A Looking Glasse for London and England. (1) All had a 'strong popular appeal'. (2) Nashe also clearly knows of George Gascoigne's The Spoyle of Antwerpe, a first-hand account of the city's fall.

Nashe's great success, Pierce Penilesse, is set in a London recognizably that of the literature of warning. Stow's Annales introduces a lengthy account of the siege of Antwerp into a history of England:

This statelie City, was within an hundred yeeres past, but a poore fisher Towne, though now the only rich and beauteous Citie of the West, whose inhabitants like her selfe, bigge swolne with pride: her Merchants boasting of their mightie wealth, would proudly wagers lay amongst themselves, who would shew the greatest heape of coyne. (3)

This must be compared with Nashe's London,

that Hel (which at the beginning was but an obscure Village)... now become a huge Cittie. (1; 161)

Nashe's London is 'wholy inhabited with this damnable enormitie' of pride (1; 172), and the newly-won prosperity and overweening influence of the merchant classes are satirized in Pierce Penilesse at several points.

The raw material for Nashe's account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in Chrs Teares is contained mainly in Joseph Ben Gorion's History of the Latter Times of the Jew's Commonweal. The English translation (by Peter Morvyn in 1558) was evidently popular, reaching six editions before the end of the century. (4) Miriam's story, the heart of Nashe's pamphlet, is first recounted in the fourteenth-century alliterative
poem, The Siege Of Jerusalem. (5) The dual subject of Christs Teares, leading Nashe from Jerusalem's example to his 'true tears' for London, also plainly owes 'a good deal' to the popular literature of warning. (6)

The 'general idea' for Christs Teares Over Jerusalem was 'probably suggested' by John Stockwood's A very fruitfull and necessarie sermon of the moste lamentable destruction of Jerusalem, (7) for the style of the work is 'lively and of a kind that would have excited Nashe's interest'. (8) The complexity and ambiguity of Nashe's vision of retribution can best be described by comparison with Stockwood's.

In Christs Teares Over Jerusalem Nashe re-examines the themes of The Unfortunate Traveller. The literature of warning provided a useful focus for popular resentments and fears, affording a 'penetrating insight' into the mind of the Elizabethan masses', who clamoured for 'a God of swift and terrible justice' and 'sought for clear distinctions between right and wrong'. (9) Like its companion piece, The Unfortunate Traveller, Christs Teares Over Jerusalem complicates 'clear distinctions between right and wrong'. Nashe's text, 'the Lord is knowne by executing judgment' (2; 15), is used to focus on a horror which hints at condemnation of the judge.

As its title suggests, the main concern of Stockwood's sermon is to reconcile God's mercy with the terror of his judgement - to find the compassion of Christ in his destruction of the city. In so doing, Stockwood must carefully skirt the charge of God's injustice. It must not be thought, therefore God were to be charged with crueltie or injustice, for destroying of them with suche an extreeme and horrible punishment. (10) Yet the description 'extreeme and horrible' proposes such a charge of 'crueltie or injustice'. The narrator's solution is to assert the authority of the narrative, denying the possibility of condemnation where it appears unavoidable. The reader is offered the bald fact of the divinity's paradoxical ordering of things. Not instruction in a providence comprehensible to reason, but the requirement of unthinking obedience to an irrational power. It is the mystique of power, as much as the mystery of godhead which enters into Stockwood's text.

In Christs Teares human morality is replaced by a divine aesthetics. If the slaughter of the Anabaptists by the Imperial Army is represented as
the chastising of children by a loving parent, in Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem Nashe expounds on the text:

For whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth, and he scourgeth every Sonne he receiveth...God chastiseth his Sonnes and not Bastards... (2; 166-7)

Both the Switzers who put down the Anabaptist uprising and the Christ who destroys the rebellious pride of Jerusalem, weep for their victims, so that the element of force is curiously missing from the infliction of extreme violence.

In both Stockwood's and Nashe's Jerusalem, the agent of destruction is absent from a drama which is played out between the pride of the Jews and the righteous wrath of Christ: 'Not they alone besiege us, but our sinnes also' (2; 71). Here, Nashe may have been recalling Gascoigne's account of Antwerp's fall in which victory in battle is very firmly subordinated to the divine plan:

But whosoever wil therein extoll the Spanyardes for their vallure and order, must therewithall confess that it was the very ordinance of god for a just plague and scourge unto the Towne. (11)

As in the Switzers' massacre of the Anabaptists in The Unfortunate Traveller, the role of the human agent is subsumed into the motionless activity of the divine providence.

Stockwood's sermon is concerned to justify the apparently irreconcilable ways of god to man. In order to present a human contradiction, a failure of reason, as a divine paradox, Stockwood must create a zone of silence between god and man: the text of divine judgement must remain free from interrogation. Nashe's text does not, of course, openly question Christ's judgement on Jerusalem, but its peculiar strategies and its grotesque treatment of the city's fall, achieve this effect. Nashe's dramatisation fails, but in so doing it effectively highlights the areas of contradiction and conflict which Stockwood's emollient and complacent style conceals.

Christ bewails rather the disobedience and stubbornness of Jerusalem than delights in its destruction. The excess of violence in which the city ends must be presented as a natural consequence of sin, rather than the imposition of a regime of force. Among the prognostications which precede and accompany the city's downfall are:

false teachers; warres tumultes and seditions; pestilence, famine and earthquake; wonderfull persecution for the gospel; preachynge of the
gospel.

By grouping 'tumulte', 'sedition' and 'warres' with pestilence, famine and earthquakes, Stockwood converts ideological conflict into natural disaster. The affairs of men, with their own, proper discourse, are made the means by which God communicates his wrath to mankind. The city of Jerusalem is imprisoned behind a wall of silence across whose boundary the usual laws of cause and effect cease to operate. Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem includes and embellishes several of these stories: comets, flocks of ravens, gates bursting open without cause, fountains of blood, armed men skirmishing in the skies, tempests of thunder and lightning, 'Manie monstrous byrthes at thys instant were brought foorth' (2; 62).

The Romans, the agents of Jerusalem's disaster, barely figure in the sermon's account of the city's suffering. Again, the damned are imprisoned in the remorseless logic of their own crimes, rather than by the external force of gaoler and persecutor. Within the city,

there were several armyes together by the ears within the citie, the one armye being governed by the desperate ruffian Iehochanan, the other ruled by the wicked cuttethrote Schimeon, and the thirde guyded by the vile murderer Eleazer. (12)

Like the paradoxical equation of the necessary and lamentable destruction of Jerusalem, this description is not amenable to reason: the terms used to describe the factions within the city only reinforce their equation. They become synonyms for inordinate wickedness, and once again the mystifications of the divine surround the doings of political man. The text is completely identified with the spectacle of authoritative punishment. The narrator's role is to observe, not to investigate the problems of conflict and punishment revealed in the text.

Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem also describes the breakdown of divine order in a city deserted by god. In this vacuum a parodic trinity holds sway. Three ruffians named Eleazer, Jehochanan and Schimeon control the city, of whom the greatest is Eleazer:

A man hee was that made a mockery of all Lawes and Religion, and any thing which Authority forbad most greedily would embrace. (2; 63-4)

Even in its absence order shapes chaos. The forms assumed by lawlessness, also reveal the necessity of the divine providence. Hence Eleazer names his followers the 'Flower of Chivalry', for 'they feard no man, and cared
neither for God nor the devil' (2: 63-4). Like Cutwolfe in The Unfortunate Traveller, Eleazer parodies the authority by which he is defined and which eventually destroys him.

The usurpation of authority in Jerusalem by Eleazer clearly recapitulates the plot of The Unfortunate Traveller. The temporary absence of the 'lord known by executing judgement' from the narrative and the career of Jack Wilton, is paralleled in Christs Teares Over Jerusalem. Eleazer is given temporary licence to be a scourge of God to those inhabitants of Jerusalem who have repudiated authority in their hearts.

In Christs Teares, the role of Vice taken by Jack, is internalised. At the centre of the text is an episode which represents the collapse of mundane morality by an act of feasting and enforced fast - Miriam's cannibalism of her child. Miriam's feast is not only a literalisation of Christian communion (feasting on the body of the son), but also a grotesque parody of Holy Family relations. Her reasoning parodies Christ's dying to kill death: 'My sonne, my son, why should I not kill Famine by killing thee, ere Famine, in excruciating thee, kill mee' (2: 71).

Her speech of justification for this infernal parody is 'palpably sophisticated':

a tour de force of (special) pleading in which it is not the lack but the abundance of justifications that becomes suspicious. (13)

Rhetoric and eloquence are placed under suspicion because they are easily used by the duplicitous to conceal their motives. As Gosson feared, rhetoric is - in Miriam's hands at least - in opposition to the demands of morality and the law.

Thus Miriam's speech employs the wiles of the rhetorician to an unchristian end, becoming:

a forensic art of persuasion that legitimises the unthinkable and betrays its own duplicity. (14)

The spiritual allusions and theological conceits which Miriam employs in her attempt to justify the unjustifiable, mark the absence from Jerusalem of the divine order, and the overcoming by the flesh of the word. In Miriam's speech the exotic cannot be resisted and subordinated to moral argument, but imposes its own perspective of scale and order. She is lost in the 'pagan' confusion of values, feared by the School of Abuse, her reason unnaturally subordinated to a seductive language of self-extenuation. Her
Vice is not external, as was Jack Wilton, but within herself.

Miriam's attempts to wrest scripture to her project - a mother may eat her son since the Father crucified his son, and that deed hardened his heart to all mothers (2; 74) - illustrate Nashe's general warning against the misinterpretation of the divine texts:

Murther, theft, (what not?) hath his texts to authorise him. Nothing doth profite but perverted may hurt: Scripture as it may be literally expounded and sophisticallie scande, may play the Harbinger as well for Hell as Heaven... (2; 39-40) (Also see 2; 116, 2; 117-8)

In Miriam's action, all possible knowledge of divine authority is lost as human desires of revenge and innovation publish themselves under the guise of holy writ. Like the 'foolish builder' she has founded her palaces 'on the sands of your owne shallow conceits' (2; 47).

Once again, Nashe engages with the mortification of the Vice, the struggle for control of the 'extemporall veine' which has been his constant theme since the preface to Menaphon. Punishment of this transfigurative power of metaphor is brutally literal and physical:

thou must be scourged with Scorpions: a hooke shall be cast into thy jawes, and a chayne come through thy nostrils. (2; 47)

This theology of punishment, a discourse whose text is the tortured body of the sinner, cannot be misinterpreted.

The tongue is the 'encouraging Captaine, that... animates all the other corporeall parts to be ventrous'. Miriam's words come ironically true when she concludes:

He is the Judge that doomes & determines; the rest of our faculties and powers are but the secular executioners of his sentence. (2; 72)

The power of the word is finally the power of the Word. Not the tongue is judge, but 'the lord known in executing judgement', and the spoken sentence is helpless before the sentence of death made by that lord. Human free will, exercised through the parodic wit, is brought to heel by the determining power of the literal word of command and creation.

The abruptness with which the actual deed of slaughter is done is comic. As in Pierce Penilesse, a self-fuelling oration is brought to an abrupt and arbitrary end:

At one stroke (even as these words were in speaking) she beheaded him... (2; 75)

Eloquence is reduced to one physical action which cannot be extenuated. The
comedy fulfills Miriam's conditions: her actions are determined by a judge whose word is the literal fact of existence in the world and she becomes a 'secular executioner' of his 'sentence' (in both its meanings).

*Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem* reiterates the theology of *The Unfortunate Traveller* and *The Terrors of the Night*. In *The Unfortunate Traveller* Cutwolfe is blasphemously mistaken in reserving to himself the powers of judgement, yet he is suffered to act as an instrument of the authority which brings Heraclide's murderer to book. Christ tells Jerusalem:

> My voice, as it is my voice, is thy friend, but as thou abusest it
> (turnes thine eares from it, and wilt not agree with it), it is thine Adversary. (2; 33)

Miriam's actions, like those of Eleazer's in a forsaken Jerusalem and Jack Wilton's career as 'scourge of god', are unjustified but still part of a providential justice. Nashe's favourite image of the executioner, instrument of an excessive force used to preserve the decorum of the state and of divine law, informs his final judgement of Miriam. Even as Jerusalem appears most forsaken of god, the images of its disorder present the necessity of his law.

ii

*Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem* is clearly a work born from the same imaginative impulse as *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Both texts examine the spectacle of an excessive power and deduce an authoritative justice from it. Both have faced criticism for their lapses in taste. *Christ's Tears*, however, presents the reader with an additional problem. Is it, as it claims to be, a theologically sincere work of repentance, or an opportunistic study in a popular genre?

The multiplicity of prognostications reported in *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem* and the lack of authorial comment might invite suspicion: Nashe had attacked their readership's credulity in *The Terrors Of The Night*, and the manipulative motives of educated men who produced them in *Pierce Penniless*. McKerrow notes that at least two mock-prognostications were widely attributed to Nashe, in his lifetime or shortly after it. (15)

The anonymous author of *A Most Strange and True Discourse of the Wonderfull Judgement of God*, in 1600, urges his audience to:
Read, I pray you, Thomas Nashe's book entitled 'The Teares of Christ Over Jerusalem which book, if you have any grace in you, will make you to shed tears for your sins. (16)

William Cupper's Certain Sermons Concerning God's Late Visitation in the City of London 'anticipates Nashe in its attempt to explain what sins have caused the plague'. (17) More interestingly, in the light of Nashe's farewell to 'fantastical satirisme' and his attempt to conciliate Gabriel Harvey in the preface to Christs Teares, it 'attacks prophane and satirical pamphleteers, who have opened their mouths against God'. (18) These contemporary sources would seem to suggest that, in the war between preacher and clown, described by Neil Rhodes, (19) the preacher has a temporary ascendancy in Christs Teares Over Jerusalem.

Modern criticism has suspected a gigantic hoax on the genre and the credulity of its consumers, but has been unable to find final evidence of parodic intention. For G.R.Hibbard, the book is:

a kind of gigantic oxymoron in which style and content, tone and intention are constantly at odds. (20)
and he criticizes an excess which is, at various times, either ridiculous or revolting. (21)

Despite this, he stops short of declaring the work a deliberate parody, arguing that:

Nashe took an unusual amount of trouble over the planning of it and meant it quite seriously. (22)

C.G.Harlow agrees: the sermon is in fact, as it claims in print to be, the product of a real, if brief repentence on the part of its author, 'a serious piece of didactic writing quite unlike anything of Nashe's printed hitherto'. (23) Writing on the chronology of the texts of 1592-3, Harlow assumes that the preface to the work accurately summarizes Nashe's literary affairs of that year. Nashe 'felt bound to ask for pardon for his more frivolous works', and found it 'particularly embarassing' that:

two or three trivial volumes of mine at this instant are under the printers hands, ready to be published. (2; 13)

These trivial volumes - probably The Unfortunate Traveller and The Terrors of the Night (24) - being hardly the works appropriate to a preacher.

The 'intentional' view of Christs Teares Over Jerusalem is most forcefully and, therefore, perhaps least convincingly argued by Charles Nicholl. If the style throughout is 'fevered and baroque', then this is
evidence not of literary strategy, but of a 'genuine cri de coeur':

What one is witnessing, through the veil of 'holy complaint', is an actual nervous breakdown, of which the whole work is a product and certain passages a precise account. (25)

Christs Teares Over Jerusalem is a genuine attempt at devotional literature, but the modern critic must judge it from his post-Freudian vantage point as 'more pathological than devotional'.

There are two main causes for scepticism: the lurid detail of personal and collective atrocity and the ornate, hyperbolic style of the text. The attention given to both is an effect of the commonly held view that Nashe deliberately lets style replace argument in his work.

The grotesque quality of the violence visited upon Jerusalem is produced by an ideology which demands an excessive judgement and is not, therefore, conclusive evidence of parodic intent. Peter Morvyn's work describes how the massacres of Eleazer were so numerous:

that the chanel of Jordane was so stuffed and stopt with dead bodyes, that the waters rose and ranne over the bankes here and there into the fieldes and playnes. (25)

Christs Teares Over Jerusalem reworks the passage, making it even more crowded and baroque:

The channell of Jordan was so over-burdened and charged wyth dead carkasses, that the waters contended to wash theyr hands of them, and lightly leapt over theyr banckes, as shunning to mixe themselves with so many millions of murders... (2; 68)

Nashe's text exaggerates in order to increase the emotional piquancy of the scene, introducing the squeamish river as a sort of 'objective correlative'. Its eagerness suggests authorial incredulity, but its violence clearly caters to a popular taste.

George Gascoigne's The Spoyle of Antwerpe describes the Spanish occupation of the town in 1579:

heapes of deade Carcases... laye at every Trench where they entred: the thickness hereof, did in many places exceede the height of a man. I forbeare also to recount the huge numbers, drowned in ye new Towne: where a man might behold as many sundry shapes and formes of mens motio at time of death: as ever Michaell Angelo dyd portray in his tables of Doomes day. (27)

The problems faced by a modern reader in assuming Elizabethan standards of 'taste' are heightened in these passages. If Nashe's account is to be considered hyperbolic and merely sensationalist, then the reader must bring
into account its probable literary source (Morvyn), and also a possible realistic source (Gascoigne).

Notably, Gascoigne 'reads' the sack of Antwerp almost as much as he 'sees' it and his reference to Michelangelo emphasises that any scene of horror or violence was viewed by the Renaissance through the great cultural fable of the Day of Judgement:

A consciousness of sin was considered more worthwhile than sympathy for earthly sufferings, and objections to jokes about the plague were based on the belief that it was God's punishment on a wicked society, not on the fact that people were dying wretchedly. (28)

The integrity of the individual, central to the liberal codes of western humanism, is compromised in Nashe's works by the invasive forces of the great Adversary and the anatomising justice of the 'lord known in executing judgement'.

The writer, too, interrogated and laid bare. Aretino, whose sight 'pearsst like lightning into the entrails of all abuses' (2; 265), is Nashe's ideal. Gascoigne describes:

the infinite numbers of poore Almains, who lay all burned in their armour: som thentrails skorched out, & all the rest of the body free, some their head and shoulders burnt of: so that you might looke downe into the bulk & brest and there take an Anatomy of the secrets of nature. (29)

The descriptions of physical torment which fill The Unfortunate Traveller and Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem are accounts of a relationship between humanity and divine power. His judgement is an 'eye-witness against us' and there is 'no demurring or exceptioning against his testimony' (2; 171). The physical enormities of Miriam's story are offered as proof of an interrogating gaze, a providential judgement which dissects motives by chastising the flesh.

Only the question of the satirist, 'theft, murder and conspiracie...What would have you more ?' (2; 156), might suggest the salacious delight of the professional writer in offering satisfaction the 'desires of revenge and innovation'. A sermon-writer such as Parsons:

worked on his readers' fear of retribution through graphic descriptions of the ugliness of sin and the pains of hell. (30)

Miriam's sin, committed in a Jerusalem condemned by the divine power, recapitulates the rare pleasures offered by Nashe in the torments of Zadoch and Cutwolfe. In both cases the reader is offered a depiction of a
righteous violence, inflicted on those who have placed themselves outside the law and, therefore, outside the community of human compassion and fellow-feeling. But this points to the essential ambiguity of the genre and its attractions and does not isolate Nashe in a specific deception.

iii

Christ's Tears over Jerusalem does, however, display an antagonism between the style Nashe employs and the theological intention expressed. It re-examines the fear of a polyphonic textuality which confronted Nashe at the beginning of his career.

Stockwood's submission to the authority revealed in the paradoxical destruction of Jerusalem, reinforces the authority of what is being said, without constructing an authoritative persona for the writer. He can at best be considered a scribe, copying what it is not necessary for him to understand. The reader is led to accept the existence of a perfect medium between the author and the power of which he speaks.

Nashe's own ideal style in Christ's Tears over Jerusalem echoes his praise of Aretino in The Unfortunate Traveller:

Mine owne wit I cleane disinherite: thy fiery Cloven-tongued inspiration be my Muse. Lende my wordes the forcible wings of the Lightnings, that they may peirce unawares into the marrow and reynes of my Readers.

(2; 15)

Aretino's style declares his fame by suppressing the personality of the man. In the same way, Nashe 'disinherits' his own wit, submitting to the force and direction of the 'extemporall veine'. If Aretino's style is 'the spirit of ink...the spirituality of arts' (2; 264), Nashe prays to the divine Muse of Christ's Tears over Jerusalem to 'dew thy Spyrit plentifully into my incke... let my braines melt all to incke' (2; 15). Aretino's life is 'contemned in comparison of the liberty of speech'; the narrator of Christ's Tears seeks to bar his life and satirical persona from the text in order that 'No Chronicle that shall write of Jerusalem's last captivitate, but shall write of mee also' (2; 76).

Yet the strategies Nashe adopts, in order to bring his readers to repentence, do not erase the figure of the author; they bring him consistently to mind. When he bids 'ten thousand farewells to fantastical satirisme', the extravagance of the gesture suggests not a humbled spirit
but the flourish of the professional writer:

The request and the terms in which it is made contradict each other; literary artifice is apparent in every word of this prayer for simplicity. (31)

The dedication is 'unusually elaborate and high flown' even for an age of elaborate literary adulation, (32) and the terms of the apology to Harvey are 'theatrical in a way that justifies Harvey's suspicions'. (33) Although Nashe proclaims that 'now I transforme my selfe from my selfe' (2; 16), the style of Christs Teares Over Jerusalem insists on the author's presence.

Nashe's use of the preaching technique of repetition fails because the words endure rather than becoming transparent and because the author is evidently interested in the possibilities of language, rather than in a transcendent understanding of the text. The repetition of key words at pages' length in the early section of the pamphlet, is an attempt to break language down into pure sound and facilitate a pre-rational response - of grief at one's wickedness, of hope for one's salvation, of all manifestations of awe at divinity. It fails because it emphasises the author's conscious, even self-conscious strategies and ensures that the literary artefact remains a performance rather than an emotional event for the reader. The development of sense or argument is sacrificed to a mechanical verbal association and the desire for a witty conclusion. (34) Words are artificially inflated into a portentous discourse which strives for significance but does not achieve it. Christs Teares Over Jerusalem reveals the same problems as The Anatomy of Absurdity, another work which attempted to suppress Nashe's 'atheist' and 'pagan' wit in favour of a literal ideology of conformity.

The style which Nashe invents for Christ is 'among the most ornate in the language'. (35) It is almost ludicrously grotesque in its hyperbolically physical descriptions of emotional states. Christ is made to complain that:

I have sounded the utmost depth of dolour, and wasted myne eye-bals well-neere to pinnes heads with weeping (as a Barber wasteth his Ball in the water... (2; 36)

I have crackt mine eye-strings with excessive staring and stedfast heaven-gazing, when with fast-fortified prayer and eare-agonizing invocation I have distressed my Fathers soule for her; (2; 56-7)

Further passages, in which Nashe's Christ describes his withered hands, 'shivered and splintered in their wide cases of skinne' and his body rent
in two like a grave to bury Jerusalem's sins (2; 37), keep a very physical Godhead before the reader's eye.

Nashe's tactics are unclear here: plainly his aim is to convince those doubters who,

because they cannot grossly palpabrine or feele God with their bodily fingers, confidently and grossly discard him. (2; 115)

Hands splintered like wood but encased in areas of skin, a body enveloping a city, are descriptions whose individual details destroy the rational coherence of the whole. Christ is made grotesquely physical and at the same time unimaginable, in the way of all Nashe's grotesque portraits. Designed to subdue the intelligence, to abolish the distance between word and the reality of hell, the language of Christs Teares Over Jerusalem succeeds only in interposing between reader and response an ineradicable territory of artifice. This is not evidence of Nashe's incompetence, or lack of feeling, a 'callous sadism' that 'leaves one wondering just what kind of man he was'. (36) Rather, the hyperbolical imagery of Christs Teares Over Jerusalem works to bring a literal theology into question and allows the reader an active part in the making of the spectacle.

Stockwood's sermon rigorously reduces action and motive to an impersonal, incantatory language; it is designed to have no duration beyond the accomplishment of understanding. Nashe's images persist in an opposition of flesh and language, an opacity between the narrator and the 'true tears' of his desolation. If, his Christ exclaims:

For sinne I came to suffer; thy sinne exceedeth my suffering; it is too monstrous for my mercie or merites to worke on, (2; 35)

so the style of Christs Teares Over Jerusalem is too monstrous for the accomodation of its theology.

Thus, the thunder of the divine command - a paradoxical justice which makes the reasoning mind deaf - becomes in Nashe's hands a constant intercession of language:

Should I write it to the proofs, weeping would have me no eyes: like tragicke Seneca, I should tragedise my self, by bleeding to death in the depth of passion. (2; 60)

The very act of calling out his self-abnegation paradoxically calls up the figure of the author before us. Nashe is unable to extinguish himself in the fiction of writing, to make of himself a fictional author 'tragedized',

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like Jack Wilton, in the pains of the text. When his Christ promises to 'in-stall thee in eternity' (2; 32), the irreducible fact of physical being is introduced into his metaphysics.

Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem is notable for Nashe's renewed concern that the word conform to its origin and duty of representation. This intention, written into the text, is frustrated by the insistence of language on its own spectacle. At the end of the pamphlet, therefore, Nashe reinterprets the work as an attempt at a new style, a further investigation of the 'extemporall veine'. The 'Italionate coyned verbes all in Ize' which infest Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem are a form of usury, 'compounding' the English single money of monosyllabic words (2; 184), and claiming for English literature the wealth and prestige which English merchants and soldiers had already gained.

The desire 'to conforme myselfe to the holy subject of my booke' and the self abnegation of the author as divine instrument, are redefined as public theatre. The 'compelling power of Nashe in his other works', the 'public property' of his popular persona, prevent the fashioning of a conventional sermon. (37) Both literary personality and the styles he had successfully developed, were 'inimical to the success of this new departure'. (38) Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem finally confirms the familiar role of the author as entertainer. Its insistence on linguistic profit is the familiar and suspect self-aggrandizement of the Vice.

More than this, the self-advertisement of style and the opacity of a highly individual discourse, constitute a sceptical commentary on the claims of authority. Nashe's critique of Stubbes's discovery of sin and his satire on the Anabaptists isolate the dangers of any discourse which seeks to identify itself with obedience to an absolute power. His analysis of Miriam's self-justifying use of scripture (all sins have their texts to authorise them) confirms the point. In Christ's Tears Nashe's style, despite the intentions of the narrator, resists such an assimilation.

The attempt by Nashe to ally himself with his own imagination and join that imagination to the morality of the church, fails because Nashe's style restores the distance between man and god even as it bewails it. Its stubbornness confirms the possibilities of error in interpretation of divine
commands, even as it appears to accept its simplicity:

When Preachers threaten us for sinne with thy adjunct, eternall, as paynes eternall, eternall damnation, eternall horror and vexation, we heare them as words of course, but never dive right downe into theyr bottomlesse sence. (2; 168)

The author identifies a literal theology of absolute obedience and absolute punishment, but his real interest is in the interior world offered by language itself. The silence of words before the spectacle of excessive judgement is resisted in favour of a carnival licence. His continual re­arrivals at the fact of his own lucidity, explicable in no other terms than those of its declaration, reflect his attraction to those figures who, at the extremity of physical pain and personal extinction, insist that their voices go on framing curses, taunts, prayers.

In Christs Teares Over Jerusalem this endurance of eloquence is subjected to the ideological discipline of the literal. The 'extemporall veine' of carnival dissent survives, however.
The roots of the quarrel between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe are to be found in the well-known contention of Philip Sidney and the Earl of Oxford in 1579. A poem in Harvey's Three Proper Letters, Speculum Tuscanismi, ridiculed an Italianate Englishman and was interpreted by John Lyly as an attack on the Earl. The future author of Pappe With a Hatchet duly brought the putative slight to the attention of Oxford, who was 'not disposed to trouble his Joviall mind with such Saturnine paltery'. According to Harvey, the only ill-will was on Lyly's side and the affair seems quickly to have blown over. (1) Later, however, Nashe would make great play of the allegation that Harvey slandered Oxford and ridicule Harvey with the same accusations of Italianate affectations that he allegedly employed against the Earl.

Lyly pursued the quarrel in Pappe With A Hatchet, which contained a passage referring to the Three Letters. In response, Harvey composed an Advertisement for Pap-hatchet and Martin Marprelate (later published as part of Pierce's Supererogation). He does not appear to have tried to publish the work at this time, but may have circulated it to friends in manuscript.

Instead, his brother Richard took up the gauntlet on behalf of Gabriel in the anti-Martinist Plain Perceval. Richard's Lamb of God (1590) added an Epistle to the original publication, in which he hints at knowledge of Martin's identity, and attacks Nashe by name. (2) Greene inserted an attack on all three Harveys in the Quip For An Upstart Courtier.

Pierce Penilesse in 1592 started the quarrel up again, and from here on the controversy was exclusively the affair of Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. Harvey's Four Letters quickly followed and was answered by the much more violent Strange Newes. Harvey replied in 1593 with Pierce's Supererogation (1593). In Christ's Teares Over Jerusalem Nashe offered a truce, which he withdrew in the second edition of the work. Harvey's motives for rebuffing Nashe are unclear, but it is most likely that the New Letter was written and published before Harvey had seen the apology, for it refers to it only in the most general and vague terms. (3)
Nashe's final sally - and the concluding act of the flyting - was not issued until 1596 in the shape of Have With You To Saffren Walden. The quarrel was already long over when bishops Whitgift and Bancroft issued their famous restraining order on June 1, 1599, ordering that all Nasshes bookes and Doctor Harvyes bookes be taken wheresoever thye maye be found and that none of theire bookes be ever printed hereafter. (4)

The quarrel between Nashe and Harvey can be understood only in the context of the mediaeval literary game of the 'flyting'. Examples in three literatures are relevant: the flyting between Dunbar and Mackenzie which took place around 1495 and was published in 1508; Skelton's poems against Garnesche in 1513-14, partly inspired by the Scottish example (Garnesche's replies have not survived); and the scholarly altercations of Poggio and Filelfo, Poggio and Valla, Valla and Fazio, Panormita and Valla, in the city states of Renaissance Italy. Although Edward Harman has written that the controversy between Harvey and Nashe 'may fairly be described as all about nothing', (5) significant and instructive parallels can be found in the models I have mentioned.

The flyting offered to the writer the carnival freedom to attack institutions and authorities normally taboo. In the flyting between James V of Scotland and Lyndsey, for example, the King wrote satirical verses ridiculing Lyndsey, while the poet replied with allusions to the King's amours 'in terms anything but decent or respectful'. (6) Having initiated and accepted debate on the popular stage, the monarch becomes merely human, subject to the same laws as his subjects.

However, the flyting was far from being a disruption of civic order. Skelton's invective was a licensed entertainment put on for the benefit of the king. The poet was appointed court rhetorician to Henry VIII, producing odes of victory, interludes to entertain the court, epitaphs for deceased royalty, lyrics of various kinds - and a flyting against an obnoxious courtier. (7) At each section of his poem Skelton proudly states that his duel of invective is 'by the kynges most noble commaundement' and the contest in abuse 'was arranged and carried off, undoubtedly to the great amusement of the court'. (8)

Nashe is, therefore, able to mount an effective defence against
Harvey's argument of sedition and usurpation of monarchical authority:

If I had committed such abominable villainies, or were a base shifting companion, it stood not with my Lords honour to keepe me. (1; 329)

Summer's Last Will and Testament was most probably produced under the auspices of Archbishop Whitgift at his Croydon palace in the summer of 1592. (9) In Have With You To Saffron Walden the author declares 'I wil still maintaine there is in court but one true Diana' (3; 130). Nashe invokes in his defence the tradition that the wit of the Vice is deployed in the service of the prince.

As befits a royal entertainment the flyting is conducted in an atmosphere of chivalry. Comic names and grotesquely physical abuse provide the court's entertainment but are framed by the imagery of joust and personal combat. (10) The flyting in Skelton's time had:

quite definite rules. It was a literary duel in four rounds, between a challenger and a defender. Each had the right to appoint a second. (11) The epistle to the reader which begins Strange Newes ends with the battle cry 'Saint Fame for mee, and thus I runne upon him' (1; 263), as Nashe enters into combat with his antagonist.

Harvey is also prepared to use this courtly imagery, less as a concession to the 'rules' of the flyting perhaps, than because of the dignity it confers on the participants. He advises the Printers on the two sides of the combat to 'take hede how ye play the Heralds' (2; 41), for 'some lusty gentlemen' are like:

the onely Lordes of the field. If ever Esquier raved with conceit of his new Armes, it is Danters gentleman. (2; 42)

Later he imagines Nashe attacking his letters like a 'victorious Duellist... with a maine carreere' (2; 55).

The playfulness inherent in the genre is firmly based on real ideological conflict. The flyting between Skelton and Garnesche, for example, possessed a significance beyond its immediate occasion:

In its mimic combat clashed the two great influences that, from the very beginning of his reign, had been struggling for control of the young king. Behind Skelton there stood the Old World of fixed status and privilege...Behind Garnish were massed all the rising bourgeoisie of the New World... (12)

The flyting is not merely an entertainment for the king's benefit, but in its comic licence and carnival freedom offers exemplary counsel.
Harvey, the quarrel provided a platform for his views on literature and the proper government of a commonwealth. For Nashe, it offered another chance, after Pierce Penilesse, to defend the loyal popular entertainments of carnival.

Like Skelton's entertainment, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel saw a conservatively minded writer brilliantly destroying his rival in print, only to be by-passed by the political and historical trends he resisted. In the 'ancient opposition' between old and new, 'it was the Harveys who stood for the future and Nashe for the past'. Nashe's consistent defence of aristocratic attitudes, his insistence on uniformity in church and state and his contempt for all popular expressions of religion were well known. Harvey, with his Puritanism, subtle appreciations of Machiavelli and suspicion of being involved with the Martinists, could be conveniently situated at the opposite end of this political spectrum.

The comic mode of works like Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden does not mean that they do not have a serious purpose. Behind the personalities is 'a genuine clash of ideas and attitudes concerning society, education and literature'. Though both Harvey and Nashe could be considered members of the same Cambridge-educated middle class and of the same profession:

they looked at life from two diametrically opposed points of view, which were not theirs alone, but those of the age they were living in.

This opposition finds expression in a host of issues - Harvey's public support of Ramism, for example - but is fought out in exhaustive detail over the great issue of authority and satire, to which I now turn.

The energy which underpins the flying between Harvey and Nashe arises from the power of fiercely-contested opinions.

For Harvey, literature serves to preface and enhance great public actions; for Nashe, literature is a vehicle by which one displays virtuosity, entertains and excites readers, and most important, by which one earns a living.

Harvey's preferred definition of literature stresses the rigorous subordination of the word to the thing represented and the poet's sensibility to the demands of an imperial ethic of martial duty.
Right from the beginning of the quarrel, Harvey seeks to define Nashe within a new world of commercial exploitation, in which the licence of the grotesque is bound to disappear:

Alas, he is pitifully bestead, that in an Age of Pollicy, and in a world of Industry (wherein the greates matters of Government, and Valour, seem small to aspiring capacities) is constrained to make woeful Greene, and beggarly Pierce Pennylesse, (as it were a Grasshopper, and a Cricket, two pretty musitians, but silly creatures) the argument of his stile.

(72) Harvey claims the support of history, judging that the government of the new age will be written factually and literally. The demonic and ambiguous laughter of Pierce Penilesse, his grotesque mutilations of the body, will be forced to give way to sober definitions.

For these reasons the imperial theme recurs frequently in Harvey's polemic, although he is never quite able - whether for reasons of personal vanity or because of the pull of the old style - to abandon the personal joust of equals, for the punitive coercion of state:

Had he begun to Aretinize, when Elderton began to ballet...or Tarleton to extemporise; some part of his fantasticall bibble-bables, and capricious pangs, might have bene tollerated in a greene, and wild youth; but the worlde is chaunged, & there is a busier pageant upon the stage. (2; 96)

Harvey consistently seeks to convert a personal quarrel into political conflict. Action has now pre-empted language, which falls behind the simple eloquence of epic actions such as Drake's voyages to the West Indies, Raleigh's Virginian colony, or the success against the Spanish Armada.

Harvey praises pamphlets on war, military doctrine and discipline and horsemanship. England is seen as 'another Sparta' which requires the Spartan virtues of temperance, frugality, exercise, and military prowess:

and hath no wanton leasure for the Comedyes of Athens; nor anye bawdy howers for the songes of Priapus, or the rymes of Nashe. (2; 95)

His imagery stresses the importance of restraint, authority and discipline in both the natural and political worlds. A hierarchy of values within language reflects the social hierarchies in the state: 'Appetite a loyall subject to Reason, and Will an affectionate servant to Wisdom' (2; 95).

It is significant that Harvey's preferred list of useful literary genres does not include the court entertainment, for the Harvey-Nashe quarrel reheares the Tudor controversy over the theatre. Harvey undertakes the role of the School of Abuse, excoriating Nashe's monarchical defence of
privilege. Instead, exploits of arms in the service of England's newly-won commercial empire excite Harvey's praise:

and when you have observed the course of Industry...and finally found proffit to be our pleasure, provision our security, labour our honour, warfare our welfare: who of reckoning can spoare anyelewde, or vaine tyme for corrupt pamphlets. (2; 97)

His list of the Protestant virtues, long connected with the rise of capitalism, stands in direct contradiction to Nashe's prodigious but unprofitable and unpredictable fertility. Recommending 'diligent Exercise' over inspiration, Harvey declares 'give me rather Exercise without Arts, then Arte without Exercise (1; 229).

For Harvey, then, the strategic demands of a new age of policy and commercial expansion, necessitate a renewal of discipline over literature:

Oratours have challenged a speciall Liberty: and Poets claimed an absolute License: but no Liberty without boundes: nor any License without limitation. Invectives by favour have bene too bolde: and Satyres by usurpation too presumptious. (15)

Throughout the quarrel, his imagery invokes intervention by the machinery of government to regulate aesthetic disagreement. Greene's faults are 'his contemming of Superiours... and defying of all good order' (1; 169), while Greene and Nashe are allegorically transformed into:

presumptious Impudency, and odious Slauder, the two errantest vagabonds in the world. (2; 232)

The case against licence and satire is made to parallel the Elizabethan fear of a wandering and destitute underclass of masterless men.

Nashe's individual faults are assimilated to those of a class or, more accurately perhaps, a conspiracy. Harvey's critique of Pierce Penilesse identifies Aretino as co-conspirator, but also alludes to the accusations levelled against Marlowe regarding the existence of Hell:

Aretine, and the Divels Oratour...neither feare Goodman Sathan, nor master Beelzebub, nor Sir Reverrence, nor milord Government himselfe: o wretched Atheisme, Hell but a Scarecrow, and Heaven but a woonderclout in their doctrine. (2; 270)

Nashe's choice of subject, his better acquaintance 'with the divels of Hell, then with the Starres of Heaven' (1; 199), betrays the author's true morality. Marlowe is correct in assuming a political part for 'Goodman Sathan', dangerously misguided in declaring 'Goodman Sathan's' role to the mob. The writer's duty is to maintain good order in his own words so that
it flourishes in society as a whole.

The writer's importance for Harvey as 'unacknowledged legislator' explains the vehemence of his attacks on Nashe and, the whole brood of venereous Libertines, that knowe no reason, but appetite, no Lawe but Luste, no humanitie, but vilanye, noe divinity but Atheisme. Such riotous, and incestuous humours would be launced, not feasted: the Divell is eloquent enough to play his owne Oratour.

(2; 91-2)

The space offered in Nashe's works to 'desires of revenge and innovation' is clearly recognised by Harvey, but the concept of licence, of potentially subversive energies harnessed and made harmless, has equally clearly become unintelligible to him.

Nashe rarely offers replies to Harvey's specific charges since this would be to fight on ground chosen by the enemy, preferring instead deliberately to misinterpret Harvey's attacks. He does, however, seem particularly anxious to deal with accusations against Pierce's morality:

"How is the Supplication a diabolicall Discourse, otherwise than as it intreats of the diverse natures and properties of Divels and spirits? in that far fetcht sense may the famous defensative against supposed Prophecies and the Discoverie of Witchcraft be called notorious Diabolicall discourses, as well as the Supplication, for they also intreate of the illusions and sundrie operations of spirits. (1; 308-9)

Nashe's defence is, for once, both rational and restrained, anticipating a more modern division between the role expected of literature and that demanded or imposed by the state.

Yet he is unable to maintain this decorum. Discursively he pours scorn on Harvey's wilder warnings, while at the same time his invective feeds his opponent's hysteria. The invocation of demons and ghosts, as the machinery of his revenge on Harvey, is purposefully destructive:

"With one minutes studie Ile destroie more, than thou art able to build in ten daies. (1; 307)

The supremacy of chaos over law confirms Harvey's worst forebodings. It provokes and energises the quarrel but makes Nashe's position vulnerable.

Harvey, therefore, is able to extend the attack. Pierce does not only reflect on his creator's character and moral failings, but is increasingly seen as the allegorical representation of a principle of sedition throughout history and political geography:

Though Pierce Pennniles, for a spurt were a ranke rider, and like an arrant knight overran nations with a carreer. (2; 80)
The spectre of Pierce as Antichrist, overrunning nations, is pursued by Harvey into ever-widening ramifications:

but what is to be done, when vowels are coursed, & Mutes haunted, and that heavenlie conference hellishlie disturbed, God, or good Order, circumsise Tongues, and Pennes that slander without cause and raile without effect even in the superlative degree. (Foure Letters 53)

Behind the increasingly shrill attacks on Pierce/Nashe stands the figure of a greater Adversary, whose presence informs every sphere of human activity. (20) Such an identification justifies the importance Harvey sees in Pierce, a principle of disorder which infects language and is even able to upset heaven.

Harvey's metaphors submit Pierce to the greatest penalties of the law and yet deny that Nashe's writings have any effect - which would seem to remove the need for their censorship. If the majority of Nashe's critics have been in some sense his victims, then Harvey is his 'exemplary victim'. Obsessed with Nashe's mysterious themelessness, Harvey 'oscillates between denying Nashe any power at all and asserting his power to corrupt'. (21) Pierce is treated as a form of satanic untruth, dangerous and alarming, but ultimately powerless to effect any real harm.

Harvey attempts to weaken the central tenet of Nashe's defence, that the satirist, as Scourge of God, is licensed to uphold the law by stepping outside it. The good name of the monarch, the integrity of the body politic, must be protected from the satirist's mutilations. This concern to remove the dignity of the state from the public stage is soon extended by Harvey to the satirist's usurpation of all authority and order.

More specifically, Nashe is accused of usurping those powers and privileges which belong properly to the monarch. The imagery with which Harvey addresses his treatment in Nashe's pamphlets conveys a powerful sense of injustice - Harvey is imprisoned in Nashe's wit as though in the Fleet prison. Nashe's treatment of Harvey is of course unjust (in Harvey's estimation) not merely because Harvey suffers, but also because the power Nashe uses is not lawfully given to him.

Thus, while Nashe takes on the role of a 'comic outlaw figure', Harvey (like many later critics) 'undertakes the vindication of the law'. (22) The wit of the satirist, already associated by Harvey with forbidden gods, is also seen as a form of political power, an interior kingdom in which 'Every
Martin Junior, and Puny Pierce' is 'a monarch in the kingdom of his owne humour'. (Letters 81) Harvey undertakes a literal surveillance of the satirist's freedoms of the kind repudiated by the Printer in the preface to Pierce Penilesse.

Yet Harvey's imagery increasingly and paradoxically transfers to Nashe powers of authority and punishment. Nashe's demonic power can be countered only through an appeal to the power overlaying all:

> God helpe, when Ignorance, and want of Experience, usurping the chayre of scrupulous, and rigorous Judgement, will in a fantastical Imagination, or percase in a melancholy moode, presume further, by infinite degrees, then the learnedest men in a civill Commonwealth, or the sages counsellors in a Prince's Court. (1; 234)

Ignorance and want of experience, belong to the young and immodest writer whom Harvey, at the beginning of the quarrel, attempts to reform and free from Greene's baleful influence. The usurper of the chair of judgement is of a different metaphysical order: Nashe's 'extemporall veine' has become the 'fantasticall Imagination', master of Nashe, rather than his servant.

Where in the early stages of the quarrel Harvey attempts to counsel the young writer, in the later stages his invective is bitter. In the Foure Letters, he considers Pierce's complaint of poverty and urges Nashe

> Be a Musitian, & Poet unto thy self, that art both, and a Ringleader of both, unto other, be a Man, be a Gentleman, be a Philosopher, be a Divine, be thy resolute selfe; not the Slave of Fortune, that for every fleabiting crieth out - alas & for a few hungry meales, like a Greek Parasite. (48)

Harvey's initial rhetoric offers Nashe the humanist generosity of a choice of roles, rather than the contraction of possibilities which poverty and its attendant despair enforce. As the quarrel proceeds, the human infinity of roles open to Nashe is replaced by Harvey's identification and enforcement of Pierce/Nashe's diabolism. Nashe's essential humanity is replaced with the nature of the beast, human possibility by the indefiniton of evil.

Harvey begins by censuring the literary pride of the young, professional writer (2; 82-3). He ends by attacking an incarnation of Pride, Luciferan in its monstrosity:

> There is a God above, that heareth prayers: a Prince beneath, that tendereth supplications: Lordes on both sides, that Patronise good causes: learned men, that deserve Conference: time to consider upon essentiall pointes: Knowledge that loveth zeal, as zeal must reverence
The paragraph links divine and political order, finally extending the influence of civic paradigms of order into the language pattern by means of allegory. The 'innovation' of which Nashe and Greene are guilty is a principle which crosses boundaries between word and society, just as Jack Wilton and Will Summers do.

The significance of Harvey's grand parade of the pillars of society lies precisely in its very banality: the invocation of such civic deities is only necessary because of the threat made to them. Harvey's absence from the list displays his disinterestedness in the matter: a laughter which condemns universal decorum is at stake, not laughter at his own expense. He is present as one of those whose conscience must testify even against itself. The rhetoric of his two works against Nashe continually stresses that he is one who did not want to publish or to be dragged into an undignified brawl, one who can learn from his enemy's accusations if there is any truth in them. Nashe's absence is more sinister: he does not belong in this congregation and society of the good.

Nashe quickly assumes a role as principle of disorder, and Pierce's Supererogation returns again and again to the point:

If Wisedome say not, Phie for shame, & Autoritie take not order in convenient time: who can tell, what generall plague may ensue of a speciall infection ? or when the kings-evill is past cure, who can say, we will now heale it The baddest weed groweth fastest: and no Gangrene so pregnantly dispreddeth itselfe, as riott. And what Riott so pestiferous as that which in sugred baltes presenteth most poisonous hookes ? Sir Skelton, and Master Scoggin, were but Innocents to Signior Capricio, and Monsieur Madnesse: whose pestilent canker scorneth all the Medicine of Earth, or heaven. (2; 108)

His writing is an eruption of a 'motiveless malignancie' into the public domain, figured in imagery of natural (weeds) and civic (riot) disorder. Nashe is identified first - darkly - with England's external enemies, then with the allegory which sustains their envy and hatred (Capricio and Madnesse). The poets whom Nashe defends as licensed entertainers (Skelton and Scoggin) are shown to be merely the latest representations of an enduring licentiousness and evil, which threatens both temporal and eternal verities if it is not challenged.

The process of this argument is the mechanism of polemic: the
Adversary must be refuted but without admitting that his arguments are worth refuting. He must be destroyed, yet he is already less than nothing. The polemic becomes a self-perpetuating narrative in which the enemy's presence propagates itself even in the author's argument:

You that have read Luther against the Pope: Sadolet, Longolius, Omphalius, Oforius, against Luther: Calvin against Sadolet: Melancthon against Longolius: Sturmius against Omphalius: Haddon against Oforius: Baldwin against Calvin...you that have most diligently read these, and these, and sundry other, reputed excellent in their kinds, cast them all away, and read him alone: that can school them all in their terms invective, and teacheth a new found Arte of confuting, his all-only Arte. (2; 48)

Harvey's irony is not only crude but paradoxical and self-defeating. His mobilisation of a complete intellectual history for the refutation of one whose works are of no importance means that Nashe, absent from the text, seems to become invincible, ubiquitous, subverting Harvey's intellectual effort and good order. The list, symbolising a continuity of scholarship, even seems to become slightly comic in its exhaustive re-combination of names, a triumph for the exiled spirit of laughter he tries to exorcise.

Not only is this weight of literary tradition overwhelmingly a condemnation of Nashe, but it is a condemnation enforced by a sense of its own desperate peril:

God-night poore Rhetorique of sorry bookes: adieu good old Humanity: gentle Artes, and Liberall Sciences content your selves: Farewell my deere moothers, sometime floorishing Universities. (2; 52)

and so on - at pages' length. The importance of restraint, authority and discipline is contrasted with a Nashe whose role is to be:

the infamy of learning...the corruption of his reader...the damnation of whatsoever is termed good, or accounted honest. (2; 107)

The curious imbalance of power between the state and its critics - the definitive conservative fear - despite the vast resources Harvey is able to mobilise against Nashe, forms a constant current to Harvey's thought.

For both Nashe and Harvey original power rests not with the state but, in a strange reversal, with the satirist:

what Cesars might, or Catoes integrity, or what Saints devotion can stop such mouths. (2; 166-7)

Nashe's 'frivolity' threatens, in Crewe's terms, to 'install itself in the ideal center', (23) and opens up a long political horizon. 'Such mouths' are those of the Blatant Beast, the many-headed mob of Elizabethan fears.

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Harvey's polemic resumes the accusations made against Marlowe of the artist's implicit rivalry with the state to 'coin' the formulae of social and political existence. (24) In the Foure Letters Nashe shares his infamy with the original target of Harvey's ire, Robert Greene. The charges against Greene are 'his impious profaning of sacred Textes' and 'his piperly Extemporizing and Tarletonizing' (2; 168). Harvey's biography of Greene stresses his frequent shifting of lodgings, and links the 'evidence' of triviality and instability to intimations of a greater evil, whose 'very troublesomeness...lies in its instability'. (25)

Harvey looks through the 'window' of Nashe's text 'into the closet of his conscience' to find a curious indefinaction of possibilities:

Whatsoever poore I say, in any matter, or in any language, albeit Truth averr and justifie the same, he will flatly denie, and confute, even because I say it; & onely because in a frolick and dowlte jollitie, he will have the last word of me. His Grammar, is his Catechisme; si ais, ne-go: his stomack, his Dictionarie in any language: and his quarrell, his Logique in any argument. (2; 110-111)

Where Nashe seeks to identify Harvey with his own words, Harvey attempts to discover Nashe's hidden motives to the reader. These cannot be found and, instead, everything is deception and concealment, the world turned upside down of carnival, 'a frolick and dowlte jollitie'. The certainties and painstaking methods of scholarship are replaced by the arbitration of the belly god.

It is almost as though Nashe's contrariness is called into being by Harvey's opposition. It is part of Harvey's self-mythologising to identify this linguistic game with the relationship between truth (always and only itself, Harvey) and the principle of falsehood (demonic, insubstantial except in its mockery of the truth, Nashe). Where Harvey sticks to the duty of language to represent, Nashe's parody, burlesque and language games refer only to themselves, a notorious 'sliding of distinctions'.

Hence Nashe's motives become motiveless, his violence without justification. He confutes Harvey 'because he will', as simple and mischievous as:

a sprite or Coleman hedge, or a May-Lord of Primrose hill, that hath all humours in his liverie, & can put conscience in a Vices coate. Na. hee will atchieve impossibilities; and in contempt of my simplicitie, proove Truth a counterfeit... (2; 112)

Pierce/Nashe is identified not only with the Adversary and with Marlowe's
atheism, but with all those abandoned pagan gods which the School of Abuse feared were revived in the theatre and the popular pamphlet. Though Nashe asks in Have With You To Saffron Walden: 'Is there such high treason comprehended under calling a foppe a foppe?,' (3; 119), the distinction between a purely literary art of invective and the general assault against political morality which Harvey seeks to make of it, is a major area of contention in the flyting's debate over the purpose and value of satire.

Harvey's criticism of Pierce/Nashe's satire concentrates on the scandalous excess of linguistic invention to rational content. His depiction of Nashe reveals a regal figure whose pretensions do not add up:

O high-minded Pierce, hadd the traine of your woordes, and sentences beeene aanswerable to the retinue of your bragges, and threatres, or the role of your apparaunce in person suitable to the weedes of your ostentation in tearmes, I would surely have beeene the first, that should have proclaimed you, the most-singular Secretary of this language.

He identifies a frightening disparity between the real and its representation in Nashe's language that is also a defining impulse behind his accusations of Nashe's usurpation of authority.

If Nashe had a subject to match his style, Harvey suggests, he would look forward to it as eagerly as he does

for his universall Repertory of all Histories, contayning the memorable actes of all ages, all places, and all persons: for the new Calepine of all learned and vulgar languages, written, or spoken, whereof a loud rumour was lately published at Basill: for a general Pandectes of the Lawes, and statute of all nations...in the worlde. (2; 66)

Harvey attempts to caricature and crush Nashe's frivolity, by placing it in the context of a serious subject, but the terms of his invective again magnify Nashe's importance. His library of nonsense volumes only demonstrates the perpetual present of possibilities which the grotesque represents, a dispensation from moral codes.

Harvey correctly connects this literary tradition with popular modes. His simultaneous fascination and repulsion from carnival is clearly seen in this passage from the Supererogation:

I perceive, they were wise thet at riotous times, when youth was wantonnest, and knavery lustiest, as in Christmas, at Shrovetide, in May, at the end of Harvest, and by such wilde fittes, created a certaine extraordinary Officer, called a Lord of Misure, as a needefull governour, or Dictatour, to set thinges in order, and to rule unruly.
people; with whom otherwise there were no Ho. (2; 127-8)

This, considers Harvey, 'is the very depth of his plot' (128). Yet this remarkably perceptive statement of the rationale behind Nashe's satire, is countered with condemnation of 'roisterly tearmes' and 'ruffianly scoffes' contemptible to a 'scholler, or gentleman' (128). Harvey's condemnation of Nashe is not a simple failure of intellect; rather, he hones his own ideal future of literary and cultural endeavour by opposing it to Nashe's.

For Harvey the flyting with Nashe rapidly acquires an archetypal importance. It becomes a struggle between good and evil carried on over the battlefield of the body. Surfeit and Rabelaisian grotesque battle with Lent, the restraint of Harvey's Muse and the discipline of new sciences: 'Such riotous and incestuous humours would be launced, not feasted' (2; 92). Harvey uses the imagery of the satirist in order to destroy satire, the vocabulary of carnival excess to make the case for a stricter reason. His self-denying aesthetic mirrors the reticence with which Harvey publicly declares himself in print, and which Nashe was to attack as self-deception.

Nashe is forced to frame his defence of carnival within a writer's concern for responsible competition with the masters of a literary form:

I am to be my own interpreter first in this case. I say, in Pierce Penilesse I have set downe nothing but that which I have had my president for in forraine writers, nor had I the least allusion to any man set above mee in degree, but onely glanc'st at vice generallie.

This language is shielded by precedent and custom, an appeal to an older cultural tradition than the literal authority of Harvey's puritanism.

The sanctuary of mere aesthetics is used a a defence against Harvey's appeal to authority, yet it is also true that Nashe rejects any assimilation of his style to tradition:

This I will proudly boast...that the vaine which I have...is of my own begetting, and calls no man father in England but my selfe, neyther, Euphues, not Tarlton, nor Greene. (1; 319)

Specific examples and repudiation of influence answer Harvey's charge of improper frivolity, but the passage also gives some credence to Harvey's suspicions. In effect, Nashe denies patriarchal authority and proclaims, like Milton's Satan, that he is self-begotten.

Nashe's stress on his originality may be a tactic designed to deflect the opprobrium aimed at him by Harvey's assault on licentious satirists. Harvey clearly anticipates a puritan redefinition of carnival in his
search for epithet and example to Nashe's invective:

Sir Skelton, and Master Scoggin, were but Innocents to Signior Capricio, and Monsieur Madnesse: whose pestilent canker scorneth all the Medicine or Earth, or heaven. (108)

The attack on Skelton seeks to link Nashe with the Elizabethan legend of:

a Skelton synonymous with popular and folk literature, with all the attendant implications of license and disorder. (26)

Harvey's Skelton is used in the same way to develop the familiar themes of the Foure Letters and Supererogation of the writer's responsibility to society, as well as to his own Muse.

iii

Nashe's tactics in the quarrel, guilty in themselves, are further blackened by association with a poet known for 'more rayling and scoffery then became a Poet Laureat'. (27) The Skelton of an earlier age, who 'did not omit to utter truth' under the mask of laughter, (28) is replaced by Harvey's figure of a poet who 'usurped' the title of Laureate, 'beeing in deed but a rude rayling rimer'. (Foure Letters, 7) Skelton, like Nashe and Greene, is enthroned by Harvey in the kingdom of his own imagination, enforcing a loss of political authority, but also its consequence.

For Arthur Dent, the 'counterfeiting' of 'Libles, Calumnies. Slaunders, Lies for the whetstone' all 'in the vaine of Skelton' is a Satanic conspiracy. Such works are:

devised by the divel: seene, and allowed by the Pope: Printed in hel: bound up by Hobgoblin: and first published and dispeseed in Rome, Italy, and Spaine. And all to this ende, that thereby men might be kept from the reading of the Scriptures. (29)

Harvey's case against Nashe can therefore be seen to recapitulate the debate begun by the School of Abuse and to constitute the most extreme case of 'judicial severity' in Nashe's dealings with his readers.

The main figure of contention in the quarrel between Harvey and Nashe is, however, that of Pietro Aretino, 'terrible in the viciousness of his life and of his writing'. (30)

There is little doubt that Aretino's name at least, was well known in Elizabethan England - Meyer claims to have collected over 500 references to him. (31) In his own lifetime (1492-1556), Aretino was known as the Scourge of Princes, a successful politician and polemicist. (32) The decade of his
defence by Nashe, however, is that in which Aretino became known as a pornographer in works by Greene, John Eliot, Lodge and Marston. (33) The dispute between Harvey and Nashe over this literary figure is, therefore, of the greatest importance, both helping to formulate opinion and being swept along by a growing consensus.

Despite the turning of the intellectual tide, with Ascham's attack in 1570 on 'bawdie books... translated out of the Italian tongue' (34), Harvey's early attitudes are highly favourable. In 1580 he complimented Spenser's Dreames:

*bicause they savour of that singular extraordinarie veine and invention which I ever fancied moste, and in a manner admired onelye in Lucian, Petrarche, Aretine, Pasquill...*(1; 93)

Entries in his Marginalia class the 'divine Aretino' with:

sweet Petrarch...worthie Ariosto, & excellent Tasso: foure famous heroique poets, as valorously brave, as delicately fine. (Marg 162)

'Unico Aretine' is praised further for his 'rare and hyperbolical Amplifications' and because his glory is to 'imitate none but himselfe & ever to maintaine his own singularity' (Marg 124 & 156). His political astuteness is classed with that of Machiavelli (109).

One must be wary of attaching too great an importance to Harvey's lists, however, and it may be that Harvey knew more of Aretino's reputation than of his actual writing. Nevertheless, the Aretino of the Marginalia is no monster and Harvey's original attitude seems to have been very similar to the one Nashe takes in the quarrel. Both writers admired the Italian for 'the rapid gusto with which he writes', the 'force... of nature herself'. (35) Both identified a procedure of the imagination outside convention.

In the flyting with Nashe, however, the ideal of a utilitarian and civically militant national literature contrasts Aretino with Petrarch whose:

elegant judgement gratiously confined Jove within the limits of Honour; Witt within the boundes of Discretion; Eloquence within the tearmes of Civility. (2; 93)

The reference to Jove not only alludes to the Greek deity's habit of ravishing young women (and implicitly condemns Aretino's pornographic Dialogues), but also sets in train a particularly important imagery in the quarrel. Writing is seen as a form of possession by both men: Harvey censoriously in his allegations of Pierce's alliance with the Devil; Nashe
in his jokes about Harvey's begetting (an ink bottle ravished his mother).

Harvey's sentence restores the proper order overturned by that writerly presumption which chained princes and defied authority. Petrarch is praised precisely for what Harvey sees as the subordination of his Muse to an overriding moral authority, vested in the secular authorities. Aretino's example is linked with Nashe's seditious meddling in affairs of state, in a reference to Nashe's boast at the end of Pierce Penilesse:

Unico Aretino will scourge Princes: and heere is a lusty ladd of the Cartell, that will binde Beares, and ride golden Asses to death. (2; 44)

Harvey's comparison is typically double-edged: Nashe's similarity to Aretino (whom Harvey of course, condemns), lies in his baiting of social superiors but exposes his inability to measure up to that standard.

Harvey's attacks on Aretino in the flyting are plainly inconsistent with his earlier praise, as Nashe is quick to point out:

I cannot see how the Doctours may well bee reconcild, one while to commend a man...and then in another booke afterward to come and call those singular extraordinarie admired men, a venemous and viperous brood of railers. (1; 284)

The shift in opinion may well be an opportunistic attempt to deny Nashe the moral high ground, or may simply reflect a genuine change in Harvey's judgement on closer examination of the works themselves. More probably, the shift is accounted for by the difference in audience. The Letters to Spenser were written for an elite, scholarly audience, from whom Harvey may well have expected a more sophisticated response. The flyting with Nashe, was capable of reaching a popular audience for whom the 'Scourge of Princes' was too dangerous.

It is certainly true that Harvey's attacks on Aretino in the flyting continue to display his understanding of the Italian writer's importance:

When the sweet youth haunted Aretine, and Rabelays, the two monstrous wittes of their languages, who so shaken with the furious feavers of the One; or so attainted with Pocks of the other. (1; 272-3)

Aretino and Rabelais are 'monsters' (composite creatures in the renaissance sense) because they have been transformed by the language they employ. They are marked by the monstrousness of the language they use, the price of their eloquence being this deformity.

In his more generous moments Harvey portrays himself as wishing to save Nashe from a similar fate:
Lord, what an egregious Aretin should we shortly have: how excessively exceeding Aretine himselfe; that bestowed the surmountingest amplifications at his pleasure, and was a meere Hyperbole incarnate.

(2; 55)

Nashe's skill as a writer is recognized, but it is distinguished from his failure as a moral citizen. The proper use of such a talent is not the monstrous wit of Aretino, which will turn Nashe into 'Hyperbole incarnate', but the use of poetry in the service of the nation-state.

Harvey's imagery underlines his understanding of Aretino's unique responsiveness to 'the rhetorical resources of the vernacular', (36) and his politic detestation of the satirist does not destroy a sense of his achievement. Addressing Nashe, Harvey writes:

had not Aretine bene Aretine, when he was, undoubtedlie thou hadst beene Aretine, gramercy capricious, and transcendent witte, the onelie high Pole artique and deep Minerall of an incomparable stile. (1; 201)

The detestation of the satirist's subject and methods is vitiated by the description of a mineral wealth in language uncovered by him. The subtext of deep mining, of 'vein' and 'extraction', constitutes a literal wealth of invention which gives much more weight and point to the final judgement of an 'incomparable' style.

Nashe's reply picks up the same point, stressing Nashe's own understanding of the quality Harvey discerned in Aretino and Rabelais:

Thou saiest I professe the art of railing: thou shalt not say so in vaine, for if there bee any art or depth in it, more than Aretine or Agrippa have discovered or dived into, looke that I will sounde it and search it to the uttermost. (1; 320)

What is important here is the imagery of interior space, of vast underground resources and the redefinition of a literary tradition which Harvey has tried to make his own - and employ against Nashe - as the proper exploitation of this new world. Art and depth: the science of anatomy. Nashe sketches out this tradition and uses it as his warrant. Cicero, Ovid, Agrippa and Aretino were all railers and Nashe does 'no more than their examples do warrant mee' (1; 394). Their licence is the dispensation in play from the moral codes which have exhausted the wealth of language and for that reason Nashe is determined to save Aretino from the moralists.

What Harvey cannot accept, is Aretino's evasion of a single responsibility for all his actions and behaviour. His attack concentrates on Aretino's new reputation as pornographer and what Harvey perceives as
the hypocrisy in the 'contrast between his religious works and his bawdry'. 

(37) His admiration for Aretino's imaginative fertility, could not survive 
the demand that the writer's moral countenance be displayed in his work. 
Nashe's own career displays such contradictory invention, and the awareness 
that carnival both mocks and restores the authority of the ideal. 

By refusing to don the satirical mask which Nashe (and behind him 
Aretino) continually holds out to him, Harvey confronts and exorcises the 
carnival demon in his own terms. By submitting his words to the decorum of 
always being himself - the quality he initially thought he could detect in 
Aretino - Harvey establishes his honesty to his own satisfaction. Both 
writers create in their own image a version of the writer they want to be 
and judge Aretino against this ideal. Harvey's principles of sobriety and a 
conscious poise lead him to reject Aretino; Nashe's impulse to a rhetorical 
elocution denied by no subject leads him to the opposite conclusion. The 
importance of the quarrel lies not in the reactions of individuals - 
interesting as they are - but in the fact that the two versions of Aretino 
on trial, are also versions of the future which the culture of Elizabethan 
England might generate for itself. 

The frequency of catalogue in the exchanges between Harvey and Nashe 
indicates the significance of Aretino's role. Harvey's Aretino, once fit 
company of epic poets, is now brother to all manner of rogues: 

Archilocus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Julian, Aretine...that whole venemous 
and viperous brood, of old and new Raylers. (1; 164) 

Nashe's reply sensibly places Aretino in the company of poets who were also 
'scolds' and 'railers' but whose minor faults must be forgiven them for 
their major virtues: 

Tully, Ovid, all the olde poets, Agrippa, Arstine, and the rest are all 
skolds and railers, and by thy conclusion flat shrewes and rakehells: 
for I doe no more than their examples do warrant mee. (1; 324) 
The two protagonists struggle not only to re-situate the author of 
contention within a certain interpretation of literary history, but also to 
identify him with a particular culture of ideas and sensibilities. 

Harvey's polemic attempts to convert Aretino's name into an adjective, 
to replace a pass-word to a complex and irreducible knowledge, with a 
cipher which can have only one meaning. Thus Greene becomes 'an abominable 
Aretinist: an Arch-Atheist' (1; 190). Harvey's description of Greene as an
'Aretinist' assumes its audience's prior agreement on the moral objectionability of Aretino and all his works: assuming this, it creates that which it assumes, or at least makes a contrary position more difficult. The uncomfortable, paradoxical figure of the professional satirist who wrote both pornography and theology, will then disappear for ever, beneath a prejudice made part of the very language.

Once Harvey forecloses investigation in this way, he shifts debate from the scholarly to the popular sphere. Nashe, who has no compunction in assisting the popular assassination of Machiavelli's reputation, is forced to defend Aretino's reputation away from the popular sphere. This ironic reversal - one of the few points during the great quarrel at which Harvey gains the advantage - is testimony both to Nashe's real regard for Aretino and to the weakness of that position by the end of the sixteenth century.

Aretino's importance to Nashe is impossible to overestimate. His contemporary reputation as 'true English Aretine', (38) was encouraged by Nashe, for 'of all stiles I most affect & strive to imitate Aretines' (3; 152). Both writers share a relish for exaggeration, particularly in physical description. Both use the familiar details of their day, landmarks, names, snatches of popular song for the purposes 'of ludicrous and repulsive comparison, which is the chief art of satirical journalism'. Words and phrases are 'invested with a physicality' which made both famous to their contemporaries. (39) But Nashe's Aretino is still that of the Scourge of Princes, 'that might strip these golden asses out of their gaié trappings' (1; 242), rather than the pornographer of Elizabethan legend.

The praise of Aretino set into The Unfortunate Traveller contains Nashe's most complete defence of the satirist and an extended essay on his own craft. The writer's privilege and duty is to maintain a loyal, but critical independence as 'no timorous servile flatterer of the commonwealth wherein he lived' (2; 265).

Instead, his role is to test the authority of those who have wealth or power on earth, an office in which he is - like Jack Wilton - ambiguously sanctioned by divine authority:

His sight pearst like lightning into the entrailes of all abuses. This I must saie, that most of his learning hee got by hearing the lectures at Florence. (2; 265)

Aretino's is an anatomical art (learnt at the anatomy theatre in Florence),
able, like the vision of God, to see beneath the flesh. By implication it 
is a defence of Nashe's stripping of Harvey's vanities from the concealed 
motive beneath.

Aretino wins Nashe's praise because his career illustrates perfectly 
the true relationship of the writer to the state. Power is vested not in 
the monarch, but is wielded by the chosen instruments of the divine will:

The French king, Frances the first, he kept in such awe, that to chaine 
his tongue he sent him a huge chaine of golde, in the forme of tongues 
 fashioned. (2; 265)
The unequal relationship between patron and writer, which increasingly 
haunted Nashe's later career, is here transformed into the patron's 
ineffectual attempt to master or deflect the power wielded by the socially 
inferior satirist.

The references to an art that strikes like lightning, to a 
'spiritualitie of artes' (2; 264), deliberately connect the satirist to the 
divine will. The poet does not create verses but transmits them as a 
'scourge of god'. (40) At the same time Nashe stresses equally archaic but 
more obviously pagan models to the poet's role. Where Christ's divinity is 
proved by his casting out of devils, the satirist's art is a possession:

No houre but hee sent a whole legion of devils into some heard of swine 
or other. (2; 264)
It is also a bacchanalian festival:

If Martiall had ten Muses...when he but tasted a cup of wine, he had ten 
score when he determined to tyrannize: nere a line of his but was able 
to make a man dronken with admiration. (2; 265)
Nashe's imagery is uncomfortably poised between a physical benediction and 
and a sublimation of the satirist's antecedents in a christian context. Thus, 
he praises Aretino for his devotional works, but also notes that 
'Singularly hath he commented of the humanitie of Christ' (2; 265), which 
suggests an insistence on the physical existence of the son of man at the 
expense of his divine origins.

Nashe's imagery connects Aretino's career with the archaic and 
fundamental origins of poetry and satire, but also attempts to defend him 
against specific charges by denying those implied associations. Nashe's 
Aretino boasts with Ovid 'My lyfe is chast though wanton be my verse', (2; 
266), a motto consistent with Nashe's own attempts to dissociate himself 
from his troublesome creation, Pierce Penilesse. The controversy over
Arzino's alleged authorship of the atheistic pamphlet, de tribus impostoribus Mundi, is attributed to professional jealousy and one of Machiavelli's followers, who:

> to avoyde discredit, filcht it forth under Aretines name, a great while after he had sealed up his eloquent spirit in the grave. (2; 265)

Harvey's attempts to prove the heretical or subversive qualities of Nashe's writings, has no actual foundation, but is merely the jealousy of a professionally inferior fellow writer. Where Harvey aims to define the writer's function as a literal subordination to authority and therefore insists on the same court of judgement over both politics and literature, Nashe defends an aesthetic of license whose rules are different to those governing affairs of state.

The cost of such outspokenness, taught by Nashe's experience with Pierce, is the discomfiture of the satirist:

> One of these months I shall challenge martirdome to my selfe, and write large stories of the persecution of tonges. (1; 131)

Aretino's art is perfectly free from censorship:

> His tongue & his invention were foreborne; what they thought, they would confidently utter... Princes hee spard not, that in the least point transgrest. His lyfe he contemned in comparison of the libertie of speech. (2; 265)

The artist's life becomes a function of his art and the 'persecution of tonges' which Nashe prophecies, is not merely authority's persecution of the writer, but the writer's own martyrdom by his art. Aretino's life is condemned by his art in the same way that Jack Wilton is condemned by the text to infinite pains.

Harvey's abuse of Greene concentrates on the extent to which Greene has become a prisoner of his own, licentious Muse, and Nashe an 'epitome' of 'Fantasticalitie'. His attack on satire concentrates on its unwarranted assumption of authority and betrays the implicit fear that language is originally powerful, distinctions of rank and personality merely its derivations.

Harvey's growing dislike of the satirist's office, and his election of a different type of seriousness, follows and reflects structural social change. The vocabulary of feast and of revealed interiors, which Harvey attempts to suppress, was already endangered by the time of the flyting. The old familiarity with the body was giving way to a new reticence, (41) a
The Flyting

discipline which would produce different but equally varied and fantastic codes for its production in political and philosophical discourse. Harvey's continual complaints of his eloquence misrepresented, articulate speech ruined by the bestial but unnatural Nashe, reflects this sea-change. The body is moving out of one kind of politics, refused by Harvey:

no pleader for the regiment of the feete over the hear, or the
government of the stomacke over the hart. (2; 153-4)

and into the new restraints and freedoms of another kind. It is for this reason that Harvey considers the state cannot support the licentiousness of the poets of the old body, Aretino, Nashe, Skelton.

Harvey's fear of a language in which individual characteristics are reduced to functions of language, anticipates a humane politics in which excessive and punitive force exerted over the body, will be gradually reduced. Nashe's determined rearguard defence of carnival, remembers an individuality of office, in which the satirist becomes great ('Il flagello de principi, Il veritiero, Il devino, & L'unico Aretino.': 2; 265) precisely in his abandonment to the impersonal forces of his discourse - 'the extemporall veine'. Harvey's argument reaches towards an individuality distinct, private, secluded: Nashe's prose is rooted in Bakhtin's unfinished body, public in all its activity of ingesting and excreting the world, dying and giving birth.

Francis Bacon's indictment of the Marprelate polemacists clearly indicates that the art of the satirist was falling into suspicion and disfavour:

it is more than time that there was an end and surseance made of this immodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertained, whereby matters of religion are handled in the style of the stage...to turn religion into a comedy or satire, to search and rip up wounds with a laughing countenance...is a thing far removed from the devout reverence of a Christian. (42)

The covering up of the body - a process already in operation but shortly to accelerate - and its restraint, are means which will bring it into the new economy of industrial narratives. The prodigality of the satirist becomes first offensive then an offence, as its freedoms become increasingly unprofitable. The violence of The Unfortunate Traveller and Have with You To Saffron Walden is then made incomprehensible to the judicial severity of the modern critic.
The aim of the flyting is not simply to entertain with a display of linguistic virtuosity and fantastic invention, but to destroy the credibility and reputation of the opponent, inventing a profitable adversary in his place. The imagery of chivalric personal combat only frames the main business of the flyting. The ceremonial of the court co-exists with an equally ceremonial violence, whose subject is:

- the diseases of the skin, the size of the nose, the odor of breath,
- poetic ability, ancestry, sexual aberrations, and in general the pride, hypocrisy and stupidity of their subjects. (1)

The Italian debates saw 'the most incredibly base and obscene accusations' which, nevertheless, were 'regarded at the time with enjoyment and admiration'. (2) Nashe's grotesque treatment of Harvey in Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden strips his antagonist of his humanity.

The texts of the flyting attempt to identify the adversary as exemplary victim and incite his punishment. Both writers attempt to ally themselves with a power of judgement. Nashe threatens Harvey that 'eyes that pierce into all estates, saw thee when thou wert unseen of thy selfe' (1; 295). Harvey also seeks to identify himself with the authoritative eye of God, taking comfort in the thought (imitated from Plutarch) that:

- there is an eie, that pierceth into the secretes sinnes, and most inscrutable thoughts of profoundest Hypocrisy. (1; 211)

Where Harvey seeks to place his own malice above the battlefield, however, Nashe's strategies identify the same kind of public execution which was wished upon Martin Marprelate by the anti-Martinists and is visited upon Cutwolfe in The Unfortunate Traveller. From hyperbolic abuse, through various punishments of law, Harvey is subjected to a gamut of popular and judicial tortures.

The invention of the public scaffold which Nashe prepares for Harvey, requires the invention of an audience accustomed to such spectacles. In the first section of this chapter I will examine how the two writers compete to establish a specific and favourable audience.
Differences in the rival definitions of audience can most clearly be seen in the dedications and prefaces of the works involved. Nashe's preface to *Have With You To Saffron Walden* is a parody dedication to the barber of Trinity College, whereas Harvey dedicates the *Foure Letters* to 'all Courteous Mindes, that will Vouchsafe the reading'. Strange Newes is 'conceived of in terms that recall those used in a learned disputation, or... court of law'. (3) The dignity and rational debate of the logic schools is turned upside down by the popular abuse they are made to contain.

Harvey opposes Nashe's carnival with the concept of a scholar's democracy, a reason which was shortly to become revolutionary. Harvey lays open his argument to criticism and reconstruction: Nashe's humour is democratic in a different sense. It is populist, in that it speaks to an audience raised on carnival assumptions, but it also reserves an absolute power to itself. The barber of Trinity College, the snatches of popular ballads and frequent place-names that litter Nashe's prose may belong to the public domain, but the intelligence that directs them is monarchical and presumptive. Harvey's textual democracy is oligarchic, Nashe's is populist but tyrannical.

Harvey seeks to reserve debate to scholarly proprieties and to a domestic setting of intellectual peers. Both writers:

wanted to emphasise that his works were extemporaneous so that he would appear a ready wit, fit for employment in matters of the world. (4)

Nashe, explicitly searching for such a formula since his preface to *Menaphon* had posited the existence of an 'extemporall vaine', was better able to create this necessary fiction of spontaneity.

Moreover, Nashe was aided by the fact that Harvey's persona was already public property, having being mocked in a Cambridge play, *Pedantius*:

Nashe's ludicrous portrait of Harvey...is a perfect description of the character of Pedantius as presented in the play. (5)

Harvey was both unwilling to confront Nashe on his own terms and disabled by his preceding appearances on the literary stage.

It is not surprising then, that as Harvey became increasingly aware of Nashe's comic skill he should also fear:

a number of greedy Eares, that egerly longe, and as it were daunce

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attendaunce, to heare those dreadfull invincible termes, steeped in Aquafortis, & Gunpowder. (Letters 216)

Harvey typically makes light of popular judgement, but Nashe too, is wary of the audience whose approval he invites, when attacking those whom:

to recreate and enkindle their decayed spirites... care not how they set Harvey and mee on fire against another, or whet us on to consume ourselves. (3; 29)

Once engaged in the flyting, the authors of the quarrel were to find themselves as much manipulated as manipulating.

A pair of those 'greedy eares' belonged to Henry Chettle, whose Kind Harts Dreame reproaches Pierce Penilesse with allowing the Harveys' damaging accusations to go unanswered:

Pierce, more witless than pennilesse; more idle than thine adversaries ill imployde; what foolish innocence hath made thee (infantlike) resistless to beare what ever injurie Envie can impose? (6)

The satirist-executioner, powerful as he seemed, was subject to the jurisdiction of the audience before which he performed. As with Cutwolfe's execution, the audience is not simply a cipher to the execution of the art, but takes an active part in the administration of justice. If the satirist is not skilfull or inventive enough then the audience will turn on him, and re-christen him 'with a hundred Titles of Idiotisme', or 'more witless than pennilesse' as Chettle puts it. If the executioner does not please the mob with his skill at torture, he may find himself on the receiving end of popular violence.

Throughout both Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden, Nashe pays court to this audience, called into being by him, but endowed with its own capacity of invention and torture. The beginning of Strange Newes indicates the fate Nashe has in mind for Gabriel. Like Jack Wilton he is to be infamously preserved in the ballads of the common people, in this case 'to the tune of 0 man in Desperation' (1; 265). It is this public - 'the united voyce and opinion abroad' (3; 26) - that is the real judge. Nashe is merely its advocate.

At the heart of Strange Newes the writer takes his place among the audience to his satire. He invokes a company of writers to judge Harvey:

Hough, Thomas Delone, Phillip Stubs, Robert Armin, &c. Your father Elderton is abus'd. Revenge, revenge on course paper and want of matter, that hath most sacriligiously contaminated the divine spirit & quintessence of a penny a quart. (1; 280)
The imagery unifies allusions to the law court, parliament, a circus burlesque of these, theatrical tragedy and its anthropological analogue of the public execution. The writer speaks:

as if he were standing in the throng, the assembled guild of writers, and calls for blood. (7)

Harvey's crime has been to libel the dead, the ghosts honoured by the community. Nashe's abuse is not the settlement of a private quarrel, but an act of revenge sanctioned by all the 'Poets and writers about London' whom Harvey 'mistermed... piperly make-plaies and make-bates' (1; 271).

Against this popular judgement Harvey revives the fear of the levelling influence of the press:

The Print is abused, that abuseth: and earnestly beseecheth flourishing writers, not to troubleth the Presse, but in case of urgent occasion, or important use. (1; 231)

As Stephen Hilliard points out, Harvey's objection to Greene and Nashe is initially utilitarian; their pamphlets serve no purpose. (8) The space devoted to trivia reduces that available for more important matters; the acclaim given to nonsense, devalues the pursuit of scholarship.

Among 'the most contemptible fellowship of the scribblinge crew' (1; 222), Greene is singled out for particular condemnation:

Greene with the running Head, and the scribling Hand, that never linnes putting-forth new, newer, and newest bookes of the maker. (1; 187)

Harvey continually identifies Nashe and his supposed mentor Greene with the age of print, in which the garrulousness of the mob and the democracy of the press threaten to destroy distinctions of reason and taste. He particularly disapproves of romance and legend and the types of imaginative invention they fostered (2; 66-7), popular forms, but ones which peddled a version of the aristocratic good life.

For Nashe, Harvey's professed distaste for the business of writing and print is an example of his hypocrisy:

observe the proud humor of the pert Didimus, that thinks nothing hee speakes but deserves to be put in print... (1; 271)

He labels Harvey a 'letter-munger'; one who peddles literary goods advertising his private self, much as a coster-monger does his wares.

Yet Nashe also appears to attack the age of print in Gossonian terms and formally condemn the craft of the professional writer. The apparent identity of tactics hides a basic difference in strategy: Nashe does not
attack the popular press as such, but rather particular pamphlets and writers. Where Harvey diagnoses a general social malaise from the typical products of such as Greene, Nashe's attacks are specifically directed:

Tender itchie brainde infants, they car'd not what they did, so they might come into print: and of that strain are a number of mushrumpes more, who pester the world with Pamphlets. (3; 109)

This attack is directed not against the phenomenon of printed popular literature from the viewpoint of a high minded academic observer - a persona of 'Olympian disdain for the lowly practitioners of commercial literature' (9) - but is the commercially shrewd assault of a professional writer against his rivals.

In fact, Nashe's use of popular techniques, the very tone of his comedy, invites a popular audience. The title - 'Strange Newes Of the intercepting certayne Letters, and a Convoy of Verses' - suggests that its contents report some monstrous or prodigal event of the type which was massively popular in the sixteenth century. (10) The primitive method of news-gathering and the liberties which writers and printers alike took with facts provide Nashe with a model to misquote and misconstrue his opponent's sense and words with impunity. Most important of all, the choice of the genre identifies the central issue of the Foure Letters - 'Harvey's disapprobation of literary professionals who cater to popular taste'. (11)

The mediaeval flyting presented to Nashe a different version of the complicity between executioner and victim he identified in The Unfortunate Traveller. Harvey becomes the 'exemplary victim' on whom Nashe practises a forensic art of torture, as a display for the entertainment of the mob and in the service of the state.

In a shame culture, a public controversy of this kind, puts at stake the vital sense of personal identity, marking the victim with the physical deformities of infamy. There is, in such a culture, 'Nothing more deere, or estimable, then a mans good name' (1; 167). For this reason caricature, 'the deliberate distortion of a particular individual's features for purposes of laughter or mockery', (12) probably came into being as a distinct art form no earlier than the late sixteenth century:

Wherever it is not considered a joke, but rather a dangerous practice to
distort a man's features, even on paper, caricature as an art cannot develop. (13)

Although the duel may have begun as a 'staged' literary quarrel, 'by the second round each man's honor was at stake'. (14) As the quarrel intensified, 'issues were obfuscated in favour of more personal and strident invective'. (15) If Nashe uses the quarrel primarily as the 'occasion for a literary exercise', Harvey's pamphlets are the work of a man 'with whom the abuse and the impudence of Greene and Nashe really rankled'. (16)

The ideal flyting involved only the pretence of anger, but in practise this dissociation was difficult to achieve. Filelfo's quarrels with literary contemporaries, for instance, often went beyond merely verbal vituperation to the use of hired cut-throats, (17) for:

In an honour society, violence, or the ever-present possibility of violence, was a way of life. (18)

Nicholas Upton, in the early fifteenth century, considered that aristocratic duelling incurred no blame as long as the intention was not malicious but merely to display strength or gain honour. But the sixteenth-century lawyer, Feretti,

regarded hatred as inherent in the nature of the duel, the result of the universal enmity which was apparent in the law of nature. (19)

Nashe's writing continually begs the question that parody, invective and satire target literary form, without damaging its human content.

The introduction to Have With You To Saffron Walden figures the damage done to Nashe's reputation in insistently physical terms. While Harvey lives 'unanswered', Nashe lives:

A disgraced and condemned man...worse than he that hath peacably and quietly put up an hundred bastinadoes, or suffred his face to be made a continual common wall for men to spit on... (3; 27)

The eye of the writer is fixed on the largest possible history, situating his own reputation in a contemporary landscape, but also concerned with:

an age to come, which, knowing neither thee nor him, but by your severall workes...will authorise all hee hath belched forth in thy reproach for sound Gospell... (3; 27)

Imagery which evokes the struggle between heresy and orthodoxy to control history is not coincidental in a literary conflict whose methods are, at times, virtually indistinguishable from those of religious persecution and
Indeed, it is Nashe's presumption in naming the objects of his censure in The Anatomy of Absurdity, which provokes Richard Harvey's assault on him in The Lamb of God:

The Lamb of God make him a better Lamb heereafter then he hath beene heeretofore, and teach him now to dispute rather ad rem, then ad personam, especially till he hath reformed his owne person... (20)

In Strange Newes Nashe comments on the reception given to Pierce Penilesse's 'beast fables' and laments the loss of freedom enjoyed in the time of Aesop when their 'allusion':

was not restrained to any particular humor of spite, but generally applyed to a generall vice. Now a man may not talke of a dog but it is surmised he aimes at him that giveth the dog in his Crest. (1; 261)

The author finds it necessary to disclaim particular application of his allegory to 'any man set above mee in degree', arguing that he 'onely glanc'st at vice generallie' (1; 320). True to the ideals of the flyting and to the aesthetic of the satirist - who must discover vice without detecting it in himself - Nashe disclaims any degree of actual hostility to Harvey.

Despite this proviso, several of the techniques used by Nashe are associated with propaganda of the period. The construction of figures from accumulated and often incongruous details may be seen not only in Nashe's Dame Niggardize, or his portrait of Harvey in Have With You To Saffron Walden, but also in popular pamphlets such as A Strange Monster Born In Rome, which details a Papal and Imperial conspiracy against English Protestantism by the figurative means of a fantastic birth. The Scottish flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy used national and racial xenophobia as one of its strategies of abuse: Nashe identifies himself with the national community and Harvey with a traditional enemy - the Scots - in Have With You To Saffron Walden (3; 35). It was no doubt useful for Nashe to counter Harvey's allegations of sedition by a comic invective against Harvey as a monstrous threat to the English way of life, but in using such techniques he also incites an exemplary violence against his opponent.

The Harvey-Nashe quarrel must be considered not only as a flyting or literary game, but in the context of the interrogatory scandals surrounding Machiavelli, Aretino, Martin Marprelate and Marlowe - the 'vague and
terrifying' words which described interchangeably 'all varieties of dissenters'. (21)

The fate of dissenters was decided by a political culture used to defining itself against the heretical or atheistical void. Christendom itself, 'surrounded itself with defences against Islam'. (22) Both Nashe and Harvey justify their own aggression in the flying reference to their opponent's. Harvey's Nashe is a demonic figure, running riot over whole civilisations, while in Nashe's hands Harvey becomes the exemplary victim of a culture well used to the spectacle of torment. Harvey's humanity is distorted and finally lost beneath the ritual function he is made to fulfill.

These tactics are prefigured in the case of Machiavelli and Martin Marprelate. Machiavelli, for instance, became:

a sort of rallying point for whatever was most loathsome in statecraft, and indeed in human nature at large. The political devices he had studied in past history, in order to infer from those historical practises the laws of a political science, were fathered upon him as if he had been not their expounder but their actual inventor. (23)

Harvey in earnest, and Nashe in jest, attempt to enforce a similar metamorphosis on their opponent. Harvey deliberately conflates Nashe with his creation Pierce and with a whole host of imputed and atheistical qualities. Nashe invents a Harvey at once both loathsome and risible - almost a definition of the enemy in Christian culture.

Nashe's references to Machiavelli exhibit the Italian political writer before the reader as the chief prize of bestiaries, or as an adjective for particularly virulent forms of moral sickness: 'an aposta, an hypocrite, a Machiavell, a cousner, a jugler, a letcher' (3; 137), or:

lastly, under hypocricie, all Machiavellisme, puritanisme, and outward gloasing with a man's enemie. (1; 220. See also 3; 138)

In the epistle to the printer which precedes Pierce Penilesse, Machiavelli keeps company with:

Tully, Ovid, Roscius, Pace the Duke of Norfolk's jester, and lastly the Ghost of Robert Greene. (1; 153)

The printer is blamed for being 'so forward' in publishing his tract that he was not able to include 'certayne Epistles to Orators and Poets'. The presence of Machiavelli marks an occupation by the instability of triviality or evil: he is marked down as a denizen of the poet's
licentiousness.

The reputation finally enjoyed by Machiavelli led to mock lives being written about of him, of the kind in Greene's Groatsworth Of Wit, in which he is portrayed as a bad and ignorant man, addicted to all vices, hating his country and dying in despair. His name is coupled with those of Ignatius Loyola and Aretino to make the imaginary monster the 'Mach-Aretino'. The distortions of his name are 'an emblem of his villainy'. Nashe's mock-biography of Harvey is a comic masterpiece, but it recalls the character assassination of the Italian writer. The ingenuity of epithets for Machiavelli is matched by the comic fertility of Nashe's amazing list of fantastic names for Harvey and the technique is the same. The context of literary game only imperfectly divides his treatment of Harvey from the persecution of Machiavelli.

The distortions of name, in which Machiavelli was exiled beyond the pale of civilisation, were extended in the Marprelate controversy into a literary interrogation of the author's fictional body. The danger offered to the political culture of Elizabethan England by the Martinist campaign, lay in its setting of theological debate in the languages of popular humour. Martin threatened to appeal directly to those classes excluded from affairs of state. This potentially revolutionary innovation produced an extraordinary counter-offensive by the bishops. Professional writers - including Lyly, less certainly Nashe himself - were hired to reply in the same kind of carnival violence.

The radical theology in Martin's pamphlets was replaced in the anti-Martinist publications by an extensive imagery of juridical torture. The campaign against Marprelate was a deadly version of the flying, in which 'the effect produced is that of listening to the voice of the people itself'. (24) Only this time the voice of the people - like the crowd at Cutwolfe's execution - demanded ritual sacrifice, rather than the anatomisation of political power. The replacement of political debate by the ritual spectacle of the condemned man's passion can also be seen in the flying.

The anti-Martinist shows put on in the play-houses demonstrated the tactics of the campaign clearly. They showed Martin 'attired like an Ape on ye Stage' and dressed with 'a cocks combe, an apes face, a wolfs bellie,
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cats clawes, &c'. Martin's appearance was in itself an act of revenge, but worse was applied. He was put to 'the paine of worming and launcing', physicians 'opened the vaine that feeds his head' and pronounced that 'he would spit out his lunges within one yere'. (25)

The imagery of surgery and torture mixed, in the interrogation of Marprelate, as it does in Cutwolfe's death. A popular taste in torture led to Martin being:

ridiculed as a May-game scapegoat and figuratively purged with the apparatus of medical and judicial torture. (26)
The game became a blind, used to give 'a comic preview of the torture and execution of the Martinist writers'. (27) The rendering apart of Martin's words was followed by the literal interrogation of the suspected Martinist writers, discovered by real instruments of torture.

The clownishness and verbal invention of the early Martinist pamphlets became an insistent return to 'the state of the poor men that are taken', (28) dwelling on the horrors of capture and interrogation: 'halter, axe, bonds, scourging and racking'. It is no accident that Nashe's imagery of interpretation, of the derivation of meaning from a text, is almost wholly either that of mineral exploitation of natural wealth or of juridical torture - or that the two are intimately linked. Both are examples of a nation state growing in power and abrogating ever more extensive privileges to itself. The comedy of Nashe's anatomy of Harvey must be read in the context of this, more sober and disconcerting violence.

iii

The idea of words that cannot be redeemed from the actions they produce, is a unifying motif in Nashe's work, which assumes the mystical powers of curse and invocation, still an immediate memory in the late sixteenth century. The curse spoken over Jerusalem leads to a literal destruction, while Gabriel Harvey is captured in the ridiculous versions of his name: 'They are his owne wordes, hee cannot goe from them' (1; 257). Conventional remarks are used to isolate their speaker in a grotesque particularity, but Nashe is always able to claim that 'just as it is there, in his owne text it comes together' (3; 43).

Harvey identifies the source of Nashe's strategies when he complains,
in Pierce's Supererogation, that:

his only Art, and the vengeable drift of his whole cunning, to mangle my sentences, hack my arguments, chopp and change my phrases, wrinch my words, and hale every sillable most extremely; even to the dis-joynting, and maiming of my whole meaning. (2; 115)

The evocation of honour meant that any course of action acquired an 'ultimate' character: 'Once honour is in question life itself has to be staked on it'. (29) Nashe's imagery of torture exhibits Harvey 'since my strappadoing and torturing him' (3; 91).

Harvey's language, therefore, becomes a weapon, dispossessed by its auditor, stolen from the original speaker, whose essence it magically conveys. Using Harvey's own words in this way creates a powerful image of constraint, of the body present but unable to control the use to which it is put. It is Harvey who declares that 'I am to make an use of my adversaries abuse (1; 165), but it is Nashe who most successfully does so.

Harvey is converted by Nashe into a thing of words: those words are then made into a flesh that can be tortured and anatomised. His works are figured in the imagery of food: 'this Gargantuan bag-pudding stuffed with tripes and entrails' (3; 34 also 35, 36), or:

da dozen spare-ribs of his rhetorique, with tart sauce taunts correspondent... (3; 41 and 3; 80)

Nashe imagines himself both as an executioner, preparing the condemned man for judgement and a butcher, preparing a carcass for human consumption and profit, 'unbowelling' Harvey's book like a 'leane Carcase' (1; 272).

Harvey is also figured as a sacrificial animal, delivered not to a jealous god, but to the pleasure of the crowd, baited 'worse than a bull' (1; 319). This leads, by verbal association, to 'Bull the hangman, that he may dispatch thee'. Nashe's wit leads the reader into carnival locations: the exercise of justice is seen in terms of the preparation of food. Natural order is inverted, in the same way that many sixteenth-century cartoons depicted animals flogging, riding or butchering men. (30)

The stealing of Harvey's words is not only the theft of linguistic property, but also a mangling of his essential humanity. Nashe's vengeance on Harvey is essentially an economic exploitation, conducted via an imagery of commerce, that values Harvey's text as various profitable forms of produce. Nashe sets a monetary value on Harvey's literary pretensions by
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valuing the Foure Letters as 'certaine foure peniworth of Letters and three farthing-worth of sonnets' (1; 256). In Have With You To Saffron Walden he discovers 'a whole Gravesend barge full of Newes' and unpacks it to find:

a packet of Epistling, as bigge as a Packe of Woollen cloth, or a stack of salt-fish. (3; 33)

Harvey's pages are used for basting paper and are cherished like large cheeses (3; 14). Nashe makes fun of the great bulk of the Supererogation by comparing it to Africa because of its size and barrenness (3; 36). Nevertheless, Africa is an Elizabethan place of wonders concealed and marvels made real and represents a source of imaginative, if not of commercial wealth.

Harvey's style is also described in terms of bestiality and fertility, a 'littour of inckehornisme that those foure pages have pig'd' (1; 272). The remaking of his literary productions into the lower stratum of animal existence and the comparison with a farm animal, whose existence is exploited by man for his own profit, indicates that Nashe is using Harvey instrumentally, in order to implement the 'extemporall veine'. The absurd comparisons with which he christens Harvey constitute a kind of treasure. The derangements, mutilations and perversions of Harvey's person have a 'heuristic value; through them we may discover... singularly beautiful and grotesque forms of humour'. (31)

The means of production are conjoined with a barbaric cruelty wreaked upon Nashe's 'exemplary victim'. The grotesque style habitually and surgically uncovers the hidden places of the body. This is a production of wealth, an evasion of authority in the limitless interiors of the body, but it also reflects a form of power which disciplines by the arts of pain. The displayed autonomy of language and the violence that autonomy does to man in the flying with Harvey, parallels the barbarities of The Unfortunate Traveller in which bodies are torn apart. It also invokes the grotesque portraits of Pierce Penilesse, in which the human body is made a rhetorical pattern reflecting on the virtuosity of its authors, Nashe, and his surrogate, the anonymous executioner.

The virtuosity of Nashe's language leads to a dissociation of literary expression from the recognition of human kind which is profoundly disturbing. The parodist's target 'is not the social fact, but the literary
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form'. (32) When literary form is conflated with the integrity of the human body - and perhaps that integrity is more bound up with aesthetic categories and responses than we would care to admit - such a distinction becomes difficult to make. Shakespeare's Autolycus devotes his dazzling literary skills to lavish accounts of incredible cruelties, mixing the reader's responses and encouraging an 'apparent reneging of the emotions'.

The assault upon Harvey cannot be exempted from these charges. As H.D.Duncan notes, ridicule arouses a hatred which reduces the ridiculer's 'burden of consciousness' and neutralises 'the power of the victim'. (33) By ascribing ignoble and ludicrous characteristics to a minority group or scapegoated individual, ridicule legitimates the opinion of the majority or the power of the elite:

We share our humour with those who have shared our history and who understand our way of interpreting experience. (34)

Often there is an obvious victim in Nashe's pamphlets - Cutwolfe in The Unfortunate Traveller, Harvey himself, the 'exemplary victim', both risibly and sinisterly Italianate. But more than this Nashe's caricature constructs a constant victim in its very structures.

The Marprelate model of comic and grotesque violence contained by the structure of game - which is also the model of the flyting - has an important and long standing precedent in the Corpus Christi drama. The Vice in The Trial of Treasure observes of the audience: 'Ye have no pity on me, you, I see, by your laughing'. (35) The laughter of Have With You To Saffron Walden is a disquieting form of violence, rooted in popular art forms and sanctioned by the great model of hell itself, the torture-room of condemned desires.

The paradoxical relationship between authors in the flyting and in the Marprelate polemic - antagonism and collaboration - is the secret complicity of executioner and condemned man. The reader of An Almand for a Parrat gains glimpses of an allegiance shared by the writers, rather than given by the writer to the cause, when the author wishes 'authority do not moderate the fiery fervence of my enflamed zeale' (3; 369):

for now a dayes a man cannot have a bout with a Balletter, or write Midas habiet aures asininas in great Romaine letters, but hee shall bee in daunger of a further displeasure. Well, come on it what will, Martin and I will allow of no such doings; wee can cracke half a score blades
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in a back-lane though a Constable come not to parte us. (3; 341-2) The Martinists and their opponents 'speak the same language' (though Lyly at least was careful to dissociate himself from it). The professional's pride in his skill means that the reader of An Almand 'glimpses a kind of covert allegiance between the antagonists'. (36) The secret cameraderie of heretics and their gaolers divides not orthodoxy and heresy, but the true society of clowns and carnival demons from their identical masters.

Where Harvey tries to identify Nashe with 'masterless men' and Machiavellian threats to society, Nashe insists on the covert alliance of 'Harvey and I (a couple of beggars)' who 'take upon us to bandie factions' (3; 19). This is a judgement which the bishops followed when they issued their banning order on them both.

The construction of the victim justifies the violence used against him, not merely within the flying but upon it. The bishops' response identified both Harvey and Nashe as the victims of the law, as the quarrel took on a life, 'dashing their prospects and damaging their reputations even before the bishops banned their works'. (37) Nashe observes that:

All the controversie is no more but this, he began with mee, and cannot tell how to make an end; and I would faine end or rid my hands of him, if he had not first begun. (3; 19)

Once invoked, the language of violence is only partially the antagonists' to command and they become vulnerable to the audience's own 'desires of revenge and innovation'. It is in the nature of festive game that the audience possess a power of intervention.

A rational settlement of the dispute would disappoint an audience invested by the authors with some power. Moreover, maintaining honour fastens them to the necessity of having the 'last word'. Giving one's word of honour bound the gentleman to a specific and public course of action, making withdrawal possible 'only at the price of public diminishment'. (38) Nashe is able to insist that Harvey adopt or admit a particular interpretation - 'they are his owne wordes he cannot goe from them'.

Both Harvey and Nashe become characters of their own making, placing themselves on a stage and at the disposal of its spectators. Harvey loses his autonomy because he is cast in the role of ceremonial victim, a secular Martin, condemned purely for entertainment. Nashe is threatened with loss of control, for if his abilities fail him, he will be sacrificed by the mob
which expects a display of skill and ingenuity from its showman, the executioner, and if it does not get it will intervene on its own behalf.

Language comes to possess an autonomy which does violence to humanity, as both authors are dispossessed of their authority, by placing arbitration with the audience they invoke in their own interests. Thus Harvey identifies Greene as 'an Epitome of fantasticalitie' and 'notoriously grown a very proverbe of Infamy, and contempt' (1; 162-3). Greene is punished for his licenciousness by becoming a byword for it, an instance of the language he himself abused, to be abused by other men. He flourishes only in the memory of those who are 'wedded to the wantonnesse of their own fancy'.

These techniques were pioneered in the campaign against Marprelate, whose object was:

to write him out of his right wittes...til we have brought Martin to the ablative case, that is, to bee taken away with Bulls voider. (39)

- where a voider is a tray for removing the remains of a meal, and Bull was the Tyburn hangman until the turn of the century. The wordplay reveals the dissection of humanity by language, and the torturer's interrogation of the condemned man to be intimately linked. The authors in the flyting may be seen as impostors, adopting like armour a rhetorical persona in order to do battle. The literary criticism of Harvey's text undertaken by Nashe, reveals a malicious pleasure in outlining and hence rendering redundant the imposture of the text, anatomising in the service of a comic god, the real 'body' of the text beneath.

It is Nashe's treatment of Harvey which demonstrates this rule of the flyting most clearly, however. He observes,

how affluent and copious thy name is in all places, though Erasmus in his Copia verborum never mentions it. (3; 6)

Harvey is resumed into a language not his to direct. He loses his polemical self in a collection of phenomena, of the kind Celia becomes when she loses her integrity in Volpone's speech of seduction:

By the time Nashe has finished his picture, Harvey has ceased to be a historical figure, bounded by place and time, and has become a timeless artefact. (40)

Nashe confers upon Harvey a strange kind of literary infamy. In the same way, the king's judgement - in which the people with its folk ballads and communal memory collaborates - translated the condemned bandit into heroism
or speechless notoriety by the instrument of his punishment.

In the flyting, style reverses roles with its author: 'Instead of the style being the creation of the man, the man becomes the puppet of the style. (41) Harvey's humanity becomes increasingly a matter for dissection and language becomes humanised, 'these impertinent Parentheses' (3; 60) confronting a tortured Harvey. As Jack Wilton's fate was to be recreated in the pains of a text that he did not recognise, Harvey's similar tragedy is to be caught within a fiction which he denies but within which he is remade all the same. Both Jack and Harvey struggle to assert their independence and humanity in the face of a monstrous and punitive text which insists on their fictionality.

Gabriel's predicament is that of all sinners - his own nature. Nashe is not an arbitrary persecutor (as Harvey sees him), but, Job-like, Jack Wilton-like, appointed by Harvey's own faults and sins as executioner. Harvey's nature becomes a text to condemn him, as Nashe notes:

that thou beeing afraide of bewraying thy selfe with writing, wouldest faine been a mute, when it is too late. Againe, thou revivest on us and saist that mutes are coursed and vowels haunted. Thou art no mute, yet shalt thou be haunted and coursed to the full. I will never leave thee as long as I am able to lift a pen. (1; 319)

Gabriel's punishment is not enforced, but rather is written into the fabric of a language which betrays his essential vacuity and malice, even as he attempts to use it against others.

Harvey's reasoned thrusts are ironically converted into grotesquely physical replies. Partly, this is done as a deliberate defence of comedy against the opposing emphasis on the utilitarian value of literature. Yet, as Harvey complains, the process is disturbingly archaic and primitive:

It had bene a worthy exploit, and beseeming a witt of supererogation, to have dipped a sopp in a goblet of rennish wine; and naming it Gabriel, (for you are now growne into great familiaritie with that name) to have devoured him upp at one bit.

He asks Nashe

Did you never heare of detestable Jewes, that made a picture of Christ; and then buffetted, cuggelled, scourged, crucified, stabbed, pierced, and mangled the-same most unmercifuly ? (2; 113)

Nashe is cast in the role of worshipper at a satanic parody of communion, with Harvey's blood and body as the body and soul of Christ. Nashe is accused of defacing Harvey's image, in the same way that Jews were supposed
to defile Christian images and icons. Nashe's grotesques, in this reading, are not harmless toys, but test the tolerance of taboos against deforming man made in God's image. By implication, his caricatures of Harvey are a ritual defacement of the divine person. They use a form of sympathetic magic, devouring the flesh of the enemy in order to appropriate his attributes. In mangling Harvey's person in his words Nashe makes Harvey's meaning his own, but impairs the integrity of the human body.
The period of almost two years between the publications of Richard Harvey's *The Lamb of God* and Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*, is the most intriguing aspect of the chronology I have described. Sidney Thomas has suggested that the Nashe-Harvey quarrel, assumed to be in abeyance between these two works, was, in fact, very much alive. In Richard Harvey's epistle 'To his loving brother, Master Gabriell Harvey, Doctor of Lawes', inserted in *Philadelphus* (1593), Thomas claims to have detected allusions to the 'missing' works of the controversy. (1) I would like to suggest an alternative explanation of the 'missing' years which takes account of the internal evidence of the texts themselves.

The polemical basis of Nashe's muse has long been recognized. The Marprelate controversy was instrumental in the development of Nashe's early style, (2) and *The Unfortunate Traveller* is informed throughout by the techniques of polemic. (3) Nashe's literary motives are those of rhetorical man, 'characteristically ludic, antagonistic'. (4)

G.R. Hibbard assumes Nashe's authorship of *An Almand For A Parrat* and suggests that Nashe learnt from the polemic the possibilities of invective and caricature:

At its conclusion one can imagine him looking eagerly round for a fresh victim and butt to take the place of Penry and his associates. (5) Richard Harvey's assault in *The Lamb of God* and Gabriel Harvey's willingness to be provoked, suggested to Nashe the perfect replacement. Since the silencing of Martin removed the opportunity for a vituperative style licensed by the state, 'Nashe invented one in a supposed private quarrel with a well-known University man'. (6) *Pierce Penilesse* is not a link to a missing work, but opportunistically revives the debate between the anti-Martinists and the Harveys, as a suitable pretext for a virtuoso display of literary invention.

Both writers had different motives in embracing the quarrel. Harvey wished to be called finally into the government service that had eluded him. The values of Pierce's Supererogation and the Foure Letters are those appropriate to such an end: scholarship, devotion to the national good and
politecal acumen. Nashe hoped to find:

a regular patron who would reward him for writing the satiric defences
of orthodox values that were his speciality. (7)

and his purpose 'was rather to bring the writer and his wit into notice
than to clear him of the aspersions cast upon him'. (8)

Both men promoted themselves under cover of defending their
reputations, a 'risky but not unheralded route to preferment', (9) whose
precedents include the mediaeval flytings, mock academic debates, and
several 'notorious' Continental quarrels in print, in which the dispute
served as the occasion of 'an elaborate, if peculiar rhetorical exercise'.
(10) If not quite a "'put up affair" between the parties', (11) the reader
should always bear in mind the degree of calculation underlying the
fantastic scales of abuse and tallies of invective developed by Nashe.

Nashe's use of Harvey, as an instrument of invention, is in the direct
tradition of the flyting. The common theme of the Scottish and English
flytings, and the quarrels between Italian scholars of the Renaissance, is
the new-found resource of the vernacular and its most effective
exploitation. Dunbar praises Chaucer, Gower and Lydgate in his poems
because they had 'our rude langage... clere illumynate' and links his own
poetry of flyting with their heroic examples. In Renaissance Italy the
early humanists discovered in classical texts 'this freedom of railing' and
'the vituperative art reached almost unimaginable heights'. (12)

One of the most important themes of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, then, is
that of the mineral exploitation of a language, the search for a
'profitable' vein of invention which is Nashe's unifying preoccupation from
the preface to Menaphon onwards. Nashe is quite clear about the
significance of his satires against Harvey, writing a paradoxical key to
the affair as a postscript to Strange Newes: 'Who feedes revenge hath found
an endlesse Muse' (1; 333).

The first few pages of Have With You To Saffron Walden contain Nashe's
justification for the long delay in replying to Pierces Supererogation.
They are a kind of 'limbering up', in which Nashe boasts of his ability to
destroy Harvey at any time he chooses. Harvey is not the issue; what is at
stake is Nashe's own quarrel with himself and his relationship to his muse.
As Charles Nicholl notes, the mock-biography of Harvey at the centre of Have With You is 'one of the masterpieces of English satire', ample justification in itself of Nashe's role in the flyting.

Harvey affects to be disappointed with his adversary; expecting a 'dreadfull enginer of phrases', Nashe shoots only 'dogboltes and catboltes' (2; 41). Elsewhere he describes Nashe ironically as:

this brave Columbus of tearmes, and this onely merchant venturer of quarrels; that detecteth new Indies of Invention. (45)

Despite the sarcasm Nashe's eloquence is identified and paid tribute. His fertility of invention in Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden is summed up by Harvey:

Arte may give out precepts and directoryes in communi forme: but it is superexcellent witt...is the mother pearle of precious Invention; and the goulden mine of gorgeous Elocution. (51)

In the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, as in the earlier flytings, the achievements of the vernacular language are intimately linked to the expansion of the national economy and the growth of the nation-state.

Similarly, Nashe's own collections of Harvey's inkhorn terms are only partly intended to damn. They show not only Harvey's absurdities, 'but the extent to which modern English is indebted to Harvey... for the wealth of its vocabulary'. (14) The structures of antagonism reveal the wealth of collaboration. Again, this can be traced back to the original mediaeval form:

when a troubadour attacked the appearance, reputation, talent or manhood of a rival poet, and when the rival replied in kind, they were in fact collaborating to produce a tension. (15)

Skelton's poems, answering attacks made by Sir Christopher Garnesche, constitute the surviving half of an English tension; the Nashe-Harvey quarrel has claims to be the longest and most complete example of the form in the English language.

Nashe's plea in his preface to Menaphon - 'Give me the man' - is thus answered by his debate with Harvey. That address is not only a prayer for the sort of writer he would like to become, but is a plea to the collaborator he invents in Gabriel Harvey, an enduring source of rich comedy and bizarre linguistic play. In the same vein, Harvey declares

I looked either for a fine-witted man, as quick as quick-silver, that with a dexterity of lively concerte, and exquisite secretaryship, would out-runne mee many hundred miles in the course of his dainty
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devises...or some terrible bombarder of tearmes, as wild as wild-fire, that at the first flash of his fury, would leave me thunder-stricken upon the ground... (2; 41)
The invective which the two writers employ is disciplined by an understanding of their complicity in a drama not of revenge or contention, but of collaboration. If we look again at Harvey's criticisms of Nashe's style do we see examples of personal animosity, which nevertheless reveal a hidden understanding and admiration of their object; or are they praise written simply in the language of invective? It is not always possible - or profitable - to tell.

Hence the personal animosity which appears to be present in the flying can be viewed as a necessary strategy. If Dunbar and Kennedy were writing in the tradition of the 'tenson' then 'we need not suppose any real animosity between them'. (16) Though the Italian scholars Luigi Pulci and Matteo Franco:

loaded each other with the grossest abuse... yet the intimacy of their friendship is said to have continued without interruption. (17)
The abuse called for by the flying is - or is intended to be - entirely theatrical. Not 'cankring envy, malice, nor despite' stir up the flying, but rather 'generous emulation'. (18) The motives which impelled Harvey and Nashe were not necessarily those of 'actual enmity' but 'considerations of policy'. (19)

In the classical flying only the pretence of anger is involved. Indeed, according to W.H.Auden, the flying depends for its effect on the distance between declared and concealed motive:

The comic effect arises from the contradiction between the insulting nature of what is said which appears to indicate a passionate relation of hostility and aggression, and the calculated skill of verbal invention which indicates that the protagonists are not thinking about each other but about language and their pleasure in employing it inventively. (20)

If revenge is an 'endlesse Muse' for Nashe it is not because Nashe hates Harvey: 'I protest I doo not write against him because I hate him' (3; 19). Rather, his invective is necessary 'for varietie of Epithites' (1; 270). It is Freud's pleasure principle that is at work in this kind of scurrility, not Thanatos. Harvey features in Nashe's discourse as the type of the enemy, but also fulfills the covert and necessary function of collaborator.

As both writers compete to script the reactions and prejudices of
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their audience, so both attempt to mould an ideal author and antagonist. Harvey's initial paternal generosity towards Nashe fulfills the basic function of reinforcing his own personal myth - the construction of an exemplary personality. Harvey converts the failings of his opponent into moral capital. In Howe One May Take Profette of his Enemyes, an anonymous translator of Plutarch's advises that the surveillance of our enemies makes us honest. It is:

therefore profitable to the, to be constrayed to that poynt / that alway thou lyve hedefully and warely...so to kepe faultless and unblamable maners. (21)

Nashe becomes an essential part of Harvey's political and literary economy, an Adversarial figure of the rottenness that threatens England from within and without. Harvey's comparison of England to Sparta and his praise of military literature express an ethic of competition in which the example of the Adversary brings the honest man into 'a custome of not offendynge'. The best revenge on the enemy is to make oneself 'an honeste and a good man'. (22) Harvey's public reticence, his rhetoric of dispassionate advice attempt to fulfill this maxim.

Nashe, on the contrary, exaggerates and emphasises the arbitrary violence of his grotesque attacks on Harvey. My aim in this chapter is to outline the ways in which Nashe takes profit of his enemy.

ii

The Harvey of Have With You To Saffron Walden is, of course, one of Nashe's greatest inventions, his 'exemplary victim', but the Harvey who wrote the Supererogation and Foure Letters is also esential to Nashe's project, whose:

strength lay in his gift for improvisation, in his flair for the topical, in his unfailing interest in novelties and ingenuities of style, and in his facility for satire, parody, caricature and abuse. Controversy therefore was his natural element, since he could then rely on his opponent to produce material for him to play with, refute, burlesque and hold up to scorn. (23)

The indefinition of identity which haunts the apprentice author of The Anatomy of Absurdity and The Terrors of the Night is resolved in the flyting. Harvey provides not only the opportunity for eloquence, but also the material for parody and - most importantly - a role-model for
authorship. The adversary makes us honest by redeeming us from our faults. Nashe's comedy is brought into being by Harvey's seriousness, his licentiousness and crudity by Harvey's decorum.

Harvey's attraction as a target owed much to his prominence on the literary stage. In Pedantius, performed at Trinity College Cambridge in 1580-1, (24) his distinctive taste in rhetoric is satirized. An exaggerated concern with the sounds of words instead of their sense and a general use of rhetorical strategies to distract rather than persuade the hearer, is also mocked in The Unfortunate Traveller's portrait of Vanderhulke. It seems likely that the play and Nashe's text share the same target. (25)

Harvey's use of the Ciceronian clausulae was unequalled in English rhetoric of the time, but he was satirized mercilessly for it:

and the use of clausulae became a hallmark of the characters invented to represent Harvey on the stage and in print. (26)

Nashe observes in Have With You To Saffron Walden that:

Some there be (I am not ignorant) that upon his often bringing it in at the end of everie period, call him by no other name but esse posse videatur. (3; 66)

His literary stature is a precondition of comedy, but Harvey is risible because his verbal and literary mannerisms reveal a less than human automaton of monstrously regular and mechanical habits, disproportionate to his literary fame.

Nashe presents Harvey as a strange division of being from action, divorcing character and identity from their effectual representation in the world. So Nashe bids himself:

Nashe, do thy worst, the three brothers bid a Fico for thee: discommend thou them never so much, they will palpably praise, and so consequently dis-praise themselves more in one booke they set forth, than thou canst disparage them in tenne. (1; 297)

Both Nashe, in addressing himself, and the brothers are divided, but where Nashe's divided self is a device artfully engaged in by a single identity, the brothers are at war with themselves. Where Nashe is in the Olympian position of seeing his ambitions and ends brought about simply by the act of willing them, the Harveys are deprived of all effective contact with the world.

The fantastic derivations of Gabriel's name are chimeras replacing the consistent unity of action which should define a human being:
Harvey's conspiracy is no conscious manoeuvre of the politically sophisticated, but ends in unsophisticated and naive failure. The sophistication of Nashe's high rhetoric — often, but not always, legal jargon — is intended to convince by display rather than by argument. It 'displays Harvey as everything Four Letters proclaims he is not'. (27)

The attack on Harvey as monstrously innocent, naively sophisticated, is consistent with popular propaganda of the period. Munday's English Romayne Life for instance, makes essentially the same point against Catholics as Nashe against Harvey: the Catholic ludicrously mistakes phenomena for essence, appearances for actuality. This criticism is rooted in protestant hatred of icon-worship, but it is also part of a long tradition of national or communal humour directed against external and threatening groups. Nashe's accusations of dishonesty against the Puritan Stubbes, in The Anatomy of Absurdity, centre on Stubbes' inability to distinguish between reality and the force of his own desires.

Nashe, by contrast, claims a facility as translator between the two worlds of the real and the parody, of the word and the flesh, which Harvey is unable to distinguish. Gabriel is ludicrous because he cannot see any more than his own egotism:

it hath beene his wont, if he writ but a letter to any friend of his, in the way of thanks for the potte of butter, gamon of bacon, or cheese that he sent him...to give coppies of it abroad in the world. (1; 297)

Harvey is made a monolithic and serious figure, unable to translate himself into those manners of the world necessary for survival. Nashe meanwhile, accepts the condition of duality and proves himself an adept messenger between the two spheres.

The guise of messenger, or translator, is particularly congenial to Nashe. In Pierce Penilesse it is the Knight of the Post, riding between earth and the underworld. In The Unfortunate Traveller Nashe brings news of Jack Wilton to the reader. This experience also delighted Nashe in Aretino and is the basis of grotesque humour with its systematic assault on authority, legality and the fetishism of privilege.

The title-page, Strange Newes of the Intercepting Certain Leters, and
a Convoy of Verses, as They Were Going Privily to Victual the Low Countries
is Nashe's first shot in the war. It is a highwayman's interception,
announcing the parallel world of carnival. It alludes both to the war going
on at that time in that place, and puns on the popular meaning of privates.
The world of politics, military exploits and epic mythology is equated with
the most basic functions of the human body, an authoritative meaning
undercut but not replaced by its carnival shadow.

Nashe's style in the flyting proposes a transformation of duty into
pleasure, an embodiment of laughter in the ideal forms of duty: 'I am
bolde, in stead of new Wine, to carouse to you a cuppe of newes...' (1;
253). As an authoritative or decorous meaning is proposed, it is opposed by
spectacle which the language insists on preferring. The ideal image is
replaced by a composite whose constituent parts do not give up their
integrity to the whole. Harvey's role is to propose the ideal forms which
Nashe's text will parody.

Nashe's initial opinions - a judgement on appearances - are ironically
confirmed by second thoughts:

Then being very yoong, I counted it the abjectest and frothiest forme
of Divinitie that came in that place. Now more confirmed in age and Art,
I confirme my ill opinion of it. (1; 270)

Harvey's requoted oration becomes spoken and present, enabling Nashe to
construct a dramatic situation in which Harvey appears self-contradictory,
in effectual and superficial.

Harvey's self-mythologising as scholar and the inventor of the English
hexameter - 'it goeth somewhat hard in my harsh legend' (Letters 31) -
plays into Nashe's hands. Parodic intrusions continually undercut Harvey's
weighty pronouncements. Harvey's summing up of himself, his writing of a
preferred epitaph, is interrupted by a laughter which redistributes
Harvey's privileged meanings. Nashe is consistently able to use Harvey's
own text as his collaborator, intensifying the comedy of Harvey's outrage.

iii

Nashe uses Harvey's generalised imagery of excess in food and drink to
good comic purpose. Harvey links excess in diet (Greene's fatal banquet of
Rhenish wine and pickled herring) with indecorum of style and, by extension, disorder in the body politic. Nashe drinks to himself - 'By this blessed cuppe of sacke which I now holde in my hand' (1; 288) - and interrupts himself to take sardonic draughts of wine, after Harvey has accused Nashe's talent of being born out of a beer barrel:

Heigh, drawer, fil us a fresh quart of new-found phrases, since Gabriell saies we borrow all our eloquence from Taverns... (1; 305)

Aretino's style is praised in the terms of alcoholic intoxication and in the preface to Strange Newes language itself seems intoxicated.

The spirit of comic incongruity, laughter which is an interruption in the community of reason, reappears as a drunkenness which is both a usurpation and fulfillment of linguistic possibility:

Gentle M. William, that learned writer Rhenish wine & Sugar, in the first booke of his Comment upon Red-noses, hath this saying: veterem ferendo iniuriam inuitas nouam; which is as much in English as one Cuppe of nipitaty puls on another. (1; 255)

Nashe is, of course, drawing on a Rabelaisian tradition in stressing the material and physical basis to the abstract concepts of religion and authority: drunkenness becomes an analogue of linguistic invention freed from restraints of law and reason. Nevertheless, as can be clearly seen, his use of the trope has specific relevance in the quarrel.

In the Foure Letters Harvey makes much of Greene's death, attributing it to an excess of pickled herring and rhenish wine. Nashe appears at this infernal banquet in his alter-ego as Pierce,

his inwardest companion, that tasted of the fatal herringe, cruelly pinched with want, vexed with discredits, tormented with other mens felicitie, and overwhelmed with his own misery. (Letters 44)

He defends Greene against Harvey's malicious portrait of him, at some length and with some dignity: he also takes over the terms of Harvey's attack into his own writing, much as eighteenth-century political groupings in England (Whigs and Tories) learnt to wear their opponents' abuse as their badge of identification. Nashe's last work, Lenten Stuff, subtitled the praise of the red herring, and with its promise 'I will cloy you with herring before we part', is surely a last joke at Harvey's expense.

Other phrases in Harvey's indictment of Greene and Nashe are picked up in later works. Praising 'Mercuriall and Martiall Discourses' Harvey argues that such works:
write everlasting shame in the forhead of a thousand frivolous, & ten thousand phantastical Pamflets. (2; 108)

Nashe's Christs Teares Over Jerusalem, a work of submission both to the divine authority and renewed social decorum, wishes 'A hundred unfortunate farewels to fantastical Satirisme' (2; 12). This is an uncomfortably light-hearted phrase for a work which assumes such a mantle of responsibility, but might better be understood as a covert reply to Harvey.

The very structure of Nashe's Strange Newes alludes ironically to Harvey's boast in the Foure Letters that:

I am not to be mine owne Judge, or advocate: but am contente to bee sentenced by every courteous, or indifferent peruser, that regardeth honesty in persons, or trueth in testimonies, or reason in causes.

(1; 220)

Harvey's dignity, encapsulated in the legal vocabulary of his imagery, is deflated by Nashe's parodic use of precisely the same weapons. The flyting's ethic is to use the enemy's weapons - his words and physical appearance, his manners and customs - against him. If Harvey figures Nashe's wit as a Gargantua about to give birth (2; 285), then Nashe will construct an entire Rabelaisian mock-life of Harvey. Nashe comes out on top in this contest because he is the more willing to carry it to its absurdly hyperbolic conclusions.

So, for instance, Harvey insistently publicises his own, gentlemanly reticence in publishing the Foure Letters:

partelie the vehemente importunity of some affectionate friends, and partly mine owne tender regard of my fathers and my brothers good reputation, have so forcibly over-ruled me. (1; 176)

He addresses the first letter to 'my very good frend M. Emmanuell Demetrius' and introduces himself in the third person (Letters 10). Nashe, already exploring the concept of the author as intermediary between the realms of imagination and moral authority, satirises Harvey's false modesty in the fiction of Have With You To Saffron Walden. His text is written in the author's absence, by a committee of bizarre, invented friends, calling attention to the artifice involved in Harvey's disclaimers.

Nashe's perceptive praise of Aretino manages to recycle Harvey's original attack on him. Where Harvey satirises those 'that fighteth not with simple wordes, but with dubble swordes...' (2; 49). Nashe praises Aretino's pen as 'sharp pointed lyke a poinyard' (2; 264). Harvey's
sardonic references to 'terrible gunpowder: not with the small shot of contention, but with the main ordinaunce of fury', is taken up in Nashe's praise, 'With more than musket shot did he charge his quill, where he meant to inveigh'. This competition to control the terms of conflict suits Nashe's polemical muse and enables him to take profit of his enemy.

Finally, Nashe is able to poke fun at Harvey's utilitarian view of literature, by producing tangible but ludicrous inventions:

The secretaries of art and nature, if it were not for frivolous contentions, might bestead the commo-wealth with manie puissant engins. As for example, Bacons brazen nose, Archites wodden dove, dancing bals, fire breathing gourdes, artificiall flies to hang in the aire by themselves... (1; 331)

The writer of romances, whose bad example makes the nation weak and effeminate, is exorcised by Harvey's praise of a martial language representing heroic action. Nashe's catalogue of fantastic inventions exposes the contradiction in Harvey's argument between the insubstantial 'frivolity' of the writer and his effect on the commonwealth.

Yet Nashe is aware - even before his readers - of his complicity in these methods. Harvey and Nashe are collaborators in the flyting, Harvey 'most willing to undertake this controversy' (3; 118). It remains to be shown that Nashe is fully aware of the precise function of Harvey's presence in his text.

Nashe's readings of Harvey's texts are undertaken in the persona of Vice, the catalyst of the sinner's discovery and identification of his sin in his own words. His use of imagery and language originating with Harvey, identifies his opponent as a collaborator in the construction of an authorial persona:

on hys mine hath his whole foundation and dependence, and I doo but paraphrase upon his text. (3; 123)

Nashe's comment establishes a strategic disinterestedness. It paraphrases Lyly's disclaimer of his invective against Marprelate: whatever offends in the work is the fault of the enemy, whose weapons these properly are. At the same time, of course, the disclaimer frees him to use these weapons.

Nashe's new authorial persona, is worked out in contradistinction to Harvey, who is his enemy, not through personal animosity but because he is: the galimafrier of all stiles in one standish, as imitating everie one,
& having no separate form of writing of thy owne. (1; 317)

Nashe's own boast is that:

the vaine which I have... is of my owne begetting, and cals no man
father in England but my selfe... (1; 319)

Harvey is the victim and indispensable precondition of Nashe's eloquence
but not, it seems, in any way its author.

Nashe's attacks on Harvey are complex and ambiguous, if not
intentionally misleading. For example, he complains that:

my stile, with treading in thy clammy steps, is grown as heavie gated,
as if it were bound to an Aldermans pace, with the irons at Newgate cald
the widows Almes. (1; 322)

The first thing to note about this passage, is that its description of
Harvey's style is an exemplary and characteristically Nashean piece of
work. The verve and gusto of the writing, which as always with Nashe,
involve the most concrete imagery from the everyday life of late sixteenth-
century England ('an Aldermans pace... the irons at Newgate'), is far from
'heavie gated'. Although Nashe attempts to deny that Adversary whose
existence is necessary to his eloquence, he is enjoying himself far too
much for that denial to ring true.

And the second part of the passage confirms this preliminary
conclusion. Rather than inhibiting Nashe's Muse, Harvey's slow pace appears
as a necessary collaboration in it:

Ere I was chained to thee thus by the necke, I was as light as the
Poet Accius, who was so lowe and so slender that hee was faine to put
lead into his shoes for feare the winde shoulde blowe him into another
Countrie. (1; 322)

Harvey is the lead which prevents Nashe from floating off into airy
nothingness and his talent from becoming foreign to him. Nashe has begun by
attempting - not, of course, very seriously - to exorcise Harvey's presence
and ended by more or less admitting his indispensable assistance. It is
because Nashe was able to grasp this concept that he has the better of the
exchanges with Harvey. Harvey too, recreates and extends Nashe's role in
his own text, but in his polemic, Nashe becomes ubiquitous without being
accepted. It is necessary to invent the enemy; yet, because he exists, he
must be decried as a burden. Because he exists as a burden, his invention
is implied by the continual effort of trying to exorcise him.

The central passage of Strange Newes exemplifies the process of

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authorical construction. Drawing on the important example of the 'Scourge of Princes', Nashe writes that:

In the Romaine common-wealths it was lawful for Poets to reprove that enormitie in the highest chairs of authoritie, which none else durst touch, alwaies the sacred Maiestie of their Augustus kept inviolate: for that was a Plannet exalted above their Hexameter horizon, & it was capitall to them in the highest degree, to dispute of his setting and rising, or search inquisitively into his predominance and influence.

The secrets of God must not be searcht into. Kings are Gods on earth, their actions must not be sounded by their subjects. (1; 285)

On the one hand, it is the subject and proper function of literature to infamise vice and magnify virtue and to reprove 'enormitie' even in the highest places of society. On the other, a poet exposes himself to enormous penalties precisely in proportion to his success. Within these formulae of inviolability, the reader hears a voice which is not Nashe's own, or is at least opposed to the voice which defends Aretino: that of authority, constituting a special area within the text denied to the writer. In the doomed city of Jerusalem, a similar veil is drawn over an area in which normal laws of cause and effect do not operate and in the execution of Cutwolfe, a divine aesthetics replaces human morality.

Nashe gives an example of the penalties which face the poet, in the case of Ovid, who:

once saw Augustine inn a place where he would not have beene seene; he was exilde presently to those countries no happy man hears of.

Ovid's plight is dramatised by a revealing pun:

Long might hee, in a blinde Metamorphosis, have played upon all the wenches in Roome... (1; 286)

Ovid would not have achieved his true value and meaning as a poet if he had not infringed upon the mysteries of power: in some sense, the Emperor's order of exile enabled him to construct the true Metamorphosis from the 'blinde'.

Nashe goes on to imagine himself in Ovid's position, struggling with creation and the false examples of predecessors - 'how hath my pen lost it self in a crowde of Poets'. It is as though he too, is merely an impostor, who will give way to the real Thomas Nashe, poet, as the Ovid of licence was purified by punishment to become the poet of his fame:

One of these months I shall challenge martirdome to my selfe, and write large stories of the persecution of tongues. Troth, I am as like to persecute as be persecuted. Let him take up his Crosse and blesse
himselfe that crosseth mee, for I will crosse shinnes with him. (1; 131)

Blasphemously, Nashe identifies his own assertion of missionary self with the paradox of persecution. The intentionally ambiguous grammar of the 'persecution of tongues', like his praise of Aretino's life condemned in favour of his freedom of speech, is not simply the persecution of Harvey, but a persecution of Nashe himself. Nashe's fraught relationship with authority can perhaps best be understood as an attempt to provoke his transformation from impostor into poet. It could almost be said that Nashe 'collaborated' with authority as he collaborated with Harvey in the flying, in the guise of antagonist.

It is not coincidental, then, that Augustus is above the impostor's 'Hexameter horizon' for that, of course, was the metre whose transposition into English verse with which Harvey was publicly associated. Although Nashe maintains the myth of Gloriana in Strange Newes, he nevertheless mocks Harvey's notorious sycophancy and toadying (1; 276-8).

The assault on Harvey in the two works of the flying can now be seen in a new light. Harvey is derided as an imposture of the sort Nashe has felt himself lost in, an appearance, guise, countenance, a blind poet of the sort Ovid might have remained had he not dared to pry into secrets of state. Nashe's invention of a whole gallery of Harveys - Gamaliel Hobgoblin, Poet Hobbinoll etc - a species of fools without a central principle or guiding intelligence, impostors rather than poets, draws attention to Harvey's unfinished creation of himself. It is significant in this respect, that Nashe attempts to discredit Harvey by relating (or inventing) Harvey's attempt to pass off one of his own works as a rediscovered classic by Tully. Nashe prizes his own originality as evidence that he has emerged from the chrysalis of imposture.

Aretino becomes Nashe's mediation between the example of Harvey's imposture and his own ideal of the poet. Nashe particularly praises Aretino's political independence and his reversal of monarchical domination of literature. Nashe's revenge on Harvey - his hyperbolic treatment of Harvey's attempts at conducting the flying rationally and decorously - fulfills a dual function. The imagery of Ovid's crime, 'in a place where he would not have beene seene', could refer to either geographical or physical location. In either case the implication is the same: Augustus is caught
before an audience, like Shakespeare's Cleopatra. His actions are no longer shrouded in the mystery of government, but must be justified before an audience, even if a mute one. Aretino's blackmail of Princes recreates the relationship between executioner and condemned man, reversing polarities of power. Harvey is anatomised by Nashe both as public figure and as offender.

Nashe brings the second letter of his Strange Newes to an end in expectation of a series of unfulfilled transformations:

he will have a long beard drop out of his mouth, or have his cheeks muffled in fur... or wear Welsh freeze on his face. (1; 292)

His version of the poet's integrity involves a transformation of the man by the text, so that 'our words will be written in our visage'.

The third letter, which follows, examines the condition of Harvey's false consciousness: rather than striving to become what he is, Harvey pretends that that which he is has been forced upon him, and Nashe uses as evidence his own words:

Is not this your drift / you would have the worlde suppose you were urgde to that which proceeded of your own good nature. (1; 292)

Harvey is, in fact, lost in a 'crowde of Poets' and unable to complete the metamorphosis which Nashe himself triumphantly accomplishes in Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden.
Lenten Stuff, Nashe's last published work, restates characteristic themes with some expertise. Within its pages carnival reigns once again, but the pleasure taken from word-play and parody of ideal literary forms is vitiated by the circumstances in which the work was written. Of all Nashe's works, Lenten Stuff is most obsessively concerned with the process and dangers of interpretation.

Lenten Stuff's dedication is to 'his worthie good patron, Lustie Humfrey' or, 'according as the townsmen doo christen him, little Numps' (3; 147). The text immediately announces its modernity (Humfrey is 'King of the Tobacconists'), and its satisfaction with popular culture (snatches of the song 'Go from my Garden go'). Judgement is again possessed by the common reader rather than the aristocratic patron or authoritative narrator: Nashe 'cares not what they be' (3; 151).

As in The Unfortunate Traveller these opening pages enact a carnival reversal of rank: 'A King thou art by name, and a King of good fellowship by nature' (3; 149). This introduction opens up into a celebration of grotesque surfeit and plenitude. Nashe praises the town of Yarmouth for providing for a 'monstrous' army of 'outlandishers' in which:

the rate of no kinde of food is raised, nor the plenty of their markets one pinte of butter rebated, and at the ten weekes end... no impression of any dearth left, but rather more store than before. (3; 158)

This period of miraculous provision is limited 'at the ten weekes end' and therefore compatible with more usual regimes and economies.

The means of Yarmouth's paradisal survival is the red herring, which also feeds Nashe's muse, being 'the onely unexhaustible mine that hath raisd and begot all this' (3; 174). To join the 'triumphall charriot of the red herring' is to enter into a display of arcane vocabulary, linguistic invention, neologism and a Courtier's Library of fantastic books like that written by:

Cornelius the brabantine, who was felloniously suspected in 87, for penning a discourse of Tuftmockados. (3; 178)

Nashe's praise of the red herring is, in fact, another shaft to the 'extemporall veine'. Though his attitude to 'this whole catalogue of wast
authors' is conventionally disapproving, his censure exploits their possibilities and the real subject of the praise of the red herring becomes that of the pleasure in profitably using language itself.

Lenten Stuff traces the presence of the red herring into every aspect of human affairs. Its praise is also a national hymn of celebration - the 'right use of auncient poetrie' - in which Nashe examines all those products which claim to be the quintessence of being English and decides in favour of the red herring. For:

as, of our appropriate glory of the red herring no region twixt the poles...may, can, or will rebate from us one scruple. (3; 179)

The red herring industry is essential to the British economy, being exchanged for luxury goods and vital imports. In the herring boats British sailors are trained in all the arts of survival necessary for war.

The red herring is also discovered to be ubiquitous in classical history and mythology: Nashe re-interprets the stories of Helen of Troy and of Xerxes' expedition against Greece. A tour through Europe and into Turkey considers the significance of the red herring in the rites and customs of alien cultures. Even the languages of the Orient can be analysed to reveal the subject of Nashe's praise:

Mortus Alli, they worship, whose true etimologie is, mortuum halec, a dead red herring. (3; 195)

The red herring becomes the unnoticed, significant detail necessary to the history of the great, a parodic alternative analysis which criticizes conventional genealogies and derivations without formally renouncing them. It is similar to Jack Wilton's history, whose digression does not detract from the 'only true subject of Chronicles', but also to The Anatomy Of Absurdity's survey of habits in temperance and excess.

The red herring is also the insistence of matter, the overlooked body whose suppression is a pre-condition for the authority of hierarchies in society, art and over the mundane world. Within Lenten Stuff the praise of the red herring entails a diminution in the respect due to such ideals, and the insertion of a profane and democratic commentary:

behold, it is every mans money, from the King to the Courtier...with it, for his dinner, the patchedest leather pilchre laboratho may dine like a Spanish Duke. (3; 179)

It is clearly used by Nashe to enable an alternative, democratic analysis
of social mores and manners, in the same way as he used gold in Pierce Penilesse and the page in The Unfortunate Traveller.

Nashe's version of Hero and Leander, the most famous passage from Lenten Stuff, exemplifies this process. The motive force which Nashe's account excavates from the mythology of star-crossed lovers and unkind fate, is that of the simplest, most mechanical lust. The frustration of the lovers, when separated by a stormy Hellespont, makes this point: Hero weeps 'as trickling as the heavens', while Leander 'stormed worse than the stormes' (3; 197). Leander's fate, after his failure to swim the channel, is to suffer a sea change into something rich and strange, but again - with its 'blew jellied sturgeon lips' - something indistinguishable from elemental matter.

Hero and Leander are reunited at a lower level of sentience. Leander is 'to that fish translated...which of us is termed Ling' whilst Hero is made the stem of 'Cadwallader Herring' (3; 199). The Nurse is turned into mustard seed, so that all the players in the drama are together again wherever fish is eaten with mustard.

Lenten Stuff refuses the authoritative readings which The Anatomy of Absurdity, for example, would have made of fables like that of Hero and Leander. It deliberately humanises mythology by means of a parody which stresses the domestic and banal. Where The Anatomy condemned Egyptian gods with the bodies of men and faces of animals, Lenten Stuff accepts the animal periphery of human nature. In place of a golden image of Jupiter is:

a plaine coated red herring... whome, for the strangeness of it, they... in their temples enshrined for a God, and in so much as Jupiter had shewed the such slippery pranckes more than once or twice, in shifting himselfe into sundry shapes... they thought this too might be a tricke of youth in him, to alter himselfe into the forme of this golden Scali-ger, or red herring. (3; 194)

This humour, like that of The Terrors of the Night, asserts christian reason against the variety of pagan deities, but it is not overawed by the christian god and it does not attempt to deny the closeness of the human image to less exalted forms of life. Just as human affairs - particularly the extra-human affairs of mythology - are transformed into the elements, so the Aesopian discourse of Lenten Stuff raises the affairs of the red hering to human diplomacy and warfare in the fable of how the fish chose their king (inevitably, the red herring) (3; 201 ff).
The fables and extended jokes which comprise Nashe's praise of the red herring are clearly not arbitrary, but compose a 'peripheral agitation around an elusive...core of meaning'. (1) The Pope's encounter with the red herring indicates Nashe was already thinking of the problems of interpretation which come to dominate the book. In having the fish introduced into his presence by the full conclave of Cardinals and having it canonised after its 'death', Nashe attacks ceremony which has lost intelligible meaning and has become merely animal behaviour.

The passage identifies the literal-mindedness of those who scan invented titles for hidden meanings. Parody of mythological authority is strengthened by the text's own refusal to hide its artifice and insist on the suspension of disbelief. Hero's grief at her discovery of Leander's corpse, entails a transformation in her fictional status, as well as her emotional state: 'she became a frantick Bacchanal outright...and left worke for Musaeus and Kit Marlowe' (3; 198). This democratic re-reading of mythology is an attack on 'That greedy seagull ignorance... apt to devour anything' (3; 212), which Nashe fought in his scorn of Richard Harvey's prognostications and in The Terrors of the Night's comic versions of the 'Indian wonders'. Nashe again plays the role of Vice, an instrument of justice invoked by the reader's culpable credulity, 'theirs to gull them better than ever I have done' (3; 213).

The ironies and word-play in which Lenten Stuff delights are not evidence that Nashe has left 'the normal concerns of humanity' behind, or that Lenten Stuff 'has no significance outside itself'. (2) Rather, they are 'a puzzle, designed to confront readers with the process of interpretation'. (3) Lenten Stuff dramatizes the production and interpretation of meaning and constitutes Nashe's most sustained reflection on 'the martyrdom of the self' which he challenged in the flying with Harvey.

The Renaissance tradition of the mock encomium stressed the point. (4) As with the jester's entertainment or the Vice's attempt to gull his audience, folly is reversed in the praise of folly (Erasmus) or nothing, to become wisdom. (5) The paradox enabled writers to express controversial opinions and protect themselves from their consequences. (6) The language
games of Lenten Stuff form part of a display which is exemplary in the same way as the violent, knockabout farce of the flying with Harvey. The assault on interpreters stresses the harm which such excessive zeal does to the monarch's good name. It behoves all loyal subjects to be 'vigilant and jealous for their princes safetie', but to use 'too many manes of disquisition by tortures, or otherwise' so as 'to picke thankes, and curry a little favour... or crosse some great enemie they have' is, Nashe maintains, 'most lewd and detestable' (3; 219).

If, in The Terrors of the Night, Nashe's whole tractate is 'but a dream', the act of writing in Lenten Stuff is represented as almost a surrealist cultivation of automatic writing: 'but carelessly betwixt sleeping and waking I write' (3; 213). Nashe consciously denies his intention to make his text bear an allegorical meaning; the writer's fertility of invention is achieved by a relaxation of the rational mind's demand that language merely 'clothe' abstract thought - the commonplace of rhetorical theories of reading and interpretation.

Onto this scene steps 'an infant squib of the Innes of Court' (3; 213), coming between the author and his invention as a constable comes between Martin and the author of An Almand for a Parrat. The 'infant squib', to prove himself 'an extravagant statesman',

catcheth hold of a rush, and absolutely concludeth, it is meant of the Emperor of Russia, and that it will utterly marre the traffic into that country if all the Pamphlets bee not called in and suppressed, wherein that libelling word is mentioned. (3; 213)

Despite the bitterness we can imagine Nashe as feeling (he has been forced to flee from London in the aftermath of the Isle of Dogs affair), his attack against moralising politicians is contained within the form of carnival laughter. The mis-interpreter is comically young, merely an afterthought of language, a squib. He is a product of his own pomposity and self-importance; in him the vice has become the whole man.

It has been suggested that Nashe refers in the passage above to the suppression of Giles Fletcher's Of The Russe Commonwealth, (7) but Nashe's own works were attacked in this way. Christs Teares Over Jerusalem, for example, was criticized by merchants for its mediaeval views on usury, (8) Pierce Penilesse for its depiction of the Danes as a nation of drunkards (a stock jest-book attribution).
The letter which contains this latter charge is by Robert Beale, a Puritan member of the Privy Council, to Lord Burghley. It is dated 1593 and in it Beale complains:

that one of these subjects, in his book entitled A Supplication to the Devil, so reviled the whole nation of Denmark, as everyone who so bore any due respect to her Majesty and her friends, might be sorry and ashamed to see it.

The letter was written after Beale had incurred the Queen's displeasure, and may be an attempt at self-justification, consciously exaggerating his solicitude for the Danish trade, in order to demonstrate assiduousness in looking after Elizabeth's interests.

Yet the paranoia which penetrated all levels of late Tudor politics and was fostered by the allegorical habit, sounds through the attack. That need to see in the conspiracy of banal events the controlling figure of the enemy, causes Beale to claim, that though of late he had dealt:

very little with any foreign causes, yet if this course came not from Rome, he had heard it reported that it was well liked of in Rome by the Pope and his adherents, and all the English Jesuits, Seminaries and traitors abroad. (9)

Harvey's assaults on the figure of Pierce may have been suggested by this interpretation.

The figure of the red herring can, therefore, be seen as a conscious strategy on the author's part to absolve himself from the dangerous readings of contemporary politics. Pierce Penisesse had proved the most popular of Nashe's pamphlets, a main reason being,

undoubtedly the varied satire it contained of leading figures in Elizabethan public life. (10)

Like Gabriel Harvey, in Pierce's Supererogation, modern critics have supplied many a 'shrewd gesse at a courtly allegory'. (11) Anthony Petti, for example, writes of Nashe's 'foolhardy boldness' in attacking some of the most important members of Elizabeth's court, (12) while Donald McGinn suggests that the fable of the bear and the fox is clearly 'an allegory satirising men in high places'. (13) Letters written by the English Catholic exile, Richard Verstegan, link Pierce Penilesse to Spenser's Mother Hubberdes Tale as an attack against Lord Burghley's administration of the government. (14)

Petti and McGinn concentrate on different aspects of Pierce and
identify different targets. Their specific readings point to an Elizabethan habit of allegorical reading in which the fable is the 'ground plot of a profitable invention' and can support numerous readings. It is unnecessary to expect the author to provide authoritative evidence for any such reading in particular or to ascribe authorial intention to any of them.

Rather, Nashe provides a text which is supplied with meaning by each reader. The enigmatic utterances of the beast fables tempt the reader into finding them applicable to his own peculiar vice or complaint. In Strange Newes Nashe writes that his only intention was to 'figure an hypocrite', adding:

Let it bee Martin if you will, or some old dog that bites sorer than hee. (1; 320-1)

This is not an admission or an identification: it openly restores the production of meaning to the reader. The purpose of the writer is not to impose meaning but to offer the entertainment of emblem and fable to his audience.

In Lenten Stuff it is not the writer's sin which is reflected in the text, but the reader's own 'desires of revenge and innovation' discovered:

My readers peradventure may see more into it then I can; for, in comparison of them...I am...as blinde as blinde Bayard. (3; 220)

The interpretation of meaning from the text is the reader's responsibility and it is their vices which may be discovered. Like Jack Wilton, the satirist is a kind of catalyst by which the gull exposes his own folly and wickedness. He offers his reader a wealth of invention which is appropriated or misappropriated by that reader for his own ends.

By these strategies the satirist attempts to deflect criticism and suspicion of his own part. Despite them, Nashe's allegorical obscurity led to interventions by the rich and powerful against him and to his works becoming 'texts to condemn us'. The satirist's generic vulnerability to his reader - the court in which he is judged - is a matter of urgent concern in Lenten Stuff.

iii

Nashe appears in the guise of Pierce - an identification he was concerned to reject in the flyting with Harvey. The 'martyrdom' which Nashe
challenged to himself in the quarrel had become real by the time of Lenten Stuff, composed after 'the strange turning of the Ile of Dogs fro a comedie to a tragedie two summers past' (3; 153). This aesthetic transformation is not effected by the author and indeed is beyond his powers. It is ordered by the literal world of authority and is of the same genre as Cutwolfe's execution, Jerusalemn's destruction, the banning order on the flyting and the hostile interpretations of Pierce Penilesse.

Yet Nashe, in Lenten Stuff, accepts and even provokes this 'martyrdom of the self':

Every man can say Bee to a Battledore, and write in prayse of Vertue and the seven Liberall Sciences/...but out of drie stubble to make an after harvest, and a plentifull croppe without sowing and wring juice out of a flint, thats Pierce a Gods name, and the right trick of a workman.

(3; 151-2)

This art is both magical, reaping crops without sowing, and transformative, miraculously producing juice from stone. It does not even admit the claims of the 'right use of auncient Poetrie', the 'prayse of Vertue', but exalts a carnival grounded in the craft of the workman.

The use of his alter-ego suggests that the author now accepts that his life must be 'contemned' in favour of his art. As he judges Yarmouth 'a predestinate fit place for Pierce Penilesse to set up his staffe in' (1; 154), Nashe gives up the indefinite freedom of the disembodied, authoritative voice and relinquishes control to the judgement of the audience. His arrival in Yarmouth is 'predestinate'.

The narrator of Lenten Stuff sets in operation the mechanics of interpretation and torture by his acceptance of this guise, in the same way as Jack Wilton's materialisation makes him prey to the vulnerability of the flesh. Images of cannibalism underline this fundamental shift of power to the reader. Nashe admits,

Head, body, taile and all of a redde Herring you shall have of mee, if that will please you. (3; 151)

His enemies are stickle-backs, 'as busie nibbling about my fame as if I were a deade man throwne amongst them to feede upon' (3; 151), while 'infinite posterities of hungry Poets' receive sustenance from Nashe's 'crummes' found among his papers (3; 154).

It is little wonder that Nashe complains of the writing of the Isle of Dogs as a supernatural event, claiming:

I was so terrifyed with my own encrease (like a woman long travailing to bee delivered of a monster) that it was no sooner borne but I was glad to run from it. (3; 154)

The tone is humorous, using one of Nashe's favourite Aunt Sallys, the popular taste for strange happenings in exotic places, freaks of nature and prognostications of disaster that he had satirized in Richard Harvey.
Nevertheless, with Ben Jonson already in jail for his part in the comedy, Nashe must have been well aware of the danger in such casual accusations. The possibility of being called upon to give physical account for a page of writing (as Surrey must honour the debts incurred by Jack Wilton's masquerade), is ever present. The last pages of Lenten Stuff describe the process of interrogation, trial and finally execution of a text.

The substitution of text for body and its almost physical torment is a favourite theme of Nashe's. Strange Newes, and Have With You To Saffren Walden, present nightmarishly complete interrogations and anatomisations of the life and words of Gabriel Harvey. Harvey is stretched on tenterhooks like a garment (3; 17), strappadoed and tortured by Nashe's wit (3; 91), and his style literally cannibalised for Nashe's recipe of 'halfe a dozen spare-ribs of his rhetorique' (3; 41). Official disapproval of 'seditious' or indecent texts did not hesitate to resort to physical punishments - as the cutting off of John Stubbs's hand shows. (15)

In disassociating himself from some of the more subversive interpretations being constructed from the beast fables of Pierce Penilesse, Nashe alludes to this very real danger:

Aretine, in a Commedie of his, wittily complaineth that upstart Commenters, with their Annotations And gloses, had extorted that sense and Morall out of Petrarch, which if Petrarch were alive, a hundred Strappadoes might not make him confesse or subscribe too; So may I complaine that rash heads, upstart Interpreters, have extorted & rakte that unreverent meaning out of my lines, which a thousand deaths cannot make mee ere grant that I dreamed off. (1; 260)

The process of textual interpretation is compared to interrogation by torture, and with each reading the torment is resumed. (Hence Jack Wilton's fate in The Unfortunate Traveller.) Nashe asserts that the fable is aimed at a 'generall vice', but that now 'a man may not talke of a dog, but it is surmised he aimes at him that giveth the dog in his Crest' (1; 261).

Nashe's defence against such 'unreverent meanings' is consistent with his earlier attacks on Stubbes and Richard Harvey. Just as Stubbes merely exposed his own sinfulness in claiming to detect that of others, so Nashe complains of lawyers who:

set words on the tenters, never reading to a period (which you shall scarce find in thirtie sheets of a lawyers declaration) whereby they might comprehende the intire sence of the writer togithir, but disjoynt and teare every syllable betwixt their teeth severally, and if by no meanes they can make it odious, they wil be sure to bring it into
disgrace by ilfavoured mouthing and missounding it. (3; 214-5)

The text becomes odious and monstrous when read by odious and monstrous men, just as the drunkard may find scriptural authority for his drunkenness, or the adulterer for his adultery (Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem). The imagery of the passage defends the integrity of the human body and man's natural dignity of language against the misinterpreters who can only masticate sense like animals a bone.

The author is constantly aware that every reader of his text may be his accuser and interrogator. We are faced with the paradox that the writer – in absolute control of textual discourse – is forced to defend his right to speak against the reader, and even to interrupt his own text:

if I should fall into their hands, I would be pressed to death for obstinate silence, and never seeke to cleere my selfe, for it is in vaine, since they will confound a man's memory wyth their tedious babbling, ? and in the first three wordes of his Apology, with impudent exclamations interrupt him. (3; 214-5)

The pun on 'a man's memory' is significant here, for it not only indicates the present memory of the writer, but also refers to that longer term fame which is the proper concern of the satirist. In The Terrors of the Night Nashe's interrogator is his own imagination and there, at several moments, the narrator's memory is 'confounded'. The text becomes a dream from which the writer cannot awaken (1; 360-1), but by which he is at the same time 'entraunced'(1; 361), unsure whether he is in or out of his text, or how he has come to 'digresse to such a dull, Lenten, Northren Clyme' (1; 360).

In The Terrors of the Night Nashe's narrator is 'entraunced' both by the paganism of the imagination (the deceptions inscribed in rhetoric), and by the accusing authority of the imagination. In the two works of the great flyting, Harvey's words are kidnapped and subjected – in the parodical exegesis with which Nashe surrounds them – to interruptions of the most impudent kind. As in a trial, the right of free speech is taken from the accused. The parody trial inverts even the limited freedom enjoyed by the prisoner in the dock, whose own speech is purely reactive, produced by the promptings of legal discourse, for Harvey's words are taken out of context by his tormentor in order to make Harvey look ludicrously unable to adapt himself to the situations he now finds himself in. Both the literary criticism of this kind and the burlesque of the narrative, construct a kind
of comedy which is also the cruelty reserved for the condemned, subject to a particularly violent form of inappropriateness.

The examinations of the Martinist writers enacted a ritual drama based on the legal power to produce the kind of discourse required by the interrogating authority. Henry Barrowe is told by the bishops that the 'Papists':

dea
t more simply than I did: and surely they very grievously interrupted me with slanders, evil speeches and blasphemies. (16)

The proceedings against these actual prisoners turns on the exact form of words, just as in Nashe's fictional proceedings against Harvey, words and phrases are subjected to exhaustive interrogation. The bishops are of course correct in asserting that the prisoners are evading the question: all questions dictate the terms of the answers they are to receive. Legal authority's last sanction is to impose silence on the contentious textuality and ambiguity of the language in which the prisoners take refuge. Silence is enforced by the law for 'Scismaticks are clamorous alwayes. It is a perpetual note to know them by'. (17) Cutwolfe's torments take place in silence: lest he blaspheme in his agony, the executioner pulls his tongue out. Nashe establishes around Gabriel Harvey a perfect silence in which the speech of the living man becomes an only-too-corporeal text, mercilessly tortured and anatomised.

This reduction to silence does not come until conviction of the accused in his own voice. The catastrophe of silence which overtakes Jerusalem in Christ's Tears, is preceded by a prophetic utterance come to pass, unchangable and unredeemable. Cutwolfe is given a speech in which he resolutely blasphemes against god and prince and thereby condemns himself in his own words. Nashe's weapon against Harvey is that the stupidities he accuses and convicts Gabriel of, are only deduced from Harvey's own words. There is an interesting coincidence of phrasing between The Anatomy of Absurdity and The Unfortunate Traveller. In the earlier work the apprentice satirist contemptuously declares 'I leave these in their follie' (1; 19). In the later text, Cutwolfe is abandoned by his tormentors:

In this horror left they him on the wheel as in hell. (2; 327).

The verbal coincidence details a coincidence of aims: the satirist and the executioner accomplishing their similar offices. As Cutwolfe's bloody flesh
is the sign of his crimes against man and god, so the idiocy of the dupe
convicts and identifies him in his vice.

In Lenten Stuff Nashe faces the prospect of being convicted in his own
words. This loss of freedom is the loss of speech which Barrowe describes:

Yet the Bishops because my answer fitted not their turnes / as I thinke
/ comanded the question and answer to be blotted out. (18)

Nashe returns from his complaint against the lawyers and interpreters, to
the praise of the red herring, a theme deliberately chosen to put his
pursuers 'off the scent', (1) and which epitomizes the freedom of language
to make anything of anything without being tied down to an exclusive
meaning. In the rape of 'Madame Turbot', the beast fable is used to make
one last defence against the conventional aesthetic of interpretation.

Where the grotesque usually emphasizes the similarity of the human to
the animal and therefore makes the human vulnerable to an animal fate, here
the animal is deliberately sentimentalized. Madame Turbot suffers in the
same way as Cutwolfe in The Unfortunate Traveller:

the nutte was crackt, the strife discust, and the center of her heart
layd open. (3; 218-9)

Not only is the metaphor deliberately similar to that used when the
executioner removes Cutwolfe's heart, but it is made to recall the
renaissance doctrine of the nut and the kernel. 'What is crucial' in
renaissance treatments of the good reader, writes Russell Fraser, 'is the
impulse to refine or to rationalise: to come to the kernel'. (20)

In Nashe's view, the interrogation of a text and the torture of the
prisoner are intimately related. Lest there be any remaining possibility of
his meaning being misunderstood, Nashe writes of the knavery of parasites
who choose some poor victim (the suggestion of arbitrary power is
important), for the strappado and stretching torture:

and there eyther teare him limbe from limbe, but hee will extract some
capitall confession from him, that shall concerne the Prince's life and
his crowne and dignity...when the poore fellow so tyrannously handled
would rather in that extremitie of convulsion confess he crucified
Jesus Christ than abide it any longer. (3; 218-9)

Nashe's own torture of Harvey, conducted by the anatomical criticism of his
literary productions, demonstrated just such an arbitrary misuse of royal
power - as Harvey continually points out.

When, therefore, Nashe asks in Lenten Stuff, 'Stay, let me looke
about, where am I? in my text or out of it?' (3; 219), the voice is that of the Vice mortified, but also that of Nashe subjected to the torture he describes, out of his skin and his life, which is the text. It is the same bewilderment as that which overtakes him after recounting the end of the Anabaptists in The Unfortunate Traveller. He has been displaced from the freedom of speech by the spectacle of judicial violence, which is anticipated in the violent game of accusation and slander. Nashe's last appearance in his own works sees the author:

mangled and torne in menne's mouth as about this playing with a shuttlecock or tossing empty bladder in the ayre. (3; 225)

Here, the satirist's power over words, the Vice's freedom, has been replaced by a vulnerability made a final punishment.

The account of Jack Cade's demise near the end of Lenten Stuff makes it impossible to distinguish the physical torture done to the rebel, and the ingenious torments of Nashe's metaphors:

The rebel Jack Cade was the first that devised to put redde herrings in cades, and from hym they have their name. Nowe as wee call it the swinging of herrings when wee cade them, so in a halter was hee swung, and trussed up as hard and round as any cade of herring he trussed up in his tyme, and perhappes of his being so swung and trussed up, havyng first found out the trick to cade herring, they woulde so much honour him in his death, as not only to call it swinging, but cading of herring also. If the text will beare this, we wil force it to beare more, but it shall be but the weight of a strawe, or the weight of Jack Strawe more.

(3; 221)

The brutal and insistent punning on 'Cade' and 'cading' is a more sophisticated version of the usual portrait grotesque. Instead of a human appearance both constructed and deconstructed by visual images, the 'unreadability' of this sequence is due to the insistence of the pun word 'cading'. The repetition of a word ostensibly used to illuminate, actually ensures an effect in which the word becomes sufficient in itself, its repetition insisting on sound over meaning. In Terence Cave's terms, the passage presents a world of purely verbal reality, opening up the sliding of distinctions feared by Erasmus as the consequence of a pagan text.

As in The Terrors of the Night, standards of reference are impossible to pinpoint in this description.

for the monstrosity and enigma of his act is that it threatens the foundations of order itself, and even in success could not survive the catastrophe it plots. (21)
Nashe's prose is self-generating, proliferating and multiplying on the page in a precipitate rush that owes something to polemic but is unrestrained by the discipline of argument. Rhetorical techniques of improvisation can be seen; Nashe is adept at turning a digression to his advantage, finding in the apparently irrelevant or superfluous detail a fertile source of new metaphor. The feeling of urgency in this prose speaks of a sequence of events which is not controlled - possibly uncontrollable - by rational or moral authority. Playing on the pun word Cade, in which an event of human destruction is memorialised in a name or a metaphor which then becomes a further means of torment, enacts the rebel's loss of identity in the discourse to which he gives himself up.

Jack Cade is trussed up in language itself. Language has become external to the rebel, mastering him rather than letting him use it. It imposes its own silence upon him. Cade is confined within the boundaries of a name whose interrogation by the satirist, parallels the anatomisation of his flesh by the executioner. The freedom Cade claimed has become the closest of confinements, as the Vice is ritually punished for his temerity in speaking that which must not be openly spoken. He is finally reduced to a category of language. The complex horror and intermingled comedy of Jack Cade's reduction to textuality, bearing the pains of interpretation and judicial torture provides a structure for Nashe's individual works and constitutes a running debate between the works themselves.
CONCLUSIONS

i

The purpose of this thesis has been to challenge and amend the critical consensus that Nashe's works 'say nothing'. My argument has been that these 'speedily botcht up and compild' pamphlets are products of a 'complex social accomodation', thematically and imaginatively consistent with one another.

Nashe's writings are best understood in the context of a contemporary and vital debate about 'the right use of auncient poetrie'. The Anatomy of Absurdity, his apprentice work, reiterated the fears of conservative critics that the freedom of the comic or fantastic writer allied to the mass printing press, would infect the reading public with 'desires of revenge and innovation' against the existing social order. It criticized 'pagan' poetry and rhetoric and advanced a theory of reading in which the reader penetrated beyond the surface entertainments of language to reach the moral sentence beneath. It sided with duty to the martial past and glorious future against the pleasure of the present.

However, the grandiloquent rhetoric which Nashe chose as appropriate for this early work failed to ignite the 'extemporall vaine' praised in the preface to Menaphon. Competition for a popular audience and the internal dynamic of the 'extemporall vaine', led Nashe to repudiate the decorum of The Anatomy Of Absurdity.

ii

Instead, the self possessed Gossonian narrator, impervious to the pagan irresponsibilities of pleasure in language, gave way to a text which did not answer immediately or wholly to a moral narrator. The text itself elided distinctions between the real and the imaginary - or rather, abandoned the hierarchy of fictions, encapsulated by the fable of the nut and the kernel.

The ideological grammar of the School of Abuse, situating the 'guilty interiority' of the satirist within a narrative of sufficient causes, was replaced by the grotesque wit of the 'world turned upside down'. Nashe's texts celebrated Gosson's fear of:

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passing our boundes, going beyonde our limites, never keeping our selves within compasse, nor once looking after the place from whence we came.

(1)

The boundaries between fiction and reality, rendered ambiguous by the absence of the moral narrator in Nashe's mature fiction, were further blurred by the grotesque portraits which became a feature of Nashe's style after Pierce Penilesse.

Furthermore, artistic licence led to a corresponding freedom with social verities, as Gosson feared it would. The conventions governing the relationship between writer and patron were subverted, the 'polemic western self' replaced by a polyphony of voices in which 'losers' were given leave to speak, and the moral narrative overridden by the antagonistic values of carnival. In Pierce Penilesse and The Unfortunate Traveller, 'wit is the only rule' and social distinctions are turned upside down. Like Jack Wilton's career, Nashe's writings represent an extended digression from the 'right use of auncient poetrie'. His definitive characters are 'faults escaped in printing', threatening hierarchy and convention.

Although this grotesque wit had its genesis in the fear of a material Hell and the popular taste for marvels of all kinds, it was, in the first instance, a form of popular resistance to divine and secular authority. Nashe's texts became festivals in which the body - feared and despised by an increasingly puritan church - was delighted in, for all its pains and malformations. Though their occasion was moral condemnation, that occasion was remade. They gave a different account of the divine, posited in the signs of a rhetorical 'unreadability' similar to that of the Song of Songs. The human image - the single, literal fact insisted upon by divine authority - was broken down into a multiplicity of signs, none of which was allowed precedence over others.

In the grotesque of Pierce Penilesse or The Unfortunate Traveller the human image was deconstructed to reveal an economy and a landscape. The place was the city - various, polyglot and diverse. The economy was that of the expanding commercial and intellectual vistas of the late sixteenth century. The grotesques revealed a popular history and a shift from the
vertical hierarchies of God, prince and man, to the horizontal democracy of pleasure in intellect and sensual experience.

Although similar to the popular genre of prognostications and 'strange and true reportes' Nashe's grotesques were crucially different. The prognostications sought to enslave: the grotesques taught a critical reading which allowed the reader to examine responses of fear and veneration. They were a form of popular revenge against oppressive hierarchies, for they repossessed the attributes of the powerful by insisting on the primacy of the sensual. They created a textual democracy in which - briefly - the reader was flattered as a legislator.

It should not be concluded, however, that this 'material conquest' of a hostile world could be complete or without price. Nashe's fictions are 'texts to condemn us': their rebellion is licensed and self-limiting.

If the laughter which Nashe directed against the classification of demons, for instance, suggests an intellectual and political scepticism worthy of Marlowe, the anxiety engendered by that laughter, harks back to Gosson and Stubbes. Though it is correct to identify the carnival aspect of Nashe's work, I have also tried to make clear its orthodoxy.

Both laughter and fear expressed in The Terrors of the Night, critical and credulous readings, led Nashe to an examination of his own imagination. Where The Anatomy of Absurdity accepted Gosson's assumption that the text must be made a perfect representation of the author's moral countenance, Nashe's popular works insisted on undeclared motives in author and reader.

In place of a transparent medium, refusing to acknowledge its own presence, Nashe drew deliberate attention to the dishonesty of any language which does not announce its own operations. The Terrors of the Night examined the revelation each text makes about its author. If the desires of Stubbes, Richard Harvey and the Anabaptists are betrayed by a supposedly objective text, then the text in The Terrors of the Night condemned Nashe's own confusion and 'guilty interiority'. The text became God's providence in which the Vice of language was to be punished.

The Unfortunate Traveller emphasised that both creator and creation walked a tightrope between the comic licence beneficial or acceptable to
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the prince and an unacceptable self-assertion. The jest-book pranks of Jack's 'rule' lead to the Vice's discomfiture. Jack is refused carnival authority and the many roles of Vice. Instead, he is confined within the single body of pain inflicted by a judicial narrative.

The darker works of Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem and The Unfortunate Traveller demonstrated that the grotesque was not only a revenge of the people on its masters and enemies, but a sign of its masters' hold over its imagination. The transformations of the flesh became the punishment of the prince upon his enemies. The grotesque is also an 'anteroom of torture', in which the 'desires of revenge and innovation' given partial representation by the text, were those which inflict pain and suffering.

Therefore, the liberating laughter of Nashe's comedy led him necessarily to the violence for which he is also notorious and that violence is a form of punitive discipline directed against the laughter. The moment of catastrophe - the law suspended in order to re-affirm the law - is his obsessive theme. It provided a moment in which the subordination of body and senses to authority seemed to be ended, and in which, therefore, the sinner was flattered in an active destiny. But it was also a moment in which the sins inevitably became the punishment which the law ordained. The pagan wandering and overpassing of bounds led Nashe's imagination to a literal punishment.

In the salutary tale of Jerusalem's suffering, then, can be seen this characteristic theme: the text which condemns us when we become blind to our wilfulness. Jerusalem's sins condemn it: the destruction visited upon it is an inevitable punishment, a violence without force. Jerusalem is terrorised by rival bands of brigands, who exercise power in the interregnum between vested authorities. Miriam's act of cannibalism is the grotesque set-piece of the book, again demonstrating the results of allowing pagan rhetoric to lead Christian moral reason astray.

The alliance of Cutwolfe, his executioner and the crowd which gathers to 'make holiday' at his torture, was reflected in the complicity Nashe
made between himself, his text and his reader. The satirist was, at one and
the same time, the instrument of punishment and the Vice to be punished. The role of the audience, in demanding a 'maximum compensation' of its 'desires of revenge and innovation' was substantially the same at the public execution, as in the market for Nashe's pamphlets.

The 'endless Muse' or extemporall vaine which had been his goal from Menaphon on, was discovered in the ornate art of torture. In the two works 'dedicated' to Gabriel Harvey, Strange Newes and Have With You To Saffron Walden, Nashe invented an 'exemplary victim', defining his own, comic genius against Harvey's torments.

The scurrility and abuse of the flying with Harvey were licensed by, and took place under the aegis of the prince. In this respect also the flying conformed also to the model of the execution. Nashe's executioners stepped outside the law to uphold the law, the licence given to plays was defended on the grounds that they strengthened order and convention, the barbaric acts of communal and private abandon during the fall of Jerusalem manifested and recalled the lost knowledge of the divine power. In the same way the flying with Harvey was 'holiday time' in which the need for order was made manifest. The decisive subject of the flying was precisely the place of the satirist in the political and moral order and the relation between his carnival prodigality of invention and the licensing power of the monarch.

Nashe argued that the satirist was not a dangerous outsider, like the 'masterless men' who gathered at plays, or the wandering vagabonds of Harvey's accusation, but an integral part in the administration of the monarch's justice. The player in the flying makes a display of professional abilities before an adjudicating authority both political and aesthetic, but he also acts on behalf of that authority. The carnival freedom of the grotesque is finally reconciled to the authority of the prince; the alliance of the Vice with the reader's vice, threatens to subvert order but finally restores it, strengthened and renewed.

Finally, the flying demonstrated the shifts in cultural tolerance which foreclosed the art of grotesque invective. The narrative which
assaulted Jack Wilton in The Unfortunate Traveller and which read a text to condemn the author in The Terrors of the Night, operated in these works also. The two authors were trapped within the personae of their quarrel. Both were interrogated by the audience and that part of language which does violence to man.

Harvey's reading of Nashe's texts and moral countenance, composed a hostile but penetrating analysis of Nashe as the counterfeiter and usurper of royal power. Both Harvey and Nashe came dangerously close to the conclusion that original power rests with the satirist not the state and that political and divine authority was merely a necessary or more privileged fiction - the basic fear of the School of Abuse. The famous banning order of the Archbishops Bancroft and Whitgift makes no distinction between the two authors.

Harvey, however, won the support of history, if he did not manage to overcome Nashe in flyting. The grotesque's highly stylised view of the world and its uncovering of the anatomical body were based upon a culture rapidly transforming itself, sublimating its energies in new directions. The body's unfinished character gave way to a new ideal:

its protuberances and offshoots were removed, its convexities (signs of new sprouts and buds) smoothed out, its apertures closed. The ever unfinished nature of the body was hidden, kept secret... (2)

Nashe's abuse was informed by the tradition of the grotesque; Harvey's paralleled a new cultural reticence about the body.

Nashe's abuse of Harvey is also evidence of a dominant penal code, in which authority exercised its power to inflict pain and to write its formulae in the mutilated body of the offender, without embarrassment. A modern discipline of narrative time swallowed up the 'accomodating shapelessness' of Nashe's structures.

The response of the bishops illustrated the growing power of the nation state over the bodies and actions of its subjects and indicated the emergence of a 'civil' society in which the monopoly both of honour and violence by the state was asserted. (3)

Nashe's privileged and violent invective, the freedom of the grotesque, was overtaken and forgotten by history. The purpose of this thesis has been to discover beneath Nashe's 'inexplicable themelessness' a coherent and consistent archaeology of themes and insight.

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1: THE VICE AS HERO

1 C.S.Lewis, English Literature In The Sixteenth Century, Oxford 1954, p 416.
8 A.K.Crosten, 'The Use Of Imagery In Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller', RES 24 (1948), p 90.
10 Ibid, pp 4-5.
11 Margolies, op cit, p 85.
12 Oscar James Campbell, Comicall Satyre And Shakespeare's Troilus And Cressida, San Marino (CA) 1959, pp 30 and 33.
16 Ibid, p 87.
18 For a summary of the legend of Archilocus, see G.L.Hendrickson, 'Archilocus And The Victims Of His Iambics', AJP 46 (1925), p 103.
19 See Mary Claire Randolph, 'The Medical Concept In English Renaissance Satiric Theory: Its Possible Relationships And Implications', SP 38 (1941), p 140.
21 Campbell, op cit, p 24.
26 Elliott, op cit, p 81.
28 Ibid, p 45.

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30 See Jones, op cit, p 47.
31 Campbell, op cit, p 49.
32 Alvin Kernan, in The Cankered Muse, New Haven 1959, p 27, provides a survey of how satirists came to be popularly known by the vices attacked in their satires.
35 Donaldson, op cit, pp 3-4.

2: THE RIGHT USE OF AUNCIENT POETRIE

3 See David Norbrook, Poetry And Politics In The English Renaissance, London 1984, p 56.
4 See George Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer, Punishment And Social Structure, New York 1939, pp 12-14
5 Norbrook, op cit, p 146.
6 John Hoskins, Directions For Speech And Style, edited by Hoyt Hudson, Princeton 1935.
7 See Lucy De Bruyn, Mob Rule And Riots, London 1981, pp 51 and 53-4; the argument of Michael Murrin's The Veil Of Allegory, Chicago 1969; Norbrook, op cit, on Sir Thomas More's Utopia, p 32, for the significance of writing in Latin.
8 Norbrook, op cit, p 118.
12 Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais And His World, tr. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge (Mass) 1968, p 10
13 Norbrook, op cit, p 8
14 Bishops Tyndale and Coverdale; Obedience of a Christian Man, London 1536; sig c5r.
15 See Roger Ascham; The Scholemaster; London 1570; book I; Kinney, op cit, p 65, for other works in the genre. According to Laura Stevenson, op cit, p 214, all were 'bestsellers'. For a general discussion of the English humanists' attack on romances see R.P. Adams; 'Bold Bawdry and Open Manslaughter'; HLQ 23, 1959-60, pp 33-48.
For a brief summary of Whitgift's importance in Nashe's career see Stephen Hilliard, The Singularity Of Thomas Nashe, Lincoln (Na) and London 1986, pp 29-30 and p 27 (Nashe's 'orthodoxy').


For example: Gosson "When Ovid had roamed long on the seas of wantonnesse", fol 4r, and "I wil beare a lowe saile and rowe neere the shore, least I chaunce to be carried beyonde my reache, or runne agrounde in those coasts which I never knewe", fols 6r-6v.

Gosson, op cit, fol 7v.

Eleanor Rosenberg; Leicester: Patron of Letters; New York 1955.

Gosson; op cit, fols 14r-14v.

Ibid; fols 10r-10v.


The analogy of the nut and the kernel 'not only delineates the sources of pleasure and profit but ranks the two poetic functions: being content with surface delight alone is childish play, seeking the inner wisdom is properly mature activity.' Glending Olson, Literature As Recreation in the Middle Ages, Cornell 1982, p 23.

See David Margolies, Novel and Society in Elizabethan England, London 1985; p 14; Stubbes, op cit, fols 62r and 121r; Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, tr. Helene Iswolsky, Cambridge (Mass) 1968, p 89; Stubbes, op cit, fols 94r-96v; Bakhtin, op cit, p 117

A conventional thought from The Anatomy echoed, for instance, in the Reverend Edward Dering's Brief And Necessarie Catechisme of 1572, 'Wee have now long enough played with our owne fancies'. Quoted by Russell Fraser, The War Against Poetry, Princeton 1970.

3: THE RULE OF THE TONGUE

1 Terence Cave, The Cornucopian Text, Oxford 1979, p 126.
3 Cave, op cit, p 126.
4 M.C. Bradbrook, Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy, Cambridge 1935, p 82.

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7 Stephen Hilliard, The Singularity Of Thomas Nashe, Lincoln (Na) and London 1986, p 12.
12 Lanham, op cit, p 2
13 As Don Cameron Allen points out, op cit, p 170.
14 H.S.Bennett, English Books And Their Readers 1558-1603, Cambridge 1965, pp 5-6
16 Hilliard, op cit, p 17.
17 For the composition of The Terrors of the Night see the articles by C.G.Harlow, 'Nashe, Robert Cotton The Antiquary, And The Terrors Of The Night', RES, ns 12 (1961), pp 7-23, and 'A Source for Nashe's The Terrors Of The Night And The Authorship of 1 Henry IV', SEL 5 (1965), pp 31-47 and 269-81
18 Stephen Gosson, The School of Abuse, London 1579, fols 6r-6v.
20 Gosson, op cit, fol 6v.
21 Richard Lanham, op cit, p 8
22 Ibid, p 184
23 Quintilian, op cit, X vi 6.
24 Cave, op cit, p 130.
25 Lanham, op cit, p 16.
26 Erasmus, Ciceronianus, quoted and translated by Cave, op cit, p 159.
27 Erasmus, De Ratione Studii, quoted and translated by Cave, p 20.
28 Cave, op cit, p 20.
31 Cave, op cit, p 150.
32 As argued by Erasmus in The Enchiridion Of Erasmus, tr. Raymond Himelick, Bloomington 1963, p 51.
33 Stanley Fish, Self-Consuming Artefacts, Los Angeles 1974, p 273.
35 Cave, op cit, pp 29-30
36 Quintillian, op cit, IV ii 32, IX ii 40.
37 Cave, op cit, pp 29-30.
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1 For the sources of the Indian Wonders, see Rudolf Wittkower, 'Marvels Of The East: A Study In The History Of Monsters', JWCI 5 (1942), pp 166 and 179.
3 Luther, quoted in Norman O.Brown, Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning Of History, London 1959, p 212
4 Caesamius of Heisterbach, Dialogus Miraculorum, quoted by Norman Cohn, Europe's Inner Demons, London 1975, p 71.
5 Wittkower, op cit, pp 177-8.
6 Conrad Wolfhart, Prodigarum Ac Ostentorum Chronicon, 1557. See Wittkower, op cit, p 155.
7 Wittkower, op cit, p 185.
9 See Cohn, op cit, p 73.
14 See C.G.Harlow, ' A Source For The Terrors Of The Night And The Authorship Of 1 Henry IV', SEL 5 (1965), p 31, who argues that A Defensative 'was one, and probably the only, major source for The Terrors Of The Night'.
16 Thomas Cooper, An Admonition To The People Of England, London 1589, sig F2v
18 See H.S.Bennett, English Books And Their Readers 1558-1603, chapter 4 'The Variety Of Books', pp 201-4.
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5: THE DEMOCRATIC TEXT IN PIERCE PENILESSE

5 Bennett, op cit, p 21.
6 J.B.Steane (ed), The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works, Harmondsworth 1972, p 14.
7 Bennett, op cit, p 30.
9 Crewe, op cit, p 46.
12 Sandra Clark, op cit, pp 30-1.
13 Margolies, op cit, p 9.
16 Clark, op cit, p 25.
19 Clark, op cit, p 122.
20 Ibid, p 244.
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23 Eisenstein, op cit, p 272.
25 Eisenstein, op cit, p 59.
29 See Max Gluckman, Custom And Conflict In Africa, Oxford 1956, chapter 5.
30 Donaldson, op cit, p 15.
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41 The Examinations Of Henry Barrowe, John Grenewood, John Penrie, London 1586, sig B3r.
42 See also the argument of Sir Philip Sidney's An Apology For Poetry.
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44 See David Norbrook, op cit, p 162 (his discussion of La Boetie).

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11 Ibid, p 52.
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10 Charles Nicholl, A Cup Of News: The Life Of Thomas Nashe, London 1984,
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7 See Alexander Leggat, op cit, p 32; and Madelon S.Gohlke, 'Wits Wantonness: The Unfortunate Traveller As Picaresque', SP 73 (1976), pp 397-413.
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10: CHRISTS TEARES OVER JERUSALEM

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7 Mackerness, op cit, p 251. Also McKerrow, op cit, IV 213.
9 Pratt, op cit, p 60.
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15 See McKerrow IV pp 476-7, V pp 138-9.
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28 Neil Rhodes, op cit, p 11.
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32 Ibid, p 127.
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11: THE FLYTING

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14: LENTEN STUFF

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12 Petti, op cit, p 139.
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