Abstract. John Taylor Retailored

The works of John Taylor the Water Poet (1578–1653) have in recent years been reappraised by scholars of early modern material culture for their expression of a working-class voice, for their inventive manipulation of the print market, and above all for their embodiment, in contrast to dominant Renaissance paradigms of literary worth, of a poetics of physical labour. In this article I revisit the figure of the tailor in Taylor's defences of his own literary practice, showing that he cleaved to a simplistic distinction between originality and theft, identifying tailoring with the latter. I then examine three examples of his reworkings of previous poems—a micro-drama about the Thirty Years War, an anti-Papist dialogue, and an extended piece of nonsense verse—in an attempt to demonstrate that, despite Taylor's critical assertions, they can after all best be thought of retailorings, neither properly original nor stolen. This category, however, is a modern one, and I conclude that we have no choice but to appreciate Taylor's poems, or those of any other early modern writer, on our own terms.

John Taylor Retailored

> Moreover it is a verie slender and bare Arte, whiche of it selfe is altogeather a foolishe thinge, excepte it be attired [*vestiatur*] and savoured with some other Discipline. An Arte that is alwaies hungrie, and eatinge up other mens breade like mise. . .
>
> — Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, on the art of poetry.[1]

To an extent difficult for us now to appreciate, early modern poets valued learning, and understood their craft more as imitative composition from sources than as creation *ex nihilo*. Stephen Orgel, in a 1981 essay later described by Christopher Ricks, to Orgel's own surprise, as 'influential', defended Renaissance poetry and art from the modern charge of plagiary, arguing that a hostility to the reuse of others' work essentially postdated the period, and that we misrepresent the business to indict it for crimes it did not conceive as such.[2] Much recent effort has been expended in trying to reconceptualise originality in this period, that is, to reorient it away from post-Romantic ideas with which we are more familiar; and, for obvious reasons, this effort has focused on Shakespeare.[3] But one should not exaggerate the difference; in fact, plenty of Renaissance voices complained about literary theft, and for a century and a half after Shakespeare's death, critics sought to defend him from the charge of unoriginality, usually by pointing to his lack of classical erudition.[4]

One of these critics, Richard Farmer, compared Shakespeare to a poet positively proud of his lack of learning, namely John Taylor, the so-called 'Water Poet' (1578–1653), a Thames boatman, King's Waterman and traveller who achieved literary celebrity for his innumerable pamphlets in prose and verse on every imaginable topic. Everything that critics had pointed to in Shakespeare as evidence of a classical education could, said Farmer, also be found in the works of Taylor, a man who had admitted his ignorance of Latin, Greek, and even French.

Indeed, ‘this *sweet Swan of Thames*, as Mr *Pope* calls him,[5] hath more scraps of *Latin* and allusions to antiquity than are any where to be met with in the writings of *Shakespeare*’.[6] Farmer’s readers were dismayed.[7] If Shakespeare was the paragon of English literary genius, Taylor had become a mere curio, a witness to contemporary historical, social and political events, but no artist. This was explicitly the judgement of Taylor’s most famous reader, Robert Southey, and of the Belfast antiquary William Pinkerton, who invoked *Hamlet*: ‘next to the old dramatists, [Taylor] merits our thanks for holding the mirror up to nature, and showing us the form and pressure of his times’.[8] The same attitude has persisted until recently: tellingly, the only monograph on his work, while comprehensive and well-researched, is written chiefly from the perspective of social history, and titled *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet*.[9] Few defended his literary virtues.[10]

In the past twenty-odd years, this has begun to change, as a number of scholars have investigated Taylor as a figure worth studying his own right.[11] In particular, his *oeuvre* has suited the materialist turn in early modern studies, with its interest in non-élite voices, and its renewed attention both to the physical apparatus of the period’s culture and to the metaphorical textures with which it described itself. Critics in this field have evoked ever more powerfully the decentred, recuperative, and compository nature of early modern literary creativity: everything was borrowed, stitched up, reused, reworked, rearranged—from lines, poems and stories to physical books themselves.[12] Taylor seems a perfect fit. After all, opening the 1630 folio volume of his *Workes* offers an experience akin to that of the editor-narrator in Thomas Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus* upon receiving a package from his hero, the ‘philosopher of clothes’ Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, where he finds not documents for a biography but unorderable chaos: ‘miscellaneous masses of Sheets, and oftener Shreds and Snips. . . treating of all imaginable things under the Zodiac and above it’.[13] The material chaos of the folio is even greater than the pamphlets it collects: in an effort to make Taylor look more like an erudite classic, the volume’s

three different printers took the running marginal notes that had guided the reader's eye through the original pamphlets, and retailored them into useless footnotes.[14]

The present essay engages with the recent critical work on Taylor in two ways. First, I seek to correct what I see as a misunderstanding of his self-image, centred on the figure of the tailor. Second, taking up the sartorial theme from a different angle, I analyse three reworkings by Taylor of earlier poems, showing not only that they undermine that self-image, but that their aesthetic merits suit our own critical discourse better than that of early modern England. Although materialist scholarship has done much excellent work on the history of reading, it has been strangely unreflective about what we, here and now, get out of the reading process.[15] It is the latter question as much as the former that motivates this essay.

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In a landmark article of 2005, Katharine Craik argues that John Taylor breaks with the early modern privileging of a poet's natural wit, finding literary value instead in the 'intellectual and physical labour involved in writing'.[16] To do this, he reimagines the classical literary processes of *exercitatio* and *imitatio* in material terms. Ben Jonson, too, reconfigured *exercitatio*—which in ancient sources like the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and in his direct source Pontanus, only meant literary practice—as quasi-physical exertion, but, as Craik brilliantly shows, Taylor goes further in constructing a poetics grounded in honest work, literally the work of writing but figured as that of ferrying, walking or other activities.[17]

The professional figure of the tailor, patching and mending, is a key pun in her reading of Taylor's self-image; she refers, for instance, to 'the value of literary exertion, especially the effort involved in tailoring the work of other poets enjoying better states than his own'. To explain his attitude to the tailor's craft, Craik quotes a passage from his long poem *In Praise*

of Hemp-Seed (1620), in which Taylor contrasts his own writerly approach to that of unnamed learned borrowers:

> My poore invention no way is supply'd,
> With cutting large thongs from anothers hide:
> I haue not stolne a syllable or letter
> From any man, to make my booke seeme better. . . .
> But had I tongues and languages, like many
> Sure I should filch and strale as much as any.
> But like an Artlesse Poet, I say still,
> I am a *Taylor*, true against my will.[18]

In Craik's reading of this passage, Taylor 'replaces the vocabulary of cutting, flaying and thieving with one of tailoring', the latter being the poet's equivalent of *imitatio*, a 'necessary, functional service' which, unlike the dishonest practices of the erudite polyglot, is carried out 'truthfully within the constraints of necessity'.[19] The problem with this interpretation is that 'cutting large thongs from anothers hide', which Taylor abhors, far from being contrasted to the tailor's practices, is an example of them. Early modern tailors were proverbially light-fingered, as attested by three entries from Morris Tilley's 1950 dictionary of Renaissance proverbs.[20] The assumption seems to have been that they stole strips ('thongs') from their customers' cloth. Bonaventure des Périers tells of a tailor so addicted to stealing in this manner that 'If he had cut out a garment for himself, he would have thoght his cloth had deceived him, if he cut not somthing beside the garment to cast into the chest.'[21] In *Don Quixote*, when Sancho Panza begins playing judge at Barataria, one of his first cases involves a tailor whom a client suspects of wanting to steal some of the cloth supplied for the job, due to 'the bad reputation

of tailors' (*la mala opinión de los sastres*, misunderstood by Thomas Shelton as a purely personal opinion).[22] In a dialogue from a 1633 school manual for learning French, a man instructs his tailor to cut the cloth in his presence to prevent theft.[23]

For this reason, uses of tailoring as a literary metaphor in the period are always pejorative, as can be seen from Linda Woodbridge's representative list of examples.[24] Likewise, Taylor's inveterate foe George Wither, in his satire 'The Scourge' (1613), accused him of theft by playing on his name ('Entreat the Tailor next, if that he can, / To leave his theft and prove an honest man').[25] The following year, in his verse 'Description of a Poet and Poesie, with an Apology in Defence of Naturall English Poetry', prefixed to *The Nipping and Snipping of Abuses* (1614), Taylor strenuously denied Wither's implication:

> Because my name is *Taylor*, they suppose
> My best inventions all from stealing growes:
> As though there were no difference to be made
> Betwixt the name of *Taylor*, and the Trade. . .
> My skil's as good to write, to sweate, or row,
> As any Taylors is to steale or sow.[26]

The sense is plain, notwithstanding the threat of ambiguity in the word 'invention', which in the Renaissance began to tread a path between imitation and creation, as Rocío G. Sumillera has recently shown.[27] The proper model for his work, Taylor suggests, is *not* tailoring but the physical labour embodied in sweating and rowing, his other occupation; as he later put it, in a play on words that would become canonical for his self-image, 'all my Schollership is Schullership'.[28] These lines perfectly illustrate the importance of labour for Taylor's view of poetry as delineated by Craik and Ellinghausen, while dissociating it from tailoring: the latter

is the opposite of labour because it accrues profit by theft. Taylor only ever defends the profession from that charge in his paradoxical pamphlet *An Arrant Thiefe* (1622), which depicts everything in the world as a thief *except* tailors, along with millers and weavers, a conventional triad.[29] Given his apparent hostility to tailoring, how should we interpret his statement, quoted by Craik, that 'I am a *Taylor*, true against my will'? It seems to mean, in the context, not that his poetry is sartorial but only that he is *named* 'Taylor', despite his 'will' to be seen as an original, honest poet.

In his explicit critical statements, then, Taylor rejected tailoring as a figure for his verse, although, as we shall see, sartorial images do creep into his comments elsewhere. If the point here were merely to correct the valence of a metaphor, it would hardly be worth making. My argument, rather, is that Taylor, beyond the stress he put on physical effort, had no new trope with which to correct the reductive dichotomy of originality and theft. When he defended his own work, he had recourse to precisely the same claim made by contemporary writers for Shakespeare—that he was unlearned and therefore 'naturall'.

In the 'Description', for instance, Taylor acknowledges that he has little new to say, but maintains that he arrived at it on his own: originality without novelty, that golden mean of Renaissance poetics. He associates true poetry with the invention of the writer's wit, which makes 'Of nothing something. . . / With Nature onely all his Muse arraide'. Indeed, this is his own status: 'I take a Schollers part, / That have no ground or Axioms of Art; / That am in Poesie an artlesse creature, / That have no learning but the booke of Nature'.[30] Learning cannot supply invention, and often begets mindless repetition: 'By teaching Parrots prate and prattle can, / And taught an Ape will imitate a man.' As in the lines from *In Praise of Hemp-Seed*, plagiarism is especially evident in the work of those whose facility in languages allows them to pass off foreign literature as their own, a recourse unavailable to Taylor since he reads only English.[31] In any event, he expresses contempt for those poets

That like so many bandogs snarle and snatch,

And all's their owne they can from others catch:

That licke the scraps of Schollers wits (like dogs)

(A Proverbe old) *draffs good enough for hogs*.

Purloyning line by line, and peece by peece,

And from each place they read, will filch a fleece.[32]

Taylor's understanding of literary composition is straightforward. Either one filches one's verse piece by piece, like a thieving tailor, or one learns from the book of nature and produces original poetry: there is no middle ground.

What I want to demonstrate in the rest of this essay is that Taylor's critical language is not only simplistic on this point—as was that of his contemporaries—but misrepresentative of his actual poetry. Taylor's literary approach, despite his statements to the contrary, *was* sartorial, as sensitive modern readers have felt it to be. This was partly a matter of patching pieces, in the way Woodbridge and others have characterised early modern texts more generally; as Joanne Gates observes, picking up an old comparison, Taylor was a writer 'who, like Shakespeare. . . peppered his own work with borrowings from others'.[33] But his more remarkable jobs are better understood as *re*-tailorings, a very specific form of the imitations studied by materialist historians and critics. To see this, I will interrogate three of his poems that are substantially unoriginal—a micro-drama about the Thirty Years War, an anti-Papist dialogue, and an extended piece of nonsense verse. In each instance, Taylor's *ad hoc* changes to his source make it less coherent but more interesting, and I suggest that this is part of the reason we might now think of such works as literature.

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In 1848 the antiquary James Orchard Halliwell printed a manuscript poem by Taylor, *The Suddaine Turne of Fortunes Wheele* (1631), although he neglected to state whose copy he was using.[34] In his 'Advertisement to the Reader', Taylor explains the origins of the poem, using a metaphor that will not surprise us, but ought to, given the foregoing analysis:

> Some of these followeinge Verses (by chaunce) came to my handes to the number of 186, I neither knoweinge the Author, Time or Place where or when they were written: when I sawe them I was both glad and sad: glad they were soe good, and sad they were soe fewe, but sadest for mine insufficientcy to add more unto them: at last, knowinge the cause to be good, I adventured to peice a Scarlet Roabe with my course stammell [i.e., a rough red wool].[35]

Strikingly, Taylor seems happy to use a sartorial metaphor for his composition when it is an acknowledged reworking of another poem, and in doing so he finally finds an alternative to his earlier dichotomy of theft and originality. But again it is self-deprecating: he may not be filching someone else's poem for his own, but he is repairing it inelegantly, and the new work is evidently worse than the original.

Taylor does not tell us which lines are his and which from his source, instead challenging the reader to 'find which is which, if he cann'; in this he reminds us of those writers studied by Stephen Dobranski who solicit active engagement from their readers.[36] Fortunately we have the original, an anonymous and undated (c. 1619) pamphlet entitled *Prosopopoeia, or, A Conference Held at Angelo Castle, Betweene the Pope, the Emperor, and the King of Spaine*.[37] Unfortunately it runs to only 172 lines of verse, not 186; either we have to include

nine ‘lines’ of speech headings (it is a drama of sorts) and five in the long title, or Taylor miscounted, or he had a slightly longer version, perhaps in manuscript. Moreover, his claim in the ‘Advertisement’ that his own lines are ‘more in number’ than those of the original is, by my count, true only by one way of reckoning.[38]

Nonetheless, *faute de mieux*, I will here assume that the printed *Prosopopoeia* is Taylor’s source. This short work is a prosopopoeia in the old sense of a voicing of other individuals, specifically a dialogue in verse between ‘the Pope’ (then Paul V), ‘the Emperor’ (then Ferdinand II) and ‘the King of Spaine’ (Ferdinand’s cousin Philip III), supposedly convening at the Castel Sant’Angelo, the papal fortress in Rome, at the outset of the Thirty Years’ War. Spooked by the Bohemian rebellion, the three Catholic leaders conspire to overcome the Protestant heretics; the Pope insists on military means, invoking the former archduke Albert VII and the king of Poland Sigismund III Vasa as allies in the future conflict, and apparently proposing necromancy to raise dead Catholic assassins, martyrs and scholars—François Ravaillac, Jacques Clément, John Gerard, Guy Fawkes, Henry Garnet, Francisco Suarez, Robert Persons, Robert Bellarmine, even Ignatius Loyola. But Philip is pessimistic, noting the weakness and treachery of the Catholic forces, as well as the Great Comet of 1618 with its prognostications for Protestant success.[39] *Prosopopoeia* is obviously propaganda from a year when hopes of victory over the Catholics were high, though it does betray occasional literary flourishes, such as the Latin line from the *Aeneid* in the margin to gloss the Pope’s invocation of the ‘fiends from hell’. We can easily see why it appealed to Taylor.

Given that *Prosopopoeia* portrays specific individuals—not named, but identified explicitly by blood relationships—reacting to events at a particular moment in history, the act of rewriting it twelve years later, even with alterations, is a peculiar one. If the old poem is a voicing, the new one is a revoicing. *The Suddaine Turne* offers us apparently the same setup: a conference in the Castel Sant’Angelo between the Pope, the Emperor and the Spanish king.

But *when*? In the absence of a statement to the contrary, Taylor's readers in 1631, like those of 1619, would presume that it was the present, and that therefore the Pope was Urban VIII and the king of Spain Philip IV, son of Philip III. This assumption would be reinforced by the early mention of Sweden, and, towards the end, by the Emperor's laments, both that 'sword and famine hath these twelve years space, / Rag'd all mine empire o'er in every place', and that his his general, Johann Tserclaes, count of Tilly, has been defeated at Breitenfeld (17 Sept 1631). However, other elements of the poem would threaten to confuse those readers; the 1618 comet is still referred to as 'last December', and the Pope still describes the king of Spain as the emperor's 'Spanish cousin'. These look like elements of the original that Taylor did not bother to update, leaving the dialogue as a whole in a peculiar limbo, halfway between 1619 and 1631, with two popes and two Spanish kings.

It is thus partly a historical narrative, with the pregnant irony of earlier Protestant confidence since shattered; in this aspect a decade of loss gives added poignancy to certain lines, as when the Pope vows to 'turne cleare daies into the darkest nights!' Taylor even adds to the devastation: 'I'le make Aceldema a field a blood. / 'Gainst heretiques I'le thunder out my bulls, / And make their land a place of dead men's sculls.'[40] But it is also, like the original *Prosopopoeia*, a response to new circumstances, and above all to the 'sudden turn' of the title, namely the dramatic intervention in 1630 of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632). Wikeley judiciously points to Taylor's introduction of Adolphus as evidence of the commitment to international Protestantism in Taylor's pre-Civil War career, and links it to the interest in Adolphus among Taylor's associates from his 1630 *Workes*.[41] The specific temporality of the Swede's appearance in the poem, however, is rather peculiar. The Spanish king notes the flurry of exegesis provoked by the comet, and adds:

The eleventh and twelvth of Esdras they applye

Against th’ imperiall Eagle’s monarchie;

And that the lion comeing from the wood,

Is of the King of Sueden understood;

And that the lion shall the eagle foile,

And in triumphant sort divide the spoyle.

The rebells make constructions on this text,

Whereby the Catholickes are severely vext;

As th’ Eagle’s wings doth o’er the empire spread,

Even so the lion, if the armes of Swede:

And Sued (they say) true anagram is Deus,

Whom they do hold the Christian Macchebeus.[42]

They further saye Gustavus is his name,

Which is Augustus in his anagram.[43]

Adolphus is here not the famous general who has already (as the Emperor subsequently laments) defeated Tilly at Breitenfeld, but a figure mystically foretold before he has arrived (‘the lion *shall* the eagle foil’), by means of an interpretation of ancient scripture, namely 2 Esdras 11–12.[44] With the device of prophecy Taylor thus manages to collapse the early and present state of the War. The narrative cohesion of the dialogue is thrown into jeopardy; readers in 1631, who were very unlikely to have read the obscure source that Taylor acknowledges at the start, might reasonably wonder when this conference was taking place, what relationship *The Suddaine Turne* had to its original, and, finally, what the work meant as a statement in its own right. Wikeley argues that Taylor ‘harnesse[s]’ the *Prosopopeia* ‘to give force to his version, directed to the specific circumstances of 1631’, but this claim does not quite capture the atavism of the poem. [45] It is not a sequel or update or fresh version of the *Prosopopoeia*,

but something closer to a retailoring, one that preserves much of the original but patches in new material to complement and set it off, in line with the demands of the news.

And just as Taylor operated on his source, so *The Suddaine Turne* would be copied in turn, in a 1642 prose work entitled, like the 1619 pamphlet, *A Conference Between the Pope, the Emperour and the King of Spaine*. The copyist in this instance worked hastily, or possibly aurally, since words are garbled from *The Suddaine Turne*; Taylor's Pope says, 'I'le make Aceldama a field of blood', whereas his counterpart says, meaninglessly, 'I'le make a Keldoma and field of bloud'.[46] Taylor's additions are thus absorbed into a continuous tradition of pamphlets and propaganda with ever less relevance to the moment.

Taylor would not acknowledge all of his borrowings, and one in particular has caught the attention of several scholars. In an 1861 issue of *Notes and Queries* William Pinkerton, whom we first mentioned above, announced his discovery that Taylor's anti-Catholic satire *A Pedlar and a Romish Priest* (1641) had been plagiarised from an earlier poem by the Scottish diplomat Sir James Sempill, *The Pack-mans Pater Noster, or a Dialogue Betwixt a Chapman and a Priest* (1624).[47] On the evidence, the charge is unanswerable. A century later, the bibliographer Lyle Kendall Jr., who had consulted in the Folger Library the only surviving copy of the first edition of Sempill's work, defended the value of Taylor's version on the grounds that he 'worked hard at improving both the poetry and the satire' of Sempill's original, and concluded that it therefore 'has some right to be judged as an independent production'.[48]

Sempill's poem consists of a dialogue in couplets, as its title implies, between Jamie, a Scottish peddler in Poland,[49] and a Catholic priest, whom the peddler addresses as 'Sir John', perhaps in reference to the priest of that name in the play *Sir John Oldcastle*. The peddler, whose lines are rendered in honest Protestant blackletter, visits the priest, cast in perfidious roman, 'to learne to pray'. The priest bids him learn his Latin prayers (the 'Ave [Maria]' and 'Pater Noster') but the peddler does not understand the language and complains that there is no

scriptural support for the Catholic use of Latin in prayers. The rest of the dialogue continues to rehearse the same theme, except for a digression in the middle about the intercessory power of Mary, against which Jamie lectures Sir John for three pages. The peddler is then taken to the prior, and finally tied up and robbed of his pack; 'For if they have not fred mee of my sinne, / They sende mee lighter out, than I came in.' Crude polemic, but effective.

As Kendall details, Taylor's version follows much of Sempill's poem line for line, with small alterations for clarity and smoothness, but there are minor deletions from the main conversation, as well as two substantial additions. The first is an extensive encomium by the peddler on the Virgin Mary, glossing the line from the original, 'We love her then, though we beleeve not in her', and implying a change of feeling, if not in Marian doctrine, between Sempill and Taylor. The other addition is still longer, and includes several prose sections recounting stories from the *Golden Legend* that the peddler scorns as superstitious nonsense.[50] Finally, the poem ends on a very different note, before the encounter with the prior, and without anguish: instead of cursing the Catholic monks and friars, Taylor's peddler peacefully withdraws, praying that God 'would / Bring all his straying Flock into his Fold'.

Following a note by Pinkerton, Kendall indicated a valuable witness to Taylor's process of composition, namely British Library, Harley MS 7332. The manuscript appears to be in two hands, both probably of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. Though not, *contra* Kendall, in Taylor's hand, it must surely derive from an autograph, representing an intermediate stage between Sempill's original and Taylor's published version; we can see his stylistic changes gestating, both in lines within each quatrain and even in the words within each line. (The only hypothetical alternative—that it represents a reader choosing the bits of each version that he prefers—is made impossible by the longer ending of the manuscript, which was excised in print perhaps because, as Kendall suggests, the printer ran out of space on the final quire.) Here are two examples of the reworking process, from the beginning and end:

A POLLANDS PEDLER went upon a day

Unto his Parish Priest, to learne to pray.

The Priest sayd; Packe-man, thou must hant the Closter

To learne the Ave, and the Pater noster.

(Sempill 1624)

A Poland pedler went upon a day

Unto his Parish Priest to learne to pray

The Priest said pedler get thee to thy Cloister

And learne the Art [*sic*] & the Pater noster

(BL, Harley MS 7332)

A Poland Pedlar went upon a day,

Unto a Romish Priest to learne to pray;

The Priest said Pedlar get thee to the cloister

And learne the *Ave* and the *Pater Noster*.

(Taylor 1641)

Ergo a Pack-man to the Lord may pray,

And never know a syllabe he doth say:

For when you put me to my Pater noster,

I seek an egge, and ye give me an oster.

(Sempill 1624)

Ergo a Pedlar, to the Lord may Pray.

and know no Sillable that he doth say,

So when you Put me to my Paternoster,

I seeke an Egge, and you give me an Oyster.

(BL, Harley MS 7332)

Ergo a Pedlar to the Lord may pray,

And know no sillable that he doth say,

So when you put me to your *Pater noster*,

I aske an Egge when I would have an Oister.

(Taylor 1641)

The last line here, evidently a late revision, is curious. The original merely invokes a proverbial contrast, the egg and oyster being one early modern equivalent of our 'chalk and cheese' (variants include apple and oyster, and apple and lobster); the peddler had sought spiritual guidance and received the opposite.[51] But Taylor's line seems to imply that the peddler was asking for the opposite of what he himself wanted—that he had not at first really known what he wanted. It is not that the egg of Protestant truth is unlike the oyster of Catholic falsehood, but that the egg of Catholic doctrine is discovered, by means of conversation, to be incompatible with the oyster of truth. Taylor's poem records a *self*-realisation.

At any rate, the main message of Sempill's satire was sufficiently commonplace that Taylor had propounded it elsewhere. When the priest offers to teach Latin prayer to be recited without understanding, the peddler replies that such a thing is without purpose or meaning: 'Shall I that am a man of perfect age / Talke like a witlesse parret in a Cage?' Already in 1622, paraphrasing Mary I, Taylor had sarcastically written that 'In *Latine* Service must be sung and said, / Because men should not know for what they pray'd.'[52] The image of the parrot, however, also takes us back to his 1614 preface on poetry, where he had written that '[b]y teaching Parrots prate and prattle can', meaning that without natural wit, a poet's study of the classics or other literature can produce only tedious babble. Put side by side, the two passages imply a

correspondence, in Taylor's system of values, between learned, uninventive verse and Papist prayer, both being species of imitation without thought; and, conversely, between his own poetry and the honest professions of a good English Protestant. Obliquely, *A Pedlar* now looks like another example of Taylor's commentary on his own work.

But given the nature of *A Pedlar*, that system of values seems hard to sustain: in fact the poem is only one index of the much broader truth that imitation and self-expression are not opposed at all. As Colin Burrow has posited, the individual literary styles of Renaissance writers, such as the proverbially learned Ben Jonson, were born from habits of imitation that proved imitable themselves.[53] Taylor was no Jonson, but he participated in similar processes. He even imagined a ghostly visit from one of his acknowledged forebears, Thomas Nashe, using much of the imagery described by Burrow as symbolic of the imitative encounter.[54] Taylor drew much from Nashe, and much, in a different way, from the anti-Papist satires of Sempill and the *Prosopopoeia*, but such debts made his work more complex, less predictable; each source only helped him to articulate his own thoughts with greater intensity.

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Taylor's anxiety about prattling like a parrot may seem ironic, given his copious and influential experiments with nonsense poetry.[55] Southey approved, noting that 'he amused himself with verses of grandiloquous nonsense,—not that kind of nonsense which passes for sense and sublimity with the poet himself. . . but honest right rampant nonsense'.[56] But it is in that genre, despite its studied appearance of witlessness, that we are most likely to expect evidence of a natural wit unhampered by debts to erudition. Nonsense, after all, seems one step towards automatic writing, constrained in Taylor's case by form (rhyme and metre) but not by coherence of meaning. Like the chatter of a parrot, like unoriginal verse, like uncomprehending

prayer, it is form without content. Rebecca Fall has recently argued that Taylor's nonsense deploys the form of élite culture—its use of classical names and allusions—without its content, so that all readers, learned and unlearned alike, are equally unable to interpret and so equally able to enjoy its aural delights: 'in contrast to strategically obscure literary discourse, which is interpretable to an initiated in-crowd, nonsense is incomprehensible to everyone; instead of functioning as an exclusionary tactic, its witty opacity aims to please all readers'.[57] In such a way it implicitly satirises the culture of literary allusion, as embodied in Jonson.

There is certainly some truth to this judgement, but it is not the whole story, and closer study reveals in some of his nonsense surprising ligaments to sense. Take one of his most elaborate works in this vein, and the one that Fall uses as her chief example, *Nonsence upon Sence: Or, Sence upon Nonsence: Chuse You Either or Neither*, first published in 1651, expanded the same year, and again before his death, and printed posthumously in 1654. Much of the humour is achieved by combining bombastic Marlovian pentameter (almost entirely catalectic) with bathetic household items and low English place-names.[58] It thus opens with a parodic invocation of the epic muse, condensing the world into an area of Clerkenwell notorious for thievery and bear-baiting:

> Mount meekly low, on blew presumptuous wings,
> Relate the force of fiery water Springs,
> Tell how the Artick and Antartick Pole
> Together met, at Hockley in the Hole: (3)[59]

As one continues, the references and allusions accumulate uncontrollably, without narrative or structure; reading becomes a game of survival rather than the navigation and mastery of terrain. The collocation of ancient and modern is habitual: Chaucer mingles with Thersites and Ajax,

Achilles with ‘John Dory’ (i.e., Giovanni Doria, the Genovese admiral), Thames with Tiber, and so on, like an endless echo of Pandarus at the end of *Troilus and Cressida*, calling forth to some future ‘galled goose of Winchester’. We also find plenty of nods to the Reformation and the Civil War, as in one run of lines:

> I weeping sing, to thinke upon the Quibblins
> ’Twixt Romane, and Imperiall Guelphs and Giblins,
> How Munsters John a Leide, and Knipperdoling
> Were barberous Barbers in the Art of poling.
> From Sence and Nonsence, I am wide, quoth Wallice,
> But not so far as Oxford is from Callice:
> Give me a Leash of merry blades, right Bilboes,
> True tatterd Rogues, in Breech, Shirts, Skirts, and Elboes,
> And each of them will make a fit disciple,
> To ride up Holborne to the tree that’s triple.
> A man may think his purse is turn’d a Round-head,
> When all the crosses in it are confounded:
> ’Tis sayd that Poetry a thriving trade is,
> And gets a World of wealth from Lords and Ladies. . . (9–10)[60]

We are not going to get much meaning out of these lines as they stand: as Fall rightly says, ‘having a clear conception of these allusions, conventions, and vocabulary adds nothing to the sense of the poem’.[61] However, some clarification, though of a strange sort, is attained by comparing the pamphlet to another by Taylor, namely *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse, Cut Out, and Slenderly Sticht Together*, which bears the date 10 May 1644. It tells

his 'Turvey Topsie' life story of the past six months or so: Taylor, a proud royalist under threat from Parliamentary allies, had in late 1643 fled London via Windsor and Abingdon to Oxford, where he took up service to the King as a water bailiff and propagandist. (He elsewhere refers to October 1643 as 'this Mad, Sad, Cold Winter of discontent'.[62]) The poem opens with a lament, its subject evident already in the first couplet with its proto-Hudibrastic rhyme: 'I Weeping sing the maddest mad Rebellion / That ever Story told, or Tongue can tell ye on'. We will immediately notice the phrase 'I weeping sing' from the extract of *Nonsence upon Sence*. But that repetition is no coincidence: remarkably, the entire passage, and others, turn out to be fashioned of couplets from *Mad Verse* torn out, rewritten and stuck together. All couplets but one are in the same order as in the original poem:

I Weeping sing the maddest mad Rebellion,
That ever Story told, or Tongue can tell ye on:

The *Roman* and th' *Imperiall Guelphes* and *Gibellins,*
Unto our *English* Rebells are but *Quiblins*.

Not *Munsters Iohn a Leyd,* or *Knipperdoling,*
Did ever use such Pilling and such Poleing;

He said mine Enemies were full of malice
(Wider from truth then *Dover* is from *Callice;*)

The third man (which did make their number triple)
Offered his service, like a kind disciple,

My leash of Rascalls, were mad Blades, (right *Bilboes*)
True tatter'd Rogues, in breech, shirts, skirts and elboes,

My purse was turn'd a *Brownist* or a *Round-head,*
For all the Crosses in it, were confounded,

Thus have I been imployd, besides my trade is,
To write some Pamphlets, to please Lords and Ladies,

Couplets from *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse. Cut out, and slenderly sticht together* (1644)

I weeping sing, to thinke upon the Quibblins
'Twixt Romane, and Imperiall Guelphs and Giblins,
How Munsters John a Leide, and Knipperdoling
Were barberous Barbers in the Art of poling.
From Sence and Nonsence, I am wide, quoth Wallice,
But not so far as Oxford is from Callice:
Give me a Leash of merry blades, right Bilboes,
True tatterd Rogues, in Breech, Shirts, Skirts, and Elboes,
And each of them will make a fit disciple,
To ride up Holborne to the tree that's triple.
A man may think his purse is turn'd a Round-head,
When all the crosses in it are confounded:
'Tis sayd that Poetry a thriving trade is,
And gets a World of wealth from Lords and Ladies. . .

Extract from *Nonsence upon Sence* (1651)

I tooke a Boate, and up to *Windsor* went I,
Whereas of Rebells (of all sorts) were plenty,

Some Cobling Preachers, some perfidious Nobles,
(The Church, the King and Kingdomes cursed troubles,)
Besides a crew of base Knaves, *Omnium Gatherum,*
Shuffle 'em together, and the Divell father 'um;

And now and then was punisht a Delinquent,
By which good meanes away the filth and stink went.

Couplets from *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse. Cut out, and slenderly sticht together* (1644)

I tooke a Cammell, and to Naples went I,
Of pickled Sausedges I found great plenty;
The Gudgeon catcher there, o're top'd the Nobles,
And put the Viceroy in a peck of troubles:
Brave tag rag multitude of Omnium Gatherum,
Shuffle 'um together, and the Devill father 'um:
But now and then was squeez'd a rich Delinquent,
By which good means away the precious chinke went:

Extract from *Nonsence upon Sence* (1651)

In the opening gambit of his analysis of early modern cut-up texts, Adam Smyth has suggested taking the sartorial subtitle of Taylor's *Mad Verse. . . Cut Out, and Slenderly Stitcht Together* 'as a literal account of his compositional process, and not merely as a metaphor'.[63] At the least, it really does contain mad verse (about the mad rebellion), sad verse (about Taylor's hardship), glad verse (about his joyful encounter with the royalists at Oxford), and bad verse (*passim*). But paradoxically, it turns out to be *Nonsence upon Sence* that was composed, from *Mad Verse*, with a cut-up technique. Early modern scholars might have conceptualised such a technique as that of the cento, an ancient form in which lines and hemistichs, usually from Vergil or Homer, were rearranged to make a new poem, often on a Christian subject.[64] But that form relies on a feat of ingenuity in finding fresh uses for old phrases: Taylor's effort, by contrast, does not depend on ingenuity at all, precisely because it seeks to smash meaning apart altogether. It is closer instead to what has become familiar to us from the modernist avant-garde—not so much Alfred Döblin (as in Smyth's analogy) as Tristan Tzara and William Burroughs. Taylor bade

the readers of his mad and sad verses either 'to Commend them, or *Come Mend* them', but the later poem performs the opposite of mending, for whereas the original couplets made perfect sense, Taylor has built nonsense upon them, as the new title reminds us.[65]

That is to present the relationship of the two texts from Taylor's point of view. We also need to consider it from ours, going not forwards chronologically, but backwards, using the earlier book to help explain the later. The sensical couplets of *Mad Verse* serve to gloss words that the reader of *Nonsence*, no matter how astute and erudite, would have to guess at; but like any gloss, the earlier poem threatens to enrich as well as delimit meaning in the later. For instance, the third couplet above left says that the Parliamentary rebellion of 1642 was bloodier even than the 1534 Anabaptist uprising at Münster spearheaded by John of Leiden and Bernhard Knipperdolling, of which Taylor may have remembered the satirical account in Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*. The expression 'to pill and poll', literally meaning to strip someone's skin and hair, connotes pillage and plunder, although here we have 'pilling and poleing', perhaps suggesting also combat with crude weapons—the *OED* lists the early modern sense of 'to pole' as 'to fight with poles'. In the corresponding couplet of *Nonsence* we read that the Anabaptists were 'barberous Barbers in the Art of poling'; Noel Malcolm glosses the final word as 'polling', i.e., beheading, but with the original phrase beside it we now find folded in the meanings of pillage and shaving, the latter resonating with 'barbers'.

From the reader's perspective, the sense breathes fresh life into the nonsense. Whatever the author's intentions, therefore, it is not true that this passage of nonsense is equally meaningless to learned and unlearned audiences. Its lines are not exactly allusive, in the classical, Jonsonian sense, but their referentiality amounts to more than the vague, unconscious, and indefinitely extensive 'intertextuality' now sometimes posited in contrast to deliberate allusion. Raphael Lyne has adduced the concepts of explicit and implicit memory as suggestive analogies for allusion and intertextuality respectively, and we might think that these lines, too,

look like a memory of the earlier poem in the later.[66] But it seems to be a painful one, for it comes to us condensed and displaced, like the feelings or memories of a Freudian dream, outwardly transformed to evade the censorious eye of the superego. Be that as it may, the fact remains that, although the new poem contains the old, its full purport, as with allusive and intertextual references, is unavailable to the casual reader: it has to be decoded by critical inspection, that is, by a Taylor *scholar*. It is in this way that *Nonsence upon Sence* may be called a 'scholarly' poem, built on reference not to Knipperdolling and the rest but to Taylor's own work. And this is true not only of individual lines; the original puts a new affective cast on the poem as a whole, evoking nonsense as a response—perhaps defiantly joyous, perhaps frantic, perhaps both—to the political chaos and tribulations of the Civil War.[67] As in Shakespearean tragedy, nonsense responds to trauma, whether personal or national. Indeed, as his 'mad verse' for the 'mad rebellion' already intimated, if the idea of nonsense had any symbolic political valence for Taylor, it was as likely to be negative as positive.

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Taylor had no qualms about rewiring earlier verse, including his own. This contradicts his simple self-portrait as a natural poet, and seems to position him closer to the thieving tailor figure that he explicitly rejected, even perhaps to Des Periers's tailor who, as we saw, stole from himself too. Neither Taylor nor his contemporaries had any critical vocabulary—not even the trope of patching and piecing—with which to defend the aesthetic value of these reworkings. And yet our reaction to the poems is not like our response to a student plagiarist, or to, say, a mediaeval theologian inserting unattributed chunks of St Augustine into his tract on original sin: considering the poems against their sources enriches rather than reduces them, and each in different ways. We can enjoy the disruption of historical time in *The Suddaine*

Turne, the subtle adjustments and oblique self-commentary of *A Pedlar*, and the unexpected intrusion of reality into *Nonsence upon Sence*; and we enjoy these effects by understanding them as the results of retailoring, productive in their unresolved juxtapositions, allowing old and new, once revealed, into dialogue without obscuring either. In other words, rather than a formal coherence and beauty, these poems have a material richness, and this quality makes them both original and quintessentially literary. Likewise, John Kerrigan can write of *Much Ado About Nothing* that it 'is pieced and patched and recycled. Its originality is real because the assemblage is unique, edged with uncertainty as to origins.'[68] Retailoring is one metaphor, but we already have an array of others to appreciate the poems in this manner: we might speak of *bricolage*, for instance, or of *pentimenti*, or of the palimpsest. Such terms indicate a taste for the fragment that derives ultimately from German Romanticism, the same aesthetic Carlyle expounded in *Sartor Resartus*.

But Taylor's contemporary readers, who were of course not Taylor scholars, could not possibly have enjoyed his poems in this way. Moreover, although learned humanists of the sort scorned by Taylor often imagined their own works as disordered *silvae*, *farragines*, even well-woven patchworks and rhapsodies, English readers never praised poetry or drama for its fragmentary, material, retailored quality, despite the innumerable examples of works from the period that seem to have such qualities, from Shakespearean drama to the unique *Liber Lilliati* volume beautifully analysed by Jeffrey Todd Knight.[69] To those who would simply point to the works themselves as evidence of such a taste, the absence of any explicit judgement to that effect, and the corresponding surplus of criticisms of literary patchwork as theft, will prove a difficult thing to explain. It is we, then, not Taylor himself, who have recuperated the sartorial metaphor, praising him for virtues he would not have conceptualised as such.

There is no reason for us to be embarrassed about this apparent anachronism. Southey and his critical heirs denied that Taylor's poetry had any 'intrinsic merit', but all they meant

was that they did not like it, and any scholarly quest for that merit may rest on faulty premises. The chief duty of criticism is not so much to explain its objects as to make them more interesting, and this duty can be fulfilled just as well with Taylor as with learned Jonson and golden Shakespeare. It is *our* office, as readers, to navigate the river-networks of the Water Poet's literary traffic, and by doing so to bring further meanings to his words. That is what it means to treat his work as literature; or rather, what it would mean for his work to *be* literature, if we only imagine that term to denote a category of reading—our own reading—rather than of writing. Southey was joking when he declared of the nonsense poets:

> [T]here is a mystery in an unknown tongue; and they who speak it, and consequently they who write it, may be inspired for the nonce—though they may be as little conscious of their inspiration as they are of their meaning. There may be an unknown inspiration as well as an unknown tongue. If so what mighty revelations may lie unrevealed in the gibberish of Taylor the Water Poet![70]

That act of revelation, however, is precisely our prerogative.

[1] Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *The Vanity of the Arts and Sciences* (1526), trans. James Sandford (London, 1569), fol. 13v.

[2] Stephen Orgel, 'The Renaissance Artist as Plagiarist', *English Literary History* 48 (1981), 476–95. The essay is reprinted, as 'The Renaissance Poet as Plagiarist', in Orgel's *The Authentic Shakespeare and Other Problems of the Early Modern Stage* (New York, 2002), 89–105. See also his later comment on the subject, 'Plagiarism Revisited', in his *Spectacular Performances: Essays on Theatre, Imagery, Books and Selves in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2011), 211–28. On plagiarism, see also the essays in *Plagiarism in Early Modern England*, ed. Paulina Kewes (Basingstoke, 2003), and *Borrowed Feathers: Plagiarism and the Limits of Imitation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Hall Bjørnstad (Oslo, 2008), esp. Kathy Eden's chapter, 'Literary Property and the Question of Style: A Prehistory'.

[3] For instance, *Shakespeare, Origins and Originality*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge, 2015); John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Originality* (Oxford, 2018); and *Shakespeare and Authority: Citations, Conceptions and Constructions*, eds Katie Halsey and Angus Vine (London, 2018), esp. Colin Burrow's chapter in that volume, 'Shakespeare's Authorities'. See also now that critic's outstanding work on literary imitation in the Renaissance (and beyond), *Imitating Authors: Plato to Futurity* (Oxford, 2019). Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia, 2013), pp. 90–94, notes the shift in scholarly attitudes to early modern originality between Terence Cave and Orgel. For an older work of great value, see David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven, 1983).

[4] See, for instance, Leonard Digges, 'Upon Master William Shakespeare, the Deceased Authour, and his Poems', in William Shakespeare, *Poems* (London, 1640), sig. *3r; Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition* (London, 1759), 81; Richard Farmer, *An Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1767), Preface, [2]. Orgel, 'The Renaissance Artist', 484, cites this book but seems to misunderstand its argument, and the words he quotes from it are actually taken by Farmer from an

editorial comment in Horace, *Epistolae ad Pisones et Augustum*, ed. Richard Hurd, 2nd ed., 2 vols (Cambridge, 1753), I, 187. On the broader history of the debate, see Charles and Michelle Martindale, *Shakespeare and the Uses of Antiquity: An Introductory Essay* (London, 1994), 1–8.

[5] *Dunciad Variorum* (London, 1735), II.323. In a later version (*Dunciad in Four Books*, 1742) Taylor appears simply as 'swan of Thames', relocated to III.20.

[6] Farmer, *An Essay*, 35. In the ironic comparison he had the recent example of William Kenrick, *A Review of Doctor Johnson's New Edition of Shakespeare* (London, 1765), 111.

[7] William Maginn, 'Dr. Farmer's essay on the Learning of Shakspeare Considered', *Fraser's Magazine* 20 (1839), 253–73 and 476–90, at 481a; 'Some Shaksperian and Spenserian MSS', *The American Review* n.s. 85 (Jan 1852), 17–29; William Theobald, *The Classical Element in the Shakespeare Plays* (London, 1909), 33.

[8] William Pinkerton, 'The Packman's Paternoster' (as at n. 47 below), 242b. Compare Robert Southey, 'Introduction: Lives and Works of our Uneducated Poets', in John Jones, *Attempts in Verse*, ed. Southey (London, 1831), 86.

[9] Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet* (Oxford, 1994). There is also an old German thesis-monograph, which I have been unable to consult in a period of global lockdown: Ferdinand Lohmann, *Taylor the Water-Poet: Sein Leben und seine Werke nach der folio von 1630* (Dülmen, 1911).

[10] For a typical evaluation, see Jonathan Post, *English Lyric Poetry: The Early Seventeenth Century* (London and New York, 2002), 89: 'it would be a desperate act of literary criticism to set a very high mark on any of Taylor's writings, however direct and pleasantly earthy many of them are'.

[11] An early critic to do this was Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print: Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997), 191–200. Several other recent scholars are cited and discussed below.

[12] For the last, see especially Knight, *Bound to Read*.

[13] Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröck in Three Books* (London, 1888), 58.

[14] On the circumstances of printing, see Clare Wikeley, *John Taylor the Water Poet, Authorship and Print, 1612–1631*, 2 vols, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southampton (2009).

[15] See, for instance, *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, eds Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia, 2002); Stephen Zwicker, 'Habits of Reading and Early Modern Literary Culture', in *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature*, eds David Loewenstein and Janet Mueller (Cambridge, 2002), 170–98; *The Textuality and Materiality of Reading in Early Modern England*, eds Jennifer Richards and Fred Schurink, *HLQ* 73.3 (2010, special issue), esp. the editors' introduction at 345–61; Edith Snook, 'Recent Studies in Early Modern Reading', *English Literary Renaissance* 43 (2013), 343–78.

[16] Katharine Craik, 'John Taylor's Pot-Poetry', *The Seventeenth Century* 20 (2005), 185–203.

[17] Craik's analysis of Taylor and labour has recently been extended by Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567–1667* (London, 2018), ch. 4.

[18] John Taylor, *All the Workes*, 3 parts in 1 (London, 1630) [henceforth *Workes*], III, 75a.

[19] Craik, 'John Taylor's Pot-Poetry', 194.

[20] See Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), R145 for the tailor, and M957 and T22 for tailors, millers and weavers.

[21] Bonadventure des Périers, *The Mirrour of Mirth and Pleasant Conceits*, tr. R.D. (London, 1583), 46v-47r. For the original, see *Les nouvelles recreations et joyeux devis*, no. 46: 'Du tailleur qui se desroboit soy-mesme'.

[22] [Miguel de Cervantes], *The Second Part of the History of the Valorous and Witty Knight-Errant, Don Quixote of the Mançha*, tr. [Thomas Shelton] (London, 1620), 295–6 (ch. 45).

[23] George Mason, *Grammaire Angloise* (London, 1633), 103–4.

[24] Linda Woodbridge, 'Patchwork: Piecing the Early Modern Mind in England's First Century of Print Culture', *English Literary Renaissance* 23 (1993), 5–45, at 24. As she notes, John Lyly admits to making a livery of 'the Taylors shreds', but the metaphor is self-deprecating.

[25] George Wither, 'The Scourge', in his *Abuses Stript and Whipt, or, Satirical Essayes* (London, 1613), sig. V1v.

[26] *Workes*, II, 248b. Compare later Taylor, 'A Thiefe' (1622), in *Workes*, II, 120a: 'Because my Name is *Taylor*, some doe doubt, / My best invention comes by stealing out / From other Writers workes'.

[27] Rocío G. Sumillera, *Invention: The Language of English Renaissance Poetics* (Cambridge, 2019).

[28] Taylor, 'A Thiefe', in *Workes*, II, 120a. On scholar and sculler, see Michelle O'Callaghan, '"Thomas the Scholer" versus "John the Sculler": Defining Popular Culture in the Early Seventeenth Century', in

Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England, ed. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham, 2009), 45–56.

[29] *Workes*, II, 119a.

[30] Taylor, 'Description', *Workes*, II, 249a.

[31] 'A Few Lines, to Small Purpose', prefixed to 'Superbiae Flagellum, Or, The Whip of Pride' (1621), *Workes*, I, 27a.

[32] Taylor, 'Description', *Workes*, II, 249a.

[33] Joanne E. Gates, 'Travel and Pseudo-Translation in the Self-Promotional Writings of John Taylor, Water Poet', in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Carmine G. Di Biase (Amsterdam, 2006), 267–80, at 268.

[34] John Taylor, *The Suddaine Turne of Fortune's Wheele: A Poem*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London, 1848); only 75 copies were printed. I quote from this edition, though one may also consult the text (from a manuscript belonging to the Rev. Thomas Corser) in John Taylor, *Works Not Included in the Folio Volume of 1630*, 5 vols (Manchester, 1870–78), II. A fine manuscript copy of the poem from c. 1800 survives in BL, Egerton MS 2398; Acton Frederick Griffiths, *Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica, or, A Descriptive Catalogue of a Rare and Rich Collection of Early English Poetry* (London, 1815), 349, ascribes the transcript to a Mr Fillingham, and mentions another, in quarto of 60 pages, 'probably in the hand-writing of John Taylor'. One of these was sold from the collection of Richard Heber in 1836; see *Bibliotheca Heberiana*, 13 vols (London, 1834–7), XI, 141.

[35] Taylor, 'An Advertisement to the Reader', prefixed to *The Suddaine Turne*, 6.

[36] Stephen Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005), 21–62.

[37] On the political context see Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge, 1989), 15–18 and 66–7.

[38] Taylor's poem runs to a total of 312 lines (including thirteen speech headings and four inserted non-metrical lines), and there is an added verse preface of 46 lines—a full total of 358. 12 lines of the source have been removed, leaving 174 lines, which means Taylor has added 184: more than the original lines that survive in his poem, but fewer than his own count of the total number of lines in the source. (This estimate does not count lines that have been partially changed from the original.)

[39] This comet occasioned many astrological and prognostic pamphlets, for instance Elias Ehinger, *Iudicium astrologicum von dem newen Cometa welcher den 1 Decemb 1618 am Morgen vor und nach 6 uhren zu Augspurg von vilen Personen gesehen worden* (Augsburg, 1618), John Bainbridge, *An Astronomicall Description of the Late Comet from the 18. of Novemb. 1618 to the 16. of December Following* (London, 1618), and Paul Hintzsch, *Beschreibung des erschrecklichen Cometsterns, welcher im Octobri, Novembri und Decembri des 1618 Jahrs… erschienen* (Leipzig, 1619). It was also one of the three comets analysed in Galileo's *Discorso delle Cometi* of 1619.

[40] The 'bloody field' Aceldama, associated with the betrayal of Judas at Acts 1:18–19, undermines the Pope's righteous anger.

[41] Wikeley, *John Taylor*, 426–30.

[42] Diethelm Böttcher, 'Propaganda und öffentliche Meinung im protestantischen Deutschland 1628–1636)', in *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg: Perspektiven und Strukturen*, ed. Hans Ulrich Rudolf (Darmstadt, 1977), 343; Anna Fritzmann, *Friedrich von Logau, the Satirist* (New York, 1983), 246. William Coupe, *The German Illustrated Broadsheet in the Seventeenth Century: Historical and Iconographical Studies*,

2 vols (Baden-Baden, 1966–7), I, 81. Gerhild Scholz Williams, *Ways of Knowing in Early Modern Germany: Johannes Praetorius as a Witness to his Time* (London, 2017), 206.

[43] Taylor, *Suddaine Turne*, 17–18.

[44] On this interpretation, see Alastair Hamilton, *The Apocryphal Apocalypse: The Reception of the Second Book of Esdras (4 Ezra) from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1999). For a curious modern update, see Alexander James Ferris, *The Three-Headed Eagle: A Foreview of the Nations of Europe and their Destiny according to the Prophet Esdras* (London, 1944).

[45] Wikeley, *John Taylor*, 427.

[46] *A Conference Between the Pope, the Emperour and the King of Spaine* (London, 1642), sig. A1v.

[47] William Pinkerton, 'The Packman's Paternoster', in *Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, 11 (1861), 241–2. On Pinkerton, see Robert Young's preface to his selection of manuscript materials on Belfast from Pinkerton's collection, *Historical Notices of Old Belfast and its Vicinity* (Belfast, 1896), v–vii. S[ir] J[ames] S[empill], *The Pack-Mans Pater Noster, or A Dialogue Betwixt a Chapman and a Priest* (Aberdeen 1624), falsely claiming to have been 'Newlie translated out of Dutch'. The pamphlet was reedited by Sempill's son Robert as *A Pick-Tooth for the Pope* (Glasgow, 1669).

[48] Lyle Kendall, Jr., 'John Taylor's Piracy of *The Pack-Mans Paternoster*', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 57 (1963), 201–10, at 204–5.

[49] A recognisable demographic: see, for instance, Waldemar Kowalski, *The Great Immigration: Scots in Cracow and Little Poland, circa 1500–1660* (Leiden, 2016), 94–104.

[50] John Taylor, 'A Pedlar and a Romish Priest', in *Works Not Included,* I, 13–17.

[51] For the phrase see Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs*, A291.

[52] John Taylor, 'A Memoriall of all the English Monarchs', *Workes*, III, 293.

[53] Burrow, *Imitating Authors*, 235–78.

[54] John Taylor, 'Crop-Eare Curried, or Tom Nash His Ghost' (1644), in *Works Not Included*, II, 1, writes of Nashe's ghost coming to him 'with stareing haire, Neglected beard, Ashy Gastly look'; the image of a ghost with similar features haunts Burrow's history of imitators and their models, going back to Aeneas's vision of Hector at *Aeneid* II.268–79, on which see *Imitating Authors*, 121.

[55] For a chronological survey, see P. N. Hartle, '"All His Workes Sir": John Taylor's Nonsense', *Neophilologus* 86 (2002), 155–69. Noel Malcolm, *The Origins of English Nonsense* (London, 1997), 17–29, offers a judicious picture of Taylor's place in the early English tradition, and see Wikeley, *John Taylor*, 276–89, on the content and printing of *Gregory Nonsence*.

[56] Southey, 'Introduction', in Jones, *Attempts in Verse*, 43.

[57] Rebecca L. Fall, 'Popular Nonsense According to John Taylor and Ben Jonson', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 57 (2017), 87–110, at 91.

[58] Cf. O'Callaghan, '"Thomas the Scholer"', 54–6. Taylor gives us four burlesque lines on *Hero and Leander* in this poem; earlier, 'Taylor's Motto', *Workes*, II, 55b, he claimed to have been struck with the desire to write poetry after '[r]epeating lines of Hero and Leander' in his boat.

[59] See Fall, 'Popular Nonsense', 103, for a nice description of the pleasure in the sounds of this quatrain. I disagree with her in reading 'Mount' not as a noun but as an imperative verb (going with 'Relate' and

‘Tell’), on the grounds that this seems to fit better with the clause ‘on blew presumptuous wings’, though I accept that when dealing with nonsense verse the criterion of coherence is on shaky ground. Taylor would have remembered Hockley from the early stages of his ‘penniless pilgrimage’ to Edinburgh in 1618: see his *Workes*, I, 123b.

[60] For glosses, see Malcolm’s edition in *The Origins of English Nonsense*, 195–96, although ‘bilboes’ here (like ‘blades’) means not swords but those who wield them.

[61] Fall, ‘Popular Nonsense’, 103.

[62] Taylor, ‘Crop-Eare Curried’, 1.

[63] Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2018), 22.

[64] On centos, see Scott McGill, *Virgil Recomposed: The Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity* (Oxford, 2005), and George Hugo Tucker, ‘Virgil Reborn, Reconfigured, Reinvented in the Early Modern Verse-Canto’, in *Virgil and Renaissance Culture*, ed. L. B. T. Houghton and Marco Sgarbi (Tempe, AZ, 2018), 181–201.

[65] Elsewhere Taylor recycles phrases from his earlier nonsense; for instance, ‘*Don Diegoes* horse hath broke his crupper’ (*Odcombs Complaint*, 1613) > ‘Tom Holders Mare hath broke her Crupper’, and ‘smugfac’d *Mulciber*’ (*Gregory Nonsence His Newes from No Place*, 1622) > ‘smug fac’d Mulciber’.

[66] Raphael Lyne, *Memory and Intertextuality in Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge, 2016). esp. 21–42.

[67] On which, see especially Hartle, ‘‘‘All His Workes Sir’’’, 162–7, also invoking Freud.

[68] Kerrigan, *Shakespeare's Originality*, 39, and see more generally 37–40 on this theme.

[69] Knight, *Bound to Read*, 87–116. For patchwork metaphors in humanist writing, see Eric MacPhail, *Dancing around the Well: The Circulation of Commonplaces in Renaissance Humanism* (Leiden, 2014), esp. chapters 1 and 4.

[70] Robert Southey, *The Doctor*, 7 vols (London, 1834–47), V, 175 (ch. 149).