

**‘Awake Your Faith’:
Word-Magic in Shakespeare’s Late Plays**

Rana Banna

University College London

PhD in English

Declaration:

I, Rana Banna, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis examines how Shakespeare's late plays – *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* – stage a semiotic problem that is only overcome by faith in their miraculous endings. Towards the end of his career – alert to the upsurge in scientific rationalism – Shakespeare shows a nostalgic yearning to recuperate magical thinking in his writing, to prove and preserve language's enduring power despite this cultural shift, showing that words, if used expertly, could still magically perform meaning, embodying an optimistic semiotics.

Each chapter of this thesis addresses one of Shakespeare's four romances, identifying in each a distinctive aspect of early-modern magical practice which is first examined through period commentary, before then observing how it repairs the corrupted linguistic signification of the play to salvage a faithful, operative semiotics. Although these plays begin in a cynical, deceptive, harsh political landscape, plagued by a crisis of slippery, dysfunctional signification, Shakespeare recovers an innocent conception of language as a sentimental alternative that purposely grants a naïve faith in the efficacy of the linguistic sign.

These late plays are most reliant upon moments of spectacular wonder in which the impossible appears possible, like the spectacle of Hermione's statue, seemingly resurrected in *The Winter's Tale*. Crucially, however, this magic is only effective once Paulina primes her audience: 'It is requir'd | You do awake your faith' (V.iii.94-5). This study reveals how Shakespeare's romances are preoccupied by a seemingly outdated desire to capture the transcendent *magic word*, even as magical thinking recedes.

Impact Statement

This thesis contributes to scholarship on early-modern conceptions of language and magic in Shakespeare's late plays, where it identifies a re-enchanting semiotics in response to contemporary threats to magical-thinking and the advancing rational scepticism of New Science. I examine this period of epistemological overlap via the various scientific, magical, rhetorical, theological, and philosophical early-modern texts, considering these in dialogue with Shakespeare's romances to offer an interdisciplinary, historically-informed linguistic understanding.

As a doctoral candidate in London, I have discussed and debated my research in different academic communities and participated in various conferences throughout the UK and US, such as: the 'Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (ACMRS) and Medieval Association of the Pacific (MAP) Joint Conference: *Magic, Religion, and Science in the Global Middle Ages and Renaissance*' (2019), and 'The London Shakespeare Centre & Shakespeare's Globe Second Graduate Conference: *Negotiating Boundaries: Early Modern Texts and Cultures*' (2020). Over the course of my PhD at UCL, I have taught undergraduates in tutorials and seminars as well as leading seminars at the summer school and this has helped to inform my research. Parts of my first chapter have also been published as a journal article, entitled: 'Alchemical Word-Magic in "*The Winter's Tale*"', *Accessus*, Vol. 6, ii (2020), 5.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
A NOTE ON THE TEXT	7
ABBREVIATIONS	8
INTRODUCTION: Renaissance ‘Word-Magike’ in Shakespeare’s Late Plays	9
I. A ‘Secret Operation in the Word’: Early-Modern Sign Theory	9
II. ‘This is the True Magic’: A Re-enchanted Poetics	22
III. Linguistic Faith in Shakespeare’s Late Plays	33
PART ONE: NATURAL MAGIC	
CHAPTER I: Alchemical Signatures and <i>The Winter’s Tale</i>	42
I. The Alchemical Language of Signatures	42
II. Natural Language in <i>The Winter’s Tale</i>	51
i. Making Words Wanton: Hermione’s Fertile Rhetoric	51
ii. ‘Awake Your Faith’: Alchemically Regenerative Words	60
CHAPTER II: Semiotic Harmony: The Music of the Spheres in <i>Pericles</i>	70
I. The Language of Celestial Harmony	70
II. The Politics of Discord in Shakespeare’s Pre-Romances	82
III. <i>Pericles</i> and the Restoration of Semiotic Harmony	90
i. ‘I’ll Take Thy Word for Faith’: Discordant Oaths	90
ii. ‘Most Heavenly Music!’: Therapeutic Harmonies	99
PART TWO: UNNATURAL MAGIC	
CHAPTER III: Prophetic Promise: Lineal Return in <i>Cymbeline</i>	112
I. ‘Prophetic Poesie’: The Early-Modern Poetics of Prophecy	112
II. Prophetic Utterances in Shakespeare’s Pre-Romances	122
III. The Divinatory Repair of Lineage in <i>Cymbeline</i>	133
i. ‘I Cannot Delve Him to the Root’: Lineage and Fidelity	133
ii. Restoring ‘Lopp’d Branches’: Prophetic Return	150
CHAPTER IV: Transformative Magic: Verbal Conjunction in <i>The Tempest</i>	173
I. ‘Speak’: The Transformative Power of Early-Modern Invocation	173
II. ‘I Am Not Who I Am’: Demonic Conjuring in Shakespeare’s Pre-Romances	184
III. Transformative Conjunction in <i>The Tempest</i>	198
i. ‘What Cares These Roarers for the Name of King?’: The Language of Usurpation	198
ii. Beyond ‘Dumb Discourse’: Communal Speech in a ‘Brave New World’	216

CONCLUSION	234
BIBLIOGRAPHY	239

Acknowledgments

For my mother, father, and sister. With special thanks to Eric Langley.

A Note on the Text

Original spellings have been retained in all quotations, with the exception of i/j and i/y and u/v and vv/w, which have been modernised. Square brackets denote the restoration of elisions in a text as well as my own editorial additions. Citation to period texts is given in short-form in footnotes, and in full in the bibliography. Unless otherwise stated, all quotations from William Shakespeare's works are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used:

OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), www.oed.com.</i>
PMLA	<i>Modern Language Association of America</i>
SEL	<i>Studies in English Literature 1500-1900</i>
SQ	<i>Shakespeare Quarterly</i>
SS	<i>Shakespeare Survey</i>
HUP	<i>Harvard University Press</i>
OUP	<i>Oxford University Press</i>
CUP	<i>Cambridge University Press</i>
PUP	<i>Princeton University Press</i>
JHUP	<i>The Johns Hopkins University Press</i>
YUP	<i>Yale University Press</i>
UPP	<i>University of Pennsylvania Press</i>
PSUP	<i>Pennsylvania State University Press</i>
ACMRS	<i>Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies</i>
UTP	<i>University of Toronto Press</i>
UTXP	<i>University of Texas Press</i>
UCP	<i>University of Chicago Press</i>
EUP	<i>Edinburgh University Press</i>
MUP	<i>Manchester University Press</i>

INTRODUCTION

Renaissance ‘Word-Magike’ in Shakespeare’s Late Plays

I. A ‘Secret Operation in the Word’: Early-Modern Sign Theory

May we not suspect yet there is some piece of truth more than we are ware of? some piece of secret operation (as *Serenus Salmonicus* doth write) in the word of *ABRACADABRA*, to heale one of the fever ... hanging aboute hys necke in a silken purse, if a piece of wood have such power to save us.¹

The first known occurrence of the word, ABRACADABRA, appears in the second century text, *Liber Medicinalis*, by tutor and physician to the Roman emperor, Quintus Serenus Sammonicus (d. 212 AD), who advocated its power, when spoken or written, to perform a healing charm. This operative utterance was believed to derive from the Aramaic or Hebrew expressions for ‘I will create with words’, ‘I create like the word’, or ‘I create as I speak’, and while ‘supporting evidence is lacking’ for these folk etymologies, they rely upon a sense of magical semiotics whereby words themselves function to miraculously enact the speaker’s purpose.² In a 1565 treatise calling for the severe restriction of Church ceremonies without scriptural authority, the Anglican priest and academic, James Calphill (c. 1529-1570), pauses to consider whether there might be ‘some piece of truth’ or ‘secret operation’ contained intrinsically within this obscure sign, since it was typically used to ‘heale one of the fever’ when worn ‘hanging aboute’ the patient’s ‘necke’ as a literary amulet with the word arranged in triangular formation:³

ABRACADABRA
ABRACADABR
ABRACADAB
ABRACADA
ABRACAD
ABRACA
ABRAC
ABRA
ABR
AB
A

¹ James Calphill, *An Aunswere ...* (1565), 133v.

² Craig Conley, *Magical Words: A Dictionary* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 2008), 66; *OED*, ‘abracadabra’, *n.* & *int.*, etymology.

³ ‘Abracadabra Triangle’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 13th edn. (1926).

Calfhill, however, only ever contemplates the efficacy of the magical word with the tentative scepticism of a staunch Calvinist, discounting its validity and power on account of its lack of scriptural merit: ‘how can it save him by hanging it about hys necke? Furthermore, wherin consisteth the vertue of ye gospel? in the proportion of ye letters? or understanding of the sense?’.⁴ Unable to locate an essential power in the materiality of the word, Calfhill begins to demystify its magical potency, instead identifying a semiotic dislocation between its merely designatory ‘letters’ and an ‘understanding’ of their ‘sense’ or meaning. Observing the developments of early-modern linguistic sign theory through the commentary of rhetoricians, alongside occultist, devotional, and scientific writers, it becomes clear that faith-based period semiotics significantly anticipate, complicate, even circumvent inherently faithless poststructuralist critiques of language operations, investing metaphysical meaning in the sign with a wilful, profound naivety unavailable to twentieth-century thought; it is an age in which the gap between the *word* (‘sign’) and the *sense* (‘signified’) which it denotes was understood, and importantly, an age in which faith hoped to negotiate that gap, conveying significant meaning to the sign. For example, in his essay, ‘Of Glory’ (first published in English in 1603), the French humanist philosopher, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), deconstructs language into ‘both name, and the thing’, explaining:

The name, is a voyce which noteth, and signifieth the thing: the name, is neither part of thing nor of substance: it is a stranger-piece joyned to the thing, and from it.⁵

Under the pressure of early-modern humanist learning and linguistic thought, period thinkers grew accustomed to making what we may think of as distinctions between elements of the sign: the ‘name’ should be understood as detached from the ‘thing’ that it ‘signifieth’, as words began to lose that meaningful ‘substance’ which magical language so effectively invoked. It is one proposition of this study that – in the face of this semiotic discernment or exactitude – magical thinking – in which words could conjure, summon, curse, cure, or bind with oaths – was increasingly superseded by scientific semantic rigour. As the second section of this introduction shall examine, this was the result of a process of – albeit, non-linear – disenchantment, in which the faithful, premodern universe of sympathetic correspondences gave way to the disjointed, sceptical rationalism of the Scientific Revolution. The impact of New Science on period conceptions of linguistic signification is illustrated, for example, by the natural philosopher and father of the scientific method, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), in his 1620 *Novum Organum*, as he debates the ‘Mis-apprehensions forced by

⁴ Calfhill, 134^{r-v}.

⁵ Montaigne, *Essays* ... (1613), 350^r.

words upon the Understanding’, discovering a discrepancy between ‘names’ and ‘things’, for there are ‘names of things which are not’ or ‘names of things which are but confused’:

But such is our manner of inventing Sciences, that we attribute not much to the sharpness and strength of wit So fares it exactly with our Reason, Although there be no particular use of confutations, yet we must say something of the Sects and Kinds of these Theories, and afterwards of their outward signs, because they are in a bad condition, and lastly of the causes of so much unhappiness, and so long and general a consent in error, that Truth may have an easier access, and the Humane Understanding may be more thoroughly purged, and rid of these mistakes.⁶

By ‘inventing Sciences’, Bacon hoped for humankind to refine their ‘Understanding’ which was marred by the esoteric ‘outward signs’ of language, purging the mind of semantic inaccuracies and substituting these for empirical and mathematical precision. Overall, the transcendent ambitions of a magical semiotics gradually withdrew from the period’s popular culture as science began to encroach on its imaginative territory. By the early seventeenth century, word-magic was being specifically condemned for pretending to invoke sacrilegious or artificial efficacy. In his 1616 *Triall of Witch-craft*, the English physician, John Cotta (1575-1650), refuted the methods of those who attempted to prove the existence of magic, dismissing the direct powers of ‘the word Magitian, whereby they are ordinarily tearmed’, for to truly conduct his verbal charms he would have to ‘employ’ a ‘Divell, and a supernaturall effect or miracle’, some ‘power in them above the power of a meere voyce, or speech’. As for the ‘mumbling of words of supernaturall effect’, Cotta derides, it is only ‘the foolish man’ who would ‘supposed those effects to proceed from his words’.⁷ Likewise, Fulke Greville (1554-1628), the Elizabethan poet, dramatist, and politician, in his collection of verse poems entitled ‘A Treatie of Humane Learning’ (1633), dismisses the practice ‘among *Physitians*’ of ‘what they call | *Word-Magike*’, for it ‘never helpeth the disease, | Which drugges, and dyet ought to deale withall’, denouncing such cunning folk as ‘Word-sellers’. Evidently, by this period, the curative powers of ABRACADBRA had been significantly undermined.⁸

Although early-modern faith in magical speech-acts dwindled, yet the semantic sub-structure of the word was not solely considered a site of dislocation or inertia. Magical practitioners adapted their philosophies to justify and preserve the profound unification of ‘word’ and ‘sense’. When, in 1533, the influential German occult writer and polymath, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486-1535), published the last of his *Three Books on Occult Philosophy*, he upheld a powerful word-magic, and

⁶ Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (1676), 7-8.

⁷ John Cotta, *The Triall of Witch-craft* (1624), 58. Originally published 1616, however the 1624 publication features the term ‘word Magitian’.

⁸ Fulke Greville, *Certaine Learned and Elegant Workes...* (1633), 29.

despite burgeoning period conceptions of semiotic dualism, prevailed over this dislocation with faith:

Sacred words have not their power in Magicall operations, from themselves, as they are words, but from the occult Divine powers working by them in the minds of those who by faith adhere to them; by which words the secret power of God as it were through Conduite pipes, is transmited into them, who have ears purged by faith, and by most pure conversation and invocation of the divine names are made the habitation of God, and capable of these divine influences; whosoever therefore useth rightly these words or names of God with that purity of mind, in that manner and order, as they were delivered, shall both obtain and do many wonderfull things.⁹

For Agrippa, the power of magical language derives not from its signifiers, which ‘from themselves’ possess no inherent value, but rather from their utility as ‘Conduite pipes’ channelling ‘the secret power of God’ – the *transcendental signified* – to those who have ‘their ears purged’ of modern, new-world scepticism by pure ‘faith’. Like other period magicians, Agrippa reunifies the demystified, scientific cosmos by once more tethering words to their meanings using the connective tissue of faith, such that words could still usher down ‘divine influences’ from the heavenly sphere to fuel their ‘Magicall operations’. In doing so, Agrippa recovers the healing powers of the ‘Ancient Doctors’:

Who were wont to do many wonderfull things by words; the *Pythagorians* also have shewed, how to cure very wonderfully the diseases both of body and mind, with certain words Also *Serenus Samonicus* delivereth amongst the precepts of Physick, that if this name *Abacadabra* be written, as is here expressed, *viz.* diminishing letter after letter backward, from the last to the first, it will cure the Hemitritean Feaver or any other, if the sheet of paper or parchment be hanged about the neck, and the disease will by little and little decline and pass away.¹⁰

According to Agrippa, invocational expressions, like ABRACADABRA, may yet possess the archaic power to perform wondrous, therapeutic acts, such as curing disease. But in a world progressively shaped by the rationalism of new-scientific thinking, these words could only function on the condition that their recipients have their ‘ear[s] purged’ of any reservations, instead, committing to a blind-faith in their ‘Magicall operations’.

Learning from contemporary occultists to sustain the semiotic immediacy of language – summoning transcendental truths through verbal signs – the early-modern poet similarly sought to overcome the gap between the lacking word and its referent. For verse to invoke its designated meaning, the poet must, as Agrippa instructs, wilfully invest an optimistic faith in the efficacy of the linguistic sign, for its ‘Divine powers’ only work ‘in the minds of those who by faith adhere to

⁹ Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (1651), 373-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 374.

them'. Building on the work of critics such as James S. Baumlin, Keir Elam, Thomas M. Greene, Genevieve Guenther, Murray Krieger, and Richard Waswo, who consider the influence of magical language as a performative speech-act in their analyses of Renaissance poetry or language, this study examines how Shakespeare's late romances – *Pericles* (c. 1607-8), *The Winter's Tale* (c. 1609-10), *Cymbeline* (c. 1610-11), and *The Tempest* (c. 1610-11) – stage a semiotic problem that is only overcome by faith in their miraculous endings.¹¹ Towards the end of his career – alert to the upsurge in scientific rationalism – Shakespeare shows a nostalgic yearning to recuperate magical thinking in his writing, to prove and preserve language's enduring power despite this cultural shift, showing that words, if used expertly, could still magically perform meaning, embodying an optimistic semiotics. Although these plays begin in a cynical, deceptive, harsh political landscape, plagued by a crisis of slippery, dysfunctional signification, Shakespeare recovers an innocent conception of language as a nostalgic alternative that purposely grants a naïve faith in the efficacy of the linguistic sign. These late plays are most reliant upon moments of spectacular wonder in which the impossible appears possible, like the spectacle of Hermione's statue, seemingly, resurrected in *The Winter's Tale*, crucially, however, this magic is only effective once Paulina primes her audience: 'It is requir'd | You do awake your faith'.¹² This study reveals how Shakespeare's romances are preoccupied by a seemingly outdated desire to capture the transcendent *magic word* – recovering the powerful function of ABRACADABRA – even as magical thinking recedes.

To begin with, it must be observed how early-modern rhetoricians often cynically contemplated the site of linguistic dislocation, between the 'word' and its 'sense', before determining how this semiosis might be – if only momentarily – overcome by poetry. In *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), the English writer and literary critic, George Puttenham (1529-1590), identifies how the rhetorical device of allegory 'is when we speake one thing and thinke another' such 'that our wordes and our meanings meete not'.¹³ Puttenham compares the use of such 'poeticall ornament' – in which the poet illustrates the 'beautie and gallantnesse of his language and stile' – to the 'profession of a very Courtier, which is in plaine termes, cunningly to be able to dissemble'.¹⁴ Like the posturing

¹¹ James S. Baumlin, *Theologies of Language in English Renaissance Literature: Reading Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014); Keir Elam, *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse: Language-Games in the Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009); Thomas M. Greene, *Poetry, Signs, and Magic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005); Genevieve Guenther, *Magical Imaginations Instrumental Aesthetics in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: UTP, 2012); Murray Krieger, *Poetic Presence and Illusion: Essays in Critical History and Theory* (Baltimore: JHUP, 1979), and *Words about Words about Words: Theory, Criticism and the Literary Text* (Baltimore: JHUP, 1988); Richard Waswo, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (Princeton: PUP, 1987). Also see: Robert A. Yelle, *Semiotics of Religion: Signs of the Sacred in History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

¹² William Shakespeare, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), *The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.94-5. All subsequent references to Shakespearean texts will refer to this edition and be given in parentheses within the text.

¹³ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589), 155.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 250.

aristocrat, who ‘never speake[s] as he thinks, or thinke[s] as he speaks’, who ‘in any matter of importance his words and his meaning very seldome meete’, Puttenham argues that the poet ought to also ‘dissemble not onely his countenances & conceits, but also all his ordinary actions of behaviour, or the most part of them, whereby the better to winne his purposes & good advantages’.¹⁵ Puttenham, at first, leverages this cynical hermeneutics, in which the poet exploits a disingenuous, counterfeit rhetoric, one which only ever feigns real, profound truths for the sake of an effective, influential mode of expression. Deliberating, however, upon the differences between a political rhetorical artifice and the artifice of a creative poetics, Puttenham revises his cynicism:

Arte is not only an aide and coadiutor to nature in all her actions, but an alterer of them, and in some sort a surmounter of her skill, so as by meanes of it her owne effects shall appeare more beautifull or straunge and miraculous, as in both cases before remembred.¹⁶

Poetry’s artifice is not deceptive, since, in order to convey divine truths, poetry need not simply ‘aide’ or represent nature, but it must imaginatively alter and render the natural into something ‘more beautifull or straunge and miraculous’: affecting, what *The Tempest* describes as, ‘a sea-change | Into something rich and strange’ (*Tmp.*, I.ii.401-2). After much discussion, Puttenham concludes that art and nature equally inform and create one another, just as Polixenes argues in *The Winter’s Tale*: ‘The art itself is Nature’ (*WT*, IV.iv.97). A ‘surmounter’ of nature’s ‘skill’, the poet surpasses nature to produce that which is inexplicably ‘miraculous’ – which is *supernatural* – through the proficient use of potent words. This transformative language, as Puttenham explains, possesses the power to ‘affect the minde’ and ‘inforce the sence of any thing by a word of more than ordinary efficacie’, which may outwardly seem as if it were ‘not apparant, but as it were’ is ‘secretly implied’.¹⁷ Puttenham, thereby, puts aside his political cynicism to transcend the sort of verbal duplicity prevalent in the courtroom, admitting his faith in a naturally-occurring poetics that resembles word-magic, that somehow exceeds the duplicity of the modern world where ‘words and his meaning very seldome meete’. As the English poet and scholar, Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), suggests in his *Defence of poesie* (1595), poetry’s capacity to excel nature is an inherently magical process:

Nature never set forth the earth in so rich Tapistry as diverse Poets have done, neither with so pleasaunt rivers, fruitfull trees, sweete smelling flowers, nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth more lonely: her world is brasen, the Poets only deliver a golden.¹⁸

Poetic word-magic performs an act resembling alchemical transmutation, as nature’s ‘brasen’ world is converted, by the poet’s efficacious verse, into a perfect, prelapsarian, ‘golden’ one.

¹⁵ Ibid., 251.

¹⁶ Ibid., 254

¹⁷ Ibid., 153.

¹⁸ Philip Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie* (1595), C1r.

Alongside poetry, commentaries on language also sought to sustain language's fertile meaning and evade dualism through the social activity of dialogic exchange, that is to say, through dynamic discourse, illustrating what Elam calls 'the active and self-advertising presence of language in use'.¹⁹ As the poet and dramatist, Ben Jonson (1572-1637), warns, in his posthumously published collection of meditations, *Timber, or Discoveries* (1641), if semiotic division is not continually overcome, it might quash the functionality of language altogether, for 'in all speech, words and sense are as the body and the soul', thereby, 'sense' is the 'life and soul of language, without which all words are dead'.²⁰ To prevent the verbal signifier from losing its meaning and succumbing to its own empty futility, Jonson reminds his reader that, 'sense is wrought out of experience, the knowledge of human life and actions', and that 'words are the people's', so 'they are to be chosen according to the persons we make speak, or the things we speak of'.²¹ Essentially, words retain their sense through active and collective use, which ensures the continual evolution of discourse, and 'herein is seen their elegance and propriety, when we use them fitly and draw them forth to their just strength and nature'.²² In his monograph on *Shakespeare's Language*, Jonathan Hope characterises Renaissance language as 'the system which allowed humans to engage in the more important activity of discourse – the sociable, public demonstration of reason and understanding – and something which required exchange, rather than monologue', while, in turn, society 'was not an abstract or imagined set of social relationships, but an active process of interaction through language'.²³ Just as words are kept alive through perpetual, communal conversation, equally, it is through language itself that society was constructed: 'for most in the Renaissance, language that did not communicate across society – that did not in fact *create* society – was pointless'.²⁴ Despite the period's ambition to overstep dualism, creating meaning through abundant, semantic activity, Hope, nevertheless, identifies the persistence of linguistic debates between the more cynical Renaissance Aristotelians – for whom words were conventionally and arbitrarily assigned to meaning – and the Platonists – for whom words possessed their meaning by an intrinsic essentialism.²⁵ Christian doctrine dictated that the origins of language were not arbitrary, but rather they were perfectly assigned by Adam, who founded the prelapsarian language through which 'the whole earth was of one language and one speech', that is, until the Babel parable, which 'was the

¹⁹ Elam (2009), 1.

²⁰ Ben Jonson, *Timber*, ed. Felix Emmanuel Schelling (Boston: Ginn, 1892), 60.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Jonathan Hope, *Shakespeare and Language: Reason, Eloquence and Artifice in the Renaissance*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2010) xii, 31.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

cause of the confusion of tongues' and 'did there confound the language of all the earth'.²⁶ According to Hope, the Babel myth 'embodied', for Aristotelians, 'man's postlapsarian separation from God', while for Platonists it alternatively 'worked to reinforce the power of the idealist Platonic/Adamic myth: when human language was one', either way, this compelled various period thinkers – not only linguists, but magicians and scientists, alike – to pursue a recovery of the lost, Adamic language, that words might maintain their prelapsarian correspondence to meaning.²⁷ For example, Agrippa's call to learn 'the tongue of angels',²⁸ influenced John Dee (1527-1609), the mathematician, occultist, and court astrologer for Elizabeth I, who decides, in his *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), that Man must 'learn through the perfect disquisition of the mystical languages'.²⁹ In pursuit of these languages, Dee later documents how he is divinely granted communication with angelic spirits via his scribe, Edward Kelley (1555-1597), given access to 'Celestiall speche', 'the dew of Truth', identified in a note as '*Lingua et Vox Angelica*', the Angelic or Echonian language.³⁰ Alternatively, Francis Lodowick (1619-1694), a Fellow of the Royal Society, was the pioneer of the scientific *a priori* languages, which, in the seventeenth century, were also termed the 'philosophical languages'. Lodowick engineered '*a new perfect language*', for he believed 'Languages' to be 'the gates to Sciences' which 'therefore should admit easie and quick entrance to the things themselves, else it proveth a greater discouragement in Students, or at best, a losse of pretious time'.³¹ Whether motivated by a theological longing for prelapsarian return to the Creator, by occult spiritualism's desire to access heavenly truths, or even by the quest for scientific discovery, pursuits to retrieve the language of perfect signification persevered throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Observing period compulsions to overcome semiotic disjunction, Richard Waswo, in *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance*, pronounces a 'semantic shift' from a 'referential' to 'relational semantics': a radical shift from the 'dualistic model' – in which words are merely a cosmetic sign and conduit to a transcendental meaning that exists beyond language – to the notion that linguistic meaning is, in fact, generated by language itself and 'the manifold relations of words with each other'.³² This

²⁶ *The Bible and Holy Scriptures* (Geneva: John Crispin, 1569), Genesis 11.1, 6, 9.

²⁷ Hope, 14-15.

²⁸ Agrippa, 379; See: György E. Szónyi, *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004), 116-17; and Stephen Clucas, 'John Dee's Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*: Renaissance Magic and Mediaeval Theurgy', *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas (New York: Springer, 2006), 231-73 (233-5).

²⁹ John Dee, 'Theorum XXII', in *The Hieroglyphic Monad* (1564), trans. J. W. Hamilton-Jones (Boston: Red Wheel Weiser, 1975).

³⁰ Dee, '*Liber Mysteriorum Quintus*' (1583), in *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, ed. Joseph H. Peterson (Boston: Weiser, 2003), 255-359 (267).

³¹ Francis Lodowick, *The Ground-Work...* (1652), 2.

³² Waswo, 48, 8, 5, 13.

shift, however, contends with the continuous struggle to ‘escape the captivity ... of the dualistic model’ which is a manifestation of our anxieties about language; it is because ‘we both fear and revere the power of words’ that we produce a ‘semantic theory that exiles meaning from language into whatever realm words are taken to stand for’, even if this ‘is a displacement of the power intuitively felt in the use of words themselves’.³³ As Waswo explains, the efficacy of language is often attributed to magic: ‘we have intuitions of “correspondence” ... in the sense of the magical identity of the word and the thing’, for ‘the power of language’ is ‘first felt as the immediate, magical control of objects or persons’.³⁴ Although Waswo illustrates how Renaissance linguists, like the Italian humanist scholars Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) and Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540),³⁵ developed refined theories of the semantic mechanisms that generate meaning, the potency of words still evoked a sense of ‘Magic, as the felt correspondence of word to thing’ which ‘simply gets transposed into the *theorized* correspondence of two separate orders of being’:

The naïve magic that frankly seeks to exercise the power of words over the world has at least the virtue of not dividing them. The sophisticated magic that seeks to exorcise that power by making that division must then exercise itself in backhanded ways in order to overcome the division it has made. Our ambivalence toward the power of words has produced semantic theories that either deny that power or attach it to something else. Such theories are caught in a vicious circle of their own making, basing themselves on an absolute division that then requires a reconnection they cannot rationally make – at which point magic enters to assert it.³⁶

Whether it is the early, archaic ‘naïve magic’ of ABRACDABRA, that permits no division between word and thing, or else the ‘sophisticated magic’ of sixteenth-century occultists, like Agrippa, who permit ‘division’ but determine ‘ways in order to overcome’ it, magic simultaneously implies and resolves its semiotic chasm. This is a process of destruction and recuperation which, in fact, constitutes magical language, and, as I shall argue, Shakespeare’s plays stage a protracted version of this cyclically restorative word-magic.

Observing a magical semiotics at play in Renaissance poetry, Thomas M. Greene, in *Poetry, Signs, and Magic*, reasons that poetry inherited its need for operative linguistic signs from magic. Despite the post-magical prevalence of a cynical, dualistic semiotics, what Greene terms his ‘disjunctive theory’, poetry – from the Renaissance to the Romantics – relied upon a ‘conjunctive theory ... which does indeed involve the merging of word and thing, signifier and signified’.³⁷ Perhaps, Greene suggests, the magical semiotics of poetry may be attributed to its initial, primordial conception, as ‘poems had to grow out of spells before establishing their independence’;

³³ Ibid., 5, 25.

³⁴ Ibid., 25.

³⁵ See: *ibid.*, 88-133.

³⁶ Ibid. 29.

³⁷ Greene, 19.

accordingly, ‘magic like poetry depends upon a conjunctive semiotics, since magic affords power to signs as efficacious artifacts’.³⁸ While Greene recognises the gradual process of disenchantment throughout the early-modern period – ‘a complicated and rough homology between the occult-scientific split and the Catholic-Protestant split’ that both ‘stemmed from a fundamental disagreement over the relationship of sign and thing’ – yet, within the poetry of this age, he identifies ‘the persistence of magic, the nostalgia for magic, the dangerous returns of suppressed magic’ which ‘betray what looks like a perennial human desire for signs endowed with potency in themselves’.³⁹ As advancements towards sceptical modernism promoted an increasingly ‘disjunctive’, non-magical semiotics, poetry increasingly endeavoured to compensate for this linguistic deficiency: ‘the shift from magic to poetry substitutes one kind of satisfaction for another’.⁴⁰ Though Greene assures this ‘does not mean of course that poetry is merely withered magic’, yet ‘it might suggest that we continue to be afflicted by the sensations of lack’,⁴¹ for while ‘magic responds to the libido by trying to satisfy it’ yet ‘poetry responds by giving it a voice’ that, in fact, ‘circumscribes it’ and ‘situates the libido within a frame that acculturates desire without suppressing its force’.⁴² Unlike magic, poetry would never claim to perform its miraculous, invocational, curative speech-acts within reality:

The passage from spell to poem requires a sacrifice of that utopian possibility and a sacrifice of the words as a charged teleological instrument. The name employed by an invocation ceases to be what it had once been, the ideal name. The poem, insofar as it is a poem, surrenders the network of metaphysical correspondences in which signs take their place and by which they operate concretely. The poem must settle for a dispersed world barren of correspondence, and it must settle for provisional meanings emergent from incomplete analogies.⁴³

Poetry must knowingly ‘sacrifice’ the conception of ‘words as charged’ and the endless ‘utopian possibility’ this implies. Unlike magical words, poetic words forgo the occult influences channelled by ‘the network of metaphysical correspondences’ admitting their own performance of word-magic to be illusory. Sidney reminds his reader that, unlike the charlatan magician: ‘the *Poet* as I said before, never affirmeth, the *Poet* never maketh any Circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true, what he writeth’.⁴⁴ In turn, the reader should ‘know that the *Poets* persons and doings, are but pictures’ depicting ‘what should be, and not stories what have bin, they will never give the lie to things not Affirmatively, but Allegorically and figuratively written’. Poetry never

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34, 45.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Sidney (1595), G1r.

promises its magic within reality, but rather constructs a fantastical ‘fiction’ as an ‘imaginative ground plat of a profitable invention’.⁴⁵

Renaissance poetry’s illusory magical performance is described by Murray Krieger, in *Poetic Presence and Illusion*, using Sidney’s phrase of ‘figuring forth’ the poem’s absent signified: ‘*Poesie* therefore, is an Art of *Imitation* ... a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth to speake Metaphorically’ it is ‘A speaking *Picture*, with this end to teach and delight’.⁴⁶ In this capacity to deliver an imaginative impression of poet’s subject, Krieger locates a ‘conception of language richly available to the Renaissance mind’:

It is the notion of word-magic, a live theory of imagination which is far less limited by distinctions among words and concepts and things. This magical notion thrives on an inter-illumination, an inter-referentiality, among words, emblems, concepts, and things – not only mutualities and identities among them but also within emblems, within words, within concepts, and within things. It represents a naïve confidence in signs which, substantially filled; become things as well as signs. Or, to put it more precisely, signs turn reflexive in such a way that they are in effect things themselves, things which continually overrun their bounds and change their natures.⁴⁷

Poetic word-magic was, according to Krieger, conducted under the pretence of a ‘naïve confidence in signs’ that they might appear ‘substantially filled’ and ‘become things as well as signs’. The poet invokes the signified subject of his poem, who then wondrously materialises in an ‘act of presenting, by which is meant the making-present of the person or god who stands outside the language’.⁴⁸ In his essay ‘On Virgil’, Montaigne studies passages of Classical poetry, deducing that their excellence is not owing to their aesthetically ‘fine words’, but rather their competence at ‘making-present’ or ‘figuring forth’ the poem’s subject:

This pourtraiture is directed not so much by the hands dexteritie, as by having the object more lively printed in the minde. ... *Plutarch* saith, that he discerned the Latine tongue by things. Heere likewise the sense enlightneth and produceth the words: no longer windie or spungie, but of flesh and bone. They signifie more then they utter.⁴⁹

According to Montaigne, the greatest poetic works are those which successfully deliver the impression of their subject, ‘in the minde’ of the reader, with striking, corporeal tangibility, their words ‘no longer’ hollow, ‘windie or spungie’, but revitalised into ‘flesh and bone’. In Sonnet 106 of Sidney’s ‘Astrophil and Stella’ sequence, the beloved is explicitly conjured by her name:

O absent presence, Stella is not here;

⁴⁵ Ibid., G1^{r-v}.

⁴⁶ Ibid., C2^v.

⁴⁷ Krieger (1979), 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁹ Montaigne, 490.

False flattering hope, that with so fair a face
 Bare me in hand, that in this orphan place
 Stella, I say my Stella, should appear.⁵⁰

Instructed to ‘appear’, the invocation of ‘Stella’, Latin for ‘star’, evokes a momentary linguistic pull from the celestial realm as the ‘absent presence’ of the poet’s beloved is brought forth.⁵¹ The solicitation of Stella by her name, Krieger writes, ‘dissolves the empty incapacities of the language that normally struggles on its own’, but only momentarily, for the poet soon admits, ‘But thou art gone’ (7), disappearing as promptly as she arrives.⁵² Though only briefly, the poet, nonetheless, enacts a ‘miraculous leap’ over the semiotic chasm of language, such that ‘meaning fuses into being’ when Stella enters the poem. It is a phenomenon which, Krieger recognises, reveals ‘the act of faith, of creative faith’ required, by which the poet ‘makes the god he adores’.⁵³ In the following passage from his *Defence*, Sidney characterises the poet as a Seer with the power to elicit the presence of divinity, exemplifying the prophetic poem using the psalms of David. Sidney begins condemning the ‘verie vaine and godlesse superstition’ of those who ‘thinke spirits were commaunded by such verses, whereupon this word *Charmes* derived of *Carmina*, commeth’, yet he embraces that the employment of such mystical words by ‘the Poet, did seeme to have some divine force in it’:

Lastly and principally, his handling his prophecie, which is meerly Poeticall. For what else is the awaking his musical Instruments, the often and free chaunging of persons, his notable *Prosopopeias*, when he maketh you as it were see God comming in his majestie, his telling of the beasts joyfulness, and hils leaping, but a heavenly poesie, wherin almost he sheweth himselfe a passionate lover of that unspeakable and everlasting bewtie, to be seene by the eyes of the mind, onely cleared by faith?⁵⁴

Through ‘his notable *prosopopoeias*’ – a rhetorical device whereby the absent person is represented as speaking – Sidney argues that David ‘maketh’ God, who enters his poem as we ‘see God coming in His majesty’, however, this is ‘onely’ ever successfully accomplished if ‘the eyes of the mind’ are ‘cleared by faith’.⁵⁵ To facilitate the spectacle of word-magic which appears to fill the words of a poem with substantial matter, to encounter the presence of divinity, to summon the absent beloved, what is demanded from the disillusioned reader is a return to a naïve faith in language. Instead of sceptically contemplating both absence and presence, ‘What may words say, or what may words not say’, as Sidney does in Sonnet 35, if as he suggests in his *Defence*, your ‘mind’ is ‘cleared by faith’,

⁵⁰ Sidney, ‘Astrophil and Stella’, in *The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: OUP, 2008), Sonnet 106.1-4.

⁵¹ *OED*, ‘Stella, *n.*’, etymology.

⁵² Krieger (1979), 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁵⁴ Sidney (1595), B4^{r-v}.

⁵⁵ *OED*, ‘prosopopoeia, *n.*’, 1.

or, as Agrippa requests, your ‘ears’ are ‘purged by faith’, and, as Paulina commands, ‘You do awake your faith’, then, miraculously, ABRACADBRA *can* cure disease, Astrophil’s Stella *does* appear, and – regardless of scientific rationalism – word-magic endures.

II. ‘This is the True Magic’: A Re-enchanted Poetics

All practitioners of magic, medicine and prophesy produce no results without a pre-given faith ... great results are produced by those bonds which come from the words of a man of eloquence, by which a certain disposition arises and flourishes in the imagination, which is the only entrance for all internal feelings and is the bond of bonds. This is the point of Hippocrates’ saying, ‘The most effective doctor is the one whom most believe’. The reason for this is that he binds many people with his eloquence or presence or fame. This applies not only to medicine but to any type of magic or to any power identified by a different title, for, in the act of binding, the imagination must be stimulated or else one can hardly motivate anyone by other means.⁵⁶

During the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, the world remained a predominantly enchanted one governed by sympathies and antipathies, for magic was not yet considered esoteric or removed from the mainstream, rather it was a key route to knowledge, often inextricable from theology and science.⁵⁷ Although the latter may have gradually prevailed – the Scientific Revolution of the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries claiming to supersede such arcane modes of thought – the premodern universe of sympathetic correspondences remained a necessary preconception for occultist and literary writers looking to sustain an enchanted poetics, for, implicit within the magical cosmos is a semiotic model of connectivity. In his 1588 treatise ‘On magic’, the Italian philosopher, poet, and cosmologist, Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), writes that ‘all magical powers ... are dependent upon magical bondings’, recognising the potential for those magical ‘bonds which come from the words of a man’, to perform a curative word-magic.⁵⁸ This harmonious cosmos fused together by ‘bonds’ is outlined by Agrippa, in Book I of his *Occult Philosophy*, as a ‘three fold World’, composed, in ascending order, of ‘Elementary, Celestial, and intellectuall’ spheres, in which ‘every inferior is governed by its superior, and receiveth the influence of the vertues thereof.’⁵⁹ These ‘vertues’ descend through the ‘Angels’ in the ‘Intellectuall’ world, the ‘Stars’ in the ‘Celestiall’ world, to the terrestrial ‘Elements, Animals, Plants, Metals, and Stones’ in the ‘Elementary’ world.⁶⁰ ‘Virtue’, in this archaic sense, denotes a ‘power or operative influence inherent in a supernatural or divine being’, what Agrippa describes as ‘the secret power of God’, which is ‘transmitted’ to words ‘through Conduite pipes’ that bridge realms together.⁶¹ Agrippa’s worldview, according to the early criticism of E.M.W. Tillyard, constitutes the dominant ‘Elizabethan world picture’ of a hierarchical

⁵⁶ Giordano Bruno, ‘On Magic’, *Cause, Principle and Unity: And Essays on Magic*, trans. and ed. Richard J. Blackwell (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 103-42 (141).

⁵⁷ See: Jane Bennet, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: PUP, 2001); Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2010); Mary Floyd-Wilson, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013); Anne Harrington, *Reenchanting Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: PUP, 1996); Seth Lobis, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: YUP, 2015); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2007).

⁵⁸ Bruno, 142.

⁵⁹ Agrippa, 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ OED, ‘virtue, *n.*’, I.3.a.

universe ordered from the angels down to man – for whom the world existed – to the beasts and plants.⁶² Frances Yates, similarly, presumed that the Agrippian structure predominated throughout the entire period, directly influenced by the Neoplatonic, hermetic tradition of the early Renaissance, which initiated what Brian Copenhaver has called, the ‘remarkable rebirth’ of magic.⁶³ More recent criticism, like that of Allison B. Kavey, contests the application of Agrippa’s model as the period blueprint, for implicit in his work was a radical or demonic occultism which ‘exceeded the hermetic goal of locating knowledge through study of one’s self and God’ since, in his interpretation, ‘it is possible for the most capable and studious magicians to ascend the ladder and, in the end, sit next to God’, as Agrippa puts it, ‘to draw new virtues from above’.⁶⁴ Kavey, nevertheless, recognises that Agrippa ‘proposes a world structure that is derived from, but certainly not identical to, the ones put forth by Neoplatonic natural philosophers and Catholic theologians’ from whom ‘Agrippa adopted the notion of a hierarchy of forces’.⁶⁵ Beginning with the conception of a profound, hermetic magic, as it emerges from the philosophy of the Florentine Neoplatonists, I observe a gradual (though by no means linear) process of *disenchantment* – a dismantling of the interconnected cosmology of magic – as the period advanced towards the sceptical rationalism of New Science. Inheriting the faithful magic of the Neoplatonists, magical practitioners writing a century later, like Agrippa and Bruno, found themselves in an increasingly faithless world of unravelling bonds, compelled to learn that ‘magic’ could no longer produce ‘results without a pre-given faith’, without a nostalgic commitment to the network of sympathies wherein words preserve their potency.

The Florentine Neoplatonists established a magical philosophy carefully negotiated with Christian doctrine. In 1462, the banker and politician, Cosimo di Giovanni de’ Medici (1389-1464), received manuscripts which purported to be the work of an ancient Egyptian priest-king and magician, Hermes Trismegistus – thought to predate Plato, Pythagoras, and Orpheus – who was granted an extraordinary genealogy in an age that revered the chronological distance of antiquity for its closeness to God.⁶⁶ These hermetic texts were believed to document the *prisca theologia* (the one, true ancient theology) that appeared to prefigure Christ and his teachings.⁶⁷ Translating this *Corpus Hermeticum* under the patronage of de’ Medici was Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), a scholar and

⁶² E.M.W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Pimlico, 1998).

⁶³ Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002); Brian Copenhaver, ‘Magic’, in *The Cambridge History of Science*, eds. Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 518-40 (518).

⁶⁴ Alison B. Kavey, ‘Building Blocks: Imagination, Knowledge, and Passion in Agrippa von Nettesheim’s *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres*’, in *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination*, ed. Alison B. Kavey (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 36-7; Agrippa, 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁶⁶ Copenhaver, 522.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Catholic priest, who, in his 1469 commentary on Plato's *Symposium*, described a magically sympathetic universe based on the Christian values of love and egalitarianism:

Why do we think that Love is a *magician*? Because the whole power of magic consists in love. The work of magic is the attraction of one thing because of a certain affinity of nature. But the parts of this world, like the parts of a single animal, all deriving from a single author, are joined to each other by the communion of a single nature. Therefore just as in us the brain, lungs, heart, liver, and the rest of the parts draw something from each other, and help each other, and sympathize with any one of them when it suffers, so the parts of this great animal, that is all the bodies of the world, similarly joined together, borrow and lend natures to and from each other. From this common relationship is born a common love; from love, a common attraction. And this is the true magic.⁶⁸

Accommodating hermeticism into the framework of Christian Neoplatonism, Ficino theorises a magical cosmos built on Platonic conceptions of divine Eros, revealing the 'whole power of magic' to derive from the mutual 'attraction' and 'communion' of all parts of nature which 'sympathize' with each other to form an interdependent whole. As he later reiterates in his *Three Books on Life* (1489) the means of 'attraction' by which 'the world binds itself together' is through 'the mutual love of its members' and 'the mutual union of its parts'.⁶⁹ The Christian ideals of love and unity underlying Ficino's hermetic magic are adopted by his student, the scholar and philosopher, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), who, in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1496), carefully distinguishes between 'magic in two senses': the first being an unnatural, sacrilegious demonology, 'which relies entirely on the activity and authority of demons' and 'is a monstrous and accursed thing'; and the other, being his religiously-sanctioned philosophy, 'is nothing more than the final realization of natural philosophy', after all, 'in the Persian tongue, as Porphyry says, the word *magus* means the same thing as our *interpreter* or *worshipper of the divine*'.⁷⁰ The role of the natural magician is, therefore, to decipher the natural world, doing so in reverence to divine authority in a manner that 'excites man to that astonishment at God's works', and 'this magic is as divine and helpful as the other is dreadful and harmful', for unnatural magic 'leads man away from God by enslaving him to God's enemies'.⁷¹ Equipped with a 'hope, faith and a love that is always willing', the divine, natural magician seeks to uncover 'the deepest mysteries, including the most profound contemplation of the most abstruse secrets and leading at last to knowledge of Nature as a whole':

Not so much by working wonders as by diligently serving Nature as she works them, this other magic calls out of hiding into the light powers *sown* by a gracious God and *scattered* over the

⁶⁸ Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Thompson: Spring Publications, 1985), 127.

⁶⁹ Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, vol. 57 (Arizona: ACMRS, 2019), 387.

⁷⁰ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Oration*, ed. and trans. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2022), 125. 'γοητεία', transliterates to 'goiteía', or 'charm'; 'μαγεία', transliterates to 'mageía', or 'magic'.

⁷¹ Pico (2022), 129.

world. After probing deep into that universal accord that the Greeks more tellingly call *συμπάθεια* after examining how natures are kin to one another, and applying to each and every thing its inborn charms – named *λυγγες* by the Magi – this magic makes public, as if it were the Artificer, wonders concealed in the world's secret parts, in Nature's heart, in God's hideaways and storerooms, and, as a farmer *marries elm to vine*, so a magus joins earth to heaven, linking things below to properties and powers of those above.⁷²

The task of the magician is to locate those occult 'mysteries' and 'abstruse secrets' that lie latent and hidden within nature, detecting the sympathies by which certain 'natures are kin to one another', and connecting a pathway between terrestrial signifiers and the divine wisdom they indicate: 'linking things below to properties and powers of those above'. Unlike the occultism of Agrippa, which seeks to bypass cosmic order and its hierarchical bounds, Neoplatonic magic humbly identifies the 'inborn charms' planted throughout the natural landscape. For the Neoplatonists, unlike Agrippa, words need not be manipulated to transmit 'the secret power of God', for they are naturally imbued with what Ficino characterises as the 'natural power in speech, song, and words'.⁷³ Likewise, 'regarding names' Pico, assures his reader 'that they have a natural force' which 'is known to everyone', what is more, 'they do not have this force inasmuch as they signify by convention (*ad placitum*) but inasmuch as they have certain natural things in them'.⁷⁴ As Keir Elam observes, Neoplatonic sympathies, therefore, endorsed the magical linguistics of '*nomina sint numina*' in which 'the name *is* the essence of the thing'.⁷⁵

The 'inborn charms' embedded within words, endowing them with sense and potency, gradually wane as New Science begins to compromise the metaphysical beliefs underpinning notions of universal sympathy. The shift towards a scientific worldview is initiated by the Polish mathematician and astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) whose 1543 publication, *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*, expounded his heliocentric theory, which disproved the geocentric, Ptolemaic model – this was later championed by Galileo's (1564-1642) discovery of the observable phases of Venus in 1610. This newfound cosmology began undermining what we might think of as Tillyard's 'Elizabethan world picture', ostracising and isolating humankind from their position at the centre of the universe. Indeed, scientists like Francis Bacon, in his *Advancement of Learning* (1605), began to denounce 'NATURAL MAGICKE' for certain credulous and superstitious conceits and observations of *sympathies*, and *Antipathies* and *hidden Proprieties*, and later, in *Sylva*

⁷² Ibid., 127-9. 'συμπάθεια' transliterates to 'sympátheia', or 'sympathy'; 'λυγγες' refers to the wryneck gods, birds sacred to theurgy, considered by the Greek Gnostics to empower the symbols used in theurgic rites. See: Robert Goulding, 'Geometry and the Gods: Theurgy in Proclus, *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*', *Perspectives on Science*, 30 (2022), 358-406.

⁷³ Ficino (2019), 363.

⁷⁴ Pico, *Conclusiones Nongentae* (1532), 42-3, cit. Elam (2009), 123.

⁷⁵ Elam (2009), 123.

Sylvarum (1626), ridicules that ‘foolish Tradition in *Magicke*’ which relies upon ‘vaine Dreames of *Sympathies*’.⁷⁶ If, within traditional, pre-Copernican orthodoxy, words enjoyed, what Bruno refers to as, ‘magical bondings’, bound to that which they denoted through inbuilt cosmic correspondences, then, as scientific findings invalidated this order, it would, inevitably, sever words from their ‘inborn charms’. The semiotic disenchantment implemented by New Science is discussed at length by Thomas Sprat (1635-1713), an English churchman, writer, and Fellow of the Royal Society, who was commissioned to write their 1667 mission statement, in which he addresses importance of using a plain, non-enchanted language for the sake of clarity:

The ill effects of this superfluity of talking, have already overwhelm’d most other *Arts* and *Professions*; insomuch, that when I consider the means of *happy living*, and the causes of their corruption, I can hardly forbear recanting what I said before; and concluding, that *eloquence* ought to be banish’d out of all *civil Societies*, as a thing fatal to Peace and good Manners. To this opinion I should wholly incline; if I did not find, that it is a Weapon, which may be as easily procur’d by *bad* men, as *good*: and that, if these should onely cast it away, and those retain it; the *naked Innocence* of vertue, would be upon all occasions expos’d to the *armed Malice* of the wicked. This is the chief reason, that should now keep up the Ornaments of speaking, in any request: since they are so much degenerated from their original usefulness.⁷⁷

Like Bacon, Sprat propounds that science should purge language of any ‘superfluity’ or ‘*eloquence*’ that has muddled signification and ‘degenerated’ language from its ‘original usefulness’, replacing this with an unornamented speech of ‘*naked Innocence*’ to guard against the co-opting of words for deceptive or malevolent use. Sprat confesses that although language ‘at first’ (*a priori*) began as ‘an admirable Instrument in the hands of *Wise Men*’ designed ‘to represent *Truth*’ and ‘to bring *Knowledge* back again to our very senses, from whence it was at first deriv’d to our understandings’, it is now ‘generally chang’d to worse uses’ of ‘bewitching’ with ‘uncertainties’ and ‘specious *Tropes* and *Figures*’.⁷⁸ Seeking to ‘reform’ this demonic, linguistic ‘evil’, Sprat strips the pre-scientific rhetoric of ‘*Natural Philosophy*’ of its polysemy and imposing embellishment, for these boast an excess of bloated, ‘amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style’, advocating, in its place, a ‘return back to the primitive purity, and shortness, when men deliver’d so many *things*, almost in an equal number of *words*’:

They have exacted from all their members, a close, naked, natural way of speaking; positive expressions; clear senses; a native easiness: bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can: and preferring the language of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants, before that, of Wits, or Scholars.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Bacon, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning...* (1605), 32; Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum...* (1627), 97.

⁷⁷ Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal-Society of London...* (1667), 111.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

New Science championed the notional purity of the monosemous sign, so mathematically precise that each *thing* could be ‘deliver’d ... in an equal number of *words*’. Sprat demands a prelapsarian ‘return back’ to a language of exact signification, ‘primitive purity, and shortness’, an Adamic, ‘naked, natural way of speaking’, that can still be observed in the rustic honesty ‘of Artizans, Countrymen, and Merchants’. As Ryan J. Stark illustrates, New Science imposed a reform of rhetoric that pronounced a distinct division between occult and scientific conceptions of language:

Perhaps the most distinctive characteristic of seventeenth-century experimental philosophy – and the principles of rhetorical plainness contained therein – is this campaign opposing charmed tropes. Working against the assumptions of the occult Renaissance cosmos, new philosophers advance a non-magical philosophy of rhetoric commensurate with the ethos of modern experimentalism, and this new style, or more precisely, this new philosophy of style, marks the origins of modern English rhetoric.⁸⁰

New Science endorsed a modern, disenchanted linguistics, a ‘non-magical philosophy of rhetoric’ that rejected ‘charmed tropes’, refusing to grant words the transcendental, semiotic connectivity afforded by hermetic sympathies.

In *Theologies of Language in the English Renaissance*, James S. Baumlin is primarily influenced by Max Weber, who set the precedent for a historical narrative of the ‘disenchantment of European religious culture’, as well as the work of Keith Thomas, which grapples with the problem of why magic declined as religion endured.⁸¹ Baumlin subscribes to these accounts of a disenchantment incited by the Reformation of the sixteenth century (1517-1648), as he considers how the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism signalled a shift away from the ‘implicit word-magic of Roman Sacramentalism’ to the inward faith of Protestant theology.⁸² The Catholic priest performs a miraculous speech-act, using, what Baumlin calls, an ‘incarnationalist rhetoric’, through which the ‘Word’ is ‘made flesh’, invoking Christ’s Real Presence within the material host, transubstantiating bread and wine into the divine body and blood.⁸³ Meanwhile, Protestants mocked the Eucharistic phrase, *Hoc est enim corpus meum* (meaning, ‘this is my body’), as mere *hocus pocus*, or so the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tillotson (1630-1694), supposes in his 1684 *Discourse Against Transubstantiation*:

⁸⁰ Ryan J. Stark, *Rhetoric, Science, and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 46.

⁸¹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons [1905] (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003); Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Penguin Books, 1971).

⁸² Baumlin, xi.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, xxix; *Geneva Bible*, John 1.14.

In all probability those common *jugling* words of *hocus pocus* are nothing else but a corruption of *hoc est corpus* by way of ridiculous imitation of the Priests of the Church of Rome in their *trick* of *Transubstantiation*.⁸⁴

Although the *OED* cautions against the ‘notion that *hocus pocus* was a parody of the Latin words used in the Eucharist’ which ‘rests merely on a conjecture thrown out by Tillotson’, nevertheless, Protestantism adopted its own ‘rhetoric of transcendence’: ‘the Protestant’s transcendent God worked His miracles of faith from within, through the *sermo innatus* of the Spirit’.⁸⁵ The Reformation, according to Baumlín, marked a linguistic turn from Catholicism’s ritualised utterances, chants of vocalised prayer, and recitation of Scripture – like Holy Mass, the sign of the cross, the Liturgy of the Hours, the Angelus, and so on – to Protestantism’s private contemplation of Scripture. Certainly, this was made increasingly possible as copies of the Bible became accessible for personal use – not only to Greek and Latin speaking scholars – but to a wider, literate audience, through the mass production and distribution facilitated by Gutenberg’s printing press.⁸⁶ The Reformation’s ‘desacralization leads to an inevitable *secularizing* of language and ontology alike’, as Baumlín traces a model of ‘Weberian “disenchantment,” wherein religious reform – specifically, the elimination of priestly word-magic – necessitated the reform *of language*’.⁸⁷ Crucially, however, in his examination of early-modern poetry, Baumlín detects the re-emerging remnants of a pre-Reformation word-magic, contemplating the various ways that this literary re-enchantment can be interpreted:

They can be read faithfully (if so, naively) as ritual displacements from public to private spheres; they can be read nostalgically, as so many lamentations over the loss of such ritual practices they can be read ironically, as weak and ineffectual parodies of priestly word-magic, once deemed mighty; they can be read combatively, as so many superstitions to be resisted and rooted out by all means. Each poem, in sum, plays within the age’s reading game, creating so many dialogues between faith and skepticism, belief and doubt.⁸⁸

In this passage, Baumlín refers to the work of the English poet and Church of England clergyman, John Donne (1572-1631), whose writing appears to mourn the ‘priestly word-magic’ facilitated by sympathetic connectivity – whether with a tone of faithful nostalgia or sceptical irony. In his 1611 poem ‘An Anatomy of the World’, Donne commemorates the death of Elizabeth Drury (1596-1610), the daughter of his friend and patron, Robert Drury (1575-1615). The poem is based on the premise that this virtuous, young woman was the world’s soul, so with her death the world collapsed into ‘teares’, ‘consumption’, ‘fever’, and ‘fits’, rendered a ‘Sicke World, yea, dead, yea

⁸⁴ John Tillotson, *A Discourse Against Transubstantiation* (1684), 34.

⁸⁵ *OED*, ‘hocus-pocus, *n.*, *adj.*, and *adv.*’, etymology; Baumlín, xxx; xxxiii.

⁸⁶ Stephan Füssel, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2020).

⁸⁷ Baumlín, xi, xxxiii.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

putrified, since shee | Thy'intrinsique balme, and thy preservative'.⁸⁹ Grieving after the rotting 'carcasse of the old world', Donne laments the loss of a sympathetic universe:

What Artist now dares boast that he can bring
Heaven hither, or constellate anything,
So as the influence of those starres may bee
Imprison'd in an Hearbe, or Charme, or Tree,
And doe by touch, all which those stars could doe?
The art is lost, and correspondence too.⁹⁰

Without 'correspondence' between the divine realm of 'Heaven' and the 'starres' of the celestial sphere which then deliver their divine 'influence' to our natural world – 'Imprison'd in an Hearbe, or Charme, or Tree' – Donne concedes that 'art' itself 'is lost'. Although the sorrowful poet attempts to preserve the deceased, 'trying to emprison her' in his words – 'when I saw that a strict grave could doe, | I saw not why verse might not do so too' – yet he realises the impossibility of this task – 'Verse hath a middle nature: heaven keepes Soules, | The Grave keepes bodies, Verse the Fame enrouples' – for his words can only ever sustain her legacy in the intellectual consciousness of his reader.⁹¹ Though Donne's poem 'Creates a new world', he remains defeated by the disjointedness of new-world scepticism as he pines after the corpse of old world of sympathies.⁹²

The modern critical approach to disenchantment, like that of Robert W. Scribner, Alexandra Walsham, Ulinka Rublank, and Euan Cameron, challenges Weber's straightforward account, proposing more complex models – yet, such critics still detect an upsurge in the enchantment of period literature.⁹³ Although Walsham acknowledges a 'rhetoric of "disenchantment"' emerging from the reformers – a 'degree of slippage between souvenir and sacramental, sign and receptacle of supernatural virtue' that 'seems if anything to have increased' – she denounces the 'linear paradigm of disenchantment'.⁹⁴ Instead, Walsham puts forward a 'perennial process' by which 'the boundaries between 'religion' and 'magic' were readjusted and the malleable category of 'superstition' was redefined, as successive loops in a perpetual spiral of desacralization and

⁸⁹ John Donne, 'An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary', *The Collected Poems*, ed. Roy Booth (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994), 12, 19, 20, 56, 57.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75, 391-6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 47, 471-2, 47-74.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹³ Cameron; Ulinka Rublank, *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017); Robert W. Scribner, 'The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the "Disenchantment of the World"', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23, 3 (1993), 475-94; Alexandra Walsham, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51, 2 (2008), 497-528; Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2011). Also, see: Bennet; Floyd-Wilson; Harrington; Lobis; Taylor.

⁹⁴ Walsham (2011), 508, 512.

resacralization’ and ‘cycles’ of ‘disenchantment and re-enchantment’.⁹⁵ Post-Weberian criticism proposes the contemporaneous, fluctuating simultaneity of magical, religious, and also scientific epistemologies, since critics like Charles Schmitt and Brian Vickers debate the degree to which occult thinking also aided the development of scientific thinking during this period.⁹⁶ Overall, however, magical thinking gradually endured increasing condemnation from scientists, threats from reformers, and even legislative criminalisation, when, in March 1563, Elizabeth I reinstated *An Acte against fonde and Phantasticall Propheesies* and *An Acte against Conjurations, Enchauntmentes, and Witchcraftes*, first passed under Henry VIII and Edward VI, then King James VI of Scotland and I of England, replaced the 1563 witchcraft law with his much harsher *Acte against the Conjuracion and Dealinge with evill and wicked Spirits*, upon his accession to the English throne.⁹⁷ In response to this pressure, poets and playwrights appeared to increasingly endorse notions of word-magic in their writing, where it was still permissible. Although magic, for Walsham, had not disappeared, it was ‘very slowly migrating into the sphere of art and the imagination’. Seth Lobis, similarly, argues that seventeenth-century notions of sympathy never disappeared but ‘underwent a gradual process of internalization ... a historical shift from a predominantly natural-philosophical or natural-magical concept of sympathy to one that subordinates cosmic relations to human relations’, proposing, like Walsham, the transference of ‘magical conceptions of sympathy’ to literature: ‘at the core of my analysis is the idea that literature can serve as a vehicle not only of enchantment or re-enchantment but also of disenchantment’.⁹⁸ As late as 1644, the English poet, John Milton (1608-1674), in his prose polemic opposing censorship, declares his own resurgent sympathetic-alchemical conception of literary writing: ‘books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are’, for ‘they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them’.⁹⁹

Turning to Shakespeare, Eric Langley offers a cynical yet enchanted reading of early-modern universal sympathies, depicting the duality of a period ‘deeply reliant upon sympathetic or compassionate rhetorical and emotional structures’, while continually threatened by the counter-

⁹⁵ Ibid., 522-7.

⁹⁶ Charles B. Schmitt, ‘Reappraisals in Renaissance Science’, *History of Science*, 16 (1978), 200-14; Brian Vickers, *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984).

⁹⁷ Elizabeth I, ‘An Acte Against Fonde and Phantasticall Propheesies’ and ‘An Acte Against Conjurations, Enchauntmentes, and Witchcraftes’, in *Anno quinto reginae Elizabethae ...* (1563), 52-3; James VI/I, ‘An Act Against Conjuracion ...’, *Statutes at Large*, c. 12 (1604). See: Michael Devine, ‘Treasonous Catholic Magic and the 1563 Witchcraft Legislation: The English State’s Response to Catholic Conjuring in the Early Years of Elizabeth I’s Reign’, in Harmes (2015), 67-94.

⁹⁸ Lobis, 3, 32.

⁹⁹ John Milton, ‘Areopagitica’, *The Major Works*, eds. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 239-40.

force of antipathies.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, Shakespeare's dramas offer a linguistic landscape in which 'communication can both alleviate and aggravate' – situating this phenomenon in the pharmaceutical terms of what Derrida, via Plato, terms the *pharmakon* – as Langley considers how the plays are 'forced to articulate themselves in, or be articulated by, language with the dual potential to form and deform their dangerously dependent identities'.¹⁰¹ The language of Shakespeare's plays captures 'the double nature and inherent ambivalence of all communication', where 'fair is foul and foul is fair' (*Mac.*, I.i.11).¹⁰² Shakespeare's 'unreliable exchange network' of words is, according to Langley, inherently 'duplicitous', capable of slipping from 'poisonous' signification back to the 'curative conclusion' of the late plays. 'Shakespeare's Romances', Langley continues, 'are often enjoying moments of radical restorative conversion' – like *Cymbeline's* 'Strange ling'ring poisons' (*Cym.*, I.v.34) which become 'more fresh, reviving' (42) – these are the sympathetic turning points, 'where prophesies are fulfilled and redemptive truths are revealed, miraculously untainted by the lies that had threatened to swallow them'.¹⁰³ Likewise, Nandini Das and Nick Davis, in their introduction to *Enchantment and Dis-enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama*, find in Shakespeare's late plays, a possibility for magical 'transformation' that is 'not simply' intended at 'problematizing any perceived drive towards disenchantment, but also renegotiating the very idea of enchantment itself, embattled as it was by emergent conceptions of rationality and scepticism'.¹⁰⁴ These are plays that resonate 'with that double impetus: the acknowledgement of the everyday, and the submission to the unfolding of the wondrous, the strange, and the enchanted' which 'proceed not in denial of each other, but in deliberate counterpoint'.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, Shakespeare's late plays begin enmeshed in the degraded hermeneutics of cynical, deceptive, new-world, political rhetoric, however, as they sentimentally return to a primitive, romance wilderness of magical possibility – from the wistful pastoral of Bohemia in *The Winter's Tale*, to the Welsh countryside of Milford Haven in *Cymbeline*, and Prospero's island in *The Tempest* – they discover a faithful, Adamic language through which to recover the curative, transformative, restorative powers of the word-magic connection. The nostalgic pull back to a magical age of innocence is examined by Kevin Pask, who, in *The Fairy Way of Writing*, considers the prevalence of enchantment in Shakespeare's plays:

This historical process of disenchantment represented an opportunity for the theatre, which could present "falsehoods" on the stage, at least in the form of fictions, with relative impunity. If popular magic no longer carried the ability to charm and to harm, it might still carry the potential to entertain. The fairy way of writing thus also belonged to the age of the new science,

¹⁰⁰ Eric Langley, *Shakespeare's Contagious Sympathies: Ill Communications* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 52.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 145-51.

¹⁰⁴ Nandini Das and Nick Davis, eds., *Enchantment and Dis-enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama: Wonder, the Sacred, and the Supernatural* (London: Routledge, 2017), 9.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 11

despite the nostalgia sometimes evinced, after Shakespeare, for the “old England” of “rewards and fairies.”¹⁰⁶

Amid a climate of scepticism, as the inexplicable charms of magic, and the perceived cosmic structures of sympathy sustaining this magic, find themselves under escalating threat and condemnation, Shakespeare rediscovers an enchantment, at the end of his career, that illustrates his retrospective desire to recuperate a magical semiotics in his poetry. The desire to re-enchant words and reconnect them to a network of sympathies is, for example, alluded to in the final scene of *Cymbeline*, as Posthumus Leonatus fails to recognise an unambiguous rendering of his name (meaning, ‘born of-the-lion after death’) within the oracle which refers to him as the ‘lion’s whelp’ (*Cym.*, V.iv.138). These prophetic words pre-empt a semiotic disjunct from the very subject they designate, anticipating that Posthumus ‘shall’ be ‘to himself unknown’ (138-9), and, as foretold, Posthumus appears to read words so incomprehensible to him that he deliberates whether this might be ‘still a dream’, or the nonsensical mutterings of ‘madmen’, that is, ‘senseless speaking’, or, perhaps more accurately, ‘speaking such | As sense cannot untie’ (145-8). Regardless, Posthumus professes an instinctive association with the words of the prophecy: ‘The action of my life is like that, which | I’ll keep, if but for sympathy’ (149-50). It is this nostalgic appetite to ‘keep’ evocative, magical words – though they may appear increasingly ‘senseless’ and unrecognisable – and to persevere and invest a blind faith in their efficacy, on the insubstantial basis of intuiting semiotic harmonies that correspond to our ‘life’, that compels the word-magic of Shakespeare’s late plays.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Pask, *The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien* (Baltimore: JHUP, 2013), 4.

III. Linguistic Faith in Shakespeare's Late Plays

Shakespeare's late writing straddles the transitional period between the enchanted, magical universe of sympathies, and the disenchanting scepticism of an increasingly scientific future; an epistemological shift which threatens to undermine the potency of words. The late plays – *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, and *The Tempest* – therefore, seek to recuperate a magical semiotics, staging linguistic problems of failed signification within a cynical, fragmented, and ruthless play-world that are only overcome by a nostalgic return to magical thinking, commanding our 'faith' to miraculously, and inexplicably, restore order and harmony. These plays enact their pivotal turn to romance by a wistful escape to a seemingly Edenic landscape – or seas, in the case of *Pericles* – which is decidedly 'not prelapsarian', as Palfrey writes, for 'the court-cum-city' is 'never truly left behind'.¹⁰⁷ Even within the bounds of the pastoral wilderness, the degraded, deceptive hermeneutics of harsh political realities are – like postlapsarian knowledge that cannot be unlearned – never forgotten. Ruined courtiers creep into the parameters of the previously uncontaminated old-world, eventually drawing its exiles back to the courtroom where they must negotiate their wondrous revelations – 'O brave new world | That has such people in't!' (*Temp.*, V.i.183-84) – within their former, aristocratic reality: "'Tis new to thee' (185). Although these plays ultimately reinstate political order, their momentary encounters with the innocent, idyllic, unspoiled past, entertains possibilities for new, alternative futures, for utopian new worlds, as Kiernan Ryan argues, in a genre which confronts 'the tyranny of realism itself':

If being realistic, in both art and life, is an attitude inclined to secure our accommodation to the status quo, to subdue our desire for difference to the sway of the way things are, then the ambition of Shakespeare's romances is the precise reverse of this: to expand the scope of the possible and whet our appetite for change by forging from the theatrical dialect of his day a discourse of the future. The last plays employ a host of techniques and devices designed to convert their plotlines into precursive rather than recursive fictions, into prefigurative parables that couch desirable futures in the forms and language of the past. The symbolically condensed projections of Shakespearean romance allow us to grasp the potential as if it were already actual, to watch the improbable and the impossible become plausible and feasible before our very eyes. ... these plays seek to break the cynical grip of realism on our minds and sustain the insatiable hunger of hope, our yearning for the world to be otherwise.¹⁰⁸

Once Shakespeare's late plays retrieve the pure, Adamic 'language of the past', they gain the clarity to realise an optimistic and transformative 'discourse of the future'. As Catherine Alexander agrees, 'Shakespeare's late verse' is 'no longer content merely to represent the conflicts of this world, he has instead imagined new worlds' that offer 'a refreshed view of the affirmative capacities of

¹⁰⁷ Simon Palfrey, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 15.

¹⁰⁸ Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014), 15-16.

language, an endorsement of words as a medium for constructing an alternative reality'.¹⁰⁹ By reviving faith in an operative, magical semiotics, Shakespeare alludes to his own desire to preserve the impactful word-magic of his poetic writing, even after his 'charms are all o'erthrown' (*Epi.* 1), by disenchantment. Certainly, for Russ McDonald, this 'refreshed sense of the positive capacities of language, and [Shakespeare's] reconceived faith in the power of the theatre and the role of the artist' is a development wherein 'Shakespearean romance articulates its alienation from its own age and its commerce with futurity'.¹¹⁰ Though these plays begin plagued by a postlapsarian scepticism, exposing the dangers of language when it is misused with Machiavellian intent, yet, unlike Shakespeare's tragedies, they opt to transcend the horrors of their realism by commanding us to 'awake' our 'faith' in the magical power of words and reactivate the numinous possibility abundant in the nostalgic landscape. It is by faithfully replenishing words with their 'potent art' (V.i.50) that the romances perform their reconciliatory endings.

Shakespeare's magical late plays were never catalogued under the same genre in the First Folio (1623): *Cymbeline* was categorised as a tragedy, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* were comedies, while *Pericles* was not included until the Third Folio of 1664, after it was first published in 1609 as a quarto. These plays were grouped together as 'romances' by the literary critic, Edward Dowden (1843-1913), in his 1875, *Shakspeare: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art* (1875), adding *Pericles* to this collection in his 1877, *Shakespeare Primer*.¹¹¹ Modern criticism continues to adopt Dowden's configuration of the 'romances' – also referred to as 'late plays', 'last plays' and, occasionally, 'tragicomedies' – for, as Alexander notes, 'there is a great deal to gain from thinking of the late plays as "late" or "last"' as long as 'the critic bears in mind the extent to which the category so delineated is *constructed* rather than *given*'.¹¹² After all, these plays share striking narrative similarities, tormented, at first, by the hardship and despair of divided families, treacherous voyages, survival as outcasts in deserted landscapes, and the apparent death of loved ones. Often, after a temporal leap, a return to pastoral purity, and magical, providential intervention, there is a momentous shift, during which the rifts – between husbands and wives, fathers and daughters, exiled rulers and their dominions or heirs – are reconciled, as daughters reach marriageable age, the dead are miraculously resurrected, lineal succession is restored, and all those separated are reunited in scenes of wondrous recognition. Characterising these comparable redemption narratives under the umbrella of 'romance', however, has been challenged by recent critics for its misleading association with the

¹⁰⁹ Catherine M.S. Alexander, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*, ed. Alexander (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), 107.

¹¹⁰ Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare's Late Style* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 2.

¹¹¹ Edward Dowden, *Shakspeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (London: Henry S. King, 1875); Edward Dowden, 'Shakspeare', in *Literature Primer* (London: Macmillan, 1877).

¹¹² Alexander, 24.

genre's more antiquated conventions, like those of ancient Greek romances and the chivalric romances of the Middle Ages.¹¹³ Certainly, these Classical and medieval texts influenced those Elizabethan prose romances which inspired Shakespeare's dramas, for example, Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1593) is considered to have informed *The Tempest*, Robert Greene's (1558-1592) *Pandosto* (1588) inspired the plot for *The Winter's Tale*, and Thomas Lodge's (c. 1557-1625) *Rosalynde: Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590) was the source for *As You Like It* (1599). However, as Howard Felperin proposes, this genre of 'the miracle play' is uniquely challenged by Shakespeare who takes 'an older romance model' only to 'show its inadequacy ... to expose the dangers inherent in the mode he uses by testing it against a reality it cannot cope with'.¹¹⁴ Alison Thorne, similarly, recognises that Shakespeare's late plays 'simultaneously point up their temporal and critical distance from the naïve or "primitive" consciousness associated with' typical romance, as their 'impossible denouement demands of its audience a more reflective, yet not dissimilar, act of "faith"'.¹¹⁵ Since these plays only ever consciously perform their naivety, demanding 'faith' to momentarily quash their disenchanted cynicism, this crucial distinction has rendered the term 'romance' problematic.

Alternatively, Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope grapple with the genre of 'tragicomedy', 'arguably the single most important dramatic genre of the period 1610-50', under which Shakespeare's romances may also fall.¹¹⁶ Renaissance critics struggled in their search for a 'working definition of the genre',¹¹⁷ heavily relying on a description laid out by John Fletcher (1579-1625), the English playwright who succeeded Shakespeare as house playwright for the King's Men, in his introduction 'To a Reader', published alongside his pastoral tragicomedy, *The Faithful Shepherdess* (c. 1609).¹¹⁸ McMullan and Hope conclude that the dependence on Fletcher's definition drove critics to the 'mistaken assumption that its precepts can be applied to' a 'disparate' range of works including 'Shakespeare's romances' or 'late plays' without distinguishing between diverse interpretations of the genre, from Fletcher's own 'Italianate pastoral tragicomedy' to the Elizabethan and Jacobean use of the term to indicate a combination of 'tragic and comic elements'.¹¹⁹ 'Rejecting' Fletcher's definition, Hope and McMullan, refuse to implement 'a

¹¹³ Alison Thorne, ed., *Shakespeare's Romances* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), 4. See: Barbara Mowat, *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); R.W. Uphaus, *Beyond Tragedy: Structure and Experiment in Shakespeare's Romances* (Kentucky: UP of Kentucky, 1981); R.S. White, *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Shakespeare and the Romance Ending* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000).

¹¹⁴ Howard Felperin, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: PUP, 2015), 13, 53-4.

¹¹⁵ Thorne, 4.

¹¹⁶ Jonathan Hope and Gordon McMullan, eds., *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2021), 1.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1; John Fletcher, 'To the Reader', *The Faithful Shepherdess* (c. 1609).

¹¹⁹ Hope and McMullan, 7, 5, 4.

monolithic statement on the nature of the genre' which encompasses such a variety of renditions.¹²⁰ With this in mind, this thesis refers specifically to the 'late plays', only ever employing the term 'romance' with awareness of Shakespeare's ironic and cynical interplay with the genre's traditionally innocent naivety. The term 'late' also implies what McMullan, in *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing*, refers to as a 'discourse of lateness', it is 'a critical category not a construct' which prioritises the author's own biographical chronology, often subscribing to the presumption that 'old age can produce a profound concentration, an intense focus of attention and a tendency to look back'.¹²¹ The reconciliatory serenity associated with lateness is, according to McMullan, a 'myth', a 'projection of a transcendent late style' which, for Shakespeare's works, originated in the Romanticism of Dowden.¹²² Edward Said, famously, refuted the tendency to consider late work to be 'all about reconciliation and a kind of restful summing-up of a long, productive career', as assuming an inferior mode of lateness which can be found 'in Shakespeare's late romances like *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline*, or in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, where, to borrow from another context, ripeness is all'.¹²³ In his final published work, *On Late Style*, Said, however, adds that the 'prerogative of late style' is to 'render disenchantment and pleasure without resolving the contradiction between them'.¹²⁴ Looking, as McMullan encourages, beyond the parameters established by Dowden, Shakespeare's late romances appear to convey, precisely, this combination of 'disenchantment' and curative 'pleasure' that Said desired. Shakespeare's work endured the relentlessly cynical play-world of his tragedies, before his late plays intercept to momentarily suppress this reality, recovering a site for magical redemption and permitting the poetic word a nostalgic return to its performative power, but on the vital, postlapsarian condition that faith is unquestioningly granted.

The inclusion of *Pericles* in this study, although it was co-written with the poet and pamphleteer, George Wilkins (d. 1618), is not only grounded in its generic similarities to the other late plays, but hinges on the understanding that its second half (from Act Three onwards) is recognised to have been written by Shakespeare. Surveying the authorship of Shakespeare's collaborative plays by collating socio-historical linguistic evidence, Hope's findings continue to strengthen prevailing theories of 'Wilkins as the author of the early part of the play (Chorus 1 to scene 2.05 in the Arden edition), and Shakespeare of the later part (chorus 3 to Epilogue)'.¹²⁵ Crucially, it is Shakespeare's

¹²⁰ Ibid., 7, 15.

¹²¹ McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing: Authorship in the Proximity of Death* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 5, 16, 9.

¹²² Ibid., 9.

¹²³ Edward W. Said, 'Untimely Meditations', *The Nation* (NY: Sep. 2003).

¹²⁴ Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (NY: Pantheon, 2006), 148.

¹²⁵ Hope, *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 106.

latter portion of the play which features the turn to romance: from Act Three, in which the alchemical physician, Cerimon, uses his powers to magically summon a ‘rough and woeful music’ (*Per.*, III.ii.88) that revives the seemingly-dead Thaisa; to Act Five in which Pericles hears the inaudible celestial ‘music of the spheres!’ (V.i.229) breaking his silence in a moment of revelation and mutual self-recognition between reunited daughter – ‘My name is Marina’ (142) – and father – ‘I am Pericles of Tyre’ (204). It must be noted, however, that my study of the Shakespeare’s late plays does not incorporate the final collaborative plays which preceded *The Tempest*, co-written with John Fletcher, those which Alexander calls the ‘late late’ plays, aside from the lost play, *Cardenio* (1612-13), these include, *Henry VIII* (1613) and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613).¹²⁶ As McDonald identifies, Shakespeare’s style in these last works may yet be ‘elliptical, roundabout, crowded, and extravagant, but the sense of *possibility* no longer seems to obtain’ as if Shakespeare appears ‘to be changing his mind again’ about the magical, faithful possibilities of language.¹²⁷ The narrative of *Two Noble Kinsmen*, derived from ‘The Knight’s Tale’ in Geoffrey Chaucer’s (c. 1340s-1400) *The Canterbury Tales* (1387), adheres to the common tropes of the comedy and tragicomedy genres, featuring, love triangles, duels, and resolving – though with prayer, notably, without magical intervention – in conventional marital unions. In *Henry VIII*, however, one final glimpse of faithful romance resurfaces amid the cut-throat political rhetoric of the Tudor courtroom, embodied by Cardinal Wolsey, whose slippery, deceptive, Machiavellian rhetoric, Norfolk cautions Buckingham to correctly interpret in the play’s opening scene: ‘read | The cardinal’s malice and his potency | Together’ (*H8*, I.i.105-6). As the conniving Wolsey suffers his downfall, the duplicity of his speech is revealed, by Act Three Scene Two, to ‘hath a witchcraft | Over the King in’s tongue’ (III.ii.18-9), falling from the royal favour, for ‘The King hath found | Matter against him that for ever mars | The honey of his language’ (20-2). It is when Wolsey is replaced with Cranmer – who comes under attack despite his ‘innocence’ (301) – that the newly-appointed Archbishop purifies the polluted linguistic climate of this play, crying before the King, who observes his unembellished honesty: ‘He has strangled | His language in his tears’ (V.i.156-7). Absolved by his tender inarticulacy, Cranmer’s tears distil into magical words of divine insight – ‘the words I utter | Let none think flattery, for they’ll find ’em truth’ (V.iv.15-16) – prophesying a successful reign for Anne’s Boleyn’s newborn, the future Queen Elizabeth and her successor. It is an instance of magical linguistic recovery, which, as Raphael Lyne argues, makes this, only momentarily, ‘a history play subtly affected by the dynamics of romance’.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Alexander, 10.

¹²⁷ McDonald, 254.

¹²⁸ Raphael Lyne, *Shakespeare’s Late Work* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 15.

Each chapter of this thesis addresses one of Shakespeare's four late plays, identifying in each a distinctive aspect of early-modern magical practice as it repairs the corrupted linguistic signification of the play, salvaging a faithful, operative semiotics. Divided into two parts, comprising two chapters each, part one encompasses 'natural magic', examining: in chapter one, allusions to alchemical signatures in *The Winter's Tale*, and in chapter two, references to astrology and cosmic harmony in *Pericles*. Part two addresses 'unnatural magic', observing: in chapter three, the implications of divination and prophecy in *Cymbeline*, followed, in chapter four, by demonic invocation in *The Tempest*. These chapters begin with a contextual study of the linguistic models implicit in the respective areas of Renaissance magic, via various rhetorical, theological, scientific, magical, and literary texts, concluding with a case-study of Shakespeare's corresponding play, tracing its crisis of disastrous semiotic dislocation as it is reconciled by faith in language, performing a remedial word-magic at the play's redemptive conclusion. Chapter 1, 'Alchemical Signatures and *The Winter's Tale*', considers how the alchemical *doctrine of signatures* – championed, in the Renaissance, by the Swiss physician, alchemist, astrologer, and father of modern medicine, Paracelsus (1493-1541) – seeks meaning and knowledge (the *transcendental signified*) through the interpretation of terrestrial signs embedded and inscribed by divine providence throughout the natural world. The alchemist must learn to read the *book of nature* – 'Nature, that universall and publik Manuscript, that lies expans'd unto the eye of all' – to identify the medicinal and transformative qualities of chemicals, minerals, plants, and earthly matter.¹²⁹ Though *The Winter's Tale* presents a linguistic crisis of fidelity – as Leontes is mistrustful of the playful rhetoric of his wife, Hermione, accusing her quick-witted repartee with his childhood friend, Polixenes, of being 'Too hot, too hot!' (*WT*, I.ii.108) – this play discovers a revelatory renewal of faith in the creative word within the natural world. It is in the rustic, pastoral countryside, to which the play longingly harks back, where the royal couple's estranged daughter, Perdita, reaches sexual and reproductive maturity, contemplating her own presumed lineal illegitimacy by musing over the metaphorical, alchemical signature of grafted, cross-bred Gillyvor flowers, 'Which some call Nature's bastards' (IV.iv.83). When Polixenes illuminates that 'The art itself is Nature' (97) – that artifice itself is a natural creation – it is a realisation that re-legitimises the fertile creativity of both mother and daughter. A precursor to the play's wondrous conclusion, which resurrects the seemingly-dead Hermione, rendering the *art* of her statue into *nature*, supposedly transmuting stone to flesh, in a spectacle of magic that most explicitly calls for faith – 'It is requir'd | You do awake your faith (V.iii.94-5) – to successfully perform its word-magic.

¹²⁹ Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (1642), 20-1

Chapter 2, ‘Semiotic Harmony: The Music of the Spheres in *Pericles*’, examines the astrological concept of *musica mundana*, an inaudible music produced by the concordant motions of celestial bodies in the heavens – ‘There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st | But in his motion like an angel sings’ (*MV*, V.i.60-1) – spreading its operative virtues through every correspondent level of the macro- and micro-cosmic experience: ‘Such harmony is in immortal souls’ (63). This doctrine provided an abstract metaphor for a hierarchical, premodern universe full of profound meaning, sympathetic correspondences, and perfect harmonies, influencing and governing earthly life. Architect of this ancient philosophical concept, Pythagoras (c.570-495 BCE), made clear that the sensory experience of celestial harmony was inextricable from a rational and intellectual comprehension of the principles of earthly music, therefore, establishing universal mathematical laws that governed all categories of music. With ‘Pythagoras, reducing all things into Number’, the harmonious universe could be understood through its *harmonious numbers*, thoroughly investigated in the pursuit of profound meaning by early-modern numerologists, like William Ingpen in *The Secrets of Numbers* (1624).¹³⁰ Period poets and dramatists sought to convert these harmonious numbers into harmonious words – ‘as inarticulate Harmonie much delighteth the minde by Sense: so woords Harmonious, which are converted with reasonable consideration, by the Sense doo delight the minde of the Hearer’ – ascribing, to the signifying-capacity of language, the semiotic immediacy of universal harmony.¹³¹ This chapter argues that although the cosmological revolution (of 1543 onwards) threatened to discredit astrological notions of harmony, Shakespeare’s *Pericles* (1607-8), remains almost anachronistically reliant upon idealised concepts of celestial music to facilitate the faithful repair of *semiotic harmony* – a simple correlation operating between words and truth. *Pericles* begins in linguistic disorder, as the binding words of oaths or vows are broken, divorced from the actions they promise – Pericles, for example, is deceived after he naively assures Helicanus, ‘I’ll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath: | Who shuns not to break one will crack [them] both’ (*Per.*, I.ii.120-1) – resulting in a mistrust of words that leads the protagonist to reject language altogether, as he takes a vow of silence. Semiotic correspondence can only be restored in the play by his daughter, Marina – a physical and etymological embodiment of the sea, ‘Call’d Marina | For I was born at sea’ (V.i.155-6) – whose sympathetic connection with the celestial realm is expressed by her disarmingly honest and virtuous ‘holy words’ (IV.vi.133), and the ‘sweet harmony’ (V.i.45) of her singing voice. The therapeutic powers of universal harmony – by way of concordant music – restore Pericles’ faith in the semiotic harmony between words and the deeds they are bound to, upon which he, inexplicably, hears ‘the music of the spheres!’ (229).

¹³⁰ William Ingpen, *The Secrets Of Numbers...* (1624), *4r.

¹³¹ Roger Rawlyns, *A Consort of the Creatures...* (1591), 5.

Chapter 3, ‘Prophetic Promise: Lineal Return in *Cymbeline*’ defines an early-modern poetics of prophecy, which Bacon describes as ‘springing and germinant’, for prophetic words propel their recipient towards the prospect of its fulfilment and in the direction of posterity.¹³² Like Banquo, who urges *Macbeth*’s witches to ‘look into the seeds of time, | And say which grain will grow, and which will not’ (*Mac.*, I.iii.58-9), prophetic speech enacts a *generative linguistics*, prompting the procreative realisation of its words. Early-modern prophets were often likened to poets, for both channel a ‘Divine Enthusiasme’, speaking, in what the controversial minister and theologian, Theophilus Gale (1628-1679), in reference to Plato, calls ‘*Prophetic Poesie*’ or ‘Poetic Prophesie’.¹³³ Prophecy remained a significant feature in the literature of the early seventeenth century, as writers sought to preserve its poetic ability to travel back and forth between different temporal perspectives to reconnect ruptured lineal ties and repair divided Kingdoms. Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* opens with series of critical, semiotic disruptions, in which the indicators of lineal and marital bonds appear obscured or illegible. For example, the King seems to have forever lost his two male heirs who ‘from their nursery | Were stol’n ... | Some twenty years’ (*Cym.*, I.i.59-62) ago, the courtiers complain of Posthumus whose ‘name and birth’ (27) they ‘cannot delve ... to the root’ (28), and the matrimonial love tokens (a ring and a bracelet) exchanged between Posthumus and Imogen are craftily misplaced – forming misleading impressions of familial estrangement, fragmented and untraceable ancestry, and infidelity. To mend these severed relationships, the play faithfully submits to the divine providence of the Welsh wilderness, an especially contaminated pastoral which, nonetheless, rediscovers, both, a primitive, rustic faith in words – ‘Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith thy name’ (IV.ii.381) – and *Cymbeline*’s missing sons. Following this return to a time before the rifts of the past, Posthumus encounters his dead ancestors in a prophetic dream-visitation where they reveal his legitimate and noble breeding, validating his unauthorised marriage to Imogen. Posthumus’ spectral visitors leave behind a written oracle, rendering tangible a prophetic word-magic, that is etymologically deciphered on stage by the soothsayer in the play’s final, reconciliatory scene: reuniting the lovers, recovering the ‘root’ of Posthumus’ name, and regrafting the ‘lopp’d branches’ (V.iv.141) of *Cymbeline*’s lost heirs.

Chapter 4, ‘Transformative Magic: Verbal Conjunction in *The Tempest*’, investigates the word-magic which forms the premise of the proverb: ‘speak of the Devil and he shall appear presently’.¹³⁴ The instant performativity of words intended to summon the devil may have been a phenomenon denied by Protestant Reformists, while they anxiously conceded its latent potential to facilitate

¹³² Bacon (1605), 16.

¹³³ Theophilus Gale, *The Court of Gentiles* (1677), 59, referring to: Plato, ‘Ion’, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1925), IX, 534b-534e.

¹³⁴ Giovanni Torriano, *Piazza Universale...* (1666).

demonic presence – for these speeches of magical conjuration were seen to be composed of ‘watchwords’ indicating profane intent, indirectly gesturing ‘unto Satan’.¹³⁵ Fundamentally devious, early-modern demonology discovered a rhetoric of demonic inversion – ‘I am not what I am’ (*Oth.*, I.i.65) – as the devil ventriloquises, through the mouth of his human host, his deceptive verbal performance, one ‘contrary to Gods word’ and to truth, intended to beguile the linguistically faithful with the ‘cunningly counterfeited’ illusion of virtuousness.¹³⁶ The language of invocation, however, when spoken by pious practitioners of magic, like John Dee in his angel conversations, or by faithful poets, granted a transformative linguistics, so long as the speaker faithfully revered to transcendent divinity. Shakespeare’s last solo-written play, *The Tempest*, depicts a world devastated by ruthless political conspiracy, usurpation, and the duplicitous language of scheming courtiers, who disguise unlawful lies as legitimate truths: like one | Who having into truth, by telling of it, | Made such a sinner of his memory | To credit his own lie’ (*Temp.*, I.ii.99-102). Using the ‘art’ (28) of his verbal conjuration, Prospero stages magical illusions – ‘insubstantial paegent[s]’ (IV.i.155) – to silence the speech of opportunistic courtiers, instead promoting a pre-linguistic, natural world ‘Of excellent dumb discourse’ (III.iii.39), and primal, inarticulate sounds: ‘strange and several noises | Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains, | And moe diversity of sounds, all horrible’ (V.i.232-4). In this chapter, I observe how Prospero’s spectacles follow the transition from the initial reaction of inexplicable wonderment to an assimilation and accommodation of magic’s implications within the reality to which they return. In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare stages the realism that must inevitably come after the turn to romance – typically *after* the play’s finale – following the ‘dumb discourse’ of spectacle, the play resumes an active, communal discourse in which characters must negotiate their temporary experiences of magical idealism within their collective reality, perhaps, to contemplate a ‘brave new world’. Though the utopian visions facilitated by magic only ever appear in quick bursts that dazzle its spectators, these provide an opportunity for the disenchanted signifier to become re-enchanted, once more, by linguistic faith. Of course, during the age of disenchantment that provides the backdrop to Shakespeare’s late plays, a naïve faith in magical words to perform the impossible could never be authentically revived to replicate a prelapsarian innocence – it is too late for we have seen the magician’s sleight-of-hand – but, we might still *perform* a nostalgic return to faithful naivety, just long enough to look away, while word-magic presents to us its miraculous recovery.

¹³⁵ William Perkins, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft...* (1610), 53.

¹³⁶ Reginald Scot, *Discovery...* (1651) B^v-B2^r, P3^v.

CHAPTER I

Alchemical Signatures and *The Winter's Tale*

I. The Alchemical Language of Signatures

Halchymie tradeth not alone with transmutation of metals (as ignorant vulgars thinke: which error hath made them distaste that noble Science) but shee hath also a chyrurgical hand in the anatomizing of every mesenteriall veine of whole nature: Gods created handmaid, to conceive and bring forth his Creatures.¹

In 1605, the late-Elizabethan Reverend, Thomas Tymme (d. 1620), completed his English translation of *The Practise of Chymicall, and Hermeticall Physicke*, a Latin, Paracelsian, alchemical text by Joseph Du Chesne (c. 1544-1609), the French physician, which identifies how alchemy encompasses powerful theological, philosophical, and scientific resonances which distinguish it from what ‘ignorant vulgars’ believe to be its principal preoccupation with metallic transmutation.² As Du Chesne suggests, early-modern alchemy was, simultaneously, a methodical, chemical ‘science’, dissecting and ‘anatomizing’ every strand of the natural world with an investigative, ‘chyrurgical hand’, while also a spiritual, metaphysical tool, as ‘Gods created handmaid’, harnessing divine powers of creation ‘to conceive and bring forth his Creatures’. Likewise, according to Tymme, the ‘ordering of matter’ corresponded to a divine ordering, whereby ‘all the things in Nature, are comprehended in the number of three, according to that triple proportion, wherein God is said to have made all things in waight, number, and measure’.³ As Bruce Janacek observes, for period alchemists like Tymme, ‘the physical and spiritual worlds had melded to the point that

¹ Josephus Du Chesne, *The Practise of Chymicall, and Hermeticall Physicke...*, trans. Thomas Tymme (1605), A4^{r-v}.

² On Thomas Tymme, see: Bruce Janacek, *Alchemical Belief: Occultism in the Religious Culture of Early Modern England* (Pennsylvania: PSUP, 2011). For recent criticism on early-modern alchemy, see: Ralph Bauer, *The Alchemy of Conquest: Science, Religion, and the Secrets of the New World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019); Eoin Bentick, *Literatures of Alchemy in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2022); Katherine Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2015); Anthony Grafton and William R. Newman, eds., *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Janacek; Didier Kahn and Hiro Harai, eds., *Pseudo-Paracelsus: Forgery and Early Modern Alchemy, Medicine and Natural Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Bruce T. Moran, *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2006); Mark Morrisson, *Modern Alchemy: Occultism and the Emergence of Atomic Theory* (Oxford: OUP, 2007); Karen Hunger Parshall, Michael T. Walton, and Bruce T. Moran, eds., *Bridging Traditions: Alchemy, Chemistry, and Paracelsian Practices in the Early Modern Era* (Pennsylvania: PSUP, 2015); Jennifer M. Rampling, *The Experimental Fire: Inventing English Alchemy, 1300-1700* (Chicago: UCP, 2023); Meredith K. Ray, *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2015).

³ Thomas Tymme, *A Dialogue Philosophicall* (1612), 20, 38.

they were almost indistinguishable'.⁴ For example, Robert Fludd (1574-1637), the English physician, associated the 'wisdom' of the 'spirituall rock' – commonly referred to as the philosopher's stone and containing within it 'the true philosophers Elixir' for rejuvenation and immortality – with 'all the mysterys, parables and oracles of holy writ'.⁵ The stone, for Fludd, was itself 'composed of a divine spirit and a spirituall body', while he equally insists that, 'we must not nor cannot justly affirme that this divine and spirituall stone can be excluded from materiality'.⁶

Although alchemical pursuits of purification, transmutation, and regeneration were often expressed in terms of scientific certainty – pursuing chemical refinement by intricate methods of metallurgic distillation, or quantifying the physiological reversal of aging and disease – its intents and methods were often obscured by quasi-mystical abstractions and metaphorical processes of conversion. Alchemical transformation was not only material or corporeal, but also spiritual, articulated in terms of theological allegory that referenced scripture, presenting a scientific and religious register in simultaneous coexistence: 'the Book of Nature and the Book of God were integrally related' such 'that neither could be fully understood without reference to the other'.⁷ The language of alchemical texts, therefore, could appear purposefully obscure – veiled behind divine symbolism and analogy – intended to preserve the rarefied, scholarly exclusivity of a practice accessible only by the adept, although, as I shall later discuss, the poetic ambiguity of alchemy became an increasing problem in the light of new-scientific literalism.⁸ In 1652, Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), a Fellow of the Royal Society, published his extensively annotated compilation of English alchemical texts, which included a 1477 alchemical poem, *The Ordinall of Alchimy*, by the poet and alchemist Thomas Norton (d. 1513), that declares itself: 'A Booke of secrets given by *God*; | To men *Elect*, for 'of a *Million*, hardly three | Were ere Ordaind for *Alchimy*'.⁹ Within his verse, Norton addresses the necessarily figurative ambiguity of alchemical writing:

All *Masters* that write of this Soleme werke
They made their Bokes to many Men full derke,
In Poyses, Parables, and in Metaphors alsoe,
Which to Shollers causeth peine and woe.¹⁰

⁴ Janacek, 38.

⁵ Robert Fludd, 'Truth's Golden Harrow: An Unpublished Alchemical Treatise', ed. C.H. Josten, *Ambix*, 3 (1949), 91-150 (110-11).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Janacek, 58.

⁸ See: Lawrence Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: PUP, 1998).

⁹ Thomas Norton, 'The Ordinall of Alchimy', in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. Elias Ashmole (1652), 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

As Norton reveals, alchemists who wrote in elusive, esoteric, semi-literary forms – like ‘Poyses, Parables’ and ‘Metaphors’ – hoped to safeguard a practice reserved for the erudite, divinely-selected few. Alchemical works were linguistically composed in order to cause ‘peine and woe’ to the common reader, only rendered comprehensible to the ‘hardly three’ in ‘a *Million*’ blessed with superior, intellectual insight. Alchemy articulated its own mystified, abstruse, semantic symbols, themselves to be understood as operating with the efficacy of chemical matter, embedded in the world by divine providence, and legible only to the adept: a principle manifest in one of alchemy’s most predominant concepts, *the doctrine of signatures*.

The Swiss physician, alchemist, and theologian known as Paracelsus (1493-1541) – often regarded the father of modern chemistry – popularised the doctrine of signatures in the early-modern period, which advocated a nominative determinism, based on the law of sympathies, that granted all terrestrial beings a ‘name that accords with its nature’.¹¹ The ancient philosophical concept was originally derived from the work of Greek physician and pharmacologist, Pedanius Dioscorides (c. 40-90 AD), whose *De Materia Medica* (65 AD) served for centuries as the leading botanical source, a pharmacopoeia of medicinal plants influencing Renaissance herbals.¹² This line of enquiry was later advanced by Galen (129-216 AD), the Roman Greek physician and philosopher, in his medical text *On the Natural Faculties*, which championed the belief that herbaceous plants could be used to heal the body parts they resembled.¹³ In his 1571 treatise, *Astronomia Magna*, Paracelsus provides his own ‘Explanation of *signatum*’:

There is nothing that Nature has not signed in such a way that man may discover its essence As you can see, each herb is given the form that befits its nature; similarly man is endowed with a form corresponding to his inner nature...The art of signatures teaches us to give each being its true name in accordance with its innate nature. A wolf must not be called a sheep, a dove must not be called a fox; each being should receive a name that accords with its nature. ... Since nothing is so secret or hidden that it cannot be revealed, everything depends on the discovery of those things which manifest the hidden.¹⁴

¹¹ Paracelsus, ‘Astronomia Magna’, in *Essential Readings*, trans. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1999), 109-44 (129). On Paracelsus, see: Hugh Crone, *Paracelsus: The Man who Defied Medicine* (Melbourne: Albarello Press, 2004); Joseph Borzelleca, ‘Paracelsus: Herald of Modern Toxicology’, *Toxicological Sciences*, 53, I (2000), 2-4; Allen Debus, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (NY: Dover Publications, 1977); Charles Webster, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time* (New Haven: YUP, 2008).

¹² See: John M. Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin: UTXP, 1985).

¹³ On Galen’s early-modern influence, see: Oswald Croll, *Bazilica Chymica...* (1670), A3^v. Otherwise, on Galen and signatures, see: Bradley C. Bennett, ‘Doctrine of Signatures: An Explanation of Medicinal Plant Discovery or Dissemination of Knowledge?’, *Economic Botany*, 61, iii (2007), 246-55; Anthony Grafton and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999); Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); A. Wear, ‘Galen in the Renaissance’, in *Galen: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Vivian Nutton (London: The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1981); Wear, R.K. French and I.M. Lonie, eds., *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).

¹⁴ Paracelsus, ‘Astronomia Magna’, 129-30.

According to Paracelsus, each constituent of the terrestrial realm – chemical, botanical, animal, or human – has been given both a ‘name’ and physical ‘form’ sympathetically pertinent to its essential ‘nature’. These signatures provide divinely encoded messages that lie latent throughout the natural landscape, functioning to the medical advantage of the alchemist who, learning to interpret these inscriptions can, for example, identify and extract the proper antidote for a particular ailment. As Paracelsus writes in his *Archidoxis Magica* (c. 1570), this ‘sign or signal has a virtue and operation, one for the head ... another for the sight, another for the kidney-stones’, and so on.¹⁵ These verbal signatures not only gesture towards medicinal cures, but – by their sympathetic bonds – themselves perform a literal healing function. As the Czech mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and physician, Simeon Partlicius (1588-1640) observes, ‘the Cable of *Paracelsus*, manifesteth a way whereby Characters, Figures, Sigills, and words; strang things which some think is impossible, may be Performed’, an operative word-magic or speech-act by which an immediate ‘Semeiotica delivers the Doctrine of Signs’.¹⁶

As Partlicius recognises, Paracelsian ‘Alchemy is to be considered’ to be both ‘the Signification of the Words and Medicines, and the preparation of them’.¹⁷ Thus, in Book Eleven of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667), when the Archangel Michael ‘from Adams eyes the film removed’ – a film blurred by eating that forbidden, ‘false fruit’ which had ironically ‘promised clearer sight’ – he administers a combination of medicinal flowers to restore Adam’s vision that not only correspond medicinally and physically to the eye, but also exist in semiotic equilibrium with each other to provide a linguistically restorative balance:

Michael from Adams eyes the film removed
Which that false fruit that promised clearer sight
Had bred; then purged with euphrasy and rue
The visual nerve, for he had much to see;
And from the Well of Life three drops instilled.
So deep the power of these ingredients pierced,
Even to the inmost seat of mental sight.¹⁸

A common ocular remedy was found in *Euphrasia*, otherwise known as ‘Eyebright’: a flower with distinctively striped petals, reminiscent of bloodshot eyes.¹⁹ According to the laws of signatures, this visual resemblance led to an etymological, or nomenclative resemblance, rendering the flower apposite for treating the eye. As the English physician, Walter Baley (1529-1593) notes in his

¹⁵ Paracelsus, ‘Archidoxis Magica’ (1570), in *Essential Readings*, 192-97 (194).

¹⁶ Simeon Partlicius, *A New Method of Physick...* (1654), 88, 437.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 544.

¹⁸ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. John Leonard (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 258, XI.412-18.

¹⁹ *OED*, ‘euphrasy, *n.*’, 1.a.

treatise on the preservation of eyesight: ‘the powder of eyebright’ is ‘reputed as very good meanes to continue the sight’.²⁰ Also, to refocus Adam’s foggy retina, ‘euphrasy’, derived from the Greek *εὐφροσύνη*, meaning ‘cheerfulness’, is stabilised by its etymological antagonist, ‘rue’ from the German, ‘regret, repentance, remorse’, though literally referring to *Ruta graveolens* ‘dwarf shrubs’ with ‘yellow flowers ... formerly much used for medicinal purposes’.²¹ Michael combines these signatorial antipathies to form a balanced, restorative solution that bilaterally clears Adam’s outward and inward vision – his ‘mental sight’ – to show him lamentable visions of the Fallen future: ‘The effects which thy original crime hath wrought’. Milton applies the flower’s tonic corporeally and spiritually, to concurrently purge the fleshly eye and the metaphorical mind’s eye of the perversions of postlapsarian corruption.

For signatures to perform their corrective role with semiotic immediacy, Paracelsus assumed a semantic literalism which may not be expected to prove compatible with later new-scientific thinking which would endorse the study of *things* rather than the *words* they denoted. Popularising an increasingly sceptical conception of language, by which ‘words are the signs of notions’, and meaning was arbitrarily or conventionally assigned to these words, Francis Bacon will insist that, ‘therefore if Notions, the basis of Things be confus’d, and rashly abstracted from things, nothing will be firm that is built upon them’, concluding that, ‘our only assurance is in a right induction’.²² In contrast, Paracelsus positions alchemical signatures within the framework of innocent, prelapsarian linguistic origins, borrowed from the scriptural account of Adamic naming in Genesis. Expanding on the biblical passage – in which, ‘the Lord God formed’ every creature and ‘brought *them* unto the man to see how he would call *them*: for howsoever the man named the living creature, so was the name thereof’ – Paracelsus proclaims that ‘Adam is the first signator’, but not the last, making this divine art accessible to those who can ‘boast’ their ‘skill in the science of signatures’:

First of all, know that the signatory art teaches how to give true and genuine names to all things. All of these Adam the Protoplast truly and entirely understood. So it was that after the Creation he gave its own proper name to everything, to animals, trees, roots, stones, minerals, metals, waters, and the like, as well as to other fruits of the earth, of the water, of the air, and of the fire. Whatever names he imposed upon these were ratified and confirmed by God. Now these names were based upon a true and intimate foundation, not on mere opinion, and were derived from a predestinated knowledge, that is to say, the signatorial art.²³

Like a divine agent, the alchemist – who Du Chesne calls ‘Gods created handmaid’ – could study the ‘true and intimate foundation’ of things to assign them their appropriate names. Signatures,

²⁰ Walter Baley, *Two Treatises Concerning the Preservation of Eye-sight* (1616), 5.

²¹ OED, ‘euphrasy, *n.*’, etymology; ‘rue, *n.*’, 1.a.; ‘rue, *n1.*’, etymology.

²² On period debates, see: Hope (2010), 7-16; Bacon (1676), 2.

²³ *Geneva Bible*, Genesis 2.19; Paracelsus, ‘De Natura Rerum’ (1537), in *Essential Readings*, 173-91 (189-90).

thereby, engaged in a collaborative relationship with the alchemist, who was guided by divine authority, while himself a neologist aspiring to Adamic insight. By way of this creative, reciprocal activity of linguistic exchange, the Paracelsian alchemist kept the operative and remedial function of his words fertile.

Conceptions of a faithful, Adamic semiotics, that facilitated the curative word-magic of alchemical signatures, became increasingly challenging to sustain during the early phases of new-scientific activity in the seventeenth century, especially for practitioners such as the English physician and author, Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682), who sought metaphorical, theological messages throughout a legible, articulate natural world, in which he beheld the ‘Physiognomy, not onely of men, but of Plants, and Vegetables; and in every one of them, some outward figures which hang as signes or bushes of their inward formes’.²⁴ As they were for Paracelsus, Browne’s signatures were marked by God, who ensures ‘there is no *Grotesco* in nature, nor any thing framed to fill up empty cantons, and unnecessary spaces in the most imperfect creatures’, for ‘every where, where the power of the Sun is; in those is the wisdom of his hand discovered’.²⁵ However, in his aptly entitled *Religio Medici* (1643), Browne endeavours to negotiate his spiritual faith with a pragmatic, scientific intent; as Clare Preston observes, while this treatise was Browne’s ‘reflection on the mysteries of nature, Scripture, and faith’, its ‘vast, liberally displayed learning’ is ‘quickened by his sceptical curiosity, his willingness to entertain with complete equanimity the possibility of truth in every speculation’.²⁶ Within this text, scientific rationalism informs acts of almost exegetic interpretation; for example, Browne might admit to occasions in which he ‘can cure vices by Physicke, when they remaine incurable by Divinity, and shall obey my pils’.²⁷ Thus, for Browne, nature is – after Scripture – the second piece of divine literature:

Thus there are two bookes from whence I collect my Divinity; besides that written one of God, another of his servant Nature, that universall and publique Manuscript, that lies exposed to the eyes of all; those that never saw him in the one, have discovered him in the other: This was the Scripture and Theology of the Heathens ... the ordinary effect of nature wrought more admiration in them, than in the other all his miracles: surely the Heathens knew better how to joyne and reade these mysticall letters, than we Christians, who cast a more common eye on those Hieroglyphicks, and disdain to suck Divinity from the flowers of nature.²⁸

Browne reads the *book of nature* alongside the *book of God*, weaving scripture into the flora and fauna of the natural landscape, constructing a twofold ‘Manuscript’, authored by God and natural science,

²⁴ Browne, 116. See: Claire Preston, *Thomas Browne and the Writing of Early Modern Science* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

²⁶ Preston, “‘Unriddling the world’: Sir Thomas Browne and the Doctrine of Signatures”, *Critical Survey*, 5, iii (1993), 263-70 (263).

²⁷ Browne, 144.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

inviting the wise to peruse both and ‘suck Divinity’ – as they would with the words of scripture – ‘from the flowers of nature’.²⁹ Condemning those ‘Christians’ who fail to study the linguistic characters of nature’s ‘mysticall letters’ and ‘common Hieroglyphicks’ with an alchemist’s curiosity, Browne praises the faithless ‘Heathens’ for their familiarity with the sacred language of signatures, since ‘those that never saw him in the one’ at least ‘discovered him in the other’. By identifying the ‘ordinary ... miracle’ of nature’s language, Browne seeks to incorporate the wondrously, medicinal potency of signatures into scientific discourse.

Kathleen Crowther-Heyck purports that in the sixteenth century natural histories were based on the presumption that ‘natural objects are thoroughly imbued with spiritual significance’ since ‘human beings were surrounded by a world in which the divine and the mundane were thoroughly intertwined’.³⁰ However, by the seventeenth century, Browne was contending with the prevalence of Baconian science, which – despite its complex and interconnected relationship with religion – sought to construct theoretical explanations not predetermined by theology: ‘For we are founding a real model of the world in the understanding, such as it is found to be, not such as man’s reason has distorted’, Bacon asserts, which must, ‘let men learn the difference that exists between the idols of the human mind and the ideas of the Divine mind’.³¹ Browne’s attempts to accommodate his late hermetic, neo-platonic Christianity with modern, new-scientific empiricism, therefore, resulted in inconsistencies that Marshelle Woodward terms Browne’s ‘double hermeneutics’: a ‘paradox’ which arises ‘from Browne’s dyadic approach to the book of nature, that is, from his insistence on interpreting the book of nature, like the book of scripture, according to both literal and allegorical levels of meaning’.³² Although Browne ‘presents these two hermeneutic methods as complementary’, Woodward suggests ‘that in actuality they lead to multiple antinomies, exegetical, spiritual, cosmological, and ontological’.³³ This rift – which exposes Browne’s anxious inadequacies in his efforts to combine ever-divergent epistemologies – is observable in his writing style, which

²⁹ On nature as the book of God, see: Peter Barker, ‘The Role of Religion in the Lutheran Response to Copernicus’, in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 59-88; John Headley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); Janacek, 24; David C. Lindberg and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Michael T. Walton, ‘Genesis and Chemistry in the Sixteenth Century’, in *Reading the Book of Nature: The Other Side of the Scientific Revolution*, eds. Allen G. Debus and Michael T. Walton (Kirkville: Sixteenth-Century Journal Publishers, 1998), 1-14.

³⁰ Kathleen Crowther-Heyck, ‘Wonderful Secrets of Nature: Natural Knowledge and Religious Piety in Reformation Germany’, *Isis*, 94, ii (2003) 253-73 (255-6).

³¹ Bacon, ‘Novum Organum (1620)’, in *The Works*, ed. and trans. Basil Montague, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Parry & MacMillan, 1854), vol. 3, 343-71 (369).

³² Marshelle Woodward, ‘Paradox Regained: Reconsidering Thomas Browne’s Double Hermeneutics’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 58, iii (2016), 305-28 (312).

³³ *Ibid.*, 307.

struggles to convey material realities together with divine allegory, and therefore, becomes obscured and muddled by the evasive language of metaphor which alchemy had previously valued:

As for the wingy mysteries in Divinity, & aiery subtilties in Religion ... where there is an obscurity too deepe for our reason, tis good to set downe with a description a periphrasis, or adumbration; for by acquainting our reason how unable it is to display the visible and obvious effect of nature, it becomes more humble and submissive to the subtilties of faith: and thus I teach my haggard and unreclaimed reason to stoope unto the lure of faith.³⁴

Browne recognises that the ethereal, ‘wingy mysteries’ and ‘aiery subtilties’ of divinity are ‘too deepe’ in ‘obscurity’ to be sufficiently captured by non-metaphorical prose; indeed, the word ‘subtilties’, itself, not only implies the ‘tenuity’ of this subject, but also the ‘abstruseness of language’ which necessarily conveys it.³⁵

While a fundamental tenet of Browne’s natural philosophy, metaphysicality remains, by definition, so impossibly elusive in literal terms that Browne is compelled to admit rhetorical circumlocution – ‘periphrasis, or adumbration’ – to be the only sufficient mode of expression. Bound by the inadequate opacity and ambiguity of analogy, Browne forgoes the scientific principle of ‘reason’, deferring to naïve faith to sustain nature’s miraculously, therapeutic qualities. In response to the same passage, Preston remarks:

Browne, then, values the metaphor as the trope which can adequately represent his recognition of God’s illimitable design and the limits of intellectual exploration imposed by the inscrutability of divine purpose. He is content to understand a mystery without a rigid definition ... [so] metaphor adumbrates but never exactly replicates its original. And God’s work can, of course, never be remotely imitated or replicated. Metaphor is a way of speaking of God’s glory without hubris; the inadequacy of metaphor teaches his unreclaimed reason to stoop unto the lure of faith.³⁶

Although metaphor almost undermines the scientific method by submitting to ‘the inscrutability of divine purpose’ in nature, yet its deficiencies are compensated by a ‘faith’ that repairs the lost, sympathetic correspondences that give a semiotic power to signatures. Faith, according to Browne, glorifies God by mystifying Him, and so must be given blindly, as he writes: ‘contrarily I blesse my selfe, and am thankfull that I lived not in the dayes of miracles’ and did not see the parting of the Red Sea or Christ’s resurrection or healing of the sick, for ‘then had my faith beene thrust upon me, nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that believe and saw not’.³⁷ This overwhelming faith permits Browne to expediently suggest that alchemical signatures work ‘deepe’ beyond the remit of scientific ‘reason’.

³⁴ Browne, 14-17.

³⁵ *OED*, ‘subtlety, *n.*’, 4a. 2.

³⁶ Preston (1993), 265.

³⁷ Browne, 15.

Brooke Conti argues that while Browne ‘indulges in metaphorical and metaphysical flights of fancy’, his attempt to negotiate ‘the relationship between faith and reason’, by his ‘rhetorical gymnastics hint not just at confusion but deep anxiety over the role played by each’.³⁸ Indeed, in a moment of cynicism, Browne confesses that although ‘we naturally know what is good, but naturally pursue what is evil: the Rhetoricke wherewith I perswade another, cannot perswade my self’.³⁹ In spite of his occasionally disenchanted scepticism and metaphorical evasions, however, by calling for a blind faith beyond reason, Browne repeatedly returns to a nostalgic, Adamic semiotics – amid the Edenic, natural landscape that sympathetically binds words to an intrinsically operative meaning and purpose predetermined by God – to recover the medicinal properties of nature’s alchemical signatures. To maintain the healing, restorative powers of signatures, the early-modern alchemist must rely on faithful naivety in its obscure, ambiguous poetics, even while scientific literalism threaten to expose its insufficiencies. It is this sense of the alchemical signature as an allegorical tool made available by faith, which comes to inform my reading of *The Winter’s Tale*. After first examining how Shakespeare’s play begins in linguistic crisis of faith – a semiotic malaise caused by Leontes’ interpretation of Hermione’s fertile rhetoric as suspicious and promiscuous – I later illustrate how this diseased hermeneutics is healed by a faithful return to the natural landscape. In the rural, pastoral setting of a sheep-shearing festival, Perdita and Polixenes discover a symbolic, hybridised flower – endorsing reproductive, feminine signification – which functions, like an alchemical signature, to motion towards the play’s magically recuperative and regenerative ending.

³⁸ Brooke Conti, ‘Religio Medicus’s Profession of Faith’, in *Sir Thomas Browne: The World Proposed*, eds. Reid Barbour and Claire Preston (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 149-56.

³⁹ Browne, 105.

II. Natural Language in *The Winter's Tale*

i. Making Words Wanton: Hermione's Fertile Rhetoric

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Feste and Viola liken the rhetorical art of word play to sexual congress, suggesting that words can turn 'wanton' by a 'dalliance' with them, a word implying both idle chat, amorous flirtation, and lustful fondling.⁴⁰ To 'dally' or 'linger' on the multiple possible meanings of a word by persistent punning might make a word breed, rendering promiscuous not only the semantic unit itself, but also, by association with a woman, her sexuality:⁴¹

FESTE	A sentence is but a chev'ril glove to a good wit. How quickly the wrong side may be turn'd outward!
VIOLA	Nay, that's certain. They that dally nicely with words may quickly make them wanton.
FESTE	I would therefore my sister had had no name, sir.
VIOLA	Why, man?
FESTE	Why, sir, her name's a word, and to dally with that word might make my sister wanton. But indeed words are very rascals since bonds disgraced them.

III.i.11-20

Just as a pliant glove might be inverted to expose its 'wrong side', so the 'good wit' of a 'sentence' could have its innocent meaning distorted and tarnished. Feste relates the unfaithful signification of words – that 'disgrace' the 'bonds' they promise – to an adulterous, licentious woman, and since words are so easily 'turn'd outward' to reveal their duplicity. While the glove conjures a commonplace bawdy innuendo (about pushing fingers into holes), Feste wishes his 'sister had had no name' for others to 'dally with'. By his punning, the Fool quietly allies himself with Viola, who conceals her own secondary meaning in the male guise of Cesario, engaging in gender play that evades the patriarchally-imposed constraints of her womanhood and permits polysemy. Her feminine identity – like 'an apple, cleft in two' (V.i.223) from her brother, Sebastian – is substituted for her masculine, pageboy persona, Cesario, a name etymologically evocative of the twin's figurative, caesarean rift. As Cesario, Viola engages in the duplicitous rhetoric typically prohibited of the eroticized female voice, becoming free to equivocate, in the same words as that master of deceit, Iago – 'I am not what I am' (*Oth.*, I.i.65; *TN*, III.i.141) – for what in Iago's tragic world had represented his devilish, Machiavellian capacity to extemporise expedient identity, becomes, in

⁴⁰ *OED*, 'dally *v.*', 1, 2.a.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 4. See: Madhavi Menon, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Toronto: UTP, 2004), 6-7.

comedy, a capacity to perform, improvise, and experience the liberation of a temporary role, before retreating into literalisms upon Sebastian's return: 'I am Viola' (*TN*, V.i.253).

In *The Winter's Tale*, however, the 'fertile' (I.ii.113), flirtatious rhetoric of the pregnant Queen, Hermione, provokes a crisis of faith – the focus of this current section – concerning the veracity and integrity of women's words, initiated by Leontes' misinterpretation of her playful conversation with his childhood friend and neighbouring King, Polixenes, mistranslated into terms of infidelity. This worldly hermeneutics of suspicion and distrust is exemplified by Leontes' spider-in-the-cup soliloquy in Act Two Scene One, where, already convinced of Hermione's unfaithfulness, he laments:

... There may be in the cup
A spider steep'd, and one may drink; depart,
And yet partake no venom (for his knowledge
Is not infected), but if one present
Th' abhor'd ingredient to his eye, make known
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the spider.

II.i.39-45

Although Leontes perceives the deadly 'spider' in his metaphorical 'cup' to be the painful 'knowledge' of his wife's supposed betrayal, in reality, it embodies the intrusion of his own paranoid delusions, since it is not his drink but his mind that is 'infected' by an imagined 'venom' with purely placebic effects. As Anne Barton proposes, Leontes' words are incapable 'of distinguishing truth from falsehood', instead, his speech betrays an act of 'self-deception' through which he 'forces the imaginary to become true'; 'it is characteristic', Barton adds, 'of the Last Plays, that the speaker should be quite unconscious of what, for the theatre audience, is the primary meaning of his own words'.⁴² Similarly, James A. Knapp observes that in this passage, Leontes 'knows that his belief is tainted by his own knowledge, a knowledge admittedly produced by the power of involuntary affection to make dreams reality' for, 'the Sicilian king has made clear that his concern with truth is based not on the kind of appearance that can be perceived visually but on that which is seen with the mind's eye'.⁴³ Indeed, Leontes validates his claim that Camillo, Polixenes, and Hermione were plotting his death, with a declaration that blindly confirms all false suspicions: 'All's true that is mistrusted' (48). It with this bleak cynicism that Leontes' language becomes incomprehensible, for example, in Act Three Scene Two, at the court of Justice, when Hermione, complains to her

⁴² Anne Barton, 'Leontes and the Spider: Language and the Speaker in Shakespeare's Last Plays', in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, eds. Phillip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank and G.K. Hunter (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), 131-50 (144), 147, 133.

⁴³ James A. Knapp, 'Visual and Ethical Truth in *The Winter's Tale*', *SQ*, 55, iii (2004), 253-78 (273-4).

husband, ‘you speak a language that I understand not: | My life stands in the level of your dreams’ (III.ii.80-1), to which he mockingly responds: ‘Your actions are my dreams; | You had a bastard by Polixenes, | And I but dream’d it’ (82-4). Ironically, Leontes’ ‘language’ is, indeed, one of ‘dreams’, imaginary spiders, and ‘bastard’ children, obscuring the monovalence of simple truth with the fertile perplexity of unfaithful polyvalence; as he does with the transparent words of oracle – ‘Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten, and the King shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found’ (III.ii.132-6) – denouncing them entirely: ‘There is no truth at all i’ the oracle: | The sessions shall proceed: this is mere falsehood’ (140-1). For Leontes, argues Gina Bloom, his ‘political and personal problems stem from an inability to hear effectively’, a deafness to truth that can only be redeemed by the hypernatural faith in feminine language, imposed at the play’s end, when Leontes ‘realises he has no choice but to open himself aurally to Paulina, whose words of truth may cause great danger if not admitted’.⁴⁴ As I shall examine, Leontes must eventually silence his own discourse of patriarchal tyranny to re-embrace a fertile semiotics, in which signs contain curative, regenerative truths – located, like an alchemical signature, within the nostalgic, pastoral, natural landscape – with the magical power to resurrect the articulate, maternal figure, if only ‘you do awake your faith’.

In Act One Scene Two, Hermione protests at Leontes’ feeble attempts to persuade Polixenes to prolong his visit – ‘you, sir, | Charge him too coldly’ (I.ii.29-30) – asserting her more cogent rhetoric to almost ventriloquise as Leontes. Even interfering with political matters to reassure Polixenes of his Kingdom’s stability – ‘tell him, you are sure | All in Bohemia’s well’ (30-1), which was only ‘the by-gone day proclaim’d’ (32) – Hermione substitutes Leontes’ kingly authority for her own, as she intercepts his words to replace them: ‘Say this to him’ (32). Confident in her own powers of persuasion, Hermione quips that ‘he’s beat from his best ward’ (33), the term ‘ward’ not only denoting a ‘defensive posture or movement’ in ‘fencing’ – alluding to her playful, verbal sparring with the men – but also, offering an auditory pun with ‘word’, teasingly suggesting that she has beaten his best argument. Hermione’s words slip between multiple significations, exemplifying – ultimately to her own downfall – a promiscuous semiotics with correspondingly erotic nuances, as she dallies with the word ‘verily’:⁴⁵

HERMIONE	... You’ll stay?
...	
POLIXENES	I may not, verily.

⁴⁴ Gina Bloom, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2007), 122-25.

⁴⁵ OED, ‘ward, n2’, III.8.a.

HERMIONE Verily?
 You put me off with limber vows; but I,
 Though you would seek t' unsphere the stars with oaths,
 Should yet say, "Sir, no going." Verily,
 You shall not go: a lady's "verily" is
 As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?
 ...
 My prisoner? or my guest? By your dread "verily,"
 One of them you shall be.

POLIXENES Your guest then, madam.

I.ii.44-56

Hermione echoes Polixenes' use of 'verily' – a declaration of theological faith, from the Latin *veritas*, meaning 'truth', often 'said of God or of Christ' – to pledge that he 'may not' stay any longer in Sicilia, coaxing, seducing, and softening this faithful 'vow' into a pliable, 'limber' word until its meaning changes: 'Your guest then, madam'.⁴⁶ Polixenes' 'limber vows' possess erogenous implications – the phallic 'shaft of a cart or carriage', or that which is undesirably 'flaccid' – for Hermione to stimulate, tempting him to undermine the semiotic and moral virtuousness of his word.⁴⁷ Once Hermione arouses this frisky, sexual insinuation from Polixenes' faithful 'verily', she adopts the phrase to elicit a sense of competitive virility between the men, arguing that a 'lady's' vow is 'as potent as a lord's'. Even literary critics, such as Nevill Coghill, adopt Leontes-like cynicism, listening with worldly ears, asking, 'who can fail to wonder whether the man so amicably addressing this expectant mother may not be the father of her child?', maintaining that 'these things are not done by accident', though it is crucial to observe that such flirtation is contained to the rhetorically implicit subtext.⁴⁸

As far as Leontes is concerned, Hermione's titillating word-play is synonymous with adultery, as his senses and her semantics breed. The misogyny of both kings – perhaps playful on Polixenes' part, but increasingly violent in Leontes – considers Hermione's linguistic sophistication as analogous to the discourses of temptation, sin, and the Fall of Man, insinuating that it is the wanton words of women that drag men into fallen depravity. Polixenes nostalgically recalls his supposedly prelapsarian childhood with Leontes, before women disrupted their Edenic bliss:

We were as twinn'd lambs that did frisk i' th' sun,
 And bleat the one at th' other. What we chang'd
 Was innocence for innocence; we knew not

⁴⁶ Ibid., 'verity, *n.*', 1.a., 2.c.?

⁴⁷ Ibid., 'limber, *n.*', 1.a.; 'limber, *adj.*', 1.c.

⁴⁸ Nevill Coghill, 'Six Points of Stage-Craft in *The Winter's Tale*', *SS*, 11 (1958) 31-41 (33). See also: Howard Felperin, *The Uses of the Canon: Elizabethan Literature and Contemporary Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 44.

The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dream'd
 That any did. ...
 Temptations have since then been born to 's: for
 In those unfledg'd days was my wife a girl;
 Your precious self had then not cross'd the eyes
 Of my young playfellow.

I.ii.67-79

Polixenes portrays an idyllic, mythological, golden age of pastoral, semiotic purity in which 'innocence' is only every exchanged for 'innocence', shared by pre-verbal, 'twinn'd lambs' who naively 'bleat' at one another. To 'bleat' is to produce an 'imitative' sound with etymological associations to the word 'blabber' or 'babble', an infantile speech yet perhaps dangerously and portentously reminiscent of the biblical 'Babel' parable: the Fall of the pure Adamic language, from 'one language and one speech', to a 'confusion of tongues'.⁴⁹ Women are identified, by Polixenes, as the cause of the men's loss of innocence, as the kings hark back to a time before their 'eyes' had 'cross'd' with their wives, whose sexuality intrudes upon their unspoiled, bucolic boyhood:

Hermione's entrance – perhaps literally between the two kings? – disrupts this male haven. The visual impact of her pregnant body inevitably focuses attention on her, reminding the audience of what has been missing from the gentlemen's conversation; and her body immediately becomes the sight of longing and terror, its very presence disruptive of male bonds and male identity.⁵⁰

Hermione's fertile, maternal body and rhetoric imposes upon the fraternity and masculinity uniting Leontes and Polixenes; as Adelman suggests, 'the sexualized female body is the sign of male separation and loss' and 'in its very fullness, that body becomes the register of male emptiness'.⁵¹ While the old friends profess that polysemy is inherently promiscuous, their underlying anxiety concerns the sterility of their own dualistic signification.

Ultimately, the comparative failure of his own persuasive, rhetorical art, as opposed to that of Hermione, persuades Leontes of his wife's infidelity:

LEONTES	Is he won yet?
HERMIONE	He'll stay, my lord.
LEONTES	At my request he would not.
...	
	Too hot, too hot!
	To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.

⁴⁹ OED, 'blea, v.'; *Geneva Bible*, Genesis 11.1, 6.

⁵⁰ Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (NY: Routledge, 2012), 220.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 221.

The playful to-and-fros voiced from Hermione's 'fertile bosom' (113), create a verbal friction 'too hot' for Leontes, a 'mingling' of meanings, analogous to over-intimate 'friendship', and beyond that, to the exchange of bodily fluids.⁵² In his heated frenzy – 'I have *tremor cordis* on me: my heart dances' (110) – Leontes claims to observe snatches of physical intimacy that prove evidence of adultery, those 'paddling palms and pinching fingers' (115) or 'practised smiles' (116), hallucinations of an eroticised body language. Leontes imagines Hermione 'virginalling | Upon his palm!' (126-6), fingering that delicate part of Polixenes' hand as if it were that instrument associated with young, chaste women.⁵³ Despite Polixenes' reassurance to Leontes, earlier in this scene, that, 'no tongue that moves, none, none i' th' world, | So soon as yours could win me' (20-1), he is ultimately 'won' by Hermione's 'limber' and 'hot' rhetorical play, not Leontes' 'cold', ineffective signifiers.

Significantly, Leontes' interpretation of Hermione's language reflects period anxieties about gendered language in early-modern England, in which, as Patricia Parker examines, anti-Ciceronian humanists condemn elaborate, rhetorical language for being 'effeminate', promoting 'a virile or "manly" style' as 'the antithesis of a copious one'.⁵⁴ This concern is best expressed by the Dutch, humanist scholar, and reformer, Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536), in his 1527 letter to the Spanish humanist, Francisco de Vergara (d. 1545):

I was always so far from copying the style of Ciceronian expression that, even if I could achieve it, I would prefer a more rugged, more compact, more sinewy style, less adorned and more masculine. In general, rhetorical embellishment has been a slight concern to me.⁵⁵

For Erasmus, a 'more masculine' style of writing was concise yet powerful, simple but 'rugged', like Man's 'sinewy' physical ideal. The opposing 'rhetorical embellishment' of 'Ciceronian expression', however, was 'a slight concern', at risk of confounding sense with its 'adorned' verbosity. In his 1528 treatise, *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus asks his reader: 'If Cicero's style was lacking in manly vigor, do you think it appropriate for Christians, whose every plan looks to living virtuously' to be 'speaking ornately and elegantly, from whose lives all paint and theatrical effects ought to be far removed?'.⁵⁶ Unmanly eloquence, according to Erasmus, was not conducive to the Christian path of 'living virtuously' – especially since the word 'virtue' etymologically implies masculinity, from the classical

⁵² Scholastic philosophy proposed that the basic component of semen was blood, see: Aristotle, 'Generation of Animals', in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. A. Platt (Princeton: PUP, 1995), 1111-218.

⁵³ OED, 'virginal, n.', etymology.

⁵⁴ Patricia Parker, 'Virile Style', in *Premodern Sexualities*, eds. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (NY: Routledge, 1996), 201-22 (201-6).

⁵⁵ Desiderius Erasmus, '1885 To Francisco de Vergara', in *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1802-1925*, ed. James K. Farge, trans. Charles Fantazzi (Toronto: UTP, 2010), 367.

⁵⁶ Erasmus, *Ciceronianus...*, trans. Izora Scott (NY: Columbia University, 1908), 84.

Latin *virtūt-* or *virtus*, meaning ‘manliness’, and *vir*, ‘man’ – to live virtuously required a *virile* style of mode of speech, stripped of performativity and ‘theatrical effects’.⁵⁷ The superiority of the masculine style is frequently attested to in period rhetorical debate, as also endorsed by Ben Jonson (1572-1637), the English poet and playwright, who, in his 1641 commonplace book, *Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter*, commends the ‘manly’ style of ‘composition’ for having ‘avoided faint, obscure, obscene, sordid, humble, improper, or effeminate phrase’, which he considers crass and ostentatious:

Look upon an effeminate person, his very gait confesseth him. If a man be fiery, his motion is so; if angry, it is troubled and violent. So that we may conclude wheresoever manners and fashions are corrupted, language is. It imitates the public riot. The excess of feasts and apparel are the notes of a sick state, and the wantonness of language, of a sick mind.⁵⁸

For Jonson, if ‘manners and fashions’ of a man ‘are corrupted’, so his ‘language is’, and in the case of an ‘effeminate’ person, whose flamboyant ‘gait confesseth him’, his ‘excess of feasts and apparel’ reflect a ‘sick state’ and ‘sick mind’, resulting in a ‘wantonness of language’. The ‘effeminate’ speaker, like the fertile Hermione, tampers with linguistic signifiers until they turn into slippery, ‘wanton’, and promiscuous words.

If an excessive indulgence in words might periphrastically obscure truth or deflect the action it denotes, the patriarchal fear was that a wordy woman conceals the truth of her sexual immodesty, an anxiety succinctly captured by the popular early-modern proverb, employed, for example, by the English poet, Thomas Howell (fl. 1568): ‘Women are wordes, Men are deedes’.⁵⁹ In 1608, the Roman Catholic bishop, William Bishop (c. 1554-1624), debates the ‘rude rhetorike of brabbling and scolding women’, as opposed to that of men:

To give the man his due, I acknowledge that he inditeth not amisse, if he did not defile and poison his penne with so huge a multitude of ougly, venimous, and unsavoury tearmes. But what account is to be made of choise, picked, and pleasing wordes, when they be employed not only to abuse and beguile simple soules, but also to disgrace the sincere verity of Gods word? surely for the debating of controversies in religion, plaine usual speeches without painting or superfluity, have alwayes beene taken by the learned for most decent and expedient, according to that ancient Adage: *simplex est veritatis oratio, the stile of truth is simple and plaine*.⁶⁰

While Bishop portrays women as wasteful with an overabundance of ‘ougly, venimous, and unsavoury’ rhetorical expressions, the words of men, by remaining ‘decent and expedient’ can be trusted to deliver ‘*truth*’ that is ‘*simple and plaine*’. Just as period commentators maintain notions of a deceptive, signficatory promiscuity associated with playful feminine rhetoric, in *The Winter’s Tale*,

⁵⁷ OED, ‘virtue, *n.*’, etymology.

⁵⁸ Jonson, 27, 32.

⁵⁹ Thomas Howell, *His Devises...* (1581), D2r.

⁶⁰ William Bishop, *A Reproofe of M. Doct. Abbots Defence...* (1608), 3-5.

when Hermione's 'fertile', 'hot', verbal abundance succeeds in persuading Polixenes to stay, trumping Leontes' own monosemous, masculine brevity, his only justification – rather than reconsidering the inefficacy of his own linguistic style – is Hermione's lustful, adulterous betrayal.

Only midway through the play's second scene, Leontes has been infected by early-modern perceptions of gendered language, pronouncing 'women' as 'false' creatures 'that will say anything' (130-1). Yet, as is evident to the audience, it is not feminine rhetoric but Leontes' mind – contaminated by what Camillo calls his 'diseased opinion' (297), the result of a mistrustful hermeneutics – that wrongly perceives a 'spider' (II.i.40) in his figurative cup. Leontes' linguistic crisis of interpretation deteriorates to such an extent that, according to his own logic, words are rendered devoid of meaning and truth entirely, as he frantically derides Camillo for defending the integrity of the Queen:

Is whispering nothing?
Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
Kissing with inside lip? ...
...
... Is this nothing?
Why then the world and all that's in't is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings,
If this be nothing.

I.ii.284-96

Leontes' mocking 'nothings' – which he believes to be sensual, breathy moments of 'whispering' and 'kissing' – in fact, refer to 'nothing' but his own imaginings, and so 'nothing have these nothings' in terms of any substantial, real value, as the word becomes progressively deflated of sense with every use. Yet, Leontes' own interpretative capacities have been so dislocated from reality, that to realise the hollowness of these 'nothings', he exclaims, would reduce his whole world – the 'sky', 'Bohemia', and his 'wife' – to 'nothing'. Howard Felperin argues that 'the linguistic problems foregrounded in the opening act of *The Winter's Tale* are never, because they cannot be, solved – not even in the exquisite transfigurations of the last'.⁶¹ For Felperin, the problem of Leontes' language is irredeemably tarnished, so severed from truth that even the magical turn to romance cannot convincingly repair its deficiencies since, 'the language of art' – Hermione's rhetorical artifice, and later, Paulina's alchemical word-magic – seem 'every bit as incommensurate and incompatible with the "nature" it attempts to define as was the language of presence employed

⁶¹ Felperin (1992), 53-4.

by Leontes to identify what was only imagination'.⁶² However, I demonstrate that the play successfully, if only momentarily, commands us to 'awake' our 'faith' in the efficacy of the fertile, feminine signifier – which becomes a site for natural, rather than insatiably promiscuous, abundance – suspending the incurable, linguistic cynicism of reality to deliver a magically operative semiotics.

⁶² Ibid.

ii. 'Awake Your Faith': Alchemically Regenerative Words

... I

Do come with words as medicinal as true,
Honest as either, to purge him of that humour
That presses him from sleep.

WT, II.iii.36-9

In *The Winter's Tale*, Leontes' perception that Hermione's fertile, rhetorical play discloses her promiscuity constitutes, as we have seen, a 'diseased opinion' (I.ii.297) or hermeneutics from which he must 'be cured' (296); accordingly, the first verbal antidote is offered by Paulina, who approaches Leontes with his new-born infant to deliver this tangible evidence of Hermione's fidelity, like a 'physician' (II.iii.54) bringing 'words as medicinal as true', to 'purge him' (37) of his paranoid delusions. Once Leontes rejects his daughter as a 'bastard' (76) child and 'a mankind witch!' (68) – in an outburst of misogynistic rage – casting her off with Antigonus to the Bohemian coast, Paulina realises that his disease resembles 'a curse' (157), and so, 'he cannot be compell'd to't' (89), without the use of her own natural witchery to 'remove | The root of his opinion, which is rotten' (89-90). So consumed is Leontes by his psychological *dis-ease*, that he mistakes the source of his infection to be the common plight of 'deceiv'd, cuckolds' (I.ii.191), lamenting its incurability – the unfortunate lack of 'Physic for't' (200) since 'there is none' (191) – though 'thousands' (206) do 'have the disease, and feel't not' (207). Although Paulina's medicinal words are initially prevented from conveying their curative truths, the play later stages a recovery of faith via the authority of her matriarchal language, the success of which ultimately suggests that female rhetorical command may no longer be considered wanton but rather a generative, productive, restorative art, and rendering the 'magic' of Paulina's words 'lawful as eating' (V.iii.111). *The Winter's Tale* recuperates this faithful linguistics in the sheep-shearing festival of Act Four Scene Four, offering its turn away from the sterile, pastoral, nostalgia of the Kings at court – recalling their childhood bliss, when, like 'twinn'd lambs', they would imitatively 'bleat the one at th' other' – as the play turns towards redemptive romance, in what Janet Adelman refers to as 'the fertile space of a decidedly female pastoral', abundant with a flexible diversity of signifiers.⁶³ Extracting the therapeutic qualities from the natural, rural landscape, the play heals the problem of semiotic impotence through a hybridised flower which, once closely examined, metaphorically functions like an alchemical signature to indicate profound wisdoms that aid Perdita in repairing her own, unknown, lineal disruptions, reclaiming her reproductive destiny, and resurrecting the seemingly petrified, maternal figure. As Margaret Healy observes, 'Shakespeare's romances have been particularly associated with the

⁶³ Adelman, 228-9.

alchemical cycle and the affirmation of the “possibility of regeneration”, for it is ‘emphatically in the late plays’ that ‘tyranny and destructiveness are reformed and corrected through the healing associated with suffering and the regenerative power of love and art’.⁶⁴ Crucially, however, for this word-magic to perform its successful, reviving redemption, all those watching must ‘awake’ their ‘faith’ in Paulina’s alchemically-transformative art.

The fruit of Hermione’s criminalised pregnancy, Perdita, reappears ‘sixteen years’ later (IV.i.6), in Act Four of the play – having been adopted and raised as ‘a shepherd’s daughter’ (27) in the Bohemian countryside – as a young woman on the brink of her own sexual maturity, desired by her prospective husband, Florizel, who must control his ‘lusts’ (IV.iv.34) not to ‘burn hotter than my faith’ (35) before they marry. An embodiment of nature and its prolific beauty, Perdita is characterised as the goddess of flowers, ‘Flora’, garlanded in in ‘unusual weeds’, like a ‘queen’ among ‘petty gods’ (1-5), and admired as the female, pastoral ideal by voracious observers, such as Camillo, who, devours her lustfully with his gaze: ‘I should leave grazing, were I of your flock, | And only live by gazing’ (109-10). In response to this – albeit lecherous – eroticisation of her womanly form, however, Perdita anxiously inherits her father’s impotent hermeneutics of suspicion – denying her own sexuality and lineal legitimacy (of which she remains unaware) for being undeserving of these hyperfeminine adornments, complaining how ‘it not becomes’ (6) her status: ‘poor lowly maid, | Most goddess-like prank’d up’ (6-10). As Polixenes enters this rustic celebration in disguise – the barren, bleating, masculine pastoral intruding upon the plentiful, feminine countryside – he also suspects an incongruity between Perdita’s beauty and breeding, suspecting the manner in which this ‘prettiest low-born lass that ever | Ran on the green-sward’ (156-7), appears instinctively aristocratic, since ‘nothing she does or seems | But smacks of something greater than herself, | Too noble for this place’ (157-9). In spite of this, as Claire Duncan writes, Polixenes ‘conjoins human and plant procreative language’ using ‘grafting rhetoric as a test of Perdita’s genealogical intentions’ with his Prince-son, through the analogy of a cross-bred flower, an investigation which cunningly employs this polysemous sign, inadvertently providing the solution to sterile monosemy:⁶⁵

PERDITA ...the fairest flow’rs o’ th’ season
Are our carnations and streak’d gillyvors
(Which some call Nature’s bastards). Of that kind
Our rustic garden’s barren, and I care not
To get slips of them.

⁶⁴ Margaret Healy, *Shakespeare, Alchemy and the Creative Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), 197-8.

⁶⁵ Claire Duncan, “‘Nature’s Bastards’: Grafted Generation in Early Modern England”, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 38, ii (2015), 121-47 (139).

POLIXENES Wherefore, gentle maiden,
 Do you neglect them?
 PERDITA For I have heard it said,
 There is an art which in their piedness shares
 With great creating Nature.

IV.iv.81-8

Perdita instinctively projects the shame of her own mistaken identity onto this symbol of illegitimate breeding, the gillyvor flower, which sprouts petals that appear ‘streak’d’ with a two-tone colour – a ‘piedness’ – revealing them to be ‘Nature’s bastards’.⁶⁶ Refusing to graft ‘gillyvors’ by taking ‘slips of them’, Perdita, as Duncan suggests, ‘eludes Polixenes’ bizarre trap, as she firmly stands by her earlier claim of the gillyvor’s bastardy’, demonstrating ‘her pure devotion to Florizel’, since, ‘by marrying him, she is not attempting to improve her own genealogical line through grafting as Polixenes implies, but is simply in love’.⁶⁷

In agricultural terms, Perdita refuses to graft these flowers on account of the ‘art’ of human intervention, implied by their synthetically engineered ‘piedness’, which vainly attempts to imitate ‘great creating Nature’ by producing new species of its own. However, Gabriel Egan proposes that what Perdita rejects is not the artificiality of cross-breeding – for, though ‘bastards’, she admits these flowers are ‘Nature’s’ – but rather the visual appearance of hybridisation:

[Perdita] objects to ‘carnations and streaked gillyvors’ not because they are artificially created, but because even though naturally created (by cross-pollination from proximity) they *look* like hybrids that result from human interference in nature. Even though she knows them to be entirely natural, they are to her impure by likeness.⁶⁸

Afterall, the English poet and writer, Gervase Markham (1568-1637), in his 1613 instruction manual for gardeners, notes the appearance of diversity flaunted by the varied, bright colours of carnations and gillyvors – ‘Gilliflowers are of divers kindes, as Pynks, Wall-flowers, Carnations, Clove-Gilliflowers’ – remarking upon their hardy condition when grafted: ‘They are better to be planted of Slips then sowed, yet both will prosper’.⁶⁹ According to Egan, Perdita rejects this visual display of a multicoloured blend – one flower denoting several varieties, all combined within its

⁶⁶ On the gillyvor flower, see: Charles R. Forkers, ‘Negotiating the Paradoxes of Art and Nature in *The Winter’s Tale*’, in *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s The Tempest and Other Late Romances*, ed. Maurice Hunt (NY: MLAA, 1992) 94-102; Richard W. Hillman, ‘The “Gillyvors” Exchange in *The Winter’s Tale*’, *English Studies in Canada*, 5, i (1979), 16-23; Mary Livingston, ‘The Natural Art of *The Winter’s Tale*’, *Modern Language Quarterly*, 30, iii (1969), 340-55; Jennifer Munroe, ‘It’s All About the Gillyvors: Engendering Art and Nature in *The Winter’s Tale*’ in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, eds. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 139-54; William O. Scott, ‘Seasons and Flowers in *The Winter’s Tale*’, *SQ*, 14, iv (1963), 411-17.

⁶⁷ Duncan, 140.

⁶⁸ Gabriel Egan, *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2006), 129.

⁶⁹ Gervase Markham, *The Second Booke of the English Husbandman* (1614), 36.

variegated petals – associating this with a wanton semiotics, for which reason she keeps her euphemistically ‘rustic garden’ – her womb – ‘barren’. As William O. Scott explains, Perdita objects to the gillyvors because they ‘are associated with eroticism’, rejecting its multiplicity of meanings as indicative of promiscuity, refusing the flower on the same terms that Hermione was incarcerated for her rhetorical playfulness.⁷⁰ Determined to prove her naïve intolerance for erotically-charged language, Perdita asks the men to ‘forewarn’ the thieving, singing, trickster, Autolycus, ‘that he use no scurrilous words in’s tunes’ (214), and makes herself deaf to Florizel’s burning ‘lust’, sanitising his words: ‘I cannot speak | So well, nothing so well; no, nor mean better: | By the pattern of mine own thoughts I cut out | The purity of his’ (380-3). As Palfrey observes, Perdita’s ‘words appear to defer to Florizel’s sophistication, but in fact reverse the modest expectation, interpreting his words in terms of her own thoughts’.⁷¹ Perdita must, therefore, recognise the legitimacy of a propagative semiotics, exemplified by this horticultural analogy, to accept her own sexuality and reproductive future.

Polixenes endeavours to lure Perdita into admitting the hereditary benefits of grafting her, purportedly, ‘low-born’ self to Prince Florizel, strategically endorsing this agricultural practise by engaging in a popular early-modern debate about the collaboration of art and nature:⁷²

POLIXENES	Say there be; Yet Nature is made better by no mean But Nature makes that mean; so over that art Which you say adds to Nature, is an art That Nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry A gentler scion to the wildest stock, And make conceive a bark of baser kind By bud of nobler race. This is an art Which does mend Nature – change it rather; but The art itself is Nature.
PERDITA	So it is.
POLIXENES	Then make [your] garden rich in gillyvors, And do not call them bastards.

IV.iv.88-99

Polixenes argues that the art of crossbreeding is natural since it is made of and by naturally-occurring constituents, engineered by humans who are, themselves, a part of nature, and so, Perdita

⁷⁰ Scott, 413.

⁷¹ Palfrey, 227.

⁷² On debate concerning art and nature, see: Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, eds., *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (NY: Zone Books, 2001), 265.

should graft herself – in an act of upward social mobility by marriage – to ‘a gentler scion’ that would elevate her ‘wildest stock’ to produce, from its ‘baser’ bark, descendants of a ‘nobler race’. However, Perdita ultimately refuses – ‘I’ll not put | The dibble in earth to set one slip of them’ (99-100) – voicing one side of the period discussion against the combination of art and nature, which appears, for example, in Montaigne’s essay, ‘Of the Caniballes’, in which he differentiates between those ‘fruites wilde, which nature of hir selfe, and of hir ordinarie progresse hath produced’, and ‘those which our selves have altered by our artificiall divises’, concluding that the former contains ‘the true and most profitable vertues, and naturall properties most lively and vigorous’, which in the latter, ‘we have bastardized, applying them to the pleasure of our corrupted taste’.⁷³ Alternatively, the intervention of human art in nature was essential for the alchemist, like Arthur Dee (1579-1651), who introduces his 1629 anthology of alchemical writings, *Fasciculus Chemicus*, as a ‘Philosophical work’ in which ‘Nature and Art ought so lovingly to embrace each other, as that Art may not require what Nature denies nor Nature deny what may be perfected by Art’.⁷⁴ Similarly, in his treatise on physic, John Cotta, explains that the ‘true artist’ can improve nature: ‘Nature cannot decoct, infuse, compound, mixe or prepare her rootes, metals, or other drugs and simples, in number and nature infinite; but Art is unto her benefite and service theirin accurate’.⁷⁵

For Perdita, however, it is not so much the art of grafting itself against which she protests, but the patriarchal co-opting of her reproductive agency implicit in this discourse. In early-modern gardening manuals, like that published by the English author and translator, Leonard Mascall (d. 1589), in 1572, grafting was often framed as the exertion of male power over mother nature:

The skil of planting and graffing, the which not only we may see with our eyes, but also feele with our handes in the secret workes of nature: yea, nothing more discovereth unto us the great & incomprehensible worke of god... . What greater pleasure can there be, than to smell the sweete odour of herbes, trees, and fruites, and to beholde the goodly colour of the same, which in certaine tymes of the yeare commeth forth of the wombe of their mother and nourse.⁷⁶

Just as Perdita fears that grafting ‘shares’ the divine power of ‘great creating Nature’, Mascall affirms that it provides an opportunity for Man to engage with and apply the ‘secret workes of nature’ and the ‘incomprehensible worke of god’, specifically seizing control over nature’s maternal ‘wombe’ which grows these ‘herbes, trees, and fruites’. The early-modern gardener splices his creations into

⁷³ Montaigne (1613), 102.

⁷⁴ Arthur Dee, *Fasciculus Chemicus* (1650), A5v.

⁷⁵ Cotta, *A Short Discoverie...* (1612), 120.

⁷⁶ Leonard Mascall, *A Booke of the Arte and Maner...* (1572), Aii^r-Aiii^v.

the ‘wombe of their mother and nourse’, to fulfil the patriarchal aspiration to regulate female reproduction. In the case of *The Winter’s Tale*, however, Duncan recognises that:

While the gardening treatises imagine man’s power over generation in the natural world and metaphorically connect that power to his control of sexual procreation elaborated in the obstetrical treatises, *The Winter’s Tale* complicates this fantasy of male reproductive power by depicting Leontes’s efforts at genealogical control as unnecessary and fruitless: not only do Perdita and Hermione survive and flourish after his attempts to kill them, but Perdita is the legitimate and non-grafted offspring of Hermione and Leontes.⁷⁷

Perdita refuses to graft herself to Florizel, obstructing the ‘fantasy of male reproductive power’ manifest in the grafting metaphor, instead, reclaiming her own, unknown genealogy – as ‘the legitimate and non-grafted’ royal heir – symbolically regrafting herself back to her ‘nobler’ lineage, literally and figuratively resuscitating her paralysed maternity, before marrying Florizel to resume her own bloodline.

At the end of Act Four Scene Four, as Polixenes emerges from his disguise to forbid his son’s supposedly heterogamous marriage, threatening to tarnish Perdita’s erotic appeal – ‘I’ll have thy beauty scratch’d with briars’ (425) – Perdita reengineers her own fertile sexuality and aristocratic legitimacy through slippery, semiotic play. Fleeing to Sicilia, in disguise, Camillo advises Perdita, ‘dismantle you, and (as you can) disliken | The truth of your own seeming’ (651-3), encouraging her to perform a duplicitous role that depends upon the artifice of ‘seeming’, creating impressions that bend ‘truth’ and simulate ‘miracle’, resulting in a mutable identity, Perdita agrees: ‘I see the play so lies | That I must bear a part’ (IV.iv.649-54). This ‘limber’ performance sets the stage for a miraculously ‘seeming’ illusion – theatrically presented behind a curtain in the chapel on Paulina’s estate – as art appears to transmute into nature when Hermione’s professed statue is magically resurrected. Before returning to the Sicilian court, Perdita, ‘hearing of her mother’s statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina’ (V.ii.94-5), transports the naïve, reviving qualities of the pastoral to the romance’s final reunion scene, where all return to worship with ‘greediness of affection’ (102-3) at the altar of the petrified Queen, having long heard stories about this work of art:

A piece many years in doing and now newly perform’d by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano, who, had he himself eternity and could put breath into his work, would beguile Nature of her custom, so perfectly he is her ape. He so near to Hermione hath done Hermione that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer.

V.ii.95-102

The gentlemen discuss the rumours of the sculpture’s suspiciously lifelike appearance, having overheard that its artist ‘could put breath into his work’ (98) as if ‘one would speak’ (101) to

⁷⁷ Duncan, 123.

Hermione ‘in hope of answer’ (102). However, the implications of this almost divine creation, made by an artist with the power to ‘ape’ or ‘beguile Nature’, are compromised by hints at Hermione’s enduring fetishization – despite her ostensibly postmenopausal, ‘wrinkled’, and ‘aged’ form – her ‘fertile’ sexuality is neither sterilised, nor is it fossilised. Indeed, Shakespeare refers to an artist known as a master of Renaissance erotica, Giulio Romano (c. 1499-1546), the Italian painter, architect, and a pupil of Raphael (1483-1520), who, in collaboration with the engraver and printmaker, Marcantonio Raimondi (c. 1480-1534), produced *I Modi* or *The Sixteen Pleasures* (1524-1527), a book featuring engravings of couples in sexual positions. As Simon Palfrey remarks:

This of course is one of the denouement’s many opaque jokes: there is neither statue nor sculptor. Furthermore, Shakespeare’s choice of Romano reinforces his discourse’s rootedness in iconoclasm and mischief the Italian was famous as a pornographer, suggesting more than anything the ‘Dildo’s’ and ‘fowle gap[s]’ of Autolicus’ pretty love songs.⁷⁸

For Palfrey, this reference undermines the existence of both the statue and its sculptor with an obscure, pornographic ‘joke’.⁷⁹

While Paulina primes her audience to ‘prepare | To see the life as lively mock’d as ever | Still sleep mock’d death’ (V.iii.18-20), what her so-called statue in fact *mocks* is not only Hermione’s likeness, by imitation, but its deceived spectators, like Leontes, who suspects: ‘The fixture of her eye has motion in’t, | As we are mock’d with art’ (67-8). The attentive congregation are mocked by a statue that appears so much more true-to-life than clay – ‘chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed | Thou art Hermione’ (24-5) – suspiciously betraying pulsating, panting bodily rhythms and signs of vitality – ‘would you not deem it breathed? and that those veins | Did verily bear blood? ... | The very life seems warm upon her lip’ (64-6) – before its resurrection. Therefore, in order to successfully execute the illusion of her transformative, alchemical magic, Paulina must, first, encourage her spectators to retreat, twice-blocking Perdita, then Leontes, from kissing the calcified, saint-like Hermione: ‘The statue is but newly fix’d, the colour’s Not dry’ (46-7), she intercepts, and, once again, ‘The ruddiness upon her lip is wet; | You’ll mar it if you kiss it, stain your own | With oily painting’ (81-3). Preparing to ‘draw the curtain’ (83), Paulina demands a faith in the magic of her theatrical sleight-of-hand:

PAULINA

Either forbear,

Quit presently the chapel, or resolve you
For more amazement. If you can behold it,
I’ll make the statue move indeed, descend,
And take you by the hand; but then you’ll think

⁷⁸ Palfrey, 240.

⁷⁹ See: Eric Langley, ‘Postured like a Whore? Misreading Hermione’s Statue’, *Renaissance Studies*, 27, iii (2013), 318-40.

(Which I protest against) I am assisted
By wicked powers.

LEONTES What you can make her do,
I am content to look on; what to speak,
I am content to hear; for 'tis as easy
To make her speak as move.

PAULINA It is requir'd
You do awake your faith. Then, all stand still.
On; those that think it is unlawful business
I am about, let them depart.

V.iii.85-97

Paulina's words possess the magical capacity to animate the statue, on the condition that – 'IF' – her audience pre-emptively accept to 'behold' this inexplicable wonder, and are 'content to' believe it, that she is 'assisted | By wicked powers'. Explicitly 'requir'd' to 'awake' their 'faith', the onlookers are instructed to momentarily suspend their disbelief, turning themselves – even for one brief, redemptive moment – naively credulous as to the illusion before them. It is this prerequisite of blind faith that grants Paulina her operative word-magic, with which she instructs the statue to 'descend', metamorphosing its flinty substance to fleshy tissue: 'be stone no more' (99).

For Felperin, 'the faith Paulina appeals to us to awaken' compensates for the cynical, deficiency of words:

Such a realism understands, accepts, and above all *foregrounds* the inescapable mediacy of language, the radical difference between presence and reference, and the ultimate subjectivity of all interpretation. In sum, the fallen and incorrigible nature of language – of which the casual duplicity of the pun ... is only the most familiar symptom – paradoxically enables it in Shakespeare's hands to become the perfect medium for defining human reality. This foregrounding of linguistic difficulty in the interests of a sophisticated realism suggests that the larger relation between poetic and ordinary language is one of figure to ground, poetic language – whether that of Renaissance drama or modern lyric poetry – emerging as a problematic of ordinary language, a making explicit, indeed conspicuous, of the undeclared difficulty of everyday speech.⁸⁰

For Felperin, the 'casual duplicity' of realism, which concedes a 'radical difference between presence and reference', is such that for poetic language to function it must obscure the ruptured semiotics of 'ordinary language'. To resolve the 'difficulty' of the real-world, 'fallen and incorrigible nature of language' – initially typified by the patriarchal hermeneutics of Leontes, who attributed to semiotic fertility a wantonness, promoting sterile signification – faith must be invested in the capacity for words to legitimately perform their meaning and overcome the degraded, fruitless, referential failures of 'realism'. Sudden, naïve faith is just enough for the romance to recuperate a

⁸⁰ Felperin (1992), 55-6.

nostalgic, magical semiotics, eliciting revival, as Leontes faithfully authorises, and thus renders operative, the magic of Paulina's medicinal words:

PAULINA ... her actions shall be holy as
 You hear my spell is lawful ...

LEONTES O, she's warm!
 If this be magic, let it be an art
 Lawful as eating.

V.iii.104-11

Hermione, who was once 'too hot' for Leontes – heated by the friction of her copious rhetoric – is now tempered into something 'warm', as the restorative magic of Paulina's spell is sanctioned by the repentant King who accepts this 'magic' to be 'Lawful as eating'. This 'magic' presents 'an art' which appears to convert itself into nature – and although the offstage theatrics suggest that this art was nature all along – faith in the illusion of death and rebirth is enough to miraculously resolve the play's severed marriages, friendships, and royal families.

'Shakespeare still believes in art's value', as Richard C. McCoy concludes, 'even when he discounts and mocks it', for his characters' 'faith', in *The Winter's Tale*, involves 'accept[ing] the truth of seeming and mockeries even if they lack plausible explanations'; ultimately, 'even as they remind us that appearances can deceive, Shakespeare's plays also affirm that at moments like this, seeing can be believing'.⁸¹ Likewise, Shakespeare asks his audience to take part in this spectacle, to 'awake' their 'faith' in the potency of the playwrights' words to alchemically transmute the play's ending into a successfully redemptive romance, despite the disenchanting cynicism implicit in making such a request. Faith in the alchemical power of poetry to refine the linguistic incapacities of the real-world may have been upheld by contemporary writers, like Philips Sidney, for whom, 'no art' was 'delivered unto mankind that hath not the workes of nature for his principall object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend', and it was the poet's job to be 'making things either better than nature bringeth fourth or, quite a new', for while nature's 'world is brasen, the poets only deliver a golden'.⁸² However, Sidney's faith in the transformative potency of poetic language, was given in defence of sceptical, anti-theatricalist attacks on poetry, like that of the English satirist, Stephen Gosson (1554-1624), in his 1579 text *The School of Abuse*, which renounces poetry's alchemical power:

The foole that comes into a faire Garden likes the beawtie of flowers, and stickes them in his Cap: the Phisition considereth their nature, and puttes them in the pottle: in the one they wither without profite; in the other they serve to the health of the bodie: He that readeth good writers,

⁸¹ Richard C. McCoy, *Faith in Shakespeare* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 139-44.

⁸² Sidney (1595), Cr-v.

and pickes out their flowers for his owne nose is lyke a foole; hee that preferreth their vertue before their sweet smel is a good Phisition.⁸³

For Gosson, the poet's indulgence in nature's 'beawtie' is an aesthetic pursuit, 'without profite' or 'vertue', while the 'Phisition' virtuously nurtures the medicinal qualities of nature's flowers. In response to such arguments, poets such as Sidney and Shakespeare work harder to preserve faith in the invigorating magic of their words, returning wistfully to a 'golden', pastoral 'Nature' to pluck 'sweet-smelling flowers' – like Perdita's gillyvor – retrieving faith in its restorative wisdoms. These poets reclaim an alchemical semiotics – a language infused with a potent concoction of operative signifiers – to convert our 'brasen' world and 'deliver a golden', as Shakespeare distils this diseased, sterile play-world, to extract his perfected, curative, romance ending.

⁸³ Stephen Gosson, *The School of Abuse...* (1679), 35^v.

CHAPTER II

Semiotic Harmony: The Music of the Spheres in *Pericles*

I. The Language of Celestial Harmony

A Knowing Man ... [is] a rare Metaphysitian where he is above Nature. ... A wonderful Arithmetician, for he can by his reduction, reduce all things to one thing, from whence they came; as did the *Pythagoreans* of old, and practises his Division, and gives every mad his due; he is a sweet Musitian, for there is such sweet harmony proceeds from his Organs, and such Concord in all his thoughts, words and actions, every Learned man moving in their proper Sphears; Oh the harmony of these Sphears, and Orbs and besides these, he is a real Musitian ... He is an Astronomer, for his eye is always fixt on Heaven, and considers whether the Starrs, Heavens-eyes look with kind aspects on the Sons of Men, and a deep profound Astrologer, and considers the powerful working influence, and effects of the Starrs, the Caelestial torches, and an eloquent, eminent Rhetorician, who has *Mercury's* Golden Tongue.¹

In his 1664 treatise, *An Anatomical Lecture of Man*, Samuel Person identifies the essential proficiencies of the 'Knowing Man', the 'rare Metaphysitian' or magus, who must be adept enough to emulate – musically, verbally, and mathematically – the astrological principle of universal harmony. This ancient philosophical concept, established by Pythagoras (c. 570-495 BCE), theorised a universe operating under divine laws of order and concord, governed by *harmonai* which functioned as an abstract metaphor for an inaudible cosmic music determined by the motions and velocities of celestial bodies in the heavens.² In sympathy with the musical 'harmony of these Sphears, and Orbs', the 'Astronomer' – whose 'eye is always fixt on Heaven' – could channel this 'powerful working influence', the 'effects of the Starrs, the Caelestial torches', to become, himself, a 'sweet Musitian' who produces his own 'sweet harmony'. The music of the spheres was, necessarily, abstracted by the 'Knowing Man' into intellectually conceivable terms, since an acoustic experience of this harmony was considered inaudible to the human ear; as Aristotle explains in *On the Heavens*, 'the sound is in our ears from the very moment of birth and is thus indistinguishable from its contrary silence, since sound and silence are discriminated by mutual contrast'.³ Early-modern accounts of *musica universalis*, therefore, move interchangeably between notions of literal

¹ Samuel Person, *An Anatomical Lecture of Man* (1664), 31-2.

² See: Joscelyn Godwin, *The Harmony of the Spheres: The Pythagorean Tradition in Music* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1992); S. K. Heninger, *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (NY: Angelico Press 2013); John Stohmeier and Peter Westbrook, eds., *Divine Harmony: The Life and Teachings of Pythagoras* (Berkeley: Berkeley Hills Books, 2003).

³ Aristotle, 'On the Heavens', in *The Complete Works* (1995), II.9.

music and metaphorical modes of harmony, and these manifestations of harmony are experienced both in the macrocosmic cosmic realm and within the microcosm of the individual corporeal human, as the dramatist and poet John Tatham (fl. 1632-1664) observes: ‘Man is Compos’d of Harmonie, each Sense | Moves by a Sphericall Intelligence’.⁴ The perfect harmony that governs the motions of the spheres likewise governs all the constituent parts of man, even his speech; as Person explains, universal harmony could be expressed linguistically by the ‘deep profound Astrologer’, who, by harnessing its powers, thereby speaks like an ‘eminent Rhetorician’, as if blessed with the mythological, divine eloquence of ‘*Mercury’s* Golden Tongue’. The music of the spheres trope, therefore, affords a glimpse into the minds for which the universe was full of profound meaning, sympathetic correspondences, and perfect harmonies influencing and governing earthly life, spreading its operative virtues through every correspondent level of the macro- and micro-cosmic experience. ‘The Sympathetical Harmony of the Universe, that true Musick of the Sphears’, the English author Thomas Tryon (1634-1703) asserts, is ‘that Golden Chain which unites Heaven and Earth’.⁵ This connectivity granted what might, in linguistic terms, be thought of as *semiotic harmony* – the perfect, divine correspondence between the word and its signification – in which expressive words were not only analogous to the musical harmony of the heavens, but substantiated by them. Roger Rawlyns, in his 1591 theological tract, relates inaudible cosmic music to harmonious words, defining both by their correspondence to understanding: ‘inarticulate Harmonie much delighteth the minde by Sense: so woords Harmonious, which are converted with reasonable consideration, by the Sense doo delight the minde of the Hearer’.⁶

Yet, in broad terms, as the sympathetic harmonies underpinning premodern conceptions of the musical universe began to disassemble on account of the astronomical shift from a Ptolemaic geocentric model to the Copernican heliocentrism of 1543 onwards, words began to lose their cosmically predetermined bonds, their semiotic affiliation to transcendental meaning which Giordano Bruno had referred to as ‘those bonds which come from the words of a man of eloquence’.⁷ Consequently, the poetry which emerged in the aftermath of the Scientific Revolution, as this following section demonstrates, sought to metaphorically repair those severed bonds of celestial harmony, nostalgically embracing an increasingly contested, even out-moded, cosmological model, disclosing their remedial hope that words could still retain their former potent efficacy, still conveying divine insight. Poets attempted to restore a semiotic harmony between words and sense by perpetuating traditional notions of the musical universe in their writing; for

⁴ John Tatham, ‘On my Friend Mr. John Gamble...’, in *Ayres and Dialogues...* (1657), a1v.

⁵ Thomas Tryon, *A Treatise of Dreams & Visions* (1689), 3.

⁶ Roger Rawlyns, *A Consort of the Creatures with the Creator...* (1591), 5.

⁷ Bruno, 141.

example, as a legal pamphlet of the late 1650s still asserts, ‘it is an excellent harmony paralell with that of the Spheres, to see a mutuall concent of workes and words’.⁸ Echoing the Pythagoreans, who ‘conceived of the cosmos as a vast lyre, with crystal spheres in place of strings’, John Milton, begins his 1629 poem, ‘On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’, by inviting the heavens to ‘ring out, ye crystal spheres!’, celebrating the aethereal forces of divinity.⁹ ‘The Pythagorean concept of the music of the spheres, which was based on Ptolemaic cosmology, survived the Copernican revolution’, as Karina Williamson explains, ‘continu[ing] to be used by poets to represent the beauty of the planetary system designed by God’, to the extent that ‘the persistence of such ideas and images [could] contradict ... the view that the rise of New Science caused a breakdown in metaphysical beliefs’.¹⁰ In spite of this, Williamson argues that the endurance of such tropes depicting celestial harmony was, in Enlightenment poetry, purely metaphorical:

Poets in the Augustan period ... continued to use the traditional musical metaphors for world harmony. ... Use of such metaphors indicates rather the strain of adjusting poetic language to the new metaphysics. They are employed for rhetorical purposes in a struggle to conserve the spiritual and aesthetic values invested in the older classical and Christian world-view. The concept of ‘silent harmony’ evolved as a means of retaining the potent appeal of the music of the spheres even while acknowledging its fictionality.¹¹

The poetry written in the wake of science revived pre-Copernican ideals of ‘world harmony’ for the ‘rhetorical purposes’ of ‘retaining’ the linguistically ‘potent appeal of the music of the spheres’.

Before the Augustan period of literature to which Williamson refers, however, seventeenth-century thinkers had not yet capitulated to the ‘fictionality’ of cosmic harmony, especially when, in 1619, Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), the German astronomer and mathematician, published *Harmonice Mundi*, which Bruno Gringas identifies as ‘the last serious attempt to find musical harmony in the motions of the heavens’.¹² Published during ‘an age in which empirical science was quickly overtaking theoretical speculation’, Gringas writes, Kepler ‘sought to construct a cosmological theory which would include all the recent developments in the field of astronomy’, while ‘at the same time preserving the essence of the ancient tradition of “celestial harmony”’.¹³ Like Kepler, seventeenth-century poetry, therefore, invested in the contemporaneous yet deteriorating principle

⁸ R.B.H., *An Alarum to Pamphleteers...* (1659), 6.

⁹ Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe* (London: Abacus, 1995), 38; Milton, ‘On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’, in *Poems of Mr John Milton* (London: 1645), 7.XIII.

¹⁰ Karina Williamson, ‘From Heavenly Harmony to Eloquent Silence: Representations of World Order from Dryden to Shelley’, *The Review of English Studies*, 55 (2004), 527-44 (527).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Bruno Gringas, ‘Johannes Kepler’s *Harmonice mundi*: A “Scientific” Version of the Harmony of the Spheres’, *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*, 97, vi (2003), 228-33 (228). See also: Bruce Stephenson, *The Music of the Heavens: Kepler’s Harmonic Astronomy* (Princeton: PUP, 1994).

¹³ *Ibid.*; see also: Aviva Rothman, *The Pursuit of Harmony: Kepler on Cosmos, Confession, and Community* (Chicago: UCP, 2017).

of harmony, pre-emptively ‘adjusting poetic language’ to maintain its correspondence to profound truths. In a 1651 poem that was later set to music, the metaphysical poet, Thomas Stanley (1625-1678) considers the operative power granted to words as vehicles for divine harmony:

But if the Angel which inspires
 This subtile Flame with active fires
 Should mould this Breath to words, and those
 Into a Harmony dispose;
 The Musick of this heavenly sphear,
 Would steal each soul out at the Ear,
 And into Plants and Stones infuse
 A life that Cherubins would choose;
 And with new Powers invert the Laws of Fate,
 Kill those that live, and dead things animate.¹⁴

Stanley supposes that if heaven’s ‘Angel’ was to ‘mould’ their ‘Breath to words’, converting their words into ‘Harmony’, it would not only sound like a perfect ‘Musick of this heavenly sphear’, but even obtain ‘new Powers’ to perform acts resembling those of a formidable magician who dominates the laws of nature, able to: ‘steal’ a human ‘soul’; to ‘infuse’ the inanimate with ‘life’; to tamper with divinely ordained ‘Fate’; to end life; and reverse death. Stanley depicts the potential for a potent word-magic, if only the music of celestial harmony could be verbalised. Indeed, if the poet were to ‘inspire’ his own words with ‘Harmony’, his verse might retain the miraculous capacity to reignite the musical universe.

Seeking to uphold lasting impressions of universal harmony in their writing, early-modern poets also turned to Pythagorean numerology – incorporating references to its *harmonious numbers* – since its arithmetical language survived the transitional period between magical and scientific thinking, bridging the gap between the two epistemologies. With the signficatory efficacy of words under increasing threat, Thomas Sprat, on behalf of the Royal Society, demanded a new-scientific approach to language that reduces words ‘back to ... primitive purity’, to better resemble numbers: ‘bringing all things as near the Mathematical plainness, as they can’, and this ‘primitive’, primordial sign, according to Pythagoreanism, was numerical.¹⁵ In his 1624 treatise on *The Secrets of the Numbers*, English numerologist, William Ingpen traces this numerical quintessence to its point of origin where it facilitated the creation of the harmonious-mathematical cosmos: ‘God ... created the world out of the lump’ forming ‘an harmonious body, containing number, order, beauty, and proportion, in all the parts thereof’, describing the Creator as ‘the first and indivisible Unity from

¹⁴ Thomas Stanley, *Poems* (1651), 17. Set to music by John Gamble, *Ayres and Dialogues...* (1657), 35.

¹⁵ Sprat, 113.

whence all other harmony proceedeth ... as having all number within himself', concluding that, 'the next way to knowe him perfectly, is, To begin with numbring'.¹⁶ Ingpen reminds his reader that 'Pythagoras' was the first to start 'reducing all things into Number', the first to regard numbers like a conceptual *prima materia* from which the harmonious universe was constructed, as Aristotle documents in his *Metaphysics*.¹⁷

The so-called Pythagoreans applied themselves to mathematics, and were the first to develop this science; and through studying it they came to believe that its principles are the principles of everything. ... And since they saw further that the properties and ratios of the musical scales are based on numbers, and since it seemed clear that all other things have their whole nature modelled upon numbers, and that numbers are the ultimate things in the whole physical universe.¹⁸

Pythagoreanism sought to explain and interpret the natural world of harmonies through a mathematical lens, since numbers 'are the principles of everything'. The first to theorise a mathematical foundation to music – discovering that harmonic intervals could be expressed in perfect ratios, as I shall soon discuss – Pythagoras considered the 'whole physical universe' to arranged as upon 'musical scales' that were 'based on numbers', for, as Jamie James writes, 'Pythagoreans did not simply discern congruencies among the number and music and the cosmos: they identified them' for 'music *was* number, and the cosmos *was* music'; arithmetical ratios produced musical harmonies and musical harmonies expressed ratios.¹⁹ The Pythagorean approach, of understanding the mechanisms of the universe through the numerical systems upon which it was built, found a renewed relevance among scientific thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly when, in *Il Saggiatore* (1623), Galileo proclaimed the new, non-verbal language of the scientific method:

Philosophy is written in that vast book which stands forever open before our eyes, I mean the universe; but it cannot be read until we have learnt the language and become familiar with the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language, and the letters are triangles, circles and other geometric figures, without which means it is humanly impossible to comprehend a single word.²⁰

To comprehend the intricacies of the natural world, Galileo asserts, one must first render it legible by learning its language, one written in geometrical and numerical characters, rather than in the primarily semantic mode of pre-scientific expression. As Robin Headlam Wells deduces, Galileo's

¹⁶ Ingpen, 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, *4^r.

¹⁸ Aristotle, 'Metaphysics', in *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, trans. Hugh Tredennick, vols. 17-18, (London: William Heinemann, 1989), 1.985b.

¹⁹ James, 30-1.

²⁰ Galileo, 'Il Saggiatore', in *Augustine to Galileo: The History of Science AD 400-1650*, ed. A.C. Crombie (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1953), 295.

‘secret language that was accessible only to the initiate’ was derived from ‘the Pythagoreans mathematics’ for this ‘was a key that could unlock the hidden mysteries of the universe created on harmonic principles’.²¹ Pythagoras, therefore, anticipated the ‘mathematical language’ that characterised New Science: ‘historians of science have often (and rightly) suggested that the key to the Scientific Revolution is “the mathematization of nature”’, as David Wooton affirms, for ‘the Scientific Revolution was, first and foremost, a revolt by the mathematicians against the authority of philosophers’, and so, numbers began to fill the void left by words.²²

Various critics, such as Hanns-Peter Neumann, observe a distinct increase in the popularity of Pythagorean cosmology and mathematics during the early-modern period, ‘especially in the course of the seventeenth century’, since it could be ‘used as an argument for bringing theological principles into line with mathematical, scientific, and philosophical ones’:²³

In connecting modern science with the Pythagorean tradition, early modern scholars contributed to the fact that the Pythagoreans were highly esteemed as a kind of Copernicans *avant la lettre*, being the first to advocate a heliocentric system. But they were also highly valued for their mathematical knowledge, which made them extraordinarily attractive – more than other Greek philosophers – to the movement of the so-called Scientific Revolution in early modern Europe.²⁴

Indeed, the Pythagorean, pre-Socratic philosopher, Philolaus of Croton (c. 470-385 BCE) prefigured the major astronomical discovery of this period, the heliocentric model, as Aristotle famously documents: ‘there is fire at the center and the earth, acting as one of the heavenly bodies, is carried around the center in a circle so as to produce night’. Moreover, Neumann reasons that Pythagoreanism endured the shift towards science by accommodating powerful notions of metaphysical harmony within rational, mathematical logic.²⁵ For example, Pythagoras’ discovery of the arithmetical relationship between harmonic intervals empirically compared the weights of the hammers that were ‘beating out a piece of iron on an anvil’ – six, nine, and twelve pounds – observing that the harmony of the tones were produced in precise relationship to their weights.²⁶ According to his findings, two hammers whose weights were in a ratio of 1:2 produced the interval

²¹ Robin Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 118-19.

²² David Wooton, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 2015), 199, 209.

²³ Hanns-Peter Neumann, ‘Pythagoras Refracted: The Formation of Pythagoreanism in the Early Modern Period’, in *Pythagorean Knowledge from the Ancient to the Modern World: Askesis, Religion, Science*, eds. Almut-Barbara Renger and Alessandro Stavru (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016), 453-64 (458). On the revival of Pythagorean harmony, see: Jacomien Prins, *Echoes of an Invisible World: Marsilio Ficino and Francesco Patrizi on Cosmic Order and Music Theory* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014); Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen, eds., *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony* (London: Routledge, 2017), especially chapters by Maude Vanhaelen, Leen Spruit, Jacomien Prins and Grantley McDonald.

²⁴ Neumann, 458.

²⁵ Aristotle, *De Caelo*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2020) 293a, 20-3.

²⁶ Dominic J. O’Meara, ‘Iamblichus’ Life of Pythagoras’, *The Classical Review*, 54, i (2004), 84-86 (84).

of an octave, those in a ratio of 2:3 gave the sound of a fifth, and those in ratio of 3:4 produced the interval of a fourth.²⁷ However, Pythagorean numerology prescribes simultaneously symbolic conceptions of these numbers, which signified metaphysical truths: ‘Number one denoted to them the reason of Unity, Identity, Equality, the purpose of friendship, sympathy, and conservation of the Universe’, while ‘Number two, or Duad, signifies the two-fold reason of diversity and inequality, of everything that is divisible, or mutable, existing at one time in one way, and at another time in another way’, and so on. In *The Life of Pythagoras*, Porphyry explains that ‘incorporeal forms and first principles could not be expressed in words’, instead ‘they had recourse to demonstration by numbers’, which sustained an inherent correspondence to divine mysteries, functioning like a numerical word-magic to convey and perform aspects of universal harmony which they represented with an innate immediacy.²⁸ Faith in this operative number-magic persisted throughout the age of New Science, when, in a 1651 treatise on love, Erastophil draws attention to the ‘Opinion, that there is a certaine hidden and secret Magicke in Number’, recalling how ‘this conceit seemeth to be first deduc’t from the Pythagoreans, who were great and Religious Admirers of the Vertues and Powers of Number’.²⁹

Likewise, in *Religio Medici* (1642), Thomas Browne confesses his admiration for ‘the mystical way of Pythagoras, and the secret Magicke of numbers’:

Beware of Philosophy, is a precept not to be received in a narrow sense; for in this masse of nature there is a set of things, that carry in their front, though not in Capitall letters, yet in stenography, and short Characters, something to Divinity, which to wiser reasons serve as Luminaries in the abysses of knowledge, and to judicious beliefe, as scales and roundles to mount the pinnacles and highest pieces of Divinity.³⁰

Without conceding the authority of his scientific training, Browne reasons that Pythagorean numerology must not be underestimated, since the natural world is strewn with precise signatures – ‘short Characters’ – that designate and illuminate the ‘highest pieces of Divinity’. Indeed, in his treatise on poetry, Henry Reynolds (1564-1632), the English poet and critic, persevered with notions of ‘Sacred harmony’ that the ‘law of Number did accompany’, for the vital reason that it is the ‘Art of Numbers that should unlocke and explaine his Mystically meanings to us’.³¹ Pythagoras integrated both his mathematical-musical theory of harmonic intervals and the mystical symbolism of his numerology to form symbol known as the *tetractys*:

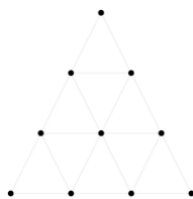
²⁷ Ibid., 85.

²⁸ Porphyry, ‘Life of Pythagoras’, in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Michigan: Phanes Press, 1987), 123-35 (133).

²⁹ Erastophil, *An Apology for Lovers...* (1651), C3r.

³⁰ Browne, 20-1.

³¹ Henry Reynolds, *Mythomystes...* (1632); *ibid.*, 35-7.



The tetractys depicts the ratios of the intervals in the harmonic series – 2:1 (octave), 4:3 (perfect fourth), 3:2 (perfect fifth) – with the numbers one to four arranged equidistantly, while, simultaneously, the sum of the first four numbers, or rows, make the ‘decad’, which is ‘considered to be a complete thing and to comprise the whole essential nature of the numerical system’, for all things ‘which revolve in the heavens are ten’.³² The tetractys neatly encompasses the ancient subject of ‘arithmology’ – a crossover between arithmetic and numerology – according to Leonid Zhmud, who reiterates the definition offered by Armand Delatte in his book on Pythagorean literature, in which he defined arithmology as ‘a genre of notes on the formation, significance, and importance of the first ten numbers, in which sound scientific research is mingled with fantasies of religion and of philosophy’.³³ As late as 1680, in his effortlessly cross-disciplinary treatise on *The Most Sacred and Divine Science of Astrology*, the English priest, John Butler (d. 1682), defines ‘Astrology’ as ‘an holy, and most excellent Science’, based primarily on empiricism – as it ‘has been gained partly by verified Traditions, but especially by diligent and constant Observations’ – and examined ‘Mathematically’ as a ‘Science that treateth of the Magnitude, or Measure, or Number of the Heavens, or of the Stars of Heaven’.³⁴ For early-modern Pythagoreans, arithmology – couched in same ‘mathematical language’ that characterised early science – served as the optimal device through which to conserve the semiotic harmony of the musical cosmos.

Through allusions to the rudiments of cosmic harmony – Pythagorean *harmonious numbers* – seventeenth-century poetry finds a way to regraft modern, disenchanted, cynical discourses to a divine order, without forgoing the advancements of contemporary science – albeit within the metaphorical parameters of the poem. For example, in his 1688 sermon on *The Idea of Christian Love*, Edward Young (c. 1641-1705), the Church of England clergyman, locates harmonious numbers as an essential quality of the heavenly sphere, alongside poetic language:

(For Verse the only Language is Above,
Where all Things in Harmonious Numbers move):

³² Aristotle (1989), 1.986a.

³³ Leonid Zhmud, ‘Greek Arithmology: Pythagoras or Plato?’, in Renger (2016), 321-46 (321); Armand Delatte, *Études sur la Littérature Pythagoricienne* (Paris: E. Champion, 1915), 139.

³⁴ John Butler, *Hagiastrologia*,... (1680), e1^{r-v}.

How purg'd, how undefil'd should be the Mind,
Which imitates the way of the Angelick kind.³⁵

According to Young, the loftiest form of language – poetic ‘Verse’ – orbits among the celestial spheres with the perfect precision of ‘Harmonious Numbers’: both analogous, intellectual expressions of universal harmony which ‘imitate the way of the Angelick kind’, emulating the underlying structures of divinity. Critics, such as John V. Fleming, conclude that early-modern poets ‘related to the harmonic conceptions of beauty’ due to ‘the belief that human art could – and should – mimic the procedures of the divine Creation’.³⁶ Similarly, Kate Gartner Frost determines that as far as the Renaissance poetry was concerned, ‘it was not for the artist to impose an ... order on his creation but rather to reveal to his audience the inherently logical order of the cosmos’, thus, ‘both turning their gaze to the Creator and eliciting admiration for the skill with which the poet’s framework was constructed’.³⁷ Consequently,

In a rationally, (that is, mathematically) ordered universe, the very structure of the soul corresponded to the order of the universe, and the creation of mathematically ordered poetry was the natural movement of that soul in imitation of its maker. Hence, in English poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we find the use of number symbolism.³⁸

If, as Frost suggests, period poetry inevitably reflected the predominating contemporary cosmology, then once science began to endorse a ‘rationally’ and ‘mathematically ... ordered universe’, poetry, naturally, began to reflect these developments using various forms of ‘number symbolism’. Although, in some cases, numerology was expressed in the form and structural patterns of the poem, I shall give examples of period poetry that more overtly articulates a yearning for pre-Copernican semiotic connectivity, hoping to revive this using references to *harmonious numbers*.³⁹

As late as 1700 – by which time, theories of chaos, disorder, and irregularity were well established as part of mathematical and scientific debate – John Froude wistfully recalls a poetic voice so harmonious that it appears to offset these recent intellectual preoccupations. Froude’s elegy to the late translator and Classical scholar Thomas Creech (1659-1700) – made famous for translating

³⁵ Edward Young, *The Idea of Christian Love...* (1688), viii.

³⁶ John V. Fleming, ‘Numbers’ in *Luis de Camões: The Poet as Scriptural Exegete* (Martlesham: Tamesis Books, 2017), 133.

³⁷ Kate Gartner Frost, ‘Donne and the Tradition of Number Symbolism: Our Creatures are our Thoughts’ in *Holy Delight: Typology, Numerology, and Autobiography in Donne’s ‘Devotions upon Emergent Occasions’* (Princeton: PUP, 1990), 78-105 (93).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁹ On number symbolism in Renaissance poetry, see: Alastair Fowler, *Conceitful Thought: The Interpretation of English Renaissance Poems* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1975); *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), and *Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1970); Heninger (2013), and Heninger, *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1977).

Lucretius' (c. 99-55 BCE) poem, *De Rerum Natura*, notoriously expounding the potentially heretical principles of atomism, in 1682 – depicts the late Creech as Daphnis, Greek mythology's Sicilian shepherd and the creator of pastoral poetry. As 'the mourning Shepherd, young *Alexis* lay' grieving the loss of 'Daphnis, who from the Earth was lately fled', he recalls the influence of the poet's 'charming Voice' and its cosmic impact:

Where wandring Atoms in Confusion hurl'd,
 Agreed by Chance, and so compos'd a World.
 Whilst Nervous Numbers with harmonious Feet,
 In such a soft, and tuneful Cadence meet;
 As (to his lasting Honour) fully prove
 Chance could not in such Beauteous Order move.⁴⁰

Alexis proposes that the scientific tenets of probability and chance – by which, according to this Epicurean cosmology, the world was formed, through the variable motions of 'Atoms in Confusion hurl'd' – are negated by the perfect concord of Daphnis' art, since mere 'Chance could not in such Beauteous Order move'; the suggestion is that despite his dangerous subject matter, Creech defuses the Lucretian threat by reinserting the atomist's stochastic universe into an orderly poetic superstructure, converting errancy to regularity. Daphnis wrote in 'Nervous Numbers', a poetic metre that advances cautiously and rhythmically, composed of 'harmonious Feet', which collaborate like harmonic intervals to produce such 'a soft, and tuneful Cadence' that it would 'prove' the doctrine of universal harmony. This elegy fondly reminisces about a poetry so affectingly harmonious that its musicality can be traced back to the very point of harmony's conception, to that primordial moment before Creation, when the 'Flocks' on 'flow'ry Banks' listening to Daphnis' poetry were:

Charm'd with the Musick of his Voice, and Reed:
 Of *Chaos* first he sung, and boundless Space,
 Before the Birth of Matter, Time, or Place;
 ...
 Then, how the wondrous Universe began,
 What Order thro' the new-made Structure ran;
 The Birth of Nature, and the Birth of Man.⁴¹

The poet returns to a time before the '*Chaos*' of 'boundless space' – before 'the wondrous Universe began' – identifying the charming 'Musick' of Daphis' poetic 'Voice' to be the architect of divine 'Order', inexplicably conjuring this 'new-made Structure' with the word-magic of his poetry, which

⁴⁰ John Froud, *Daphnis...* (1700), 1-3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

possess the creative force to prompt ‘the Birth of Nature’ and ‘of Man’. Froud’s poem employs the modern, mathematical-scientific discourse of ‘Nervous Numbers’ and ‘Chaos’, only to reclaim an outmoded universal structure, with immense semiotic power. Edmund Spenser (c. 1552-1599), in his 1591 poem, ‘The Ruines of Time’, addresses the incorruptible durability of harmonious numbers over words: ‘And thoughts of men do as themselves decay, | But wise wordes taught in numbers for to runne, | Recorded by the Muses, live for ay’.⁴² It is by using ‘wordes taught in numbers’ that the poet can hope to immortalise his own voice, that his words might survive, uncontaminated by the scepticism of modernity.

‘What is this wondrous Art, | Which breaths such Gentle Fire into the Heart?’, asks Baron John Cutts of Gowran (c. 1660-1707), the army officer and politician, in his 1687 collection of poems, pondering: ‘Is it the noblest Truths, the best express’d, | Or Nature in Harmonious Numbers dress’d?’, for both appear interchangeable.⁴³ References to harmonious numbers in poetry throughout the period often allude to the passage from Milton’s invocation to the ‘heavenly Muse’ in Book Three of *Paradise Lost*, in which the poet, afraid of the spiritual implications of his deteriorating eyesight, solicits the Muse to clear his literal and metaphorical vision and infuse him with the ‘holy light’ of insight – ‘Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers | Irradiate, there plant eyes ... that I may see and tell | Of things invisible to mortal sight’ – to guide the harmonious numbers of his poetry, enabling him to write about Creation, moving through the ‘Chaos’ to constructed order:

Then feed on thoughts, that voluntarie move
 Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful Bird
 Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid
 Tunes her nocturnal Note.⁴⁴

For Milton, his impending blindness not only implies a detachment from profound understanding which distances him from the world’s harmonies – ‘Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair | Presented with a universal blank | Of nature’s works ... | And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out’ – but also, he fears, suggests his postlapsarian Fall from grace, his figurative blindness to Creation.⁴⁵ While Milton nostalgically laments the loss of his own innocence – since it is the excessive pursuit of knowledge that he suspects to have caused his blindness – the poets who subsequently adopt his terminology prove doubly nostalgic: not only for a lost world of harmonious

⁴² Edmund Spenser, ‘The Ruines of Time’, in *The Shorter Poems*, ed. William A. Oram et al (New Haven: YUP, 1989), 401-3.

⁴³ John Cutts, *Poetical Exercises...* (1687), 27.

⁴⁴ Milton (2008), III.19, 1, 52-5, 18, 37-40.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 47-50.

certainties, but also for the passing era of the poets, like Milton, and consequently concerned about their own Fall from grace. Longing to sing his poetic song just as strikingly when he is plunged into darkness, like a bird shrouded by nightfall, this passage, in which Milton calls for divinely-granted poetic inspiration, is directly cited by the English poet Herbert Walwyn (1596-1668), to suggest that all poetry – especially from the age of mathematical language – which forgets to adopt its incarnation as ‘Harmonious Numbers’, becomes vulnerable to subjective imprecision:

If with a Poet’s Fate, Heaven would but give
The Poet’s Spirit too, by which they live;
Could feed on *Thoughts that voluntary move*
Harmonious Numbers, free from fumes of Love.⁴⁶

Walwyn wishes for the poet to be liberated from the unconscious, involuntary, unthinking thoughts associated with ‘Love’ and its intoxicating ‘fumes’, instead urging poets to focus with clarity upon coherent, stable ‘Thoughts’, that is, ‘*Harmonious Numbers*’. In such poems, poetic language is purified when it takes the form of harmonious numbers, embodying the impregnable rudiments of universal harmony, which are – unlike words – not open to interpretation, unthreatened by the transition from magic to science.

In an anonymous poem, written in memory of the English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright, John Dryden (1631-1700), in the year of his death, the poet speculates, ‘whose wondrous Harmony alone could raise | An equal Monument to *Dryden’s Praise!*’, considering the accomplished balance of Dryden’s writing, where one might, ‘Wit in true Perfection see, | Where Thoughts and Subject mutually agree; | Where brightest Language with just Numbers meet’.⁴⁷ The seamless convergence of ‘brightest Language’ and ‘just Numbers’ form a ‘wondrous Harmony’, as the poet reiterates: ‘How smoothly did His Numbers glide along! | In what soft Order did his Periods Move! ... | How eas’ly into Harmony they fell’.⁴⁸ This seventeenth-century metapoetic practice emerges after the birth of science to consciously perform a nostalgic and naive turn back to the old cosmology of universal harmony – often, as we have seen, mediated via Milton’s own moment of poetic and universal creative inspiration – but do so using the durable rhetoric of numerical, Pythagorean signifiers. What these poems betray, however, is their self-conscious awareness that a connective, magical semiotics has been progressively disassembled, for implicit in the persistent allusion to *harmonious numbers* is the increasing deficiency of harmonious words – as much as these poems might anxiously refute this loss.

⁴⁶ Herbert Walwyn, *Poems on Several Occasions...* (1699), 22.

⁴⁷ Anon., *Luctus Britannici...* (1700), 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

II. The Politics of Discord in Shakespeare's Pre-Romances

How shall we find the concord of this discord?

MND, V.i.60

In the final act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as Theseus confusedly queries the paradoxical description of his wedding entertainment, as 'very tragical mirth' (57), he uses the language of musical harmony, inadvertently conveying the imposition of his own courtly, political order – 'concord' – onto the discordant, anarchic, fanciful realm of fairies, including all those influenced by the disorderly forest, like the rustic players who speak in dissonant oxymorons. In early-modern political commentary, musical harmony often functions as a metaphor for social order: while one author might declare 'concord [to be] profitable to every Realme, and justice much to bee desired', another – such as minister John Jones in a sermon of 1639 – preaches that 'Discord', or the 'dissolving of the bond of Concord', is instigated only by those that 'love no musique but jarring', who 'are Separatists in affection, and wholly addicted to breake the peace'.⁴⁹ As figure of 'sharp Athenian law' (I.i.162), when Theseus breaches the parameters of play's magical register – the forest of fairies – it provokes audible dissonance: inviting his Queen to accompany him 'to the mountain's top, | And mark the musical confusion | Of hounds and echo in conjunction' (IV.i.109-11), to which Hippolyta remarks, 'I never heard | So musical a discord' (117-18). What can be heard 'in conjunction' are: the appositely harmonious barks of their aristocratic hunting dogs – who are 'match'd in mouth like bells, | Each under each' with 'A cry more tuneable' – brought into line with the authority of the hunting horn, for they 'never hollow'd to, nor cheer'd with horn' (123-5); rendered into a cacophonous 'confusion' of sound when it reverberates throughout the discordant forest – 'the groves, | The skies, the fountains, every region near' (115-16) – distorting their tuneful barks. Although this incongruously 'gallant chiding' (115) or 'sweet thunder' (118) may literally refer to the ferocious din of victory in blood-sport – recalling a time 'when in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear' (113) – such moments also, as Johannes Riquet argues, manifest the play's larger 'struggle to move from discord to concord, or rather, to present discord as concord'.⁵⁰ Returning to court, even the language with which the couples convey their whimsical tales from the forest sound discordantly incomprehensible in the ears of Hippolyta, who observes, 'tis strange my Theseus, that these lovers speak of' (V.i.1), while Theseus similarly dismisses these reports as 'more strange than true' (2). In what follows, I shall demonstrate how Shakespeare's pre-romance plays reveal politically discordant play-worlds through allusions to correspondent musical and cosmic

⁴⁹ David Owen, *Puritano-Jesuitismus...* (1643), 23; John Jones, *The Conquest of the Saints...* (1639), 9.

⁵⁰ Johannes Riquet, "'How Shall We Find the Concord of this Discord?'" Music, Magic and Ideology in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Variations*, 20 (2012), 77-91 (86).

disharmony: disbanding the order of universal sympathies until it is manifest in the semiotic ruptures between words and sense or truth, producing a discordant hermeneutics, so ‘strange’ that language scrambles to ‘find the concord’ of pure expression.

The pervasiveness of abstract, universal structures of concord and discord in early-modern thought – manifesting on every strata of existence, from the cosmological, to the socio-political, right down into the operations of the local corporeal body – are outlined by the French writer, Pierre de La Primaudaye (1546-1619), in his popular text *French Academie* (first published in French in 1577):

As we see that in the body of this universall frame, there is (as the Philosophers say) matter, forme, privation, simplicitie, mixture, substaunce, quantitie, action and passion, and that the whole world being compounded of unlike elements, of earth, water, ayre and fire, is notwithstanding preserved by an Analogie and proportion, which they have together: and as we see in a mans body, head, hands, feete, eyes, nose, eares: in a house, the husband, wife, children, master, servaunts: in a politike body, magistrates, nobles, common people, artificers. ... So is it in every common-wealth well appointed and ordred, which consisting of many and sundry subjects, is maintained by their unitie, being brought to be of one consent & wil, and to communicate their works, artes and exercises together for common benefit & profit.⁵¹

According to La Primaudaye, a well-ordered universe requires the consent and careful collaboration of ‘unlike elements’, willing to resolve their discordant differences according to the metaphysical principles of sympathy and antipathy. It follows, then, that this ‘analogie and proportion’ is integral to the governance of any stable nation; ‘since the order of the universe consisted in the harmonious reconciliation of opposing or discordant qualities’, as Robin Headlam-Wells observes, ‘it followed from the doctrine of correspondence that the same principles of harmony must obtain in any well-regulated state’.⁵² Indeed, like a ‘mans body’ and its constituent parts, or a household and the various roles of its inhabitants, the ‘politike body ... consisting of many and sundry subjects’, must be brought in ‘unitie’ together, to ‘communicate’ in a manner comparable to the laws of musical harmony:

A citie or civill company is nothing else but a multitude of men unlike in estates or conditions, which communicate together in one place their artes, occupations, workes and exercises, that they may live the better, & are obedient to the same lawes and magistrates. [Yet] a dissimilitude in harmonically agreement ariseth by due proportion of one towards another in their divers orders & estates, even as the harmonie in musicke consisteth of unequall voyces or sounds agreeing equally together.⁵³

Just as music produces its harmony by the simultaneous sounding of discrete notes, ‘unequall voyces or sounds agreeing equally together’, the same model – whereby ‘of such a dissimilitude an harmonically agreement ariseth’ – must apply to civil society, in which ‘a multitude of men unlike in

⁵¹ Pierre La Primaudaye, *The French Academie...* (1586), 744.

⁵² Wells, 6.

⁵³ La Primaudaye, 743.

estates or conditions' coexist, remaining 'obedient to the same lawes'. Like the humanist and diplomat, Sir Thomas Elyot (c. 1490-1546), suggests, 'the perfecte understandyng of musyke' is 'necessary ... for the better attaining the knowlege of a publyke weale' which 'conteyneth in it a perfect harmony'.⁵⁴ This will be the governing logic of Thomas Hobbes' (1588-1679) political-philosophy in *Leviathan* (1651), whereby the harmonious commonwealth relies upon the participation of innately self-serving particulars, persuaded to contribute to the common good – or general theme – for their own mutual, concordant benefit: this, for Hobbes, comprises a well-tuned state, with each individual string playing the same tune. If even the 'thoughts' of men fail to conform, 'Unguided, without Designe', society will seem 'without harmony; as the sound which a Lute out of tune would yeeld to any man; or in tune, to one that could not play'.⁵⁵

Joseph M. Ortiz recognises that, 'the political version of the theory of music harmony is so ubiquitous in Renaissance England that it may be taken as a commonplace', concluding that, 'once understood as abstract symbol, music reveals the natural order of government'.⁵⁶ By examining the figurative significance of music as a theoretical, scholarly discipline – informed by the Augustinian and Boethian Neoplatonic principles of *musica speculativa* whereby instrumental music resonated with the metaphysical music of the spheres – Ortiz proposes that for Shakespeare, 'the ideological work performed by the rhetoric of *musica speculativa*, while useful in the classroom, is indispensable in the political arena'.⁵⁷ This analogy extends to heaven and earth, as the English writer, John Case (d. 1600) defends music against Puritanical attacks, encouraging his reader to: 'Looke upon the frame, & workmanship of the whole worlde, whether there be not above, an harmony between the spheares, beneath a simbolisme between the elements'.⁵⁸ While Case elicits a worldview governed by the inherently poetic framework of sympathy and harmony, his injunction to pay better attention to it – to 'Looke upon' this order – betrays the pragmatic function of what becomes an expedient, political metaphor: instructing society to collectively participate in a model of systematic interdependence and ruly structure. Adopting the theoretic underpinning of 'early modern pedagogical works on music', Ortiz observes that Shakespeare's plays also assume 'the politicization of music', such that, 'the experience of musical sound has become subordinate to its inscription in rhetoric'.⁵⁹ In an often-cited example from *Troilus and Cressida*, as Ulysses scolds Agamemnon and the other Greek soldiers for their failure to observe authority, he co-opts the

⁵⁴ Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke named the Governour* (1537), 23.

⁵⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan...* (1651), 9.

⁵⁶ Joseph M. Ortiz, *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2011), 142-3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ John Case, *The Praise of Musicke* (1586), 2.

⁵⁹ Ortiz, 145.

politically-charged rhetoric of celestial and musical harmony, strategically endorsing a hierarchical universal order to reinforce his own position as King of Ithaca:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre
 Observe degree, priority, and place,
 Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
 Office, and custom, in all line of order;
 And therefore is the glorious planet Sol
 In noble eminence enthron'd and spher'd
 Amidst the other; whose med'cinable eye
 Corrects the [ill aspects] of [planets evil],
 And posts like the commandment of a king,
 Sans check, to good and bad. But when the planets
 In evil mixture to disorder wander,
 What plagues and what portents, what mutiny!
 ...
 Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And hark what discord follows.

I.iii.85-110

Ulysses depicts the pre-Copernican, geocentric, Pythagorean cosmos – with the Earth as ‘this centre’ – organised by uniform, geometrical patterns – arranged by likeness, ‘degree, priority’, ‘proportion ... form’ – a planetary ‘line of order’ resembling the political hierarchies that ideally govern earthly society. The ruling planet Sol, ‘noble’ and ‘enthron’d’, oversees the other planets and ‘corrects’ their ‘evil’ and ‘ill aspects’, its hot gaze functioning ‘like the commandment of a king’ by shining on all. It is an analogy also drawn by the Church of England clergyman and writer, Alexander Ross (1591-1654), who insists that ‘as the Sunne amongst the Planets; so is a King amongst his subjects’, also identifying the king’s curative role as ‘a God of physick’, obliged to violently amputate the uncooperative portions of his realm: ‘to cut off rotten and hurtfull members, to purge out all grosse humors, that is, bad maners, with the pills of justice’.⁶⁰ Ulysses warns that if the planets, or the individual heroes to whom they correspond, stray beyond this order and ‘to disorder wander’, the consequences would be catastrophic: ‘What plagues and what portents, what mutiny’. Employing the musical metaphor of a stringed instrument, Ulysses illustrates the technical precision required to maintain harmony, for to ‘untune’ just one ‘string’, modifying this note by a single ‘degree’, would be enough to provoke utter ‘disorder’. Therefore the king, as Ross accordingly concludes, ‘is a God of musick also, for where there is no King or head, there can be no harmony nor concord’.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Alexander Ross, *Mel Heliconium...* (1642), 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

In his chain-of-being monologue, Ulysses addresses another crucial manifestation of harmony under threat due to its inherent correspondence to both the cosmological and the musical, that is, semiotic harmonics; the concordant, correlating capacities of language itself, he fears, are threatened as a consequence of the disintegrating political order, as language's signifiatory capacity – the resonance and harmonious relations between sign and signified – grows troublingly discordant. Ulysses reasons that if society's code of ethics – that which determines 'right and wrong, | (Between whose endless jar justice resides)' (I.iii.116-17) – was to collapse under the pressure of a lawless, anarchic state, then these virtues 'should lose their names, and so should justice too' (I.iii.118). Detached from meaningful referents, notions of civic morality could disappear from discourse altogether, recalling Ben Jonson's assertion that 'language' not only reflects the 'sick mind' of an individual person but also a collectively 'sick state': 'It imitates the public riot'.⁶² Ironically, however, Ulysses exemplifies the rhetoric of political duplicity, co-opting the doctrine of universal harmony for the opportunistic, Machiavellian purposes of his own oppressive tyranny. Only moments after his speech, for example, Ulysses tells the commander, Nestor, of his dishonest scheme – 'I have a young conception in my brain; | Be you my time to bring it to some shape' (312-13) – plotting to hold a 'lott'ry' (373) for his soldiers that is rigged 'by device' (374) to 'let blockish Ajax draw | The sort to fight with Hector' (374-5), thereby pretending he is 'the better man' (376), much to the jealous dismay of Achilles: so 'Ajax employ'd plucks down Achilles' plumes' (385). As Gayle Greene observes, '*Troilus and Cressida* is concerned with the breakdown of order, the hierarchical ideal which has served for centuries' and its 'consequences for language', particularly 'the bond between word and thing', and although 'no one, including Ulysses, heeds Ulysses' warning ... his vision of self-devouring appetite, is exactly fulfilled in the play'.⁶³ The downfall of political and semiotic order, in tandem, is captured in the relationship between Troilus and Cressida, for Troilus is initially encouraged to consummate, hence substantiate, his words, by Pandarus' 'words pay no debts, give her deeds' (III.ii.55). So, while the couple's relationship seemingly does prove sexual, as Pandarus crudely implies, Troilus frequently aspires to "purer" linguistic ideals, validating his 'few words' by fixing them 'to fair faith', in the knowledge that 'what truth can speak | truest' is 'not truer than Troilus', reasserting only his 'firm faith' (95-108). Once Troilus' naïve faith in his beloved is shattered – 'false Cressid! false, false, false! | Let all untruths stand by thy stained name' (V.ii.178-9) – romantically and politically betrayed by Cressida's purported promiscuity at the Greek army camp, the words of her love letter, like her name, lose all

⁶² Jonson, 32.

⁶³ Gayle Greene, 'Language and Value in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*', *SEL*, 21, ii (1981), 271-85 (271-2).

value, as the semiotic ‘bonds of heaven are slipp’d, dissolv’d, and loos’d’ (V.ii.156) and language become futile: ‘Words, words, mere words’ (V.iii.108).

For other dishonest Shakespearean kings, it is not necessarily the deceptive misuse of the harmony-trope for political purposes, but rather a wilful deafness to the intuitive truths expressed by semiotically harmonious words that collapses their nations into mutinous disorder. As the early-modern physician, magistrate, and philosopher, Richard Burthogge (1638-1705) reiterates in his treatise on reason and truth, ‘Truth is Harmony’, so a failure to attend to harmony is a failure to discern truth.⁶⁴ The prophetic dying words of *Richard II*’s John of Gaunt – explicitly characterised as profound insights akin to harmonious music – may endeavour to warn the foolish King that his ‘rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last’ (II.i.33), yet they fall on imprudently deaf ears:

They say the tongues of dying men
 Enforce attention like deep harmony.
 Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
 For they breathe truth that breathe their words in pain.
 He that no more must say is listened more
 Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose.
 More are men’s ends mark’d than their lives before.
 The setting sun, and music at the close,
 As the last taste of sweets, is sweetest last,
 Writ in remembrance more than things long past.
 Though Richard my live’s counsel would not hear,
 My death’s sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

II.i.5-16

Asserting the sacred veracity of his words, Gaunt cautions the King that ‘the tongues of dying men’ must ‘enforce attention’, not only on account of their finality and scarcity but in their closeness to divinity, by which ‘they breathe truth’. This evokes the proverbial notion, in early-modern England, that ‘dying men speak true’, exalted from worldly duplicities to speak in ‘deep harmony’ with the heavenly realm, transmitting spiritual wisdom as they approach the ‘music at the close’ of life.⁶⁵ After Gaunt’s final breath, his harmonious ‘tongue’, according to Northumberland, ‘is now a stringless instrument’ (149), picking up this musical analogy to entice the King – who typically ‘would not hear’ – to ‘undeaf his ear’ to Gaunt’s reverberating advice. Examining the differences between male and female deafness in Shakespeare’s dramas, Gina Bloom notes that, often, ‘for male characters’ auditory ‘blockages are a sign of problematic deafness, disruptive if not over–

⁶⁴ Richard Burthogge, *A Discourse of Reason and Truth...* (1678), 61, 64.

⁶⁵ Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: 1950), 514.

come', and although such forms of deafness attempt to defiantly 'maintain early-modern gender hierarchies and a patriarchal social order', as we have heard, for Shakespeare's kings, their own 'political and personal problems [frequently] stem from an inability to hear effectively'.⁶⁶ Dismissing Gaunt as 'a lunatic lean-witted fool, | Presuming on an ague's privilege' (115-6), King Richard obstructs the prophecy with a politically defensive deafness intended to protect 'the royal blood' (118) and maintain 'his native residence' (119), although, of course, Gaunt's prediction, that 'violent fires soon burn out themselves' (34), is proven true when his Crown is taken by the country's preferred leader, Bullingbrook.

Elsewhere, deafness to musical harmony indicates an obstinate political refusal to reconcile differences. In *The Merchant of Venice*, as Lorenzo charms Jessica, while skygazing, with his descriptions of celestial harmony – 'look how [in] the floor of heaven ... | There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st | But in his motion like an angel sings' (V.i.58-61) – he recognises that although 'such harmony is in immortal souls ... we [often] cannot hear it' (63-5), owing to the limitations of our contaminated earthly form: 'this muddy vesture of decay' (64). Lorenzo explains the difference between those whose 'spirits are attentive' (70) to harmony, and those who are not:

The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as [Erebus]:
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

V.i.83-8

The individual who fails to reciprocally embody, or be affected by musical harmony, Lorenzo proposes, is not 'be trusted', since they threaten social order, and are predisposed to committing destructive, unlawful offenses: 'fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils'. As Ortiz writes:

This framing of musical perception as an ethical problem – the idea that there are 'good' and 'bad' listeners of music, and that these differences reflect moral stature – is a phenomenon that the plays will address repeatedly. ... To hear music as universal harmony is to make a politically and ideologically inflected choice. Or, more accurately, to hear music as universal harmony is not to *hear* music at all. Since ... political harmony depends crucially on an act of translating musical sound into something other than itself [it] comes at the expense of silencing music. And in *The Merchant of Venice*, it comes at the expense of silencing Jessica.⁶⁷

To 'mark the music' – mutually perceiving, personifying, and verbalising its melodies – engaging with all manifestations of universal harmony, is synonymous to a political decision, either to choose

⁶⁶ Bloom, 116, 122.

⁶⁷ Ortiz, 147-57.

order, or else submit to the unravelling chaos of disorder. The unreceptive listener who refuses to ‘undeaf his ear’ to the harmony of divine truths may suffer a mutiny against his own sovereignty, while the too-passive, eager listener, like Jessica, might unknowingly yield to enforced, oppressive, patriarchal hierarchies. Alternatively, some devious aristocratic speakers co-opt rhetorical tropes of musical harmony, in attempt to prevent the deterioration of a hierarchical order that ensures their status, but by this exploitative endeavour, undermine harmony, counteractively dismantling the significatory capacities of language. Essentially, abstract notions of universal harmony provide prescribed, conceptual paradigms of order, that – like the inaudible, conceptually-perceived music of the spheres – silently obscure the distinction between musical sound, words about music, and words themselves, until, by taking away but one degree away, untuning one string, the ‘bonds of heaven are slipp’d, dissolv’d, and loos’d’. Shakespeare’s more cynical, pre-romance dramas, therefore, present cosmically, musically, and linguistically discordant play-worlds, which make it impossible to ‘find the concord’ – even when order is supposedly restored – ‘among’ their ‘discord’. It is not until Shakespeare’s last plays that music is granted a magical, curative semiotics, restoring cosmic, musical, political, and linguistic harmony simultaneously.

III. *Pericles* and the Restoration of Semiotic Harmony

i. 'I'll Take Thy Word for Faith': Discordant Oaths

Concerning the promises in the words ... there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteousnesse and Peace, they kisse one another.⁶⁸

Church of Scotland minister, Andrew Gray (1633-1656), in his sermons concerning the sanctity of Christian promises (published posthumously in 1669), explains that 'when a Christian meeteth with the accomplishment of the Promises' – honouring his word by performing its intent – he achieves a 'divine harmony' between 'Mercy and Truth' and 'Righteousnesse and Peace'.⁶⁹ According to Gray, words are bound – by a semiotic 'kisse' – to the action they promise, compelled, by the laws of universal harmony, to perform their meaning. Early-modern discussions of binding language – oaths, vows, promises, and swearing – were often framed as obeying the principles of harmony when the oath is fulfilled, but unleashing discord if its words are broken. Conceptions of the operative oath as a speech-act eliciting harmonious, heavenly bonds persist throughout the period, for example, in his 1659 pamphlet, *The Dissonant Harmony of Sacred Publique Oathe*, William Prynne maintains that 'all lawfull sacred Oaths, Vowes, Covenants, Protestations' must 'inviolably bind the souls, consciences, of all that take them, to an Absolute, indispenible, sincere, faithful performance, and strict observation of them'.⁷⁰ Moreover, the natural philosopher Walter Charleton (1619-1707) recognises the oath as a sacred contract, considering the words of an 'Oath' to be 'a religious Affirmation', and 'the strongest Seal of Human Faith', obliged to 'God' as 'Monarch of the Universe'.⁷¹ Otherwise, the sacrilegious *dis harmony* implicit in breaking an oath is also anxiously noted in various theological treatises, like that of the independent minister, Matthew Barker (1619-1698), who, in 1648, lists what would be 'apt to disquiet' a Christian, including: 'when there appeares no harmony between Promises and Providences, the word and workes of God'.⁷² Likewise, a single-page declaration from the Quakers, published in 1670, proposes that 'Seditious' and 'Disloyal Persons' inciting 'Discord' can be identified as 'Tracherous, Trayterous, False, Deceitful, Breakers of Promise, and the like'.⁷³ As we have seen, universal harmony provided a politically expedient discourse that sought, through these cosmological gestures, to legitimate social obedience, law and order, and a rigid hierarchical structure of authority, concatenating subjection.

⁶⁸ Andrew Gray, *Great Precious Promises...* (1669), 5.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ William Prynne, *Concordia discors...* (1659), 15.

⁷¹ Walter Charleton, *The Harmony of Natural and Positive Divine Laws* (1682), 147, 10.

⁷² Matthew Barker, *A Christian Standing & Moving upon the True Foundation* (1648), 13-14.

⁷³ Anon., *A Declaration...* (1670), 1.

To break binding language, was, therefore, to violate the authority of harmony, rupturing the correspondence between the word and its intended action that secures linguistic and political order.

Within the linguistically and politically discordant play-world of *Pericles* – in which oaths are routinely broken, fidelity is proven to be naïve, and dextrous verbal duplicity dominates public discourse – the first problem that presents itself to the Prince of Tyre is the faithful veracity of his speech. In the opening scene of the play, King Antiochus entraps his daughter's suitors, including Pericles, via a deadly riddle designed to protect their incestuous relationship:

I am no viper, yet I feed
 On mother's flesh which did me breed.
 I sought a husband, in which labour
 I found that kindness in a father.
 He's father, son, and husband mild;
 I mother, wife – and yet his child.

I.i.64-69

Rather than mystifying its own covert meaning, the riddle unambiguously discloses incest between father and daughter, plainly confessing that the Princess, who 'sought a husband', instead 'found that kindness in a father'. As Raphael Lyne observes, this is 'barely a riddle at all', introducing Pericles to a 'place where incest proclaims itself and everyone looks the other way', forcibly diverting attention away from the truths it manifestly betrays.⁷⁴ Antiochus challenges Pericles with a perversely decrypted riddle that presents a deceptively inescapable double-edged linguistic trap: if its words are 'read and not expounded', Antiochus declares, 'tis decreed, | As these before thee, thou thyself shalt bleed' (57-8), so the penalty for failing to interpret its connotation is death; however, the unanticipated outcome of discovering the riddle's incestuous solution, as Pericles does, is similarly lethal: 'He hath found the meaning, | For which we mean to have his head' (143-4). Pericles finds himself embroiled in a linguistic game that both flaunts yet prohibits its own sense, demanding from him a linguistic bad-faith by way of a censorship that deviously withholds heinous truths. The riddle depicts a sterile, linguistic feedback loop, evoked by the self-consuming 'viper' that feeds on its own tail in an act of self-cannibalism synonymous with incest, an emblem of the defiled play-world encircling Pericles. Realising that he has been verbally surrounded, Pericles plays along, evading the mortal intent of the conniving King's words, as he cautiously equivocates, 'few love to hear the sins they love to act; | 'Twould braid yourself too near for me to tell it' (92-3), while Antiochus similarly skirts around his purpose, deciding that he 'will gloze with him' (110). By

⁷⁴ Lyne, 83.

deciding to ‘interpose a gloss’, Antiochus plans to ‘talk deceptively’, using a distracting technique of verbal elusiveness in order ‘to veil with specious comments; to palliate; to explain away, extenuate’.⁷⁵ The term ‘gloze’ – derived from the Latin *glōssa*, meaning ‘a word needing explanation, hence later the explanation itself’, and also from the Greek *γλῶσσα*, originally referring to the ‘tongue’, and later to ‘a foreign or obscure word’ – implies a rhetorical device that appears to expound while obscuring truth with its verbosity.⁷⁶ Beneath multiple layers of linguistic deception, both men understand the other’s meaning, and Pericles is quickly disabused of his naïve sentiments, forced into a play-world that relies upon a concealed and deadly hermeneutics, he begins to realise the futility of his words – ‘the great Antiochus ... | Will think me speaking, though I swear to silence’ (I.ii.16-19) – as he pledges to keep the King’s secret before fleeing into hiding. The riddle establishes the incipient linguistic crisis of a play in which a bold-faced, explicit utterance perversely forces truth into abeyance, giving simplicity the lie with its unabashed, stubbornly upfront challenge. *Pericles* presents an inverted semiotic crisis, in that words are not misused or employed with deceitful double-intent, but rather, the straightforwardness of the utterance comes coupled with threat, forcing what is legible back into the unutterable, inarticulate, illegible shadows. Within this obscene linguistic climate, where truth is made occasion for a lie, Pericles realises the complete dysfunctionality of his own honest vow of ‘silence’, for in such a dangerous world of rhetorical deception and dissemblance, there is no room for the credulous naivety of linguistic fidelity – the purity of the sign is a deadly and must not be spoken.

In Act One Scene Two, Pericles turns, out of desperation, to gamble his remaining faith on the word of his advisor, Helicanus, who urges Pericles to ‘go travel for a while’ – lest ‘the tyrant’ King ‘either by public war or private treason | Will take away your life’ – leaving him as provisional ruler: ‘Your rule direct to any; if to me’ (104-9). Just as Helicanus assures him of his loyalty – ‘day serves not light more faithful than I’ll be’ – Pericles cautiously reciprocates, granting his faith in return: ‘I do not doubt thy faith; | But should [Antiochus] wrong my liberties in my absence?’ (110-2). John Downname (1571-1652), an English Puritan clergyman and theologian, recognises the precursor to an oath as the wagering of one’s faith – ‘also in our oathes we sometimes pawne and pledge unto God those things which are deere unto us, as it were suerties of our truth’ – agreeing, ‘*By my soule, by my faith*’ to ‘pawne my soule and faith unto God, for the confirmation of this truth’.⁷⁷ For Pericles, this binding exchange of faith equates to the oath itself, which becomes redundant, since both faith and oath are interchangeable: ‘I’ll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath | Who

⁷⁵ OED, ‘gloze, *v.1*’, 1.b.; ‘*Pericles*’, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1533n110; OED, ‘gloze, *v.1*’, 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid., ‘gloze, *n.*’, etymology.

⁷⁷ John Downname, *Four Treatises...* (1609), 2; John Kerrigan, *Shakespeare’s Binding Language* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), 10.

shuns not to break one will sure crack [them] both' (120-1). Only 'time' can reveal the 'truth' of whether Helicanus shall remain 'a subject's shine' and Pericles 'a true prince' (123-4). In *Shakespeare's Binding Language*, John Kerrigan observes how 'binding language does not just bind the speaker to what is said or subscribed':

Because assertory oaths are made to satisfy or convince others of the truth of something, and because sworn promises or vows are calculated to generate faith ... there is a social, lateral binding between those who speak or write bindingly and those who accept the given words with whatever degree of trust. ... You are bound to what you say, but also bound to those whose acceptance of your word might be thought to leave them with an obligation to trust that meshes with your responsibility to speak the truth.⁷⁸

According to Kerrigan, this linguistic contract not only binds Helicanus to his word, but Pericles too is similarly reciprocally bound by his 'obligation to trust' this word and maintain faith in its eventual fulfilment. This agreement, therefore, functions as a test of both of these men's integrity, according to *The Harmony of our Oathes*, an anonymous 1643 text, 'oathes may distinguish honest men from knaves' though 'they cannot make them so': while 'an honest man swears a just oath, because without an oath he meanes to do the thing he swears' the 'knave is bound with nothing but impossibilities.⁷⁹ This type of verbal bond takes a risk, only serving to distinguish the 'honest man' from the 'knave' once it is too late and its terms have been defied – a problem that is encountered by Pericles later in the play when oaths are made with politically-driven opportunists – though, Helicanus proves, at the end of the play, to be 'a figure of truth, of faith, of loyalty' (V.iii.92) who nobly returns Tyre to its rightful ruler. Without linguistic faith from both parties, however, the oath is particularly susceptible to exploitation for deceptive, self-serving, political purposes, as the Florentine politician and writer, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), divulges in his notorious 1532 political treatise, *The Prince*. Insisting that 'it is necessary to know well how to ... be a great pretender and dissembler', Machiavelli concludes that 'hee who hath a mind to deceive, shall always find another that will be deceivd', using Pope Alexander VI (1431-1503), infamous for papal corruption, as his prime example:

Alexander the sixth, never did any thing else than deceive men, and never meant otherwise, and always found whome to worke upon; yet never was there man would protest more effectually, nor averre any thing with more solemne oaths, and observe them lesse than he; neverthesse, his coosenages all thriv'd well with him; for hee knew how to play this part cunningly.⁸⁰

Since the words of an oath depend only upon faith, for the ruthless Machiavellian, this offers the opportunity to duplicitously wield power over any credulous man, 'who will allow himself to be

⁷⁸ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁹ Anon., *The Harmony of our Oathes* (1643), A^r.

⁸⁰ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*... (1640), 138-9.

more speciall kind', for its words engage in a contract by which the speaker is 'rigorously bound' and 'tied up unto God'.⁸¹ Moreover, by Strode's definition, Cleon turns duty, unmistakably, into an oath:

Duty is not so firm as Promise, nor Promise as an Oath; wherefore all sacred Contracts with God are tied with this knot ... all celebrated in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, a Clause equivalent with an Oath. ... Wherefore thus Promise, Vow, Swear to the Lord; and when thy hands are so tied to the Plow, that thou canst not let them go, do not look back with thine eyes, as wishing to be loose; let these Bonds be thy Triumph.⁸²

Unlike duty, an oath is sworn in 'the Name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost', performing 'sacred Contracts' that are linguistically 'tied with this knot' to God, forming 'Bonds' that resemble Cleon's commitment to suffer the 'gods revenge' if he falls short. Therefore, Cleon's declaration presents 'a Clause equivalent with an Oath'. William Perkins outlines the 'double bond' that characterises 'every lawfull oath': at 'first, it bindes one man to another, for the performing of the thing hee sweareth to doe'; and 'secondly, it bindes a man unto God, for he that sweareth, invokes God as a witnesse, and a Judge of the truth of his assertion', so 'hee stands bound unto God, till the thing sworne unto, bee performed'.⁸³ This holy pact not only binds men's words to one another, but also to the Creator, powerfully substantiating the contractual authority of language. Strode responds to concerns regarding the tenuous deficiency of words by upholding the significance of well-intended utterances in the eyes of God: 'Words and Thoughts are to him more legible, than Actions to us, for God is Light; whosoever seeks to rob Him doth lesse lie hid, than a Thief in a Candle'.⁸⁴ In *Pericles*, the discord between 'Words and Thoughts' and the 'Actions' they designate indicate a profane cynicism that obstructs the divinely-intended function of words.

Cleon and Dionyza, nevertheless, remain undaunted by the consequences of perjury, daring to invoke 'the gods' to 'revenge it upon me and mine' on account of their bitter scepticism, willing to merely rehearse these theologically-informed platitudes. Meanwhile, Pericles invests his credulous faith in Cleon's words even 'without your vows', once more rejecting the formality of a pledge – 'I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath' – in exchange for his own reciprocal faith. Instead, Pericles binds Cleon's vow to his own honest vow, pronouncing in the name of the goddess, 'bright Diana', that, until his daughter 'be married ... unscissor'd shall this hair of mine remain' – staying true to this pledge later in the play when he believes Thaisa and Marina to be dead, and 'swears | Never to wash his face, nor cut his hairs' (IV.iv.27-8). By these undertakings, Pericles repeatedly

⁸¹ William Strode, *A Sermon...* (1660), 4, 10-11.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁸³ William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition...* (1608), 153.

⁸⁴ Strode, 26.

hopes to recover the pure congruence between a promise and its performance, however, entirely disillusioned by repeated breaking of linguistic bonds, he is compelled to forgo language altogether, vowing complete silence when he later becomes ‘a man who for this three months hath not spoken | To any one’ (V.i.24-5). Observing the oaths of both Cleon and Pericles, Elena Glazov-Corrigan writes:

Pericles also makes a vow, even if that vow ... is directly opposed to Cleon’s hyperbolic vows and Dionyza’s equally hyperbolic lie. ... We can conclude that both types of oath, therefore, whether the over-explicit type of Cleon ... or the silent vow of Pericles, signify the rejection of tragedy. Cleon reduces to absurdity the language which nurtures tragic art, Pericles’ silence rejects and buries it. ... [Pericles] mistrusts words altogether, and therefore, questions the very art of his creator – the art of expression, and the underlying faith in language[:] Pericles’ silence is, indeed, a stoical protest against the art of words.⁸⁵

Both Cleon and Pericles, Glazov-Corrigan suggests, appear to deny the catastrophic, tragic potential of deceptive rhetorical artifice: Cleon – by his exaggerated overstatements that inevitably fail to abide by their denotations – ‘reduces’ language to futile ‘absurdity’ that is then rejected by Pericles, who silently withdraws from the depraved linguistic arena of the play. By transcending tragedy with his ‘stoical’, silent ‘protest against the art of words’, Pericles transcends tragedy to make room for the play’s romance resolution, that he might later be drawn by Marina’s verbal purity – her righteous veracity and ‘holy words’ (IV.vi.133) – to restore his faith in words.

Anne Barton considers Act Four Scene One of *Pericles* to exemplify Shakespeare’s linguistic cynicism in the late plays, its words so inoperative that Barton cannot imagine ‘the final romances as embodying a renewed faith in words’ after such bleak ‘scepticism’.⁸⁶ This is the scene that stages the attempted assassination of Marina, beginning by Dionyza reminding her hitman, the ‘murderer’ (IV.Cho.38), Leonine, that he must honour his pledge to kill the Princess: ‘Thy oath remember, thou hast sworn to do’t’ (IV.i.1). By insisting upon the sanctity of his oath, Dionyza ironically breaks her own word, an extension of Cleon’s vow, in which she too promised to raise and protect Marina, asked by Pericles to take the position of his daughter’s adoptive mother – ‘Good madam, make me blessed in your care | In bringing up my child’ (III.iii.31-2) – to which she falsely agreed: ‘I have one myself, | Who shall not be more dear to my respect | Than yours’ (32-4). Dionyza, simultaneously, illustrates the futility of her own promise, in the absence of faith, while also incongruously compelled to guarantee Leonine’s commitment to this bond-breaking murder using oaths, re-asserted by affirmations: ‘I will do’t’, he reassures her, ‘I am resolv’d’ (IV.i.9-12). As this scene piles one ruptured oath atop another, Marina interferes, questioning the contractual

⁸⁵ Elena Glazov-Corrigan, ‘The New Function of Language in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*: Oath versus “Holy Word”’, *JSS*, 43, xliii (1991), 131-40 (136).

⁸⁶ Anne Barton, ‘Shakespeare and the Limits of Language’, in *JSS*, ed. K. Muir (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), 19-30 (28).

legitimacy of Leonine's wicked undertaking, hoping to unfetter its bonded words by her powers of persuasion, as she begs for her life:

LEONINE	... I am sworn To do my work with haste.
MARINA	... I never did her hurt in all my life. I never spake bad word, nor did ill turn To any living creature.How have I offended, Wherein my death might yield her any profit, Or my life imply her any danger?
LEONINE	My commission Is not to reason of the deed, but do't. ... I am sworn, And will dispatch.

IV.i.69-91

Twice guaranteeing that he is 'sworn' to the 'commission' of his word, Marina offers her own linguistic purity as proof of her innocence, reasoning that she 'never spake bad word' to warrant that her 'death might yield' Dionyza 'any profit'. What the naïve Marina fails to understand, however, is that, in this linguistic marketplace, only the false, deceptive signifiers hold value. Until the end of the play, language is not a form of communicative exchange, but rather a false, fraudulent, and sterile performance. As Barton remarks, 'until Leonine draws out his dagger with unmistakable intent, neither one is really listening to the other', for 'arbitrary sealed off in separate worlds, they talk at but not really to each other'.⁸⁷ Instead of uniting in conversation, words alienate its speakers from one another: 'words define the gap between individuals; they do not bridge it.'⁸⁸ Glazov-Corrigan identifies that 'Marina's confrontation' with Leonine in this scene, is, in fact, between 'the power of the oath' and 'her power of persuasion', grappling between the two major linguistic forces of the play: the faithless bonds of Machiavellian oaths, and the compelling purity and insight of the faithful, innocent speaker, who 'never spake bad word'.⁸⁹ Despite her cogent rhetorical performance, Marina does not convince Leonine to disregard his vow, but neither is she killed, instead, this tension is interrupted when Marina is abducted by pirates and Leonine fails to fulfil his oath, in response to which he makes another empty promise: 'There's no hope she will return. I'll swear she's dead, | And thrown into the sea' (IV.i.98-9).

⁸⁷ Barton, 29; on Marina's 'almost obsessive recounting of her stormy birth-scene to an uninterested Leonine', see: Inga-Stina Ewbank, "'My name is Marina': The language of recognition", in *Shakespeare's Styles*, 118.

⁸⁸ Barton, 29.

⁸⁹ Glazov-Corrigan (1991), 131-4.

Even Machiavelli recognised the severity of being caught violating an oath, writing in his *Discourses on Livy* (1531) that ‘the Roman people collectively ... dreaded far more to violate their oath than to transgress the laws’ owing to the fear of God’s vengeance, for ‘an *Oath of Conscience* ... binds before God upon paine of perjurie’.⁹⁰ Accordingly, the oath-breakers and corrupters of language in *Pericles* are inexorably bound to suffer divine retribution. For his crime of ‘incest’ (I.Cho.26), protected by a deadly ‘riddle’ (38) for which ‘many [a] wight did die’ (39), King Antiochus is punished at the hands of ‘the most high gods’ (II.iv.3), who, could no longer ‘withhold the vengeance that they had in store, | Due to this heinous capital offence’ (4-5). As anticipated by his own vow, ‘wicked Cleon and his wife’ (V.iii.95) are punished by the people of Tarsus – ‘when fame | Had spread his cursed deed ... to rage the city turn, | That him and his they in his palace burn’ (95-8) – also being reprimanded by the gods for their, albeit unsuccessful, plot to assassinate Marina: ‘The gods for murder seemed so content | To punish, although not done, but meant’ (99-100). Just as Strode proposes, for God’s ‘Words and Thoughts’ to appear ‘more legible, than Actions to us’, so Cleon and Dionyza are punished, even for their intent, regardless of its practical failure. Finally, the ‘villian Leonine’ (IV.iii.9), a ‘murderer’ (IV.Cho.38) who also speaks the sterile language of empty vows, is ‘pois’ned’ (IV.iii.10) by Dionyza who cannot trust his word – especially since she cannot even trust her own figuratively poisoned tongue. As oaths are continually broken, truth appears increasingly obscured from all, even Dionyza, who unknowingly divulges to her husband – ‘Yet none does know but you how [Marina] came dead, | Nor none can know, Leonine being gone’ (29-30) – that Marina is dead. Kerrigan observes that in *Pericles*, ‘those who swear are likely not just to be bad but to use oaths to spur their badness’.⁹¹ Certainly, through the vow-breakers of this play, Shakespeare illustrates the catastrophic effects of a perpetually discordant semiotics, not only on social order but on the function of language itself, which alienates truth from words: rendering truth either unspeakable, as with the incestuous truth of the riddle, or else, inaudible, when, for example, Marina fails to be heard by Leonine. It is only through the evocation of faith in words, articulating truth through disarmingly honest and virtuous ‘holy words’ (IV.vi.133), and accompanied by the ‘sweet harmony’ (V.i.45) of her cosmically ‘immortal’ (V.Cho.3) singing voice, that Marina’s harmonious word-magic succeeds to perform apparently restorative miracles.

⁹⁰ Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy* (c. 1517), trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: UCP, 1996), 34; Christopher White, *Of Oathes their Object, Forme, and Bond* (1627), 14.

⁹¹ Kerrigan, 8.

ii. ‘Most Heavenly Music!’: Therapeutic Harmonies

A Harmonie from Heaven. Sommoning all men unto the hearing of the truth.⁹²

In his 1592 sermon, the Elizabethan clergyman, Henry Smith (c. 1560-1591), explains that ‘God would have all men come to the knoweledge of the truth, & bee saved’, for which they must ‘come unto God, but by that ordinarie meanes, which is the hearing of his word the which the Apostle calleth his truth’: to ‘hear [this] trueth’ is to hear ‘a Harmonie from Heaven’. Early-modern literary and non-literary writers often equate verbalised truth to universal harmony, for example, Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), the Jacobean playwright and poet, refers, in his mock-medieval pageant, *The Triumphs of Truth* (1613), to ‘Truths coelestiall Harmony’.⁹³ Fittingly, as we shall see in Shakespeare’s *Pericles*, moments of miraculous redemption appear to be induced by truthful modes of speech that elicit the cosmic powers of harmony, privileging a faithful, nostalgic conception of a reified or innocent language in its romance conclusion, over other extant conceptions of language which would perhaps assert its more discordant and modishly Machiavellian aspects: rhetorical dissemblance, self-serving deceit, and politic duplicity. In what follows, both Cerimon and Marina will be seen to exercise a similar function in the play, invoking the curative powers of musical harmony through their performative word-magic.⁹⁴ Though these therapeutic harmonies are not necessarily melodic in sound – Cerimon’s being ‘rough and woeful’ (III.ii.88) – yet they successfully recover congruence and find sympathy with cosmic, metaphysical forces, retrieving a recuperative power to restore order. Ultimately, Marina’s disarmingly honest ‘holy words’ and persuasive rhetoric, accompanied by the ‘sweet harmony’ of her singing voice, will prompt the listener to detect its implicit divine concordance, hearing the ‘vestals sing’ (IV.v.7) or ‘the music of the spheres!’ (V.i.229).

The sympathetic transferral of harmony from music to the individual as a form of spiritual medicine, is a concept discussed, in the early Renaissance, by Ficino, who examines the healing properties of music: ‘Musical consonance occurs in the element which is the mean of all [i.e. air], and reaches the ears through motion, spherical motion’, after which these frequencies, carried through the air, powerfully affect the listener: ‘musical sound, more than anything else perceived by the senses, conveys, as if animated, the emotions and thoughts of the singer’s or player’s soul

⁹² Henrie Smith, *The Poore Mans Teares...* (1592), 39.

⁹³ Ibid; Thomas Middleton, *The Triumphs of Truth* (1613) c2r.

⁹⁴ On similarities between Cerimon and Marina in *Pericles*, see: Glazov-Corrigan, 133; F. Elizabeth Hart, ‘Cerimon’s “Rough” Music in *Pericles*, 3.2’, *SQ*, 51, iii (2000), 313-31; Douglas L. Peterson, *Time, Tide and Tempest: A Study of Shakespeare’s Romances* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1973), 96. On music’s curative powers, see: Penelope Gouk, ‘Sister disciplines? Music and Medicines in historical perspective’, in *Musical Healing in Cultural Contexts*, ed. Gouk (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 171-96.

to the listeners' souls'.⁹⁵ Ficino's ideas inform the occult writings of Agrippa, who paraphrases this idea that 'Musical Harmony also is not destitute of the gifts of the Stars', but a conduit of 'Celestial influence' that 'doth change the affections, intentions, gestures, motions, actions and dispositions of all the hearers'.⁹⁶ Consequently, Agrippa adds, many have 'cured divers of very great diseases by Musick', for 'Singing can do more then the sound of an Instrument, in as much as it arising by an Harmonial consent' by 'transferring the affection and minde of the Singer with it, It moveth the affection of the hearer by his affection'.⁹⁷ Period conceptions of the healing powers of the voice and its tuneful inflections are examined by Penelope Gouk, who concludes that 'the exaltation of voice as a sound lying beyond the power of all musical instruments was itself an old trope by the time early nineteenth-century thinkers pronounced on these matters'.⁹⁸ For example, George Ent (1604 -1689), the English scientist, confirmed, in his study of acoustical science, that popular voices offer a certain musicality:

Sitting in some company, and having been but a little before musical, I chanced to take notice that in ordinary discourse words were spoken in perfect notes; and that some of the company used eights, some fifts, some third; and that those were most pleasing, whose words, as to their tone, consisted most of concords; and where of discords, of such as constituted harmony; and the same person was the most affable, pleasant and the best natured in the company. And this suggests a reason why many discourses which one hears with much pleasure, then they come to be read scarcely seem the same things.⁹⁹

Ent discovered that when regular speech – 'ordinary discourse words' – was 'spoken in' arithmetically 'perfect notes' it tended to, most effectively, express its meaning with a 'harmony' so pleasing to the hearer that the experience of hearing the same words uttered without this tuneful concord would 'scarcely seem the same thing'. Words pronounced harmoniously drew greater attention, appearing to communicate more profound knowledge, as the Church of England cleric Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) writes in his 1654 theological treatise, 'in all sciences words signifie things, but it is proper to Theologie, that things themselves signified or expressed by voices should also signifie something beyond it'.¹⁰⁰ Although, in *Pericles*, the knotted, binding language of duplicitous oaths obstruct and sever the connective tissue between words and truth, if vocalised tunefully, words held the potential to repair this correspondence and 'signifie something beyond', to which musical notes are faithfully attuned.¹⁰¹ In the case of Cerimon and Marina, it is by their

⁹⁵ Daniel P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (Pennsylvania: PSUP, 2000), 8-9.

⁹⁶ Agrippa, 255.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 256-7.

⁹⁸ Gouk, 99.

⁹⁹ George Ent, 'To Make a Probable Conjecture of Tempers and Dispositions by the Modulations of the Voice in Ordinary Discourse', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (1665-1678)*, 12 (1678), 1010-11 (1010).

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy Taylor, *The Real Presence and Spirituall of Christ...* (1653), 129-30.

¹⁰¹ For more on the Renaissance voice, see: Bloom.

rhetorical gestures which summon an ethereal, remedial music – bringing forth its harmonies with their word-magic – that the language of their playworld is finally disentangled from discordant deceitfulness.

As Glazov-Corrigan proposes, it is ‘important to observe’ Cerimon’s power against ‘blind, pagan custom which admits of no exception and which professes a close link to supernatural power’.¹⁰² This custom is the anecdotal fallacy that obliges the sailors to hastily throw, the supposedly dead, Thaisa overboard – that ‘the sea works high, the wind is loud, and will not lie till the ship be clear’d of the dead’ (III.i.47-9) – a binding ‘superstition’ (50), performed by sailors who are ‘strong in custom’ (52), one that Cerimon must overpower with his own, more scholarly, erudite, magical language. In the following scene, Act Three Scene Two, Cerimon is brought a ‘chest’ (III.ii.50) that the ‘sea tossed up upon our shore ... of some wrack’ (50-1), and finding Thaisa’s body within, protests:

For look how fresh she looks! They were too rough
That threw her in the sea. ...
...
The rough and woeful music that we have,
Cause it to sound, beseech you.
The viol once more. How thou stir’st, thou block!
The music there! I pray you give her air.
Gentlemen, this queen will live. Nature awakes,
A warmth breathes out of her.

III.ii.79-93

The ‘too rough’ custom of the sailors – in that it is executed ‘hastily’ – is overpowered by Cerimon’s sympathetically ‘rough and woeful music’, a ‘discordant’ and ‘harsh’ (II.iii.97) sound, that meets the superstitious disorder of the sailors on its own terms, before disorder is remedied and Thaisa resuscitated.¹⁰³ In the play’s prologue, Gower anticipates the practice of music for ‘restoratives’ (I.Cho.8), its healing capacities exemplified by Cerimon’s ‘viol’ (I.i.81), for this may not only refer to a small container or ‘vial’ of reviving medicine, but also evokes the presence of the ‘musical instrument’, as Cerimon commands a curative music to play.¹⁰⁴ The ‘source’ of this music remains unclear, as Ortiz remarks, it ‘is rhetorically obscured’ which ‘helps to mystify the medicinal and spiritual effects of music’.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, when Cerimon vaguely conjures ‘the music there!’ (III.ii.91) and pronounces Thaisa alive – ‘Nature awakes, | A warmth breathes out of her’ (92-3) – her

¹⁰² Glazov-Corrigan (1991), 133.

¹⁰³ *OED*, ‘rough, *adj.* & *int.*’, II.6.a; ‘rough, *adj.* & *int.*’, IV.16.a.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, ‘vial, *n.*’, forms.

¹⁰⁵ Ortiz, 162.

inexplicable resurrection is reminiscent of Hermione's supposed statue in *The Winter's Tale*: Paulina commands for 'music! to awake her!' (*WT*, V.iii.98), and as Hermione appears to awaken, Leontes observes, 'O, she's warm!' (109). In both cases, music has vitalised the cold, inanimate body, the lively vigour of its tempo sympathetically quickening the veins with its rhythmic pulse, prompting Cerimon to declare: 'this queen will live' (*Per.*, III.ii.92). F. Elizabeth Hart comments how 'critics and directors' often depict Cerimon 'as an early modern practitioner of occult magic despite the classical setting and context in which he is presented', a student of the 'secret art' of 'physic' (32) through which his pursuits of 'immortality' (30) and 'making a man a god' (31) echo those of occultists, like Agrippa, who asserts that the 'spirit of a man' who masters the art of magic behaves 'as if it were an immortal God'.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, a period alchemist, Cerimon catalogues nature's 'cures' (38), investigating what qualities 'dwell in vegetives, in metals, stones', (36) just as contemporary alchemists would: resembling what William Ingpen might describe as 'the secret power of hearbes, plants, stones and metals, wherein the facultie of those Paracelsians chiefly consisteth'.¹⁰⁷ As Paracelsus himself affirms, 'diseases are most principally cured by Nature'.¹⁰⁸ Cerimon, therefore, revives, nostalgic astrological conceptions of the powers of inaudible and obscured cosmic harmony, setting the stage for what Marina will soon accomplish with her harmonious speech.

Before Marina is reunited with Pericles – a unification which symbolically repudiates the malign bonds of Dionyza and Leonine's murderous oaths and vows that promised her death, thereby restoring Pericles' faith in operative words – she first demonstrates how her rhetorical powers are rooted in an optimistic, honest mode of speech that figures as a conduit for divine harmony. The 'absolute Marina' (IV.Cho.31) speaks as 'a piece of virtue' (IV.vi.111) in 'holy words' that elicit an epiphanic recognition of truth and understanding in her listeners. Ewbank's discussion of 'the language of recognition', proposes that 'the peculiar quality of Marina's language is that, in its simplicity, it gets as close, I believe, as Shakespeare ever does to expressing the inexpressible'.¹⁰⁹ By the unvarnished honesty and pure signification of her words, Marina's rhetoric has the power to convert others, inducing quasi-divine realisations or revelations – often punctuated by references to sublime music as the receptacle of truth. In Act Four Scene Five, a brief exchange between two gentlemen leaving the brothel in Mytilene – where Marina resides after having been forcibly sold into prostitution – proves the transformative effect of her speech:

¹⁰⁶ Hart, 313. On Cerimon as an occult practitioner, see: Shakespeare, *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt et al (New York: W.W. Norton: 2015), 712; Shakespeare, *Pericles: Prince of Tyre*, eds. Doreen DelVecchio and Antony Hammond (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 72n; Agrippa, 475-6.

¹⁰⁷ Ingpen, 33.

¹⁰⁸ Paracelsus, *The Art of Curing Sympathetically...* (1700), 14.

¹⁰⁹ Ewbank, 112-4.

FIRST GENTLEMAN Did you ever hear the like?
 SECOND GENTLEMAN No, nor never shall do in such a place as this, she being once gone.
 FIRST GENTLEMAN But to have divinity preach'd there! did you ever dream of such a thing?
 SECOND GENTLEMAN No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy-houses. Shall's go hear the vestals sing?
 FIRST GENTLEMAN I'll do any thing now that is virtuous, but I am out of the road of rutting for ever.

IV.v.1-9

Emerging from the brothel after their off-stage visit to Marina, the two men recount their amazement, for they never did 'hear the like' of such 'divinity preach'd' by her. So wondrously inspirational is Marina's conversation that both men part her company converted; 'converse' and 'convert' sharing an etymological derivation in the Latin word *convertĕre*, meaning, 'to turn about', suggesting that conversation, at its core, evokes a transformative shift.¹¹⁰ Suddenly committed to all things 'virtuous', the gentlemen profess their abstinence – 'no more bawdy-houses' – and celibacy – 'out of the road of rutting for ever' – still retaining the rustic, coarse immediacy of their natural expression. The 'virtuous' tone of Marina's 'divinity preach'd' overwhelms even the sexually vulgar discourse of Mytilene's rustics, as Lyne observes: 'Myteilene is a land of innuendo as well as a place of reformation and reunion'.¹¹¹ Though crude, the language of Mytilene's brothel-goers is direct, unadorned with artifice, and antithetical to the deceptive rhetoric and broken oaths associated with the play's aristocratic characters. Receptive to Marina's similarly pure, unembellished speech, the men are afterwards compelled to hear holy music – 'shall's go hear the vestals sing?' – alluding to the divine harmony imparted by Marina's words.

At the brothel itself, the defiant purity and divine femininity of Marina's language must contend with an oppressive patriarchal discourse that seeks to violate her fertile speech. As the proprietors of the brothel discuss their concerns that Marina's persuasive 'holy words' and 'virginal fencing' (IV.vi.57-8) – her righteous verbal sparring – are driving away business, Boult attempts to silence her eloquent piety by raping her to take her virginity: 'Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfurnish us of all our cavalleria, and make our swearers priests' (11-2)'. Boult distinguishes between Marina's faithful language of 'priests', and that of the profane 'swearers', what Palfrey identifies as the 'clashing discourses' in the brothel:

Partly this imperative reflects Marina's own stubborn will; she retains possession of a language uncolonized by her oppressors. Equally, however, the resistance is the genre's own, a power

¹¹⁰ *OED*, 'convert, *v.*' and 'converse, *v.*', etymology.

¹¹¹ Lyne, 84.

rooted not so much in the heroine's transcendent independence as in the play's own faithfulness to its revivifying discursive sources.¹¹²

While Marina is plagued by the sexual appetites of predatory men who often leer at her like 'roast-meat' at a 'market' (IV.ii.25), yet she linguistically elevates her value, muttering to the gods in prayers that sound, to the cynical Boulton, like superstitious incantations: 'She conjures!' (IV.vi.147). By the end of the scene, however, Marina has persuaded Boulton to 'do any thing but this thou doest' (174) and reconsider a profession that encourages him to violate her. Also seeking a better profession for herself, Marina is so impressively assured in her own proficiency that she challenges Boulton, 'prostitute me to the basest groom | That doth frequent your house' (190-1), if she fails to demonstrate sufficient expertise to teach music and embroidery. Employing the linguistic tone of Mytilene's brothel in order to persuade Boulton of her competence, Marina intelligently exhibits her command of language through an understanding of heteroglossic variety, staking her own sexuality, which she has tirelessly fought to preserve, upon her own musical talents. At the start of Act Five, Gower validates Marina's conviction in her own abilities by confirming that, 'Marina thus the brothel scapes' (V.Cho.1), working in 'an honest house' (2) where she is able to fulfil her desire to teach singing, weaving, sewing, and dancing, renowned amongst locals for her divine musical talents: 'She sings like one immortal, and she dances | As goddess-like to her admired lays' (3-4). In her struggle to linguistically assert her own feminine agency amid the sexually threatening dialect of Mytilene, Marina ultimately succeeds in establishing herself as a transcendent, 'immortal', and 'goddess-like' messenger of harmony, proceeding in the play's final act, to heal sterile patriarchal discourses with her therapeutic verbal and musical harmonies.

Marina's speech appears to be characterised by a restorative harmony that renders her incorruptible throughout the play. Born aboard the royal vessel during a tempestuous storm, Marina is declared destined for a life of concord by her father, Pericles:

Now, mild may be thy life!
 For a more blustering birth had never babe.
 Quiet and gentle thy conditions! for
 Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world
 That ever was prince's child. Happy what follows!
 Thou hast as chiding a nativity
 As fire, air, water, earth, and heaven can make
 To herald thee from the womb.

¹¹² Palfrey, 206.

III.i.27-34

Marina suffers a birth so thunderously ‘blusterous’ – a ‘rudeliest welcome’, so ‘chiding’ an astrological ‘nativity’ – that Pericles prays to the heavens for a ‘Quiet and gentle’ life to follow. Despite the *rude* tenor of her continued misfortune, yet Marina sustains her own ‘Happy’ destiny. Even when faced with the authority and charm of Lysimachus, the brothel’s most ‘honorable’ (IV.vi.50) visitor and governor of Mytilene, Marina not only maintains her own linguistic purity, but exercises her conversational/conversational faculties to outwit and transform him:

LYSIMACHUS Now, pretty one, how long have you been at this trade?
 MARINA What trade, sir?
 LYSIMACHUS Why, I cannot name’t but I shall offend.
 MARINA I cannot be offended with my trade. Please you to name it.
 LYSIMACHUS How long have you been of this profession?
 MARINA E’er since I can remember.
 LYSIMACHUS Did you go to’t so young? were you a gamester at five, or at seven?
 MARINA Earlier too, sir, if now I be one.

IV.vi.66-76

As Lysimachus’ discreetly enquires about her seeming ‘trade’ or ‘profession’ of prostitution, refusing to ‘name’t’ in fear of causing offence, Marina protests against this label, in deliberate defiance she refuses for the polite presumptions of Lysimachus to redefine her own, wilful conceptions of reality. As Ewbank suggests, Marina has ‘been established as having a kind of therapeutic literalness of speech, based in the brothel scene on a refusal to separate name and act’.¹¹³ Insisting that Lysimachus ‘name’ her occupation, Marina rhetorically performs her own naivety and innocence, assuming an ignorance to his implied meaning, persuading Lysimachus of her virtuous integrity as she prays, ‘that the gods | Would set me free from this unhallowed place’ (99-100). Astonished by the transformative efficacy of Marina’s speech, Lysimachus confesses:

I did not think
 Thou couldst have spoke so well, ne’er dreamt thou couldst.
 Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,
 Thy speech had altered it. Hold, here’s gold for thee.
 Persever in that clear way thou goest,
 ...
 ... thou art a piece of virtue, and
 I doubt not but thy training hath been noble.

IV.vi.102-12

¹¹³ Ewbank, 116.

Observing the scholarly dexterity of her rhetoric – speaking as if ‘thy training hath been noble’ – Lysimachus realises the capacity for Marina’s ‘speech’ to have ‘altered’ even the most ‘corrupted mind’. Marina’s sincere, rhetorical style exposes truth and undoes the damage of a deceptive language of political opportunism by fundamentally rejecting its falsehoods, ascribing only to a pure and rarefied semiotics.

Recognising Marina to be ‘all goodness that consists in beauty’ (V.i.70), Lysimachus brings her aboard the Tyrian vessel, docked in Mytilene, confident that ‘she questionless with her sweet harmony’ of voice ‘and other chosen attractions, would allure’ the muted Pericles, ‘and make a batt’ry through his deafen’d parts, | Which now are midway stopp’d’ (45-8). So potent is the power of Marina’s faithful, virtuous, harmonious, altering speech, that Lysimachus hopes it might unblock the ears of Pericles, since what ‘deafen’d’ them was the opposingly discordant duplicity and broken vows of political schemers. Obscuring his explicit meanings using what Lyne calls ‘innuendo about innuendo’, Lysimachus’ indirect phrasing also contains sexual implications, offering Pericles this young woman to ‘allure’ with her ‘attractions’ and unstop his ‘parts’.¹¹⁴ However, in spite of sexual innuendo, Shakespeare ensures that – even intuitively, for father and daughter, as of yet, remain unaware of their relation to one another – Pericles is unlike the incestuous King Antiochus with which the play opens, since he was initially disconnected and silenced by such depraved civilisations precisely to reject their sterile modes of discourse. In his ‘grief’ (26), therefore, Pericles ‘will not speak | To any’ (33-4), while Marina is given the task to ‘win some words of him’ (44), to ‘draw him but to answer thee in aught’ (73), extracting a faithful language from him once more, she seeks a shortcut to harmony, and turns, first of all, to song:

[They withdraw. Marina sings] the Song.

LYSIMACHUS [*Advances.*] Mark’d he your music?

MARINA No, nor look’d on us.

LYSIMACHUS See, she will speak to him.

V.i.80-1

Initially, Marina’s singing may appear outwardly imperceptible to Pericles, since Lysimachus is compelled to ask, ‘mark’d he your music?’, though it soon become apparent that this is only because he is so profoundly and inwardly struck. After all, in what follows, Marina ‘will speak to him’ as Pericles breaks months of silence to engage in conversation, as she begins to repair the ruptures between word and truth across the liminal and subliminal lines between spheres. Building towards the play’s miraculous, romance recognition finale, father and daughter piece together their

¹¹⁴ Lyne, 84.

identities. As Marina begins to tell the familiar story of her estranged, royal lineage – ‘though wayward fortune did malign my state, | My derivation was from ancestors | Who stood equivalent with mighty kings, | But time hath rooted out my parentage’ (89-92) – Pericles echoes snippets of these recognisable headlines:

PERICLES	My fortunes – parentage – good parentage – To equal mine – was it not thus? What say you?
MARINA	I said, my lord, if you did know my parentage, You would not do me violence.
PERICLES	I do think so. Pray you turn your eyes upon me. You’re like something that – What country-woman? Here of these shores?
MARINA	No, nor of any shores, Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am No other than I appear.

V.i.97-105

As Pericles picks up and repeats Marina’s words back to her – ‘My fortunes – parentage – good parentage’ – they mirror one another in a verbal to-and-fro, in which she also reiterates his reiterated words: ‘if you did know my parentage, | You would not do me violence’. Once more, when Pericles asks if she is ‘here of these shores?’, Marina imitates his vernacular: ‘No, nor of any shores’. This linguistic mirroring repeats and reaffirms the simplicity and truth of Marina’s story, without the need for any modification or embellishment, demonstrating the idea that the value of her words lies in their literalness and purity, as Russ McDonald reasons:

To some degree the repeated words and phrases that dominate this passage are a function of the deliberate simplicity required by Pericles’ practically comatose state. Their minimalism conveys the delicacy of the interrogation, but it also expresses the inverted familial relation ... as the knowing child instructs the child-like parent.¹¹⁵

Like a parent, Marina commands the implication of their shared words with a tone of disciplinary negation – ‘if you did know my parentage, | You would not do me violence’; ‘No, nor of any shores’ – while Pericles asks questions with a ‘child-like’ wonder and innocence that reverts the incestuous, father-daughter bond of the play’s opening scene. Edging closer towards redemptive recognition, Pericles realises that what, at first, appeared to be mere resemblance, ‘You’re like something that’, and artificial similarities, ‘thou lookest | Like one I lov’d indeed’ (124-5), has evolved from ‘like’ to absolute sameness. Appearances and truth have reconciled when Marina admits to being ‘no other than I appear’.

¹¹⁵ McDonald, 191.

Pericles delays his climactic recognition of Marina, as Lyne observes, his ‘thirst for information contrasts poignantly with his reluctance to accept truth’.¹¹⁶ Scarred by the deceptive rhetorical traps of the past, Pericles is hindered by hesitations and disbelief that tend towards extraordinary explanations – believing he must be ‘mock’d’ (142), either by some ‘god’ (143) or else dreaming ‘the rarest dream that e’er dull’d sleep | Did mock sad fools withal’ (161-2) – nevertheless, Pericles heeds the honesty and integrity of Marina’s words, until he decides: ‘Falseness cannot come from thee, for ... thou seemest a palace | For the crown’d Truth to dwell in. I will believe thee’ (120-2). Recognising Marina as a majestic conduit of truth, with growing urgency, her words reach their prodigious peak when they arrive, straightforwardly, at the self: ‘My name is Marina’ (142). This is the revelatory assertion that repairs Pericles’ own lineage and thereby facilitates his own self-discovery:

MARINA	The name Was given me by one that had some power, My father, and a king.
PERICLES	How, a king’s daughter? And call’d Marina? ...
	...Where were you born? And wherefore call’d Marina?
MARINA	Call’d Marina For I was born at sea. ...
PERICLES	... This cannot be My daughter – buried! – Well, where were you bred?
MARINA	... I am the daughter to King Pericles, If good King Pericles be. ...
	What is your title?
PERICLES	I am Pericles of Tyre.

V.i.147-204

With the proclamation of their names and titles, Marina and Pericles are both resurrected back from presumed death into one another’s lives, their ruptured identities reassembled via the other’s. In Lyne’s terms, Pericles’ ‘fragmented self becomes reintegrated as the parts of his life, scattered over the Mediterranean, are rejoined’.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Lyne, 58-9.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 61.

For Pericles, it is by Marina's name that he is able to decipher her origins and retrace their lineage, unpicking her story using her dynamic nominative article – 'a king's daughter? | And call'd Marina?' – most significantly, querying: 'and wherefore call'd Marina?'. Not only is she 'call'd Marina' because she 'was born at sea', but by this name Marina is, once again, recognised at sea, nominatively determined to return to her own etymological roots; her name derived from the Italian, meaning 'coastal region, port area' – the exact location of their reunion.¹¹⁸ As Laurie Maguire argues, often Shakespeare's 'names are matter – material entities capable of assuming lives and voices of their own', such that Marina's linguistic powers of self-assertion transcend even her own rhetorical abilities.¹¹⁹ The early-modern approach to onomastics presupposes that a person's name appropriately indicates qualities relating to their character, thus the Latin motto, *bonum nomen, bonum omen*, was anglicised into the proverb: 'Names and nature do oft agree'.¹²⁰ For Pericles, the realisation of this harmonious, semiotic equivalency between names and nature revives his faith in linguistic signification, as he finally recognises his daughter: 'rise, th' art my child ... | She is not dead at Tharsus as she should have been' (213-5). Glazov-Corrigan observes:

In *Pericles*, ... there is a reawakening of trust in the capacity of language (despite its perversions of oath, curse, lie, sinister command, etc.) to re-create, recognize, and, above all, to restore life.¹²¹

By this faithful recuperation of a magical semiotics, through performative, operative declarations, Pericles is finally confident enough to assert his own name and title – 'I am Pericles of Tyre' – in a statement that resolves the problem of the deadly binding language that drove him to silence. At the point of this pivotal turn to romance, Pericles hears the music of the spheres:

PERICLES	O heavens bless my girl! But hark, what music? ...
	How sure you are my daughter. But what music?
HELICANUS	My lord I hear none.
PERICLES	None? The music of the spheres! List, my Marina.
LYSIMACHUS	It is not good to cross him, give him way.
PERICLES	Rarest sounds! do ye not hear?
LYSIMACHUS	Music, my lord? I hear.
PERICLES	Most heavenly music! It nips me unto list'ning, and thick slumber Hangs upon mine eyes. Let me rest.

¹¹⁸ *OED*, 'marina, *n1.*', etymology.

¹¹⁹ Laurie Maguire, *Shakespeare's Names* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 4.

¹²⁰ Tilley, N32.

¹²¹ Glazov-Corrigan (1991), 139-40.

In the same moment that Marina successfully recovers his faith in language's capacity to signify truth, Pericles hears an obscured, mystified, celestial music, exclusive to his 'undeafen'd' ears, repeatedly asking, 'what music?', to bystanders like Helicanus who admit – 'my lord I hear none' – while Lysimachus decides to 'give him way' and humour him: 'Music, my lord? I hear'. Despite this cynical company, Pericles' genuine perception of this music is also demonstrated by his physical, tangible response as it 'nips' him, with a sharp and visceral pinch or squeeze, 'unto list'ning', before lulling him into a drowsy stupor: 'thick slumber | Hangs upon mine eyes'. Restoring the harmony between words and truth, the 'sweet harmony' of Marina's speech achieves the impossible, attuning her father to an inaudible cosmic music that reconnects sympathetic, verbal bonds to the heavenly sphere.

In 1648, the English songwriter, Henry Lawes (1596-1662), published an elegy written in memory of his younger brother and contemporary, William Lawes (1602-1645), recalling the expressive articulacy of his musical composition, 'whose boundlesse skill made Musick speak such sense, as if't had sprung from an intelligence':

In's just proportioned songs, in's just proportioned songs might you find, his soule convers'd with heav'n ... with heav'n, heaven with his mind, and in such language that Rhet'rick never knew, for his were Rhetorick, and sweet Musick too, and sweet Musique too: Like that which brought from the Imperiall skie Angels to men, Angels to men, from men made Divels flie, made Divels flie. But (oh) he's dead, he's dead To heav'n is he gone? is he gone? the life of Musick.¹²²

For Lawes, the ultimate praise of his brother's musical talents is in admiration of the legibility of his songs, hearing them communicate like a language, complimenting how he 'made Musick speak such sense', and did so 'in such language that Rhet'rick never knew, for his were Rhetorick, and sweet Musick too'. Moreover, through these 'proportioned songs' – composed according to the arithmetical laws of harmonious numbers – 'his soule convers'd with heav'n', in perfect semiosis. According to Lawes, music *is* language, both divine expressions that, at their best, remain pure in meaning and resonance, with no room for an interpretive detour. Likewise, in *Pericles*, both rhetorical and musical concord are interchangeable manifestations of the same universal principles, concurrently performed when Cerimon verbally conjures medicinal musical harmonies, or by the 'sweet harmony' of Marina's speech and song, since she epitomises perfect, astrological alignment. This is a play in which semiotic harmony and musical harmony both motion towards one another, the former often eliciting the latter by an honest language of signification which resolves the

¹²² Henry Lawes, *Choice Psalmes...* (1648), Cc4^{r-v}.

discordant, broken ties of the play's politically disruptive conspirators. Faithfully uttered words preserve the magical power to transmit cosmically therapeutic harmonies that repair the semiotic ties between spheres.

CHAPTER III

Prophetic Promise: Lineal Return in *Cymbeline*

I. 'Prophetic Poesie': The Early-Modern Poetics of Prophecy

[The] HISTORY of PROPHECIE, consisteth of two Relatives, the Prophecie, and the accomplishment: and therefore the nature of such a worke ought to be, that every prophecie of the Scripture be sorted with the event fulfilling the same, throughout the ages of the world ... being of the nature of their Author [God], with whom a thousande yeares are but as one day, and therefore are not fulfilled punctually, at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulnesse of them may referre to some one age.¹

In his *Advancement of Learning*, Francis Bacon distinguishes between the prophetic utterance and the ensuing moment of its 'accomplishment', using a metaphor of lineal and generational succession. Describing the prophecy and its completion as sequential 'Relatives', he recognises that rather than being 'fulfilled punctually' the words of a prophecy may undergo a 'springing and germinant accomplishment throughout many ages'. Prophetic language propels its recipient towards the prospect of its fulfilment and in the direction of posterity. This onward-'springing' momentum is implicit in the word 'germinant', which refers to 'the sprouting of a bud or shoot'.² Derived from the Latin *germen*, the term 'germinant' also signifies 'generation, procreation, beginning', encompassing the reproductive life-force, the 'germen', 'seed', 'embryo' is the 'rudiment of an organism' that specifically possesses a 'reproductive element' or quality.³ Written c. 1608, Shakespeare's *King Lear* features one of the earliest uses of 'germens', as the distraught King wanders out onto the heath challenging the storm to do its worst: 'And thou, all-shaking thunder, | Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world! | Crack nature's moulds, all germains spill at once | That makes ingrateful man!' (III.ii.6-9). Lear calls for 'thunder' to 'Strike' and 'Crack nature's moulds' relinquishing the embryonic life contained therein, for these 'germains' refer to 'the *semina* existing in nature from which all, including man, is created'.⁴ According to the *OED*, Lear's use of 'Germains' refers to 'seeds, buds, or first stages of life' combined with a possible play on 'germanes' to suggest 'bloodlines', since 'germane' is an etymological derivation meaning 'closely related'.⁵

¹ Bacon (1605), 16.

² *OED*, 'germination, *n.*', 1.a.

³ *Ibid.*, 'germination, *n.*', etymology; 'germen, *n.*', 1.

⁴ 'King Lear', in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1322n8.

⁵ *OED*, 'germen, *n.*', 1; 'germane, *adj.*', I.

Bacon's wording carefully implies that prophetic utterances provoke a fertile sense of procreative, generational advancement, anticipating the realisation of its words over the course of 'many ages'. In *Macbeth*, after the witches' prophesy that the current 'Thane of Glamis' (I.iii.48) shall be 'Thane of Cawdor' (49) and 'King hereafter' (50), Banquo urges the witches to 'look into the seeds of time, | And say which grain will grow, and which will not' (58-9). Like Bacon, Banquo frames the notion of prophecy in terms of 'seeds' or 'grains' that 'will grow' to their 'height or fulnesse' over 'many ages'. The witches respond with a prediction of kingship to be inherited by the next generation – 'Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none' (67) – not directly, but dynastically fruitful for Banquo. Addressing the frequently deferred fulfilment of prophecy in Shakespeare, Yan Brailowsky proposes that, although 'prophetic language may *appear* to be performative', in fact:

A closer analysis of the words of some of these prophecies [in Shakespeare's plays] suggests that they are far more fragile than one might believe: ... 'prophecy' is not destined to divine the future but to '[p]revent it, [to] resist it'. The prophecy, in other words, is not meant to be efficacious.⁶

Brailowsky demonstrates how Shakespeare's prophetic language often features hypothetical and conditional tenses, with subjunctive statements intended to warn of what *may* come and to prevent it. In *Richard II*, the Bishop of Carlisle warns those who participate in the downfall of the monarch of the ills that will befall them *if* Henry Bolingbroke is crowned king: 'if you crown him, let me prophesy, | The blood of English shall manure the ground' (IV.i.136-7). Brailowsky suggests 'that these prophecies are *not* models of performative utterance' – since 'establishing a correlation between an utterance and its "realisation" does not suffice to determine a *causal link*' – instead, arguing that prophecy is decidedly '*non*-performative' in Shakespeare's plays, intended to prevent action rather than provoking it.⁷ While Brailowsky's analysis corresponds with the rationalism of standard contemporary speech-act theory, in doing so it partly overlooks the residual historical powers afforded to the language of the early-modern prophet and poet alike.⁸ For a period audience, prophecy at least aspired to remain an operative mode of speech, with the potential to impel its recipients towards its fulfilment, to enact disruptive or restorative temporal leaps when faith was granted in its magical capacity to self-realise.

The fertile language of prophecy performs a word-magic that elicits unborn, future generations, fulfilling the same linguistic aspirations found in early-modern poetry. In his 1635 treatise, Scottish

⁶ Yan Brailowsky, 'Prophecy and the Supernatural: Shakespeare's Challenges to Performativity', in *Shakespeare and the Supernatural*, eds. Victoria Bladen and Brailowsky (Manchester: MUP, 2020), 137-56, (148, 141).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 149, 141.

⁸ Brailowsky grounds his analysis of speech-acts in the works of: John L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962); and, John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969).

minister and rhetorician, Ninian Campbell (1599-1657), explains that the ‘Scholastick’ style of ‘funerall sermons’ feature, among other things, the ‘fertile inventions of alluring poesie’.⁹ Language at its most operative was often depicted in reproductive terms, for example, the Spanish physician, Juan Huarte de San Juan (1529-1588), in his 1575 magnum opus, *Examen de Ingenious*, characterises the creative, productivity of witty language in terms of reproduction:

’Tis a clear Case, that Wit is a Generative Power, and if we may so say, becomes pregnant, and brings forth; that has, I say, Children; and moreover, as *Plato* affirms, wants a Midwife to deliver her. For like as the Plant or Animal in the Generation of the first sort, gives a real and substantial Being, to what they produce, which they have not before Generation; even so Wit has the Power and natural Force to produce and bring forth within it self a Son, which the Natural Philosophers call *Notion*, or as it has been accounted, *the Word of the Spirit*.¹⁰

‘Wit’, for Huarte, is an effective rhetorical device that possesses the same ‘Generative Power’ and ‘natural force’ as childbearing, generating new ideas to ‘produce and bring forth’, like a new generation of ‘Children’, or the first, primordial generation of a ‘Plant or Animal’ that begot ‘a real and substantial Being’ which had ‘not before’ existed. This metaphorical, first ‘Son’ – intellectually spawned by witty words – represents the birth of the philosophical ‘*Notion*’, as well as, divine wisdom, ‘*the Word of the Spirit*’. The ‘Generative Power’ of witty language, therefore, lies in its capacity to convey ideas and wisdoms that elevate the recipient towards metaphysical understanding.

Indeed, Huarte’s depiction of wit corresponds with Bacon’s impression of prophecy in that both forms of language breed new and enlightening perspectives and futures that momentarily render transcendent knowledge attainable. As Bacon asserts, prophecy has only one true ‘Author’ who predetermines the course of the future generations, for God possesses the exclusive power to prophesy with foresight. This is a notion which John Cotton (1584-1652), clergyman in England and the American colonies, reinforces in his 1650 theological treatise – ‘for Prophecy is an u[tt]erance onely of the word of God, and of the things of God contained in it; which Instruments without voyce cannot doe’ – denouncing prophetic speech that is not ‘of God’ for being false.¹¹ Cotton addresses frequent comparisons made between ‘Psalmes and Prophecy differing no otherwise then Poetry and Prose’, since these all have the potential to convey varying expressions of the same God-Word:

As the gift of Tongues was extraordinary, so was every Ordinance dispensed in it, whether Prayer, or *Psalmes*. or Prophecy, all of them extraordinary, both for sublimity of matter, (in the

⁹ Ninian Campbell, *A Treatise Upon Death...* (1635), B^{r-v}.

¹⁰ Juan Huarte, *Examen de Ingenios...* (1698), 2.

¹¹ John Cotton, *Singing of Psalmes...* (1650), 5.

Spirit he speaketh Mysteries, *ver.* 2.) and for power and demonstration of the Spirit, and for suddenesse and dexteritie of utterance without previous study, or meditation.¹²

Prophecy, like prayer, psalms, or poetry, is a ‘gift of Tongues’, an inspired, expert ‘utterance’ through which ‘the Spirit ... speaketh Mysteries’ with astonishing ‘suddenesse and dexteritie’. Unlike divinely-ordained individuals, such as clergyman or monarchs, most poets and writers lacked the religious authority to speak with foresight, but, in spite of this, *aspired* to conduit the transcendent ‘Mysteries’ of ‘the Spirit’ in their writing, in the pursuit of the ‘germinant’, ‘generative’ word-magic of scriptural prophecy.

Especially during this age of disenchantment, poets attempted to meet the performative demands of prophetic words in a ‘shift from magic to poetry’ that ‘substitutes one kind of satisfaction for another’, but is ultimately ‘afflicted by the sensations of lack’, since the poet’s magic is only ever an illusory art.¹³ Regardless of growing period scepticism, in his *Defence*, Sidney etymologically underpins the ancient connection between poet and prophet:

Among the Romanes a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or Prophet, as by his conjoynd words *Vaticinium*, and *Vaticinari*, is manifest, so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestowe upon this hart-ravishing knowledge, and so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thoughtin the chanceable hitting upon any of such verses, great foretokens of their following fortunes, were placed.¹⁴

From the Latin *vāticināt-*, participial stem of *vāticinārī*, ‘to forebode, foretell, prophesy’, the noun ‘vates’, denotes ‘a poet or bard’, especially ‘one who is divinely inspired; a prophet-poet’.¹⁵ Sidney’s analysis traces the word ‘*Vates*’ back to Roman antiquity, when poets received great ‘admiration’ for their ‘hart-ravishing knowledge’ and insight, synonymous with the ‘diviner, foreseer, or Prophet’, for poets were deemed capable of prophesying ‘great foretokens of their following fortunes’ through their ‘verses’. As late as 1677, Theophilus Gale (1628-1679), the controversial ejected minister and theologian asserts that ‘*Vates are nothing else but Interpreters of the Gods*’, citing Plato in his examination of the inextricability of prophecy and poetry:

The Prophets utter these things not by Art, but from a divine power ... not by art but by a divine fate, or afflation. ... [the] sort of madnesse and transport, surprising the tender and inaccessible mind is from the Muses, exciting and inspiring it unto Enthusiastic Songs and Poems. But he that undertakes this Prophetic Poesie from a confidence on some art, is very imperfect, in comparison of him that is possessed with an Ectastic furor. Wherefore al that Prophetic Poesie, which issues from the mind of a sober temperate man, vanisheth. Truly I could reckon up to thee so many and more illustrious effects of this furor inspired by God. His design is to shew, that al Poetic Prophesie comes from a Divine Enthusiasme or afflation without art. ... Poets and Prophets, were of the same import. ... and Vates signifies both ... these excellent Poems were in no regard human, or the product of mens wits, but divine and coming from

¹² *Ibid.*, 34, 35.

¹³ Greene, *Poetry, Signs, and Magic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 45-50.

¹⁴ Sidney (1595), B4^v.

¹⁵ *OED*, ‘vaticinate, *v.*’, etymology; ‘vates’, *n.1*.

God; for the Poets [or Prophets] are no other than Interpreters of God. This description which he gives of these false Diviners suits wel with Gods true Prophets, who are but Instruments by which he speaks.¹⁶

According to Plato, that which true ‘*Prophets utter*’ is not produced by human art, but granted by ‘*a divine power*’, its speaker ‘*possessed*’ by God in an ‘*Ectastic furor*’ when conveying the ‘*Enthusiastic Songs and Poems*’ that constitute their ‘*Prophetic Poesie*’. As Gale reiterates, though prophecy is inherently poetic, it arises ‘without art’, emerging ‘from a Divine Enthusiasme’; ‘al Poetic Prophesie’ is so completely God’s Word that ‘these excellent Poems were’ considered ‘in no regard human’. ‘*Poets*’ and ‘*Prophets*’ – who were both ‘of the same import’ – served as mouthpieces, ‘Instruments by which [God] speaks’. In an elegy written for the death of the poet and preacher Robert Wilde (1615-1679), the anonymous writer begins by declaring the departed, ‘A Prophet and a Poet both!’, the world being ‘loth ... to part with such a Wit’. Lamenting the loss of such an intuitive literary voice, the poet questions, ‘But what if Pregnant Wits in silence lie’, reassuring himself where such poetic insight truly derives from: ‘Yet shall the Spirit be poured from on high’.¹⁷ Wilde is a poet-prophet inasmuch as he serves as a receptacle and conduit of divine wisdom, through which ‘the Spirit [can] be poured’ and channelled by his voice. The ‘Pregnant’ words of the prophet transcend human artifice and its imaginative limitations, abundant with a substantial performativity, with the capacity to realise their predictive potential within our own tangible reality, coming to constitute a prescient form of verse directly inspired by the Creator.

Like the common poet, many early-modern practitioners of divination lacked the spiritual authority required to legitimately utter prophecies, therefore, this category of magic was often dismissed, either, as the work of false prophets – like soothsayers and fortune-tellers associated with the deceptive criminality of cunning folk – or else was considered demonic. Reformists, like the English theologian, William Perkins (1558-1602), for example, condemned those ‘whome they called Prophets’ as ‘men instructed by Satan in the grounds of Divination’.¹⁸ As Jason Philip Coy reaffirms, early-modern divination was often ‘defined as diabolical’, especially that of ‘Reformation-era preachers and polemicists’ who ‘sought to persuade [their readers] that fortune-telling, just like blatantly malevolent forms of black magic, was inherently evil’; since ‘the Bible and the Church Fathers had excoriated pagan forms of divination as demonic, any knowledge gained through occult means must be derived from a satanic pact’.¹⁹ Indeed, Nathanael Homes (1599-1678), a Puritan theologian and preacher, wrote a treatise on *Damonologie, and Theologie* (1650) in which he

¹⁶ See: Anon., *A Collection of the Statutes...* (1667), A2r; Gale, 59-62, referring to: Plato (1925), IX, 534b-534e.

¹⁷ Anon., *A Pillar Set Upon the Grave of The Reverend Dr. Robert Wilde* (1679), 1.

¹⁸ Perkins (1610), 4r.

¹⁹ Jason Philip Coy, *The Devil’s Art: Divination and Discipline in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 4-6.

explains that divinatory speech is based on a binding linguistic contract, a demonic pact that permits the devil to speak through the diviner:

The Devil makes the Witch or Diviner his immediate instrument in Divination, when hee immediately informing the Witches and Diviners, inableth them to tel many hidden things, he speaking *in* them or *by* them.²⁰

Essentially, the prophet who procures their insights by infernal pact is the diabolical antithesis of the *Divinus vates* who speaks by way of God.

In fear of prophecy's demonic implications, legislative action was taken to prohibit such magic in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, in the hope of avoiding the spread of deceptive or treasonous rumours. In the early years of Elizabeth I's reign, the Privy Council received information concerning English Catholics allegedly using magic against the new Queen.²¹ In response, Elizabeth I reinstated laws against such practices in March 1563 with *An Acte Against Fonde and Phantasticall Propheesies* and *An Acte Against Conjurations, Enchauntmentes, and Witchcraftes*, first passed under Henry VIII and Edward VI.²² King James VI/I replaced his 1563 Scottish Witchcraft Act with a much harsher *Acte Against the Conjuracion and Dealinge with Evill and Wicked Spirits*, upon his accession to the English throne in 1603. Observing the seeming urgency for newly crowned monarchs to address the threat of potentially oracular practices to political harmony, Tim Thornton presents 'ancient prophecy in the sixteenth century' as 'a threat to order and stability, and either benignly dismissed or savagely punished by an ever more incomprehending elite'.²³ These laws against divination appeared to condemn prophetic words themselves as constituting treason, rather than the act of prophesising, though to do so was contrary to customary legal thought. Elizabeth I's Act, for example, promised to punish the offender with one year's imprisonment and 'for everye suche offence the summe of tenne poundes', all those who 'advauce, publishe, and set forth by writing, printing, syngyng, or any other open speache or dede, to any person or persons, any fonde, phantasticall or false prophesie' liable 'to the stirring and movinge of factions, seditions, and rebellions within this Realme ... aswel concerning the Quenes Majestie'.²⁴ Johnathan K. van Patten, in his account of the legal history of prophecy and treason in Reformation England, explains that 'the law, with some exceptions, does not condemn a person for thoughts and words alone', rather:

²⁰ Nathanael Homes, *Damonologie, and Theologie* (1650), 47.

²¹ For historical details of these events, see: Devine, 67-91.

²² *Ibid.*; Elizabeth I, 52-3.

²³ Tim Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 14.

²⁴ Elizabeth I, 52v.

Some act manifesting the betrayal is usually required. This is in part due to the limited capacity of law to search a person's mind or heart, but also it is due to the general recognition that people commonly experience inner struggles and the law will not condemn until the inner struggle has resolved itself in favour of a treacherous act.

[Nevertheless] rulers have, from time to time, pushed the sanction of the treason laws in the direction of condemning disloyal words. ... The cases of opposition through magic and prophecy are especially interesting because the traditional demarcation between words and acts is blurred.²⁵

Typically, the law regulated criminal actions rather than 'thoughts and words', unless these thoughts and words began 'manifesting' beyond the 'person's mind or heart' in some 'treacherous act'. Elizabethan and Jacobean legislative attempts to convict prophetic speech further confused the 'demarcation between words and acts', since the 'power of words to effect change' was considered a possibility, 'due in part to a self-fulfilling belief that words could affect the substance of the world'.²⁶ Prophetic speech could, therefore, pose 'a real threat to political and social order because people were willing to act on the assumed truth of these symbols', as mere words were the germinant seeds that could incite a 'treacherous act', intended either to attain or prevent the forecast event.²⁷ As the English legal writer, Fernando Pulton (1536-1618) explains in his *De Pace Regis et Regnis* (1610), the law of treason 'doth not only restrain al persons from laying violent hands upon the person of the King' but more so, 'it doth inhibit them so much as to compasse or imagine, or to devise or thinke in their hearts to cut off by violent or untimely death, the life of the King'.²⁸ An anxiety pervaded early-modern society that prophecy was a 'powerful political language and the ideas it carried with it could not be simply brought under anyone's control'.²⁹

King James feared the prophets' disruptions to his kingdom, writing in his 1597 treatise on *Daemonologie*, that 'the visiones of the Prophets ... deceive' those who 'fall into' its 'snares, and justlie permittes them to be illuded with great efficacy of deceit, because they would not beleve the trueth'.³⁰ In spite of this, James was, himself, praised for possessing a divine intuition sanctioned by God, after he pre-emptively uncovered the Gunpowder Plot of 5th November 1606, deciphering the meaning of a treasonous letter intercepted by secret police.³¹ In a sermon marking the first anniversary of his discovery of this Plot, Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), the English bishop and

²⁵ Johnathan K. van Patten, 'Magic, Prophecy, and the Law of Treason in Reformation England', *The American Journal of Legal History*, 27, i (1983), 1-32 (2-3).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-2.

²⁸ Fernando Pulton, *De Pace Regis et Regni Viz...* (1609), 110.

²⁹ Thornton, 51.

³⁰ James VI/I, *Daemonologie in Forme of a Dialogue* (1597), 4.

³¹ James VI/I, 'Speech to Parliament of 9 November 1605', in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 147-58 (150); see also: Mark Nicholls, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot* (Manchester: MUP, 1991), 25.

scholar, refers to the biblical proverb which reinforces the validity of a prophecy spoken by the sovereign – ‘a divine sentence shall be in the lips of the king: his mouth shall not transgress in judgment’ – remarking:³²

But then cometh God again, (God most certainly), and as in the Proverbs [puts] a very ‘divination’, a very oracle, in ‘the Kings lips’, and his mouth missed not the matter; made him, as Joseph, ‘the revealer of secrets’, to read the riddle: giving him wisdom to make both explication, what they would do; and application, where it was they would do it. This was God certainly.³³

James was a prophet-king, ‘filled with the Spirit of the holy God’ and divinely appointed to speak with the power in his ‘lips’ to convey God’s ‘oracle’, and to engage in ‘divination’ without error, since ‘his mouth missed not the matter’. Equipped with the ‘wisdom’ of ‘God’, the king had the capability to ‘read’ and decipher the Creator’s obscure ‘secrets’ and ‘riddle[s]’.

Granted this linguistic gift, King James asserted a corresponding authority over poetic language, seeking to establish his reputation as a divinely-inspired poet, as he writes in his 1584, *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie*, he ‘oft revolved, and red over (favorable Reader) the booke and Poems of the devine and Illuster Poete, Salust du Bartas’.³⁴ Specifically referring to *Devine Weekes and Workes* (1605) by the French courtier and poet Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas (1544-1590), an account of Creation through the divine Word, James is ‘moved’ to ‘a restles and lofty desire, to preas to attaine to the like vertue’.³⁵ Pursuing this sublime poetic voice, James recognised that, ‘all art ... is a heavenly gift: no flesh nor bone’, it transcends human corporeality, for all great poets are a vessel or instrument of God: ‘For Poets right are lyke the pype alway, | Who full doth sound, and empty staves to play: | Even so their fury lasting, lasts their tone’.³⁶ During his Scottish reign, King James also published a second volume of verse, *His Majesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres* (1591), which included: sonnets; translations from the Roman poet, Lucan (39-65 AD) and Du Bartas; a long poem on the Mediterranean naval Battle of Lepanto (1571); and a treatise on Scottish poetry. For these works, James was held in high esteem, when, during the early months of his English reign in the spring of 1603, ‘the majority of works registered by the Stationers’ Company concerned James’s accession’ and addressed his ‘poetic and scholarly interests’ as ‘a recurring theme’.³⁷ Both universities produced collections of Neo-Latin verse in his honour: *Academiae*

³² *Geneva Bible*, Proverbs 16.10.

³³ Lancelot Andrewes, *Ninety-Six Sermons*, eds. J.P. Wilson and J. Bliss, 5 Vols (Oxford: Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, 1841), IV, 216.

³⁴ James VI/I, *The Essayes of a Prentise...* (1584), Ciii^r.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Diiii^r.

³⁷ James Doelman, ‘The Accession of King James I and English Religious Poetry’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 34, i (1994), 19-40 (23).

Oxoniensis by Oxford, and *Threnothriambenticon* by Cambridge, within which references are made to his combined role as prophet, poet, king, and divine figure. For example, the English churchman, Richard Eedes (1555-1604), addresses James I as, ‘Holy prophet; divine King; other God on earth, who is king and poet at the same time’.³⁸ Not only was his credibility as King-prophet upheld by his poetic capabilities, but in turn his poetry reinforced his gift for divine intuitions. In *Basilikon Doron* (1599), James’ treatise on government, the Scottish King also writes how he considers his exalted poetic ambitions to be a part of his royal duty, for ‘it best becommeth a King to purifie and make famous his owne tongue; wherein he may goe before all his subjectes’ for it encourages ‘him well to doe in all honest & lawfull things’.³⁹ As sceptical attitudes towards divine right increased – prompting James I to write his 1609 Speech to Parliament upholding the divine right of Kings – James sought to preserve his divinely-elected authority through his poetic talent. ‘Verse’, according to King James, ‘did then in heaven first bud and blume’, stimulating the same visionary, ‘springing and germinant’ poetics of the prophet, with the power to transcend corporeality and create the lasting reputation that he sought after as *divinus vates* – authorised by God to explore the powers of those divinatory words that were forbidden to most.⁴⁰ Belief in occult, non-scriptural prophecy remained to the extent that fears of demonological activity escalated during the Reformation, increasing restriction of prophetic utterances since their words posed an insurgent threat to political stability. However, the fertile hermeneutics of divine prophecy could be effortlessly transposed to the words of poet, since the prophet and poet shared an intimate, historical interdependency. By writing in ‘*Prophetic Poesie*’, the poet preserved prophetic word-magic with the power to enact an impossible leap towards fulfilment of the unborn future tense.

³⁸ Richard Eedes, *Academiae Oxoniensis* (Oxford: 1603), 8, cit. Doelman, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), 23.

³⁹ James VI/I, *Basilikon Doron*... (1603), 119-20.

⁴⁰ James VI/I (1605), Eit.

II. Prophetic Utterances in Shakespeare's Pre-Romances

And therefore all you whome this may most concern, either deny this prophesie of God, and wipe it out (which if you doe, God wil deny you, and wipe you out of the booke of life) or eis confesse it, to bee fulfilled in and among you, and give glory to God.⁴¹

In 1612, the English minister and co-founder of the General Baptist denomination, Thomas Helwys (1575-1614) published *A Shorte Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity*, a radical defence of religious liberty, debating the errors of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England, while considering the undeniable realisation of the apocalyptic prophetic visions in the Book of Revelation: 'For let anie man but heare the prophesie of this booke of the Revel and he may see it fulfilled'.⁴² So palpable are these already-accomplished biblical prophecies, that Helwys warns his reader, if a Christian is to 'deny' them, their only alternative is religious expulsion and even, perhaps, death. If the pre-emptive 'mind of God was revealed by Prophecy', as an anonymous 1650 legal document dictates, then 'when Gods will in this kind is revealed, it is to be submitted to' for 'providence shall dictate'.⁴³ Prophecy obliges the early-modern subject to comply with its set narrative, and any attempts to exert individual agency over its words are punishable by death: 'God wil ... wipe you out of the booke of life'. Pre-modern prophecy implemented a somewhat tyrannical politics of order and hierarchy, endorsing a purity of lineage and inheritance, as an anonymous 1642 treatise on prophecy affirms: 'The demonstration of Prophetick Divinations predictates the future estate of a Kingdome, and whatsoever hath been expressed in this lately mentioned, is already fulfilled in exemplary relations'.⁴⁴ Conceptions of prophecy as a magically determinist language, however, had begun to wane, particularly towards the end of Shakespeare's writing career, making way for the empirically observed pragmatism of scientific-thinking, as Victoria Bladen and Yan Brailowsky observe: 'Shakespeare wrote in, and for, an enchanted world but one that was on the cusp of change, with the emergence of observational methods, proto-empiricism and sceptical discourses'.⁴⁵ Scepticism regarding the performative validity of prophetic utterances became increasingly prevalent among anti-magic Protestants, such as Reginald Scot, who, in his 1584 *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, recognised 'the ceasing of miracles, prophesies and oracles'.⁴⁶ Even Francis Bacon, in his essay 'Of Prophecies' (1625), protests the implausible frequency with which prophecies were issued, 'being infinite in Number', discarding them as illegitimate, composed of 'Impostures, and by idle and craftie Braines, meere contrived and faigned, after the

⁴¹ Thomas Helwys, *A Shorte Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity* (1612), 27-8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴³ Anon., *A Logical Demonstration of the Lawfulness of Subscribing the New Engagement* (1650), 6.

⁴⁴ Anon., *Sixe Strange Prophecies...* (1642), A2r.

⁴⁵ Bladen (2020), 8.

⁴⁶ Scot, 155.

Event Past'.⁴⁷ While the prophetic sign began to lose its pre-scientific power to verbally induce its outcome, Shakespeare's last plays sought to nostalgically preserve the magically restorative notion of prophecy for the sake of facilitating narrative, lineal, and linguistic redemption, as I shall explore in the following section on *Cymbeline*. In Shakespeare's pre-romance, often more cynical play-worlds, however, prophecy is employed as a linguistic device to implement repressive political regimes, demanding the passive accommodation of its foretold future, which can only be accomplished once an excess of human will is eradicated, with agency surrendered instead to 'Gods will'. Even Shakespeare's comedies, typically, illustrate that a successful prophecy compels its characters to yield to its words, relinquishing their subjective desires and conforming to its lineal model, an acquiescence rejected by the figures of tragedy, who push back against prophecy as ambitious human agency seeks shortcuts to a promised destiny with an exertion of selfhood that eventually kills the prophetic subject.

All's Well That Ends Well is an example of a comedy that enforces the fulfilment prophetic wagers, a play where even accidentally prophetic words – like those of Bertram's letter to Helena – prescribe a narrative arc that must, ironically, surpass even the prophet's own personal intentions and desires. Before this, however, Helena challenges the King of France with her own prophetic gamble: if the medicinal cure, left by her late Doctor-father 'on's bed of death' (II.i.104), fails to save the royal life and remedy the King's sickness within two days – 'ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring | Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring ... | What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly, | Health shall live free, and sickness freely die' (161-8) – she will forfeit her own life; but, if she succeeds, Helena demands, 'Then shalt thou give me with thy kingly hand | What husband in thy power I will command' (193-4). Though the revived King is true to his word – 'receive | The confirmation of my promis'd gift, | Which but attends thy naming' (II.iii.49-51) – Helena's reluctant new husband, Count Bertram, escapes the unwanted company of his low-born wife, writing a letter containing a prophetic bet of his own:

'When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband; but in such a "then" I write a "never".' This is a dreadful sentence.

III.ii.57-61

Bertram confidently gambles on Helena fulfilling two seemingly impossible conditions that would oblige him to perform the dreaded role of loving husband to his wife: for the first condition – 'when thou canst get the ring upon my finger' – he ensures his ring 'never shall come off'; and the

⁴⁷ Bacon, *The Essayes or Counsels...* (1696), 101.

second condition, in which Helena must ‘show ... a child begotten of thy body that I am father to’, is impracticable since he has refused to consummate their marriage. In the unlikely scenario that both these stipulations are met, Bertram promises that Helena may ‘then call [him] husband’, before he grammatically dismisses the prospect of such a future: ‘in such a “then” I write a “never”’. The play’s comic or tragic fate depends on whether Bertram’s prophecy will be realised, illustrating the function of Daniel L. Keegan’s definition of the ‘prophetic wager’ in Shakespeare, which is ‘a speculative intervention into the dense web of relationships’ – specifically, ‘human, rather than spectral, relationships’ – and a contemplation of ‘human plurality’.⁴⁸ Essentially, the prophetic wager functions to highlight the multiplicity of possible outcomes, yet, despite this illusion of vast potentiality, the unforeseen accomplishment of Bertram’s inadvertent prophecies illustrate the prescriptive outcome that is typical of Shakespeare’s comedies. Once Helena has successfully fulfilled Bertram’s conditions in the final scene of the play, he is bound to reluctantly perform prophecy’s ‘dreadful sentence’, grammatically constrained by the words of his own conditional clauses. Helena returns to court reciting the words of Bertram’s letter: “When from my finger you can get this ring, | And [are] by me with child, etc.” This is done. | Will you be mine now you are doubly won?” (V.iii.312-4). In a fanciful moment of instant transformation, Bertram concedes, ‘I’ll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly’ (316), demonstrating how prophecy coerces a compliance to its words and its prescribed lineage, even ensuring the conception of their unborn child.

Antithetically, *Macbeth* stages an example of the tragedy genre’s approach to prophecy, tracking its protagonist as he endeavours to accelerate the witches’ premonitions, overriding their natural course with a ‘vaulting ambition’ of his own ‘which o’erleaps itself’ (I.vii.27). Macbeth’s disruptive interference with the authority of the prophetic narrative demands bloody acts of regicide and murderous tyranny which escalate towards his rapid demise. However, this downfall is, in part, due to the witches’ insidiously manipulative rhetorical delivery. Jessica L. Malay observes how it is the witches’ prophetic language that incites the calamity which ensues, explaining how these ‘Sibylline figures ... are disturbing because they speak truths that are uttered in such a way as to create destruction and chaos’.⁴⁹ Supposedly, the witches ‘speak truths’ considering that their predictions are realised throughout the play in perfect sequence, but they speak with a ‘strange intelligence’ (I.iii.76) designed to tempt Macbeth with the ‘earnest of success’ (132). They prophesy in admiring verbal prostrations, firstly addressing Macbeth’s current position – ‘hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!’ – then his future positions, still within the present tense – ‘hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!’ – and the future perfect – ‘All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!’ – grammatically granting an

⁴⁸ Daniel L. Keegan, ‘Performing Prophecy: More Life on the Shakespearean Scene’, *SQ*, 62, iii (2011), 420-43 (421-3).

⁴⁹ Jessica L. Malay, *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance: Shakespeare’s Sibyls* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), 114-15.

experience of the victories of the future as if already accomplished (48-50). The witches are ‘imperfect speakers’ (70) because their ‘prophetic greeting’ (78) is incomplete, leaving Macbeth to fantasise about how their prophesied outcomes might be achieved. His mind soon filled with ‘horrible imaginings’ (138) of ‘murder yet ... fantastical’ (139), Macbeth is consumed by the prophecy’s deceptive conveyance of truth, understood to be a demonic tool of seduction, to the extent that his conception of reality is inverted entirely: ‘nothing is | But what is not’ (141-2). Tormented, most of all, by his own depraved distortions of the prophesied course of events – ‘to know my deed, ’twere best not know myself’ (II.ii.70) – Macbeth must pay the price not only in his own downfall, but by his complete dynastic termination, whereby the Scottish kingdom is ultimately restored to the murdered Duncan’s bloodline.

Shakespearean romances, as is later examined, begin like a tragedy, in a fallen world that is cynically reliant upon the deceptive hermeneutics of the political sphere – resisting or overriding prophetic speeches – yet these plays conclude much as comedies in moments of redemption that accommodate the authority of divine providence. In this sense, the romances are, themselves, structured like prophecy, encompassing its obligatory process of linguistic accommodation. *Hamlet* is a tragedy which presents an exception to its genre, structured similarly to a romance, when, in the final scene of the play, the equivocating Prince pronounces a significant shift in his approach to prophecy: from tragedy’s lethal defiance of its words to the passive, accommodating faithfulness of the comedies. Of course, unlike in the last plays, Hamlet still suffers his tragic fate, for his realisation comes too late; nonetheless, abandoning his characteristic scepticism and turning to divine certainty, Hamlet returns from his transformational journey at sea with a newfound conviction: ‘This is I, | Hamlet the Dane’ (*Ham.*, V.i.257-8). This moment of self-affirming faithfulness often characterises the revelatory turn to romance, such as the moment in which Pericles recovers his linguistic faith at sea – ‘I am Pericles of Tyre’ (*Per.*, V.i.204) – reunited with his seemingly resurrected daughter: ‘My name is Marina’ (V.i.142). After this pivotal moment, Hamlet is challenged to a duel with Laertes, before he confesses to a premonition:

HAMLET ... I shall win at the odds. Thou wouldst not think how ill all’s here about my heart – but it is no matter.

...

HORATIO If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

HAMLET Not a whit, we defy augury. There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be [now], ’tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it [will] come – the readiness is all. Since no man, of aught he leaves, knows what is’t to leave betimes, let be.

Ham., V.ii.211-24

Initially, Hamlet was driven by an intransigent commitment to the supernatural, hanging attentively upon the words of his late father's ghost, who sought 'revenge' for his 'most unnatural murder' (I.v.25) which Hamlet foresaw: 'O my prophetic soul!' (40), however, in the momentous realisation of Act Five Scene Two, Hamlet turns from his faith in the words of the paranormal, instead devoting himself to the exemplary words of scripture. He reflects upon the futility of divinatory intuition, thus 'defy[ing] augury', concluding that since all is preordained by God we must surrender and 'let be', submitting ourselves to the 'special providence' of the divine, which '[will] come' regardless. Condemning the occult practice of 'augury' that involves its practitioner meddling with God's plan, Hamlet resigns his life to the wisdom of the Creator, persevering with the deadly duel, despite 'how ill all's ... about [his] heart'. Hamlet expresses his faith in divine predestination, or 'special providence', in Biblical terms, referencing 'the fall of a sparrow' from the Book of Matthew: 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father?'.⁵⁰ In other words, despite the insignificant value of the sparrow, even such inconsequential creatures as these die by God's will. Although the term 'augury' explicitly denotes the supernatural 'practice of predicting the future, revealing hidden truths, or obtaining guidance in future affairs on the basis of the observation and interpretation of natural signs', its etymology roots may, in fact, refer back to God's sparrow.⁵¹ Indeed, an 'augur' was the ancient Roman 'religious official who predicted future events and gave advice on public matters' by interpreting 'the behaviour of birds', otherwise termed 'avispe' a Latin, contraction of *avis*, meaning 'bird', and *spex*, 'an observer'.⁵² In light of this, Hamlet's use of the word 'augury' implies the unchristian custom of reading God's fallen sparrow as an ominous sign, a practice the well-educated Prince renounces as a wasted and hubristic endeavour.

In his reading of this passage, Matthew Wagner, similarly, distinguishes between 'augury' as 'conventionally more aligned with divination – a *seeing* or *telling* of the future, as an interpretive act', while 'prophecy' conveys an impression of the future upon a passive recipient:

If augury and divination are thought of as interpretive – seeing the future by way of reading specific signs – prophecy might be thought of as at least slightly more generative, especially within a performative context. By articulating a prophecy, one is crafting a version of the future within the present ... the utterance has something of the performative speech act (*à la* J.L. Austin) to it. To read Hamlet's defiance of augury in these terms, then, is to read his act as a rejection of looking to the future; it is a refusal to read signs, which is in itself a highly uncharacteristic manoeuvre for him.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Geneva Bible*, Matthew 10.29.

⁵¹ *OED*, 'augury, *n.*', 1a.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 'augur, *n.*', 1; 'auspex, *n.*'; 'auspex, *n.*, etymology'.

⁵³ Matthew Wagner, 'Performing the Prophetic', *Shakespeare*, 15, iii (2019), 262-71 (267).

When Hamlet declares that ‘we defy augury’, he not only recognises the useless compulsion of resisting fate, but he also denies a process of actively *interpreting* prophetic signs, signalling a significant shift in the play as Hamlet the over-reader becomes a passive receiver. As Wagner concludes, Hamlet’s ‘defiance of augury’ is ‘a rejection of looking to the future; it is a refusal to read signs’, he ignores prophecy’s ‘craft[ed] ... version of the future within the present’, because he has surrendered his destiny to God’s will. Bound by his own refusal to interpret and act upon his premonition, Hamlet succumbs to his tragic end. Still, with his final ‘dying voice’ (V.ii.356), he resolves to ‘prophesy th’ election lights | On Fortinbras’ (355-6) before ‘the rest is silence’ (358). This time, however, his prophetic words look to a future that he ‘cannot live to hear’ (354), accepting his ‘fall’, like that of the sparrow, with ‘readiness’.

Just as Hamlet’s acceptance that he must ‘let be’ comes too late, a similar fate tends to befall the prophetic subjects of Shakespeare’s histories. Inexorably, these plays trace a prescriptive narrative of royal lineage and generational inheritance for rulers whose downfall has already been documented by historical accounts. This genre dramatises the real-life tragedy of prophecy: since the fates of its characters are literally predetermined, any individual resistance against the historical course of events proves not only entirely futile but is often met with a precipitous demise; nobody can resist their historical direction. Yet in these plays, prophetic language, also serves as an imaginative digression, offering occasional glimmers of hope for the future, interrupting the linear temporality of the fixed historical account with an interval of suspended time, pausing to consider alternative possible outcomes, unearthing history’s un-lived potential and tempting us with it – irrespective of our certain knowledge that this can never be realised. Accordingly, Kiernan Ryan argues that Shakespeare’s use of prophecy exemplifies the scope of the writers’ ‘proleptic imagination’, creatively envisaging possible outcomes by ‘liv[ing] imaginatively in the future’, for moments of prophecy, in the histories, temporarily prioritise ‘human potentiality rather than historical reality’.⁵⁴ Prophecy is framed in these terms, as visionary word-magic, in a 1665 treatise by the English clergyman and scholar, John Spencer (1630-1693), who considers ‘Prophecies as a kind of Verbal Prodigies’ which ‘feed the curiosities of men by the pretended notices of the future’.⁵⁵ From the classical Latin *praetendere* ‘to hold or stretch out, to extend in front, to put forward as a pretext or reason’, the word ‘pretend’, aside from to playfully or deceptively feign, implies a prolonged digression, a sense of expanding time.⁵⁶ Prophecy encourages its subject to anticipatorily protract their imagination in order to conceive of multiple possible futures. To

⁵⁴ Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare’s Universality: Here’s Fine Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 27-8 (31).

⁵⁵ John Spencer, *A Discourse Concerning Vulgar Prophecies* (1665), 7.

⁵⁶ OED, ‘pretend, *v.*’, etymology.

‘pretend’, therefore, encompasses the central paradox of Shakespeare’s prophecies, on one hand they appear to semi-magically allow for the extradition of self to the future, in an almost impossibly aspirational way; yet, at the same time, they are the most fraudulent type of speech, luring human agents into verbal traps where they must acquiesce to their own purely fictive and manipulated ‘fate’. Prophetic words conjure an imaginative or ‘pretended’ fantasy of alternative futures, reframing our conception of the present by expanding the sense of latent possibility for recuperative change within it.

When the prophets of the history plays prefigure a monarch’s passing, for example, they convey a ‘fatal prophecy’ (*1H6*, III.i.194) that triggers, what Ryan calls, a ‘posthumous perspective’ – the vivid depiction of a time in which the living monarch has already died – prompting the momentary consideration of a different path, which ‘serves to keep the prospect of the transformation of human life alive in the present’.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the characters in Shakespeare’s histories inauspiciously question the validity of the prophetic utterance, refusing to correctly interpret its cautionary signals before it is too late; only after the ‘fatal prophecy’ is realised can Shakespeare’s characters retrospectively lament their lack of foresight, their failure to entertain the ‘posthumous perspective’ as a missed opportunity for ‘transformation’. For example, in Act Three Scene One of *Henry IV Part 2*, the King regrets his past failure to recognise what has proved to be prophecy; as he paces the palace in his nightgown, troubled in the knowledge that Northumberland is considering waging war against him, Henry IV muses how swiftly time passes and loyalties change: ‘O God, that one might read the book of fate, | And see the revolution of the times’ (III.i.45-6). Reflecting back, the King traces the treasonous betrayals of Northumberland: who, ‘not ten years’ ago, began as ‘great friends’ with Henry IV’s own predecessor, Richard II; then, ‘eight years’ ago, turned in ‘defiance’ of Richard II and ‘like a brother toil’d’ and ‘laid his love and life’ to assist Bullingbrook himself in his accension to the throne (57-65). He continues to ‘remember’,

When Richard, with his eye brim full of tears,
Then check’d and rated by Northumberland,
Did speak these words, now prov’d a prophecy?
‘Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
My cousin Bullingbrook ascends my throne’
...
‘The time shall come,’ thus did he follow it,
‘The time will come, that foul sin, gathering head,
Shall break into corruption’: so went on,
Foretelling this same time’s condition
And the division of our amity.

⁵⁷ Ryan, 121.

III.i.67-79

In this moment, King Henry Bullingbrook realises that the admonition delivered by Richard II – that ‘the time shall come’ for him to suffer the consequences of his ‘foul sin’ – may ‘now [be] prov’d a prophecy’, predicting a rebellion that seems to be ‘foretelling this same time’s condition’. Only with hindsight, can the King glance back, wishing he had ‘read the book of fate’ and deciphered the meaning of its ‘words’ to avoid his ruin. The Earl of Warwick, in Act Three Scene One, also hints at the shortcomings of the now ailing monarch who failed to study the developments of the past and glean their prophetic value, since these anticipatory instances have now proved to proffer reliable insight into future proceedings:

There is a history in all men’s lives,
 Figuring the natures of the times deceas’d,
 The which observ’d, a man may prophesy,
 With a near aim, of the main chance of things
 As yet not come to life, who in their seeds
 And weak beginning lie intreasur’d.
 Such things become the hatch and brood of time.

III.i.80-6

Warwick employs a common trope used to depict the fertility of prophetic language, referring to the metaphorical ‘seeds’ of the future, that have not yet ‘become the hatch and brood of time’. If one simply ‘observ’d’ the course of ‘history’ and ‘the natures of the times’ passed, he might then ‘prophesy, | With a near aim’ that which has ‘yet not come’, for therein the ‘seeds’ of what is to come lie dormant, only intelligible by this close examination.

Henry IV’s opportunities to heed prophetic speeches become increasingly undermined by the realisation of their more ambiguous, slippery linguistic signifiers. In Act Four Scene Four, the ailing King discloses to his advisors and younger sons that he is prepared, once the civil war is resolved, to lead an army – ‘we will our youth lead on to higher fields ... | Our navy is address’d, our power collected’ (IV.iv.3-5) – and join the Crusades in Jerusalem. However, his plans never comes to fruition owing to his deteriorating condition, when, in the following scene, the King anticipates his imminent passing, querying the words of the prophecy that had foretold his place of death:

Laud be to God! even there my life must end.
 It hath been prophesied to me many years,
 I should not die but in Jerusalem,
 Which vainly I suppos’d the Holy Land.
 But bear me to that chamber, there I’ll lie,
 In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

IV.v.235-40

The King's ambition to battle in Jerusalem, where he was also prophesied to die, is undercut by his misinterpretation of the prophecy itself, as it is upon his deathbed that he realises he was never destined to die 'in Jerusalem, | Which vainly' he 'suppos'd the Holy Land' but rather in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster Abbey. Mocking the King's loftier ambitions to lead an army to Jerusalem, where he expected to die, most honourably, this farcical linguistic slippage is what Keegan refers to as a 'prophetic misfire' in which 'the moment of prophecy's consummation turns on a crucially unstable signifier' when 'incontinent significations become legible in retrospect'.⁵⁸ This disheartening semiotic lapse serves as an ironic reminder of what *could* have been, and how far reality has fallen short, a reminder of the plurality of outcomes available.

The prophecy in *Henry VI Part 2*, similarly, stumbles over its deceptive, misleading signifiers. With her eye on the throne, the Duchess of Gloucester dabbles in necromancy, hiring a witch and wizard (Margery Jordan and Bolingbrook, respectively) to summon a spirit and predict the fates of the King and his courtiers:

BOLINGBROOK 'First of the king: what shall of him become?'
[Reading out of a paper.]
 SPIRIT The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose;
 But him out-live, and die a violent death.
[As the Spirit speaks, Bolingbrook writes the answer.]
 BOLINGBROOK '[Tell me] what [fate awaits] the Duke of Suffolk?'
 SPIRIT By water shall he die, and take his end.
 BOLINGBROOK 'What shall [betide] the Duke of Somerset?'
 SPIRIT Let him shun castles.
 Safer shall he be upon the sandy plains
 Than where castles mounted stand.

I.iv.29-37

In the first prediction, when the Spirit pronounces that the King shall be deposed by a duke who is destined to 'die a violent death', he accurately prefigures the Duke of York's bid to overthrow Henry VI – well-documented for inciting the War of Roses. Next, just as the spirit foresees that the Duke of Suffolk shall die 'by water', it is a partially accurate estimation, for he dies *near* water, beheaded by pirates. And finally – as Bolingbrook asks 'what shall [betide] the Duke of Somerset?', to which the spirit urges, 'let him shun castles' and avoid 'where castles mounted stand' – this last premonition features a sly signifiatory substitution, in which 'castle' refers to the name of a pub, since Somerset is not killed on the grounds of a fortified castle, but rather by the Duke of

⁵⁸ Keegan, 431.

Gloucester (the future King Richard III), ‘underneath an alehouse’ paltry sign, | ‘The Castle in Saint Albons, Somerset’ (V.ii.67-8). Malay, comments on the ‘the riddling veracity of the prophecies’ in this scene, in which the Spirit:

Asnath, directed by Jordan, answers a series of questions so enigmatically that although in the end they are proven to contain the truth, they are so oblique as to be impossible to understand and thus do not provide any useful guidance.⁵⁹

Indeed, the use of enigmatic prophetic truths, ‘so oblique as to be impossible to understand’, function like a decoy, eliciting the expectation of another, more dignified, end for the Duke of Somerset. Although the characters in this play condemn divinatory practices as demonic – as with the Duchess of Gloucester who is arrested and ultimately banished for witchcraft – yet, upon realising how the spirit’s prophecy has, technically, been fulfilled, the Duke of York acknowledges that this ‘hath made the wizard famous in his death’ (69). On account of such cunning verbal duplicities, it is only in hindsight, after the prophecy has been proven and its true meaning unveiled, that the sceptical courtiers regret their lack of faith in its magical words.

Though Shakespeare’s histories, like his tragedies, often depict a disillusionment with the prophetic language that obstructs its characters from a constructive interpretation of its words before it is too late, there are more cynical examples of prophecy in which alternative redemptive futures are not even momentarily perceptible. The Fool, in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* prophesies an impossibly naïve future of linguistic faithfulness and wondrous redemption, but, until the last plays, these moments of nostalgic yearning for innocence remain enveloped by a cynical futility. As King Lear seeks shelter in the tempestuous storm, the Fool turns aside in a momentary digression to address the audience and ‘speak a prophecy ere I go’ (III.ii.80):

When priests are more in word than matter;
 ...
 When every case in law is right;
 No squire in debt nor no poor knight;
 When slanders do not live in tongues;
 ...
 And bawds and whores do churches build;
 Then comes the time, who lives to see’t,
 That going shall be us’d with feet.
 This prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live before his time.

III.ii.81-95

⁵⁹ Malay, 102.

The Fool interrupts the height of the drama, to prophesy a perfected utopia, in the same moment that political order and its patriarchal hierarchies are tumultuously overturned: the monarch has recognised the reality of his compromised position as ‘a poor, infirm, weak, and despis’d old man’ (20), and soon after, bemoans the meaninglessness of his own royal status, stripping off his kingly robes: ‘unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, fork’d animal as thou art. Off, off, you lendings!’ (III.iv.106-8). Ryan suggests that just as the play exposes the illusory pageantry of civilised society and its rulers, the Fool hints at ‘utopian possibility’ amid ‘dystopian reality’: ‘the Fool ... personifies at this moment the whole play’s disruption of chronological time in the name of a vision of history to which the prospect of transformation has been restored’.⁶⁰ Stepping beyond the disordered kingdom of the play, this soliloquy envisions a triumphant age of redemption, a world so fair and just that, ‘every case in law is right; | No squire in debt nor no poor knight’, and so innocent that, ‘bawds and whores do churches build’. What is more, this is an age of linguistic purity and unwavering faith in the meanings that words signify – the deceptive language of ‘slanders do not live in tongues’ – it is a future characterised by an Adamic language uncorrupted by falsehoods. The Fool introduces this era as one in which ‘priests are more in word than matter’ – in which religious conviction transcends the ostentation of the material realm, elevated by its devotion to Scripture and the God-Word – for, in his fantasy utopia, a faithful reverence for a pure, divinely-anchored linguistics appears a necessary precondition. The language of this soliloquy, however, remains embedded within a bleak nihilism, as it simultaneously ridicules the naïve impossibility of such prelapsarian purity and faith, given the postlapsarian, merciless play-world of ruthless, Machiavellian politics. The Fool relocates his prophecy to a historically fiction moment, not due to be spoken until the reign of King Arthur – ‘this prophecy Merlin shall make, for I live before his time’ – almost retracting his words in this final statement; confounding our chronological perceptions altogether, the Fool renders his sardonically idyllic prophecy void.

Throughout Shakespeare’s pre-romances, the word-magic of prophecy may provide a momentary insight into the pre-written mysteries of the universe, but this is simultaneously undercut by prophecy as a language of prosaic irony or trickery. Throughout Shakespeare’s plays, prophecy is either charged with magical determinist agency and efficacy, or its utterances are revealed to be chimeras, deluding his characters into cooperating with their own downfall. Though the comedies enact a fulfilment of their prophecies, they do so under the oppressive precondition of quashing the individual will. While the tragedies are driven by prophetic promissory notes of something more, yet as aspirational human agency attempts to exert itself it contrives its own hubristic ruin

⁶⁰ Ryan, 43, 42.

by being tempted. In the histories, prophecy 'stretches out' time to consider alternative futures, while predetermined narrative fates concede that its warnings are futile, inevitably heeded too late. Only in his last plays, do we observe an evolution of prophetic word-magic from a sinister rhetorical tool of political oppression to a miraculously recuperative language.

III. The Divinatory Repair of Lineage in *Cymbeline*

i. 'I Cannot Delve Him to the Root': Lineage and Fidelity

Prophecy remained a significant feature in the literature of the early seventeenth century – despite an increasing disenchanted scepticism – as period writers sought to preserve this divinatory mode's poetic power to activate a generative linguistics, travelling back and forth between different temporal perspectives to reconnect ruptured lineal ties, repairing divided Kingdoms. This is observable in Edmund Spenser's (c. 1552-1599) *The Fairie Queene* (1590-1596), which briefly features the mythical Welsh magician, Merlin, known for his instrumental role in the rise of King Arthur and celebrated in literature for his powers of prophecy. In Spenser's epic poem, Merlin constructs a magical mirror for Britomart's father, King Ryence, intended 'to shew in perfect sight, | What ever thing was in the world contaynd'.⁶¹ Interpreting Britomart's vision in the mirror, Merlin prophesies that Artegall and she are destined to produce an heir who shall establish a great royal dynasty that concludes with the reigning monarch of Spenser's age, Elizabeth I, in 'A chronicle of Briton kings ... till time of Gloriane' (II.x.Proem, 1-4). Yet, Spenser's prophet imposes a set political order – 'the streight course of heavenly destiny, | Led with eternall providence' (III.iii.24, 3-4) – to which his subject must defer as a necessary precondition of effective prophecy, to ensure this family's rule over several ages to come: 'Therefore submit thy wayes unto his will, | And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill' (8-9). Though it upholds (and even champions) this sinister political ideal, Spenser, like Shakespeare, subscribes to this magical determinist view of prophecy, to sustain its generational connectivity, allowing the poet to simultaneously trace the national ancestry while directing individual progeny onto a miraculously restorative, collective path. Hoping to preserve an increasingly outdated conception of prophetic word-magic, Spenser's *Fairie Queene*, like Shakespeare's romances, adopt genres resembling myth and fantasy that are compatible with the magical worldview of multi-directional temporality and connectivity. In an often-cited passage, Northrop Frye considers the romance genre in similar terms:

Romance, the kernel of fable, brings an upwards journey toward man's recovery of what he projects as sacred myth. At the bottom of the mythological universe is a death and rebirth process which cares nothing for the individual; at the top is the individual's regained identity. At the bottom is a memory which can only be returned to, a closed circle of recurrence: at the top is the recreation of memory.⁶²

Romance inhabits a systematic and cyclical 'mythological universe' that repeatedly enacts journeys of 'recovery', of 'a memory ... returned to' and then recreated. It is a framework that prioritises a

⁶¹ Edmund Spenser, *The Fairie Queene* (1590), ed. A.C. Hamilton (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), III.ii.19:1-2.

⁶² Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1976), 183.

cross-generational narrative of nostalgic recuperation and ‘cares nothing for the individual’, whose free will dare not disrupt prophecy’s prerequisite of compliance. More recent critics, like Raphael Lyne, challenge Frye, arguing that ‘it is problematic to approach Shakespeare’s romances in mythical terms’ since:

These plays are closely embroiled in their immediate historical milieu and cannot be read as straightforwardly ideal or archetypal. Political concerns, and the dynamics of earthly power, are often in evidence. The other is their constant self-conscious quality, and the sometimes light-fingered way they achieve their movement from a ‘closed circle or recurrence’ to the ‘recreation of memory’.⁶³

Indeed, Shakespeare’s last plays may borrow their restorative power from mythology, but rather than being ‘straightforwardly ideal or archetypal’ interpretations of the genre, they introduce an underlying cynicism in line with a contemporary political expedience that seeks to recuperate a Tudor order, alongside the ‘self-conscious’ rationalism – inherited from New Science – that threatens to interfere with the performance of naivety that is required to accomplish their final recoveries. Kevin Pask – who observes how early-modern disenchantment prompted a literary preservation of magical and superstitious tropes – identifies how ‘Shakespeare, and to a lesser extent, Spenser, provided a high version of fantasy’ to resuscitate a realm within which prophecy’s powers of recovery can function, albeit at a disillusioned remove.⁶⁴

Struggling to reconcile prophecy’s enchanted, operative, remedial linguistics with the disbelieving age of the New Science, Spenser and Shakespeare nostalgically hark back to the past to forecast a more naively faithful, connected future. It is what J.K. Barrett, in her chapter on *Cymbeline*, terms ‘anticipatory nostalgia’, as ‘Shakespeare characters themselves look forward to looking back when they imagine the link between present experience and its eventual reconstitution in words’.⁶⁵ This prophetic return to an idealised past evades the ambiguity of the cynical, faithless new-world, to the degree that prophecy’s traditionally esoteric language becomes inexplicably clear, in order to successfully repair former ancestral rifts. After all, prophecies in Shakespeare’s earlier plays are indecipherable, often understood only retrospectively and so heeded too late, whereas in his last plays prophetic utterances either appear in legible terms or else they undergo a process of interpretation that demystifies their enigmatic wording. As we have seen, in Act Three Scene Two of *The Winter’s Tale*, as Hermione stands trial in court, wrongfully accused of infidelity, a remarkably

⁶³ Lyne, 4.

⁶⁴ Pask, 71.

⁶⁵ J.K. Barrett, *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2016), 147-76 (148-52).

straightforward message arrives from Apollo's Oracle, with the hope of exonerating the accused Queen:

‘Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten, and the King shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found.’

III.ii.132-6

The Oracle's insights are unusually direct, with a clear purpose to validate the Queen's fidelity – ‘Hermione is chaste’ – and, therefore, the parentage of her ‘innocent babe truly begotten’ for the sake of her ‘jealous tyrant’ husband, King Leontes. Historically, the Ancient Greek Oracle of Delphi was known for her incomprehensible riddles that required extensive analysis and debate, as the pre-Socratic philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus (c.500 BCE), remarks: ‘The Lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals, but gives a sign’.⁶⁶ In his *Philosophy from Oracles*, the Neoplatonic philosopher, Porphyry (c. 234-305 AD), objects against prophecy's abstruse language: ‘Hide these from me, as more unutterable than the unutterable: for the gods did not prophesy about them plainly, but through riddles’.⁶⁷ However, the instant discernability of the Delphic Oracle's message in *The Winter's Tale* appears to circumvent the traditionally lengthy process of decryption required, instead offering a pure expression of almost legal immediacy. Despite the prophecy's transparency, however, oracular truth is initially and preposterously rejected by the King upon its reception: ‘There is no truth at all i' th' oracle ... this is mere falsehood’ (140-1). First, Leontes must learn to devote faith to the intuitive veracity of word-magic, as he eventually does under Paulina's instruction at the end of the play – ‘it is requir'd | You do awake your faith’ – in order that ‘the oracle is fulfill'd’ (V.ii.22-3), and, in the genre's archetypally cyclical process of salvaging the past, for ‘that which is lost’ to ‘be ... found’. Although prophecies appear legible in the romances – as the genre calls for its characters to have ‘faith’ in its restorative powers – these plays begin with a cynical undoing of familial and marital ties that often disturbs the peace of the kingdoms in which these divided family's rule.

Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* begins with a series of critical semiotic disruptions, in which signifiers of perceived virtues, like lineage or marital devotion, appear obscured or illegible, often forming a misleading impression of a fragmented and untraceable ancestry, familial estrangement, or marital infidelity. The play begins with King Cymbeline having lost ‘his daughter, and the heir of's kingdom’ (I.i.4), Imogen, by her unauthorised and ‘disloyal’ (131) marriage to Posthumus, however,

⁶⁶ Richard Stoneman, *The Ancient Oracles: Making the Gods Speak* (New Haven: YUP, 2011); Miroslav Marcovich, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (Merida, Venezuela: Los Andes UP, 1967), fr. D93.

⁶⁷ Porphyry, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith (Leipzig: Teubner, 1993), fr. 305.

this succession crisis began twenty years earlier, when the King lost his two male heirs, who ‘from their nursery | Were stol’n’ as infants. The royal Princes were, in fact, kidnapped by a courtier, Belarius, precisely to disturb the dynastic future of the British Crown, as he later discloses: ‘I stole these babes, | Thinking to bar [Cymbeline] of succession’ (III.iii.101-2). Barrett remarks on the significance of ‘*Cymbeline* open[ing] with the threat of a succession crisis’ that is grounded in events of the distant past:

That Imogen is heir to her father’s throne is itself the result of a previous succession crisis – twenty years earlier, Cymbeline’s two sons were abducted. ... In stealing his male heirs, Belarius steals the king’s posterity and troubles the prospects of the British crown well beyond his own lifetime. ... Like Posthumus’s name, Belarius’s proleptic perspective on loss brings to the fore the temporal dimensions of a problem like lineage.⁶⁸

The King’s sons therefore function as a promise of the play’s latent recuperation, however, from the opening scene, the play establishes the various ‘temporal dimensions’ that must first be addressed by the narrative to resolve ‘a problem like lineage’. The King’s temporary substitute, his adopted son, Posthumus, embodies the lineal crisis, as one whose ‘name and birth’ (I.i.27) they ‘cannot delve ... to the root’ (28). Rather than designating his family, his name was granted after the motherless boy lost his heroic father, whose bravery in battle earned him the sur-addition Leonatus (‘lion-born’). His full name was bestowed upon him by Cymbeline as Posthumus Leonatus (‘born of-the-lion after death’), characterised entirely by parental loss and suspended in time as if unable to proceed with his own personal chronology.

As Barrett discerns, ‘Imogen’s husband began his life etymologically linked to his own belatedness, his estrangement from his family reinforced by a name that communicates a disordered temporal sequence (“after death”)⁶⁹. In keeping with his own uncertain ‘root[s]’, his character appears equally ineffable when a courtier offers his ‘inaugural praise of Posthumus’, introducing him in manner that Simon Palfrey describes as ‘palpably ambiguous’.⁷⁰ The courtier commends Posthumus as a ‘good man!’ (18), gauging his honour by his physical beauty: ‘I do not think | So fair an outward and such stuff within | Endows a man but he’ (22-4). When a second courtier queries, ‘you speak him far’ (24), the first then justifies his acclaim in somewhat complex, knotty terms – ‘I do extend him, sir, within himself, | Crush him together rather than unfold | His measure duly’ (25-7) – confessing that he fails to fully convey or ‘unfold’ the extent of Posthumus’ merits with only his corporeal form to ‘measure’ them by. To ‘extend him ... within himself’ is, therefore, to repress the enormity of his greatness, and so to ‘crush him together’. As Glazov-Corrigan observes, ‘once

⁶⁸ Barrett, 147-8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁰ Palfrey, 84.

the measurable correspondence between the superior inner and outer qualities has been established, it is immediately cancelled as insufficient, but cancelled in such a manner that the language of external appearance is still propagated'; in other words, since the shallow rhetoric of the courtier only manages to articulate Posthumus' inward qualities in physical terms, the result is to reductively 'crush' with an empty and invalidated compliment.⁷¹ Palfrey examines this same passage, identifying a courtly linguistics reliant on 'outward' appearance:

The whole of *Cymbeline* is built around such pointedly insufficient figures Hence the unstable currency of courtly discourse. By turns opaque, oxymoronic, and otiose, the courtiers' analogies draw from a figurative body no longer capable of the burden. ... The courtier's boast of diffidence is, taken literally, a coy paean to cruelty. A certain decadent affectlessness suggests how a self-aggrandizing language, loosened from the accountabilities of precise referentiality, becomes a screen or charter for injustice. ... The subject's worth becomes strangely by-the-way, a nostalgic essentialism in an age of political paralysis and nominalism.⁷²

Cymbeline's court is populated with 'insufficient figures' who verbally exchange an 'unstable currency of courtly discourse'. The futile materiality of their language relies on a 'figurative body', like Posthumus', as its only frame of reference, a body which becomes 'no longer capable of the burden' of signification, and 'crush[es]' its meaning. The courtiers' speech becomes so far 'loosened from the accountabilities of precise referentiality' that it functions like an obstructive 'screen' for the 'injustice' of their degraded, political sphere. They cannot use words to 'delve' Posthumus' heritage 'to the root', neither can they 'unfold' the 'measure' of his character' duly, due to the failure of an ossified linguistics that attempts to identify its subject using obscure or imprecise referents.

In King Cymbeline's court, signs of marital fidelity are rendered deceptive by a materialist semiotics of commodification. Subscribed to a mercantile linguistics – wherein human virtues are leveraged as credit – Posthumus calculates the cause of Imogen's supposed infidelity by evaluating the spurious value of his own illegitimate birth:

We are all bastards,
And that most venerable man which I
Did call my father, was I know not where
When I was stamp'd. Some coiner with his tools
Made me a counterfeit.

II.v.2-6

Notably, Posthumus elects to employ currency as a metaphor with which to express his own illegitimacy, his father like a 'coiner' assigning false value to that which is 'counterfeit'. As Lyne

⁷¹ Glazov-Corrigan, 'Speech Acts, Generic Differences, and the Curious Case of *Cymbeline*', *SEL*, 34, ii (1994), 379-99 (387).

⁷² Palfrey, 85.

notes, ‘in Shakespeare’s romances birth is never said to matter more than worth, but the point is moot – birth and worth are the same thing’.⁷³ Embittered by his wife’s supposed betrayal, Posthumus brandishes all men as worthless ‘bastards’ since they are born of women who are ‘not constant’ (30) or ‘chaste’ (13) but ‘deceiving’ (23) with their ‘Lust and rank thoughts’ (24). Palfrey summarises the ineffective value standard of this ‘inhospitable “new world”’ endlessly ‘striving for capital’:

Personality is less ‘natural’, a magical gift uniquely one’s own, than a product of barter or function. It is as if romantic sufficiency, a freedom from factitious self-strivings, depends upon a ‘legitimate’ parentage which, in this play of the absent origin, is quite lost from view.⁷⁴

It is within this culture that regards a virtuous, legitimate ‘personality’ as legal tender – a ‘product of barter’ by which suitors and chaste women retain their value, upholding their ‘romantic sufficiency’ by claiming “‘legitimate’ parentage’ and fidelity – that the self-proclaimed ‘bastard’ Posthumus gambles upon the fidelity of his Princess-wife, Imogen. Suspecting her disloyalty, ‘low Posthumus’ (III.v.76) is, therefore, certain that Imogen’s betrayal must be a consequence of his birth. Their relationship is, after all, exemplified by a transactional semiotics, when, before his exile from Britain, the couple exchange love tokens that, they are convinced, indicate their profound devotion to one other, but in fact, with a sense of bleak irony, represent a deprecating trade agreement: her gift to him is a ‘diamond’ ring (I.i.112) symbolising their betrothal – ‘keep it till you woo another wife, | When Imogen is dead’ (113-14) – while his to her is a bracelet, which he calls ‘a manacle of love’ (122). Posthumus’ wedding gift is depicted in these sinister terms of constraint, as he himself shackles the bracelet upon Imogen’s wrist – ‘I’ll place it | Upon this fairest prisoner’ (122-3) – ‘rather like a device to secure property’, Constance Jordan notes, therefore symptomatic of the court’s own culture of commercialism.⁷⁵ Considering that Posthumus himself evaluates his own worth in terms of ‘counterfeit’ currency, it is unsurprising that he reduces his wife’s integrity to a bracelet denoting sexual ownership. His purchase of Imogen’s chastity explains why, ‘once in Rome, Posthumus is easy prey for Iachimo who tempts him from his faith by language that prices Imogen’s diamond and, by association, her fidelity’ – for Iachimo speaks the same corruptible language.⁷⁶

With Cymbeline’s Britain at war over the payment of tribute to the Romans – resisting financial submission for the sake of national stability – the British court has already surrendered to a culture of commodification. This is exacerbated by Iachimo’s Roman influence, the gambling fraudster

⁷³ Lyne, 105.

⁷⁴ Palfrey, 86-7.

⁷⁵ Constance Jordan, *Shakespeare’s Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997), 79.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

who defines human virtues by their monetary worth, driving the others into a ‘new linguistic direction which becomes more and more prominent as *Cymbeline*’s plot unfolds, and both Leonatus and Imogen are literally weaned (albeit in painful fashion) from this manner of comparing human qualities with material objects’.⁷⁷ In Act One Scene Four, Iachimo, who initiates Posthumus’ subsequent misfortune, is frustrated by the Englishman’s notoriety which he considers overvalued according to his market worth:

... He was then of a crescent note, expected to prove so worthy as since he hath been allow’d the name of. But I could then have look’d on him without the help of admiration, though the catalogue of his endowments had been tabled by his side, and I to peruse him by items.

I.iv.1-7

When Posthumus’ growing reputation is described as being of a ‘crescent note’ – referring to the now obsolete meaning of ‘note’ as ‘(a person’s) good, benefit, or profit’ – there is tacit acknowledgement of how his status increases his monetary value.⁷⁸ Assessing Posthumus’ merit as one might a piece of merchandise, Iachimo is certain he would be unimpressed by the ‘catalogue of his endowments’ – if he were to ‘peruse him by items’ – on account of his low birth, also questioning the Princess’ ‘judgement’ (22) for ‘taking a beggar without less quality’ (23). Iachimo diagnoses Posthumus’ inflated worth to be a direct result of ‘marrying his king’s daughter, wherein he must be weigh’d rather by her value than his own’ (14-15), condemning this misleading method of valuation which overlooks his lesser breeding in favour of a self-made inflation.

Once he economically calculates the fragility of Posthumus’ repute, which is helplessly dependent on Imogen, Iachimo targets his attack on the material token signifying her marital fidelity – the ring – seeking to diminish its value and thus evoke the prospect of a disloyal wife:

IACHIMO	... If she went before others I have seen, as that diamond of yours outlustres many I have beheld, I could not [but] believe she excell’d many. But I have not seen the most precious diamond that is, nor you the lady.
POSTHUMUS	I prais’d her as I rated her: so do I my stone.
IACHIMO	What do you esteem it at?
POSTHUMUS	More than the world enjoys.
IACHIMO	Either your unparagon’d mistress is dead, or she’s outpriz’d by a trifle.
POSTHUMUS	You are mistaken: the one may be sold or given, or if there were wealth enough for the [purchase], or merit for the gift; the other is not a thing for sale, and only the gift of the gods.

I.iv.72-85

⁷⁷ Glazov-Corrigan (1994), 387

⁷⁸ OED, ‘note, *n1.*’, 1.b; ‘crescent, *adj.*’, I.1.

Iachimo urges Posthumus to question his tenuous method of determining Imogen's faithfulness by the brightness of a diamond, which perhaps 'outlustres many' but is not 'the most precious diamond that is'. Yet Posthumus evaluates both his 'stone' and his wife by the same method – 'I prais'd her as I rated her: so do I my stone' – as the ring and the objectified Imogen become increasingly conflated. The early-modern poetics of 'praise' – drawing on the word's French Medieval roots from *'priser, prisièr'*, meaning 'to value, to make a valuation of, to esteem', the post-classical Latin *'pretiare'* also 'to appraise, value', and the classical Latin *'pretium'* denoting 'price' – reduces the, often feminine, subject to an account of her financially-quantified worth.⁷⁹ Though Posthumus may 'esteem' his ring to be worth 'more than the world enjoys' – owing to the wife that it symbolises – Iachimo refuses the possibility that such a precious jewel could signify Imogen, mockingly presuming that if the ring's worth is, indeed, unparalleled, then either his 'mistress is dead' or 'outpriz'd by a trifle'. Speaking Posthumus' language of material signification, Iachimo displaces his attack of Imogen onto the ring – to which the exiled Posthumus desperately directs his affections – and reduces it to a mere 'trifle'. Though Posthumus, ironically, retaliates by distinguishing between the marketability of a quantifiable object that 'may be sold ... if there were wealth enough for the [purchase]', and his wife, who is 'not a thing for sale', Iachimo persists, insisting that both the ring and Imogen are items of variable worth, since they may easily be stolen, damaged, and rendered worthless:

You may wear her in title yours; but you know strange fowl light upon neighboring ponds. Your ring may be stol'n too: so your brace of unprizable estimations, the one is but frail and the other casual. A cunning thief, or a (that way) accomplish'd courtier, would hazard the winning both of first and last.

I.iv.88-93

Like the ring, Imogen – that thing of supposedly 'unprizable estimations' – may too be stolen, for her worth is equally 'casual', unstable enough that the skilful seduction of a 'cunning' or 'accomplished' man would entice her. Posthumus responds defensively that, 'Italy contains none so accomplish'd a courtier to convince the honor of my mistress' (94-5), simultaneously assuring his antagonists that 'I fear not my ring' (98); what was remaining of the semiotic space between the ring (a thing of mutable fiscal value) and Imogen's sexuality, begins to dissolve entirely – 'she your jewel, this your jewel' (153) – as 'she' and 'this' jewel, merge into one.

Assigning Imogen's chastity as a quickly depreciating material asset, Iachimo has primed the linguistic marketplace in order to make his wager. The trickster bets that if he succeeds in his conquest to prove Imogen's unfaithfulness, Posthumus must hand over that yonic emblem of her

⁷⁹ Ibid., 'praise, *v.*', etymology.

sexual maturity, the diamond, for the value of both the ring and her sexuality must correspond to one another:

IACHIMO I dare thereupon pawn the moi'ty of my estate to your ring, which, in my opinion, o'ervalues it something. But I make my wager rather against your confidence than her reputation; and to bar your offense herein too, I durst attempt it against any lady in the world.

...

I will lay you ten [thousand] ducats to your ring, that, commend me to the court where your lady is, with no more advantage than the opportunity of a second conference, and I will bring from thence that honor of hers which you imagine so reserv'd.

POSTHUMUS I will wage against your gold, gold to it. My ring I hold dear as my finger; 'tis part of it.

I.iv.108-33

Once Posthumus begins to question the enduring value of the 'jewel' that is his wife's commodified chastity, he agrees to 'wage against' Iachimo's 'ten thousand ducats' with his 'ring', gambling upon Imogen's 'honour' with the very object which, he believes, holds it in place, and which Iachimo suspects he 'o'ervalues'. The wager secured, Iachimo turns his focus from the ring to the woman, slipping effortlessly between the signifier and its referent, as he warns against the swiftness with which female sexuality itself devalues, so rapidly that it scarcely maintains any worth: 'If you buy ladies' flesh at a million a dram, you cannot preserve it from tainting' (134-6). With chauvinistic scorn, Iachimo vilifies the 'honour' of all womankind, boasting of the venture that he 'durst attempt it against any lady in the world', as he contemptuously guarantees that in the case of Imogen, he shall 'bring from thence that honour of hers'. Though Iachimo diminishes a woman's 'honour' to a material product that might be procured by any enthusiastic consumer, the play anticipates the revelation articulated by Falstaff in *Henry IV Part One* about 'that word honor' (1*H4*, V.i.134), realising the triviality of its application in a courtly setting, like insubstantial 'air' (135) it is employed as a hollow token of status, 'a mere scutcheon' (140).

The subject of a wager, Imogen's body is under the erotic possession of a verbal marketplace that illicitly trades in deceptive signifiers, often employed by Iachimo to construct the impression of sexual intimacy so that he might win his wager. This is most observable in Act Two Scene Two, a scene that Palfrey refers to as 'Iachimo's stealthy semiotic rape of Imogen', in which the sly Roman lord sneaks into the bedchamber of Posthumus' sleeping wife to devise the illusion of a successful conquest.⁸⁰ Iachimo catalogues every detail of her bedroom – 'to note the chamber, I will write all

⁸⁰ Palfrey, 97.

down' (*Cym.*, II.ii.24) – as well as 'some natural notes about her body' (28), studying these intimate markings so to persuasively fill 'the contents o' th' story' (27) of seduction that he tells Posthumus, ensuring his deceptive words appear substantially-filled with realistic detail. Although Iachimo also articulates a longing to physically violate Imogen – 'that I might touch! ... | But kiss, one kiss!' (16-17) – he resolves this lustful urge not by seizing her chastity, but an emblem of it: stealing the bracelet from her wrist in the hope of presenting Posthumus with material proof that he 'will witness outwardly, | As strongly as the conscience does within, | To th' madding of her lord' (35-7) – since the play's courtly language does indeed determine in the inward virtues through outward appearance. Two scenes later, however, the stolen bracelet fails to persuade him of Imogen's disloyalty when Philario reasons, 'who knows if one her women, being corrupted | Hath stol'n it from her?' (II.iv.116-7), so instead, Posthumus implores: 'Render to me some corporal sign about her, | More evident than this; for this was stol'n' (119-20). Before even receiving this evidence, Posthumus has pre-emptively decided that it is a distinctive bodily signifier, glimpsed and stolen from Imogen's commodified, eroticised form, that would hold the most powerful influence above any physical object. The 'corporal sign' that ultimately fulfils Iachimo's 'semiotic rape' of Imogen is a most intimate blemish 'on her left breast' of 'a mole cinque-spotted', its five spots studied in extensive detail: 'like the crimson drops | I' th' bottom of a cowslip' (II.ii.37-9). Although Posthumus may interpret this blemish to be like Odysseus' scar in Homer's epic poem – 'by whose scar he came | To be discovered by this aged Dame' – functioning as a legible mark of recognition that betrays his identity to Eurycleia – 'a scar now seeing on his foot, that bore | An old note to discern him; might descry | The absolute truth' – Imogen's 'corporeal sign' conveys no 'truth', but rather a false impression of promiscuity.⁸¹ Iachimo is excited, most of all, by the discovery this unique imperfection, a 'stain' (II.iv.139) located in 'that most delicate lodging' (136), certain that such a 'secret' intimate detail 'will force [Posthumus to] think I have pick'd the lock and ta'en | The treasure of her honor' (II.ii.41-2). As anticipated, Posthumus reacts by lamenting that 'it doth confirm | Another stain, as big as hell can hold' (II.iv.139-40), as the literal mole conflates with a 'stain' on her honour. Concealed surreptitiously 'under her breast' (134), it is such an arousing finding for Iachimo that he need not even take note: 'Why should I write this down that's riveted, | Screw'd to my memory?' (II.ii.43-4). Instead, he lustfully devours her 'corporal sign' with his carnal gaze – 'it gave me present hunger | To feed again, though full' (II.iv.137-8) – gratified by this in the place of physical contact.

⁸¹ Homer, *Odyssees* (1615), 300-2.

It is at the very same moment Iachimo spots the mole that he notices another gesture towards Imogen's salacious passions: a copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that 'she hath been reading late' (II.ii.44), marked, inauspiciously, at the rape of Philomel by Tereus, with 'the leaf's turn'd down | Where Philomele gave up' (45-6). As far as Iachimo is concerned, this myth of rape – 'the tale of Tereus' (45) – indicates Imogen's possible sexual proclivities, like a textual prophecy locking women into mythic destinies of abuse, especially considering that, at the start of the scene, Iachimo alludes to another rape-myth – depicted by both Ovid and Shakespeare – the rape of Lucrece, likening himself to 'our Tarquin' (12):

Giacomo changes the usual emphasis in the stories he mentions. By saying 'our Tarquin', he recognizes that he and the Roman King share Italian origins; but calling it 'the tale of Tereus', he shifts the emphasis away from its heroine; by saying Philomel 'gave up', he misrepresents the violent struggle of her rape. ... the audience is conscious of eyes being altered, viewpoints changing, and reality shifting.⁸²

Twice, Iachimo implicates himself as the rapist through references to myth, however, as Lyne notes, rather than villainising such characters, he repeatedly distorts the original narratives in his favour, misrepresenting the fates of both attacker and victim. In *Metamorphoses*, for example, Tereus was the King of Thrace who raped Philomel (his sister-in-law) and, when she threatened to expose his crime – 'my voyce the verie woods shall fill, | And make the stones to understand' and 'let Heaven to this give eare | And all the Gods and powers' – he cuts out her tongue to silence her account.⁸³ But Philomel, in fact, never 'gave up' as Iachimo suggests, but finding 'hir tunglesse mouth did want the utterance of the fact', she wove her story into a tapestry – 'weaved purple letters in betwéene it, which bewraide | The wicked déede of *Tereus*' – berating Tereus with such vigorous determination that, in outrage, he dismembers her.⁸⁴ Revising the ending to one in which she 'gave up', Iachimo, like Tereus, silences the tale of the muted Philomel with a figurative cutting of her tongue, an implicit warning to Imogen whose narrative he also plans to falsely co-opt, telling his own false version. At the start of his soliloquy, as Iachimo sneaks into Imogen's bedchamber, he also references 'Tarquin' from 'The Rape of Lucrece', evoking the infamous son of the Roman King who similarly 'waken'd | The chastity he wounded' (13-14). In this familiar tale, which somewhat mirrors Iachimo's wager with Posthumus, Tarquin and other noblemen test their wives' virtue, but as Tarquin becomes obsessed with the beauty and innocence of Collantinus' wife, Lucrece, he creeps into the room where she sleeps – in search of erotic signifiers, like Iachimo, 'What could he see but mightily he noted? | What did he note but strongly he desired?' (*Luc.*, 414-

⁸² Lyne, 32.

⁸³ Ovid, *Metamorphosis* (1567), 77^v.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 77^{r-v}.

15) – and rapes her. After this incident, Lucrece takes her own life, exposing Tarquin’s crime and prompting the people of Rome to exile him. In both Ovidian rape-narratives, the stifled female victim finds indirect means by which to communicate her story, while the assaulter is ultimately shunned and reprimanded for his crime.

Iachimo rewrites these rape-myths to trivialise the repercussions of sexual violence as he emulates their predators, performing an assault on Imogen’s truth, stealing her signifiers and cunningly reassigning their meaning, that they all appear to point in the direction of her promiscuity while denying his own guilt. Palfrey theorises on Iachimo’s romanticisation of sexual violence:

The play’s crucial set pieces ... each evoke erotic possession through the concentrated savouring of a single bodily part. Imogen’s cinque-spotted mole, her blushing face, her ‘ring’, are soft-porn pictures, barely sublimated, of a barterable pudendum. ... the concentration upon discrete or severed features is such that these members take on a life, a magnetism, of their own. Rather than simply signifying the cohering mass to which they belong, they announce their own separation. Crucially, though, it is a separation into fetishism, into an eroticism of dismemberment.⁸⁵

Imogen is figuratively mutilated into various commodified pieces – the ring, the bracelet, the book, her mole – as part of, what Palfrey calls, the ‘eroticism of dismemberment’ in the play. This erotic desire to fragment the female body, he suggests, is exacerbated by a courtly culture which commercialises the individual into their consumable parts, creating a linguistic marketplace which trades in disembodied ‘corporal sign[s]’. Once Posthumus is duped into believing in his wife’s infidelity, he sustains a discourse of dismemberment by condemning ‘the woman’s part’ (*Cym.*, II.v.22) for comprising every slippery and unscrupulous human trait:

... be it lying, note it,
The woman’s; flattering, hers; deceiving, hers;
Lust and rank thoughts, hers, hers; revenges, hers;
Ambitions, covetings, change of prides, disdain,
Nice longing, slanders, mutability,
All faults that name, nay, that hell knows,
Why, hers, in part or all; but rather, all.

II.v.22-8

Like Philomel’s body, Posthumus dissects a woman’s character into various disfigured pieces that he conceives as ‘all faults ... that hell knows’. In this figurative economy, women, under the violent ‘possession of male desire’, are anatomised – as Othello threatens, ‘I will chop her into messes!’

⁸⁵ Palfrey, 97.

(*Oth.*, IV.i.199) – ‘severed’ and ‘seperat[ed]’ from the ‘cohering mass to which they belong’ and re-packaged into consumable and ‘barterable’ parts.

Though the romance narrative ultimately pieces the metaphorically fragmented body of Imogen back together, the body of the play’s most fervent advocate of reductive hyper-materialism, Cloten, is physically truncated, never to be restored. As Maurice Hunt argues, there are ‘several bodies in *Cymbeline* that are figuratively and on at least one occasion literally dismembered as a result of fracturing within the body politic’, and since Cloten epitomises the decayed portion of the body-politic in *Cymbeline*’s court, he must be amputated, both figurately and literally.⁸⁶ In this sense, Cloten embodies what Jonathan Gil-Harris might refer to as a pathological mercantile metaphor, in his study of how ‘all mercantilist literature, pathological metaphors dominate’, in part, as a result of ‘the widespread intuition in early-modern England that plague might be carried by merchant ships and their transnational cargo’.⁸⁷ Introduced through reports of a duel with Posthumus, from the start of the play, Cloten is steeped in the stench of violence, advised ‘to shift a shirt’ (I.ii.1) since ‘the violence of action hath made you reek as a sacrifice where air comes out, air comes in: there’s none abroad so wholesome as that you vent’ (2-4), emitting the deathly vapours of a sacrificial animal that prefigure like his fate. Cloten makes his entrance while bragging that ‘the villain would not stand me’ (I.ii.14), identifying himself in relation to his rival and narrative foil. Both men subscribe to the same semiotic commercialism of the royal court where they are each of unknown lineage; while they ‘cannot delve’ Posthumus ‘to the root’, Cloten’s ancestry is also left undetermined, with the occasional jibe suggesting that he seems to be of lower-class breeding: described by Imogen as ‘too base | To be [Posthumus] groom’ (II.iii.126-7), and later (dressed in Posthumus’ garments) he is mocked by Guiderius for appearing to have a ‘tailor ... | Who is thy grandfather! he made those clothes, | Which (as it seems) make thee’ (IV.ii.81-3). Both surrogate sons to the King, Posthumus and Cloten, therefore, gain their social status through marriage rather than birth: Posthumus as husband to the Princess – ‘By her election may be truly read, | What kind of man he is’ (I.i.53-4) – is assessed by Imogen’s ‘election’; and the nepotistic Cloten assumes his position at court as the current Queen’s son from her previous marriage. Significantly, the two men never appear on stage together, as one almost appears to substitute the place of the other, for example, in Posthumus’ absence, Cloten competes for Imogen’s affections, dressing in her husband’s garments. In spite of this overlap between Posthumus and Cloten, Shakespeare clearly distinguishes between the sincerity and substance of these two men, since Posthumus, is notably

⁸⁶ Maurice Hunt, ‘Dismemberment, Corporal Reconstitution, and the Body Politic in *Cymbeline*’, *Studies in Philology*, 99, iv (2002), 404-31 (407).

⁸⁷ Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare’s England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2004), 127-8.

esteemed at court, ‘most prais’d, most lov’d’ (47) and adored by Imogen, while Cloten is routinely embarrassed by his own incompetence, despised by courtiers who interrupt their false flattery with scathing asides: ‘This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse, | There was no money in’t’ (IV.ii.113-4). Like a currency without value, Cloten is a parody of the sycophantic, posturing courtier, composed entirely of pretence, who, unlike Posthumus, invests only in his own social mobility. For example, Posthumus accepts his position as ‘bastard’ or ‘counterfeit’, never looking to marry the Princess to improve his social status, whereas Cloten admits, ‘if I could get this foolish Imogen, I should have gold enough’ (II.iii.7-9) to repay his gambling debts. His conniving Queen and ‘mother hourly coining plots’ (II.i.59), encourages Cloten to take advantage of Imogen for the sake of upward mobility through marriage, as she herself did in her own marriage to the King: ‘she purpos’d ... | (When she had fitted [Cymbeline] with her craft) to work | Her son into th’ adoption of the crown’ (V.v.52-6). While both men partially resemble one another, as insufficient substitutes for the King’s sons, Cloten serves to highlight how ‘the major characters of *Cymbeline* stand in need of a purge of the Cloten within’ for he eventually ‘becomes a sacrifice figuratively redeeming Posthumus and cleansing the play’s world’, serving to highlight those aspects of Posthumus that must be destroyed, for the play to perform its curative redemption.⁸⁸

Projecting Posthumus’ greatest insecurity – his lineage which must later be recuperated – Cloten, hypocritically, repudiates hypogamy when ridiculing Imogen’s choice of the ‘low Posthumus’:

The contract you pretend with that base wretch,
 One bred of alms and foster’d with cold dishes,
 With scraps o’ th’ court, it is no contract, none;
 And though it be allowed in meaner parties –
 (Yet who than he more mean?) to knit their souls
 (On whom there is no more dependancy
 But brats and beggary) in self-figur’d knot,
 Yet you are curb’d from that enlargement by
 The consequence o’ th’ crown, and must not foil
 The precious note of it with a base slave.

II.iii.111-22

Framing Imogen’s marriage to Posthumus in terms of an invalid financial transaction – a ‘contract you pretend’ – Cloten reduces his competition to a charity-case ‘bred of alms’ and raised on ‘cold dishes’, taking his ‘scraps o’ th’ court’ from Imogen, so low in relation to her that it deems the marriage contractually void. In response, Imogen challenges Cloten’s ‘empty purse’ philosophy that status and appearance determine nature, with her more profound philosophy that a person’s

⁸⁸ Hunt (2002), 418.

integrity must be judged by their character, dismissing Cloten on these terms, for lacking dignity in comparison to Posthumus, regardless of status: ‘Wert thou the son of Jupiter, and no more | But what thou art besides, thou wert too base | To be his groom’ (125-7). The Italian bishop, poet, and translator, Giovanni Della Casa (1503-1556) condemns the likes of Cloten in his influential treatise on social etiquette, first published in Venice in 1558, protesting:

How *ridiculous* a sight is a *vain young Gallant*, that *bristles* with his *plumes*, and shakes his *giddy* head like an *empty* bottle, and plunders the air, and the earth, to adorn a body *viler* than the worms that have spun out their bowels to make him fine, and then windes it into an hundred *mimical odde* shapes; and *all* this to no *other* purpose, but to get possession of a *Mistress*, that’s a *verier* trifle than himself? ⁸⁹

The empty head of the posturing aristocrat sits on a metaphorically decaying body that is ‘*viler*’ – from the Latin *vilem* or *vilis*, meaning ‘of low value or price, cheap, common, mean, base’ – than its own parasitic, intestinal worms, yet is dressed in the pageantry of ‘plumes’, ‘*artificial* colours’, and ‘*rich* apparel’ (47). As Della Casa makes clear, he who ‘makes the *art* of dressing his *whole* care and study’ ‘discloses the nakedness of his Soul ... that so we may *easily* know the *peasant*’ as ‘too base’ – as Cloten does when he arrogantly presumes his aristocratic superiority in the rustic countryside: ‘Thou villain base, | Know’st me not by my clothes?’ (IV.ii.80-1).⁹⁰ Despite Imogen’s insights, the uncomprehending Cloten still believes he might be able to procure ‘possession of’ Posthumus’ ‘*Mistress*’ with displays of material wealth.

After Posthumus’ banishment, Cloten exemplifies his ethos when he knocks at Imogen’s door, hoping to bribe his way into her chamber by offering gold to her maids:

I know her women are about her; what
If I do line one of their hands? ’Tis gold
Which buys admittance (oft it doth), yea, and makes
Diana’s rangers false themselves, yield up
Their deer to th’ stand o’ th’ stealer; and ’tis gold
Which makes the true man kill’d and saves the thief;
Nay, sometime hangs both thief and true man. What
Can it not do, and undo?

II.iii.66-73

Cloten is emboldened by the corrupting power of gold, convinced it would buy his ‘admittance’ into Imogen’s quarters, since it would spoil the most innocent of creatures: compelling ‘Diana’s rangers’ (women sworn to chastity) to give in to temptation, or leading the honest ‘true man’ to be ‘kill’d’ instead of (or as well as) the ‘thief’. According to Glazov-Corrigan, such a demoralising

⁸⁹ Giovanni Della Casa, *The Refin’d Courtier...* (1663), 46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

‘discovery that men are ruled by riches, that their every act is best expressed as a function of soulless beings ... could have crushed Shakespeare’s tragic characters’ and yet, ‘for Cloten it is simply a statement of the rule that governs his world.’⁹¹ Though he seeks to pave the path of his upward social trajectory with money, for ‘’tis gold | Which buys admittance’, his figurative purse remains ‘empty’, lacking so much in honour that Imogen obstructs his advances by asserting that Posthumus’ ‘mean’st garment | That ever hath but clipt his body, is dearer | In my respect than all the hairs above thee’ (133-5). Predictably, Cloten takes this as a straightforward comparison to Posthumus’ clothing rather than understanding this metaphorical gibe at his lack of substance: ‘She said upon a time ... that she held the very garment of Posthumus in more respect than my noble and natural person’ (III.v.133-6). Cloten seeks revenge by literally dressing in Posthumus’ garments in the hope of luring the Princess, killing Posthumus, and raping her – ‘with that suit upon my back will I ravish her; first kill him, and in her eyes’ (137-8) – under the impression that to ‘execute in the clothes that she so prais’d’ (142-3) would allow him to finally surpass Posthumus: ‘there shall she see my valour, which will then be a torment to her contempt’ (138-9). Yet in the Adamic, Welsh pastoral – where language is no longer duplicitous, for they ‘do not play in wench-like words’ (IV.ii.230) – the ceremonial pomp of royal rank and garments hold no significance. Here, Cloten, while dressed in ‘the garments of Posthumus’ (308), is not protected but rather made vulnerable by his aristocratic appearance, ultimately decapitated, much to the horror of Imogen who finds the body of ‘a headless man’ (308) in her husband’s clothing – an image which, as we shall later discover, signals the amputation of Posthumus’ mercantile malaise.

In the rural wilderness, beyond the fraudulent materialism of the courtiers at Cymbeline’s palace, Cloten’s value system – which dictates that ‘gold ... buys admittance’ – ceases to exist. This is something even Imogen must learn while disguised as the aptly named Fidele:

IMOGEN	Here’s money for my meat, I would have left it on the board so soon As I had made my meal, and parted with Pray’rs for the provider.
GUIDERIUS	Money, youth?
ARVIRAGUS	All gold and silver rather turn to dirt, As ’tis no better reckon’d, but of those Who worship dirty gods.

III.vi.49-55

⁹¹ Glazov-Corrigan (1994), 389.

Imogen's uncontaminated brothers remind her that the value assigned to 'gold and silver' is arbitrary. Arviragus depicts money as a form of idolatry for 'those | Who worship dirty gods', making Cloten – who embodies a most extreme and unwavering commitment to a dehumanising semiotics of trade – the play's greatest sinner, like a heathen who cannot even temporarily survive in the prelapsarian pastoral. Cloten is killed by Imogen's brothers, natives to this untainted Welsh landscape, who crusade against his religion of material commercialisation, as part of cult of toxic vanity which entitles him to violently usurp, impersonate, and rape whom he pleases. In the linguistic economy of King Cymbeline's court, that highly valued human qualities, like lineage and fidelity, are reduced to illegible or deceptive signifiers, ruthlessly traded, bartered, and violently dismembered. With ancestral, familial, and marital ties brutally severed, the play must engage with the word-magic of prophesy to revisit a time before the ruptures of the past and foresee a recovery of lineal and relational bonds, alleviating the Kingdom of its succession crisis.

ii. Restoring ‘Lopp’d Branches’: Prophetic Return

When from a stately cedar shall be lopp’d branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries.

Cym., V.iv.140-2

Emerging from *Cymbeline’s* mercantile, courtly semiotics – which commodifies individual virtues and bodies, severing and bartering their parts – Imogen and Posthumus each find themselves alienated from their aristocratic origins, suffering a similar fate to the kidnapped Princes who live as outcasts, ‘lopp’d’ from the ‘branches’ of their ancestry. Early-modern thinkers were drawn by an overpowering compulsion to locate lineal succession in its absence, for example, in his essay ‘Of Parents and Children’ (1625), Francis Bacon asserts that ‘the care of Posterity, is most in them, that have no Posterity’.⁹² Joseph Alford, in his 1649 theological treatise, queries how one might remedy ‘the posterity’ of non-Christians, concluding with a biblical citation: ‘the Romanes, doth plainly prophesie that, *Those branches which were cut off through unbelief, shall through Faith be reingrafted*’.⁹³ Indeed, prophecy’s capacity to recover ‘lopp’d branches’ – thereby restoring disrupted lineage – is contingent upon a faithful submission to the authority of divine providence, conforming to its predestined course. Providence – that is, ‘the foreknowing and protective care of God’ or ‘nature’, by its patent etymological derivative, ‘provide’ – functions to yield a generative future; one contrary to the degraded transactional discourse of financial credit in the play that leaves its participants wanting, like ‘an empty purse, | There was no money in’t’.⁹⁴ Whether by the providential powers of nature or supernatural soliciting, Posthumus and Imogen salvage their corrupted faith with a retrospective turn back to a nostalgic, ancestral past, one characterised by a linguistic innocence whereby words correspond effortlessly to truth: ‘Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith thy name’ (381). This temporal shift encompasses what J.K. Barrett terms ‘anticipatory nostalgia’, as ‘Shakespeare characters themselves look forward to looking back when they imagine the link between present experience and its eventual reconstitution in words’.⁹⁵ Yearning for the dynastic harmony of an idyllic past, Posthumus and Imogen return to the original source of their ruptured ancestry, inhabiting and reviving its naïve world of faithfulness until providence *provides*.

Imogen, throughout the course of the play, is progressively ‘lopp’d’ from various familial ‘branches’: firstly, by her father, King Cymbeline, by whom she is ‘imprison’d’ for marrying her adopted brother, Posthumus; then, estranged from this ‘husband banish’d’ (I.i.8), who, during his

⁹² Bacon, ‘Of Parents and Children’ (1696), 15.

⁹³ Joseph Alford, *The Church Triumphant...* (1649), 21.

⁹⁴ *OED*, ‘providence, *n.*’, 2; etymology (ii).

⁹⁵ Barrett, 152, 148.

exile, is wrongly persuaded of her infidelity by Iachimo – though her characteristic virtue remains ‘more goddess-like than wife-like’ (III.ii.8). By Act Three, the twice-‘lopp’d’ Imogen has fled to the Welsh countryside of Milford Haven, escaping to this seemingly wistful pastoral, where she unknowingly repairs the familial rupture of her childhood, for this is the place where her long-lost brothers reside. Sequestered within this landscape, the King’s ‘two sons’ (I.i.57) and rightful heirs to the British throne, who ‘from their nursery | Were stol’n ... | Some twenty years’ ago, live in ignorance of their royal breeding: ‘These boys know little they are sons to th’ King, | Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive’ (III.iii.80-1). Though princes, they ‘are beastly’, living like primitive man in a ‘pinching cave’ where they survive the ‘rain and wind’, the ‘dark’, and ‘freezing hours’ of the wilderness (37-40). Ironically, they have been raised in this hostile, rustic setting by an aggrieved courtier, their kidnapper, Belarius, who keeps them isolated from the corruption of a civilisation that he previously endured:

And you may then revolve what tales I have told you
 Of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war.
 This service is not service, so being done,
 But being so allow’d. To apprehend thus
 Draws us a profit from all things we see;
 ... O, this life
 Is nobler than attending for a check;
 Richer than doing nothing for a [bable];
 Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk:
 Such gain the cap of him that makes him fine,
 Yet keeps his book uncross’d. No life to ours.

III.iii.14-26

Confined to this ‘cell of ignorance’ (33), the King’s sons live vicariously through ‘tales’, told by Belarius, ‘of courts, of princes, of the tricks in war’, unable to fulfil their own narrative destiny; growing restless with their own lack of experience, they ask ‘what should we speak of | When we are old as you?’ (35-6), realising they ‘have seen nothing’ (39) of the world, like birds ‘unfledg’d | Have never wing’d from view o’ th’ nest’ (27-8), or like the ‘prison’d bird’ (43) who sings of his ‘bondage freely’ (44). In spite of its limitations, Belarius introduces ‘this life’ in nature as an escape from the nefarious political sphere of economic tyranny and financial dependency where he was in perpetual need of money: ‘attending for a check’, ‘rustling in unpaid-for silk’, and ‘doing nothing for a [bable]’. A ‘Bable’ or ‘bauble’, refers to a trifle – ‘a small ornament ... that is showy or attractive but typically inexpensive or of little value’ – from the Old French *babel*, *baubel*, meaning, a ‘child’s toy’ or ‘trinket’.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, ‘bauble’ is also related to the word ‘babe’ – as in Valerie Wayne’s

⁹⁶ ‘*Cymbeline*’, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 1586n23; *OED*, ‘bauble, *n.*’, I.1.a; etymology.

Arden edition of the play – since it also derives its etymological roots from ‘babble’, denoting the ‘early infantile vocalization’ that is also associated with the Biblical parable of ‘Babel’ – the name of a city in ancient Babylonia which ‘was the cause of the confusion of tongues’ and ‘did there confound the language of all the earth’.⁹⁷ By ‘doing nothing for a [babe]’, Belarius, therefore, depicts the court as an economic marketplace that trades in frivolous, materialistic trifles and senseless verbal signifiers, before he replaced that lifestyle with a rural one, inhabiting a land of romantic hope and prelapsarian innocence which transcends such concerns, offering a ‘nobler’, ‘richer’, and ‘prouder’ way of life, the ‘profit’ from which surpasses monetary value.

Considering how ‘Shakespeare envisages various types of “countryside” in his late plays’, Palfrey recognises that ‘such places evoke not only a kind of parallel world to a disappointing present, but a community’s past or future’, namely, ‘a world before present forms have been built, or after they have disintegrated’.⁹⁸ Palfrey identifies that in *Cymbeline*’s pastoral, Imogen seems to return to ‘an exploration of distinctively British origins’, recovering her supposedly dead brothers and heirs to the British throne in this ‘birthplace of dynasty’.⁹⁹ Certainly, Belarius portrays this landscape as an archetypal Arcadia, the site of unspoiled, primordial beginnings:

This rock and these demesnes have been my world,
Where I have liv’d at honest freedom, paid
More pious debts to heaven than in all
The fore-end of my time. But up to th’ mountains!
This is not hunters’ language.

III.iii.70-4

Reiterating the value of this agrarian life as far superior to a modern existence of financial obligations – having here ‘paid | More pious debts to heaven than in all | The fore-end of my time’ – Belarius interrupts his own elegant description of the ‘honest freedom’ and ‘pious’ innocence of rustic life with a crucial realisation: his own lyrical sentimentality ‘is not hunters’ language’ but an urbane rhetorical style that reflects a man who lives in ‘banishment’ (69) from *Cymbeline*’s court, not native to the countryside. His own, inadvertently, eloquent depiction of an elevated idyll, spoken within the context of rural simplicity is, therefore, a conspicuous reminder to Belarius of his own ostracization from court.

It becomes increasingly clear that Milford Haven functions, not as a discrete Eden within its own right, but as an artificially constructed one within the context of a fallen world: a refuge for the

⁹⁷ William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 245; *OED*, ‘bauble, *n.*’, etymology; *Geneva Bible*, Genesis 11.1, 6, 9.

⁹⁸ Palfrey, 126.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

palace's outcasts and hostages, misled by layers of deceptive language to dwell here, often under false pretences. Firstly, Belarius, his 'fault being nothing', lives here in exile on account of 'two villains, whose false oaths prevail'd | Before my perfect honour' when they 'swore to Cymbeline | I was confederate with the Romans' (65-8). Then, Belarius abducted the King's sons, Guiderius and Arviragus, to live with him – 'they think they are mine' (82) – concealing their stately lineage by renaming them 'Polydore' (86) and 'Cadwal' (95), respectively. By reassigning the royal heirs these typically pastoral names – the former from the Greek *Polydōros*, which translates to 'many gifts', and the latter from *Cadwaladr*, a Welsh name originally referring to a leader or commander in battle – Belarius attempts a return to the plain-speaking style of 'hunters' language', wherein the 'false oaths' that once destroyed him could never 'prevail'. Imogen is also lured to Milford Haven by Posthumus' false letter promising a lovers' tryst, while a second letter surreptitiously instructs Pisanio to 'take away her life' (III.iv.27-8) upon arrival. With these all lured into this provincial site by the duplicitous language of courtiers – whose written word proves especially deceptive – the Edenic pastoral is contaminated by the serpentine depravity of aristocracy, such that Palfrey anticipates 'a more hybrid and materialistic, more accountable version of the romantic idyll' in this play:

Shakespeare's anachronisms do, however, contribute to a framing irony regarding the Welsh scenes' prophetic veracity. Rather than serendipitous fortune or destiny, the boys' residence at the birthplace of dynasty is the consequence of treason and larceny: a den of the thieved. Such incongruity is crucial to the Welsh scenes' historical engagements. ... *Cymbeline's* pastoral has trickier aspirations than effortless aristocratic restitution.¹⁰⁰

In *Cymbeline's* pastoral, therefore, 'one should not expect, then, a simple contrast between ancient virtue and modern degeneracy', but rather an ambiguous flux between a bucolic hideaway that voices a pure, 'hunters' language' while simultaneously becoming tainted by a violent Machiavellianism, composed of courtly deceptions and divisions that stand in the path of the Prince's 'aristocratic restitution' and 'imperial destiny'.¹⁰¹

The poisonous linguistics that sinisterly percolate throughout the Welsh countryside, increasingly polluting its naive purity, are exemplified by Posthumus' letter which provides instruction for Imogen's assassination, much to the horror of his servant, Pisanio – 'O master, what a strange infection | Is fall'n into thy ear! What false Italian | [As poisonous tongu'd as handed] hath prevail'd | On thy too ready hearing?' (III.ii.3-6) – who detects a language so pernicious that it

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 130.

must be the fault of some aurally-transmitted contagion.¹⁰² As Imogen reads the infected words of this letter – disclosed by her honourable chaperone – she renounces her faith in language: ‘The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus, | All turn’d to heresy? Away, away, | Corrupters of my faith! you shall no more | Be stomachers to my heart’ (III.iv.81-4). Posthumus’ words, to which she was once so devoted as if they were ‘scripture’, by such slanderous falsehoods are now ‘all turn’d to heresy’, becoming the very ‘corrupters of [her] faith’, so utterly divorced from truth that they lose their authority to legitimately signify. Language is not only rendered defective, it also corrupts, as David Solway observes, affirming that in these plays, ‘the carriers of these languishing poisons are not primroses and cowslips but words and metaphors’:

The effect of this degraded language is to intoxicate, to blur distinctions, induce forgetfulness, distort awareness, and cause honour and commitment to languish beyond the hope of restoration. But language is equally poisoned by its debased and ulterior purposes and must flee for its survival into the complementary realms of invincible naivety to Delphic complexity. Outside the pastoral or the oracular modes of discourse it can only suffer and languish in a sort of semantic viscosity, the expression of perverted will.¹⁰³

The ‘poisonous-tongued’ Iachimo corrupts Posthumus with his words, transmitting a ‘strange infection’ that is palpable to the clear-sighted Pisanio, who assures Imogen, ‘tis slander, | Whose edge is sharper than the sword, whose tongue | Outvenoms all the worms of Nile ... viperous slander’ (33-9). As it contagiously spreads, ‘poisoned’ language is itself ‘equally poisoned by its debased and ulterior purposes’, as Keir Elam puts it: ‘Language sucks disease into itself: it is no longer the word that infects the world, but the world that infects the word by means of pneumonic contamination’.¹⁰⁴ Words, therefore, must ‘flee’ for ‘survival’ to the ‘invincible naivety’ of, either, ‘the pastoral’, or else, the ‘Delphic complexity’ of ‘oracular modes of discourse’, that arrive towards the end of the play. After all, even in the presumed safehouse of Milford Haven, it takes time for language to remedy and overcome its residual feedback loop of infecting and self-infection, as Solway continues, ‘the pastoral world evoked in the late romances are in essence prelapsarian, although we observe them at the pivotal moment in which the serpent of reality effects its entry ... when Eden is breached’.¹⁰⁵ For language to restore an Adamic mode of signification, in which words denote truth, the toxic venom of false import must be purged, that Imogen might recover her ‘corrupt[ed] ... faith’.

¹⁰² On poisonous language, see: Langley (2018), 151-90; Elam, “‘Til Plague thee for that Word”: Language, Performance, and Communicable Disease’, *J3*, 50 (1997), 19-28.

¹⁰³ David Solway, *Random Walks: Essays in Elective Criticism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1997), 118.

¹⁰⁴ Elam (1997), 23.

¹⁰⁵ Solway, 118.

Imogen begins to reawaken her linguistic faith by escaping the ‘viperous slander’ of her name, upholding the truth of her marital loyalty by adopting the disguise of a male youth named Fidele – indicating ‘fidelity’, etymologically originating from the Old French *fidélité* and the Latin *fidelitāt-em*, *fidelis*, meaning ‘faithful’, and *fidēs*, denoting faith – which she is later told corresponds aptly to her character with a seeming nominative determinism: ‘Thy name well fits thy faith; thy faith thy name’.¹⁰⁶ Sanctified by her new pastoral identity, Fidele fortuitously purges Milford Haven of its ‘languishing poisons’ with an elegiac ritual of death and resurrection, characteristic of the romance genre. In Act Four Scene Two, as Fidele travels across the pastures of Cambria plotting a voyage to Italy, her plans are quickly diverted when she falls ill, drinking what is supposedly a medicinal cure concocted by Cymbeline’s Queen – ‘I am sick still, heart-sick. Pisanio, | I’ll now taste of thy drug’ (37-8) – who deviously guaranteed Pisanio that ‘it is a thing I made, which hath the King | Five times redeem’d from death’ (I.v.62-3). Although the Queen intended this ‘mortal mineral’ (V.v.50) to be a poison that ‘should by the minute feed on life, and ling’ring, | By inches waste you’ (51-2), the court physician assures us it is no such drug: ‘She doth think she has | Strange ling’ring poisons’ but since he ‘will not trust one of her malice with | A drug of such damn’d nature’ (I.v.33-6), since he substituted its ingredients. Although this use of the term ‘lingering’ refers to ‘disease, suffering, or death: slow, painfully protracted’, specifically ‘of poisons: characterized by slow or tardy action’, perhaps its etymological derivation, ‘leng’, ‘to lengthen, prolong; to delay’ or ‘to linger, tarry, remain, abide, dwell; to continue in some condition’ – conceals the drugs’ true capacity to prolong life.¹⁰⁷ After all, according to the physician, the true effect of the Queen’s potion:

Will stupefy and dull the sense awhile,
 ... there is
 No danger in what show of death it makes,
 More than the locking up the spirits a time,
 To be more fresh, reviving. She is fool’d
 With a most false effect; and I the truer,
 So to be false with her.

I.v.37-44

Just as Imogen figuratively ingests the poisonous words of Posthumus’ letter only to evade his ‘viperous slander’ by inhabiting Fidele as her purifying antidote, she literally ingests the Queen’s intended poison by which she is inserted, via sleep, into a redemptive fairy-tale narrative. Imogen restores the tainted pastoral by an outward ‘show of death’, a ‘most false effect’ of lifelessness, during which time the ‘ling’ring poisons’ of an avaricious aristocracy are purged, before she later

¹⁰⁶ *OED*, ‘fidelity, *n.*’, etymology.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, ‘lingering, *adj.*’, b; ‘linger, *v.*’, etymology; ‘leng, *v.*’ 1, 2.

awakens ‘more fresh’ and ‘reviv[ed]’.¹⁰⁸ In the place of Fidele, who lies unconscious, her ‘angel-like’ (IV.ii.48) presence is replaced by Cloten, an embodiment of the expunged posions for he ‘reek[s]’ of imminent ‘sacrifice’ (I.ii.2), status-obsessed and posturing in Posthumus’ garments: ‘Thou villain base, | Know’st me not by my clothes?’ (IV.ii.80-1). ‘By being attentive to the pharmaceutical vocabulary of both the Shakespearean play and the early modern essay tradition’, Eric Langley concludes that, often, ‘the dissembler or flatterer comes to be understood as a poisonous parody of the restorative friend’ – as in this case where Posthumus is the poisonous parody of Cloten – associated with ‘venomous and infectious words’ that are ‘informed by period pathological thought’.¹⁰⁹ For example, when Cloten challenges Guiderius to ‘hear but my name, and tremble’ (IV.ii.87), Guiderius supposes his name to be that of some venomous creature: ‘thy name | I cannot tremble at it. Were it Toad, or Adder, Spider’ (89-90).

Cloten is slain by the brothers in a symbolic defeat of courtly vacuity, as Guiderius observes in the aftermath: ‘This Cloten was a fool, an empty purse, | There was no money in’t’ (113-14). Afraid of the repercussions at court, Belarius contemplates the prophetic significance of this event – ‘it’s strange | What Cloten’s being here to us portends, | Or what his death will bring us’ (181-3) – since the beheading of ‘Cloten’s clotpole’ (184) marks the toppling of one inane, counterfeit Prince by Cymbeline’s rightful Princes, in a reclamation of their narrative which hints towards their legitimising return. Returning with Cloten’s remains to discover a seemingly dead Fidele, the brothers, in a moment of poetic sorrow, lament the loss of their companion:

GUIDERIUS	If he be gone, he’ll make his grave a bed. With female fairies will his tomb be haunted, And worms will not come to thee.
ARVIRAGUS	With fairest flowers Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele, I’ll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack The flower that’s like thy face sore shaming Those rich-left heirs that let their fathers lie Without a monument! ...
GUIDERIUS	Prithee, have done, And do not play in wench-like words with that Which is so serious. Let us bury him.

IV.ii.216-31

¹⁰⁸ On imperfection within pastoral, see: Myriam Yvonne Jehenson, *The Golden World of the Pastoral: A Comparative Study of Sidney’s New Arcadia and D’Urfé’s L’Astrée* (Ravenna: Longo, 1981).

¹⁰⁹ Langley (2018), 156.

Mourning the passing of their beloved Fidele in the whimsical, feminine language of ‘female fairies’ and ‘fairest flowers’, the brothers construct a floral shrine, so divorced from the hypermasculine ostentations of a greedy, courtly wealth and inheritance, that by Arviragus’ own definition it would put to shame ‘those rich-left heirs’, so spoiled that they ‘let their fathers lie | Without a monument’. Meanwhile, Arviragus betrays his true identity as a royal heir by his rhetorical sophistication, delivering a verbose romantic elegy which so much exceeds the functional simplicity of ‘hunters’ language’ that Guiderius abruptly calls for an end to his slippery ‘play in wench-like words’ at a ceremony ‘so serious’. Barrett observes the significance of this burial scene within the context of the literary pastoral tradition:

When Arviragus, Guiderius, and Belarius find Fidele in a deep sleep, they think that their new friend has died. Shakespeare pairs Cloten’s gruesome beheading with Fidele’s apparent death to turn the action toward funeral elegy, invoking a pastoral tradition [through] Death’s everlasting presence ... intensified by Guiderius and Arviragus’s frame of reference for funeral rites – they repeatedly invoke the death of their foster mother, heightening the scene’s atmosphere of ritual memory.¹¹⁰

The brothers decide to ‘lay’ Fidele ‘by good Euriphile, our mother’ (233-4), evoking the cyclical ‘atmosphere of ritual memory’ as they revisit her maternal resting place, also returning Fidele and Cloten to ‘the ground that gave them first’ (289) in a ceremony which eliminates ‘wench-like words’ out of reverence for nature’s deific authority. Indeed, the formidable power of the natural world is honoured by their funeral song – ‘Fear no more the heat o’ th’ sun, | Nor the furious winter’s rages’ (258-9) – in which death is an escape from the treacherous struggle of survival. On this land of hardship and human remains, all must ‘come to dust’ (263, 269, 275), as their song’s refrain repeats, in a pulsing cycle of life and death that recollects the mighty providence of nature, reconnecting with the rudiments of a land of ancestral origins.

The mysterious fatalism of the natural world presides over the Welsh pastoral scenes, as the suppressed nobility of the princes’ ancestry asserts itself above all odds, mounting anticipation of a prophetic return to their sovereign state. Though the King’s sons are raised ‘meanly’ (III.iii.82) in the primitive wilderness of Belarius’ ‘cave’ (83), their substitute father discovers, in astonishment, as the aristocratic lineage of their past persists:

How hard it is to hide the sparks of nature!
 ... and though train’d up thus meanly
 I’ th’ cave [wherein they] bow, their thoughts do hit
 The roofs of palaces, and nature prompts them
 In simple and low things to prince it much
 Beyond the trick of others.

¹¹⁰ Barret, 156.

III.iii.79-86

King Cymbeline's sons are unknowingly charged with royal blood that flashes with the 'sparks of [their] nature', an inherited social superiority that intellectually elevates them with such lofty 'thoughts' that 'hit | The roofs of palaces'; though uncultivated, yet even in 'simple and low things' their genealogy dominates as they 'prince it much', executing crude tasks with refinement. The elder son and heir to the throne, Guiderius, exhibits the innate competence of a leader, enraptured by stories of 'warlike feats' (90) and 'act[ing]' out their 'words' (95), while the younger son, Arviragus, flaunts a proficiency for rhetorical eloquence as he intuitively 'strikes life into ... speech' (97). Lyne considers their 'natural prowess', concluding that perhaps, 'the ascetic idyll in which they have been raised might be hailed as ideal for fostering such qualities, especially in conventional contrast with the corrupt court', and in this sense, 'the play may allow some resistance to the idea that virtue and true royal birth are deeply connected, but it offers the idea strongly none the less'.¹¹¹ So strongly, in fact, that Belarius is persistently stunned by the utter conspicuousness of their irrepressible breeding:

O noble strain!
 O worthiness of nature! breed of greatness!
 ...
 O thou goddess,
 Thou divine Nature, thou thyself thou blazon'st
 In these two princely boys! ...
 ... 'Tis wonder
 That an invisible instinct should frame them
 To royalty unlearn'd, honour untaught,
 Civility not seen from other, valour
 That wildly grows in them but yields a crop
 As if it had been sow'd.

IV.ii.24-181

Despite Belarius' attempt to weed out aristocratic sophistications, the 'noble strain' of their 'princely' pedigree upholds the fated plan of 'divine Nature', manifest as some 'invisible instinct' for a 'royalty' and 'civility' never before encountered.

Just as the persistence of their 'invisible instinct' anticipates a return to their dynastic past, to the palace where their heirdom awaits, the instinctive pull of return is also felt by the brothers' visceral bond with their sister, Imogen, although all parties remain unaware of their biological relation. When the exhausted, wandering Fidele is met by her unsuspecting brothers, it is with the particular

¹¹¹ Lyne, 103.

tenderness of a sibling that Arviragus discerningly vows: 'I'll love him as my brother: | And such a welcome as I'd give to him | After long absence, such is yours. Most welcome!' (III.vi.71-3). Likewise, Imogen, at this first meeting, responds by intuitively wishing they were indeed her own brothers: 'would it had been so, that they | Had been my father's sons' (75-6). So explicitly fraternal is their rapport that, when Fidele falls sick, both of her brothers confess the inexplicable intensity of their love, despite having only just met. Guiderius declares, 'I love thee; I have spoke it; | How much the quantity, the weight as much, | As I do love my father' (IV.ii.16-8), after which Arviragus admits, 'I know not why | I love this youth, and I have heard you say, | Love's reason's without reason' (20-2). The 'reason', of course, is biological and divinely predetermined, and much like the brothers' inherited capacity to intellectually 'reason', this instinctive 'reason' serves as a pathway to truth. Indeed, the process of reasoning, popularised by Renaissance rationalists, is encapsulated by the French philosopher, scientific, and mathematician, René Descartes (1596-1650), in his 1637 *Discourse of a Method for the Well Guiding of Reason*, which, 'contains a Method, by the Rules whereof we may Shape our better part, Rectifie or Reason, Form our Manners and Square our Actions, Adorn our Mindes', therefore, 'making a diligent Enquiry into Nature, wee may attain to the Knowledge of the Truth, which is the most desirable union in the World'.¹¹² This inexorable courtly intellectualism, along with an intuitive love, draws these 'lopp'd branches' back together, repairing the breaches at the heart of this ruling family, under the providential influence of the pastoral.

Like Imogen and her brothers, Posthumus is the final 'lopp'd branch' to engage in a ritual of self-destruction before being miraculously 'jointed' back to his long-departed 'old stock' by divine intervention. Introduced as one whose 'name and birth' (I.i.27) they 'cannot delve [...] to the root' of (28), Posthumus is persistently characterised by his illegitimacy as an orphaned child, his unknown heritage obscured by a name given to commemorate his father's death in battle – Posthumus Leonatus – reinforcing his own anonymity. Embodying the abrupt demise of his own bloodline and its posterity, Posthumus is also estranged from his adoptive family, 'banish'd' by his foster father, King Cymbeline, for an unauthorised marriage to his Princess-daughter, Imogen, who complains that she 'took'st a beggar, wouldst have made my throne | A seat for baseness' (I.i.141-2). Similarly, during his exile in Italy, Posthumus is resented for 'marrying his king's daughter' (I.iv.14) by Iachimo, who echoes Cymbeline when he questions Imogen's judgment 'for taking a beggar without less quality' (23). Embittered with jealousy by Posthumus' good fortune, Iachimo doubts that this 'beggar' could 'prove so worthy as since he hath been allow'd the name of' (2-3), conning him into suspecting his wife's infidelity to win a wager – a deception which culminates in

¹¹² René Descartes, *A Discourse of a Method...* (1649), A7v.

Posthumus issuing the order for her execution. Extradited from Britain, swindled by a Roman, and undone by guilt for his supposed murder of Imogen, by Act Five Scene One, the anchorless Posthumus inhabits an increasingly severed and protean identity:

... I am brought hither
 Among th' Italian gentry, and to fight
 Against my lady's kingdom. 'Tis enough
 That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress; peace,
 I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,
 Hear patiently my purpose: I'll disrobe me
 Of these Italian weeds and suit myself
 As does a Britain peasant; so I'll fight
 Against the part I come with.

V.i.17-25

In an imminent battle between Britain and the Romans, Posthumus is conscripted 'among the Italian gentry', though he refuses to kill British soldiers after taking the life of their Princess: "'Tis enough | That, Britain, I have kill'd thy mistress'. Instead, he vacillates between both nations, occupying a series of disguises that confound his fragile sense of belonging in a ritual of self-destruction. For example, Posthumus initially vows to 'disrobe me | Of these Italian weeds and suit myself | As does a Britain peasant' – that he might keep his loyalty to his wife and so, 'die | For thee, O Imogen' (25-6) – but on account of British victories in battle, complains that he 'could not find death' (V.iii.69), and so reverts back to his Roman guise: 'No more a Britain, I have resum'd again | The part I came in' (75-6). Pining, above all, after death – 'for me, my ransom's death. | On either side I come to spend my breath' (80-1) – Posthumus refuses to devote himself to 'either side'.

Critics, like Wall-Randall, have observed that the 'Posthumus, who goes to England disguised as an Italian, fights the Romans disguised as a British peasant, has himself arrested as a Roman, then reveals his Britishness' is in 'a state of mutable identity'.¹¹³ Valerie Wayne argues that the instability of his persona is what initiates the dream-visitation from his ancestors in Act Five Scene Four, enabling Posthumus 'to recover his own identity through his family connections'.¹¹⁴ As Posthumus dismantles himself in battle, he prepares himself for a re-identification with his own elusive parentage. Calling for a pivotal moment of self-realisation, he pleads for the gods to 'put the strength o' th' Leonati in me!' (V.i.31): namely, to empower him with his paternally-inherited, lion-

¹¹³ Sarah Wall-Randell, *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 47-75 (54).

¹¹⁴ Wayne, 'The Woman's Parts of *Cymbeline*', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Johnathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 288-315 (301).

hearted ‘valour’ as he marches forth into battle. In this moment, Posthumus yearns for the epiphanic self-recognition that often accompanies the turn to romance, particularly the recovery of lost relatives, such as Pericles’ recognition of his daughter when she pronounces, ‘my name is Marina’ (*Per.*, V.i.142) – after which he too reclaims his purpose, echoing ‘I am Pericles of Tyre’ (204) – or when Prospero reveals himself to the shipwrecked islanders in the final scene of *The Tempest*: ‘Behold, sir King, | The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero’ (*Temp.*, V.i.106-7). Though Posthumus is not yet able to assuredly assert himself until the final scene of the play – for only once his place among a forgotten lineage has been salvaged, can he declare, ‘I am Posthumus, | That kill’d thy daughter’ (*Cym.*, V.v.217-8) – at this juncture, he simply aspires to locate ‘the Leonati in me’, to ‘delve’ himself ‘to the root’. In pursuit of a lineal return to his departed family, Posthumus dissociates from the modern, futile materiality of courtly language, as he vows to fight with ‘more valour in me than my habits show’ (V.i.30), reversing the philosophy of Cloten by outdoing his humble garments, embracing the heroism of Leonatus in the dress of a ‘Britain peasant’. Posthumus seeks to challenge the principles of a degraded world that measures internal merits by external beauty – ‘so fair an outward and such stuff within | Endows a man but he’ (I.i.23-4); ‘you speak of him when he was less furnish’d than now he is with that which makes him both without and within’ (I.iv.8-10). Inverting this model, Posthumus tenaciously strives for ‘less without and more within’ (V.i.33).

Relinquishing external signifiers of virtue in the search for more essential meaning, Posthumus acquires a faithful mode of signification, a speech that cedes its efficacy to divine authority. Repenting to the gods for taking Imogen’s life, Posthumus confesses his sin before offering himself in submissive devotion: ‘Gods, if you | Should have ta’en vengeance on my faults ... | But Imogen is your own, do your best wills, | And make me blest to obey!’ (7-17). This transition, in which Posthumus adopts a language of faithfulness, somewhat evokes a discourse of Christian repentance – though in the context of the pre-Christian polytheism of the Roman Empire – observable in Act Five Scene Four, as the imprisoned Posthumus offers his life in penance to the gods:

... My conscience, thou art fetter’d
 More than my shanks and wrists. You good gods, give me
 The penitent instrument to pick that bolt,
 Then free for ever! Is’t enough I am sorry?
 So children temporal fathers do appease;
 Gods are more full of mercy. Must I repent,
 I cannot do it better than in gyves,
 Desir’d more than constrain’d. To satisfy,
 If of my freedom ’tis the main part, take
 No stricter render of me than my all.

V.iv.8-17

Entreating for some 'penitent instrument' to free his tormented 'conscience', Posthumus considers the futility of a mere apology: if 'sorry' is the manner by which 'children temporal fathers do appease' then he must transcend their earthly vanity. To be granted the forgiveness of the gods, and so to liberate his 'conscience ... fetter'd', Posthumus must 'repent' and atone for his sins, not by force but of his own will, for redemption must be 'desir'd more than constrain'd'. Seeking absolution, Posthumus, therefore, substantiates his 'sorry' with his 'all', as he forfeits his life.

In his sermon on repentance, the English bishop and chaplain to the royal family, Brian Duppa (1588-1662), reminds his congregation that although 'Innocence' is 'a Jewell of higher price in the substance', yet 'Repentance' is 'of greater value in the workmanship; so much of greater value'.¹¹⁵ This serves as an apt metaphor for the 'Jewell' of Imogen's 'Innocence' – the ring – for once it is replaced with Posthumus' 'Repentance', their love bond acquires a much 'greater value'. As part of his process of spiritual purification, Posthumus, as he prays, once more declares his aversion to the dysfunctional language of economic credit that plagues his world, questioning its method of valuing individual worth:

I know you are more clement than vild men,
 Who of their broken debtors take a third,
 A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again
 On their abatement. That's not my desire:
 For Imogen's dear life take mine, and though
 'Tis not so dear, yet 'tis a life, you coin'd it.
 'Tween man and man they weigh not every stamp;
 Though light, take pieces for the figure's sake;
 You rather, mine being yours: and so, great pow'rs,
 If you will take this audit, take this life,
 And cancel these cold bonds. O Imogen,
 I'll speak to thee in silence.

V.iv.18-29

Posthumus devotes himself to the gods – rather than the 'vild men' of a commercialised new world who exploit the misfortune of others, like creditors or usurers taking 'a third, | A sixth, a tenth' from that owed by 'broken debtors' – demanding to pay his moral debt owed with everything he has: 'For Imogen's dear life take mine'. Though, he admits, 'tis not so dear' as the princess', 'yet 'tis a life', like a coin that is comparatively 'light' in weight, but still assigned or 'stamp[ed]' with the same price. Through this metaphor, Posthumus advocates for a more refined system of valuation: one

¹¹⁵ Brian Duppa, *Angels Rejoicing for Sinners Repenting* (1648), 15.

that transcends currency's materiality and considers each human life – regardless of social class or status – to hold equal value, such that superficial differences between individuals must not be levied. On these enlightened terms, Posthumus therefore requests that the merciful gods accept his repayment and 'cancel' the outstanding balance of his loan: 'take this life, | And cancel these cold bonds'. At the same time that Posthumus repays his debt, he also cancels the 'cold bonds' of the linguistic marketplace that he inhabits, opting to 'speak to [Imogen] in silence'. The sense of redemptive transformation that Posthumus benefits from when paying his debt to Imogen recalls the terms of a period financial tract, written by the actor, poet, and playwright, Thomas Jordan (c.1614-1685), in 1644, who argues '*That it is better for a man to live in Debt, then otherwise*', since within nature, 'we see that nothing is made for it self, but each hath a bond of duty, of use, or of service, by which it is, indebted to other', so Mankind must 'look into himself, and see how his constitutive parts are debtors each to other'.¹¹⁶

Having dismantled himself into his 'constituent parts' on the battlefield, and thereby acknowledging his 'bond of duty' to Imogen as he attempts to compensate her life, Posthumus is, according to Jordan, 'bound to return' to his lender 'the greatest pleasure, which I can no way do, but by being in his debt'; fulfilling an agreement in a moment of conversion that resembles 'the *Alchemists* who promise to themselves to turn Tin into Silver, and Copper into Gold' and in doing so would be 'transported out of themselves with joy'.¹¹⁷ Even more miraculous than alchemical transmutation, on account of its urgency, Jordan imagines 'how much more a Creditor' must be enraptured 'when he shall recover a desperate debt? it is like the joy of a Father that receives his lost Child'. In this sense, the settlement of one's debt has the transcendent capacity to prompt a magical romance recovery.¹¹⁸ As Wall-Randall observes:

Posthumus had left behind the pettiness of his images of debt and counterfeiting. Having forgotten his old language and, with it, his desire to pay the ultimate price, he has moved into a larger and more romance-inflected realm of speech. By the last scene, as we have seen, *counter* has come to have an entirely different meaning, signifying not commerce but transformation, mutuality, and love.

At the same time, to let go of the absolute and final idea of canceling one's debt is to accept the idea of continuing to live in a world where interactions with others are conducted in more complicated and less coldly transparent terms than economic transactions.¹¹⁹

For Wall-Randell, this scene marks a shift from the 'old language' of 'debt and counterfeiting' – where human interaction is framed in terms of callous, 'economic transactions' and 'cold bonds' –

¹¹⁶ Thomas Jordan, *The Debtors Apologie...* (1644), 1-2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Wall-Randell, 73.

to a ‘more romance-inflected’ sense of ‘*counter*’, expressed by Cymbeline in the final scene when siblings and lovers are reunited: ‘Posthumus anchors upon Imogen; | And she ... throws her eye | On him, her brothers, me, her master, hitting | Each object with a joy; the counterchange | Is severally in all’ (V.v.393-97). Since the word ‘counter’ might also imply ‘anything used in counting or keeping account’, it undergoes a conversion, from a site where currency is exchanged using illegitimate ‘counterfeit’ (II.v.6) coins, to the reciprocally loving gaze of ‘counterchange’ – in a turn away from the poisonous language of Posthumus’ letter that ‘corrupt[ed]’ Imogen’s ‘faith’.¹²⁰ Committed to a language purged of ‘wench-like words’, or devious ‘vild men ... | Who of their broken debtors take’, Posthumus, like the drugged Imogen of Act Four, slips into the ‘silence’ of sleep.

As a newly faithful Posthumus dreams, Shakespeare stages the magical return of his lost ancestral past, retrieving the irretrievable by a supernatural revelation that pinpoints *Cymbeline*’s turn to romance. The visitation from the spirits of Posthumus’ departed relatives – who seek to recover his displaced identity and restore his future fortune – is such a flight of fancy for Posthumus that it remains contained within the parameters of his dreamworld, as they finally ‘delve him to the root’:

SICILIUS LEONATUS I died whilst in the womb he stay’d
 Attending nature’s law;
 Whose father then [as men report
 Thou orphans’ father art]
 Thou shouldst have been, and shielded him
 From this earth-vexing smart.

MOTHER Lucina lent not me her aid,
 But took me in my throes,
 That from me was Posthumus ripp’d,
 Came crying ’mongst his foes,
 A thing of pity!

V.iv.37-47

Finally, Posthumus’ biological parents reveal the origins of his violent familial ruptures, tracing this back to his very conception *in utero*. His father – who, like King Cymbeline, ironically fathered orphans but never his own – ‘died whilst in the womb he stay’d’, consequently defining Posthumus’ whole identity, including his name, by his proximity to paternal death.

¹²⁰ OED, ‘counter, *n.*3’, I.1.

Furthermore, Posthumus, during his birth, was ‘ripp’d’ from his mother who suffered maternal death, not aided by ‘Lucina’, the Roman goddess of childbirth, who, she laments, ‘took me in my throes’. Born by caesarean section into a parentless world, Palfrey observes:

Even when Posthumus’ dream seems to reunite him into a kind of Lacanian pre-natal wholeness (V.iv.30-151), the image is not only hedged by incredulity and impending violence, but split by the news of his ‘unnatural’ birth. Ripped from the womb through instrument of the knife, he is as parentless as Macbeth. Posthumus not only bewails, but personifies, what the Scottish tyrant effects: the disintegration of organicist securities.¹²¹

In the precise moment that Posthumus’ dream returns him to the comforting, ‘pre-natal wholeness’ of his ancestors, it simultaneously reinforces familial disunion with the bloody image of his own surgical severing from his mother. The account of Posthumus’ birth echoes the words of Macduff, who threatens Macbeth’s conceited indestructability – ‘I bear a charmed life, which must not yield | To one of woman born’ (*Mac.*, V.viii.12-13) – with the fact that he ‘was from his mother’s womb | Untimely ripp’d’ (15-16). Likewise, and with comparable, psychologically-inflected intent, Janet Adelman identifies this impulse to violently split oneself from the maternal body, recalling ‘Posthumus’ own parthenogenesis fantasy ... distilled in “woman’s part” speech’, proceeded by ‘a series of defensive strategies designed to excise the woman’s part in him’:

The fantasy solution of *Cymbeline* ... would attempt to do away with the female body altogether. Hence marriage can be recovered only in the context of a parthenogenetic fantasy that denies the place of the maternal body But as the wild play of doubling and redoubling suggest, this fantasy is hard to sustain; and as though recognizing its hopelessness, Shakespeare returns ... to the point of origin in the problematic female body.¹²²

According to Adelman, although Posthumus’ fantasy ‘denies the place of the maternal body’, in reality ‘this fantasy is hard to sustain’, compelling a necessary return ‘to the point of origin in the problematic female body’ as he, once more, arrives at the figure of his mother. While this parentless ‘parthenogenetic fantasy’ may mortally threaten a tragic hero like Macbeth, in a romance like *Cymbeline*, Posthumus is simply lulled, by his dream, back to the womb-like comforts of a ‘pre-natal wholeness’, back ‘to the point of origin’, where his family finally legitimate not only his ‘roots’, but also his virtuous character. In the first scene of the play, the courtiers fail to determine the extent of Posthumus’ merits with only his physical form and no family to assess him by, so they ‘crush him together rather than unfold | His measure duly’. Now, however, his integrity is unambiguously corroborated, as one possessing a ‘great nature, like his ancestry, | Moulded the stuff so fair, | That he deserv’d the praise o’ th’ world, | As great Sicilius’ heir’ (V.iv.48-51) – affirming his rightful position. No longer Cymbeline’s surrogate son or unworthy son-in-law who would have made the

¹²¹ Palfrey, 87.

¹²² Adelman, 211-19.

King's 'throne | A seat for baseness', Posthumus becomes a worthy successor within his own right: no longer *Posthumus*, he has, arguably, superseded his name.

As Posthumus' spectral relatives restore his tenuous foundations, they summon the supreme face of providence in the play, the Roman sky god, Jupiter, to recuperate and deliver a better future for their living progeny. As Posthumus' late family solicit divine intervention to repair his convicted fate, they not only entreat Jupiter as a deity but as a figure of political authority governing over them, since (as discussed earlier in this chapter) early-modern prophecy obliges its subject's deference to a politics of order and hierarchy:

SICILIUS LEONATUS Thy crystal window ope; look out;
 No longer exercise
 Upon a valiant race thy harsh
 And potent injuries.

MOTHER Since, Jupiter, our son is good,
 Take off his miseries.

SICILIUS LEONTAUS Peep through thy marble mansion, help,
 Or we poor ghosts will cry
 To th' shining synod of the rest
 Against thy deity.

BROTHERS Help, Jupiter, or we appeal,
 And from thy justice fly.

V.iv.81-92

Just as Jupiter was believed to protect laws and rule over the state of ancient imperial Rome, so he watches over *Cymbeline's* play-world, not only with a divine influence, but like a bureaucratic politician. Reigning over his people from the heavens like an aristocratic tyrant, Jupiter fails to 'look out' from his lavish 'crystal window' or even 'peep' from the extravagant luxury of his 'marble mansion', prompting the spirits to threaten a coup, recruiting the other gods in a rebellion if he fails to 'help' Posthumus: 'we poor ghosts will cry | 'To th' shining synod of the rest | Against thy deity'.

Considering contemporary Jacobean political interests, Leah S. Marcus explores the often-made connection between King James I's performance in parliament and the thundering figure of Jupiter:

In the third year of his reign, James I more than once descended upon Parliament like Jove with his 'thunderbolts' to chide its members for their sluggishness with a pet project of his, the creation of Great Britain through the union of England and Scotland. ... The image of James as Jove swooping down with his thunder became a leitmotif of the parliamentary session.¹²³

¹²³ Leah S. Marcus, 'Cymbeline and the Unease of Topicality', in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (London: Routledge, 1999), 134-68 (135). For comparisons of King James I to Jupiter, see: Wallace Notestein, *The House of*

Like some of the political disillusionment and ridicule that compromised the reputation of King James, the spirits' loyalty to Jupiter is conditional upon certain intimidating terms: 'Help, Jupiter, or we appeal, | And from thy justice fly'. Once Jupiter descends in a burst of theatrical magic and early-stage pyrotechnics, his response oscillates between tyrannical hubris and the obliging benevolence of a threatened ruler:

No more, you petty spirits of region low,
 Offend our hearing; hush! How dare you ghosts
 Accuse the Thunderer, whose bolt, you know,
 Sky-planted batters all rebelling coasts?
 ...
 Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift,
 The more delay'd, delighted. Be content,
 Your low-laid son our godhead will uplift.
 ...
 He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,
 And happier much by his affliction made.
 This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein
 Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine,
 and so, away! No farther with your din
 Express impatience, lest you stir up mine.

V.iv.93-112

With dismissive fury Jupiter chastises Posthumus' relatives as 'petty spirits of region low' for this disturbance – 'no farther with your din' – yet he assuages them, tenderly mitigating his rage: 'Whom best I love I cross; to make my gift, | The more delay'd, delighted'. Agreeing to fulfil their bids and reinstate the 'full fortune' of Posthumus, Jupiter guarantees a future in which, 'He shall be lord of Lady Imogen' again. For Glazov-Corrigan, 'Jupiter's answer' to their appeals shows 'both that prayers do disturb the heavenly gods and that the gods are constantly involved in human affairs':

This means that in terms of the construction of *Cymbeline*, there is a force which presides over the characters' fate and is exhibited (inconspicuously everywhere except in its culmination in the Jupiter scene) and communicated to the audience at those moments of highest danger – and this force, in terms of Speech Acts is the perlocutionary force of prayer.¹²⁴

The previously inconspicuous 'force which presides over the characters' fate' – presumably the same absent authority that compels Imogen to intuitively recover her lost brothers and return them home to inherit their kingdom – is revealed to be Jupiter. In what Lyne describes as a 'culmination

Commons, 1604-1610 (New Haven: YUP, 1971), 250-4; David Harris Willson, ed., *The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Boyer, 1606-1607* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), 269, 282, 287-8; G.B. Harrison, *A Jacobean Journal: Being a Record of Those Things Most Talked of During the Years 1603-1606* (London: Routledge, 1941), 131.

¹²⁴ Glazov-Corrigan (1994), 394.

of the providential plot of the play', Jupiter is beckoned forth by the power of a devoutly faithful language, revealing a furiously patriarchal figure who presides over the posterity and future of all, embodying the force of divine order to which all those living must submit.¹²⁵

Though spoken in a dream, Jupiter's prophetic promises are neither ethereal nor illusory, since he leaves behind an oracle, a physically palpable book in which Posthumus' destiny is redeemed: 'This tablet lay upon his breast, wherein | Our pleasure his full fortune doth confine'. In his *Intepretacion of Dreames* (1576), the English writer and translator, Thomas Hill (c.1528-74) distinguishes between meaningful and meaningless dreams, concluding that 'true' dreams were of two kinds: either 'vain dreames' coming from bodily disturbances, or 'dreames seene by grave & sober persons' that 'do signifie matters to come, and a spirite undoubtedlie shewing to them, whiche by her nature is a Prophetesse ... al matters imminent'.¹²⁶ By this period definition, Posthumus' dream not only delivers prophecy, it physically manifests it. As Wall Randell recognises:

In dream visions and other notable dreams in medieval and early modern literature, it is not usual for an object encountered in a dream to cross the line between sleeping and waking life. Objects [that] remain after a dream [therefore] guarantee its reality or meaningfulness For Posthumus ... this almost primal wish is fulfilled: something found in a dream withstands the transition to waking and miraculously, gratifyingly, stays found. By recalling the classical and medieval "apport" rather than early modern conventions of dream representation, Posthumus's book is also a nostalgic backward-looking element of romance.¹²⁷

The material presence of the book which wondrously 'withstands the transition to waking', substantiates a 'nostalgic backward-looking', faithful naivety, typical of 'romance'. As Charlotte Scott notes, the shift from tragedy to comedy is marked by the appearance of this book which, itself, offers a miraculous redemption.¹²⁸ Waking from his sleep, Posthumus, at first, assumes that all his familial connections have been lost – 'Sleep, thou hast been a grandsire and begot | A father to me; and thou hast created | A mother and two brothers. But (O scorn!) | Gone!' (123-6) – lamenting all the 'Poor wretches that depend | On greatness' favour dream as I have done' then 'Wake and find nothing' (127-9). However, once he detects the book, this 'nothing' transforms into a mystified wonder:

What fairies haunt this ground? A book? O rare one,
Be not, as is our fangled world, a garment
Nobler than that it covers! Let thy effects
So follow, to be most unlike our courtiers,
As good as promise.

¹²⁵ Lyne, 46.

¹²⁶ Thomas Hill, *The Moste Pleasaunte Arte of the Interpretation of Dreames* (1576), Aii^v.

¹²⁷ Wall-Randell, 63.

¹²⁸ Charlotte Scott, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 43-4.

V.iv.133-7

Divorced from the ‘fangled world’ of counterfeit ‘courtiers’, Posthumus hopes the book is not merely like ‘a garment | Nobler than that it covers’ – just as Cloten was – but that its contents are of meaningful substance, matching its appearance, that it may be, ‘unlike our courtiers, | As good as promise’. Here, the ‘promise’ is reified as an opportunity for faithful utterance, illustrative of the play’s linguistic salvation.

The problem of the oracle is not, as Posthumus suspects, one of its vacuity, but rather his own exegetic failure to read its words. Indeed, the prophecy refers to Posthumus as the ‘lion’s whelp’, or cub – ‘when as a lion’s whelp shall, to himself unknown, without seeking find, and be embrac’d by a piece of tender air ... then shall Posthumus end his miseries’ (138-43) – featuring an unambiguous rendering of his name which he fails to recognise. Although this prophecy also anticipates that until its conditions are fulfilled, this ‘lion’s whelp’ shall remain ‘to himself unknown’, therefore, pre-empting his misrecognition, as he confusedly reads:

’Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as madmen
Tongue and brain not; either both or nothing,
Or senseless speaking, or a speaking such
As sense cannot untie. Be what it is,
The action of my life is like that, which
I’ll keep, if but for sympathy.

V.iv.145-50

In the process of recuperating his identity, Posthumus still fails to read himself or recognise his name, such that the words on the page appear at a semiotic disjunct, devoid of sense. The oracle is so incomprehensible to Posthumus that he deliberates whether this might be ‘still a dream’, or the nonsensical mutterings of ‘madmen’, that is, ‘senseless speaking’, or, most accurately, ‘speaking such’ as his own ‘sense cannot untie’.

Wall-Randell compares the textuality of Posthumus’ dreamt-up oracle to the sleeping Imogen’s copy of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in Act Two Scene Two:

The book, rather than emblemizing a discrete part of the self, can serve as a representation of ... the self as a whole. Importantly, both ... are scenes in which reading and dreaming touch or overlap. In the first instance, Imogen reads a book she believes to be separate from her own experience, but when she wakes, the book’s story turns out, nightmarishly, to come true, to be her own. Later, Posthumus encounters a book that *does* tell his story and that is offered in a dream, ostentatiously, as a prophecy for his future; it proves unreadable to him but becomes the occasion for his to break through into truer self-knowledge.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Wall-Randell, 49.

While Imogen is doomed to become textual, entrapped by mythology during the phase of the play in which textuality – as with Posthumus’ deceptive letter – is felt to be unreliable, the oracle restores textual authenticity, offering truths that Posthumus must learn to read. The book, therefore, offers an opportunity for Posthumus’ to ‘break through into truer self-knowledge’ if he accommodates the prophecy’s terms: to know his ‘unknown’ self. After all, although Posthumus cannot decipher the ‘sense’ of the oracle’s words, he admits to an instinctive association with them, in ‘sympathy’ or correspondence with ‘the action of my life’:

The book creates order out of the painful chaos of his existence, but it simultaneously keeps that order sufficiently separate from Posthumus’s agency and from his understanding to retain its aura of its wholeness and completeness. ... the book’s inherent strangeness in this play, its unreadability and unresolvability, its straddling of the world of dream and waking ... is the essence of its power to estrange, to make known things unknown, and – through an immaterial, unglorious, but transformative ‘sympathy,’ not through the material and rational – to release, liberate, and resolve.¹³⁰

Posthumus, therefore, accepts to sleepily ‘estrangle’ himself from the oracle, relinquishing his understanding of it in order to sustain a magical universe of sympathies, in which he invests his faith, deciding to ‘keep’ the book – though it transcends his understanding – ‘if but for sympathy’.

In the final scene of the play, the romance’s miraculous resolution can be detected, not only by the magical realisation of the oracle’s words, but also by the adoption of its fertile and faithful semiotics. When the first portion of the prophecy – which foretells that Posthumus ‘shall ... be embrac’d’ by his wife once more – is finally realised, Posthumus persists with the metaphor of a family tree – ‘hang there like fruit, my soul, | Till the tree die!’ (V.v.263-4) – which frames the second part of the prophecy, perhaps anticipating the retrieval of the original ‘lopp’d branches’, the King’s sons:

... and when from a stately cedar shall be lopp’d branches, which, being dead many years, shall after revive, be jointed to the old stock, and freshly grow; then shall Posthumus end his miseries, Britain be fortunate and flourish in peace and plenty.

V.iv.140-4

The ‘stately cedar’, which represents the reign of King Cymbeline, returns its ‘lopp’d branches’, his heirs, to their ‘old stock’, when his sons return to court to inherit their kingdom, that Britain might ‘be fortunate and flourish in | peace and plenty’ once more. The cedar tree also serves as an image of dynastic fertility in *Henry VIII*, as Cranmer prophesies over the newborn Elizabeth that she will die without an heir, he proceeds to forecast the succession of King James I: ‘he shall flourish, | And like a mountain cedar reach his branches | To all the plains about him. Our children’s children | Shall see this, and bless heaven’ (*H8*, V.iv.52-5). The image of ‘lofty cedar’ (*Cym.*,

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 74-7.

V.v.453) commonly depicts an enduring royal bloodline, as its biblical roots suggest. In the book of Ezekiel, for example, the cedar tree serves as an allegory for the historical ‘greatness’ of nations, though they shall inevitably collapse, like the ‘Pharaoh king of Egypt’, whose dominion, ‘*like a cedar ... with fair branches, and with thick shadowing boughs, and shot up very high*’, where ‘under his shadow dwelt all mighty nations’.¹³¹

Just as the emblem of the towering cedar tree prophesies the rise and fall of powerful ruling kingdoms, in *Cymbeline* it indicates the predicted return of posterity, remedying Britain’s crisis of succession, and reinstating the order of dynastic rule. This fruitful moment of ‘reviving’, in which the King’s son’s return, ‘jointed to the old stock’ and thus regrafted to the iconographic tree, marks prophecy’s repair of broken signifiers. Iachimo confesses to falsifying an impression of Imogen’s infidelity with ‘simular proof’ (200) – like the ‘corporal sign’ of a ‘mole cinque-spotted’ – thus, ‘wounding [Posthumus] belief in her renown | With tokens thus, and thus’ (202-3). This ruinous ‘stain’ (II.iv.139) on her honour transfers, in this final scene, from the sexualised body of Imogen to the body of Cymbeline’s returning son: ‘Guiderius had | Upon his neck a mole, a sanguine star, | It was a mark of wonder’ (V.v.363-5). Guiderius’ re-evaluated, reformed bodily sign replaces Imogen’s mole – which was a mark of promiscuity – to assume a newfound, divinatory significance as a celestial ‘mark of wonder’. It is a ‘natural stamp’, destined by ‘wise nature’s end’ to ‘be his evidence now’ (366-8), facilitating the miraculous recognition at the play’s magical, semiotic recovery.

With the prophecy fulfilled and linguistic faith restored, Posthumus – the ‘lion’s whelp’, still ‘to himself unknown’ within the prophetic text – instructs Caius Lucius’ soothsayer to etymologically decipher the words of the oracle that he may know himself: ‘Thou, Leonatus, art the lion’s whelp; | The fit and apt construction of thy name’. Though all at court gather to collectively observe the erudite interpretations of this magically adept and divinely-elected soothsayer, his etymological derivations are, in fact, false, as critics observe, although his meaning is correct.¹³² First of all, his initial prophetic ‘vision’ (IV.ii.346) in Act Four Scene Two, ‘which portends | (Unless my sins abuse my divination) | Success to th’ Roman host’ (IV.ii.350-2), has already proven false on the battlefield. According to the soothsayer in this final scene, Imogen’s designation, as a ‘piece of tender air’, derives from the Latin ‘*mollis aer*’ (447) – ‘*mollis*’ implying femininity by its meaning, ‘soft’ – an extraction of ‘*mulier*’, meaning ‘woman, wife’.¹³³ However, by 1607, this etymology is presented as specious, when Henrie Stephen’s translation of the French lexicographer, Henrie

¹³¹ *Geneva Bible*, Ezekiel 31.2-6.

¹³² See: Glazov-Corrigan (1994), 388; Solway, 119; Wall-Randell, 74.

¹³³ *OED*, ‘soft, *adj.*’, etymology; ‘*mulier*, *adj.*, *n.2*, and *adv.*’, etymology.

Estienne's (1528-1598) *A World of Wonders*, refers to the 'subtil and curious Etymologizing' of priests and monks: 'the ancient Latinists ... had as good dexteritie in giving Etymologies of ancient latin words; wisse the notation of Mulier, *quasi mollis aër*'.¹³⁴ Despite the soothsayer's mistaken etymologies, the court unquestioningly concedes to his linguistic analysis, led by Cymbeline: 'This', he concludes, 'hath some seeming' (452).

As they study the oracle, Cymbeline's court finally discover a language that – despite the soothsayer's etymological blunders – they can, at least partially, 'delve ... to the root'. Otherwise the courtiers rely on a linguistic faith, accepting these words for inexplicably 'seeming' to resemble reality, and corresponding with 'sympathy' to truth. Observing the naïve faithfulness of language in the romances, Solway observes:

The pastoral tradition invokes the golden age of meaning when signifier and signified lived in wedded harmony, when things were what they seemed and words were denotatively faithful to their spousal objects. But if language is the child of love, it is also the victim of time; and the brave new world of Shakespearean pastoral – with its lovely and incorruptible heroines attacked by the emissaries of a fallen world ... is given as the reface of an incurable nostalgia. The world as we know it represents the victory of history over eclogue, and the truth – for the communication of which language was ostensibly invented – finds a congenial refuge in the cryptic and protective maze of the oracle. It is probably no accident that the soothsayer in *Cymbeline* is also preoccupied with etymologies, digging down the roots of words, and ironically coming up with a false derivation.¹³⁵

For the 'world as we know it' – the 'fallen world' of Iachimo and his deceptive language – to return to a nostalgic one of semiotic 'harmony', to a time before the financially-obligated linguistics of the political sphere, language must conceal its postlapsarian corruptions behind naivety and oracular complexity, behind the perpetually unresolved 'cryptic and protective maze of the oracle'. Solway goes so far as to argue that 'without a language grounded in the (threefold) capacity to lie (to misrepresent, omit, and exaggerate), Arcadia would cease to exist – would languish without hope of revival'.¹³⁶ Granted that the characters of Shakespeare's romance submit their fate and agency to the providential authority of a tyrannical god, like Jupiter, or to repeatedly mis-read 'senseless' oracles, language can recuperate a nostalgic innocence that renders the magic of prophetic return and lineal recovery possible.

¹³⁴ Henri Estienne, *A World of Wonders...* (1607), 292.

¹³⁵ Solway, 119.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

CHAPTER IV

Transformative Magic: Verbal Conjunction in *The Tempest*

I. 'Speak': The Transformative Power of Early-Modern Invocation

Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak.¹

We may plainly see the power of the Word, of what a transforming nature it is.²

In Christopher Marlowe's (1564-1593) *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* – a play based on the notorious story of the German magician, Johann Georg Faust (c. 1480-1541), who trafficked with the devil – his protagonist, a sixteenth-century scholar at Wittenberg, is struck by the instant efficacy of his 'conjuring speeches' when the demon, Mephistopheles, appears in response to his invocation by ceremonial magic. It is a play which stages the consequences of the superstitious idiom for tempting fate, 'Talk of the Devil, and he's presently at your elbow',³ as Giovanni Torriano documents in his 1666 collection of Italian and English proverbs, a phrase that reappears, soon after, in Maurice Atkins' 1672 mock-poem entitled *Cataplus*: 'Talk of the Devil and see his horns'.⁴ However, when a dazzled Faustus calls for affirmation of his performative word-magic – 'Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee?' – Mephistopheles proposes a more sceptical hermeneutics:

That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*.
 For when we hear one rack the name of God,
 Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ,
 We fly in hope to get his glorious soul,
 Nor will we come unless he use such means
 Whereby he is in danger to be damned.
 Therefore, the shortest cut for conjuring
 Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity
 And pray devoutly to the prince of hell.

I.iii.46-54

¹ Christopher Marlowe, 'Doctor Faustus, A-Text', in *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 137-84, I.iii.45.

² Samuel Loveday, *The Hatred of Esau...* (1650), 18.

³ Torriano, 134.

⁴ Maurice Atkins, *Cataplus...* (1672), 72.

Mephistopheles explains to Faustus that his speech-act was only operative ‘*per accidens*’, for only in hope did this demon ‘fly’ to the scene in attempt to ‘get his glorious soul’. The scholar’s words possess no inherent magical power to summon spirits, rather, it is the wilful declaration of blasphemy – ‘when we hear one rack the name of God, | Abjure the Scriptures and his Saviour Christ’ – that entices the devil, for it leaves the soul vulnerable and ‘in danger to be damned’.

Various critics investigating the performativity of early-modern conjuring language refer to this passage from Marlowe’s play, remarking upon its accordance with sceptical period voices – like those of the Protestant reformists or demonologists who condemned ritual magic for its demonic associations – since these polemicists denied the efficacy of verbal magic on a similar basis.⁵ Genevieve Guenther observes parallels between the cynical linguistic premise of Mephistopheles and that of reformists during ‘the late 1580s and early 1590s, just before *Doctor Faustus* was first performed’:

Popular Protestant devotional writers ... attacked the traditional understanding of conjuration as a ritual in which the magician commands devils by iterating a version of the formula, ‘In the name of the divine, I conjure you no more to resist, but to appear and be obedient.’ These reformist writers brought remarkably corrosive scepticism to bear on the essentialist linguistic assumptions underlying the belief that devils could be conjured with performative language, while simultaneously maintaining or even buttressing theological justifications for the idea that devils, and Satan in particular, intervened in people’s lives via the instrumentality of the magician.⁶

With a ‘remarkably corrosive scepticism’, Protestant reformists renounce a faithful, magical semiotics that calls forth that which is signified by words. Church of England clergyman and author, George Gifford (c. 1547-1600), wonders how magicians could ‘be so folish as to Imagine’ that spiritual beings ‘are effected [b]y the vertue of wordes, gestures, figures, or such lyke’.⁷ Likewise, William Perkins describes the spiritual incapacity of words in terms of their corporeal limitations – ‘All words made and uttered by men, are in their own nature but sounds framed by the tongue, of the breath that commeth from the lungs’ – resolving that this ‘is onely a bare sound’ which ‘in all reason can have no vertue in it to cause a reall worke, much lesse to produce a wonder’.⁸ While reformists obstinately insist that magical words lack the intrinsic spiritual potency to directly conjure the devil, as Guenther notes, Protestant preachers were ‘simultaneously

⁵ See: Daniel Gates, ‘Unpardonable Sins: The Hazards of Performative Language in the Tragic Cases of Francesco Spiera and *Doctor Faustus*’, *Comparative Drama*, 38, i (2004), 59-81; Guenther, 62-85; Laura Levine, ‘Danger in Words: Faustus, Slade, and The Demonologists’, *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage*, eds. Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich (NY: Routledge, 2016), 47-58; Andrew Sofar, ‘How to Do Things with Demons: Conjuring Performatives in *Doctor Faustus*’, *Theatre Journal*, 61, i (2009), 1-21.

⁶ Guenther, 63.

⁷ George Gifford, *A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devilles...* (1587), B3v.

⁸ Perkins, 134-5.

maintaining' the paradoxical notion 'that devils, and Satan in particular, intervened in people's lives via ... the magician'. As Guenther continues: 'despite their critique of ... inefficacious conjuration, the reformers take it for granted that the devil does, in fact, come when the magician calls him', for 'their premise that devils are being conjured all the time is so fundamental to their polemic that it is never debated or even really discussed'.⁹ The justification propounded by reformists for the sporadic success of verbal invocation echoes that given by Mephistopheles: it never operates by an essential linguistic performativity, however, '*per accidens*', it might work. Although Perkins insists that 'the repeating of certain forms of words; the using of signes, characters, and figures ... [are] no whit effectually in themselves', yet, he expounds, 'they serve for watchwords unto Satan, without whose ayde nothing is done by them'.¹⁰ Even if signifiers of magical conjuration fail to perform their meaning by directly ushering in the devil, nonetheless, such speeches are composed of 'watchwords' indicating profane intent and incidentally gesturing 'unto Satan'. Betraying a residual superstition, Protestant renunciations of word-magic, therefore, remained incongruously undercut by their simultaneous fear of an inadvertently performative verbal magic, resulting in the devil's arrival upon his elicitation.

Laura Levine recognises a similar phenomenon in early-modern demonological treatises, which refute the power of conjuring magic while conceding its latent potential to facilitate demonic presence. For example, in King James VI/I's *Daemonologie* (1597), Epistemon tells his interrogator, Philomathes, 'that it is no power inherent in the circles, or in the holines of the names of God blasphemously used', persisting, 'nor in whatsoever rites or ceremonies at that time used, that either can raise any infernall spirit, or yet limitat him perforce within or without these circles'.¹¹ Despite the supposed incapacity of these ritualistic signals to invoke the devil, he still appears, 'not by anie inherent vertue in these vaine wordes and freites', and 'not by anie power that they can have over him', but '*ex pacto* allanerlie', that is, by a pact, 'that he may on the other part obtaine the fruition of their body & soule, which is the onlie thing he huntet for'.¹² Observing an inconsistent approach towards the performativity of word-magic, Levine identifies that:

[Demonologists] exhibit a different attitude towards language, one deeply at odds with what they say about the way that the words have of conjuring work. For it is almost axiomatic that the more loudly demonological treatises protest that the words and symbols of witchcraft and conjuring have no inherent power, the more they seem to fear that just the opposite is the case, that a particular and discrete set of words or images will effect action simply by being uttered.¹³

⁹ Guenther, 67.

¹⁰ Perkins, 53.

¹¹ James VI/I (1597), 16-7.

¹² *Ibid.*, 12, 9.

¹³ Levine, 55.

Underlying these polemical writings, which ‘protest that the words’ of ‘conjuring have no inherent power’, is a conflicting apprehension that these same words could, by an inconspicuous pact with the devil, successfully ‘effect action simply by being uttered’. What is more, this was regardless of the speaker’s purpose or magical proficiency, since the mere recital of these spells, even in the context of theatrical spectacles, was discouraged. Especially when this fear, supposedly, came to fruition decades later, when, in 1633, the anti-theatricalist, William Prynne (1600-1669), recounts the sighting of a demon, accidentally conjured during a performance of *Doctor Faustus*:

The visible apparition of the Devill on the Stage at the Belsavage Play-house, in Queene Elizabeths dayes, (to the great amazement both of the Actors and Spectators) while they were there prophanely playing the History of Faustus (the truth of which I have heard from many now alive, who well remember it,) there being some distracted with that fearefull sight; I shall confine my selfe onely to such printed examples of Gods judgements upon many Players and Play-haunters together, which I finde scattered here and there in sundry Authors.¹⁴

If an actor delivering lines – without the nefarious intentions of a learned necromancer – could rouse ‘the visible apparition of the Devill on the Stage’, there is certainly a case to be made that the innately performative word-magic which sceptics so adamantly denounced, existed in tension with an almost identical, *indirectly* performative one. ‘The rumours of the Faustian devils’, for Guenther, ‘powerfully demonstrate that even representations that announced their own theatricality – even illusions that were institutionally marked out as such – could still be understood as having theological consequences’.¹⁵ This inescapable anxiety surrounding magical words is articulated in the final act of Marlowe’s play, when, despite Mephistopheles rationale, Doctor Faustus commands himself, the scholars, and perhaps even the audience, to ‘be silent then, for danger is in words’ (V.i.25). Faustus cautions, with first-hand experience, against the risks of verbal invocation, afraid that a mere misspoken syllable might present the devil – who always listens – with the opportunity to seize his soul. With bitter irony, by this point in the play, Faustus’ soul has already been damned, cursed by his failure to resist the temptation to speak his ‘conjuring speeches’ in the pursuit of power.

While the dangerous words of demonic solicitation were enough to threaten even sceptics with the possibility of malign spirits materialising, when spoken by more faithful and pious practitioners of magic, invocation offered an operative linguistics which granted its speaker divine, transformative powers. As Gabriela Dragnea Horvath argues, this was not just a period of increasing, ‘generalized awareness of the power of language’, but also an age during which ‘philosophy, theatre and magic’

¹⁴ Prynne, *Histrio-mastix*... (1633), 556.

¹⁵ Guenther, 70.

contributed to ‘the awareness that words do not only signify reality, but also transform it’, proceeding to explain that:

The search for the original idiom in perennial philosophy, motivated by many converging readings on the power of language, from the inception of St John’s Gospel and the *Hermetica* ... highlights the philosopher’s aspiration to connect to Adam’s wisdom, penetrate the mystery of divine creation and be able to imitate it through magical formulas.¹⁶

The early-modern search for an Adamic language sought to harness the linguistically creative faculties of divinity, yearning for the time before Babel, when, ‘the whole earth was of one language and one speech’. This longing for the age before linguistic variation – when ‘the people *is* one, and they all have one language, and this they begin to do, neither can they now be stopped from whatsoever they have imagined to do’ – discloses a desire to recuperate prelapsarian singularity from postlapsarian plurality.¹⁷ The transformative potential of the divine language, to reunify mankind with divinity, is observed by early-modern theological treatises. In 1597, for example, I.T. writes of ‘holy scripture’ that ‘it affecteth not ye mind with eloquence and finenesse of words, but by a secret and certaine divine power, draweth and transformeth the mindes of men’.¹⁸ General Baptist preacher, Samuel Loveday (1619-1677), in *The Hatred of Esau* (1650), reveals that those ‘excommunicated for their disobedience’ may be saved by the ‘words of Christ’, which are ‘transforming words’, explaining: ‘We may plainly see the power of the Word, of what a transforming nature it is, it transformed a man into love, not onely to his brethren, but also to his enemies’.¹⁹ After all, Christ embodies his own ‘transforming words’ as a corporeal manifestation of God’s Word: ‘And that Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us’.²⁰ In turn, it is by God’s Word, namely, by eucharistic prayer during the Catholic sacrament of transubstantiation, that bread and wine are converted into the Body and Blood of Christ: ‘Can then the worde sayd | Transforme the breade | Into fleshe natural’.²¹ If dedicated to the God-Word, human language could be blessed with the capacity to implement miraculously transformative change. This was a notion realised by early Renaissance hermeticists such as Pico della Mirandola who propounded the following principles in his 1486 *Conclusions*:

3. Sounds and words are efficient in magical operations, as the original magic in nature was effected through God’s voice.

¹⁶ Gabriela Dragnea Horvarth, *Theatre, Magic and Philosophy: William Shakespeare, John Dee and the Italian Legacy* (Oxford: Routledge, 2017), 179-80.

¹⁷ *Geneva Bible*, Genesis: 11.1, 6.

¹⁸ I.T., *The Haven of Pleasure...* (1597), 13.

¹⁹ Loveday, 17-19.

²⁰ *Geneva Bible*, John: 1.14.

²¹ John Mardeley, *A Shorte Resytal...* (1548), Av^v.

4. Any voice has power in magic, in so far as it is a voice of God.²²

Establishing ‘God’s voice’ as ‘the original magic’, Pico concludes that the utterance of words by ‘Any voice’ can hold a ‘power in magic’, so long as it channels the ‘voice of God’. In the following century, Agrippa expressed a similar precept, in which, ‘words’ receive ‘the secret power of God’, and so, when spoken with a reverent ‘purity of mind’, the ‘invocation of the divine names are made the habitation of God’, made into operative words ‘capable of’ transmitting ‘divine influences’.²³

Heavily influenced by Agrippa’s ceremonial magic and in possession of the 1550 Basel edition of his *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, John Dee pursued knowledge of what Agrippa called ‘the tongue of angels’: a heavenly language through which ‘to discover the secrets of universe, and mankind’s position within it’, striving for perfect knowledge through communication with God, whose Word was the foundation and source of all existence.²⁴ In his *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564), Dee locates ‘the medicine of the soul, the liberator from all suffering’ in ‘the Voice of the Creator of the Universe’, concluding that Man must ‘learn through the perfect disquisition of the mystical languages’.²⁵ Years later, in *Mysteriorum Liber Primus* (1581), Dee prays to receive knowledge of God’s language:

O God Almighty, thow knowest, & art my director, and witnes herein, That I have from my youth up, desyred & prayed unto the for pure & sownd wisdome and understanding of some of thy truthes naturall and artificiall: such, as by which, thy wisdome, goodnes & powre bestowed in the frame of the word might be brought, in some bowntifull measure under the Talent of my Capacitie ... I could fynde no other way, to such true wisdome atteyning, but by thy extraordinary gift.²⁶

Longing for the ‘extraordinary gift’ of God’s ‘wisdome, goodnes & powre bestowed in the frame of the word’, Dee’s prayers are answered, when, as he documents in *Liber Mysteriorum Quintus* (c. 1581), he is finally given access to ‘Celestiall speche’, ‘the dew of Truth’, identified in a note as ‘*Lingua et Vox Angelica*’, that is, the Angelic or Echonian language.²⁷ Dee is divinely granted communication with angelic spirits via his scryer, Edward Kelley (c. 1555-1598), through whom the angels corroborate the limitations of his postlapsarian language:

²² Pico, *Conclusiones Nongentae. Le Novecento Tesi Dell'anno 1486*, ed. and trans. Albano Biondi (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1995), 118-9, cit. Horvath, 192.

²³ Agrippa, 373-74.

²⁴ See: Szónyi, 116-17; Clucas, 233-5; Agrippa, 379; Benjamin Woolley, *The Queen’s Conjurer: The Life and Magic of Dr Dee* (London: Harper Collins, 2001), 329.

²⁵ Dee (1564).

²⁶ Dee, *Mysteriorum Liber Primus* (1581), in *John Dee’s Five Books of Mystery*, ed. Joseph H. Peterson (Boston: Weiser, 2003), 50-86 (57-8).

²⁷ Dee (1583), 267.

Your voyces are but fayned: shaddows of the wordes and voyces that substantially do comprehend every substance in his kinde. The things which you do loke on, bycause you see them not in dede, you also do name them amysse: you are confownded, for your offenses.²⁸

According to the angel, Me (medicine of the soul), human ‘wordes and voyces’ are detached from that which they denote, but ‘shaddows’ without a conception of their own substance, unable to truly ‘see’ those ‘things which [they] loke on’, failing to signify accurately as they ‘name’ things ‘amysse’. The angels, who ‘are fully understanding’ and ‘see all things’, therefore, offer Dee their language of primitive divinity, revealing the original names of things, for theirs is the ‘Adamical’ tongue – ‘He named all things (which knew it) and they are so in dede, and shal be so for ever’ – promising Dee the extraordinary, cosmic power enabled by their perfect speech:

The waters shall stand, if they here they own speche. The hevens shall move, and shew them selves, when they know theyr thunder. Hell shall tremble, whan they know what is spoken to them.²⁹

Certainly, the Echonian language is the key with which to dominate the spiritual and natural realms: hearing ‘theyr own speche’ the tempestuous ‘waters shall stand’, the elusive ‘hevens shall move, and shew them selves’, and even ‘Hell shall tremble’ in its might.

Accordingly, Stephen Clucas recognises the linguistic performativity of Dee’s angelic conversations as, ‘attempts at acting upon, and manipulating the world (both natural and political) through supernatural means’, urging his reader to ‘try to conceptualise it as a form of operative practice which has its constitutive roots in religious forms’.³⁰ While Dee’s spiritual communication relishes the immense agency of ceremonial magic, it functions like a religious practice, grounded in prayer. This prompts Nicholas Clulee to argue that, since the scrying session ‘takes place in the simple religious atmosphere of Dee’s oratory following a period of silent prayer’, then ‘Dee’s objective is not the attraction of beneficial influences or the invocation and manipulation of spirits for specific purposes’, rather ‘to learn and follow God’s will’.³¹ Although Dee may apply a Christian mode of prayer, nonetheless, he purposefully intends to summon spirits, asking the angel, Uriel, in one of his earliest sessions, for a ‘meanes or order to use in the invocating of Michael’, and is instructed, as follows:

He is to be invocated by certayn of the psalmes of David, and prayers. The which psalmes, are nothing els, but a means unto the seat and Majestie of God: whereby you gather with your selves due powre, to apply your natures to the holy Angels. I mean the psalmes, commonly called the Seven psalmes. – You must use pleasant savours: with hand and hart: whereby you shall allure him and wynn him (thorowgh Gods favour) to atteyn unto the thing, you have long

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Clucas, 235.

³¹ Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988), 206-7.

sowght for. There must be Conjunction of myndes in prayer, betwixt you two, to God Continually. Yt is the wyll of God, that you shold, jointly, have the knowledge of his Angells to-gither.³²

Angels, like Michael, must be ‘invocated’ through Christian prayer, wherein ‘you gather with your selves due powre’ in order to ‘allure’ and ‘wynn’ the spiritual creatures ‘you have long sowght for’. Later, Michael commands Dee to ‘Invoke *Nomen eius, aut nihil agere possumus*’ (invoke this name, or we can do nothing), because ‘The key of Prayer openeth all things’.³³ Dee is assured by his angelic interlocutors that ‘God hath granted thee a force in prayer’:

[His] tongue of the holy and mystical Call before delivered: which followeth in practice for the moving of the second Table, the Kings and Ministers of government: The uttrance of which, is of force, and moveth them to visible apparition: moved and appeared, they are forced (by the Covenant of God delivered by his spirit) to render obedience and faithful society. Wherein, they will open the mysteries of their creation, as far as shall be necessary: and give you understanding of many thousand secrets.³⁴

By his ‘Call’ or ‘uttrance’, Dee has acquired the wondrous ability to conjure angelic ‘Kings and Ministers’ to ‘visible apparition’, compelling them ‘by the Covenant of God’ to exercise ‘obedience’. Even with such authority, however, Dee’s purpose remains only to obtain an ‘understanding’ of the divine, never seeking private power, but working only ‘for the prayse and advancement of Gods Glorie’.³⁵ It is owing to his own selfless devotion that the angels bestow upon Dee a celestial language, invested from one with the divine strength to ‘move’ the ‘heavens’ and govern the entirety of nature.

Although words began to lose their invocational powers, dismissed as inoperative, cosmetic signs by New Scientists like Francis Bacon – ‘for wordes are but the Images of matter’ – yet, their science overtly sought to harness the transcendentally transformative powers of ceremonial magic and to implement these throughout the natural world.³⁶ Bacon worked, in *Novum Organum* (1620), ‘to censure the limitations of Sciences to the bounds prescribed to us’ as he sought ‘a right interpretation of Nature’s Mysteries’, urging for a ‘deeper enquiry [that] should dive into Nature beyond the bounds of Sobriety’.³⁷ Investigating Bacon’s conception of nature’s boundlessness, Mickaël Popelard proposes that he ‘put forward ... a new method for acquiring knowledge of, and

³² Dee (1581), 70.

³³ *Ibid.*, 129.

³⁴ Dee, *A True & Faithful Relation...* (1659), 82, 88.

³⁵ Dee (1583), 214.

³⁶ Bacon (1605), 18.

³⁷ Bacon (1676), A2r, 13.

power over, the natural world', that is, by upholding the pursuits of magic.³⁸ In *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bacon deliberates, 'if then it bee true that Democritus sayde, *That the truthe of Nature lyeth hydde in certaine deepe*', then to 'digge' to the bottom of this, 'it were good to devide Naturall Phylosophie' into a numerous 'professions or occupations', including the category of natural magic:

And heere I will make a request, that for the latter (or at least for a parte thereof) I may revive and reintegrate the misapplied and abused Name of NATURALL MAGICKE, which in the true sense, is but NATURALL WISEDOME, or NATURALL PRUDENCE: taken according to the ancient acception, purged from vanitie & superstition.³⁹

Natural magic, purified and 'purged from vanitie & superstition', is the same as 'OPERATIVE, NATURALL SCIENCE', since both are preoccupied with discoveries which surpass the confines delineated by traditional perceptions of the natural world.⁴⁰ Proposing that mankind might further comprehend nature by interfering with it, Bacon offers an analogy in which nature is compared to the mutable, Greek sea-god, Proteus:

For like as a Mans disposition is never well knowen, till hee be crossed, nor Proteus ever changed shapes, till hee was straightened and held fast: so the passages and variations of Nature cannot appeare so fully in the libertie of Nature, as in the trialls and vexations of Art.⁴¹

Bacon illustrates that the scientist's task is to confront and provoke nature, disrupting its usual or expected course with the 'trials and vexations of Art', so as to discover its hidden facets and the various shapes that it is capable of assuming. An example of this approach is observable in Bacon's pursuit of immortality, which depended upon the belief that, by tampering with the natural deterioration of the body, the scientist could prolong human life. In *Historia Vitae et Mortis* (1623), Bacon suggests that by working on the body's vital spirits – describing these 'as the uppermost wheele, which turneth about the other wheeles, in the Body of Man' – scientists would avert the biological aging process:

If any Man could procure that a young Mans Spirit: could be conveyed into [an old] Mans Body; It is not unlikely, but this great Wheele of the Spirits, might turne [into reverse] the lesser wheele of the [parts.] And so the Course of [nature] become Retrograde.⁴²

Bacon hypothesises that scientists could accomplish immortality by way of *artifice* (by the 'trials and vexations of Art'): transplanting a young man's vital spirits into the body of an old man, to *artificially* 'reverse' the 'Course of [nature]'. Aspiring to such a future, Bacon wrote his final,

³⁸ Mickaël Popelard, 'Unlimited Science: The Endless Transformation of Nature in Bacon and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*', in *Spectacular Science, Technology and Superstition in the Age of Shakespeare*, eds. Sophie Chiari and Mickaël Popelard (Edinburgh: EUP, 2017), 171-94 (174).

³⁹ Bacon (1605), 24^{r-v}.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 10.

⁴² Bacon, *Historie Naturall and Experimental...* (1638), 414, 184.

unfinished work, the utopian novel, *New Atlantis* (published posthumously in 1626), presenting his vision of a civilisation committed to the ideals of scientific research. On the mythical island of Bensalem, where his novel is set, the Father of the House of Salomon decrees that the aim of this 'Foundation is the Knowledge of Causes, and Secrett Motions of Things; And the Enlarging of the bounds of *Humane Empire*, to the Effecting of all Things possible'.⁴³ The aspirations of Baconian science were propelled by the prospect of an infinite utopian fantasy in which 'all Things' are 'possible', articulated in a work of literary fiction designed to conjure up the impression of a future transformed by the advancements of science. Thus, Popelard concludes, 'In Baconian thought, therefore, boundlessness takes the form of the 'unrestricted' or 'unlimited' transformation of nature', and it is precisely magic's boundlessly transformative philosophy that Bacon seeks to preserve.⁴⁴

Though scientists, sought to 'revive and reintegrate' the powers of 'NATURALL MAGICKE' to transform nature, they had lost faith in the essential power of the words that once facilitated this transformation: 'to fall in love with them [words] is all one, as to fall in love with a Picture'.⁴⁵ Poets, however, like magicians, maintained a transformative poetics, reminded by Philip Sidney in his *Defence* of their artistic responsibility of 'making things either better than nature bringeth foorth or quite a new, formes such as never were in nature', to convert our 'brasen' world and to 'deliver a golden'.⁴⁶ Throughout Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* sonnet sequence, the disinterested beloved, and 'absent presence', summoned by the poet – 'Stella, I say my Stella, should appear' – embodies that romanticised, 'golden' version of the reality that the poet possesses the creative power to evoke.⁴⁷ After all, Stella is depicted as epitomising Nature's greatest creation – 'When nature made her chief work, Stella's eyes, | In colour black why wrapped she beams so bright?' – for which she is endowed with a 'miraculous power' to perform divine transformation.⁴⁸ In Sonnet 44, Astrophil begins defeatedly bemoaning his suffering for the sake of Stella – 'My words I know do well set forth my mind' – unable to comprehend her 'unkind' lack of sympathetic 'pity': 'And yet she hears, yet I no pittie finde, | But more I cry, less grace she doth impart'.⁴⁹ However, the poet concludes by attributing the lack of kindness from Stella's 'sweet heart' to the transformative qualities of her divinity:

That when the breath of my complaints doth touch

⁴³ Bacon (1627), 31.

⁴⁴ Popelard, 177.

⁴⁵ Bacon (1605), 18.

⁴⁶ Sidney (1595), C1^{r-v}.

⁴⁷ Sidney (2008), Sonnet 106.1-4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Sonnet 7.1-2, 9.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Sonnet 44 1, 8, 3, 5-6.

Those dainty doors unto the court of bliss,
The heavenly nature of that place is such
That once come there, the sobs of mine annoys
Are metamorphosed straight to tunes of joys.⁵⁰

The poet's beloved transforms all that she 'doth touch', for 'when the breath of [Astrophil's] complaints' encounters her 'heavenly nature', his sorrowful 'annoys' are 'metamorphosed', phonetically, into blissful 'joys' by her godly magic. Through his word-magic, Sidney's poet not only conjures Stella – a mythic, archetype of nature's brilliance – but also imbues her with magically transformative linguistic capabilities, to perfect everything she 'doth touch' and so, to 'deliver', even to the initially dejected poet, the 'joys' of 'a golden' world of romantic harmony. The words of invocation for poets, as for magicians, offered a heavenly magic with the capacity to transform the world, so long as the speaker faithfully revered to transcendent divinity. While scientists worked to preserve the aspects of magical thinking that could comprehend and influence the natural world, expanding its established bounds, magicians and poets alike called upon the ethereal presence of the divine, hoping to channel its powers and improve nature through their deployment of an angelic word-magic. All were, ultimately, striving to transform their inadequate, restricted, tarnished reality, and to conjure a natural world that aspired to an utopic idyll.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Sonnet 44.4-14.

II. 'I Am Not Who I am': Demonic Conjuring in Shakespeare's Pre-Romances

GLENDOWER I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
 HOTSPUR Why, so can I, or so can any man,
 But will they come when you do call for them?

1HIV, III.i.52-4

Shakespeare's final romance, *The Tempest*, presents a seemingly enchanted play-world invested with an operative word-magic which verbally conjures supernatural spirits to resolve an otherwise cyclically destructive hermeneutics of ruthless political opportunism and usurpation. This late play demonstrates how purposely embracing a naïve faith in the performative speech-act of invocational magic might not only recover political order but to lead us to consider a 'brave new world' (*Temp.*, V.i.183) of utopic possibilities – possibilities to be discussed in the following section. Shakespeare's pre-romance plays, however, often inhabit a disenchanted world of, at best, humanist rhetorical pragmatism, but at worst, faithless scepticism, often mocking conjuring words as inoperative superstition and mere theatrical illusion. In *Henry IV Part One*, for example, the 'great magician' (I.iii.83) and leader of the Welsh rebellion, Owen Glendower, claims that by his powers he 'can call spirits from the vasty deep', prompting Hotspur to ridicule the efficacy of his invocations: 'Why, so can I, or so can any man, | But will they come when you do call for them?'. When Hotspur is chided for defying his leader, he protests that he 'cannot choose' but be infuriated by Glendower's talk of magic: 'Sometime he angers me | With telling me of ... the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies ... | And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff | As puts me from my faith' (III.i.146-53). Though his religion is compromised by these strange tales of necromancy, Hotspur relays that even as Glendower 'held me last night at least nine hours | In reckoning up the several devils' names', he himself ignored this diabolical nonsense and 'mark'd him not a word', for the Welsh wizard's magical words are void of substance, as empty, futile, and 'tedious | As a tired horse, a railing wife, | Worse than a smoky house' (154-9). Despite Glendower's claims to have repelled King Henry's invasions – 'Three times hath Henry Bullingbrook made head | Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye | And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him | Bootless home and weather-beaten back' (63-6) – his supposed powers prove fruitless, given that the rebel alliance is ultimately defeated. Essentially, Glendower's purportedly superstitious mutterings carry no weight in a sceptical world of real-politik.

Shakespeare's cynicism concerning the performativity of conjuring words emerges in the context of controversy surrounding the publication of one of the most influential demonological treatises

of the age. Following the success of *Malleus maleficarum* (c. 1486), by Dominican Friars and academics Heinrich Kraemer (c. 1430-1505) and Jacob Sprenger (c. 1436-1495) – a widely popular treatise on the subject of witchcraft, revived among royal courts during the Renaissance, which instructed its reader to identify and condemn all sorcery as heresy – the English Reformed Protestant and Member of Parliament, Reginald Scot published his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), a determinedly rationalist text that sets its stall out against popular superstition and folk tradition, seeking to undermine the legitimacy of occult magic once and for all. In recent criticism investigating Shakespeare's use of demonological language, Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra recognise Scot as 'one of Shakespeare's favourite demonological writers', later citing *The Discovery* as 'one of Shakespeare's more evident sources for demonological material'.⁵¹ Similarly, Peter Kapitaniak, in his chapter assessing the influence of Scot's treatise on Shakespeare's writing, more tentatively observes an 'accumulation of clues repeatedly pointing towards *The Discoverie*'.⁵² Indeed, Hotspur's incredulity and godly devotion echoes that of Scot, who urges his reader:

I pray you beleeve my writings, wherein I will prove all popish charmes, conjurations, exorcismes, benedictions and curses, not onely to be ridiculous, and of none effect, but also to be impious and contrary to Gods word.⁵³

According to Scot – who held that the 'popish charmes' of the Roman Catholic church encouraged comparable superstitious belief in witchcraft – to consider magical incantations, like 'conjurations', as capable of fulfilling their performative function would be 'ridiculous'; they are, he concludes, 'of none effect' whatsoever. Arguing that such language might only ever deceive by an illusory performance of theatrical and psychological trickery, Scot attempts to explain a biblical account of invocational magic from the Book of Samuel, in which the Witch of Endor is visited by King Saul who asks her to summon the spirit of the prophet Samuel to tell his fortunes:

And so goeth she to worke, using ordinary words of conjuration, of which there are sundry varieties and forms (whereof I shal have occasion to repeat some in another place) as you see the jugglers (which be inferior conjurors) speak certain strange words of course, to lead away the eye from espying the manner of their conveyance, whilest they may induce the mind to conceive and suppose that he dealeth with spirits ... belike after many such words spoken, she saith to her selfe; Lo now the matter is brought to passe, for I see wonderful things. ... Howbeit, a little before she cunningly counterfeited that she saw Samuel, and thereby knew it was Saul that was come unto her.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Marion Gibson and Jo Ann Esra, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 62, 116.

⁵² Pierre Kapitaniak, 'Staging Devils and Witches: Had Shakespeare Read Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*?', in Chiori and Popelard (2017), 43-64 (53).

⁵³ Scot, B^v-B2^r.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

Though Scot declares conjuring words ineffectual, he discerns that ‘neverthesse, witches charms, and conjurors cousenages are yet thought effectuell’,⁵⁵ for they deceive using ‘words of conjuration’, ‘strange words’ designed to ‘induce the mind to conceive and suppose that he dealeth with spirits’, so that a ‘cunningly counterfeited’ performance of the witch finally seeing Samuel – ‘for I see wonderful things’ – evokes only the impression of an efficacious verbal magic. Therefore, for sceptics, like Scot, the language of conjuring magic, while inherently inefficacious, could be exploited by demonic witches and wizards to construct a deceptive rhetorical performance, one ‘contrary to Gods word’ and contrary to truth, intended to beguile the linguistically faithful with the ‘cunningly counterfeited’ illusion of an operative word-magic. Hotspur accuses Glendower of affecting a purely rhetorical performance such as this, for what the Welshman claims as his potent magical words, in fact, constitute a far more effective mode of language, an entirely pragmatic, political style in which words are artificially and cunningly constructed. What Hotspur, therefore, retaliates against are Glendower’s attempts to create the impression of his own demonic summoning powers:

GLENDOWER Why, I can teach you, cousin, to command
 The devil.
 HOTSPUR And I can teach thee, coz, to shame the devil
 By telling truth: tell truth and shame the devil.
 If thou have power to raise him, bring him hither,
 And I’ll be sworn I have power to shame him hence.
 O, while you live, tell truth and shame the devil!

1HIV, III.i.55-61

Hotspur embodies an outmoded style of language that is simple and direct, one of ‘telling truth’, which, as Scot suggests, might be susceptible to the duplicity of demonic trickery. In this case, however, Hotspur peers behind the smoke and mirrors of Glendower’s magic to uncover his rational, politically scheming oratorical agenda. Hotspur attempts to counter Glendower’s roguish impersonation with God’s ‘truth’, which is in antithetical opposition to ‘The devil’ – for if the rhetorical trope of demonic conjuring was to speak in ‘contrary to Gods word’, then to ‘tell truth’ would ‘shame the devil’.

Early-modern demonic practice is often considered a discipline rooted in rhetoric, as Armando Maggi suggests: ‘could we not say that the innumerable treatises on demonology written in premodern and modern Europe – starting from the late fifteenth-century *Formicarius* and *Malleus maleficarum*’ and then ‘continuing to the repetitious manuals still composed during the

⁵⁵ Ibid., B^v-B2^r.

Enlightenment – are in fact grammar books, obsessive attempts to define the idiom exchanged between these two radical solitudes’ that is, ‘humanity’ and ‘Satan?’.⁵⁶ Likewise, Ryan J. Stark depicts demonic possession as a practice in which ‘the Devil attempts to work through the human voice to destroy the world’, concluding that this is ‘why every demonology in the Renaissance is a treatise about rhetoric’, in other words, ‘demonic possession is in an important sense a rhetorical condition’. ‘The rhetorical tradition’, Stark concludes, ‘informs the Renaissance science of demonology, and Renaissance demonology informs the rhetorical tradition’.⁵⁷ It is a tradition embedded in the Middle English word ‘conjure’, derived from the old French ‘*conjurer (conjurere)*’ and the Latin ‘*conjūrāre*’, meaning, ‘to swear together, to band, combine, or make a compact by oath, to conspire’, revealing a derivation whereby ‘conjuring’ in the demonological sense – that is, the exorcizing or raising of spirits – requires a verbally binding contract reminiscent of oath-taking.⁵⁸ Demonological conjuring necessitates a linguistic pact with the devil, as pamphleteer and author of criminal biographies, Henry Goodcole (1586-1641) writes of the accused witch, Elizabeth Sawyer (d. 1621): ‘a playne way to bring you to the Divell; nay that it brings the Divell to you’ is to ‘swear’ for ‘her oathes did so conjure him’.⁵⁹ It is a pledge in violation of our linguistic contract with God, which counterfeits God’s word and perverts it with opposingly satanic implications, as the English Puritan Cleric John Gaule (c. 1603-1687) makes clear, ‘the Devil is Gods Ape, and one that faines to imitte him though in contrary wayes’.⁶⁰ Spanish philosopher, Pedro Ciruelo (1470-1548), elaborates: ‘Christ and Satan are enemies ... a fact demonstrated by comparing the actions of one with those of the other – they are antithetical’.⁶¹ Thus, as James Mason remarks, whatever God does, ‘Satan and his ministers, the sorcerers, will seeme to doe the same: albeit they have alwaies another, yea a contrary entent and meaning’.⁶² This divergence of ‘entent and meaning’ in early-modern demonological language is examined by Stuart Clark:

Demonic witchcraft made sense, then, in a world of meanings structured by opposition and inversion; these were the general conditions for ‘knowing’ witches. ... In fact, demonology was a rather pure case of the argument *a contrariis*. ... Devils and witches turned particular things upside-down in particular ways. It was up to their audiences to explain the choices and interpret the meanings by reading into each individual performance an actual or symbolic inversion of a traditional form of life. This would not, admittedly, have been very difficult. The early-modern

⁵⁶ Armando Maggi, *Satan’s Rhetoric* (Chicago: UCP, 2001), 2.

⁵⁷ Stark, 140.

⁵⁸ OED, ‘conjure, *v.*’, etymology.

⁵⁹ Henry Goodcole, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer...* (1621), D3r.

⁶⁰ John Gaule, *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts* (1646), 68.

⁶¹ Pedro Ciruelo, *A Treatise Reproving all Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft* (1530), trans. Eugene A. Maio and D’Orsay W. Pearson, ed. D’Orsay W. Pearson (London: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1977), 274.

⁶² James Mason, *The Anatomie of Sorverie...* (1612), 59.

devil was a profligate parodist; his capacity for dissimulation, true to the baroque spirit, was endless. His trope was irony, carried to the lengths of hyperbole.⁶³

As an ‘upside-down’ parody of God, the devil’s rhetorical ‘trope was’ therefore ‘irony’, which contemporary rhetoricians define in similar terms to demonic rhetoric. For John Smith (pseud.), a puritan polemicist, irony was a form of ‘mocking or counterfeiting ... to dissemble in speaking’, a semiotic reversal, ‘whereby one thing is thought and another spoken; it signifies also taunting speeches, or a speaking by contraries; as if we should say black is white’.⁶⁴ Irony is ‘called the mocking Trope, whereby in derision we speak contrary to what we think or mean, or when one contrary is signified by another’.⁶⁵ Demonic irony was a linguistic deception designed to invert and subvert order with diabolical consequences, a pattern of speech observable, for example, in *Macbeth*’s witches, who speak in incongruous, chiasmic turns of phrase: ‘Fair is foul, and foul is fair’ (*Mac.*, I.i.11). Although the witches’ speech is not directly performative, their demonic rhetoric of inversion degrades Macbeth’s thinking, prompting ‘horrible imaginings’ and ‘fantastical’ impressions of ‘murther’, disturbing his perceptions until he soon concludes – in a rhetorical inversion that mimics the demonic configurations of the witches’ speech – that, ‘nothing is | But what is not’ (I.iii.138-2). Demonic rhetoric such as this – though lacking the effective performativity of Prospero’s godlike word-magic – still constitutes a linguistic activity with a real-world, Machiavellian powers to influence and dominate, promoting a hellish mutiny against political order, reducing the linguistically-possessed Macbeth to the embodiment of a ‘Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself, | And falls on th’ other’ (I.vii.27-8).

Although demonic inversion, according to Clark, might mimic ‘the appearance ... of institutional and social order’, in fact ‘the reality was a disorder wrought by disobedience and tyranny’, for ‘demonic inversion was inseparable, in the first instance, from notions of archetypal rebellion and pseudo-monarchy’.⁶⁶ Returning to *Henry IV Part One*, it might then be argued that Glendower, as leader of the Welsh rebels, attempts to stage the illusion of a demonic possession of naïve Englishmen, like prisoner-to-the-rebels, Mortimer, shifting his allegiances in favour of treasonous political rebellion against the Crown. Hotspur suggests as much when he not only denounces Glendower’s invocations but also derides his native tongue of Welsh, amid their disagreements: ‘Let me not understand you then, | Speak it in Welsh’ (III.i.117-18). A language often associated with pastoral mysticism, Welsh is scornfully rendered demonic by Hotspur upon hearing Lady Mortimer (Glendower’s daughter) speak the language to her English-speaking husband, Mortimer,

⁶³ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 80-2.

⁶⁴ John Smith, *The Myserie of Rhetorique Unweild* (1665), 38.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Clark, 86.

whose love for his captor's daughter compels him to vow: 'I will never be a truant, love, | 'Till I have learn'd thy language, for thy tongue | Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd' (204-6). Observing this, Hotspur's quips that the devil must favour Mortimer – 'Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh' (229) – on account of the beautiful wife he has been granted. Though he himself is allied with the rebel forces, Hotspur begins the play as a valiant soldier for King Henry and a foil for his recklessly irresponsible heir, Prince Hal, who jests that his companion, Falstaff, only 'stands to his word' so that 'the devil shall have his bargain, for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs', so 'he will give the devil his due' (I.ii.117-19). Comparing both Harrys, the King envies the Earl of Northumberland, wishing to 'be the father to so blest a son – | A son who is the theme of honour's tongue' (I.i.80-1) rather than seeing 'riot and dishonour stain the brow | Of my young Harry' (85-6), fantasising that if 'some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd | In cradle-clothes our children where they lay, | And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet! | Then would I have his Harry and he mine' (87-90). Although Hotspur is, in part, driven by the characteristically hot-headed rage – implied by his name – when he betrays the King and joins the rebels, his ultimate motive is, in fact, to return the throne to his cousin, Mortimer, who his father and uncle reveal was 'proclaim'd | By Richard, that dead is, the next of blood' (I.iii.145-6) and rightful heir. In this sense, Hotspur is an advocate of lineal order who never entirely assimilates himself among his more traitorous Welsh and Scottish peers. Ultimately, this is a play in which political rebellion is quashed once Hal faces his inherited responsibility, showing 'how much better than my word I am' (I.ii.210), and killing his, now redundant, foil, Hotspur, at the Battle of Shrewsbury, where King Henry's troops triumph – 'Thou speak'st as if I would deny my name ... | I am the Prince of Wales, and think not, Percy, | To share with me in glory any more' (V.iv.60-4) – and gaining command over language. Although Glendower's attempts fail to imitate a word-magic with the power to usurp sovereignty, the play, instead, reveals the real linguistic threat to be that from a disenchanting, political mode of speech. Hal recognises this when as he ensures his own hyperglossic ability to 'command all the good lads in Eastcheap' (II.iv.14-15), each 'in his own language' (19), demonstrating that modern linguistic power is not magical but real-world, and real-political, rhetorical persuasion. While Hal remains perpetually neurotic about the capacity for these common words to destabilise his authority, *Henry IV Part Two* begins with Rumour, 'stuffing the ears of men with false reports' (2*H4*, *Pro.* 8) and doing so 'in every language' (7).

Likewise, in a tragedy like *Othello*, the spuriously 'Honest Iago' (*Oth.*, I.iii.294; II.iii.177; V.ii.72), Othello's most 'honest, honest Iago' (V.ii.154), is similarly successful in linguistically possessing his Venetian army general with a demonic rhetoric of inversion – 'I am not what I am' (I.i.65) – in the interest of a political opportunism which subverts social order. While other critics have often

described Iago's influence over the speech of others as specifically ventriloquial,⁶⁷ Blair Morris suggests that Iago performs a kind of demonic possession of Othello via his rhetorical practice, 'frequently plac[ing] his deceitful speech into the mouths of other characters, possessing their voices and transmitting through them a supernaturally inflected vocabulary of degradation and fear'.⁶⁸ '*Ventriloquie*' itself was historically rooted in notions of demonic possession, defined by the English lexicographer, Henry Cockeram (fl. 1623-1658), as a 'Divination by the inwards of beasts, a hollow speech of a devill in a possessed body', as in his *Discoverie*, where Scot describes 'a wench, practising her diabolical witch craft, and ventriloquie'.⁶⁹ Derived from the 'medieval or early modern Latin *ventriloquium*', a contraction of '*ventri-*, *venter* belly + *loqui* to speak', the word was modelled on the archaic Greek term 'engastrimythos' (*en* for in, *gaster* for belly, and *mythos* for speech) referring to 'One who appears to speak in the belly, a ventriloquist', for it was believed that engastrimyths had demons in their stomachs who belched words from their host's mouths.⁷⁰ Although, by the sixteenth century, ventriloquism was still widely associated with demonic possession, the legitimacy of a demonic voice remedied by exorcism became a viciously contested subject between Catholics, Puritans, and Anglicans. In 1585-1586, Catholic priests, led by the Jesuit, William Weston (c. 1549-1615), performed exorcisms at Denham, and between 1596-1597, John Darrell (c. 1562-1607), the Anglican clergyman noted for his more extreme Puritan views, conducted exorcisms in a variety of English towns, alarming authorities who imprisoned both Weston and Darrell for staging fraudulent exorcisms.⁷¹ In response to this, the Church of England denied the possibility of bodily possession, commissioning the English writer, Samuel Harsnett (1561-1631), to refute all claims of exorcism as staged, in his famous treatise, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603). Harsnett ridicules such reports as that of a demon supposedly 'hunted up into [the] body' of a woman where it 'grew there so unruly, and outrageous, that the Exorcists seemed to feare least her bowels would burst', mocking how, 'when it fel out pat, as the devil, & the priest would have it, it bred in the poore sillie spectators a wonderful admiration of

⁶⁷ E.A.J. Honigmann notes how Iago's command over Othello's language renders him a 'ventriloquist's dummy', in *Othello*, eds. E.A.J. Honigmann and Ayanna Thompson, Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 243n470. On Iago as ventriloquist, see also: John Gronbeck-Tedesco, 'Morality, Ethics, and the Failure of Love in Shakespeare's *Othello*', in *Othello: New Critical Essays*, ed. Philip C. Kolin (NY: Routledge, 2002) 255-70 (267); Lynne Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 174; *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, ed. Michael Neill (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 382n136.

⁶⁸ Blair Morris, 'Demonic Ventriloquism and Venetian Skepticism in *Othello*', *SEL*, 53, ii (2013), 311-35 (311).

⁶⁹ Henry Cockeram, *The English Dictionarie...* (1623), L3^v; Scot, 94.

⁷⁰ OED, 'ventriloquy, *n.*', etymology; 'ventriloquus, *n.*', etymology; 'engastrimyth, *n.*'. See: Steven Connor, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: OUP, 2000); and Anthony Ossa-Richardson, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought* (Princeton: PUP, 2013), 46-82; Leigh Eric Schmidt, 'From Demon Possession to Magic Show: Ventriloquism, Religion, and the Enlightenment', *Church History*, 62, ii (CUP, 1998), 274-304.

⁷¹ See: Marion Gibson, *Possession, Puritanism, and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare, and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2015).

the dignitie of the priesthood, and power of the Catholique Romish Church'.⁷² This encouraged other sceptical Anglican authority figures, such as John Deacon and John Walker, to contribute to a pamphlet war against Darrell, who circulated a series of lengthy responses to his opponents from prison, maintaining with conviction that demons could inhabit the bodies and voices of individuals:

And to this effect Calvin writeth on this place: This speech (saith he) is as much as if Luke had said, This man was moved by the inspiration of the divell: for by God his permission Satan had possessed the powers of his soule, that he might enforce him at his pleasure, as wel to speake, as to other motions. And therefore when Demomakes speak, those very divels, to whose rule they are permitted, both speake in them, & by them.⁷³

Morris argues that 'Shakespeare was almost certainly aware of the exorcism debates that raged during his lifetime' citing the failed 'mock exorcisms' performed in plays like *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, and *All's Well That Ends Well*, alongside the passages from Harsnett's *Declaration* that Kenneth Muir traces in *King Lear*.⁷⁴

In Act Four Scene Four of *The Comedy of Errors*, for example, Adriana mistakes Antipholus of Syracuse for her husband, Antipholus of Ephesus, and, convinced he is mad, hires an exorcist to cure him: 'Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer, | Establish him in his true sense again' (IV.iv.47-8). Pinch confirms that, 'both man and master is possess'd: | I know it by their pale and deadly looks', insisting, 'They must be bound and laid in some dark room' (92-4). Although these playful instances of mistaken identity characterise the play's farcical comedy, such moments allude to the dark underside of identity confusion that plague its characters. For Barbara Freedman, this play 'dramatizes a nightmare vision in comic form – a truly terrifying fantasy of a sudden, inexplicable disjunction between personal and communal accounts of one's identity', such that, as is often the case in Shakespeare's plays, comedy threatens to slip into tragedy.⁷⁵ Confused by a series of inexplicable misunderstandings, Antipholus of Syracuse contemplates the possible dangers of demonic metamorphosis present in Ephesus – 'They say this town is full of cozenage: | As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye, | Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind, | Soul-killing witches that deform the body' (I.ii.97-100) – having himself mistaken the Courtesan for a witch-like demonic apparition: 'Mistress Sathan? ... | Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam, and here she comes in the habit of a light wench' (IV.iii.49-52). Troubled by demonic anxieties, both Antipholus of Syracuse and Doctor Pinch address the devil in attempted exorcistic conjurations, the former expelling the Courtesan herself – 'Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress: | I conjure thee to leave me

⁷² Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures...* (1603), 58.

⁷³ Gibson, 145-50; John Darrell, *Concerning the Doctrine...* (1602), 9.

⁷⁴ Morris, 313-4. See: Kenneth Muir, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Routledge, 2005), 203-7.

⁷⁵ Barbara Freedman, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991), 79.

and be gone' (66-7) – while the latter addresses the devil: 'I charge thee, Sathan, hous'd within this man, | To yield possession to my holy prayers, | And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight: | I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven!' (IV.iv.54-7). Although exorcism is ultimately a comic device and an ineffective ritual in the play, reconciliation is only ever delivered tenuously and unexpectedly by a figure of the Catholic Church, the Abbess, Emilia, whose insights and revelations provide a recuperative religious 'sanctuary' (V.i.94). With such an ending, Shakespeare privileges period tensions concerning demonic exorcism above the stereotypes associated with the competing Christian denominations in England, trivialising the notion of exorcism, meanwhile sustaining the tragic possibility of real demonic possession in a play-world where individual identity is continually displaced.

With more explicitly sinister intent, in *The Tragedy of Othello*, Shakespeare confronts his audience with Iago, a puppet-master seemingly adept at demonic possession of his victims, who conceals his own identity, projecting his villainous purpose onto these credulous characters. From the opening scene of the play, Iago admits to Roderigo that his interactions with Othello feigns loyalty and honesty, while deviously employing the rhetorical tactics of demonic inversion:

Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago.
 In following him, I follow but myself;
 Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
 But seeming so, for my peculiar end;
 For when my outward action doth demonstrate
 The native act and figure of my heart
 In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
 But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
 For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

Oth., I.i.57-65

Only 'seeming' to 'follow' Othello, not for 'love and duty', but for his own 'peculiar end', Iago reveals his philosophy as one in which a semiotic correspondence between 'outward action' and the internal 'native act and figure of my heart' would only make him vulnerable; refusing to 'wear [his] heart upon [his] sleeve' where 'daws' might 'peck at' it, Iago cloaks his true intention behind insubstantial verbal performance. Even Iago's self-declarations avoid exposing his true self – 'Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago' – grammatically revealing a duplicity between his interior, 'I', and his mutable persona, 'Iago', neither aligning with the other. By the end of this passage, his subjective 'I' slips further from reach, occluded by the chiasmic inversion, 'I am not what I am', an equivocation wherein Iago parodies God, who, in Exodus, instructs Moses to respond to all who

ask for the name of the God that sent him with the absolute utterance: ‘I am that I am’.⁷⁶ In accordance with period definitions of demonic rhetoric, in which ‘the Devil is Gods Ape’ and ‘faines to imitte him though in contrary wayes’, Iago only identifies himself through a negative inversion of God’s Word.

Framing his own speech in these demonic terms, Iago ventriloquises Roderigo, first instructing him to ‘rouse’ Brabantio and ‘poison his delight’ (68) with news of his daughters’ marriage to Othello. As Roderigo proceeds to ‘call aloud’ (74) under cover of darkness, Iago intercepts, speaking as Roderigo:

IAGO	[’Zounds,] sir, y’ are robb’d! For shame, put on your gown; Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul; Even now, now, very now, an old black ram Is tupping your white ewe. Arise, arise! Awake the snorting citizens with the bell, Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you. Arise, I say!
BRABANTIO	What, have you lost your wits?
RODERIGO	Most reverend signior, do you know my voice?
BRABANTIO	Not I, what are you?
RODERIGO	My name is Roderigo.

I.i.86-95

Roderigo participates in Iago’s co-option of his speech – conceding to his own possession as ventriloquised subject – for after Iago covertly delivers the news of Desdemona’s marriage, Roderigo resumes speech only to ask Brabantio if he recognises this voice, assuring him: ‘My name is Roderigo’. Evoking images of bestial horror, Iago casts Othello as the ‘devil’ in a deflection which Brabantio carries to the Venetian senate when he demands to ‘find out’ the ‘practices of cunning hell’ (I.iii.102) with which Othello seduced his daughter, speculating that perhaps, ‘with some mixtures pow’rful o’er the blood, | Or with some dram (conjur’d to this effect) | He wrought upon her’ (104-6). Accused of using necromancy to secure Desdemona’s love – ‘She is abus’d, stol’n from me, and corrupted | By spells and medicines ... | For nature so prepost’rously to err ... | Sans witchcraft could not’ (60-4) – Othello assures the court that she was not bewitched by a diabolical language, but rather by plain and virtuous tales recounting his life on the battlefield:

O’THELLO	... Rude am I in my speech, And little bless’d with the soft phrase of peace; ... And little of this great world can I speak
----------	---

⁷⁶ *Geneva Bible*, Exodus 3.14.

More than pertains to feats of broils and battle,
 And therefore little shall I grace my cause
 In speaking for myself. Yet (by your gracious patience)
 I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver
 Of my whole course of love – what drugs, what charms,
 What conjuration, and what mighty magic
 (For such proceeding I am charg'd withal)
 I won his daughter.

I.iii.81-94

As opposed to the intoxicating ‘mighty magic’ of ‘drugs’, ‘charms’, and ‘conjuration’, Othello claims his courtship offers only a ‘round, unvarnish’d tale’ – ‘round’ in the archaic sense, meaning, straightforward or ‘not mincing words’ – expressed in a non-mystical, ‘rude’ mode of ‘speech’: ‘if I had a friend that lov’d her, | I should but teach him how to tell my story, | And that would woo her ... | This only is the witchcraft I have us’d’ (164-9).⁷⁷ In reality, Othello’s oratory is artful and captivating, encouraging Desdemona to ‘with a greedy ear | Devour up [his] discourse’ (149-50) – perhaps a simplified, less embellished approach would have provided a linguistic safeguard against the devilish Iago. Addressing early-modern tensions between eloquent and rustic speech, Stark maintains that the ‘Royal Society’, from the latter half of the seventeenth century – who ‘wholeheartedly accepted the existence of demonic language’ – promoted a ‘new plain style’ of language because it ‘functioned as rhetorical protection against demonic possession’:

In a theological-medical way, the plain style was a verbal cure, an especially relevant cure, given the nature of demonic possession as a rhetorical condition. Writers who used a plain style (i.e., a non-enchanted style) defended themselves against the influences of demonic idioms, because plain writing was a thoroughly natural mode of rhetoric in this context, as opposed to a preternatural or supernatural mode.⁷⁸

Indeed, early Society member Thomas Sprat admits that this ‘plain’ and ‘non-enchanted style’ guarded language from subjection to malignant misuse, describing ‘*eloquence*’ as ‘a Weapon, which may be as easily procur’d by *bad* men, as *good* and that ‘would be upon all occasions expos’d to the *armed Malice* of the wicked’.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, Othello’s attempts to tell his story as an honourably ‘Rude’ and ‘round unvarnish’d tale’ transpire to be something more rhetorically elaborate, leaving his words susceptible to the procurement of ‘wicked’ men, like Iago.

⁷⁷ OED, ‘round, *adj.*’, b.a.

⁷⁸ Stark, 143-4.

⁷⁹ Sprat, 111.

Employing these, his rhetorically deceptive tactics, Iago demonically inverts Othello's perception of good and evil, even relishing the seeming innocence of his furtively ruinous advice to Cassio to seek Desdemona's help at getting reinstated:

... How am I then a villain,
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now; for whiles this honest fool
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear –
That she repeals him for her body's lust,
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

II.iii.348-62

To turn Desdemona's 'virtue' and 'goodness' to dark, foul, resinous 'pitch', Iago's words must penetrate Othello's bodily openings – 'I'll pour this pestilence into his ear' – through which, according to demonological writings, devils could make direct incursions into the souls of their victims. Richard Bernard (1568-1641), an English Puritan clergyman and writer, depicts this precisely in his 1610 religious treatise: 'The Divel closeth the eyes with ignorance, and filleth the eares with Sophistrie'.⁸⁰ Iago, likewise, 'turns' his own wickedness to appear as if it were 'Divinity', questioning, 'How' he could possibly seem the 'villain' when outwardly displaying such kindness; a nefarious ploy like that of the 'devils' who 'will the blackest sins' conceal 'with heavenly shows, | As I do now'. Cloaked behind his illusory performances, Iago sufficiently fills Othello's ears with his words of 'pestilence', until he inverts light 'virtue' to dark 'pitch': 'Now do I see 'tis true ... Swell, bosom, with thy fraught, | For 'tis of aspicks' tongues!' (III.iii.444-50), Othello exclaims, interpreting what is 'true' through Iago's warped lens, for his bosom is swollen only with Iago's virulent language. It is in this moment that Othello linguistically binds himself to Iago in a pact with the devil:

OTHELLO [He kneels.] ...
In the due reverence of a sacred vow

⁸⁰ Richard Bernard, *Contemplative Pictures...* (1610), 69-70.

I here engage my words.
 IAGO Do not rise yet.
 [*Iago kneels.*]
 Witness, you ever-burning lights above,
 You elements that clip us round about,
 Witness that here Iago doth give up
 The execution of his wit, hands, heart,
 To wrong'd Othello's service! Let him command,
 And to obey shall be in me remorse,
 What bloody business ever.
 ...
 OTHELLO ... Now art thou my lieutenant.
 IAGO I am your own for ever.

III.iii.460-80

As is made etymologically implicit in the word 'conjure' (to swear, to make an oath), Othello performs a ritual ceremony of satanic conjuration via this 'sacred vow', promising to 'nev'r look back, nev'r ebb to [the] humble love' of his virtuous bride, but to 'engage [his] words' instead to the 'bloody thoughts' inspired by his possessor (457-8). Raising the demon by whom he is already possessed – 'Witness that here Iago doth give up | The execution of his wit, hands, heart, | To wrong'd Othello's service!' – Othello now devotes himself to Iago entirely: 'in the manner of demoniacs who ironically possess the demon lodged within them, Othello has ritualistically conjured into himself words from Iago that intensify the possession of his being'.⁸¹ Once Othello proclaims, 'Now art thou my lieutenant', Iago becomes his place (Fr. *lieu*) holder (*tenant*), as he responds 'I am your own forever'; Iago demonically *holds* the *place* of Othello's person entirely. His plan having culminated in the blameless Desdemona's murder, Emilia exposes Iago's deception – 'that handkerchief thou speak'st of | I found by fortune, and did give my husband ... | He begg'd of me to steal't' (V.ii.225-9) – prompting Othello to finally see Iago's true, diabolical nature: 'I look down towards his feet', to see if he is cloven-hooved, 'but that's a fable. | If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee' (286-7). Wounding but failing to kill this devil, Othello confronts his possessor in their final interaction:

OTHELLO Will you, I pray, demand that demi-devil
 Why he hath thus ensnar'd my soul and body?
 IAGO Demand me nothing; what you know, you know:
 From this time forth I never will speak word.

V.ii.301-4

⁸¹ Morris, 320-1.

Entirely dissociating himself from Iago by directing his speech to an interlocutor, Cassio, Othello recognises Iago as ‘that demi-devil’ who ‘hath thus ensnar’d my soul and body’. Meanwhile, Iago’s last words remain fiendishly vague about his true motive – ‘what you know, you know’ – withdrawing his ‘word’ since its rhetorical efficacy depended upon Othello’s ignorance: ‘Were I the Moor, I would not be Iago’. Iago’s deceptive rhetoric and the identity constructed around it, depend upon a credulous ‘Moor’ who ‘will as tenderly be led by th’ nose | As asses are’ (I.iii.401-2). No longer able to co-opt the speech of others, Iago resigns from language altogether.

Shakespeare’s demonic rhetoric can only ever thrive in such linguistically faithless, politically-driven play-worlds, where ‘I am not what I am’, or ‘nothing is | But what is not’, or where one Antipholus is confused for the other, and the slippery signifier perpetually eludes and inverts its own meaning, deceptively counterfeiting the virtue of God’s Word. But once the devil is unmasked, the demoniac may be linguistically exorcised, returning to a plain speech of faithful semiotic correspondences; although this may be possible in *The Comedy of Errors*, this resolution remains unavailable to the tragedies, where revelation often comes too late. When the hopelessly ruined Macbeth reflects upon the story of his life, ‘It is a tale | Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, | Signifying nothing’ (*Mac.*, V.v.26-8); and Othello, before his suicide, begs for his once elaborated story to be posthumously recounted without linguistic ornament: ‘Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate’ (*Oth.*, V.ii.342). These tragedies suffer the consequences of an overembellished eloquence which falls susceptible ‘to the *armed Malice* of the wicked’, as Sprat warns. These inverted, demonic, rhetorical deceptions can only be remedied by the faithful semiotics of the romances, where an operative word-magic silences the lies of usurping courtiers, recovering truth. As the following section explores, Prospero is free, at the end the play, to tell the non-enchanted ‘story of [his] life’ (*Tmp.*, V.i.305) with a candour that Macbeth and Othello could only ever have longed for.

III. Transformative Conjunction in *The Tempest*

i. 'What Cares These Roarers for the Name of King?': The Language of Usurpation

A man being overpower'd may yeeld for his own safety, but to submit to that usurp'd power, as to the legall Authority of that Kingdome where it is, is to assert that as lawfull, which is but usurp'd, and in the Scripture language to make a lie.⁸²

In 1649, English politician and Puritan writer, Francis Rous (c. 1581-1659), published a pamphlet on *The Lawfulness of Obeying the Present Government*, arguing that scripture demanded obedience to authority regardless of who wielded it. However, Rous cautioned against the theological implications of submitting to 'usurp'd power' – unless for one's 'own safety' – for regarding 'as lawfull' that 'which is but usurp'd', is, according to scripture, 'to make a lie'. This phrasing recalls a verse from the Old Testament in which Job warns his friends, who deploy the false syllogism that his suffering must be divine retribution for his wickedness, that creating such a lie cannot benefit God: 'Will ye speak wickedly for God's *defense*, and talk deceitfully for his cause? ... will you make a lie for him, as one lieth for a man?'.⁸³ Rous equates the blasphemous lie – falsely presuming to act upon on God's behalf – to the usurper's presumption of legitimacy, by which he falsely claims divinely-appointed authority. To attribute, in the name of God, the power of the ruling title to he who arrogates this sovereignty, constitutes a heretical falsehood – claims to a kingdom predicated on a lie – thus inciting a widespread linguistic catastrophe in which lies come disguised as truths, 'because *People cannot judge of Titles*: when they cannot judge, then an usurped Title is true to them, and will exact obedience'.⁸⁴ In his 1585 anti-Catholic tract on *The Theater of the Popes Monarchie*, the English Puritan pamphleteer, Philip Stubbes (1555-1610), likewise regards any claim to divine authority 'by usurpation' to be a contravention of God's Word, for such claims must be accomplished 'by false wresting, and wrything of Scriptures, describing Catholic rule as a 'proude Antichristian kingdom, which consisteth only of lies, falshood, murther, treason, usurpation, & rebellion'.⁸⁵ Shakespeare's last solo-written play, *The Tempest*, depicts a world similarly polluted by the duplicitous language of scheming courtiers – principally that of the treacherous brothers, Antonio and Sebastian – whose ruthless politics involving conspiracy and usurpation disguises unlawful lies as legitimate truths. Indeed, Antonio stealthily gained influence before usurping his brother, Prospero, as Duke of Milan, by giving credence even to his own fictions, 'like one | Who having into truth, by telling of it, | Made such a sinner of his memory | To credit his own lie'

⁸² Francis Rous, *The Grand Case of Conscience...* (1649), 3-4.

⁸³ *Geneva Bible*, Job, 13.7-9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸⁵ Philip Stubbes, *The Theater of the Popes Monarchie...* (1585), B2^r, D8^r.

(*Temp.*, I.ii.99-102). Systematically, Antonio annexes power by the ‘substitution’ of each ‘truth’ with a ‘lie’, deviously ‘executing th’ outward face of royalty’ acting as lawful ruler in the conniving pursuit of his ‘ambition growing’, ousting Prospero from Milan, and later, luring Sebastian to attempt the same against his own brother, Alonso, as King of Naples (103-5). Exiled from his subjugated Italian dominion and finding its political language devalued by usurpation and falsehood, Prospero – who, even during his dukedom, had already begun ‘neglecting worldly ends’ (89) for the ‘bettering of [his] mind’ (90), ‘transported | And rapt in secret studies’ (76-7) – is literally relocated to a new locus for his archaic, occult, literary pursuits. Prospero arrives ashore on a prelapsarian, even magical island ‘by Providence divine’ (159), with his daughter Miranda, whose name (derived from the Latin *mirari* ‘to wonder’) appears to prefigure their miraculous redemption: ‘Admir’d Miranda, | Indeed the top of admiration!’ (III.i.37-8).⁸⁶ As we shall see in what follows, Prospero’s enchanted, romance wilderness accommodates the faithful semiotics of his ‘liberal arts’ (I.ii.73), facilitating a restorative, operative word-magic with the power to redeem deceptive political discourses. This first section explores how, Prospero, as patriarchal master of language, initially asserts his linguistic authority to disrupt the ossified hierarchies and unscrupulous speech of opportunistic courtiers, summoning the pre-linguistic, primal, inarticulate sounds native to the island – ‘strange and several noises | Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains, | And moe diversity of sounds, all horrible’ (V.i.232-4) – to clamour for rebellion against the dissembling eloquence of the aristocrats, even provoking utopian revelations like that of Gonzalo; that is, before Prospero realises his own colonial, political tyranny to, equally, be the instigator of these groans, embodied by the indigenous Caliban. In the next section, this silenced world ‘of excellent dumb discourse’ (III.iii.39) will be shown to be transformed by the ‘art’ (28) of Prospero’s verbal conjuration, as he stages magical illusions, or ‘insubstantial paegent[s]’ (IV.i.155), to promote a more egalitarian, communal discourse, inspired by his idyllic visions. To begin with, however, Prospero performs his role as linguistic ‘god o’ th’ island’ (I.ii.390), continually obstructing the conspiratorial hermeneutics that attempt to ‘*make a lie*’ of truth, even pre-emptively intercepting Ferdinand’s presumption that his supposed royal title warrants him any power – ‘Thou dost here usurp | The name thou ow’st not, and hast put thyself | Upon this island as a spy, to win it | From me, the lord on’t’ (454-7) – for, upon his island, Prospero must reassert his control over the political rhetoric that cheated him of his title, challenging customary nominative hierarchies.

The opening scene stages the first of Prospero’s illusory, magical performances, itself a microcosmic summary of play, a tempest that bifurcates the royal vessel – ‘We split, we split, we

⁸⁶ *OED*, ‘admire, *v.*’, etymology.

split' (I.i.62) – literally and figuratively dismantling this ship of state and all who travel within it: master from crew, king from attendants, father from son, husband from wife. King Alonso instinctively cries out for the help of authority – ‘Where’s the master?’ (9-10) – only to be ignored, until Antonio repeats the question: ‘Where is the master, bos’n?’ (12). As far as the Boatswain is concerned, the status afforded by conventional hierarchies would bring no tangible value to assist him in his turbulent battle with the elements, as he proceeds to dismiss the King and courtiers as being not only redundant, but obstructive: ‘You mar our labor ... | What cares these roarers for the name of king?’ (13-17). Set against the primal chaos and rebellion of ‘roaring’ waves, the linguistic conceptions of a civilised society, that privileges aristocratic titles and favours ‘the name of king’, are entirely ineffective. Since the urbane oratory of kings cannot ‘command these elements to silence’ (21-2), their language proven futile against the Boatswain’s discourteous cries, he challenges the king’s men to either ‘use your authority’ or, ‘if you cannot’ (23-4), get ‘out of our way’ (26-7). David Norbrook examines the subversion of traditional class disparities in this scene, recognising how “‘roaring’ connotes misrule and rebellion’, for ‘in a remarkably defiant gesture, the boundless voice of the elements and of social transgression is pitted against the name of king’ and his ‘arbitrary language of power’ in a play which ‘is structured around such oppositions between courtly discourse and wider linguistic contexts’.⁸⁷ The Boatswain’s call for ‘silence!’ (17) insults the eloquent courtiers, who respond with vulgar curses – ‘A pox o’ your throat, you bawling, blasphemous, incharitable dog!’ (40-1); ‘Hang, curl! hang, you whoreson, insolent noisemaker!’ (43-4) – alongside their frightened screams, such that the Boatswain protests: ‘A plague upon this howling!’ they are louder than the weather, or our office’ (36-7). Curses, howls, and roaring waves reverberate throughout the scene, drowning out ‘the name of king’ and dissolving the discourse of hierarchy. As Simon Palfrey argues, these inarticulate groans emanate as if from the womb of the primordial earth, to herald a new linguistic beginning:

One might think of alternative inference about the world before its inaugurative word: that is, not silence and emptiness, but the vibrating disturbance of disordered sound, of a clamour unmediated by meaning. In this case, origins do not begin with a peace that passes all understanding, but with a chaos awaiting annexations. ... If roaring can suggest society marooned in a baby’s babble, its violence might also connote the same state’s ending, cursing in the mouth of revelation, a refusal of grace abominable to any Omega silence. Such onomatopoeic discourse can evoke a time before etymological trace; the plays can then seem to rebuild a language, and a state, if not from scratch then with a memory duly informed by the calamities which inform huge violence. ... The storm, then, invokes ends and beginnings, the violence of secular judgement and the pain of birth. The consciousness of a ‘split’ thus connotes on the one hand the political subject’s divorce from authority, and on the other the emerging

⁸⁷ David Norbrook, “‘What Cares these Roarers for the Name of King?’: Language and Utopia in *The Tempest*”, in *The Politics of Tragicomedies: Shakespeare and After*, eds. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (London: Routledge, 2021), 21-54 (21).

subject's need to construct a language capable of dealing with a frightening and unaccommodating environment.⁸⁸

Language is traumatically birthed, emerging from the harrowing 'split' of the ship, as Palfrey suggests, a separation from an articulate maternal authority, as the voiceless infant wails and embarks upon their own self-identification through language. Humanity's pre-linguistic origins are 'not silence and emptiness' but a violent struggle to formulate those first words out 'of a clamour unmediated by meaning'. The play operates, then, as a kind of linguistic *tabula rasa*, first dismantling the degraded political rhetoric of the nobles – reducing it to a language at the point of its inception – before it 'can then seem to rebuild a language, and a state', reinscribing new rules in pristine performatives. In this first scene, Prospero, therefore, gestures towards the prospect of a repaired discourse, purged of conceptual structures promoting ineffectual hierarchy, a language with the potential to confer a 'brave new world' (V.i.183).

While this wondrous 'isle ... full of noises, | Sounds, and sweet airs' (III.ii.135-6) offers the time and space in which to reconstruct a new and faithful language with the capacity to conceive of utopian futures, at first, such attempts are repeatedly sabotaged by the worldly scepticism of the shipwrecked courtiers, whose political discourse implicitly privileges rank and facilitates conspiracy. In Act Two Scene One, the King's advisor, Gonzalo – that 'noble Neapolitan' who 'out of his charity' aided the banished Prospero with supplies – is faithfully receptive to the island's ethereal magic (161-2). Gonzalo urges the King to 'be merry' and find 'joy', in spite of his missing son, Ferdinand, who is presumed dead: such a 'hint of woe | Is common' for many people travelling overseas, and so they must delight in the unlikely 'miracle' of their own 'preservation' (II.i.1-7). Inspired by the island's Arcadian abundance, Gonzalo comforts his King by encouraging him to consider its utopian potential, however, every one of his observations is punctuated and disrupted by the mocking interjections of the cynical conspirators, Antonio and Sebastian:

ADRIAN	The air breathes upon us here most sweetly.
SEBASTIAN	As if it had lungs, and rotten ones.
ANTONIO	Or, as 'twere perfum'd by a fen.
GONZALO	Here is every thing advantageous to life.
ANTONIO	True, save means to live.
SEBASTIAN	Of that there's none, or little.
GONZALO	How lush and lusty the grass looks! How green!
ANTONIO	The ground indeed is tawny.
SEBASTIAN	With an eye of green in't.
ANTONIO	He misses not much.
SEBASTIAN	No; he doth but mistake the truth totally.

⁸⁸ Palfrey, 149-52.

II.i.47-58

Gonzalo's depiction of bucolic bliss is continually undercut as derisive witticisms infect his utopia. The 'air', the cynics interject, only smells 'most sweetly' when inhaled by 'rotten' lungs, for the island is 'perfumed by a fen', that is, the damp stench of sulphurous, filthy marshland; an abundant landscape bursting with 'everything advantageous to life' diminishes into one where 'means to live' are 'none, or little'; and, the 'lush and lusty ... green' grass is reduced to 'tawny', as if contaminated with rust disease. Antonio and Sebastian not only tarnish Gonzalo's idyllic perspective – refuting his claims that their 'garments' appear with a brand new 'freshness and glosses' after having been 'drench'd in the sea' – but also dismiss it entirely as a premeditated falsehood, as Antonio objects: 'If but one of his pockets could speak, would it not say he lies?' (62-7).

While this sceptical discourse of decay and lies escalates, Gonzalo continues to illustrate the island's future potentiality. Fondly recalling the wedding from which their ship was returning, 'the marriage of the King's fair daughter Claribel to the King of Tunis' (70-2), Gonzalo remarks that Tunis was once the capital city of ancient Carthage, likening Claribel – 'Who is so far from Italy removed' (111) that the King laments he shall 'ne'er again shall see her' (112) – to the 'widow Dido' (77), Queen of Carthage, who killed herself when her lover, Aeneas, abandoned her to travel to Italy where he founded Rome. Through this comparison, Gonzalo anticipates, out of loss and tragedy, the possible founding of an impressive, new nation. Although the mourning King remains unable to digest Gonzalo's faithful, new-world optimism – 'You cram these words into mine ears against | The stomach of my sense' (107-8) – Antonio and Sebastian, albeit mockingly, recognise the wondrous potential of Gonzalo's words:

ANTONIO	His word is more than the miraculous harp.
SEBASTIAN	He hath rais'd the wall and houses too.
ANTONIO	What impossible matter will he make easy next?
SEBASTIAN	I think he will carry this island home in his pocket, and give it his son for an apple.
ANTONIO	And sowing the kernels of it, in the sea, bring forth more islands.

II.i.87-92

Likening Gonzalo's 'word' to 'the miraculous harp' of Amphion, whose music raised the walls of Thebes, Antonio and Sebastian conjure the impression of a magically restorative poetry with the power to instil civil order and harmony, and so, to construct entire civilisations. Though Gonzalo is ridiculed for his dream of building 'impossible' new worlds with his words, his prolific apple-island brings forth a boundless sea of 'kernels', each containing an island of Arcadian possibility within it. These are kernels that resemble Hamlet's conceptual nutshells – 'I could be bounded in

a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space – were it not that I have bad dreams’ (*Ham.*, II.ii.254-6) – though not ‘bounded’ by the proviso of ‘bad dreams’, conversely, cultivated by Gonzalo’s optimism, his prolific kernels continually flourish. So fruitful is this image, that Palfrey locates Antonio’s potentia-filled kernel as the seed of ideological transformation in the play, from cynical power politics to utopian discourse: ‘The cynics’ joke distils the radical “kernel” which is the island: scepticism, like so much else, must endure transformation’.⁸⁹

The cynics pause their interruptions long enough for Gonzalo to deliver his complete manifesto. Presenting a vision which interrupts the courtiers’ political scheming, Gonzalo unpacks the latent potentialities contained within his apple-kernel islands, where he envisages an egalitarian future for this seemingly unspoiled, paradise:

I th’ commonwealth I would, by contraries,
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty.

Temp., II.i.148-57

Gonzalo prospective ‘commonwealth’ seeks to dispel all notions of social inequality, eliminating such concepts as: the ‘traffic’ of commercial trade; jurisdiction assigned to any one individual, calling for ‘no name of magistrate’; the elite scholarly sophistication of ‘letters’, that all discourse may be equally attainable; the disparity between ‘riches’ and ‘poverty’; the ‘use of service’ by a master who employs subordinate servants; the unearned exclusivity and nepotism of ‘succession’; the ‘bourn, bound of land’, dissolving the boundaries of private landholdings; ‘occupation’, leaving ‘all men idle’ with no employment (though as opposed to the proverb by which ‘idleness begets lust’, his islanders ‘and women too’, remain ‘innocent and pure’); and finally, ‘sovereignty’, like the Boatswain of the opening scene who demotes ‘the name of king’ to redundancy.⁹⁰ Particularly with regard to this passage, Shakespeare’s play is, most evidently, influenced by Michel de Montaigne’s essay, ‘Of the Caniballes’, an account of the Tupinambá people in Brazil, which partially began to challenge the contemporary imperial notion that European civilisations were superior to those

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁹⁰ Tilley, 336.

peoples of the newly discovered Americas: ‘there is nothing in that nation, that is either barbarous or savage, unlesse men call that barbarisme which is not common to them’.⁹¹ In a passage almost identical to that of Gonzalo, Montaigne revels in the equality and collectivism of this indigenous society:

It is a nation ... that hath no kinde of traffike, no knowledge of Letters ... no name of magistrate, nor of politike superioritie; no use of service, of riches or of povertie; no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupation but idle; no respect of kinred, but common, no apparell but naturall, no manuring of lands, no use of wine, corne, or mettle. The very words that import lying, falhood, treason, dissimulations, covetousnes, envie, detraction, and pardon, were never heard of amongst them. How dissonant would hee finde his imaginarie common-weath from this perfection?⁹²

Montaigne concludes that such absolute equality and innocence is conducive to a linguistic purity that refuses to accommodate those deceptive ‘words that import lying’. Contemplating the colonial, European explorers who share Gonzalo’s eager ‘discoverie of so infinite and vaste a countrie’, Montaigne expresses his concern – ‘I feare me our eyes be greater then our bellies, and that we have more curiositie then capacitie. We embrace all, but we fasten nothing but winde’ – in a gastrointestinal metaphor that echoes King Alonso’s inability to digest the boundless potential of Gonzalo’s vision within ‘the stomach of [his] sense’.⁹³ Montaigne proposes that these new worlds may be especially indigestible to us considering the linguistic struggle of transcending the frameworks within our own discourse when translating foreign concepts, complaining that he ‘talked a good’ with ‘so bad an interpreter ... who did so ill apprehend my meaning, and who through his foolishnesse was so troubled to conceive my imaginations, that I could draw no great matter from him’.⁹⁴

Certainly, Gonzalo’s egalitarian vision is undermined by the constraints of his own linguistic apparatus which implicitly endorse hierarchy, when, for instance, he begins this scene praising ‘the miracle’ of their ‘preservation’ on account of their social superiority: ‘few in millions | Can speak like us’ (II.i.7-8). It is self-importance reminiscent of Ferdinand’s rather clumsy observation, learning of his father’s supposed death, that, ‘I am the best of them that speak this speech’ (I.ii.430). In short, as Norbrook remarks, ‘language is the king’s’.⁹⁵ Recognising the emergence of ‘a careful counterpoint between two linguistic groups’ in the play, Norbrook identifies that the ‘speech-act [Gonzalo] is performing in evoking this utopia is strongly hierarchical’, precisely because ‘its aim is to console the king, and Gonzalo’s soft primitivism bears the stamp of someone used to

⁹¹ Montaigne, 101.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 102.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 106.

⁹⁵ Norbrook, 36.

euphemizing awkward social realities'.⁹⁶ For example, despite Sebastian's observation that the King 'receives comfort like cold porridge' (10), Gonzalo still chides Sebastian for his brutal honesty on the subject of Alonso's lost children: 'The truth you speak doth lack some gentleness, | And time to speak it in', urging his words not to 'rub the sore' when, like his own, they 'should bring the plaster' (138-140). If Gonzalo's speeches function, primarily, as oratorical diversions to pacify the King, then it is perhaps unsurprising when his words fail to escape autocratic constraints. Although Gonzalo's utopia concludes with 'no sovereignty', it begins with the proposition that he himself, 'would by contraries | Execute all things', being inexorably bound by a monarchical model of governance. This incongruity is detected by Sebastian, who interrupts Gonzalo's 'no sovereignty' to protest, 'yet he would be king on't', before Antonio identifies a vision built on antithetical principles, such that, 'the latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning' (158-9). According to Norbrook this inconsistency is, above all, a linguistic inevitability:

Language and utopia still go together for Jürgen Habermas and other theorists of universal pragmatics, for whom the 'utopian perspective of reconciliation and freedom ... is built into the linguistic mechanism of the reproduction of the species'. But poststructuralists have argued that this quest for undistorted communication implies an ultimately fixed and essentialist notion of human nature, which can become repressive and mystifying, prematurely suppressing the particularities of gender and class in the name of a false universality of a subject that is held to be free of the constraints of discourse. Utopia ... suppresses rhetoric and hence must fail to recognize its ineluctable basis in the materiality of language and power.⁹⁷

The linguistic quest for an utopia suffers a paradox whereby it oppressively requires a 'fixed and essentialist notion of human nature', a non-existent, 'false universality', to define an intrinsically indefinable subject, 'a subject that is held to be free of the constraints of discourse'. Once articulated, utopia, therefore, 'must fail to recognize its ineluctable basis in the materiality of language and power', to describe it automatically imposes power structures back onto it, reinterpolating the formerly emancipated vision.

Gonzalo's vision continues to expose contradictions that undermine its ostensible purpose:

GONZALO	All things in common nature should produce Without sweat or endeavour: treason, felony, Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine, Would I not have; but nature should bring forth, Of it own kind, all foison, all abundance, To feed my innocent people.
SEBASTIAN	No marrying 'mong his subjects?
ANTONIO	None, man, all idle – whores and knaves.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 23.

GONZALO I would with such perfection govern, sir,
 T' excel the golden age.
 SEBASTIAN 'Save his majesty!
 ANTONIO Long live Gonzalo!
 GONZALO And – do you mark me, sir?
 ALONSO Prithee no more; thou dost talk nothing to me.

II.i.160-71

Gonzalo proposes a society dependent only upon 'all things in common nature', equally distributing its 'produce' among its people, once more echoing Montaigne's account of the native communities who, 'bequeath all their goods indivisibly, to all these heirs in common, there being no other entitlement than that with which nature purely and simply endows all her creatures by bringing them into this world'.⁹⁸ However, Gonzalo, again, disrupts his portrayal of a 'common' society with the implication of his own presiding authority: 'To feed *my* innocent people'. The cynics resume their mockery, this time, of Gonzalo's oblivious self-importance, when Sebastian asks after 'his subjects' – who Antonio reduces to 'whores and knaves', refuting the claim that 'men idle' could be 'innocent and pure' – noticing as this 'commonwealth' degenerates into an increasingly dystopian autocracy: 'I would with such perfection govern'. Crowning himself King, Gonzalo's deteriorating political landscape ironically appeals to the cynics – "Save his majesty!", 'Long live Gonzalo! – as proponents of power politics and usurpation. As Gonzalo vows to 'excel the golden age', that prelapsarian era of Edenic bliss before the Fall of Man, he deifies himself above God, in another misguided distortion of Montaigne's admiration for the innocent, pastoral purity of the natives: 'what experience has taught us about those peoples surpasses ... all the descriptions with which poetry has beautifully painted the Age of Gold and all its ingenious fictions about Man's blessed early state'.⁹⁹ Crucially, however, the King has no capacity for sentimental speculations, 'Prithee no more; thou dost talk nothing to me', slyly punning on utopia, an etymological 'no place' – from the ancient Greek *ou* 'not', *topos* 'place' – which cannot exist and therefore cannot be verbally conceptualised.¹⁰⁰ It is a pun picked up by Gonzalo who retorts that the likes of Antonio and Sebastian 'always use to laugh at nothing', and though Antonio quips "'Twas you we laugh'd at', Gonzalo perseveres: 'Who, in this kind of merry fooling, am nothing to you; so you may continue, and laugh at nothing still' (176-9). Although Gonzalo concedes that his utopia remains, by definition, an insubstantial 'nothing', yet he argues in favour of indulging its abstract imaginings over those sceptical jests of 'merry fooling'. Delivering his vision to most obstinate courtiers, Gonzalo's utopia remains a 'no-thing' that can only ever be defined in terms of what it is not, as

⁹⁸ Montaigne, 236-7.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 223.

¹⁰⁰ OED, 'utopia, *n.*', etymology.

Thomas Bulger observes: ‘Gonzalo’s utopia is essentially one of negation and absence’.¹⁰¹ Gonzalo may indeed identify a list of societal injustices to abolish when he eradicates ‘riches’, ‘poverty’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘felony’, and so on, but, unable to escape his own courtly discourse, he is, consequently, unable to escape its power dynamics, inadvertently placing himself as absolute and perfect monarch.

Though Gonzalo’s imaginative digression attempts to start anew and rise above the cynical mutterings of scheming courtiers, it ultimately fails to escape the confines – lying latent in the language – of a dysfunctional, political rhetoric. This becomes apparent when, in the aftermath of Gonzalo’s vision, Antonio, who once usurped his brother, rehearses his compulsions towards usurpation in an almost identical scenario. In this re-enactment, Antonio urges Sebastian to attempt murder and thus usurp his own sleeping brother, Alonso, as King of Naples, in a plot of treasonous regicide. However, this unsuccessful parody is induced by Prospero’s magic, since Ariel’s music insidiously puts all, except Antonio and Sebastian, to sleep. Prospero can finally disrupt their devious, conspiratorial dialogue, thwarting it with a drowsy, ineffective discourse:

ANTONIO	And yet me thinks I see it in thy face, What thou shouldst be. Th’ occasion speaks thee, and My strong imagination sees a crown Dropping upon thy head.
SEBASTIAN	What? art thou waking?
ANTONIO	Do you not hear me speak?
SEBASTIAN	I do, and surely It is a sleepy language, and thou speak’st Out of thy sleep. What is it thou didst say? This is a strange repose, to be asleep With eyes wide open – standing, speaking, moving – And yet so fast asleep.
ANTONIO	Noble Sebastian, Thou let’st thy fortune sleep – die, rather; wink’st Whiles thou art waking.
SEBASTIAN	Thou dost snore distinctly; There’s meaning in thy snores.

II.i.206-18

Prospero reduces the conspiring of the conniving brothers not to the pre-verbal ‘roars’ of the opening scene, but rather to a ‘sleepy language’ of ‘snores’. The sharp wit of these jesting sceptics devolves into a muddled and disjointed conversation of incoherent misunderstandings, as Sebastian

¹⁰¹ Thomas Bulger, ‘The Utopic Structure of *The Tempest*’, *Utopian Studies*, 5, i (1994), 38-47 (42).

struggles to grasp Antonio's meaning: 'What? art thou waking? ... What is it thou didst say?'. Sebastian appears suspended in a liminal state between wakefulness and sleep, 'with eyes wide open – standing, speaking, moving – | And yet so fast asleep', hearing only an indecipherable, 'sleepy language'. As their semi-conscious exchange continues, words become increasingly futile. For example, while Antonio justifies Sebastian's right to the throne – since his heir, Ferdinand, must be dead, while Claribel is 'Queen of Tunis' and 'dwells | Ten leagues beyond man's life' (246-7) – he reasons that those who survive must 'by that destiny ... perform an act' (252), one that re-enacts the crimes of 'what's past' and then quickly disregards them, like the forgotten words of a 'prologue' (253), in pursuit of the Crown. If an act of murderous supplantation can be reduced to irrelevant words which are dispensed with, then by this theory of semiotic disconnection, the vision before them of the sleeping King would appear 'no worse' (261) if he were dead; signifiers can be severed from any real-world implications. In a world of devalued referentiality, even one courtier, like Gonzalo, could easily be attributed with other words, replaced with other 'lords that can prate | As amply and unnecessarily', for, as Antonio claims, he could teach a jackdaw to speak as profoundly: 'I myself could make | A chough of as deep chat' (265-6). Therefore, with words reduced to idle 'chat', and the only 'meaning' to be found in unintelligible 'snores', the dream of political rebellion dissipates. After all, as Norbrook observes, Antonio and Sebastian only ever 'satirically represent their rebellion as an eruption of the political unconscious, if not a roaring then at least a snoring', it is a failed, mock-rebellion to reflect the 'prevailing scepticism about discourse'.¹⁰² The courtiers present a language so faithless that words can be entirely disassociated from the acts which they designate, a linguistic model that fails to operate on Prospero's island of faithful word-magic. Though Gonzalo's optimistic daydream of utopia is a faithful counterpoint to Antonio's cynical sleep-dream of dystopia, both convey a fantasy that amounts to *nothing* in the ears of the King, who embodies the progressively failing language of the courtroom: after dismissing Gonzalo's vision, 'thou dost talk nothing to me', the King, now, upon waking, tells the conspirators, 'I heard nothing' (313). Nevertheless, Gonzalo's utopian kernels prevail, for unlike the King who hears not 'nothing', this faithful noble is warned of 'open-ey'd conspiracy' (301) by Ariel who interrupts the assassination plot. The courtiers all awake from their 'sleepy language' into the clamours of pre-verbal noise – 'we heard a hollow burst of bellowing ... | It strook mine ear most terribly'; 'a din to fright a monster's ear, | To make an earthquake; sure, it was the roar | Of a whole herd of lions'; 'a humming | (And that a strange one too)' – the violently transformative rumbles of Prospero's island resurface, to fill a linguistic vacuum (311-18).

¹⁰² Norbrook, 31.

The barbaric grumbles of the previous scene that rouse the courtiers from their sleep become personified, at the start of Act Two Scene Two, by the enslaved native islander, Caliban, who ‘needs must curse’ (II.ii.4) his tormentor, Prospero, for threatening to ‘fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar | That beasts shall tremble at thy din’ (I.ii.370-1). Caliban, as Palfrey writes, is ‘an embodied roar’, who exemplifies the pre-literate origins of his primitive island, taught the language of his colonisers, Prospero and Miranda, who, he recalls, would, ‘teach me how | To name the bigger light, and how the less, | That burn by day and night’ (334-6), evoking the innocent, biblical beginnings of language as a process of Adamic naming.¹⁰³ Caliban naively reciprocates this knowledge by sharing his prelapsarian Eden – ‘I lov’d thee | And show’d thee all the qualities o’ th’ isle, | The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile’ (336-8) – only to realise that he has aided his serpentine colonisers in hegemonizing with their imperial tongue. Identifying their language as the tool facilitating his subjugation, Caliban regrets that he ever learned to think in its terms:

Curs’d be I that did so! ...
 For I am all the subjects that you have,
 Which first was mine own king; and here you sty me
 In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
 The rest o’ th’ island.

I.ii.339-44

After acquiring their language, Caliban laments that he is robbed of his liberty, prevented from being his ‘own king’, humiliated as the tyrannised ‘subject’ of Prospero who keeps him captive and immured from ‘the rest o’ th’ island’. His name, ‘Caliban’, conjures various anagrams (or partial anagrams) associated with imperial bigotry, like the term ‘cannibal’, from the Spanish ‘canibal’, first mentioned in the 1492 journals of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506), in reference to the ‘Carib’ people of the West Indies (from which the term ‘Caribbean’ originates), claiming they were anthropophagites.¹⁰⁴ The first English translations of Columbus’ diaries appeared in 1555, in *Decades of the New World*, an influential anthology of early colonial voyages to the ‘New World’ of the Americas, by the alchemist and translator Richard Eden (c. 1520-1576). These so-called *Carib cannibals* are even evoked by the name of King Alonso’s daughter, ‘Claribel’, whose marriage to the King of Tunis (Carthage) is suggestive of Roman imperial rule, furthermore, ‘Barbary’, the historical region of North and North West Africa, was considered the original home of the ‘barbarians’.¹⁰⁵ Regarded as the abject other of European civilisation, Caliban is dehumanised, often bestialised as

¹⁰³ Palfrey, 154.

¹⁰⁴ *OED*, ‘cannibal, *n.*’, etymology; 1.b.; ‘caribbean, *adj.* & *n.*’, etymology.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, ‘barbarian, *n.* & *adj.*’, etymology.

a ‘monster’ (II.ii.65), even ‘half a fish and half a monster’ (III.ii.29), as if his scaly body is born out of the play’s tempestuous seas, like a creature emerged from the primal waters of creation, who, Miranda supposes, without her civilising teachings, ‘didst not, savage, | Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like | A thing most brutish, I endow’d thy purposes | With words that made them known’ (I.ii.355-8). This unschooled, gabbling monster-native is only taught the ‘meaning’ of his own ‘purposes’ by Miranda’s ‘words’ insofar as they define and delimit those purposes in Prospero’s favour. As Bill Ashcroft remarks in *Caliban’s Voice*:

What is being enacted here is the power of Miranda’s language to construct Caliban racially, a power that is coterminous with Prospero’s very tangible control of his body, his actions, his destiny.¹⁰⁶

Miranda concludes that the nature of Caliban’s ‘vild race’ is what kept him ‘deservedly confin’d into this rock, | Who hadst deserv’d more than a prison’, but (apart from his supposed sexually aggressive tendencies) he is only an ‘abhorred slave’, a ‘savage’, and ‘a thing most brutish’, precisely because he is uncooperative, questioning and resisting the motives imposed upon him by his occupiers’ language (351-62).¹⁰⁷ Caliban responds to Miranda with a defiant remark which lies at the heart of post-colonial literary studies – ‘You taught me language, and my profit on’t | Is, I know how to curse. The red-plague rid you | For learning me your language!’ (363-65) – prompting Ashcroft, whose monograph hinges upon this moment, to ask: ‘is that language good for nothing but cursing, or can Caliban use that language to change the world?’¹⁰⁸

Undeniably, Caliban’s curses like his roars convey his violent suffering, he ‘needs must curse’ (II.ii.4) at the torturing, metamorphosing spirits conjured by Prospero who will ‘bid ’em; but | For every trifle’ (7-8) to ‘pinch, | Fright’ (4-5), ‘like apes that mow and chatter at me, | And after bite me’ (9-10), ‘mount | Their pricks at my footfall’ (11-12), and ‘All wound with adders who with cloven tongues | Do hiss me into madness’ (13-14). However, as Caliban ‘continues to figure and suffer the “roar”, the violence which lies latent in linguistic history’, this ‘roar, then, is the

¹⁰⁶ Bill Ashcroft, *Caliban’s Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 30.

¹⁰⁷ On colonial and post-colonial discourse in *The Tempest*, also see: Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century’, in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, 2 vols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 561-80; Bruce Erlich, ‘Shakespeare’s Colonial Metaphor: On the Social Function of Theatre in *The Tempest*’, *Science and Society*, 41 (1977), 43-65; Lorie Leininger, ‘Cracking the Code of *The Tempest*’, *Bucknell Review*, 25 (1980), 121-31; Peter Hulme, ‘Hurricanes in the Caribbees: The Constitution of the Discourse of English Colonialism’, in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, ed. Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1981), 55-83; Paul Brown, “‘This thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine’: *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism”, in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: MUP, 1985), 48-71; Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986), 89-134; Thomas Cartelli, ‘Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as Colonialist Text and Pretext’, in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean Howard and Marion O’Conner (London: Methuen, 1987), 99-115; Meredith Anne Skura, ‘Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*’, *SQ*, 40, i (1989), 42-69.

¹⁰⁸ Ashcroft, 2.

soundtrack to Caliban's growth', the early realisation of his own capacity for powerful linguistic resistance, to reconstitute his own defiant meaning in this imperial tongue.¹⁰⁹ Thus, the roaring 'Caliban is both an image of the oppressive politics which cause the repeated incarcerations, and such a black hole himself, screaming with the potential to confer "new worlds"'.¹¹⁰ Caliban's howls herald a mutiny against linguistic imperialism, his language being, simultaneously, the tormented voice of persecution and that which barely articulates a transformative rebellion, as various critics concur. Ashcroft, for example, warns against failing 'to conceive any possibility of Caliban's power to transform language' for, 'Caliban remains an evocative and controversial symbol of post-colonial resistance', advising his reader not to reductively 'see Caliban's cursing as the only response the colonized subject might have to the colonial language'.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, Norbrook may concede 'language as dulling resistance to power' in this play, but nevertheless, he argues that 'Caliban's subjectivity is not just passively determined by discourse', for Caliban is able to 'make his own linguistic choices', demonstrating how he 'enact[s] his resistance by means of a grammatical rebellion'.¹¹² Similarly, Lyne concludes that, 'the most important voice of resistance is Caliban', a recognition that is 'most obviously true when the play's colonial dynamics are taken into account' for Caliban, 'is not only a recalcitrant primitive abused (or not) by a tyrant' but 'he also displays a kind of poetry that is very much his own, though it appears only fleetingly'.¹¹³ From monstrous roars and cursing, to poetic expressions of liberation (that I shall soon discuss), Caliban's language increasingly frustrates imperial discourse.

It is in Act Two Scene Two that Caliban's cursing begins to subvert the function of colonial language as an instrument of oppression, reappropriating it into a vehicle of resistance. When Stephano discovers a cloak concealing the tormented and cursing Caliban at one end – 'Here comes a spirit of his, and to torment me ... I'll fall flat' (15-16) – and the foolish jester, Trinculo, at the other – 'the storm is come again! My best way is to creep under his gaberdine' (37-8) – he mistakes this vision for a 'monster of the isle with four legs' (65) from which he hears 'two voices' (89). A metaphorical depiction of Caliban's linguistic self-division: Trinculo's 'forward voice ... to speak well of his friend' (90-1), is that of the subordinate helpless fool, 'O, defend me!' (88); while Caliban's cursing 'backward voice is to utter foul speeches and to detract' (91-2) and disrupt order. When Stephano pulls his friend, Trinculo, out from under the gaberdine by his legs, he leaves

¹⁰⁹ Palfrey, 163

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 154.

¹¹¹ Ashcroft, 17.

¹¹² Norbrook, 41.

¹¹³ Lyne, 51.

behind the voice of political rebellion, performing what Maurice Hunt terms a symbolic ‘purgation’ of a ‘foul voice’:

This voice is not only Caliban’s foul voice of cursing; it is also ... the occasionally foul voice of jesting, which at times has threatened good understanding in the serious action of *The Tempest*.¹¹⁴

Hunt argues that jesting voices, like those of Antonio, Sebastian, and Trinculo, engage in a ‘maiming of speech’ concerned ‘only with the word’s significance as latent pun’ they ‘limit their knowledge to a single, often trivial, dimension of speech meaning’, therefore, by performing ‘Caliban’s release from a jesting spirit ... he stands free of an occasional corrupter of speech and knowledge’.¹¹⁵ With the politically regressive voice of jesting removed, Caliban’s radical voice emerges, evolving from one defined by cursing – since ‘Caliban’s cursing voice is not heard in *The Tempest* after Stephano’s symbolic removal of the monster’s backward voice in Act Two of the play’ – to a more refined mode of articulacy.¹¹⁶ Even before this ‘symbolic removal’, Caliban also began to symbolically awaken his own language, in the company of unthreatening, drunken subordinates, as Stephano wonders, ‘Where the devil should he learn our language?’ (66-7), pouring wine into his mouth in hope of *extracting* a more distinct, communicative voice that does not simply *detract*: ‘Open your mouth; here is that which will give language to you’ (82-3). Once he completes these transformative rituals with wine and purging, Caliban begins to discover a wistful, poetic voice: ‘I’ll show thee every fertile inch o’ th’ island ... | I’ll show thee the best springs; I’ll pluck thee berries; | I’ll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough’ (148-61). While these words may echo the prelapsarian naivety with which Caliban previously welcomed those who first gave him language – ‘I lov’d thee | And show’d thee all the qualities o’ th’ isle, | The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile. | Curs’d be I that did so!’ (I.ii.336-9) – this time, equipped with postlapsarian knowledge, he need not curse in the company of credulous, unruly, intoxicated clowns. Though Caliban does ‘kneel’ (II.ii.118) and scrape to the foolish drunks – ‘I’ll kiss thy foot. I’ll swear myself thy subject’ (II.ii.152) – offering them the false flattery which their courtly culture values, he orchestrates a political coup of his own to oust Prospero and liberate himself. Caliban sings his way to liberty – ‘Ban, ’Ban, Ca-Caliban | Has a new master, get a new man. | Freedom, high-day! high-day, freedom! freedom, | high-day, freedom!’ (184-7) – with lyrics that reveal his newfound realisation: among these usurping colonialists the position of a leader is both arbitrary and replaceable.

¹¹⁴ Maurice Hunt, ‘Purging the Jestng Spirit in *The Tempest*’, *Comparative Drama*, 45, iv (2011), 417-37 (426).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 422-5.

¹¹⁶ Hunt, ‘The Backward Voice of Coriol-anus’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 32 (2004), 220-39 (226).

Caliban's endeavours, in Act Three Scene Two, to familiarise his drunken masters with the tragic tale of his enslavement are repeatedly sabotaged by Prospero, in a series of disruptions driven by a colonialist compulsion to silence the oppressed. As soon as Caliban recounts, 'I am subject to a tyrant, | a sorcerer, that by his cunning hath | cheated me of the island' (III.ii.42-4), Ariel interjects with, 'Thou liest' (45), demonically ventriloquising as Trinculo to discredit Caliban's story. In response, Stephano threatens the innocent Trinculo not to 'trouble him any more in 's tale' (48-9) and Caliban soon proceeds to lay out his strategy for 'Revenge' (54), a conspiracy to usurp his usurper – 'I'll yield him thee asleep, | Where thou mayst knock a nail into his head' (60-1) – when Ariel ventriloquises once more: 'Thou liest, thou canst not' (62). This murderous scheme, disrupted by Ariel, appears like a reproduction of the same satirical plot of Antonio and Sebastian against the sleeping King in Act Two Scene Two, in a perpetual sequence of parodies that demonstrate the degrading, cyclical hermeneutics of violent usurpation. However, Caliban's plot differs crucially, for he never seeks to usurp this monarchical power for himself – conferring this role to Stephano, who naively rejoices, 'I will be king' (107) – but only wishes to end Prospero's reign of settler-colonial tyranny through a language of invocational word-magic. Caliban identifies Prospero's books as the source of this linguistic power:

Having first seiz'd his books; or with a log
 Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,
 Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember
 First to possess his books; for without them
 He's but a sot, as I am; nor hath not
 One spirit to command; they all do hate him
 As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.

III.ii.89-95

Although we hear of Prospero's beloved books, that travelled in his boat from Milan 'from mine own library with volumes that | I prize above my dukedom' (I.ii.167-8), yet, as Sarah Wall-Randell observes, 'the play never actually requires a book to appear onstage' for 'the real power of the book lies in its existence in the mind as an infinitely manipulable structure, an organizing principle, a model for thinking' an object containing 'a whole universe of knowledge and power'.¹¹⁷ What Caliban astutely recognises to be the instrument of empire – beyond titles and crowns – is the literary power embodied by Prospero's books, repeatedly entreating the clowns, before all else, to 'seize', 'possess', and 'burn' them, for 'without' these books, Prospero is disarmed:

The recognition of the power of books elaborates the very important link between language and writing in the colonial exchange. Shakespeare uses the term 'books' here ... to refer to not

¹¹⁷ Wall-Randell (2013), 76, 102, 104.

only Prospero's physical collection of books, but also his book learning, his scholarship or study ... it describes Caliban's unquestioned acceptance of the fact that Prospero's power is located in a superior culture embodied in the written word, in his books.¹¹⁸

Without his vast literary compendium, Prospero loses the authority of his 'superior culture' in a civilisation which circulates intellectual scholarship, and is reduced to the status of Caliban, a 'sot', who would lose the power to verbally 'command' and rule over his dominion. Caliban, however, never seeks to claim the autocratic authority of Prospero's books for himself, rather, he resuscitates his blissful island through a whimsical and nostalgic poetics, reassuring his frightened companions:

CALIBAN	Be not afeard, the isle is full of noises, Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices, That if I then had wak'd after long sleep, Will make me sleep again, and then in dreaming, The clouds methought would open, and show riches Ready to drop upon me, that when I wak'd I cried to dream again.
STEPHANO	This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing.
CALIBAN	When Prospero is destroy'd.
STEPHANO	That shall be by and by. I remember the story. ... Lead, monster, we'll follow.

III.ii.135-50

Evoking Montaigne's report of his encounter with an indigenous tribe of the New World, during which he revelled in the melodious 'poetry' of their speech – 'their language is a kinde of pleasant speech, and hath a pleasing sound' – Caliban's poetic monologue invites his companions to relish the 'sounds and sweet airs, that give delight' and the harmonious synchronicity of 'twangling instruments' and humming voices.¹¹⁹ It is a romantic fantasy of sleeping and 'dreaming' that, unlike the 'sleepy language' of the courtiers, inspires Stephano to entertain an utopian fantasy of his own, imagining his 'brave kingdom' as one steeped in his philosophy of hedonism, with excesses of wine and free music, 'where | I shall have my music for nothing'. Stephano conjures an illusory paradise entrenched in the sentimental poetry of Caliban's romantic vision. In spite of this indulgence in the prospect of a utopian future, it cannot be entertained by Caliban until 'Prospero is destroy'd', quietening the violent storm of his imperial word-magic by burning his books, that others might

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁹ Montaigne, 106.

‘remember the story’ of Caliban whose liberated voice will ‘lead’ the march towards a ‘brave kingdom’ for these ordinary rustics.

Prospero governs with a coercive magical language which Caliban ‘must obey’ for ‘his art is of such pow’r, | It would control my dam’s god, Setebos, | and make a vassal of him’ (I.ii.372-4). God of the indigenous Patagonians, Setebos was made known by the Venetian scholar and explorer, Antonio Pigafetta (c. 1491-1531), in his 1526 publication recounting his voyage to Patagonia in 1519, first translated to English, like that of Columbus, in Eden’s 1955 collection.¹²⁰ Prospero’s scholarly magic of empire is, therefore, so expansive that it even holds sway over the island’s indigenous deity, Setebos, while it overpowers the native witchcraft of Caliban’s mother, Sycorax. Indeed, Sycorax is the island’s original inhabitant who Prospero derides as a ‘foul witch’ (258), a ‘damn’d witch’ (263) of ‘earthy and abhorr’d commands’ (273), ‘mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible’ (264), with which she confined Ariel in ‘a cloven pine, within which rift | Imprison’d thou didst painfully remain | A dozen years’ (277-9). Although Prospero boasts, in response to Ariel’s desperate pleas for ‘liberty’ (245), that he freed the spirit from Sycorax’s tyranny – ‘When I arriv’d and heard thee, that made gape | The pine, and let thee out’ (292-3) – he fails to recognise his own analogous tyranny of ‘abhorr’d commands’, by which he imprisons, tortures, and enslaves the island’s inhabitants, that they might perform his bidding. Certainly, Prospero’s language of conjuration accomplishes carefully orchestrated magical illusions that alienate courtiers from their corrupt discourse of power politics, challenging its conceptual hierarchies to beckon forth the possibility of new, linguistic utopias. However, Prospero’s subversion of court politics begins to backfire when the tyranny of his own bookish word-magic is opposed by his subjects. After all, Prospero seeks only to end the disorder of endless usurpation plots so to restore the order of his own dukedom, imposing this by a word-magic which relies inherently upon authoritarian ideals. So long as these hierarchical discourses prevail, it is impossible to conceive of possible redemptive utopias, like Gonzalo’s egalitarian vision or Stephano’s ‘brave kingdom’, and later, Miranda’s ‘brave new world’. Only once Prospero’s conjuring magic accomplishes its task of obstructing and diffusing the deceptive language of courtly politics can he address the tyranny of his own linguistic imperialism.

¹²⁰ See: Pietro Martire d’Anghiera, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde...* (1555), 245-6.

ii. Beyond ‘Dumb Discourse’: Communal Speech in a ‘Brave New World’

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

Tmp., I.ii.400-2

Disbanded from the royal party in the aftermath of the tempest, Ferdinand, while sat ‘weeping’ in sorrow for ‘the King my father’s wrack’, is abruptly struck by the wondrous melodies of Ariel and his chorus of ‘sweet sprites’, deliberating, in his amazement, about the origin of these ephemeral voices: ‘Where should this music be? I’ th’ air, or th’ earth?’ (380-91). Thereupon, this miraculous music ‘sounds no more ... ’tis gone’ (389-95), providing an interval in which Ferdinand can identify the source of Prospero’s transient magic, assessing and concluding with ironic accuracy: ‘sure it waits upon | Some god o’ th’ island’ (389-90). Ariel’s song ‘begins again’ (396) in elegiac mode, recalling the decomposing body of Ferdinand’s supposedly ‘drown’d father’ (406), King Alonso – ‘Full fadom five thy father lies, | Of his bones are coral made: | Those are pearls that were his eyes’ (397-9) – his corporeal parts metamorphosing into various subaquatic treasures. However, Prospero has already disclosed that Alonso and his men are alive, assuring Miranda that his tempest was merely a ‘direful spectacle’ (26) causing ‘no harm’ (15). In light of this, the lyrics of Ariel’s ballad offer a more profound metaphor for the socially transformative function of magic in the play. The body of the King – the emblem of patriarchal sovereignty – is dismantled into its constituent parts which undergo a type of alchemical transmutation, a ‘sea-change’, depicting a radical transformation of the body-politic into something more refined, ‘into something rich and strange’. Prospero stages magical illusions that challenge the governing ideologies of the shipwrecked nobles, shifting their attribution of authority from the Crown towards a subsequent acceptance of the dominance of the natural world, where all men equally decompose. Throughout the play, Prospero’s magic repeatedly conjures brief moments of poetic wonder that transform understanding. Indeed, the origin of human understanding is wonder, as Aristotle writes in his *Metaphysics* (c. 350 BCE), ‘it was because of wonder that men both now and originally began to philosophize’.¹²¹ Philip Sidney, in his *Defence of Poesie*, explains that poetic wonder effects a ‘purifying of wit, [an] enriching of memorie, enabling of judgement, and enlarging of conceit, which commonly we call learning’ with the purpose ‘to lead and draw us to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worse by their clay-lodgings, can be capable of’.¹²² Thus, wonder is often preceded by profound understanding and realisation which exalts the mind beyond its corporeal

¹²¹ Aristotle (1989), 982b.

¹²² Sidney (1595), C3^r.

‘clay-lodgings’, as implied by the resonant image of King Alonso’s transmuting body. Examining wonder in the late plays, David Fusch observes how the restorative spectacles of the previous romances – Paulina’s resurrection of Hermione’s statue, Pericles reunion with Marina, and Posthumus’ dream-visitation from his deceased ancestors – ‘evoke but do not resolve the wonder of their participants’, for they ‘awake [our] faith’ (*WT*, V.iii.94-5) only to keep the audience suspended in a state of inexplicable admiration and marvel until the play’s end.¹²³ If, as Fusch writes, ‘the goal’ of miraculous moments ‘is not only to “incorporate” or internalize a new way of seeing, but, through incorporating it, to be transformed through seeing in this new way’, then, in the first three late plays, this transformed understanding ‘is to be arrived at not within the boundaries of the play, but after the close of the last scene’; in his earlier romances, Shakespeare is ‘staging the marvel in a ceremony that will transform and awaken its participants and allow for understanding only once the play is ended’.¹²⁴ In *The Tempest*, however, ‘many of the staged wonders [are] explicitly shown to be illusions, and therefore wonders that can be made familiar’, fleeting magical diversions which abruptly disappear before returning to reality; as Ferdinand observes soon after hearing Ariel’s music, ‘tis gone’.¹²⁵ Uniquely, *The Tempest* stages this transitional ‘move from wonder to understanding ... from the dissolution of a spectacle to a chronicle and explication of its particulars’, in such a mystified way that Ferdinand soon learns that the music he hears ‘is no mortal business, nor no sound | That the earth owes’ (*Temp.*, I.ii.407-8), before re-joining reality, informed by the invigorating, faithful experience of wonderment, and instantly falling in love when he espies Miranda: ‘O you wonder!’ (427).¹²⁶

In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare stages the realism that must inevitably follow the magical turn to romance, the post-romance return, wherein his characters must negotiate the lessons learned from their experience of an enchanted, pastoral idealism within a collective reality, adapting this reality into something both old and new. For T.G. Bishop these moments of wonder present ‘a space of semiotic and psychological experience, through which the audience, like the characters, must negotiate a way’.¹²⁷ Likewise, David Fusch determines that:

The audience must negotiate what is reality and what is illusion – and the internal object of the ceremony, i.e., their selves, their social, familial, and persona identities. The ceremony that is the occasion for these negotiations allows the characters to heal the rifts in their community, evokes wonder, and provokes its audience to inquire, to ask for the whole of the winter tale, for the circumstances and the explanations that will render this wonder familiar. ... Paradoxically, the rupturing of the audience’s understanding allows for a waking of their

¹²³ David Fusch, ‘Wonder and Ceremonies of Waking in Shakespeare’s Late Plays’, *Mediterranean Studies*, 14 (2005), 125-47 (127).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹²⁷ T.G. Bishop, *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 41.

understanding, a movement from sleep to waking, through an intervening marvel, a dream. The object of the ceremony, then, is something akin to Puttenham's 'reviving our spirits', a waking and reviving of the audience's faith and understanding which can allow for a comic healing of the individual and the community.¹²⁸

Prospero's ceremonies 'heal the rifts in their community' by dismantling the discourse of hierarchical power politics which privileges 'the name of king', facilitating a linguistic turn towards a communal dialogue. To engineer a 'ceremony that is the occasion for these negotiations', Prospero stages events which traditionally reinforce social bonds – like the mock-banquet of Act Three Scene Three, or the wedding masque of Act Four Scene One, both of which I shall discuss shortly – unifying and remedying a society burdened by class disparity. These are rituals which typically feature an evocative and operative word-magic of their own, one that marks the passage to social unity, for example, the toast delivered before indulging in a banquet feast, or the pronouncement of marriage vows – a linguistically binding contract of betr-*oath*-al – signalled by that instantly performative declaration, 'I do'. Prospero, therefore, conjures ceremonies where words are naturally charged with a magical semiotic efficacy and immediacy, possessing power to verbally bind disjointed communities together. As Montaigne writes, in his essay, 'Of Lyers': 'Nothing makes us men, & no other meanes, keeps us bound one to another, but our word'.¹²⁹ Reiterating this sentiment in his philosophically-mature Book Three essay, 'Of Experience', Montaigne examines how the pursuit of knowledge is enhanced when, 'One worde is changed for another word, and often more unknowen', that we might better understand it.¹³⁰ Likewise, Cicero, in *De Officiis*, his 44 BCE treatise on moral duties or obligations, considers, 'the felouship of al mankinde' the 'bonde wherof is reason, and speeche' which possesses the greatest power to unite 'one man to an other, and joineth them in a certein naturall felouship'.¹³¹ Prospero's islanders 'suffer' the wondrous 'sea-change' of his transformative, ceremonial magic, as it illuminates the disintegration of their own political hermeneutics – with the splitting of the royal vessel, the decaying body of the King, and the various splintering of political groups – before compelling them, through wondrous congregative ceremonies, to accommodate, within reality, an uncorrupted, communal discourse.

In Act Three Scene Three, Prospero subjects the King and his courtiers to an illusory banquet designed to tempt these 'men of sin' (III.iii.53) with the false prospect of a rich feast, mocking the commitment of their wicked appetites to political greed, and confounding their cynicism at

¹²⁸ Fusch, 146-7.

¹²⁹ Montaigne, 16.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 602.

¹³¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Three Books of Duties...* (1556), 21^{r-v}.

Gonzalo's utopian vision in Act Two Scene One. Though Alonso had rejected the force-fed words of Gonzalo's indigestibly egalitarian fantasy, complaining that 'you cram these words into mine ears against | The stomach of my sense' (II.i.107-8), his appetite for political gluttony remains insatiable. Unlike Gonzalo's articulate 'words', this spectral banquet perhaps appeals palatable to Alonso in its mindless inarticulacy, since it requires no 'sense' but rather features distractions that Alonso 'cannot too much muse' for 'Such shapes, such gesture, and such sound expressing | (Although they want the use of tongue)' produce only 'a kind | Of excellent dumb discourse' (III.iii.36-39). Only for incoherent gorging do these men 'have stomachs' (41), as the King resolves: 'I will stand to, and feed' (49). Even the hungrily-ambitious Sebastian suspects the credibility of this dumbshow which, he admits, appears like an act of fanciful burlesque – 'a living drollery' (21) – yet, motivated by greed, he instantly pledges a blind faith to its existence: 'Now I will believe | That there are unicorns; that in Arabia | There is one tree, the phoenix' throne, one phoenix | At this hour reigning there' (21-4). Likewise, Antonio, commits to the same absolute faithfulness – 'I'll believe both' (24) – even if this means to credulously believe in all manner of impossibilities: 'And what does else want credit, come to me, | And I'll be sworn 'tis true' (25-6).

Once Prospero gains the trust and devotion of the nobles to his magical illusion – ready to sink their teeth into its food – the banquet vanishes as Ariel appears in disguise as a harpy, a Greek and Roman mythological creature, half-bird and half-woman. The harpy not only personifies stormy winds, a manifestation of Prospero's vengeful tempest, but moreover, evokes Aeneas' confrontation with the harpies who also steal his feast in Virgil's epic poem. On his journey to Italy to fulfil the prophecy of founding Rome, Aeneas and his men sail to the Strophades Islands where they encounter the wrath of the harpies who repeatedly, and 'with fearful swoop', snatch and 'plunder the feast; and with unclean touch mire every dish', punishing the men with hunger for disrupting their island, for the 'slaughtered cattle and slain bullocks' stolen for food.¹³² Shakespeare, therefore, draws the parallel between his courtiers, in *The Tempest*, and Aeneas and his men, as imperial, European settlers who suffer the consequences of their entitlement to their occupied island's resources. Just as the leader of the harpies in the *Aeneid*, Celaeno, proclaims a hostile prophecy that the Trojans will not found their city 'until dread hunger and the wrong of violence towards us force you to gnaw with your teeth and devour your very tables', Ariel, as a harpy, similarly deprives the King and his men of the illusory food before prophesying a fate in which they suffer divine retribution.¹³³ Ariel thunderously reveals to the royal party that 'Destiny' (53)

¹³² Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H.R. Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1999), 387-9.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

which 'hath to instrument this lower world | And what is in't ... | Hath caus'd to belch up you; and on this island' (54-6) since they are 'mongst men | Being most unfit to live' (57-8). Drawing their swords, the men are once more obstructed by the cosmic powers of providence – 'You fools! I and my fellows | Are ministers of Fate' (III.iii.60-1) – paralysed by magic with 'swords ... too massy for [their] strengths' (67). Ariel disarms the group to perform his 'business' of addressing the crimes these 'three' must 'remember' committing, when 'from Milan' they 'did supplant good Prospero', before turning to specifically chastise the monarch himself (68-70):

The pow'rs, delaying (not forgetting), have
 Incens'd the seas and shores – yea, all the creatures,
 Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,
 They have bereft; and do pronounce by me
 Ling'ring perdition (worse than any death
 Can be at once) shall step by step attend
 You and your ways, whose wraths to guard you from –
 Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls
 Upon your heads – is nothing but heart's sorrow,
 And a clear life ensuing.

III.iii.73-82

The three courtiers are accused of having incensed 'the seas and shores' into a disastrous tempest with their conspiratorial politics as they now suffer their cosmic reckoning. Alonso is issued the harshest of punishments, 'bereft' of his 'son' and cursed with 'ling'ring perdition' for the violation of his sacred duty as king, a crime which resonates throughout the natural and supernatural realms. Threatening the 'wraths' of the gods, Ariel obliges Alonso to suffer a guilty conscience – 'nothing but heart's sorrow' – commanding contrition, thereby, 'a clear life ensuing'. Ariel's instructional punishment complements what Genevieve Guenther refers to as the 'intensely instrumental aesthetics of the banquet', producing ethical and social transformation through its aesthetic force, in accordance with early-modern conceptions of poetry's moral purpose.¹³⁴ Certainly, Prospero praises the compelling effect of Ariel's dramatic diatribe, 'bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou | Perform'd', noting even the 'grace it had, devouring' (83-4) the disappearing spectre of the banquet with the consuming authority of an elegant yet terrifying speech. Prospero even attributes the efficacy of his magic to Ariel's 'devouring' words, for under his 'instruction hast thou nothing bated | In what thou hadst to say' (85-6), commending the spirit for the diligent coherence of his successfully executed instrumental aesthetics, as Prospero rejoices: 'My high charms work, | And these, mine enemies are all knit up | In their distractions. They now are in my pow'r' (88-90). With

¹³⁴ Guenther, 101.

the courtiers caught up in ‘distractions’, Prospero decides ‘in these fits’ to ‘leave them’ (91), where they may process the wonder of the banquet’s ‘high charms’, digesting ‘what [Ariel] hadst to say’ into profound understanding. Indeed, before the end of the scene, after the second iteration of the mock-banquet disappears, an inward transformation of conscience occurs as Alonso finally starts to ‘muse’ upon Ariel’s words, realising the macrocosmic consequences of his political crimes, crying, ‘O, it is monstrous! monstrous!’ (95). Like the ‘roarers’ – those roaring waves of the tempest, which care not for ‘the name of king’ – Alonso hears the island’s mystical voice as it ‘pronounc’d | The name of Prosper’ similarly drowning out his sovereign title, as he confesses, ‘it did base my trespass’ (98-9).

In Act Four Scene One, Prospero’s next transformational ceremony brings Alonso’s ‘monstrous’ remorse into sharp relief as he conjures a wedding masque for Ferdinand and Miranda, a seemingly ‘harmonious’ (IV.i.119) diversion from political catastrophe. Unlike the banquet’s transitive magic of ‘high charms’, the Masque of Ceres, ostensibly, displays a pleasing theatrical performance, described by Prospero as a mere ‘vanity of mine art’ (41), in which ‘spirits’ have been ‘call’d to enact’ his ‘present fancies’ (120-2). It is a type of magic which, as he had previously espoused, appears to neglect ‘all worldly ends’, instead, offering a celebratory expression of pastoral escapism. Guenther examines this shift from the instrumental magic of the banquet to the masque, which ‘serves to transform ... and to transmute magic, which at first seemed like a technology of power, into a mode of aesthetic experience’:

The play makes Prospero appear forgivable by changing the quality of his magic, emptying it of political content and turning it into celebratory spectacle, and thereby transforming the magician into a playwright who conjures spirits only for the audience’s pleasure. ... Prospero’s art becomes not only mere theatre, but a form of theatre that, in its ideal state, is *disinterested* rather than instrumental, having no other end but to please.¹³⁵

This enchanted ‘vanity’ of Prospero’s ‘fancies’ seems to function like a purely aesthetic experience, intended simply ‘to please’ and honour the betrothed with symbolic depictions of idyllic harmony. When Prospero, like a ‘playwright who conjures spirits only for the audience’s pleasure’, instructs the couple to passively spectate without interacting – ‘No tongue! All eyes! Be silent’ (59) – he engages a magic that seems ‘*disinterested* rather than instrumental’. However, this is not to say that these disinterested poetics are trivial, apolitical distractions, but rather, they proffer a carefully crafted synthesis of art and politics. Instead of explicitly implicating real-world politics, Prospero’s spectacle firstly revels in the social unity and concord of utopianism, compelling Ferdinand to recognise ‘this place’ as a ‘Paradise’ (124) for which he yearns: ‘Let me live here ever’ (122). This,

¹³⁵ Ibid., 15-16, 100.

of course, is soon undermined by the imminent realisation that the wedding itself is motivated by Prospero's own political-powerplay, ensuring his family's dynastic future as he coordinates Miranda's union with the future King of Naples. Before these tensions surface, Prospero, as Guenther proposes, can momentarily 'imagine a poetics that are not instrumental, a delight that is not compulsive, a labour that is not alienated', entertaining the false notion of 'a life in which he would be free to make art that does nothing more than celebrate ideal harmony'.¹³⁶

Indulging in an initially naïve pastoral, the 'Harmonious' masque features an ensemble of three Ancient Roman goddesses who congregate for 'a contract of true love to celebrate', bestowing their 'donation' of gifts, 'freely to estate | On the bless'd lovers' (84-6). Iris, Goddess of the rainbow and messenger to the gods, personifies divinity, meeting with Miranda's 'Deity' to confirm that – despite Cupid's 'wanton charm upon this man and maid' – their union is lawful, for they have obeyed their 'vows' to consummate after marriage, 'that no bed-right shall be paid | Till Hymen's torch be lighted' (92-7). Next, Juno, Queen of the gods and goddess of marriage and childbirth, offers her 'marriage-blessing' (106), and lastly, Ceres, Goddess of agriculture, fertility, motherhood, and the earth, bestows a rich harvest: 'Earth's increase, foison plenty' (110). This holy trinity of goddesses personify the realms of divinity, human society, and the natural world as they collaborate harmoniously to embody one dimension of the Edenic, pastoral ideal. In this regard, the masque's 'majestic vision' (118) of 'Paradise', evokes Gonzalo's vision of utopia, as Bulger ascertains:

Shakespeare turns to his fullest and richest presentation of the utopian ideal in Act IV. Whereas Gonzalo's utopia is essentially one of negation and absence, the nuptial ceremony of Ferdinand and Miranda is an affirmation of the highest and noblest possibilities of human intercourse. ... Prospero's masque culminates this ceremony by giving form to the play's ultimate utopian horizons.¹³⁷

Though only an ephemeral fantasy, Prospero's masque gives form to Gonzalo's conceptual utopia, producing the 'fullest and richest presentation' of it yet. After all, while Gonzalo's is an impossibly idyllic pastoral that calls for 'all things ... common' yet conceptually fails to fulfil its premise – 'I would with such perfection govern' – Prospero's is a mature pastoral which incorporates suffering, sexuality, and death, betraying underlying fears that gesture towards reality.¹³⁸ These discordant truths emerge when the courtly goddesses give way to the rustics who, 'In country footing' (138), perform their '*graceful dance*' (138sd). At first, the rural landscape from which Iris 'summons' these country people appears naively heavenly, first calling for water 'nymphs ... of the windring brooks' who wear garlands, 'sedg'd crowns' and display 'ever-harmless looks' of prelapsarian innocence

¹³⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹³⁷ Bulger, 42.

¹³⁸ On death in mature pastoral, see: Jehenson.

(128-31). However, rather than inviting archetypal shepherds as their male partners, Iris bids the 'Reapers' (138sd) to join the dance: 'sunburn'd sicklemen' who appear 'weary' (134) from their work of harvesting the fields. Consequently, the transition from the courtly goddesses of leisure to labouring rustics unveils a distinct sense of hierarchical injustice. Unlike the bucolic purity of shepherds, these not-so-innocent reapers end the masque, as Lyne observes, 'in a romping dance ... which suggests sexuality and licence rather than chastity', a manifestation of Prospero's anxious intent to regulate Miranda's virginity.¹³⁹ Having warned Ferdinand not to, 'break her virgin-knot before | All sanctimonious ceremonies may | With full and holy rite be minist'ed' (15-17), Prospero distracts the eager lovers with his spectacle, ensuring Miranda loses her virginity at the opportune moment. This pageant, therefore, hints at a frightening transition away from understanding Prospero's controlled island as Miranda's pre-sexual childhood, negotiating a necessary expansion beyond the bounds of patriarchal control, as father and daughter look to leave the island at the moment of her sexual maturity; Prospero's masque maintains aesthetic order in the face of these disruptive erotics. As Lyne concludes, Prospero's 'masque shows the limits of control: he sets his play in motion and it rebounds on him', offering 'a reflection on his project as a whole: he can raise a daughter, he can reconfigure the power dynamics of the Mediterranean, but he cannot control them wholly or forever'.¹⁴⁰

These tensions build until Prospero interrupts his spectacle, suddenly remembering that which, on account of his fantastical digression, he 'forgot': the 'foul conspiracy | Of the beast Caliban and his confederates | Against my life' (139-41), in an abrupt recall of the nightmarish violence of political realities. At this critical, transitional point, between marvelling at the entrancing spectacle of the masque, and returning to a 'foul conspiracy' – the interim at which revelatory insight and understanding might be gleaned – Prospero delivers a philosophy which begins to consolidate wonder with reality, for both are frail and impermanent:

You do look, my son, in a mov'd sort,
As if you were dismay'd; be cheerful, sir.
Our revels now are ended. These our actors
(As I foretold you) were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air,
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded

¹³⁹ Lyne, 48.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on; and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep.

IV.i.146-58

Observing Ferdinand ‘in a mov’d sort’, transformed, or still malleable to transformation, bewitched ‘charmingly’ (119) by the masque, Prospero defers his return to a politics of murderous ‘conspiracy’ in order to first deconstruct and diminish the language of political hierarchy altogether, ‘melt[ing]’ its powers ‘into thin air’ and rendering it ‘insubstantial’. Significantly, the elements of Prospero’s ‘vision’ reduced to airy, ‘baseless fabric’ are all paradigms of social superiority: the lofty ‘cloud-capp’d towers’ where the most privileged dwell; ‘the gorgeous palaces’ of sovereign rulers; and ‘the solemn temples’ of divine worship. If all these structures which house supreme authority upon this ‘great globe’ are temporary and ‘shall dissolve’, just like Prospero’s ‘insubstantial pageant’, then perhaps the dominance they assert over others is unjustified, since we are all ‘such stuff | as dreams are made on’, equalised by a collective experience as temporal, mortal beings, living ‘a little life’ that must, for all, expire, when it is ‘rounded with a sleep’. Prospero, therefore, dispels the conceptual structures of hierarchy that govern courtly discourse, disenchanting monarchical politics with his equally ‘insubstantial’ yet ‘majestic vision’ of ‘Paradise’.

‘The baseless fabric of this vision’ must dissolve in the light of social realities, lasting only as long as the ‘plot’ (141) of the ‘beast Caliban’ is forgotten, yet Prospero distils universally applicable philosophies from this theatrical spectacle that begin to resonate throughout the reality which resumes. Brian Gibbons argues that ‘in *The Tempest* interruption is the expression of power’, chronicling a series of disruptions throughout the play, from the masque itself, to the sudden remembering of Caliban’s conspiracy which interrupts this interruption.¹⁴¹ Gibbons examines this latter occasion as the moment in which Prospero realises the urgency of incorporating the intricacies of the real-world into his digressions:

Prospero’s forgetting the conspiracy is a testimony to the power of the wedding masque, but his abrupt recollection of it reasserts, all the more forcefully, the imperative of power. Between the symbolic meaning of marriage and the practical complexities of life, a gap is exposed, especially for those born to political responsibility.¹⁴²

It is within this ‘gap’ that Prospero must attempt to negotiate and accommodate the social unity and harmony of the wedding masque, employing it as an antidote against escalating political machinations. For instance, Prospero and Ariel demonstrate, with a symbolic gesture, the

¹⁴¹ Brian Gibbons, ‘*The Tempest* and Interruptions’, *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 45, i (1994), 47-58 (47-8).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 55.

emptiness and vanity of pursuits of power and status, luring Caliban's co-conspirators away from their scheme with 'trumpery' (186), the garments of noblemen hanging from a lime tree, described in the stage directions as '*glistering apparel*' (193sd). These empty, sensual baits signify the inverse of Prospero's 'vision', which is composed of a metaphorically 'baseless fabric' and yet is profoundly enlightening, for, instead, this literal fabric denotes material worth void of intrinsic value. Though tangible, these garments are as much a 'vanity' of Prospero's 'art' as the masque, brought from his 'house' to appear as if the uninhabited costumes of his 'actors' whose 'revels now are ended'. The appearance of these garments anticipates King Lear's realisation that 'man is no more' than his 'uncover'd body' (*Lear*, III.iv.102) as he rips off his royal robes – 'Off, off, you lendings! Come, unbutton here' (108-9) – recognising that the trappings of power carry no absolute or essential importance. When Trinculo detects the hanging regalia, calling for his leader, 'worthy Stephano' (*Temp.*, IV.i.222-3), to 'look what a wardrobe here is for thee' (223), only Caliban recognises the frivolous futility of these items – 'Let it alone, thou fool, it is but trash' (224) – insisting again this is the pastime of a fool: 'The dropsy drown this fool! what do you mean | To dote thus on such luggage?' (230-1). Caliban's pursuit, after all, was never power or status, but, more essentially, his own freedom, condemning the foolish Trinculo for drawing Stephano's attention to such meaningless 'friperry' (226). 'I will have none on't' (247): this empty semiotics of avaricious, covetous materialism is one in which Caliban refuses to participate, insisting instead upon taking urgent, seditious action to overthrow Prospero's tyranny: 'Let[t] alone | And do the murder first ... we shall lose our time' (231-47). What follows this dispute is a second anti-masque, like the banquet, in which the conspiratorial clowns are enticed by the glimmer of wealthy gentlemen's clothes, but, when they reach out to take them, Ariel conjures a pack of vicious hunting dogs to drive away these low-comic grotesques bent on anarchy. In both antimasques, Prospero's distractions, soon after, melt 'into air', leaving behind transformed subjects, ashamed of their past mistakes. Like Alonso and his men, who finally observe the 'monstrous' consequences of their actions, Caliban begins to realise the materialistic foolishness of his co-conspirators, who he once revered, prostrating himself before Stephano as 'Caliban ... thy foot-licker' (218-19):

Prospero's performance succeeds in incorporating interruption, the great test for a teacher, a politician, or an actor; interruption is made metaphorical, but it is also the device which brings out the quintessence of drama, its commitment to the live moment of performance, of existential risk.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 56-7.

Prospero's theatrical interruptions, his masque and anti-masques, function as metaphors for various aspects of life, temporarily suspending their spectators from reality only to return them to one brought into sharper focus.

Prospero uses his magic to provoke and enlighten the islanders with insightful visions of an egalitarian utopia – facilitating Gonzalo's 'commonwealth' fantasy and staging a wedding masque depicting a harmonious 'Paradise' for Ferdinand and Miranda – while also presenting antimasque-style spectacles to parody the cosmic repercussions of their amoral power politics, like the banquet and the dog-hunt. This sets the stage for radical transformation as Prospero begins to promote a shift towards a cooperative, communal discourse that surpasses the language of political greed. But before embracing the islanders in a common dialogic exchange, Prospero must first disrupt and transcend the power politics of his own word-magic. As Gibbons identifies, in *The Tempest*, 'what Shakespeare designs is an action showing the transcendence of human baseness', adding that 'the apex of this transcendence is the renunciation by Prospero of revenge, at the point where he wins complete power over his enemies'.¹⁴⁴ Though Prospero begins Act Five Scene One full of thoughts of revenge – 'strook to th' quick' and wrought with 'fury' at 'their high wrongs' – these impulses are softened when Ariel reports that the courtiers appear tormented by guilt (V.i.25-6). The King and his men – who are all 'confin'd together ... all prisoners' (7-9) in Prospero's 'cell' (10) and 'cannot boudge till [his] release' (10) – suffer the pangs of remorse, 'distracted' (12) and 'brimful of sorrow and dismay' (14), while the compassionate Gonzalo's 'tears runs down his beard' (16). Hearing this account, Prospero recognises that the culpable conspirators have been inwardly altered by his instrumental spectacles, as Ariel confirms the efficacy of his transformative magic: 'Your charm so strongly works 'em | That if you now beheld them, your affections | Would become tender' (17-19). Having accomplished his purpose, Prospero, in a pivotal moment, heeds his 'nobler reason' (26) by refraining from exercising any further powers in the name of revenge, declaring that, 'The rarer action is | In virtue than in vengeance' (27-8), opting for the passive 'action' of renouncing 'vengeance':

The alchemical moment of projection is achieved in unexpected terms when Prospero converts his worldly passion of power and vengeance by renouncing it, philosophically refining away what is base and venal, transcending self, and thereby enabling a similar conversion to overcome those others in the play who may be susceptible.¹⁴⁵

By choosing to transcend his 'worldly passion of power' Prospero is 'transcending self', renouncing individualism so to invite communalism in its place. However, for the shipwrecked nobles to truly

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 56.

undergo a ‘similar conversion’, Prospero must grant them renewed autonomy, which he soon does: ‘Go, release them, Ariel. | My charms I’ll break, their senses I’ll restore, | And they shall be themselves’ (30-2). Their transformation (like Prospero’s own) is therefore characterised by a disenchantment of magic, *breaking charms* that bind, to release each individual back to ‘themselves’, thus *restoring* ‘their senses’. Moreover, to restore full autonomy and overcome worldly power completely, Prospero must forgo his own word-magic – for although it has been implemented to partially undermine discourses of hierarchy – yet it governs with its own tyrannical agenda:

... Graves at my command
 Have wak’d their sleepers, op’d, and let ’em forth
 By my so potent art. But this rough magic
 I here abjure; and when I have requir’d
 Some heavenly music (which even now I do)
 To work mine end upon their senses that
 This airy charm is for, I’ll break my staff,
 Bury it certain fadoms in the earth,
 And deeper than did ever plummet sound
 I’ll drown my book.

V.i.48-57

In first part of this speech, Prospero, at length, brandishes the immense, cosmic powers of his ‘potent art’, with which he mastered all elements: ‘bedimm’d | The noontide sun, call’d forth the mutinous winds’ (41-2); with ‘dread rattling thunder’ (44) and ‘fire ... rifted Jove’s stout oak’ (45), outmanoeuvring the god of thunder ‘with his own bolt’ (46); made the sturdy cliffs ‘shake’ (47); uprooted ‘pine and cedar’ (48) trees; even claiming to have raised the dead at his verbal ‘command’ (8). Yet, within the same line, Prospero renders his most ‘potent art’ into a ‘rough magic’ which he must ‘abjure’. Here, Prospero’s use of the term ‘rough’ may designate actions ‘characterized by violence or harshness’ particularly ‘towards someone’, in which sense, he relinquishes a dangerous and malevolent power by which he inflicts vengeful harm on his former enemies and slaves.¹⁴⁶ Otherwise, ‘rough’ could denote the limitations of his craft, as an ‘rudimentary, crude, imperfect’ magic which, by his own admission, produces ‘baseless’ and ‘insubstantial’ visions, ‘airy charm[s]’, which are soon after ‘melted into air’, for they are transient illusions.¹⁴⁷ From the start, the play is punctuated with reminders that six hours temporally delimit Prospero’s invocational magic, as agreed in his demonic pact with Ariel – that since the ‘time o’ th’ day’ (I.ii.239) is ‘past the mid season’ then ‘the time ’twixt six and now | Must by us both be spent most preciously’ – in exchange for the spirit’s ‘liberty’ which Prospero promises to grant, ‘before the time be out’ (239-46). This

¹⁴⁶ OED, ‘rough, *adj.*’, III.11.a.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., II.8.a.

comes full circle when Prospero begins this final scene by asking for the time, anticipating his final hour with Ariel, who reveals: ‘On the sixth hour, at which time, my lord, | You said our work should cease’ (V.i.4-5).

Mickaël Popelard identifies the limitations of Prospero’s magic, correlating the renunciation of his restrictive ‘rough magic’ with contemporaneous advancements towards a Baconian, scientific philosophy, wherein nature is understood as boundless, open to the capacity to be endlessly transformed:

Prospero’s powers, however, are only temporarily limitless, for unlike Bacon’s open reform of science, which stretches off into infinity, Prospero’s science has clear temporal limits. ... Prospero is ‘a man of limits’ - a seemingly almighty natural philosopher, he displays a constant preoccupation with ‘limits’, ‘confines’, ‘boundaries’. His is a closed space, a confined territory, whether it is his Milan study or his island cell.¹⁴⁸

Thus, as Prospero forswears his magic, *The Tempest* reflects the ‘epistemological shift from ‘closeness’ of magical-thinking, to the ‘boundlessness’ of scientific-thinking’.¹⁴⁹ It is a transition (discussed in Section One of this chapter) that Bacon, himself, accommodates when he describes science like ‘NATURALL MAGICKE’ that is ‘purged from vanitie & superstition’ of spectacle, for its function is, rather, to probe and interfere with nature that ‘the passages and variations of Nature’ may more fully ‘appeare ... as in the trialls and vexations of Art,¹⁵⁰ thus, prolonging human life, or even reversing time so that ‘the Course of [nature might] become Retrograde’.¹⁵¹ In Prospero’s magical philosophy, time and space are enclosed, as if by concentric circles, life is ‘rounded with a sleep’, and his island is rounded with the sea. However, when Prospero vows to ‘break’ his ‘staff’ and ‘drown’ his ‘book’, he splits open these circles, reaching beyond their bounds as he pledges to return his tokens of magic back to the primordial earth’s core: to ‘bury’ his staff ‘certain fadoms in the earth’ and ‘drown’ his book ‘deeper than did ever plummet sound’. Returning his overbearing, wordy magic to these archaic origins, to which it is ultimately tethered, Prospero engages in tentative dialogue with the natural world, confounding its presumed bounds, as he negotiates a ‘brave new world’. This is a brave new world composed of the open-ended enquiries of Baconian inductive reasoning, just like the voyagers of Bacon’s fictional *New Atlantis* are advised, as they endeavour to create a utopian land based on principles of scientific discovery, this is an altered and improved future, ‘*beyond, both the Old World, and the New*’.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Popelard, 192.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 194.

¹⁵⁰ Bacon (1605), 10.

¹⁵¹ Bacon (1638), 184.

¹⁵² Bacon (1627), 7.

Only after Prospero has performed his final, reconciliatory acts of magic – ‘when I have requir’d | ... To work mine end upon their senses that | This airy charm is for’ – will he conclude his powers. For Prospero’s magical finale to successfully enact its miraculous, romance recovery and ‘work ... upon their senses’, he must obtain the naïve faith of his aristocratic spectators, despite having already disenchanted his once ‘potent art’ by ‘break[ing]’ his ‘charms’ and ‘restor[ing]’ their ‘senses’. As Prospero harks back to the occult, practising demonic ritual magic by tracing a circle with his staff to conjure the courtiers (this ‘rounded’ shape symbolising one last return to the enclosed philosophy of magic), his magic fails to accrue a sense of revelatory wonder when he is not recognised by his former peers, ‘Not one of them | That yet looks on me, or would know me!’ (82-3). Improvising, Prospero calls Ariel for the clothes he wore as Duke – ‘Fetch me the hat and rapier in my cell. | I will discase me, and myself present | As I was sometime Milan’ (84-6) – in an attempt to rouse their memories and reassert his former position. At the climactic point of reunion, when the exiled Prospero finally reveals himself to the shipwrecked nobles in his stately robes, as if returned from his remote banishment, the reaction is not one of mystified recognition but of oblivious bewilderment and non-recognition. Nonetheless, Prospero persists with a proclamation of self-assertion and self-realisation that is characteristic of the genre – ‘Behold, sir King, | The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero’ (106-7) – but he is, once more, met with cynicism. Prospero reasons that the disenchanted royal party ‘do yet taste | Some subtilties o’ th’ isle, that will [not] let you | Believe things certain’ (123-5), having only just awakened from their enchantments they remain residually mistrustful of their own perceptions. The ‘sleepy language’ of his ‘airy charm[s]’ is no longer sufficient to ‘awake [their] faith’ (*WT*, V.iii.94-5), as Alonso bids Prospero to share the truth of his story – ‘If thou beest Prospero, | Give us particulars of thy preservation’ (*Tmp.*, V.i.134-5) – demanding a verbal account of his time ‘upon this shore’ (137). This marks a transference of linguistic faith from the performative and imposing declarations of Prospero’s word-magic (‘Behold’) to a shared discourse of storytelling and collective experience. In spite of this, Prospero perseveres, hoping to sustain his magic long enough to capture one final moment of wonder:

... I perceive these lords
 At this encounter do so much admire
 That they devour their reason, and scarce think
 Their eyes do offices of truth, their words
 Are natural breath; but, howsoev’r you have
 Been jostled from your senses, know for certain
 That I am Prospero, and that very duke
 Which was thrust forth of Milan, who most strangely
 Upon this shore (where you were wrack’d) was landed,
 To be the lord on’t. No more yet of this,

For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
 ...
 At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye
 As much as me my dukedom.

V.i.153-71

Prospero advises the courtiers to question the credibility of their restored 'senses', which he ensures are 'justled' by their astonishment at this 'encounter' that they 'so much admire'. 'Admire', in this sense, refers to 'wonder' and spectacle, derived, like Miranda's name, from the Latin *ad-mirari*, 'to wonder', and *mirare*, 'to be surprised, to look at with wonder', these are both etymological roots of the verb 'mire', meaning 'to look at oneself in a mirror', and the noun 'miracle', from the Latin *miraculum*, meaning an 'object of wonder'.¹⁵³ Prospero, therefore, beguiles these disenchanting cynics by upholding the likelihood that a miraculous wonderment could overcome their senses, such that, in utter disbelief 'they devour their reason', their mouths agape in shock, wrongly presuming their deceiving 'eyes' to be 'offices of truth' and their 'words' to be 'natural breath'. Persuading them to doubt their own ordinary speech, Prospero primes the group to believe one final spectacle of 'wonder', which he hopes to 'bring forth', deferring, for one last time, a domestic discourse of his 'chronicle of day by day': 'No more yet of this'.

To successfully perform his final restorative illusion, Prospero must deceive the King who mourns his 'dear son Ferdinand' (139), by professing that he too 'lost my daughter' (148), in order to stage their seemingly miraculous resurrection. Delivering his final recuperative act of 'wonder' designed 'to content', Prospero reveals the newlywed couple as they play chess, and 'for a score of kingdoms ... wrangle' (174), in a tableau depicting their politically strategic marriage alliance which unifies Naples and Milan. Unlike in Shakespeare's previous romances, the theatrical artifice and mechanics behind this magical revival are explicitly disclosed to the audience, nonetheless, it successfully dazzles even the most cynical of the aristocratic characters, Sebastian, who admits it is 'a most high miracle!' (177). Meanwhile, a simultaneous recognition of wonder arises from that object of wonder herself, Miranda, who, after growing up in complete isolation from human society since childhood, observes the stunned onlookers, exclaiming:

MIRANDA	O wonder!
	How many goodly creatures are there here!
	How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
	That has such people in't!
PROSPERO	'Tis new to thee.
ALONSO	What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?

¹⁵³ *OED*, 'admire, *v.*', etymology; 'miracle, *n.*', etymology.

Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours.
 Is she the goddess that hath sever'd us,
 And brought us thus together?

V.i.181-8

For the wonderous Miranda, this moment is also declared a 'wonder', but not for the seeming miracle of resurrection – since she was aware of her father's plot to cause the shipwrecked nobles 'no harm' – rather, hers is a 'wonder' at the common phenomenon of humanity and social unity. Miranda observes a congregation of relations and old companions – her father, uncle, father-in-law, courtiers from her childhood – as a reunited community of 'mankind'. This reunion is facilitated, not only by Miranda's marriage to Alonso's heir, but also by her curative faith in 'goodly' and 'beauteous mankind', inspiring her to declare a 'brave new world', on account of which Alonso intuitively identifies her as the 'goddess' that 'brought us thus together'. Prospero, however, remains disillusioned by Miranda's 'brave new world', as he remarks, 'tis new to thee', with the world-wearied pragmatism of one who 'neglect[ed] worldly ends' and civilisation, embarking upon this 'new world' only to discover the foolish naivety of pursuing utopian ideals. As Bulger comments:

Such pragmatism is a commentary on all naively optimistic utopianism in general and Stuart political mythology in particular. The communalism and communism of the golden age is a wonderful ideal to entertain and to strive for but also a serious delusion if regarded as a spatio-temporal historical reality. ... *The Tempest*, then, is at once a sober acknowledgement of the fragility of Utopian ideals and also a testament to the enduring vitality and desirability of the concept of the utopic community.¹⁵⁴

Prospero, perhaps, retreats from the magical fantasy of Miranda's 'naively optimistic utopianism', seeking to negotiate such idealism with real-world 'communalism', realising a 'new world' that may appear wonderous, but is, in fact, a revived, modified, and improved rendering of the old. Prospero enters into this new, cooperative era, only to re-establish himself alongside his fellow mortals through a discursive exchange of narratives:

PROSPERO Sir, I invite your Highness and your train
 To my poor cell, where you shall take your rest
 For this one night; which, part of it, I'll waste
 With such discourse as, I not doubt, shall make it
 Go quick away – the story of my life,
 And the particular accidents gone by
 Since I came to this isle. ...
 And thence retire me to my Milan, where
 Every third thought shall be my grave.

¹⁵⁴ Bulger, 44.

ALONSO

I long

To hear the story of your life, which must
Take the ear strangely.

PROSPERO

I'll deliver all.

V.i.301-11

Prospero's language is no longer circumscribed by a six-hour window or contained to the island, it is a temporally and spatially liberated 'discourse' with which he could even 'waste' time and 'retire me to my Milan'. The verb 'waste', etymologically derived from the Latin *vastus*, has two meanings: 'desert, desolate', which evolved into Anglo-Norman and Old French *waster* 'to devastate, spoil' particularly in reference to 'uncultivated and uninhabited' regions; but also an etymon of 'vast' it refers to that which is 'huge, immense' and 'extensive'.¹⁵⁵ Prospero is, therefore, filling, expanding, and dilating the empty space upon this desolate and unoccupied *wasteland* with his 'discourse', that on their last night time might pass 'quick away', simply by the telling of his 'story', with attention to the details of 'particular accidents gone by'. Recounting 'the story of [his] life', Prospero returns to a common, mortal mode of speech which may, indeed, fill time expeditiously, interfering with perceptions of its pace, but cannot (at least not *yet*, according to Bacon) reverse its course, thus, Prospero is obliged to contemplate his own mortality: 'Every third thought shall be my grave'. Illustrating the reciprocity of this new 'discourse', Alonso, once more, assures Prospero, 'I long | To hear the story of your life', since what it conveys are ordinary words which, nonetheless, 'must | Take the ear strangely', must 'captivate, delight, charm' the listener, with a real, non-magical, disenchanting truth.¹⁵⁶

Though only ever temporary, Prospero's word-magic enables the politically motivated characters, from the courtrooms of Milan and Naples, to escape their degenerate, Machiavellian power politics, and experience, not only the cosmic repercussions of their conspiratorial treacheries, but also a transformative, imaginative immersion in fantastical utopian ideals, through whimsical, nostalgic returns to a golden age of pastoral naivety. By the end of the play, as his invocational magic comes to its inevitable end, dissolving like his 'insubstantial pageant' into a 'rough magic' that he must 'abjure', Prospero begins to accommodate the moral and socio-political principles of his spectacles, which replace hierarchy with egalitarian unification, making way for a reciprocal discourse of community that simply shares narratives of lived experience. This linguistic transition takes Shakespeare's play beyond the point of redemptive romance, where magic simply recuperates political order:

¹⁵⁵ OED, 'waste, *v.*', etymology; 'waste, *adj.*', 1.a.; 'vast, *adj.* & *adv.*', 1., 2.a.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 'take, *v.*', I.i.8.b.

It is not so much that the play is a romance as that it stages, and in the process distances itself from, the romance scenario of dynastic redemption that Prospero is staging. And yet the play also recognizes a certain congruence between a narrowly aristocratic romantic impulse and a broader utopian project. ... The magic island of Shakespeare's play is at once an instance and an allegory of the players' project of opening up new spaces for discourse. It is a place where no name, no discourse, is entirely natural; language and nature are neither simply conflated nor simply opposed to each other.¹⁵⁷

The Tempest distances itself from 'romance' as a somewhat reactionary genre of 'aristocratic escapism' and 'dynastic redemption' and moves towards 'a broader utopian project' which permits a negotiation of the reconciliatory and classless idealism of romance with 'realism', thus 'opening up new spaces for discourse', where 'the name of king' is drained of its value. By transcending typical characteristics of his genre, the playwright, like Prospero, illustrates that what follows the romance's fleeting faith in magic must be to incorporate its miraculous discourse within our imperfect reality. In Prospero's epilogue, with the tyrannical regime of his 'charms ... all o'erthrown' (*Epi.* 1), his potent 'strength' (2) now 'most faint' (3), he begs the audience to have 'pardon'd' the 'crimes' (19) of his coercive magic. Returning to the parallel between his magic and the spectacle of theatre – established in the 'revels' speech of Act Four Scene One – Prospero assumes an authorial voice, begging forgiveness not only for his conjuring 'charms' within the play, but also for Shakespeare's 'project' (12) as the playwright, 'which was to please' (13). Indeed, like Prospero's islanders 'confin'd' to this 'bare island', Shakespeare's audience is 'confined' to the auditorium, where they, too, fall prey to the 'deceiver' and the linguistic 'spell' of his poetry (4-8). Just as Prospero, without his verbal conjuring, no longer has 'Spirits to enforce, art to enchant' (14) – like the 'actors' of his wedding masque who 'were all spirits and | Are melted into air' – Shakespeare, without the 'art' of his poetry, can no longer 'enchant' his audience beyond the theatre. Though limited to the spatio-temporal margins of the play, the influence of Prospero's (and Shakespeare's) own word-magic upon a faithful audience is such a potentially dangerous power and burden that he begs for 'release' from these 'bands | With the help of your good hands' (9-10), with the applause that concludes a successful production, and with the 'gentle breath' (11) of cheers and discussions that follow. In other words, amongst themselves, the audience must deliberate and negotiate the play's magic, for if its philosophies are considered, without being prescriptive, then its 'project' never 'fails' (12), for the 'crimes' of wielding a coercive word-magic 'would pardon'd be' (19), and the magician-playwright, 'set ... free' (20).

¹⁵⁷ Norbrook, 26.

CONCLUSION

The Disciples of pretended Naturall Magicke, have beene so intemperate, as they have exalted the power of the imagination, to be much one with the power of *Miracle-working* faith. ... And herein comes in crookedly and dangerously, a palliation of a great part of *Ceremoniall Magicke*. For it may bee pretended, that *Ceremonies*, *Characters*, and *Charmes* doe worke, not by any *Tacite* or *Sacramentali* contract with evill spirits; but serve onely to strengthen the imagination of him that useth it.¹

During the early stages of the Scientific Revolution, in 1605, Francis Bacon protests that the ceremonies and symbolic ‘Images’ used by the ‘*Romane Church*’ work upon the ‘*Fascination* [which] is the power and act of Imagination’ to persuade worshippers of a direct access to divinity – ‘to fix the cogitations, and raise the devotions of them that pray before them’ – employing the same deceptive methods as practitioners of ‘Naturall Magicke’.² According to Bacon, occultists, like Catholics, practice a ‘pretended’ art which elicits the false impression of a ‘*Miracle-working* faith’. Bacon worries that in all ‘Probabilitie’, magic functions by ‘transmissions and operations from spirit to spirit, without the mediation of the [requisite empirical] senses’, so that ‘the force of confidence’ alone is what influences the credulous mind. By recognising the exclusively illusory value of ‘*Ceremonies*, *Characters*, and *Charmes*’, which ‘serve onely to strengthen the imagination’, Bacon refuses the operative, semiotic immediacy of magical words preferring rather the empiric and experimental principles of new-scientific rationalism, furthering a trajectory of disenchantment and methodologically formalising a more widespread linguistic scepticism.³ Well aware of these contemporary epistemologies, as propounded by those such as Bacon, and yet, despite this, retaining his faith in the almost miraculous capacity of language, Shakespeare’s late plays still sought to demonstrate that even the linguistic and hermeneutic crises of the most cynical of play-worlds, those degraded by real-world political modernity, could still be – at least poetically and within the parameters of the auditorium – redeemed by assertively committing to what even Bacon admits to be ‘the power of *Miracle-working* faith’.

Just before writing his romances, Shakespeare provides a glimpse of this compulsion to recuperate a nostalgic faith in the miraculous in *All’s Well That Ends Well* (1603-6), as Lafew remarks upon the unexpected revival of the King from near-death:

¹ Bacon (1605), 46^r-47^v.

² *Ibid.*, 47^v.

³ *Ibid.*

They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Hence is it that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge, when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.

II.iii.1-6

Lafew discusses, with Parolles and Bertram, his ‘wonder’ (7) at the ‘recov’ry of the King’ (36), who was ‘relinquish’d of the artists’ (10) – given up on by physicians – after ‘both’ the major schools of medicine, ‘of Galen and Paracelsus’ (11), pronounced him ‘incurable’ (14), and yet he has been miraculously healed by the ‘Very hand of heaven’ (31): Helena. In light of this, Lafew questions the premise that the biblical age of ‘miracles are past’ while ‘modern’ philosophy disproves ‘things supernatural and causeless’, suggesting that we should, instead, discard ‘seeming knowledge’ for a blind faith in the ‘unknown’. However, this moment grants only a passing advocacy of mystical optimism, for Shakespeare quickly returns to the reality of Helena’s pragmatic pharmaceutical knowledge: ‘my father left me some prescriptions ... a remedy ... To cure the desperate languishings whereof | The king is render’d lost’ (I.iii.221-30). Overlooking her practical and intellectual inheritance – the prescriptions of her medical father – Lafew misconceives her role as that of a ‘debile minister’ (II.iii.34), a mysterious agent of ‘great power, great transcendence’ (34-5), in a moment of wistful yearning. Aside from Lafew’s world of faithful naivety and Helena’s pragmatic realism, Shakespeare offers another degraded reading of the King’s malaise, for he ‘languishes of’ a ‘fistula’ (I.i.32-4), a boil with foul and sexually depraved implications, especially when the therapeutic aid provided by Helena is implicitly framed in terms of relieving the King of his sexual impotence: ‘I have seen a medicine ... whose simple touch | Is powerful to arise King Phippen’ (II.i.72-6). Side-stepping these more cynical, infected implications (thereby refusing to allow the play to become modishly satiric or too worldly in its wit), Helena chooses to inhabit Lafew’s nostalgic world of divine mysteries, but does so as a modern realist, fictionalising her pragmatism as if it were a magical art, since she recognises the real-world advantage of mystified illusions – like bed tricks and riddling prophecies – using these to coordinate her own upward social mobility through marriage. In this sense, *All’s Well That Ends Well* is a play that forges a potential path beyond modern scepticism, as Shakespeare prepares his audience for the more radical faithfulness of the romances. The last plays indulge further in Lafew’s sentimental fantasy to discover profound, restorative possibility, awaking a deliberately naïve faith in the power of word-magic, to – at least seemingly – conjure miraculously redemptive spectacles.

This thesis has observed various forms of early-modern word-magic – namely, those which appear in each of Shakespeare’s romances – to, firstly, examine how their sympathetic, semiotic bonds were tested to their limits by the emergence of sceptical, scientific modes of discourse throughout

the early-modern period, and then to trace how these ruptured, inoperative linguistic ties are repaired by the faithful, magical, recuperative ending of each late play. As Chapter One illustrated, period focus shifted from the Paracelsian doctrine of alchemical signatures – which semantically denote the potentially curative, medicinal, or transformative qualities of the natural world – to the scientific study of *things* in nature, rather than the *words* denoting those things. The instantly remedial, alchemical language of signatures was, however, reclaimed in *The Winter's Tale* by a turn from rhetorical sterility to embrace fertile, feminine signifiers, extracted from the flowers of the rural countryside, such that, by the play's end, Paulina need only instruct her audience to 'awake your faith' for Hermione's supposed statue to transmute the petrified Queen back into living flesh. Chapter Two observes as unquestioned faith in a semiotic harmony implicit in the astrological principle of celestial music also began to be challenged by the cosmological, scientific discoveries of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries increasingly contesting that sympathetic, but incrementally more outmoded worldview, considering how *Pericles* eventually resuscitates the 'sweet harmony' (V.i.45) of heavenly music through Marina's 'holy words' (IV.vi.133), reinstating the Tyrian Prince's faith in language as he inexplicably hears 'the music of the spheres!' (229). Illustrating, in Chapter Three, how sceptics condemned prophetic utterances as false, demonic, and politically disruptive, refuting their magical capacity to perform self-fulfilling temporal leaps into the generational future, we saw how, in *Cymbeline*, the lineal crisis implied by Posthumus' name was repaired by a supernatural, prophetic dream-visitation, validating his ancestry and 'delv[ing] him to the root' (I.i.28), leaving behind the remarkably decipherable words of an oracle to predict the return of King Cymbeline's 'lopp'd branches' (V.iv.141), his lost heirs, regrafted back into the family tree. Chapter Four showed how the invocational magic of conjuration also incrementally lost its purported power to summon and materialise demonic presence in early-modern society due to the sceptical anxieties of reformers, while scientists also sought to appropriate and thereby transfer its transformative powers to their investigative domain – as Bacon writes, to 'revive and reintegrate the misapplied and abused Name of NATURALL MAGICKE' – co-opting its ambitions as a pursuit of new-scientific inquiry.⁴ In *The Tempest*, Prospero summons mystifying spectacles, 'insubstantial paegent[s]' (IV.i.155), to reconcile political rivalries and reunite their fragmented discourses into one communal dialogue, contemplating the potential for a 'brave new world' (V.i.183).

Crucially however, despite the restorative turn to romance facilitated by faithful words, each chapter concedes that an undercurrent of scepticism and rationalist pragmatism still runs under the

⁴ Ibid., 24r.

surface of these plays. As Shakespeare concedes, these magical performances are only ever spectacles that resemble theatrical productions: Hermione has simply been alive, all along, and so ‘we [were merely] mock’d with art’ (*WT*, V.iii.68), our credulity encouraged; Prospero’s supposedly ‘potent art’ was only ever a transient, ‘rough magic’ (*Tmp.*, V.i.50). Only by accepting bitter, real-world truths and recognising the impossibility of these illusory fictions, can Shakespeare’s romances champion real faith, that is, a renewed trust in the possibility of the impossible, the truth of the fictional, the magic of the otherwise prosaic, the naïve investment in what we know is mere nostalgia. It is the significant act of faith, despite the odds, that characterises the romance world. As Palfrey observes:

The romances offer simulacrum of closure which, though they can garner the affect and poignancy of achieved nostalgia, do little to harness the nascent politics which is romance’s subject-matter. There is always, then, a doubleness of ending: the putative plot looks backward, as if to before the play begins, finding a sweet forgetful unity which is almost entirely fictive and factitious; at the same time, an in-dwelling proleptic power looks back to the play itself, and identifies the battles of the future.⁵

Pre-emptively bracing for the signficatory inadequacies of a faithless, disenchanted future, Shakespeare’s romances urgently recover this loss, transcending a cynical reality by relying upon a ‘backward’ looking, ‘forgetful’ faith in prelapsarian innocence to make its redemptive magic work. Although this nostalgic idealism seems ‘almost entirely fictive and factitious’, Shakespeare demonstrates that within the words of his poetry, he can still perform word-magic by the ‘pretended’ power of a ‘*Miracle-working* faith’, that even Bacon recognises as imaginatively effective. Although Shakespeare ends his final romance and last solo-written play, *The Tempest*, resigning from the dwindling art of verbal magic – ‘now my charms are all o’erthrown, | And what strength I have’s mine own’ (*Epi.* 1-2) – he prepares his audience for what Thomas Greene refers to as ‘the postmagical disorderly world’, where ‘poetry makes nothing happen as magic’; however, ‘by constructing intricate and irreplaceable signifieds, by calling things into being that can be interiorized in a living consciousness, it succeeds sometimes in a feat of animation’.⁶ Looking towards an increasingly disenchanted future, Shakespeare writes plays that illustrate how the poet might still reignite the performative magic of words, conjuring infinite possibility and ‘brave new world[s]’, which may be, as Bacon imposes, confined to the ‘imagination’. Yet, as Shakespeare suggests, it remains up to his spectators to transport this redemptive faith beyond the walls of the auditorium, where we ‘Must fill’ our ‘sails’ with the ‘Gentle breath’ of dialogue about the enchanting ‘art’ of his magic, ‘or else’, Prospero laments, ‘my project fails’ (*Epi.* 11-14). In which case, the

⁵ Palfrey, 265-6.

⁶ Greene, 61.

capacity for boundless, hopeful discussions of utopian possibility is what the faithful, magical words of Shakespeare late plays leave us with.

Bibliography

Primary

- Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, trans. J. F. (London: R.W., 1651).
- Alford, Joseph, *The Church Triumphant, or, A Comfortable Treatise of the Amplitude and Largeness of the Kingdom of Christ* (London: W. Bentley, 1649).
- Andrewes, Lancelot, *Ninety-Six Sermons*, eds. J.P. Wilson and J. Bliss, 5 vols. (Oxford: Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, 1841).
- Anon., *A Logical Demonstration of the Lawfulness of Subscribing the New Engagement* (London: John Maccock, 1650).
- Anon., *A Collection of the Statutes Made in the Reigns of King Charles the I and King Charles the II* (London: John Streater et al, 1667).
- Anon., *A Declaration from the People of God called Quakers* (London: s.n., 1670).
- Anon., *A Pillar Set Upon the Grave of the Reverend Dr. Robert Wilde* (London: s.n., 1679).
- Anon., *Lactus Britannici, or, The Tears of the British Muses for the Death of John Dryden* (London: for Henry Playford and Abel Roper, 1700).
- Anon., *Sixe Strange Prophesies Predicting Wonderfull Events, to Betide These Years of Danger* (London: for Francis Coles, 1642).
- Anon., *The Harmony of our Oathes* (London: T. Pain and M. Simonds, 1643).
- Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. Brian Davies (Oxford: OUP, 2014).
- Aristotle, *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, trans. Hugh Tredennick, vols. 17-18 (London: William Heinemann, 1989).
- Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. A. Platt (Princeton: PUP, 1995).
- Aristotle, *De Caelo*, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2020).
- Atkins, Maurice, *Cataplus, or, Æneas, His Descent to Hell a Mock Poem in Imitation of the Sixth Book of Virgil's Æneis* (London: for Maurice Atkins, 1672).
- Austin, John L., *How to do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
- Bacon, Francis, *Of the Proficiency and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane* (London: Thomas Purfoot and Thomas Creede, 1605).
- Bacon, Francis, *Sylva Sylvarum: or A Naturall Historie in Ten Centuries* (London: John Haviland and Augustine Mathewes, 1627).
- Bacon, Francis, *Historie Naturall and Experimentall, of Life and Death. Or of the Prolongation of Life* (London: John Haviland, 1638).

- Bacon, Francis, *Novum Organum*, trans. M.D. (London: for Thomas Lee, 1676).
- Bacon, Francis, *The Essays, or Councils, Civil and Moral* (London: for H. Herringman et al, 1696).
- Bacon, Francis, 'Novum Organum (1620)', in *The Works*, ed. and trans. Basil Montague, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Parry & MacMillan, 1854), vol. 3, 343-71.
- Baley, Walter, *Two Treatises Concerning the Preservation of Eye-sight* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1616).
- Barker, Matthew, *A Christian Standing & Moving upon the True Foundation* (London: M.S., 1648).
- Bernard, Richard, *Contemplative Pictures with Wholesome Precepts* (London: William Hall, 1610).
- Bishop, William, *A Reproofe of M. Doct. Abbots Defence, of the Catholike Deformed by M. W. Perkins* (London: Secret Press, 1608).
- Browne, Thomas, *Religio Medici* (London: for Andrew Crooke, 1642).
- Burthogge, Richard, *Organum Vetus et Novum, Or, A Discourse of Reason and Truth* (London: for Samuel Crouch, 1678).
- Butler, John, *Hagiastrologia, or, The Most Sacred and Divine Science of Astrology* (London: William Bromwich, 1680).
- Calfhill, James, *An Aunswere to the Treatise of the Crosse* (London: Henry Denham, 1565).
- Campbell, Ninian, *A Treatise Upon Death First Publickly Delivered in a Funerall Sermon, anno Dom. 1630* (Edinburgh: R. Young, 1635).
- Case, John, *The Praise of Musicke* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1586).
- Charleton, Walter, *The Harmony of Natural and Positive Divine Lawes* (London: for Walter Kettilby, 1682).
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *Thre Bokes of Duties to Marcus his Sonne*, trans. Nicolas Grimalde (London: Richard Tottel, 1556).
- Ciruelo, Pedro, *A Treatise Repeating all Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft: Very Necessary and Useful for all Good Christians Zealous for their Salvation* (1530), trans. Eugene A. Maio and D'Orsay W. Pearson, ed. Pearson (London: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 1977).
- Cockeram, Henry, *The English Dictionarie: or, An Interpreter of Hard English Words* (London: Eliot's Court Press, 1623).
- Cotta, John, *A Short Discoverie of Severall Sorts of Ignorant and Inconsiderate Practisers of Physicke in England* (London: Richard Field, 1612).
- Cotta, John, *The Triall of Witch-craft* (London: I.L., 1624).
- Cotton, John, *Singing of Psalmes a Gospel-Ordinance, or, A Treatise Wherein Are Handled These Particulars* (London: for J.R. and H.A., 1650).

- Croll, Oswald, *Bazilica Chymica, & Praxis Chymiatricæ, or, Royal and Practical Chymistry in Three Treatises* (London: for John Starkey and Thomas Passinger, 1670).
- Cutts, John, *Poetical Exercises Written upon Several Occasions Presented and Dedicated to Her Royal Highness, Mary, Princess of Orange* (London: for R. Bentley and S. Magnes, 1687).
- d'Anghiera, Pietro Martire, *The Decades of the Newe Worlde or West India Conteynyng the Navigations and Conquestes of the Spanyardes*, trans. Richard Eden (London: Guilhelmi Powell, 1555).
- Darrell, John, *The Replie of John Darrell, to the Answer of John Deacon, and John Walker, Concerning the Doctrine of the Possession and Dispossession of Demoniakes* (London: Secret Press, 1602).
- Dee, Arthur, *Fasciculus Chemicus or Chymical Collections* (London: J. Flesher, 1650).
- Dee, John, *A True & Faithful Relation of What Passed for Many Yeers between Dr. John Dee and Some Spirits*, ed. Meric Casaubon (London: D. Maxwell, 1659).
- Dee, John, *The Hieroglyphic Monad* (1564), trans. J.W. Hamilton-Jones (Boston: Red Wheel Weiser, 1975).
- Dee, John, 'Liber Mysteriorum Quintus' (1583), in *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, ed. Joseph H. Peterson (Boston: Weiser, 2003) 255-359.
- Dee, John, 'Mysteriorum Liber Primus' (1581), in *John Dee's Five Books of Mystery*, ed. Joseph H. Peterson (Boston: Weiser, 2003) 50-86.
- Della Casa, Giovanni, *The Refin'd Courtier, or, A Correction of Several Indecencies Crept into Civil Conversation* (London: F.G., 1663).
- Descartes, René, *A Discourse of a Method for the Well Guiding of Reason, and the Discovery of Truth in the Sciences* (London: Thomas Newcombe, 1649).
- Donne, John, 'An Anatomy of the World: The First Anniversary', in *The Collected Poems of John Donne*, ed. Roy Booth (Ware: Wordsworth, 1994).
- Downname, John, *Foure Treatises Tending to Dissuade all Christians from Foure no Lesse Hainous then Common Sinnes* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1609).
- Du Chesne, Josephus, *The Practise of Chymicall, and Hermeticall Physicke, for the Preservation of Health*, trans. Thomas Tymme (London: Thomas Creede, 1605).
- Duppa, Brian, *Angels Rejoicing for Sinners Repenting* (London: nk, 1648).
- Eedes, Richard, *Academiae Oxoniensis* (Oxford: nk, 1603).
- Elizabeth I, 'An Acte Against Fonde and Phantasticall Prophetes' and 'An Acte Against Conjurations, Enchauntmentes, and Witchcraftes', in *Anno Quinto Reginae Elizabethae* (London: Richarde Jugge and John Cawood, 1563).
- Elyot, Sir Thomas, *The Boke Named the Governour* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1537).

- Ent, George, 'To Make a Probable Conjecture of Tempers and Dispositions by the Modulations of the Voice in Ordinary Discourse', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 12 (1678), 1010-11.
- Erasmus, Desiderius, *Ciceronianus; Or, A Dialogue on the Best Style of Speaking*, trans. Izora Scott (NY: Columbia University, 1908).
- Erasmus, Desiderius, *The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 1802-1925*, ed. James K. Farge, trans. Charles Fantazzi (Toronto: UTP, 2010).
- Erastophil, *An Apology for Lovers, or, A Discourse of the Antiquity and Lawfulness of Love* (London: s.n., 1651).
- Estienne, Henri, *A World of Wonders: or An Introduction to a Treatise Touching the Conformitie of Ancient and Moderne Wonders* (London: Richard Field, 1607).
- Ficino, Marsilio, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, trans. Sears Jayne (Thompson: Spring Publications, 1985).
- Ficino, Marsilio, *Three Books on Life*, trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies*, vol. 57 (Arizona: ACMRS, 2019).
- Fletcher, John, 'To the Reader', in *The Faithful Shepherdess* (London: for R. Bonian and H. Walley, 1609).
- Fludd, Robert, 'Truth's Golden Harrow: An Unpublished Alchemical Treatise', ed. C.H. Josten, *Ambix*, 3 (1949), 91-150.
- Froud, John, *Daphnis or, a Pastoral Elegy upon the Unfortunate and Much-Lamented Death of Mr. Thomas Creech* (London: for John Deeve, 1700).
- Gale, Theophilus, *The Court of Gentiles* (London: J. Macock, 1677).
- Galileo, 'Il Saggiatore', in *Augustine to Galileo: The History of Science AD 400-1650*, ed. A.C. Crombie (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1953), 295.
- Gamble, John, *Ayres and Dialogues (To Be Sung to the Theorbo-lute or Bass-viol)* (London: W. Godbid, 1657).
- Gaule, John, *Select Cases of Conscience Touching Witches and Witchcrafts* (London: W. Wilson, 1646).
- Geneva Bible, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva: John Crispin, 1569).
- Gifford, George, *A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerers* (London: for Toby Cooke, 1587).
- Goodcole, Henry, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Elizabeth Sanyer a Witch Late of Edmonton, Her Conviction and Condemnation and Death* (London: A. Mathewes, 1621).
- Gosson, Stephen, *The School of Abuse* (London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1679).
- Gray, Andrew, *Great and Precious Promises* (Edinburgh: George Swintown and James Glen, 1669).

- Greville, Fulke, *Certaine Learned and Elegant Workes of the Right Honorable Fulke Lord Brooke* (London: Elizabeth Purslowe, 1633).
- Harrison, G.B., *A Jacobean Journal: Being a Record of Those Things Most Talked of during the Years 1603-1606* (London: Routledge, 1941).
- Harsnett, Samuel, *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures to Withdraw the Harts of her Majesties Subjects from their Allegiance* (London: James Roberts, 1603).
- Helwys, Thomas, *A Shorte Declaration of the Mistery of Iniquity* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1612).
- Hill, Thomas, *The Moste Pleasaunte Arte of the Interpretation of Dreames* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1576).
- Hobbes, Thomas, *Leviathan, or, The Matter, Forme, and Power of a Common Wealth* (London: for Andrew Crooke, 1651).
- Homer, *Homer's Odyssey*, trans. George Chapman (London: Richard Field and William Jaggard, 1615).
- Homes, Nathanael, *Dæmonologie, and Theologie* (London: Thomas Roycroft, 1650).
- Howell, Thomas, *His Devises, for his Owne Exercise, and his Friends Pleasure* (London: for H. Jackson, 1581).
- Huarte, Juan, *Examen de Ingenios, or, The Tryal of Wits Discovering the Great Difference of Wits Among Men* (London: for Richard Sare, 1698).
- I.T., *The Haven of Pleasure Containing a Freemans Felicitie, and a True Direction How to Live Well* (London: P.S., 1597).
- Ingpen, William, *The Secrets Of Numbers; According to Theologicall, Arithmetically, Geometricall and Harmonicall Computation* (London: Humfrey Lovvns, 1624).
- James VI/I, *The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (Edinburgh: Thomas Vautroullier, 1584).
- James VI/I, *Daemonologie in Forme of a Dialogue* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1597).
- James VI/I, *Basilikon Dōron. Or His Majesties Instructions to his Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave, 1603).
- James VI/I, 'An Act Against Conjuratiō, Witchcraft, and Dealing with Evil and Wicked Spirits', *Statutes at Large*, c. 12 (1604).
- James VI/I, 'Speech to parliament of 9 November 1605', in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 147-58.
- Jones, John, *The Conquest of the Saints: A Sermon* (London: Jones, 1639).
- Jonson, Ben, *Timber: or, Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*, ed. Felix Emmanuel Schelling (Boston: Ginn, 1892).

- Jordan, Thomas, *The Debtors Apologie, or, A Quaint Paradox Proving that it is Good to be in Debt, and, in This Age, May be Usefull for all Men* (S.L.: s.n, 1644).
- La Primaudaye, Pierre, *The French Academie*, trans. T.B. (London: Edmund Bollifant, 1586).
- Lawes, Henry, *Choice Psalmes Put into Musick* (London: James Young, 1648).
- Lodowyck, Francis, *The Ground-Work, or Foundation, Laid (or so Intended) for the Framing of a New Perfect Language* (London: s.n, 1652).
- Loveday, Samuel, *The Hatred of Esau, and the Love of Jacob Unfolded* (London: John Clowes, 1650).
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, *The Prince* (London: R. Bishop, 1640).
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, *Discourses on Liny* (1531), trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: UCP, 1996).
- Mardeley, John, *A Shorte Resytal or Certayne Holy Doctours Whych Proveth that the Naturall Body of Christ is not Conteyned in the Sacrament of the Lordes Supper* (London: Thomas Raynalde, 1548).
- Markham, Gervase, *The Second Booke of the English Husbandman* (London: Thomas Snodham, 1614).
- Marlowe, Christopher, *Doctor Faustus and Other Plays*, eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Oxford: OUP, 1995).
- Mascall, Leonard, *A Booke of the Arte and Maner, Howe to Plant and Graffe all Sortes of Trees* (London: Henrie Denham, 1572).
- Mason, James, *The Anatomie of Sorcerie. Wherein the Wicked Impietie of Charmers, Inchanters, and Such Like, is Discovered and Confuted* (London: John Legatte, 1612).
- Middleton, Thomas, *The Triumphs of Truth* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1613).
- Milton, John, *Poems of Mr John Milton* (London: Ruth Raworth, 1645).
- Milton, John, *Paradise Lost*, ed. John Leonard (London: Penguin Books, 2003).
- Milton, John, *The Major Works*, eds. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: OUP, 2008).
- Montaigne, Michel de, *Essays*, trans. John Florio (London: Melch. Bradwood, 1613).
- Norton, Thomas, 'The Ordinall of Alchimy', in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, ed. Elias Ashmole (London: J. Grismond, 1652).
- Notestein, Wallace, *The House of Commons, 1604-1610* (New Haven: YUP, 1971).
- Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Willyam Seres, 1567).
- Owen, David, *Puritano-Jesuitismus, The Puritan Turn'd Jesuite* (London: for William Sheares, 1643).
- Paracelsus, *The Art of Curing Sympathetically, or Magnetically* (London: For Tho. Newborough, R. Parker and P. Buck, 1700).

- Paracelsus, *Essential Readings*, trans. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1999).
- Partlicius, Simeon, *A New Method of Physick: or, A Short View of Paracelsus and Galen's Practice*, trans. Nicholas Culpeper (London: Peter Cole et al, 1654).
- Perkins, William, *A Godly and Learned Exposition of Christs Sermon in the Mount* (Cambridge: Thomas Brooke and Cantrell Legge, 1608).
- Perkins, William, *A Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft so Farre Forth as it is Revealed in the Scriptures, and Manifest by True Experience* (Cambridge: Cantrel Legge, 1610).
- Person, Samuel, *An Anatomical Lecture of Man, or, A Map of the Little World* (London: T. Mabb, 1664).
- Pico, Giovanni Della Mirandola, *Conclusiones nongentae* (Rome: nk, 1532).
- Pico, Giovanni Della Mirandola, *Conclusiones Nongentae. Le Novecento Tesi Dell'Anno 1486*, ed. and trans. Albano Biondi (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1995).
- Pico, Giovanni Della Mirandola, *Oration*, ed. and trans. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2022).
- Plato, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1925).
- Plato, *Phadreus, Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1966).
- Porphry, 'Life of Pythagoras', in *The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library: An Anthology of Ancient Writings Which Relate to Pythagoras and Pythagorean Philosophy*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Michigan: Phanes Press, 1987), 123-35.
- Porphry, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta*, ed. Andrew Smith (Leipzig: Teubner, 1993).
- Prynne, William, *Concordia Discors.; Dissonant Harmony of Sacred Publique Oathes* (London: for Edward Thomas, 1659).
- Prynne, William, *Histrionum Scourge, or, Actors Tragædie* (London: Edward Alde et al, 1633).
- Pulton, Fernando, *De Pace Regis et Regni Viz: A Treatise Declaring Which be the Great and Generall Offences of the Realme* (London: Adam Islip, 1609).
- Puttenham, George, *The Arte of English Poesie Contriued into Three Bookes* (London: Richard Field, 1589).
- R.B.H., *An Alarum to Pamphleteers; or the Danger of an Habeas Corpus* (London: s.n., 1659).
- Rawlyns, Roger, *A Consort of the Creatures with the Creator, and with Themselves* (London: Thomas Orwin, 1591).
- Reynolds, Henry, *Mythomystes* (London: George Purslowe, 1632).
- Ross, Alexander, *Mel Heliconium, or, Poeticall Honey Gathered Out of the Weeds of Parnassus* (London: L.N. and J.F, 1642).
- Rous, Francis, *The Grand Case of Conscience Stated, About Submission to the New and Present Power* (London: s.n, 1649).

- Scot, Reginald, *Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft Proving the Common Opinions of Witches Contracting with Devils, Spirits, or Familiars* (London: R.C., 1651).
- Shakespeare, William, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, gen. ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd edn. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
- Shakespeare, William, *Pericles: Prince of Tyre*, eds. Doreen DelVecchio and Antony Hammond (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).
- Shakespeare, William, *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, ed. Michael Neill (Oxford: OUP, 2006).
- Shakespeare, William, *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, Gordon McMullan, Suzanne Gossett (NY: W.W. Norton: 2015).
- Shakespeare, William, *Othello*, eds. E.A.J. Honigmann and Ayanna Thompson, Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
- Shakespeare, William, *Cymbeline*, ed. Valerie Wayne (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
- Sidney, Philip, 'Astrophil and Stella' in *The Major Works*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: OUP, 2008).
- Sidney, Philip, *The Defence of Poesie* (London: Thomas Creede, 1595).
- Smith, Henrie, *The Poore Mans Teares Opened in a Sermon* (London: John Wolfe, 1592).
- Smith, John (pseud.), *The Myserie of Rhetorique Unveil'd* (London: E. Cotes, 1665).
- Spencer, John, *A Discourse Concerning Vulgar Prophecies* (London: J. Field, 1665).
- Spenser, Edmund, *The Shorter Poems*, ed. William A. Oram, Einar Bjorvand and Ronald (New Haven: YUP, 1989).
- Spenser, Edmund, *The Fairie Queene* (1590), ed. A.C. Hamilton (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007).
- Sprat, Thomas, *The History of the Royal-Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge* (London: T. R, 1667).
- Stanley, Thomas, *Poems* (London: s.n., 1651).
- Strode, William, *A Sermon Preached at a Visitation Held at Lin in Norfolk* (London: W. Wilson, 1660).
- Stubbes, Philip, *The Theater of the Popes Monarchie Wherein is Described as Well the Uncleane Lives of that Wicked Generation, as Also Their Antichristian Government, and Usurped Kingdome* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1585).
- Tatham, John, 'On my Friend Mr. John Gamble His Excellent Composition of the Songs and Dialogues of Thomas Stanley, Esq', in John Gamble, *Ayres and Dialogues (To be Sung to the Theorbo-lute or Bass-viol)* (London: W. Godbid, 1657), a1^v.

- Taylor, Jeremy, *The Real Presence and Spirituall of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament Proved Against the Doctrine of Transubstantiation* (London: James Flesher, 1653).
- Tilley, Morris Palmer, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press: 1950).
- Tillotson, John, *A Discourse Against Transubstantiation* (London: M. Flesher, 1684).
- Tillyard, E.M.W., *The Elizabethan World Picture* (London: Pimlico, 1998).
- Torriano, Giovanni, *Piazza Universale Di Proverbi Italiani; Or, a Common Place of Italian Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London: F. and T.W., 1666).
- Tryon, Thomas, *A Treatise of Dreams & Visions* (London: s.n, 1689).
- Tymme, Thomas, *A Dialogue Philosophicall* (London: T.S., 1612).
- Virgil, *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H.R. Fairclough, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1999).
- Walwyn, Herbert, *Poems on Several Occasions Humbly Dedicated to the Right Honourable the Marchioness of Tavestock* (London: for William Chandler, 1699).
- White, Christopher, *Of Oathes their Object, Forme, and Bond: The Punishment of Perjurie, and the Impietie of Papall Dispensations* (London: George Purslowe, 1627).
- Willson, David Harris, ed., *The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Bowyer, 1606-1607* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931).
- Young, Edward, *The Idea of Christian Love* (London: for Jonathan Robinson, 1688).

Secondary

- Adelman, Janet, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to The Tempest* (NY: Routledge, 2012).
- Alexander, Catherine M.S., 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's Last Plays*, ed. Alexander (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).
- Ashcroft, Bill, *Caliban's Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009).
- Barker, Peter, 'The Role of Religion in the Lutheran Response to Copernicus', in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: CUP, 2000).
- Barrett, J.K., *Untold Futures: Time and Literary Culture in Renaissance England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2016).
- Barton, Anne, 'Leontes and the Spider: Language and the Speaker in Shakespeare's Last Plays', in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, eds. Phillip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank and G.K. Hunter (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), 131-50.
- Barton, Anne, 'Shakespeare and the Limits of Language', in *SS*, ed. K. Muir (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), 19-30.
- Bauer, Ralph, *The Alchemy of Conquest: Science, Religion, and the Secrets of the New World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019).
- Baumlin, James S., *Theologies of Language in English Renaissance Literature: Reading Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014).
- Bennet, Jane, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: PUP, 2001).
- Bennett, Bradley C., 'Doctrine of Signatures: An Explanation of Medicinal Plant Discovery or Dissemination of Knowledge?', *Economic Botany*, 61, iii (2007), 246-55.
- Bentick, Eoin, *Literatures of Alchemy in Medieval and Early Modern England* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2022).
- Bishop, T.G., *Shakespeare and the Theatre of Wonder* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996).
- Bladen, Victoria and Yan Brailowsky, eds., *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* (Manchester: MUP, 2020).
- Bloom, Gina, *Voice in Motion: Staging Gender, Shaping Sound in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2007).
- Borzelleca, Joseph, 'Paracelsus: Herald of Modern Toxicology', *Toxicological Sciences*, 53, i (2000), 2-4.
- Brailowsky, Yan, 'Prophecy and the Supernatural: Shakespeare's Challenges to Performativity', in Bladen (2020), 135-56.
- Brooke, John Headley, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).

- Brown, Paul, “‘This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine’”: *The Tempest* and the Discourse of Colonialism’, in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, eds. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (Manchester: MUP, 1985), 48-71.
- Bruno, Giordano, ‘On magic’, *Cause, Principle and Unity: And Essays on Magic*, trans. and ed. Richard J. Blackwell and Robert de Lucca (Cambridge: CUP, 1998) 103-42.
- Bulger, Thomas, ‘The Utopic Structure of *The Tempest*’, *Utopian Studies*, 5, i (1994), 38-47.
- Cameron, Euan, *Enchanted Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).
- Cartelli, Thomas, ‘Prospero in Africa: *The Tempest* as colonialist text and pretext’, in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*, eds. Jean Howard and Marion O’Conner (London: Methuen, 1987), 99-115.
- Clark, Stuart, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).
- Clucas, Stephen, ‘John Dee’s Angelic Conversations and the *Ars Notoria*: Renaissance Magic and Mediaeval Theurgy’, in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. Stephen Clucas (New York: Springer, 2006), 231-73.
- Clulee, Nicholas H., *John Dee’s Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988).
- Coghill, Nevill, ‘Six Points of Stage-Craft in *The Winter’s Tale*’, *SS*, 11 (1958), 31-41.
- Conley, Craig, *Magical Words: A Dictionary* (San Francisco: Weiser Books, 2008).
- Connor, Steven, *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).
- Conti, Brooke, ‘*Religio Medicus*’s Profession of Faith’, in *Sir Thomas Browne: The World Proposed*, eds. Reid Barbour and Claire Preston (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 149-56.
- Copenhaver, Brian, ‘Magic’, in *The Cambridge History of Science*, eds. Katherine Park and Lorraine Daston (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 518-40.
- Coy, Jason Philip, *The Devil’s Art: Divination and Discipline in Early Modern Germany* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).
- Crone, Hugh, *Paracelsus: The Man who Defied Medicine* (Melbourne: Albarello Press, 2004).
- Crowther-Heyck, Kathleen, ‘Wonderful Secrets of Nature: Natural Knowledge and Religious Piety in Reformation Germany’, *Isis*, 94, ii (2003) 253-73.
- Das, Nandini, and Nick Davis, eds., *Enchantment and Dis-enchantment in Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama: Wonder, the Sacred, and the Supernatural* (London: Routledge, 2017).
- Daston, Lorraine, and Katharine Park, eds., *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (NY: Zone Books, 2001).

- Debus, Allen, *The Chemical Philosophy: Paracelsian Science and Medicine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (NY: Dover Publications, 1977).
- Delatte, Armand, *Études sur la Littérature Pythagoricienne* (Paris: E. Champion, 1915).
- Devine, Michael, 'Treasonous Catholic Magic and the 1563 Witchcraft Legislation: The English State's Response to Catholic Conjuring in the Early Years of Elizabeth I's Reign', in Harmes (2015) 67-94.
- Doelman, James, 'The Accession of King James I and English Religious Poetry', *SEL*, 34, i (1994), 19-40.
- Doelman, James, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).
- Dowden, Edward, *Shakspeare*, Literature Primer (London: Macmillan, 1877).
- Dowden, Edward, *Shakspeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* (London: Henry S. King, 1875).
- Duncan, Claire, "'Nature's Bastards': Grafted Generation in Early Modern England', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 38, ii (2015), 121-47.
- Egan, Gabriel, *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- Eggert, Katherine, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2015).
- Elam, Keir, "'I'll Plague thee for that Word": Language, Performance, and Communicable Disease', *SS*, 50 (1997), 19-28.
- Elam, Keir, *Shakespeare's Universe of Discourse: Language-Games in the Comedies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).
- Erlich, Bruce, 'Shakespeare's Colonial Metaphor: On the Social Function of Theatre in *The Tempest*', *Science and Society*, 41 (1977), 43-65.
- Esra, Jo Ann and Marion Gibson, *Shakespeare's Demonology: A Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).
- Ewbank, Inga-Stina, "'My name is Marina": The Language of Recognition', in *Shakespeare's Styles: Essays in Honour of Kenneth Muir*, eds. Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank and G. K. Hunter (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), 111-30.
- Felperin, Howard, *The Uses of the Canon: Elizabethan Literature and Contemporary Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).
- Felperin, Howard, *Shakespearean Romance* (Princeton: PUP, 2015).
- Fleming, John V., *Luis de Camões: The Poet as Scriptural Exegete* (Martlesham: Tamesis Books, 2017).
- Floyd-Wilson, Mary, *Occult Knowledge, Science, and Gender on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013).
- Forkers, Charles R., 'Negotiating the Paradoxes of Art and Nature in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's The Tempest and Other Late Romances*, ed. Maurice Hunt (NY: MLAA, 1992), 94-102.

- Fowler, Alastair, *Conceitful Thought: The Interpretation of English Renaissance Poems* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1975).
- Fowler, Alastair, *Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1970).
- Fowler, Alastair, *Triumphal Forms: Structural Patterns in Elizabethan Poetry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970).
- Freedman, Barbara, *Staging the Gaze: Postmodernism, Psychoanalysis, and Shakespearean Comedy* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991).
- French, R.K., A. Wear, and I.M. Lonie, eds., *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).
- Frost, Kate Gartner, *Holy Delight: Typology, Numerology, and Autobiography in Donne's 'Devotions upon Emergent Occasions'* (Princeton: PUP, 1990).
- Frye, Northrop, *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 1976).
- Fusch, David, 'Wonder and Ceremonies of Waking in Shakespeare's Late Plays', *Mediterranean Studies*, 14 (2005), 125-47.
- Füssel, Stephan, *Gutenberg and the Impact of Printing* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2020).
- Gates, Daniel, 'Unpardonable Sins: The Hazards of Performative Language in the Tragic Cases of Francesco Spiera and *Doctor Faustus*', *Comparative Drama*, 38, i (2004), 59-81.
- Gibbons, Brian, 'The *Tempest* and Interruptions', *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 45, i (1994) 47-8.
- Gibson, Marion, *Possession, Puritanism, and Print: Darrell, Harsnett, Shakespeare, and the Elizabethan Exorcism Controversy* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2015).
- Glazov-Corrigan, Elena, 'The New Function of Language in Shakespeare's *Pericles*: Oath versus "Holy Word"', *SS*, 43, xliii (1991), 131-40.
- Glazov-Corrigan, Elena, 'Speech Acts, Generic Differences, and the Curious Case of *Cymbeline*', *SEL*, 34, ii (1994), 379-99.
- Godwin, Joscelyn, *Robert Fludd: Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds* (Boulder, CO.: Shambhala Press, 1979).
- Godwin, Joscelyn, *The Harmony of the Spheres: The Pythagorean Tradition in Music* (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1992).
- Gouk, Penelope, *Musical Healing in Cultural Contexts*, ed. Gouk (Oxford: Routledge, 2016).
- Goulding, Robert, 'Geometry and the Gods: *Theurgy* in Proclus's *Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements*', *Perspectives on Science*, 30 (2022), 358-406.
- Grafton, Anthony and William R. Newman, eds., *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001).

- Grafton, Anthony, and Nancy G. Siraisi, eds., *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).
- Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Learning to Curse: Aspects of Linguistic Colonialism in the Sixteenth Century', in *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old*, ed. Fredi Chiappelli, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 561-80.
- Greene, Gayle, 'Language and Value in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*', *SEL*, 21, ii (1981), 271-85.
- Greene, Thomas M., *Poetry, Signs, and Magic* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).
- Gringas, Bruno, 'Johannes Kepler's Harmonice Mundi: A "Scientific" Version of the Harmony of the Spheres', *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada*, 97, vi (2003), 228-33.
- Gronbeck-Tedesco, John, 'Morality, Ethics, and the Failure of Love in Shakespeare's *Othello*', in *Othello: New Critical Essays*, ed. Philip C. Kolin (NY: Routledge, 2002).
- Guenther, Genevieve, *Magical Imaginations Instrumental Aesthetics in the English Renaissance* (Toronto: UTP, 2012).
- Harmes, Marcus and Victoria Bladen, eds. *Supernatural and Secular Power in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
- Harrington, Anne, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: PUP, 1996).
- Harris, Jonathan Gil, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Philadelphia: UPP, 2004).
- Hart, F. Elizabeth, 'Cerimon's "Rough" Music in *Pericles*, 3.2', *SQ*, 51, iii (2000), 313-31.
- Headlam Wells, Robin, *Elizabethan Mythologies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).
- Healy, Margaret, *Shakespeare, Alchemy and the Creative Imagination: The Sonnets and A Lover's Complaint* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011).
- Heninger, S. K., *Touches of Sweet Harmony: Pythagorean Cosmology and Renaissance Poetics* (NY: Angelico Press 2013).
- Heninger, S.K., *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1977).
- Hillman, Richard W., 'The "Gillyvors" Exchange in *The Winter's Tale*', *English Studies in Canada*, 5, i (1979), 16-23.
- Hope, Johnathan, *Shakespeare and Language: Reason, Eloquence and Artifice in the Renaissance*, The Arden Shakespeare (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).
- Hope, Jonathan, and Gordon McMullan, eds., *The Politics of Tragicomedies: Shakespeare and After* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

- Hope, Jonathan, *The Authorship of Shakespeare's Plays: A Socio-linguistic Study* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).
- Horwarth, Gabriela Dragnea, *Theatre, Magic and Philosophy: William Shakespeare, John Dee and the Italian Legacy* (Oxford: Routledge, 2017).
- Hulme, Peter, 'Hurricanes in the Caribbees: The Constitution of the Discourse of English Colonialism', in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature*, ed. Francis Barker (Colchester: University of Essex, 1981), 55-83.
- Hulme, Peter, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Methuen, 1986).
- Hunt, Maurice, 'Dismemberment, Corporal Reconstitution, and the Body Politic in *Cymbeline*', *Studies in Philology*, 99, iv (2002), 404-31.
- Hunt, Maurice, 'The Backward Voice of Coriol-anus', *SS*, 32 (New York: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2004), 220-39.
- Hunt, Maurice, 'Purging the Jestng Spirit in *The Tempest*', *Comparative Drama*, 45, iv (2011), 417-37.
- James, Jamie, *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe* (London: Abacus, 1995).
- Janacek, Bruce, *Alchemical Belief: Occultism in the Religious Culture of Early Modern England* (Pennsylvania: PSUP, 2015).
- Jehenson, Myriam Yvonne, *The Golden World of the Pastoral: A Comparative Study of Sidney's New Arcadia and D'Urfé's L'Astrée* (Ravenna: Longo, 1981).
- Jordan, Constance, *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1997).
- Kahn, Didier and Hiro Harai, eds., *Pseudo-Paracelsus: Forgery and Early Modern Alchemy, Medicine and Natural Philosophy* (Leider, Netherlands: Brill, 2021).
- Kapitaniak, Pierre, 'Staging Devils and Witches: Had Shakespeare Read Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*?', in *Spectacular Science, Technology and Superstition in the Age of Shakespeare*, eds. Sophie Chiari and Mickaël Popelard (Edinburgh: EUP, 2017).
- Kavey, Alison B., 'Building Blocks: Imagination, Knowledge, and Passion in Agrippa von Nettesheim's *De Oculis Philosophia Libri Tres*', in *World-Building and the Early Modern Imagination*, ed. Alison B. Kavey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- Keegan, Daniel L., 'Performing Prophecy: More Life on the Shakespearean Scene', *SQ*, 62, iii (2011), 420-43.
- Kerrigan, John, *Shakespeare's Binding Language* (Oxford: OUP, 2018).
- Knapp, James A., 'Visual and Ethical Truth in "*The Winter's Tale*"', *SQ*, 55, iii (2004), 253-78.
- Krieger, Murray, *Poetic Presence and Illusion: Essays in Critical History and Theory* (Baltimore: JHUP, 1979).
- Krieger, Murray, *Words about Words about Words: Theory, Criticism and the Literary Text* (Baltimore: JHUP, 1988).

- Langley, Eric, 'Postured like a Whore? Misreading Hermione's Statue', *Renaissance Studies*, 27, iii (2013), 318-40.
- Langley, Eric, *Shakespeare's Contagious Sympathies: Ill Communications* (Oxford: OUP, 2018).
- Leininger, Lorie, 'Cracking the Code of *The Tempest*', *Bucknell Review*, 25 (1980), 121-31.
- Levine, Laura, 'Danger in Words: Faustus, Slade, and The Demonologists', in *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage*, eds. Lisa Hopkins and Helen Ostovich (New York: Routledge, 2016), 47-58.
- Lindberg, David C., and Ronald L. Numbers, eds., *God and Nature: Historical Essays on the Encounter Between Christianity and Science* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).
- Livingston, Mary, 'The Natural Art of *The Winter's Tale*', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 30, iii (1969), 340-55.
- Lobis, Seth, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: YUP, 2015).
- Lyne, Raphael, *Shakespeare's Late Work* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).
- Maggi, Armando, *Satan's Rhetoric* (Chicago: UCP, 2001).
- Magnusson, Lynne, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999).
- Maguire, Laurie, *Shakespeare's Names* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).
- Malay, Jessica L., *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance: Shakespeare's Sibyls* (Oxford: Routledge, 2010).
- Marcovich, Miroslav, *Heraclitus: Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (Merida, Venezuela: Los Andes UP, 1967).
- Marcus, Leah S., 'Cymbeline and the Unease of Topicality', in *Shakespeare: The Last Plays*, ed. Kiernan Ryan (London: Routledge, 1999), 134-68.
- McCoy, Richard C., *Faith in Shakespeare* (Oxford: OUP, 2015).
- McDonald, Grantley, 'The Reception of Ficino's Theory of World Harmony in Germany', in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, eds. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 160-82.
- McDonald, Russ, *Shakespeare's Late Style* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006).
- McMullan, Gordon, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing: Authorship in the Proximity of Death* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007).
- Menon, Madhavi, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Toronto: UTP, 2004).
- Moran, Bruce T., *Distilling Knowledge: Alchemy, Chemistry, and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2006).

- Moran, Bruce T., Karen Hunger Parshall, Michael T. Walton, eds., *Bridging Traditions: Alchemy, Chemistry, and Paracelsian Practices in the Early Modern Era* (Pennsylvania: PSUP, 2015).
- Morris, Blair, 'Demonic Ventriloquism and Venetian Skepticism in *Othello*', *SEL*, 53, ii (2013), 311-35.
- Morrison, Mark, *Modern Alchemy: Occultism and the Emergence of Atomic Theory* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).
- Mowat, Barbara, *The Dramaturgy of Shakespeare's Romances* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976).
- Muir, Kenneth, *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005).
- Munroe, Jennifer, 'It's All About the Gillyvors: Engendering Art and Nature in *The Winter's Tale*', in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, ed. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 139-54.
- Neumann, Hanns-Peter, 'Pythagoras Refracted: The Formation of Pythagoreanism in the Early Modern Period', in Renger (2016), 453-64.
- Nicholls, Mark, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot* (Manchester: MUP, 1991).
- Norbrook, David, "'What Cares these Roarers for the Name of King?': Language and Utopia in *The Tempest*", in *The Politics of Tragicomedy: Shakespeare and After*, eds. Gordon McMullan and Jonathan Hope (London: Routledge, 2021), 21-54.
- O'Meara, Dominic J., 'Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras', *The Classical Review*, 54, i (2004), 84-6 (84).
- Ortiz, Joseph M., *Broken Harmony: Shakespeare and the Politics of Music* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2011).
- Ossa-Richardson, Anthony, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought* (Princeton: PUP, 2013).
- Palfrey, Simon, *Late Shakespeare: A New World of Words* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).
- Parker, Patricia, 'Virile Style', in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (NY: Routledge, 1996), 201-22.
- Pask, Kevin, *The Fairy Way of Writing: Shakespeare to Tolkien* (Baltimore: JHUP, 2013).
- Patten, Johnathan K. van, 'Magic, Prophecy, and the Law of Treason in Reformation England', *The American Journal of Legal History*, 27, i (1983), 1-32.
- Peterson, Douglas L., *Time, Tide and Tempest: A Study of Shakespeare's Romances* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1973).
- Popelard, Mickaël, 'Unlimited Science: The Endless Transformation of Nature in Bacon and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*', in *Spectacular Science, Technology and Superstition in the Age of Shakespeare*, eds. Sophie Chiari and Mickaël Popelard (Edinburgh: EUP, 2017), 171-94.
- Preston, Claire, *Thomas Browne and the Writing of Early Modern Science* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).

- Preston, Clare, “Unriddling the world”: Sir Thomas Browne and the Doctrine of Signatures’, *Critical Survey*, 5, iii (1993), 263-70.
- Principe, Lawrence, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and His Alchemical Quest* (Princeton: PUP, 1998).
- Prins, Jacomien, ‘Francesco Patrizi and the “Weakest Echo of the Harmony of the Spheres”’, in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, eds. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 139-59.
- Rampling, Jennifer M., *The Experimental Fire: Inventing English Alchemy, 1300-1700* (Chicago: UCP, 2023).
- Ray, Meredith K., *Daughters of Alchemy: Women and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2015).
- Renger, Almut-Barbara and Alessandro Stavru, eds., *Pythagorean Knowledge from the Ancient to the Modern World: Askesis, Religion, Science* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016)
- Riddle, John M., *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin: UTXP, 1985).
- Riquet, Johannes, “How Shall We Find the Concord of this Discord?” Music, Magic and Ideology in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*’, *Variations*, 20 (2012), 77-91.
- Rothman, Aviva, *The Pursuit of Harmony: Kepler on Cosmos, Confession, and Community* (Chicago: UCP, 2017).
- Rublack, Ulinka, *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017).
- Ryan, Kiernan, *Shakespeare: The Last Plays* (London: Taylor & Francis, 2014).
- Ryan, Kiernan, *Shakespeare’s Universality: Here’s Fine Revolution* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
- Said, Edward W., ‘Untimely Meditations’, *The Nation* (New York: Sep. 2003).
- Said, Edward W., *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (NY: Pantheon, 2006).
- Schmidt, Leigh Eric, ‘From Demon Possession to Magic Show: Ventriloquism, Religion, and the Enlightenment’, *Church History*, 62, ii (1998), 274-304.
- Schmitt, Charles B., ‘Reappraisals in Renaissance Science’, *History of Science*, 16 (1978), 200-14.
- Scott, Charlotte, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Book* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).
- Scott, William O., ‘Seasons and Flowers in *The Winter’s Tale*’, *SQ*, 14, iv (1963), 411-17.
- Scribner, Robert W., ‘The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the “Disenchantment of the World”’, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23, 3 (1993), 475-94.
- Searle, John R., *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969).
- Siraisi, Nancy, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

- Skura, Meredith Anne, 'Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in *The Tempest*', *SQ*, 40, i (1989), 42-69.
- Sofar, Andrew, 'How to Do Things with Demons: Conjuring Performatives in *Doctor Faustus*', *Theatre Journal*, 61, i (2009) 1-21.
- Solway, David, *Random Walks: Essays in Elective Criticism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 1997).
- Spruit, Leen, 'Francesco Giropi on the Harmony of Creation and the Catholic Censorship of His Views', in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, eds. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 123-38.
- Stark, Ryan J., *Rhetoric, Science, and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2009).
- Stephenson, Bruce, *The Music of the Heavens: Kepler's Harmonic Astronomy* (Princeton: PUP, 1994).
- Stohmeier, John and Peter Westbrook, eds., *Divine Harmony: The Life and Teachings of Pythagoras* (Berkeley: Berkeley Hills Books, 2003).
- Stoneman, Richard, *The Ancient Oracles: Making the Gods Speak* (New Haven: YUP, 2011).
- Szönyi, György E., *John Dee's Occultism: Magical Exaltation Through Powerful Signs* (Albany: State University of New York, 2004).
- Taylor, Charles, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: HUP, 2007).
- Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Penguin Books, 1971).
- Thorne, Alison, ed., *Shakespeare's Romances* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003).
- Thornton, Tim, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2006).
- Tilley, Morris P., *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950).
- Uphaus, R.W., *Beyond Tragedy: Structure and Experiment in Shakespeare's Romances* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 2014).
- Vahaelen, Maude, 'Cosmic Harmony, Demons, and the Mnemonic Power of Music in Renaissance Florence', in *Sing Aloud Harmonious Spheres: Renaissance Conceptions of Cosmic Harmony*, eds. Jacomien Prins and Maude Vanhaelen (New York: Routledge, 2017), 101-22.
- Vickers, Brian, *Occult & Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984).
- Wagner, Matthew, 'Performing the Prophetic', *Shakespeare*, 15, iii (2019), 262-71.
- Walker, Daniel P., *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (Pennsylvania: USUP, 2000).

- Wall-Randell, Sarah, *The Immaterial Book: Reading and Romance in Early Modern England* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013).
- Walsham, Alexandra, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51, ii (2008), 497-528.
- Walsham, Alexandra, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2011).
- Walton, Michael T., 'Genesis and Chemistry in the Sixteenth Century', in *Reading the Book of Nature: The Other Side of the Scientific Revolution*, eds. Allen G. Debus and Michael T. Walton (Kirkville: Sixteenth-Century Journal Publishers, 1998), 1-14.
- Waswo, Richard, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (Princeton: PUP, 1987).
- Wayne, Valerie, 'The Woman's Parts of *Cymbeline*', in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, eds. Johnathan Gil Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: CUP, 2002) 288-315.
- Wear, A., 'Galen in the Renaissance', in *Galen: Problems and Prospects*, ed. V. Nutton (London: The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1981).
- Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), trans. Talcott Parsons (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003).
- Webster, Charles, *Paracelsus: Medicine, Magic and Mission at the End of Time* (New Haven: YUP, 2008).
- White, R.S., *Let Wonder Seem Familiar: Endings in Shakespeare's Romance Vision* (London: Humanities Press, 1985).
- Williamson, Karina, 'From Heavenly Harmony to Eloquent Silence: Representations of World Order from Dryden to Shelley', *The Review of English Studies*, 55 (2004), 527-44.
- Woodward, Marshelle, 'Paradox Regained: Reconsidering Thomas Browne's Double Hermeneutics', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 58, iii (2016), 305-28.
- Woolley, Benjamin, *The Queen's Conjuror: The Life and Magic of Dr Dee* (London: Harper Collins, 2001).
- Wooten, David, *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 2015).
- Yates, Frances, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002).
- Yelle, Robert A., *Semiotics of Religion: Signs of the Sacred in History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).
- Zhmud, Leonid. 'Greek Arithmology: Pythagoras or Plato?', in Renger (2016), 321-46.