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8

‘Flowers for English Speaking’

Play Extracts and Conversation

András Kiséry

Scholars interested in the reception of Shakespeare have long been searching for traces left by early modern readers of plays. In addition to the very limited amount of marginalia and discursive commentary, they have identified phrases, lines, and passages copied into printed and manuscript miscellanies, anthologies and commonplace books, which are also discussed by Laura Estill in the present volume.

While early modern readers obviously valued plays not only for their ‘lines’ but also for their ‘plots’ and ‘passages’ (the latter usually meant things that come to pass: events, exciting turns of the plot),¹ their marking and note-taking was focused on phrases, lines, and segments of the dramatic dialogue that can be marked or copied. The conclusions we can draw from

the passages they collected are limited: as Lois Potter warned, play extracts show 'what was thought quotable, but not necessarily what was most read or what had been most theatrically successful'.² Yet careful study of such extracts also reveals the uses to which readers put their playbooks, and through these uses, something about the playtexts themselves.

Critics have often used the evidence from traces of active reading and from note-taking to address questions about the place and prestige of drama in the textual and literary culture of the period. They have suggested that early modern readers who excerpted and copied passages from plays subjected them to some version of the practice of 'commonplacing', a process that was crucial to humanist education and early modern literary culture. Commonplacing readers rendered classical texts into shorter passages, organizing them under headings to make them reusable in written composition. The very act of commonplacing a play would therefore have included it in the canon of texts to which such treatment was appropriate: the texts of classical authors. Historians of the book, too, have seen the use of italics or the use of double inverted commas in the margin to highlight sententious lines or passages in vernacular play books as pre-selecting them for future extraction and manipulation. Such typographical marking would then not only be a reflection of humanistic manuscript practices, but also a way early modern publishers advertised their plays as deserving academic treatment appropriate to classical texts.³

These important suggestions have been integrated into larger narratives about how commercial plays, Shakespeare's in particular, rose from sub-literary to literary status in the early modern period. Whether 'the literary' is meant in the more ambitious modern sense that is constrained to textual works of art, or in the broader early modern sense of learning, and what such elevation of plays might mean for a notion of 'the literary' itself, is usually left unexplored and unexplained; social cachet and cultural classification, high status and literariness, are in good bourgeois manner considered to be

coterminous.⁴ While scholarship is clearly divided on this issue, it is unified in its concern with writing, with the production and enjoyment of written composition, and with poetic or humanist authorship on a classical model (whether of the dramatist, of the commonplacing author-to-be, or both).⁵

Through considering some specific play extracts in their contexts, this chapter will highlight additional reasons for note-taking from plays in the early modern period, up to the somewhat arbitrary divide of the Restoration. Without denying the embeddedness of drama in the textual culture of the period, it will focus on the crucial relationship between dramatic texts and colloquial interaction. The conversation-oriented use of playtexts registers the distinctiveness of drama and traces a cultural-historical narrative in which drama is not a marginal entity in need of being elevated into the mainstream, but a key factor.

Viral forms

Sententious extracts were gathered from plays into notebooks that were later to be consulted and used. If readers entered them under a topic heading in a commonplace book, they hardly ever recorded the source of the extracted fragment. If they wrote them *seriatim*, i.e. in the order they found them in the playtext, they may have copied them under the title of the play, but when they used these notes later on, the passages were put in circulation without indication of their origins in the work of a particular playwright or drama.

Traces of the circulation of the following couplet around the turn of the century can serve as an illustration.

‘Offer no love-rites, but let wives still seeke them,
‘For when they come unsought, they seldom like them.’⁶

The 1600 Quarto of *Every Man out of His Humour* was among the first commercial plays equipped with gnomic

pointing, that is, with inverted commas in the margins, and this couplet is among the lines thus marked.⁷ Whether or not one agrees with the enthusiastic reaction by the speaker's interlocutor, 'this is Gospel', the couplet was deemed suitable for inclusion in *England's Parnassus*, the 1600 anthology of extracts from English poems and plays organized under commonplace headings, where it appears under the heading 'Marriage', and is attributed to 'B. Iohnson'.⁸ Sometime between 1600 and 1613, a Derbyshire gentleman called Edward Pudsey also copied the couplet along with several other extracts from the play into his notebook; in this case, as on occasion elsewhere in the manuscript, he used italic hand to reflect the gnomic points in the margin of the play quarto.⁹

Soon after the play's appearance, the lines also found their way into the notebook-diary of John Manningham, a law student at the Middle Temple. Manningham's record of a performance of *Twelfth Night*, and his anecdote about Burbage announcing himself at a lady's door as 'Richard III' only to be told that 'William the Conqueror', i.e. Shakespeare has been there before him, have made him well-known to Shakespeare scholars. This couplet, however, is unrelated to Manningham's interest in plays, players, and playwrights, as it appears among a number of sentences he derived not from a play, but from a sermon which Robert Scott, the junior dean of Trinity College, Cambridge, delivered in 1601. While Scott may have thought that the couplet was indeed like Gospel when he cited it in his sermon, there is no trace of either Scott's or Manningham's awareness of its origin in a play.¹⁰ What was happening to the couplet here can hardly be considered an effect of 'playreading'; Manningham's note is only a play extract or a post-performance document in a fetishistic sense. Rather, this is the story of an epigrammatic couplet passing through all the major public textual media of the period: stage, print – both in a playbook and in an anthology – and pulpit, transmitted from one to the other, through memory, conversation, or manuscript notes.

Lines or couplets in such circulation do not necessarily originate in a play at all.¹¹ When a character in John Marston's

The Malcontent rehearses the closing couplet of an epigram by Thomas Bastard, she immediately ascribes it to 'an honest priest' – which Bastard, a well-known author of epigrams, had indeed become by the time the play was written. The dialogue makes a point of the pre-play attribution, but when the couplet is picked up in *Bel-vedère* it is – like the rest of the materials in this printed commonplace book of single lines and couplets – not attributed at all.¹² Not only did plays rehearse a vast amount of proverbial material, but also playwrights like Webster or Marston – who raided Montaigne for his *Dutch Courtezan*¹³ – depended on extensive borrowing of commonplace materials in constructing their dialogues. Pointed, aphoristic, sententious lines, as well as striking phrases, puns, and jokes that appear in plays, rather than originating in the surviving dramatic work, may very well have been captured by the dramatist from written or oral sources, without our realizing their intricate prehistories.

A much more elaborate example of the passage of a passage from notebook to notebook is provided by Laura Estill, who follows the circulation of a proverb that appears in *Love's Labours Lost*. The lines 'Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits / Make rich the ribs but bankrupt quite the wits'¹⁴ rework a proverb already in wide circulation by the time Shakespeare quoted them, which continued to be copied and re-copied in Shakespeare's phrasing, and then, in modified form, was copied again as a proverb with no awareness that at one stage it had passed through Shakespeare's comedy.¹⁵ What Estill's spectacular reconstruction of the circulation of this proverb shows is that Shakespeare's play is only one node, and not even the most important one, in the network of the phrase's labyrinthine transmission.

The careful and imaginative research of Tiffany Stern and others has shown songs to be literally and materially detachable from early modern play scripts, separate pieces of paper that moved in and out of plays, which also came to be copied as songs in their own right.¹⁶ Though epigrams, proverbs, aphoristic observations, and jests did not have the same kind of physical independence from the dramatic dialogue, they

resemble these separate pieces of paper in that they are readily detachable self-contained short forms, held up in scripted dialogue as objects to be taken away. Rather than understanding them as pieces created by extraction from something larger, it might be more productive to see them as viral utterances passing through bulkier, baggier host materials, already dissociated from their context as they replicate themselves in another. Plays are particularly good hosts, breeding grounds and transmitters of such viral infection – but the logic of this metaphor for their circulation invites us to make the virus, not the host organism, the unit of our analysis.

When *sententiae*, songs, or jests¹⁷ are lifted from a play, they become indistinguishable from similar materials sourced from elsewhere. They enter the buzz of those anonymous or anonymized short forms that are, like drama itself, amphibious. As our examples indicate, these forms are as strongly associated with orality and conversation as they are with textuality and inscription, and move briskly between media. Of course, almost anything extracted from the text of a play would by definition have been extracted from scripted conversation, but unlike a description that might be copied for its poetic qualities, *sententiae* are dramatized and isolated by the play through their use on stage. The delivery of a *sententia* by a stage character, who rehearses it as a quotation, holds it up as a textual object deserving our consideration, models its dissemination even as it makes it available for further circulation among the play's audience.

Describing the *sententia* as an oral form goes counter to the literary emphases of current scholarship. Play readers collecting *sententiae* in their notebooks with an eye to using them in conversation is a practice that does not so much assimilate drama to literature, as distinguish the dramatic medium as a form of exemplary orality. In this model, readers' notes are not preparatory work for written composition, but supporting material for oral performance. Such a model makes better sense of some well-known instances of early-seventeenth-century dramatic extracts, and also reveals how often plays

were read for details that were conversational or otherwise markedly oral in character.

Edward Pudsey's manuscript notebook, where the couplet from *Every Man Out* quoted earlier appears in a set of passages taken from Jonson's play, illustrates this tendency. The manuscript includes about 18 pages of notes extracted from 26 early-seventeenth-century plays. Although Pudsey also copies full lines, couplets, and occasionally brief passages from plays, many of his extracts are shorter than a pentameter line, whereas the passages he copies from historical and other sources in the rest of his notebook are usually considerably longer. From sentences through phrases to individual words, Pudsey's play extracts record the verbal, linguistic innovations of early modern drama. He often tags his extracts by noting their topic in the margin, but many do not fit any thematic heading. Much of what he takes from plays are expressions he must have found apt, surprising, or novel – Jonson's *Every Man Out* yields him such remarks as 'ffollowing the fashion afarr of like a spye', expressions like 'well parted', 'dazeled & distasted iudgment', 'pursue no favor', or 'wyld in her affections'. On occasion he even copies individual words – like 'Discompanied' and 'discloakt' from *Cynthia's Revels*, or the verb 'exist' from Marston's *Antonio's Revenge*. So rather than imagining Pudsey as a critic or commentator on plays, his play-reading is best understood as driven by a desire to acquire and appropriate the verbal competence traded on the stage and in playbooks.

Listening to plays for turns of phrase, and for 'good words, very good words' – as one hapless stage character enthuses as he is writing down the very words with which his interlocutors mock him¹⁸ – was of course a frequent subject of satire. When referred to in plays, it reassured play-goers of their own superior wit, while also reminding them to appreciate the theatre as 'the *Mint* that daily coyns new *words*', and to recognize it as the cultural institution in charge of the circulation and distribution of linguistic capital generally.¹⁹ As Pudsey well understands, such capital consists of much more than a good vocabulary and a storehouse of proverbial wisdom with which to pepper one's

utterances. His notes clearly show that he is interested not only in sententiae and aphorisms, words and phrases, but also in the give and take of conversational performance: forms of address, and situationally defined remarks.²⁰ He learns from *Every Man Out* to ask someone 'to house your head' (i.e. to put your hat back on), and from *Cynthia's Revels* to say 'your phrase was without mee' in order to express incomprehension. From Jonson he also copies elaborate pleasantries like 'Yow forgiue the humor of my ey in obseruing it', 'Your desert & indeuors are plentiful', 'I must entreat yow to exchange knowledg with this gent'. and 'ffashion me an excuse to &c'. From Marston he learns to ask someone to 'hony me with fluent speech' or to shut them up by telling them to 'Keele your mouth it runs ouer'. From Shakespeare he takes examples of witty repartee, copying Benedict's response in *Much Ado* to Beatrice's 'Will yow not eat your woard. Res[ponse]. with no sause that can be deuised to it', and from *Hamlet*, 'Ile take my leaue. Respon[se]. Yow cannot take from me any thing that I will not more willingly part withall except my life', as well as Hamlet's answer to Ophelia's 'Yow are keen my L. respon[se]. yt wil cost yow a groaning to take of my edge.'²¹ Pudsey's book registers an interest in the blueprints for improvisation and thinking on one's feet that are provided by play scripts. This conversational interest has such compulsive force that it defines Pudsey's attention not only to comedies, but also to politically fraught texts, which he mines for expressions rather than substance or argument: Pudsey was reading politics and history largely for witty talk.²² In his practice, it is not drama that is incorporated in a canon of classical or political literature, but such literature that is occasionally assimilated to texts that modelled conversation, namely, playbooks.

Plays and colloquies

The fact that drama, as scripted conversation, reflects and shapes actual conversations that take place among its publics may almost seem a trivial observation. We know this from

epigrams and plays that show less-than-sophisticated figures wooing with phrases stolen from other plays. A character in Thomas Tomkis's *Albumazar*, for example, woos 'with compliments drawn from the plays I see at the Fortune and Red Bull, where I learn all the words I speak and understand not'.²³ Yet the dominantly literary focus of the study of early modern play-reading has made it difficult to integrate the colloquial use of plays into a larger cultural-historical narrative. Humanist pedagogy is central to our understanding of the habits and practices of play-reading. The study of the technologies of textual production, commonplace books, note-taking, written translation, and composition, has resulted in a 'solitary and scribal model' of humanist education and book use.²⁴ This approach, determined by the written evidence available, also de-emphasizes the spoken word, which was also central to the humanist understanding of language, to education in the arts of language, and, of course, to drama.

The period between the late fifteenth and early seventeenth century saw not only the invention of the mechanical reproduction of the written word, but also the discovery of the distinction and particularity of the spoken word – an effect of the way swift, informal cursive script permeated all areas of life from record-keeping to correspondence. The interest is registered by theories of conversation (initially in the larger sense of sociability) from Castiglione to Guazzo, and by the demand for a technology to record the spoken word resulting in a wide variety of systems of shorthand. By the early seventeenth century, plays and sermons were taken down in shorthand, and people took notes of oral transactions on their tablets or 'tables' – the spoken word could now be recorded before it flew away.²⁵ The emphasis on orality in humanist education was thus part of the larger phenomenon of the codification, textual embodiment and authorization of orality in the period – a development that amounted to the Renaissance invention of orality, and of colloquial speech in particular, through the medium of writing.

For the humanists, Latin was a living language, which they wanted not only to read, but also to write and speak. And as with any vernacular, the logic and structure of good Latin was modelled on the usage of native speakers, and specifically, the Romans of the Republic and the early Empire. Speech was both the theoretical base and the goal of Latin instruction.²⁶

The colloquial language of Roman comedy, and of Terence in particular, was the cornerstone of the teaching of spontaneous everyday Latin oral communication, as it provided direct access to the colloquial language of the Romans. According to Erasmus, 'a true ability to speak correctly is best fostered . . . by conversing and consorting with those who speak correctly . . . among Latin writers who is more useful for speaking than Terence? He is pure, concise, and closest to everyday speech.' Erasmus formulates the key paradox of humanist education when he says Terence is 'the best [master of speech], which is why one should be always turning his pages'.²⁷

At early modern schools, Terence's plays were not only read but also performed, in part as classroom exercises, and in full as staged school theatricals.²⁸ His six comedies remained a key feature of the curriculum, supplemented by colloquial dialogues by Erasmus, Vives, or Cordier (that were themselves informed by Terentian comedy) and by vernacular translations and phrasebooks that were used as study-aids.

'Study-aid' phrasebooks, indeed, made up the first collections of play extracts in print circulation. The earliest in English was the 1483 *Vulgaria quedam abs Terencio in Anglicam Linguam Traducta*, which was published to accompany John Ankwyll's school grammar, and had been reprinted a further six times by 1529. In 1534, it was superseded by Nicholas Udall's *Floures for Latine Spekyng Selected and Gathered Oute of Terence, and the Same Translated in to Englysshe*, reprinted seven times by 1581 – its title a vernacularized term for the genre of such a collection of excerpts: the words *anthology* and *florilegium* both mean 'collection of flowers'. In 1598, precisely around the time when vernacular playbooks started appearing in larger numbers and

were first equipped with gnomic pointing for *sententiae*, Richard Bernard's *Terence in English* appeared, which provides after each scene an English prose translation, followed by the moral lesson that can be drawn from the scene, a list of *formulae loquendi* (in two languages) and a Latin-only list of *sententiae*. These books, like their numerous continental counterparts, provide one or several vernacular equivalents for each Latin phrase and expression extracted, creating a bilingual phrasebook or conversation manual. And, since the phrases are printed in the order in which they appear in the comedy, an index usually aids in finding the apt phrase or expression.

While these phrasebooks are to help with spoken Latin, the vernacular equivalents they offer are colloquial English expressions, not word-for-word translations in the style of interlinear glosses, and the effort to provide apt equivalents sometimes seems intended to serve the need of those looking for a good *English* expression too. This is how Udall renders some of the Latin phrases from the first scene of the *Andria* in the 1540 edition of his *Flowers for Latin speaking*:

Paucis te volo. I would speake a woorde or two with you.

...

Excessit ex ephoebis, He is past childhoode, or, he waxeth a man, or, he groweth well towards mans state.

...

Captus est, He is taken, or, he is in the snare, or, he is in the lashe. And prouerbially, he is in for a byrde, or he is in by the weeke.

...

Dic sodes, Tell me I pray you, tell on a good felowship, Tell me if thou be a good feloe.²⁹

Many of Udall's English phrases also turn up in his own comedy *Ralph Roister Doister*: of the expressions above, scene 2 of the play has 'He is in by the weke' and 'I muste needes speake with thee a worde or twaine', for example. Udall shows the formative influence of Terence on the language of English comedy, and the

interdependence of comedy and phrase books in the transmission of polished colloquial expressions in the vernacular. Familiarity with the textual technologies for learning colloquial Latin prepared the audiences of English commercial plays to consider them as conversational resources too. Likewise, the awareness of a distinct colloquial register of a language, and the grammar-school training in scripting conversations in this register, contributed to the polyphony of English dramatic writing.

In the classical canon, comedy came closest to recording everyday conversation – in addition to Terence, and to a lesser degree Plautus, Aristophanes was also understood in sixteenth century commentary to be ‘rooted in contemporary speech’.³⁰ Comic dialogue can model the language of familiar discourse, partly because – as sixteenth century poetics regularly noted – it is written in a stylistic register that sets it apart from the formal, elevated diction and vocabulary of tragedy, but also because it is characterized by quicker exchanges, more direct interaction among a larger number of characters, and utterances more enmeshed in the immediate context, than tragic discourse.³¹ Tragedies written for the English commercial theatre in the late-sixteenth and especially early-seventeenth centuries are remarkable not only for deploying scenes with a comic conversational texture – think of Iago’s banter with Emilia and Desdemona in *Othello* 2.1, or Hamlet’s exchanges with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern – but also for using, even in some of the darkest tragic scenes, a language that resembles the flexible, spontaneous-sounding back-and-forth of Terentian conversation rather than Senecan declamation or stichomythia.³² The note-taking attention to dramatic dialogue was thus extended to all dramatic genres: phrases and expressions selected out of Shakespeare and his contemporaries were gathered as ‘flowers’ for English speaking, much as Udall’s Terentian collection offered ‘flowers for Latin speaking’.

John Cotgrave’s well-known *The English Treasury of Wit and Language Collected out of the Most, and Best of Our English Drammatick Poems* is often described as the ‘first English drama anthology’.³³ Critics have discussed the compiler

John Cotgrave's literary preferences as reflected by the plays he selected for excerpting, but a comparison of *The English Treasury* with *Wits Labyrinth*, a small quarto booklet of phrases and sentences described in the preface as the print version of its author J. S.'s notes from his readings, suggests that the choice of plays is not always the most distinctive feature of such an anthology.³⁴ Although *Wits Labyrinth* does not advertise or even indicate its dramatic origins, all of its passages that I have been able to trace to an earlier printed source were taken from plays. Cotgrave's book contains 1,700 play extracts, which is comparable to the c. 1,400 entries in *Wits Labyrinth*. But while *The English Treasury* offers 311 pages of thematically organized passages of varying, and often considerable length (the longest being 60 lines), few of which are sententious expressions, and none colloquial formulas, *Wits Labyrinth* is a 53-page list of single-line *sententiae* and phrases. These two anthologies belong to two different genres, their compilers taking notes from plays for different ends.

In a way that resembles many collections of Terentian extracts, *Wits Labyrinth* is divided into a sententious and a colloquial part: the first section consists ‘of most witty, Ingenious, wise, and learned sentences and phrases’, which are general, context-independent statements, and the second of ‘Most pithy, facetious, and patheticall complementall expressions’, which are mostly phatic or emotive phrases intended to engage an interlocutor. As the following short set of lines from *Albumazar* shows, the book’s tendency to take extracts from the same source *seriatim* can blur the distinction between the two parts of the collection:

The worlds a theatre of theft, great rivers rob the smaller
 brooks, and them the Ocean.
 Close as a Usurers purse.
 Let reason cleer your sight.³⁵

While the first two of these lines are instances of sententious generalizations, the last one would seem to belong with the

pithy, facetious, complementall expressions, like the longer set of phrases from S.S.'s *The Honest Lawyer* which begins:

Your example steeres mee.
 Our moderators are our swords.
 I burst, if I containe my passion.
 I'll be a just executor, of your will.³⁶

J. S. takes 'My hopes are prevalent', and 'Why are you cloath'd in teares or sorrow' from John Day's *Law-trickes*; 'You seeme to tread on aire', 'Let me enjoy my longings' and 'Tis now about the noone of night' from Jonson's *Sejanus*; 'You are full of faire desert' and 'You are a man most deare in my regard' from Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Each of these plays are represented by many other lines, and no sample can represent the hundreds of lines in the book.³⁷ What can be said, however, is that there is nothing literary or dramatic about most of these phrases: the interest in their aptness or originality that this anthology registers is use-oriented. In functional terms, *Wits Labyrinth* is related to such miscellanies as the 1640 *Academy of Complements*, a pragmatic courtesy manual consisting of forms of address, sample letters, model dialogues, phrases, that concludes in a list of difficult, Latinate words with their more familiar synonyms.

Wits Labyrinth is not the only instance of the use of plays in a miscellany providing instruction in the art of conversation and compliment. As well as publishing the *English Treasury*, which he considered the 'quintessence' of hundreds of 'drammatic poems',³⁸ John Cotgrave also published another miscellany. *Wits Interpreter* (1655) offers itself as a guide 'in the most acceptable qualifications of discourse, or writing,' in which the 'whole mystery of those pleasing witchcrafts of eloquence and love are made easie'.³⁹ The second section of this manual is called 'Theatre of Courtship, Accurate Complements'. It consists of 51 dialogues, each of them

about a page or two, and each excerpted and, where necessary, slightly adapted from plays.⁴⁰ They are scenes of wooing, in various registers and with various outcomes: a manual of amorous conversation. Whether they were consulted by anxious solitary readers in preparation for such encounters, or enjoyed in sociable reading or in private theatricals, as John Astington suggests,⁴¹ these familiar colloquies, in a book that also contains model letters and various entertaining curiosities, serve to inspire and aid polite social intercourse.

Like the words, phrases, colloquial expressions, and proverbs extracted from plays, these longer extracts represent yet another textual form that mediated between dramatic works and everyday conversation. They participate in the process I have been tracing here, in which the public stage and the publication of playbooks created, shaped, stylized, and to some degree also standardized the private, colloquial use of language. *Wits Labyrinth* carried the Horatian promise 'Aut prodesse, aut delectare potest' (i.e. it can profit as well as delight) on its title page, and in terms of the profit readers could expect to reap, conversational proficiency was one of the most important – if now least appreciated – uses of drama in the early modern period. Since the practice was developed and disseminated through humanist education, and since it both presupposed a written text and required writing and note-taking, it can certainly be called a literary use of drama, in the early modern sense of having to do with learning and writing. But unlike mining plays for materials to be used in written composition, using them to learn how to talk aptly and respond sharply did not assimilate drama to a pre-existing canon of non-dramatic literary texts. Such use depended on a feature specific to drama, namely, its representation of informal, improvisational conversation in social interaction. Whether this is evidence of vernacular drama being 'literature', or whether it designates play scripts as literary drama, is a different question, and not even necessarily the most interesting one.

Notes

- 1 See the brief notes of appreciation appended after a series of extracts from each play in Abraham Wright's book, BL MS Add 22608; the comments are reprinted in Arthur C. Kirsch, 'A Caroline Commentary on the Drama', *Modern Philology*, 66 (1969), 256–261.
- 2 Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writing: Royalist Literature, 1641–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 118.
- 3 Roger Chartier and Peter Stallybrass, 'Reading and Authorship: The Circulation of Shakespeare 1590–1619', in Andrew Murphy, ed., *A Concise Companion to Shakespeare and the Text* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 35–56; Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59 (2008), 371–420. Charles Whitney's wide-ranging *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) reveals the variety of uses and reactions plays were subject to, and while its primary focus is not on textual culture, it gives a sense of the rich array of what evidence we have of the responses to plays, and also highlights the tensions between dramatic character and the anonymity of the commonplace (see esp. 82–91).
- 4 For an example of the slippage, see Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 95. Erne seeks to correct the claim that 'plays were not regarded as "literature" but as relatively ephemeral entertainment reading on no higher plane than, say, a novel made from the script of a popular moving picture' not by revising or critically considering the blatantly ahistorical terminology, but by asserting the literariness of drama in precisely those terms, as something on that 'higher plane' – see esp. 98–99. Erne is quoting the claim as formulated by Fredson Bowers, 'The Publication of English Renaissance Plays', in Fredson Bowers, ed., *Elizabethan Dramatists*, Dictionary of Literary Biography 62 (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1987), 406–16. The problem is pointed out by Adam G. Hooks, who seeks to establish what was distinctive about the publication of

- plays, rather than use the elasticity of the term 'literary' to squeeze plays into the category, see *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 28–30.
- 5 In addition to work already cited, see also Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 186–232.
 - 6 Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humor* (1600), F3v. Here, and throughout, i/j and u/v have been regularized.
 - 7 On the use of gnomic pointing in English drama, see G. K. Hunter, 'The Marking of Sententiae in Elizabethan Printed Plays, Poems, and Romances', *The Library 5th ser.*, 6 (1951), 171–188; Lesser and Stallybrass, 'The First Literary Hamlet'.
 - 8 Robert Allott, *Englands Parnassus: or The Choysest Flowers of our Moderne Poets, with their Poeticall comparisons* (1600), O4v.
 - 9 Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. d. 3., fol. 39v.
 - 10 BL MS Harleian 5353 fol. 9r, and Robert Parker Sorlien, ed., *The Diary of John Manningham of the Middle Temple, 1602–1603: Newly Edited in Complete and Unexpurgated Form from the Original Manuscript in the British Museum* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1976), 41.
 - 11 Mary Bly, 'Defining the Proper Members of the Renaissance Theatrical Community', *Renaissance Drama*, 40 (2012), 113–123, is valuable for correcting the assumption that when the same joke appears in more than one play, it was the canonical author who came up with it, but her model still limits the scope of such circulation to the theatre.
 - 12 *Bel-vedère or The Garden of the Muses* (1600), Q1v.
 - 13 Charles Crawford, *Collectanea, Second Series* (Stratford-on-Avon: The Shakespeare Head Press, 1907), 1–48.
 - 14 *Love's Labour's Lost*, ed. John Kerrigan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 1.1.26–27.
 - 15 Laura Estill, *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2015), 201–223.
 - 16 Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009),

- 120–173. Letters could be similarly detachable, but were unlikely to show up in other plays or contexts. Paradoxically, letters don't travel: see Alan Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 25–34. On the independent circulation of prologues and epilogues, see the chapter by Craig and Massai in this volume.
- 17 Lucy Munro, 'Reading Printed Comedy: Edward Sharpham's *the Fleer*', in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 47–50, 54–55.
 - 18 John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge*, ed. W. Reavley Gair (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 1.3.22.
 - 19 Richard Flecknoe, *Miscellania* (1653), 103–104. On newly coined words as a commodity in the 'knowledge marketplace' of the theatre, see Robert N. Watson, 'Coining Words on the Elizabethan and Jacobean Stage', *Philological Quarterly*, 88 (2009), 49–75, and 'Shakespeare's New Words', *Shakespeare Survey*, 65 (2012), 358–377.
 - 20 Jean-Christophe Mayer, 'Les spectateurs de Shakespeare: à la découverte des lettres et carnets de ses contemporains', in *Shakespeare et ses contemporains: Actes du colloque 2002 de la Société Française Shakespeare*, ed. Patricia Dorval (Paris: Société Française Shakespeare, 2003), 149; Fred Schurink, 'Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), 468.
 - 21 Stratford ER/82/1/21 ff. 1v, 2r, 2v.
 - 22 András Kiséry, *Hamlet's Moment: Drama and Political Knowledge in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 274–280.
 - 23 Of course poetry can also circulate in this 'non-poetic' way – witness how much of Shakespeare's *Lucrece* crops up as sententious material: Sasha Roberts, *Reading Shakespeare's Poems in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 129–137.
 - 24 Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 43.

- 25 Tiffany Stern, 'Sermons, Plays and Note-Takers: *Hamlet* Q1 as a "Noted" Text', *Shakespeare Survey*, 66 (2013), 1–23.
- 26 Martin Elsky, *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing, and Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 35–69.
- 27 *De Ratione Studii*, translated by Brian McGregor, in Craig R. Thompson, ed., *Literary and Educational Writings 2, Collected Works of Erasmus* vol. 24 (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 669; *De Copia*, translated by Betty I. Knott, *ibid.*, 416; translations modified.
- 28 Ursula Potter, 'Performing Arts in the Tudor Classroom', in Lloyd Kermode, Jason Scott-Warren, and Martine Van Elk, eds, *Tudor Drama before Shakespeare 1485–1590* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 143–165; Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom*, esp. 33–61.
- 29 *Floures for Latine Speakyng Selected and Gathered oute of Terence, and the Same Translated into Englyshe . . . : Compiled by Nicolas Udall* (1540), A1r–A2r.
- 30 Tanya Pollard, 'Greek Playbooks and Dramatic Forms in Early Modern England', in Allison K. Deutermann and András Kiséry, eds, *Formal Matters: Reading the Materials of English Renaissance Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 105.
- 31 The critical potential of making linguistic distinctions among genres is shown by Jonathan Hope, *Shakespeare and Language: Reason, Eloquence and Artifice in the Renaissance* (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2010), 187ff.
- 32 Jonathan Hope and Michael Witmore, 'The Hundredth Psalm to the Tune of "Green Sleeves": Digital Approaches to Shakespeare's Language of Genre', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 374–382.
- 33 Jeremy Lopez, *Constructing the Canon of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 47. On *The English Treasury*, see G. E. Bentley, 'John Cotgrave's *English Treasury of Wit and Language* and the Elizabethan Drama', *Studies in Philology*, 40 (1943), 186–203; Potter, *Secret Rites*, 17–19; Estill, *Dramatic Extracts*, 88–94, and Joshua J. McEvilla, with contributions from Sean M. Winslow, *An Online Reader of*

John Cotgrave's *The English Treasury of Wit and Language*,
<https://shakespeareauthorship.com/cotgrave/index.htm>.

- 34 *VVits Labyrinth. Or, A Briefe and Compendious Abstract of Most Witty, Ingenious, Wise, and Learned Sentences and Phrases. Together with Some Hundreds of Most Pithy, Facetious, and Patheticall, Complementall Expressions. Collected, Compiled, and Set forth for the Benefit, Pleasure, or Delight of All, but Principally the English Nobility and Gentry.* By J. S., Gent. (1648).
- 35 *VVits Labyrinth*, B2v.
- 36 *VVits Labyrinth*, G1r.
- 37 Some of the lines from Shakespeare are listed in *The Shakspeare Allusion-Book*, ed. John Munro (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 1:515; but cf. Furnivall's note, 1:514.
- 38 *The English Treasury of Wit and Language Collected out of the Most, and Best of Our English Drammatick Poems; Methodically Digested into Iommon Places for Generall Use.* By John Cotgrave, Gent. (1655), π3r.
- 39 *Wits Interpreter, the English Parnassus. or, a Sure Guide to Those Admirable Accomplishments that Compleat our English Gentry, in the Most Acceptable Qualifications of Discourse, or Writing. . . .* By I. C. (1655).
- 40 John H. Astington, 'Dramatic Extracts in the Interregnum', *Review of English Studies*, 54 (2003), 601–614.
- 41 Astington, 'Dramatic Extracts' 609.