

**The Juggler in Shakespeare:
Con-Artistry, Illusionism, and Popular Magic in Three Plays**

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that Shakespeare's plays *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Winter's Tale* engage deeply with representations of, and associations with, that early modern social person known as the juggler, a type of popular entertainer who specialized in legerdemain, feats of agility, and more. Iago, Petruchio, Katherina, Autolycus, and Paulina reflect this figure and recall other con artists and tricksters who were compared to jugglers in Shakespeare's England. Based on perceptions of street magicians and of what were considered their cultural and professional forerunners—gypsies, witches, minstrels and jocolators—the word “juggling” was applied to a diverse set of social and religious practices, many of which were branded morally dubious or unlawful. The activities most frequently compared to juggling were Catholic miracles and language, confederate trickery, spiritual magic and witchcraft, illicit sexual behaviour, and, finally, stage-playing.

This project takes the study of early modern juggling, and of juggling in Shakespeare, in several new directions. While detailing the juggler's more insidious attributes, my dissertation also discovers characterizations of a morally ambiguous and potentially productive juggling magician within other early modern magic texts, most notably Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*. These more positive characterizations have heretofore gone largely unnoticed by modern scholarship. This dissertation also notes that women too were called jugglers and that at least a few of

Shakespeare's female characters (Katherina and Paulina) may be read as jugglers. Rather than confine itself to a study of the juggler as magician or juggler as metaphor, this dissertation looks carefully both at the social figure of the juggler and at the shadows of perception that that figure casts in philosophical, criminological and religious discourses, all shaping Shakespeare's plays and their reception. Finally, and most importantly, this dissertation considers how juggling and early modern practices associated with juggling are conjured in Shakespeare's plays not peripherally or didactically, but as structuring principles that crucially inform the plays' dramatic action.

Résumé

Cette thèse soutient que les pièces *Othello*, *La mégère apprivoisée*, et *Le Conte d'hiver* de Shakespeare engagent profondément les représentations de, et associations avec, la personne sociale de la Renaissance connue en tant que bateleur, une sorte de saltimbanque qui spécialisait entre autres en prestidigitation et en prouesses d'agilité. Iago, Petruchio, Katherina, Autolycus et Paulina reflètent ce personnage, et rappellent autres escrocs et filous qui étaient comparés aux bateleurs de l'Angleterre au temps de Shakespeare. Basé sur des perceptions des magiciens de rue et de ceux qui étaient considérés leurs ancêtres culturels et professionnels—les bohémiens, sorcières, ménestrels, et jongleurs—le mot « juggling » s'appliquaient à une série de diverses pratiques sociales et religieuses, dont plusieurs marquées comme illégales ou moralement douteuses. Les activités les plus souvent comparées au jonglage étaient les miracles et le langage catholiques, la tromperie confédérée, la magie spirituelle et la sorcellerie, les comportements sexuels illicites, et, finalement, le jeu sur scène.

Ce projet amène en plusieurs nouvelles directions l'étude du jonglage dans les œuvres de Shakespeare et pendant la Renaissance. Tout en énumérant les attributs les plus insidieux du bateleur, ma thèse découvre aussi des caractérisations ambiguës et potentiellement productives du magicien jongleur dans d'autres textes de magie de l'époque, notamment dans *Discovery of Witchcraft* de Reginald Scot. Ces caractérisations plus positives ont jusqu'ici passées plutôt inaperçues dans des études

contemporaines. Cette thèse note d'ailleurs que les femmes aussi étaient nommées bateleuses, et qu'au moins quelques-unes des personnages de Shakespeare (Katherina et Paulina) peuvent être interprétées de cette façon. Plutôt que se restreindre à une analyse du bateleur en tant que magicien ou en tant que métaphore, cette thèse examine autant le personnage social du bateleur que les ombres que jette celui-ci dans les discours philosophiques, criminologiques et religieux, donnant forme aux pièces de Shakespeare ainsi qu'à leur réception par son public. Finalement, et du plus important, cette thèse considère comment le jonglage et les pratiques y associées pendant la Renaissance sont évoqués dans les pièces de Shakespeare, non de façon périphérique ou didactique, mais comme principes structurants qui informent crucialement l'action dramatique des pièces.

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Introduction

This dissertation is about how Shakespeare and his contemporaries imagined jugglers, members of a distinct entertaining class with a unique history, influential presence, and fascinatingly complex social identity. While the term “juggler,” a word with vast semantic dimensions in the early modern period, has been called a lexicographer’s nightmare, it is also a poet’s (and literary historian’s) dream. The word “juggling” today enjoys a fairly unitary and stable meaning, referring almost exclusively to a particular art of performing feats of dexterity. This modern definition, and the relative stability of the term, is a recent phenomenon, however.¹ Shakespeare, we can be fairly certain, never understood, nor does he refer to, juggling as the art of throwing objects. A fraction of early modern jugglers may have practiced this particular feat—though juggling was hardly defined by this practice—and the art itself of tossing and catching objects was never called juggling. What he did mean is more of an enigma to the modern reader, one upon which this dissertation aims to shed some light.

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to pin down the juggler; for juggling, while it enjoys a fairly stable meaning now, was a tricky term then, dexterously

¹ The modern understanding of the words “juggling” and “juggler” are not even referenced in the *OED* until they are added in the Additional Series 1997, and there “juggler” is described as a nineteenth century invention (juggler, *n.*).

escaping the shackles of monologism as it operated among various linguistic and social registers. Appropriately, this dissertation is an exploration of, and an exercise in, centrifugal meaning-making.² From multiple origins, but especially from the figure of the popular sleight-of-hand stage magician, juggling came to figuratively represent a multitude of deceptions and illusions across a broad range of cultural domains, including the theatrical, sensual, psychosocial, political, and religious. It is the purpose of this dissertation to limn the juggler, not exclusively as a flesh-and-blood entertaining illusionist, but also as a more articulated figure, a generative object of discourse that, subject to others' attempts to illuminate him/her, casts shadows of gradated moral shading all over the Renaissance. We shall see, for instance, particularly in Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), that juggling entertainers were depicted as good, bad, or somewhere in between, depending especially on the function they served and the transparency of their deceptions. Depictions of jugglers, the likes of which are described in Scot, appear to influence Shakespeare's deployment of the term, as does the term's very connotative richness.

It is, first, this dissertation's principal concern with juggling in Shakespeare, and, second, its overarching interest in social and verbal projections of juggling, which distinguish it from other scholarship on jugglers in the early modern period. By "projections" I mean early connotations of juggling spinning off into figurative

² My ideas on dialogism and centrifugal forces in language come from Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*.

usage: persons, activities and ideas associated with juggling, as opposed to simply the use of the word “juggling” itself; and the assignment of the word “juggler,” deflected and hurled as an insult and as a means of establishing one’s own legitimacy, especially in the case of magic.

This project relies upon the insights of pioneering works which have treated, from across the disciplines, popular magic in the period: Louis B. Wright’s “Juggling Tricks and Conjury on the English Stage Before 1642” (1927), Sidney Clarke’s *The Annals of Conjuring* (1924-28), Keith Thomas’s *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), Barbara Mowat’s “Prospero, Agrippa and Hocus Pocus” (1981), and more recently, Philip Butterworth’s painstakingly researched *Magic on the Early English Stage* (2005). For all of their differences, these works share an interest in the ways types of magic—intellectual versus popular magic or subcategories of intellectual or popular magic—were distinguishable from one another. In the works among this list that treat juggling extensively (Wright, Clarke, and Butterworth), it is discussed as an entertainment art rather than more broadly as a synonym for deception. Wright, Mowat, and Butterworth share a preoccupation with the art’s relationship to early modern theatre, and Mowat’s is the only one of these studies to treat the art of juggling as one of several kinds of magical traditions Shakespeare draws upon in his portrait of the magician, in particular Prospero. Her approach is to look to *The Tempest* in order to prove Prospero’s likeness to the juggler, rather than to examine how juggling contributes to the making of the play’s narrative and extra-narrative worlds.

By contrast, this dissertation looks beyond Shakespeare's more obvious magician figures and to and beyond contemporary scholarship's most commonly discussed definition of juggling in the period. Instead, it organizes itself around major characters previously unrecognized or under-recognized as jugglers, and around other social categories (players, cony-catchers, papists) and particular kinds of behaviours (deception, illusion, mind-control, confederacy) associated with juggling. It argues that in early modern representations, hazy lines of demarcation are drawn between kinds of magical traditions and also between popular magic, common cony-catching, and the theatre. Most importantly, it views the discovery of juggling in Shakespeare's plays not as an end in itself, but as a useful jumping-off point from which to explore the clusters of social, linguistic and philosophical problems posed by Shakespeare's plays.

My approach is an eclectic and improvisational one: it is in some senses sociological and archaeological, sifting through fields of discourse to observe how juggling subjects are articulated, and how various articulations of juggling determine ideas about illusion. It is in some ways inspired by Bakhtin's interest in the living heteroglossic (multi-layered and contextual) and dialogic nature of social speech, especially as it takes into account audience, author, and many-voiced characters as active interlocutors in meaning-making. More narrowly, it takes up interests expressed by other post-structuralists (including post-structuralist Shakespeare critics like Patricia Parker) in the multiplicity of meanings expressed through individual words. My project is guided by the practice of closely reading Shakespeare's plays,

observing the conscious and accidental ways these works appear to be informed by popular representations of individuals called jugglers.

One of the earliest definitions of the art of juggling can be found in Roger Bacon's thirteenth-century manuscript the *Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magick* (ptd. 1659). After lauding the "Art" of natural magic, which he says uses nature as an instrument and is superior to Nature itself, Bacon distinguishes natural and artificial magic from the deceitful practices of jugglers.³ He writes,

Whatsoever Acts otherwise than by natural or artificial means, is not humane but merely fictitious and deceitful. We have many men that by the nimbleness and activity of body, diversification of sounds, exactness of instruments, darkness, or consent, make things seem to be present, which never were really existent in the course of Nature. The world, as any judicious eye may see, groans under such bastard burdens. Jugler by an handsome sleight of hand, will put a compleat lie upon the very sight.⁴

Bacon, we notice, describes the juggler as one who works by deceiving the senses, especially the sense of sight. The juggler's art is one of appearances, which he may create with the aid of "instruments" (typically, crude mechanical devices which I will discuss later) and also through the "nimbleness and activity of body"; by this Bacon may be suggesting that jugglers work by sleight-of-hand—though the fact that he mentions the "activity" of the entire body suggests that he may be including among

³ Roger Bacon 1-2.

⁴ Bacon 2.

jugglers performers of feats of activity, such as dancers on the rope and other acrobats whom Renaissance writers associated with or called jugglers. Bacon's adumbration of the acrobatic juggler becomes pertinent in my second chapter's discussion of Petruchio's rope tricks. Meanwhile, his mention of the juggler's use of "darkness" (ignorance but probably also the absence of light), as well as his metaphors of bad magic as illegitimate conception, resonate in my chapter on *Othello*.

We have also Cornelius Agrippa's description of the art of juggling, which appears in his *Of the Vanitie and Uncertaintie of Artes and Sciences*, translated into English by James Sandford in 1569:

But let us retourne to Magicke, whereof the Juglers skil is a parte also, that is, illusions, which are onely done accordinge to the outwarde apparence: with these the Magitiens doo shewe vaine visions, and with Juglinge castes doo plaie many miracles, & cause dreams, which thinge is not so much done by Geotically inchauntmentes, and prayers, and deceites of the Deuill, as also with certain vapors of perfumes, lightes, medicines, colleries, bindings, & hangings, moreover with ringes, images, glasses, & other like receites and instruments of Magicke, and with a natural and celestial vertue. There are many thinges done also, with a readie subteltie and nimbleness of the handes, as wee dayly see stage players and Juglers doo, which for that cause we terme

Chirosophi, that is to saie, hande wise. There are bookes extant of the delusions or iuglinges of Hermes touchinge this skill....⁵

Unlike Bacon, Agrippa collapses distinctions between magicians and jugglers, and between jugglers and natural magic. Jugglers are magicians insofar as their skills consist of natural, celestial, and mechanical feats in which certain instruments, medicines and transitive spiritual/physiological operations are used to create illusions and affect imaginations (for instance, causing dreams). Meanwhile, magicians like Hermes Trismegistus—whose *Asclepius* inspired the Hermetic magical tradition of which Ficino and Pico were a part—were jugglers according to Agrippa; they used legerdemain, which, along with natural magic, Agrippa sees as constitutive of the juggler's art.

As Scot would do years later, Agrippa traces the juggler's art and unorthodox magic in general to the Pharaoh's magicians of Exodus and traces heresies (which for Scot years later would include Catholicism) to the practices of magicians: "Of the Magitiens also is spronge in the Churche a greate route of heretickes, which as Iamnes and Mambres haue rebelled against Moses, so they haue resisted the Apostolike truthe...."⁶ Agrippa's magicians/jugglers "auaunt that they can woorke miracles, by Magicall vanities, exorcismes, inchauntments, drinkes of loue Agogimes,

⁵ Agrippa sig. 62v.

⁶ Agrippa sig. 63r. For Scot on the Pharaoh's magicians see 317.

and other diuelish woorkes.”⁷ They are, Agrippa suggests, vain pretenders, promoting idolatry as they attribute to themselves miraculous powers.⁸

Here in his *Vanities*, a text in which Agrippa condemns many magical arts while renouncing the unlawful magic practiced in his younger days, Agrippa continues to laud the virtues of natural magic, which, as well as being used to delude others, as in the case with jugglers, may also be put to good purpose, he suggests.⁹ Still we will notice that Agrippa’s natural magic is more modest than Bacon’s. For Bacon, nature is an instrument of natural magic; meanwhile for Agrippa (as we shall see later), natural magic is a servant to nature. Such discussions of the relationship between art, nature and juggling come to bear on Polixenes’s ideas about gardening and Paulina’s statue magic in *The Winter’s Tale*.

In both Agrippa’s and Bacon’s discussions juggling is treated as an inferior, even harmful art. But with the writings of Reginald Scot (1584), juggling is afforded the opportunity to redeem itself. Similar to Bacon and Agrippa, Scot writes that the juggler’s art is one of “delusions, or counterfeit actions.”¹⁰ And yet Scot suggests that juggling can also be beneficial when jugglers amuse spectators—*especially* when by their own admission that theirs is a natural art they help debunk the art of jugglers, magicians and so-called witches who operate under supernatural pretences.¹¹

⁷ Agrippa sig. 63v.

⁸ Agrippa sig. 63v.

⁹ See Agrippa sig. 54v.

¹⁰ Scot 321.

¹¹ Scot 321.

From Scot's writing emerges a discourse of good and bad, lawful and unlawful magic, one which persists well into the seventeenth century, where it is echoed in Paulina's claims to lawful magic in *The Winter's Tale* and in seventeenth century magic manuals. For instance, the anonymous author of the pamphlet *Hocus Pocus Junior* writes:

THE end of this Art is either good or bad, accordingly as it is used: Good, and lawfull when it is used at Festivals, and merry meetings to procure mirth: especially if it bee done without desire of estimation above what we are. Bad, and altogether unlawfull when it is used on purpose, to cozen, deceive, or for vaine glory to bee esteemed above what is meet and honest.¹²

Confinement to a particular place, use for a positive purpose, and the absence of pretence make for good juggling. *Hocus Pocus's* author, whose purpose is to share rather than to simply expose tricks, does not enlist the juggler in the same project of detecting "impious arts" as does the pious Protestant Scot.

Informed by his religious beliefs as well as by his desire to expose idolatrous supernatural pretence and defend so-called witches, Scot imagines an ideal juggling magician, one suited to serve reformist agendas. As for the bad juggling magician—the one who works by deceit and pretends that his words and images have supernatural efficacy or the one who feigns to substantiate spirit into corporeal substances—he or she is likened to witch hunters, heretics, pagans, and papists, all of whom would take power away from God and idolatrously place it in some beloved or

¹² *Hocus Pocus Junior* sig. B1r.

detested spiritual medium on earth. In Scot, juggling (like witchcraft) becomes a term watered-down, a synonym for all kinds of con-artistry from cheating in cards to Catholic ritual and rhetoric.

It is in part Scot's dilution of juggling and witchcraft (which Scot argues is actually juggling in most cases) to which the King of Scotland and soon-to-be King of England would react in his *Daemonologie* (1597). James condemns "the damnable opinions of two principally in our age": Agrippa's pupil and defender of witches Johannes Wier and "one called SCOT an Englishman, [who] is not ashamed in publike print to deny, that ther can be such a thing as Witch-craft: and so mainteines the old error of the Sadducees, in denying of spirits."¹³

James re-mystifies witchcraft as real demonic threat and juggling as an art taught to cheaters by the devil. Satan, he says "will learne them manie juglarie trickes at Cardes, dice, & such like, to deceiue mennes senses thereby: and such innumerable false practiques; which are prouen by ouer manie in this age: As they who ar [sic] acquainted with that Italian called SCOTO yet liuing, can reporte."¹⁴ This same juggler is also named by Thomas Nashe (1594) when he writes that "Scoto...did iugling trickes here before the Queene," Elizabeth.¹⁵ Based on the King's description we might assume that James kept jugglers at arm's length, but records pertaining to the revels of James's Court list "An Itallian Iugler" among those who performed for

¹³ James, *Damonologie* sig. 2v.

¹⁴ James 22.

¹⁵ Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traueller. Or, the Life of Iacke Wilton* sig. F3r.

James's son Prince Henry.¹⁶ It would seem James's relationship to jugglers was more ambiguous than it might at first appear when he places jugglers in league with devils and describes the devil as if he were a superior juggler: "it is no wonder, that the Deuill may delude our senses, since we see by common prooffe, that simple juglars will make an hundreth thinges seeme both to our eies and eares otherwaies then they are."¹⁷

When James compares the devil to a juggler he is repeating a commonplace that persists into the seventeenth century. In one of his sermons Thomas Adams (1614) remarks, "The Deuill is a Iuggler, and would make men beleue" that which was in reality not true.¹⁸ In a work on how to discover witches, John Cotta (1625) writes, "...the Diuell playeth the Iugler in many things, seeming to raise the dead, to transforme into Cats or Dogs or other Creatures, to present the same body in two distant places at the same time."¹⁹ Cotta's words here suggest the basis of a comparison between a juggler and the devil. Each deals in appearances: both perform illusions of conversion into beastliness, resurrection tricks (which we will read in relation to *The Winter's Tale*), and consubstantiation. In reporting the last two tricks Cotta is almost certainly taking a jab at Catholics, whose reports of resurrections and

¹⁶ See Malone Society Appendix C.

¹⁷ James 23.

¹⁸ Adams, *The Deuills Banket Described in Foure Sermons* 29.

¹⁹ John Cotta, *The Infallible True and Assured Witch* sig. ¶3v. Like Scot, Cotta lauds what emerges as a Protestant process of knowing and discovering (witches)—one characterized by "industrious" learning to oppose "slothful" ignorance (sig. ¶3r).

converted substances Protestants chided, and also at certain reformists who believed in the “Real Presence” of Christ during the sacrament.²⁰

Also, by suggesting that the devil play-acts the part of a juggler, a theatrical role itself, Cotta hints at another string of associations made mostly by antitheatricalists in the period—one connecting deluding devils, stage players, and jugglers of the illusionistic and acrobatic (rope-trick) varieties. For instance, in his *Plays Confuted* Stephen Gosson suggests that the theatre is the “iuglinge of the deuill,” and William Prynne condemns without distinction “Tumblers, Players, and Dancers upon the Rope.”²¹ The comparison between juggler and stage player is not a new one; we will remember Agrippa suggests that both stage players and jugglers perform by a “subteltie and nimbleness of the handes.”²² In other words, according to Agrippa, both are legerdemain artists.

I have thus far traced juggling as a magical and theatrical activity involving deception of the senses, and as a term that, along with its non-English cognates, acquires more and more figurative applications from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. By the time Shakespeare wrote his plays, authors were using the word “juggler” to describe a particular class of entertaining magicians, some of whom were wandering criminals according to Elizabethan and Jacobean law and some of whom were

²⁰ On reports of resurrections, see Keith Thomas 26. I will discuss this debate and its relation to juggling later in the dissertation. For more on this subject see Tracey Sedinger, “*Jake Juggler, the Lord’s Supper, and Disguise*” (233-246).

²¹ Gosson, *Plays* sig. C5v; Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge* (1633) 425.

²² Agrippa 62v.

legitimate, licensed entertainers employed by persons of the highest social status, including royalty.²³ While many scholars of literature and religion have discussed the term's use in anti-Catholic polemical literature, few have explored the ways in which religious usages conjured representations of real magical tricks and strategies.²⁴ Meanwhile historians of juggling magic (and, to my knowledge, scholars generally) have neglected to mention that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the words “juggling” and “juggler” more often described deceitful religious ritual or rhetoric and those who practiced it than they described performance magic and its practitioners.

I have already noted that Reginald Scot compares juggling magic to papist ritual. In the debates between William Tyndale and Thomas More we get a sense of how juggling was applied to religious words and arguments. More's *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answere* (1532) reads like a debate in which both speakers exchange charges of juggling. Tyndale has dismissed the secret, impenetrable and unnecessary Latin words of Latin Catholic ritual and doctrine as “iuglynge termes.”²⁵ More refutes him, referring to the person who would “iugle away...those termys of grace and the very name of grace out of menys earys.”²⁶ Tyndale has used the scriptures to justify his claims against priestly intermediaries and the Catholic emphasis on charity,

²³ On the criminalization of unlicensed jugglers along with wandering players and other masterless entertainers and con artists, see See England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), *An Acte For Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdie Beggars* (1598) 1.

²⁴ As I note later, Paul Whitfield White and Marie Axton have each looked at the term juggler in anti-Catholic polemical literature (White 26; Axton 19-20). See White's *Theatre and Reformation*: and Axton's edition of *Three Tudor Classical Interludes*.

²⁵ More cliiii.

²⁶ More clvi.

as well as to justify his claims in favour of Lutheran ideas concerning sin and sacrifice.²⁷ More says that Tyndale in his interpretation “turneth...wordes out of theyr ryght frame, to iugle and blere our yie wythall.”²⁸ Tyndale’s commentary on charity, for instance, is “a prety poynt of iuglynge / by whyche he wolde make the reader loke a syde y hym selfe” while he plays false.²⁹ This exchange demonstrates that Protestants too attracted accusations of “juggling,” though the word was used more often to describe Catholic activity. Furthermore, it gives us a sense of how figurative deployments of juggling recall the juggling illusionist’s operational strategies. For instance, when More suggests that Tyndale makes the reader look aside, More references the operation of visual misdirection—an operation which, we will see, is central to Iago’s strategy of displacement and monster-making in *Othello*.

It is neither a writer nor an Englishman, but rather the Netherlandish painter Hieronymus Bosch who has bequeathed us one of the period’s most interesting and comprehensive representations of jugglers and their trade. Bosch’s the *Conjuror* [c. 1475-1480] is often discussed in terms of its symbolic and moralizing qualities. Less attention has been paid to the painting’s value as a portrait of the tools, tricks, and social networks of juggling magicians as they were described in contemporary discourse.³⁰ Bosch’s painting gives us significant insight into juggling as a theatrical

²⁷ More lxviii.

²⁸ More lxviii.

²⁹ More cli-clii.

³⁰ Jeffrey Hamburger remarks, “At first glance, the *Conjuror* presents nothing more than a scene Bosch might have observed in the streets of his native...Hertogenbosch” (6). Hamburger’s double

activity and also brings to the fore the period's most popular associations with that activity, ones which we see activated in Tyndale's, More's, Scot's, and especially Shakespeare's representations of juggling and its metaphors.



Bosch, Hieronymous. *The Conjuror*. [1475-1480]. Oil on panel. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

The painting, we notice, is divided in the middle by the conjuror's table. On one side the magician stands, palm open, directing attention to a ball between his

take results in a reading preoccupied with animal symbolism (from medieval bestiaries, Flemish proverbs, and the bible) and one that argues that the *Conjuror* is in essence a critique of the juggling show as anti-mass 16. What Hamburger does not say is that the imagery of the painting lends itself to reading the mass as a juggling show.

fingers. On the other side the audience watches: some look at or near the trick at hand; others—roughly half of the crowd—watch members of the audience whose purses (and in some cases more) the thieves covet. Of the four audience members who actually appear to be there to see the show, one (the person at the very back) looks past the juggler; another, with a conical hat, looks down, appearing to be asleep; a third, a woman in a red hat, stares smiling, unaware of the lecherous look and the thieving hand that together pass over her. The closed and entranced eyes in the crowd remind us of Bacon’s claim that the juggler will by sleight-of-hand “put a compleat lie upon the very sight,” of Agrippa’s claim that the juggler enchants the eyes, and of Scot’s claim that more insidious jugglers (including alchemists) “bleare,” “abuse,” and shut the eyes.³¹ Both Scot and Agrippa find scriptural parallels in the blinding effects of juggling, but Scot also sees them as an analogy for Catholic bedazzling in the “blind time of poperie.”³² However, as we shall see, such references to transforming vision and imagination were more than metaphors; they point at what were believed to be real physiological and spiritual threats (i.e. transitive natural magic and witchcraft).

While the eyes of Bosch’s figures draw our attention, hands appear to have the most to tell us—both about the composition’s meaning and about perceptions of juggling in early modern Europe. The nimbleness of hands, their ability to perform “sleights,” was probably the most discussed feature associated with the juggler.

³¹ Bacon 2; Agrippa 63r; Scot 353, 321.

³² Scot 138.

We will remember that Agrippa calls the juggler “hand wise,” a phrase that (at least in English translation) suggests both dexterity and cunning.³³ The juggler’s undetectable hand movements no doubt prompted analogies between jugglers and thieves. Reginald Scot and Samuel Rid would have us believe many juggling magicians themselves were cheaters and thieves, making money disappear in vanishing acts on the stage and also in the audience, where confederates of the juggler operated.³⁴ In Bosch’s painting the hands of thieves are prominent. We may include Bosch’s juggler among the rank of thieves, though the clarity of his operation (there is nothing obscuring our view of his side of the table); the wide-openness of his palm; and slim lines of his sleeves, compared to those of the other subjects, suggest either that there is nothing or no place to hide, or, more likely, that something is hiding in plain sight. Indeed, we are reminded of Thersites’s words in Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*: it is “A juggling trick, — to be secretly open” (5.2.24).³⁵

We also may include among the thieves the young boy who holds what critics of the painting have misidentified as a “whirligig” (Hamburger) or a “windmill” toy (Gertsman). Both Jeffrey Hamburger and Elina Gertsman suggest that the child is playing and oblivious; he is a symbol of folly, according to Hamburger, not unlike another image of a child in Bosch’s *Temptation of St. Antony*, which Dirk Bax

³³ Agrippa 62v.

³⁴ On juggling counterfeit Egyptians stealing money and clothing from poor country girls, see Rid B1v. On money tricks, see my chapter on *Othello*, and also see Scot where he writes on the conveyance of money on 324-326.

³⁵ All citations from Shakespeare’s plays come from *The Riverside Shakespeare*.

suggested earlier is also symbol of folly.³⁶ If we reconsider the visual evidence in the painting within the context of juggling, it seems Bosch had something else in mind.

The boy's hands are visible, like those of the other thieves, and he stares up at his victim rather than watching the show. In the painting his "toy" with its vertical line resembles both the magician's wand and the keys that hang from the side of the painting's primary dupe (*and*, I suggest, a trickster in his/her own right). In the contexts of juggling—at least as it was discussed in sixteenth and seventeenth century England—the boy's tool resembles an angling hook, one of the main tools of the trade used by thieves whose activity was described as juggling. His clothes, we will notice, are similar in colour and style to the conjuror and his dupe. It seems clear that this is not an innocent child, but the juggler's confederate, his "boy," as the figure was described in several works on juggling, including Scot's *Discovery*.³⁷ His toy in the painting reads as just another among the many tools of the trade we see here: cups and balls, a wand, a hoop, box or basket, plant-life, trained animals, a table, and a wall. Many of these accoutrements we will return to later, as they are represented in juggling texts from the period and in Shakespeare.

Finally, we will notice the relationship between the juggler and the principal dupe, a man (or woman, some critics have suggested) who in many ways mirrors the conjuror.³⁸ They are dressed in like colours, and the dupe's hat is similar in shape to

³⁶ Hamburger 20.

³⁷ See, for instance, Scot 349 where he discusses the boy's participation in the trick The Decollation of John the Baptist.

³⁸ On the figure's gender, see Hamburger 6.

the cups of the juggler's trick. With his popish hat, the dupe resembles a man of religion. Certainly the juggler performing his trick as if in front of an altar suggests the priest doling out the sacrament. The dupe vomits forth two toads, an action which Hamburger interprets as "no mere sleight of hand" but sorcery, an indication that Bosch wants us to read his conjuror as unequivocally malevolent.³⁹ Yet if we believe Scot and the anonymous author of *Hocus Pocus*, the conversion of substances, including the ingestion of one substance and the spewing forth of another, was a regular part of the juggler's repertoire. I am not suggesting that the conjuror's trick would not have been interpreted as witchcraft, but that the line between juggling and witchcraft was weakly demarcated in the period, as we shall see. Hamburger describes the juggler's performance as an anti-mass, suggesting that Bosch is critiquing those magical arts that would rival the true church.⁴⁰ I want to suggest that with the popish figure, rather than the juggler, transforming earthly substances (toads), and with his/her hand showing like those of the other thieves, the painting lends itself to a more subversive reading: the mass as juggling show and church as thief. Of course, Bosch's conjuror is imaged just before the dawn of the Protestant Reformation, the time when juggling becomes synonymous with papistry—but the painting suggests comparisons between juggling and religion were operating even in the fifteenth century on the Continent.

³⁹ Hamburger 8.

⁴⁰ See Hamburger 16. Hamburger never suggests that the dupe is in any way popish or an emblem of religion.

Bosch's conjuror helps us to visualize the tricks, tools, scale, setting, and audiences of popular magic shows in the early modern period. It also gives us a glimpse at the vast web of associations (scientific, religious, sexual, and criminal) spun from perceptions of the juggling magician. In this dissertation's reading of *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Winter's Tale*, I search out these materials and metaphors of juggling as they appear in Shakespeare's plays.

Jugglers in *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Winter's Tale*

In my first chapter I look to Shakespeare's *Othello* as a play that reflects certain deep-seated social anxieties in the period, particularly those concerning the misleading and rebellious nature of the imaginative faculty and the ability of certain naturally-predisposed and highly-skilled individuals to manipulate that faculty to the detriment of credulous minds. Those believed capable of imposing their stronger imaginations upon other, weaker ones (by binding, forcing, or fascination) and even those who captivated imaginations in other ways (through sensory deception, sleight-of-hand tricks, and acts of natural magic including binding) were commonly called "witches." For Reginald Scot and other writers on both popular magic and the imagination, these figures were little more than jugglers.

In this chapter I look at Iago as a portrait of the "juggler" in several senses of the word: jocolator; witch/wizard; trickster/deceiver; performing magician or illusionist; and one who deceives by use of clever, distracting or manipulative language. Though several of the above descriptions point to discrete social persons, these terms and the descriptions applied to them overlapped in the popular lexicon

and even occasionally in the language of more specialized magic manuals. Iago, with his demonic invocations, monster-making, and mind-control, summons up the juggler as witch or supernatural agent. Yet, his operations are fully explainable as fairground feats performed by natural, illusionistic and fraudulent operations as they were outlined in the works of Scot, Samuel Rid and Thomas Hill. In other words, Iago finds his closest analogue in the juggling illusionist, a master of improvisation and suggestion, who Bacon and Scot believed possessed a keen awareness of human psychology and preyed upon susceptible imaginations.

On the other side of this relationship is Othello. Highly imaginative, free, and open to suggestion, described in terms of the fertile feminine, and a “blackamoor” by description, Othello recalls that cross-section of the population that was diagnosed by early modern theorists of the imagination as prone to flights of fancy and susceptible to the infectious suggestions of other minds. Against the backdrop of magic manuals treating the power of the imagination and works on the imagination treating the power of jugglers, Iago’s seemingly demonic nature and knack for penetrating other minds is demystified. Meanwhile Othello’s heartbreaking belief in Iago’s authority makes sense as the product of ideological illusionism.

In the second chapter, I observe the juggler’s appearance within and upon other discursive platforms besides philosophy and the natural sciences. While continuing to seek out the juggling magician and even peeking forward to the following chapter’s emphasis on juggling and religion, this chapter looks at the juggler as criminal trickster and hoaxing con artist. More precisely, this chapter looks at the juggler as a figure or amalgam of social figures captured in the pages of cony-

catching literature, Elizabethan legislation, and dramatic representation—including the play I look at here, Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*.

While the first chapter highlights juggling’s imagistic dimensions, this one examines further its linguistic ones. And while the last chapter focuses on juggling entertainers as somewhat more isolated magicians on the other side of the platform, this chapter looks at confederate networks as they operated along both sides of the stage. Cony-catching tricksters—named in the seventeenth century for their linguistic feats and secret languages as members of the “canting crew”—haunted highways and theatres and became the subject of legislation grouping together entertaining jugglers, unlicensed players, crank magicians, and wandering fortune hunters, all as rogues and vagabonds.

While “rogue” and “vagabond” were legal terms erasing differences among a wide array of masterless men and women, we shall see later in this dissertation’s chapter on *The Winter’s Tale* that in less official and colloquial language, “juggling” came to stand in rather indiscriminately for many different deceptive and criminal (as well as theatrical) activities, including, as Thomas Dekker suggests, picking locks and hooking goods out of windows.⁴¹ Alongside the discursive practice of erasing differences between tricksters or tricking activities, we see in the period something of the inverse as well: publications defining particular types of con artists and explaining their unique practices.

⁴¹ See Dekker sig. G2r-G2v, and see also the discussion of angling in my chapter on *The Winter’s Tale*.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* many of the characters evoke specific types of con artists named by legal statutes, or by lexicographers of criminal canting, or in fictional and dramatic works. These types include performers of legerdemain, dancers on the rope, and “shrews”—a word which, like “ juggler,” came to mean figuratively those who deceive at the level of language. This chapter suggests that many of the play’s more elusive lines and impenetrable scenes can be more clearly understood in the light of these “con-texts.” Moreover, understanding Petruchio and Katherina as confederate con artists (a reading which the play, I argue, accommodates and even encourages) opens to endless possibilities an ending too neatly closed by the conventions of comedy and the opinions of delimiting criticism.

I begin my chapter on *The Winter’s Tale* by situating the play critically among a range of voices which for over four hundred years have commented upon the play’s performance of trickery: trickery’s presence or absence; its generic classification; its excusableness or inexcusableness; its role as dramatic or thematic device; and finally, its relationship to character. Some critics less hostile to *The Winter’s Tale* suggest that Paulina, like Shakespeare, is a particular kind of stage magician; her magic is that of the raised stage rather than the stuff of ground-level street theatre. Others perceive the play to revolve more around the romantically-imagined productive ritual magic of the Christian Neoplatonic magus than around the cheap tricks of the juggler, who is reputed to entertain uselessly or destructively. Throughout the play’s critical history, when scholars reference *The Winter’s Tale* in relation to “Legerdemain” (Lennox), “sleight-of-hand,” or “parlor-trick mummery” (Siemon 13), it is usually for the purpose of either denouncing an inferior play or

distancing an inferior magic from Shakespeare's, and Paulina's, loftier art. As for the statue scene, it would seem that comparing this episode to mere jugglery would amount to detracting from *The Winter's Tale's* theatrical impact, or even from Shakespeare's status as canonized illusionist. These kinds of distinctions are not unique to modern criticism. Historically, they were strategically articulated to defend one kind of magic as more legitimate or lawful than another. Also, they are not entirely accurate. As I have noted, commercial stage actors shared the English stage with jugglers, and many stage magic tricks came straight from the street juggler's repertoire. We will also remember that antitheatricalists indiscriminately called all stage players "jugglers." Often, to be called a juggler meant to be dismissed or else to be situated amongst a cohort of tricksters of questionable legal and moral standing.

In this chapter I look at the war of representation waged over the status of natural and artificial magic—types of magic that I suggest fall within the scope of the juggler's art. In particular, I review perceptions of spiritual animations and mechanical automations that may well have inspired Shakespeare's statue scene. Paulina, I allow, does indeed resemble the Neoplatonic and Hermetic magus, but we should take care to recognize that the Renaissance Magus was often taken (or mistaken) for both witch and juggler. For critics of magic, all magic ran the risk of being somewhere in between supernatural diabolism (Zetterberg) and supernatural pretences pejoratively tagged "juggling."

After turning my attention to and briefly considering animations in Elizabethan narrative theatre, I explore that other theatrical context largely overlooked as an influence on the play: the practices of jugglers attempting

resurrection tricks and other animations. My discussion of the juggler here focuses primarily on Reginald Scot's work, which uses the term "juggling" to describe many things: the illegitimate art of performing magicians who pretend their art is the result of spiritual rather than natural or mechanical causes; the work of so-called witches or village cunning men operating under supernatural pretence; the persuasive powers of continental inquisitors and papists who wrongfully attribute miraculous powers to witches and Catholic rituals; and the hoaxes—especially resurrection hoaxes—perpetrated by Catholic puppeteers. We might rightfully deduce that juggling, when applied metaphorically, was associated primarily with Catholicism. And yet, I suggest that the juggler may sometimes be recognized from other angles as a Protestant character. By this I mean that the juggler occasionally emerges as a fictional "personality," an invented villain to serve as foil to a humbly heroic Protestantism or, quite oppositely, that the juggler could play the Protestant hero.

If juggling were conceived of in unequivocally negative terms, Paulina's likeness to the juggler would prove limited. Even if her initial dishonesty over Hermione's death is suspect, albeit understandable; even if her prolonged deception and berating of Leontes goes too far (a subject of debate); even if she is not the persistently honest character that Fitzroy Pyle maintains she is or the good "conscience" that Bethel would have her be, many readers would agree that she does a fair bit of good. Her final performance is portrayed in the play as a means to healing. In my chapter I side with those critics who see her not idealistically, but as a very human, deeply ambiguous character. In particular, I argue that Paulina is a trickster figure—though she is less of an archetypal abstraction than she is a

historically particular juggler. Like the juggler, she incites suspicions, even if those suspicions are mitigated to some extent, first, by the play's ending and second, by what I suggest is Scott's counter-discourse of good juggling.

As I argue, according to Scot, juggling as theatrical magic need not be a menace. In fact, if jugglers acknowledge the source of their art as natural and divinely sanctioned magic or sleight-of-hand, and if spectacles of juggling expose the human limitations of the conjuror's practice, then the juggler's art is commendable. In other words, when open human deception reaffirms the superiority of sacred secrecy, juggling is useful to the social and spiritual health of the commonwealth. Scot's portrait of juggling recalls Protestant notions of acceptable faith-inspiring art.

In my chapter on *The Winter's Tale* I suggest that until the very end, Paulina's juggler walks the line between Catholic and Protestant juggling. In certain ways Paulina's statue conjuring continues to remind audiences of secret and ritual magic accessible only to certain initiates. In other ways her magic recalls the open nature and call to industrious spiritual searching that some reformers attributed to Protestant art. Insofar as Hermione's statue is didactic, deconstructive, narrative, and emptied of magical efficacy, it resembles the Catholic idol turned Protestant image, and Paulina represents the heretical juggler turned servant to Protestantism and, by extension, to theatre.

This dissertation focuses on three plays in which juggler figures lead the cast of characters. I have chosen these plays because, in them, juggling is not just a word but a structuring principle: In *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Winter's Tale*,

themes of juggling power the dramatic action, and tricks from the juggling magician's repertoire figure significantly and play out poetically. As well as activating associations with juggling as theatrical illusionism, these plays represent those other activities that were called juggling in the early modern period. Shakespeare uses the term "juggler" in nine plays, and while a careful study of these plays is beyond this paper's scope, I will briefly mention here a few instances of the term's use.⁴²

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Hermia, after hearing Lysander express his hate for her, says to Helena: "O me, you juggler, you canker-blossom, / You thief of love! What, have you come by night / And stol'n my love's heart from him?" (3.2.282-284). Of course Hermia is wrong to accuse Helena of foul play; the audience knows that Puck, with his love juice, is the real juggler. Hermia's words here recall associations between pestiferous juggling and thievery—ones that this dissertation brings to the fore.

In *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, when Macbeth learns that he has been misled by the witches' prophecy he says, "And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd, / That palter with us in a double sense, / That keep the word of promise to our ear, / And break it to our hope" (5.8.19-22). Here Macbeth repeats the common conflation of witchcraft and juggling, while also evoking juggling in the sense of manipulative and misleading language.

⁴² These plays are: *The Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *King John*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Henry IV Part 2*, *Henry VI Part 1*, and *Henry VIII*.

In the *Life and Death of King John*, when King Philip of France remonstrates King John for blasphemy, John strikes back:

Though you and all the kings of Christendom
 Are led so grossly by this meddling priest,
 Dreading the curse that money may buy out;
 And by the merit of vile gold, dross, dust,
 Purchase corrupted pardon of a man,
 Who in that sale sells pardon from himself,
 Though you and all the rest so grossly led
 This juggling witchcraft with revenue cherish,
 Yet I alone, alone do me oppose
 Against the pope and count his friends my foes. (3.1.162-171)

Here, as in much literature from Shakespeare's time, "juggling" is applied to corrupt practices of the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church.

In *The Comedy of Errors* the term appears twice.⁴³ In the first of these two instances, Antipholus of Syracuse, feeling cheated by Dromio, says of 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,

⁴³ In the second of these instances, Antipholus of Ephesus calls Pinch a "A mere anatomy, a mountebank, a threadbare juggler and a fortune-teller..." (5.1.239-240). G. Blakemore Evans glosses the term juggler here as "sorcerer"(102 n. 5.1.240).

Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,

And many such-like liberties of sin; (1.2.97-102)

Jugglers here are performers of legerdemain, but in this passage they appear in the company of other magicians and con artists who were believed to associate with, or to be themselves, jugglers.

These passages indicate that Shakespeare was aware of and made use of “juggling’s” many connotations. In the following study we will see how *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Winter’s Tale* summon juggling in every sense evoked in the passages above—and in several other senses too. We turn first to *Othello* where Iago, recalling all kinds of Ephesian magicians, deceives the eye, cheats, peddles poisons, and changes the mind of Othello.

1 • “by the iuglings of the imaginarie”: Iago as Magician of the Mind⁴⁴

This chapter argues that Shakespeare’s portrayal of Iago is informed by the early modern figure of the juggler as it appeared in English cultural imaginaries and was described in numerous and important manuals of magic in the period.⁴⁵ To consider Iago as an illusionist (and signifier of everything else the term “juggler”/“iugler” connoted in the period) is to shed new light on three sets of questions that have persistently consumed critics of Shakespeare’s *Othello*. First, why does Othello believe Iago?⁴⁶ More precisely, why does it seem he hastily transfers his faith in Desdemona’s love to a belief in Iago’s authority? Second, who or what is Iago, and in the same

⁴⁴ Quotation from John Cotta’s 1612 *A Short Discoverie of the Unobserved Dangers* 52.

⁴⁵ I use the term “cultural imaginaries” here as Graham Dawson defines it: “those vast networks of interlinking discursive themes, images, motifs and narrative forms that are publicly available within a culture at any one time, and articulate its psychic and social dimension” (Dawson 48). Charles Taylor’s description of a “social imaginary” is also useful insofar as it emphasizes networks of *people* and how people within those networks envision themselves as part of a social unit: “By social imaginary....I am thinking...of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (Taylor 23). This dissertation is more concerned with discourse, though it certainly poses questions regarding sympathetic relations between people, audience-formation around juggling, juggling as a threat to racial, gender, and national identity, and official and unofficial networks of tricksters.

⁴⁶ As Stanley Cavell suggests, the question is more complex than this (129). Nonetheless, I think, it is an important preliminary one. Both Cavell and Stephen Greenblatt argue that it is not so much that Othello believes Iago, but that Iago brings out (Greenblatt) or provides an excuse for Othello to surface (Cavell) something he already believes. My argument diverges from the influential works of Greenblatt and Cavell by underscoring the significance of external and internalized racializing, suggesting it is still paramount to the play.

vein, what motivates his character?⁴⁷ And third, what are the operations by which Iago cultivates monstrous mental conceptions of incipient racialism and misogyny in the community at large and, especially, in the mind of Othello? Can these operations and their effects be historicized, pathologized, or understood as an activation of already-embedded social norms, or does Iago work merely by some kind of magic?⁴⁸

Criticism of the play has tended to describe Iago's sway over Othello in vague, even mystical terms. Samuel Coleridge remarks that Othello kills Desdemona because of "a conviction forced upon him by the almost superhuman art of Iago."⁴⁹ Robert Heilman suggests that there is a "'flow,' so to speak, from Iago into the rest of the community."⁵⁰ Stephen Greenblatt compares Iago to the empathic Western colonizer who, as a means to conquering, must "insert [himself] into the

⁴⁷ Bernard Spivack sums up a question posed throughout the play's critical history, "What is Iago, and why does he do the things he does?" (7).

⁴⁸ There is a long tradition of seeing Othello's paroxysms of jealousy and his susceptibility to Iago's suggestions as having some physiological basis. Let us, for a moment, trace a historical trajectory of these arguments. Bradley's reading of *Othello* (1904) and his substantiation of Othello's own assertion that he is not by nature jealous were reactions to earlier claims that there is something physiologically wrong with Othello (and with Shakespeare for employing a "Negro" general as the play's hero). This latter notion is Rymer's (1693) 91. Bradley discounted the "ridiculous notion that Othello was jealous by temperament" and dismissed the argument that *Othello* is a play about a "noble barbarian, who has become Christian and has imbibed some of the civilization of his employers, but who retains beneath the surface the savage passions of his Moorish blood" (186). In response to Bradley's romantic reading of *Othello*, mid-twentieth century critics including F.R. Leavis (1952) attacked what they uncritically described as Othello's race-related deficiencies (Pechter 189). Since then, G.K. Hunter (1967), Janet Adleman, Karen Newman, Michael Neill and Mary Floyd-Wilson, among others, have treated the characters' (or the play's) racializing tendencies as symptomatic of cultural stereotypes, and in Floyd-Wilson's case as a way to intentionally counter, by deflection, claims about deficient British bodies. On this point see Floyd-Wilson's "Introduction," especially 11, 16. Floyd-Wilson has argued that Iago, more than Othello, would qualify as a man physiologically predisposed to jealousy (139). As for discussions of Iago's pathologies, Hazlitt describes the villain as exemplifying "diseased intellectual activity" (1814) (Hazlitt in Pechter 223). Iago's impact on Othello has been explained by critics using metaphors of infection. See, for instance, Pechter 141.

⁴⁹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1819).

⁵⁰ Heilman 26.

consciousness of another.”⁵¹ And E.E. Stoll, while ultimately suggesting Shakespeare did not have magic in mind when penning Iago, concedes Iago’s resemblance to a magician or mesmerist:

Iago does his thinking for him [Othello], Iago puts jealousy upon him....In a moment he...is “frighted” and “moved” by a pow-wow of mystery and the bare names of jealousy and cuckoldom. In a moment he is hanging upon the Ancient’s lips, his eyes fixed on the baleful mesmeric orbs, on the waving wizard hands, and to every suggestion he responds with little better than a groan or sob.

But of suggestion or hypnotism Shakespeare knew not a thing.⁵²

Readings such as these don’t appear out of thin air. They are inspired by Iago’s actions and by the claims of the play’s characters. For instance, read in the context of the play’s action, Othello’s pregnant pun on conception—“For to deny each article with oath / Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception / That I do groan withal” (5.2.55-56)—suggests that he has been incubating the monstrous idea of Desdemona’s guilt (5.2.53-56), which we know Iago to have seeded or at least to have nurtured.⁵³ Earlier, Emilia, having lectured Othello for doubting Desdemona’s

⁵¹ See Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 227. Greenblatt’s larger argument is this: what is often seen as benign empathy—in other words, the ability to see oneself or put oneself in another’s mind (225, 227)—is in fact the insidious core of both the Western colonialist project and of Iago’s colonialist, authorial, and theatrical program of improvising upon Othello’s open narrative of himself. According to Greenblatt it is not some internalized belief about his blackness that Iago preys upon, but rather an internalization of Christian beliefs regarding the dangers of sexuality (242-243).

⁵² Stoll, *Othello* (1915) 16-17.

⁵³ Othello says to Desdemona, “Therefore confess thee freely of thy sin; / For to deny each article with oath / Cannot remove nor choke the strong conception / That I do groan withal” (5.2.53-56).

honesty, remarks ironically, “If any wretch have put this in your head, / Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse!” (4.2.14-15). Unbeknownst to Emilia here she curses her own husband, the insinuating Iago.

Contrary to Stoll, this chapter argues that Shakespeare almost certainly did know about the powers of suggestion and suggestibility. In the popular imagination (if we are to believe Reginald Scot), the ability to alter another's mind and body from some distance was commonly attributed to demonic agents and their witchcraft—the occult work of powerful eyes and “waving wizard hands,” to borrow Stoll's words.⁵⁴ Yet skeptics of witchcraft such as Reginald Scot argued that manipulating imaginations and implanting verbal and visual suggestions did not constitute demonic magic, as was commonly believed. Rather, these kinds of delusions could be ascribed to natural causes—often, physiological disorders of the imagination, as well as to human agents—men or women skilled in recognizing and preying upon these types of disorders.

Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584) is integral to this chapter's arguments, and more broadly to this dissertation's arguments, as it is a work committed to debunking demonic magic, the first extensive treatment of magic tricks in English, and our greatest resource on perceptions of early modern “juggling” as it was literally and figuratively conceived. The juggler in Scot emerges as a sleight-of-hand magician, a common con artist and thief, a witch (or more accurately, one who was believed to be a witch), a perpetrator of religious hoaxes (an ancient pagan or,

⁵⁴ Scot makes this point throughout his *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584).

usually, a Catholic), a “witchmonger,” or any popish deceiver. Though Scot in his prefatory Epistles never explicitly calls witchmongers or witch-hunters “jugglers,” he does argue that these are the greatest and most culpable of juggling con artists, and they should be “discovered” and judged accordingly.⁵⁵ According to Scot, not only do they wrongfully condemn melancholic women and other people susceptible to suggestion, but they feign magic in the rituals of their services and gull their impressionable congregations into thinking things witchcraft which are, in reality, nothing more than deceptions of the senses or of the imagination.⁵⁶ Later, in the work itself, he compares, in a complex analogy, the pope’s “trumpery” to a juggler’s legerdemain.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See Scot’s Epistle “To the Honorable. . .ROGER MANWOOD.” He writes, “. . .that which grieveth me to the bottom of my heart, is, that these Witchmongers cannot be content to wrest out of Gods hand his Almighty Power, and keep it themselves, or leave it with a Witch: but that, when by drift of argument they are made to lay down the bucklers, they yield them up to the Devil, or at the least pray aide of him, as though the rains of all mens lives and actions were committed into his hand, and that he sat at the stern, to guide and direct the course of the whole World; imputing unto him power and ability enough to do as great things, and as strange Miracles, as ever Christ did” (Scot sig. A3r).

⁵⁶ Scot writes that one sort of those that “are said to bee witches, are women which be commonly old, lame, bleare-eyed, pale, fowle, and full of wrinkles; poore, sullen, superstitious, and papists; or such as know no religion: in whose drousie minds the divell hath gotten a fine seat; so as, what mischeefe, mischance, calamitie, or slaughter is brought to passe, they are easilie persuaded the same is doone by themselves; imprinting in their minds an earnest and constant imagination thereof. They are leane and deformed, shewing melancholie in their faces, to the horror of all that see them. They are doting, scolds; mad, divelish. . .” (7).

⁵⁷ “It is also to be wondered, how men (that have seene some part of witches coosenages detected, and see also therein the impossibilitie of their owne presumptions, the follie and falsehood of the witches confessions) will not suspect, but remaine unsatisfied, or rather obstinatelie defend the residue of witches supernaturall actions: like as when a juggler hath discovered the slight and illusion of his principall feats, one would fondlie continue to thinke, that his other petie juggling knacks of legerdemaine are done by the helpe of a familiar: and according to the follie of some papists, who seeing and confessing the popes absurd religion, in the creation and maintenance of idolatrie and superstition, especially in images, pardons, and relikes of saints, will yet persevere to thinke, that the rest of his doctrine and trumperie is holie and good” (Scot 15).

To understand how Shakespeare and the more literate members of his audience might have envisioned a juggler's manipulation of another (especially a "blackamoor") by way of suggestion, visual illusions, and common tricks, one must first grasp how the powers of the imagination were widely understood in the period as hyper-impressionable and impressive, as well as how these powers were believed to operate differentially across cultural groups. For this reason, I begin this chapter with an overview of *Othello* as a text that participates in this broader cultural conversation regarding the imagination and its powers.

Perhaps more than any other Shakespeare play, *Othello* foregrounds what emerged in this period as a crisis of the imagination. By this I mean to say that *Othello* expresses a widely held belief that the embodied imagination, with its potential to misdirect human judgment, was vulnerable to threats from within and from without. Functioning in a world constituted of sympathetic and antipathetic relations, of volatile fluids and contagious, physiology-altering passions, impressionable imaginations were believed to be subject to the whim of humoral fluctuations and their own errant tendencies. They were also thought to be susceptible to infectious delusions resulting from potentially faulty sensory apprehension, and were suspected prey to (often) diabolical presences that, through deceptive performances of authority and conjurations of illusion, achieved mastery over weaker minds.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See Gale Kern Paster's work, especially "The Body and Its Passions." Paster discusses a natural world arranged analogically and enlivened by a world soul (an idea traceable back to Plato's *Timaeus*).

In early modern England the debate over the imagination featured many contesting voices. Theologians and Protestant anti-theatricalists spoke out against what they deemed creative, transformative acts of imagination, ranging from fairground jugglery to secular theatre on the London stage.⁵⁹ On the other hand, proponents of theatre and magic defended the imagination's potential for positive change and sometimes for divinely sanctioned revelation.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, many members of Shakespeare's audience must have found themselves negotiating the competing claims of neighbours, theologians, philosophers and pseudo-scientists.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the imagination was viewed as an indispensable faculty, a messenger between the senses and the higher cognitive faculties. It was thought of as the source of human creativity and the necessary means by which, in Todd Butler's words, "human desires are brought to heel."⁶¹ Yet, even as it became increasingly medicalized the imagination carried with it a certain onto-mythological and post-lapsarian stigma. Relying upon metaphors of contagion, disorder, rebellion, theft, and monstrosity, early modern representations of imagination recalled persisting associations with stolen Promethean creative fire and

She observes the way in which the passions and cognitive faculties were conceived of in climatic and political terms (45,47) and how individuals were thought to be open and susceptible to natural, external disturbances.

⁵⁹ For a more in-depth discussion of these ideas as set forth by Rankins, Gosson, and Stubbes, among others, see my chapter on *The Winter's Tale*.

⁶⁰ Again, see the chapter on *The Winter's Tale*, especially its overview of the writings of Thomas Lodge and Thomas Heywood.

⁶¹ Butler 95.

Adamic knowledge.⁶² Often this theft took form in images of diseased reproductive appropriation—a rejection of the imagination’s (or the imaginer’s) imitative role, and a pilfering of parental or even divine creative powers.

Into the seventeenth century, theories of the imagination were still informed by beliefs in the sympathetic and antipathetic relations between things in the natural (and sometimes celestial) world and by the notion that persons could alter the physiology of others from a distance. The latter was both an ancient and a modern idea. The scholarship of D.P. Walker and, more recently, Paola Zambelli is particularly helpful in elucidating the historical trajectory of beliefs regarding the transitive powers of the imagination. Walker writes,

It will be remembered that the basis of most theories of natural magic is the power of the imagination, aided by planetary influences and the *vis verborum*, *musices*, etc. and that this can work in two ways, subjectively or transitively.

The first leads to Ficinian magic, where the effects remain within the operator; the second leads to fascination, telepathy, medical incantations, and most of the operations of witchcraft.⁶³

⁶² As we shall see, Montaigne describes the imagination as contagious and claims it is responsible for monstrous births. Gianfrancesco Pico sees the disordered imagination as the root of monstrous mental conceptions or opinions. G.F. Pico and Francis Bacon each suggest that the imagination is a rebellious faculty. For an overview of the Hebraic and Hellenic roots of these opinions and a discussion of these metaphors’ origins in classical and medieval philosophy, see the first two chapters of Richard Kearney’s *The Wake of Imagination*.

⁶³ Walker 149.

Al Kindi, Avicenna, and even Aristotle believed the imagination was a power, in Zambelli's words, "capable of modifying physical reality."⁶⁴ Al Kindi, for instance, thought that certain persons born under favorable astrological configurations and using certain words or gestures had extraordinary powers.⁶⁵

Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola—nephew to the great natural philosopher Giovanni—remained skeptical of Al Kindi's claims that imaginations operate upon others, as stars do, through projected rays, and that these rays may "impress" the images of one mind upon another.⁶⁶ Pico believed, rather, that corporeal spirits may be projected from shorter distances with similar effects (for example, the idea that monstrous births were the result of visual/seminal emissions, or the belief in fascination, the casting of the evil eye).⁶⁷ As we notice in later philosophical and scientific writings, the idea that one thing or person can affect

⁶⁴ Zambelli 6.

⁶⁵ Zambelli 6.

⁶⁶ "Impress" is Walker's word, see 150; Charles B. Schmitt (like Walker, Lynn Thorndike and Fortunat Strowski) has argued that the younger Pico had a much larger influence upon sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought than was once imagined. Strowski, in particular, has argued that Pico's skepticism influenced Montaigne (Schmitt 105-106, 115); Pico is often known for his *Examen Vanitatis* (1520) a critique of Aristotelianism, which he argued was discordant with Christianity and unsound because its experimental method supposed, incorrectly, the reliability of sensory experience (Pico is deeply distrustful of the senses and, as we shall see, the imagination's reliance upon them) (107). Pico nonetheless leans on Aristotelian ideas throughout his writings. The work of Pico which this chapter treats, *Picus De Imaginatione* or, in English, *On the Imagination* (1501), is influenced by Aristotelian faculty psychology as well as by both the ideas of the Arab thinkers and those of the Neo-Platonic mystical philosophers (Harry Caplan 3). Pico's ideas in *De rerum praenotione* (1506) are what led D.P. Walker to include Pico among a group he misleadingly lumps together as "anti-magical writers" (147). While confirming the existence of demonic forces, *De rerum* attacks the legitimacy of judicial astrology and what he sees as other false sciences. This text was cited by Agrippa's protégé and inspiration to Reginald Scot (1538-1599), Johann Weir (1515-1588). Though Weir believed in the existence of witches, he thought they were vulnerable, mentally-unsound people whose imaginations had been corrupted by demons (Schmitt 116; Thorndike 517, 515). On something like the other side, Jean Bodin (1530-1596) used what he suggested was Pico's belief in witchcraft to leverage his argument that witches existed, were culpable and should be tortured (see Schmitt 117).

⁶⁷ Walker 150.

another from some distance persists into the seventeenth century and is no doubt reinvigorated by later findings such as those on magnetism published by William Gilbert in his deeply influential *De Magnete* (1600).

This chapter focuses on what might be conceived of broadly as two fields of discourse representing the imagination, along with the imaginative faculty's susceptibility to illness and disorder and its manipulation at the hands of those known as "jugglers." These two discursive fields are: early modern works of natural history and natural philosophy, which occasionally treat juggling; and late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century magic manuals that treat the imagination, along with enumerating tricks, and, in certain cases, the exposures of con artists (Scot, Rid). From the former field I look to the writings of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1470-1533), Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), and Francis Bacon (1561-1626). I turn first to the writings of the younger Pico as the syncretic author looks back to (among other influences) the faculty psychology of Aristotle and the metaphysical beliefs of the Neoplatonists.⁶⁸ Some of Pico's ideas seem to resonate with those of Montaigne, and his politically minded analysis of the imagination looks forward to Bacon as well.⁶⁹ Pico considers extensively the imagination's subjective or somatic workings—its place and tenuous authority within an individual body's hierarchical economy of cognitive faculties. Pico also underscores the more esoteric transitive

⁶⁸ On Pico's influences, see Harry Caplan. He writes, Pico "levies on Plato, Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, the Peripatetics and the Arabs, on the Stoics, and on the Augustinian and theological psychology" (3).

⁶⁹ Schmitt mentions Strowski's argument that Pico influenced Montaigne (106); See Todd Butler for an extensive treatment on the political uses of the imagination, according to Bacon, and also on Bacon's use of political metaphor in his representation of the imagination.

aspects of the imagination, focusing particularly on the imagination's susceptibility to the influence of external images and demonic forces.⁷⁰

Bacon and Montaigne are useful to my project, first, because Bacon describes how jugglers in particular work upon imaginations, and second, because together their writings underscore one of this chapter's foundational tenets: even while "magic," especially of the spiritual variety, was increasingly naturalized by philosophers more skeptical of witchcraft (and skeptical Protestants, like Scot), the culture's most learned voices and harbingers of the new science (Bacon) believed the imagination to have what we, in our age, would consider a supernatural influence.

From the second field, magic manuals, I look to three pioneering texts, two of which (Scot; Rid) attempt to uncover the mysteries of juggling and the juggler's apparent power to manipulate image and imagination. The three works are Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), Samuel Rid's *The Art of Iugling or Legerdemaine* (1612) (which, though often dismissed for its flagrant plagiarism of Scot, provides unique insight into the anxieties associated with imaginative susceptibility and national contagion), and Thomas Hill's *Naturall and Artificiall Conclusions* (1581). In these writings the juggler is described as an amusing illusionist who works within the order of nature, as a gulling and dangerous dissembler able to transform the colour of his skin through "blackface" makeup and lighting, and as a figure incorrectly interpreted by the masses as a "dark" magician relying upon supernatural powers. As well as illuminating social perceptions of the juggler, these

⁷⁰ Pico 57, 60-61, 87.

texts describe in detail the technical operations by which jugglers work, and they reveal the secrets of their tricks.

Taken together, these discursive contexts set the stage for understanding *Othello's* treatment of trickery and its traffic with the imagination. Each of the play's major characters attempts to discover truth through or beyond the uncertainties of observation, prophecy, reputation, insinuation, and faith. Here, I will limit my character analysis to Othello, and more thoroughly, to Iago. In the play, Iago appears as the play's principal actor, exhibiting overwhelming agency. If Iago does not exercise lone agency (as Auden suggests),⁷¹ he indeed performs what Stephen Greenblatt accurately recognizes is an overwhelming "improvisation of power."⁷² In the spotlight of soliloquy and from behind the scenes, Iago assumes control over almost every aspect of Othello's "fashioning," conjuring his monstrosity before our very eyes.⁷³ Iago's theatrical enterprise is hardly the cooperative venture that some argue was Shakespeare's theatre.⁷⁴ Reducing the complexity of human affairs to questions of ownership, Iago seems to mean business, emerging as an unscrupulous principal shareholder and mis-manager of others' ideological, psychic, and financial investments. And yet, as critics continue to note, his motivations do not appear to be

⁷¹ Auden sees Iago as the play's centre and the source of its action: "I cannot think of any other play in which only one character performs personal actions—all the deeds are Iago's—and all the others without exception exhibit behavior" (246).

⁷² For Greenblatt's purposes, "improvisation" means, "the ability both to capitalize on the unforeseen and to transform given materials into one's own scenario" (227).

⁷³ I borrow this word as a variant of Greenblatt's "refashioning."

⁷⁴ See Stephen Orgel's "The Authentic Shakespeare" 7, and William Worthen's "Authority and Performance" 8.

financial. Iago's deft handling of monetary and proprietary metaphors, along with his successful cozening of Roderigo out of cash, are means to more uncertain ends.

As Wyndham Lewis noted in 1927, Iago's overwhelming egoism suggests something of the Machiavel.⁷⁵ And yet there is no indication in the text that power is his ultimate motive. In fact, Iago's malice appears to be driven by no single conscious or articulated motive, perhaps no earthly motive at all. Such "motiveless malignity," as Samuel Coleridge famously called it (1819),⁷⁶ E.E. Stoll (1940) sees as an outgrowth of a distilled diabolism. According to Stoll, Iago is "little or nothing short of a demon" or devil.⁷⁷ While devilishness in some ways defines Iago, there is a distinctly theatrical quality to his devilishness that demands to be accounted for. Bernard Spivack (1958) attempts to square Iago's demonic presence with the villain's overt theatricality and tries to account for his lack of naturalistic motivations by calling him a descendent of the Vice, "Villainy disguised by late convention to act

⁷⁵ In *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis develops the argument that "Iago is the typical Elizabethan Machiavel" (66).

⁷⁶ This phrase from a lecture Coleridge gave on Othello was often incorrectly interpreted to justify the position that Iago acted evilly for evil's sake—at least this is what Bradley suggests in *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904). Bradley interprets Coleridge as meaning that Iago's malignity is not the by-product of any reason Iago himself suggests is a motive, and his motives are not conscious (226-228).

⁷⁷ According to Stoll, neither the recent psychological nor sentimentalist critics see "what was evident to earlier critics, as well as to Coleridge and Lamb, the dramatist Freytag, and in more recent days, George Woodberry, J.J. Chapman, W.L. Courtney, Lytton Strachey, and John Palmer—what indeed the dramatist has made sufficiently plain, not only by the characterization itself, but by the villain's own avowals at the outset and the hero's and Lodovico's recognition at the end—that under all the appearances of humanity, Iago is little or nothing short of a demon" (233-234). Stoll's description here contrasts with his earlier representation of Iago as an amalgam of types: "he is an imaginative composite or 'condensation'; himself derived from the medieval Vice, the Senecan hero-villain, the Plautine or Terentian intriguing slave, or fallax servus, and the Machiavel...Iago both professes and exemplifies the veritable Florentine principles of egoism, simulation of the virtues because of their usefulness, and glorification of the will; but he has, besides, most of the highly colored or picturesque traits or ways of the established stage figure" (231).

like a man.”⁷⁸ But as critics from A.C. Bradley (1904) to Robert Heilman (1956) have rightly observed, if Iago is (or has become, according to Bradley) devilish, he is also a human being with human aims.⁷⁹ Heilman, for instance, suggests that in crafting Iago, Shakespeare moved beyond the Vice and past the flat diabolism recognizable in Iago’s prototype, Cinthio’s villain. While mythical and allegorical representations of evil may have been a starting point for Shakespeare, the playwright goes deeper so that “the human dimension is primary.”⁸⁰

In some ways this chapter attempts to reconcile these disparate theories by suggesting that the social figure of the juggler acts out many of the qualities that critics have attempted to extract from Iago and attribute to different fictional character types. Iago’s characterization as godless, satanic, demonic, and magical, his self-satisfied theatricality, and at base his humanness—all of these qualities cohere in the context of Renaissance juggling.

While the works of aforementioned critics are valuable inroads into problems of character and motivation, W.H. Auden’s essay “The Joker in the Pack” and Mark Thornton Burnett’s recent “Conceiving ‘Monsters’ in *Othello*” provide the most effective jumping-off points into the topic at hand. According to Auden, Iago is a

⁷⁸ See Spivack 55.

⁷⁹ In his insightful if overly generous lecture on Iago printed in *Shakespearean Tragedy*, Bradley argues that Iago is not by nature a demon, not essentially evil; rather he becomes diabolical (217-218). Bradley observes Iago’s relation to another literary devil: “It is only in Goethe’s Mephistopheles that a fit companion for Iago can be found...But then Mephistopheles, like so many scores of literary villains, has Iago for his father” (208). It is, however, Iago’s human dimension that the critic underscores extensively. Mephistopheles is “half person half symbol” (208). Iago, on the other hand, is above all, a man. According to Bradley, the problem with the abiding notion that Iago is motiveless and pure evil is that such a character is “if not a psychological impossibility, not a human being” (209).

⁸⁰ See Heilman 42.

portrait of the more malicious “practical joker,” motivated by the desire to use others as social experiments, improvising as he goes along, just to see what happens.⁸¹ While Auden never traces the etymology of the word “joker,” it is worth noting here that “joker,” “joculator,” and “juggler” all derive from the same Latin root *iocus*, meaning “joke.” While “Iago” (Spanish) and its variants “James” (English) and “Iacob” (Hebrew) suggest one who supplants, the name sounds much like *iocus*, *ioculor* (jester or joker in Latin) or the sixteenth-century English word “iugler.”⁸² The Jacob of the Bible was in many ways a trickster figure; Scot, we shall see later, describes the trick of the parti-coloured lambs (Genesis 30.26-43) as an operation of natural magic the likes of which have been performed by jugglers throughout the ages.⁸³

While jugglers of the entertaining variety were known in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries primarily as stage illusionists, their caste is a carryover from older buffoon and minstrel traditions.⁸⁴ In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a juggler was, in one sense of the word, a buffoon and, in another, a witch or wizard.⁸⁵ The word’s tangled history anticipates later associations between juggling entertainers and witches.

Mark Thornton Burnett’s discussion of the play also deserves some treatment here. Burnett claims that *Othello* is “situated at the inauguration of [an] empirical

⁸¹ Auden 270-27.

⁸² Later on this chapter will entertain the juggler’s (and Iago’s) connection to the Jacob figure as described in Reginald Scot.

⁸³ See *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament* Geneva Edition (1560). All subsequent biblical references in this dissertation are from the 1560 Geneva edition.

⁸⁴ Clarke 13, 14.

⁸⁵ *OED* “juggler” Defs. 1-2.

philosophy” with Francis Bacon as its chief representative.⁸⁶ The contest that Burnett sees at the centre of the play is that between outmoded myths about magic and race, and a mode of scientific exploration whose adherents see themselves as attempting, through careful vision and sound judgments, to put these myths and superstitions to the test. Iago, with his revelatory function (bringing “this monstrous birth to the world’s light”), is reminiscent of the fairground “Monster-Master” who, as we might guess, displays monsters for show.⁸⁷ For Burnett, Othello “conjur[es]” up myths about African beastliness and defectiveness, including the flawed, impressionable imagination—conceptions still lodged deeply in the popular imagination and in Othello’s imagination as well.⁸⁸ The tragedy of Othello is that the hero “collapses back into the ‘devices of Fancy’” and falls prey to the kind of superstitious thinking and “legerdemain” Bacon advises his readers to look out for and avoid.⁸⁹ One might think by Burnett’s use of the term “legerdemain,” by his suggestion that Iago’s relationship to Othello smacks of the fairground, and his claim that Iago “conjures” mental conceptions, that Iago would appear to him a juggler figure. And yet in his later chapter on *The Tempest*, Burnett appears to distinguish the Monster-Master from the juggler, or at least to suggest the Monster-master is a sub-class of juggler with a particular and distinguishable role (collecting and showing monsters).⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Burnett 96-97.

⁸⁷ Burnett 99.

⁸⁸ Burnett 98, 96, 114.

⁸⁹ Burnett 114.

⁹⁰ Burnett 128.

I want to suggest rather that *Othello* in its portrait of Iago draws upon a more versatile social referent—namely, the juggler, whose wide range of activities includes not only showing, but more importantly *making monsters appear*; delving into secrets, but also (in Scot's fantasy, as we shall see) bringing things to light; preying upon, manipulating and binding weaker imaginations; and in acts of legerdemain deploying certain theatrical properties, some of which feature prominently in *Othello*.

Recognizing Iago as a representation of the juggling magician helps us to better understand the operational strategies by which he performs the play's primary creative act, the delivery of its monstrous birth. Such strategies include using suggestion, diverting the eye and ear, employing confederates (accomplices), manipulating stage props and other devices, and substituting bodies in a series of dramatic appearances and disappearances. Such recognition further explains what might seem to modern readers to be supernatural powers of imaginative revisionism, powers that, in certain ways, appear to be shadowy reflections of Shakespeare's commonly naturalized authorial prerogative. Iago's knack for transmitting infectious suggestion, his appointment of time as the complicit vessel of monstrous delivery, and his super-potent powers of transforming the imagination all recall the juggler's more insidious attributes. Meanwhile, Othello's too-hasty transference of belief makes better sense in the context of the broader early modern conversation about disordered and disordering imaginations.

Imagining Order, Imaginative Disorders

In an early and influential Renaissance treatment of the subject, Pico della Mirandola outlines what he believes to be the meaning and function of the imagination. It is for Pico a “power of the mind,” a “motion of the soul,” and perhaps most importantly, a distinctly visual faculty—a producer and storehouse of images which essentially collects the “impressions” acquired from sensory apprehension and purifies them for the higher cognitive faculties.⁹¹ Called *imaginatio* in Latin, the imagination, writes Pico, derives its name “from its function; from the images, that is, which it conceives and forms in itself.”⁹² After transforming sensory information into pictures, the imagination sends these images to reason and to the intellect so that they might accordingly pass judgments.⁹³ Judgments are then sent back to the imagination, which, in turn, visualizes reason’s decisions for the will.⁹⁴ Pico, Bacon and Montaigne all treat the imagination as an essential intermediary between the physical world and the higher cognitive/spiritual self. When properly functioning, it is an obedient minister to reason, and an authorized director of the will.⁹⁵

Despite their belief in the imagination’s necessity, natural philosophers treated it with various degrees of suspicion, with many commenting on the precariousness of this faculty (Pico 43). Often the imagination rejects its imitative and supportive role, misinforms the intellect and misdirects the will. When the

⁹¹ Pico 25, 33, 25-26, 41.

⁹² Pico 25.

⁹³ Pico diverges from other thinkers by dividing what was commonly believed to be one faculty—reason—into two: the reason and the intellect (Pico 29). For the remainder of this chapter, unless directly referring to Pico, I will use the term “reason” to describe both the workings of what Pico calls “reason” and what he names “intellect.”

⁹⁴ Butler 6.

⁹⁵ Butler 8.

rebellious faculty of the imagination strays, it was thought to incite a collapse of order. This confusion of authority was described in a geopolitical analogy as usurpation; in (de)evolutionary terms as a degeneration into beastliness; in onto-theological terms as a rejection of its imitative role and a usurpation of creative powers; and in medical terms as physiological disintegration and symptomatic disease.

Pico devotes several chapters in his treatise to diagnosing and treating what he calls “defectus imaginationis” (defects of the imagination) or “Imaginationis Morbus” (Disorder of the Imagination).⁹⁶ He explains that in order to “correct the vices and defects of the imagination,” we must “like rational physicians...prob[e]...their causes.”⁹⁷ These causes include humoural imbalance, for “[i]t is the testimony of philosophers and medical men that one’s imagination is determined by the relative supply of blood, phlegm, red bile, or black bile.” These humours “stimulat[e] diverse images” and through them, “the spiritual eye of the soul, the intellect, changes and is deceived....”⁹⁸

For Pico, humoural imbalances that precipitate imaginative disorders may themselves have several causes: “...we obtain [our dispositions] from our parents, from our native land, and from our manner of living....”⁹⁹ Here he affirms an early commonplace to which Desdemona herself seems to subscribe: there are geographical

⁹⁶ Pico 50-51, 56-57.

⁹⁷ Pico 51.

⁹⁸ Pico 51.

⁹⁹ Pico 53.

and hereditary bases to human dispositions, including the qualities and contents of the imagination.¹⁰⁰ Desdemona, however, reinterprets theories of causal climate, stating, “I think the sun where he was born / Drew all such humors from him” (3.4.30-31). Using Othello’s Sub-Saharan origins to deny his jealous imaginings, Desdemona stands in opposition to common opinions that Moors were naturally “hot-blooded”;¹⁰¹ that they, as Iago suggests, teetered on the edge of beastliness with an absence of reason and hyper-abundance of spleen;¹⁰² or, as Pico implies, that their “black and wasted-bodies” left them more susceptible to imaginative revolt.¹⁰³

While early modern commentators on the imagination believed that the climate of individuals’ native lands or their inherited dispositions contributed to illnesses of imagination, they also assigned significant blame to two other causes which I will mention here and elaborate upon later. First, they suspected that unreliable sensory apprehension—including the traps and failings of physical eyesight—leads to mental disease.¹⁰⁴ While tenaciously retaining its Platonic designation as the “noblest of senses,” vision was widely mistrusted for what Martin

¹⁰⁰ Karen Newman relates that in the myth of Phaeton and in Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*, “Africans’ blackness was explained by their proximity to the sun.” Only after 1589 did new travel accounts begin to challenge this myth (78).

¹⁰¹ Pechter 3.4.30n.

¹⁰² “Marry, patience, / Or I shall say y’ are all in all in spleen / And nothing of a man” (4.1.87-89).

¹⁰³ Pico 53. Floyd-Wilson has suggested that while Desdemona’s opinion stands in opposition to one school of thought on humoralism, it is in keeping with another. Floyd-Wilson sees Desdemona’s words as reflecting an opinion expressed by Pseudo-Aristotle, Albertus Magnus, Jean Bodin and others that the African sun burnt away humours, leaving African bodies cool and dry.

¹⁰⁴ Pico 55.

Jay recalls people believed was its “potential for deception and the arousal of lascivious thoughts,” as well as for its ability to spawn monsters of imagination.¹⁰⁵

Second, they attributed to certain minds the capability to affect other imaginations by way of their own. Montaigne asserts, “the imagination should sometimes act not merely upon its own body, but on someone else’s.” For instance, he suggests, “[o]ne body can inflict an illness on a neighboring one (as can be seen in the case of the plague, the pox and conjunctivitis which are passed on from person to person).”¹⁰⁶ For Montaigne, then, the imagination both infects the other like a disease and can spread diseases through its work upon other minds. Montaigne here draws upon transitive theories of the imagination associated with the Neoplatonists and the Arab philosophers, rather than Aristotelean somatic theories, which deal mainly with the imaginations workings within the body of an individual.

In large part, this chapter is devoted to demonstrating the ways in which Iago embodies the kind of mind Montaigne talks of—one with a power like plague or poison. I want to suggest here also that as well as being a man with a contagious imagination, Iago represents the imagination itself, a faculty which is meant to serve higher faculties, yet rebels, deludes and forces false judgments. In short, Iago is not simply a portrait of the juggler’s imagination, but a portrait of the imagination itself as juggler.

¹⁰⁵ See Jay 44.

¹⁰⁶ See Screech’s translation of Montaigne 118.

Othello's Disordered Imagination

Audiences of the play are often confounded by the haste of what appears to be Othello's shift of allegiance.¹⁰⁷ What begins as a life-staking leap of faith in Desdemona's faithfulness ends in his freedom-forsaking captivation by Iago's insubstantial "heavenly shows" (2.3.352). In *Othello*, friend and foe alike discover truth in Iago's declaration: "He [Othello] is much changed" (4.1.268).¹⁰⁸ The play commonly represents this change as a mental illness characterized by ruling passions, jealous imaginings, and misguided reason. Lodovico even asks, "Are his wits safe? Is he not light of brain?" (4.1.269).¹⁰⁹ With failing judgment, Othello misdiagnoses the source of his illness. Blaming Desdemona rather than Iago for leaving his memory to resemble an "infectious house" (4.1.21), he may justify that murder which Montano calls a "monstrous act" (5.2.189).

Of such misguided judgments and consequent actions Pico asserts, "the faults of all monstrous opinions, and the defects of all judgments, are to be ascribed beyond all peradventure to the vices of phantasy."¹¹⁰ Pico's unequivocal assertion leaves little doubt as to Othello's diagnosis. His monstrous "defects" of judgment suggest

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Cavell relates, "One standing issue about the rhythm of *Othello's* plot is that the progress from the completion of Othello's love to the perfection of his doubt is too precipitous for the fictional time." Within this time, "Othello's mind continuously outstrips reality, in trance or dream or in the beauty or ugliness of his incantatory imagination; in which he visualizes possibilities that reason, unaided, cannot rule out" (128).

¹⁰⁸ Desdemona herself concedes, "My lord is not my lord" (3.4.121).

¹⁰⁹ On passions and humours, see the basis of Iago's plan, formulated through his scolding of Roderigo in 1.3.326-332. Also note Iago's charges of humoral imbalance (4.1.88) and overwhelming emotion (4.1.77). On jealousy and judgment, see 2.1.301-302.

¹¹⁰ See Pico, 49. While medieval thinkers commonly distinguished between "phantasy" and "imagination," Pico returns to Aristotle by treating the two as one and the same (Caplan 4).

defective imagination as outlined by Pico. Francis Bacon explains how what begins as a localized infection might develop into a fully debilitating disease of the imagination: "Infection is received (many times) by the Body Passive, but yet is by the Strength, and good Disposition thereof, Repulsed, and wrought out, before it be formed into a Disease."¹¹¹ Even if some prove immune, others, he suggests, are susceptible to full-blown disorders of imagination. Bacon sees the "Sicke," the "Fearfull," the "Superstitious," "Women," and those who misattribute authority as among those most vulnerable.¹¹² Pico, as I have mentioned, implies Moors are particularly susceptible to this disease; and Pico, Montaigne and Bacon all suggest that individuals with vivid imaginations, open-minded credulous persons, and those in the presence of controlling minds are at risk.

Othello either exhibits or is ascribed several qualities that early modern experts believed left the mind immunocompromised. He appears highly imaginative from the beginning of the play. Initially, this quality manifests itself in his ability to overlook social perceptions of blackness and to reinvent himself in the image of the romantic Christian hero.¹¹³ Othello also indicates the breadth of his imagination when he tells his "traveler's history" (1.3.130-145), which he represents as eyewitness accounts, though such accounts, as Mark Thornton Burnett suggests, might strike

¹¹¹ See Bacon 242-243.

¹¹² Bacon 243, 254.

¹¹³ As Stephen Greenblatt observes, this attempt at "self-fashioning" proves a dangerous inroad for Iago's "empathetic" recognition and improvisation (227-28).

even Shakespeare's audience as outdated, unbelievable fictions.¹¹⁴ Eventually, of course, the same imagination that he uses to woo his wife and recreate his own image will prove broad and receptive enough to wrongly imagine Desdemona as a source of his "contamination."¹¹⁵

Othello's susceptibility to suggestion might be caused in part by what is characterized as the general openness of his character and the transparency of his imagination. While Othello views his "free and unhoused condition" (1.2.26) as the antithesis of enslavement, Iago cites Othello's unfixity as a means to enslave his passions and imagination. Throughout the play, Iago represents Othello's "free and open nature" (1.3.390), his "credulous[ness]" (4.1.44), and his "changeable" will (1.3.346), as indicative of a "weak function" (2.3.348) open to and pliable for "refashioning."¹¹⁶ Othello's imagination is, coincidentally, most open to view in a moment that seems to mark the height of his powers of imagination. When Desdemona attests to having seen "Othello's visage in his mind" (1.3.252), she suggests an uncanny connection of deep love and his admirable ability to creatively

¹¹⁴ Burnett suspects that these stories of "anthropophagi, and men whose heads / Do grow beneath their shoulders" (1.3.142-44) would have smacked of "an outmoded 'monstrous' exoticism," and aroused doubt in the minds of readers (102).

¹¹⁵ Othello is motivated, in part, by Iago's words: "...strangle her in her bed, / even the bed she hath contaminated" (4.1.207-208). For Othello's suggestion that his memory has been infected, see 4.1.21, and also numerous toxic conceits—delivered or directed by Iago—as, at once, "medicine" (4.1.44) "poison" (1.1.68, 3.3.326) and "plague" (1.1.71). Othello's conflation here likely reflects convention. In his discussion of the scapegoat mechanism, René Girard has written that accused doctor/sorcerers from the period (most notably Jews blamed for spreading illness) were commonly sought by high-ranking English officials who associated their power to cure with the power to cause sickness" (Girard 46).

¹¹⁶ I borrow this last term from Greenblatt and am indebted to his ideas concerning Othello's "narrative fashioning" at the hands of an "improvising" cognitive colonist (237; 222-254).

reformulate prescribed judgments. At the same time, she betrays Othello's psychological transparency, which Iago will eventually seize upon.

Several instances in the play—most notably his abrupt weavings of the handkerchief narratives—suggest Othello's openness may extend to an embrace of magic and to superstitious thinking. In his highly influential *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas notes that while magic enjoyed a certain popularity in practice, “provok[ing] any person to unlawful love” remained illegal and often harshly punishable into the seventeenth century.¹¹⁷ Othello's self-purported use of love magic, then, would likely associate civil lawlessness with his character—a disregard for order perhaps reflecting a lawless imaginative faculty prone to superstition.

In turn, and finally, Othello's associations with superstition and witchcraft further associate him with the susceptible and fertile feminine.¹¹⁸ Iago continually characterizes Othello's imagination as a fertile womb incubating the “monstrous birth” Iago promises to deliver (1.3.403). As I have already mentioned, Othello himself begins to represent his own jealous suspicion as a “strong conception” making him “groan” as in labour (5.2.55-56).

Juggling Imagination

¹¹⁷ See Thomas 245.

¹¹⁸ For more on Othello's associations with the feminine see Karen Newman. Writing in response to authors, including Stephen Greenblatt, who highlight similarities between Iago's and Othello's structuring narratives, Newman adds, “Othello both figures monstrosity and femininity *and* at the same time represents the white male norms the play encodes through Iago” (Newman 87).

Pico, Bacon and Montaigne all took a special interest not only in the potential deficiencies of the imagination, but in the way such imaginative disorders could be either brought about or exacerbated by potent imaginations capable of wounding, infecting, or inseminating passive bodies. Discussing the powers of the imagination, Montaigne writes, “when the imagination is vehemently shaken it sends forth darts which may strike an outside object.”¹¹⁹ As an example of this he relates a story of Scythian women who were said to kill men through their looks. He also recalls legends of tortoises and ostriches that by some “ejaculative vertue” of their eyes hatch their eggs by looking at them.¹²⁰

Turning to examples from his own day, Bacon sees the juggling magician as the quintessence of a potent mind capable of forcibly implanting thoughts in other imaginations. Bacon explains to his readers how he recounted to an acquaintance the story of a juggler’s bedazzling card trick performed upon two men. When Bacon suggested to his acquaintance that in guessing the card secretly picked by the volunteer the juggler had read the volunteer’s mind, his acquaintance wisely suggested rather the juggler was “Inforcing....a Thought vpon him [the volunteer], and Binding his Imagination by a Stronger [Imagination—the juggler’s own].”¹²¹ In the end the purpose of Bacon’s story is to validate the opinion of his acquaintance and to suggest that the juggler could not read minds, but instead operated by

¹¹⁹ See Screech’s translation of Montaigne 118.

¹²⁰ The words “ejaculative vertue” appear in many translations of Montaigne, including Charles Cotton’s famous 1877 translation, 109. Therefore, I include it here. All the other quotations from Montaigne reprinted in this dissertation are from Screech’s edition, unless indicated otherwise.

¹²¹ Bacon 253.

establishing his authority and credibility by working upon an impressionable mind eager to believe. In part Bacon is talking here about “forcing” a card, using suggestion and psychology to make the tricked believe that he or she has guessed the right card (forcing a card is still a common operation used in card tricks today), and yet Bacon is suggesting that more than suggestion is at work here. The juggler works by “force” or “binding,” which Agrippa explains in his *Occult Philosophy*. According to Agrippa, the binding of weaker to stronger imaginations is a quasi-physical, quasi-spiritual transitive operation by which spirits or subtle vapours of the blood are emitted through the eyes and work on another like an infection.¹²²

Unlike their philosophical counterparts, Reginald Scot, Samuel Rid and Thomas Hill spend less time meditating on the physiological workings of imagination. Rather, they discuss at length the operational strategies by which juggling and natural magic generally create convincing appearances and work upon spectators’ imaginations. Scot more than the others demonstrates a commitment to preventing abuses caused in large part by credulity; the notion that modern witches can do any more than the Pharaoh’s magicians (who were nothing else but superior jugglers) “has no truth at all either of action or essence, beside the bare imagination....”¹²³

¹²² See Agrippa *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (1651): “CHAP. LXIII. How the passions of the mind change the proper body”; “CHAP. LXVIII. How our mind can change, and bind inferiour things to that which it desires”; CHAP. LXV. How the Passions of the Mind can work out of themselves upon anothers Body”; and “CHAP. L. Of Fascination, and the Art thereof.”

¹²³ See Scot on credulity, 1-8; Scot on the belief in witches and witches compared to the Pharaoh’s magicians, 318.

In his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Reginald Scot explores jugglery with equal measures of the skeptical Christian's orthodoxy and the magic enthusiast's affection. According to Scot, when performing without pretence and for the purpose of promoting mirth and harmless amusement, jugglers are:

not only tollerable, but greatly commendable, so they abuse not the name of God, nor make the people attribute unto them his power, but alwaies acknowledge wherein the art consisteth, so as thereby the other unlawfull and impious arts may be by them the rather detected and bewraied.¹²⁴

For Scot, then, juggling is praiseworthy when its ends are beneficent and its means openly acknowledged—in other words, when it plays the accomplice to Scot's own project: detecting tricks and laying bare the secrets of that which has passed, too long, for supernatural conjuring. In his argument Scot takes on the “adversaries” of “yoong ignorance and old custome” as he promises to correct the blindness of the blear-eyed.¹²⁵ Holding up a candle to the true nature of magic, he will illuminate practices heretofore sunken in the depths of darkness and misunderstanding.¹²⁶

A work largely plagiarized from Scot, Samuel Rid's *The Art of Iugling* distinguishes, as *Discovery* does, more acceptable from less acceptable forms of

¹²⁴ Scot 321.

¹²⁵ Scot sig. A6v.

¹²⁶ See sig. A7r. In the text this promise emerges through a complex analogy and takes the form of a Protestant lesson about the importance of industrious searching and knowledge vs. ignorance. Scot goes on to compare god-given knowledge (or more accurately, it is implied here, the ability to search out and know the nature of magic) to a talent that, like a candle, should be used rather than snuffed out under a barrel (sig. A7r). While Scot uses the image of the candle here metaphorically to suggest honest inquiry and illumination, later he will discuss candles as a theatrical prop used by jugglers to deceive sight.

juggling. Rid's work is unique in more than one respect, however. While Rid expresses admiration for certain skilled, professional jugglers, he condemns others, using horticultural and especially epidemiological metaphors to describe them. In doing this, Rid tells us something about cultural perceptions of jugglers and especially those ur-jugglers known in early modern England as "Egiptians."¹²⁷

Rid poaches Scot verbatim when, after apologizing for exposing the tricks of honest professionals who make a living by way of their art, he says that there are individuals "whose doings héerein are not onely tollerable, but greatly commendable, so they abuse not the name of God, nor make the people to attribute unto them his power, but alwaies acknowledge wherein the Art consisteth."¹²⁸ Rid suggests elsewhere in his text that jugglers generally work by natural means and by legerdemain—accomplished usually through the "nimbleness...of their hands" and through deceptions of both the eye and ear.¹²⁹ The notion that any juggler may call upon supernatural powers is a folly perpetrated by certain intolerable jugglers, and also by dim, superstitious people who attribute to the devil tricks which are in fact "nothing els [sic] but mere illusion, cosoning, and legerdemain."¹³⁰ While jugglers that operate under supernatural pretence comprise one kind of intolerable juggler, there are other overlapping pernicious types that he discusses: jugglers who by fraud

¹²⁷ Rid sig. B1r-B2v.

¹²⁸ Rid sig. B3r.

¹²⁹ See sig. B2v and sig. B3v.

¹³⁰ Rid implies that certain bad jugglers do not acknowledge the mundane nature of their art when he suggests that good jugglers "alwaies acknowledge wherein the art consisteth" (sig. B3r). For Rid's discussion of superstitious people who wrongfully attribute to jugglers supernatural powers, see sig. B2v.

cheat their marks out of money, and two semi-distinct groups which he lumps together under the name “Egyptians.”¹³¹ Rid traces the more insidious juggler’s history in his own country and, as was commonplace in the period, he constructs a false genealogy of “gypsies” as diasporic Egyptians. Rid writes that, in about the twentieth year of King Henry VIII’s reign:

Certaine Egiptians banished their cuntry (belike not for their good conditions) arived heere in England, who being excellent in quaint trickes and devises, not known heere at that time among us, were esteemed and had in great admiration, for what with [st]rangenesse of their attire and garments, together with their sleights and legerdemaines, they were spoke of farre and néere, insomuch that many of our English loyterers ioyned with them, and in time learned their craft and cosening. The speach which they used was the right Egiptian language, with whome our Englishmen conversing with, at last learned their language. These people continuing about the cuntry in this fashion, practising their cosening art of fast and loose, and legerdemain, purchased to themselues great credit among the cuntry people, and got much by Palmistry, and telling of fortunes: insomuch as the pittifully cosoned the poore cuntry girles, both of money...and the best of their apparrell.¹³²

Rid goes on to suggest that counterfeiting gypsies became such a problem that in the first two years of Phillip and Mary’s reign the crown issued a statue calling for the

¹³¹ On cheaters see sig. B1v.

¹³² Rid sig. B1v.

punishment of those who “tooke upon them the name of Egiptians,” or who “were séen in the company of vagabonds, calling themselves Egiptians, or counterfeiting, transforming, or disguising themselves by their apparrell, speech, or other behaviours like unto Egiptians.”¹³³ According to Rid, Elizabeth revived this statute in her reign. Nonetheless the spread of gypsy counterfeiting could not be stopped and continues until the time of Rid’s writing.¹³⁴

The previous passages and examples from Rid point to a number of themes in his writing at large. First, Rid’s “Egiptians” are like weeds or the plague. In his narrative they have overrun the country, practicing an art that has caught on quickly among the vagrant English population. We see in the passage above that Rid suggests English counterfeits emulated the appearance of Egyptian jugglers. The author implies that counterfeits did this in order to appear more legitimate (as “authentic” Egyptians were commonly seen in the period as the heirs to a long mystical tradition, traceable back to and beyond the Pharaoh’s magicians in “Exodus”). Mark Netzloff, on the other hand, argues that gypsies were classified somewhere in between foreigners and British subjects and thus appear to have enjoyed immunity from English vagabondage laws. Consequently, English jugglers emulated gypsies to evade these laws.¹³⁵ Whatever the real reason, Rid reports that English con artists went to great lengths to pass. As we shall see later, the author suggests that they even went so far as to darken their skin colour. The metaphors that Rid uses to describe Egyptians

¹³³ Rid sig. B2r.

¹³⁴ Rid sig. B2r-B2v.

¹³⁵ Netzloff, “Counterfeit Egyptians’ and Imagined Borders” 771, 773.

(real and counterfeit) bring to the fore the fear of contagion, which is always under the surface of his anxious rhetoric. These Egyptians are to him “pestiferous carbuncles in the commonwealth,” a “pestiferous people” which legal statutes like Elizabeth’s have failed to “roote out.”¹³⁶ Today, Rid says, “the contagion of cheating, is now grown...universall” and is sure to “bréed your great losse.”¹³⁷

Second, these passages intimate that for Rid such jugglers have forced the fields of perception, and especially visual perception, to a point of crisis. Generally, jugglers were thought to be adroit at passing one thing off as another before a spectator’s eyes, and at passing objects from one place to another without onlookers visually detecting the trick. This skill was known as “conveyance,” though the word “conveyance” was also used more broadly to describe the practice of juggling, any juggling trick, or even more broadly any underhanded contrivance.¹³⁸ Rid tells us that jugglers commonly conveyed objects by uttering some magical sounding formula, often, in his examples, accompanied by the words “passe passe.”¹³⁹ Juglers’ skills at conveyance and illusionism, as well as their reported talents at figure-casting (throwing astrological calculations), probably helped them earn the name “tregetours”—jugglers and mountebanks, according to the *OED*, but literally those who throw or cast across.¹⁴⁰ They were known for misleading (misdirecting) or even blurring vision. In Rid’s story the juggler’s stage tricks are performed on the larger

¹³⁶ Sig. B1r; sig. B2r; sig. B2r.

¹³⁷ Both quotations are from sig. D1r.

¹³⁸ For broader definitions of this word, see *OED* “conveyance,” Defs. 11b. and c.

¹³⁹ See Rid sig. B3v and sig B4v.

¹⁴⁰ See *OED* “figure-casting,” *vbl.n.* and “cast” *v.* Def. 39; See also “tregetour.”

stage of national culture, creating problems of resemblance, misrecognition, and the passing on of a social disease characterized by deception and racial passing.¹⁴¹

The writings of Scot and of Rid prescribe distinctions among jugglers—perhaps as an antidote to their nebulosity and their tendency to confute differences within and outside of their ranks. Such distinctions are, of course, fundamental to any socially-stratified culture, especially one such as existed in early modern England, where unchecked mobility of many sorts (geographical, social) could be difficult, temporary, or illegal. Good jugglers are transparent, and help bring “dark,” hidden, or obscure practices to light. Bad jugglers foolishly dabble or lay claims to the supernatural. They are ambulatory and contagious con artists, or they operate by obfuscation and disguise, pretending to be or passing as what they in fact are not. In many cases bad jugglers are all of these things. Both Rid’s and Scot’s distrust of a particular *kind* of juggler reflects a broader cultural distrust of playing with disguise and of playing (acting) more generally. As Linda Woodbridge claims, a period increasingly recognized for its newly emerging, inward subjectivities, “the sixteenth century was preoccupied with imposture and with infiltration...you couldn’t be sure who anyone was. Was your neighbour a witch, or a

¹⁴¹ Passing in the modern sense of racial or gender passing in particular is an early twentieth century usage (“pass, *v.*” Def. 43.a) but as early as the fifteenth century, “to pass for (also as)” could mean for an object or person to be taken for something that either it is or is not. The *OED* turns to Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* 1.2.54 for an example of this usage: “God made him, and therefore let him passe for a man.”

rogue/confidence man, or a light-skinned Moor?”¹⁴² Taking Scot’s example into account, we might add to Woodbridge’s list: was someone whom you had come across a white Englishman in blackface?

By encouraging heightened vigilance and restored vision, and in promising to illuminate what are often misrecognized as dark arts or dark gypsies, both Rid and Scot employ literary tropes common in works on magic, juggling, and cony-catching: lighting up the darkness, unmasking, uncovering, and discovering secrets, correcting the vision of the hazy-eyed, and helping people see past appearances into what a thing really was.¹⁴³ While tropes such as these saturate the works of these authors, so too do many other images—gardening, servitude (sometimes female servitude), poison, monstrosity, disease, and contagion—that were frequently deployed in other English and Continental works on juggling and natural magic. For instance, Cornelius Agrippa’s natural magician and his art is reminiscent of the explorer, the parent(s), the female servant and occasionally even the midwife, and the advanced gardener, who by nothing but natural means may bring flowers to bloom and plants to open up before their time:

Natural Magick therefore is that, which considering well the strength and force of Natural and Celestial beings, and with great curiosity labouring to discover their affections, produces into open Act the hidden and concealed

¹⁴² See Woodbridge “Imposters” 10. The electronic version of this article is numbered by paragraph rather than by page. Therefore, throughout this dissertation, any citation number for “Imposters” will (as 10. does here) indicate a paragraph number.

¹⁴³ See Woodbridge on this trope.

powers of Nature; so cupoling inferiour with superior faculties, by a mutual application thereof, that from thence many times great and marvelous Miracles have been effected: not so much by Art, as Nature, to whom Art onely shews her self a Hand-maid and Assistant in her operations. For Magicians, as the most accurate inquirers into Nature, taking along those things which are prepared by Nature, and applying Actives to Passives, oftentimes produce effects before the time ordained by Nature; which therefore the Vulgar take for Miracles, when they are notwithstanding onely natural Operations: as if any person should in March produce Roses, ripe Figs, or Garden-beans; or should cause Parsly to spring from the Seed into a perfect Plant in few hours; and greater things than these, as to cause Thunder, Clouds, Rain, Animals of divers sorts; and several transmutations and transigurations of living beings, such as Roger Bacon is said to have done by pure natural Magick.¹⁴⁴

It is language such as this that Linda Woodbridge talks about when she says

As Thomas Kuhn and others have shown, early science was often piggybacked on magical beliefs, and early natural philosophers—forerunners of our “scientists”— often applied the same language to uncovering nature’s ‘secrets’ as witch-hunters applied to unmasking occult practices of sorcery,

¹⁴⁴ This passage is taken from J.C.’s 1676 printing of Agrippa’s *De Incertitudine & Vanitate Scientiarum & Atrium* (1526), or *The Vanity of Arts and Sciences*, p. 111. In Ia. San. Gent’s earlier English translation, Agrippa’s word “ministra” is translated as “servaunte” rather than hand-maid, 55v. In 1533, portions of the *The Vanity*, including the selection reprinted above, were appended to his expanded version of *De Occulta Philosophia, Of Occult Philosophy* in the form of a retraction of that work.

and—we can add—as travel writers applied to secrets of darkest Africa and writers of ‘rogue literature’ applied to underworld practices.¹⁴⁵

We can also add they applied the same language that witchcraft debunkers like Scot applied to juggling practices.

As well as comparing the natural magician to a diligent discoverer, Agrippa compares him to a productive gardener. This association is not new and, in fact, echoes earlier defences by experimental philosophers of the Neoplatonic and Hermetic magical traditions. For instance, answering those detractors who charged all magicians with poisoning the body politic, tampering with nature, usurping reproductive powers, and conjuring spirits, Marsilio Ficino defends natural magic by turning to the analogy of agriculture:

I mention natural magic which by natural things seeks to obtain the services of the celestials for the prosperous health of our bodies. This power, it seems, must be granted to minds which use it legitimately, as medicine and agriculture are justly granted, and all the more so as the activity which joins heavenly things to earthly is more perfect.¹⁴⁶

The metaphor of the gardener/servant magician persists into the seventeenth century, where it is used in English writings on natural magic and on jugglery operating through natural means. Meanwhile, gardening tricks were among those most frequently mentioned in juggling how-to manuals. For instance, in *Naturall and*

¹⁴⁵ Woodbridge, “Imposters” par. 3.

¹⁴⁶ Selections trans. and rpt. by Zambelli are from *De Vita Libri Tres*, or *Three Books on Life*. See Zambelli 23-24.

artificiall conclusions (1581), a work predating Scot's by three years, Thomas Hill discusses "How to make Rootes to haue what proper forme you will on them," and right after explaining how to make a ring dance, reveals the secret behind turning a white flower red.¹⁴⁷ Reginald Scot, like Agrippa turns to gardening metaphors to describe the art of natural magic: "naturall magicke is nothing else, but the worke of nature. For in tillage, as nature produceth corne and hearbs; so art, being natures minister, prepareth it."¹⁴⁸ Years later, we will recall, Rid relies on plant metaphors as he tries to weed out rampantly spreading bad jugglery from acceptable practice.

While natural magicians and jugglers who used natural magic were often compared to both gardeners and a variety of plant life—from the pestilent and invasive to cultivated cures in the making—they were also associated with the monstrous. Jugglers and other cozeners of the public were often accused of monstrous transgressions, a charge which both Scot (in his debunking of demonic magic) and Rid in many ways try to correct, but which Rid also reinforces in his diatribe against "Egiptians" and their imitators. The association of jugglers with monsters was probably inspired in part by the fact that jugglers and other magicians reportedly performed acts of monster-making and other strange illusions.

Thomas Hill explains how to conjure and behold oddities in a section on "How to see many and divers straunge sightes in an Urinall," while Scot devotes

¹⁴⁷ See Hill sig. B5r, sig. B5v.

¹⁴⁸ Scot 290.

almost an entire chapter to “How to produce or make monsters by art magike....”¹⁴⁹ In his chapter, Scot describes a trick that must have been the inspiration for Puck’s transformation of Bottom in Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Scot writes that in his age any persons who suggested that with charms or words they could make an asses head appear on a man’s shoulders would be accused of demonic magic. Yet, in truth, the feat of making one *appear* like an ass was more than natural magic. Scot writes, “if J. Bap. Neap. experiments be true, it is no difficult matter to make it seem so.” To do so, an ass’s or horse’s head should be cut off when the animal is still alive. It should be placed in an earthen vessel with oil added. The vessel should be covered and the cover daubed with loam. The mixture should boil over a fire for three days, after which time the hair should be beaten into powder and added to the mixture. Then writes Scot:

annoint the heads of the standers by, and they shall seeme to have horses or asses heads. If beasts heads be anointed with the like oile made of a mans head, they shall seeme to have mens faces, as divers authors soberlie affirme. If a lamp be anointed herewith, everie thing shall seem most monstrous.¹⁵⁰

Scot also writes of monstrous or unusual births, which he suggests are the product of sights impressed by natural operations upon the imagination: “We read also of a woman that brought forth a young blacke Moore, by means of an old blacke Moor who was in her house at the time of her conception, whom she beheld in

¹⁴⁹ Hill sig. C7v; Scot 313.

¹⁵⁰ Scot 315.

phantasie, as is supposed...¹⁵¹ One of the most interesting things about this story is its placement and purpose in the chapter titled “How some are abused with Natural Magick, and sundry Examples thereof when Illusion is added thereunto...” Scot’s report of magical miscegenation is prefaced with the example of Jacob’s parti-coloured sheep. He begins by citing the story of the sheep as one of many “natural and secret Experiments” we read about in the scriptures. The story to which Scot alludes of course is the one in which Jacob tricks his uncle Laban. Having been previously conned by his uncle out of his wages, “Iaakób” enters into a deal with Laban that he will receive every spotted sheep and spotted goat, along with every black lamb from the flock. Jacob then places wooden rods streaked white from peeling the bark in the watering troughs of the sheep in heat, and as a result of this, the story tells us, the animals “brought forthe yong of party colour, and with smale and great spottes” (Genesis 30:39).¹⁵²

What Scot appears to do in his chapter is use Jacob’s story to illustrate the impressive powers of images, especially those of darkness or of dark and light mixed, upon a (re)productive imagination.¹⁵³ Placed in the context of stories about abuses of imagination and deluding con artists, Jacob emerges in Scot’s text as the

¹⁵¹ Scot 312.

¹⁵² For the story of the parti-coloured lambs, see Genesis 30.26-43.

¹⁵³ The idea that Jacob’s lambs were the product of tricks played upon the imagination was not a new one. In *City of God*, Augustine suggests as much when he compares Jacob’s trick, a natural experiment with “material things,” to the tricks demons played on the Egyptians using “phantoms of a bull” to influence the mind and offspring of a pregnant cow. We may presume from Augustine that these phantoms looked like Apis, the patched bull the Egyptians worshipped. From this sight, a pregnant cow’s desire was stimulated and caused marks to appear on its offspring, a sign the people took for miracles (XVIII ch. 5, 767-768).

quintessential juggler, and one not above suspicion for creating something both natural *and* perhaps, a little monstrous.¹⁵⁴

I want to suggest here that Iago in Shakespeare's play comes to represent a twisted version of Jacob the juggler in Scot's story, and perhaps of the other biblical stories of Jacob's disguise and early heel-grabbing. While Iago, as I have remarked, sounds much like "Iocus," it also closely resembles "Iacob" (supplanter; heel-grabber). Iago plants suggestions of black and white mixing in the minds of the Venetians, including the superstitious and impressionable Brabantio, believer in dreams. When Iago taunts him with "Even now, now, very now an old black ram / Is tuppung your white ewe" (1.1.88-92), his ovine conceits produce foul thoughts of mottled and monstrous offspring in Brabantio's imagination. Brabantio, like the lambs he imagines, will then reproduce images of corruption in his suit to the Duke. In both juggling texts and in the play *Othello*, images of monstrosity, poison, pestilence and darkness replicate rampantly—though in *Othello* they are skillfully managed and re-directed by the most of inscrutable of sources.

Iago

I have all but directly suggested that we may view Iago as one of those early modern individuals who, whether by determination of the stars, the economy of his passions, the force of his imagination—in short by some natural process not entirely within his

¹⁵⁴ A marginal note in the Geneva Bible to 30:37 clarifies that "Iaakób herein used no deceit: for it was Gods commandment." Considering Scot's (and Augustine's) context for the story though, it would appear he is not convinced.

control—was capable of affecting other minds. Even with the growing skepticism concerning witchcraft, such beliefs were tenacious, not only among witch-tryers and the common people, but among “enlightened” natural philosophers and skeptics of spiritual and demonic magic, who still left open the possibility that natural, transitive operations of images and the imagination were possible. All this is not to suggest, however, that Iago’s role is entirely pre-determined by physiology or quasi-metaphysics in the play, or that his operations upon Othello merely happen because in the world of the play he is blessed (or cursed) with a potent and dangerously empathic mind and Othello is blessed and cursed with a deeply imaginative and impressionable one.¹⁵⁵

Iago precipitates Othello’s downfall in large part because Iago possesses both a keenly developed skill set associated largely with jugglers and a world view about perception and the passions that allows him to practice those skills. Iago is on one hand adept at mental improvisation, imagination, and the ability to plume up his will—in other words the ability to control his own internal cognitive climate. On the other hand, like the juggler or the cautioning juggling detector, he is skilled at recognizing the problems inherent in the fields of sensory perception, imagination and consequently, judgment. Similar to the juggler he is skilled at preying upon those weaknesses which, in his opinion and that of many in the period, are more acute in certain social and racialized groups, including blackamoors, who were

¹⁵⁵ Among the imaginative one can of course include Desdemona, who claims she fell in love with Othello because she saw his “visage in his mind” (1.3.252).

considered particularly prone to superstition. Some of the principal operations by which Iago works, taking problems of perception and imagination into account, are dissembling and disguise and the most common of juggling strategies, visual misdirection.

Scot in his *Discovery* suggests that juggling is accomplished largely as the result of visual “abuse” and misapprehension: “And as much as I professe rather to discover than teach these mysteries, it shall suffice to signifie unto you, that the endeavour and drift of jugglers is onelie to abuse mens eies and judgements.”¹⁵⁶ While jugglers abuse the eyes of those more susceptible to suggestion, they can also deceive the eyes of kings, “making false things to [them] appeare as true.”¹⁵⁷ One of the ways this is accomplished is by the feat of misdirection, which I touched upon earlier in the chapter. Scot speaks of misdirection (and also “patter,” or distracting talk) here when he writes that “juglers (which be inferior Conjurors) speake certaine strange words of course, to lead awaie the eie from espieng the manner of their conveyance, whilst they may induce the mind...” (146-147). Iago, as we shall see later, is a master of such misdirection.

Iago appears to have a vexed relationship to vision and its reliability. At times he seems to privilege eyesight as dependable, as well as to suggest that his own visual and supervisory faculties are superior. This is evidenced in his claim that his visual and experiential familiarity with battle makes him a more reliable choice for

¹⁵⁶ Scot 321.

¹⁵⁷ Scot 109.

Lieutenant than the inexperienced Michael Cassio, who he suggests has not sufficiently seen the battlefield (1.1.8-33). Of course, in this case the play undermines the supremacy of sight by showing the visually experienced Iago to be a poor choice for any ancillary role. Iago appears to see clear sightedness, or sight as opposed to blindness for that matter, as that which separates humans from weak and dispensable animals, or similarly useless animalistic humans. We glean this first point from his advice to Roderigo to “Drown cats and blind puppies” before you trade your humanity with creatures ruled by passion (1.3.334-336). Though Iago seems to despise blindness, seeing it as a condition of fools and domesticated animals, like any juggler the success of his entire project relies on the unreliability of eyesight, its ability to be redirected and reinterpreted so as to incite the audience’s imagination.

As early as the first act, Iago demonstrates a familiarity with proto-scientific understandings of the mind. He relies on this understanding to bind a former slave’s free imagination. Desdemona claims that Othello is the antithesis of base, jealous creatures (3.4.26-29), but Iago relies on what he already knows by experience: that the Moor is of a “free and open nature” and thus credulous (2.1.399), and that he is highly imaginative. Iago combines this experiential knowledge with the persistent social and scientific fictions about blackamoors (we will recall Pico’s suggestion that Africans are predisposed to flights of the imagination). Iago attributes those visual deficiencies and animal passions that he sees in “blind puppies” to Othello, and he sees Othello’s deficiencies as an opportunity to “put the Moor / At least into a jealousy so strong / That judgment cannot cure” (2.1.294-296).

Iago distinguishes himself from the realm of the supernatural and the superstitious. This domain, the play suggests, with its gypsy juggler and an Othello increasingly tied to magical beliefs, is a realm of dark arts and dark skin. Rather, he suggests, “we work by wit and not by witchcraft” (2.2.372), and describes himself as ruled by reason: “If the balance of our lives / had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, / the blood and baseness of our natures would / conduct us to most preposterous conclusions” (1.3.324-7).

I will take a moment to make a few observations about Iago’s claims and their unreliability. First, Iago’s private invocations of “hell and night” contradict his public disavowals. I am not suggesting here that Iago is a witch in the supernatural sense, but that shrouded as he is in images of hell and binding imaginations (still often believed to be demonic rather than natural in the popular imagination), he may well have been construed as such by members of Shakespeare’s audience. Second, as I imply above, there is something at stake for Iago in distinguishing himself from a world of witchcraft and superstition that is in the play associated with blackamoors and gypsies, when in fact Iago unmasked will prove a “blacker devil.” Iago is thus in certain ways an inversion of the counterfeit Egyptian. He is rather one black at heart masquerading around in whiteface and contaminating the body politic. Third, the distinction Iago proposes between mental powers (including acuity) and witchcraft is a false one, at least in the contexts of early modern philosophical representations. As I have suggested, many natural philosophers saw binding or fascination as a natural phenomenon resulting from strong minds and imaginations. As Reginald Scot notes, “Sometimes jugglers are called Witches. Sometimes also they are called Sorcerers,”

but they are really only exceedingly clever individuals able to “seduce others with violent persuasions.”¹⁵⁸

Placing Iago even more squarely in the realms of magical thinking is his use of gardening metaphors to describe his mental processes. Expressing a distinction between body and mind, Iago curiously likens his will to a gardener with the ability to cultivate and control his body (and presumably the bodies of others). While Iago’s horticultural emphasis, along with other purported valorisations of wit and reason may appear to evince his rational vs. magical sensibility, he seems instead to twist the ideas of natural magicians like Agrippa who compare the procreative and intellectual powers of the natural magicians to the gardener. This rhetoric also defends his operations by grounding them in natural processes.

Iago perhaps protests too much when he eschews the passions and presents reason as his ruling faculty. Robert Heilman argues that the play suggests Iago is driven by some unfathomable desire, rather than by any rationally grounded motivation.¹⁵⁹ He perceptively observes that the charge that Othello has slept with Emilia is “an afterthought...: ‘I hate the Moor; / And it is thought abroad,’ etc.” The conjunction implies that “hate is prior and a motive is then discovered and happily pounced upon...Iago is improvising.”¹⁶⁰ In the context of the play, Iago’s improvisations of motivation appear conjurations of inflammatory scenarios whose

¹⁵⁸ Both quotations from Scot 110.

¹⁵⁹ Heilman 22.

¹⁶⁰ Heilman 31.

only purpose is to incite his *own* imagination as a means of “plum[ing] up” his will and subjecting others to it (1.3.293).¹⁶¹

The improvisational theatre in Iago’s head is reflected also by an unmistakable theatricality on the social stage. As many have pointed out, Iago is a showman—an actor and director of the plot.¹⁶² More specifically, though, he emerges as a particular kind of showman. Iago’s ability to misdirect the eye and possess imagination recalls a particular kind of theatrical enterprise that depended on keen psychological awareness: fairground jugglery. Iago deploys “flag and sign” (1.2.156), orchestrates “heavenly shows” (2.3.352), and embodies strategic seeming as a means of distinguishing his own cognitive functions and practicing overwhelming agency upon an instrumental cast. Iago’s act continually captures the imaginations of the play’s characters, who grant him a credibility indicated by his appellation, “honest Iago” (2.3.334). We will remember that establishing credibility and authority is, according to Bacon, one of the means by which jugglers fix the imaginations of their audiences.

Mirroring the play’s tone-setting political diversion, Iago’s production also plays upon fears of a vulnerable body politic. While Iago misdirects vision, displacing his own penchant for psychological enchantment upon Othello, the Turkish fleet stages a decoy assault on Rhodes. Thus the primary operational strategy of the play’s

¹⁶¹ My conclusion here is a variation on Heilman’s brilliant observation: Iago “uses his mind” to “convert feeling into action (and even the ‘will’ which he has defined as the controller of the body he will now ‘plume up... / In double knavery” (Heilman 22).

¹⁶² Auden suggests he is both a performer and a man of action; Heilman and Greenblatt both focus on his skills of improvisation.

villain becomes, like that of the Turks who pretend to head for Rhodes instead of their real goal Cyprus, the production of “pageant[s] / To keep us in false gaze...” (1.3.18-19). Of course Iago in his denial, “Nay, it is true, or else I am a Turk (2.1.114),” ironically reveals his true status as the Turk in hiding, the original imposter/stranger whom Othello through his begriming will become. It is worth noting here that “Iago” is a *Spanish*, not an Italian name.

One of Iago’s foundational feats of misdirection is his displacement or projection of his tendencies toward conjuring and con-artistry from himself onto Othello. Driven by Iago’s feats of imaginative manipulation, Brabantio names Othello Venice’s diabolical poison-pushing mountebank (1.3.60-61), when it is Iago who converts substances (turns “virtue into pitch” (2.3.360)), offers up false cures, does tricks, and makes monsters appear in their visible absence. A mountebank was more than simply a potion pusher or quack doctor. Butterworth explains that “mountebank” was another name for someone who performed juggling tricks, a suggestion supported by Englishman Thomas Coryate in his travelogue *Coryat’s Crudities* (1611).¹⁶³ Coryate describes Venetian mountebanks as skilled and versatile entertainers whose name, traceable to the Italian “Montare” (to ascend) and “banco” (bench), signifies the temporary stages on which they perform. The mountebanks of which Coryate speaks play music, amuse the crowd with their oratory skills, play juggling knacks, and praise the virtues of their healing potions. One of the things about them that Coryate finds most impressive, though, is their ability to improvise:

¹⁶³ See Butterworth 3.

For they would tell their tales with such admirable volubility and plausible grace, even *extempore*, and seasoned with that singular variety of elegant jests and witty conceits, that they did often strike great admiration into strangers” who would congregate around them and buy their potions and other wares.¹⁶⁴

While Coryate’s portrayal of the Venetian mountebank in some ways fits Othello with his wooing tales of travel, it more closely resembles Iago. Iago is the witty jester and practical joker (Auden)—though his “alehouse” (2.1.38-39) humour is hardly delicate (2.1.99-166). As Michael Bristol keenly observes, Iago is a provocateur of degrading, abject laughter.¹⁶⁵ In addition to being an improviser, he is also a peddler of infectious conceits that he sells as honest remedies, in his words, like poisons:

The Moor already changes with my poison:
 Dangerous conceits are in their natures poisons,
 Which at the first are scarce found to distaste,
 But with a little act upon the blood.
 Burn like the mines of Sulphur. (3.3.325-329)

From the beginning, Iago points outwardly and in visual and verbal gesture suggests, in effect, “look not at me, but over there.” He explicitly guides and misguides the look approximately eighteen times in the play with the directives

¹⁶⁴ Coryate 272-275.

¹⁶⁵ According to Bristol in *Big-Time*, “Iago is the Bakhtinian ‘agelast’, that is, one who does not laugh.” He makes jokes at the expense of others, but he does not “enjoy the social experience of laughter *with* others” (190).

“look,” “mark,” “observe,” or “watch”—causing Othello to fixate on and inaccurately interpret actions, which by themselves fail to deliver “ocular proof” (3.3.360). Under the direction of Iago, Othello does the opposite of what Pico advises: “withdraw from thinking about...[unseemly images], and turn to something else,” lest you fall into “trances” just as those who have “suffered fainting spells, and even been driven to insanity” (61). Pico’s warnings are justified within this play, where Iago’s increasing barrage of vivid “dangerous conceits” results in Othello’s “epileps[ies],” fit[s] or “trance[s]”—all apparent symptoms of his increasingly debilitated imagination (3.3.326-7, 4.1.51, 4.50-1, 4.1.43).

Iago’s Knacks

Thus far I have argued that according to early modern philosophers writing about the imagination, Othello would appear a likely candidate for contracting disorders of the imagination—a diagnosis the play itself seems largely to confirm. I have suggested that what is presented as Othello’s monstrous degeneration is explainable, not only by what was constructed in proto-racist discourses as a “natural” susceptibility, but by what were assumed to be external forces able to work upon other imaginations by way of legerdemain and natural magic. Finally, I have focused my attention on one of the principal operational strategies by which Iago is able to perform what appear to be feats of theatrical magic, or jugglery. In this next section of this chapter, I take a closer look at Iago’s theatre in practice. In particular, I examine the play’s central diversions or conveyances, noting their similarity to some of the most commonly discussed juggling tricks.

As Philip Butterworth, Barbara Mowat, and Louis B. Wright have each thoroughly demonstrated, magical performance and the theatre of Shakespeare and his contemporaries went hand in hand. In the pamphlet “Mr. William Prynne his Defence of Stage Plays, or a Retracting of a former Book of his called *Histriomastix*” (1649), the author recounts a common accusation against actors: that “many of them have swearing and blaspheming in them, many of them have cozening, cheating, legerdemain, fraud, deceit, jugglings, impostures and other lewd things which may teach young people evil things.”¹⁶⁶ There were many reasons why antitheatricalists associated the theatre with jugglery. As both Butterworth and Wright extensively demonstrate, many of the stage tricks adapted by English theatre companies were learned directly from stage jugglers.¹⁶⁷ Juggling acts were often incorporated into prologues, interludes and the plots of plays proper. The same stages that hosted plays by Shakespeare’s contemporaries attracted crowds for magical attractions.¹⁶⁸ From the fairground to the public stage, from literature exposing the secret operations of jugglery to experience gleaned through dilettante dabblings in the art, Shakespeare and his theatregoers were almost certainly familiar with the juggler’s signature knacks.

¹⁶⁶ Wright provides this example on 270. For original quotation see p. 6 of *Mr. William Prynne his Defence of Stage Plays* (1649).

¹⁶⁷ See Wright, especially 284. See also Butterworth, especially his “Chapter 9: Stage tricks” 159-180.

¹⁶⁸ Mowat (1981) suggests that “legerdemain artists” played at London theatres including the Hope and the Fortune (31n page 298). In *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage: Dramatic Companies and Players*, Gerald Eades Bentley recalls, “William Vincent was the leader of a company of tight-rope walkers which certainly offered competition to the provincial companies. Vincent may well have performed at the Fortune, for juggling and tight-rope walking are known to have been presented at that theatre, and Vincent lived in the parish” (Vol. 2, 612).

Mowat and Wright have each discussed Shakespeare's *Tempest* as a play that brings such tricks to the stage. In particular, Ariel in his conjuration of a banquet performs an act similar to a disappearing feast trick that Agrippa tells us a juggler by the name of Pasetes performed.¹⁶⁹ Critics, however, have for the most part ignored the more subtle feats performed in *Othello*, a work which seems to be *The Tempest*'s shadow-play—Shakespeare's proleptic meditation on the benevolent magus Prospero's darker double. Substantial critical attention has been paid to economies of light and dark in Shakespeare's *Othello*.¹⁷⁰ Less attention has been given to how the play's prominent images of things brought to light recall a defining trope in early modern magic texts on natural magic and those on juggling; how *Othello*'s representations of contagious blackness reflect fears of unlocalizable darkness that underlay texts treating the magic of jugglers and gypsies (Rid); how Iago seems to use lighting to set the stage for his project; and most interestingly perhaps, in what ways Iago's operations recall popular stage magic tricks that use light as a stage property.

Iago's successful production is owed to his knack for re-inscribing stubborn notions that monstrous excesses and inadequacies are legible on the black body, and that blackness is infectious, threatening to contaminate the Venetian bloodline and national purity. Iago's attributions of darkness to others are perhaps most noteworthy in that they are brought about paradoxically. His projects of "darkening" Othello's

¹⁶⁹ Mowat relates this trick in "Prospero, Agrippa" 298. See Agrippa *Vanities* chapter 48 "Of Iuglinge": "we have reade also that one Pasetes a Jugler was wonte to shewe to strangers a very sumptuose banket, when it pleased him to cause it vanishe awaie, all they which sate at the table beinge disappointed both of meate & drinke" (62v).

¹⁷⁰ See for instance Heilman's "More Fair than Black: Light and Dark in *Othello*" (1951); Doris Adler's "The Rhetoric of Black and White in *Othello*" (1974); Michael Neill (1989); and Newman (1991).

soul and sight, of making monstrous Othello and his ideas, depend upon figurative illumination and diversions of light. We see an example of this first idea (figurative illumination) where public discovery of Othello's monstrosity (the world's light) is the culminating step in Iago's project of monster-making.¹⁷¹

When Iago, promising to lead Othello tenderly by the nose like an ass, "engender[s]" the conception of a monstrous birth, one which "Hell and night / Must bring to the world's light" (1.3.401-404), he invokes the powers of imagination tied to natural magic, the art of natural magic itself as described by Agrippa, and two sides of the juggling coin: tricksters, and those exposing them through the medium of print. Iago's "engender[ing]" of a thought that conceives or conceives of a monstrous birth aligns him with those who, through forcible imaginations and fixation upon often dark or dark/white images, bring such births into being. Iago is on one hand the impressionable and impressive maternal imagination. He is on the other the master of animals and animal husbandry, who through cunning and understanding of impressionable imaginations affects the fantastic production of atypical black and white minglings, in Iago's case, even at the level of language (Iago's dark/light paradox). In other words, Iago's scenario here (as well as his interaction with Brabantio, mentioned earlier) is a twisted adaptation, perhaps an adaptation of an adaptation: the story of Jacob and his parti-coloured lambs as retold in texts on natural magic, juggling, and the powers of the imagination.

¹⁷¹ "The Moor is of a free and open nature, / That thinks men honest that but seem to be so / And will as tenderly be led by the nose / As asses are / I have't. It is engender'd. Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light" (1.3.401-404).

A closer look at the stage tricks explicitly outlined in juggling manuals suggests that his *literal* operation, of conjuring the appearance of blackness, finds its counterpart on the juggling actor's stage. So too does Iago's orchestration of candles as a means of heightening illusion. In juggling treatises, candles were one of the juggler's most essential props. Thomas Hill's book, for instance, is riddled with candle tricks. In Hill's descriptions flames resist extinction, causing the illusion of never-ending illumination; candles fashioned with certain animal essences make monstrous animal shapes appear; candles light up dark or wet places inhospitable to fire and attract animals, drawing them closer to the flame.¹⁷² Candles, lamps and other sources of illumination create the illusion of visibility or of seeing a thing clearly; and yet their actual function is often to entrap, transform, or to delude.

Iago and Shakespeare both invite the participation of only partially knowledgeable audience members/confederates by operating under the cover of darkness.¹⁷³ They do this in the figurative sense—for readers are initially left in the dark as to what Othello and others envision as his nobility of character. Instead we begin with Iago (and Roderigo; we will not meet Othello until later) who substitutes

¹⁷² See Hill, "To make a Candle that will not goe out..." (sig. A7v), "How to make thy Chamber appeare full of Snakes and Adders" (sig. B1r), "To make a Candle burne in the water" (sig. A3r), and "To take Fische by night" (sig. D4r).

¹⁷³ I include Roderigo among this group, as he does not know the entirety of Iago's intentions; neither perhaps does the improvising Iago. In "Prospero..." Barbara Mowat suggests that jugglers' confederates, often boys, were not free agents but were bound, like Ariel is to Prospero, into contracts of service. She says there is reason to believe "that the Jugler's assistant is one of those servants described in Renaissance handbooks for servants, a boy bound by contract to serve his master for certain years, and bound as well to be diligent, to be obedient, and to be truthful" (300). This dissertation will later challenge Mowat's suggestion that the juggler's assistant (in a sense another juggler) was necessarily a boy.

favourable and potentially enlightening characterizations of Othello with representations of black, bestial contamination.¹⁷⁴

Iago also works by darkness in the most literal sense—“Rous[ing]” Desdemona’s father at night (1.1.76). He so persuades Brabantio of his blindness in the “dull watch o’th’ night” (1.1.123) that Brabantio calls for corrective “Light,” demands prosthetic “tapers,” and accepts Roderigo’s explorer-like promise to “discover” (1.1.78) the monstrous Othello. But as in magic tricks, the surrogate light of candles fails to deliver real enlightenment to the beholder. Brabantio, for instance, achieves not a comprehensive vision of his daughter’s elopement and his son-in-law’s character, but a distorted picture of the couple’s bestial darkness from an obscured storyteller. In *Othello* what begins as misguiding light continues burning into the play’s final climax. Othello, threatening to snuff out Desdemona’s life like the candle he carries, watches her change shape before his eyes. In the dim candlelight, and with the aid of his imagination, she appears to him not as she really is, a loyal but imperfect human being, but as an icon of female divinity, “a statue of monumental alabaster” (5.2.5)¹⁷⁵ From here she falls into baser shapes: a betrayer of men and a “flaming minister” (5.2.6-8)—perhaps recalling the Latin “ministra,” or handmaid,

¹⁷⁴ “Even now, now, very now, an old black ram / Is tupping your white ewe” (1.1.88-89); “you’ll have your daughter cover’d with a Barbary / horse, you’ll have your nephews neigh to you; you’ll have coursers for cousins, and gennets for germans” (1.1.111-113); “your daughter and the Moor are [now] making the beast with two backs” (1.1.115-116).

¹⁷⁵ Othello’s fantasy here demonstrates what Cavell sees as the central problem of Othello: He has put Desdemona in the place of a God he can only know by faith (35, 126). As Cavell points out in his chapter “*Othello* and the Stake of the Other,” Othello’s transformation of his wife into alabaster prefigures Leontes’s transformation of Hermione into stone (125-126).

as well as alluding to Lucifer (light bearer). As Othello rehearses his future actions, he wavers:

Put out the light, and then put out the light: / If I quench thee, thou flaming minister, I can again thy former light restore, / Should I repent me; but once put out thy light...I know not where is that Promethean heat / That can thy light relume. When I have pluck'd thy / rose, I cannot give it vital growth again... (5.2.7-13).

Othello imagines himself as the agent of his dark and fallen angel's reillumination. He briefly entertains the notion than he may snuff out her life and give her spiritual life again. However, as his fantasies descend back toward earth (in the shift to the image of roses) he realizes illuminating the extinguished is a feat for gods.

Othello's candle fantasies are symbolic and, at least at first, metaphysical. Shakespeare's audience, on the other hand, may have taken his imagined feat more literally, connecting Othello's delusion to Thomas Hill's trick of making tapers appear to light by themselves. What Hill describes as a trick achieved by ointment and wicks joined by string most likely explains the operations behind the self-lighting tapers in Thomas Middleton's *A Game of Chess*.¹⁷⁶ Clearly candle tricks like this were common at both the fairground and the commercial playhouse, and even a symbolic representation of reillumination or self-illumination may well have triggered these associations.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ See Hill "*How to drawe many Candles the one after the other...*" sig. C5v.

¹⁷⁷ See Middleton (1625) British Library.

As I have already discussed, Samuel Rid in his introduction confronts fears of uncontrollable dark magic associated with the monstrous and demonic by debunking the counterfeit juggling Egyptian. Yet despite what seems to be on Rid's part an unconscious attempt to undermine or render inauthentic supernatural magic by calling attention to its replicability, ambulatory blackness emerges as even more dangerous. Described as a "pestiferous carbuncle," the plague of dissembling jugglers carries an insidious reproductive potential akin to viral replication. For Rid, dark English jugglers did more than feign the language of Gypsies, they were also notorious for "cullouring their faces and fashioning their attire...yet if you aske what they are, they dare no otherwise then say, they are Englishmen."¹⁷⁸ In Rid's account the dangers of passing emerge as more complex than might be imagined. With blackness granted a certain magical authority and impressive power, whiteness (as well as blackness) was rendered indeterminable, easily changeable, and subject to erasure. Jugglery treatises outline the way in which what we might now call racial appearances were changed. Sometimes they were altered by the use of makeup. Almost as often, it seems, the diffusion of light was used. Explaining a common trick,

Song.

Wonder worke some strange delight
 (This place was never yet without)
 To welcome thee the faire White House Knight,
 And to bring our hopes about,
 May from the Altar Flames aspire,
 Those Tapers set themselves on fire.
 May senselesse things our ioyes approve,
 The Images moove in a Daunce.

¹⁷⁸ Sig. B2r.

Hill informs his reader: “*To make folke seem blacke.* Put Oile Oliue in a Lampe, and putte thereto fine powder of grounde Glasse, and light it, and all that bee about it, will seem blacke as Egiptians.”¹⁷⁹

Hill also explains how to cast green and black hues upon one’s surroundings using illumination:

take the blacke iuyce or inke of the fish named a Cuttle, and the like quantitie of Verdigreace, these mixe well together, putting the same into a Lampe, and dipping a weeke in that licour, then light the same, puttyng out the other lightes in the rounge, and then shall all thinges round about that place, and the wals also being white, appeare both blacke and greene, vnto the meruaile o suche as shall see the same.¹⁸⁰

In the shadow of these stage tricks, the play’s largely grey-scaled palate with its green accents begins to assume additional meaning. Recalling (as I have mentioned) the language of juggling detectors and natural magicians, Iago peddles his project as bringing to light a dark imposter threatening from within. And yet, in the world of stage magic, candles produced illusory blackness (and also greenness, the hue of jealousy) rather than reveal hidden truth. As well as Othello’s implicit associations with the disordered imagination, the increasingly apparent black face of Othello (and of the actor playing his role) likely reminded audiences that colour may be illusory and the result of carefully controlled stage tricks of illumination. While leaving his

¹⁷⁹ Sig. D5r.

¹⁸⁰ See Hill sig. B1r.

audience largely in the dark concerning his actual motivations and his role as passing “Turk,” Iago shines a lantern upon Othello, casting him in a compulsory role of “blacker devil” (5.2.131) and host to that bilious “green-ey’d monster,” jealousy (3.3.166).

Iago’s project of monster-making (for this is surely what it is more than monster-showing) seems not to depend on his conning of money from Roderigo. Nor does Iago seem to anticipate any financial gain in his toppling of the Venetian general. For this reason, the structural weight of the play’s initial references to money remains a critical curiosity. Auden observes:

When we first see Iago and Roderigo together, the situation is like that in a Ben Jonson comedy—a clever rascal is gulling a rich fool who deserves to be gulled because his desire is no more moral than that of the more intelligent avowed rogue who cheats him out of his money....But as the play proceeds, it becomes clear that Iago is not simply after Roderigo’s money, a rational motive, but that his main game is Roderigo’s moral corruption, which is irrational because Roderigo has given him no cause to desire his moral ruin.¹⁸¹

As I have already mentioned in part, Auden goes on to conclude that Iago’s irrational and seemingly motiveless money-making scheme makes sense only if we see his logic as that of the “practical joker.” Iago, Auden claims, seems only to seek the pleasure of the performative experiment and the audience’s look of astonishment. Iago’s juggler

¹⁸¹ See Auden 252.

too profited from the “wonder and astonishment of simple beholders,” though professionals like the ones Rid describes had financial considerations as well.¹⁸² In particular, the money “experiment” recalls a common trick performed by cutpurses and professionals on both sides of the stage.

Almost all early modern treatises on jugglery warn of tricks (especially those involving cards) where audiences have their money and other valuables (including time) “cosoned” away.¹⁸³ While some members of the public seemed to have gambled their money away in bets, others saw their funds disappear in acts of conveyance. In “Of conveiance of monie,” Scot discusses how money and balls, each substitutable for one another in the trick, are made to vanish in the palm and “betwixt the fingers” of the juggler.¹⁸⁴

In the play, Roderigo and Brabantio fear that both of these possessions have been lost. Iago begins by convincing Roderigo that a well-hung purse (“purse” in the period commonly stood in for testicles) would win him Desdemona’s affections. Iago’s equation of human mastery and masculine potency with moneybags reverberates in Brabantio’s early exchange with night-visitors Iago and Roderigo. Iago depicts an Othello who has cozened Brabantio out of cash, and a Desdemona who being “covered with a Barbary horse” has contaminated the bloodline and withered Brabantio’s paternal authority (1.1.111). Rousing Brabantio, Iago suggests a visual

¹⁸² Rid here is talking about astonishment in the presence of card tricks. See sig. B4v.

¹⁸³ See Rid sig. B2v where the author tells of Egyptians (real and counterfeit) wandering about the country telling the fortunes and reading the palms of poor country girls who, Rid says, the Egyptians tricked out of their fortunes and apparel.

¹⁸⁴ Scot 324.

correction for phallic vitiation. Encouraging his interlocutor, as he does so often, to practice a heightened vigilance, Iago says, “Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!...Even now, now, very now an old black ram / Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise!...Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you. / Arise, I say!” (1.1.88-92).

The preceding instances point to more than Iago’s penchant for tugging purse strings. Iago, in these early instances, demonstrates his aptitude for diversion, as he suggests to Brabantio that Othello is the cozenor to watch out for. He also demonstrates here his powers of imaginative insemination—for Iago’s implanted suggestions of theft and supernatural potency will be further redirected by Brabantio when he indicts Othello as a “foul thief (1.2.62),” one who uses “spells and medicines bought of mountebanks (1.3.61).” Money here and throughout the play seems a prop to create more virulent imaginative impressions. Iago’s overspending of monetary metaphors reflects his general speech pattern of repetition. His repeated instruction “Put money in thy purse” (1.3.339-40) appears more than a call for ineffectual Roderigo’s tumescence, and more even than a means for Iago to convey funds from Roderigo. Though Iago seems self-satisfied in his performance, his patter, or juggler’s use of diversionary words, approaches the hypnotic and seems his most useful property, with money simply its accomplice.¹⁸⁵ As I have tried to demonstrate,

¹⁸⁵ Iago is here reminiscent of another Shakespearean character who would have attracted charges of conning, sorcery and poisonous patter, who demonstrates an overinvestment in monetary language, and who is similarly associated with Jacob’s jugglery—Shylock. My inspiration to look at the Jacob story and its relationship to Shakespeare’s characters came in large part from a paper delivered at

counter to the claims of Stoll which this chapter foregrounds in its introduction, Shakespeare and his contemporaries *did* know and think about suggestion. Francis Bacon, as I've demonstrated earlier, discusses suggestion of both the psychological and what we could consider the more esoteric variety (the force of one imagination upon another) when he speaks of a juggler's power over two volunteers. Years earlier, Montaigne, Agrippa, and Scot (though of the group he is the more incredulous of this particular phenomenon) each discuss similar instances of imaginative suggestion, binding, or fascination. In the moments from the play that this section of the chapter treats, Iago appears as the light illusionist, the master of suggestion, the money cozeners. More than that, his dealings with purses conjure up the Italian juggler in particular, called the *Bessoletino*, or purse-man, because he carried a purse of props for his tricks, but also perhaps because he coveted the purses of others.¹⁸⁶

Handkerchief

As Linda Boose remarks, "The meaning of the handkerchief...may well lie hidden in rituals and customs which were accessible to Elizabethans but have since been lost."¹⁸⁷ For Boose, *Othello's* most important stage property, "the center around which the rest of the tragedy inexorably wheels," represents dubious evidence that Desdemona's virgin knot has been legitimately loosened in marriage.¹⁸⁸ While both

McGill University by Michael Bristol and Sara Coodin on the subject of Jacob and Shylock. It was originally entitled "Is Shylock Jewish?"

¹⁸⁶ See Sidney Clarke 3.

¹⁸⁷ Boose 263.

¹⁸⁸ Boose 263, 269, 266.

of Boose's points are well-taken, I want to accept her invitation to consider the handkerchief as a material stage property with symbolic significance: "Given the relative infrequency of stage props in Shakespeare's theatre...the repetitive appearance of any stage prop must be considered as symbolically significant."¹⁸⁹ The direction of my consideration will be different from that of Boose, however. While she begins by examining a stage property which points outside itself to a weaving of tradition, in particular the wedding night sheet-staining ritual, I want to consider the way in which the handkerchief points back to itself as a material *and* magical stage property. This stage property in turn reflects a social and symbolic world that includes the ties of love and marriage, as people understood them literally and metaphorically.

As a stage prop manipulated by a juggling villain, as a thing of commerce circulated and discussed as reproducible—a commodity fetish, according to Paul Yachnin, and as a fetish of a different kind, an object to which Othello attributes magical properties, the handkerchief would have been unmistakable to the majority of Shakespeare's theatre-going audience.¹⁹⁰ For the more literate in Shakespeare's audience, this was not the first time they had encountered vanishing handkerchiefs. Such a device was also present in Shakespeare's source for *Othello*, Cinthio's story *The Moor of Venice*. For the educated and uneducated alike, this was almost certainly

¹⁸⁹ Boose 263.

¹⁹⁰ See Yachnin's "Magical Properties: Vision, Possession, and Wonder in *Othello*." He writes, "in the world of the play, all the characters except Othello view the handkerchief as marketable goods; he defines it as a magical talisman" (203).

not the first time they had seen handkerchiefs make other objects, including valuables, disappear. They very likely encountered such acts in the performances of common jugglers.

Rid suggests that handkerchief tricks were an integral part of the juggler's repertoire. Commonly a handkerchief was used in vanishing acts, often with the aid of other linguistic and material tools used for diversion, like enchanting words and candlesticks.¹⁹¹ Scot tells us that one popular handkerchief trick (a kind of vanishing trick in the sense that money disappeared out of volunteers' pockets) was "how to knit a hard knot upon a handkercher, and to undoo the same with words."¹⁹² He writes:

The Aegyptians iuggling witchcraft or sortilegie standeth much in fast or loose, whereof though I have written somewhat generallie alreadie, yet having such opporitie I will here shew some of their particular feats; not treating of their common tricks which is so tedious, nor of their fortune telling which is so impious; and yet both of them meere cousenages. Make one plaine loose knot, with the two corner ends of a handkercher, and seeming to draw the same verie hard, hold fast the bodie of the said handkercher (neere to the knot) with your right hand, pulling the contrarie end with the left hand, which is the corner of that which you hold. Then close up handsomelie the knot, which will be yet somewhat loose, and pull the handkercher so with

¹⁹¹ For instance, see Rid: "A very pretty trick to make a groate or a testor to sinck thorow a table, and to vanish out of a hand kercheife very strangely." See sig. C3v.

¹⁹² Scot 336.

your right hand, as the left hand end may be neer to the knot: then will it seem a true and a firm knot. And to make it appear more assuredlie to be so indeed, let a stranger pull at the end which you hold in your left hand, whilst you hold fast the other in your right hand: and then holding the knot with your forefinger & thombe & and the nether part of your handkercher with your other fingers, as you hold a bridle when you would with one hand slip up the knot and lengthen your reins. This doone, turn your handkercher over the knot with the left hand, in dooing whereof you must suddenlie slip out the end or corner, putting up the knot of your handkercher with your forefinger and thombe, as you would put up the foresaid knot of your bridle. Then deliver the same (covered and wrapt in the middest of your handkercher) to one, to hold fast, and so after some words used, and wagers laied, take the handkercher and shake it, and it will be loose.¹⁹³

Several elements of Scot's description of the handkerchief trick deserve elaboration. First, Othello's original narrative traces the handkerchief's origins to a prescient Egyptian mind reader, the likes of whom both Scot and Rid, we will recall, describe as the originator of the "fast and loose" trick. Retracing his own origin, Othello claims the charmer gave it to his mother, allowing her to subdue his father in love (and implicitly produce Othello like the "hallowed" silkworms that "did breed the silk" which started his story) (3.4.73). Appearing to be both unsure of the truth and timing of Othello's revelation, Desdemona demystifies Othello's magical "web"

¹⁹³ Scot 336-337.

(3.4.69) recognizing his performance for what Shakespeare's audience would likely have seen it: "This is a trick...." (3.4.87), she says, an observation supported by his narrative revisions in a second handkerchief account.¹⁹⁴ Desdemona's observation, interestingly, follows on the heels of her own hand at trickery. Responding to Othello's demand, "Fetch't, let me see't" (3.4.85), she promises the power to reveal what is now vanished: "Why, so I can, [sir,] but I will not now" (3.4.86-87).

While Desdemona and Othello each struggle to control a talisman that is assigned the power to control them, it is an "Egyptian" of another sort who has inherited the handkerchief's binding legacy and stages its disappearing act. We will recall once more that for Rid, "Egyptians" and "Gypsies" are terms used interchangeably to describe dark-skinned North Africans, ethnic Romani-Spanish, and even English citizens who disguised themselves as Gypsies and practiced a juggling trade learned of them. Strongly reminiscent of the latter type, Iago's successful performance relies, not surprisingly, on the Egyptian juggler's most notable prop, a "trifle light as air" (3.3.322) that he manages to transfigure substantially into confirmation of broken faith. Of course the stage property of the handkerchief does not materialize out of thin air and find itself mysteriously in the hands of Iago. Rather Emilia, who first appears an unwilling and unknowing confederate and perhaps another victim of Iago's subjugating imagination, puts it into play.

¹⁹⁴ She is wrong of course in her assumption that the trick's purpose is to "put me from my suit" (3.4.87).

Emilia's compliance in Iago's handkerchief ploy is an enduring source of frustration and confusion to readers of the play, many of whom wonder why a woman so distrustful of male motivations, and devoted enough to Desdemona to eventually join her in the play's tragically-loaded bed, would assist Iago in his handkerchief deception. Yet when Emilia is seen as a human stage property manipulated in Iago's staged juggling act, her actions become significantly more explicable. Upon first picking up the trifle, Emilia relates its importance to Desdemona, its magical properties, and its synecdochal significance as an embodiment of their memorialized love. She says, "(For he conjur'd her she should ever keep it) / That she reserves it evermore about her / To kiss and talk to" (3.3.294-96). More importantly perhaps, Emilia seems to know the emotional impact the theft will have on Desdemona: "Poor lady, she'll run mad / When she shall lack it" (3.3.317-318).

Still, Emilia's sympathies appear to be overpowered by an influential presence that seems to cancel out both her command of will and her understanding of her separate and objective personhood (an erasure mirrored in the handkerchief whose work she plans to have "ta'en out") (3.3.296). Mindlessly expressing the seductive powers of Iago's imagination, along with its ability to efface her sense of self and reproduce his own image in her absence, Emilia concedes "I nothing but to please his fantasy" (3.3.299). We will recall that Pico, following an Aristotelian model, sees phantasy as a synonym of imagination. Thus, Emilia reveals herself here as subject to Iago's mastering imagination. When continually faced with Desdemona's distress, Emilia further reveals that her will has been erased by exhibiting an almost

somnambulistic silence, thus appearing at once to be the juggler's only partially-enlightened confederate and another imaginatively-manipulated cony.

According to the *OED*, the colloquial phrase "fast and loose" was first used in 1557.¹⁹⁵ Shakespeare makes use of the phrase in *The History of King John* 3.1, where King Phillip, using the language of marriage, says to Cardinal Pandulph:

This royal hand and mine are newly knit
 And the conjunction of our inward souls
 Married in league, coupled, and link'd together
 With all religious strength of sacred vows.

 And shall these hands, so lately purged of blood,
 So newly join'd in love, so strong in both,
 Unyoke this seizure and this kind regret?
 Play fast and loose with faith?...¹⁹⁶

Into the twenty-first century, the phrase is applied generally to any type of con or deceit, yet it seems to have accrued significant mileage as a description of sexual or emotional infidelity, as in "she played fast and loose with his emotions." King Phillip's use of the term in *King John* suggests the phrase had a similar meaning in the period and could point more specifically to marital infidelity.

¹⁹⁵ See *OED* "fast and (or) loose."

¹⁹⁶ *King John* 3.1.226-242.

It is understandable why “fast and loose” and specifically the fast and loose trick would accrue associations with marital infidelity. Those in Shakespeare’s audience familiar with Shakespeare’s frequent punning on bridal/bridle or wives and horses (most apparent perhaps in *Taming of the Shrew*)¹⁹⁷ would have more reason to connect Scot’s knotted handkerchief with either marital ties or the virgin knot offered in exchange for the tying of the proverbial knot in marriage. Scot conjures such associations when he instructs the handkerchief’s handler to hold the handkerchief’s knot, “as you would hold a bridle when you would with one hand slip up the knot and lengthen your reins.”¹⁹⁸

The descriptive textures of *Othello* make this play’s handkerchief particularly resonant with Scot’s equations of magical trickery and animal handling. Describing Othello as a Barbary horse, Iago exacerbates latent fears of miscegenation by framing them in terms of equine corruption and inheritance: “you’ll have your daughter / covered with a Barbary horse; you’ll have your nephews / neigh to you” (1.1.111-112). It is not only the handkerchief’s figurative associations with animality that bring Scot and Shakespeare into dialogue here, but the actual mechanics of the trick.

By demanding of Iago proof without “hinge nor loop” (3.3.365), Othello’s description of the logical loophole ironically betrays additional figurative and literal meaning. The fast and loose juggling con demanded that handkerchief knots and

¹⁹⁷ For an elaboration of this pun’s function in *The Taming of the Shrew*, see Shea and Yachnin’s “The Well-Hung Shew” in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Ed. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton. London: Ashgate Press, *forthcoming*.

¹⁹⁸ See again Scot 336-337.

other “looped” cords appear tight. Upon pulling, however, the deceptive appearance of a tight loop gave way to a loose napkin and a lost wager. As Iago’s greatest feat of deception, the handkerchief trick propels Othello irrevocably toward the unravelling of his marriage and toward his own undoing. While a series of deceptions precipitate his demise, the handkerchief episode appears to mark the moment in which Othello’s life-staking wager, “My life upon her faith” (1.3.294) is lost. Of course, as we know from the play *Othello* and from the revealed secrets of the fast and loose trick, the game is fixed from the beginning. As the fixer, Iago knows this from the beginning. While “Are you fast married?” (1.2.13) is a question that casts doubts on the consummation of Othello and Desdemona’s marriage and the undoable tightness of their bond, it is also a taunt about a real trick performed by a real, or just as real counterfeit juggler.

In this chapter I have argued that three questions the play itself poses—Why does Othello believe Iago? What motivates Iago? What are we to make of Iago’s operations of suggestion, imaginative mastery, seeming witchcraft, monster-making, illusion, light and shadow play, common con-artistry, misdirection, disguise, theatrical improvisation, and the transformation of trifling stage properties into things of apparent substance?—can be answered in the following way, and without foreclosing other interpretive possibilities. We may see Iago and Othello’s relationship as emblematic of a social dynamic represented in early modern magic manuals, the relationship between the deluding juggler and his overly credulous and imaginatively disabled victim. In the play, this relationship depends upon two

persistent social fictions: first and most hideous, that members of certain social, ethnic and racialized groups were susceptible to delusion and the imposing imaginations of forceful minds, and second, that certain social persons sometimes called witches, sometimes natural magicians, sometimes Gypsies or Egyptians, and more often jugglers, were believed to have strong somatic and transitive mental powers, as well as a well-developed knack for preying upon the inherently unreliable senses. Insofar as this chapter suggests that in certain ways Shakespeare's play reinscribes (like Iago does) racist social fictions upon the black body, mine is admittedly a dim view.

There are, though, hopeful glimmers of resistance on the part of Shakespeare. In the play, rather than permanently affix themselves to bodies, images of blackness *and* light float around, masquerade, replicate, appear and disappear, suggesting race to be a theatrical fiction and social production, rather than an innate truth. Most encouraging is that, seen against the backdrop of juggling and especially light tricks, black beastliness and monstrosity in the play emerge as illusory, the product of flaming ministers, fairground jugglers, and juggling proto-scientific discourses alike. Light (or illusory whiteness) is not simply that which illuminates or reveals truth, but something that distracts and distorts. We can only hope that what appears to be this light in the darkness, this glimpse of resistance on the part of Shakespeare, is not merely an illusion.

2 • Petruchio and Katherina: The Juggler as Confederate Con Artist

In the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, a deluded Christopher Sly asks the Lord's cast of con-men what type of play he can expect. "Is not a comonty / A Christmas gambold, or a tumbling-trick?" (Ind. 2.137-138). While Sly's question is quickly dismissed by the Page, its tricky content and its dramatic and historical contexts of cunning and conning bid revisiting.¹⁹⁹ In the previous chapter I argued that Shakespeare's portrayal of Iago draws upon ideas concerning the "juggler" in the figurative sense, that is as "One who deceives by trickery; a trickster."²⁰⁰ In developing Iago, Shakespeare also appeals to ideas about "jugglers" in at least two more literal understandings of the word; Iago summons the dark conjuror or demonic magician, a figure misunderstood, as Reginald Scot suggests, by the credulous masses. Iago also embodies what Scot argues so-called demonic magicians really are: sleight-of-hand artists and entertaining illusionists who manipulate the imaginations of others by natural, and fraudulent, operations.²⁰¹

In this chapter, I suggest that many of *The Taming of the Shrew's* characters are reminiscent of the juggler in one figurative sense of the word (a trickster), while

¹⁹⁹ "It is a kind of history," says the Page (Ind. 2.141).

²⁰⁰ See *OED* "juggler" Def. 3. *transf.* and *fig.*

²⁰¹ See *OED* "juggler" Def. 2.

also evoking many of the juggler's other avatars as described in texts devoted to "discovering" con artists, distinguishing among con artist-types, and educating the public about their scams and secret languages. I argue that we can hear among the competing social languages in *The Taming of Shrew* the heretofore inaudible cant of juggling magicians, cony-catchers, gamesters, counterfeits, cunning shrews, nimble rhetorical tumblers and rope dancers, many of whom are described generally in the period as "jugglers" and also as members of the canting crew.²⁰²

Katherina's place in this world of cons cannot be ignored. In fact, as I will argue, her relation to this world has radical implications for reading the play's divisive ending. In approaching Katherina's character, though, I look first and more thoroughly at the play's more conspicuous cons, most notably Petruchio, whose seemingly successful dupery is matched only by that of Tranio and the Induction's Lord.

There is another reason I use Sly's question as a jumping off point for my discussion of conning. His query, as Lesley Wade Soule has articulated, addresses the expectations of "performative frameworks" and generic conventions. For Soule, Sly's

²⁰² For an elaboration of these terms see the Introduction. The *OED* makes some distinction between "cony-catchers" and "jugglers" in the most literal sense: "cony-catchers" (a term made famous by Robert Greene) were swindlers and sharpers ("cony-catcher." Def. 2.), while jugglers were jesting and singing entertainers (early usage), so-called witches and magicians, and sleight-of-hand artists ("juggler." Defs. 1. and 2.). The terms however did overlap in figurative usage as juggler, as early as the fourteenth century, came to mean deceivers and tricksters in general ("juggler." Def. 3. *transf. and fig.*). In practice cony-catchers sometimes amused and jugglers often swindled, and the terms were used with great interchangeability. It is not the purpose of this chapter to determine whether Petruchio, for instance, is a juggler, a cony-catcher or any particular type of trickster or fealist. Rather, I wish to show that at different points in the play he seems to resemble various members of the canting crew as he is bound by a singular reputation for attracting/manipulating the gaze, promoting idleness, and performing trickery through rhetorical, visual or physical agility.

question points to a drama poised between two theatrical traditions: one presentational and popular (the entertaining and often comedic stuff of fairground tumbling tricks), and one representational, illusionistic and elite (the edifying, more serious stuff of history).²⁰³ Notwithstanding the Page's assertion to the contrary, the play performed is in keeping with comic tradition. As a comedy, and particularly as a kind of fairground farce, the play's conjuring of cons and monsters diverges markedly from the structure of Shakespeare's tragedies.

Looking at the tragedy of *Othello*, my last chapter foregrounds the methods by which the central juggler figure in the play (Iago) anticipates and deflects charges of monstrosity, contagion, and unorthodox magic, producing the illusion that monsters and monstrous magic threaten from someplace outside of himself. It also interprets Iago as one who, by means of manipulating image and imagination, incites what would have been perceived in the period as real physiological transformations.

Shakespeare conjures magic and monstrosity differently in the comedies generally and in *Shrew* specifically, where Petruchio first dons the markers of Katherina's monstrosity and then seems to transform her public image from monster (and demon) to model wife. Thus monstrosity, rather than figuring as a dramatic telos, becomes a means of either achieving, or, in *Shrew's* case I will argue, achieving the appearance of, tidy resolution.

While *Shrew* is a comedy, it is not always funny. For a modern audience the play tends to arouse discomfort over what is commonly treated as sanctioned violence

²⁰³ See Soule, "Tumbling Tricks: Presentational Structure and *The Taming of the Shrew*" 164-165.

against servants and wives. So too for Shakespeare's audience the play must have provoked feelings of discomfort. I would suggest, however, that any dis-ease the play might have caused was symptomatic of something other than or at least in addition to unease over marital violence. In large part this dis-ease must have had something to do with deep-seated social anxieties concerning the subtle and sometimes even undetectable nature of con artists and their tricks and something also to do with the ambiguous nature of juggling illusionism and con-artistry more generally—as trickery that might be pleasurable and in some cases even productive but which might also be dangerous on a physical, social, and spiritual level.

In her work on roguery in the period, Anna Bayman discusses the entertainment value of cony-catchers in print, if not in public spaces. On one hand, cony-catching narratives, and especially cheaply produced pamphlets on the subject (popular during the reign of Elizabeth), were written to “amuse and titillate.”²⁰⁴ On the other hand, these narratives were often characterized by deep anxieties concerning what Martine Van Elk calls “urban misidentification,” and they were driven by moralizing impulses that often placed repentant narrating offenders at the gallows.²⁰⁵ Entrenched in the social context Bayman and Van Elk describe, *Shrew* seems to take stock of the ambiguous social status of con-artistry as it negotiates the pleasures of conning with a suspicion of it, a good-natured acceptance of dupery with a desire for a remedying disclosure, reversal (the conner conned), or punishment.

²⁰⁴ See Bayman, “Rogues, Cony-catching and the Scribbling Crew” 3.

²⁰⁵ See Van Elk, “Urban Misidentification in *The Comedy of Errors* and the Cony-Catching Pamphlets” 323-346. See also Bayman 5.

In this chapter I begin by looking at contemporaneous representations of the cony-catcher/juggler, variously figured as dangerous rope-ripe imposter and comic, even heroic master of ropery.²⁰⁶ Casting a wider net than both Van Elk and Bayman, my selection of contextual material is not dictated by a particular literary genre (Van Elk and Bayman both focus on sixteenth-century cony-catching pamphlets). This chapter does not direct its inquiries centripetally, from the world of cons into the play's text. Rather, it is organized around a series of questions, assertions or riddles posed by the play itself. From there the chapter moves outward, toward a generically diverse representational landscape of tricksters, cunning characters and fairground feats. Eventually it arrives back at the play, assessing the interpretive yields of contextual dialogue.

“Where is the life that late I led?”: Petruchio as Con²⁰⁷

Posing a question of some critical controversy, Petruchio's lyrics are glossed by many editors in terms similar to Frances E. Dolan's: “a fragment of a lost ballad, probably lamenting the man's loss of freedom in marriage.”²⁰⁸ In his inquiry into this

²⁰⁶ I use “rope-ripe” here as it is defined by the *OED* in the both the punitive and linguistic senses: “rope-ripe, *a.*” Def. A. *adj.* “Ripe for the gallows; fit for being hanged” and Def. A.b. “Applied to language.” I use “ropery” as it is defined by the *OED*: Def. 2. “Trickery, knavery, roguery.” For a discussion of the word's history in Shakespeare and its overlap with “rope-rhetorics,” see Richard Levin, “Grumio's ‘Rope-Tricks’ and the Nurse's ‘Roperly,’” 82-86. Also see Wayne A. Rebhorn, “Petruchio's ‘Rope Tricks’: *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric,” 294-327.

²⁰⁷ Petruchio sings these lines at 4.1.140.

²⁰⁸ See Dolan, ed., *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts* 104 note 4.1.109-10; In “What was the life that Petruchio lately led?” Levin discusses the popularity of this interpretation, listing Dolan among a group of scholars (Ann Thompson, Jean Howard, David Bevington, Burton Raffel, etc.) who have similarly interpreted this passage (33).

annotation's editorial history, Richard Levin finds little to support this interpretation:

The fact remains, however, that all the evidence we have, both positive and negative, indicates that the lost ballad beginning "Where is the life that late I led" was not about a man regretting the surrender of his freedom when he married, and that it has no special relevance to Petruchio, who shows no signs of regretting this. I believe that his singing it here is to be regarded, rather, as just another theatrical turn in the capricious behavior that he deliberately stages in this scene as part of his strategy to "curb" or "tame" Kate...²⁰⁹

For Levin, it would seem, Petruchio's words represent a blind alley or stage trick played on Kate or on any of us who might try to make sense of this phrase, using it to trace Petruchio's relationship with his past. There is less for us to glean from the words themselves. We can understand more by observing their mode of delivery and the timing of their deployment; they are semantically void, erratic interruptions, and this is what matters. While I agree fundamentally with Levin's interpretation, I would argue that Petruchio's highly theatrical and strategically madcap mode—specifically his playing the fool for the purpose of fooling his audience—invites us to reconsider what might appear a meaningless question.

Where and what is the life that Petruchio formerly led? Who is this Petruchio, so adept at trickery, flattery, wager-winning, dowry-snatching, clowning,

²⁰⁹ See Levin, "What was the life" 38.

and cunning? Who is this motley fool recently rolled into town, this theatrical presence ready with a repertoire of visually dumbfounding feats (including conjuring the sun and moon and taming an untameable shrew)? As Soule observes,

Petruccio is a traveling figure. After providing perfunctory information about his father and his circumstances, he places himself as someone from an almost fanciful elsewhere, blown by ‘such wind as scatters young men through this world’ (1.2.47) to stir things up in this ordinary, everyday place—not simply Padua but this stage, which in such moments becomes an illusory self-reflection.²¹⁰

This is not to say that Petruccio is a complete stranger, but neither is he entirely familiar. He is a friend of the Paduan Hortensio, who hardly strikes us as a reliable character reference. Hortensio is, after all, the one who by cunning hatches the plot to have the intractable Katherina married off so that Baptista, having given away his eldest daughter, may then marry off his younger one, beloved by Hortensio.²¹¹ There is also Petruccio’s reputation to consider, but we know very little about his own standing, as it is his father’s reputation and not his own which precedes him.

BAPTISTA. Whence are you sir? What may I call your name?

PETRUCHIO. Petruccio is my name, Antonio’s son,

A man well known throughout all Italy.

BAPTISTA. I know him well; you are welcome for his sake. (2.1.67-70)

²¹⁰ See Soule 175. For the line in the *Riverside Shakespeare* corresponding with line she quotes, see 1.2.50.

²¹¹ For Hortensio’s plotting with Gremio, see 1.1.113-18.

There is reason to suspect Petruchio misrepresents himself as honourable and that his self-characterization should scarcely be taken at face value. Martha Andreson-Thom, for instance, has remarked that in Act 1 scene 2 we may observe a compensatory quality in Petruchio's hyperbolic rhetoric of "romantic adventurism."²¹² In other words, Petruchio is deceiving himself, and I would add the audience, in a narrative which we might say is as "puff'd up with winds" (1.2.201) as the sea he claims to have conquered.²¹³ This is not the first time Petruchio launches images of seafaring; nor is it the first instance in which metaphors of nautical conning give way to those of conning (and bald-faced theft) of a different kind. We see Petruchio traffic in these type of metaphors earlier when he says,

Hortensio, peace! Thou know'st not gold's effect.

Tell me her father's name, and 'tis enough;

For I will board her, though she chide as loud

As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack. (1.2.93-95)

Petruchio's self-representation as a self-made gentleman seems at odds with his appearance in this scene as domestic pirate, coveting the town's confidence and his wife-to-be's booty.

Let me pause, for a minute, to clarify what I am suggesting. We cannot assert with any surety the extra-diagetic life of any Shakespearean character. Nor do I wish to imply that Shakespeare's characters, including Petruchio, are inflexible generic

²¹² See Martha Andreson-Thom, "Shrew-Taming and Other Rituals of Aggression: Baiting and Bonding on the Stage and in the Wild" 127.

²¹³ See 1.2.198-210.

types, lacking emotional complexity and psychological contradiction.²¹⁴ I am suggesting, however, that from our first introduction to Petruchio and upon first hearing his financial motivations for marriage, we encounter much of the con man.

This chapter is not the first to elaborate Petruchio's likeness to the trickster. In fact, both Leslie Wade Soule and Northrop Frye have explored Petruchio's lineage among trickster types. According to Soule, Petruchio's "free sweeping movement" is reminiscent of "folk farce" and the perambulatory nature of his "vice and clown progenitors."²¹⁵ He functions primarily as a "stage persona" whose dramatic ancestors include "trickster figures of earlier popular performance" such as "Mak, Pierre, Pratein and the braggart soldiers of classical, Tudor and Italian comedy," as well as the folk devil and the Tudor vice.²¹⁶ Northrop Frye remarks,

The vice is combined with the hero whenever the latter is a cheeky, improvident young man who hatches his own schemes and cheats his rich father or uncle into giving him his patrimony along with the girl. The vice-hero is a favorite of Jonson and Middleton, but not of Shakespeare, though Petruchio is close to the type.²¹⁷

Diverging from Soule and Frye, this chapter looks beyond the medieval theatrical tradition to a social reality (or at least, to this reality's contemporaneous representations). While Petruchio shares qualities with the literary character of the

²¹⁴ On this point I disagree with Soule, who argues that like the characters of popular farce, Petruchio's motivation is devoid of "psychological depth or complexity." He is driven, rather, by a desire to demonstrate skill, she suggests (175).

²¹⁵ Soule 175.

²¹⁶ Soule 174.

²¹⁷ See Northrop Frye, "Characterization in Shakespearian Comedy" 274.

medieval vice, he more clearly resembles social characters closer to the playwright's own time: cony-catching thieves, juggling illusionists, and jugglers of other sorts (including acrobats and word-wielding papists).

There is evidence to suggest that rogues, vagabonds, cony-catchers and jugglers occupied the thoughts of Shakespeare's audience. Known for their wandering (as well as for their deceptions), tricksters were feared in part because of their social, geographic and generic mobility. From Elizabethan ordinances to the popular genres of cony-catching pamphlets, from how-to juggling texts to commissioned poetry and plays, tricksters riddled the period's legal, literary, and dramatic landscapes.

In 1598 under the reign of Elizabeth, parliament passed *An Acte for Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdie Beggers*. Under this Act a group of wandering jugglers and crank magicians, beggars, con artists, and unlicensed entertainers were deemed rogues and vagabonds.²¹⁸ Those found guilty faced increasingly harsh penalties. For a first offence they were stripped and whipped, sent to their parish of origin or, if that was untraceable, to the last place through which they had passed. There the offender was sent to work and was ordered to stay confined to a particular geographic region. The second offence called for a similar

²¹⁸ See England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), *An Acte for Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdie Beggers*" (1598) 1.

punishment, in addition to forced service for a year. The third offence warranted death.²¹⁹

The language of this proclamation (and Commonwealth ordinances more than half a century later) points to a few assumptions held in the period. It was at least in part the peripatetic livelihood of these rogues, their veiled origins and evasion of accountability to any one domain, which rendered them particularly dangerous. Linda Woodbridge succinctly sums up the metaphorical implications of the rogue's spatial traversals and theatrical transvestism in a period increasingly concerned with the impermanence of social identity when she notes that "[t]he geographic mobility of vagrants came to stand in for social mobility."²²⁰ So, says Van Elk, did the theatricality of dissembling tricksters: "The trickster's acting talent, then, problematizes the notion of social position in a larger sense, making social mobility a permanent possibility and a threat to the respectable members of the commonwealth."²²¹ The points raised here, in the context of a statute failing to distinguish between all types of wanderers and especially wandering tricksters, evoke not only the slippery demeanour attributed to cons, but also the slippery language used to characterize them. As I've already suggested, those we might describe generally as tricksters were called by many names, and much literature on the subject

²¹⁹ The law of 1598 was not the first Elizabethan Act to criminalize idle persons and masterless men; in many ways this act was more moderate than previous laws. See J.L. McMullan's *The Canting Crew* for an excellent overview of similar laws in England and the punishments they called for, including burning (39) or removing (38) the accused's ear or branding the accused with an "S" in order to indicate the accused's subjection to a lifetime of slavery (38-39).

²²⁰ See Linda Woodbridge, "Imposters, Monsters, and Spies: What Rogue Literature Can Tell us about Early Modern Subjectivity" par. 1.

²²¹ Van Elk 327.

was devoted to containing what was represented as an epidemic of con artists by classifying their types and exposing their cant.

In one such work Thomas Harman (1567) attempts to classify particular orders within the population of misdealing and “pestilente people” fated to be hanged—“for that is the fynall ende of them all, or els to dye of some filthy and horrible diseases.”²²² There are, for instance, “uprygh[t]” men who wander the country, often stopping at some household and requesting charity. These men pretend a past of honest service and bravery (having been to war, for instance). “If he [the upryght man] be offered anye meate or drynke, he vtterly refuseth scornefully, and wyl naught but money.”²²³ The upright men use women to help them steal but “stand so much upon their reputation, as they wyll in no case haue their wemen walke with them....”²²⁴

In addition there are the “Abraham men” who “fayn them selues to haue bene mad” and use this appearance to beg or to “pycke and steale as the uprighte man...”²²⁵ In *A new dictionary of the canting crew in its several tribes*, B.E. similarly defines “Abram-men” while focusing more specifically on their style of dress. According to this 1699 source, “Abram-men,” “the seventeenth Order of the Canting-crew,” were “Beggers antickly trick’d up with Ribbands, Red Tape, Foxtails,

²²² See Thomas Harman, “*A Caueat or Warening, for Common Cursetors Vulgarly Called Vagabones*” (1567), sig. A3r-A3v.

²²³ Harman sig. B3r.

²²⁴ Harman sig. B3v.

²²⁵ Harman sig. D1v.

Rags, &c. pretending Madness to palliate their Thefts of Poultreys, Linnen, &c.”²²⁶

The wandering scholar is even grouped among those other cons listed in the 1598 Elizabethan statute previously mentioned:

And be it also further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all persons calling themselves Schollers going about begging, all Seafaring men pretending losses of their ships or goods on the Sea, going about the country begging, All idle persons, going about in any country either begging or using any subtile craft...shall be taken, adjudged and deemed Rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggers, and shall susteine such paine and punishments, as by this Acte is in that behalfe appointed.²²⁷

B.E. calls the wandering scholar by the innocuous name “pedant,” by which he means “a meer Scholar, a School-master, a Man of one kind of Learning or Business, out of which he is good for nothing.”²²⁸

The “Dronken Tinckar” is a member of a “beastly people” and is one of the worst kinds of cons, according to Harman.²²⁹ These tinkers were known to steal not only from honest folk, but also from other con artists. Harman relates,

I was credibly informed by such as could well tell, that one of these tipling Tinckers wt his dogge robbed by the highe way iiii. Pallyardes and ii Roges. vi persons together, and tooke from the aboue iiii pound in ready money, &

²²⁶ B.E., *A New Dictionary of the Canting Crew in its Several Tribes of Gypsies, Beggars [sic], Thieves, Cheats &c....* (1699) sig. B1r.

²²⁷ See England *Rogues, Vagabonds*.

²²⁸ B.E. sig. I3v.

²²⁹ Harman sig. C1r.

hide him after in a thicke woode a day or two, and so escaped vntaken. Thus with picking and stealing, mingled in a little worke for a collour, they passe their tyme.²³⁰

While there are several other orders of cons whose likenesses, I believe, appear in the *Shrew*, I will conclude my list with two of particular interest. One is the Patrico or Patercove who, according to B.E., is a member of the “Fifeteenth Rank of the Can[t]ing Tribe.” Patricos, for him, are “stroling Priests that Marry under a Hedge without Gospel or Common-prayer Book, the Couple standing on each side a Dead Beast, are bid to Live together till Death them do’s Part, so shaking Hands, the Wedding is ended....”²³¹ For B.E. the Patrico is a con man who specializes in conducting crude, spurious marriages. Harman describes the Patrico in similar terms and distinguishes him from the Patriarch, who is in canting language, he says, a priest who “should make mariages tyll death doo departe.” Yet Harman jokes there are no real Patriarchs among the canting tribe; their marriages are shams and the lot of them are lusty liars.²³²

Finally there is the Kate, a term to which, along with Patrico, I will return later. This term shows up in at least two canting glossaries from the period and is described similarly by Richard Head in the *English Rogue Described* (1666) as a “pick-

²³⁰ Harman sig. C1v.

²³¹ B.E. sig. I3r.

²³² Harman sig. C1v.-C2r.

lock” and by B.E. who adds the example, “‘Tis a Rum Kate, c. that is a Cleaver Pick-lock.”²³³

In *Shrew* many members of the canting crew make an appearance. In keeping with the drunken tinker type, the inebriated and loitering tinker Sly avoids responsibility for the property he has accumulated and damaged (namely, the “burst” glasses of the alehouse).²³⁴ The likeness between Sly and B.E.’s drunken tinker appears to end here though, as the name “Sly” ironically antithesizes a character seemingly bereft of subtlety or craft—one who appears the dupe of a high culture con in the shape of a Lord. It is the Lord who explicitly introduces the theme of theatrical cunning/conning in his employment of itinerate players for the purpose of tricking Sly: “...I have some sport in hand, / Wherein your cunning can assist me much” (Ind. 1.91-92). And it is the Lord whose prestidigitatious dealings include a dress-up game reminiscent of what was perhaps the period’s most famous extant theatrical interlude dedicated to the subject of jugglery. In *Jake Juggler*, the vice Jake dons the clothes of his rival Jenkin Careaway in order to trick him into believing that Jenkin is not himself and that that Jake in fact is Jenkin. *Jake Juggler*, entered into the Stationers’ register between 16 October 1562 and 22 July 1563, plays with and perhaps parodies an institutionalized assumption in the period that clothes make the man.²³⁵ *Jake Juggler* nods at the period’s sumptuary laws and their concern with the

²³³ Head, *English Rogue Described* (1668) 33; B.E. sig. G5v.

²³⁴ Ind.1.7.

²³⁵ See Tracey Sedinger, “‘And yet woll I stiehl saye that I am I’: *Jake Juggler*, the Lord’s Supper, and Disguise” 239–269, especially 240.

dangers of disguise and illegitimate mobility. Even more specifically, the interlude comically treats concerns that jugglers and rogues moved surreptitiously among the people, usurping legitimate authority and evading public disclosure. Sly's transformation at the hand of the Lord and Tranio's convincing disguise are more complicated than Jake Juggler's scenarios, as Shakespeare deploys multifaceted characters among a more socially stratified playing field. Ultimately, though, *Shrew* poses similar questions about the layers and limits of selfhood and about dress as a constitutive facet of identity.

As the culmination of his sport the Lord directs a play (for all intents and purposes *The Taming of the Shrew*) cast of various trickster types evocative of those described in texts like those written by Harman and B.E and in the Elizabethan statute against rogues and vagabonds. Among this group are two travelling scholars (Hortensio/Litio and Lucentio/Cambio) whose cunning proves more than Baptista bargains for; a trickster servant who has "cony-catched" the elderly Baptista (5.1.8-9) and is aptly named for his seamless transition into aristocratic pretence (Tranio); and an antickly dressed fortune-hunter who is a conjuror of illusions and, as I elaborate upon in the following sections, a "charm[ing]" head "master" of his own "taming school" plus a shrew in his own right (Petruccio) (4.2.54-59).²³⁶

²³⁶ See 1.1.97, where Baptista seeks "cunning men" to school Bianca. "Cunning" is glossed by Dolan here as "skillful or learned" (56). Earlier, when the lord calls for cunning players, the editor interprets this usage as "professional skill" (45). That Shakespeare means to evoke other shadowy uses of the term in both passages is likely; according to the *OED*, the term "cunning" was also understood during Shakespeare's period in the pejorative sense of crafty ("cunning, *a.*" Defs. 5a. and 5b.) as well as in the sense of being magically skilled (Def. 3) (as in cunning men and women).

Pursuing here my first two characterizations of Petruchio, I turn to two exemplary moments: Petruchio's appearance at the wedding and the exhaustively referenced sun-and-moon scene. As for the wedding, Petruchio's likeness to the "Abram-man" who was described by B.E. as "antickly trick'd up with Ribbands" and "Rags" speaks most eloquently for itself:²³⁷

BIONDELLO. Why, Petruchio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turn'd; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another lac'd, an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt, and chapeless; with two broken points; his horse hipp'd with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred...."

BAPTISTA. Who comes with him?

BIONDELLO. O, sir, his lackey, for all the world caparison'd like the horse; with a linen stock on one leg, and a kersey boot-hose on the other, gart' red with a red and blue list; an old hat, and the humour of forty fancies pricked in't for a feather: a monster, a very monster in apparel, and not like a Christian footboy or a gentleman's lackey. (3.2.43-71)

Like the Abram-man and his kind, Petruchio attracts suspicions of mean madness from the gullible and suspicions of mad meaning from seasoned cons such as Tranio, who muses "He hath some meaning in his mad attire" (3.2.124). As Tranio seems to recognize, Petruchio is either performing madness, or he is performing the performance of madness in order to win some advantage. The second possibility, that

²³⁷ B.E. sig. B1r.

Petruchio is putting on the Abram-man's act of ostentatious meanness and madness, is perhaps less immediately apparent to a modern reader, but to Shakespeare's audience on the lookout for the Abram-man's appearance and themselves subject to sumptuary codes, the connection would have been in plain sight.

The scene demonstrates the way in which Petruchio conjures monstrosity or human animality in order to advance his cause. In one of the play's many representations of human as horse, Grumio, by Petruchio's design, is dressed like the horse he rides. Consequently described as "a monster, a very monster in apparel" (3.2.69-70), Grumio exacerbates Katherina's embarrassment, an effective affective stratagem key to Petruchio's taming program. Grumio's grooming as horse and Petruchio's monstrous appearance seem also diversionary tactics—juggling feats of misdirection in which Petruchio plays the prodigy, directing the gaze away from Katherina, who appears less monstrous, if not less bestial, in comparison. Even Gremio, voice to some of the play's most vicious insults, concedes: "Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him!" (3.2.157).

Of course, the play's recurrent equation of horse and human means Petruchio's horse deserves comment. The horse is not simply ill dressed, but superfluously diseased. Read in conjunction, Petruchio's abuse of servant and wife (characterized in the play as equine), the fallen and fleeing horses in 4.1, and the diseased horse buckling under the weight of his correspondingly disarrayed master in the wedding episode at 3.2.43-71 suggest that Petruchio imperils horses. In my discussion of shrews and their relation to cons in the next section, I advance one possible reason for this characterization: in contemporary lore horses were the

principal victims of the shrew mouse (analogue to the trickster shrew man). Also, Petruchio's representation as proximate to and perhaps even the cause of disease recalls contemporaneous associations between jugglers and other con artists with physical as well as moral contagion.²³⁸

After the wedding, Petruchio continues the juggler's reign of visual manipulation and also exhibits verbal control in an episode that many, including Frances Dolan, see as the "pivotal moment" in the taming game.²³⁹ In Act 4, scene 3 Petruchio's rhetorical recalibration of the time, his insistence that it is seven in the morning and not, as Katherina observes, two in the afternoon,²⁴⁰ recalls the juggler's ability to exploit the disjunction between real time and the appearance of time passing, particularly through distracting or convincing babble.²⁴¹ When like a mystified audience Hortensio responds, "Why, so this gallant will command the sun" (4.3.196), he acknowledges both Petruchio's temporal manipulation and the power of his astounding performative, spawning a sun of his own voice. It is often the theological undertones of this passage and its logocentrism which attract the most critical attention: in the microcosm of marriage Petruchio appropriates the godly

²³⁸ See my chapter on *Othello* for Rid's discussion of counterfeit Egyptian jugglers as "pestiferous." Later this chapter will discuss Greene's representation of the female cozener as a source of contagion.

²³⁹ "The pivotal moment in the taming process—Petruchio's converting Katherina from the outspoken, violent, resistant 'shrew' of the first few acts to the... 'household Kate' of the last scene—occurs in 4.5....The arena of struggle turns out not to be the material domestic world... Instead, Petruchio's control over material resources empowers him" in the realm of "language" (29).

²⁴⁰ See 4.3.187-195.

²⁴¹ In his *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), Reginald Scot describes a feat performed by Brandon the Juggler for the King, in which Brandon painted and then stabbed an image of a pigeon on the wall, only to have a dead pigeon seem to fall from above shortly after. According to Scot, Brandon may have accomplished this trick by poisoning a pigeon shortly before and stalling the crowd with babble while he waited for the medicine to take effect: "But in the meane time the Jugler uses words of art, partlie to protract the time, and partlie to gaine credit and admiration of the beholders" (308).

power of naming to create a world from words.²⁴² Read against a conventional model of marriage, Petruchio's actions are vested with authority; their execution carries a certain legitimacy. In view of early modern beliefs regarding the susceptibility of weaker (including female) imaginations to adept jugglers, he might also possess the actual power to change minds.²⁴³ It is likely, though, that Petruchio's magical investment in words and his attempts to substantiate matter, if only through Katherina's imagination, would have conjured other associations in the audience—namely with jugglery as an analogy for papal magic and with what Reginald Scot describes as a particular juggling feat that was often mistaken for witchcraft.

As I explained at length in my introduction, historians, most notably Keith Thomas, have discussed Protestant criticisms of Catholic belief in the incantatory power of words and the mystical properties of objects—for example, the host as material substantiation of Christ's body.²⁴⁴ The association of Catholicism with jugglery is a commonplace in the period and is noted by Reginald Scot: "I see no

²⁴² See Rebhorn: "As he proclaims his right to call the sun the moon or a man a woman, Petruchio arrogates to himself both the power of Adam, who first gave names to all things and served frequently in the Renaissance as the model for patriarchal rule, and the power of God, the creator and patriarch of all patriarchs. Petruchio's proclamation amounts to an assertion that he can—and will—create the world through his words; he indulges a fantasy of ultimate power that Katherina confirms as she tells him: 'What you will have it named, even that it is'" (4.5.21; Rebhorn 302); See also Tita French Baumlin, "Petruchio the Sophist and Language as Creation in *The Taming of the Shrew*" 237-257.

²⁴³ For a more extensive discussion of jugglery and imagination, see my chapter on *Othello*.

²⁴⁴ In *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*, Thomas discusses Protestant charges that magical power was invested in human intermediaries from Christ, to priests, to the saints (32); in consecrated objects such as the Host (34-35); in holy charms (43); in the relics of the beatified; and in ritual actions and their symbols, from powerful visual images stimulating spirituality to magically efficacious words. In many of these cases the spiritual fetish's power rests in its inscrutability, its secret and impenetrable nature. Latin prayers were incomprehensible to laymen, yet their very unintelligibility lent them "incantatory" power in which the "mere pronunciation of words" (33) along with accompanying rituals, worked upon congregants "like a charm upon an adder" (33).

difference between these [other conjurors including jugglers] and Popish coniurations...” and by William Tyndale, who debunks the legitimacy of transubstantiation and of pretending priests who “vttereth their sleighe iuggelynge ouer the brede.”²⁴⁵ According to Tracey Sedinger, the trajectory of association could also be reversed: *Jake Juggler’s* titular con man came to represent the papist.²⁴⁶ The play’s dramatization of the question, “can a person exist in two places at the same time?” is an analogy for the problems of consubstantiation.²⁴⁷ As for *Shrew*, it seems neither accurate nor useful to read Petruchio’s name game as purely papist in reference. Yet Petruchio’s role as trickster and his nominal association with the hedge priest (or Patrico) suggest some basis for comparison.

When Hortensio suggests that Petruchio can command the sun, he seems also to be evoking one particular feat attributed to witches who, according to Scot, were nothing more than jugglers. Scot scoffs at Cardanus’s fallacious belief and at the beliefs of poets (Ovid, Horace, etc.) who followed Cardanus’s suit in writing,

²⁴⁵ Scot 433; William Tyndale, *The souper of the Lorde* (1533) sig. B5r. Critics including Paul Whitfield White and Marie Axton have observed the use of the term “juggler” in anti-Catholic polemical literature (White 26; Axton 19-20). See White’s *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* and Axton’s edition of *Three Tudor Classical Interludes: “Thersites,” “Jacke Juggler,” “Horestes”*; See also Sedinger, who argues that these associations made their way into fictional and theatrical treatments of jugglery. In her insightful interpretation of *Jacke Juggler’s* theological analogies, she argues that through the Vice figure’s deployment of the disguise motif, *Jacke Juggler* criticizes the idea that a body can be in two places at once—an assumption fundamental to the Real Presence (240-241).

²⁴⁶ See, for instance, Sedinger 247.

²⁴⁷ Quotation mine. Sedinger suggests Catholics and Lutherans were on one side of this debate and certain other reformists like Zwingli on the other. Zwingli argued that the sacrament was nothing more than a sign (245) and that Jesus’s body could not or did not violate natural physical laws by existing both in heaven and on earth in the sacrament (233-244). Calvin would later take a more moderate approach. Though he did not believe in the real presence he tried “to establish some concord amongst the Reformed churches” and argued in his *Institutes* (2:597) “that the bread and wine were signs, ‘a spiritual food...’” (Sedinger 245-246).

that eurie eclipse they were woont to thinke, that witches pulled downe the sunne and moone from heauen. And doubtles, hence came the opinion of that matter, which spred so farre, and continued so long in the common peoples mouthes, that in the end learned men grew to belieue it, and to affirme it in writing.²⁴⁸

Scot implies that such a feat is impossible in reality and is merely, as Propertius accurately calls it, a “subtill slight.”²⁴⁹ For Scot, then, acts involving the command of the sun and moon are nothing but tricks acted out by illusionist jugglers and false literary feats performed by cozened and cozening authors.

“By this reckoning he is more shrew than she”: Petruchio and the Cunning Shrew²⁵⁰

After Grumio reports his master’s outrageous and violent behaviour at the wedding and on the way home, Petruchio’s servant Curtis asserts, “By this reck’ning he is more shrew than she” (4.1.85-86). Shakespearean criticism has by and large dismissed this exchange between Petruchio’s subordinates either as unnoteworthy, or as confirmation of Peter’s assessment that he “kills her in her own humor” (4.1.180). Petruchio’s actions, then, are read almost invariably as strategic imitation, part of the curriculum of Petruchio’s taming school. Petruchio acts like a shrew, in the derivative

²⁴⁸ Scot 251. Cardanus is here explaining eclipses, according to Scot.

²⁴⁹ Scot 250.

²⁵⁰ Selections from this section come from “The Well-Hung Shrew,” co-authored by J.A. Shea and Paul Yachnin.

sense of the sharp-tongued and unruly scold, in order to train the play's original, female shrew.²⁵¹ Challenging this dominant view, Paul Yachnin and I have argued for a revaluation of Petruchio's (as well as Katherina's) persistent shrewdness, based in part on the often-ignored semantic fecundity of the word "shrew."²⁵² Of particular relevance to this chapter is the period's pervasive understanding that shrews, both humans and their animal namesakes, were cunning tricksters to watch out for.

Indigenous to and abundant on British soil, shrew mice roamed town and country, settling among humans.²⁵³ Early modern accounts of shrews describe them as extremely vocal, intelligent creatures that appeared almost tame. Edward Topsell suggests, however, that this apparent docility is merely an act performed by one of nature's great dissemblers; for a shrew is in actuality "a rauening beast, feygning it selfe to be gentle and tame, but being touched it biteth deepe and poisoneth deadly."²⁵⁴ Topsell's words here allude to several common early modern beliefs about shrews. First, they were perceived to be clever, sneaky and scheming. Second, they were thought to be untameable and dangerous, though they might falsely appear amenable to domestication. According to Topsell, these cunning little creatures entrap beasts and also humans, threatening their loins and livelihood through their

²⁵¹ In "Refashioning the Shrew," Valerie Wayne notes the common critical interpretation, "Petruchio tames a shrew by becoming one" (171).

²⁵² See J.A. Shea and Paul Yachnin, "The Well-Hung Shrew" *Ecocritical Shakespeare*. Ed. Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton. London: Ashgate Press, forthcoming.

²⁵³ See Sandy Feinstein, "Shrews and Sheep in 'The Second Shepherds' Play'" 67; Sara Churchfield, *The Natural History of Shrews* 7. Also see Topsell *The Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes* (1607), where he relates Albertus's description of the shrew: "This Mouse saith Albertus, is a red kinde of Mouse hauing a small taile, a sharpe voice, and is full of poyson, or venome. For which cause Cats doe kill them, but doe not eate them" (535).

²⁵⁴ Topsell 536.

infectious presence: if a shrew “shall but passe ouer either an Oxe, or a horse...it will bring such a dangerous disease vpon them, that the beast ouer which she shall passe shall be lame about the loines.”²⁵⁵ As punishment for their crimes, or as a means of apotropaic deflection, shrews were hanged or desiccated and hung around the neck of livestock.²⁵⁶

Deriving their reputation from zoological description, human shrews of both sexes were ascribed dangerous formidability, cunning, and the “preposterous” power to overrun something greater than themselves, from the unmanned husband to the British body politic.²⁵⁷ The *MED* demonstrates that more than a hundred years before Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales* popularized the term’s association with the railing woman who subverts marital hierarchy, “shrew” commonly described “a rascal, a rogue.”²⁵⁸ According to the *OED*, the shrew was a “mischievous or vexatious person” or “malignant man.”²⁵⁹

Sir Thomas More describes a cunning man wielding razor-sharp rhetorical skills as a shrew, saying, “this man is a wyly shrewe in argument I promyse you.”²⁶⁰ In his version of *Reynart the Foxe*, William Caxton describes that “false shrewe and

²⁵⁵ Topsell 540.

²⁵⁶ Churchfield 148.

²⁵⁷ My use of the term here is inspired by Patricia Parker’s “Preposterous Events,” where she describes the preposterous in Shakespeare as that which is figured as unnatural inversion. See especially 187, 213.

²⁵⁸ See *MED* “shreue (n.)” Def. 1(a).

²⁵⁹ See also *OED* “shrew, *n.*² and *a.*” Def. A.*n.*1.a.

²⁶⁰ Thomas More, *The Answere to the Fyrst Parte of the Poysoned Booke* (1533) sig. C2v.

deceyuar” Reynart as a consummate flatterer.²⁶¹ And in his sonnet “Of the Sutteltie of Crafty Louers,” Henry Howard describes man-shrews as cunning paramours who possess an ability to change colour, a power of masterful rhetoric, and an arresting gaze:

The eye as scout and watch to stirre both to and fro,
 Doth serue to stale her here & there where she doth come and go.
 The tong doth pleade for right as herauld of the hart:
 And both the handes as oratours do serue to point their part.

But if she then mistrust it would turne blacke to white,
 For that the woorrier lokes most smoth when he wold fainest bite.

Wherin if she do thinke all this is but a shewe,
 Or but a siubtile masking cloke to hide a crafty shrewe
 Then come they to the larme, then shew they in the fielde,
 Then muster they in colours strange, that waies to make her yeld

then do they woo and watch.²⁶²

Like both Reynart and the cunning lover Howard describes, Petruchio demonstrates rhetorical prowess, using flattery as a first line of attack in his war of words: “Say that

²⁶¹ See William Caxton, *This is the Table of the Historie of Reynart the Foxe* (1481) sig E4v. See also sig. C6r.

²⁶² See Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, *Songes and Sonettes* (1557) Fo. 106. sig. D2r.

she rail, why then I'll tell her plain / She sings as sweetly as a nightingale" (2.1.170-71). When flattery fails to move Katherina, Petruchio shows his teeth, employing methods of rhetorical and physical coercion (including reshaping her reality through language in the sun and moon episode, and through depriving her of both food and sleep).

Before continuing, let me explain my motivations for placing shrews (a category applied more generally to various kinds of cons) among texts marked by classificatory impulses (types of cons and tricks). First, the movement of shrews across a generic sampling of popular pamphlets and high-culture histories suggests cons could not be confined to the fairground. Rather, the word "shrew" was applied somewhat broadly to describe any cunning and seductive tricksters who might deceive publics or infiltrate domestic spaces, especially through their use of linguistic and visual manipulation, as Howard's *shewe/shrewe* rhyme seems to indicate.

Immediately after Petruchio announces his intention to board Katherina, Grumio predicts Petruchio's success: "A' my word, and she knew him as well as I do, / she would think scolding would do little good upon / him...he'll rail in his rope tricks" (1.2.108-112). In the editorial tradition of the play, the phrase "rope-tricks" has rather consistently and hesitantly (as the question mark implies) been glossed as G. Blakemore Evans interprets it: "blunder for *rhetorics* (an interpretation supported by *figure* in line 114) (?) or tricks that deserve hanging (?)."²⁶³ While some critics,

²⁶³ For a more elaborate account of the editorial tradition, see Rebhorn 306. For Blakemore Evans's interpretation see *Riverside* 117 n 1.2.112.

beginning with Anne Lancashire, have argued that rope was a common Elizabethan euphemism for the penis, others, from Richard Levin to Wayne Rebhorn, have tried to reconcile the bawdy pun with the Renaissance conception of a rhetor: one who demonstrates phallic aggression, trickery and ensnarement, primarily at the level of language.²⁶⁴

While Rebhorn's reading of the rope as a rhetorical trap wielded by the speaker is trenchant, his argument neglects to address adequately the punitive implications of this passage—for one, the possibility that a noose likely lies at the other end of the rhetor's snare. The danger of hanging always looms over the play, threatening its dominant shrews, Katherina and Petruchio. For example, Grumio remarks that if Katherina is not wooed by Petruchio he will hang her himself (1.2.197). For her part, Katherina would rather have the witty Petruchio “hanged on Sunday” than marry him (2.1.299). It is his “extempore” speech (2.1.263) that elicits Katherina's sense of threat. Though the gift of “goodly speech” (2.1.262) imperils Petruchio, it works, conversely, to save his skin. Avoiding the strangulation of the gallows and the castration of Katherina's rejection, Petruchio re-scripts their private interaction for a public display of tumescence: “She hung about my neck, and kiss on kiss / She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath, / That in a twink she won me to her love. / [...] How tame, when men and women are alone” (2.1.308-312). Anticipating the play's final tableau, Petruchio here transforms the gallows rope into

²⁶⁴ See Anne Lancashire “Lyly and Shakespeare on the Ropes” 237-244. See also Rebhorn, especially 295.

a boast of masculine mastery, whereby the fantasy of the passively hung Katherina reconstitutes his missing manhood.

Shakespeare's representation of the rope-ripe shrew likely was inspired by abundant accounts of the well-hanged and well-hung shrew mouse.²⁶⁵ Equally proliferous and influential, metaphorical male shrews littered contemporaneous literature, where they were represented as comen adept at ropery which might, in the end, hang them.²⁶⁶ While Judas (a shrew according to Thomas More) met his destiny at rope's end, more benign shrews including Caxton's Reynart comically eluded their fate.²⁶⁷ In Caxton's work, Reynart both faces the rope and barely escapes it because of his rhetorical craftiness.²⁶⁸ From these examples we see that shrews faced fates similar to those of common cons. Yet their distinguishing adeptness with language left shrews particularly susceptible to ensnarement through their own words.

Rope Tricks: Feats of Agility

While "rope tricks" almost certainly suggests on one level the rhetorical trickery and inadvertent self-entrapment of shrewd rogues, there is another possible reading of the

²⁶⁵ See *OED*, "rope-ripe, a. and n," Def. A. adj. "Ripe for the gallows; fit for being hanged" and Def. b. "Applied to language."

²⁶⁶ "Roperly" is defined by the *OED* as "Def. 2. Trickery, knavery, roguery." For a discussion of the word's history in Shakespeare and its overlap with "rope-rhetorics," see Levin.

²⁶⁷ More II.iii.v (img. 18).

²⁶⁸ See Caxton sig. C6r., where Reynart is judged so "that the foxe sholde be dede and hanged by the necke lyste not he to pleyde alle his flaterynge wordes and deceyts coulde not help him." See also chapter xvij, "How the foxe brought them in daunger / that wolde haue brought hym to deth. and how he gate the grace of the kyng."

phrase, one surprisingly overlooked by critics of the play. That is, in using the phrase, Grumio is not simply blundering or blending. Rather, he is likening Petruchio's exercises to theatrical feats familiar to Shakespeare's audience and to his theatre company, for whom especially they would have resonated. As Phillip Butterworth keenly observes in *Magic on the English Stage*, theatre companies contemporaneous with Shakespeare—in particular the Queen's Men and the Lord Admiral's and the Lord Strange's troupes—were documented as performing what were called “feats of activity,” as well as the theatrical stage plays for which they were most renowned. While records suggest that the actors' feats mainly consist of tumbling acts, Butterworth notes that “Occasionally, this work is performed in the presence of dancers on the rope,” though “these performers are not recorded as members of the company.”²⁶⁹

It is likely that players shared the stage with rope dancers and other featists—an affiliation which led to the frequent conflation of actors, ropedancers and other juggling performers in anti-theatricalist rhetoric of the mid-seventeenth century.²⁷⁰ Puritan polemicist William Prynne uses his reading of homilies to the people of Antioch to decry “these pompes of Satan which...are Theaters, and Cirque-playes,” describing collectively the efforts which “Tumblers, Players, and Dancers upon the Rope did take to make themselves expert in their professions.”²⁷¹ Further equating rope-dancers and stage players, and codifying these attitudes into law, the Lords and

²⁶⁹ Philip Butterworth, *Magic on the Early English Stage* 33.

²⁷⁰ See Butterworth's chapter “Feats of Activity.”

²⁷¹ See William Prynne, *Histrio-Mastix: The Players Scourge* (1633) 425.

Commons assembled in Parliament ordered the suppression of “publique Play-Houses, Dancing on the Ropes, and Bair-baitings.”²⁷²

There is no telling when rope dancing gained its foothold in the English consciousness, but we do know that there are numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century accounts of this activity. Indeed Pierre Danet, in his *A Complete Dictionary of the Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1694, 1700), discusses the difficulty in precisely dating the feats performed by “Funambuli,” or “Dancers on the Rope.” He traces the art’s inception to several possible sources, including the self-proclaimed “first Inventors,” the Cyziceniens and then follows its rise in the Greek and Roman world to the introduction of stage games and plays. After citing ancient references to the dancers, including some in Horace and Pliny, Danet recounts four types of funambuli named in the first book of *Bullenger de Theatra*, the likes of which continued the ancient practice in early modern England. There were those who vaulted and tumbled around the rope, those who slid from the high to the low end of a stretched rope, those who ran on a horizontal rope, and finally, those who “did not only walk on a bent Rope, but also leapt and played many such tricks, as a Dancer might do on firm ground at the sound of a Flute.”²⁷³ “Tricks” here seem clearly to refer to dancing or feats of footwork. But there is some evidence to suggest that

²⁷² England and Wales. Parliament (1647).

²⁷³ See Danet, “FUNAMBULI” Sig. Pp2v.-Sig. Pp3r.

ropedancers may also have performed conjuring tricks or sleights-of-hand, perhaps even while on the rope.²⁷⁴

While histories of funambulism abound in sixteenth-eighteenth century England, so do eyewitness accounts, both in travel narratives and in domestic reports of the practice (which was often described as a foreign import) captivating curious crowds throughout England. One such account is recorded in Dr. Taylor's History from the REED records at Shrewsbury in Shropshire, where in 1589, he reports:

This yeare and the xxiiijth [of] [day of Iuly] there was a scaffolld put vp in the cornemarket in salop vpon the *w*hich an hongarian and other of the queenes *Maiesties* players and tvmlars vsid and excersid them selves in sutche maner of tvmblinge and tvrninge as the...lick was never seene in shrewsburie before, that is to saye in this maner, they wold tvrne them selves twice bothe backward and forward without towchinge any grownde in lightinge or fallinge vpon their feete som of them also wold apere in a bagge vpright in the same beinge tied fast at the mowthe above his head and wold beinge in the sayde bagge turne bothe foreward and backward without towchinge any grownde in falling vpright vpon his feete in the sayde bagge marvelous to the beholders also a litill from the sayde stadge there was a gable roape tighted and drawen strayte vpon poales erectid against master pursers place in the sayde corne market vpon the whiche roape the sayde hongarian did assende and goe vpon withe his bare feete having a longe poale in his

²⁷⁴ Butterworth makes a case for this, 91.

handdes over his headd and wold fall stridlenes vppon the sayde roap and
 mowntinge vp againe vpon the same withe hys feete verey myraculous to the
 beholders at soondrie tymes and in soondrie maners, aso vppon the topp
 ofthe saine roape goinge streight from bothe the sloapes he went to & fro the
 same in daunsinge and turninge hym sellff withe holdinge still his saide poale
which wayed above xxxviij li. weight and also he put on two broadeshues of
 copper vpon hys feete not towching them with hys handes and went vpright
 vpon the saide roape never suarvinge on no syde in woonderfull maner and
 after he had put downe the poale he shewyd woonderfull feates and knackes
 in fallinge his head and handes downewardes and hangid at the roape by his
 feete and assendid vp agayne and after that hangid by his handes and all his
 feete & body downewardes and turnid hys body backward & forward
 betwyxt his handes & the rope as nymbell I as yf it had been an eele in sutche
 woonderfull maner that the licke was neuer seene of the inhabitantes there
 before that tyme.²⁷⁵

I quote Taylor at length here because his account so vividly illustrates the space,
 scale, and performance of certain kinds of “knacks” or tricks, as well as the sense of
 wonder the act seems to arouse in the crowd. In editorial glossings of the rope-trick
 passage from the *Shrew*, the word “rail” has been most commonly interpreted as a
 verbal gesture, and as such, it, along with Grumio’s later use of the word “figure,” has
 provided the basis for the common editorial interpretation of rope-tricks as a blunder

²⁷⁵ “Dr. Taylor’s History” from *Shropshire 1: The Records - Records of Early English Drama*, 247.

for rope-rhetorics. Amid the broader theatrical and linguistic context, Grumio's "rope tricks" may well refer to performed feats of agility or feats of legerdemain performed while demonstrating feats of agility such as dancing on the rope.

Ropes in Legerdemain

A further possibility remains, however, and this is that Grumio is invoking popular acts of legerdemain performed with a rope as their central stage property. This last opinion is supported by the *OED* definition of rope-tricks. According to the *OED* "rope-trick" is "a punning or illiterate distortion of 'rhetoric,'" but it is also "a juggling trick or sleight-of-hand involving a rope or ropes; freq. in *Indian rope-trick*."²⁷⁶ I will revisit the *OED*'s example here, the "Indian rope-trick," and its possible applicability to Shakespeare's play after discussing the period's most familiar rope tricks.

In treatises on jugglery from the period, sleight-of-hand rope tricks are some of the most commonly mentioned, since its flexibility and versatility made rope a useful tool for a variety of tricks. In the previous chapter on *Othello* I related in some detail one variation of the fast and loose trick, which was often performed with handkerchiefs. Reginald Scot mentions other varieties of the fast and loose trick used with cords or ropes, namely a trick "to pull three beadstones from off a cord, while you hold fast the ends thereof, without remoouing of your hand."²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ See *OED* "rope, *n.*"

²⁷⁷ Scot 337.

In his explanatory treatise on magic tricks, Thomas Hill (1581) relates “How to break a new and big Rope with the hands onely”:

To do this take and fasten the one end of the Cord or Rope, either with a nail driuen fast into it, or about a strong hook of Iron, and after winde the same three or foure times, or oftner about thy hande, and the other ende of the Corde or Rope winde about by the top of the Palme between the fore finger and the thumb, that the one part of the corde may reach vnto the Nail, and the head or other ende vnto the bottome of the Palm, by which it must again be winded about, and after that winded again once or twice about. And this so done, then with a vehement plucke and force, assay in the same part by which it is so ouer winded or run with the Corde, for that the substance of the Cord or Rope which is under, doth defend, that the hand can take no harme by the hastie and strong pull: and take heed that the uttermost fold of the Cord slide not in thy hand. And to conclude, this conceiue, that in the mighty and hasty pluck together, the one fold of the Cord doth so cut the other in sunder, and then especailly when as that parte shall be set soft, which is between the hand and the nail and that both the hand be strong, and then pluck out-right and quick. And now if you will conceive this order in the winding of the Cord about both the hands, you may so breake the same with the onely strength of the hands, yea suche strong Cordes or Ropes, as will

well hold a Bullocke or Cow, vnto the admiration or wondering: of the
lookers on.²⁷⁸

While Thomas Hill's rope trick astounds audiences by its demonstration of what appears to be superhuman strength, other knacks, like the following one described by the anonymous author of *Hocus Pocus Junior* (1634), present the illusion of bodily transformation, penetration, or disfiguration. Describing "How to seeme to pull a rope thorow your nose," the author instructs,

YOu must have likewise for the effecting of this delusion, an Implement on purpose....It may be made of two elder stickes, thrusting out the pith, and afterward glued together, the ends whereof must have a peece of corke cut hollow, and glued over them: then must there be a little whipcord put thorow them, the ends whereof must come out at two holes made on the outward side of each elder sticke. Put this Trinket over the fleshy part of your nose, then pull one end of the rope, and afterwards the other and it will bee thought that the rope commeth quite thorow your nose.²⁷⁹

In an earlier work, Samuel Rid (1612) mentions the trick in which a juggler seems to pull a cord through his nose or mouth, and then he goes on to describe a series of other tricks that would seem to endanger the body, but which in reality leave it unscathed—for instance, seeming to put a ring through your cheek, pretending to put a "bodkin through your head," appearing "to cut halfe your nose in sunder," or,

²⁷⁸ Hill, *Naturall and Artificiall Conclusions* sig C6v-C7v.

²⁷⁹ *Hocus Pocus Junior* Sig. D1r.

in one of the most famous tricks, “the decollation of S. Iohn the Baptist,” seeming to decapitate another.²⁸⁰

Returning to the *OED*'s example, there is the possibility that Shakespeare alludes to what became known in the nineteenth century as the “Indian rope-trick.” In one of the earliest accounts of this seemingly impossible vanishing act, Ibn Batuta describes a juggler performing at the Amir Kurtai's palace in China (c. 1358), a man who threw a ladder of cord into the air and persuaded his young assistant to ascend into the invisible heights. Pursuing the boy up the ladder with a knife, himself disappearing into what seemed thin air, the juggler descended only after a litter of body parts, presumably the boy's, had fallen from the sky to the ground below. If these miraculous illusions of disappearance and dismemberment were not enough, the juggler, in his finale, was said to reintegrate and reanimate the boy with a kick and a magical incantation.²⁸¹ It is uncertain to what extent the account providing the basis for Henry Yule's nineteenth-century translation circulated in early modern England. But the existence of derivative stories written in the period in both Latin and Irish suggests that similar accounts captured audience imaginations throughout Europe.²⁸²

“Petruchio is the master, That teacheth tricks eleven–and–twenty long”

²⁸⁰ See Samuel Rid, *The Art of Iugling or Legerdemaine* sig. E2r-E3v.

²⁸¹ For Butterworth's description of the tale as told by Ibn Batua appearing in Henry Yule, see Butterworth 91. For Henry Yule's account see “Ibn Batua's Travels in Bengal and China” (1866) 500-501.

²⁸² See Butterworth 91.

Petruchio, I have argued, is described variously as a wandering fortune hunter of dubious distinction, a cunning shrew, and one who rails in rope tricks. Collectively, these characterizations locate the play's hero among a world of agility featists and tricksters who are suspended in the period's narratives between entertainment and criminality, between public amusement and private profit. He is also, as both the above quotation and the final scene's wager on obedience suggest, a gamester. In particular, he is the kind of card trickster the likes of which Reginald Scot, Samuel Rid and others warn against in their discussions of fairground cons. More importantly though, as the above passage implies and as I will argue, Petruchio is a pedagogue, acting out his mastery of disciplinary power for those who would learn his shrew-taming tricks.

In various ways and with greater or lesser degrees of directness, critics of *Shrew* often end up asking whether or not Katherina is a quick study. Is she a human who learns her place as a broken woman and a broken animal?²⁸³ Is she a wild animal who enters a compact voluntarily and learns human ethical reciprocity at the hands of her master?²⁸⁴ It is important to ask what, how, and how fast Katherina learns, and it is even more important to ask what are the ethical (often unethical) dimensions of

²⁸³ See *Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds*, where Lynda Boose finds a historical analogue for Kate's plight in the subjugation of shrews and scolds by way of confining them and training them with an apparatus like a horse's bridle.

²⁸⁴ This is very much Margaret Loftus Ranald's argument in "The Manning of the Haggard." Speaking of the way obedience is learned in falconry, Ranald writes, this "method...is one that lays equal demands on both bird and keeper" (118). Later she argues "...the compact between master and falcon is basically a voluntary commitment...[T]he bird is capable of flying free, and only the kindness of the keeper and the consequent gratitude and indebtedness of the bird can keep it under control. So too with Kate and Petruchio" (120). In "The Well-Hung Shrew," Yachnin and I propose an alternative to Boose's and Ranald's arguments when we suggest that the play be considered according to a model outside of the hierarchies of human/animal mastery.

her education. Yet I would suggest that we should first consider the play's characterization of education generally and Petruchio's role as educator specifically before pursuing the question of "what, if anything, does Katherina learn?"

Education as it is presented in the play is almost exclusively associated with trickery—either teaching as a means toward tricking others (the tutoring scheme as a collective endeavour to "beguile the old folks" (1.2.138-139) and win women) or teaching as a program for the imparting of "tricks," such as Petruchio's tips in shrew-taming. In *Shrew*, even the language of education becomes an opportunity for rhetorical trickery, a chance for Shakespeare to conjure dramatic ironies that are by definition potentiated by deceptions or orchestrations of incongruous levels of awareness. Particularly, I am speaking of the way that, unbeknownst to Baptista, "cunning" operates as a synonym for "conning" in the play. When the elder Minola seeks "cunning" schoolteachers (1.1.187) for his daughters' education, he desires those who, in keeping with the *OED*'s definition of the term, "posses[s] knowledge or learning" or those "versed in (of) a subject."²⁸⁵ This is the primary definition of the term from the fourteenth into the sixteenth century (although during this time "cunning" also commonly suggested the possession of "magical knowledge or skill"), and it is surely the one that Baptista intends.²⁸⁶ The *OED* suggests, though, that the 1590s saw an expansion of this definition to include craftiness, artfulness and

²⁸⁵ See *OED* "cunning, *a.*" Def. 1.a.

²⁸⁶ For cunning meaning "possessing magical knowledge or skill: in *cunning man*, *cunning woman*, a fortune-teller, conjurer, 'wise man', 'wise woman', wizard or witch," see "cunning, *a.*" Def. 3*spec.*

slyness—terms that describe the tutors Baptista unwittingly receives.²⁸⁷ I should note that this conflation of cunning and conning in *Shrew* and in its linguistic contexts reflects the already-mentioned legislative efforts and social attitudes regarding wandering scholars and crank pedants.

It is against this background of dubious pedagogy in the period and in the play that the motivations and successes of Petruchio's taming school must be evaluated. Education in *Shrew* has secret subtexts. While its ulterior motives may be realized, its ostensible goals are never reached. Kate's and Bianca's lessons are interrupted by violent eruptions and amorous distractions. More importantly, Petruchio's tricks in shrew-taming are never mastered by the men, who fail to control their wives in the play's final scenes. It is no wonder their education in mastery has failed. Rather, as Lucentio aptly recognizes, it is remarkable Petruchio succeeds, if in fact, he does: "Here is a wonder, if you talk of wonder" (5.2.106). After all, as I've already argued, the animal behind the metaphoric shrew was recognized for its untameability, for only feigning domestication and for being one of nature's greatest cons. By extension, figurative "shrewishness"/"shrewdness" in the period most commonly described tricksters feared for their dupery and for their escape artistry as they eluded the trick rope turned gallows rope. In light of these definitions and according to the logic of the play, Petruchio's shrew-taming should be either interpreted according to Hortensio's assessment—Katherina's obedience signals a truly miraculous, prodigious feat ("And so it is [a wonder]. I wonder what it

²⁸⁷ See *OED* "cunning, *a.*" Def. 5.a-5.b.

bodes...")²⁸⁸—or read as an impossibility, a hoax either produced by or played on a quack schoolmaster who, in any case, has imparted his promised lesson.

Entertaining Katherina's Confederacy

Over the course of this chapter I have argued *Shrew* is riddled with the cant and character types described in cony-catching literature, named after animal cons and their metaphorical human counterparts, modeled after fairground feats of agility and legerdemain, and characterized by dubious educations. I have suggested that the play is structured around the theme of cunning, that the social languages of cons and fairground featists operate crucially within the play, and that a sensitivity to context and to the multiple valences of language functioning in and around the play open up a wealth of historically-grounded interpretive possibilities—most notably that the title (and the act it describes) may signal a hoax. But if *Shrew* stages deliberate deceit, who is the joke on, and what is Katherina's role in it?

In her final speech, in words most often read as proof of a tamed falcon's hoodwinking and her adoption of patriarchal ways of seeing, Katherina announces, "But now I see our lances are but straws, / our strength as weak, our weakness past compare, / That seeming to be most which we indeed least are" (5.2.173-175). Most obviously Katherina here denounces female pretences of power, and yet the phrases are imbued with contradiction. While assigning women inherent weakness, she acknowledges in them superior powers of counterfeiting and illusionism, which

²⁸⁸ See 5.2.107.

though decried here, prove mechanisms of (mostly male) strength and accomplishment in the play at large. Might we read Katherina's description of women "seeming to be most which we indeed least are" as hinting at an opposite performative trajectory: women appear weak, domesticated, and tame when they are in fact something else? When considered in isolation, this reading of Katherina's words may seem a tenuous attempt at the kind of apologetic revisionism the play's discomfiting ending often spawns. Read against the broader backdrop of cunning tricksters, educational subtexts and untameable shrews, however, it seems more plausible that Katherina's final act is, in the very least, more than it seems. This prospect becomes even more likely when we recall those particular types of cons whose names sound curiously similar to Shrew's cunning leads. "Patricos," as mentioned earlier, were said to officiate marriages without legitimate legal or religious authority, while "Kates" were clever pick-locks.

If Petruchio is in fact a trickster, Kate may be one too, one more subtle, perhaps, and even more successful in her craft. For while Petruchio's cunning character has been recognized in Shakespearean criticism, the possibility of Katherina as con has gone relatively unnoticed. Kate's potential tricksterism and more specifically her extra-literary association with pick-locks may prompt us to consider alternative readings of the play's ending. Might not the play invite us at least to entertain a behind-the-scenes fleecing of Petruchio (a performance of submission for the purpose of gaining access to his safeguarded money and domestic spaces)? Might it suggest Katherina's own art of escape from social obligations to which she appears bound or, at the very least, from the grip of an unloving father and spoiled sister?

According to pamphleteering whistle-blowers such as Richard Head, female cony-catchers were nefarious members of the canting crew. They might disguise themselves as pregnant women or even as men in order to rob others.²⁸⁹ While Head devotes his text to discovering “the Most Eminent Cheats of Both Sexes,” Robert Greene’s female cony-catcher in *A Disputation Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher* (1592) argues for the particularities of the cony-catching whore’s treachery.²⁹⁰ Suggesting the cony-catching whore is at least as dangerous as the male cony-catching thief, Nan a Traffique remarks that “shee flatters him [her cony], she invueagles him, shee bewitcheth him, that hee spareth neither goods nor landes to content her, that is onley in love with his coyne.”²⁹¹ In the end, she will beguile him into forsaking his loved ones and bring him “to the gallowes, or at the last and worst, to the Pockes, or as preiudiciall diseases.”²⁹²

Nan’s remarks remind one of Katherina’s hyperbolic and, as many critics have pointed out, unfounded flattery of Petruchio. While the presence of obsequiousness in Katherina’s final speech has impelled critics to suspect irony here, it is the function of flattery in the play as a whole, and specifically as a means for the shrewd Petruchio to trick Katherina into marriage, that begs a closer look. Flattery, using verbal “rope-tricks” to free oneself and to enfetter another, is perhaps the most characteristic device of the shrew[d]. Perhaps it is also a lesson learned from

²⁸⁹ Head 111-113, 102-105.

²⁹⁰ See Head title page.

²⁹¹ See Greene sig. C3v.

²⁹² See again Greene sig. C3v.

Petruchio the trickster-teacher or (considering, alternatively, a model of contagion) a tendency caught from Petruchio the contagious juggler. We might also consider another possibility, one more consistent with character and context—that is, *Shrew's* marriage between tricksters should be entertained as a collusive partnership the likes of which are described by B.E. Harman, Head, and Greene. While currently the legitimacy of the couple's public contract and private dealings has eluded skepticism, we must ask if Shakespeare's audience is as unsuspecting. The Patrico/Patercove was a familiar figure in Shakespeare's England, and of course the hedge-priest was employed by Shakespeare himself to comically invoke illegitimacy, indecency or underhanded motivation (for instance, through Oliver Martext in *As You Like It*). For the *Shrew's* original audience, this allusion through the name Petruchio may well have produced a similar sense of good-hearted incredulity—casting the marriage contract or the authenticity and character of its public performance in doubt and arousing suspicions of collusion. In his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Reginald Scot describes acts of confederacy as the primary operations by which jugglers appear to accomplish the miraculous. While he defines private confederacy as the apparent achievement of something in public that has already been accomplished in private, without the aid of accomplices, “publike confederacie” is:

when there is before hand a compact made betwixt diverse persons; the one to be principal, the rest to be assistants in working of miracles, or rather in cousening and abusing the beholders. As when I tell you in the presence of a multitude what you have thought or done, or shall do or thinke, when you

and I were thereupon agreed before. And if this be cunninglie and closelie handled, it will induce great admiration to the beholders.²⁹³

While numerous accounts of confederacy describe a boy assisting the juggler or cony-catcher from behind the scenes, others outline male and female partnerships, the members of which affect estrangement in order to accomplish their scams. As was touched upon previously, Thomas Harman specifically mentions that upright men often worked with women, confederates with whom they would not be seen publically. Yet these men and women worked together, stealing at fairs and markets, even though the men would not allow the women to walk with them.²⁹⁴

By recalling the suspicions of authors such as Harman, the kinds of tricks and collusions to which the play appears to allude, and the themes of conning which most clearly structure *Shrew's* dramatic and comedic arc, I am not offering a definitive alternative to the play's dominant reading—that Katherina is tamed. Rather, I am suggesting that the play's final scenes almost certainly would have provoked misgivings. The wager, whose winnings leave the couple with money and Katherina with the respect of the stunned onlookers, has all the markings of a scam. Such a scenario likely would have aroused suspicions in Shakespeare's audience, which was surrounded by literary accounts of and real-life interactions with cony-catchers and which was familiar with the codes of canting and meanings of shrewishness now lost on modern audiences. But as we eye *Shrew's* theatrical and

²⁹³ On private confederacy, see Scot 308. On public confederacy, see Scot 309.

²⁹⁴ Harman B3r–B3v.

ideological turns, risking interpretations, we also do well to acknowledge the generous character of the play's exit. With the admiration and bewilderment of a captive audience, Lucentio concludes the play not with certainty or suspicion, but with a "wonder" wagered by the curious, or the gullible. "'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so" he says,²⁹⁵ before the couple disappears into the unseen spaces and the false bottoms of imaginary possibility.

²⁹⁵ See 5.2.89-90.

3 • Paulina: The Juggler as Religious Servant

Shakespearean Legerdemain in the Critical Milieu

As with *Othello*, over the long reception history of *The Winter's Tale* critics have ranged in their responses from rebuking the play to exuberantly embracing it. For the play's harsher critics from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century, this is a work "grounded on impossibilities" (Dryden 1672), one which cheats the unities (Malone 1790) and relies, rather unsuccessfully, on crude dramatic devices (Lennox 1753).²⁹⁶ Whether they blame Leontes's unfounded jealousy, the playwright's "invention" of a Bohemian seacoast, or the play's unconventional acceleration of time through a bear, a statue, or second-hand testimony, these critics express a feeling of being tricked.²⁹⁷ For Charlotte Lennox the statue scene is a "mean and absurd contrivance," while Leontes's sudden jealousy is little more than cheap hocus-pocus.²⁹⁸ She writes, "The Legerdemain, who shows you a tree that buds, blossoms, and bears ripe fruit in the space of five minutes, does not put so great a cheat on the

²⁹⁶ John Dryden, *The Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards* 163; Edmond Malone, selections from *Primary Remarks* 233 rpt. by Horace Howard Furness (1898) in *A New Variorum Shakespeare: Volume XI The Winter's Tale* 379-380; Charlotte Lennox *Shakespeare Illustrated* Vol. 2 75 rpt. in *New Variorum* 353.

²⁹⁷ Ben Jonson (1619) is the first to famously criticize the so-called invention of a seacoast—though later critics were quick to point out that Shakespeare's primary source for *The Winter's Tale*, Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* (1588) had given Bohemia a coast years earlier (Furness ix).

²⁹⁸ Lennox in Furness 353.

senses as Shakespear [sic] does on the understanding; for this jealousy of one minute's growth we see take Root before our Eyes...."²⁹⁹ Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch's sentiment is similar, but his target is the play's visually-absent recognition scene, which is delivered to us aurally in the gentlemen's eye-witness account. Quiller-Couch remarks, "Are we not baulked? In proportion as we have paid tribute to the art of the story by letting our interest be intrigued, our emotion excited, are we not cheated when Shakespeare lets us down with this reported tale?"³⁰⁰

Criticisms similar to those by Lennox and later by Quiller-Couch have generated an equal measure of defence and sophisticated reconsideration of issues of trickery within the play. S.L. Bethell does not dispute what he agrees is *The Winter's Tale's* reliance on clunky stage tricks and outmoded devices, but he appropriates the play's "technical crudity" and "staginess" as values serving his own decidedly theological agenda.³⁰¹ For Bethell *The Winter's Tale* sets in motion a self-conscious "creaking of dramatic machinery" as a means of breaking through the illusion of art's superiority and of driving home timeless themes of divine providence, Christian redemption, and the limitations of human comprehension.³⁰² Despite the obvious limitations of his own argument, Bethell makes some observations that deserve reconsideration, albeit with increased attention to the play's particular historical embeddedness.

²⁹⁹ Lennox in Furness 353.

³⁰⁰ Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch, *Notes on Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1917) 266.

³⁰¹ Bethell, *The Winter's Tale: A Study* 51, 103.

³⁰² Bethell 50.

In more recent theatrically and historically minded criticism we find a slew of responses to traditional charges against the play's crude contrivances and second-rate trickery. In an examination of stage-craft, Nevill Coghill refutes six of the most common charges against the play and concludes with a spirited defense of the statue scene: "Of all Shakespeare's *coups de théâtre*, the descent of Hermione from her pedestal is perhaps the most spectacular and affecting; it is also one of the most carefully contrived and has indeed been indicted for its contrivance...."³⁰³ For those who have suggested that the play dramatizes, successfully or unsuccessfully, a genuine resurrection, Coghill reminds, "Hermione is not a Lazarus, come from the dead....The spiritual meaning of the play in no way depends on her being a Lazarus or an Alcestis."³⁰⁴ Leontes's restitution and what it means for the audience depend only on Hermione's appearing dead or the audience believing her dead.³⁰⁵ That is to say, these crucial aspects of the play depend upon what Coghill seems to see as the monumental success of Shakespeare's foolery.

Stephen Orgel, meanwhile, focuses on the dramatic facts leading up to Hermione's "resurrection" that result in the audience being tricked. We receive not only Paulina's report that Hermione has died, but also Leontes's confirmation, since he asks to see the bodies of his wife and son and gives the orders to have them buried in one grave. Orgel notes, "Leontes is our guarantee that the two deaths are real: if Mamillius is dead, so is Hermione; and by the same token, if Leontes is being

³⁰³ See Coghill, "Six Points of Stagecraft in *The Winter's Tale*" 39.

³⁰⁴ Coghill 40.

³⁰⁵ Coghill 40.

deceived by Paulina about the reality of death, so we are being deceived by Shakespeare.”³⁰⁶ Focusing on deceptive descriptive practices, Richard Meek (like Orgel) likens Shakespeare as an authorial con man to his trickster characters. For Meek, Autolycus is a figure of the playwright as con artist, playing with the unreliability of appearances and the trickery of old tales.³⁰⁷ Others have focused more extensively on themes of duplicity and on characters practicing deception in the play. Of course, they have tended to look mainly at Autolycus’s lies; but increasingly, some critics, notably Leonard Barkan and B.J. Sokol, have eloquently asked what we are to make of the liberties Paulina takes with the truth.³⁰⁸

While these critics emphasize deceptions within, and perpetrated by, *The Winter’s Tale*, others either eschew the suggestion of any “*coup*,” or they play down the trickery in order to salvage what they see as the characters’ honesty and the gravity of the play’s final scene. For Fitzroy Pyle the statue scene is a “double deception-that-is-no-deception.”³⁰⁹ The scene incorporates self-delusion and willing collusion on the part of the audience, not lies perpetrated by Shakespeare or Paulina. He believes that the playwright and the character should be seen as persistently good agents of transformation throughout the play. For Pyle, Hermione’s death is not simply a lie, but it is a dramatic fact that does not reverse itself until we learn the

³⁰⁶ See Orgel’s edition of *The Winter’s Tale* 36.

³⁰⁷ See Meek, “Ekphrasis in ‘The Rape of Lucrece’ and *The Winter’s Tale*.”

³⁰⁸ Barkan, “Living Sculptures: Ovid, Michelangelo, and *The Winter’s Tale*” 640; Sokol, *Art and Illusion in The Winter’s Tale* 151-166.

³⁰⁹ Pyle, *The Winter’s Tale: A Commentary on the Structure* 141.

truth in the final scene. This honest secret is a necessary one, lest the high seriousness of the final act descend into laughter.³¹⁰

More recently, James Edward Siemon has joined Pyle in blanching from the statue scene the taint of authorial fraudulence, wresting it from the world of jugglers, con artists, and stage magicians. Siemon discounts the theory that we should see Hermione's death and recovery as "dramatic sleight-of-hand."³¹¹ He insists that,

...to treat the statue scene as only a coup de theatre is to reduce to parlor-trick mummery in deplorable taste the solemn music and ritual with which Paulina invokes Hermione to 'descend; be stone no more; approach...Bequeath to death your numbness; for from him / Dear life redeems you,' and this is simply not the effect of the scene.³¹²

I begin my chapter with this critical survey in order to underscore widespread interest in a subject that has hardly been exhausted. I begin here to show the historical perseverance of a critical conversation regarding trickery—how deception's presence and, for a few, its absence—in *The Winter's Tale* might have something important to tell us. This chapter aims to resuscitate a complex, often confusing, but nonetheless important Renaissance concept that thus far has eluded Shakespeare criticism. There is a figure—rhetorical, material, phantasmical—that, better understood, helps us make sense of what might otherwise appear a series of unrelated debates driving the

³¹⁰ Pyle 135, 141.

³¹¹ Siemon, "But it Appears She Lives"; Iteration in *The Winter's Tale* 13.

³¹² Siemon 13.

play. Con-artistry versus theatrical artistry; Catholic ritual versus Protestant reflection; lawful versus unlawful magic—all of these tensions converge within the conceptual and metaphorical domain of the “juggler.”

Throughout this dissertation I have continued to build upon the definition of juggling and its associated concepts that I supplied in my Introduction. I will now summarize the definition as it has developed. By “juggler,” I mean a real figure, a theatrical presence, whose popularity reached its height during Shakespeare’s time. This figure was often a professional magician who was sometimes a wandering trickster and other times a court entertainer. Here and throughout this dissertation I also use “juggler,” as it was used then, in a broadly figurative sense. The term “juggler” was a product of ideological agendas and was applied to a wide array of players in Shakespeare’s social scene. Spiritual, mechanical, and natural magicians; witches; witch hunters; papists; puppeteers; con artists; and stage players all attracted and often deflected charges of jugglery.

Autolycus’s likeness to the juggler has been neither explicitly nor thoroughly articulated, though commonly critics fall just shy of naming him one. He has, after all, been likened to a host of cheats who, I have argued, would have passed for jugglers in the period, including the sleight-of-hand cony-catcher and what David Kaula calls the “cunning merchant of popish wares.”³¹³ More pertinent to this

³¹³ In “Rogues, Shepherds and the Counterfeit Distressed,” Barbara Mowat discusses Autolycus’s likeness to one of Robert Greene’s cony-catchers (59-61). In a footnote, she lists critics who have made this comparison before her: “Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, in his introduction to the *New Cambridge Winter’s Tale*, 1931, seems to have been the first scholar to note the parallel: ‘let anyone turn to Greene’s Second Part of Canny-catching (1592), he will find the trick played by Autolycus on

chapter, though, is Paulina's status. For critics committed to upholding what they imagine is Paulina's almost saintly character, Autolycus's trickery (especially when read unromantically) seems a radical counterpoint to her persistent honesty.³¹⁴ Even many critics who find Paulina's relationship to the truth ambiguous at best tend to treat her deceptions as if they were different in kind from those of Autolycus—as if they were removed somehow from the contiguous worlds of cony-catching and juggling. Instead, Paulina's illusionism and her staging of Hermione's metamorphosis tend to elicit comparisons to “higher” if not less contentious forms of art.³¹⁵ For instance, for several critics her artistry and artfulness recall the animations in Ovid and Euripides (Douglas B. Wilson and Sarah Dewar-Watson); the life-like sculpture and trick paintings by Italian masters (Barkan; Sokol); the productive intellectual magic of Neoplatonists and Hermeticists (Gourlay); even the theatre of the commercial playhouse (Sokol).³¹⁶ To my knowledge, Paulina has been called neither a cony-catcher nor a juggler.

the Clown so exactly described as to leave no doubt that poor Greene was again drawn upon.” Kenneth Muir in *The Sources of Shakespeare's Plays* (1977) writes that “Autolycus...might have stepped out of one of the pamphlets of Harman, Greene, or Dekker, exposing the iniquities of the criminal underworld. Several of his tricks do in fact come from Greene's cony-catching pamphlets,” one of which “describes...Autolycus'...robbing of the shepherd's son” (275-76) (Mowat 72 n 8); See also Frank Aydelotte's early and excellent treatment of rogues in *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds*. In this book Aydelotte compares Autolycus to those rogues who faked illnesses in order to steal (31, 43); for Kaula's quotation see “Autolycus' Trumpery” 287-288.

³¹⁴ See for instance Lee Sheridan Cox's “The Role of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*.” Cox remarks that “Autolycus is not like the good Paulina or the good Camillo, who deal in medicine and cure and health” (287).

³¹⁵ Readings of Paulina as witch, scold, and midwife are notable exceptions. See for instance Pearson's “Witchcraft in *The Winter's Tale*: Paulina as Alcahueta y un Poquito Hechizera.”

³¹⁶ See Douglas B. Wilson's “Euripedes, Alcestis and the Ending of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*”; Sarah Dewar-Watson's “Alcestis and the Statue Scene in *The Winter's Tale*”; Barkan's “Living Sculptures”; Patricia Southard Gourlay's ““Oh my most sacred lady’: Female Metaphors in *The Winter's Tale*, and Sokol's *Art and Illusion*—particularly Sokol's chapters “The Statue's Tale:

The reason for this oversight, I think, has more to do with our age's assumptions than with those held in Shakespeare's period or with any absence of evidence in the play itself. Echoing a number of critics on the subject, Orgel notes that in contrast to the English Renaissance, which viewed genre more flexibly, our period is more "disturb[ed]" by mixed genres.³¹⁷ Back then, for the sake of dramatic effect, comic and serious episodes were played side by side, and plays ended with the performance of jigs.³¹⁸ Since then, opinions on Shakespearean genre and decorum have been defined and redefined.

Edward Dowden's classification of *The Winter's Tale* as a romance in 1877 neither meant the abandonment of previously solid generic distinctions nor did it imply some new understanding of the play as a free-for-all of comic and tragic minglings.³¹⁹ Rather, in the wake of *The Winter's Tale's* late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century generic re-invention, critics are often inclined to stress the play's structural divisions, or they tend to dismiss low comic elements considered out of place in what Sokol calls a "very serious" final act.³²⁰ It is likely then that assumed generic distinctions within the play, as well as concomitant distinctions of social

Metamorphic Art" 55-84, "Julio's Tale: Beguiling Art" 85-115, and "Paulina's and Camillo's Tale: Playwrights in a Play" 142-166.

³¹⁷ Orgel 4. Orgel notes that Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* is incorrectly cited as a defence of generic purity; but Sidney decries another fault of which *The Winter's Tale* is certainly "guilty": breaches in decorum (3-4).

³¹⁸ Orgel 4.

³¹⁹ See Orgel 2.

³²⁰ See Orgel 4. It is Sokol in *Art and Illusion* 10 who calls the final act "very serious." Mowat is a notable exception to this critical trend. In "A Tale of Sprites and Goblins" she argues that Leontes's fall cannot truly be considered tragic and discusses the final scene's mingling of the tragic and comic.

rank, precipitated readings of Paulina and Autolycus as worlds apart, or as foils in (respectively) high and low artistic trickery.

Moreover, the overlooking, by critics, of Paulina's likeness to the juggler (and to Autolycus for that matter) is also most likely attributable to a few historical misunderstandings: first, that juggling had a persistently negative valuation in Shakespeare's time, and second, that juggling was exclusively a popular practice separate from philosophical or intellectual magic. The first view, I think, we owe in part to Shakespeare himself and to his influence on the development of our language; the second is due to Renaissance defences of natural magic as well as twentieth-century histories of magic. The word "juggler" never appears in *The Winter's Tale*, though I argue that the play is built almost entirely around literal and metaphorical conceptions of juggling. When the word is used in Shakespeare (and it is used eleven times in nine plays) it is hurled almost inevitably as an insult.³²¹ Its comic, malignant, and superstitious associations are the ones to which Shakespeare gives voice when his characters utter the word. These associations are not the author's invention, but through their incorporation into other plays Shakespeare magnifies certain social distinctions asserted through broader cultural deployments and denials of "juggling." For example, as well as being used by reformist Protestants to describe Catholic hoaxers, the term was sometimes used against Neoplatonic or Hermetic magi to

³²¹ For a list of these plays and discussion of their uses of the term, see this dissertation's Introduction.

debase their art as either illegitimate or unlawful.³²² In turn, practitioners of “high” natural, mechanical and occasionally spiritual magic ducked inquisitors and defended their entitlement to practice magical arts, distinguishing their knowledgeable and useful practice from the entertainments and beliefs of the vulgar.

Many twentieth-century histories of magic appear to have taken for fact what are politic fictions or, at least, exaggerated distinctions (i.e. between high and low magic). In *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Keith Thomas reaffirms staunch divisions between intellectual and popular magic, suggesting that they “were essentially two different activities, overlapping at certain points, but to a large extent carried on in virtual independence of each other.”³²³ Even if Thomas is right (and I believe he overstates his case), these “certain points” of convergence deserve our attention—particularly when, as in the case of Reginald Scot’s widely-read *Discovery of Witchcraft* (1584), they have likely influenced Shakespeare’s work.

Here I have speculated on certain critical resistances to calling Paulina a juggler. Many of these resistances, I suggest, may be chalked up to a desire to shun bad form, bad reputation, or bad taste. There is, it seems, a persistent assumption that Stuart-era jugglery and its cousin cony-catching were invariably comic, lowly, and even malignant. Concurrently, there has emerged in much *Winter’s Tale* criticism a Perdita-like need to separate a nobler scene (if not a nobler character)

³²² We see, for instance, the one-time magus Agrippa associate higher forms of magic with juggling, suggesting that jugglers use the art of higher magicians and that magicians sometimes are jugglers. See “Of Iugling” in *Vanities* (62v-63r) and a variation of that chapter, “Of Juggling or Legerdemain” (581-583), in *Occult*.

³²³ Thomas 228.

from the wilder stock of Autolycean trickery. This chapter will graft together Paulina and Autolycus as well as other tricksters in *The Winter's Tale*, arguing that if not sprung from same seed, they enact a curious cross-fertilization within the play. Before situating the statue scene textually among its tricksters, I will situate it historically, amidst a lively debate regarding animation magic, hoaxing, and common jugglery.³²⁴

Thus, this chapter explores “juggling” as both a metaphorically expansive concept and a particular historical theatrical practice that exerts pressure on the lawfulness of magic in an age of scientific and especially religious reform. At the same time, the chapter traces a complicated counter-discourse running through Reginald Scot’s skeptical treatment of witchcraft and his discussion of witchcraft’s relation to jugglery. This discourse has remained largely overlooked and demands closer attention. Simplified, it seems to schematize literal fairground jugglery according to its transparency and functionality, making room for a kind of juggler who was not only benign, but also potentially beneficial to the spiritual health of the commonwealth.³²⁵ In light of both Scot’s treatment of juggling spectacles and Reformation views on imagery at large, a more nuanced juggler emerges. This gradated portrait of the juggler helps us make sense of Paulina’s character and the play’s broader treatments of trickery and magic.

³²⁴ Before proceeding further I should prepare the reader: while my study, at least at the level of the play-text, revolves around Paulina and the statue, both figures largely direct this chapter (as Paulina does the play) from behind the scenes. I am largely concerned with the statue scene’s contexts and, of course, what they mean for the statue scene itself.

³²⁵ I explore this counter-discourse at some length in my chapter on *Othello*.

Spiritual Animation to Mechanical Automation

While writing *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare almost certainly looked to poetical representations of living statues such as those reported in the popular contemporary translation of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* by Arthur Golding. Frances Yates and others have argued that Shakespeare was influenced by ideas of the Neoplatonists (who had by and large tried to naturalize mathematical and mechanical magic, or to justify it as in keeping with orthodox Christianity).³²⁶ It is very likely, for instance, that Shakespeare came across the writings of Cornelius Agrippa, especially James Sandford's popular English translation of *The Vanitie and Uncertaintie of Artes and Sciences* (1569). In Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (English translation 1651) the author recalls stories of statue magic:

there was also a statue holding a wand, which did strike a bason, whereby the bason made answer by moderated strokes. Whence it is read in the Epistle of *Ausinus to Paulinus*,

Answers did give the Dodonean brass,

With *moderated strokes; so docile t'was*.³²⁷

Agrippa includes here not an animation trick performed by mathematical or mechanical magic, but rather an illustration of theurgical (or spiritual/ritual) magic and, in particular, phrensy (or the soul coming from divine forces—in this case Apollo—and inhabiting inferior animate and inanimate bodies—here statues). This

³²⁶ See Frances Emilia Yates, *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (rpt. 1999); Frank Kermode, "Introduction" to Arden *The Tempest* (1958); Barbara Mowat, "Prospero, Agrippa and Hocus Pocus" (1981).

³²⁷ Agrippa, *Occult* 507.

is the kind of spiritual statue animation described by Hermes Trismegistus in his *Asclepius*, a topic of much interest in the period.³²⁸

Whether recounted by continental Neoplatonic philosophers from Ficino to Agrippa, or by Jacobean inheritors of magical tradition, stories of magic attracted suspicions of supernatural diabolism on one hand, and of more mundane forms of deception on the other. Perhaps this is one reason why, though theurgical explanations of animation continued well into Shakespeare's age, mechanical or mathematical explanations began to supersede them in discourses defending these "magical" arts. Still, as J. Peter Zetterberg has demonstrated, mathematical experiments were readily mistaken for supernatural magic among the people.³²⁹

John Dee, along with Agrippa, was believed to have influenced several theatrical representations of magic in the period—from Marlowe's *Faustus* to Shakespeare's *Prospero*—because he advocated spiritual magic. At the same time he did much to revive stories of ancient mathematical magic, suggesting that this magic

³²⁸ Critics have suggested a few namesakes for Paulina, the practitioner of a different kind of statue magic in *The Winter's Tale*. Huston Diehl, for instance, has made a convincing case that Pauline Protestantism infuses the play and inflects Shakespeare's name choice. The above correspondence between Ausonius and Paulinus suggests we might conceive of another possibility: that the name presents a complex fusion of appellative referents and with them ideological conceptions of the image. On one hand "Paulina" evokes St. Paul, who is largely cited in Reformation literature as an adversary of idolatry, though some more moderate Protestant interpretations of Paul may have precipitated a more hospitable climate for images in an era of iconoclasm. On the other hand, the name may have evoked (among less divisive associations) the statue magic described by Ausonius to Paulinus, magic celebrated by theurgists and decried by radical reformist enemies of idolatry. Shakespeare certainly had access to Paulinus's name, as he is referenced in Plutarch's *Lives*. Perhaps he had access to this story and considered its ramifications, a possibility certainly worth introducing (though not pursuing here beyond this chapter's scope).

³²⁹ This idea is the centrepiece of his argument in "The Mistaking of 'the Mathematicks' for Magic in Tudor and Stuart England."

was the result of legitimate operations.³³⁰ In his "Mathematicall Preface" to Euclid's *Elements of Geometrie* (1570), Dee recounts with admiration stories of "Art Mathematicall," including tales of mechanical magic and illusions achieved through the Art of Perspective.³³¹ Such art, he writes, "giueth certaine order to make straunge workes, of the sense to be perceiued, and of men greatly to be wondred at...."³³² Some of these works "are moved by "Stringes strayned, or Springs, therwith Imitating lively Motions. Some, by other meanes, as the Images of Mercurie: and the brasen hed, made by Albertus Magnus, which dyd seme to speake."³³³ Dee also recalls stories of hissing serpent heads, singing birds, "selfmouers" (self-movers), the wooden dove of Archimedes and strange feats of perspective, including one where after having taken gold and precious gems into your hand, the valuables vanish, you "find[ing] nought but Ayre."³³⁴

As Zetterberg makes clear, Dee was one of several mathematicians whose popular vernacular works contained appreciative discussions of mathematical magic and mechanical automations.³³⁵ Another was William Bourne in his *Inuentions or deuises Very necessary for all generalles and captaines, or leaders of men, as wel be sea as by land* (1590). Bourne explains how operators of mechanical devices can make their inventions seem to "seeme to speake some words" by talking through "some truncke

³³⁰ See Zetterberg 84.

³³¹ Dee, "Mathematicall Preface" to H. Billingsley's translation of Euclid's *Elements of Geometrie* sig. A1r.

³³² Dee, Preface sig. A1r.

³³³ Dee, Preface sig. A1v.

³³⁴ Dee, sig. A1v. Dee writes that he saw self-movers in Paris in 1551.

³³⁵ Zetterberg 83-85.

or trunckes of brasse,” presumably leading into or near the device “so that the simple people will maruell at it.”³³⁶ He also explains how “you may make a small puppet, either like a man or woman, to seeme to goe by wheeles and springs.”³³⁷ Such devices “the common people would maruell at, thinking that it is done by Inchantment, and yet is done by no other meanes, but by good Artes and lawfull.”³³⁸

At least two elements of Bourne’s discussion deserve attention here; the first is his assumption that common people mistake mechanical and natural phenomena for supernatural events. The dispelling of these notions would be one of many projects undertaken by Scot’s popular *Discovery of Witchcraft* years later. The second is the distinction he articulates between lawful and unlawful arts, one to which Paulina alludes in *The Winter’s Tale*. We will later revisit Bourne’s “lawful” mechanical magic, and also his discussion of “trunk work” in this chapter’s close reading of the play.

Theatrical Contexts: Staging the Animation Debate

In Shakespeare’s time images of animation were not confined to works on mathematics and natural philosophy. They also found a place in popular theatre, where, harkening back to ancient stories and reflecting current practices, they attracted both appreciation and condemnation. According to Leonard Barkan, the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage had no shortage of moving images, including “many

³³⁶ Bourne 99.

³³⁷ Bourne 99.

³³⁸ Bourne 99.

statues or pseudo-statues [that] had come to life in contemporary plays and narratives with which Shakespeare would have been familiar.”³³⁹ Barkan provides an impressive list of plays featuring living statue episodes on the seventeenth-century stage.³⁴⁰

In the company of statues stood other animated figures, including an embodiment of Dee’s “Thaumaturgicke” which he himself unleashed on the English stage. In his *Compendious Rehearsal* [1576-78?], Dee recalls how in 1547 at Trinity College:

...I did sett forth (and it was seene of the University) a Greeke comedy of Aristophanes, named in...Latin, *Pax*; with the performance of the *Scarabeus* his flying up to Jupiter’s pallace, with a man and his basket of victualls on her back: whereat was great wondring, and many vaine reportes spread abroad of the meanes how that was effected.³⁴¹

Dee must have been thinking of “vaine reportes”—reports that Dee had accomplished this trick by demonic means—when he wrote his “Mathematicall Preface.”³⁴² After admiring those historical and contemporary mathematical feats that I mentioned earlier, he indignantly asks, “for these, and such like marueilous Actes and Feates, Naturally, Mathematically, and Mechanically, wrought and contriued: ought any honest Student, and Modest Christian Philosopher, be counted, & called a Coniurer?”³⁴³

³³⁹ Barkan 639.

³⁴⁰ Barkan 639.

³⁴¹ See Dee, “The Compendious Rehearsal” in his *Autobiographical Tracts* 5-6.

³⁴² Zetterberg also makes this point (84).

³⁴³ Dee sig. A1v.

Dee's trick may have invited hostility for its function more than its existence in fact. This display of splendor appears to have no self-reflexive moral investment, nothing to say about its own inadequacies or self-destructive potential. Such was less the case with the famous brazen head in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1591). Greene's head is reminiscent of a speaking statue believed to have been created by Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus or Hermes Trismegistus. Whether the animation of this head was mechanical or spiritual, and whether it was lawful or idolatrous became a subject of much debate in the period.³⁴⁴ Greene's brazen head likely aroused suspicions of unorthodox magic, especially among conservative Protestants in the audience. In the play, though, the head offsets potential suspicions through its function and fate. If it is a graven image, it is, in its theatrical deployment, built to be broken.

Another possible inspiration for Greene's prop is the talking brass head of a statue that Pope Sylvester the Second, instructed by the Saracens of Spain, was said to use as an oracle. Walter Charleton (1682) relates the account as told by the twelfth century English historian and monk William of Malmesbury.³⁴⁵ Charleton includes this story among other tales in which the silly "vulgar" attribute supernatural causes to contrived natural/mathematical or fictional animations.³⁴⁶ For instance, he says such beliefs surround the story of Bacon's brazen head and tales of statue magic in

³⁴⁴ Zetterberg 92-93.

³⁴⁵ Chareton, *The Harmony of Natural and Positive Divine Laws* 119-121.

³⁴⁶ Charleton 121.

Hermes's *Asclepius*.³⁴⁷ Charleton implies here—and Wilkins suggests in his *Mathematical Magic* (1648)—that mechanical, not spiritual, forces propelled temple “miracles” like those described by Hermes.³⁴⁸ Temple priests and their accomplices, it would seem, were what we might call clever jugglers, as talking statues convinced gullible worshipers that machines were spiritual miracles.

Charleton suggests that St. Paul's doctrine against idolatry warns us against erroneous opinions and practices such as these.³⁴⁹ By positioning Hermes's demystified story of statue magic alongside the Pope's talking head and Paul's doctrine, Charleton echoes earlier Reformation rhetorical strategies of emptying Catholic magic of its mystical content and linking papist jugglery to Pagan idolatry and temple tricks.³⁵⁰

In addition to popular theatre, court masques were another showcase for animations and automations. Though not immune to charges of supernatural diabolism or mundane trickery, they persevered under kingly favour. As well as championing this kind of courtly entertainment, the Stuarts invested in mathematical magic more generally—as a common onstage feature of the masque and as an extra-theatrical decoration of the Stuarts' personal surroundings.

Before his death in November of 1612, King James's son Prince Henry had a fascination with mechanical wonders. He requested that a pupil of the hydraulic

³⁴⁷ Charleton 119-120.

³⁴⁸ Wilkins 176-177.

³⁴⁹ Charleton 111-112.

³⁵⁰ The pertinence of this strategy to my argument will become clear in the sections to come.

engineer Tomasso Francini design the Somerset gardens with what Scot Maisono describes as “hydraulic automata—lifelike statuary—that looked and moved like real human beings.”³⁵¹ Henry’s father James also appreciated mechanical wonders. Vaughan Hart recalls that after visiting the Danish island of Hveen in 1589-90, James praised Tycho Brahe’s garden with its extraordinary automata.³⁵² For James, possessing such lively gardens almost certainly amounted to a display of wealth. But the gardens probably also carried deeper significance. Hart argues that they were meant to express “the Stuart monarch as the agent for restoration of earthly harmony.”³⁵³ With its meticulous geometric design and mechanical animation the garden embodied the “magico-scientific” efforts to recover the lost secrets of nature and positioned the king in front of these efforts.³⁵⁴

According to Hart, court masques served a function similar to that of the royal garden. Masques, like those engineered by Inigo Jones, were often characterized by extravagant magical/mechanical sets, and through these sets the creative and restorative powers of kingship were glorified. Geometrically exact environments used optical tricks to direct focus onto the king.³⁵⁵ Like the gardens, masques showed off optical tricks and moving automata, adding them to a repertoire which included *tableaux vivant*—moving pictures or living statues.

³⁵¹ Scot Maisono, “Infinite Gesture: Automata and the Emotions in Descartes and Shakespeare” 74.

³⁵² Vaughan Hart 93.

³⁵³ Hart 92.

³⁵⁴ Hart 92.

³⁵⁵ Hart 84-85.

James, as we know from his *Daemonology* and from his attack on Reginald Scot's skepticism, believed in supernatural diabolism and the potency of spiritual magic.³⁵⁶ Yet, his admiration of mathematical magic suggests he did not attribute to all forms of magic the kind of idolatrous supernaturalism that Scot and later Wilkins saw as the folly of the vulgar. As Hart rightly observes, we may recognize in Jones's mechanical marvels—and in James's symbolic investment in these marvels—a direct line of influence from high Neoplatonist naturalizations of mathematical magic.³⁵⁷ Still, at the time, Jones's detractors traced his art to more lowly origins. Jonson, for instance, called Jones an “Arithmetically, Geometrically gamester,” thus rhetorically toppling him from the ranks of culturally elite magi to those of common sharpers (such cony-catchers are listed among Scot's jugglers).³⁵⁸

Finally, I wish to address here another theatrical context: that of juggling theatrically performed and textually represented. The mechanics of animation were confined neither to specialized discourses nor to plays on the popular or private stage. Years before Charleton and Wilkins explored the mechanisms of temple magic, Reginald Scot had detected the “illusions and ridiculous conceits” of temple Egyptian magicians:

Our jugglers approach much nearer to resemble Pharaos magicians, than either witches or coniuers, & can make a more liuelie shew of working

³⁵⁶ For more on James's opinion see the Introduction.

³⁵⁷ Hart 86-87.

³⁵⁸ Zetterberg 88.

miracles than anie inchantors can do: for these practise to shew that in action,
which witches do in words and termes.³⁵⁹

The “action” Scot describes often relies upon mathematical knowledge. Scot remarks that jugglers perform a range of “arithmetical and geometrical” feats “which being exercised by iugglers are credit to their art.”³⁶⁰ With some knowledge of optics, jugglers could make bodies appear, disappear, or be transformed. With an understanding of acoustics they could give voice to inanimate objects and other, animate bodies. Advanced knowledge was helpful but not necessary for pretending miracles. Jugglers could use more complicated tools from mirrors to magnets, or simpler mechanical or “arythmeticall devices”: fake weapons, prosthetics, trick trunks and string-operated puppets.³⁶¹ Various combinations of mechanical and mathematical effects, natural and alchemical procedures (including chemical petrifications and poisoning), and simple legerdemain aided jugglers in suspending lives or creating the illusion of suspension.³⁶² Jugglers relied on similar procedures to feign the flip side of suspension: animation. In particular, Scot discusses several resurrection tricks, including one that describes how a juggler may “thrust a knife through the braines and head of a chicken or pullet, and seem to cure the same with words: which would live and do well, though neuer a word were spoken.”³⁶³

³⁵⁹ Scot 320.

³⁶⁰ Scot 343.

³⁶¹ Scot uses this phrase on 307.

³⁶² Such tricks are of course referenced by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, with the temporary suspensions of the lives of Juliet and Hero.

³⁶³ Scot 307.

Scot turns his attention to more infamous forms of pretended necromancy, including hoaxes involving resurrections of the human dead or invocations of the dead for the purposes of possession and prophecy. Though common in the period, resurrection hoaxers were hardly new on the scene; Scot even detects them in the Scriptures. Such a trickster was the Biblical Witch of Endor, a conjuring con artist whom Scot discusses among so-called witches whom he says practice “iugling.”³⁶⁴ Scot likens the witch to the notorious Englishman Feats, “a iugler by the name of Hilles a witch or coniurer, everie waie a cousener.”³⁶⁵ Debunking Samuel’s resurrection in the presence of Saul and comparing it to present frauds, Scot says: “I could cite a hundred papistical and cousening practices, as difficult as this, and as cleanlie handled.”³⁶⁶ Scot proceeds to hypothesize about ways in which the scam might have been executed. According to him, the trick likely relied on at least a few of the following elements: the juggler’s manipulation of Saul’s imagination;³⁶⁷ the use of a confederate, likely some “lewd crafty priest” who hid in the closet;³⁶⁸ the substitution of bodies, with either the Witch or her confederate playing Samuel’s part;³⁶⁹ and finally, some kind of ventriloquism practiced by the hidden priest or by the prestidigitatrix:

³⁶⁴ Scot here is discussing how witches, including the Witch of Endor, worry that others will “espie their iugling” (146).

³⁶⁵ Scot 144.

³⁶⁶ Scot 142. The period’s scientific opinions on jugglery and the imagination I discuss in my chapter on *Othello*.

³⁶⁷ Scot 142.

³⁶⁸ Scot 144-146.

³⁶⁹ Scot 148.

that this Pythonist being Ventriloqua, that is, Speaking, as it were, from the bottome of her bellie, did cast her selfe into a transe, and so abused Saul, answering to Saul in Samuels name, in her counterfeit hollow voice: as the Wench of Westwel spake....³⁷⁰

As well as touching upon the perceived mechanics of ventriloquism, Scot positions “the witch” here among a long tradition of jugglers, from more contemporary female tricksters like one he calls the Wench of Westwel back to the Pythonists of Apollo. He remarks, “Priests that attended thereon at Delphos were coseners, and called Pythonists of Pytho, as Papists of Papa; and afterwards all Women that used that trade, were named Pythonissae, as was this Woman of Endor.”³⁷¹ When we later turn to *The Winter’s Tale*, Scot’s discussion here will become useful to us on several fronts, from its recollection of a tradition of female trickery called witchcraft, to its association of Apollo’s oracles with jugglery.

Scot’s detection of apparitions conjured through confederacy and of animation tricks takes aim, in part, at certain professional jugglers, common con artists who swindle the unenlightened by pretending supernatural powers in an era when, according to reformists such as Calvin and Luther, miracles had long since ceased. Common jugglers, however, comprise Scot’s secondary target. Scot treats jugglers of the entertaining variety more ambivalently than he treats the ranks of papists, including

³⁷⁰ Scot 150.

³⁷¹ Scot 155.

inquisitors who Scot represents as the most dangerous of jugglers. Like other Protestant reformers, Scot condemns what he sees as the Roman Catholic Church's mystification of images and its deluded affirmation of supernatural magic through the celebration of sanctioned miracles and the condemnation of rival magical practices. These idolatrous affirmations, he believes, are perpetuated at the highest level of the Roman Church and are typified by The Council of Trent, with its avowal of venerating of saints and relics.³⁷² The Church's institutionalization of supernatural magic is not only wrong-minded, suggests Scot, but hardens the hearts of worshippers. Meanwhile, the most reprehensible of tricksters, papist witchmongers go free.

Scot's brand of skepticism did not exist in a vacuum, but was the logical outgrowth of centuries of religious reform from the fringes of the Catholic Church to the emerging Protestant religions. As well as drawing directly upon Erasmus and Calvin and reflecting Luther's ideas, Scot's project follows in the footsteps of reformist natural magicians, careful to distinguish acceptable natural magic from unacceptable, and often bogus, natural or spiritual magic. Included among this lot are Johannes Wier (Johann Weyer) and his teacher Cornelius Agrippa. Agrippa, suspected in his time as a Lutheran heretic, was one of the first to debunk what some denounced as malignant supernatural practices. He was also known to have

³⁷² Scot 530.

“courageously defend[ed] a woman who had been hounded down by the mob and inquisitor as a witch,” an event that Scot himself, admiringly reports.³⁷³

Understanding these historical contexts, the reformist elements of which I elaborate upon in the next section, helps us better comprehend Scot’s skeptical project, in particular his detection of Catholic counterfeit animations. Scot is responding not only to doctrinal affirmations of false miracles, but also to what he sees as the sanctioned perpetration of these bogus wonders by members of the Roman clergy. When (as mentioned earlier) he compares the resurrection of Samuel to papistical frauds, Scot may have had innumerable animation hoaxes in mind. Keith Thomas observes the commonness of resurrection reports during the earliest days of the Reformation. For instance, thirty-nine people were reported resurrected as the result of miracles occurring at the Holy Rood of Bromholm in Norfolk.³⁷⁴

On top of such reports, published stories circulated of statues and other icons come to life. One incident that may have caught the attention of both Scot and Shakespeare was a famous hoax at Bern. In 1507 a Dominican novice named Hans Jetzler claimed he was having divinely-inspired dreams about the miraculous conception of the Virgin Mary. One summer morning that same year Jetzler’s visions appeared to materialize. Bowing in the Dominican church before an image of the Pietà, he exhibited the holy wounds of the stigmata. More astonishing was that his

³⁷³ Scot 36, Thorndike Vol. 5 127.

³⁷⁴ Thomas 26.

presence seemed to precipitate a flow of bloody tears streaming from the statue before him. For months the spectacle continued in the presence of a praying Jetzler until it was branded a hoax. Tortured by his accusers, Jetzler admitted perpetrating the fraud with the help of four accomplices, also Dominicans. News of the hoax and of Jetzler's trial spread widely mostly through the work of satirist Thomas Murner, who illustrated his version of the methods behind Jetzler's statue magic.³⁷⁵ Though Murner was himself a Catholic, a Franciscan, his depiction is in keeping with the then-common practice of conflating the Church's "miracles" with common jugglery and theatrical magic:

At the left, from behind a curtain, a man 'conjures forth' (in Murner's words) red tears by blowing them into the statue through a pipette. At the center, Jetzler prays with his stigmata clear on display. And at the right, the Dominicans point toward their profitable attraction.³⁷⁶

Another famous incident, one in England, involved a hoax exposed at the Abbey of Boxley in Kent. According to William Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1542, the Abbey was known throughout the realm as a place of many miracles. One of its most famous was a cross of the crucified Christ, known as the Rood of Grace, which was said to move.³⁷⁷ During the dissolution of the monasteries, associates of Cromwell, including the brother of Nicholas Partridge, defaced the monastery at

³⁷⁵ Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* 146-147. On the hoax, see also Kim Woods, *Viewing Renaissance Art* 252.

³⁷⁶ Koerner 147.

³⁷⁷ Butterworth 123.

Boxley. A letter by John Hoker of Maidstone to Bullinger, dated 24 Feb 1538, tells how Partridge's brother discovered the ruse: the "brave fellow...smelt the deceit, loosened it from the wall, and exposed the trick. The juggler was caught. The thing was worked by wires through little pipes."³⁷⁸ The Rood was taken to London, where it was put on display along with other defaced icons at St. Paul's Cross. According to Nicholas Partridge in a letter to Heinrich Bullinger, dated 12 April 1538, while at St. Paul's, the figure had "turned its head, rolled its eyes, foamed at the mouth, and shed tears."³⁷⁹

Reginald Scot also describes the incident, comparing it to the fraudulent animation of Apollo:

vaine is the answer of idols. Our Rood of grace, with the helpe of little S. Rumbal, was not inferior to the idol of Apollo: for these could not onlie worke external miracles, but manifest the internall thoughts of the [he]art, I believe with more livelie shew, both of humanity and also of divinitie, then the other. As, if you read M. Lamberts booke of the perambulation of Kent, it shall partlie appear. But if you talke with them that have beene beholders thereof, you will be satisfied herein. And yet in the blind time of poperie, no man (might under pain or damnation) nor without danger of death, suspect the fraud. Nie, what papists will yet confess they were Idols, though the wiers that made their eies gogle, the pins that fastened them to the posts to make

³⁷⁸ Rpt. in Butterworth 124.

³⁷⁹ Butterworth 125.

them seem heavie, were seene and burnt together with the images themselves, the knaverie of the priests bewraied, and euerie circumstance thereof detected and manifested.³⁸⁰

Both Hoker and Scot mention the use of wires to animate moveable parts. Such operations, in a more transparent theatrical context, would readily be recognizable as puppetry. The association of Catholic acts with puppetry was hardly lost on reformists, who often exchanged punningly the words “popery” and “puppetry” in anti-Catholic-rhetoric.³⁸¹ This pun is likely attributable to the more exceptional act of using mechanical “puppets” in Catholic hoaxes, as well as to the institutionalized custom of positioning priests as God’s spokesman.

Stories of hoaxes like these help to shed light on the contested orthodoxy of mechanical magic, since it was believed that such “magic,” albeit not mystical in nature, led to idolatrous deceptions. While mechanical magic was commonly considered dangerous, we may see how reformists used the rhetoric of mechanization in order to serve a Protestant project. Explaining away the mechanical, natural, and theatrical/illusionistic operations hiding behind the curtain of “supernatural” frauds, reformists paved the way for a doctrine of faith in the absence of miracles.

Reginald Scot and the Reformation

³⁸⁰ Scot 137-138; I have included the word “[he]art” instead of “art” (as the word appears in the 1587 text, 77) because “art” in this context seems to be an abbreviation for “heart.” This is certainly how editors of the 1655 edition read it: there it appears clearly as “heart” (77).

³⁸¹ See Butterworth 126-127.

Thus far I've explored one set of pervasive imaginings regarding mechanical, animating magic, and another involving jugglery, tracing each set's foray into the other's representational domain. From this juxtaposition a pattern emerges, wherein a variety of what we might call "animation" or "automation" tricks are treated favourably (for the most part) in natural philosophical, mathematical, and "high" magical discourses, ambivalently in the theatre, and more suspiciously in the literature of jugglery detection. This literature of detection ranges from what we might call more literal descriptions of professional, theatrical magicians to metaphorical representations of papist tricksters. Here I want to elaborate upon a complication within this pattern which I have thus far only adumbrated, one that pertains to the more nuanced status of common jugglers in Scot's rhetoric. I accomplish this task by examining a counter-discourse emerging in Scot, one reflective, I think, of Reformation ideas concerning the positive transformational potential of certain sanctioned images.

In his remarkable book, *The Reformation of the Image*, Joseph Leo Koerner discusses the seemingly paradoxical employment of Protestant visual art in an era of iconoclasm. Huston Diehl has quite accurately identified the centrepiece of Koerner's discussion, transformative Protestant imagery, as the driving force in the statue scene of *The Winter's Tale*.³⁸² Diehl disputes critics such as Michael O'Connell who argue that the play's statue creates an experience "precisely analogous to [Catholic]

³⁸² See "'Does not the stone rebuke me?': The Pauline Rebuke and Paulina's Lawful Magic in *The Winter's Tale*" 69-82 in *Shakespeare and the Cultures of Performance*.

Religious experience.”³⁸³ Instead, Diehl suggests that the statue is less reminiscent of the forgiving Catholic idol than it is of Protestant art—which in accordance with Pauline doctrine rebukes the viewer for his or her sins and promotes the kind of inward reflection and self-reform valued by Protestants. I’d like to focus here on another key element of Koerner’s richly applicable discussion while taking it in a different direction. Namely, I want to look at the self-negating Reformation image and how it speaks to representations of jugglery in both the period and in *The Winter’s Tale*.

Focusing on continental images, Koerner suggests that for Luther and many of his followers, church art was not inherently idolatrous. Rather, its value was determined by two sides of an interpretive exchange. On one side resided the spectators of the image, their reception framed not simply by their optical faculties, but by their intellectual and spiritual ones. This opinion is reflected by a group of scholars from Wittenberg in their *A Necessary Answer* (1597):

two people visit a popish church, the one a papist, the other a Lutheran. There they see all sorts of images. The question is, are such pictures idols for both? Paul says no. For he who has the knowledge, that is, he who in Christian faith is instructed also in evangelical freedom: to him such a picture even in a popish church is nonetheless not an idol but a piece of wood, a

³⁸³ O’Connell, *The Idolatrous Eye: Iconoclasm and Theater in Early-modern England* 141. See also Diehl 180.

stone like any other stone. For the papist, though, who bows before that picture and prays to it, it truly is an idol.³⁸⁴

In other words, idolatry is rooted in a dangerous misrecognition. For a Lutheran, church art was a representation of a sacred thing, not a sacred thing itself to be revered (such a distinction would play prominently in the transubstantiation/consubstantiation debate). The pious and knowledgeable observer is aware of the art's materiality, conscious of the supplies used in the image's construction. But the wood and stone are recognized as natural substances, rather than mystical ones, which suggest rather than embody sacred power.

Let us also consider Paul as this passage invokes him. His numerous edicts against idolatry were used to condemn inherently dangerous images, from church pictures to observable secular magical practices. Yet, as demonstrated here, Paul was dually recruited by more moderate reformers wishing to shift the onus of idolatry onto the interpreter—onto a domain of self-reflection founded upon understanding of the visible world and faith in an invisible god. Simply put, this Pauline conception of idolatry suggested that “the eye saw what was in the heart.”³⁸⁵ Clearly, Reginald Scot relies on this conception of idolatry when he relates, as we will recall, “vaine is the answer of idols. Our Rood of grace, with the helpe of little S. Rumbal, was not

³⁸⁴ From *Notwendige Antwort / Auff die im Fürstenthum Anhalt Ohn langesten ausgesprengte hefftige Schrift* (Wittenberg), ctd. in Koerner 165.

³⁸⁵ Koerner 165.

inferior to the idol of Apollo; for these could not work external miracles, but manifest the internall thoughts of the [h]eart.”³⁸⁶

Scot further improvises upon Pauline themes when he uses one of the most famous of Protestant rallying calls to justify his project of promoting understanding through the detection of jugglery:

Me thinks these magical Physicians deal in the Commonwealth, much like as a certeine kind of Cynicall people doo in the Church...who in stead of learning and authoritie (which they make contemptible) doo feed the people with their owne deuices and imaginations...Christianite, is beautified with knowledge and learning. For as nature without discipline dooth naturallie incline unto vanities, and as it were sucke up errors; so doth the word, or rather the letter of the scripture, without understanding, not onlie make us deuoure errors, but yeeldeth us up to death & destruction: and therefore Paule saith, he was not a minister of the letter, but of the spirit.

Thus have I beene bold to deliver unto the world, and to you, those simple notes, reasons, and arguments, which I have devised or collected out of other authors...³⁸⁷

Scot prefaces his project here as one of education, a purpose he sees directly in line with the Pauline promotion of understanding the letter. As we have already begun to see, Scot’s project also reflects the Protestant emphasis on understanding the image.

³⁸⁶ Scot 137. See earlier where I quote this passage and provide a footnote.

³⁸⁷ Sig. B1r-B1v.

Opposite the beholder in the interpretive exchange is the image itself. Koerner argues that Luther “tolerated and even encouraged art if it served to instruct.”³⁸⁸ This didactic role of church imagery was in part a function of textual explanations, which were often attached to the artwork itself.³⁸⁹ It was also encouraged by the architecture of the image. The ideal image attracted, only to deflect attention from its empty centre toward inward faith and Protestant interpretation of the word. Koerner notes, “images were built to signal the fact of their impotence. Expressing their mundaneness through willfully crude visible forms,” they appeared neither magically efficacious nor spatially or poetically deep.³⁹⁰ In fact, applying the principles of magic to Koerner’s analysis, one might say that the ideal image ceased to appear at all, enacting through the materiality of its presence a self-erasure, a kind of orthodox disappearing act.

Especially noteworthy here is the way these images in their construction reflect Catholic “idols” in their destruction. Through the crudeness of their form and the mundaneness of their content, the images Koerner describes participate in a project of critical deconstruction or self-detection. Like canny discoverers of Catholic hoaxes, these Protestant images tear down the apparatus of artifice to reveal the pretence and inadequacy of human mediation. Even more to the point of this chapter is the way these deconstructive images reflect the writings of Scot—not only

³⁸⁸ Koerner 28.

³⁸⁹ Koerner 28.

³⁹⁰ Koerner 28.

in his program of detection, but in his depiction of the ideal juggler who lays bare the mundane workings of his art (thus serving a Protestant project).

As mentioned in both the Introduction and in the chapter on *Othello*, jugglers' spectacles were, like other Reformation images, not inherently harmful. They were "not onlie tollerable, but greatlie commendable, so they abuse not the name of God, nor make the people attribute unto them his power; but alwaies acknowledge wherein the art consisteth, so as thereby the other unlawfull and impious arts may be by them the rather detected and betwraied."³⁹¹

Let us consider for a moment the meaning of this passage and how, by any number of combinations, a juggler's process of revelation and detection may have played out (if only in Scot's imagination). Perhaps it was through the performance of an unconvincing, outmoded, or transparent trick—a creaking of the dramatic machinery as Bethell sees happening in *The Winter's Tale* or Koerner sees as defining Protestant art. Perhaps it was through an actual verbal acknowledgment of methods prefacing the trick—though it is hard to imagine how either a rough, didactic form or an arid, demystificatory framing would leave room for the kind of wonderful amusement Scot values. Rather, we might assume that this process of detection, if it existed at all, either framed the trick subtly or occurred implicitly; that is, through the help of educational works like Scot's. An implicit contract of agreed limited pretence was established, much as it was in the theatre. In other words, thanks to works of jugglery detection, audiences would know that jugglery is nothing but

³⁹¹ Scot 321.

theatre. Otherwise, we might gather that revelation followed the trick in the form of limited disclosure. Audiences may have been granted a peep at the machinery; such peeps are built into some contemporary magic shows as well as into Shakespeare's magical theatre. We see such late-show illusion busters in the metatheatrical disclosures of Rosalind's boy actor in the epilogue to *As You Like It*. We see them in the coupling of Prospero's wand breaking with the realistic rupture of allusions to the Globe Theatre in *The Tempest*. We see them also, as we shall observe, in *The Winter's Tale*, where the methods behind Paulina's magic promise to be exposed, a promise which, if it does not break the spell of the statue scene, re-brands the spell as lawful.

The Set-up: Craftiness and the Crafting of the Statue Scene

“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” (5.3.94-95).

By now I hope we have begun to listen to Paulina's language for the influence of three overlapping discursive traditions. In her discerning and defensive language of lawful magic and its faith-based appeal before Hermione's statue, we hear echoes of what we might call a high or more erudite magical tradition, one defensively negotiating the lawfulness of spiritual, mechanical and natural animations. Second, we hear a reformist Protestant tradition—one bifurcated into a more radical indiscriminate iconoclastic strain (those who believed all church images were idolatrous, or against Mosaic law) and a more flexible strain (those inspired by Lutheran tolerance of certain materially self-aware, faith-awaking images in religious

settings). Finally, within the unfolding context of Paulina's revelations emerges a jugglery tradition, the actual domain of illusionists performing animation tricks among other conceits, and also the representational terrain of Scot, who discerns potentially enlightening juggling from shady, idolatrous con-artistry. Shakespeare's dialogue with these traditions becomes increasingly visible when we carefully examine the statue scene itself—in particular its themes of deception, lawfulness and restitution in the face of conversional images or faithful imaginations. First, though, we will turn our attention to the setting of this scene, with an eye to character.

Coghill has argued that *The Winter's Tale* is foremost concerned with Leontes's restitution.³⁹² While it seems that Coghill places the King too firmly fixed and unchallenged at the play's narrative centre, we would be hard pressed to deny that this is in many ways Leontes's story. It is after all Leontes's guilty hauntings that the play will see exorcised, and it is his likeness we hear spoken of in the whispers of Mamillius's meta-tale: "A sad tale's best for winter. I have one / Of sprites and goblins. /There was a man—Dwelt by a churchyard. I will tell it softly, / Yond crickets shall not hear it" (2.1.25-31).

In the first act we are introduced to a Leontes who, through a series of negative judgments, ushers his family through the cemetery gates. It is his foundationless verdict of adultery that drives a violent course of events, only to be re-charted in the last act. Echoing the language of both empiricism and rationalism, Leontes's judgments come from what he sees as his superior perceptual faculties, as

³⁹² Coghill 39-40.

well as reason based on an authoritative visceral intuition: “You smell this business with a sense as cold / As is a dead man’s nose; but I do see’t and feel’t / As you feel doing thus [grasps his arm]—and see withal / The instruments that feel” (2.1.151-154). It is with this vision of the world that Leontes affirms the certainty of his doubts:

Ha’ not you seen, Camillo

(But that’s past doubt; you have, or your eye-glass

Is thicker than a cuckold’s horn), or heard

For to a vision so apparent rumour

Cannot be mute), or thought (for cogitation

Resides not in that man that does not think)

My wife is slippery? (1.2.267-273)

As is often the case with Leontes’s speech, the syntax here is confusing. The ambiguous parenthetical punctuation allows us to read the last statement(s) in at least two ways. Most obviously, Leontes says to Camillo, have you not thought (for any thinking person must think what I am about to tell you) that my wife is slippery? This first, most common reading is in keeping with what we know of Leontes. He presents himself as a discriminating rationalist. By “discriminating” I mean not only one capable of discriminating the truth, but one who asserts his superior credentials by discriminating them from the inferior ones he perceives others to have.

The other reading we should consider suits Leontes just as well. Standing on its own within parentheses is the phrase, “(for cogitation / Resides not in that man that does not think).” Read this way, these lines not only demonstrate Leontes’s

allegiance with rationality, but also betray the emptiness of his reason and rhetoric. As he does with so many of his self-begotten accusatory propositions, Leontes speaks tautologically.

It is not only Leontes's language, but also his loyal servants who betray his folly. Paulina and Camillo expose his rationality as both fallacious and fanciful—an outgrowth of his misleading imagination. Paulina disparages “The root of his opinion, which is rotten” (2.3.90), and later traces it to “weak-hinged fancy” (2.3.119) rather than to accurate perception or reason. Such foundational fancy Camillo calls by another name: faith. In Act 1 scene 2 Camillo decries “The fabric of his [Leontes's] folly, whose foundation / Is pil'd upon his faith....” (2.3.428-430).

The root of Leontes's problem is commonly read as his faithlessness. But is he truly faithless? We might say Leontes is faced with what Cavell suggests is the “skeptical problematic.”³⁹³ In the case of *The Winter's Tale*, with the world beyond knowledge (Hermione's faithfulness or faithlessness beyond proof) the skeptic turns mere suspicions—imagination we might call them—into law.³⁹⁴ An embodiment of, as Cavell calls him, the “skeptic as fanatic,” Leontes denies the unknown, including his wife, and distinguishes himself from those who either do not know or those who see multi-perspectively or ambivalently:³⁹⁵

CAMILLO. Good my lord, be cur'd

Of this diseased opinion, and betimes,

³⁹³ Cavell 3.

³⁹⁴ Cavell 93.

³⁹⁵ Cavell refers to Leontes as a fanatical skeptic on 7 and 206.

For 'tis most dangerous.

LEONTES. Say it be, 'tis true.

CAMILLO. No, no, my lord!

LEONTES. It is—you lie, you lie!

I say thou liest, Camillo, and I hate thee,

Pronounce thee a gross lout, a mindless slave,

Or else a hovering temporizer that

Canst with thine eyes at once see good and evil,

Inclining to them both..." (1.2.296-304)

If "faith" is "belief" as opposed to certain knowing and if, as Camillo suggests, faith is equivalent to imagination, then Leontes's problem is not faithlessness.³⁹⁶ He has no shortage of imagination, though he parades it as certain knowledge. Rather, we might more accurately see Leontes as demonstrating "bad faith," an appropriate term, I think, when we consider the saturation of the play's language with economic, legal-contractual and religious references.

Echoing the medicalization of jealous opinion in the text, we might also call his bad faith "diseased imagination." Camillo suggests in the quotation above that Leontes's jealousy is either the cause or product of physiological illness. Earlier in the play, Polixenes unintentionally points toward Leontes's illness while foreshadowing his rejection of the cure. Speaking of his own son, Polixenes says that the boy, "with his varying childness cures in me / Thoughts that would thicken my blood"

³⁹⁶ See *OED*.

(1.2.170).³⁹⁷ Shortly before this, we have heard Leontes describe feeling “tremor cordis” (1.2.110), which according to Galen was caused by overheating of the blood.³⁹⁸ We might be inclined to see Leontes here as choleric as opposed to melancholic. But Ficino had suggested ways in which hot blood (especially through over-thinking) leaves the blood in the brain dense and dry, thus misguiding reason.³⁹⁹ Leontes’s symptoms then are not inconsistent with melancholy. Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* includes in its list of bodily symptoms both thick blood and heart palpitations and in its mental symptoms suspicion and jealousy.⁴⁰⁰ Scot, meanwhile, argues that delusions of witchcraft are commonly caused by melancholy.⁴⁰¹

I have dwelt for some time on Leontes’s imagination because gaining insight into the character seems essential if we are to understand how trickery in the play (from a person playing tricks to the mind playing tricks) speaks to jugglery in the period—especially as Scot understands it. Before continuing with the play, let us look back to Scot and his description of the most insidious kind of juggler. Scot begins his *Discovery* with this appeal to judgement:

...I find your Lordship a fit person to iudge and looke upon this present
treatise. Wherein I will bring before you, as it were to the barre, two sorts of

³⁹⁷ Polixenes here seems to be referring to an idea proposed by Galen, Avicenna, and later Roger Bacon who discusses the opinions of the former two. Bacon suggests that while certain diseased or dark complected (morally and physically) individuals may make others sick by their presence, young “wholesome men” (or “pure spirits” according to Galen in his *Techne*) have the opposite effect, bringing “comfort” to those they are near (12-13).

³⁹⁸ Pechter notes Galen’s opinion in his edition of *The Winter’s Tale* (100 n 1.2.109)

³⁹⁹ See Walker 4.

⁴⁰⁰ Burton sig. F3v.

⁴⁰¹ See, for instance, where Scot recalls the story of a poor servant named Bernard who had delusions of witchcraft—in this case believing that he himself was a witch—due to melancholy (sig. B4r).

most arrogant and wicked people, the first challenging to themselves, the second attributing unto others, that power which onelie apperteineth to God, who onelie is the Creator of all things, who onelie searcheth the hart and reins, who onelie knoweth our imaginations and thoughts, who onelie openeth all secrets, who onelie worketh great wonders....And therefore, that which greeveth me to the bottome of my hart, is, that these witchmongers cannot be content to wrest out of Gods hand his almightie power, and keepe it themselves, or leaue it with a Witch...[but that they are] imputing unto him [the Devil] power and abilitie enough to doo as great things, and as strange miracles, as ever Christ did.⁴⁰²

Scot's opening gambit is a brilliant rhetorical move: witchmongers are likened to the "witches" they accuse and are subjected through textual trial to the same judgments. Scot, however, will present his case against witchmongers and his defence of inculpable delusional old women and less culpable jugglers as more rationally and spiritually defensible. Both witches and witchmongers are not supernaturally potent, but they are either (or both) delusional or cozeners—pretending, misrecognizing or misattributing miraculous powers reserved for God. Referring to the delusional fancies of witches he says "neither let us prosecute them with such despight, whom our fancy condemneeth, and our reason acquitteth...."⁴⁰³ We will recall that according

⁴⁰² Scot sig. A3r.

⁴⁰³ Scot sig. B5r.

to Scot, papists are not simply guilty of delusion but are guilty of deluding others into believing in the supernatural.

It is worth pausing here to note that Scot and Leontes, or Scot and the witchmonger for that matter, are not cut from entirely different cloth. Both appeal to reason as a means of introducing doubt. Each in his own way is a skeptic. The crucial difference is that Scot's project is primarily a defensive one, calling for compassion to be bestowed upon those whom he sees as wrongfully judged.⁴⁰⁴ Contrastingly, Leontes's doubt is an externally-destructive expression of narcissistic self-preservation. Or, if we are to believe Cavell, it is an expression of internally-destructive nihilism. In either case we see a Leontes who is strongly reminiscent of Scot's witch hunter.

These likenesses emerge most explicitly in Leontes's treatment of Paulina—who he calls “a mankind witch” (2.3.68) and associates with shrews; “shrew” is a term (and figure) which, as I have noted in my *Taming of the Shrew* chapter, had supernatural valences along with those suggesting trickery and scolding.⁴⁰⁵ Leontes also suggests that Paulina has unnatural strength when he says that her husband Antigonus is “woman-tir'd; unroosted / by thy Dame Partlet here” (2.3. 75-76). All of these accusations resonate later when Paulina must defend herself against Leontes's suspicions. Using terms reminiscent of Scot's when he defends witches and condemns witchmongers, Paulina says, “It is a heretic that makes the fire, not she

⁴⁰⁴ I say “primarily,” since Scot denies compassion to the papist he tactically tries in service of another's defense.

⁴⁰⁵ Leontes evokes shrews on several occasions, including when he calls her “A callat/ Of boundless tongue, who late hath beat her husband/ And now baits me!” (2.3.91-92). “Callat, *n.*” according to the *OED* could mean a scold (Def. 2), a term that was a synonym for shrew.

which burns in it” (2.3.115-116). Suspicions of magical influence also inflect Leontes’s treatment of Hermione, who, on the basis of his fancy (if we are to believe Camillo and Paulina), is first accused of trickery and treasonous adultery and is subsequently sent to her death. The implication that Hermione has used supernatural powers to avoid detection of her crimes emerges when Leontes accuses the First Lord and Antigonus of being “stupefied” (2.1.165). The term evokes the paralyzing potential attributed, along with other natural causes, to the biting shrew mouse, shrew trickster, or shrew curse, as well as to the poisonously sighted, mythological basilisk (emerging in the play as ancestor to a sorry-sighted Leontes and not to Polixenes, who rejects any comparison between himself and this beast) (1.2.388). This is the same power attributed to the juggler, who, by transitive “natural” magic and hypnotism, enters and controls imaginations.

Leontes never specifies in this passage just who is doing the stupefying. If there is a mythical beast or a transitive magician among them, he never remarks who that person is. The play no doubt would have a very different trajectory if Leontes had picked a single scapegoat to banish into the wilderness. Rather, *all* are guilty according to Leontes: Hermione is a “slippery” (i.e., tricking) whore, Mamillius a whispering bastard, Paulina a supernatural manipulator, Polixenes an infectious betrayer (1.2.306), Camillo a tricking traitor and “false villain” (2.1.48), and women false as fixed dice or “o’er-dy’d blacks” (1.2.132-133). The final accusation is

commonly glossed as “black things painted over with another color.”⁴⁰⁶ However, I strongly suspect it also alludes to the common notion reflected in *Rid* that English juggling tricksters, some known also as counterfeit Egyptians, donned black face in order to project supernatural authority.⁴⁰⁷

Let me clarify what I am suggesting. Leontes may fear some supernatural magic in the web, but he is more frightened, and at the same time more emboldened, by another fantasy. He remediates his uncertainty (about who is responsible) with conviction, deflecting his own sins onto what he marks as a cozening collective, one turning tricks or playing tricks:

...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'aborr'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.
 Camillo was his help in this, his pandar.
 There is a plot against my life, my crown;
 All's true that is mistrusted. That false villain
 Whom I employ'd was pre-employ'd by him:

⁴⁰⁶ See Evans 1571 n. 1.2.132.

⁴⁰⁷ *Rid* sig. B2r. See my discussion of counterfeit Egyptians in my chapter on *Othello*.

He has discover'd my design, and I
 Remain a pinch'd thing, yea; a very trick
 For them to play at will. (2.1.39-52)

It would seem that the spider in the cup is not Leontes's knowledge that his wife has committed adultery. Rather, it is knowledge of what he perceives to be a conspiratorial poisoning by a networking web of tricksters. Most poisonous to Leontes is the knowledge that he has been communally played a fool: Camillo has been "pre-employed" by Polixenes and "is / A federary with [Hermione]" (2.1.90).

We may further notice the way trickery here is represented not only as a social but also as a professional act. Leontes suggests that he is not just the victim of treachery, but he is, more specifically, the victim of trickery for financial gain: Hermione is a "hobby-horse" (a "loose woman" or "prostitute" according to the *OED*); Camillo is a "pandar" to Polixenes; and Polixenes, wearing Hermione like a "medal hanging / About his neck" (1.2.307), has capitalized on stealing Leontes's honor.⁴⁰⁸

In the first scene of Act one, before Camillo's flight appeared to Leontes to justify these many suspicions of trickery and treachery, Leontes ruminates on suspicions of confederacy. "We have been Deceived," says Leontes to Camillo. If one insists upon Hermione's honesty, one is either dishonest or else

a coward,

⁴⁰⁸ Leontes will see that honour restored at the end when Hermione "hangs about his [Leontes's] neck" (5.3.12). See *OED*, "hobby-horse, *n.*" Def. 3.

Which hoxes honesty behind, restraining
 From course requir'd; or else thou must be counted
 A servant grafted in my serious trust,
 And therein negligent; or else a fool,
 That seest a game played home, the rich stakes drawn,
 And taks't it all for jest (1.1.240-249)

Among the four options Leontes presents here, three explicitly place Camillo as either in or within plain sight of a game played at the expense of Leontes. In the first scenario Camillo is “not honest” (perpetrating deception through his lie). In the second he is a hoaxer, hamstringing honesty and laming it from its course.⁴⁰⁹ In the final scenario he mistakes dangerous gambling for benign entertainment, failing to realize how much is about to be lost. Of course Leontes’s “stakes” burn with an irony lost on its speaker, one which glows most brightly in Paulina’s evocation of the inquisitor’s fire (2.3.115).

We will learn over the course of the play that Leontes’s suspicions of Camillo are not without substance. Driven by opportunism, beneficence, or both, Camillo orchestrates a series of ruses: from the Bohemians’ disappearing act to his carefully contrived reunion of Florizel, Perdita, and Leontes in Act 5. Leontes will indeed find himself surrounded by tricksters, who are plentiful in this play. What is at issue here, though, is not the consequential truthfulness of Leontes’s suspicions of trickery,

⁴⁰⁹ Evans glosses “hoxes” to mean “hamstrings” n. 244 (*Riverside* 1573).

which will prove self-fulfilling, but rather it is his obsession with and insidious characterization of confederacy.

If Leontes reflects Scot's Catholic inquisitor, he also resembles the overly suspicious detector of tricks. In this role, one might say, he resembles Scot himself—though again, Scot distinguishes himself from Leontes in both motivation for (compassion-driven defence of the weaker party) and characterization of his subject (juggling may be used to good purpose or for entertainment). More accurately, we might say Leontes resembles a much more extreme version of Scot—the fanatic iconoclast or anti-theatricalist, viewing entertainment myopically as dangerous trickery or vain illusionism. For Leontes “entertainment” is slippery in substance, though univocally negative in value:

This entertainment

May a free face put on, derive a liberty
 From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,
 And well become the agent; 't may I grant.
 But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers,
 As now they are, and making practic'd smiles
 As in a looking-glass, and then to sigh, as 'twere
 The mort o' the' deer—O, that is entertainment
 My bosom likes not, nor my brows. (1.2.111-118)

Whether Hermione's gestures have in fact taken place—or to what extent they incline themselves to Leontes's sentence—escapes verdict here as a matter of subjective stage business. It is not Hermione's guilt or innocence that becomes

apparent through the language, but the corrupted imagination of Leontes, with its monstrously self-propagating suspicions.

One meaning of “entertainment”—socially decorous hospitality—becomes another—“service, employment” by another, the hidden opposite of the deceptively “free face.”⁴¹⁰ In the shifting semantic economies of Leontes’s language, financial resonances further give way to theatrical ones: the freely giving entertainer becomes the kept entertainer for hire, the tricking whore in the new theatrical marketplace. In his evocation of the “looking-glass,” Leontes describes a vain entertainment that leaves him both an illusionist’s fool and a monster (the cuckolded horned man). In short, he sees himself victim to the kind of players William Rankins described in *A mirror of monsters* (1587): “some term them Players, manie Pleasers, but I Monsters, and whie Monsters? Bicause vnder colour of humanitie, they present nothing but prodigious vanitie.”⁴¹¹ They “...with pretended shadowes to couer so deformed a substance...delude those which thorow an ignorant spirit...follow his vice.” Through these delusions, Rankins suggests players breed “manifold vices, & spotted enormities.”⁴¹² Leontes, like Rankins, fears that entertainment has led to a spotting which must be purified. For Leontes, though, the immaterial fantasy of public entertainment finds a material and domestic analogue: the bed sheets. Leontes asks,

Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,

To appoint myself in this vexation, sully

⁴¹⁰ See *OED* “entertainment” Def. 2.a.

⁴¹¹ Rankins sig. B2r.

⁴¹² Rankins sig. B1r.

The purity and whiteness of my sheets
 (Which to preserve is sleep, which being spotted
 Is goads, thorns nettles, tails of wasps)

Give scandal to the blood o'th' Prince, my son...? (1.2.325-330)

Like the spotted sheets of *Othello* (or the spotted handkerchief which Linda Boose sees as their metonymic counterpart) sheets become a symbol of insubstantial, even deceptive proof.⁴¹³ They are rendered even less substantial in *The Winter's Tale* as they exist here not as a material stage property but only as imaginary metaphor and a piece of a dubious conclusion. Leontes's logic operates thus: my sleeplessness is a result of my sheets (i.e. honour) being spotted by someone other than myself. Fancied sullied and stolen by Polixenes and his confederates, the sheets serve Leontes here as confirmation of Hermione's guilt, but mostly as evidence of his own rational adjudication. They serve (poorly) as proof that he is guided by reason rather than by deceptive imagination. Just lines earlier, Leontes has prescribed a cure to the sleeplessness which he misattributes to Polixenes and his confederates. Recruiting Camillo as poisoner of Polixenes, he says, "thou, / His cupbearer...who mayest see / Plainly...How I am gall'd, mightst bespice a cup / To give mine enemy a lasting wink" (1.2.331-317).

The poison that Leontes prescribes is designed to suit the crime: a confederate jugglery—which, we might recall from earlier chapters, was depicted by Rid as a poison to, and pestiferous carbuncle infecting, the nation—has poisoned the

⁴¹³ See Boose, "Othello's Handkerchief: 'The Recognizance and Pledge of Love.'"

knowledge of Leontes and paralyzed the perception of onlookers. This epistemological poison, at once figured as arachnid, epidemiological and connivingly magical, has a cure, which like so many cures in the Renaissance has sympathetic and antipathetic relations to the source of infection. Polixenes, Leontes imagines, has galled him. “Galling” suggests here a metaphorical irritation as well as more literal physiological transformations: the epidermal manifestation of galls (painful pustules) or the deeper, splenic production of gall, or bile, associated with melancholic jealousy.⁴¹⁴ The term “galling” simultaneously invokes what is nearly its polyseme: “gulling” or dupery. The sleeplessness attributed to poisonous dupery or resultant hyper-vigilance Leontes will attempt to remediate by forcing Polixenes to sleep. It has become an editorial commonplace to gloss “lasting wink” as meaning the sleep of death. Orgel for instance reads this phrase as “close my enemies’ eyes for good.”⁴¹⁵ Though Orgel is certainly right, Leontes’s conniving—along with poison’s associations with cowardly acts of deception and sometimes magical or illusionistic practices—suggests another possibility: the lasting wink that Leontes would deliver is at once a knowing wink to his confederate cup-bearer and to privy play-goers, and at the same time a hoodwinking of an unsuspecting Polixenes.

Read against the first act’s climate of lost confidence, the wink further gestures toward the trick taken back, the cony turning con artist and delivering poetic justice. “I will seem friendly, as thou hast advised me” (1.2.350) says Leontes

⁴¹⁴ See *OED* “gall, *n*²” Def. 1 and “gall, *n*¹” Def. I.1.a.

⁴¹⁵ Orgel 111, n. 314.

to Camillo, mirroring the “practic’d smiles” he sees performed by Polixenes and Hermione (1.2.116).⁴¹⁶ Leontes is acting here, encoring an earlier performance of quintessential con-artistry. After perseverating upon his wife’s “entertainment,” Leontes places us in his confidence when he responds to Hermione’s question as to whether or not he will seek her in the garden: “To your own bents dispose you; you’ll be found / Be you beneath the sky. [Aside] I am angling now, / Though you perceive me not how I give line. / Go to, go to!” (1.2.180-181). As noted by editors across the board, Leontes uses the metaphor of fishing here to describe his trickery; that Shakespeare has fishing in mind becomes increasingly clear as the metaphor crystallizes a few lines later:

Go play, boy, play, Thy mother plays and I
 Play too, but so disgrac’d a part...

 And many a many there is (even at this present,
 Now, while I speak this) holds his wife by th’arm
 That little thinks she has been sluic’d in ’s absence,
 And his pond fish’d by his next neighbor, by
 Sir Smile, his neighbor...” (1.2.187-196).

Angling, like treacherous poisoning, is yet another mode of punishment suiting the crime Leontes imagines. Polixenes, Leontes thinks, has angled his wife, an idea

⁴¹⁶ We may only assume that Camillo’s theatrical coaching here secretly services his own show: Camillo must bid friendly appearance and bide time in order orchestrate his own disappearance.

reinforced gesturally through the image of hooked arms (or hand in or on arm as is written literally). As fitting recourse, Leontes imagines himself now the angler—though circumstances have it he must seek a more accessible catch than Polixenes: “She, th’adultrous; for the harlot King / Is quite beyond mine arm...but she / I can hook to me...(2.3.4-7).

Using the terms and tools of “angling,” Leontes, fancying himself the figurative fisherman, finds recourse in snaring and beguiling. However, “angling” carried another definition in the period, one that must have lent some coherence to the disparate clusters of descriptive imagery in the first act. Angling or “hooking” referred to a particular and apparently very popular kind of cony-catching practice in which con artists fished for goods, usually textiles.⁴¹⁷ Though absent from the *OED*, the angler, otherwise known as a “hooker” or “curber,” is described in works on cony-catching by Harman, Greene, and Dekker and later in the *Canting Dictionaries* of the seventeenth century. Harman says,

THEse hokers or Angglears be peryllous and most wicked knaues, and be deryued or procede forth from the vpright men...when they practise their pylfeinge, it is all by night, for as they walke a day times from house to house to demaund charitie, thei vigelantly marke where or in what place they may attayne to there praye, casting there eyes vp to euery window, wel noting what they séi their, whether apparel, or linnen, hanginge nere vnto the sayde

⁴¹⁷ I describe angling here as a kind of figurative fishing, but it is worth reiterating the way in which distinctions of the literal and the figurative collapse in the period, especially among intertwined discourses of thievery, predation, and animality.

windowes, and that wyl they be sure to haue y[^] next night folowing, for they customably carry with them a staffe of v. or vi. foote long, in which, within one inch of y[^] tope ther of is a little hole bored through in which hole they putte an yron hoke, and with the same they wyll plucke vnto them quicly any thing yt they may reche ther with, which hoke in the day tyme they couertly cary aboute them, and is neuer sene or taken oute till they come to the place where they worke their fete.”⁴¹⁸

These anglers, writes Thomas Dekker, work by what he calls the "Curbing law," which "begotten in Idleness" teaches "how to hooke goods out of a window."⁴¹⁹ On an easy job a curber may simply hook goods from an open window. Otherwise, he must use "gins" (engines) or housebreaking devices used by the picklocks, practitioners of the "Black Art."⁴²⁰ Such devices (also called vices) or "gins" (engines) were known as "trickers":

A hooke or Curb is made with ioynts like an Angling rod, and in the day time is conueyed into the forme of a truncheon, and worne like a walking staffe till night, when it is put to doe other seruice. Whatsoever the Curber with his angle fishes for and takes, the warp beares it away, and he deliuers it either to a Broker or some bawd (for they all are of one feather,) of which Receiuers they haue as present money for it, as if they traded with merchants.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas Harman, *A Caueat or Warening, for Common Cursetors Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1567) sig. B4r-C1r.

⁴¹⁹ Dekker, *The Belman of London: Bringing to Light the Most Notorious Villanies That Are Now Practised in the Kingdome* sig G2r. (1608)

⁴²⁰ Dekker sig G2r.

Then is ther (belonging to this facultie) a Diuer, and he is iust in the nature of a Curberf or as the one practises his villany with a hooke, so the Diuer workes his iugling feats by the help of a boy (called a Figger) whome he thrusts in at a casement....⁴²¹

Reading these two descriptions both separately and in conjunction, we notice a few characteristics of angling. First, such performances are called “juggling feats.” Among other features of the trade, the use of “fishing” props and the “upryght” costuming of character suggest these were performances. The acts of sleight-of-hand illusionists and nimble-fingered thieves were often treated interchangeably. Second, as Frank Aydelotte has observed, curbing was often a confederate act.⁴²² In his description Dekker delineates the social engines driving cony-catching as well as the mechanical ones. Third, like so many acts of con-artistry, hooking is associated with “bawdry”; either the broker or bawd serves as middle man, according to Dekker. But along with other sex work terms such as “trick” or “ginny” for that matter, “hooker” likely has some folk origin linking this language back to obsolete canting slang of the Renaissance. These associations are most likely also a product of the rich metaphorical potential of his trade, his “traffic in sheets.” Of all the booty anglers might steal by “hoke,” bed linens are perhaps the ones most commonly described. Hung out to dry, sheets became easy targets for casing anglers ready to re-circulate them within a burgeoning black market for fabrics.

⁴²¹ Dekker sig. G2r-G2v.

⁴²² Aydelotte makes this point throughout *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds*.

The Winter's Tale is, of course, an adaptation of Greene's *Pandosto*, and Shakespeare was probably also familiar with Greene's popular works on con-catching; *The Winter's Tale* almost certainly alludes to this thieving practice. It is no accident, I think, that Leontes, hurling charges of harlotry and lamenting the spoiling of his bedsheets, identifies himself with a particular kind of con-artistry—one where bed sheets become spoil and people are unbreeched. In fact, within the juggling drama he imagines, Leontes's identification with the angler emerges as an especially apt bid for a better part than the "disgraced" one in which he sees himself wrongfully cast (1.2.188).

Before continuing, let me pause to recapitulate what I have been arguing. Paving the way for the dramatic action to come, the first act of *The Winter's Tale* is first and foremost about trickery. More specifically, it is about the insubstantial fantasies of loss associated with being tricked and the real losses accrued when we fail, in the absence of evidence, to lend confidence; we might call such confidence a charity of belief or good faith. The kind of trickery treated in the first act is figured variously as magical, illusionistic, delusional, confederate, professional, commodifiable, costly and theatrical. Attracting this cluster of values, such trickery treads on the professional/theatrical domain of the cony-catcher or the more theatrically-oriented juggler.

The Inside Men: Apollo, Autolycus and Trickery Laid Bear

Trickery takes a turn in Act 3, the play's structural centre. Suspicion makes way for penitential confidence, even though (perhaps even because) deception is real. The turn is most explicit with two of Shakespeare's most enigmatic figures. Living large on the inside we have Autolycus and a bear. Along with the oracle of Act 2, these figures change the tone of trickery, paving the way for the more explicitly positive jugglery in the last act.

We begin with the Delphic oracle, for which Leontes's disregard is accurately seen as signalling his arrogance. After the officer reads Apollo's prophecy, Leontes responds: "There is no truth at all i' th' oracle. / The sessions shall proceed; this is mere falsehood" (3.2.140-141). In the polytheistic universe the play inhabits, Leontes has profanely disregarded a god. We must remember, though, that in the monotheistic Protestant world in which the play was performed, believing the oracle would have been considered by some to be idolatrous or foolish in light of Scot's discussion of Delphic ventriloquism hoaxes. I am not saying that within the dramatic structure of the play Leontes is right to deny the oracle. We are meant to reside largely in the polytheistic world represented, to imagine in it analogues rather than antitheses to a monotheistic world. But as Shakespeare has already suggested through his characterization of Leontes, imaginative investments cannot help but be offset by present doubts. When Shakespeare stages the oracle, he is by its very invocation introducing contemporaneous discourses of trickery and trickery detection. Those more vigilant and well-versed spectators might at first sympathize with Leontes's skepticism of the oracle, entertaining Scot's opinion that it was a vain idol and animation trick not unlike Catholic hoaxes such as the Rood of Grace. And yet by

confirming the oracle's truth through prodigious reprisal, Shakespeare paves the way for a pattern we will see revisited in the statue scene: the conjuring of doubt through apparent trickery is dispelled through godly affirmation.

When "the heavens themselves do strike" (3.2.147) at Leontes's injustice (the death of Mamillius had been like a lightning bolt), there can be little doubt that this is an act of divine retribution. The function of the bear is less certain. Not without basis many critics have seen the bear as a "natural" extension of Apollo's revenge. Abandoning Perdita to fortune and to complicit nature, the shipmen are swallowed by a mocking sea; the image the Clown reports is a striking actualization of the heaven-sent justice Leontes describes. Pyle observes, "the sea reinforces the bestial aspect of nature, ready to tear men to pieces, and like the bear roars back at them in mockery of their impotence...Thus the Clown's speech has a serious subject: the beast in nature, man's impotence in its hands, his pettiness in the context of natural forces."⁴²³ For Pyle, the Clown's report and the preceding on-stage pursuit by the bear are not devoid of amusement. Overshadowing comic elements, though, is an angry sacrificing nature, solemnly slaughtering Antigonus and ushering him from the stage, not with terror or unbridled laughter, but with a bow.⁴²⁴

While Pyle does not wholly ignore the scene's theatrical elements, performance-minded criticism has more fully considered their impact. For Coghill Shakespeare's audience would not have recognized nature suited like a bear, but

⁴²³ Pyle 68.

⁴²⁴ Pyle 69.

rather would have seen a man in a bear suit, some “trained acrobat” who steals the scene, delivering it from tragedy to comedy.⁴²⁵ Coghill’s argument is more convincing when we consider another moment within the play itself. At the sheep-shearing festival of the next scene, the Servant will announce to the Shepherd the arrival of performing leapers: herdsman “themselves all made of hair,” one of whom “jumps twelve foot and a half by th’ squier” (4.4.325-26; 339). Coghill himself never mentions this example of animal-skinned acrobats, nor does he tread further into the historical world of feat performers, jugglers and jongleurs. Still his observations help us recognize the bear scene as a theatrically self-reflective moment. We may begin to see it as Shakespeare’s audience would have seen it, as an act of jugglery rather than simply an act of nature.

Andrew Gurr’s discussion of the bear scene leads us again to the world of jugglers. For him, as for Coghill, the bear is a metatheatrical animal. However, Gurr argues that this metatheatricality has less to do with a Jacobean audience’s familiarity with men in animal suits and more to do with its familiarity with bears. Bears were not only seen fighting in amphitheatres, but dancing in the streets and at fairs.⁴²⁶ Bearwards (keepers of performing bears) and ape-bearers (keepers of performing apes) were known also by the name of “jugglers.” In his famous history of the London fairs, Thomas Frost discusses animal ownership among jugglers: “Performing monkeys, bears, and horses appear in many of the mediaeval illuminations, and were

⁴²⁵ Coghill 35.

⁴²⁶ Gurr, “The Bear, the Statue and Hysteria in *The Winter’s Tale* 423.

probably...popular agents of public amusement in the earliest years of Bartlemy fair as they can be shown, from other authorities, to have been in the sixteenth century."⁴²⁷ One such authority from the period was John Hall, who in *The courte of Vertue* (1565) says:

Of these many were Juglers lewde,
 And some had apes and beares,
 And some had foolyshe puppet playes.⁴²⁸

Another is Ben Jonson or, more accurately, his character the Stage-Keeper, who describes "a jugler with a well educated ape, to come over the chain for the king of England, and back again for the prince, and to sit still on his hind quarters for the pope and the king of Spain...."⁴²⁹

The juggler sometimes had animal acts, and he or she was a jack of many trades. Puppetry, animal acts, and, as we have seen time and again, nimble feats, constituted the juggler's domain of entertaining trickery. Belonging to this domain, of course, is the play's most recognizable juggling insider. But before turning our attention to Autolycus, let me suggest that the bear's presence in *The Winter's Tale* points to a particular kind of domestic entertainment, one not separate from but in confederacy with the natural and supernatural worlds.

⁴²⁷ One of the most famous talking horses was William Banks's educated horse Morocco, to whom Shakespeare alludes in *Love's Labour's Lost* (See intro and chapter on *Othello*).

⁴²⁸ Hall 140v. This image is presented alongside others in what Hall suggests is his dream; but in this dream Hall seems to describe real people (many of them con artists) from the period.

⁴²⁹ See Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Induction 15-17 (489) in Oxford's World Classics *Ben Jonson: Five Plays*.

What does it mean, though, that the play's bear is not playful, that it does not remain tethered or amuse without arousing some fear or discomfort? Its complex and elusive function makes more sense when we consider it simultaneously as an embodiment of divine and mundane trickery. On one hand the bear seems an *ursus ex machina*, delivering with some seriousness Antigonus from the play at virtually the same moment Perdita appears by some "trunk work." Upon finding the abandoned daughter of Leontes, the Shepherd fears, "This has been some stair-work, some trunk-work, some behind door work" (4.1.73-75). The suspicious Shepherd is likely suggesting that Perdita is the offspring of some clandestine sexual encounter, but audiences who are privy to Apollo's prophecy and by now attuned to the language of magic would likely hear this passage differently. Boxes used to stage disappearances and appearances were, as they are today, among the professional illusionist's most famous properties. Scot describes some of these "diuers iuggling boxes with false bottoms, wherein manie false feats are wrought," including some that make corn disappear or others that appear to change wheat into flour.⁴³⁰ Also, we will recall that the tubes used to animate mechanical marvels and speaking statues were called trunks. And so, the trunk-work appearance of Perdita and the nearly concurrent disappearance of Antigonus suggest that some divine trickery is afoot. Shakespeare's staging of both the bear's appearance and Perdita's trunk-work preservation seems to prove Autolycus's later assertion: "the gods do this year connive at us" (4.4.676).

⁴³⁰ Scot 340-341.

On the other hand, we may see the bear not simply as divinely guided nature gone amok but as both an ungenerous human trick and also human suspicion gone awry. Suspicion of trickery reaches such a pitch in the first act and is invested with such heavy pathos that its release—if we are to move from tragedy to comedy—finds a natural outlet in the loose bear. Leontes in his attempt to take back the game has lost control of the trick. The scene is saved from delivering unbridled terror or moralism by the bear's self-aware theatrical presence and also by its narrative presence in eye-witness reporting; here the loose bear is somewhat tamed by the Clown's comic bathos. From this account (and from Coghill's), we may recognize the bear as a generic bridge from a tragic to a comic-pastoral world; through its appearance we are conveyed from court to country. Just as importantly, the bear appears a thematic bridge, moving us from the self-induced losses of the angler Leontes to the more harmless pilfering of Autolycus.

Autolycus, we will come to learn, entertains with comic trickery, stupefies through sound, earns confidence through disguise, and makes other people's money disappear by way of his "open ear, . . . quick eye, and . . . nimble hand" (4.4.670-673). A self-described cozener, although the Clown to whom he speaks does not recognize him as such (4.4.253), Autolycus resembles also the cony-catcher's sometimes-identical relative, the juggler.

Shortly after we are introduced, Autolycus picks the Clown's pocket, all the while playing the victim of robbery with a dislocated shoulder blade.⁴³¹ Admitting intimate familiarity with the thief, the disguised Autolycus names his assailant:

CLOWN. What manner of fellow was he that robb'd you?

AUTOLYCUS. A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames. I knew him once a servant of the Prince. I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whip't out of the court.

.....

AUTOLYCUS. ... I know this man well; he hath been since an ape-bearer, then a process-server, a bailiff, then he compass'd a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies; and having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue.

Some call him Autolycus. (4.3.84-100)

This Autolycus described is an itinerant rascal, the kind of wandering "rogue" and cony-catcher subject to vagabondage laws and testing a culture wrestling with the moral and legal obligations of charity. His characterization as possible bawd, puppeteer, professional thief, and exhibitor of trained trick-performing animals places Autolycus squarely among the jugglers John Hall describes.

That we should believe Autolycus's characterization to the Clown is suggested by his confessional self-description delivered upon entrance as either a kind

⁴³¹ This dislocation, I should mention, seems none other than a comic iteration of Antigonus's fatal injury by the bear: "how the bear tore out his shoulder-bone," according to the Clown (3.3.95).

of interior monologue in song, or as audience-directed disclosure. Singing of Spring's rebirth, Autolycus awakens images of peering daffodils followed by images of himself tumbling in the hay with "doxies" and "aunts," confederate cheating prostitutes in canting language (4.3.2-12). In turn, aunts make way for "white sheets bleaching on the hedge" (4.3.5). If Spring is the season of Florizel and Perdita, it also belongs also to Autolycus. His affiliation with vernal (and venereal) trickery is suggested in both his procession of images and in his subsequent wordplay of Spring/springe when he marks the gullible Clown: "If the springe holde, the cock's mine" (4.3.35). Spring it would seem signals not only the renewal of nature, but also the renewal of trickery. In other words, this is a season favourable for cony-catching, a time of easy cocks and liftable linens practically growing on trees. Spring's arrival also marks a more symbolic renewal of the imagination, as Leontes's sullied images of both con-artistry and sexuality begin to come clean.

One image aired in this scene, that of freshly laundered sheets that Autolycus covets, calls to mind the sheets mentioned earlier in the muddying accusations of Leontes against Hermione. They also perhaps come to mind just lines before Autolycus's entrance when Polixenes slanders Perdita, unknowingly using the metaphor that her father had used years before: "I / fear, the angle that plucks our son hither" (4.2.46). With the appearance of Autolycus, the angler returns, stealing back and purifying the sheets so besmeared by Leontes and even Polixenes. The sheets, as Autolycus describes them, are bleached, and though still ironically associated with the paintedness of bawdry they flag a movement toward more playful evocations of whoring, specifically, and less suspicious views of sexuality, generally.

“My traffic is sheets,” (4.3.23) Autolycus announces, the phrase suggesting at least three meanings. First, he is a professional angler securing his livelihood, as the kite (or hawk) strengthens his nest, with linen. Next, he is a bawd, likely a trafficker in the sex trades dealing in con-artistry and perhaps the kind of middleman Dekker describes as brokering for anglers. Finally, he is a ballad monger, peddling tales of bawdry and monstrous generation like the one in which a usurer’s wife became pregnant with money. When Mopsa questions his tale’s verity, Autolycus replies, “Here’s the midwife’s name to to’t, one Mistress / Tale-porter, and five or six honest wives that were present” (4.4.269-270). For the credulous Mopsa, both its materiality in print and its confirmation through eyewitness testimony verify the ballad’s truth and clinch the deal. Richard Meek has argued that the balladeer here becomes a likely stand-in for Shakespeare, who in the texture of this fantastic play weaves “old tales” of intervening gods, curst bears, monstrous mental conceptions, and miraculous generations.⁴³²

There are of course certain complications arising from such an identification, not the least of which is that, compared to Shakespeare’s play, Autolycus’s tale is less likely to be “bought” by audiences. Though prodigious births were commonly given credence in the period, the audience already knows this balladeer to be an unreliable con man. Meanwhile, Leontes’s misguided testimony regarding the visual evidence of conspiratorial infidelity has rendered dubious all eyewitness accounts, especially those from less credible witnesses. The first act seems to suggest that seeing, as well as

⁴³² Meek 387.

hearsay, shouldn't always be believing. In contrast, as we shall see, the final act demands a certain investment of trust in both the eyewitness's account and the visual spectacle. For instance, the reconciliation scene reported second-hand by a few minor characters requires we believe the word in the absence of visual proof, a Protestant notion it would seem. The statue scene, on the other hand, demands that, if only for a moment, we believe in the visual spectacle—within the limits of lawful magic, of course.

At this stage though, we have not yet been asked to awaken our faith, but only our eyes, with a good-natured and selective skepticism distinguishable from Leontes's radical distrust. After all, Mopsa and the Clown may be silly gulls to believe Autolycus, but when we meet Florizel, we see his unfailing confidence in Perdita as a valued counterpoint to Leontes's bad faith: "It cannot fail but by / The violation of my faith, and then / Let nature crush the sides o'th' earth together, / And mar the seeds within" (4.4. 476-79). We may suppose that Florizel's faith is rewarded because he has chosen to trust one with steadfast and devoted intentions. And yet the play suggests, insofar as trust and trickery are concerned, intentions are not everything. Perdita, for instance, positions herself against Autolycus: she expresses little interest in his show of empty trinkets and bawdy songs. In fact we might say that Perdita is, like her father, suspicious of all forms of creative artistry, including theatrical entertainment. Nonetheless, Perdita finds herself performing in the shows of the sheep-shearing festival and later in the deceptive flight from Bohemia, orchestrated by another con man, Camillo. Reluctantly she dons a disguise, assuming what she

suggests is a necessary role: “I see the play so lies that I must bear a part” (4.4.655-56).

For Autolycus, as for Perdita, trickery is determined: deception is sometimes beyond our control, directed by gods or playwrights. Autolycus, however, inverts Perdita’s analysis that the intention to do right is sometimes overridden by the necessity to play bad. Rather, Autolycus suggests that playing the trickster sometimes leads, quite incidentally, to going or doing right. Let us for a second return to the moments following Autolycus’s arrival onstage when he declares, “...when I do wander here and there, / I then do most go right” (4.3.17-18). As we shall see in a moment, Autolycus’s speech foreshadows future actions, but its synchronic function here first deserves attention. In many modern editions this phrase is given no explanatory note (for example, John Dover Wilson and Arthur Quiller-Couch, Jonathan Bate, and Barbara Mowat pay it no mention).⁴³³ Orgel, who does provide a note, reads the passage as “I do what is best for me.”⁴³⁴ This reading is fairly consistent with Kenneth Deighton’s reading of the line, “when I seem to be going wrong, to have lost my way, I am then going in what is the right path for me.”⁴³⁵ Though certainly correct in one sense, both of these readings ignore the geographical and geometrical turns implied by the sentence.

⁴³³ Wilson and Quiller-Couch, *The New Shakespeare: The Winter’s Tale* 161 n. 4.3.16-18; Jonathan Bate, *The RSC Shakespeare: William Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale* 61; Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine *New Folger Library: Shakespeare The Winter’s Tale*.

⁴³⁴ Orgel 163 n. 18.

⁴³⁵ *Variorum* 166 n. 17-54.

From one perspective there is both a comic and a more serious logic implied by Autolycus's series of right turns. While or through wandering, the rogue, always tending right, ends up where he begins. The circular or, perhaps more accurately, square perambulations suggested are a function of his foolery, and the reference likely drew laughs. On a more serious note, the unwitting returns implied by the logic of his motion reflect the rogue's fate as prescribed by vagabondage laws. As I have mentioned in my *Taming of the Shrew* chapter, as a punishment for their wandering and for their unaccountability to any territory, vagabonds and jugglers were often forced to return to any domain whose laws they violated, where they would face their punishment.⁴³⁶

From another perspective, Autolycus's "right" seems to imply an incidentally moral as well as geographical turn. His words seem to suggest more than the relativist "right for me" which Orgel and Furness propose and which Autolycus may well himself intend. Autolycus's rumination here foreshadows what, despite his opportunistic motives, will prove good deeds for all in the end. When through another imposture, Autolycus herds Shepherd and Clown on the ship bound for Bohemia, he believes his interception will benefit both him and the prince: "Though I am not naturally honest, I am so sometimes by chance" (4.4.712-713).⁴³⁷ It is safe to assume, I think, that Autolycus fully grasps neither outcomes nor organizing

⁴³⁶ See England and Wales. Sovereign (1558-1603: Elizabeth I), *An Acte for Punishment of Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdie Beggers.*"

⁴³⁷ When Autolycus makes this statement he is concerned that if the shepherds go to Polixenes it will stop Florizel's flight with Perdita.

principles.⁴³⁸ The King and Camillo on land, rather than a sick Florizel on sea, will discover the Shepherd's revelations. Autolycus's gulls—rather than the prince—*may* become his “good masters,” and if the play's overwhelming emphasis on prophecy and providence is any indication, divine order rather than chance will steer his right turns. These ironies, though, were unlikely to have been lost on Shakespeare's contemporaries, well tuned to notions of Protestant providence. For some of them, I would imagine, Autolycus's early characterization of wandering comes back to resonate with the rogue's final deeds. While the path of trickery appears both directionless and in the trickster's hand, it will ultimately prove itself beyond human intention and subject to moral direction. We see in the case of Autolycus, as we have seen with Leontes and the bear, the trickster losing control of the trick.

Paulina and Autolycus

So far in this chapter I have mostly hinted at Paulina's role among a series of deceptions culminating in the statue scene. I have chosen instead to concentrate on the scene's critical and historical contexts as well as its dramatic framework. My thesis is a relatively simple one, though its development has meant tracing convergences within a vast network of discourses concerning magic, art, religion theatre and trickery. *The Winter's Tale*, I have proposed, is structured around themes of deception and often ritualized theatrical illusionism associated in the period with

⁴³⁸ When he makes this statement he is concerned that if the shepherds go to Polixenes it will stop Florizel's flight with Perdita.

jugglers. I have also suggested that Paulina in many ways epitomizes the juggler operating among a confederacy of con artists and cony-catching tricksters—though my close readings of the play have focused mostly on her entourage. Until now I have approached Paulina and the statue more obliquely, assuming readers familiar with the play might start to draw connections from my trail of hints and histories. Here I want to look more directly at the place where non-fictional narratives about juggling and Shakespeare’s play text meet.

Before Paulina’s grand hoax is revealed in the final act, Autolycus is the most obvious juggler in the play. After witnessing how his deceptions rely on disguises of gentle birth and guises of honesty, after hearing of his history of service in the court, we should hardly be surprised that Paulina may be a juggler in disguise playing a servant to nobility. Paulina’s status as courtier rather than commoner does not estrange her from the world of jugglers as artists. I have shown previously that performing jugglers were not always masterless vagabonds, but sometimes worked as servants to the court. And I have demonstrated that when the label “juggler” was applied figuratively—used broadly as a synonym for “deceiver” or “illusionist”—it described a cross-section of the population, cutting across boundaries of social rank.

Nor does Paulina’s gender preclude her from associations with juggling. I’ve demonstrated here and in my section on *The Taming of the Shrew* that women were commonly called jugglers, especially as the word was applied to professional con artists, including those who, often accused of witchcraft, used illusions and other sleights to support professions in spiritual advising, healing and procuring. That Paulina plays all of these roles, and more importantly that they are central to her

character, has hardly been lost on critics, especially D'Orsey Pearson, who compares her to the "urban witch."⁴³⁹ In an age in which the supernatural came under increased scrutiny, all of these labels including "witch and "magician," fell under a wider umbrella: they commonly stood simply as synonyms for juggler. This is especially true in the writings of Reginald Scot.

If, as I have suggested, historical representations of jugglers and other tricksters would have led Shakespeare's audiences to associate Paulina with these figures, so, even prior to the statue scene, does the play itself. Paulina's honest disposition, even as characters persistently assert it, is throughout the play called into question, both through Paulina's associations with Autolycus and independent of those associations.

When we are first introduced to Paulina in Act 2 scene 1, her confident sense of entitlement, her stubborn persistence, and her reception by the jailer immediately condition audience expectations. Paulina attempts to gain access to an imprisoned Hermione by virtue of her reputation:

PAULINA. You know me, do you not?

JAILER. For a worthy lady,

And one who much I honour.

PAULINA. Pray you then,

Conduct me to the Queen. (2.2.5-8)

⁴³⁹ See Pearson, "Witchcraft in *The Winter's Tale*: Paulina as Alcahueta y un Poquito Hechizera."

Paulina enters with a reputation for worthiness and goodness that seems to follow her in force throughout the play and into its critical history. Paulina is for Frederick James Furnivall a “truer Emilia” and is for Bethell a “true believer,” a symbol of conscience and an impetus toward “right conduct.”⁴⁴⁰ For Hartley Coleridge she is an “honest scold,” and for Pyle she is an image of “militant goodness throughout.”⁴⁴¹

All this is not to say that Paulina’s persistent goodness has gone unchallenged, but that this notion of her is resilient, largely, I think, because of the way Paulina is represented by herself and by others. Consider, for instance, not only the terms that contribute to her reputation for honesty, but also the very frequency of their repetition. About to vie for the jailor’s leniency and for Hermione’s confidence in her role as advocate “to th’ loud’st” (2.2.37), Paulina says,

Tell her, Emilia,

I’ll use that tongue I have. If wit flow from’t

As boldness from by bosom, let’t not be doubted

I shall do good. (2.2.49-52)

And while soliciting the jailor to free the baby Perdita, Paulina urges, “Do not you fear. *Upon mine honour, / I will stand betwixt you and danger*” (2.2.63-64). Later, when trying to soften the King with the sight of his child and to win his faith in her healing powers, she announces that she comes “with words as medicinal, *as true, / Honest as either, to purge him of that humour / That presses him from sleep*”

⁴⁴⁰ Furnivall, “Introduction” to *The Winter’s Tale xci*; Bethel 40, 59.

⁴⁴¹ Bethel 40; Coleridge 149; Pyle 41-42.

(2.3.37-39). And then she adds, “I come— / And I beseech you hear me, who professes / Myself your *loyal* servant, your physician, / Your most *obedient* counsellor” (2.3.52-55). After Paulina fails to persuade Leontes of Hermione’s innocence, she disputes the King’s accusations against herself (Paulina) of witchcraft and bawdry, arguing,

Not so:

I am as ignorant in that, as you

In so entit’ling me; and no less *honest*

Than you are mad; which is enough, I’ll warrant

(As this world goes), to pass for *honest*. (2.3.69-73) [all emphases mine]

Let us attend here to the broader rhetorical strategies and speech patterns Paulina demonstrates. For now, we may observe that in the play, her claims to truthfulness and virtue are surpassed in number only by commendations of her by others, especially Leontes, who after years of penitence calls her “My true Paulina” (5.1.81), “Good Paulina, (5.1.49) “grave and good Paulina” (4.3.1), and again in the play’s final lines “Good Paulina” (5.3.151).

Significantly, words like “honest,” “good,” “truth,” “honour,” “trust,” are used to describe other characters in the play or to inflect their own narratives. But in the case of Paulina they are deployed excessively; and excessive attributions of honesty elsewhere in this and in other plays tend either to signal or to confirm the suspicion or the reality of dishonesty. The clearest example of this is the case of “honest” Iago (the image, I have argued, of the juggler at its most insidious)—though in support of this point, we really need look no further than *The Winter’s Tale*. When

Leontes uses the word “honest” early on, it is usually as baiting tactic in his angling. Leontes, for instance, refers to Mamillius as his “honest friend” or “honest man,” but honesty like “playing” has a double sense: “Go play, Mamillius; thou’rt an honest man” (1.2.210). As “entertainment” sounds with the suggestion of infidelity, so does “honesty” here. According to the *OED*, “honesty” in a deprecatory sense (“to make an honest woman” out of an already seduced wife) does not emerge until 1629, eighteen years after Simon Forman saw the first recorded performance of the play in 1611.⁴⁴² And yet Shakespeare certainly plays with honesty here and elsewhere in his plays as a word wedded to suspicions of its opposite.

In the case of Mamillius mentioned above, honesty proves to have no subtext. Elsewhere in the play, however, abundant deployments of what I will call “truth words,” or claims to truth (though they are not exactly truth claims) suggest grounds for suspicion—especially of course, when their claimants have retrospectively proven tricksters in one sense or another. In *The Winter’s Tale*, only a few characters compete with Paulina for the honour of being most affiliated with these claims or terms. They are the “Good Camillo”—who, repeatedly called an “honest man” (1.2.380, 1.2.410, 3.2.156, 3.2.188, 4.2.1, 4.4.513, 4.4. 579), will prove, on the basis of both his reputation for goodness and his penchant for deception, a fitting companion to the “good” trickster Paulina at the play’s end—and Autolycus. Although Autolycus in his series of asides decries honesty as a “fool” (4.4.595) with whom he will only occasionally acquaint himself by “chance,”

⁴⁴² See Orgel on Forman xxviii.

pretences toward or appeals based on honesty and truth are fundamental to his con games.

When we first meet Autolycus he seals his conies' trust by appealing to what he suggests are shared values of charity, honesty and general goodness. Phrases such as "sweet sir" (4.3.65), "good-faced sir" (4.3.115), and "Prosper you, sweet sir" (4.3.118) comprise his addresses. He underscores his own honesty with a pride in keeping with his character by eschewing money; he hints that he has no need for material aid, the suggestion of which he says, "kills my heart" (4.3.83). Instead, Autolycus will accept what he tells the Clown is the "charitable office" (4.3.76) of helping a wounded stranger up. Of course, the audience knows that the charity to which the Clown refers is actually the unwitting donation of his pocket, which Autolycus has just picked (4.3.75). Autolycus pretends to be honest by playing the helpless stranger in a Good Samaritan scenario—in this case dishonest rogues have left him worse off than his benefactors, who though unscathed this time, are likewise vulnerable. Because of this episode's distinct biblical resonance, the disguised Autolycus's admission of flaws seems, at least on the denotative level, a confirmation of his virtue. Explaining why he did not retaliate when robbed, he says, "I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter. I am *false* of heart that way" (4.3.107-08; emphasis added). Of course, while "a falseness of heart" reads to canny audiences as a counterfeit centre, it most likely appears to the Clown and Shepherd as, at worst, a menial cowardice and, at best, an act of biblical obeisance—an exemplary turning of the other cheek.

When Autolycus appears later at the sheep-shearing festival in another guise, as the balladeer and the seller of wares, his sales pitches ring with clichéd claims of truth and authenticity. His “Lawn” and “Cypress” for sale are of the truest colours (4.4.218-219). As I mentioned earlier, Autolycus promises that one of his ballads is “very true” (4.4.267) and that another is “very pitiful, and as true” (4.4.281). Their truth, as I have already mentioned, is doubly and triply guaranteed by eyewitnesses and by their status as print material.

When Autolycus appears again before the Shepherd and Clown in another disguise, he projects the authority of a courtier and a pretended aversion to dishonesty: “Let me have no lying,” he demands of father and son, while asking for their story and telling them a tale he has heard recently: the grieved king would have the Shepherd stoned for his daughter’s marriage to Florizel. Promising to be their advocate to the king in exchange for gold, Autolycus urges,

...Tell me (for you seem to be honest plain men) what you have to the King.
Being something gently consider’d, I’ll bring you where he is aboard, tender
your persons to his presence, whisper him in your behalfs; and if it be in man
besides the King to effect your suits, here is man shall do it. (4.4.793-799)

After the deal is sealed as a thing “promis’d” (4.4.810) we hear this exchange:

AUTOLYCUS. I will trust you. Walk before toward the sea-side, go on the
right hand, I will but look upon the hedge, and follow you.

CLOWN. We are bless’d in this man, as I may say, even bless’d.

SHEPHERD. Let’s before as he bids us: he was provided to do us good.

(4.4.824-830)

Here again Autolycus plays a familiar game, disarming his victims by suggesting that after some consideration they have won his trust; they are the ones getting a bargain on beneficence from this good man who means them well. Meanwhile, of course, Autolycus's promise to look upon the hedge betrays other criminal intentions—ones with which the play's audience is by now familiar.

I have tried here to demonstrate here the ways in which speech by and about Autolycus and Paulina (and also Camillo) reveals similar patterns of good reputation and “good” repetition. Part and parcel of these patterns is another rhetorical tendency that Paulina shares with Autolycus and other con artists from Shakespeare's era to the present. Like the language of other con artists, Paulina's speech is characterized by promises—high-stakes oaths, money-back guarantees and conditional bargains, often in the form of if/then statements: “If I prove honey-mouth'd, let my tongue blister” (2.2.31); “If she dares trust me with her little babe, / I'll...be / Her advocate...” (2.2.35-37); “If wit flow from't [my tongue] / ...let't not be doubted / I shall do good” (2.2.50-52) “Upon mine honour, I / Will stand betwixt you and danger” (2.2.63-64); “If you can behold it, / I'll make the statue move indeed...” (5.3.87-88).

In another passage particularly indicative of this pattern and its service to her greatest deception, Paulina avers,

I say she's dead; I'll swear't. If word nor oath
 Prevail not, go and see: if you can bring
 Tincture or lustre in her lip, her eye,
 Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you

As I would do the gods. (3.2.203-207)

When read against the play's Christian contexts, these last promises in particular (essentially a heretical exchange of idolatry for necromancy) recall the blasphemous colloquial oaths that Bakhtin describes as belonging to the language of the marketplace, a favourite haunt of the juggler. The fact that Paulina is bluffing here only settles her more firmly within the trickster's territory.

Even if Paulina's oaths didn't approach heresy, they would have aroused suspicions when audiences considered their company. Autolycus is another character in the play who uses conditional phrasing often—mostly albeit as a way of explaining the ethics of his roguery. For instance, he uses this phrasing in his confessional inversion of the confidence man's oath of honesty: "If I make not this cheat bring out another, and the shearers prove sheep, let me be unrolled and my name put in the book of virtue!" (4.3.120-122). More importantly, as I have suggested, his devices depend on promises of truth and plain speaking and of being one's advocate.

I am not implying that promises or conditionals in the play necessarily signal deception. After all, we are meant to believe Hermione's promises of fidelity. And while I have argued that even divine forces in the play deal in secrecy and deception (ostensibly to good purpose), the oracle's message, itself an if/then statement, proves a truth fundamental to the play's outcome. Nor am I arguing that Paulina is a mirror image of Autolycus. There are significant differences between them: unlike Autolycus, she is not (until perhaps the end of the play) "honey-mouth'd" (2.1.31), but abrupt, scolding, shrewish. No "sweet" addresses for the purpose of ensnarement fall from her lips. While Autolycus continuously tries to avoid the gallows, she dances

dangerously close to both the rope and the heretic's fire. We have no personal asides from her; Autolycus on the other hand constantly reveals himself to the play's audience. Thus Autolycus is in one sense an opposite reflection of the cony-catcher as the figure was represented by many texts in the period, especially canting dictionaries, which described in third-person accounts a secret society of dangerously unrecognizable tricksters. But if we look at Robert Greene's pamphlets (a likely inspiration for Shakespeare's portrait of Autolycus), first-person narratives countered secrecy through discovery and confession. The trickster in effect lays bare the workings of operations, much as Scot's ideal juggler does. This is what we see in the case of Autolycus and his tendency toward tipping the wink. Paulina's mind, by contrast, is largely off-limits to the audience; what we know of her we know through her public persona. She holds her cards close, showing some of her hand to audiences only in the final scene.

I do want to suggest, however, that as the Shepherd reminds us in his warning to the Clown in Act 5 scene 2, the promise of honesty is a dubious and dangerous guarantee (5.2.156-161).⁴⁴³ For this reason and for others that I have mentioned, the similarities between Paulina and Autolycus invite closer scrutiny. As I have suggested earlier, Paulina is not a counterpoint to Autolycus or to those con artists and jugglers from which he is drawn. Rather she is in many ways a

⁴⁴³ "CLOWN. [to Autolycus] Give me thy hand: I will swear to the Prince thou art as honest a true fellow as any is in Bohemia. SHEPHERD. You may say it, but not swear it. CLOWN. Not swear it, now I am a gentleman? Let boors and franklins say it, I'll swear it. SHEPHERD. How if it be false, son?" (5.2.156-161). Shakespeare here jabs at the Clown's foolishness as well as at the pretensions of the gentry.

complement to them—even in roles where she might first appear their opposite. Consider for instance two facets of her character that emerge in the passages I have recounted in this section: her reputation for healing (or what we might call “faith healing,” as it is faith which she attempts to conjure and cure), and for shrewishness.

We will recall that in Act 2 scene 3, Leontes first rejects Paulina’s role as a “physician” (2.3.54) who would restore faith. In the final scene, however, her encore performance as a kind of faith healer proves far more successful.⁴⁴⁴ While the outcome of Paulina’s healing likely dispelled suspicions of malfeasance, her role as healer must have suggested dubious practices to begin with.

Girard, for instance, has shown that in the play’s historical climate, dispensers of “cures” (especially social outsiders such as women or Jews) attracted both patronage and persecution from high places. Queen Elizabeth’s Jewish doctor Lopez, “executed for his attempts at poisoning and for his practice of magic,” is a case in point.⁴⁴⁵ Further, Sidney Clarke explains how in the seventeenth century the word “Physician” or “Doctor” (as well as “mountebank”) was another name for juggler.⁴⁴⁶

As for Paulina’s reputation for shrewishness, it follows her in the play and subsequently into its criticism, where it is often described as (exceptionally) complementing rather than detracting from her good character. Recall that Hartley

⁴⁴⁴ Like most faith healing, it succeeds not through supernatural magic or medical miracle but by trickery and the power of persuasion. To my knowledge the “faith healer” as so called post-dates the period. Certainly, however, Medieval and Renaissance writers discussed how mountebanks and crank physicians elicited a placebo effect in their patients by encouraging confidence in their product and the authority of their person. See for instance the first English translation (1659) of Roger Bacon’s *Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magick* (9).

⁴⁴⁵ Girard *Scapegoat* 47.

⁴⁴⁶ Clarke, *Annals of Conjuring* 3.

Coleridge describes her as an “honest scold,” and Pyle writes of her shrewishness, “As the pastime of an idle moment the thought of such a woman was good fun, then as now.”⁴⁴⁷ She could even be the basis for an entire play if she were tamed, suggests Pyle, “But taken seriously she was a menace.” There were, nonetheless, “exceptional women, from Queen Elizabeth down....Such an exceptional case is Paulina... (Pyle 41).

As has become commonplace, Pyle describes Paulina even in her exceptionalness as one kind of shrew—the kind Leontes all but names when he condemns her as a henpecking and “unroost[ing]” “Dame Partlet” (2.3.75-76). The word “shrew” and its cognates, however, are conceived of more broadly in the period and in the play. In *The Winter’s Tale*, “beshrew” is spoken as a curse, which, not coincidentally, is directed toward another by only one character in the play. Paulina declares, “These dangerous unsafe lunes i’ the king, / beshrew them!” (2.2.28).⁴⁴⁸

In my chapter on *The Taming of the Shrew* I have discussed at length the animal behind this word and how perceptions of the shrew mouse influence the way the word “shrew” was understood at the time. It bears repeating here that the shrew was assigned a vociferous, toxic and diabolical malevolence. Such beliefs about the shrewmouse no doubt precipitated the word’s linguistic rebirth as curse. Another of the most common definitions of “shrew” in the period (the one, in fact, which defeats both “scold” and “curse” for first place in the *OED*’s figurative definitions) is

⁴⁴⁷ Pyle 41.

⁴⁴⁸ Camillo directs the curse inward saying “Shrew my heart” (1.2.281).

this: “a mischievous or vexatious person,” commonly a trickster as literature from the period suggests.⁴⁴⁹ In other words, Paulina’s shrewishness carries with it other associations, ones that over time we have lost sight of but which contemporary audiences likely would have considered.

To summarize before turning to the fifth act, read in conjunction, Paulina’s repetition of claims to truth, her reputation as honest, the rhetorical texture of her speech, and even her leading roles as honest scold and faith healer place Paulina among a camp of cony-catchers and other tricksters not unlike Autolycus. The magical, diabolical, and theatrical/illusionistic overtones of Paulina’s character, in addition to the lexical and performative interchangeability of jugglers and other con artists means that even before the fifth act, Paulina likely reminded Shakespeare’s audiences of “jugglers” in literal and figurative senses of the word. The play’s overwhelming emphasis on trickery and magic, and Paulina’s implications in their web, means that audiences are prepared for some deception on Paulina’s part.

The Fifth Act: Preparation, Transformation, Substitution

Discussing the fifth act, Fitzroy Pyle suggests that in an atmosphere of wonder, with Perdita found and the oracle fulfilled, “No one can say that if the statue moves we

⁴⁴⁹ This character was commonly though not exclusively a male—a gender attribution complicated by the fact that animal and human shrews of all varieties were, like bearded “mankind witch[es]” (2.3.68), often described in either gender-neutral or gender-blending terms.

have not been warned.”⁴⁵⁰ Pyle’s purpose in underscoring the play’s warnings seems of a piece with another of his principal motives: to defend the secret of Hermione’s cloistering and her resurrection as dramatically necessary, honest, and exemplary of legitimate theatrical illusionism. Read in the context of his larger argument the play’s presaging becomes a means by which he will distinguish Hermione’s resurrection from resurrection tricks. This is not, he writes, a “Reanimation...hoax, a mere device for restoring Hermione, devoid of high seriousness.”⁴⁵¹ Pyle is right, I believe, to propose that we are prepared dramatically for the final scene. That said, there is little textual evidence to support his other claim that the statue scene suggests honest theatre magic is separate from common (and comic) hoaxing. On the contrary, moments that foreshadow the statue’s animation, which are often references to resurrection, also allude to cozening practices, including performing or pretending magic.

Consider for instance a moment that has attracted the kind of critical condemnation to which Pyle no doubt reacts in his defence of the play’s honest illusionism. We hear rather than see that Leontes has performed a saint-like sorrow—penitence enough for Cleomenes and Dion, but not for Paulina, who insists he must not marry. Sixteen years unfold in a matter of minutes, an unorthodox manipulation and narrativization of time on Shakespeare’s part.

⁴⁵⁰ Pyle 115.

⁴⁵¹ Pyle 123.

Paulina, though she serves as Leontes's advisor and "conscience," nonetheless continues to evoke both shrew and witch as she exercises powerfully performative speech (the auditory equivalent of the basilisk's gaze); her accusation that Leontes has killed Hermione, we hear from Leontes himself, "strikest" him sorely (5.1.17). After inciting his guilt, she appeals to prophecy and to the compelling image of Antigonus's resurrection:

There is none worthy,
 Respecting her that's gone. Besides, the gods
 Will have fulfill'd their secret purposes;
 For has not the divine Apollo said,
 Is't not the tenor of his oracle,
 That King Leontes shall not have an heir
 Till his lost child be found? Which that it shall,
 Is all as monstrous to our human reason
 As my Antigonus to break his grave,
 And come again to me; who, on my life,
 Did perish with the infant. (5.1.34-44)

Paulina's words achieve their fullest force in yet another image of resurrection:

LEONTES. Thou speak'st truth:
 No more such wives, therefore no wife. One worse,
 And better us'd, would make her sainted spirit
 Again possess her corpse, and on this stage
 (Where we offenders now) appear soul-vex'd,

And begin, “Why to me—?”

PAULINA. Had she such power,

She had just cause.

LEONTES. She had, and would incense me

To murder her I married.

PAULINA. I should so:

Were I the ghost that walk'd, I'd bid you mark

Her eye, and tell me for what dull part in't

You chose her; then I'd shriek, that even you ears

Should rift to hear me, and the words that follow'd

Should be, “Remember mine.” (5.1.55-67)

Some critics have interpreted Paulina's devotion to the oracle (observable in the first passage) as evidence of her otherworldly nature as well as her truth-telling function. In fact, this passage highlights a more dubious human character. Paulina is here reminiscent of Protestant depictions of the juggling priest, a deceptive and flawed intermediary obscuring truth—here the fact of Hermione's survival—and too confident in the authority of his, or in this case her, scriptural interpretation.

While in the first passage she denies the reasonableness of resurrection (the breaking of Antigonus's grave), in the second one she powerfully enacts Hermione's return from death with a rhetorical force as powerful as if Hermione herself had been speaking. In some ways undercutting the scene's supernatural suggestions is the moment's highly theatrical language. Leontes sets the tone, envisioning less an actual revival than a theatre of resurrection and possession; Paulina, then, shortly after

throwing Apollo's voice at Leontes, seems to ventriloquize Hermione in a call to remembrance. In this way, Paulina recalls other jugglers that Scot describes: the "Ventriloqua" who answered Saul "in Samuel's name, in her counterfeit hollow voice," and the priests at Delphos, cozeners who were "called Pythonists of Pytho, as Papists of Papa" (Scot's way of comparing them to contemporary papists, of course).⁴⁵²

The resurrection motif, or what we might more accurately call the resurrection hoax motif, continues to develop in the next scene. The King, we learn from two gentlemen, has been reunited with his lost daughter, Polixenes and Leontes have been reconciled, the Shepherd is redeemed as an instrument of recovery, and Paulina has received, with divided response, news of her husband's death and the fulfilment of the oracle's prophecy. Here the gentlemen introduce themes widely acknowledged as central to the scene to come, including the relationship between words and images and the importance of faith in the absence of things seen. What I want to emphasize here, however, are the scene's gestures toward illusionism and other forms of deception, from criminal legerdemain to magical theatre—especially in its rendering of a few figurative resurrections. Consider the Gentlemen's exchange here:

1. GENTLEMAN. The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes, for by such it was acted.

⁴⁵² Scot 150; 155.

3. GENTLEMAN. One of the prettiest touches of all, and that which angled for mine eyes (caught the water, though not the fish) was when, at the relation of the Queen's death...she [Perdita] did, (with an "Alas!"), I would fain say, bleed tears; for I am sure my heart wept blood. Who was most marble there chang'd color.... (5.2.79-90)

In the history of this episode's critical reception, the trickery that has attracted probably the most attention is the playwright's. It is with this moment that Quiller-Couch suggests Shakespeare cheats us, substituting a dramatically crucial scene, what even the Third Gentleman admits "cannot be spoken of" (5.2.43), with an eye-witness account relayed by minor characters heretofore never introduced.⁴⁵³

Meek has discussed the gentlemen's vibrant narrative as an example of "ekphrasis," a dramatic depiction of a work of art, or more generally, the use of vivid description to paint a picture with words.⁴⁵⁴ He has also pointed to this account as an example of "hypotiposis" as it was defined in the period. In *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589) George Puttenham describes "hypotiposis," or "counterfeit representation," as when "The matter and occasion leadeth vs many times to describe and set forth many things, in such sort as it should appeare they were truly before our eyes though they were not present."⁴⁵⁵ Meek emphasizes that according to Puttenham the use of

⁴⁵³ Quiller-Couch, *Notes on Shakespeare's Workmanship* (1917) 266.

⁴⁵⁴ Meek 395, 406.

⁴⁵⁵ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* 199.

hypotiposis requires the execution of deceit and greater cunning on the part of the author than if the subject matter were true.⁴⁵⁶

The details of the gentlemen's language cast an even greater air of suspicion upon the scene, as they summon up Reformation fears of papistry, illusionism and con-artistry on and off the English stage. The men represent Perdita's discovery in terms recalling animation hoaxes in the period. We will recall that the Third Gentleman "would fain say" that she, (like Jetzler's mechanically tricked up virgin, we will recall) "bleed[s] tears" (5.2.88-89). "Fain" here functions adverbially to mean, as it is defined in the *OED*, "Gladly, willingly, with pleasure"—but, considering the word's semantic context here, it also suggests its homonym, "feign," "To fashion fictitiously or deceptively."⁴⁵⁷ By using this word, the Third Gentleman calls attention to the dubiety of his own narrative and of miraculous accounts which more generally, we have seen, shaped popular opinion in the period. When those described as having witnessed the earlier relation of events observe Perdita's miraculous-seeming response, they soften; their hearts bleed in reflection of, and in sympathetic response to, Perdita's weeping.

Though the image is a figurative one, it clearly invokes persistent beliefs in real transitive magic whereby one affects another at a distance. This is the kind of magic that I have suggested is invoked in *Othello* as Iago's mental juggling; it is also the kind of force that in *Richard III* would have made King Henry's wounds "Open

⁴⁵⁶ Meek 396.

⁴⁵⁷ See *OED* "fain, *a.* and *adv.*" Def. 4.B.*adv.* and also "feign, *v.*" Def. II.

their congeal'd mouths and bleed afresh" (1.2.56) in the presence of his murderer. The particular phenomenon of sympathetic bleeding Scot sees as a real, natural occurrence: "I have heard by credible report, and I have read many grave authors constantlie affirme, that the wound of a man murdered reneweth bleeding, at the presence of a deer friend, or of a mortall enemye."⁴⁵⁸

In describing the theatrical magnetism of the event witnessed, Shakespeare chooses a metaphor which, by the fifth act he had already given much line. The dramatic tug on audience emotions is rendered as angling—fishing here, but also, as I have shown, a thieving practice described in the period's cony-catching pamphlets as nimble conveyance and juggling. Its usage couched within the passage's numerous references to theatre invokes the kind of cozening practices that antitheatricalists decried as permeating London's theatrical arena, from the criminal and licentious activity practiced by playgoers, to acts of cozenage instructed on stage and imitated by audience members, to acting itself, generally described as a poisonous practice, ensnaring the minds of playgoers and transmogrifying them into criminals and beasts. In *Playes Confuted* (1582) Stephen Gosson warns that when Londoners are "sufficiently beaten with the hurte of such lessons as are learned at Plaies, if not for conscience sake, yet, for shunning the mischief that may priuately breake into euery mans house, this methode of teaching will bée com so hatefull that even worldly policy without any gramercy shalbe driuen to banish it."⁴⁵⁹ Gosson delivers a similar

⁴⁵⁸ Scot 303.

⁴⁵⁹ Gosson, *Playes* sig. C6v- C7r.

message in his *Schoole of Abuse* (1579). As well as attacking what he sees as theatre's pagan and papist lineage, he suggests that, currently, the playhouse is a "Market of Bawdrie" and a school teaching lessons in criminality.⁴⁶⁰ Associating theatre with what he suggests are other deceptive arts, he argues that poetry, piping, and playing are "chayned in linkes of abuse."⁴⁶¹ Meanwhile, by comparing the poet to a "juggler [who] casteth a myst," Gosson implies that juggling is a part of that chain, linked to commercial theatre.⁴⁶² Gosson continues to evoke the juggler in his descriptions of playing when he writes that Poets in theatres "tickle the eare" and "flatter the sight."⁴⁶³ Players are monsters as well as jugglers; they are the "Basiliskes of the world, that poyson, as well with the beame of their sighte, as with the breath of their mouth."⁴⁶⁴

In similar terms, William Rankins (1587) suggests that the theatre is a "mirroure of monsters," "for men doo then transforme that glorious image of Christ, into the brutish shape of a rude beast, when the temple of our bodies which should be consecrate vnto him, is made a stage of stinking stuffe, a den for théeues, and an habitation for insatiate monsters."⁴⁶⁵ Describing players, he says, "First they are sent from their great captaine Sathan (vnder whose banner they beare armes) to deceiue the world, to lead the people with intising shewes to the diuell, to seduce them to

⁴⁶⁰ Gosson, *Schoole* sig.18r.

⁴⁶¹ Gosson, *Schoole* sig.11r.

⁴⁶² Gosson, *Schoole* sig. 2r.

⁴⁶³ Gosson, *Schoole* sig.12v.

⁴⁶⁴ Gosson, *Schoole* sig.16r.

⁴⁶⁵ William Rankins, *A Mirroure of Monsters* sig. B2v.

sinne....”⁴⁶⁶ Players, he continues, are Satan’s “armes that stretch out ot [sic] catch the poeple [sic] within the compasse of his chaine.”⁴⁶⁷

Rankins’s description of a deluding devil who nimbly steals souls recalls a few commonplaces in the period: that the devil, the greatest of illusionists, was the ultimate juggler, and also that theatre, which we will remember Gosson said “tickle[s] the eare” and “flatter[s] the sight,” could be the “iuglinge of the deuill.”⁴⁶⁸ We should observe that the language used by antitheatricalists, even when describing theatre’s auditory and visual effects, is largely tactile; in this sense it recalls literary and pictorial illustrations of performing jugglers and their confederates, where the sleights of nimble hands figured prominently.

Turning back to *The Winter’s Tale*, we will notice that the episode under consideration is rendered both theatrically and tactilely. Perdita’s weeping is one of the “prettiest touches” (5.2.82) in a moving “act” (5.2.79) that reaches out and transforms its audience into likenesses of the spectacle beheld. The substance of this transformation, or more accurately the substance of the spectators transformed, is dramatically open-ended. Either their marbleness, presumably an effect of the earlier dramatic narrative, is reversed—they have become more human (we will entertain this interpretation shortly); or, in a reading more in keeping with antitheatricalist sentiment, the witnesses become merely sentient statues in the face of this latest

⁴⁶⁶ Rankins sig. B2v.

⁴⁶⁷ Rankins sig. B2v.

⁴⁶⁸ On the devil’s juggling see, for instance, Thomas Adams, *The Deuills Banket Described in Foure Sermons* 29 and also John Cotta, *The Infallible True and Assured Witch* ¶3v; Quotations from Gosson, *Schoole* sig. 12v. and Gosson, *Playes* sig. C5v.

spectacle. In any case, their first metamorphosis into stone certainly recalls another description by Gosson, of idolatrous playgoers:

Shall Tullie, Herodian, Cato condemne this glittering, this pompe, this diligence in setting foorth of plaies, for vanity, for wantonnes, for negligence of honesty: and shall wee that [?] of the law, of the Prophets, of ye gospel, of God himselfe, so looke, so gaze, so gape vpon plaies, that as men yt stare on the head of Maedusa & are turned to stones, wee freeze vnto yse in our owne follies?⁴⁶⁹

Theatre's Medusan gaze (similar to its Basilisk gaze in *Playes Confuted*) appears here as a mythological rendering of the prescription for idolaters in Deuteronomy 17, in which the community is instructed in no uncertain terms to stone such individuals to death.⁴⁷⁰

If we take into account only this episode's imagery—rather than either the imagery's ambiguous deployment or the scene's less ambiguous dramatic function—we see simply a confirmation of Reformation anxieties, a counterintuitive undercutting of the play's redemptive scheme and of Shakespeare's own theatrical practice. Rather than merely echo antitheatricalists, however, the scene answers back with a difference. If, in order to heighten its air of wonder, this moment conjures a sense of the miraculous, it also dispels it, drawing attention to the theatrical machinery behind the magic. The events we behold in this episode are just a few in a

⁴⁶⁹ Gosson, *Playes Confuted* sig. E7v.

⁴⁷⁰ See Geneva *Bible*.

series of the play's almost-miracles, figured here as dramatic, not divine. The theatricality of this scene probably did little to allay the fears of antitheatricalists who attributed to the theatre a nearly supernatural malignance, and who believed that theatre itself, not simply the morally damaging content of plays, was a danger to the country's spiritual health. Instead, it speaks to common playgoers, including some moderate reformers, concerned that theatre of all kinds maintain no supernatural pretence.

Angling as represented in Act 5 may evoke criminal and conning practices, but it functions dramatically here as a positively-charged metaphor for the emotional hook of theatre. The rod's re-rigging for productive effect reflects another stage in the resuscitation of the play's earlier angling metaphor. The practice of angling is employed insidiously by Leontes, entertained comically by Autolycus, and invoked creatively here to suggest the life-renewing impact of performance. If the theatre leaves audiences petrified with wonder, it also quickens them. The play is amenable to reading the transformed audience not as mechanical instruments (automated statues) but as social beings, the warming of their empathy legible their newly-sanguine hue: "Who was most marble there chang'd color" (5.2.89-90).

In the ways the scene optimistically invokes theatre, it functions as the dramatic counterpart to non-dramatic defences of playing, where actors respond to charges that theatre stupefies, degenerates, petrifies, and turns theatre goers into criminals and con artists. Both Lodge (1579) and Heywood suggest that

antitheatricalists are the ones who are less than healthy, less than human.⁴⁷¹ Gosson is compared to a venomous spider (Heywood sig. A3r), a “crocodel” (Lodge 33), and the witless father of a horribly ignorant text, “a monstrous chickin both wythoute hedde, and also tayle, lyke the Father, full of imperfection and lesse zeale” (Lodge 27). Described as envious, full of spleen, suspicious (Heywood), having head heavy with “gross follis,” and a body in need of purging (Lodge), Heywood and Lodge’s antitheatricalists appear not only as monsters, but as melancholics.⁴⁷² Every one of the qualities they ascribe to Gosson is for Burton either a symptom or a source of melancholy, a condition that, we will recall, Burton says clouds the mind and thickens the blood.⁴⁷³

In contrast to stolid detractors of the theatre, John Webster, quoted in *An Apology for Actors*, likens Heywood’s defence of theatre (and implicitly its subject, theatre) to the Spring season, which is “merry and renewes our bloud.”⁴⁷⁴ John Taylor suggests that theatre is (rather than a mirror of monsters) a transparent Christall mirror, “To shew good minds their mirth, the bad their terror.”⁴⁷⁵ By example it compels one to “braue acts,”⁴⁷⁶ and also causes brave actors and brave civilizations to live on:

Romulus...not knowing how to people...[Rome], his traine wholly
consisting of Souldiers, who without the company of women (they not

⁴⁷¹ Thomas Lodge, *Protogenes Can Know Apelles By His Line*.

⁴⁷² See Heywood sig A2v; Lodge 11.

⁴⁷³ Burton sig. F3v.

⁴⁷⁴ Heywood, *Apology* 1612 sig. A2v.

⁴⁷⁵ In Heywood, *Apology* sig. A3v.

⁴⁷⁶ Hopton in Heywood, *Apology* sig A2r.

hauling any in their Army) could not multiply; but so were likely that their
 immortall fames should dye issuesse with their mortall bodies. Thus
 therefore Romulus...built a Theatre....⁴⁷⁷

Thomas Lodge describes playing and its kindred arts in terms similarly emphasizing
 its renewing and re-animating potential. Poets do not distract, but like “good
 preachers” deliver the word with a force capable of moving men and stones alike.
 Quoting Horace’s *Ars Poetica* he describes Amphion, founder of Thebes, as a
 mythological counterpart to today’s poets and players. For Amphion,

by his force of lute did cause,
 The stones to part a sonder.
 And by his speach them did direct,
 Where he would have them staye.
 This wisdom this was it of olde
 All strife for to allay. To giue euery man his owne;
 To make the Gods be knowne....⁴⁷⁸

Lodge’s comparison of poets to preachers, as well as his allegorical handling of
 theatre’s poetic vs. spectacular powers, seems part of a self-conscious rhetorical
 strategy.

If this dramatization of figurative statue animation recalls both sides of the
 argument regarding theatre’s value and vices while also anticipating the resurrection

⁴⁷⁷ Heywood, *Apology* sig. C1r.

⁴⁷⁸ Lodge 8.

theatre to come, so especially does the Third Gentleman's evocation of Julio Romano and Paulina:

3. GENTLEMAN. The princess hearing of her mother's statue, which is in the keeping of Paulina—a piece many years in doing and now newly perform'd by the 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...”

2. GENTLEMAN. I thought she had some great matter there in hand, for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that remov'd house....

1. GENTLEMAN. ...Every wink of an eye, some new grace will be born—our absence makes us unthrifty to our knowledge. Let's along. (5.2.94-111)

This is the second time in the play that the wink functions on more than one level. As we will recall, Leontes earlier would have Camillo poison Polixenes, delivering him a lasting wink. I have proposed that Shakespeare's use of “wink” in that instance is a deliberately multivalent choice, suggesting not only the lasting sleep of death (as it is commonly glossed) but also the visual flexing and reflexing associated with jugglers, accomplices, and audiences. Jugglers were said to take advantage of blinking, winking, and blaring, to convey objects and command attention within a brief span of time, and without others observing their methods.

Here the wink, couched in an idiom of temporality, calls attention to Shakespeare's own artistic contrivances previously manipulated within the play. It looks back to his casting of Time in Act 4 scene 1 to serve as Chorus, condensing the years in a compact narration of unseen events, and to his use of the gentlemen's recollections to convey crucial offstage events never seen. It also looks forward to the birth of grace—a spiritual and social aspect associated throughout the play with Hermione. The wink here is figured as a visual veil under which grace will be delivered; it is granted here the power to give life, rather than to kill, as is Leontes's intent. I am suggesting here, first, that as in the case with angling, we see a pattern emerge where an act associated with jugglers rises above suspicions earlier attributed to it and over the course of the play is by its semantic context or dramatic function exonerated, even sanctified. Second, that the gentlemen's speech provides a clue that Hermione will be reborn as the result of some act of visual manipulation or nictitation amounting to holy conniving.

Looking at the passage above, we also notice the Third Gentleman's vivifying speech. Its almost pictorial representations of Romano's life-giving powers are akin to those inherently-deceptive narrative practices of ekphrasis and hypotiposis. Barkan has suggested also that the scene's evocation of the debate over one art's relationship to another art, but especially art's relationship to nature, is an instance of *paragone*.⁴⁷⁹ It is important, though, to first notice the way the artistic practices suggested by this

⁴⁷⁹ Barkan defines *paragone* when he says, "the ultimate destination of the *paragone*, the rivalry among the arts, is the rivalry of art and life" 663.

passage combine fruitfully rather than compete, and second, how any suggestion of competition between art and nature is allayed (at least in part) through both the comparison's hypothetical character and its multivalent language. The gentleman suggests that *if* Romano was immortal like the gods, his creative abilities would give nature a run for her money. As it stands, Romano is simply nature's ape. To ape, or, more precisely, to "play the ape," according to the *OED*, "refer[s] to the way in which these animals mimic human form and gestures...; to imitate, esp. in an inferior or spurious manner, to counterfeit, mimic the reality."⁴⁸⁰ The word's use in the play both evokes and disarms suspicions. It incites doubts as it smacks of juggling practices; we recall that Autolycus, like many jugglers, was an ape bearer. At the same time, it allays suspicions as it reconfigures Romano's (and ultimately Paulina's and even Shakespeare's) artistic illusionism as the play does Autolycus's juggling practices: as in service to, rather than in competition with, divinely ordained nature.

As well as recalling Autolycus's con-artistry, Romano's art calls to mind the kind of creative gardening that Polixenes prizes but Perdita distrusts. Romano's artistic fruit is presented as a pied combination of sculptural and theatrical practice—it is not merely sculpted, but "newly performed" in a way that appears to animate stone; later in Act 5 the statue's paintedness is also underscored (5.3.81-83). In its variegated nature it is akin to Polixenes's "streak'd gillyvors" or hybrid flowers, which Perdita compares to unnaturally painted (or made-up) faces (4.4.101-103), but which Polixenes sees as natural works of art. For Polixenes, art does not compete

⁴⁸⁰ See *OED* "ape, *n.*" Def. 2.b. "to play the ape."

with or try to change nature, but as nature's own creation art serves nature and is part of it (4.4.89-97).

In *The Vanity of Arts and Sciences* Agrippa relies heavily on the language of and examples from gardening when he defines natural magic: "Arte [of Natural Magic] dothe proffer her selfe a seruante [to Nature]." The "common sorte" believe things to be miracles which are only natural works "as if a man in the moneth of Marche woulde cause Roses to Spring..."⁴⁸¹ In his *Naturall and Artificiall Conclusions* Thomas Hill discusses how some of the tricks Agrippa mentions were achieved; he also details other tricks, such as how to change the colour of flowers or streak them with more than one colour.⁴⁸² I am suggesting, then, that in their treatment of both art's relationship to nature and the production of hybrid painted works, Polixenes's discussion of gillyvors and his descriptions of Romano's art recall practices of natural magic as they were described by Agrippa, Hill, Scot and other writers on magic in the period.

Of course, Romano's art, we will learn, is in fact Paulina's. Romano, as Gurr points out, will prove a "brilliant red herring," a way for Paulina to misdirect attention while she performs her ruse.⁴⁸³ In a sense, Romano is Paulina's ape, a figure whose image Paulina (like Shakespeare) creatively shapes to work as an alibi and one

⁴⁸¹ Agrippa, *Vanity* sig. 55r-v. Roger Bacon was not merely as modest as Agrippa. He says in his *Discovery of the Miracles of Art, Nature, and Magic*, "Nature is potent and admirable in her her working, yet Art using the advantage of nature as an instrument (experience tels us) is of greater efficacy than any natural activity" (1-2).

⁴⁸² Hill sig. C1r.

⁴⁸³ Gurr 420.

who fulfils a substitutive function whereby one character mimics and stands in for another.

Let us consider for a moment substitution as a practice ascribed to and performed by jugglers. As well as being attributed the power to shape other persons and things, jugglers were commonly suspected of shifting their own shape, either by mundane practices of disguise or by supernatural means. In her discussion of cony-catchers Van Elk suggests that for tricksters generally the question “‘Who am I?’ is a crucial one.”⁴⁸⁴ Woodbridge, looking at the class of imposters to which jugglers commonly belonged highlights their “shift[ing] roles and identities in an age officially committed to rigid occupational categories and starting to be concerned about stability of identity.”⁴⁸⁵ In an examination of primary resources principally devoted to illusionism and popular magic we see similar concerns expressed. Samuel Rid warns of jugglers transforming or of disguising themselves through their “apparrell, speach, or other behauiours.”⁴⁸⁶ Throughout his *Discovery*, Scot discounts the popular opinion that devils can assume man’s shape or that witches “can transubstantiate themselves and others, and take the forms and shapes of asses, woolves, ferrets, calves, apes, horsse, dogs....”⁴⁸⁷ Transformations of this kind are merely the product of illusion perpetrated by performing jugglers (and perpetuated by “Witchmongers, Papists, and Poets.”⁴⁸⁸ Another notion Scot debunks (one I have

⁴⁸⁴ Van Elk 332.

⁴⁸⁵ Woodbridge, “Imposters” par. 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Rid sig B2r.

⁴⁸⁷ Scot 10.

⁴⁸⁸ Scot 9.

addressed earlier) is the idea that bodies can be cut up or killed and then reconstituted or revived. Such illusions, he suggests, are conducted by means of substitution. In his explanation of the beheading trick, known in the period as the “Decollation of John the Baptist,” he discloses,

This is commonlie practised with a boie instructed for that purpose, who being familiar and conuersant with the companie, may be knowne as well by his face, as by his Apparell. In the other end of the table, where the like hole is made, an other boie of the bignesse of the knowne boie must be placed, having upon him his usuall apparel: he must leane or lie upon the boord, and must put his head under the boord through the said hole, so as his bodie shall seeme to lie on the one end of the boord, and his head shall lie in a platter on the other end.⁴⁸⁹

Professional actors performing stage tricks also relied heavily upon substitution. The magic behind illusions of mutilation and death or their inverses—healing and resurrection—likely came straight from the juggler’s budget of tricks. Butterworth provides a number of examples, including various stage plays with explicit stage directions calling for dummies or dummy parts, and also plays where the need for bodily substitution is implicit in the narrative. Many of his examples are, not surprisingly, taken from plays which staged religious miracles, or which have considerable religious content, such as the English mystery plays, and later, Dekker’s post-Reformation saint play *The Virgin Martyr* (1620). Butterworth neglects to

⁴⁸⁹ Scot 349.

mention Shakespeare's works among his examples of plays reliant on the substitution of artificial limbs, though several of Shakespeare's plays (especially *Titus Andronicus*) might readily have made his list.

Of course substitution was a common staging practice as well (the practice of doubling characters, or having one actor in a company play two roles). It was furthermore an important plot device in many plays from the period and especially in Shakespeare's plays where bed tricks, mistaken twins, and disguises feature prominently. The plot of *The Winter's Tale*, for instance, hinges on substitutions and misidentifications. Autolycus, of course, embodies such tricks to an extreme. But we see them practiced throughout the play by Perdita, Florizel, Camillo, Polixenes, Hermione, Paulina—practically all of the play's major characters. As for the statue scene, Shakespeare inverts mutilation and death tricks and presents a variation on the resurrection show: rather than put an effigy into play and ask the audience to believe it is part or all of a real person, Shakespeare, through the character of Paulina, uses real people (Hermione and the boy actor playing her) under the pretence of showing an effigy.

Substitution also functions subtly and symbolically in *The Winter's Tale*, and this more theoretical level of operation is what I wish to emphasize. In a play which places tremendous emphasis on disguises, misidentification, transformation and most importantly juggling, the way Paulina and the play's three other artists (Romano, Autolycus, Shakespeare) come conceptually to stand in for one another deserves special consideration. Let us first begin to look at the way Paulina and Romano double for or reflect one another. I have mentioned already that the magic Paulina

attributes to Romano will prove her own magic. We see hints that Romano is actually a disguise for Paulina even before the statue scene. The text suggests, for instance, a certain intimacy between Romano and Hermione that we have never actually witnessed. Before this we have seen no indication that this artist was “so near to Hermione” that he was capable of making her likeness speak. Such an intimacy has rather been played out between Hermione and Paulina, who, we will recall, ventriloquizes Hermione’s apparition before Leontes in a theatre of resurrection she herself directs (5.1.63-67).

After Romano’s brief and isolated mention in this scene, he disappears as quickly as he had appeared. His sudden absence is filled by reports of Paulina’s interventions. As I’ve already mentioned, The Second Gentleman reports, “I thought she [Paulina] had some great matter there in hand, for she hath privately twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione, visited that removed house” (5.2.104-107). The clandestine nature of Paulina’s visitations are suggested through the words “privately” and “removed,” while the gentleman’s suggestion that some “great matter” is “there at hand” (the tactility motif reiterated) surely suggests some legerdemain in the works. That Romano is perhaps somehow a part of the sleight we may glean by his interchange ability with Paulina, his quick dissolution and reconstitution in her image.

In effect, the “sculptor” Romano, an illusory rather than a real presence in the play, turns into Paulina, whose shaping powers we will treat in the next section. There is another character whose absence Paulina fills, however, and this is the figure of Autolycus. As this chapter has thus far illustrated, Paulina and Autolycus bear

significant resemblances to one another. When we enter into the final scene resemblance gives way to becoming as Autolycus disappears and Paulina settles firmly into his previously predominant role as juggling con artist.

When the gentlemen report the offstage events, describing the work of Romano and preparing us for the revelations to come, Autolycus is their interlocutor. After learning from them of his unwitting role in the rustics' good fortune, Autolycus meets the Clown and the Shepherd upon the road:

CLOWN. ... I'll swear to the Prince thou art a tall fellow of thy hands

.....

AUTOLYCUS. I will prove so, sir, to my power. (5.2.163-169)

These words register hedgingly and ironically. Here, Autolycus gives the Shepherd and Clown no more here than a provisional promise that he will act within the range of his abilities; up until now his powers show few signs of extending beyond the sleights of jugglers.

Rather than express any real faith in Autolycus's reform, the Clown ridiculously attempts to exercise what he sees as a gentleman's power of performative speech. He will say Autolycus is a man of his hands (we will remember from the Introduction to this dissertation that Agrippa calls jugglers "handwise"), and so it will be by virtue of his words. Autolycus in his promise to be, within his power, a man of hands, lays bare the Clown's naiveté, and hints that he will not leave behind his life of legerdemain—for we have seen what it means for Autolycus's hands to be at work. This exchange marks the last time we hear Autolycus speak, perhaps the last time we see him appear. After all, while the Clown invites Autolycus to follow him and his

father to the statue's unveiling, what comes next is left to the director's discretion or the audience's imagination.

I want to draw attention here to a sequence of events that might signal more than coincidence. Autolycus and Romano, both men of hands, disappear. Paulina, attending behind the scenes to some matter "there in hand" (5.2.94-111), sculpting Leontes's emotions (5.3.57-58), misleading through pointing, pulling curtains and other digital gestures, appears. Autolycus, the most consistently theatrical and deceptive character, exits, while the play provides elusive suggestions of his return. Paulina, having already activated suspicions of magic and con-artistry takes the stage, putting into play the most extraordinary of deceptions. I am not suggesting that in the story Paulina and Autolycus are the same person—though certainly the way they operate similarly within disparate spheres allows for interesting and largely untapped doubling possibilities at the level of staging. While it is fun to entertain the idea that the Paulina of the statue scene may be Autolycus in his final disguise, such an improbable scenario, at least on the level of plot, seems too fantastic even for *The Winter's Tale*. I am suggesting, however, that a spirit of illusionism enlivens both the play and statue, which is the play's centrepiece. Shakespeare, like Melville in *The Confidence Man* (1857) centuries later, shows us many guises of the confidence trickster, not an archetypal spectre, but a historical character wandering through Shakespeare's England, and through *The Winter's Tale* as well.

The Statue Scene

Steven Orgel has observed the ways in which the statue scene employs common topoi in the period: “the interrelationships of art, magic religion, theatre,” whereby theatre (like magic and religion) possessed the power to inspire wonder.⁴⁹⁰ Looking closely at the statue scene, I want to explore these interrelations and their effects, while suggesting how juggling and related forms of deception also figure prominently in this mix. In the statue scene, juggling is not simply a point of contemporary interest but a poetic nexus where issues of religion, theatre and high and low magic converge and drive the play’s dramatic development.

Embodying these interrelations is the setting itself. The setting of the statue’s unveiling is referred to, among other things, as a “gallery” and a “chapel,” and is described in terms appropriate to a theatre space (I will elaborate on the scene’s theatrical elements in my discussion of Paulina’s operations). Critics of the play continue to speculate as to what Paulina’s gallery really is and what it would have signified for Shakespeare and his audience. Orgel, for instance, describes royal collections as possible inspirations for the gallery setting. As Richard Haycock explains in 1598, many aristocrats had private galleries and/or magnificent art collections consisting of “excellent monuments of sundry famous and ancient masters, both Italian and German”.⁴⁹¹ In particular, King James and his son Henry were avid collectors of artworks, including (as previously mentioned) animated images and moving statuary.

⁴⁹⁰ Orgel 61.

⁴⁹¹ Haycock qtd. in Orgel 55.

Paulina's space is in certain ways reminiscent of the private galleries aristocrats enjoyed. But what are we to make of the fact that the gallery is also called a "chapel?" At the time the play was penned, "chapel" was not yet shorthand for the meeting houses of Protestant dissenters; this would happen after the 1660s.⁴⁹² Rather, it was applied more broadly to describe any house of worship, or more narrowly, to suggest a private place of worship somewhere on a noble's grounds.⁴⁹³ If we consider both the location of the statue's setting (some "removed" location on Leontes's estate) and the play's theological emphasis and redemptive structure, the choice of a chapel seems apt for the play's culminating resurrection. But this does not explain why the "chapel" doubles as a gallery and later becomes a performance space.

Notwithstanding iconoclastic sentiments in the period, Protestant churches did not abandon all religious iconography. Self-negating art that promoted inward self-reflection (rather than idolatrous adoration) continued to line the walls of churches throughout the Reformation. It is not then the presence of chapel art that appears incongruous with Protestant devotion, but its function. Until the statue comes to life, the chapel's rarities are portrayed as objects of curiosity, sources of "content" (5.3.11), and at least as far as the statue is concerned, items of exchange: Leontes has "paid home" (5.3.4) Paulina's services along with his guilt; his curiosity is whetted by the gallery's other exhibitions, and rewarded, finally, with the unveiling of Hermione's statue.

⁴⁹² *OED* "chapel *n.*" Def. 4.

⁴⁹³ *OED* "chapel *n.*" Def. 4, 6, 2.a.

Certainly this set-up evokes Protestant critiques of idol-filled Catholic churches and “juggling” priests practicing theatrical rituals—including the granting of sacramental penance (confession) and the sale of indulgences. The setting also may well have called to mind Protestant churches in England or, more importantly, the markets of which they were a part of during Bartholomew Faire days. A rare 1641 quarto describes churches turned into places of commerce. According to its unnamed author,

Christ Church Cloysters...are now hung so full of pictures, that you would take that place or rather mistake it for Saint Peters in Rome; onely this is the difference, those here are set up for wor-ship, these here for sale.⁴⁹⁴

Next to the church market the author describes aisles of pickpockets and performance spaces: “Here a Knave in a fooles cote, with a trumpet sounding, or on a drumme beating invites you and would faine perswade you to see his puppets”;⁴⁹⁵ and “[here you will see a] Hocus Pocus with three yards of tape or ribbin in’s hand shewing his art of Legerdemaine.”⁴⁹⁶

The fair, we will notice, is described as a place where religion, art, theatre and the exchanges associated with them existed contiguously. Shakespeare’s depiction of Paulina’s gallery similarly syncretises these spiritual and artistic (as well as eventually con-artistic) domains, giving the setting a certain carnivalesque quality. We may also observe that the anonymous author illustrates an atmosphere of enticement,

⁴⁹⁴ *Bartholomew Faire, or, Variety of Fancies* 2.

⁴⁹⁵ *Bartholomew Faire* 4.

⁴⁹⁶ *Bartholomew Faire* 4.

anticipation and persuasion which we now would call “hype”; “hype” is perhaps a back-formation of “hyperbole”—exaggeration of course being another central feature of carnival salesmanship. The anonymous author’s description gives us a general impression of the hype peripheral to juggling shows. Scot, and later the author of *Hocus Pocus Junior*, take us into the juggling show itself, demonstrating the hype surrounding jugglers and the atmosphere of wonder they create on stage.

It will be helpful to summarize a few of the main qualities these authors ascribe to the operators of juggling shows. According to the author of *Hocus Pocus Junior*, the juggler “must be one of an impudent and audacious spirit, so that hee may set a good face upon the matter...he must have a nimble and cleanly conveyance.”⁴⁹⁷ In other words, he or she must move objects quickly and undetectably from one location to the other, occasionally substituting one object—or body—for another. Often a juggler employs mechanical devices or prosthetics to help execute a trick (the use of dummies, and/or puppets is common). A juggler boasts his or her talents to the crowd using powers of persuasion. He “persuadeth the beholders, that he will suddenlie and in their presence doo some miraculous feat, which he hath alreadie accomplished priuilie.”⁴⁹⁸ In one of his few detailed accounts of a named, historical juggler’s performance, Scot shows us how Brandon the King’s

⁴⁹⁷ *Hocus Pocus* sig. A4v.

⁴⁹⁸ Scot 308.

juggler prepared his royal audience, promising extraordinary sights to come: Brandon “said to the King: Lo now your Grace shall see what, a iuggler can do...”⁴⁹⁹

During juggling shows the command of vision is crucial. This is accomplished by distraction or concealment, through gazing, gesture, and the use of props. Examples include looking someone in the eye so that he or she doesn’t observe the sleight-of-hand; pointing away from the trick; and using some screen to cover up the mechanisms of the juggler’s art. Often jugglers direct audience vision through verbal, biblical-sounding imperatives such as “Behold and see” or “Lo, you see.”⁵⁰⁰ In addition to deceiving sight, jugglers manipulate hearing as well. We learn from Scot how jugglers make use of sound to attract and distract while setting the tone for the show to come. We may surmise from the previous description of the “Knave in a fool’s coat” that music in particular played a part, at the very least, in luring spectators in. It is significant that jugglers (sometimes called “jongleurs”) were first a cast of musicians, before certain ones among them learned, and passed on to others, the “magical” arts. In addition, a juggler “must have strange termes, and emphaticall words, to grace and adorne his actions.”⁵⁰¹ According to Scot such words are used “partlie to protract the time, and partlie to gaine credit and and admiration of the beholders.”⁵⁰² Jugglers used strange words that were often corruptions of Latin, frequently adaptations of terms from the Catholic mass. Sidney Clarke recalls that in

⁴⁹⁹ Scot 308.

⁵⁰⁰ Scot 308; 322.

⁵⁰¹ *Hocus Pocus* sig. B1r.

⁵⁰² Scot 309.

Discourse on Transubstantiation (1694), Archbishop Tillotson traces the phrase “Hocus Pocus” back to the words uttered by the priest during the Sacrament: “Hoc est enim Corpus meum” or “Hoc est Corpus,” he suggests, becomes “Hocus Pocus.”⁵⁰³ These linguistic borrowings, real or imagined; the ritualistic elements of the performance; and the promises of miracles meant that the whole show was perceived to have many elements in common with the Catholic Mass. Such likenesses are emphasized in many verbal descriptions (like Scot’s) and pictorial representations (like Bosch’s) throughout the period, where ceremonious jugglers appear as mirror images of priests and vice versa.

Let us return now to Paulina. Earlier we observed features of her speech that align her with real and fictional confidence tricksters, including Autolycus. Such features include her hyperbolic and repetitive claims to truth, her high-stakes bargains, and her conditional promises. In the final scene Paulina’s verbal and gestural language takes on a distinctly theatrical quality. Observing both her speech and her general modes of direction here, critics have likened her to a “stage manager” (Neely; Orgel), a playwright or director of stage plays (Sokol), or a stage magician (Orgel).⁵⁰⁴ When Paulina’s similarity to the stage magician is noted, and it is noted often, critics seem to have in mind magician characters, usually learned magi, in popular dramas staged at the large commercial playhouses. Both Barbara Traister and

⁵⁰³ Clarke 41. Clarke suggests that this is in fact a false etymology; there is more evidence to suggest that the words were a corruption of “Ochus Bochus,” said to be an ancient magician who was referred to by Italian conjurers (41).

⁵⁰⁴ See Carol Thomas Neely, “*The Winter’s Tale: The Triumph of Speech*” 335; Orgel 67; Sokol 142-165; and Orgel 61.

Orgel, for instance, have supported this notion, along with the idea that increased theatrical representations of magicians coincide with diminishing beliefs in, or at least prosecutions of, spiritual/diabolic magic in England.⁵⁰⁵ Certainly there are elements of this comparison that hold true, and yet Paulina largely, often uniquely, calls to mind street magicians and fairground impresarios. Upon first introducing Hermione's statue, she remarks,

...But here it is; *prepare*

To see the life as lively mock'd as ever

Still sleep mock'd death. *Behold*, and say 'tis well.

[*Paulina draws a curtain, and discovers*] *Hermione* [*standing*] *like a statue.*

I like your silence, it the more shows off

Your wonder; but yet speak. First, you, my liege;

Comes it not something near? (5.3.18-22) [emphasis added]

Paulina begins, as Brandon does, by arousing the king's expectations. She "prepare[s]" (5.3.18) him for a spectacle thus far kept "[Lonely], apart" (5.3.18), hidden from sight and only now to be revealed.⁵⁰⁶ Like the juggler's speech, hers is charged with hyperbole. She promises Hermione's likeness will be unparalleled, and her life "lively mock'd as ever" (5.3.19). Paulina's use of a curtain and a stage-like pedestal (the latter property is essential in staging if Hermione is to step down as

⁵⁰⁵ Orgel 61.

⁵⁰⁶ Brackets here are in the text.

scene and stage direction call for in 5.3.103-104) are of course reminiscent of performance on the playhouse stage;⁵⁰⁷ but functioning within their particular semantic and spatial environment these properties recall the juggler's platform as well. In his *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), Joseph Strutt remarks that jugglers in Renaissance England frequently used stages, from temporary scaffolds to more permanent platforms. He recalls that many writers in the period, including Thomas Igeland in his Elizabethan Interlude "The Disobedient Child," refer to "juggling upon the boards."⁵⁰⁸ Even Chaucer recalls this practice when he suggests, in the *House of Fame*, that "Coll tragetour [performed] Upon a table of Sycamour."⁵⁰⁹

Descriptions of jugglers of the figurative papist variety also suggest the use of raised platforms in their miracle hoaxes. We will recall that Murner's depiction of the Jetzler hoax suggests the altar and curtain were part of papist juggling operations. To what degree such props were actually used is to us less important than the perceptions their illustrations reveal, namely that Catholic animation hoaxes were akin to juggling stage performances.⁵¹⁰

When Paulina retracts the curtain, she suddenly makes public the secret attraction. Once the statue is revealed, Paulina, like the juggler, directs the audience's vision and controls the soundscape. "Behold, and say 'tis well" (5.3.20) is a command quickly contradicted by Paulina's expression of satisfaction with the

⁵⁰⁷ Such stage directions are of course later editorial emendations.

⁵⁰⁸ Strutt 170.

⁵⁰⁹ See Strutt 168 and Chaucer fol. cccxi v.

⁵¹⁰ We should take care, however, to notice the exaggerated or fictitious nature of many accounts of juggling of both the entertaining and the religious variety.

audience's silence; her encouragement of silence is then reversed with a bid for speech: "But yet, speak" (5.3.22). Her direction to "behold" (5.3.20) is one in a line of similar visual imperatives—"prepare / To see" (5.3.18-19), and "Mark a little while" (5.3.18)—which stir anticipation and help to incite a sense of "wonder" (5.3.22). Wonder, of course, is an emotion in no way unique to audiences of juggling shows. Its attachments to all kinds of endeavors (theatrical, colonial, medical to name a few) have proven, especially in recent years, inexhaustible subjects of scholarly attention. In the play, however, wonder is tied to theatrical practices, magical transformations, and acts of Catholic con-artistry, making juggling a likely context for the kinds of amazement and responses we see here.

Like the spectators described in Act 5 scene 2 by the gentlemen, Perdita is so paralyzed by her astonishment that she is described as being turned to stone. As many editorial commentaries of this scene suggest, wonder's petrifying power was proverbial and, as I have observed earlier, self-consciously theatrical scenes like this recall the commonplace that theatre had the power to petrify the living or to animate stone.⁵¹¹ When Leontes recognizes in the statue a reflection of his hard heart, this recognition signals a step toward his softening and toward his increasing capacity for empathy:

does not the stone rebuke me

For being more stone than it? O royal piece,

⁵¹¹ In his note on this passage, Orgel remarks, "The ability of wonder to turn one to stone was proverbial"(226 n 5.3.41-42).

There's magic in thy majesty, which has
 My evils conjur'd to remembrance, and
 From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
 Standing like stone with thee. (5.3.37-42)

He attributes the remembrance of his own hardened actions to the conjuration of a magic statue. Even if he speaks only figuratively, Leontes introduces here a real sense of the miraculous and the spiritually powerful, one that Perdita heightens in her only slightly more orthodox response:

...do not say 'tis superstition, that
 I kneel, and then implore her blessing. Lady,
 Dear queen, that ended when I but began,
 Give me that hand of yours to kiss. (5.3.43-46)

While Leontes's words evoke theurgic, perhaps even necromantic, ritual, Perdita's actions, despite her deflection of charges that she is superstitious, recall "idolatrous" Catholic statue worship (a source of miracles for believers and the product of institutionalized delusion and papist juggling practices for Protestants).

Observing the spectacle's effects on Perdita and especially Leontes, Polixenes protests, begging some relief from "him" who had driven Leontes into the depths of guilt (5.2.53-56). When Polixenes uses the pronoun "him," he presumably refers to Romano. This is the final reference to the absent artist, whose authority until now has provided Paulina with an effective diversion. Now Paulina answers in his stead, fully enacting another of the play's dramatic substitutions. Here in the final scene,

Autolycus's tricksterism is substituted for Paulina's juggling. Romano's art gives way to Paulina's con-artistry:

Indeed, my lord,

If had thought the sight of my poor image

Would thus have wrought you (for the stone is mine),

I'd not have show'd it. (5.3.56-58)

Paulina then moves to draw the curtain (5.3.59). Owning the stone, she makes clear that this is her show. When she takes responsibility for having "wrought" Leontes, she suggests not only an agitation, but a molding of his emotions (here the images of audience petrification are reiterated). Thus, in a co-opting of Romano's function, Paulina plays the sculptor, making Romano's presence less and less necessary as his powers revert to hers. Now having taken full responsibility for the statue, Paulina must fend off those suspicions of witchcraft which are rekindled by Leontes's references to conjuring and are activated further by Polixenes's suggestion that some "power" is wielded over Leontes. These defences we see eventually in her assurances that her spell is "lawful" magic (5.3.105).

When Paulina gestures toward drawing the curtain in (5.3.56-59), this marks the first of many half-cocked verbal and gestural retractions. Throughout this episode she will apologize and move to draw the curtain—"LEONTES. Do not draw the curtain" (5.3.59); "PAULINA. I'll draw the curtain" (5.3.68); PAULINA. Shall I draw the curtain? (5.3.82). These gestures seem as though they are intended not to be sincere showstoppers, but gambits to increase audience excitement and elicit calls

for more. Until the end she remains an audacious showman, moving forward even in the face of skeptical audience members like Polixenes.

Leontes's eager belief in the statue's power deserves some attention, as does Paulina's manipulation of his imagination. We have observed earlier Paulina's verbal assault on what she calls Leontes's "weak-hinged fancy" (2.3.119). I have argued that Leontes exhibits physiological and social symptoms of an overly susceptible imagination. Such imaginations, we will recall, made easy targets for jugglers, who, it was believed, manipulated gullible spectators either through natural transitive operations or by way of clever psychology and practiced confederacy. Leontes's ready belief in the statue is not inconsistent with the younger Leontes earlier in the play, a man eager to imagine wildly in the absence of viable visual evidence. Here too we see a man ready to be led by the nose, this time towards love rather than towards hate, one led now by his servant Paulina and not by his own deceptive internal faculties. Aware of Leontes's weaknesses, Paulina plays upon his fancy and even uses it as an alibi for the natural twitches we would expect from the actor standing motionless for such an extended period: "No longer shall you gaze on't, lest your fancy / May think anon it moves" (5.3.59-60). When Leontes does think Hermione moves, he zeroes in on "the fixure of her eye," which, it appears to him, "has motion in't" (5.3.66).

Shakespeare, it seems, simultaneously incites suspicions among his theatre audiences. Hearing of and perhaps observing Hermione's small, subtle motions, spectators may have questioned whether or not their own imaginations were playing tricks on them. They may also have considered the possibility that Hermione's statue was actually some automaton or puppet, animated for legitimate or less legitimate

purposes. The word “motion” in the period meant, in addition to movement, a puppet show or puppet.⁵¹² We recall that narratives “exposing” papist animation hoaxes focus closely on the puppetry behind the popery. Partridge and Scot highlight in particular the operation, and in Scot’s case, the destruction, of the Rood of Grace’s eyes. We will remember that Scot says, “the wiers that made their eies gogle, the pins that fastened them to the posts to make them seem heavie, were seene and burnt together with the images themselves.”⁵¹³

Returning to the scene, we notice that Paulina continues to titillate Leontes with a juggler’s promises of more amazement to come: “I am sorry, sir, I have thus far stirred you, but I could afflict you farther” (5.3.73-74). Shortly thereafter she says,

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,
(Which I protest against) I am assisted
By wicked powers. (5.3.85-91)

Paulina’s directive seems aimed at Leontes, who, like Perdita, has approached Hermione too closely. As in all juggling acts, a certain proximity is invited, but

⁵¹² *OED* “motion, *n.*” Defs. 8.a and 8.b. See also Butterworth’s discussion of mechanical motions and juggling in his chapter “Mechanical Images, Automata, Puppets and Motions” 113-139.

⁵¹³ Scot 137-138.

contact must be tightly controlled so that spectators will not catch a glimpse of the magician's operational secrets. Paulina also commands the crowd at large, including those doubters (Polixenes) who have insinuated some supernatural power is at work. Despite her continued orchestration, she makes the magic's success conditional upon audience participation and communal vision: "*If you can behold it, / I'll make the statue move*" (5.3.87.88; my emphasis added).

In Paulina's next lines this redistribution of power, from priestly intermediary to faithful community, is even more apparent:

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. (5.3.94-97)

We may observe a shift here. Though images of Catholic ritual magic persist, as we will soon see, they slowly and with more than a little resistance give way to the ideals of Pauline Protestantism. At the same time, Scot's good juggler, an ally to reformist causes, slowly emerges.

Many critics have pointed out how Paulina in her call to faith summons up the Reformation rallying cry, "*sola fide*," or "*by faith alone*."⁵¹⁴ Reformers commonly appealed to scripture and especially to the words of Paul (Paulina's likely namesake) to support their claim that redemption was achieved not through works alone or

⁵¹⁴ For a discussion of the play's Pauline Protestant messages and clichés, see Huston Diehl, Sean Benson, and William Collins Watterson.

forgiving idols, but through a faith that did not demand confirmation through miracles or other visual proofs. Luther, in his introduction to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, describes faith as "confidence," a "bold trust in God's grace" that "would risk death a thousand times trusting it."⁵¹⁵ In I Corinthians 13 of the *King James Bible*, Paul suggests that charity is a kind of earthly faith: charity "believeth all things" and suffers rather than expects gain.⁵¹⁶ It is easy to see how Paul's messages might be attractive to jugglers and to confidence tricksters more generally. In the nineteenth century, Melville's *Confidence Man* would foreground Paul's doctrine as the con artist's creed. With Paulina's call to faith, and Autolycus's earlier suggestion that being pick-pocketed provides "charitable office" (4.3.76), Shakespeare appears to do the same. If it is not yet apparent, I am suggesting that Paulina is named after Paul not simply because he is a hero for Protestants, but because he is a likely candidate for the patron saint of tricksters.

Even while the seeds of a more-sanctioned juggling are planted, Paulina continues to evoke ceremonial religious experiences, many of them foreign to Protestant practice.

PAULINA. Music! awake her! strike! [*Music*]

'Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;

Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come;

I'll fill your grave up. Stir; nay, come away,

⁵¹⁵ Luther in Irmischer 124-125.

⁵¹⁶ I Corinthians 13:7.

Bequeath to death your numbness; for from him

Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs.

[*Hermione comes down.*]

.....

LEONTES. O, she's warm!

If this be magic, let it be an art

Lawful as eating. (5.3.98-103; 109-111)

The high ritual air of this scene, Paulina's promise to raise the dead, and the image of a moving statue combine to evoke several historical and fictional personages. In particular, we see traces of the theatre artist and his proverbial power to move stone, traces of the Christian miracle worker (an anachronism, I have suggested, for Protestants), traces of the spiritual, mechanical and natural magicians who maintained in the face of doubts that their magic was lawful, and especially in retrospect, when we learn that Hermione was alive all the while, traces of the juggling Catholic con artist, represented as performing magicians often were, as operating by some mechanical means.

Certainly this passage employs Neoplatonic and Hermetic imagery well-suited to the episode's Christian schema (as D.P. Walker explains, Ficino and "later syncretists" attempted to fit their magic within a "Christian framework").⁵¹⁷ Gourlay and others have paid special attention to the passage's theurgic implications and the ways in which Paulina here resembles the magus summoning heavenly powers.

⁵¹⁷ Walker 93.

Gourlay notes that, “As Ficino prescribed the playing of Orphic hymns to draw ‘celestial spirits,’ so Paulina calls for music.”⁵¹⁸ While it is true that high magical ceremonies often relied on music, its use was certainly not unique to high magic. Juggling shows too, we remember, took advantage of music and all kinds of sound to attract and distract customers.

Further, there are crucial differences between Paulina and the magus. Even Gourlay, one of the leading proponents of this Neoplatonic reading, admits that Paulina is not a “proper” magus like Prospero.⁵¹⁹ In contemporary representation, Neoplatonic and Hermetic magic is usually depicted as a rather isolated, sometimes hubristic, pursuit of higher truths. Only on occasion, as in Greene’s *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*, do we see the magus share his powers with a community of observers or use them to entertain. Paulina cannot, as far as we can see, communicate with spirits or perform alchemical operations. The success of her performance is dependent upon a community of believers willing to suspend their disbelief. Unlike those of the magus, her powers are largely, perhaps exclusively, theatrical.

Paulina and her confederate Hermione only expose the illusionistic/theatrical nature of Hermione’s animation in the play’s final moments. Slowly, and with a juggler’s knack for timing, both dispel any supernatural pretense previously conjured by their confederate illusion. After Hermione has descended from her platform and

⁵¹⁸ Gourlay 394.

⁵¹⁹ Gourlay 394.

after she has embraced Leontes “about his neck” (5.3.111), Camillo and Polixenes each play a role, as Scot does, in between the heckler and the curious magic enthusiast:

CAMILLO. If she pertains to life, let her speak too!

POLIXENES. Ay and make it manifest where she has lived,

Or how stol'n from the dead. (5.3.112-115)

Like Scot, Polixenes demands that the disposition of the statue's magic be revealed. In response, Paulina redirects attention to the statue and to what she now hints is a theatre of appearances: “That she is living, / Were it but told you, should be hooted at / Like an old tale; but it appears she lives, / Though yet she speak not. Mark a little while” (5.3.115-118). Paulina now directs (while stalling) the discovery: “Turn, good lady, / Our Perdita is found” (5.3.120-121).

After Perdita and Hermione have been reunited, after the statue proves to be no statue, and after the magic manifests its illusionistic nature, we see a series of promises and protractions of disclosure. Hermione, eager for revelation, asks with a sense of immediacy how Perdita has been preserved (5.3.124), and offers up her own explanation: “for thou shalt hear that I, / Knowing by Paulina that the oracle / Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserv'd / Myself to see the issue” (5.3.125-128). For her part, Paulina forestalls answers, stretching out the secrecy, but implying that, in time, she will reveal the mechanisms behind her theatrical magic: “There's time enough for that; / Least they desire (upon this push) to trouble / Your joys with like relation. Go together, /...I, an old turtle, / Will wing me to some wither'd bough,

and there / My mate (that's never to be found again) / Lament till I am lost" (129-5.3.134).

Paulina's imagined transformation into a dove is fitting for several reasons. As editors often comment on in this passage, the turtledove was an emblem of faithfulness.⁵²⁰ While this is certainly true, doves in general were known then, as they of course are now, as animal actors in magic shows. I described earlier Brandon's introduction of his most famous trick, as described by Scot. What we learn, from Scot, ensued was this:

Brandon the iuggler, who painted on a wall the picture of a dove, and seeing a pigeon sitting on the top of a house, said to the King; Lo now your Grace shall see what, a iuggler can doo, if he be his craftes maister; and then pricked the picture with a knife so hard and so often, and with so effectuall words, as the pigeon fell downe from the top of the house, starke dead.⁵²¹

Of course, doves and turtle doves (members of the same family) inspired in the period, as they do now, different colloquial associations. Paulina's self-description as dove all the same conjures images of theatrical magic—especially as Paulina indicates that she is approaching her final, bough/bow. Her farewell signals both her obsequiousness to the king, and her performer's dramatic exit from the play; this exit is subdued in the wake of her withering command. "Go together" is the last of her directives to the assembly (5.3.130).

⁵²⁰ See for instance Evans's gloss in n. 132 (*Riverside* 1603).

⁵²¹ Scot 308.

If Paulina wanders masterless through much of the play, she here settles, like Brandon, into the role of the King's juggler. Formerly an unruly trickster, Paulina is again subject to Leontes's commands and to his bestowal of favors. For instance, Leontes appropriates Paulina's formerly-held roles as both procurer and stage director when, in an action commonly interpreted as beneficent, he instructs Camillo to take Paulina's hand in marriage (5.3.135-36;143-44). Though the mood of the exchange appears *mostly* light, Leontes requests future accountability on the part of Paulina when he says, "Thou [Paulina] has found mine [Hermione], / But how, is to be question'd; for I saw her / (As I thought) dead; and have in vain said many a prayer upon her grave" (5.3.138-141). I say "mostly" light, since Leontes's frustration seems audible in his claims to have prayed in vain.

The play ends poised between conventional resolution and uncertainty, between openness and obfuscation. In one sense, hierarchy is restored, and, as Scot recommends, any supernatural pretence formerly conjured is laid bare—first subtly by hints of hoaxing and conspicuous staginess, then with increasing overtness, as when Hermione admits that she has lived all this while, preserving herself in hope of the prophecy's fulfilment.

That Shakespeare has hinted previously at what reveals itself in the final scene as a hoax contradicts neither the playwright's nor Paulina's status as illusionist. Autolycus is not honest by virtue of his tipping the wink to the audience; neither are Shakespeare and Paulina truthful because they hint at, while hiding, the truth. According to the definitions of "juggling" at the time, both Shakespeare and Paulina

would have certainly qualified as jugglers. Insofar as the architectures of their deceptions signal the artifice behind their operations, their tricks are closer in kind to both the good juggler's and the legitimate commercial theatre player's open secrets than to the papist's (or devil's) impenetrable delusions.⁵²²

In other ways, Paulina represents the bad juggler, including the "juggler" as morally suspect manipulator. Within the play itself, critics of Paulina express their suspicions. Cleomenes, for instance, suggests that she oversteps her station. This is a conclusion that some in Shakespeare's audience probably shared, at least initially. For Paulina emerges as the comic woman and cunning animal shrew, both at the time emblems of backbiting and overstepping in their own way. According to Dion she also threatens the health of the nation (5.1.24-29), and Polixenes, as I have already mentioned, implies that she/Romano exerts a dangerous power over Leontes, which buries him unjustly in grief (5.2.53-56).

A handful of recent critics of the play have echoed Polixenes's sentiment while expressing a few qualms of their own. Barkan underscores the discrepancies inherent in such a "worthy lady" keeping Hermione alive, perhaps imprisoned, on her husband's grounds, all the while "encouraging Leontes into deeper paroxysms of grief over having in effect killed his wife."⁵²³ Similarly, Sokol writes, "Farcical and also dark incongruities arise in the transmutation of Paulina's first super-righteous role to the role of politic liar." He continues, "In terms of Renaissance views of

⁵²² Of course, antitheatricalists found theatre players' performances neither open nor legitimate.

⁵²³ Barkan 640.

virtuous or excusable lying, at first she justifiably feigns Hermione's 'death' to preserve her. But Paulina's persistence in falsehood has obscurer excuses."⁵²⁴

Both critics broach a question which, in its own way, this chapter has pursued. Just how good is the "good Paulina"? Are we, in light of the play's apparently tidy outcome, to interpret the "good" Paulina as an eponym justly earned and sincerely christened? Or do Paulina's associations with jugglers and con artists (most notably Autolycus), the reality of and questionable reasons behind her lies, and the still murky means by which she has executed her illusions place her among crooked company? Do these facts taken together mean that we should read her title ironically?

In this chapter I have foregrounded Paulina's incongruities. Intermittently throughout *The Winter's Tale* she plays the papist, the player, and the heavenly (or demonic) necromancer of Protestant diatribes. Until close to the end she many times implies her own possession of supernatural powers, obscures the truth, and stalls disclosure. Not infrequently, thus, she calls to mind Scot's culpable juggler. We must not forget, however, that in the world of the play she is apparently exonerated. In fact, Leontes never does castigate her for prolonging her secrets and by extension his grief. By the end we are lead to believe that her devices were necessary, divinely-ordained and life-giving secrets—ones more akin to heaven's mysteries than to the dark illusionist's lies. Through ruse, Paulina has orchestrated spiritual and

⁵²⁴ Sokol, *Art and Illusion* 151.

monarchical restitution. Her wink (as it was foreshadowed) has delivered a birth of grace that amounts to recouped losses, including those of kingly authority.

While Paulina may remind audiences of a god, she is not a god. Nor will she, if she ever did, continue to compete with divine forces. In the end, the play draws attention to Paulina's role as the gods' and Leontes's servant. Moreover, her obsequiousness is signaled by her transformation from a trickster into an instrument of trickery; she moves from the role of magician to that of dove, a magician's animal actor. Her compliance is also signaled by her confederate's revelation that she (Hermione) is, in reality, a human being and not a statue. At the end of the play, art has not overthrown the natural order of the gods, but has worked within that order, and, like the hybrid gardening Polixenes idealizes, to serve it. Paulina's juggling has restored the spiritual health of King and nation. In the structural arc of the play, then, she exits a good juggler, and concomitantly a beneficent stage player.

I am suggesting, in short, that Shakespeare enters into dialogue and takes artistic liberties with debates in the period regarding the legitimacy and ethical function of illusionism. In the play, this dialogue takes shape in two portraits of the juggler and on two levels of dramatic movement, one more political and the other, we might say, more poetical. The movement of the play's action is in one sense successive and teleological. Disbelief gives way to belief, guile gives way to openness and revelation, and death, both apparent and real, gives way to resurrection and redemption, including the redemption of a trickery taken back and sanctified. Within this structure, bad jugglers serve as screens wiped clean by the play's end, diversions through which Shakespeare misdirects attention from his own illusionism

and unconventional narrative trickery. Here, good juggling prevails. Productive illusionism subtly and solemnly executed provides Shakespeare with a platform from which to answer critics, especially religious zealots who disparagingly compared the illusions of stage playing to demonic juggling practices. Redeeming juggling, or partially illuminating its practice as a divinely-championed human miracle, Shakespeare foregrounds the legitimacy of his own theatrical practice.

The other movement is characterized by contradiction, repetition and rupture. Critical narratives of Paulina, for instance, vacillate between representing her as a proponent of Protestant values and a performer of Catholic vices, as an engineer of productive theatre and one of destructive theatre, as a high magician and a low magician, as a good juggler and a bad juggler. In the play's afterlife Paulina may answer to Leontes, but spectators of *The Winter's Tale* are left questioning. How was Hermione made to appear dead to Leontes? What (de)vices were employed to cleanly convey her from the grave to the garden chapel? Who was involved in executing the play's principal deceit, and with what degree of agency? How lawful (monarchical, ecclesiastical, natural) and morally justifiable is Paulina's theatre of resurrection? And is Leontes's spiritual discovery, along with the promise of disclosure, enough to compensate for Shakespeare's leaving audiences in the dark? Deferring answers, *The Winter's Tale* asks us to wager our own opinions, to choose either confidence or suspicion in the face of uncertain appearances. Positioned like Leontes at the play's beginning, we are always faced with the threat of being cheated, but by doubting, we face the threat of cheating ourselves.

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to argue that the early modern juggler casts a sprawling shadow over Shakespeare's plays. My project might be described as Bartholomew describes *The Taming of the Shrew*; it is "a kind of history." As a magic enthusiast, I have found it both thrilling and rewarding to search through the annals of juggling and, by narratively rehearsing the history and operations of stage magic, to entertain a new audience for juggling: Shakespeare scholars. I say this is a "new" audience because, even though scholars have richly considered Shakespeare's engagement with the "high" magic of the Hermeticists, the "low" practical magic of cunning folk, and the stage sorcery of literary and dramatic character types, it has for the most part ignored juggling, or left it to play side-show to other subjects. In response to this oversight my writing has been guided by a desire to let jugglers and Shakespeare share the stage. They did, after all, share the stage in Shakespeare's time. One of my project's principal aims has been to pursue the implications of this fact—to demonstrate the ways in which the commercial theatre of Shakespeare and the street theatre of sleight-of-hand illusionists merged, in perception and popular representation, and also in reality.

Michael Bristol has astutely observed that “for the first few decades of its existence, the public playhouse of Elizabethan England was not fully differentiated from more dispersed and anonymous forms of festive life, play and mimesis.”⁵²⁵ Archival and performance scholars who have treated the carnival world of jugglers in particular (Bentley, Wright, Soule, Mowat, and Butterworth) have noticed just how intertwined the lives of players and jugglers really were. We know that jugglers played at the Hope and especially the Fortune theatre (Bentley), and we know that many of the stage tricks players used—from blood-bladder fake injuries to vanishing banquets—came directly from the juggler’s budget.

This dissertation has argued that other common juggling tricks were significant to the spectacles, metaphors and dramatic momentum of Shakespeare’s plays. For instance, the fast-and-loose handkerchief knacks traced by early modern authors to Egyptian jugglers appears in *Othello*, where Iago and Shakespeare deal sleights-of-hand and sleights-of-words. The disappearing handkerchief becomes a metaphor for the trick knots of marriage. What Reginald Scot calls the illusionist’s “subtill slight” of appearing to command the sun and moon plays a crucial role in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Petruchio attempts a similar feat in a scene many critics see as the dramatic crux of the play.⁵²⁶ Finally, the angling tricks of thieves on the other side of the juggling magician’s stage (metaphorical jugglers, according to authors of cony-catching literature) and the death and resurrection shows of

⁵²⁵ Bristol, “The Festive Agon” 73.

⁵²⁶ Scot 250.

illusionists work in tandem in *The Winter's Tale*, where together they summon forth the play's themes of confidence and redemption.

While this dissertation is “kind of history,” it is also, to borrow the words of Christopher Sly “a tumbling trick”—one bound to amuse some and raise the eyebrows of others. By this I mean, in part, that my project attempts no small feat by playing with the round-about ways juggling is articulated in the period and in Shakespeare's plays. This project treats juggling not only as performance magic but as a metaphor applied to a collection of theatrical, physiological, spiritual and criminal, activities in the period.⁵²⁷ Admittedly, such a project runs the risk of eliding important distinctions between what were in fact, in some cases, discreet social and historical activities. Such distinctions are certainly important to bear in mind, but what I want to underscore here is that these distinctions *were* commonly elided in the early modern English cultural imaginary. When in *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault speaks of metaphor's place in a world of powerful, magical sympathetic reflections, he gestures not only towards how the world was understood as metaphor, but how metaphors could be as real and worth heeding as “the real thing.”⁵²⁸ Sticks and stones broke bones, and words hurt, healed and often rendered a thing signified the thing-itself. Moreover, figurative definitions of words and conceptual associations with, for instance, social persons worked (as they do to a lesser extent now) to redefine the original. I am thus suggesting that any analysis of early modern juggling

⁵²⁷ I am thinking of metaphor here and throughout this dissertation not only as words, but as clusters of cognitive associations.

⁵²⁸ Foucault 56-57.

benefits enormously from considering other kinds of juggling, and bearing in mind the process of mutually-defining words and conceptual associations which invigorate the living language. Meanwhile, any consideration of juggling in Shakespeare benefits from searching out powerful and often elusive clusters of associations with the art.

Perhaps the biggest trick this dissertation attempts is to make visible a figure who is never called a “juggler” in the plays I treat, but who upon closer examination shows himself or herself to be a juggler, often in many senses of the word. As I mention earlier in this dissertation, Shakespeare uses the term “juggler” and its variants in several plays (nine to be exact), in which variations of the word appear eleven times. In these plays, Shakespeare invokes most of the figurative definitions of or associations with juggling which this dissertation locates as the narrative centers of *Othello*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Winter’s Tale*. I have chosen these three plays in which the juggler goes unnamed because they give us a sampling of juggling’s diversity across the genres. More importantly, these are plays in which juggling is not simply a resonant word, but also a structuring principle. It is my hope that this dissertation will set the stage for further inquiry into the subject of juggling in Shakespeare. With trickery, illusion, and magic at the heart of several of Shakespeare’s plays, in many cases driving his artistic process, much juggling remains to be discovered.

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