

Thomas Heywood,  
A defence of drama (c.1608)

THOMAS HEYWOOD (1573/4–1641) was educated at Emmanuel College Cambridge, and began his theatrical career in London as an actor. He is first mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary* in the autumn of 1596, but had probably been one of the dramatists involved in revising Munday's *Sir Thomas More* (c.1593). He worked as an actor and playwright for the Admiral's Men in the late 1590s, thereafter with Worcester's Men, and in succession Queen Anne's, until that company broke up in 1619. He claimed in 1633 'two hundred and twenty [plays] in which I have had either an entire hand, or at least the main finger'. His acknowledged compositions include *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), *If You Know not me, You Know Nobody* (1605), and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1603–8). Two of the writers who contributed commendatory verses to this treatise, Richard Perkins and Christopher Beeston, were fellow actors and sharers in the Queen's company. John Taylor (1580–1653), 'the water poet', was a friend of Heywood.

TEXT. From *An Apology for Actors. Containing three briefe Treatises. 1. Their Antiquity. 2. Their ancient Dignity. 3. The true use of their quality* (London, 1612). E. K. Chambers dated the composition of this pamphlet to c.1607–8: *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1933), iv. 250. Even so, it comes long after the major dispute over the theatre, sparked off by the Puritan Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse. Containing a plesaunt invectiue against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Jesters and such like Catterpillers of a Commonwelth* (1579), which provoked Thomas Lodge's *Defence of Poetry, Music and Stage Plays* in the same year, and at least ten other treatises over the next decade (*ECE* i. 61–3). Heywood also wrote a now-lost treatise, *Lives of All the Poets*, begun c.1614. His defence of drama follows traditional lines. See A. M. Clark, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford, 1931), and Jonas Barish, *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley, 1981).

TO MY GOOD FRIENDS AND FELLOWS THE CITY-ACTORS

Out of my busiest hours I have spared myself so much time as to touch\* some particulars concerning us, to approve our antiquity, ancient dignity, and the true use of our quality.\* That it hath been ancient, we have derived it from more than two thousand years ago

successively to this age. That it hath been esteemed by the best and greatest, to omit all the noble patrons of the former world, I need allege no more than the royal and princely services in which we now live. That the use thereof is authentic, I have done my endeavour to instance by history and approve by authority. To excuse my ignorance in affecting no flourish\* of eloquence to set a gloss upon my treatise, I have nothing to say for myself but this: a good face needs no painting, and a good cause no abetting. Some over-curious have too liberally taxed\* us, and he (in my thoughts) is held worthy reproof whose ignorance cannot answer for itself. I hold it more honest for the guiltless to excuse than the envious to exclaim; and we may as freely out of our plainness answer, as they out of their perverseness object, instancing myself by famous Scaliger, learned Doctor Gager, Doctor Gentilis,<sup>1</sup> and others, whose opinions and approved arguments on our part I have in my brief discourse altogether omitted, because I am loath to be taxed in borrowing from others; and besides, their works, being extant to the world offer themselves freely to every man's perusal. I am professed adversary to none: I rather covet reconcilment than opposition, nor proceeds this my labour from any envy in me but rather to show them wherein they err. So, wishing you judicial\* audiences, honest poets, and true gatherers,<sup>2</sup> I commit you all to the fullness of your best wishes.

Yours ever,  
T.H.

<sup>1</sup> J. C. Scaliger, in his *Poetices libri septem* (1560), assembled a great deal of information about Greek and Roman drama, including attacks and defences. Heywood also refers to John Rainolds, *Th'ouerthrow of stage-playes, by the way of controversie betwixt D. Gager and D. Rainoldes. Whereunto are added certeine latine letters betwixt maister Rainoldes, and D. Gentilis* (1599, 1629). The participants in this controversy were all distinguished Oxford scholars: Dr John Rainolds (1549–1607) was both a leading authority on Aristotle, whose lectures were frequently reprinted, and a puritan theologian who vigorously attacked Catholicism. William Gager (1555–1622) was the author of several Latin dramas, including *Meleager. Tragoedia nova* (Oxford, 1592), *Ulysses Redux Tragoedia Nova* (Oxford, 1592), and additional scenes to Seneca's *Hippolytus* (1591). Dr Alberico Gentili (1552–1608), Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford from 1587, published in 1593 a commentary on a subsection of a title in the Justinian Code, *Commentatio ad [egem] III professoribus] et med[icis]*, which has been described as 'the best and most penetrating of the Latin treatises on poetry printed in England': see J. W. Binns, *Intellectual Culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Latin Writings of the Age* (Leeds, 1990), pp. 127–31, 141–8, 350–4. Gentili replied to Rainolds's attack on the stage in *De actoribus et spectatoribus fabularum non notandis disputatio*, the first of his *Disputationes duae* (Hanau, 1599).

<sup>2</sup> Reliable money-takers (who stood at the various theatre entries).

## TO THE JUDICIAL READER

I have undertook a subject, courteous reader, not of sufficient countenance\* to bolster itself by his own strength, and therefore have charitably reached it my hand to support it against any succeeding adversary. I could willingly have committed this work to some more able than myself, for the weaker the combatant he needeth the stronger arms; but in extremities\* I hold it better to wear rusty armour than to go naked. Yet if these weak habiliments of war can but buckler\* it from part of the rude buffets of our adversaries, I shall hold my pains sufficiently guerdoned.\* My pen hath seldom appeared in press till now:<sup>3</sup> I have been ever too jealous\* of mine own weakness willingly to thrust into the press; nor had I at this time but that a kind of necessity enjoined me to so sudden a business. I will neither show myself over-presumptuous in scorning thy favour, nor too importunate a beggar by too servilely entreating it. What thou art content to bestow upon my pains, I am content to accept: if good thoughts, they are all I desire; if good words, they are more than I deserve; if bad opinion, I am sorry I have incurred it; if evil language, I know not how I have merited it; if anything, I am pleased; if nothing, I am satisfied, contenting myself with this—I have done no more than (had I been called to account) showed what I could say in the defence of my own quality.

Thine,  
T. Heywood,

*Firma valent per se, nullumque Machaona querunt.*<sup>4</sup>

## TO THEM THAT ARE OPPOSITE TO THIS WORK

Come your detracting tongues, contest no more,  
Leave off for shame to wound the actors' fame,  
Seek rather their wrong'd credit to restore,  
Your envy and detractions quite disclaim.  
You that have termed their sports lascivious, vile,  
Wishing good princes would them all exile,<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of writing Heywood's name had indeed only appeared on the title-pages of *A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse* (1607), *The Rape of Lucrece. A True Roman Tragedie* (1608), *The Golden Age* (1611) and *The Silver Age* (1612) soon followed.

<sup>4</sup> Ovid, *Ex Ponto* 3. 4. 7: 'Strong things have health of their own, and need no Machaon', or doctor.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 10. 595a ff.

See here this question to the full disputed:  
Heywood hath you and all your proofs confuted.

Would'st see an emperor and his council grave,  
A noble soldier acted to the life, 10  
A Roman tyrant, how he doth behave  
Himself at home, abroad, in peace, in strife?  
Would'st see what's love, what's hate, what's foul  
excess,  
Or would'st a traitor in his kind express?  
Our Stagirites<sup>6</sup> can, by the poet's pen, 15  
Appear to you to be the self-same men.

What though a sort for spite, or want of wit,  
Hate what the best allow, the most forbear,  
What exercise can you desire more fit 20  
Than stately stratagems to see and hear?  
What profit many may attain by plays,  
To the most critic eye this book displays.  
Brave men, brave acts, being bravely acted too,  
Makes, as men see things done, desire to do.

And did it nothing but in pleasing sort 25  
Keep gallants from misspending of their time,  
It might suffice; yet here is nobler sport,  
Acts well contriv'd, good prose, and stately rhyme.  
To call to church Campanus<sup>7</sup> bells did make;  
Plays, dice and drink invite men to forsake. 30  
Their use being good, then use the actors well,  
Since ours all other nations far excel.

Ar. Hopton

TO MY LOVING FRIEND AND FELLOW,  
THOMAS HEYWOOD

Thou that do'st rail at me for seeing a play,  
How wouldst thou have me spend my idle hours?  
Wouldst have me in a tavern drink all day,  
Melt in the sun's heat, or walk out in showers?

<sup>6</sup> Aristotle was born at Stagira or Stagirus in Chalcidice; hence a 'Stagirite' is any philosopher or moralist.

<sup>7</sup> A person credited with inventing the bell.

Gape at the lottery from morn till even,  
 To hear whose mottos blanks have, and who prizes;<sup>8</sup> 5  
 To hazard all at dice (chance six or seven),<sup>9</sup>  
 To card or bowl? my humour this despises.

But thou wilt answer: 'None of these I need,  
 Yet my tired spirits must have recreation. 10  
 What shall I do that may retirement breed,  
 Or how refresh myself, and in what fashion?

'To drab,\* to game, to drink, all these I hate:  
 Many enormous\* things depend on these.  
 My faculties truly to recreate 15  
 With modest mirth, and myself best to please,

'Give me a play, that no distaste\* can breed.  
 Prove thou a spider, and from flowers suck gall;  
 I'll, like a bee, take honey from a weed;<sup>10</sup>  
 For I was never puritanical. 20

'I love no public soothers, private scorner,  
 That rail 'gainst lechery, yet love a harlot:  
 When I drink, 'tis in sight and not in corners;  
 I am no open saint, and secret varlet.\*

'Still, when I come to plays, I love to sit 25  
 That all may see me in a public place,  
 Even in the stage's front, and not to get  
 Into a nook, and hood-wink there my face'.

*This is the difference: such would have men deem  
 Them what they are not; I am what I seem.* 30

Rich. Perkins

<sup>8</sup> Lotteries (established in England from 1567) used slips or small pieces of paper ('mottoes'), representing either prizes or blanks, which were drawn from a pitcher; cf. *Merchant of Venice* 1. 2. 32.

<sup>9</sup> In the dice game of 'hazard' (known to Chaucer), if the caster throws the number he has named (between 5 and 9) he wins; if he throws some other number, that is called his 'chance', and he goes on playing till either the main or the chance turns up.

<sup>10</sup> An ancient metaphor for selecting the improving parts of literature, ignoring other passages: cf. Plutarch, *Poetas* 12; St Basil, *Address to young men, on how to benefit from Greek literature* 4. 7; and Elyot, p. 67.

TO MY GOOD FRIEND AND FELLOW,  
 THOMAS HEYWOOD

Let others task\* things honest, and to please  
 Some that pretend more strictness\* than the rest  
 Exclaim on plays: know, I am none of these  
 That inly love what outly I detest. 5  
 Of all the modern pastimes I can find  
 To content me, of plays I make best use,  
 As most agreeing with a generous mind.  
 There see I virtue's crown, and sin's abuse.  
 Two hours well spent, and all their pastimes done,  
 What's good I follow, and what's bad I shun. 10

Christopher Beeston

TO MY APPROVED GOOD FRIEND  
 M. THOMAS HEYWOOD

Of thee, and thy Apology for plays,  
 I will not much speak in contempt or praise;  
 Yet in these following lines I'll show my mind  
 Of plays, and such as have 'gainst plays repined.\* 5  
 A play's a brief epitome of time,  
 Where man may see his virtue or his crime  
 Laid open, either to their vice's shame  
 Or to their virtue's memorable fame.  
 A play's a true transparent crystal mirror,  
 To show good minds their mirth, the bad their terror; 10  
 Where stabbing, drabbing, dicing, drinking, swearing  
 Are all proclaimed unto the sight and hearing  
 In ugly shapes of heaven-abhorred sin,  
 Where men may see the mire they wallow in.  
 And well I know it makes the devil rage 15  
 To see his servants flouted on a stage—  
 A whore, a thief, a pandar, or a bawd,  
 A broker,\* or a slave that lives by fraud;  
 An usurer, whose soul is in his chest,  
 Until in hell it comes to restless rest; 20  
 A fly-blown\* gull,\* that fain would be a gallant;  
 A ragamuffin\* that hath spent his talent;

A self-wise fool, that sees his wits out-stripped,  
 Or any vice that feels it self but nipped,\*  
 Either in Tragedy or Comedy,  
 In Moral, Pastoral, or History— 25  
 But straight the poison of their envious tongues  
 Breaks out in volleys of calumnious wrongs,  
 And then a tinker or a dray-man\* swears  
 'I would the house were fired about their ears'. 30  
 Thus when a play nips Satan by the nose,  
 Straight all his vassals are the actor's foes.  
 —But fear not, man, let envy swell and burst,  
 Proceed, and let the devil do his worst.  
 For plays are good, or bad, as they are used,  
 And best inventions often are abused. 35

*Yours ever,*  
 John Taylor

THE AUTHOR TO HIS BOOK

The world's a theatre, the earth a stage,  
 Which God and nature doth with actors fill.†  
 Kings have their entrance in due equipage,  
 And some their parts play well, and others ill. †So compared  
 The best no better are in this theatre, by the Fathers.  
 Where every humour's fitted in his kind.<sup>11</sup> 5  
 This a true subject acts, and that a traitor,  
 The first applauded, and the last confined.  
 This plays an honest man, and that a knave,  
 A gentle person this, and he a clown. 10  
 One man is ragged, and another brave:  
 All men have parts, and each man acts his own.  
 She a chaste lady acteth all her life,  
 A wanton courtesan another plays;  
 This covets marriage love, that nuptial strife, 15  
 Both in continual action spend their days.  
 Some citizens, some soldiers born to adven-  
 Shepherds, and sea-men. Then our play's begun

<sup>11</sup> Where each human type is presented appropriately.

When we are born, and to the world first enter,  
 And all find exits when their parts are done. 20  
 If then the world a theatre present,  
 As by the roundness<sup>12</sup> it appears most fit,  
 Built with starry galleries of high ascent,  
 In which Jehovah doth as spectator sit,<sup>13</sup>  
 And chief determiner\* to applaud the best 25  
 And their endeavours crown with more than merit,  
 But by their evil actions dooms the rest  
 To end disgraced, whilst others praise inherit;  
 He that denies then theatres should be,  
 He may as well deny a world to me.†  
 †No theatre, 30  
 no world.

Thomas Heywood

AN APOLOGY FOR ACTORS; AND FIRST  
 TOUCHING THEIR ANTIQUITY

Moved by the sundry exclamations of many seditious sectists\* in this age, who, in the fatness\* and rankness\* of a peaceable commonwealth grow up like unsavoury tufts of grass, which, though outwardly green and fresh to the eye, yet are they both unpleasant and unprofitable, being too sour for food and too rank for fodder; these men, like the ancient Germans, affecting no fashion but their own, would draw other nations to be slovens like themselves, and undertaking to purify and reform the sacred bodies of the church and commonweal (in the true use of both which they are altogether ignorant), would but like artless physicians, for experiment sake, rather minister pills to poison the whole body than cordials\* to preserve any, or the least part. Amongst many other things tolerated in this peaceable and flourishing state, it hath pleased the high and mighty princes of this land to limit the use of certain public theatres,<sup>14</sup> which, since many of these over-curious heads have lavishly and violently slandered, I hold it not amiss to lay open some few antiquities to approve the true use of them, with arguments (not of

<sup>12</sup> Elizabethan theatres were approximately round, having eight or sixteen sides.

<sup>13</sup> Alluding to the ancient idea of the world as a theatre in which human affairs are observed by (or from) 'the gods': cf. L. G. Christian, *Theatrum Mundi: The History of an Idea* (New York and London, 1987).

<sup>14</sup> Civic authorities in England licensed and controlled theatres and other places of public entertainment.

the least moment) which, according to the weakness of my spirit and infancy of my judgement, I will (by God's grace) commit to the eyes of all favourable and judicial readers, as well to satisfy the requests of some of our well-qualified favourers, as to stop the envious acclamations of those who challenge to themselves a privileged invective, and against all free estates a railing liberty. Loath am I (I protest), being the youngest and weakest of the nest wherein I was hatched, to soar this pitch before others of the same brood, more fledge,\* and of better wing than myself. But though they whom more especially this task concerns, both for their ability in writing and sufficiency in judgement (as their works generally witness to the world) are content to over-slip so necessary a subject, and have left it as to me, the most unworthy, I thought it better to stammer out my mind than not to speak at all; to scribble down a mark in the stead of writing a name, and to stumble on the way rather than to stand still and not to proceed on so necessary a journey.

*Nox erat, et somnus lassos submitit ocellos.*<sup>15</sup> It was about that time of the night when darkness had already overspread the world, and a hushed and general silence possessed the face of the earth, and men's bodies, tired with the business of the day, betaking themselves to their best repose, their never-sleeping souls laboured in uncouth dreams and visions, when suddenly appeared to me the tragic Muse, *Melpomene*,

*animosa Tragædia:*<sup>16</sup>  
*et movit pictis innixa cothurnis*  
*densum caesarie terque quaterque caput.*<sup>17</sup>

Her hair rudely dishevelled, her chaplet\* withered, her visage with tears stained, her brow furrowed, her eyes dejected, nay her whole complexion quite faded and altered; and, perusing her habit, I might behold the colour of her fresh robe (all crimson) breathed,<sup>18</sup> and with the envenomed juice of some profane spilt ink in every place stained. Nay more, her buskin of all the wonted jewels and ornaments utterly

<sup>15</sup> Ovid, *Am.* 3. 5. 1: 'One night when sleep on tired eyes weighed | [I had a dream and was afraid]' (tr. A. D. Melville).

<sup>16</sup> Ovid, *Am.* 3. 1. 35: 'Haughty Tragedy'.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 3. 1. 31 f.: (Tragedy): 'Standing in her embroidered buskins she moved thrice and four times her head thick with hair'. Buskins were thick-soled boots worn by tragic actors in the ancient Athenian theatre; subsequently used figuratively for the genre tragedy.

<sup>18</sup> Tarnished, contaminated: Tragedy's robe, as she later protests, has been 'blasted', blighted or damaged by the 'envenomed ink' of those who have slandered drama.

despoiled, about which, in manner of a garter I might behold these letters written in a plain and large character:

Behold my tragic buskin rent and torn,  
Which kings and emperors in their times have worn.

This I no sooner had perused but suddenly I might perceive the enraged Muse cast up her scornful head, her eyeballs sparkle fire, and a sudden dash of disdain intermixed with rage purples her cheek. When, pacing with a majestic gait, and rousing up her fresh spirits with a lively and quaint action,<sup>19</sup> she began in these or the like words:

*Grande sonant tragici, tragicos decet ira cothurnos.*<sup>20</sup>

Am I Melpomene, the buskined Muse,  
That held in awe the tyrants of the world  
And played their lives in public theatres,  
Making them fear to sin, since fearless I  
Prepar'd to write their lives in crimson ink, 5  
And act their shames in eye of all the world?  
Have not I whipped Vice with a scourge of steel,  
Unmasked stern Murder, shamed lascivious Lust,  
Plucked off the vizer from grim Treason's face, 10  
And made the sun point at their ugly sins?  
Hath not this powerful hand tamed fiery Rage,<sup>21</sup>  
Killed poisonous Envy with her own keen darts,\*  
Choked up the covetous mouth with molten gold,  
Burst the vast womb of eating Gluttony, 15  
And drowned the drunkard's gall in juice of grapes?  
I have showed Pride his picture on a stage,  
Laid ope the ugly shapes his steel glass\* hid,  
And made him pass thence meekly. In those days 20  
When emperors with their presence graced my scenes,  
And thought none worthy to present themselves  
Save emperors, to delight ambassadors,  
Then did this garland flourish, then my robe  
Was of the deepest crimson, the best dye:  
*cura deum fuerant olim regumque poetæ,* 25

<sup>19</sup> Elegant, beautiful gestures.

<sup>20</sup> Ovid, *Rem. am.* 375: 'The tragic style is grand; rage suits its buskins'.

<sup>21</sup> The seven deadly sins are invoked.

*præmiaque antiqui magna tulere chori.*<sup>22</sup>

Who lodged then in the bosom of great kings  
Save he that had a grave cothurnate\* Muse?

A stately verse in an iambic style

Became a Cæsar's mouth. Oh! these were times

Fit for you bards to vent your golden rhymes.

Then did I tread on arras; cloth of tissue<sup>23</sup>

Hung round the fore-front of my stage; the pillars

That did support the roof of my large frame

Double-apparelled in pure Ophir<sup>24</sup> gold,

Whilst the round circle of my spacious orb

Was thronged with princes, dukes, and senators.

*nunc ederæ sine honore iacent.*<sup>25</sup>

But now's the iron age, and black-mouthed curs

Bark at the virtues of the former world.

Such with their breath have blasted my fresh robe,

Plucked at my flowery chaplet, toused\* my tresses;

Nay, some who (for their baseness hissed and scorned)

The stage, as loathsome, hath long-since spewed out,

Have watched their time to cast envenomed ink

To stain my garments with. Oh! Seneca,

Thou tragic poet, had'st thou lived to see

This outrage done to sad Melpomene,

With such sharp lines thou would'st revenge my blot

As armed Ovid against Ibis wrote.<sup>26</sup>

With that in rage she left the place and I my dream, for at the instant I awaked; when, having perused this vision over and over again in my remembrance, I suddenly bethought me how many ancient poets, tragic and comic, dying many ages ago, live still amongst us in their works:<sup>27</sup> as, amongst the Greeks, Euripides, Menander, Sophocles, Eupolis,

<sup>22</sup> Ovid, *Ars am.* 3. 405-6: 'Poets once were the charge of rulers and kings, and the old choruses obtained great rewards'.

<sup>23</sup> Arras is a rich tapestry fabric, in which figures and scenes are woven in colours; cloth of tissue is a rich cloth, often interwoven with gold and silver.

<sup>24</sup> A biblical region (probably on the south-east coast of Arabia), famous for its fine gold: cf. 1 Kings 9: 28; 22: 48; Isa. 13: 12.

<sup>25</sup> Ovid, *Ars am.* 3. 411: 'Now the poets' bays lie without honour in the dust'.

<sup>26</sup> 'An elaborate curse-poem in elegiacs (perhaps AD 10 or 11) directed at an enemy whose identity is hidden under the name of a bird of unclean habits' (*OCD*).

<sup>27</sup> Such lists of ancient dramatists, known and obscure, were common in historical compilations, such as Scaliger's *Poetice*.

Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Apollodorus, Anaxandrides, Nicomachus, Alexis, Tereus, and others; so, among the Latins, Attilius, Actius, Melithus, Plautus, Terence, and others whom for brevity sake I omit.

*hos ediscit, et hos arcto stipata teatro  
spectat Roma potens; habet hos, numeratque poetas.*<sup>28</sup>

These potent Rome acquires and holdeth dear,  
And in their round theatres flocks to hear.

These, or any of these, had they lived in the afternoon of the world, as they died even in the morning, I assure myself would have left more memorable trophies of that learned Muse whom, in their golden numbers, they so richly adorned. And amongst our modern poets, who have been industrious in many an elaborate and ingenious poem, even they whose pens have had the greatest traffic\* with the stage have been in the excuse of these Muses most forgetful. But, leaving these, lest I make too large a head to a small body and so misshape my subject, I will begin with the antiquity of acting comedies, tragedies, and histories. And first in the golden world.

In the first of the Olympiads,<sup>29</sup> amongst many other active exercises in which Hercules ever triumphed as victor, there was in his nonage presented unto him by his tutor, in the fashion of a history acted by the choice of the nobility of Greece, the worthy and memorable acts of his father Jupiter; which, being personated with lively and well spirited action, wrought such impression in his noble thoughts that in mere emulation of his father's valour (not at the behest of his step-dame Juno), he performed his twelve labours.<sup>30</sup> Him valiant Theseus followed, and Achilles, Theseus; which bred in them such haughty\* and magnanimous attempts that every succeeding age hath recorded their worths unto fresh admiration. Aristotle, that prince of philosophers, whose books carry such credit even in these our universities that to say *ipse dixit* is a sufficient axiom,<sup>31</sup> he, having the tuition of

<sup>28</sup> Horace, *Epist.* 2. 1. 60-1: 'These authors mighty Rome learns by heart; these she views, when packed in her narrow theatre; these she counts as her muster-roll of poets . . .'

<sup>29</sup> In modern usage an Olympiad is the period of four years between Olympic games; Heywood uses it to refer to the games themselves, also confusing myth (Hercules) and history.

<sup>30</sup> Heywood follows a variant source, rejecting the standard account of Hera's implacable enmity as the cause of Hercules' labours and other difficulties.

<sup>31</sup> The phrase '*ipse dixit*', 'he himself said it', used of Pythagoras by his followers, signifies 'an unproved assertion resting only on the authority of a speaker, a dogmatic statement' (*NSOED*), erroneously regarded as a 'sufficient axiom' or self-evident truth.

young Alexander, caused the destruction of Troy to be acted before his pupil, in which the valour of Achilles was so naturally expressed that it impressed the heart of Alexander in so much that all his succeeding actions were merely shaped after that pattern; and it may be imagined that had Achilles never lived Alexander had never conquered the whole world.

The like assertion may be made of that ever-renowned Roman Julius Cæsar, who, after the like representation of Alexander in the temple of Hercules, standing in Cádiz,<sup>32</sup> was never in any peace of thoughts till by his memorable exploits he had purchased to himself the name of Alexander, as Alexander till he thought himself of desert to be called Achilles; Achilles, Theseus; Theseus, till he had sufficiently imitated the acts of Hercules; and Hercules, till he held himself worthy to be called the son of Jupiter. Why should not the lives of these worthies, presented in these our days, effect the like wonders in the princes of our times, which can no way be so exquisitely\* demonstrated nor so lively portrayed as by action? Oratory is a kind of speaking picture; therefore, may some say, is it not sufficient to discourse to the ears of princes the fame of these conquerors? Painting, likewise, is a dumb oratory;<sup>33</sup> therefore may we not as well, by some curious\* Pygmalion, draw their conquests to work the like love in princes towards these worthies by showing them their pictures drawn to the life as it wrought on the poor painter to be enamoured of his own shadow? I answer this:

*nec magis expressi vultus per aenea signa,  
quam per vatis opus mores animique virorum  
clarorum apparent.*—<sup>34</sup>

The visage is no better cut in brass,  
Nor can the carver\* so express the face,  
As doth the poet's pen, whose arts surpass  
To give men's lives and virtues their due grace.

<sup>32</sup> According to Suetonius (*Julius Caesar* 7), having seen a statue of Alexander the Great in the temple of Hercules, Caesar 'was overheard to sigh impatiently: vexed, it seems, that at an age when Alexander had already conquered the whole world, he himself had done nothing in the least epoch-making' (tr. R. Graves).

<sup>33</sup> Heywood applies to oratory an analogy originally made for poetry. Cf. Plutarch, *Poetas* 3; Horace, *Ars P.* 361; Sidney, pp. 345, 352.

<sup>34</sup> Horace, *Epist.* 2. 1. 248–50: 'and features are seen with no more truth, when moulded in statues of bronze, than are the manners and minds of famous heroes, when set forth in the poet's work'.

A description is only a shadow, received by the ear but not perceived by the eye; so lively portraiture is merely a form seen by the eye, but can neither show action, passion, motion, or any other gesture to move the spirits of the beholder to admiration. But to see a soldier shaped like a soldier, walk, speak, act like a soldier; to see a Hector all besmeared in blood, trampling upon the bulks\* of kings; a Troilus returning from the field in the sight of his father Priam, as if man and horse, even from the steed's rough fetlocks to the plume on the champion's helmet, had been together plunged into a purple ocean; to see a Pompey ride in triumph, then a Cæsar conquer that Pompey; labouring Hannibal alive, hewing his passage through the Alps. To see as I have seen, Hercules<sup>35</sup> in his own shape, hunting the boar, knocking down the bull, taming the hart, fighting with Hydra, murdering Geryon, slaughtering Diomed, wounding the Stymphalides, killing the Centaurs, pashing\* the lion, squeezing the dragon, dragging Cerberus in chains, and lastly, on his high pyramids writing *Nil ultra*—Oh, these were sights to make an Alexander!

To turn to our domestic histories: what English blood, seeing the person\* of any bold Englishman presented, and doth not hug his fame and honey\* at his valour, pursuing him in his enterprise with his best wishes, and as being wrapped in contemplation offers to him in his heart all prosperous performance, as if the personator were the man personated? So bewitching a thing is lively and well-spirited action<sup>36</sup> that it hath power to new-mould the hearts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt. What coward, to see his countryman valiant, would not be ashamed of his own cowardice? What English prince, should he behold the true portraiture of that famous King Edward the Third, foraging France, taking so great a king captive in his own country, quartering the English lions with the French flower-deluce,<sup>37</sup> and would not be

<sup>35</sup> Heywood mentions ten of the traditional labours here; he had represented them on-stage in *The Silver Age, Including . . . the birth of Hercules* (acted c.1610, pr. 1612) and *The Brazen Age* (acted c.1612, pr. 1613), of which Act 5 concluded *The Labours and death of Hercules. Nil ultra* ('no further') was the motto of Charles V, traditionally written on the 'Pillars of Hercules', which marked the outlet of the Mediterranean.

<sup>36</sup> *Actio*, or gesture, the last of the processes through which an orator created and performed a speech, was invoked by apologists to legitimize drama, since rhetoric was a respectable academic discipline.

<sup>37</sup> The anglicized form of 'fleur-de-lis', the royal arms of France, which could be 'quartered', in heraldic terms, by being added to the hereditary English arms of lions. Edward III and the Black Prince defeated the French at the battle of Poitiers in 1355, taking King John II of France prisoner.

suddenly inflamed with so royal a spectacle, being made apt and fit for the like achievement? So of Henry the Fifth . . .

To leave Italy and look back into Greece. The sages and princes of Grecia, who for the refinedness of their language were in such reputation through the world that all other tongues were esteemed barbarous, these that were the first understanders,\* trained up their youthful nobility to be actors, debarring the base mechanics\* so worthy employment, for none but the young heroes were admitted that practice, so to embolden them in the delivery of any foreign embassy. These wise men of Greece (so called by the Oracle) could by their industry find out no nearer or directer course to plant humanity and manners in the hearts of the multitude than to instruct them by moralized mysteries what vices to avoid, what virtues to embrace, what enormities\* to abandon, what ordinances\* to observe; whose lives, being for some special endowments in former times honoured, they should admire and follow; whose vicious actions, personated in some licentious liver,<sup>38</sup> they should despise and shun; which, borne out as well by the wisdom of the poet as supported by the worth of the actors, wrought such impression in the hearts of the plebe\* that in short space they excelled in civility and government, insomuch that from them all the neighbour nations drew their patterns of humanity, as well in the establishing of their laws as the reformation of their manners. These Magi and Gymnosophistæ,<sup>39</sup> that lived (as I may say) in the childhood and infancy of the world, before it knew how to speak perfectly, thought even in those days that action\* was the nearest way to plant understanding in the hearts of the ignorant.

'Yea, but', say some, 'you ought not to confound\* the habits of either sex as to let your boys wear the attires of virgins', &c. To which I answer: the scriptures are not always to be expounded merely according to the letter—for in such estate stands our main sacramental controversy<sup>40</sup>—but they ought exactly to be conferred\* with the purpose they handle. To do as the Sodomites did, use preposterous lusts in preposterous habits,<sup>41</sup> is in that text flatly and severely forbidden; nor can I imagine any man that hath in him any taste or relish of

<sup>38</sup> Someone who lives in a licentious way.

<sup>39</sup> Persian priests and Hindu ascetics; types of 'wise men'.

<sup>40</sup> Much of the Reformation dispute between the Protestant and the Catholic faiths concerned the eucharist, and whether the conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was literal or symbolic.

<sup>41</sup> The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their depravity; cf. Gen. 18-19.

Christianity to be guilty of so abhorred a sin. Besides, it is not probable that plays were meant in that text, because we read not of any plays known, in that time that Deuteronomy<sup>42</sup> was writ, among the children of Israel. Nor do I hold it lawful to beguile the eyes of the world in confounding the shapes of either sex as to keep any youth in the habit of a virgin, or any virgin in the shape of a lad, to shroud them from the eyes of their fathers, tutors or protectors, or to any other sinister intent whatsoever. But, to see our youths attired in the habit of women, who knows not what their intents be? Who cannot distinguish them by their names, assuredly knowing they are but to represent such a lady at such a time appointed?

Do not the universities, the fountains and well-springs of all good arts, learning, and documents, admit the like in their colleges? and they (I assure myself) are not ignorant of their true use. In the time of my residence in Cambridge,<sup>43</sup> I have seen tragedies, comedies, histories, pastorals and shows publicly acted, in which the graduates of good place and reputation have been specially parted.\* This is held necessary for the emboldening of their junior scholars, to arm them with audacity against they come to be employed in any public exercise, as in the reading of the dialectic, rhetoric, ethic, mathematic, the physic or metaphysic lectures. It teaches audacity to the bashful grammarian, being newly admitted into the private college, and after\* matriculated and entered as a member of the university, and makes him a bold sophister<sup>44</sup> to argue *pro et contra*, to compose his syllogisms, categoric or hypothetic (simple or compound), to reason and frame a sufficient argument to prove his questions or to defend any *axioma*, to distinguish of any dilemma, and be able to moderate in any argumentation whatsoever.

To come to rhetoric: it not only emboldens a scholar to speak but instructs him to speak well, and with judgement to observe his commas, colons, and full points; his parentheses, his breathing spaces and distinctions; to keep a decorum in his countenance, neither to frown when he should smile nor to make unseemly and disguised faces

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Deut. 22: 5: 'The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto the man, neither shall a man put on woman's raiment: for all that do so, are abomination unto the Lord thy God'. Ever since Tertullian, this text had been used by enemies of the theatre to denounce actors impersonating women. Rainolds had just revived the charge, Gager rejected it.

<sup>43</sup> For the vigorous tradition of acting in Cambridge see Alan H. Nelson, *Early Cambridge Theatres: College, University, and Stages, 1464-1720* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>44</sup> A student in his second or third year at Cambridge, who had mastered the Arts course in logic; the following technicalities suggest that Heywood had also done so.



in the delivery of his words; not to stare with his eyes, draw awry his mouth, confound\* his voice in the hollow of his throat, or tear his words hastily betwixt his teeth; neither to buffet his desk like a mad man, nor stand in his place like a lifeless image, demurely plodding, and without any smooth and formal motion. It instructs him to fit his phrases to his action, and his action to his phrase, and his pronunciation<sup>45</sup> to them both.

Tully, in his book *Ad Caium Herennium*,<sup>46</sup> requires five things in an orator: invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and pronunciation. Yet all are imperfect without the sixth, which is action, for be his invention never so fluent and exquisite, his disposition and order never so composed and formal, his eloquence and elaborate phrases never so material and pithy, his memory never so firm and retentive, his pronunciation never so musical and plausive,\* yet without a comely\* and elegant gesture, a gracious and a bewitching kind of action, a natural and familiar motion of the head, the hand, the body, and a moderate and fit countenance suitable to all the rest, I hold all the rest as nothing. A delivery and sweet action is the gloss\* and beauty of any discourse that belongs to a scholar. And this is the action behoveful in any that profess this quality, not to use any impudent or forced motion in any part of the body, nor rough or other violent gesture; nor on the contrary to stand like a stiff starched man, but to qualify\* every thing according to the nature of the person personated. For in overacting tricks, and toiling too much in the antic\* habit of humours, men of the ripest desert, greatest opinions, and best reputations may break into the most violent absurdities. I take not upon me to teach but to advise, for it becomes my juniority rather to be pupilled myself than to instruct others.

To proceed, and to look into those men that profess themselves adversaries to this quality, they are none of the gravest and most ancient doctors of the academy but only a sort of find-faults, such as interest their prodigal tongues in all men's affairs without respect. These I have heard as liberally in their superficial censures tax the exercises performed in their colleges as these acted on our public stages, not looking into the true and direct\* use of either, but ambitiously preferring their own presumptuous humours before the profound and authentical judgements of all the learned doctors of the

<sup>45</sup> The final stages of the orator's preparation involved *actio* and *pronuntiatio*, the effective utterance of his speech, with appropriate gesture.

<sup>46</sup> This anonymous treatise was still ascribed to Cicero at this time.

university. Thus you see that, touching the antiquity of actors and acting, they have not been new, lately begot by any upstart invention, but I have derived them from the first Olympiads, and I shall continue the use of them even till this present age. And so much touching their antiquity.

*Pars superest coepti: pars est exhausta, laboris.*<sup>47</sup>

OF ACTORS, AND THEIR ANCIENT DIGNITY  
THE SECOND BOOK

... To omit all the doctors, zanies, pantaloons, harlequins,<sup>48</sup> in which the French, but especially the Italians have been excellent, and according to the occasion offered to do some right to our English actors,<sup>49</sup> as Knell, Bentley, Mills, Wilson, Cross, Lanham, and others: these, since I never saw them, as being before my time, I cannot (as an eye-witness of their desert) give them that applause which no doubt they worthily merit; yet by the report of many judicial auditors, their performances of many parts have been so absolute\* that it were a kind of sin to drown their worths in Lethe, and not commit their almost forgotten names to eternity.

Here I must needs remember Tarleton,<sup>50</sup> in his time gracious with the queen his sovereign, and in the people's general applause, whom succeeded Will Kempe,<sup>51</sup> as well in the favour of her majesty as in the opinion and good thoughts of the general audience. Gabriel, Singer, Pope, Phillips, Sly,<sup>52</sup> all the right I can do them is but this, that though they be dead their deserts yet live in the remembrance of many. Among so many dead let me not forget one yet alive, in his time the

<sup>47</sup> Ovid, *Ars am.* 1. 771: 'Part of my enterprise remains, part is now finished'.

<sup>48</sup> Type-characters in the *commedia dell'arte*. Zany (Venetian form of Gianni or Giovanni): a servant acting as a clown, sometimes imitating his master's acts in a ludicrously awkward way; pantaloons: a Venetian character, a lean and foolish old man wearing spectacles and close-fitting breeches; harlequin: witty servant, who wore particoloured tights.

<sup>49</sup> Little is known about the actors in early Elizabethan drama; but cf. the alphabetical index in E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 327-8, 303, 330, 349-50, 313, 328.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Tarleton (d. 1588), a famous comedian, was introduced to Queen Elizabeth through the Earl of Leicester, and became one of the Queen's Men (1583); cf. *Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 342-5. *Tarleton's Jests* (probably in print before 1600; first surviving edition, 1611) is supposedly biographical.

<sup>51</sup> Will Kempe was well known by 1590 for his clowning and jigs. From 1594 on he was a member of the Chamberlain's Men, and his name survives in the stage-directions to *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado about Nothing*.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *The Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 339-40, 334-5, 296-8, 340-1.

most worthy, famous Master Edward Alleyn.<sup>53</sup> To omit these, as also such as for their divers imperfections may be thought insufficient for the quality, actors should be men picked out,\* personable,\* according to the parts they present. They should be rather scholars, that, though they cannot speak well know how to speak, or else to have that volubility\* that they can speak well though they understand not what; and so both imperfections may by instructions be helped and amended. But where a good tongue and a good conceit both fail, there can never be good actor.

I also could wish that such as are condemned for their licentiousness might by a general consent be quite excluded our society. For, as we are men that stand in the broad eye of the world, so should our manners, gestures, and behaviours savour of such government\* and modesty to deserve the good thoughts and reports of all men, and to abide the sharpest censures even of those that are the greatest opposites\* to the quality. Many amongst us I know to be of substance, of government, of sober lives and temperate carriages, house-keepers, and contributory\* to all duties enjoined them, equally with them that are ranked with the most bountiful; and if amongst so many of sort\* there be any few degenerate from the rest in that good demeanour which is both requisite and expected at their hands, let me entreat you not to censure hardly\* of all for the misdeeds of some, but rather to excuse us, as Ovid doth the generality of women:

*Parcit paucarum diffundere crimen in omnes:  
Spectetur meritis quæque puella suis.*<sup>54</sup>

For some offenders, that perhaps are few,  
Spare in your thoughts to censure all the crew:  
Since every breast contains a sundry spirit,  
Let every one be censured as they merit.

Others there are of whom, should you ask my opinion, I must refer you to this, *Consule theatrum.*<sup>55</sup> Here I might take fit opportunity to reckon up all our English writers, and compare them with the

<sup>53</sup> Edward Alleyn (1566–1626), one of the leading tragic actors in the Elizabethan theatre, who was with Worcester's players in 1583, thereafter with the Admiral's Men; his roles included Faustus, Tamburlaine, and Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*. He was stepson-in-law of the impresario Philip Henslowe, and with his considerable fortune from the theatre and property investments founded Dulwich College.

<sup>54</sup> Ovid, *Ars am.* 3. 9–10: 'Lay not a handful's crime on all the race, | But on its merits judge each woman's case' (tr. Melville).

<sup>55</sup> 'Look to the theatre'.

Greek, French, Italian, and Latin poets, not only in their pastoral, historical, elegiacal, and heroic poems, but in their tragical and comical subjects. But it was my chance to happen on the like, learnedly done by an approved good scholar, in a book called *Wits Commonwealth*,<sup>56</sup> to which treatise I wholly refer you, returning to our present subject. . . .

OF ACTORS, AND THE TRUE USE OF THEIR QUALITY  
THE THIRD BOOK

Tragedies and comedies, saith Donatus,<sup>57</sup> had their beginning *a rebus divinis*, from divine sacrifices. They differ thus: in comedies *turbulenta prima, tranquilla ultima*; in tragedies, *tranquilla prima, turbulenta ultima*: comedies begin in trouble and end in peace; tragedies begin in calms and end in tempest. . . . The definition of the comedy, according to the Latins: a discourse consisting of divers institutions,\* comprehending civil and domestic things, in which is taught what in our lives and manners is to be followed, what to be avoided. The Greeks define it thus: *Kômōdia estin idiōtikōn kai politikōn pragmatōn achin donos poroichēn.*<sup>58</sup> Cicero saith,<sup>59</sup> a comedy is the imitation of life, the glass of custom, and the image of truth. . . .

To proceed to the matter. First, playing\* is an ornament to the city, which strangers of all nations repairing\* hither report of in their countries, beholding them here with some admiration; for what variety of entertainment can there be in any city of Christendom more than in London? But some will say, this dish might be very well spared out of the banquet. To him I answer: Diogenes, that used to feed on roots, cannot relish a march-pane.\* Secondly, our English tongue, which

<sup>56</sup> This treatise by Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia. Wits Treasury being the second part of Wits Common Wealth* (1598), in which English writers are listed under various genres, juxtaposed with a list of Greek and Roman authors, was shown by D. C. Allen to have been plagiarized from J. Ravisius Textor's *Officina*: see his edition, *Francis Meres's treatise 'Poetrie'* (Urbana, Ill., 1933).

<sup>57</sup> Aelius Donatus, a grammarian of the 4th cent. AD, whose commentary on Terence was often reprinted in Renaissance editions, together with the fragmentary essay *De Comoedia et Tragoedia* by Evanthius, the source for the following definitions. For a translation of both texts, see A. Preminger, O. B. Hardison, Jr., and K. Kerrane (eds.), *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism* (New York, 1974), pp. 299–309.

<sup>58</sup> 'Comedy is [a representation of] a portion of the actions of average men and citizens, which involves no danger'. Attributed to Aristotle's pupil, Theophrastus, this definition gained great currency from its inclusion in the late 4th cent. *Ars grammatica* of Diomedes.

<sup>59</sup> This often quoted saying was attributed to Cicero by Donatus.

hath been the most harsh, uneven, and broken language of the world, part Dutch, part Irish, Saxon, Scotch, Welsh, and indeed a gallimaufry of many but perfect in none, is now by this secondary means of playing continually refined, every writer striving in himself to add a new flourish\* to it. So that in process, from the most rude and unpolished tongue it is grown to a most perfect and composed\* language, and many excellent works and elaborate poems writ in the same, that many nations grow enamoured of our tongue, before despised. Neither sapphic, ionic, iambic, phaleutic, adonic, glyconic, hexameter, tetrameter, pentameter, asclepediac, choriambic, nor any other measured verse<sup>60</sup> used among the Greeks, Latins, Italians, French, Dutch or Spanish writers, but may be expressed in English, be it blank verse or metre, in distichon or hexastichon,<sup>61</sup> or in what form or feet, or what number you can desire. Thus you see to what excellency our refined English is brought, that in these days we are ashamed of that euphony and eloquence which within these sixty years the best tongues in the land were proud to pronounce. Thirdly, plays have made the ignorant more apprehensive,\* taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read in the discovery\* of all our English chronicles; and what man have you now of that weak capacity that cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded even from William the Conqueror, nay, from the landing of Brute, until this day, being possessed of their true use, for or\* because plays are writ with this aim and carried with this method, to teach their subjects obedience to their king, to show the people the untimely ends of such as have moved tumults, commotions, and insurrections, to present them with the flourishing estate of such as live in obedience, exhorting them to allegiance, dehorting them from all traitorous and felonious stratagems.

*Omne genus scripti gravitate tragœdia vincit.*<sup>62</sup>

If we present a tragedy, we include the fatal and abortive ends of such as commit notorious murders, which is aggravated\* and acted with all the art that may be, to terrify men from the like abhorred practices. If we present a foreign history, the subject is so intended\* that in the lives of Romans, Grecians or others, either the virtues of

<sup>60</sup> Classical verse was strictly quantitative, and so, despite Heywood's assurances, cannot be reproduced in English. Cf. Campion, p. 428, and Daniel, p. 441.

<sup>61</sup> A distichon is a two-line verse, or couplet; a hexastichon is a verse of six lines.

<sup>62</sup> Ovid, *Tristia* 2. 1. 381: 'In solemn grandeur tragedy's unrivalled'.

our countrymen are extolled or their vices reprovèd. As thus, by the example of Cæsar to stir soldiers to valour and magnanimity;\* by the fall of Pompey, that no man trust in his own strength. We present Alexander killing his friend in his rage, to reprove rashness; Midas choked with his gold, to tax covetousness; Nero against tyranny; Sardanapalus against luxury; Ninus against ambition, with infinite others, by sundry instances either animating men to noble attempts or attacking the consciences of the spectators, finding themselves touched\* in presenting the vices of others. If a moral, it is to persuade men to humanity and good life, to instruct them in civility and good manners, showing them the fruits of honesty and the end of villainy.

*versibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult.*<sup>63</sup>

Again Horace, *Arte Poetica*:

*at vestri proavi Plautinos et numeros et  
laudavere sales.*<sup>64</sup>

If a comedy, it is pleasantly contrived with merry accidents, and intermixed with apt and witty jests, to present before the prince at certain times of solemnity, or else merrily fitted to the stage. And what is then the subject of this harmless mirth? Either in the shape of a clown to show others their slovenly and unhandsome behaviour, that they may reform that simplicity\* in themselves which others make their sport, lest they happen to become the like subject of general scorn to an auditory. Else it entreats of love, deriding foolish innamorates who spend their ages, their spirits, nay themselves in the servile and ridiculous employments of their mistresses. And these are mingled with sportful accidents, to recreate such as of themselves are wholly devoted to melancholy, which corrupts the blood, or to refresh such weary spirits as are tired with labour or study, to moderate the cares and heaviness of the mind, that they may return to their trades and faculties\* with more zeal and earnestness after some small, soft, and pleasant retirement. Sometimes they discourse of pantaloons, usurers that have unthrifty sons, which both the fathers and sons may behold to their instructions; sometimes of courtesans, to divulge their subtleties and snares in which young men may be entangled, showing

<sup>63</sup> Horace, *Ars P.* 89: 'A theme for comedy refuses to be set forth in verses of tragedy'.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 270-1: 'Yet your forefathers, you say, praised both the measures and the wit of Plautus'.

them the means to avoid them.<sup>65</sup> If we present a pastoral we show the harmless love of shepherds, diversely moralized, distinguishing betwixt the craft of the city and the innocence of the sheep-cote. Briefly, there is neither tragedy, history, comedy, moral, or pastoral from which an infinite use cannot be gathered. I speak not in the defence of any lascivious shows, scurrilous jests, or scandalous invectives. If there be any such, I banish them quite from my patronage. Yet Horace, *Sermon I, satyr iv*, thus writes:

*Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae,  
atque alii quorum comœdia prisca virorum est,  
si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,  
quod maechus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui  
famosus, multa cum libertate notabant.*<sup>66</sup>

'Eupolis, Cratinus, Aristophanes, and other comic poets in the time of Horace, with large scope and unbridled liberty, boldly and plainly scourged all abuses as in their ages were generally practiced, to the staining and blemishing of a fair and beautiful common-weal.' Likewise a learned gentleman<sup>67</sup> in his *Apology for Poetry* speaks thus: tragedies well-handled be a most worthy kind of poesy, comedies make men see and shame at their faults; and, proceeding further, amongst other university plays he remembers the tragedy of *Richard the Third*, acted in St John's in Cambridge so essentially\* that had the tyrant Phalaris beheld his bloody proceedings it had mollified his heart, and made him relent at sight of his inhuman massacres. Further, he commends of comedies the Cambridge *Pedantius* and the Oxford *Bellum Grammaticale*; and, leaving them, passes on to our public plays, speaking liberally in their praise and what commendable use may be gathered of them. If you peruse *Margarita Poetica*<sup>68</sup> you may see what excellent uses and sentences he hath gathered out of Terence his *Andria*, *Eunuchus*, and the rest; likewise out of Plautus his *Amphitruo*, *Asinaria* . . . But I should tire myself to reckon the names of all French, Roman, German, Spanish, Italian, and English

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Elyot, pp. 65-6, and Massinger, pp. 552-3.

<sup>66</sup> Horace, *Sat.* 1. 4. 1-5: 'Eupolis and Cratinus and Aristophanes, true poets, and the other good men to whom Old Comedy belongs, if there was anyone deserving to be drawn as a rogue and thief, as a rake or cut-throat, or as scandalous in any way, set their mark upon him with great freedom'.

<sup>67</sup> Sir John Harington: above, p. 313.

<sup>68</sup> The *Margarita poetica* of Albertus von Eyb, first published in 1472, continued to be reprinted into the 17th cent.

poets, being in number infinite, and their labours extant to approve their worthiness.

Is thy mind noble, and wouldst thou be further stirred up to magnanimity?\* Behold upon the stage thou mayest see Hercules, Achilles, Alexander, Cæsar, Alcibiades, Lysander, Sertorius, Hannibal, Antigonus, Philip of Macedon, Mithridates of Pontus, Pyrrhus of Epirus; Agesilaus among the Lacedemonians, Epaminondas amongst the Thebans; Scævola alone entering the armed tents of Porsenna, Horatius Cocles alone withstanding the whole army of the Etrurians; Leonidas of Sparta choosing a lion to lead a band of deer, rather than one deer to conduct an army of lions—with infinite others, in their own persons, qualities and shapes, animating thee with courage, deterring thee from cowardice. Hast thou of thy country well deserved? and art thou of thy labour evil requited? To associate\* thee thou mayest see the valiant Roman Marcellus pursue Hannibal at Nola, conquering Syracuse, vanquishing the Gauls at Padua, and presently\* (for his reward) banished his country into Greece. There thou mayest see Scipio Africanus, now triumphing for the conquest of all Africa, and immediately exiled the confines of Romania.<sup>69</sup> Art thou inclined to lust? behold the falls of the Tarquins in the rape of Lucrece, the guerdon of luxury in the death of Sardanapalus, Appius destroyed in the ravishing of Virginia, and the destruction of Troy in the lust of Helen.<sup>70</sup> Art thou proud? Our scene presents thee with the fall of Phaethon, Narcissus pining in the love of his shadow, ambitious Hamon, now calling himself a god, and by and by thrust headlong among the devils. We present men with the ugliness of their vices, to make them the more to abhor them; as the Persians use, who above all sins loathing drunkenness, accustomed in their solemn feasts to make their servants and captives extremely overcome with wine, and then call their children to view their nasty and loathsome behaviour, making them hate that sin in themselves which showed so gross and abominable in others. The like use may be gathered of the drunkards, so naturally imitated in our plays, to the applause of the actor, content

<sup>69</sup> Roman territory. Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus the Elder (236-183 BC), a distinguished soldier and consul, was forced into exile by political opponents.

<sup>70</sup> Some of these subjects were treated by Heywood himself. His *The Rape of Lucrece* shows Tarquin's punishment; *The Iron Age* (1612-13) emphasizes Helen's guilt. In the next paragraph: the story of Appius and Virginia was dramatized by Webster and (perhaps) Heywood, sometime between 1608 and 1634. Heywood brought Diana on stage in *The Golden Age* (1611), Lucrece (as mentioned), and Jane Shore in *1 and 2 Edward IV* (1599). The Countess of Salisbury appears in Shakespeare (and others) *Edward III*, p. 325 above.

of the auditory, and reprovng of the vice. Art thou covetous? go no further than Plautus, his comedy called *Euclio*.<sup>71</sup>

*Dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena  
vivent et meretrix blanda, Menandros erit.*<sup>72</sup>

While there's false servant, or obdurate sire,  
Sly bawd, smooth whore, Menander we'll admire.

To end in a word, art thou addicted to prodigality, envy, cruelty, perjury, flattery, or rage? Our scenes afford thee store of men to shape your lives by, who be frugal, loving, gentle, trusty, without soothing,\* and in all things temperate. Wouldst thou be honourable, just, friendly, moderate, devout, merciful, and loving concord? Thou mayest see many of their fates and ruins who have been dishonourable, unjust, false, gluttonous, sacrilegious, bloody-minded, and brokers of dissension. Women, likewise, that are chaste are by us extolled and encouraged in their virtues, being instanced by Diana, Belpheobe, Matilda, Lucrece, and the Countess of Salisbury. The unchaste are by us showed their errors in the persons of Phryne, Lais, Thais, Flora; and amongst us, Rosamond and Mistress Shore. What can sooner print modesty in the souls of the wanton than by discovering unto them the monstrousness of their sin?

It follows, that we prove these exercises to have been the discoverers of many notorious murders, long concealed from the eyes of the world.<sup>73</sup> To omit all far-fetched instances, we will prove it by a domestic and home-born truth, which within these few years happened. At Lynn, in Norfolk, the then Earl of Sussex's players acting the old history of *Friar Francis*,<sup>74</sup> and presenting a woman who, insatiately doting on a young gentleman, the more securely to enjoy his affection mischievously and secretly murdered her husband, whose ghost haunted her; and at divers times, in her most solitary and private contemplations, in most horrid and fearful shapes appeared and stood before her. As this was acted, a towns-woman, till then of good estimation and report, finding her conscience at this presentment\* extremely troubled, suddenly screeched and cried out, 'Oh! my husband, my husband! I see the ghost of my husband fiercely threat-

<sup>71</sup> The miserly old man in Plautus' *Aulularia* (the source of Molière's *L'Avare*).

<sup>72</sup> Ovid, *Am.* 1. 15. 17-18: 'as long as tricky slave, hard father, treacherous bawd, and wheedling harlot shall be found, Menander will endure'.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Hamlet* 2. 2. 596-606: 'I have heard | That guilty creatures sitting at a play . . .'

<sup>74</sup> This title could also be *Fair Francis*.

ening and menacing me!' At which shrill and unexpected outcry the people about her, moved to a strange amazement, inquired the reason of her clamour; when presently, un-urged, she told them that seven years ago she, to be possessed of such a gentleman (meaning<sup>75</sup> him), had poisoned her husband, whose fearful image personated itself in the shape of that ghost. Whereupon the murderess was apprehended, before the justices further examined, and by her voluntary confession after condemned. That this is true, as well by the report of the actors as the records of the town, there are many eyewitnesses of this accident yet living vocally to confirm it. . . .

Another of the like wonder happened at Amsterdam in Holland. A company of our English comedians\* (well known) travelling those countries, as they were before the burgers and other the chief inhabitants acting the last part of the *Four Sons of Aymon*, towards the last act of the history, where penitent Rinaldo like a common labourer lived in disguise, vowing as his last penance to labour and carry burdens to the structure of a goodly church there to be erected; whose diligence the labourers envying, since by reason of his stature and strength he did usually perfect\* more work in a day than a dozen of the best (he working for his conscience, they for their luces). Whereupon, by reason his industry had so much disparaged their living,\* conspired among themselves to kill him, waiting some opportunity to find him asleep, which they might easily do, since the sorest labourers are the soundest sleepers, and industry is the best preparative to rest. Having spied their opportunity, they drove a nail into his temples, of which wound immediately he died. As the actors handled this, the audience might on a sudden understand\* an out-cry and loud shriek in a remote gallery; and pressing about the place, they might perceive a woman of great gravity strangely amazed, who with a distracted and troubled brain oft sighed out these words: 'Oh, my husband, my husband!' The play without further interruption proceeded; the woman was to her own house conducted, without any apparent suspicion, every one conjecturing as their fancies led them. In this agony she some few days languished, and on a time, as certain of her well-disposed neighbours came to comfort her, one amongst the rest being church-warden: to him the sexton posts,\* to tell him of a strange thing happening to him in the ripping up of a grave. 'See here' (quoth

<sup>75</sup> As A. H. Gilbert observes (*LCPD*, p. 564), with the sense 'indicating, setting forth'; cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 5. 1. 322: 'And thus she means, videlicet'.

he) 'what I have found', and shows them a fair skull, with a great nail pierced quite through the brain-pan: 'But we cannot conjecture to whom it should belong, nor how long it hath lain in the earth, the grave being confused, and the flesh consumed.' At the report of this accident the woman, out of the trouble of her afflicted conscience, discovered a former murder; for twelve years ago, by driving that nail into that skull (being the head of her husband) she had treacherously slain him. This being publicly confessed, she was arraigned, condemned, adjudged, and burned.—But I draw my subject to greater length than I purposed; these therefore out of other infinites I have collected, both for their familiarness and lateness of memory.

Thus, our antiquity we have brought from the Grecians in the time of Hercules; from the Macedonians in the age of Alexander; from the Romans long before Julius Caesar; and since him, through the reigns of twenty-three emperors succeeding, even to Marcus Aurelius. After him they were supported by the Mantuans, Venetians, Valencians, Neapolitans, the Florentines, and others; since by the German princes, the Palsgrave, the Landsgrave, the dukes of Saxony, of Brunswick, &c. The cardinal at Brussels hath at this time in pay a company of our English comedians. The French king allows certain companies in Paris, Orleans, besides other cities; so doth the king of Spain in Seville, Madrid, and other provinces. But in no country they are of that eminence that ours are. So our most royal and ever-renowned sovereign hath licensed us in London; so did his predecessor, the thrice-virtuous virgin, Queen Elizabeth, and before her, her sister, Queen Mary, Edward the Sixth, and their father Henry the Eighth; and before these, in the tenth year of the reign of Edward the Fourth, Anno 1490. John Stow,<sup>76</sup> an ancient and grave chronicler, records—amongst other varieties<sup>77</sup> tending to the like effect—that a play was acted at a place called Skinners-well, fast by Clerkenwell, which continued eight days, and was of matter from Adam and Eve, the first creation of the world; the spectators were no worse than the royalty of England. And amongst other commendable exercises in this place the Company of the Skinners of London held certain yearly solemn plays; in place whereof, now in these latter days the wrestling and such other pastimes have been kept, and is still held about Bartholomewtide. Also, in the year 1390, the fourteenth year of the reign of Richard the Second, the 18 of July,

<sup>76</sup> See John Stow, *A Survey of London* (1603 edn.), ed. C. L. Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908), i. 15–16, for the following references to plays, interludes, and wrestling.

<sup>77</sup> Series of parallel instances.

were the like interludes recorded of at the same place, which continued three days together, the king and queen and nobility being there present. Moreover, to this day in divers places of England there be towns that hold the privilege of their fairs, and other charters by yearly stage-plays, as at Manningtree in Suffolk, Kendall in the north, and others. To let these pass, as things familiarly known to all men.

Now, to speak of some abuse lately crept into the quality, as an inveighing against the state, the court, the law, the city, and their governments, with the particularizing of private men's humours yet alive, noble-men, and others: I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approve it, nor dare I by any means excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselves, committing their bitterness and liberal invectives against all estates to the mouths of children,<sup>78</sup> supposing their juniority to be a privilege for any railing, be it never so violent, I could advise all such to curb and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and government. But wise and judicial censurers, before whom such complaints shall at any time hereafter come, will not, I hope, impute these abuses to any transgression in us, who have ever been careful and provident to shun the like. I surcease to prosecute\* this any further, lest my good meaning be by some misconstrued; and fearing likewise, lest with tediousness I tire the patience of the favourable reader, here (though abruptly) I conclude my third and last TREATISE.

*stultitiam patiuntur opes, mihi parvula res est.*<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Referring to the Children of the Chapel, acting at the Blackfriars theatre, who performed *Cynthia's Revels* (1600) and *Poetaster* (1601), in which Jonson satirized the plays and players of the public theatres, especially Marston and Dekker, setting off a noisy controversy. Cf. *Hamlet* 2. 2. 330–58, ed. Harold Jenkins (London, 1982) and pp. 1–3, 255–7, 470–2 of that edition.

<sup>79</sup> Horace, *Epist.* 1. 18. 29 (adapted): 'Wealth allows of folly; my means are but trifling'.

John Fletcher,  
On pastoral tragicomedy (c.1610)

JOHN FLETCHER (1579–1625) was educated at Benet (now Corpus Christi) College Cambridge, and had a prolific career as a dramatist. He wrote numerous plays with Francis Beaumont (c.1584–1616), innovating in tragicomedies displaying a pronounced emotionality, including *Philaster* (c.1609), *A King and no King* (1611), and *The Maid's Tragedy* (1611). He collaborated with Shakespeare on *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613) and *Henry VIII* (1613).

TEXT. From *The Faithful Sheperdess*, probably performed in 1608 and printed in 1610. Pastoral tragicomedy was a new genre in the Renaissance, introduced by two contrasting works, Torquato Tasso's lyrical *Aminta* (1581) and Giovanni Battista Guarini's more plot-based *Il Pastor Fido* (1590; 20 editions by 1602). Although pastoral elements figure in earlier English plays, such as *As You Like It* (1599), *The Maid's Metamorphosis* (anonymous, c.1600), and Samuel Daniel's *Queen's Arcadia* (1605), credit is due to Fletcher for writing the first fully pastoral tragicomedy in English. He consciously emulated Italian modes, as found in Guarini's *Compendio della poesia tragicomica* (1599–1601; excerpts in *LCPD*, pp. 504–33), and other theoretical works. See M. T. Herrick, *Tragicomedy: Its Origin and Development in Italy, France, and England* (Urbana, Ill., 1955).

TO THE READER

If you be not reasonably assured of your knowledge in this kind of poem, lay down the book or read this, which I would wish had been the prologue. It is a pastoral tragicomedy, which the people seeing when it was played, having ever had a singular gift in defining, concluded to be a play of country-hired shepherds,<sup>1</sup> in grey cloaks, with curtailed\* dogs in strings, sometimes laughing together, and sometimes killing one another; and, missing Whitsun ales, cream, wassail

<sup>1</sup> Guarini had insisted on this point: cf. Herrick, *Tragicomedy*, p. 139, *LCPD*, p. 530.

and morris-dances,<sup>2</sup> began to be angry. In their error I would not have you fall, lest you incur their censure.

Understand therefore a pastoral to be a representation of shepherds and shepherdesses, with their actions and passions, which must be such as may agree with their natures, at least not exceeding former fictions and vulgar traditions. They are not to be adorned with any art but such improper ones as nature is said to bestow, as singing and poetry, or such as experience may teach them, as the virtues of herbs and fountains, the ordinary course of the sun, moon, and stars, and such like. But you are ever to remember shepherds to be such as all the ancient poets and modern of understanding have received them: that is, the owners of flocks, and not hirelings.<sup>3</sup>

A tragicomedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy; yet brings some near it,<sup>4</sup> which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned. So that a god<sup>5</sup> is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy.

Thus much I hope will serve to justify my poem, and make you understand it; to teach you more for nothing, I do not know that I am in conscience bound.

<sup>2</sup> Traditional components of English holiday festivals. Cf. Perdita: 'Methinks I play as I have seen them do | In Whitsun pastorals' (*The Winter's Tale* 4. 4. 133f.).

<sup>3</sup> That is, prosperous farmers, not day-labourers.

<sup>4</sup> This influential definition of tragicomedy, as a genre which 'wants', or lacks deaths, but includes some intermediate degree of danger, while drawing on contemporary theory, looks back to classical attempts to distinguish tragedy from comedy. Diomedes the grammarian (4th cent. AD) defined comedy as a 'treatment of private and civil station that is without danger to life' (*LCPD*, p. 508). Guarini's requirements for tragicomedy included '(1) great personages, (2) verisimilar (i.e. fictitious) plot, (3) emotions "with their edge abated", (4) tragic danger but not death, (5) moderate laughter, (6) feigned complications, (7) happy reversal of fortune, (8) "above all the comic order"' (Herrick, *Tragicomedy*, p. 263).

<sup>5</sup> The *deus ex machina*, sometimes used to resolve the plot-complication in classical drama.