SETTLEMENT AESTHETICS: THEATRICALITY, FORM, FAILURE

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Settlement Aesthetics identifies a period of English history between 1570 and 1620 –
bracketed by the search for the Northwest Passage and Jamestown's Starving Time –
when the New World project was popularly regarded as a failed enterprise. Critics have
deemphasized these early years, reading them as only a stage in England's imperial
ascent. But as my project shows, dramatists were taking up and adapting accounts of
settlement's failures, recognizing in them a set of formal techniques for representing
crisis that could help them respond to changes in their own medium. The demands of the
repertory system and a commercial interest in cultivating audiences motivated dramatists
to adapt current events for popular consideration, to turn the theater (in Ben Jonson's
words) into a "staple of news." By the late sixteenth century, unprecedented geographic
expansion outside the theater precipitated an expansion of the dramatic setting in new
genres such as city comedy, dramatic romance, and tragicomedy. As a result, theater's
foundational technologies – prop, person, line, and scene – were themselves undergoing a
sea change. The plays I consider draw on the forms of settlement crisis, from
cartographic illiteracy and spatial disorientation to the failure of traditional expertise, to
show how fraught and uneven this theatrical expansion was. My chapters, one on New
World writing itself, and three on the dramatic texts that responded to it, reconstruct the
formal vocabularies that emerged from settlement's signature catastrophes. By reading

dramatic interest in settlement as aesthetic, rather than merely thematic, I show how settlement failures were central to the history of dramatic form.

By recovering a history of settlement before settlement – settlement that is still unsettled – I recover the aesthetic legacy of New World writing as it was understood by early moderns themselves. Writings emerging from the settlement context considered the New World less as a place or distinct setting, than as a container for epistemological and generic uncertainty. The imprint of settlement's material and representational failures, retained in drama, then, invites us to look for coloniality in places, and in forms, that we might not expect. What makes the dramas I consider – from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* to Ben Jonson's early city comedies – New World plays is not their fidelity to specific settlement documents, the frequency of references to the Americas, or an explicitly colonial setting, but the way they translate the tropes and conventions of colonial catastrophe into a theatrical language, turning them to new uses and occasions. While work on the global Renaissance often cites 'the early modern world' as a critical abstraction, I identify a fifty-year span (1570-1620) and a geographic context (American settlement) to show how the questions and conflicts surrounding the New World might also have implications for how we read colonialism's futures. By exposing the anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty that attended imperialism's rise, *Settlement Aesthetics* draws a line between the seventeenth century and the present. Given that we are still settlers, my project outlines the vocabularies of catastrophe that mark our own settlement moment.

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Introduction: Settlement Aesthetics and the Literature of Catastrophe

In this project, I take early New World settlement to be central to the aesthetic

development of English commercial drama during the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. On its own, this claim is contentious. We have only to consult the historical

records, the Master of Revel's rolls and the Stationer's Register, to see that very few

dramas set in the Americas were published or performed during this period. The larger

trend in voyage dramas that produced plays such as *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (licensed for

performance in 1612), *The Renegado* (1624), and *The Island Princess* (1622), looked to

the eastern hemisphere and the Ottoman Empire for dramatic material.[1] In contrast, only

three plays take the New World as the nominal setting for dramatic action, and of these

three, none are extant.[2] This absence sits uneasily beside a wealth of pamphlets, books,

ballads, and poems chronicling early settlements in Roanoke and Jamestown from the

early days of settlement (in the 1580s) to the Great Migration (in the 1630s). Documents,

such as Peter Martyr's *Decades of the New World,* published in seven separate editions

by the mid-1620s, and travel anthologies like Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*

(1589) and Samuel Purchas's *His Pilgrims* (1614), which were republished with

"enlarged" sections on New World travel at several points in the seventeenth century,

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[1] See Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005) for the popularity of the Ottoman empire as a setting for drama; on the boom in travel drama overall during this period see Anthony Parr, "Introduction," *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1; Daniel Vitkus positions what he calls "Turk plays" within the context of a larger boom in travel literature and increased interest in the east in *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 43.

[2] For more information on lost travel drama, and particularly the three lost dramas on the New World, see David McInnis, "Lost Plays from Early Modern England: Voyage Drama, A Case Study," *Literature Compass* 8, no. 8 (August 2011): 534. These three plays were titled *The New World's Tragedy* (1596), *The Tragedy of the Plantation of Virginia* (1623) and the "Amboyna Play" (named by McInnis) which was "ready for production in 1625."

demonstrate that there was plenty of New World material.[3] Add to this an increasing

number of travel guides written by Englishmen, some of which were gathered by Hakluyt

and Purchas, and others like John Smith's *General Historie of Virginia* (1624) or

Ferdinando Gorges's *A Brief Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New-England*

(1622) that were sold as standalone copies. A widespread interest in Theodor De Bry's

engravings and the increased use of New World themes and settings in Lord Mayor's

shows suggest that there was also *popular* interest in the travels. It is even more striking,

then, that the New World is so difficult to identify in drama, especially since we have

evidence that plays featuring New World settings and themes were popular with

audiences. One of the lost plays, *The New World's Tragedy* (1596) had eleven

performances (not an insignificant number) and the riot of references to the Americas

scattered throughout the rest of the canon suggests that it was commonplace enough to

refer to offhand. In *Eastward Hoe* (1605), *The Roaring Girl* (1607), *The Tempest* (1611),

and *The Sea Voyage* (1622), a sparse but persistent evocation of New World themes

suggest that early modern dramatists were spinning "news" into fiction, and in a largely

illiterate population, drama would have been one of the only sites for the relation of

contemporary events.[4] But if Swiss traveler Thomas Platter could observe that the

English "learn … at the play what is happening abroad" and prefer to "take their

pleasures at home" (i.e., to travel without travelling), then how do we make sense of the

New World's dramatic absence?[5]

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[3] All publication data obtained from the English Short Title Catalog.

[4] Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*. Parr describes an increasing "imaginative investment in a *developing* state of affairs" in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century travel drama, 4.

[5] Thomas Platter, *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599* (J. Cape, 1937), 170.

Scholars of the New World in English representations have attempted to answer this question. The New Historicist critics who first emphasized the significance of the New World context to early modern literary production pointed to its novelty, the extent to which it resisted early modern modes of categorization, while claiming that this discourse of novelty helped to reinforce imperial knowledge production.[6] To these critics, the New World takes on significance within the early modern period as something "wonderous" existing outside of established conceptual categories, but evoking notions of expansion, power, and conquest that were emerging in the pre-colonial era, if not yet crystallized.[7] In this reading, English fictionalizations of the New World become mere projections, they mark its erasure as a distinct place, and its reintroduction in and as imperial discourse.

While these scholars have read the New World as an important context for English drama, context has meant, implicitly or explicitly, a shared participation in a social discourse: in Stephen Greenblatt's terms, "the discourse of the New World."[8] This discourse is predominantly (although not exclusively) *enabling*. It is an "instrument of empire" and thus figures forth the dominant ideology of a given society: it has a "logic."[9] While discourse is enabling to its user – to imperialists, in other words, who use discourse to do things, who use it to conquer – as a critic, thinking in discourse and exposing the logics of discourse also exposes the "circumstances of its production" and

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[6] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, 1 edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New: 1492-1650*, Revised ed. edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[7] See for example Elliott, *The Old World and the New*, when he claims that the New World frequently featured in representation as an "indiscriminate compilation of facts lumped together into an undifferentiated category of the marvelous or the exotic," 32.

[8] Stephen Greenblatt, *The Greenblatt Reader* (Wiley, 2005), 85.

[9] Greenblatt, *Reader*, 123.

thus the record of violence and conflict that often went into its making.[10] By defining discourse as that which reveals context, it can become the imperfect instrument of empire to its users but the perfect instrument of empire's revelation to us. It betrays its user (Columbus, John Smith, Thomas Hariot, Marlowe) to us, its critics. But the result of this insistence on fictional and nonfictional texts as – essentially – documents of power that must be demystified is that discourse and its "logic," as well as its "circumstances," are reified. We can see this through the deconstructive process of New Historicist critique, where what is revealed about a text and its context is always a truth about power, a truth about imperial control, and the logics of empire. The reification of discourse, and the means by which it is produced, its "circumstances" and its "logic," is also the reification of context itself. While New Historicists aimed to bring context into the fold of literary critique, they also froze context in its place *as* discourse.

More recently, work on the early modern world has embraced a line of critique, represented in part by John Gillies, Ayesha Ramachandran, and David McInnis, that expands on the New Historicist link between text and context. These critics establish a connection between public theater and cartography, reading theatrical performances as largely cartographic endeavors, and follow the New Historicist tack by interpreting context as a cartographic meta-discourse in which undiscovered spaces and exotic lands becomes a dream that both cartographers and playwrights are working to make reality.[11]

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[10] Greenblatt, *Reader*, 123.

[11] Ayesha Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); See also Shankar Raman, *Framing "India": The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) for maps of India and Indianness in early modern fiction more generally; Frank Lestringant and Stephen Greenblatt, *Mapping the Renaissance World: The*

Here "discourse" in the New Historicist sense – in other words, a language, a way of

talking about settlement, that mystifies a shared imperial ideology – is replaced with the

logic of the "world" as an imagined totality. What is outside conquest and outside the

theater is precisely this wholeness, a wholeness realized both in newly available

cartographic representations, and, increasingly, in economic networks connecting remote

places. We might think of the world, in this way, as a spatialization of discourse. The

map becomes the master conceit for this understanding of the interconnected early

modern world, one that is crisscrossed with "vectors" and "flows."[12] On the stage, the

presence of the map instantiates a way of thinking about the New World and its

inhabitants – producing a kind of mind travel that reproduces the totalizing authority of

the top-down and schematic perspective of the map. The map instantiates a spatial

discourse in which the presence and perspective of the colonizer becomes a structuring

principle for how New World territories should be understood *as* territories. The linking

together of multiple places on a single plane establishes a relationship between

"commensurate and incommensurable," in Jacques Lezra's reading, allows for the

representation of abstract distance in Gillies' reading, and in Raman's analysis,

"generates the illusion of transparency… [where] space is the neutral backdrop to human

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Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery, 1ˢᵗ edition (Polity, 2014); Bernhard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).
[12] Bartolovich, Crystal. 2009. "'Travailing' Theory: Global Flows of Labor and the Enclosure of the Subject." In *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh, 1st edition, 50–66. Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 50; Ryu, Catherine. 2009. "The Politics of Identity: William Adams, John Saris, and the English East India Company's Failure in Japan." In *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh, 1st edition, 178–89. Chichester, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 185.

action."[13] The theater's adoption of a cartographic spatiality scales the fictional setting up from a lived-in place to an abstract totality, one that, in Ramachandran's words, "synthesizes new global experiences into a structure that … bind[s] individual fragments into a collective unity."[14] But this binding also shrinks "place" down, both by representing it as a fragment – part of a larger whole – *and* by making this whole itself a place. It scales a vast world down to the perspective of a single viewer. Onstage, the contact between theater and map produce a schematic rendering of non-English territories that is then organized by an English viewer located outside of it. As a "spatial art," theater implicitly or explicitly becomes a putatively cartographic technology.[15]

In work by Rebecca Bach and Allison Games, the New World is not a world *per se* in English representations, as much as an economy for merchantable commodities. have scaled it down into its merchantable commodities. In these readings, the New World becomes visible to us through its exports, allowing us to trace the way that goods and people travelled (or were transported) between the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe in an Atlantic labor economy. If New Historicist criticism read the New World as alien, and thus subject to commodification and exportation as an oddity or "wonder," this commodity then becomes local and familiar, circulating within London as a product to be consumed.[16] Working largely through references to New World products, these critics consider how dramatists evoke the Americas by presenting it as a source of money and

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[13] Jacques Lezra, "Geography and Marlowe," in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 125–37; Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*; Raman, *Framing "India,"* 150.

[14] Ramachandran, 180.

[15] Turner, Henry S. *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 37.

[16] Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions,* 24.

raw resources (tobacco and sugar), entertainment and novelty, and financial speculation.[17] They trace what Alison Games calls the "web of empire" that spanned across the Atlantic world into London, and ultimately in other readings, into the theater.[18] Just as merchants imported "tobacco" (*Volpone* 2.2.120) and "massie gold" (*Eastward Hoe* 4.3.14) (stolen from Spanish ships) into London, playwrights, we are to understand, imported them, in turn, into their plays. What Gavin Hollis calls "theatermemes," the "shared allusions, tunes, ideas [and] catch-phrases," form a "picture" of the New World already in circulation.[19] References to the New World constitute a theatrical economy, moving "from playhouse to playhouse"; they constitute a parallel New World economy to London's own, and this economy contains many of the same materials (snippets of news, imported objects, returned travelers) that were part of the representational matrix of London life.[20] Although Hollis rightfully argues that these references often countered the rosy outlook of the "Virginia Company's promotional machine," he follows Games and Bach in reading the New World through its localized references that are fungible and transportable, able to move from context to context, just as displaced New World goods

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[17] On the history of tobacco use in England and the significance of John Rolph's Virginia tobacco imports see Penny McCarthy, "'It was not tobacco stupified my brain': The Tobacco Controversy of 1607," *The Modern Language Review* 110, no. 3 (2015): 631–48, https://doi.org/10.5699/modelangrevi.110.3.0631; Craig Rustici, "Tobacco, Union, and the Indianized English," in *Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris, 2012 edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 117–31; Jason Hughes, *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). For information about Amerindians kidnapped and exported to England as spectacles or translators (some also sold into slavery for the European market) consult Alden T. Vaughan, "Trinculo's Indian: American Natives in Shakespeare's England," in *The Tempest and Its Travels*, ed. Peter Hulme and William Sherman, Critical Views. (London: Reaktion, 2000).

[18] See Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660*, 1st edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[19] Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576-1642*, 1st edition (Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

[20] Hollis, 3.

were.[21] Rather than identifying the New World as a coherent place, then, these critics see it as already partially embedded – imaginatively and economically – in the fabric of London life.

I join these critics in asserting that there was indeed a dramatic interest in the New World, even if New World locations themselves were not on display. Like Gillies and Ramachandran, I see theater as invested in some of the same representational questions as New World cartographers, how persons (theatrical or real) orient themselves without clear spatial coordinates, and how people and places remote from England become subject to English representation. Like Hollis and Bach, however, I also am invested in the reception of the New World at home, the extent to which it was embedded in a set of experiences – theatrical and local – that gave it meaning for audiences and readers. I differ from these critics, then, not in how I answer the question "Why were there no New World dramas?" but in how I define what the "New World" meant for dramatists and in how I identify the texts, experiences, ideas, forms, and representations with which it was associated. This chapter contends that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the *experience of settlement*, not the fantasy of empire or the products of an international economy, became a dramatic resource for dramatists *and* that this experience was overwhelmingly associated with failures, catastrophes, errors and loss, that were both representational (a loss of men, or food, or life, or shelter, a failure to thrive or to obtain a return on investment) and representational (a loss for words, a failure of knowledge or expertise).

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[21] Hollis, 4. For more on the New World as an economy, see Games, *The Web of Empire*; R. Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World,1580-1640*, 1st edition (Houndmills, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

Early American scholars such as Edmund Morgan, Jon Kukla, Kathleen Donegan, and Erik Seeman have reminded us that early settlers and speculators shared no such certainty about the imperial future.[22] During these first few decades, the acts of horrific violence that could come to characterize the success of the colonial project, destruction of person and property, imposition of martial law, the kidnapping and trafficking of indigenous interpreters and guides, and forced land seizure, were only just being articulated and justified as part of a vision for the colonial future. Investors were still debating whether mutual trade, rather than conquest, might be a better way to make the Americas profitable. And when these first promoters of the Virginia project established motivations for "western planting," the question of whether to settle or not does not have a clear answer.[23] Do the colonists wish to stay in the land, and if so, should they adapt their agriculture model to accommodate American plants or import plants from abroad? If they do not stay, can they still benefit from a trade relationship with native peoples? Will the New World function as a "vent" for English goods? Who exactly should do the planting – the Powhatan and Paspahegh or the English? When Richard Hakluyt the Elder asks, "what is to be done?" in his *Inducements to the Liking of the Voyage Intended toward Virginia* (1585), the question is not rhetorical. Instead, he reflects an investor's

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[22] For associations drawn between the New World, early settlement, and catastrophe, see Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, Reissue edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003); Jon Kukla, "Order and Chaos in Early America: Political and Social Stability in Pre-Restoration Virginia," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (1985): 275–98; Kathleen Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America*, 1st edition, Early American Studies; Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[23] Richard Hakluyt, "Discourse on Western Planting," in *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America*, ed. Peter C. Mancall, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 1045-1356.

uncertainty about the viability of continuous habitation or of the continuing viability of investment.

This unease is mirrored in settlement narratives themselves. When we turn to settlement writing, we see instances of *settling* in action, the extent to which settlements, and the settlers who occupied them, were constantly being disassembled and put back together, depleted through starvation or disease, or abandoned by investors and then replenished with new supplies and new occupants. While "colonial" implies a stable political relationship, settlement captures the ambiguity of this period, before the crown seized the failing Virginia company from investors as an extension of a larger imperial project, and where what Francesco Veracini terms "isopolitical" relationships between the settlers, their financiers in Europe (who intermittently abandoned them), and sovereign chiefdoms produced a complex triangulation of affinity, loyalty, and reliance.[24]

A turn to discourses of "settlement," rather than "colonial" looks toward a time at which the English would be more "settled" in the landscape but acknowledges that they were not settled *yet.* It acknowledges settlement as part of a discourse of conquest that had yet to be articulated as the purpose, the goal, or the future, of an ongoing (and still very uncertain) series of financial ventures, explorations and (ultimately) withdrawals from colonies in the Arctic Archipelagoes, Virginia, Maine, and the Caribbean. What we see

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[24] Lorenzo Veracini, "Isopolitics, Deep Colonizing, Settler Colonialism," *Interventions* 13, no. 2 (June 1, 2011): 171–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2011.573215. On the distinction between settlement and colonialism, and the rise of settler-colonialism as a critical epistemology, see Lorenzo Veracini, "'Settler Colonialism': Career of a Concept," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 2 (June 1, 2013): 313–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2013.768099; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December 1, 2006): 387–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240; Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, "Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (September 29, 2014), http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/download/21166.

instead, is a series of settlement *attempts* that were still in the process of being fully articulated by investors and settlers alike: a history, in other words, of *un*settlement.

The narratives that settlement produced were both literary (in pamphlets, anthologies, and newsprint) and verbal (rumors or stories from returned settlers). They represent a challenge to the ambitions of the Virginia Company and the investors that preceded it: ambitions that, even late in the sixteenth century, were conflicted about what, exactly, "planting" in America was meant to accomplish. Through the disappearance of the Roanoke Colony in 1590, the abandonment of the Popham Colony in 1607, and the infamous Jamestown Starving Time in the winter of 1609 and 1610, settlers experienced starvation, extreme temperatures, and abandonment by their governors.[25] The "skilful" men that the Hakluyt sought were nowhere to be found.[26] Instead, the people were, in John Winthrop's words, "a multitude of rude and misgoverned persons, and very scumme of the people" without "a right forme of government."[27] Many of these early settlers were indeed likely to be indentured; they were "poore men."[28] Still, it is not clear if the venture would have been a success had the settlers been more "skilful." In place of the "great broad riverse" promised by early investors and financiers, Ralph Lane encountered

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[25] Peter C. Mancall, *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America*, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), Kindle edition provides a useful chronology of these disasters, 3047.
[26] Hakluyt's text *Inducements to the liking of the voyage intended towards Virginia in 40 and 42 degrees of latitude* was included in one of the 1602 copies of John Brereton 1572-ca, *A Briefe and True Relation of the Discouerie of the North Part of Virginia,* Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1196:03 (London: [Printed at Eliot's Court Press], 1602), 34.
[27] According to Marsha Elaine Stewart of the Winthrop Society, Winthrop's *Reasons for the Plantation in New England* (1628) was "a widely distributed and influential piece of propaganda in furtherance of the proposed settlement of Massachusetts Bay, judging from the number of copies in various forms which are still extant, along with numerous responses pro and con penned by various interested worthies of the day." "The Winthrop Society: Descendants of the Great Migration," accessed November 30, 2017, https://www.winthropsociety.com/doc_reasons.php.
[28] Ralph Lane, "Discourse on the First Colony," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, n.d., 848.

streams "very shallow and most dangerous" as to make them "scares […] navigable"

while larger bodies of water were "salt[y] and brackish," unfit for drinking.[29] And in a

rebuttal to the Virginia Company's promise of a "wholesome and temperate […]

climate," Jamestown colonists experienced "foule weather" and "unwholesome and

sickly ayre."[30] What began in hopes of bounty ended in "meere famine," especially

during the harsh winters when even fishing could not provide sustenance because "the

river (which we were wont before this time of the yeare to be plentifull of Sturgion) had

not now (in the colder season) a Fish to be seene in it."[31] In Roanoke, Sagadahoc (a short-

lived colony in Popham, Maine), Jamestown, and the Northwest Passage voyages,

mismanagement of resources, the struggle to navigate in thick inland forests, and the

miscarriage of supply ships from England feature in narratives that detail the "Fluxes and

Agues" of dying colonists, the "negligence and improvidence" of community leaders, and

the "calamitie," "loss," and "desperate necessity" that characterized life there and that led

George Percy to declare that "there were never Englishmen left in a forreigne Countrey in

such miserie as wee were in this new discovered Virginia."[32] This archive of texts was all

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[29] Lane, 843.

[30] Counseil for Virginia (England and Wales), *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia Vvith a Confutation of Such Scandalous Reports as Haue Tended to the Disgrace of so Worthy an Enterprise. Published by Aduise and Direction of the Councell of Virginia.*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 728:14 (London: Printed [by Eliot's Court Press and William Stansby] for William Barret, and are to be sold [by Edward Blount] at the blacke Beare in Pauls Church-yard, 1610), 27. Lane, "Discourse on the First Colony," 838. William Strachey, "A True Reportory," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn, 1st edition (New York: Library of America, 2007): 979–1037, 1026.

[31] George Percy, "Discourse," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn, 1st edition (New York: Library of America, 2007), 920–34, 933. Strachey, "A True Repertory," 1021. Strachey's Jamestown narrative aligns with the time that George Percy was there; I'm compressing their ideas together here.

[32] Strachey, "A True Reportory," 1026; Ferdinando Gorges, "A Briefe Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New England (1622)," in *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America*, ed. Peter C. Mancall, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016), 2365-2576, 2405, 2392; Counseil for Virginia (England and Wales), 15-16. Percy, "Discourse," 933.

either printed, or widely available in miscellanies and in manuscript form during the early

modern period.

Documents that viewed the New World as a "dangerous and dreaded land," rather than as

a potential source of profit and speculation, were clearly not limited to coterie circulation;

they were memorialized in Hakluyt and Purchas's widely-available anthologies, and by

the early seventeenth-century had become part of the New World's popular

characterization.[33] Official documents of the period, from those issued by the Virginia

Company to those penned by settlement's early investors, restate claims about Virginia's

"fountain of woes" even as they issued corrective accounts or (more frequently) blamed

its acknowledged dysfunction on the starving settlers.[34] Thomas Hariot invokes these

rumors as "slanderous and shamefull speeches [that are] bruted abroad" and that will

"injuriously [….] slander […] the enterprise," rumors that his account will set right.[35] The

fact that officials were still alluding to these "injurious aspersions" decades later suggests

that he was not necessarily successful in his aims.[36] They were pervasive enough, even

among non-literate people, for them to post a difficulty to investors eager for sailors and

laborers. For example, when Strachey's men, shipwrecked in the Bermudas, refused to

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[33] Strachey, "A True Reportory," 986. Karen Ordahl Kupperman argues that in the late 1610s and into the early 1620s, "almost every letter from Virginia mentioned widespread death; the Virginia Company complained that some people said the enterprise was simply 'a more regulated kind of killing of men.'" Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Apathy and Death in Early Jamestown," *The Journal of American History* 66, no. 1 (1979): 24–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/1894672, 34-35.
[34] Counsell of Virginia, *A True Declaration of the Estate of the Colonie in Virginia, with a Confutation of Such Scandalous Reports as Have Tended to the Disgrace of so Worthy an Enterprise,* Early English Books (London: Printed for William Barret and Are to Be Sold at the Blacke Beare in Pauls Church-Yard,1610)," in *Tracts and Other Papers Relating Principlally to the Origin, Settlement, and Progress of the Colonies in North America from the Discovery of the Country to the Year 1776*, ed. Peter Force, 3 vols., Transactions of the American Historical Society (Washington, 1836), https://www.loc.gov/item/04027018/, 15.
[35] Thomas Hariot, "A Briefe and True Report," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn, 1st edition (New York: Library of America, 2007), 874–905, 875.
[36] Gorges, "A Briefe Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New England (1622), Loc. 2319."

continue to Virginia, they offered the defense that "in Virginia nothing but wretchednesse

and labour must be expected, with many wants and a churlish intreaty there being neither

that Fish, Flesh nor Fowle."[37] A pamphlet released by the company in 1610, the same

year as Strachey's shipwreck, confirms the sailor's biases when it details the

"interposition of clamorous and tragicall narrations […] which foule mouthes (to justifie

their owne disloalty) have cast vpon so fruitfull, so fertile, and so excellent a country,"

and attempts to impose a gag order upon future returning colonists, preventing them from

seeking to publicize their experience, or to even circulate any personal letters that would

reflect poorly upon the Virginia Company's ambitions.[38] These documents suggest that,

even if dramatists did not have access to individual documents returning from the New

World or the miscellanies in which they were gathered, they would still have access to a

veritable rumor mill surrounding Virginia speculation. If we take these two archives

together, one as a record of settlement experience, and one as an oblique

acknowledgement of these experiences in official representation, we can begin to access

a range of contextual, thematic, and narrative resources for interpreting and restaging

settlement's failures. For Jonson, composing his first London city comedy in 1598, and

Shakespeare staging *The Tempest* in 1611, this *was* the legacy of settlement.

Representational Crisis in the Americas

To argue that settlement texts were responding to recent failures, however, is different

from saying that failure constituted a formal and representational interest. Yet that is

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[37] Strachey, 1000.

[38] Counseil for Virginia (England and Wales), 2. See also that these rumors were still active by the 1620s prompting an official broadside: Virginia Company of London., *The Inconueniencies That Haue Happened to Some Persons Vvhich Haue Transported Themselues from England to Virginia*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 944:11 (Imprinted at London by Felix Kyngston, 1622).

precisely what settlement aesthetics denotes. Aesthetics on its own is an anachronistic

term for these early writings. It denotes a way of thinking about art that emerged out of

eighteenth-century ideas about artistic value. But as a term that denotes an interest in the

relationship between a work (either a work of art, or a piece of writing) and its reader, it

is a way to talk about how forms solicit judgement. Settlers, we must remember, were

always at a distance from the events that they described in these accounts. They were

often writing at years of remove, sometimes in anticipation of future investment. Their

accounts of crisis and catastrophe reflect upon this distance, reproducing accounts of

settler abjection, environmental disaster, and mismanagement from the comfort of their

homes in England. The need to detail present (or past) abjection to acquire more funding

to support failing settlements while simultaneously promising investors that they are not

just throwing away good money after bad, gives settler accounts a dual aspect. Hakluyt's

collection of texts in the American explorations provides an incredible archive of

responses to the New World by French, Spanish, and English writers. Within these

volumes, terms associated with negative states of being or knowing, such as "lost,"

"unknown," "stranded," "hungry," "doubt" and their variants, appear with more than

three times the frequency as they do in the volumes on travels to Asia, Africa, or

Muscovy (Russia). Rather than referring to the New World in positive terms, many turn

to forms of negation (what failed, what they did not know, what could not happen) to

acknowledge the distance between their experiences and their capacity to describe them.

These accounts fold together a very real crisis – a loss of money or men – with a

representational one, an acknowledgement that established techniques of observation and

description were ill suited to meet the demands of the present.

Rather than a history of settlement, what these texts show is what Kathleen Donegan

calls "unsettlement: the history of colony collapse, starvation, and mass death formed the

foundation of colonial identity and motivated the patchwork of brutal counter-efforts that

aimed to prop up failing settlements.[39] As a broader critical term, unsettlement

reconstructs this history and – in decolonizing discourse – imagines its possible futures.

But unsettlement also demarcates a grouping of writings within settlement writing.[40]

Unsettlement enters the form of these prose documents when settlers grapple with the

distance between future expectations and present experience, the demands of investors

and the reality of a present state of being *in extremis*. The challenge of representing the

New World at all is a feature of many early accounts, which associate the New World

with epistemological confusion, spatial disorientation, political crisis, and misperception.

Because settlers were often unsure of the rough shape of land masses, and were ignorant

of the topography and even the climate of settlement areas, they were frequently waylaid,

frustrated in their expectations, or operating on faulty assumptions.[41] William Strachey's

use of emblematic language to describe local wildlife, Lane's insistence that that

Chesapeake river systems were like the Thames (even as he became hopelessly lost in

them), or George Percy's curious narrative lapse between descriptions of "great

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[39] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America*, 1st edition, Early American Studies; Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 9.

[40] On unsettlement as a critical term more broadly in settler colonial and indigenous studies, see Bruno Cornellier and Michael R. Griffiths, "Globalizing Unsettlement: An Introduction," *Settler Colonial Studies* 6, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 305–16; Corey Snelgrove, Rita Dhamoon, and Jeff Corntassel, "Unsettling Settler Colonialism: The Discourse and Politics of Settlers, and Solidarity with Indigenous Nations," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 3, no. 2 (September 29, 2014), http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/download/21166; Lorenzo Veracini, "What's Unsettling about On Settling: Discussing the Settler Colonial Present," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 17, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 235–51.

[41] On the significance of mapping (or lack thereof) to the development of the colonial project, see Martin Brückner, *Early American Cartographies* (UNC Press Books, 2012).

abundance" and a long list of starvation deaths, reflect the partiality and fragility of colonial knowledge-making, but also place the struggle to work with this knowledge at the center of their accounts, as itself the subject of representation.[42] When Ralph Lane moves from the declarative to the subjunctive – detailing what could have happened "if your supplie had come before the end of April, and that you had sent any store of boats of men," or when Thomas Hariot defers certainty to future explorers, "men of skill […] shall discover them more particularly than wee have done," they acknowledge the distance between an event and its representation, and reflect on their inability to describe their experiences to readers, investors, and even to themselves.[43] What we encounter in these accounts is a coming-to-terms with material crisis *in* and *as* a crisis of representation.

The literatures that settlement produced had some key unifying characteristics that would appeal to dramatists invested in their own worldmaking projects. While Donegan emphasizes the rhetorical techniques that settlers used to refer to their own unsettlement, what produces the unsettling quality of much of settlement writing is not only the settlers' own unsettled state, but the attempts to place settlement: to settle it "before the fact," in other words, before the possibility of continuous habitation seemed viable, either financially or materially.[44] Settlement accounts are characterized by their generic and methodological confusion, a recognition that traditional forms of expertise (spatial, cartographic, rhetorical, generic) are ill-suited to the tasks of the present, an understanding that the line between what is represented and *how* it is represented must

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[42] Percy, "Discourse," 933.
[43] Lane, 841; Hariot, 882.
[44] Myra Jehlen, "History before the Fact; Or, Captain John Smith's Unfinished Symphony," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 4 (July 1, 1993): 677–92.

continually be redrawn. On one page, a lush pastoral description of a Paspahegh garden, a functional map, a clear route through an ice-clogged passage. On the next page, a list of English deaths, an inventory of spoiled food, the description of a massacre as settlers burned that Paspahegh village. Cascading interpretive and schematic frames, each evoking different genre forms and different explanatory tools (from romance, to the list, from a verbal itinerary to a map), turn moments of worldmaking into expressions of word unmaking, where "here" and "there" begin to point in circles. As a catchall term that applied to such disparate geographies as the Canadian Arctic, the Spanish Antilles, Virginia, and Florida, each with a distinct people, language, culture and climate, the New World, in English representations, was not really a "place" at all.

The New World, then, predictably doesn't appear in drama as a setting. As Walter Cohen has argued, the Americas were less a stable place of representation than a set of discursive "nonrepresentational" and formal practices that "mark forms possessed" by other genres or subjects (classical, English, Ottoman) with the traces of settlement.[45] These possessed forms range from readings of triviality and artifice, to utopian references, to distinctions between 'natural' and 'civil' discourse, to cartographic speculation.[46] In Cohen's reading, because the New World was not yet a stable object of analysis, oblique references to the Americas could provide a way for dramatists to critique England's imperial aspirations and reflect upon political and social issues back home. The New World provided them with a category for this work, an analogical frame

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[45] Walter Cohen, "The Literature of Empire in the Renaissance," *Modern Philology* 102, no. 1 (2004): 6, 11.
[46] Cohen claims that "all parallels and allusions to America pale in significance before the overwhelmingly nonrepresentational impact of the New World at the level of literary form and conceptual innovation," 10.

of reference by which one thing might be veiled in terms of another. While Cohen sees

nonrepresentation as a premise for the New World's eventual domestication, its

conversion into a rhetorical or analogical category for England's own unsettled histories,

I claim that the New World's nonrepresentational status was itself an object of analysis

for settlement writers with its own tropes and vocabularies. The narratives, pamphlets,

and travel literature anthologies that emerged from settlement's signature catastrophes

outlined colonial failures in fact *and* in representation, as events impossible to talk about

or even to describe.

Not only was the New World insistently connected with lapsed representations,

mistranslations, and doubt, but it was also unclear how the few recurring archetypes – the

uncultured native, the tobacco farmer, the speculator – could be reconciled with other

representations, such as the indigenous Portuguese Amazons from *The Sea Voyage,*

George Percy's accounts of bodies "trailed out of their Cabines like Dogges to be

buried," and use of the term "plantation" as a new colonial archetype, one that brought

together Powhatan farms, English settlements, and Spanish *encomiendas*.[47] By borrowing

the structure of these early New World documents – their vocabulary, their narrative and

spatial incoherence, their doubts, their inability to even describe or represent their

experiences – dramatists composed scenes in which territorial expansiveness is a hazard

rather than a promise, mastery elusive, and certain knowledge always in doubt. This turn

to experience was attractive to dramatists, not only because it gave them a new aesthetic

vocabulary but also because it permitted them to reflect on the representational limits of

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[47] Percy, "Discourse," 933, 1094. For information on New World archetypes see Gavin Hollis "theatermemes" in Hollis, *The Absence of America*.

their own medium, which was adapting to new conventions of representation (in the rising genres of travel, romance, tragicomedy, and city comedy) and was being increasingly turned to the tasks of the present. If we can learn to read these theatrical grammars, we can think of theatricality as learning and adapting along with settlers to resolve its own representational challenges: the difficulty of talking about these kinds of experiences at all. In other words, as settlers' problems and theatrical problems merge in representation, unsettlement becomes a defining condition for the risks and uncertainties of Britain's expansion, both at home and abroad, on the stage and in the world.

In dramatic "nonrepresentation," narratives of colonial failure and settler pessimism allow us to access a new account of drama's "swelling scene" in the first decade of the seventeenth century (*Henry V,* Prologue).[48] In these years, literary writers were addressing a representational crisis of their own. Genres of travel, dramatic romance, tragicomedy, city comedy and vernacular epic introduced new representational and spatial possibilities.[49] The emergence and popularity of these forms is often cited as one of effortless accommodation, where the worldmaking technologies of cartography, surveying, and other spatial arts expand into new fictional territories. But critics have recently called this assumption into question on both ends, within the history of literary cartography on one end and in the history of theatricality on the other. Chris Barrett has explored cartography as a site of anxiety in English poetics, as visions of totality came into conflict with local histories.[50] She points us to this discourse of cartographic anxiety as itself constitutive of literary cartography during the period. Many early modern authors

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[48] William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, ed. Andrew Gurr, 2nd edition (Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[49] Gillies, 36.
[50] Chris Barrett, *Early Modern English Literature and the Poetics of Cartographic Anxiety* (Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

were acutely aware of the ill-fit between literary spatiality and new methodological and interpretive paradigms introduced into literature from England's expanding prospects abroad. Barrett focuses exclusively on cartography. But England was increasingly invested in representing foreign places and characters outside of a putatively cartographic frame. Theater became a complementary popular archive of England's expanding presence abroad as English merchants struggled to compete with Spain and Portugal for imperial dominance.

We're used to thinking of English drama's aesthetic debts to other national literatures, whether Italian *commedia* or Spanish national epic, but it is my contention that New World literature was formally influential on English drama's early development, bringing with it a set of techniques for incorporating settler crisis into a metatheatrical language, allowing dramatists to reflect on changes in their own medium. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, unprecedented geographic expansion outside of the theater was mirrored by a corresponding expansion of the dramatic setting.[51] But as the stage swelled to accommodate new settings and subjects, more stress was placed on the material space of the stage, and the presentational technologies that supported it. As Robert Weimann has reminded us, conflicting sites of authority (the "author's pen" and "actor's voice") and an expansion into new locales – including New World territories – placed pressure on existing scenic conventions.[52] This "swelling scene" casts into relief

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[51] Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare*, 2013 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10-11.
[52] Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, ed. Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

"the gap between the object and the agency of representation, between the imaginary world in the representation and the material tools and means of rendering it."[53]

What Weimann terms the "nonidentity between [these spaces] was contiguous with the difference between the newly expanding space in (imaginary representation) and the recently institutionalized material space *of* its performance."[54] In other words, as the theater "swells" and takes on new territorial interests and engagements, it also foregrounds a crisis of representation, as the gap between *what* is represented and *how* it is presented is cast into relief. The more the scene stretches to accommodate these new territories, the more stress is put on the "institutionalized material space" of the stage. The result was a scene that was often "unfixed," "unfolding," "contrarious," "and "unstable in the symbolism of its spatial conventions."[55] By borrowing the analogical and formal vocabularies of New World failures, their narrative and spatial incoherence, their uncoupling of the link between representation (what is shown) and presentation (how it is shown,) dramatists reflected on the explanatory and presentational limits of their own medium. In genres such as dramatic romance, city comedy, and travel drama, dramatists spun "news" into fiction, making the theater a key site for the relation of contemporary events.[56] But my project takes as its starting point that the New World's connection to representational crisis was *itself* news. It was an object of analysis with its own tropes, associations, and vocabularies. It was, in short, a settlement aesthetic.

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[53] Weimann, 83.
[54] Weimann, 180.
[55] Weimann, 216.
[56] Mark Z. Muggli, "Ben Jonson and the Business of News," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32, no. 2 (1992): 323–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/450739.

Stagewreck in *The Tempest*

The Tempest, of all the plays that I survey in this project, has been the most insistently

connected to a settlement context, but it is also the most composed, and the most

enclosed, of Shakespeare's plays. It is a crystallized representation of the current state of

affairs in New World criticism, in that it seems to evoke the Americas thematically, but

only as a potential framework for talking about "mastery" and "spatial control."[57] But it

is precisely this assumption – that the way a play talks about its own form is the way we

should read this form – that this book sets out to challenge. Critics have often relied on

the speech acts of metatheatrical characters, characters like Prospero, to "set" the scene

and point us to an understanding of a play's theatricality, the forms and conventions that

govern it. But we can see a model for what theatrical unsettlement would look like, not in

the mouth of Prospero, but in *The Tempest*'s opening scene – the infamous shipwreck

that sets the stage for what is to follow. Here, the primary marker of unsettlement is not

the language or the specifics of the ship's capsize, but rather, the play's foregrounding of

the process through which the experience of the mariners – their fragmented point of

view, their panic, their fear of social and material disintegration – is turned into a scenic

aesthetic, allowing the material and the representational to fuse in a theatrical topography.

In Steve Mentz's terms, this shipwreck registers rupture: bodily, spatial, and temporal.

Each mariner responds to the shipwreck in the present, performing stage business,

gesturing, and using deictic language, thus marking the shipwreck as happening in the

now. But each merchant also registers slightly differently what the "now" might mean,

constructing a "polyepochal" time of disaster that registers an interminable present. In

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[57] Mulready, 10-11.

this way, the wreck is representative of how disasters of all types were represented in settler accounts. The settler devolves time onto a series of actions that seem to be happening both sequentially and at once. George Percy's list of food and list of bodies both speak to this sense of time as an interminable present. But, often written years after the fact, they also reconstruct this present from a future position, reconstructing it *as* formative for those who endured it: the present of the past. We can see this tension in *The Tempest*'s adoption of stylistic and formal techniques from settlement accounts.[58] That is, rather than merely producing an onstage shipwreck in terms familiar to us from prior dramas, it draws specifically on settlement accounts of disaster, reconstructing the scene of the wreck from a position inside of it. As the shipwreck intensifies, a series of dramatic actions, punctuated with deictic gestures and imperatives, aestheticize the gradual unsettling of social and representational conventions during catastrophe. And this shipwreck here does not only take place in time, it also takes place in theatricality. It unsettles the conventions of theatrical presentation and description that make it legible as a wreck, turning a shipwreck into a *stagewreck.*

 The shipwreck scene begins with a series of commands that utilize directional language and orienteering vocabulary. But rather than making the setting explicit using deictic gestures that transforms the whole stage into a single place – see, for example, *Twelfth Night,* "What country, friends, is this? / This is Illyria, lady" (1.2.1-2); *Pericles,* "this Antioch, then, Antiochus the Great / Built up, this city, for this chiefest seat" (Prologue.17-18); and *Henry V*, "suppose within the girdle of these walls / Are now

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[58] Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550–1719* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), xi.

confined two mighty monarchies" (Prologue.19-20) – the location is constructed piece by piece through the actions of the characters within it, each of whom produces a small detail of a whole. From the beginning, then, the "scene" is dependent, not on the claim of a single character, but on its mutual constitution by many characters at once, working simultaneously to uphold it. Deictic commands, such as "Take in the topsail" (1.1.6), "To cabin" (1.1.18), "Down with the topmast" (1.1.34), and "Bring her to try with main course" (1.1.35), direct the non-speaking characters (referred to only as "mariners" and "others" in the stage directions) to perform different actions that will correspond to parts of the stage. This strategy allows the entire stage to take on the quality of a ship veering towards its destination, with each piece connected to the movements of a mariner. And each of the implied actions (the responses to the commands) is distinct: each "mariner" extends the fictional space to his corner and shapes the contours of the whole. The sailor's directional knowledge, their social relationships, and their engagement with stage space are, then, all interlinked. The effect highlights the mariners' shared directional vocabulary, the extent to which the group relies on their navigational and directional expertise to keep the ship, and therefore, the scene, together.

My goal here is not to linger over the various component parts of dramatic scene-making (the history of gesture, of command and description onstage) but rather to examine the relationships between these technologies, the way that they collaborate to *take place* as a theatrical occasion. The mariners maintain the ship's integrity through a series of linked behaviors and gestures – but it nevertheless begins to disintegrate as the tempest intensifies. As the scene progresses, the crew registers fictional and theatrical collapse in the same terms. They cease to maneuver and to mark their corner of the stage, and that

fictional piece of the stage ceases to be part of the ship, allowing the storm (the implied offstage space) to flood inside. The characters increasingly lose control over the fictional world (a place that the physical stage *hosts* but is distinct from) and it falls away into the storm. This decomposition of the ship occurs through a series of dramatic entrances and exits. First the courtiers are banished to the cabin, then Gonzalo the councilor joins them, the nobles reemerge shortly afterwards to challenge the authority of the mariners, and the final few lines lead to the non-speaking characters abandoning ship, followed by the Boatswain. At the end, the noble characters, Sebastian and Antonio, leave Gonzalo to give the final pronouncement of the wreck. But what was one a space dominated by clear commands of orienteering expertise turns to expressions of inner rupture. After a "confused noise" is heard (what we can assume is the splitting of the hull) the mariners exclaim "we split!," "we split" (1.1.60) as if to signal that their bodies and the ship are being torn asunder simultaneously – there was never a clear difference between the two. The extensive catalog of nautical terminology that begins the scene, associated with navigational knowledge and orienteering of the period, "Down with the topmast! Yare! Lower, lower! Bring her to try with main course" (1.1.33), devolves into a series of panicked pronouncements about lack of knowledge – "all lost" (1.1.51). and a turn to "prayers" (1.1.51). The copious stage directions in this scene, from the initial "sound of thunder and lightning" to the detailed entrances and exits, become spatial markers of scenic incoherence and abandonment. The departure of the mariners coincides with the splitting off the ship in dramatic space. Characters leave the ship/stage for the storm/backstage, tearing at both the fabric of the theatrical scene and the social fabric

structuring the relationships between the crew and the nobles. Theatrical space, fictional space, and social space surge and collapse; when one "split[s]," so do the others.

I invoke a term like "unsettlement" here as a particular mode of knowing, acting, and representing in theatrical space, extending it beyond, on the one hand, a "condition of colonial aporia" and "an opposing principle of disruption," and on the other, a marker of critical unease.[59] Instead, unsettlement is present in this scene as settlement's *negation* – "to undo from a fixed position, "to force out of a settled place … a state of things, [an] institution" and "to clear of settlers" – definitions that move it back from contemporary criticism on settlement, to its etymological origins in the early modern period and the eighteenth century. [60] It brings together a history of colonial abjection, running through the failure of colonies such as Roanoke, Popham, and (almost) Jamestown, with the history of colonial violence: the forcible displacement of indigenous populations. It foregrounds the idea of the settler as both the subject and the abject of settlement.[61] The aesthetics of unsettlement are present on multiple levels in the shipwreck scene. First, they are present in the sailors' inability to represent and to navigate (both literally and metaphorically) the dramatic space that they occupy – they cannot prevent the ship from

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[59] Kathleen Donegan, "'As Dying, Yet Behold We Live': Catastrophe and Interiority in Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation," *Early American Literature* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 9–37, 15, https://doi.org/10.1353/eal.2002.0005; Dirk Klopper, "An Aesthetic of Unsettlement: The (Dis) Placement of the Subject in Relation to the Work of Art," *English in Africa* 33, no. 1 (2006): 59–70, 59; Lorenzo Veracini, "What's Unsettling about On Settling: Discussing the Settler Colonial Present," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 17, no. 2 (March 4, 2014): 235–51, https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2013.857923.

[60] "Unˈsettle, v.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed August 2, 2017, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/217786.

[61] See also Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettlement of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1560-1945* (Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014) for unsettlement as decolonial, a movement against colonial occupation that also registers historical violence against indigenous peoples; for a similar account of colonial subjects as also colonial abjects, see Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*. Deena Rymhs, "But the Shadow of Her Story: Narrative Unsettlement, Self-Inscription, and Translation in Pauline Johnson's Legends of Vancouver," *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 13, no. 4 (2001): 51–78.

capsizing and they cannot prevent the scene, along with their own persons, from following it. If the scene here is "produced" onstage by characters that "amend … the pictorial image of the setting," that act of emendation ("Take in the topsail") becomes here, a marker of representational *disintegration*, as the theatrical scene capsizes along with the ship.[62] The composition of the scene, its reliance on character gesture and action to create scenic space and to hold the ship together as a scenic whole allows material and representational space to fuse. It figures unsettlement by closely marking the disintegration of an initially intact theatrical scene into a series of fragmented actions and perspectives.

But unsettlement here is not purely a process of scenic decomposition, of a loss of totality and coherency; it is also an epistemic condition, an awareness of that failure as an ongoing process of recovery and compromise. This second definition takes displacement in a more figurative register, as a displacement not only from a space but from a familiar way of being or acting in the world, or from a set of knowledges. In the process, it also recounts the new knowledges that emerge from an acknowledgement of this rupture, knowledges that may not "amend" the scene, but may instead point to a failure to emend it, and subject that process to further scrutiny. Theater, in its adoption and adaptation of a settlement aesthetic, is precisely the mode that allows this partial awareness to find a formal expression. It becomes a way of making manifest, of aestheticizing, the partial strategies that emerge from a moment of rupture, the perfect venue for exposing and elaborating colonial anxieties and transforming them into an extended contemplation of

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[62] States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms,* 53.

representational catastrophe. It gives a theatrical form to the literatures of unsettlement.[63]

What is left is not the history of a shipwreck which Prospero eventually restores and

circumscribes, but a stagewreck. The unsettled setting of this first scene, as my third

chapter shows, becomes fundamental to *The Tempest*'s theatrical language, and

constitutes its own settlement aesthetic.

Theatricality's Others

We're used to thinking of theatricality as filtered through moments of theatrical self-

reflexiveness, moments where the play stops to communicate to us something

fundamental about its form or conventions. Assumptions that early modern audiences

knew what they were seeing have been buoyed by a critical insistence on early modern

theatricality's self-reflexiveness, its tendency to reflect on its own composition and make

visible its implicit rules. This perspective has become entrenched in early modern

scholarship for a few reasons. For one, it makes for better criticism. The turn from New

Historicism to New Formalism has hinged on the historicity of forms, their placement

within a specific interpretive milieu. By reading forms – including theatrical forms – as

historical, critics can attend to the nuances of theatrical staging while also acknowledging

the larger horizons of understanding in which it participates. Theatrical texts – play texts

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[63] On this classic distinction between place (a marked location or setting) and space ("the outcome of a sequence and set of operations ... permit[ting] fresh actions to occur, while suggesting others and prohibiting yet others") see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1st edition (Oxford, OX, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992): 73; see also for space insofar as it is produced in experience see Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 5th or later Edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2001); on the political implications of produced spaces see Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, 2nd Edition (London; New York: Verso, 2011); On space and place in theatricality see Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); One the distinction between space and place in the Renaissance see John Gillies, "Space and Place in 'Paradise Lost,'" *ELH* 74, no. 1 (April 1, 2007): 27–57.

– are authorities on their own making. For the critic, this means they are cultural witnesses to their own moment, unfolding for us the things it was possible to say or to see in their own time. But the legacy of New Formalism in theater studies, represented by the field of early modern theatricality, grants theater too *much* authority, especially by restricting the kinds of historical forms that we are prepared to see. A reliance on theater's own metatheatricality, its privileged perspective on its own making, results in an overattentiveness, on the part of critics, to characters who seem to know that they are in a play and to plays that reflect explicitly on how they are made. Characters like Hamlet and Prospero, for instance, who talk about the operations and functions of theater are taken as authorities, as the mouthpieces for theatrical self-reflexiveness, as guides to audiences. They become a figuration of the knowledge of theatrical audiences themselves, who, as Jeremy Lopez has recently argued, "were very much aware of the limitations of the early modern stage" and possessed an "equal self-consciousness" to the very drama that they were viewing.[64] They were, in other words, understanders in both senses. They attended plays as spectators and thus were part of the theatrical community (the original meaning of "understand" referred to a spectator standing directly under the stage), but they were also privy to the laws of "reality and illusion" – experts, in other words, in navigating and understanding theatricality.

If the text is self-reflexive, then how much more so is the actor, who must perform in it, internalize its rules and its "plot" (never mind that actors inherently possessed only

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[64] Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2.

partial knowledge, their understanding being limited to their part of the script).[65] And the

actors were of course responding to the knowingness of the audience, a group whose

ability to comprehend complex representational schemes is supported by the presence of

theatrical theorists onstage – characters like Tamburlaine and Hamlet were, by all

accounts, audience favorites and figurations of a certain kind of theatrical knowledge that

the audience might share. This assumption that early modern popular culture was

"knowing" has a longer and far more entrenched critical history. As a counter to

medieval unknowing, to superstition, to assumption and belief, the early modern period

seems to offer a kind of panacea, a turn to a self-reflexive sensibility. It signals the move

from the metatheatricality of the stage to the "self-fashioning" of early modern subjects.[66]

The rise of science and epistemology studies within an early modern framework, and a

rising interest in rational political formations such as the university, the corporation, the

colony, and other figurations of seemingly modern provenance has enhanced the

"modern" aspect of the early modern, aligning it more clearly with the position of the

critic. Writers such as Katherine Eggert and Julian Yates have articulated critical

alternatives to a positive epistemology, conjugating early modern unknowing through

"misuse" and "disknowledge."[67] But to claim ignorance as a historical value, especially

outside of established parameters such as religious believe or skepticism, would seem to

be too much of a critical projection, a confusion of our own confusion with theirs.

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[65] For the difference between "plot" and "part" in early modern practice see Paul Menzer, "Lines," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, United Kingdom; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113–32.

[66] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[67] Julian Yates, *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons From The English Renaissance*, 1 edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2002); Katherine Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

In *Settlement Aesthetics,* however, I aim to recover the ways that dramatists were reflecting on theatrical confusion, both their own and their audience's. They do so by identifying the New World as a genre of spatial disorientation, a way to render the collapse of "setting" or "place," and a way to reflect on the gap between what is being represented (a remote archipelago, a Mediterranean itinerary, the murky waters of Jonson's London) and how it is represented. While characters like Prospero, Tamburlaine, or Jonson's theatrical chorus – the "Grex" of his early city comedies – claim that their metatheatrical language is a language of conventionality, plays that adopt settlement's aesthetics abandon this discoursing about the scene for a discoursing *in* the scene. Self-reflexive language no longer becomes constitutive of the theatrical world. It only tells us what a character assumes to be true about the underlying conventions of theatricality. But this character's point of view may well conflict with another's. Character description and conversation no longer becomes a reliable indicator of the play's theatricality. We tend to think that early modern dramas were guides to their own interpretation, and that audiences had the theatrical literacy to understand them. The self-reflexiveness of early modern English theater has been a foundational assumption of criticism. But my project illuminates the ways in which dramas, in their restaging of colonial uncertainty, articulated conditions of illiteracy and misunderstanding. By drawing on the literatures of settlement, these plays challenge the optimism and epistemological positivism that we attribute to them, and to the early modern period more broadly.

Instead of relying on the textual and metatheatrical pointing gestures – stage directions, gestures, and character description – to produce a coherent sense of what a given play's

setting is or what its conventions are, my project points to the mis-seeings and mis-readings that make up the history of theatrical convention. I locate moments where what characters see doesn't correspond to what is shown to us as audience members and readers. After all, as Lorna Hutson has observed, scenes are set through the operations of dramatic language, language that points us to an understanding of how the scene is composed and how we are meant to read it. Dramatic language is, in turn, given to us by characters. But Hutson pushes against "new character theorists" who read character as a self-driven agent of theatricality, one who can speak and act in their own person. To Hutson, "character" is merely a placeholder for the kind of propositional language of scene making that often devolves onto actors. She reads the setting of drama less as a setting than a common "circumstance" which is put together by declarations of "time," "place," and "motive" that theatrical dialogue articulates.[68] Drawing on the notion of a rhetorical commonplace or category for knowledge, the theatrical circumstance constructs character only as the source of an utterance about the fictional world, an utterance that then subordinates the speaker to the logic of the scene that they build. But in my reading, this moment of rhetorical "worldmaking" is replaced by the process of world unmaking where the commonplace of the scene decomposes into a series of unshared, irreconcilable propositions about the theatrical world (deictic exclamations, gestures, descriptions, assumptions, theatrical languages) that "split" the scene into character parts – "we split! we split!" When dramatists replace the set scene, a moment of worldmaking, with the process of world unmaking, the propositional power of characters cease to be constitutive of a commonplace and instead devolve onto characters

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[68] Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 1st edition (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015).

themselves, each of which models a variable disposition toward the theatrical world and a different reading of theatricality. Theatricality in settlement's staging becomes a property of character and makes character articulable as a scenic, and thus, a theatrical technology that nevertheless is never representative of a theatrical whole.

A reading of settlement's aesthetics, its forms of failure, shifts our critical emphasis from metatheatrical characters to figures who are theatrically *under*privileged, like *The Tempest*'s wrecked sailors and stranded noblemen.[69] These characters are defined by their theatrical point of view, their knowledge about the contours and provenance of the theatrical world. And in travel drama, this position of being "native" to the fiction is increasingly racialized. That is, as the theatrical setting changes to accommodate non-European settings, fictionality – belonging to the fiction – is a status that is racially marked. It signals a distance from the place of the stage, from England, and from Europeanness. But it also marks a distance from a position of theatrical meaning-making, a position occupied by a character like Prospero. Characters who are native to the fiction produce it as a place and give us a sense of the presentational conventions that undergird it, but they do so from a position of fictional, rather than metatheatrical authority.

Their commentary on the scene, then, is not metatheatrical. It does not demarcate the place of fiction from the rules that govern its presentation. Rather, each point of view on the larger drama emerges as a character-specific insight: a "discourse … contained within the person."[70] In this reading, Caliban's description of the island, in other words, or

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[69] I mean here to evoke Erika Lin's notion of theatrical privilege, which describes characters who "articulate the most awareness of … theatrical semiotics and who showcase their ability to manipulate such signifiers." To Lin, these figures "are privileged by the performance medium," 37.

[70] Bonnie Lander, "Interpreting the Person: Tradition, Conflict, and Cymbeline's Imogen," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2008), 156.

Zenocrate's account of Egypt's borders is no less significant for how we should understand the theatricalities of the play than the self-reflexive theatrical language of Prospero's imagination or Tamburlaine's pageants. *Settlement Aesthetics* aims to consider epistemological limitedness, drawn from New World texts, as itself a theatrical language, a way of talking about theatricality from a position inside of it, a position (to quote *The Tempest*'s own stage direction) "within." It considers how characters might discourse on the scene from their own persons, and how language that we might call metatheatrical, that points us to an interpretation of the scene, might instead be a character discourse, might tell us more about the talker than the kind of thing talked about.

Readings of early modern theatricality – the study of theater's forms and conventions – have often turned to metatheatrical characters such as Prospero, Tamburlaine, and Hamlet. These characters are self-conscious theatrical practitioners, and thus can discourse on the scene, on theatrical conventions themselves. They reproduce our assumption that early modern drama was self-conscious and reflexive: one of early modern theatricality's most enduring tropes. [71] My project, however, takes up another kind of character. These characters, which I call "theatricality's others," become visible to us when the theatrical world is unsettled. If every character retains a point of view on the theatrical whole that is characterizing, that distinguishes them, then there is little difference between a character like Prospero and a character like Caliban, even if Caliban, by being native to the theatrical world, speaks in a different language about theatricality. My chapters center on characters that have been read as marginal to early

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[71] Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response*, 2.

modern theater's aesthetic development – theatricality's others, themselves racialized – making them essential to the work of dramatic scenography. Characters such as Shakespeare's Caliban and Ariel, Marlowe's Bajazeth, and Jonson's "English savages," along with pageant characters in shows like Anthony Munday's *Chruso-Thriambos* or *Triumph of Gold* (1611) and Thomas Middleton's *Triumphs of Honor and Industry* (1617), perform theatrical labor – stagework – even if they do not speak with theatrical authority. Theatrical labor distinguishes between characters who are native to the fiction and characters who are metafictional and more likely to be marked as European. Theatrical labor, then, becomes a way of registering the racialization of the category of "native," previously transitive (being native *to* a place) but increasingly coming to mark non-English subjects. Reading the language of theatricality in terms of work rather than epistemology or authority recasts our understanding of where theatrical knowledge comes from and how fictional worlds – from *The Tempest*'s placeless archipelago to Jonson's London – are built.

Scholars of early modern theatricality have identified knowing self-reflexiveness as drama's formal signature. In the plays I consider, however, a reliance on traditional literacies, including dramatic literacy itself, becomes ill-suited to the demands of the present. These texts challenge the epistemological optimism that we attribute to them, and to the early modern period more broadly. The dramatists I consider mine accounts of settlement crisis – from cartographic illiteracy and spatial disorientation to the failure of traditional expertise – to show how fraught and uneven this theatrical expansion was. Theater retains this record not because dramatists were critical of the colonial project, but because, by drawing on contemporary anxieties about settlement, they also reproduced

them. In my account, then, the London stage and prose narratives of settlement do not share common ground. They do not have a shared set of values, discourses, assumptions, or understandings about what settlement would come to be or what place the New World would come to occupy in English imperial history. But it is precisely because of an unshared context that we can uncover settlement's displaced histories. What is incidental to one writer becomes essential to another. Scholars who have looked for the New World in drama have often read for it as a place, a setting, or a cast of recognizable characters. As Lara Bolivsky has argued, looking for a term, an idea, or a description in its place is essential to reconstructing the histories that imperial archives have set out to conceal.[72] What my work aims to do, however, is unfix context from place, and person from character, allowing us to recognize colonialism in places and in forms that we might not expect. If New World settlement is central to dramatic worldmaking, not as a thematic, but as a form, an aesthetic, then reading for form in early modern drama is also a process of historical recovery. In the English sixteenth century, during a formative period in theatrical and colonial history, dramatists were drawing on settlement writing to reflect on the representational challenges that new fictional worlds posed. But what their settlement aesthetic recovers for us, is the record of pessimism, failure, and uncertainty at the heart of that worldmaking project.

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[72] Lara Bolivsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 16.

1. Northwest Passages in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*

Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* (1587) opens the second scene of its first act with an expression of territorial uncertainty. In this scene, Zenocrate, an Egyptian princess, is attempting to pass through Tamburlaine's territories on her way to Egypt. Although she and her retinue have the "the privy signet" and "highness' letter of command" that would have given them "safe conduct," as well as "aid and assistance" if those lands still had the same ruler (1.2.15-16, 20-21), they find that "letters and commands" can be easily be "countermanded" (1.2.21-22) as territories change hands.[73] While this scene presents us with what must have been a commonplace of overland travel – news of territorial acquisitions and dynastic shifts traveled slowly – it becomes a pivotal moment in the play. What is at stake here is nothing less than representation itself. The signet's ability to grant free passage gives Zenocrate's onstage movements the status of a continuous itinerary. Her steps trace a continuous line from one territory into another. But Tamburlaine's intervention in this royal progress disrupts the itinerary. The signet ceases to signify as a rite of passage, both fictionally (where it no longer offers Zenocrate protection) and theatrically. As a prop, it no longer signals that the metaphoric space of the stage is continuous. What once signified a specific spatial paradigm now has no theatrical value. In the words of another character, Tamburlaine has "mangl[ed]" these provinces, both fictionally, by seizing them, and theatrically by signaling that the tools of theatrical presentation (the itinerary, props like the ring) may themselves not have stable value attached to them (1.2.17). The risk that shifting political allegiances might result in

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[73] All quotes from the play reference Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011) and will be cited parenthetically throughout by act, scene, and line number.

both bodily danger and representational crisis is a real concern in *Tamburlaine*'s world of remeasured limits and lie in the background of the signature first line in which the Persian King Mycetes announces: "Brother Cosroe, I find myself aggrieved" (1.1.1).

Mycetes' grievance would have likely been shared by *Tamburlaine*'s English audience. For *Tamburlaine*, so the story goes, inaugurated a new presentational paradigm for theater, one that was likely unfamiliar to early playgoers. *Tamburlaine* was staged in the 1580s, a time when the New World project was just beginning to be articulated. During this period, England was redrawing its own map, constructing new categories of racial difference, and merchant companies were increasingly turning westward to bolster England's struggling domestic economy. The plot of the play is simple. The main character Tamburlaine – based on the historical conqueror Timur the Lame – lays claim to a vast swath of territories in Asia and the Levant. Although he starts as a simple Scythian shepherd, he abandons his shepherd's "weeds" (1.2.41) near the beginning of the play, adopting epic armor and the generic conventions of epic prose to match. While the play ostensibly takes place in the medieval Levant, it speaks to the English present.[74] A connection to news and contemporary events is present in its cartographic references, specifically its incorporation of itineraries from Abraham Ortelius's publication of the first modern atlas, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570). These references sketch an emerging theatrical methodology that redrew stage space into alignment with theories of spatial abstraction drawn from the new map and the 'mighty line' of the play's blank verse.

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[74] Brian Gibbons, "Introduction," in *Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011): xii.

I turn to this play, not only because of its ostensible subject (colonial conquest), but also because of its position in critical history. The conventions of language and description that it puts forward would continue to represent England's expansionist hopes to a popular audience into the seventeenth century. Thematically, *Tamburlaine* was also retaining a record of the territorial uncertainty that England's early western conquests occasioned. We might remember, for instance, that the play was staged during the height of England's colonial failures. The preceding decade had not been good for English trade. Not only had England lost Calais, a key trading hub on the European continent, it had attempted (and failed) to quell uprisings in Ireland and was being increasingly pushed out of the continental wool trade, putting its primary export in jeopardy. Conflicts with the Spanish were also escalating as England was attempting to push into the Mediterranean and South American trade routes that the Spanish and Portuguese controlled. But the capstone of these failures was England's ill-fated attempts to "discover" the Northwest Passage: a fabled outlet through the Canadian Arctic that would allow English merchants to circumvent Spanish trade routes entirely and establish a backchannel to China and India. Although this northwest passage was completely "shut up with a long mure of yce" for most of the year, it was presumed (falsely) to open during the summer.[75] The passage features in English representations as an interruption of established practices for reaching Asia. The Muscovy Company, had, in fact, used the exact same strategy that Zenocrate relied upon in Tamburlaine. They had received approval from the queen to negotiate overland travel through Russia. But this travel was a logistical nightmare, relying on the

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[75] Dionise Settle, "The Second Voyage of Master Martin Frobisher, Made to the West and Northwest Regions, in the Yeere 1577. with a Description of the Countrey, and People: Written by Master Dionise Settle.," in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of The English Nation, Vol. XII., America, Part I.*, ed. Richard Hakluyt, 1589, 61.

territorial stability of an unfamiliar region. Overland travel was also much slower than

ocean travel and had less cargo room for exports.

But while the northwest passage seemed to offer a solution to many of the practical and

logistical difficulties of establishing an English trade route to Asia, the attempts to locate

it were (predictably) an unmitigated disaster. During the 1560s and 70s, there were over

seven separate attempts to discover the passage, Frobisher's first voyage of 1568 failed

due to his use of a bootleg map (an incorrect transcription) as well as a storm that

prevented him and his men from reading land, and the resulting loss of his ship's

pinnace.[76] The second voyage to find the "supposed straights" in 1577 was caught in

another winter storm and had to offload much of its crew, not getting much farther than

the English coast.[77] A third voyage in 1578 was blown off course and a ship carrying

timber sank. As the result of this voyage, many of the early investors went bankrupt.

Humphrey Gilbert's trips in the late 1570s attempted to recover interest in the passage but

did not fare much better. In 1578, Gilbert's main ship was blown off course, travelling

east instead of west, springing a leak, and leaving sailors stranded at Irish ports. A second

voyage, and a first attempt to settle, was prematurely ended after the outbreak of a

contagious illness while the ships were still in English waters. For ships that did make it

into the arctic, the straight promised did not lead out to a sea, but only to a warren of

connected arctic islands. Ships would become lost after trying find the first path charted

by the original ship, mistaking an inlet for an outlet – "mistaken straights which indeed

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[76] John Butman and Simon Targett, *New World, Inc.: The Making of America by England's Merchant Adventurers* (Little, Brown and Company, 2018), 103.
[77] Dionise Settle, "The Third Voyage of Captaine Frobisher, Pretended for the Discouery of Cataia, by Meta Incognita, Anno Do, 1578.," in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of The English Nation, Vol. XII., America, Part I.*, ed. Richard Hakluyt, 1589, 136.

are no straights" – or finding that they were merely sailing in circles.[78] With "the huge

extension" of the North American continent still in doubt, and with much territory

uncharted, the longitudinal line has the status more of an analogy, a mental link between

places, than a description of the space between them.[79] In the absence of any actual

means of measuring longitude, sailors relied on their own markers or sea cards in which

"the degrees of longitude in every latitude" were of "one like bignesse," rendering them

virtually useless and attempts to even take measures of longitude and latitude were

frustrated by storms (45).[80] As Frobisher claims in the conclusion to his account of the

voyages: "I could declare under the Readers, the latitude and longitude of such places and

regions as we have been at, but not altogether so perfectly as our masters and others, with

many circumstances of tempests and other accidents."[81] These voyages were so notorious

that the Spanish Ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza would claim to Philip II: "The

whole business is not much thought of now as the sailors have not been paid, and the

merchants who took shares in it have failed, so that the people are undeceived" – a grim

forecast indeed.[82] I read *Tamburlaine* in the wake of these failures, drawing together two

very different histories of expansion. The first is an account of England's territorial

expansion through the Northwest Passage. And the second is a corresponding expansion

of English drama into new fictional territories, a history in which *Tamburlaine* has played

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[78] Settle, "The Third Voyage," 136.

[79] Hakluyt, Richard. *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of The English Nation, Vol. XII., America, Part I.*, 1589, 4.

[80] All quotes from the "Discoverie" reference Humphrey Gilbert, "Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage to Cataia: A Discourse Written by Sir Humphrey Gilbert Knight, to Proue a Passage by the Northwest to Cathaia, and the East Indies (1576)," in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of The English Nation, Vol. XII., America, Part I.*, ed. Richard Hakluyt, 1589 and will be cited parenthetically throughout.

[81] Settle, "The Second Voyage," 71.

[82] Butman and Targett, *New World, Inc*, 134.

a central role. What connects these documents – prose accounts of the Northwest Passage explorations on one hand, and drama on the other – is their mutual interest in theorizing the risks of territorial acquisition, and their reliance on the map as a navigational technology that might aid in it.

The idea that the map even *could* be a navigational tool was not a given. Early modern maps and charts, as Felipe Fernández-Armesto has recently argued, "were not user-friendly ways of recording information."[83] They left out vital information about ocean depths and wind direction and introduced practical difficulties for "finding and representing lines of latitude and longitude" as sailors were unable to establish their position on the grid.[84] At best, they were impractical – pictures of the world that were not meant to be taken seriously – and at worst they were "dangerously misleading."[85] When Humphrey Gilbert, an early proponent of the Northwest Passage, uses maps to prove the existence of the Passage he relies on the authority of something that was profoundly unauthorized. For maps were not considered dependable sources of navigational information. But it was precisely the speculative nature of maps as aesthetic objects, their ability to assemble an idea of a coastline without offering any practical resources to navigate it, that made them pivotal to these voyages. Perversely, the fact that maps lie is what made them convenient resources for early proponents of the Northwest voyages, voyages that were themselves intent in lying about the Passage's existence in order to obtain crucial funding. If we turn to these literatures, we can understand *Tamburlaine*'s

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[83] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*, Reprint edition (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 248.
[84] Fernández-Armesto, 248.
[85] Fernández-Armesto, 249.

own cartographic references, and the "mangling" of provinces, in a new light. For if the

Northwest Passage literatures were among the first to treat the map *as if* it were a guide to

new worlds, then these voyages also provide a crucial context for how *Tamburlaine*'s

itineraries, its "cartographical passages," would have been understood by an early

modern audience, an audience that was living in the aftermath of these failed

explorations.[86] In both the Northwest Passage literatures and in *Tamburlaine*, I claim,

maps appear as tempting spatial projections, more imaginative than real. They figure the

inability to marshal remote territories into a single unified whole. But the introduction of

a failed totalizing technology – one that promises to "bind together pieces into an organic

whole," to be explanatory of the whole world rather than just a part – was formative to

how theatrical understandings of spatiality would change during this period.[87] What the

map casts into relief is not a methodology, a way of thinking about spatial abstraction.

Instead, the map's failure to take place onstage as "a practical spatial art" gathers an

archive of uncertainties about a colonial future to question *where, through what methods,*

and to what end new worlds might find a place in English representations.[88]

A "Discourse of a Discoverie"

I begin with a search for a passage and I end with an account of how *Tamburlaine*'s

"cartographical passages" become *Northwest* Passages. The Northwest Passage voyages,

although they dominated the scene of New World investment and interest in the 1570s

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[86] Emrys Jones, "'A World of Ground': Terrestrial Space in Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine' Plays," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 38, no. 1/2 (2008): 168-82, 169.

[87] Ayesha Ramachandran, *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2015), 34.

[88] Henry S Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

and '80s, are not often the focus of critical accounts. They do not align geographically

with the territory that we associate with the "New World." As Arctic territories, largely

archipelagoes, they are geographically at a remove from Virginia and Maine, where early

settlements were established. These early voyages are also out of joint with imperial

history. Because the Northwest voyages were not a crown project, and because there was

not technically any occupation of the Northwest territories, they do not align with the

later goals of American conquest, the planting, occupation, and land seizure that

characterized later ventures. Most notably, the Northwest Passage voyages stand apart

from the bulk of colonial writing because they recount a search for a passage. They are a

tale of the search, in other words, not the tale of a 'discovery'. But in another sense, the

Artic voyages *were* representative of what was to follow. The English did claim the rights

to the string of islands in the Arctic archipelagoes – renaming islands that they passed

after English aristocrats – even though there was no successful occupation. The

Northwest voyages, because of the navigator's belief that these islands were unoccupied,

or that indigenous people occupying them were nomadic, and thus not able to claim a

right to land, set a key precedent (along with Irish colonial occupation) for how land

rights would be understood in Virginia and Maine only a few decades later. The

Frobisher voyages are also cited as the source of the "dead Indian" reference in *The

Tempest*: an Inuit man who was kidnapped and taken back to England, presumably to be

an interpreter for a future voyage (2.2.32). These early ventures were, additionally, the

some of the first opportunities for the English to engage in resource extraction on a large

scale in the Americas. The pyrite deposits that Frobisher and his men found in the Arctic

contributed to later rumors about North American gold mining, a preoccupation of the

Virginia explorations. In our contemporary moment, the Northwest voyages, and the Passage itself, continue to fascinate. Only in 2017 did the ice caps melt enough to allow passage, a fact that the cruise website *Arctic Swoop* advertises in terms almost identical to Gilbert's. The company promises its passengers a voyage of "discovery" through the "narrow channels" after summer ice has melted: "for the explorer, there are few places as evocative as the Northwest Passage. For centuries men sought a way through the ice; even today, passage is not guaranteed."[89] The ability of the Northwest Passage to still evoke the voyages of the past is clearly drawn on here as one of the singular attractions of the trip. The traveler takes on the role of Gilbert, taking on a trip of discovery and risk – "not guaranteed." In this account, the Passage becomes a first, but also a final, frontier.

To *Tamburlaine*'s audiences, these failed ventures would have likely been familiar. Texts such as Sir Humphrey Gilbert's *Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage* (1578) and Frobisher's *Divers Voyages* (1582) were gathered into the first edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1589) as the primary evidence for England's territorial claims to the Americas, where they make up the beginning of an itinerary that moves from north to south and aims to sketch out the borders of the American continent and establish England's claims to it. Hakluyt begins, as he claims, at the "extreme Northerne limit and put[s] downe successively in one rank of classis according to the order aforesaid ... which coming all together and following orderly upon one another, do much more lighten the reader's understanding."[90] If the Passage will not lead to future voyages in fact, it can lead to them in representation. The curved line of longitude of like "bigness" is here

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[89] "The Arctic Northwest Passage | Swoop Arctic | Swoop Arctic," accessed December 29, 2019, https://www.swoop-arctic.com/northwest-passage.
[90] Hakluyt, 5.

adjusted and straightened out in prose. But by claiming that he is putting these voyages down "successively" rather than leaving them "scattered in sundry corners," Hakluyt also amplifies the stylistic features of the early Northwest literatures, making their frustrated attempts to locate an itinerary part of their paratext – literally straightening out the literatures into the line, a line that leads from the north to the south, from the failed Northwest Passage explorations to accounts of successful habitation and conquest.[91] But while Hakluyt's project is explicitly archival – "chiefly undertaken for preservation of … memorable actions" – Gilbert and Frobisher are chroniclers of a different sort.[92] Under headings like "To Prove by Experience" or "To prove by Authoritie," Humphrey Gilbert's The *Discourse of a Discoverie* also collects contemporary and historical knowledge, from "sundry corners," but it does so, not to memorialize the Passage's existence, but to propose it.

Gilbert's text has often been evaluated less as a literary document than a financial one, a direct appeal to investors for funding. But its status as an appeal, an argument, is precisely what makes it so critically valuable and so stylistically discomposed. Rhetorical arguments in the early modern period, as any reader of Sidney's *Defense* will note, contain refutations. And Gilbert's refutation threatens to overwhelm his argument. Present in each of the chapter headings, each of his attempts to prove the existence of the Passage, there is a complementary and parallel argument for its non-existence that he must disprove: "This fifth reason by later experience is proued vtterly vntrue" (34). Gilbert ends with the following admonition: "Now as I haue here briefly recited the

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[91] Hakluyt, 5.
[92] Hakluyt, 5.

reasons alleaged, to prooue a passage to Cataia by the Northeast, with my seuerall answeres thereunto: so will I leaue it to your iudgement, to hope or despaire of either at your pleasure" (40). The sum of these provings does not add up to proof of the Passage itself. The true test for the existence of the Passage, after all, is only to be found in Gilbert's conclusion: "to prove by experience," to finance the venture. We're used to thinking of the *Principal Navigations* as the signature text documenting England's westward expansion, and in many ways it was. It went through multiple publications (evidence of its popularity), and it was the first text to constitute "New World literature" as such. Writing on the Americas was gathered into the third volume with the Northwest Passage literatures, as the primary example of England's territorial claim. But we must also remember that while Hakluyt's project was the premier anthology of New World writing, it was not the only archive of ideas about the New World that would have been available during this period, nor is it the only one that we should consult. The Northwest Passage literatures – Gilbert's text primary among them – are so valuable to us as critics because they too are conducting a gathering project, but to a more particular end. Gilbert is creating a bank of associations and analogies that might bring the New World, and the passage through it, into being as a place that might be represented. He thus provides a guide to the analogical frameworks in which it was being thought. In its continual shifting between methodological frames, the variability of its categories, and its tendency to group together seemingly disparate bodies of knowledge, his document produces for us a signature example of settlement aesthetics at work. Marlowe would not have had access to Hakluyt, but he produced his place in the space of Gilbert's refutation.

By drawing *Tamburlaine* back into contact with English navigational history, I mean to

revisit the classic connection between theater and the map, but on new grounds. If the

Northwest voyages literatures were – as their placement in Hakluyt suggests – central to

how early modern English people understood the New World (and westward expansion

more broadly), then we might pay more attention to how these texts themselves engage

with cartographic sources. If we turn to these contemporary texts – places that

contextualized placemaking during the period – we'll find that cartography does not

propose a coherent methodology or a set of spatial practices. The Northwest Passage

literatures provide essential context for how the map was being thought of during this

formative period in dramatic and navigational history, for they were the first voyages to

refer to it explicitly as a navigational aid. We must remember, during this period, that

maps were primarily ornamental, not practical. That is, far from being a perfect tool of

empire, they were barely a tool at all. Sailors used other tools that we now identify more

with the itinerary than with cartography.[93] They referred to verbal itineraries and portolan

charts or sea-cards for knowledge of coastlines. What made the Northwest voyages so

formative for English worldmaking was their insistence on drawing on contemporary

cartographic renderings of the Passage, probably because these were the only places

where it was figured at all. But the primarily *critical* value of Gilbert's text is in its ability

to dislocate cartographic reasoning from its position as early modern England's dominant

spatial paradigm. In Gilbert, cartographic knowledge is one of many forms of knowledge

that help to territorialize an uncharted terrain – not merely the terrain of the New World

itself, but also the methodological terrain, the systems of representation, that make it

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[93] Fernández-Armesto, *Pathfinders*; Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

possible to talk about, to schematize, and describe. Gilbert's text is a profusion of spatial technologies, some of them analogical (as in when he compares Native Americans to Scythians), some based on a logic of juxtaposition, and some explicitly cartographic. Gilbert's text functions as a repository of navigational knowledge as he works to construct the contexts – spatial, rhetorical, conceptual – that would allow him to prove the existence of the Passage: to show that it exists at all.

Early responses to the possibility of western expansion – both conquest-based and mercantile – hold critical interest for me because they fall outside the rubrics of imperial self-fashioning that structured crown projects and thus have different, and often various, priorities and aims that change the way that their narratives are composed, what they include and exclude. The assumptions and conventions that New World accounts like Gilbert's take for granted are very different than ours and often question the idea that there can be a conventional understanding of what the future of New World occupation might look like. As Gilbert chains together fragments of information, absorbing the disorientation of the passage itself, he leaves a trail of references that reproduces the current of the ocean, one that will sweep his ship from east to west on the circular motion of the tides. The same sources, or the same kinds of sources, appear under multiple headings: sometimes as representation of what is known and sometimes as an indication of how little is known, or that what is known is incorrect or vulnerable to misinterpretation. Under "To Prove by Authoritie," there are Aristotle and Plato, predictably, but also rumors about coins discovered in the Northwest Territories with the figure of Augustus, descriptions of shipwrecks and accidents, interpretations of the zodiac, statements of opinion, and descriptions of Ortelius's map. The section "To Prove

by Reason" includes interviews with fisherman, descriptions of Portuguese sea cards, the movement of ocean currents, hearsay – "the said place" (34), "Jaques Cartier hauing done the like, heard say" (32) – and liberal uses of the subjunctive and the conditional: "if the mutinie … had not bene" (32), "he might, and would haue gone" (32), "could not [there] have been" (30). Possible ways for proving the existence of the Passage provide a kind of genealogy, a trail through the thicket of historical references and received ideas.

But this trail is always, like the currents themselves, looping back to reconfigure its trajectory. Gilbert may position Ortelius's "generall mappe" as an "authoritie" (23), but it also prompts skepticism and disbelief – "If Ortelius generall carde of the world be true" (47) – and an attempt to disabuse the rumor from sailors who had used it that "the generall table of the world set forth by Ortelius or Mercator, for it greatly skilleth not, being unskillfully drawn for that point" (49). Throughout the pamphlet, rumors are a source for knowledge on the one hand, but also a source of disinformation on the other. By attempting to construct a history for something that isn't there, he makes it impossible to locate. It seems endless, recursive, like his description of the Arctic tides, it "maintain[s] itself" by "circular motion, which is all one in nature, with the Motus ab Oriente" (31). Here, the New World becomes the centerpoint of a debate about which methodological or aesthetic or representational techniques hold water. And as we can see from the progression of the voyages themselves and the demands (linguistic, navigational, cultural, climatological) that they place on Frobisher's crew, cartography, with its pretentions to a top-down and totalizing viewpoint, becomes the most flawed form of reasoning among others, the least able to reckon with the forms of contingent and context-bound reasoning and conjecture that New World voyages required.

Gilbert's account of his contemporary's assumptions about the voyage and its prospects provides overwhelming evidence (contrary to Frobisher's purpose) that the ventures would be failures. It also details the challenges that the New World posed for navigators. While England had previous forays into Ireland that allowed it to test out the more brutal components of conquest and land seizure, the New World exposed Europeans to a natural order that was illegible to them. Early navigational writing – early accounts of conquest – registers this illegibility through the imperative to force the New World into legibility through various assimilative processes. For example, when either by finding analogues between Old and New World, such as when Ralph Lane compares the Chesapeake River system to the Thames, or by framing the New World in terms of the radically unfamiliar – a wonder – or, in religious writing, as a demonic inversion in the order of nature.[94] As Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra has argued, England was actively innovating a mythology for the New World out of cobbled together sources, including classical philosophy, Spanish travel accounts, religious texts, occult documents, and fictional epics, among others.[95] Gilbert's text contains components of all these strategies. But he also registers another more practical difficulty: the transition from a form of navigation and spatial reasoning based on inland or coastal travel, to the disorienting effects of the open ocean. These factors, coupled with the acute distance between England and settler colonies, and the lack of established precedents for navigating the northern areas of the Americas, set the key conditions for the methodological profusion that the *Discourse of a Discoverie* foregrounds.

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[94] Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, 1st edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2006), 5.
[95] Cañizares-Esguerra, 60.

Gilbert provides us with a rich set of conceptual and methodological contexts for how the

New World, and westward expansion more generally, were imagined during the period in

which *Tamburlaine* was staged. That is, its value to scholars interested in the history of

drama is not as a dramatic intertext (there is no record that Marlowe read Gilbert's

pamphlet, although it's certainly possible that he did), but rather for its ability to gather

together and attempt to systematize the methodological and practical questions

surrounding England's territorial acquisitions. It provides us with a crucial context for

early modern mapmindedness, in which the map contributes to, rather than resolves,

disorientation, wrack, and spatial illiteracy. I follow Lisa Lowe's claim that we must

work to recover the "relationships between … matters classified within the distinct

stores" and "read across the separate repositories organized by … period and idea": to

work against, in other words, the organization of a historical archive of imperialism (and

imperial archive of history) that kept England and Spain, North and South, Virginia and

the Caribbean, the Arctic and the tropics separate from each other.[96] By working across

these histories and contexts, we can recover the ways that these places were

representationally and historically intertwined even within historical records that sought

to distinguish them. This chapter extends a historian's investment in comparative colonial

history, to the archives of forms and conventions that these histories left behind. It

pluralizes what we might mean by the "context of cartography" to consider how a map's

use and abuse might have informed its appearance in dramatic and navigational fictions.

What the map imports, in this reading, is not a cartographic methodology, but the failure

of one. They show us that the forms of early settlement are just as likely, in other words,

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[96] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2015), 5.

to appear in a play about a Scythian nomad as they are to feature in a play about an uncharted island buffeted by a magical tempest.

The New World, Ordered

In *Tamburlaine*, the New World characteristically appears, not in one place, but in many places. We see the Americas figured obliquely as an object of reference as "the late discovered isles," a term that seems to apply as much to the East and West Indies as it does to the Arctic archipelagos (1.1.166). When Cosroe talks fearfully about how "men from the farthest equinoctial line / have swarmed in troops to Eastern India … and made their spoils from all our provinces," he inverts the spatial coordinates of "farthest," allowing Eastern India to occupy the proximal position while England and its "men from the farthest equinoctial line" stands in place of the Antipodes (1.1.119-122). This inversion of traditional cartographic relationships is one of many in the play. When Tamburlaine talks about "those walled garrisons will I subdue / And write myself great lord of Africa," he takes the New World as a new reference point or boundary line beyond the pillars of Hercules, the borders of the western world:

> Even from Persepolis to Mexico
> And then until the strait of Gibraltar
> Where they shall meet and join their force in one
> Keeping in awe the Bay of Portugal
> And all the ocean by the British shore. (3.3.244-245, 255-259)

This quotation, one of the most famous in the play, sketches the four corners of the known world, but beginning here at the southern border and working its way north: another creative inversion that both mimics Britain's formal vocabulary of conquest and inverts it, leading from Africa to England. Tamburlaine will expand and reorient

theatrical territory. The idea that that "they shall meet and join their force in one" refers simultaneously to the "walled garrisons" and to the places themselves, which will be drawn together onto the stage to become "one" continuous territory. By drawing and linking these places together with "a force," Tamburlaine places his own theatrical prowess, "his mighty line," as a line of longitude linking unlike places, drawing them together under a single banner and making his theatricality coextensive with his language. Much like Hakluyt and Gilbert before him, this reading relies implicitly on the itinerary – a kind of written map – to fold together his ordered speech and the places, so Tamburlaine moves between representation, or what is talked about, and presentation, what is shown. To "write himself Lord" is to place himself as the dividing *line,* the unit of speech, of expression, that traces this force and influence, and makes invisible distance visible onstage as an expression of territorial vastness – and then claim that vastness as his own. In this reading, speaking is a kind of writing, and writing, the meeting and joining of distant places into relation.

The conventional interpretation of these scenes, and of the New World more generally, is that they're newly importing a cartographic sensibility. The New World and *Tamburlaine* meet on the field of discourse through the medium of the map. As Stephen Greenblatt puts it: "Tamburlaine's violence does not transform space from the abstract to the human, but rather further reduces the world to a map, the very emblem of abstraction."[97] Reading drama as a kind of "mind travel" ensures that the map and its visual logics mediate

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[97] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 198.

imperial expansion and its fictional representations.[98] If cartography has come to make up

the common ground on which theater and colonialism meet, if it has seemed to suggest

that a shared set of spatial discourses were common to both, that is because theater and

cartography have a history that predates England's ventures westward. As John Gillies

has reminded us, cartography was already familiar to theater. The relationship between

the stage and the map was an old one that was undergoing reformation. Gillies has talked

about the late sixteenth century as a moment of "unprecedented hermeneutic instability in

the *imago mundi,* in which a new geographic poetic was now emerging from, now being

swallowed by, the old poetic geography."[99] While the old geography was explicitly

"moralized" – best represented by the classic "T" map – the "new" cartography was only

implicitly so.[100] Its usefulness derived from its ability to subject new territorial

discoveries to a preexisting paradigm that could accommodate them, without having to

produce a new representational or symbolic vocabulary for these territories. While Gillies

emphasizes the movement from old to new here, an insistence that theater and

cartography are old friends is significant for my purposes. It establishes and naturalizes

theatrical geography – an investment in developing relationships between near and far,

here and there, within theatrical history even as what cartography or geography mean

changes.

We can see the kinds of narratives that this critical historiography of theater and

cartography produces. As theater participates in the work of empire, theatrical place

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[98] David McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England*, 2013 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[99] John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 36.
[100] Gillies, 4.

making becomes, in short, a kind of worldmaking. Colonial ventures in fictional

representation adopt the readymade framework ascribed to cartography by early modern

cartographers themselves, to ease the representational challenge posed by new genres,

including dramatic romance, travel drama, and city comedy. The abstract space of the

map and its readymade way of establishing relationships between new and old could

usher new worlds into representation without a fraught "discovery." Shankar Raman

describes this shift as a difference in the representation of space itself, where a grid

placed onto the world displaces the viewer a detached study on the structure of space

rather than representing it as seen from a particular point of view (embodied or divine).[101]

The transformation of the relationship between self and world as a triangulation between

situated positions to an understanding of the world as "transparent, neutral, and given"

was attractive to dramatists invested in representing distant territories onstage, especially

because theater and cartography had already been rhetorically linked in popular

understanding through atlases such as Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*.[102] In Henry

Turner's reading, theater's adoption of these cartographic paradigms – an ability to

incorporate new forms of information and to make them commensurate with each other –

also produced a new kind of theatrical space, one that "facilitate[d] comparisons among

radically heterogeneous entities [so that] all bodies, places, and ideas, no matter how

distinct, might be rendered conceptually equivalent to each other."[103] Analogy, a faculty

of literary expression, takes place visually as the geometric force of the map's rational

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[101] Shankar Raman, *Framing "India": The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2001), 110.
[102] Raman, 150.
[103] Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage*, 6.

perspective draws lines of relation between unlike things subjecting them to the same presentational logic.

While a connection between theatrical placemaking and cartography characterizes most discussions of expansion or territorial acquisition in early modern representations, the notion that theatrical cartography draws relationships between distant places, making them commensurate with each other, and thus able to occupy a single "place" onstage, has been especially central to readings of *Tamburlaine.* What Ethel Seaton famously termed "Marlowe's Map" continues to be a centerpiece of the play's contemporary editing. [104] The *New Mermaids* edition of the play traces the Ortelius connection through footnotes, twenty-four in total in the first play alone. Numerous references to maps throughout the play, from the "equinoctial line" (1.2.19) to the "blind geographers" who Tamburlaine will "confute" and "with this pen reduce … to a map" (4.4.76) constructs Tamburlaine as dramatist and mapmaker, someone who can "well perform" (3.3.4) his conquests: "but when you see his actions top his speech / Your speech will stay or so extol his worth" (3.3.26-27). In these readings, theater is not merely incorporating cartographic references (in other words, representing them); it was itself cartographic, organized under a mutual goal to visually enclose and schematize remotes places. The "cartographical passages" that the play introduces to the stage become proof that the play is also importing cartographic *methodologies,* that it is bringing scene-making and worldmaking together for the first time.

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[104] Ethel Seaton, 'Marlowe's Map,' *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, x (1924), 13–35.

Recent work by David Keck and Emrys Jones has expanded upon Seaton's initial

connection between Marlowe and Ortelius, linking *Tamburlaine* to Ortelius's illustrations

for many of the play's visual emblems, but also to Ariosto, who himself had turned to

maps as a poetic resource.[105] What these later critics have in common is their investment

in reading cartography as a presentational mode, rather than merely as something

represented. Emrys Jones, for instance, notes that the map does not, as it does in Seaton's

account, function only as a "stage prop": it also is a dramatic strategy meant to "evoke

the experience of traversing vast areas of the earth's surface," and reminds the audience

that "journeys through space require exhausting physical effort."[106] By linking

cartographic references to Marlowe's "treatment of space" in the play, Jones joins critics

like Garret Sullivan, who argues that Tamburlaine's "acts of colonization intersect with

that of the blank stage."[107] Through his cartographic itineraries and his stalking steps,

Tamburlaine's speech has a "bulldozing spatiality [that] reduces all regions in accordance

with the tyranny of [his] ambitions."[108] Even Jacques Lezra, who is particularly attentive

to the "special problems that are entailed when one brings geography … into the domain

of theatrical fiction," ultimately identifies in both theatrical fiction and cartography a

shared interest in marking "a boundary between incommensurables," and thus sees in

theater "a figure for geography, extensively understood."[109] While these writings differ in

some key points – Jones takes Ariosto as an influence on Marlowe's cartographic poetics,

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[105] David Keck, "Marlowe and Ortelius's Map," *Notes and Queries* 52, no. 2 (June 1, 2005): 189–90, https://doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gji216; Jones, "'A World of Ground.'"

[106] Jones, "'A World of Ground,'" 170.

[107] Jones, 173; Garrett A. Sullivan, "Space, Measurement, and Stalking Tamburlaine," *Renaissance Drama; Evanston, Ill.* 28 (January 1, 1997): 22.

[108] Sullivan, "Space, Measurement, and Stalking Tamburlaine," 15, 19.

[109] Jacques Lezra, "Geography and Marlowe," in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 130.

and Sullivan focuses mainly on movement as a kind of measurement – they share some foundational assumptions about the spatiality of theatrical language. But within the new cartographic framework, this distance between places was no longer unrepresentable. Places could occupy continuous terrain, the distance between them the product of a shared representational logic: that of the world or the map.

While others have seen in *Tamburlaine* the first meeting of drama and the map, I see it, via Gilbert, more as a discourse of a discovery, a documentation of the representational crisis precipitated by territorial acquisition. *Tamburlaine*'s maps are New World maps. They are maps that accompany a range of alternative navigational technologies. They are tools that are always imperfect and sometimes fail. If we attend to Tamburlaine's speeches, as critics have done, as the repository for cartographic tropes, for a systematizing and territorializing account of the theatrical world, we risk becoming lost in its circular current. In Tamburlaine's speeches we do not see the triumph of cartographic rhetoric, nor the simple opposition of old and new. Instead, shifting conventions of theatrical presentation – that is, the unspoken rules and conventions that govern theatrical placemaking – produce a borderland that seems contrived to ensure that both critic and audience lose their way. There is no question, of course, that Tamburlaine is interested in measuring. His attempts to "confute those blind geographers … and with a pen reduce [territories] to a map," generally understood to reflect both the prop he is holding at the time, and also theatricality itself, expand the map into a figure for a more capacious theatrical mode that has been borrowed from cartography. It is this redrawing of old territories that other characters fear. The play begins with an expression of concern for how Tamburlaine will "mangle" (1.2.17) others' provinces. Tamburlaine seems,

largely, to follow through on this promise. His talks about "my provinces" (1.2.23), a reduction of a kind between a place-based vision of theater, for an expanse of territory (possibly accompanied with a corresponding gesture), suggest that he will encircle with his dividing arm: scenes of measurement generally accompany scenes of imaginative containment. The question is not, then, whether Tamburlaine is interested in measurement, but rather what he is measuring and what mode of measurement is being used.

Tamburlaine's Northwest Passages

The theatrical scholar is, in some ways, a semiotician. Her goal is to work through the discursive codes that might be recovered through an imaginative contact between the play/text and its context, to expose "the baseline assumptions and expectations" of the medium."[110] As a form of pattern making *par excellence*, the map has perhaps been keyed too closely to this project, and become a critical convention that is then read back into theatricality. Instead of reading Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* as a site of contact between cartographic methodologies and the "old poetic geography," we might look within navigational literature and within the history of theater to reconstruct the aesthetic and social contexts of tools like the map.[111] By better understanding the range of contexts in which maps and cartographic language appear, we can also access the range of navigational or spatial methodologies – other forms of sense-making and of worldmaking - that map-minded texts often cede authority to alongside the map. The failure of the map

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[110] Erika T Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6-7.
[111] Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference*, 36.

as a totalizing methodological framework through which to view the world is precisely what allows us to see the efficacy of objects and ways of seeing and speaking that are not normally considered to be tools of worldmaking.

The idea that cartography might appear alongside other forms of worldmaking (or world unmaking) in early modern representations should not surprise us. Chris Barrett has explored cartography as a site of anxiety in English poetics, as visions of totality came into conflict with local histories.[112] She points us to cartographic anxiety as a constitutive feature of literary cartography during the period. Many early modern authors were acutely aware of the ill-fit between conventional spatial vocabularies and the new paradigm of the map. In the theater, this ill-fit would have been even more apparent, as genres of travel, dramatic romance, tragicomedy, city comedy and vernacular epic introduced new theatrical technologies and new fictional settings to the stage, attempting to assimilate them to the conventional vocabulary of an already spatial art. The emergence and popularity of these forms is often cited as one of effortless accommodation, where the worldmaking technologies of cartography and surveying – the tools of colonial control – help the stage to expand into new fictional territories.

But this process was anything but accommodating to the early modern theatergoer. Sidney had complained in his *Defense of Poesie* about English theater's capacious geographic imagination leading to indecorum of place: "I may speak (although I am here) of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut; but in action I

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[112] Chris Barrett, *Early Modern English Literature and the Poetics of Cartographic Anxiety* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198816874.001.0001/oso-9780198816874.

cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse."[113] The idea that Calicut and Peru could both

occupy the same stage space jars against the very definition of decorum, which is a place-

based understanding of how conventions of representation and action align with context.

By representing multiple places, the dramatist thus prevents any one context from being

the predictor of decorum. We can see here how the presentational effects of nondramatic

theatricality – pageant wagons, processional scaffolding, the co-presence of two places

onstage – would be put under pressure by a new cartographic paradigm, in which this co-

presence also implies a fictional "distance" between remote territories. The original

"Pacolet's horse" was a hobby horse: "a lytell hors of wodde," used in popular pageants

and Morris dancing.[114] This horse is enchanted and represents movement rather than

performing it. When a rider wants to "goo somwhere" he "torned the pynne towarde the

place that he wolde go to, and anone he foude him in the place without harme or

daunger." Onstage, this practice figures a world of effortless transportation, without any

real attempt to sketch out distance and scale between places. We can access in Sidney's

account, then, a range of theatrical technologies for rendering a movement in place, but

an absence of "distance." Places could be linked together through alternating scenes or

segmenting stage spaces – "Asia of the one side and Afric of the other," as Rome and

Egypt are in *Antony and Cleopatra* – though an actor's report (as in classical or

university drama) or through a magical prop like Pacolet's horse.[115] What Sidney

proposes is not only the indecorum of place but also the indecorum of knowing which

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[113] Philip Sidney, "The Defense of Poesy," in *English Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 382.
[114] *The Hystory of the Two Valyaunte Brethren Valentyne and Orson, Sonnes Vnto the Emperour of Grece* London, In Fletestrete at the sygne of the Rose Garland by me Wyllyam Copland for Iohn Walley, 1555. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240926973?accountid=13626.
[115] Sidney, "The Defense of Poesy," 381.

technique is used for rendering place. In the absence of Pacolet's horse, there is only the empty gap, only distance itself. The marking of this onstage distance – where it becomes visible *as* distance – is, in critical accounts, one of Tamburlaine's signature innovations.

But as we can see from Sidney's own document that the notion of "distance" as a form of measurement between unlike places was not necessarily intuitive to theatrical audiences. The distinction between what was presentational (what is a theatrical technology) and what is referential, was itself shifting during this period. And it is this *inability* to determine the presentational weight of any given reference or movement that my reading of Tamburlaine showcases. Take, for instance, Tamburlaine's first appeal to Zenocrate:

> But lady, this fair face and heavenly hue
> Must grace his bed that conquers Asia
> And means to be a terror to the world,
> Measuring the limits of his empery
> By east and west as Phoebus doth his course. (1.2.36-40)

Here, the link to Zenocrate's face further abstracts this image. Because her face is "fair" and of "heavenly hue," it will measure Tamburlaine's territory by standing as the sun. An interpersonal marker is, by analogy – the linking of the subordinate clauses of blank verse – an abstract marker. Measurement occurs most often in this register, from the highest celestial registers of the cosmos to the status of the person, making one stand in for the other.

But this cosmic analogy is not measurement; it does not render the distance between her face and the sun but collapses it. It abstracts from the body the movement of another body, and then connects that scaled up body to a body onstage. Rather than linking this measurement to theatrical movement, in other words, Tamburlaine "tornes the pinne; he

fixes it as a property of a theatrical person. In other scenes, this encircling gesture is that of a crown itself: that is, the theatrical prop rather than his stalking step stands in for and as an act of imperial domination. What is drawn here is not a connection between two unlike things: what is drawn is precisely the mode of measurement itself. The sun is the moving thing that establishes the relationship between east and west. But this moving body is also a stationary one. The sun is *presentationally* both the sun and Zenocrate, simultaneously something moving and unrepresentable, and something still and presented. The theatrical "as" itself is split and riven through. It might connect two things, but it is itself plural, and presents radically different models of theatrical proportion-taking.

Here, as elsewhere in *Tamburlaine*, it is not clear at which point theatrical references become theatrical *methodologies*, modes of theatrical presentation. Scholarship on early modern theatricality – from W. B. Worthen, Robert Weimann, Henry Turner, and Erika Lin, among others – has invited us to read between the written and bodily aspects of the playscript and to examine how language and the cues of the absent performance collaborate to reveal the "fundamental assumptions that were constitutive of early modern theatrical literacy, and that rendered performances intelligible."[116] The strategies for accessing these assumptions vary. Some are properties of theatrical history – traces left in the archive about what was conventional: for example, the use of a specific prop to signal shipwreck or stage directions that indicate whether shipwrecked actors had wet clothes (they did). Others are properties of the playtext itself. What Alan Dessen has

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[116] Erika T Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6-7.

called "theatrical italics" are places in the playtext that "call attention to [themselves] and provide a clear signal that something of importance is happening, thus encouraging a thinking precisely on the event."[117] Italicizations define something – some feature, some residual theatrical effect – that does not belong to a specific performance or to the edited text, but draws a line from one to the other, from the text to a *possible* performance. Broadly defined, these "italicized" portions of the text might include "gestic passages" (the traces of an actor's gestures and expression), dialogue and description that set the scene, stage directions, and metatheatrical language.[118] Put differently, italicizations reflect the authority of early modern theater to speak to its own conventions and to translate those conventions through time and space to a contemporary reader. In the process, they name early modern theater as an authority on its own conventions. Self-reflexive moments – moments when the gap between presentation and representation is foregrounded – allow us to access a history of dramatic convention. But they can also point us to what Jeremy Lopez terms "inefficient moments," in which the "value and function of convention are most tested."[119]

Tamburlaine is made up of these inefficient moments. We might remember, here, that *Tamburlaine*'s primary intervention in English theatricality was not its cartographic passages, but its turn to blank verse and to the open form of the line. The blank verse line links a series of propositions across clauses that chain from Zenocrate's face to the sun. These clauses, in Danielle Clarke's reading, point us to the continuous "reordering" of

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[117] Alan C. Dessen, *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*, Revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 143.

[118] Dessen, 61.

[119] Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 4.

words "to achieve patterns of sound and meaning," rather than a purely grammatical understanding of language that would direct us toward an understanding of the line's internal emphasis."[120] What Marlowe does here is produce an internal patterning that relies on the "working words" of Tamburlaine himself, his tendency to produce out of language an actionable effect. As Leah Marcus and Jill Levinson have argued, Tamburlaine's language is "performative" in the sense that the "invocation of an image … is often followed by its material appearance as stage business."[121] This is true in the case of a prop, such as the crown that appears after Tamburlaine talks about it, and it is also true in the case of the defeated kings drawing a cart who appear first in Tamburlaine's own predictive speech and then later in a stage direction.[122] But this feature of the play's language, where we cannot be sure when and where speech will become italicized, produces an odd effect onstage: where what is represented in language (such as the sun) cannot materially be made manifest through stage business. Tamburlaine's cosmic and cartographic imagery appears throughout the play as an ungrammatical pattern; it is linked to other pieces of stage business, to references that do make their way from representation into the material place of performance. These references, due to their scale, point out patterns of discourse that seem to indicate that "something interesting is happening" or might happen, but the something interesting itself never appears. Or when it does appear, it appears in a diminished form. Unlike the crown reference turning into the crown prop, the map reference turning into the map prop

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[120] Danielle Clarke, "Marlowe's Poetic Form," in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 60.
[121] Leah Marcus, "Marlowe's Magic Books: The Material Text," in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17.
[122] Marcus, 17.

scales down the totalizing scale of the map, making it less something constitutive of the stage's inner workings and more something contained within the fictional world.

The question here, then, becomes whether Tamburlaine's cartographic references are *italicized,* whether they are merely of interest or whether they're pointing to "something interesting happening." To understand whether something is meaningful to a play, rather than only to us, is difficult to assess specifically in the case of cartography. Generically, if not practically, maps are totalizing and explanatory. As critical tools for thinking about the past or for thinking about how early modern people thought about it, they seem to offer access to a way of thinking that translates across the centuries in a way that other theatrical technologies do not. As a fundamentally "spatial" medium, one that attempts to systematize the relationships between places, they also seem to have a particular affinity to theater. But in *Tamburlaine*, the relationship between what is or is not a theatrical technology at any moment, and what is a mere reference, is always changing. Conventions of theatrical representation, audience expectation, and changes within the theatrical language – through Marlowe's "mighty line" – produce a borderland of overlapping spatial conventions that do not resolve into a schema, a compass, a line of longitude or latitude, but instead seem contrived to ensure that both critic and audience lose their way. Throughout *Tamburlaine,* this open pattern directs us to ways of thinking of the theatrical world in multiple registers and at multiple scales at once.

We can access this other *Tamburlaine* in a signature scene of the play, one in which Tamburlaine's imperial reach is continually recast on different terms.

> Nature has framed us of four elements
> Warring within our breasts for regiment

>Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds
>Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
>The wonderous architecture of the world
>And measure every wand'ring planet's course
>Still climbing after knowledge infinite
>And always moving as the restless spheres
>Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest
>Until we reach the ripest fruit of all
>That perfect bliss and sole felicity
>The sweet fruition of an earthly crown. (2.7.18-29)

This speech begins with a discussion of bodies: the four humors and the four elements that make up both heavenly and earthly bodies. But bodily figures soon begin to multiply; what begins as one body is split into elements that are "warring without our breasts." These warring elements are then analogically related to the "wonderous architecture of the world." The body with the warring elements has analogue to another body, the "world," and is, in turn, enclosed by it. Through this gradual scaling from the warring elements, to the human body, to the warring humans within the world, we are invited to trace this course and through it to perceive the shape and the framing of the bodies that it links together. But in subordinating the worlds of the play to his own organizing influence, Tamburlaine struggles under its representational weight. Tamburlaine's body is at a crossroads here, it flickers back and forth between all three registers, each connected with a discrete set of presentational conventions, a way of imagining distance and travel onstage. In the first, his body is merely a yardstick, a figure for rational measurement that points to the distance between places on stage. Yet this distance, this "climbing after knowledge infinite," is itself enclosed within the logic of the mind, "always moving as the restless spheres" attempting to follow a larger celestial logic. This is not absolute distance, but rather the movement of a body, an exertion, "climbing," or

the shape of a mental movement "as the restless sphere." In a cartographic frame of reference, distance is an abstraction, referenced by absolute cartographic measurement that links unlike things. But in this scene, distance is also created by a body's movement towards and away from its goal. This is the "power attractive" of the planetary movement, which influences and draws upon its object, as the planetary spheres draw and act upon earthly bodies. The "draw" of the geographer's pen is thus replaced by Tamburlaine's planetary influence. He "redraws" earthly relationships with a planetary force. Here Tamburlaine himself climbs through layers of reference, different ways that measurement may itself be measured. His "aspiring mind" "measures" the movement of the planets and extends his body until it reaches a cosmic scale to become a perfected body, a heavenly body.

Tamburlaine replaces a conception of distance as a space between two things with something more like juxtaposition: a profusion of different scales and provenances. The crowning achievement of the passage is not a turn to the celestial scale, but rather to the earth, and specifically to a stage prop: "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown." We have here a whiplash, from body to mind, from heaven to earth, from measurement as it is rationally understood by the mind to measurement as the distance traversed by bodies. But the narrative ends with something smaller, more material, and more contingent than these models: it ends with pageantry. The earthly crown brings us down from the planetary realm into the world of props – wooden swords and paper crowns that Tamburlaine evokes as figures of a much more contingent and fragile power. Potentially encircling Tamburlaine's head in this moment, the crown (figured throughout *Tamburlaine* as stage prop) shrinks the world down to size, placing the outsized cosmic

mind of Tamburlaine at its center. In its foregrounding of theatrical imagery, the function

of a prop, the crown also draws on a more fragile indexicality: the ability of theatrical

places and persons to hold and to ground larger representations in a moment of

performance. Far from the imaginary reterritorialization of latitude and longitude, or even

the scalar extension of the planet, Tamburlaine's crown has only a theatrical power that is

linked to the occasion, not a "power attractive." Representationally, the crown is least

able to hold the world; yet it is the version of the world that Tamburlaine ultimately relies

on. It is how he "redraws" the world from the blind geographers, moving away from

measured distance toward juxtaposition or elided distance.

To follow the placemaking technologies of any scene in *Tamburlaine* is like attempting

to occupy the "passage" of Gilbert's discoveries. This "passage" is a kind of receptacle

for its anxious reconstitution: a project of mangling that Tamburlaine is participant in, but

is also himself caught up in. His words are drawn along by the centrifugal force of his

own rhetoric, unable to present a fixed "province" to occupy. Tamburlaine's territory is

present only as a reflection of his continual recasting of presentational technologies in

distinct and unrelated terms. Each model of the theatrical terrain assumes something

different about the conventions of representation of theatrical measurement. What

conventions can we assume here of the stage? What assumptions can we make about

worldmaking, a worldmaking that we must understand to be unfolding outside of

cartography as well as through and in it? In one register, we seem to be looking at

Tamburlaine as a still center, and then subordinating him to the measurement of the

scene. In another, Tamburlaine is an "atlas," a planet that acts with outsized influence. In

a third, he is a compound body, a "heaven of heavens" that contains worlds. Theatrical

terrain, in this third case, is more like the imagined space taken up by theatrical

representativeness, the "in one person count a million" of *Henry V*'s prologue. In a fourth

register, Tamburlaine adopts the incommensurable power of Pacolet's horse. His territory

is not continuous, is not linked through the extension of lines of relation (such as

longitude and latitude) or the extension of his person, as he shifts in scale to attain the

stature of a planet, but is left as a magical movement from one to the other: magical

thinking that becomes real through his adoption of the earthly crown. The "four

elements" that Tamburlaine discusses here are also four separate models of territorial

expansiveness. And the boundary lines between these territories are continually

reconstituted. The shift from the heavenly bodies to the crown descends downwards

toward what is perceptible, attempting to compress all of these scales within a prop, to

represent it as effortless, but what we have access to instead is a kind of nervousness and

concern about that extension, as if Tamburlaine were putting his crown into a

representational void. What we have here is an act of theatrical labor that does not resolve

the scale or scope of the viewed world, but instead replaces it with a series of nesting

dolls, each at a different scale, each overlaying the other, not extending, not expanding.

Instead of the boundary line between things, or the boundary between scales, a space of

translation and extension, we have just the boundary itself, as "one like bignesse"

(Gilbert, 45), iterated over and over again, as a crown, a body, a distance, but *within and*

between what?

If we were to attempt to locate Tamburlaine on this map, we'd find ourselves spinning in

circles. For "measurement" here is itself constantly being remeasured as accounts of

scale, size, vastness, and reach move between the presentational and representational axes

of the play. The represented scene is a fictional setting that is continually being extended and contracted by the actions of characters and actors. It belongs to the fictional world rather than to theatricality. We might be inclined to read *Tamburlaine*'s geography as something merely represented by the author (through analogy to Ortelius) or as a methodological engagement with the visual presentation and conventions of the map. But in *Tamburlaine*, the scene is continually shifting, moving from the territory of the fiction (something that he professes to have full control over) to something like the territory of the stage: to a reflection on the conventions and effects of theatricality. By tracing the movement between presentation and representation, we can access the turbulence that new territorial expansion introduced, the extent to which something cited in one scene can become a clue to the play's conventional language in another. The variability of theatrical citation in *Tamburlaine* can also help us to see the methodological power of mere reference, helping us to see how the theater was turning and converting new materials, new places, new territories *into* theatrical methodologies. Rather than pointing to specific navigational materials and the methodological technologies they represent, *Tamburlaine*'s "cartographic passages" are *Northwest* Passages. They are not meant to reproduce the logics of the map, but rather to point to the questions prompted by texts like Gilbert's – similarly structured around itineraries, and questions about the relationship between person and world, the feasibility of totalizing knowledge, and the challenges of its presentation. References to the map point away from cartography. They function as an implicit manicule, a pointing finger, that invites audience members to attend to questions of "discoverie" that authors like Gilbert outlined – and that made up the tentative tone and implicit interpretive frame of New World explorations – without

offering them a clear answer as to what, or what kind, of thing that might be or where it might be discovered.

Tamburlaine's Others

Onstage, the space between characters is forever in the subjunctive. It could be presentational (two characters are two inches apart because the actors are two inches apart) or representational (these two inches represent two miles or two continents). It can never be fixed as a stable property: a guide or map, a way out of the play's vexing maze. But what happens after "place" and convention break apart? What happens is that place – or more properly emplacement, the notion that places have certain concrete qualities – ceases to be something outside of character and begins to be a provision of character. This transition speaks back to the context of the Northwest Passage voyages and the ways that the relationship between person and place was being rewritten during the period in which *Tamburlaine* was performed.

In Gilbert's case, the moment of territorial uncertainty precipitates an act of seizure, both of the archipelagos themselves, which the English rename as they pass through the straight, and of the native Inuit, who are kidnapped as part of an intelligencing mission: an attempt to ensure that future ventures did not fail. The notion that there could be native inhabitants of the straights, in fact, was itself called into question. Gilbert acknowledges a preexisting Inuit presence, but the Inuit are re-categorized. No longer native to the Arctic, they are travelers: a culture of migrants who have traveled over the passage already. This new category of migrant dispenses with classical explanations of geographic difference and imagines a nation of people already in transit from the coveted Spice Islands and

China. Gilbert leans on climatological arguments to make this claim, explaining that the native peoples living in the Arctic, because of their visual similarity to New World peoples living farther south, must have been attempting to come through the passage and become trapped "by accidental mishap [since] the aire in such like Elevation is alwais cold and too cold for such as the Indians are" (Gilbert 35). The perceived incongruity between a people of cold climate and the dark skin of people Gilbert believes to be "Indians" must be explained by a prior migration, one that stands in for the potential future migration of the English through the passage. This geography then creates a suggestive continuity between the Spice Islands and England. England becomes part of the Moluccan archipelago, since English people can claim proximity to the Arctic Islands as native Arctic peoples. As Gilbert puts it, "the Queenes Maiesties dominions are neerer the Northwest passage than any other great princes that might passe that way" and the English have a particular capacity to survive in cold climates (Jacques Cartier would make the same claim about France) (42). What is ultimately seized here is the idea of indigeneity itself. It becomes the premise of a sovereign transfer – in representation, not in reality – between the Inuit and the English.

Gilbert's climatological argument is then used not only to suggest a continuity between the native peoples of the Arctic with the Spice Islands, but to position the English as the true native inhabitants of the Spice Islands. Gilbert can produce this sleight of hand by creating a diasporic archipelago linking the Spice Islands, through the Northwest Passage to England, and then divesting the people currently occupying the islands of any distinct culture. But the force of this argument is also an environmental force. It reinforces his prior argument about the ice floes. The English may themselves be migrants through this

space, but they can claim ancestral rights to the most important island in this synthetic

chain: England. The links of spatial representation, it seems, have already followed the

thermohaline conveyor up the ice floes and into Moluccan waters in the ship of Gilbert's

prose. Gilbert positions his own text as a ship of state – a microcosm of English cultural

difference and English identity. And this ship will keep English identity intact, even as it

navigates the diasporic and migratory extensions of Gilbert's own narrative. If the native

people of the archipelagos and his own men have something in common – that is, have

theatricality in common – it is only because English theatricality is the true native island

culture. Gilbert has positioned a native affinity for English popular culture as suggestive

evidence that these islands are the historical province of England; the Inuit "migrants"

have already been acculturated. Gilbert's extension relies on the Inuit's resemblance to

Indian peoples to create a diasporic geography controlled by the English that mirrors the

trade routes the English wish to find. The Northwest Passage becomes a passage writ

large, a way to move peoples, references, associations, and cultural categories through the

upper regions of the earth to create a climatological trade belt of cultural difference. The

Northwest Passage is interestingly situated between fiction-building and fact – it both

does and does not exist – and therefore, to some extent, Gilbert is responding to the

affordances of geographic space when he makes his imagined geography. He is reacting

to the contingent and semi-fictional existence of the Passage itself.

We can see that conquest involves here, not the appropriation of a place (since the

English never formally settled in the Arctic) but the devolution of place onto person and

the seizure of that person, along with the appropriation of their relationship to their land,

their sovereignty. In English accounts of the Arctic, the representation of "native" hinges

on established geohumoral conventions, an ability to a thrive in a cold climate. As Mary

Floyd Wilson notes, during this period, the English were attempting to realign themselves

with humoral temperateness, usually associated with Mediterranean and North Africa

(13).[123] In classical representations, the English were Scythians; they are cold and brutish,

inclined to lechery, lasciviousness, and dull of wit. English revisions of classical

geohumoralism, however, represent racial difference in terms of how a person is disposed

toward their own humoral constitution.[124] The effect of this was to say that the English

had qualities associated with a hotter climate – wit, melancholy, temperance – in spite of

their coldness. We can see this transition at work in Gilbert. Claiming a status as a "cold

climate native" within the classical model is advantageous for the English. They deny the

indigenous Arctic people they encounter the same status based on their dark skin. But the

second way Gilbert describes being native to the Arctic pushes back against the notion

that there could be a form of belonging that was specific to this particular place, rather

than only its climate. The English are themselves not native to this place; they are also

migrants. And migrancy was, in classical and continental texts, a foundational component

of the English constitution: "Englishness itself was understood primarily as a collection

of markedly fluid qualities."[125] Migrancy – the ability to belong to more than one place –

is thus in Gilbert a category inclusive of the Inuit and the English. The English claim this

identity in order to make a land claim, to argue for an analogical link between Inuit

"migrants" who were successfully living on the land and themselves. But this connection

effectively refuses to acknowledge an Inuit land claim. What distinguishes the English

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[123] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13.
[124] Floyd-Wilson, 46.
[125] Floyd-Wilson, 48.

(and the Inuit according to the English) is their ability to endure the environment, not to live in it. This refusal to grant any native identity to Arctic peoples or to themselves denies the Northwest territories any particularity as a place that someone (even the English) could belong to. It instead becomes a through-line, a route to other, more attractive, more lucrative places. In Gilbert, a humoral understanding of race lies side by side here with a newer, more opportunistic understanding of race dictated by incidental qualities like movement or social organization, a disposition toward lands in general (a migrant) and thus a property of a person rather than a marker of belonging to a place. This strategy of assigning characteristics to people *regardless* of where those people are placed would also be a part of England's attempts to deny the Irish their territories. As "nomadic" peoples, they have no right to land, and thus no sovereignty.

The vocabularies of difference and affiliation that Gilbert engages here position "native" and "migratory" as two intersecting categories, two ways of imagining difference based on epistemology or disposition rather than on religion, color, or nation. Early modern scholars such as Ania Loomba and Emily Bartels have helped us to understand that "race" in the early modern period was multiple and variable.[126] It relied on differences of religion and skin color, as well as variable qualities like disposition. This scholarship opened up discussions about race by considering the ways that early modern racialist language (language about race and difference that is often also racist) might have had its own forms and representations that are related to, but also different from, our own. As Lara Bolivsky has argued, "the most dynamic sites of racial production will occur at

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[126] Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, 1st edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Emily C. Bartels, *Speaking of the Moor: From "Alcazar" to "Othello,"* 1st edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

moments when racial boundaries are permeated or indistinct."[127] A willingness to consider the difference of difference enables us to see that "discourses other than scientific ones are involved in generating racial classifications and racial hierarchies," both in the early modern period and in our own moment.[128] But while this scholarship resulted in an increased attention to the logics of racialist discourse, logics which may or may not signify in ways that we recognize, work within the early modern period has still largely hinged on our ability to identify bodily qualities, like skin color, nation, and religion, as the marker of difference. It has hinged on racial identification, in other words, rather than on the ways that racialist thinking might be operating. But more recently, scholars such as David Sterling Brown have signaled a shift in early modern race studies by attending to the ways that the presentational technologies that make racial difference legible onstage might be at work in plays that don't seem to be "about" race, that are not themselves "race plays."[129] While Brown is concerned with how something like a history of racial difference and racialist thinking is produced from these technologies, I track a reverse movement to understand how English theatrical aesthetics, how the very language of theatricality, might become racially marked.

Tamburlaine and the Northwest Passage voyages are both, to some extent, "about race." They both feature racialization as part of territorial conquest. When Hakluyt would introduce the Northwest Passage voyages in his *Principal Navigations,* he would turn to *Tamburlaine* as a framework, claiming: "I thinke the best vtterance of our natural and

[127] Lara Bolivsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 32.

[128] Bolivsky, 28.

[129] Brown, David Sterling. "White Hands: Gesturing toward Shakespeare's "Other Race Plays." Presented at the "New Directions in Early Modern Race Studies" Plenary Session at the Shakespeare Association of America Annual Gathering, Washington, D.C., April 2019.

chiefe commoditie of cloth is like to be, if it please God hereafter to reueile vnto vs the passage thither by the Northwest. The most exact and true information of the North parts … I finde in a history of Tamerlan."[130] Hakluyt here makes this connection based on a shared climate: between the north parts of the Americas and the north parts of China. He does this to establish a common route through them. But the texts, in addition to making claims about navigability, about migratoriness, about a shared people and climate, also seek to forge a new racialist language for talking about it. In Gilbert's text, racial identity is proposed not as a discourse of person but a discourse of place, of belonging and non/belonging. This is a way of talking about race that specifically emerges from New World contexts. Amerindians posed an implicit challenge to established understandings of north/south and east/west distinctions that relied on the link between climate and skin. We must remember that at this time, the English were also unsure about whether the Americas were east or west, whether they were a way of getting to the east from the west.

We can see this reframing of difference at work in *Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine* does not only adopt the map logics proposed in Gilbert's text; it also adopts its central figure, a migratory conqueror who displaces those whose lands he seizes. As a Scythian, Tamburlaine's freedom of movement is expressed onstage as a character property. As James Berg notes of *King Lear,* "all character is property, where property represents not just what persons seem to own, but the *things* that properly belong *with* them."[131] In *Tamburlaine*, this sense of "belonging with" as an indication of racial affiliation – rather

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[130] Hakluyt, 6.
[131] James Berg, "The Properties of Character in King Lear," in *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance and Theatrical Persons*, ed. P. Yachnin and J. Slights, 2009 edition (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 99.

than "belonging to" – extends to theatricality, which becomes a provision, a property, of

character rather than the setting or context in which characters act. We have already seen

that Tamburlaine's monologues are themselves roving, representations of his ability to

move between different scenic logics and presentational schema at once. But

Tamburlaine's way of speaking about the scene – even through his working words – is,

through these monologues, also set beside it. The monologue form circumscribes the

efficacy of his working words. It showcases their performative power. It establishes

patterns of speech that later make their way into theatrical presentation. But it also

circumscribes this power as a faculty of Tamburlaine's particular way of speaking. It is

within the space of the monologue that a new theatrical understanding and theatrical

identity emerges, where theatricality becomes a property or provision of Tamburlaine the

character.

In this scene, Tamburlaine stands beside his captive – the Turkish emperor Bajazeth –

and claims:

> So shall from the East unto the furthest West
> Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm
> The galleys and those pilling bigandines
> That yearly sail to the Venetian gulf
> And hover in the straights for Christian's wrack
> Shall lie at anchor in the Isle Asant
> Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war
> Sailing along the orient sea
> Have fetched about the Indian continent
> Even from Persepolis to Mexico
> And thence unto the Straits of Jubalter;
> Where they shall meet and join their force in one
> Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale
> And all the ocean by the British shore
> And by this means I'll win the world at last. (3.3.246-255)

Tamburlaine is here italicizing two different theatrical models, linking them in representation. The first is a cartographic itinerary, one that spans from "east unto the furthest west" – a Northeast Passage. The second is a gesture. His "puissant arm" will "extend" and "fetch about the Indian continent." Much like Tamburlaine's description of Zenocrate, we have the intertwining of two different theatrical scales. As the arm turns into a galley, the reach of Tamburlaine's arm onstage comes to represent the movement of a ship. The ship then turns into a fleet, and "fetches about the Indian continent," as if it still contained the properties of Tamburlaine's arm. What is constructed here, then, is a new theatrical language, one that relies on Tamburlaine's own reach to construct an imagined context for his action. As the horizontal line of Tamburlaine's "puissant arm" extends across the stage, it takes the position of a longitudinal line on a map, an expression of effortless extension. But it also retains the qualities of its origin, the action of fetching that retains the human scale of his action. The arm of the actor here flickers between both of these registers. The extension of the arm is marked – italicized – it becomes an ordering gesture. The indexicality between reaching and extending across the map lends a fiction of scenic permanence to his gestures, turning the play of distance and proximity between characters and places into something more solid, something like rewriting a map. The plays fictional setting *and* its setting within theatricality – the theatrical language it is using – expand and contract simultaneously as Tamburlaine describes the scope of his conquests as something outside of him, while also constructing them as a provision of his body. Being within reaching distance of Tamburlaine, as Bajazeth is here, means also potentially having your territories within his grasp, as he controls the scale of theatrical representation. Distance between bodies – as between

Tamburlaine and Bajazeth in this scene – is no longer just interpersonal distance but is also the distance between empires. It is this uncertainty that drives the play, as characters are unsure which presentational register (a description, a gesture, an itinerary, an embrace) they are in at any given time. Tamburlaine's ability to chain these technologies together through a series of cascading clauses – "and thence," "and all," "and by this" – subordinates multiple forms of theatrical meaning making to his own speech. This is part of the power of his monologues, which lead us from one dependent clause to another, each depending upon a different model of theatricality and a different understanding of how we should interpret the scale and scope of the theatrical world.

The ability to move between these different registers is what distinguishes Tamburlaine from many of the other characters. It gives his language a migratory quality, aligning with his status as a Scythian. In early modern representations, Scythians are nomadic northern barbarians, occasionally English, usually north Asian and, increasingly, Amerindian. As a nomadic people, they were a key transition point between an identity of itinerant conqueror, which the English were increasingly espousing, and the position of the conquered. They allowed a dynamic point of affiliation between one and the other. The identity of "Scythian," a northern barbarian race with which the English had frequently been grouped in classical representations, provided a framework for a new colonial identity, allowing the English to naturalize their conquests as native to Englishness. By claiming the nomadic identity of the Scythian, English could push back against accusations that they were merely a colonized people, adopting the habits and behaviors of continental Europeans. This return to barbarism aligned with their identification of a common lineage with Amerindian and Inuit peoples, both in Gilbert's

text and in the juxtaposition of ancient Picts and contemporary Paspahegh warriors in the Theodor De Bry edition of Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report*. This association with ancient barbarism, and the projection of this identity onto contemporary indigenous people in the Americas, naturalizes England's settlement project and brings England in line with other conquering societies, rewriting the Roman past. But when "Scythian" appears as an identity attached to other northern peoples, such as Inuits in the Arctic or Powhatan in Virginia, it features differently. "Scythian" attached to non-English peoples amplifies both the migratory and barbarous qualities. It is only in contact with qualities such as Christianity and Englishness that migratoriness is a boon, evidence of England's pre-Roman past. We can see how "Scythian" occurring alongside other markers of difference is not itself a race but is nevertheless racializing. When associated with Englishness it designates a natural conqueror and when associated with Inuits or the Irish it designates the naturally conquered. Tamburlaine provides us with a framework for how attributions such as migratoriness, and theatrical epistemologies, ways of thinking about representation, were increasingly attached to particular characters and contexts and were becoming markers of difference.

In *Tamburlaine,* the main character occupies both positions simultaneously: the colonist who contributes to the racialization of other characters and the one who is racialized. The variability of theatrical language, which can easily shift registers and be shifted, is not only his provenance. His monologues do not contain all the italicizations that the stage can hold. They are themselves, as monologues, one of the most theatrically circumscribed ways of speaking about the theatrical world, the least connected from stage work and from action. During this "from the East unto the furthest West" monologue, we can see

the outside of Tamburlaine's speech through the physical presence of Bajazeth, chained onstage next to Tamburlaine. Bajazeth's presence makes it impossible to read the stage as an effortless extension of Tamburlaine's arm. Bajazeth's interjection in this monologue takes the link between onstage action and cartographic description that Tamburlaine establishes here and unlinks it. He reads the expanse of Tamburlaine's arm not as an ordering gesture but one that is profoundly disordered, an articulation of interpersonal violence: "yet set a ransom on me Tamburlaine / ah villains, dare yet touch my sacred arms? Oh Mahomet, O sleepy Mahomet" (3.3.268-269).

Tamburlaine's purchase on theatrical making, circumscribed by the internal, patterned theatrical framing of his monologue, is punctured by Bajazeth, who, confined to the locus of the interior scene, interrupts the speech to draw attention to his own plight. In the process, he converts Tamburlaine's theatricality from something that describes the scene, that makes his gesture predictive of how we should interpret it, into something that defines Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine's speech had just ended with a series of linking words, but Bajazeth's begins with a "yet." Bajazeth attaches his own dependent clause to Tamburlaine's speech. In this moment, he also brings us from one vision of the scene (endlessly accommodating, definitive, expansive) to another one (constricting, small, unaccommodating), making both constitutive of Tamburlaine's current position. What had been linked is now at odds: the "sacred arm" positioned against the "puissant" one. He inserts himself into the work of meaning-making. His interruption exposes the perspectival and bodily quality of Tamburlaine's "puissance" which becomes only an expression of his own state adjacent to the bodily indignities that characterize Bajazeth's "sacred arm:" both arms occupy the same theatrical place. The arm as an expression of

Tamburlaine's reach shrinks here to become merely a human arm, less intimacy as a meeting of territories than intimacy as embrace: as in its accompanying stage direction, "*they bind Bajazeth.*"

Ultimately, it is Bajazeth's words, not Tamburlaine's words, that work here, moving from dialogue into stage direction, from representation into presentation. Bajazeth's patterned language, his "yet" and his "arm," restore the stage space to a place of intimate interpersonal violence. Something that seemed to extend beyond Tamburlaine – to make his reading conventional and foundational of the drama – here becomes merely something that belongs to him that is a quality of his person. By turning Tamburlaine's "arm" back from its status as a scenic technology into a quality of his body or as a description of his disposition towards it, Bajazeth draws attention to the fragility of Tamburlaine's pretensions. Bajazeth constructs for us a borderland of subjective representations (alternatively cartographic and theatrical) that doesn't cohere into a single scene but is theatrically underdetermined. Neither of them can describe the scene or marshal an understanding of its theatricality. Throughout the play, Tamburlaine's linking of different theatrical modes – from the capacious descriptions of his monologues to the brutality of his pageants – is repeatedly punctured by a corresponding conversion of the former into the latter. His gestures outward are themselves re-italicized by his victims, snapping back his "puissant" arm into the circumscribed space of Bajazeth's cage. Characters who are subject to Tamburlaine's violence draw attention to the incapaciousness and fragility of his theatricality, the failure of his totalizing tools to make place for themselves onstage. And the result of these interventions is to further subject Tamburlaine to his own scenic logic. Just as Bajazeth is ultimately racialized by his final

exclamation, "Oh Mahomet, oh sleepy Mahomet," Tamburlaine is also characterized by his distinctive speech, his links between different presentational technologies within the monologue form. This speech, and this disposition toward theatrical meaning-making, make him a migrant not only within the fiction, but within the theatricality. Tamburlaine's enclosure within the theatrical monologue, a space of working words that brackets him off from the real stagework of the scene anticipates his later enclosure within his war tent in the second part of the play. As his empire falls apart, he is increasingly enclosed in a domestic setting with his wife and sons engaged in petty domestic squabbles. This placement, not in the world as a conqueror, but at home in an un-English setting, increasingly identifies him, not as a proxy of Englishness, but as foreign.

In classical readings of the play, characters are racialized primarily because of their distance from what is known. That is, they are marked by their relationship to place, a setting within the fiction – whether Malta, Venice, or North Africa – and thus to a relationship between this place and the setting of the performance, a dynamic that relies on the imperial discourses that place invites. Much work on *Tamburlaine* has worked to place him, as a Scythian, as a model for Spanish brutality, as a character in a complex nexus of "disposition," where the traffic in archetypes becomes visible to us as the literal "[foot] traffick of [the] stage" (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1.1 *Prologue*). Tamburlaine begins the play with his shepherd's "weeds," a model of English pastoral, and acquires imperial attributions as he travels – first the voraciousness attributed to the Spanish, and later the imperiousness often attributed to the Ottomans. Early modern racial categories attach and detach to him. But as a character who is simultaneously abstract and full of attributions,

as Emily Bartels has claimed, he seems more of a mechanism that gives us insight into how racialization works onstage than a racialized character in his own right.[132] Tamburlaine is another kind of manicule, he points to the process by which racialized characters are made. He illuminates the process by which a particular quality, a habit of movement or speech or an approach to theatricality, stands in for a character's genre: their kin or kind. Tamburlaine's speech binds him formally with the quality of migratoriness as much as Bajazeth's appeal to Mahomet and his "bind[ing]" within the interior fiction, distinguishes him from migratoriness and links him to Turkishness. That is, in his representation as a Scythian, Tamburlaine does not only model racialization more generally – the process by which a character acquires racial attributions – but he also inaugurates a new genre of racialized character, one who is primarily in transit, one who is the foil against which other racialized representations are set.

By reading Marlowe under pressure, in a period in which the dramatic scene was developing new conventional vocabularies and taking on new objects of representation, I mean not to challenge his central place in sixteenth-century dramatic history. If Marlowe can be said to renovate the eye during this period, altering the way that audiences "perceived and interpreted visual signs in the late sixteenth-century playhouse": that is, because he trains it on a new object.[133] What Lunney calls his "framing rhetoric" frames a new *mise en scène*: "a look which forces people to act."[134] This look provokes analysis; it asks audiences to form expectations based on what they see before them, including "sets,

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[132] Emily Carroll Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 23.

[133] Ruth Lunney, *Marlowe and the Popular Tradition: Innovation in the English Drama Before 1595* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2002), 36.

[134] Lunney, 36; Lutz Bacher, *The Mobile Mise En Scene: A Critical Analysis of the Theory and Practice of Long-Take Camera Movement in the Narrative Film* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 232.

costumes, props [and] the battery of theatrically derived things-put-into-the-scene."[135]

But this "look," in Marlowe, these "working words," also constitute, to borrow Eugenie

Brinkema's coinage, a *mise n'en-scène.*[136] They invite viewers to see, to interpret, words

that don't quite work. Learning to see what there is *not* is one of the qualities normally

attributed to early modern theatrical criticism, since performances were too ephemeral to

leave traces in the archive. But here it takes on special resonance. In most plays, the gap

that Weimann describes as foundational to theatricality is difficult to find. In the edited

playtexts that we have inherited, it is up to scholars of theatricality to identify the gap – to

locate places where there is pressure put on presentational effects, where the stage cannot

bear the burden of its own represented objects. But in Marlowe – as in New World

literature – an inability to settle on a relationship between presentation (form) and

representation (content) signaled by *Tamburlaine*'s methodological whiplash, where

representing movement through space and representing that space fail to point us to a

setting for that action, fail to locate a passage. *Tamburlaine* dwells on the questions that

undergird the creation of archives – on how to represent distances across places, on how

to account for fluctuations in identity and attribution – and how to address the failure of

words to do real work.

I read *Tamburlaine,* then, as a capsule for the kinds of logistical and representational

problems that Humphrey Gilbert expresses, problems which take place differently in

theatricality, even as they ask the same questions. To claim this history for *Tamburlaine*

is to read against the many readings of imperial optimism that have characterized the

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[135] Eugenie Brinkema, *The Forms of the Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2014), 44.
[136] Brinkema, 46.

play's cartographic scenography. While the final acts of the play thematize Tamburlaine's failure as a product of his overreach, these early scenes represent conquest as innately unsettling, not exclusively through its ability to "mangle provinces" and to replace conventional sources of authority (the promise given to Zenocrate of safe passage through Egypt) but to confront the conqueror with a profusion of overwritten methodological frameworks for making sense of his own conquests, each of which offers a different point of view on the object of conquest. "Territory" is never possessed because it can never be fully realized. We have, instead, all these potential passages, potential points of entry into the theatrical scene, into the kind of territorial mastery that *Tamburlaine* discusses; they remain the "discourse of a discovery for a passage," and not the passage, the setting, the itinerary, or the territory itself. Gilbert's *new world* map turns Marlowe's expanding scene into a provisional repertoire of presentational innovations during these formative years in dramatic history. When the New World appears onstage in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, it appears more as a way of thinking about or talking about a represented thing rather than as that thing itself. That is, it often bypasses representation entirely and instead provides the play with the coordinates for its own approach to territoriality. It is the very link between form and content, and the ways that the two interact and inform each other, that New World texts put pressure on and were working to revise. And *Tamburlaine* takes up this settlement aesthetic. What is schematic in one scene or indeed in one line becomes, in the next, not a methodology, a tool, or a strategy, but something to-be-represented, a "discourse of a discovery," a venture to come.

2. Ben Jonson's American London

Henry Peacham's *Art of Living in London* (1642) opens with a warning. Written for

"gentlemen, countrymen and strangers drawn by occasion of business" and "the poorer

sort that come thither to seek their fortunes," it was one of many traveler's pamphlets

circulating during the seventeenth century that set out to aid young men in navigating

continental travel. But unlike these other pamphlets, of which numerous examples may

be found for France, Germany, Italy, and other countries preceding England in the

flowering of "the Renaissance," Peacham's guide takes as its object a place far closer to

home. The guide's secondary title from the frontispiece, "A caution," gives a hint of its

contents. Inside, the brief pamphlet, only about five pages long, describes London in

terms that draw on New World metaphors, specifically the experience of being on the

open sea, to elaborate the dangers of England's largest (and soon Europe's largest) city.

> Now the citie being like a vast sea (full of gusts) fearfull dangerous shelves and
> rocks, ready at every storme to sinke and cast away, the weake and unexperienced
> Barke (with her fresh-water soldiers) as wanting her compasse and her skilfull
> Pilot: myself, like another *Columbus* or *Drake,* acquainted with her rough
> entertainment and stormes, have drawn you this chart or map for your guide, as
> well out of mine owne, as my many friends experience … for the citie is like a
> quick-sand the longer you stand upon it the deeper you sinke. (2V)[137]

By emphasizing urban hazards in maritime terms, Peacham's caution represents London

as foreign, a place for which the young Englishman will need a "guide." This

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[137] Henry Peacham, *The Art of Living in London, or, A Caution How Gentlemen, Countreymen and Strangers, Drawn by Occasion of Businesse, Should Dispose of Themselves in the Thriftiest Way, Not Onely in the Citie, but in All Other Populous Places. As Also, a Direction to the Poorer Sort That Come Thither to Seeke Their Fortunes. By H. P.*, Thomason Tracts / 26: E.145[20] ([London]: Printed for Iohn Gyles, and are to be sold by Samuel Rand, at his shop at Barnards Inne in Holborne, 1642). Pages within early modern printed books without traditional page numbers will be given the notation of their page in the electronic EEBO copy and an indication of R (Recto) or V (Verso).

representation reflects a shift in London's status relative to other smaller English cities and towns in this period. London was becoming increasingly distinguished as a metropolitan city in its composition and population.[138] And the city was straining to adapt to the rural to urban migration precipitated by both the wars of religion on the continent and enclosure at home. As a result, it was unevenly developed and poorly designed.[139] It contained the newly built Britain's Burse, the Royal Exchange, and the Inns at Court, on one hand, and bearbaiting arenas, amphitheaters filled with animal refuse, tanneries, and bawdyhouses on the other.[140] The city's changing population and changing identity feature broadly in plays and pamphlets from this period, and are reflected in urban entertainments. In a pageant pamphlet for Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker, and Ben Jonson's *Magnificent Entertainment* (1604), a celebration of James I's entry into London, foreign representatives and strangers, including Dutch merchants and Italian expatriates, figure in two out of seven thematic archways through which the king's procession passes.[141] We might make sense of this quote, then, as an articulation of a growing anxiety about London's international cast, and the reality of early modern urban sprawl.[142]

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[138] Martha Pollak, *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16, 19, 115.

[139] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance*: *Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 87-88.

[140] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 3rd edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15.

[141] Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, *The Magnificent Entertainment: Giuen to King Iames, Queene Anne His Wife, and Henry Frederick the Prince, Vpon the Day of His Maiesties Tryumphant Passage (from the Tower) through His Honourable Citie (and Chamber) of London, Being the 15. of March 1603: As Well by the English as by the Strangers, Vvith the Speeches and Songes, Deliuered in the Seuerall Pageants* (Imprinted at London: By T.C. for Tho. Man the yonger, 1604), http://archive.org/details/magnificenter00dekk.

[142] Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner, eds., *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 2.

But to understand Peacham's "caution" by drawing on these contexts alone is to risk

overlooking his singular use of metaphor. For London is not merely a confusing city; it is

a *natural* hazard, in which "shelves," "rocks," and "quick-sand" threaten to draw the

naïve and inexperienced traveler to ruin: "longer you stand upon it, the deeper you sinke"

(A3 R). We have only to look at contemporary emblem books, by Peacham and others, to

see the threat of moral and financial ruin expressed in similar terms, generally by figuring

London as a choppy sea through which the ship of state must safely navigate. Urban

entertainments – which drew on emblematic imagery and produced emblems of their own

– frequently used the ship to represent any political collective. In Thomas Dekker's Lord

Mayor's show *Trioia-Nova Triumphans* (1612), Neptune addresses London's mayor in

similar term's to Peacham's pamphlet, claiming that "thou must saile / in rough Seas

(now) of Rule: and every Gale / Will not perhaps befriend thee … for when Integrity and

Innocence sit / Steering the helme, no Rocke the ship can split," while a later show,

Brittania's Honor (1628), asks the mayor again to sail the city-as-ship to safe harbor.

Peacham's use of the ship and storm metaphor participates in this longer history.[143] It

associates London with the tempest that urban travelers must navigate *and,* when this

navigation is successful, with the ship itself. But newcomers to London were poorly

equipped for a successful voyage. While in the mayor's case, London is both a cause for

warning (as a storm) and the outcome of good governance (as the ship prepared to

[143] Thomas Dekker, *Troia-Noua Triumphans. London Triumphing, or, The Solemne, Magnificent, and Memorable Receiuing of That Worthy Gentleman, Sir Iohn Svvinerton Knight, into the Citty of London, after His Returne from Taking the Oath of Maioralty at Westminster, on the Morrow next after Simon and Iudes Day, Being the 29. of October. 1612. All the Showes, Pageants, Chariots of Triumph, with Other Deuices, (Both on the Water and Land) Here Fully Expressed. / By Thomas Dekker.* (London, England, p. London), http://search.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2240903837/citation/CC5E9712F7464DB2PQ/2.

weather it), in Peacham, risk is amplified; his readers have only their own "weak and inexperienced Bark" with which to navigate it.

But Peacham's account does not merely reproduce these motifs from a domestic emblem tradition, it also imports forms from England's ventures abroad. While Peacham is a "Columbus" or "Drake," someone staking out new and unfamiliar territory, young travelers are "fresh water soldiers," more at home in navigating the freshets and rivers of rural England. The distinction between ocean and river travel made here is not only conventional in the history of English navigation (demanding expert knowledge of wind currents and tides instead of the more customary coastal charts or "sea cards" used by sailors to navigate along coastlines), it is also a distinction in knowledge, a paradigm shift between what is familiar (the fresh water rivers that provide a view to shore) and an unknown vastness, a strangeness, that has no coordinates, and can upset the sailor in the "inexperienced Bark."[144] In this evocation of risk – a traveler "carried and led away" (A2 R) – Peacham departs from a purely conceptual understanding of the ship *topos*, to an increasing awareness of the material hazards of real ships travelling toward the New World. The metaphoric ship converts into an actual ship here, or rather we might say that the metaphor is deformed by new historical circumstances that relocate the ship from the realm of myth, nation-founding, governance, and the maintenance of the commonweal

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[144] On the distinction between open sea travel and coastal travel and the use of "sea cards" see Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*, Reprint edition (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

and bring it into conversation with the themes of catastrophe and risk that increasingly characterized exploration in the early seventeenth century.[145]

While Peacham's primary references are figures of exploration (Columbus and Drake point to England's imperial ambition) the content of the pamphlet also summons the uncertainty of a later moment, pointing to the Popham Colony's failure, to the Jamestown Starving Time, to the wreck of the *Sea Venture* off the coast of the Bermudas, and to the literature of catastrophe that accompanied these failures: documents that, like Peacham's pamphlet, lingered on examples of "needlesse and vaine expense" (Peacham A2 R), "terror of conscience and extreme melancholy" (A3 V), "extremity of want" and consumptive excess of "Beer or Ale [and] Tobacco" (A2 R). The resulting dissolution leaves the traveler "torne out of [his] skin": completely "spent," physically and financially (A4 V). Peacham evokes the settlement archive throughout the pamphlet, lingering on instances of bodily and financial dissolution that draw London living into alignment with the Americas.

Peacham's New World metaphors stand at the end point of a larger literary tradition that this chapter will identify, one in which the literature of London life comes into representation at the same time as the literature of New World catastrophe, each helping to articulate the other. The period between 1598 and 1605 saw both an unprecedented New World investment (the establishment of the Virginia Company, the founding of the first Jamestown colony) and the rise of Jonsonian city comedy, a new genre that aimed to

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[145] Valerie Forman sees an environment of economic risk as the central context for thinking of the emergence of the new genre of tragicomedy. See *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

represent an "image of the times."[146] Within Ben Jonson's *oeuvre*, we can detect both

literary traditions with which Peacham was engaging. In Jonson's pageants, we can see

the figure of the city-as-ship-of-state, which was a central figuration of Jonson's London

triumphs.[147] In shows such as *The Coronation Triumph* (1604) and *The Entertainment at*

Britain's Burse (1609), Jonson entered London's "men and matter" into dramatic

representation through a discourse of imperial pageantry.[148] These publicity campaigns

elaborated London's financial, aesthetic, and moral virtues, polishing off its bad qualities,

and inviting the audience to see it as a well-ordered ship of state.

But Jonson's city comedies construct a very different vision of London life.[149] Jonson's

dramas draw together social and physical distempers that buffet the theater: "the notes of

a sick state; and the wantonness of language of a sick mind."[150] This chapter reveals

rhetorical links between the New World and London in Ben Jonson's city comedies to

show how the settlement context helps him to represent London as a place where

ventures – financial, physical, epistemological, and literary – come up against a world of

illiteracy, hardship, and risk. Jonson's London is a pastiche of foreign influences,

references to the Grand Turk (in *Every Man in His Humor*), to Levantine voyages (in

Every Man Out of His Humor), and to classical Italy (everywhere). These sources are

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[146] Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio* (University of Nebraska Press, 1971). I cite here from the Folio "Prologue," 23. All future references to this facing page edition will be from the Quarto unless otherwise noted. References to Jonson's plays and poetry will be cited parenthetically throughout.

[147] James D. Mardock, *Our Scene is London: Ben Jonson's City and the Space of the Author* (Abingdon, UK; New York: Routledge, 2008), 46.

[148] Dekker and Middleton, *The Magnificent Entertainment*, C1 R.

[149] Mardock, *Our Scene is London*; Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London*, 1 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Griffiths and Jenner, *Londinopolis*; Mark Z. Muggli, "Ben Jonson and the Business of News," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 32, no. 2 (1992): 323–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/450739.

[150] Ben Jonson, "Timber, or Discoveries," in *The Poems; The Prose Works*, ed. C.H. Herford, E. Simpson, and P. Simpson, vol. viii, xii vols., Ben Jonson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 593.

well documented. They reflect a critical investment in identifying England's formal debts to other well-established national literatures. But Jonson's New World references have not been read in the same light. They feature, not as evidence of Jonson's investment in New World sources (that is texts, reports, or anthologies like Richard Hakluyt's magisterial multi-volume *Principal Navigations* of 1589) but in New World products: tobacco, spices, and American gold already circulating in London. Jonson's plays show that his interest in the Americas was far more wide-ranging than his dramatic settings would suggest. He borrows repeatedly from New World geographies, from the odd "angle of the town – the Straights, or the Bermudas – where the quarrelling lesson is read" and the townsfolk who "entertain the time with … tobacco" – a substance originally associated with French and Spanish imports but which was increasingly coming to represent the future of the Virginian project (*Bartholomew Fair,* 2.6.60-62).[151] His characters too, fall into New World archetypes, their "very trade / is borrowing that but stopped they do invade / all as their prize, turn pirates here at land / Have their Bermudas and their Straights I' the Strand" (*The Underwood*, 79-82).[152] His characters, urban pirates and their prey, lurk in the shallows while those who move through the city are "sailing into [a] port" (*Volpone,* 1.3.29-13).[153] En route to "placing" Jonson's theatrical London, to fixing it as the context for drama, we are "intercept[ed] in the mid-way" (*Every Man in* 2.1.15) – London *interruptus*. Bert O. States has argued that theater is a mode of cultural digestion, one that "feed[s] on the world as its nourishment,"

[151] Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist and Other Plays: Volpone, or The Fox; Epicene, or The Silent Woman; The Alchemist; Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Gordon Campbell, Reissue edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[152] Ben Jonson, "The Underwood," in *Ben Jonson: Volume VIII: The Poems; The Prose Works*, ed. C.H. Herford, E. Simpson, and P. Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 125–295.

[153] Jonson, *The Alchemist and Other Plays*.

breaking down the "roughage of hard-core reality" to feed an essentially "illusionary system."[154] We might read the theater then, not as a world, but as a process between that world and a system of meaning, one that draws in and digests the world into something for the audience to consider newly, to "digest" themselves. When we talk of Jonson's "London" we don't apprehend a coherent world, a single place, scene, or context, but a concept of place (both London and the New World) as a piece of undigested matter for theater to chew.

The standard critical interpretation of the New World in Jonson is that it represents the known unknown. Far from being associated with failure, loss, and error, The New World is a "home-making fantasy"; it is a "domesticated" place where London's own underbelly is imaginatively exported as "other" (through comparison to the New World) then reimported and insulated from London itself.[155] We might detect in these readings a whiff of Montaigne, where the New World merely becomes a way to talk about European vice, another site where England's own problems are shadowed rather than a reflection of New World failures.[156] In this one-way movement, the New World terminates in London as a London product, one that emerges from a marketplace in New World goods as an expression of foreignness, one that is represented in the rowdy young men who crowded theaters like Blackfriars, smoking New World tobacco (a figure for dissipation that James

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[154] Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of the Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985): 13, 39.

[155] R. Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World,1580-1640*, 1st edition (Houndmills, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001): 115, 135.

[156] Michel de Montaigne, "On Cannibals," *Complete Essays*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford University Press, 1958).

would condemn in his famous *Counterblaste*).[157] As a sign of un-Englishness, the New World then becomes a negative category that prepares London to be transformed by satire. It isolates English foreignness, the excesses, ungovernability and strangeness of London's native humors, from the circulation of New World products in the marketplace (including a new market for Virginian tobacco) to the London low lives, grifters, prospectors, and sailors that crowded its theaters.[158] These types become legible because they appear in a program of foreign domestication, transported under a different character or category. The New World expands while London contracts, with the contracting scene placed around the ungovernable one. It is precisely the New World's lack of known qualities that leads to this usefulness, a compelling analogue to the operation of colonialism – and indeed, many references within the plays seem to support this idea, figuring the New World merely as the site of incivility. This critical explanation represents the New World less as a source of dramatic content, then as a finite negative: London's dark mirror.

These readings offer one possibility of reading the New World and London simultaneously in Jonson, but one that tends to perform the very move that it describes: emptying out the New World context of its content, and merely seeing it as a dramatic device to produce otherness, one that becomes purely formal, even as it suggests, in that very formality, the wonders those geographies produced. Jonson might certainly have thought of the New World as a *terra incognita,* a place of foreignness alterity and

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[157] For more on James's *Counterblaste* and anti-tobacco rhetoric see Penny McCarthy, "'It Was Not Tobacco, Stupified My Brain': The Tobacco Controversy of 1602," *The Modern Language Review* 110, no. 3 (2015): 631–48, https://doi.org/10.5699/modelangrevi.110.3.0631.

[158] Gavin Hollis has categorized these New World types; he identifies them as "theatrememes" that move from play to play. See Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576-1642*, 1st edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

difference, but this association would also have been mediated by a multitude of

contemporary references that filled the New World's formal vacancy with *content*. If we

begin to follow the trail of references to the New World in Jonson, we find that his

references are simultaneously familiar and foreign, detailed and abstracted, almost

ambient (in figures of waves, clouds, winds and breath) and concrete (in the urban types

that respond to forms of New World dissolution). In addition to the incursions of New

World climate upon London geographies (as tobacco smoke, breath, spit, the "current of

… humor" (*Every Man Out of His Humor* 2.1.303), we find the evocation of risk and

danger attendant upon foolish ventures, the "flood, a torrent, [that] carries all before it"

(*Every Man Out* 1.1.304).[159] The destructive forces that work upon London are

particularized. In the city comedies, the New World is both everywhere and nowhere.

Rivers that upend, financial ventures that destroy the prospects of young gentleman,

"wellbred" men who turn into a well of breeding humors, "tobacco face[s]" that drown

themselves in "snuffe" and "spitting" (*Every Man Out*, "Induction" 179-180). Jonson

merges London and the New World in his dramatic topographies, linking everyday urban

travel to ventures that left London's port (and would likely never return). Characters that

take their "hull up and down i' the humorous world" (*Every Man Out* III.1.17-19) and no

not remember to "bear a low sail," to reduce the force of influence (*Every Man In* 1.1.79)

are subject to be buffeted by its wind, both the influence of other barks, and more

explicitly, by tobacco. When Kitely talks about being influenced by the "false breath of

telling" – the rumors that swirl in the city and reduce reputation to ash – he describes a

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[159] All references to *Every Man Out* refer to Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humor*, ed. Helen Ostovich, The Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

force both nautical and bodily.[160] This breath constructs an environment that acts upon the traveler, "O strange humor! My very breath has poisoned him" (*Every Man In* 4.3.26) as though London subjects and the New World (the source of "strange" humors) could share the same climate, the same humoral constitution. When Clove asks Shift (whom he calls "Signor Whiff" for his tobacco trade) "what fortune has brought you into these west parts" and Shift answers with both "nothing" and "an ounce of tobacco," it is difficult to ignore the implicit intertext linking "west parts" of St. Paul's and the western prospects of tobacconists (which produced both tobacco and nothing, the zero on accounting books) (*Every Man Out* 3.1.23-26).

When we refer to the New World we must attend to these various contexts, specific geographies and associations that emerge from the settlement context. In George Summer's estimation, the horrors of settlement were something that "every man knoweth that hath heard or read of."[161] But even though popular assumptions had consolidated at this time – associating New World with failed ventures of all sorts – as a place, it had not entered *literary* representation with a defined set of contents. There were no established representational conventions – specifically, from classical material – on which to draw. An author who meant to evoke New World contexts in his drama, would have to largely construct it from a pastiche of rumor, report, and assumption, but it was far from being a null set. The settlement context – the range of rumors, unauthorized writings, and recently published travel accounts – produced vocabularies for navigational misfortune.

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[160] Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour,* Folio II.1.99.

[161] Silvester Jourdain d, *A Discovery of the Barmudas, Otherwise Called the Ile of Diuels by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with Diuers Others. Set Forth for the Loue of My Country, and Also for the Good of the Plantation in Virginia. Sil. Iourdan.*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 720:06 (London: Printed by Iohn Windet and are to be sold by Roger Barnes in S. Dunstanes Church-yard in Fleet-streete, vnder the Diall, 1610).

Jonson's theatrical London proposes a specific set of challenges (navigational, epistemological, representational) that express conditions of urban vulnerability, the dangers of city life. As each character enters dramatic representation at the same time, London and the New World help to complete each other in Jonson's aesthetic program; they become entangled in his dramatic geographies.

Jonson's earliest city comedies, *Every Man In His Humor* (1598) and *Every Man Out of his Humor* (1600), trace a shift from classical and Italianate settings to London as a new subject of dramatic and aesthetic interest.[162] They also mark a transitional moment in his dramatic style, in which the New World plays a pivotal role. In *Every Man In His Humor*, London and the New World are almost invisible, shadowed in an Italian setting (and later revised in 1605 to take place in London) and alluded to only in references to a violently churning maritime topography.[163] In *Every Man Out of His Humor*, London and the New World are brought together in the foreground to make up the "*Isla Fortunata*," a term that groups England with other geographies: with the Fortunate Isles of romance, the Spice Islands, Spanish holdings in the Antilles, and the New World geographies of Bermuda and Virginia.[164] In Jonson's masques, the "Fortunate Isles" appear multiply, as a cluster for England's conquests and the future unification of England and Scotland: the

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[162] I follow here Brian Gibbon's definition of "city comedy," which includes both comedic satires and classic satires, grouping them together based on a contemporary urban setting and use of local color. See Brian Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton* (Hart-Davis, 1968).

[163] While *Every Man In* is nominally set in Italy, it includes turns of phrase and place references that establish its London setting. This setting would enter the foreground of the drama in an extensive revision of 1605 and a republication of 1616 as part of Jonson's magisterial *Workes*.

[164] By the 1580s, the "fortunate isles" could refer multiply to the "Canarian Archipelago, the Island of Saint Brendan; Antillia or the Island of the Seven Cities; the island called Brazil … and Green Island, today Greenland" See Simone Pinet, *Archipelagoes: Insular Fictions from Chivalric Romance to the Novel* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 43.

beginning of the British Empire.[165] Only a few years after penning *Every Man Out*,

Jonson would go on, in 1605, to co-write *Eastward Hoe*, his first play to overlay London

with a New World geography of shipwreck and financial ruin. In *Eastward Hoe*, both

London and the New World are the explicit subjects of representation, as Sir Petronel

Flash believes himself to be navigating to Virginia in search of gold, but finds himself,

instead, stranded on the Isle of Dogs.

But to read *Every Man Out* as Jonson's first London play and *Eastward Hoe* as his only

New World play would be a mistake. Across these plays, New World travel and the

experience of settlement failure and colonial catastrophe become primary dramatic

intertexts. News reports, rumors from the New World, new habits and vices, and

anxieties about the vulnerability of English bodies in an ungovernable environment

"break into the circuit" of dramatic representation and become conventional components

of early seventeenth-century London life.[166] If during these years Jonson was establishing

London as the "essential context" of his drama, then the New World – imbricated in

London's labyrinthine geographies – expands the common and familiar setting of London

into new territories.[167] The expansion of Jonson's theatrical scene during this significant

period lies not in an accommodation of multiple adjacent geographies onstage (Jonson's

plays are all nominally set in the same "place") but a tendency in his theatrical settings to

host multiple overlapping places that surface in the same scene simultaneously. As

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[165] See "The Fortunate Islands and Their Union" in Ben Jonson, *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969). All references to Jonson's masques cite this edition. The "New World" was similarly used to describe England on a façade for a processional arch designed by Stephen Harrison for a pageant co-written by Jonson, Dekker, and Middleton in 1601 where it winks at its usual provenance (to refer to the Americas) but also to a new prosperous period of peace when James I will have created a unified England and Scotland. See Dekker and Middleton, *The Magnificent Entertainment*.

[166] States, 12.

[167] Peter Womack, *Ben Jonson* (B. Blackwell, 1987), 14.

evidence of Jonson's early thinking about city comedy, these dramas are representative and atypical. They present us with a work, a world, in progress. But in addition to tracking London city comedy's emergence on the dramatic scene, these dramas are also dedicated to elaborating Jonson's theories of humors, a theory that would be central to his dramatic aesthetic. While London enters Jonson's drama as a setting, the New World enters through its coursing humors.

Jonson's theatrical setting does not merely reference London and the New World as possible settings, it moves between them. Jonson's scene is a scene in motion, cut through by currents of "choler, melancholy, phlegm and blood [that] By reason that they flow continually / In some part and are not continent / Receive the name of humors" (*Every Man Out*, *"*Induction" 99-102). We don't normally think of humor as something that a place can have. It is used to describe bodily physiology more than urban topography. But in Jonson, humors are spatialized. They reconfigure the city as a corrupt body full of "inland passage[s]" ("On the Famous Voyage" 33).[168] These passages reflect the London represented in the Agas Map, an early map of London, where a web of small streams that run from the main Thames estuary, reveal a network of sewage ditches running through the center of London streets. In Jonson's own representation, these waterways become bodily circuits clogged with sewage, and waste. In "On the Famous Voyage," London's occupants are recast as participants in a process of urban digestion. Their "carts … cluster" (64) to "discharge first [their] merd-urinous load" (65) into city streets which are a "pass" for "old filth" (70) and a "privy" (73) full of "suppositories;

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[168] Ben Jonson, "Epigrammes," in *The Poems; The Prose Works*, ed. C.H. Herford, E. Simpson, and P. Simpson, vol. viii, xii vols., Ben Jonson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 84-89.

cataplasms and lotions" (102). Any wherry that moves through London must be "well-greased," but that grease contributes to the urban rivulets running with "still-scalding streams" of night waste and offal (144-145). We have talked already about the plural setting of Jonson's London, the way that it draws on, and moves between, English and New World geographies. But this movement itself is the object of his interest, as it takes place in a dense humoral ecology: in a city that seems to act of its own accord, and to transform and to digest its occupants like a massive gut. By attending to Jonson's theory of humors, we can read this movement between London and the New World not as an incidental quality of his setting, but as central to his dramatic philosophy, to the way he was thinking about the possibilities and obstacles of making London – itself a confusing and contradicting space – into the subject of dramatic interest. Jonson's theatrical London courses on the flow of these "suburb humor[s]."[169]

To move through Jonson's London is to become part of a massive digestive process, from the city's liquid composition, to its vapors or "thick frequent mists" ("On the Famous Voyage" 130).[170] This environment of humoral indigestion becomes the source for Jonson's urban types: the humorous minds and bodies that enter the city's digestive tract. We're used to thinking of humor in terms of the four humors (black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood) but this isn't how Jonson is using it, or rather, it's not the only way he's using it. In Jonson, humoral digestion – that is, the transformation of living tissue by

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[169] Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, Folio 1.3.115.

[170] J.W. Lever contests their traditional grouping as "humors plays" (a critical commonplace) on the basis that Jonson labeled and structured them differently: "*Every Man in His Humor* [is] described as 'A Comoedie,' and *Every Man Out of His Humour* as a 'Comicall Satyre'." See J.W. Lever "Introduction," in *Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio* (University of Nebraska Press, 1971), xi–xxviii, xiii. By grouping them together, I do not mean to contest this reading, but instead suggest that their mutual theorization of "humor" is itself an important point of connection between them.

vital liquids that nourish it – occurs within bodies and between body and world. This quality of incontinence, a liquid composition that can overflow its bounds is the primary way that humor is defined.

> Why *humour* (as 'tis, *ens*) we thus define it
> To be a quality of air or water,
> And in itself holds these two properties:
> Moisture and flexure. As for demonstration,
> Pour water on this floor, 'twill wet and run;
> Likewise, the air forced through a horn or trumpet,
> Flows instantly away, and leaves behind
> A kind of dew; and hence we do conclude
> That whatsoe'er hath flexure and humidity,
> As wanting power to contain itself,
> Is *humour.* (*Every Man Out*, "Induction" 86-96)

Humor, in Jonson, is a quality of air or water. It is contained by bodies, both human bodies and atmospheric bodies, such as bodies of water and London's air. But humor is not only a quality, it also *has* qualities, specifically the quality of "moisture and flexure." These qualities of humor mean that it's always shifting shape, moving *between* bodily containers. As Asper claims, anything that is "wanting power to contain itself" is humor. The capaciousness of this definition, and the omnipresence of humor as a transformative substance in Jonson, shows how humor is really more than a substance. It is a form, a compositional principle. Although humor retains elements of its classical association with bodily digestion, it transforms the matter of the body at the same time as it overflows that body, dissolving and digesting that body into the world. *Every Man In* and *Every Man Out* each represent a humoral state that makes up one of the dual aspects of humor, its status as something contained "in" someone and its tendency to overflow its bounds, to move "out" of one body and into another.

It is this second understanding of humor that becomes crucial to Jonson, for it becomes his framework for thinking about humor in later plays. Being "out" of humor is a kind of *characterological* incontinence. To be "out of a humor" is to be buffeted by environmental influence to the point where the difference between person and place dissolves. Out-of-humor characters are "wanting the power to contain" themselves. They take on the characteristics of the place in which they live – a way of speaking, a set of habits – that showcases the intemperate and incontinent environmental influence that has worked upon them. "Humor" for Jonson reflects an investment in making form out of content: out of habits, turns of phrase, affectations, and mundane observations. Humor *is* the metatheatrical language of Jonson's comedies. It's the way that he talks about their form. To talk about character types in Jonson at all is to talk about this declension of character from type. Each character is put out of his humor in a slightly different way by the city.

The idea that character could be dissolved into the city to *become* a suburb humor is the primary interest of *Every Man In,* as Jonson was just beginning to shift the grounds of his own dramatic setting from Italy to London. When we first encounter Jonson's characters, they are discussing the dangers of urban living in terms now familiar to us. This text, too, opens with a warning:

> What would I have you do? Marry,
> Learn to be wise, and practice how to thrive;
> That would I have you do; and not to spend
> Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
> Or every foolish brain that humours you.
> I would not have you to invade each place,
> Nor thrust yourself on all societies,
> Till men's affections or your own desert
> Should worthily invite you to your rank.

He that is so respectless in his courses
Oft sells his reputation at cheap market.
Nor would I you should melt away yourself
In flashing bravery, lest, while you affect
To make a blaze of gentry to the world,
A little puff of scorn extinguishes it,
And you be left like an unsavory snuff
Whose property is only to offend. (1.1.58-79)

This passage invites us to consider Jonson's humors where they flow. Not only does it contain an account of the city's native dangers, but also its associated bodily and financial risks. It links two figures of waste where the city leads to a decay of fortunes, ultimately resulting in the disappearance not only of fortunes, but also of the body itself. This is what it means to fall into an urban humor, which Lorenzo Sr. describes to Stephano as a "respectless … course."

 "Humoring" here is something that *happens* to the speaker. Spending money according to the whims of others, on "every foolish brain that humors you," places the speaker in a dependent position, both humorally and financially. The link between "baubles" and "brains" figures the very wasting away he must avoid, where a person, foolish of a "servile nature" is drawn to "softness" and becomes nothing more than a trifle. This demotion from human to thing is what spending on either baubles or brains will produce. Any "respectless" action will invite a corresponding reaction, turning the active into the passive. Each is an invitation to others to act upon him: "to spend" and to be "humored," "to thrust" and to be "invited" "to sell" and then "to melt away," "to make" and then to "be extinguished" ultimately "to be left" to the whims of his debased companions; spending on them he will be spent by them. In the end he is entirely passive, merely the aftereffect of another person's action. The "little puff of scorn" is both a wind that blows

him off course and is the smoke of a tobacco pipe reducing him to "unsavory snuff." The journey into the city is unbecoming for a young gentleman because it unbecomes – it unmakes – him.

The shape of Jonson's theatrical humors reveals itself here through in the gradual pull of the city on character. Character, in the early modern period, does not signify a theatrical person (our shorthand for character) but the mark or impress that stands in for that person. [171] It is a signature (akin to the character on a page) that can come to stand for a person in absentia, that may stand for his reputation, his interests, and his family. It is a primarily textual index. But character for Jonson represents something more, something closer to our modern understanding of character. To Jonson, character demarcates an action, habit or inclination: someone who "is no action" has "no character" (*Every Man Out*, "Characters" 110-111). Character in this sense is closer to *ethos*. Someone's character marks their inclination (reinforced through virtuous action) towards good and right living. One has a character only through the accumulation of right action. When Jonson describes the dissolution of person into course, he talks about this second understanding of character. The character in this passage, the "rank" or "desert" of the young man, is used up and no longer has any action left to itself. It is dissolved into another action, another malign influence outside of itself. In this passage, the distinctive mark or impress of a person is "spent," we might even say "digested;" it shrinks down to a bit of snuff. At the same time, however, the person is dilated, expanded, consumed by

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[171] Womack, 53.

the marketplace. Reduced in estimation, he becomes coincident with the context in which he moves.

Even as the character of a person – his reputation, his interests, his arc of action, his "course" – is shrunk down to almost nothing in the movement from brain to bauble (a difference of value and ontology), it also expands to be interchangeable with the world in which he moves (a difference of exposure and scale), from brain to world. The escalation from "every foolish brain" to "each place" to "all societies," "cheap market," and ultimately "the world" formally mimics the dilation of humors overflowing their bounds, a kind of radical exposure to scorn that is multiplied (the entire world is witness to his final ruin), and that circulates the subject beyond himself. In the last place, his "property will be only to offend": the punning on property, meaning a quality that he possesses (i.e., his humor) and his financial property, folding together physical and financial loss. There is no distinction, in this last instance, between *his* course (in a humoral sense) and the course that he takes through the city (courses determined by topography, by the flows of the market, or by the social circles or places he circulates between). Carried beyond himself, he cannot act within himself to contain his humors. Lorenzo Sr.'s injunctions to "moderate expense," to retain a "perfect real substance," and to "keep the same proportion still" curiously represent the only virtuous action as a kind of principled inaction: a resistance to the city's pull, its centrifugal force (1.1.75-78). Lorenzo Sr. relies on a logic of self-containment, of reserve, of withdrawal to resist urban dangers. But to be "moderate," expresses in its frustrating bluntness and inexpressiveness the impossibility of moderation in an environment of constant flux and alteration.

The tension represented here by Lorenzo Sr.'s warning to not be "respectless in [ones] courses" – that is, to mind where you go in London and the company you keep – sets up a relationship between the city as setting, a background to action, and the city *as* an action that works on traveler's body, turning him into a humor. The city's courses – any throughway in the city – are themselves the circuits of humors. In other words, there is no course that would be respec*tful,* to course at all within the bounds of the city is to be carried away by it. Jonson's use of "course" reveals this innate turbulence in the dramatic setting, moving it into the New World register of failed investments, miscalculation, and "Spanish Gold" (*Every Man In* 1.4.4): "a loose desperate course" (*Every Man In* 2.2.79) that cause "circumstances …. [to] miscarry" and drives men to dissolution (*Every Man In* III.5.14). This "land flood" of vice "break[s] forth" and goes "against the course of all … affections" (*Every Man Out* 4.5.156-157). A course is a humor that has been spatialized, that has become external to the body but can still act upon it from outside. A course belongs to no-one in particular (humors generally attach themselves to bodies), and thus to be in a course represents a subjection that has no clear starting point, aim or end, but is just an onward movement.

Throughout *Every Man In,* course is used to refer specifically to boundless humors that seem external to the body. Lorenzo Jr. must leave the "vain course of study he effects"; (1.1.10) he must not be "respectless in his course" (1.1.66) or surrender to the "hot and lusty course of youth" (1.1.200). If he is "too violent, too sudden in [his] courses" (3.4.161-162), he will end "ashamed of his base course in life" (2.2.39). Though a "thousand fairer courses / offer themselves to [his] election" (2.2.67-68), he will be brought to a "loose desperate course" (2.2.79). "Let him run his course," says Justice

Clemente to Lorenzo Sr.: "it's the only way to make him a staid man" (3.3.131-133). We can see from these instances of "course," and equivalent terms such as "running humor" (3.1.125) and "suburb humor," that course depersonalizes humor, giving it the quality of a place.[172] Being "in" a course (or being respectless in one) may carry a character away from himself, may put him in or out of "a" humor, but one not necessarily his own. Course is the name given to urban or city humors, the humors of London itself, rather than the humors of its inhabitants. In "On the Famous Voyage," London's sewage, its plague corruption, was partly an attribute of the city, but was augmented by "night tubs" (64) and "carts" (64) that heap "discharge" (65) and "ycleped Mud" (62) and was crowded with "car men" (68) and "Fleet Land Furies" (144) that "make the place hell" (145). But in Jonson's dramas, the city itself is the "force that works on servile natures" and carries others in its wake.

I have already said that humors are fundamentally "placeless," that they mark an ongoing action, one that tends away from stability and certainty. But this action itself has qualities, ones that draw us away from London and toward the New World. London's humors do not just contain fragments of food uneaten, snuff, and refuse, they also contain specific models of dissolution imported from New World geographies: the movements, tendencies, and actions of a dissolute city as it transforms those who find their way unaided in it. As the Londoner moves in scale from a person to an "unsavory snuff," and as he expands to become the "courses" of Jonson's theatrical humors, London itself stretches from a body to a "place" to a "world" and courses into other geographies. The

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[172] "Suburb Humor" in Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour: A Parallel-Text Edition of the 1601 Quarto and the 1616 Folio*, Folio 1.3.115.

courses of New World exploration and settlement help to elaborate London's dangers, going beyond just a surface reference to become the foundational metaphor for Jonson's dramatic construction of London. They align representations of urban risk with New World ventures; both are transformative of both body and fortunes, usually for the worse. As Peacham would later claim, London is a "quicksand" and "the longer you stand upon it, the deeper you sinke" (A3 R). In Jonson, the spatialized humors of the city are worth paying attention to, for they allow him to import accounts of New World failure, making them the foundation of his urban topographies, as the floor on which his theatrical London runs. The operation of humoral digestion in Jonson, in other words, borrows *its* form from the New World.

Humoring the New World

Jonson's engagement with accounts of New World failure has been well established. But these accounts have only noted his interest in financial loss. We know from *Eastward Hoe* (1605), composed only a few years after the humors plays, that Jonson was aware of Hakluyt. Passages in the former play were taken directly from Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations*.[173] I extend his use of these sources – either reports of failed exploration, or an engagement with specific texts – to detail how bodily loss, and the corresponding loss of character, becomes a foundational component of his theory of humors, and thus informs the dramatic geography of his theatrical London. Humoral transformation was common in this travel literature. It reflected the notion that the body was porous, that it

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[173] Buttman and Target note that Hakluyt was invested in recording these travels in order to bring glory to England and encourage investment. But it would have been obvious to a reader of the narratives themselves that these hopes were rather dim. Hakluyt's "On Western Planting" often seen as a triumphant opening to the colonial project, was in its own context, intent on establishing any interest *at all* after a series of high-profile disasters.

was therefore vulnerable to environmental transformation. Being in a hot climate, in other words, would dry a person out and being in a wet climate would make a person moist and phlegmy. Dryness corresponded to darkness, and wetness to whiteness. Being in a hot country, then, could make one dark both internally and externally. We might recall that this link between bodily humors and environment is what Mary Floyd Wilson calls "geohumoralism."[174] During the period in which Jonson was writing, however, this geohumoralist idea was beginning to lose currency as a primary marker of difference. English writers noted, for instance, that dark-skinned people living in England didn't change color and that English merchants weren't necessarily racially altered by their travels. The openness and variability of terms like "humor" and "vapor," disconnected from classical reference points, are evident in Jonson's uses, where adopting a humor could mean adopting a habit, or way of speaking, rather than a realignment of the body's vital composition.

But during this same period, New World settlement writing began to renew fears of bodily, that is *physical*, transformation. At hand would have been narratives of the Northwest voyages through the Arctic archipelago (ventures that "went nowhere") and the return in 1585 of the first group of Roanoke colonists, forced to abandon their already failing settlement.[175] Add to this an attempted Newfoundland Voyage, led by Sir Humphrey Gilbert, where the crew was "infected with a contagious disease" within sight of Plymouth and forced to return.[176] This string of failures saw, at the end of the sixteenth

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[174] Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 2003): 2.
[175] John Butman and Simon Targett, *New World, Inc.: The Making of America by England's Merchant Adventurers* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2018): 218.
[176] David Beers Quinn, *The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert: Volumes I-II*, 1 edition (Abingdon, UK; New York: Routledge, 2010). Volume 2: 397.

century, the collapse of the Virginia project with the disappearance of the Roanoke

colony, a place that seemingly dissolved into the landscape (the only traces of the

colonists were on trees). The main distinction between these catastrophe narratives and

other, perhaps more familiar, ones, is their anxiety about environmental and

climatological extremity: an exposure of the body to elements. On the open sea – New

World travel was also the first open ocean travel that England had attempted – this comes

in the form of the shipwreck, where bodies are "devoured and swallowed up of the Sea,"

never to be found again.[177] Ralph Lane, who survived the first Roanoke settlement,

anticipates the disappearance of English bodies, which corresponds to the disappearance

of Englishness and English character. Faced with hunger and deprivation, the colonists

become unrecognizable to Lane: they begin to "blaspheme, and flatly to say that our Lord

God was not God, since he suffered us to sustaine much hunger."[178] The only potential

source of sustenance is a "violent stream" that will carry Lane and his company away

from their comrades and spread the rumor that they "were in part slayne, and part

starved," resulting in their premature abandonment.[179]

Jonson's drama explores forms of dissolution and digestion that were newly available

through New World accounts: bodies that are distended through bloat or stripped and

shrunk down, such as "one Edward Brookes Gentleman whose fat melted within him by

the greate heate and drought of the Countrey: we were not able to relieve him nor our-

selves, so he died in that great extreamitie."[180] Brookes' death mirrors others where "men

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[177] Quinn, *The Voyages and Colonising Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert,* Volume 2, 419.

[178] Ralph Lane, "Discourse on the First Colony," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, 850.

[179] Lane, 842, 849.

[180] John Brereton 1572-ca, *A Briefe and True Relation of the Discouerie of the North Part of Virginia Being a Most Pleasant, Fruitfull and Commodious Soile: Made This Present Yeere 1602, by Captaine*

are destroyed with cruell diseases as Swellings, Fluxes, Burning Fevers." But what was

most disturbing to New World writers, is not the complete disappearance of the colonial

body – through death, disappearance, or sickness – but the fact of its *indigestion,* where

something of the person persists through the force of an environment that seasons him.

The idea of seasoning, common to New World accounts, meant literally the ability to

survive the first summer. Peter Martyr used it in this sense in his *Decades of the New

World* as early as 1555.[181] But seasoning also registered the *failure* to survive, the

acquisition of a new hardened durability in the subject that was itself a kind of

transformation in kind, in which the body became a shell or husk of itself that could

subsist but only in an altered state. [182] This understanding of seasoning drew on its

reference to the salting or preserving of meat and the embalming of a body. Through

seasoning, the substance of a settler's body, their humor, is dried up and consumed, but

not completely. The body becomes a hard, indigestible morsel, preserving a record of a

person's subjection to environmental forces. In the year that Jonson's humors plays were

performed, there would have been seasoned settlers in London returned from the first

attempt to settle Roanoke. Some of them may have even been in the theater.

In *Every Man In* and *Every Man Out,* indigestion (the notion that someone could be

dissolved by their environment to a point, but still subsist enough to retain a record of

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*Bartholomew Gosnold, Captaine Bartholowmew [Sic] Gilbert, and Diuers Other Gentlemen Their
Associats, by the Permission of the Honourable Knight, Sir Walter Ralegh, &c. Written by M. Iohn
Brereton One of the Voyage. Whereunto Is Annexed a Treatise, of M. Edward Hayes, Conteining Important
Inducements for the Planting in Those Parts, and Finding a Passage That Way to the South Sea, and
China.*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 / 1196:03 (Londini: [Printed at Eliot's Court Press] impensis
Geor. Bishop, 1602).

[181] "Season, v.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed February 1, 2020,
http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174350.

[182] For the logic of "seasoning" see Kathleen Donegan, ed., "Jamestown: Things That Seemed Incredible,"
in *Seasons of Misery*, Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America (Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 2014): 69–116, http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/j.ctt4cggz2.5.

that dissolution) becomes an enduring fascination. *Every Man In* is focused primarily on detailing how characters might adopt a humoral disposition, how they might be "in" a humor. But one of its most notorious figures is a character who is out of his humor. Jonson's first proto-colonial character in the dissolute Prospero. Shakespeare, who was part of the cast in *Every Man In*'s first performance, would later adapt Prospero for *The Tempest*, but while Shakespeare's Prospero is a real colonist, Jonson's is merely a crypto-colonist: a profligate spender who lives in a slum and lures young men to misfortune. As his brother Thorello warns Lorenzo Sr., Prospero has so "fall'n off" (1.4.43) of his natural path, and his proper scope of action through London, that he has become something alien to his family and to himself. "His course is so irregular / So loose, affected, and depriv'd of grace / And he himself withal so far fall'n off / From that first place, as scarce no note remains / to tell men's judgements where he lately stood / He's grown a stranger" (1.4.41-46). To be a stranger is to be estranged. But this estrangement is also a curious disappearance, as if, at the moment of articulating his exile from his proper course, it was impossible to say exactly *what* defines his course or his character in the present, for "scarce no note remains" of him. But "scarce no note," is, of course, not the same as "no note" at all, and it is this hesitation, this partial noting, that I wish to emphasize here. For it implies a remainder, something left behind from the process of being "far fall'n off," represented in precisely the "unsavory snuff" that Lorenzo Sr. warned about (1.1.78). In fact, much of "note" remains of Prospero. When Lorenzo Jr. arrives in the city, he finds that Prospero has taken over his brother Thorello's house, turning it into a "mart / a theatre, a public spectacle / for giddy humour and diseased riot" (1.4.49-51): into a place, in other words, for "respectless" courses (1.1.66). It is a course

into which others may fall, and falling into it, falling in with Prospero disorders the humors. His home mirrors the declension of his person, his character and his fortunes, and lends him an almost environmental force, as though he were already digested by and into the "giddy humour and diseased riot" of his company.

Generally, character implies legibility, notability; to be a character is to be of note. But in Jonson, to be a London character is to be of almost no note. It is to be "seasoned," to retain the trace of humoral action. Much like a New World settler, Prospero is partially digested, indigested, into the very environment that he seeks to exploit. He is notable only insofar as he marks the shape of his own dissolution. While humor here is connected to physiology (to the creation of biological categories such as phlegmatic and choleric which describe the composition of the body), it is also a register of external influence, the link between a body and a particular environment.[183] Jonson's humors allow us to observe how London takes up, and is taken in by, other places, how its proximity to other geographies deforms both it and its occupants, leads them astray. It is this movement or flow between inside and outside, where interior working becomes an exterior mark, that makes Jonson's characters, and the London they inhabit, so "notable." If character or mark is discernable through action, Prospero is notable only as a gradual disappearance, the shape that his dissolution leaves behind.[184] Humor is not formless but a superficial

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[183] For more on the humors and the relation between body and environment in early modern medical thought see Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*, 1st edition (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2004).

[184] In the 1605 performance that likely preceded the revised London edition of *Every Man In* in Jonson's 1616 *Workes,* Prospero is renamed to "Well bred." Reading his name slightly askance permits a pun on "well bred" which can signify proper breeding (the primary definition), but also a breeding well, that is a well of uncontrollable desires, one that mirrors the composition of the "stew" or "tavern" where humors run riot. Well bred as breeding well replaces an origin point or ontological status (one who is well bred) with the action of a place or course of life upon a person.

form: it is that which moves from one thing to another. It is precisely that which cannot be noted and thus is not subject to digestion, to habit, or to thought; it can only disorder them. As one already "respectless in [his] courses," Prospero represents less the course itself than the shape of its dissolution, the residue that these failures have left behind. Humor, when it flows away, "leaves behind / a kind of dew" (*Every Man Out*, "Induction" 91-93) – we might even say it leaves a kind of *do,* the trace of an action. Prospero's humors have been subject to the action of London, which, as an impersonal passive, acts with a malign (if unlocatable and undefined) force.

By figuring London as a place that digests its characters, by rendering its force as one that disorders, that distempers, that digests (partially) but not completely, Jonson constructs character as the visible residue of humoral influence, the result not of having an action, but of being *in* an action, of marking the action of the city upon a theatrical person. In *Every Man In,* "Formal" is another out-of-humor character. He is a messenger for the chief Justice who has been completely dissolved into a course, a humor that has taken shape in the environment of the city and become the arc of a habitual action – his daily commute – in which he has been trapped. In fact, having been reduced only to the arc of his movement, he scarcely seems to exist at all, allowing him to be "ambuscade[ed]" by Musco, who dons his clothes and takes over his activity, allowing him access to the Chief Justice and the play's eventual resolution (2.1.14). In *Every Man Out,* Formal is matched by the characters of "Clove and Orange," who Jonson describes as "an inseparable case of coxcombs, city-borne … that like a pair of wooden foils, are fit for nothing, but to be practiced upon" ("Characters" 95-97). Their names reflect this function, with "Orange [being] the more humorous of the two (whose small portion of

juice being squeezed out)" ("Characters" 102-103) and Clove "serve[ing] to stick him, with commendations" ("Characters" 103-104). Clove and Orange stand as an extreme example of the changes the city has wrought on humors. Being "city borne" we have no idea whether they were born into these names or reduced to them. They have become entirely formal representations of their "action" in drama, their contribution to the scene and the plot, and have no excess material that can be "squeezed out" to signify the movement of humors from inside to outside. This emphasis on action is where character dissolves into course and becomes something of little note, something hardly able to be copied down and noted. Like Formal they have been reduced only to their function: in Formal's case, his proximity to the formal seat of government, but also his status only as a "formal" character, who has a function, a visual perception, but no interiority. In Clove and Orange's case, their name becomes a stand-in for a type. Characters like these exist, in an altered state, without the knowledge to reflect on that state, but with enough character left to act to be a vehicle for the formless force of coursing humors. If a figure of "no action" has "no character," we might say that they have too much character, making their character impossible to read ("Character" 110-111). They are entirely action and have no static mark or character that would allow others to make sense of them as a personation or a person. Or rather, this mark *is* their action and nothing more. They mark only a reverse movement of something into nothing – a "running humor," a "course" (*Every Man In* 3.1.125). Humors produce character as the result of an incomplete digestion into the environment of the city. They are – as Clove's name suggests – seasoned.

These courses which dissolve character, which produce character as the remainder of something *having been acted upon,* someone which has no innate action in herself, but is rather carried along, who now only stands to mark the place of a failed venture. When Prospero falls off his course of action and thus loses his character, Prospero is also deprived of Christianity ("grace") and of Englishness ("he's grown a stranger") (1.4.42-46). By evoking colonial metaphors of self-estrangement, this passage represents him as a person who is barely a person at all. The disappearance of Prospero into something of no note, the potential dissolution of Lorenzo Jr. into a piece of snuff, and the spent rind of Clove and Orange, evoke tales of disappearance and of ruin linked to colonial contexts, both in Virginia and the Bermudas where the disappearance of colonists and their ships left only the record of catastrophe, rather than the bodies themselves. But being *almost* of no note, Jonson's characters produce this perverse formalism – the trace left behind by the process of dissolution – as a marker of urban digestion, making it notable. The turning inside out of humors figures an alternative mode of cognition, of thought, of digestion, that develops out of the New World context.

We can see these movements, beneath the scrim of *Every Man In's* Italianate setting, where the New World and London merge in representation to present a single unsettling geography. We see it briefly in references to courses and humors, forces that surge and overwhelm. It is in the "wind [that] hath blown [Musco] hither in this shape" (2.3.190) and "the violence of the stream" that Piso claims "has already transported me so far / that I can feel no ground at all" (3.1.125-126). It is simultaneously a place and no-place, a ground that is groundless, a transportation away from the familiar, away from a feeling of being "in your depth," of knowledge, of probability (what is likely or unlikely to happen

in a given context). In Lorenzo Sr.'s speech it is present again as an atmospheric quality, one that has, precisely, been transported, been given new ground. It is "in the Indies where the herb grows" (3.2.66-67) and produces the "unsavory snuff" (1.1.78) of Lorenzo Sr.'s observation. It turns "pleasure and felicity" (3.2.90) into a "bushel of soot" (3.2.95) and is "good for nothing but to choke a man and fill him full of smoke and embers" (3.2.91-92). But in the ashes that tobacco leaves behind is the space or outline of a habit (a dissolute action) and thus a theatrical framework for character.

Jonson's treatment of humor has been well examined in these early plays, from critics such as Peter Womack who claim that "humor" is a capacious and ill-defined category, one that allows Jonson to compress various aspects of character affectation, habit, environmental influence, and aesthetic disposition to their status as a backdrop or "grounds" for human action that is constantly shifting. What is concealed, what is dangerous, about London is precisely a tendency to have the ground drawn out from under one, to misunderstand one's current course. Who or what is governing these courses, to whose humors do these courses belong? While Peacham's guide relied on a kind of local map or dictionary, corresponding places with the types of person who is likely to occupy them, and thus populating London with clearly defined archetypes, Jonson's London is a stew of undefined influences and affectations. A term like "courses" which refers colloquially to a movement through London, but which Jonson can also populate with other meanings and references, is one of many placeholders, part form and part content, that he draws from the "matter" of observation and turns into a foundational compositional principle of his drama. His London is built out of courses; that is, it is itself a course and traces the influence of courses: on the dilation and

expansion of character into scene, of a single course into multiple courses, of a private person into a "public receptacle," a "theatre," "a mart," "a stew" (1.4.49-51). The "coursing" of Jonson's characters gives emphasis to being "in" a humor, a kind of uncontained dilated containment, where the person is continually in a state of indigestion. It is the very confusion of reference, the confusion of cause and effect that New World geographies introduce, that muddies the waters, that complicates the course of action, that make it impossible to determine where influence comes from: giving it a diffuse, almost magnetic, capacity to disarticulate distinction that comes into aesthetic representation as a quality of both London and the New World. Jonson's mutability between course and humor is one of the sticking points of these early plays, a place where means and ends, where rhetorical relationships such as tenor and vehicle, where the tidiness of categories begins to fall apart. A lack of governance, a disintegration of social honors and conventions that demarcate gentlemen from others, and critical miscalculations and failures of judgement– an ignorance about the workings of environment on the body – mean an inexperienced traveler may find himself caught in London's distempered stomach. At the vanishing point where character almost, but not completely, disappears into setting, we can read Jonson's settlement aesthetic.

Jonson's "Perj'rous Air"

I've claimed so far that Jonson's humors are *themselves* of "scarce no note": not quite formless, they bear the trace of their contact with the New World (*Every Man In* 1.4.44). I've done so with the aim of showing how I work through the knotty relationship between form and content in early modern drama, and the ways that a given author might be turning one into the other. The plays that I consider, from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* in the

1580s to Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* in 1622, span the first three decades of English settlement. But the authors of these dramas are more likely to invoke the New World formally than they are to represent it directly. They're responding to it largely as a collection of variable attributions, analogies, and modes of description and presentation, rather than a clearly defined setting. The New World takes place in theatricality before it appears as a place within the fictional world.

To talk about Jonson's formalism through his humors, however, is not the same as talking about his theatricality. Humors, although they appear everywhere in Jonson's plays, are more textual than theatrical. They are references to incontinent bodies, roiling guts and stormy cities, to dissolution and indigestion, but they do not show us how these processes might have appeared onstage. To talk about humor as I have been talking about it so far is to accept the premise, drawn from his own writing, that Jonson was an antitheatrical author – that he disavowed the showiness of theatricality and preferred instead to instruct through poetry, through language. Jonson has often been read as a literary author, one for whom the niceties of stage action and the scene may be overlooked. We have only to turn to Jonson's poems about the stage, or any of his dramatic prefaces, to see a barely veiled scorn for the "building of the stage or scene," which Jonson calls "the mere perspective of an inch board" ("An Expostulation with Inigo Jones" 11, 44). But recent (and not so recent) critics have pushed back on this reading. Henry Turner's work on Jonson's scene, for instance, finds him a consummate, if highly scholarly, theatricalist, grounding his plotting in classical principles and in works of architectural history.[185] I am also skeptical

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[185] Henry S. Turner, ed., *Early Modern Theatricality*, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 217.

of Jonson's self-confessed antitheatricalism, but to a different purpose: for in the staging of Jonson's humors, we don't find a recovery of the antiliterary into Jonson's own sensibility, but a kind of back-door acknowledgment of the power of theatricality. The point at which Jonson's use of the New World becomes most visible to us is *precisely* when his humors become visible, when they become onstage effects: real plumes of vaporous smoke. And this process happens through tobacco. The "perj'rous air" (*Every Man Out*, "Induction" 33) of Jonson's theatrical London reeks of smoke.

If "course" was a way for Jonson to import New World geographies into London, to detail their effect on the financial and material prospects of characters – to lead to the ruin and dissolution of both land and character – tobacco features as an even more insidious encroachment of colonial territories into London life. Tobacco was becoming increasingly common in London, including in the London theater, where young men were known to blow smoke clouds upon the stage. It would also have necessarily evoked the New World to a playgoer, from its place in an indirect supply chain through the tobacco imports of the Dutch East India company and the Spanish Antilles, to the (at this point) nascent attempts to establish a market for Virginian tobacco that characterized early Jamestown prospects. The popularity of tobacco and its association with foreignness (both Amerindian and Spanish) would soon lead James I to publish his *Counterblaste Against Tobacco* in 1605, in which he would detail the detrimental effects tobacco had on the English constitution. As Craig Rustici has noted, all the qualities that James attributed to tobacco – an interest in spending money on trinkets, humoral darkening, and lechery –

were also attributes routinely ascribed to Amerindians as tobacco smokers.[186] The smoker's body is used up by tobacco. It becomes culturally and morally featureless, blank, just as, in Peter Martyr's account, native people themselves were. That native people could, in the English imagination, be both featureless and bear specific negative features should reinforce how variable and opportunistic early modern ideas about Amerindians were, but it also mirrors the hollowing out of English character that makes way for other more subversive and disturbing content. Just as tobacco vanishes an herb into a vapor, so does the act of smoking tobacco perform its own vanishing act on the English subject. James's stated fear that the English will be "Indianized" reproduces the belief that tobacco's vapors could produce a racial transformation. And it also relies on the metaphors of consumption and indigestion that I've discussed. During a time when tobacco's qualities were a subject of fierce debate, but before an official edict condemning its use, Jonson takes it up and refashions it for the theater.

In Jonson's drama, tobacco is not just a product that is consumed, but an environment that is consuming. It is the means by which he dramatizes humors. We've talked already about how Jonson's use of "course" runs a line from intention (cognition, decision-making, judgement), to the wake that these courses leave behind, in other words, from something that is *in you,* to something that *you're in.* Throughout Jonson's plays, tobacco lies at the nexus of this transformation. Tobacco, in the early modern period, was used in liquid form (as an herbal tincture) as well as smoked, so it contained those qualities of "moisture and flexure," "air and water" that Jonson ascribes to humor (*Every Man Out*,

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[186] Craig Rustici, "Tobacco, Union, and the Indianized English," in *Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris, 2012 edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 117–31.

"Induction" 87-89). It was also a register of environmental influence, as it moved from being digested, to producing indigestion: an altered body and a disturbed mind. In Jonson, it seasons characters, both with the effects of environment and with the seasoning or salting of an herb, drying them out and preserving them. It leaves a piece of "unsavory snuff" (*Every Man In* 1.1.78), something of "scarce no note" (*Every Man In* 1.4.44). It makes characters subject to an action, a habit or compulsion, that is outside of them and traces the movement of environmental matter as it enters and leaves the body. It is a master conceit for the impact that New World humors have on the character and the characters of Jonson's London. Tobacco smoking *stages* humor and makes it visible as a theatrical technology.

In *Every Man Out of His Humor,* tobacco has a central role. It tracks the movement of humors through the scenes, detailing the effects of ambient vapor on its characters as each is put out of his humor. The play is staged across four different inset frames, each of which looks in on (and makes fun of) the other. In the outer frame is the chorus, what Jonson calls the "Grex," that looks in on and narrates the action. The characters in the next frame move between the Grex and the fiction, while characters in the third frame reside only in the fiction, and the fourth and innermost frame features just two characters, mocked by everyone: a "case of coxcombs city born, fit only to be practiced upon." Ostensibly, the movement of the play is from the outermost frame inward. The Grex comments on the action and tells us how to interpret it and the other characters. But tobacco-smoking traces a reverse movement from the innermost frames outward, bleeding through all of the frames and producing a single setting or environment. In short, tobacco puts Jonson's own scenic composition out of its humor, shifting its setting

from the careful enclosure imposed by the Grex to the circuits of coursing humors that move through the layers of the play. Tobacco thus stands as a unifying conceit for the complex structure of the play itself.

In *Every Man Out,* tobacco begins as a reference, then becomes a piece of stagework, then a way of speaking and thinking – a transformation of character into environment – and then, lastly, a compositional unit of the play itself. As tobacco smoke expands and becomes scenic, it also works upon character, transforming the smoker from a person into a scene; he *almost* disappears, leaving behind a puff of smoke. All the innermost (and thus the most foolish) characters of *Every Man Out* are tobacco smokers, and chief among them is Fastidious Briske. Much like Shift, another tobacco-smoking character, one of Briske's "chief exercises" is "taking the Whiffe," and we encounter him indulging his habit when we meet him in Act III in his mistress's drawing chamber, preparing to offer her a virtuosic performance ("Characters" 92). What Briske plays upon in this scene, however, is not a musical pipe but a tobacco pipe. The "(Tab.)" here refers to his tobacco smoking, which punctuates his speech.

> *Fast*: Troth, sweet lady, I shall – (Tab.) – be prepared to give you thanks for those thanks, and – (Tab) – study more officious, and obsequious regards – (Tab.) – to your fair beauties. (Tab.) – mend the pipe, boy!
>
> *Macilente*: (Aside) I never knew tobacco taken as a *parenthesis* before. (3.3.68-74)

Briske began this scene by commenting on his "stirring humors," framing his tobacco smoking as a quality he possesses, something to stir "desire" for his mistress as he serenades her with his wit: but, as we can see here, he is soon *possessed* by it, put out of his humor. The punctuating "(Tab.)" of his speech accumulates the more that he speaks,

breaking his speech into shorter and shorter portions, as though each were an intake of breath, or the exhalation of a plume of smoke. It also mirrors the jerky, truncated language of a billet, read out two scenes earlier, advertising a Tobacco University that promises to teach a young gentlemen the methods of tobacco ingestion as if they were rhetorical techniques, a literal parenthesis: "practice of the Cuban Ebullition, Euripus, and Whiffe which he shall receive or take in here at London, and evaporate at Uxbridge, or farther, if it please him" (3.1.145-148). Like Briske's speech, the clauses get shorter and shorter as the sentence progresses, broken up by the habit of tobacco. By the scene's end, Briske's speech has been reduced to a bare trace, a hum, the exhalation of which mirrors the exhalation of vapor. The other characters are left "recoiling from the smoke," which has become the ambient medium for Briske's thought. As he says to his lady: "By this sweet smoke, I think your wit be all afire" (3.3.122-123). The progression of this scene mirrors the dissolution of Fastidious Briske as a character, replacing him with only the trace of his habit.

Tobacco begins here as a New World product, something which stirs and dries the humors, but by the end it has become the atmosphere of the scene – and of the theater, mingling with the smoke clouds of the audience. When Briske leaves the stage, presumably to get more tobacco, his smoke remains. It seeps through the inner rings of the play to infect the humoral composition of even the outermost characters. We can see the trace of this disorienting effect when the Grex comments on Briske's smoking at the end of the scene, providing its last parenthesis.

> *Mitis:* What follows next, Signor Cordatus? This gallant's humour is almost spent, methinks. It ebbs apace, with the contrary breath of his mistress.

Cordatus: Oh, but it will flow again for all of this, till there come a general drought of humor among all our actors. (3.3.151-155)

As the following exchange between two members of the Grex notes, Briske's person may not be present, but his humors remain onstage. They are "almost spent" but not quite. They leave a dew of air and water, moisture and flexure, for the other characters to consume, and ultimately move from the fictional world to infect the material place of performance. "A general drought of humor among all our actors" – referring to the drying and consumptive effects of tobacco upon the body – implies that the ebbing humors left by Briske are something that has ultimately broken through the fiction entirely to become part of the atmosphere of the playhouse itself.

In this scene, tobacco becomes a presentational technology. It *is* the theatrical language of ungoverned humors. When Cordatus and Mitis interject themselves into the scene, entering the very setting they describe, they replace the space of the Grex – literary, formal, detached – with the messy grounds of theatrical making. Jonson's theatrical "scene," then, is not bounded by the fictional world or the Grex. The grounds of the scene are themselves carried away and transformed by humors. This is the case with Fastidious Briske, who becomes frozen in a posture only insofar as he is frozen in a habit. It is his puffing on the tobacco pipe that becomes his defining characteristic, but by defining him through this critical movement, which includes also his tobacco-infused rhetoric, he analogizes the actions of the audience themselves. When they, too, "(Tab.)" on tobacco while sitting on the stage, they are not outside the circle of theatricality; Briske is among them, and all are transformed into the butt of the joke. Jonson's dramas are full of these reversals of fortune, where a character who feels himself to be aligned with the satirist

finds himself subject to the voracious appetite of the satirical scene that swallows him up. The integrity of the Grex is constantly challenged by the ingressions of those like Aspers, ingressions of the scene upon the scene, of the ungovernability of the theatrical world into the Chorus that encloses it: an ungovernability that no longer bears just on the characters within it, but on the composition of the scene itself. Our first inkling of this is in the hazy line drawn between attention and scenography, where the scene is supported as a unit not by formal rules but by the will of characters and audience. The first line of the play, "Nay my deare Asper / Stay your mind" ("Induction" 1-2), suggests the wayward audience member, someone who, like Asper, is always moving away, is always being drawn from Jonson's theatrical London to the site of the performance (the London in which they live). It is precisely the Grex's indistinction from the interior scene, its lack of ability to enclose or domesticate the interior of the world, and its interjections into its workings, that draw attention to the composition of the interior scenes. It marks their deformation as itself a dramatic style that concedes its form to ungovernability without becoming subject to it.

Throughout Jonson, tobacco becomes a viral reference that won't let go of Jonson's playworld, even in a moment of seemingly maximal enclosure. And the vaporous transformation of seasoned characters also reproduces, as Fastidious Briske does, experimentations with the dilation and expansion of the scene, from the vapors and fumes seeping onstage from *The Alchemist*'s lab to the archipelagic humoral scenography of *Volpone* (with hidden New World gold at its center). These forms of New World dissolution incorporate formal incontinence into his dramatic style and form the foundation of his urban types. In Clove and Orange's spent rind and Briske's dissolution

into a vapor, we can see tobacco becoming the humor of Jonson's formalism. It digests

Jonson's characters, and composes his scenes. In other words, Jonson's own

"assumption" of tobacco as a "delicate sweet form" makes the New World the machine

on which his comedic sensibility runs (*Every Man Out* 3.1.144). Tobacco points to

Jonson's own indigestion of the New World, as he adapts the smoke-filled English

theater to produce a transformative new theatrical effect.

Uncommon Jonson

Jonson's New World humors, his coursing rivers and perj'rous air, offer us an inverse

model of the kind of digestion that Jonson's dramas mean to produce in their audience.

While Jonson's dramas aim to make "the spectators understanders," to move the mind

from sense to understanding, tobacco charts a reverse process.[187] It produces from the

mind of a smoker a kind of word soup, a negative model of Jonsonian commonplacing.

Commonplacing, an early modern notetaking practice, may seem incidental to the work

of drama, belonging more to the page than to the stage. But it was a practice foundational

to early modern education and to Jonsonian pedagogy, in which readers of classical texts

would copy down relevant authoritative passages, merging them under larger thematic

headings (such as sagacity, error, virtue, to name a few) in a commonplace book.[188]

Commonplacing's importance to early modern memory practice, and its insistence on the

authority of the ancients, allows it to exist in the background of much Jonsonian critique,

where it stands as a hinge linking Jonson's dramatic practice to his scholasticism.[189] The

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[187] Jonson, "Love's Triumph Through Callipolis," *The Complete Masques* 454.
[188] Ann Blair, "Note Taking as an Art of Transmission," *Critical Inquiry,* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Autumn 2004), 85-107, 103.
[189] Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

goal of categorizing undigested fragments of literary wisdom on which the reader can

later draw is the preoccupation of Jonson's personal book – *Timber* or *Discoveries* –

where he outlines (citing liberally from classical sources) his literary philosophy. A good

commonplacer, that is, an organized and well-educated notetaker like Jonson, does not

arrive at new material *ex nihilo*. First comes imitation, then digestion, and lastly

innovation: a term that, for Jonson, as for most early modern people, means not to create

but to discover or uncover (hence the title) from memory. Thus, an encounter with a

passage becomes art through a process of remembering it, and then processing it into

something new. Jonson equates this to digestion. The effective commonplacer "swallows

what it takes in crude, raw, or indigested, but that feedes with an Appetite and hath a

stomacke, to concoct, divide, and turn *all* into nourishment" (*Discoveries,* 3055-63, 3065-

69).[190] The ability to digest at all, of course, to not have indigestion, relies on judgement

and selection, "for all the observations of the ancients," he writes, "we have our own

experience" (*Discoveries,* 1527). The writer may derive his work from ancient examples

but must surpass his models "to make whatever is best in each individual author his

own."[191]

The critics who take the New World's ungovernability as a centerpiece of Jonson's

literary London acknowledge that his mastery over it is more aspirational than real, but I

would like to take this imagined mastery a step further, to consider that the New World

might be the site of an aesthetic difficulty – might, in fact, render that difficulty visible

for Jonson, even as he sets off his own authority and judgement from his characters. I

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[190] Jonson, "Timber, or Discoveries."
[191] Brian Vickers, "Ben Jonson's Classicism Revisited," *The Ben Jonson Journal* 21.2. (2014): 153-202, 161.

want to attend specifically to *how* Jonson evokes New World geographies, because he does not use them towards one end, or to express one thing. We do not have here a figuration of a unified aesthetic program, one that would allow the New World merely to stand for foreignness, or even more broadly to signal illegibility or a failure to know: rather, it is precisely the overlap or disjunction between what is known and what is unknown that allows the New World to have the importance that it does as an interjection in Jonson's theatrical London, and in his formal composition of scene. Throughout Jonson, the New World shrinks and dilates as a critical reference, sometimes coming down to the point of a tobacco puff or expanding to the size of an island cluster, a neighborhood, or a continent. Sometimes the New World seems to appear as a part of London; at other times, it appears as a quality that London possesses, something that London has taken and digested into itself through its own Bermudan force. Half legible, and half illegible, Jonson's New World references – the lines of communication that he draws between New World geographies and urban London – sink into the environment of London as readily as his urban types are carried away from themselves. Jonson's theatrical London swallows references rather than being structured by them: the resulting scene is disordered, vomited up, as though from the gut of one of Jonson's own characters.

New World geographies help Jonson to trace the arc of a deformation, the work of the formless forces that work upon the body enter the realm of thought. It is Jonson's acknowledgement of the stage work of tobacco smoking that allows him to use it to make the work of commonplacing explicit, to make an interiorizing process – figures of metabolism and digestion – into a performance. The New World constructs an

environment that is hostile to commonplacing, but it also allows those errors of judgement to become articulable in dramatic representation, as forms of unknowing. This is a kind of commonplacing that commonplaces, precisely, the process of creating categories and of having them. It is, then, commonplacing as *uncommonplacing.* As a third term that intervenes in movements between classical satire and London comedy, men and matter, old and new, known and unknown, homely and foreign, the New World becomes the point of aesthetic and epistemological indistinction, of indigestion, or "reflux of the times," that forms the fundament of Jonson's comedic sensibility. The irregular and the errant become both narrative and stylistic observations, cultivated in these early prose dramas where Jonson's sentences "writhe and gurgle in an uninterrupted stream and then fall over the brink with a splash."[192] The current of language buoyed up by a New World intertext figures the roiling gut of misunderstanding. If we turn to Jonson's evocations of New World experience, rather than his citation of specific references belonging to New World contexts, we might see how the New World becomes aesthetically available to Jonson as the site of a difficulty. The New World, we might say, sticks in Jonson's craw.

We can see the New World bubbling up to the surface throughout Jonson's plays; it becomes a viral reference that won't let go of the playworld, even in a moment of seemingly maximal enclosure. Throughout Jonson's drama there are experimentations with the dilation and expansion of the scene, from the formal complications of the offstage scene in *The Alchemist,* to the river network connecting an almost archipelagic scenography in *Volpone*. We might see, in these developments, an alignment between

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[192] Barish., 118.

Jonson's "loose style," and his loose scene.[193] This scene is (as is the Grex) unbound by the very rules that it imposes; it is carried away from itself. *Every Man Out* famously culminates with the scene overflowing into the court to merge with the structure of the masque, a fantasy of containment that the play could not sustain and that, upon the death of Elizabeth and the entry of the drama into the repertoire of public theaters, was swiftly replaced.[194] But in later plays, most explicitly in Jonson's "New World play" *Eastward Hoe,* which explicitly overlaps Virginian and London geographies, turning them into the butt of a joke, The New World becomes a vocabulary that allows Jonson to register obliquely the endeavor of his own commonplacing, to create not only new things but new theatrical categories for them. The recognition of a fragile and collapsed category, place, or topos is precisely the beginning point for an interest in finding new topoi, new modes of collection, new identities, new gestures of thought that point to Jonson's indigestion of New World forms.

As one of the "places" of his comedy, and one of the things commonplaced within it, the New World has the status of what we might call Jonson's scholarly sources – the content that *he* commonplaces for composing his scenes – but it is also the form of a thought, of a process, the means by which London's types are composed by Jonsonian humors. As an uncommon place, the New World intervenes in the worldmaking of Jonson's literary London by providing a second overlapping environment beneath the surface of drama: one that provides the contortions, the misappropriations of knowledge. Like the gesture of a thought, both inside and outside Jonson at once, it is a course through which he runs.

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[193] Barish, 62.

[194] On the masque's logics of containment and Jonson's contributions to the form as theorizations of his aesthetic practice see Stephen Orgel, "The Poetics of Spectacle," *New Literary History* 2, no. 3 (April 1, 1971): 367–89, https://doi.org/10.2307/468328.

Jonson attempts to turn London into a set of containers, of commonplaces, for comedic satire, but the result is an expression of his own indigestion. Like an insatiable gut, which "eats all day and lechers all the night" ("On Gut" 1), the New World points to Jonson's insatiable appetite for theater, the stuff of scenes, giving them an uncommon "place" from which Jonson can create a new kind of theatrical style: a medium for the expression of *almost* formless form.

Jonson's use of the New World serves a two-fold purpose. The New World is the place within which Jonson's aesthetics can find a holding, a topography that holds reference and significance, a memory palace for a range of critical and theatrical gestures, while on the other hand it is what makes these gestures unrecognizable, what warps sense-making beyond recognition. The New World helps Jonson perform this move, from "objects of sense" to "subjects of understanding" and back again. That is, Jonson's link between the New World and London outlines both the impossibility of sure judgement for his characters – their tendency to dissolve into their environment, to be carried away, to migrate, to disappear into type, and thus to figure forth a new characterological sensibility. It is this deformation from type and from category that defines Jonson's theatrical "uncommonplacing," and which the place of the New World lets him express. But the New World also stands as a reference that might help to articulate London's dangers to the uninitiated. It points to this uncommonplacing process and invites the audience to digest and to understand it. It innovates (in the classical sense) a material reading practice from commonplace materials, turning it toward an occasional use (in the theater). We might call this the "Peacham reading" of the New World, in reference to the pamphlet with which we began. While everyday commonplacing may require literacy,

classical learning, and a training in the practices of memory recall that form the foundation of early modern pedagogy, Jonson's theatrical commonplacing – his uncommonplacing – holds out to audiences the possibility of drawing on popular experience – the experience of going to the theater – to cultivate a taste, an aesthetic and moral understanding.

Jonson's American London

If there is an aesthetic crisis here, it lies in the negation of Jonson's premise, that in creating a literary London, a London that could be subject to judgement, the very placidness of that judgement would make it impossible to be judged, would allow one category to slide into another – for "places" to be jumbled, for the "courses" of human understanding to be perverted – a claim that would subject Jonson presumably to the very environment. But of course, the theatrical environment of London is set apart from London itself – it has precisely been constructed by Jonson as partially explanatory. Indeed, what Jonson is doing is simultaneously registering an aesthetic crisis and offering a provisional solution, one that does not prescribe or predict but that seeks to model modes of misunderstanding. Jonson imports London's contexts from the New World in the same way that he imports his plots from Plautus or contains references to Italy beneath the surface of his English scenes (and vice versa). But what Jonson's commonplacing for the stage introduces, specifically for an audience that did not have access to the scholastic tradition in which commonplacing was embedded, is that it makes the *practice* of commonplacing contextual and intertheatrical. Dramatic commonplacing is always being digested (is always *in* digestion, and thus indigested) because it requires the performance occasion (not merely the formal scene) as the ground on which it runs.

Resistant to placement within other categories, the New World becomes the

commonplaced heading under which Jonson can register a critical movement (unfamiliar

and familiar, legible and illegible) making the movement itself subject to categorization,

to understanding and to critique.

In Jonson, and specifically in the case of Briske, we might understand the scene to do the

work of commonplacing. As Lorna Hutson has argued (although speaking of Shakespeare

rather than Jonson), the theatrical scene has much in common with the commonplace

book: it may be understood as containing "circumstances" akin to commonplacing *topoi*

that allow character dialogue to coalesce around a shared premise or "circumstance" that

then governs their thoughts and actions.[195] Critics such as Henry Turner, Peter Womack,

and Jonah Barish, who have attended to Jonson's theatricality, rather than merely his

scholasticism, have highlighted this movement from character satire (where action is

filtered through the person of the satirist) to a more diffuse model that terminates in the

scene.[196] Humors produce character by tracing an arc of action between person and

environment. They make the workings of mental digestion, of judgement, of synthesis,

vulnerable to the scene, which subordinates characters to the course, to the judgements

and actions of others. The "scene" here is thus both textual and theatrical.[197] As a trace of

Jonson's own commonplacing practice, his drawing together of characters and situations

to frame them in an easily digestible posture, the scene stands as a container for

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[195] Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 1st edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[196] Turner, *Early Modern Theatricality*; Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). Womack, *Ben Jonson*.
[197] On readings of scene see Turner, *Early Modern Theatricality*. And Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a more organic reading of scene as a unit of conversation see A. Kunin, "Characters Lounge," *Modern Language Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): 291–317, https://doi.org/10.1215/00267929-2009-001.

remembered items. It is a common place where items of interest – here, the "ragged follies of the time" – can be stored and accessed, both within a single performance and intertheatrically (i.e., between performances) (*Every Man Out*, "Induction" 15). It is where the discursive confusion of London and the New World can be brought together and put right. We might say that the scene itself is the satirist; it exposes and digests its types into the churning typologies of the city. As a gathering practice, scenes spatialize of the intellectual categories of commonplacing, through the movement of humors which resolve on a theatrical person. They invite the audience to participate in the process of Jonsonian digestion, whereby things "objected to sense" become "subjected to understanding."[198] The scene becomes a zone of apprehension, of judgement, that simultaneously exposes the workings of uncontained humors.

In Briske's smoking scene, the parenthetical enclosure of "(Tab.)" is a puff of smoke held in the mouth, a place where visual notation inscribes within itself the trace of a habit. It is the site where habit and style become indistinguishable. Brisk's playing upon the pipe, his composition of dramatic poesy out of tobacco smoke figures his poetic composition as a kind of indigestion, tracing the model by which new materials (here tobacco) become subject to the mind and produce new content: here the "senseless stuff" of his verse. The intake of breath that "(Tab.)" denotes also figures digestion through an inhaling of vapor. Instead of consuming content, Briske is "consuming the void."[199] His seriousness belies the triviality of his consumption, and the poetic product that it punctuates and produces. Unlike the substantial literary matter of the commonplacer, tobacco has an insubstantial

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[198] Jonson, "Hymenaei," *The Complete Masques* 1-2.

[199] On the early modern consumption of sugar which had similar associations, and the rhetoric of "consuming the void" see Patricia Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (Chicago; London: University Of Chicago Press, 1991).

ontology and a vexed origin. Understood to provide the most fleeting of bodily

experiences, to be almost ethereal, to be immune to the material processes of extraction

and appropriation that made up both digestion and its own colonial origin, tobacco moves

through the body as a course or vapor, something that points not to a thing, but to the act

of consuming itself. As a figure of false commonplacing, the "(Tab.)" does not only point

to the intake of breath – a kind of parody of the commonplacing process – but also retains

the trace of a material commonplacing practice. We might remember that the

parenthetical enclosure of words is a kind of emphasis, one that marks out a passage for

commonplacing, that makes the text available for the digestion of the reader. Jonson's

use of commonplacing markers (Tab.) at the end of the scene reads tobacco as that which

is commonplaced. It mimics the ' ' around the edges of a word, a sign to the reader that

the word has merit, that it is held in common, and is therefore worthy to be taken up,

copied down, and made part of the synthetic memory of the reader. In the script, the

parenthesis reproduces – sites – the stagework of tobacco smoking (by mimicking the

intake of breath) but it also invites the reader to access this work as itself the *cited* of the

commonplacer, something of note.

By invoking commmonplacing as a kind of punctuation – a parenthetical – Jonson can

both point to failed literary commonplacing and draw attention to a new mode of

theatrical commonplacing.[200] Ultimately, there is something to commonplace here, and it

is the figure of the tobacco-smoking commonplacer himself. By the end of the scene, the

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[200] Although commonplacing describes a material reading practice, the aesthetic implications of such a practice are clear both in Jonson's own articulations of his poetic artistry and in critical responses. It asks us to attend to the adhesion between concepts and ideas. It is thus suited to adaptation in non-literary modes, and, indeed, Ann Blair has claimed that notetaking can model a practice of thought and reflect the sensibility of the author. See Blair, "Note Taking as an Art of Transmission."

tobacco pipe has indeed been "digested," but not by Briske – by Jonson. The pipe smoker is not the representation of wit at all. Rather, as Jonson reminds us, it is the figure of the cuckold, and the pipe is the "true form of the woodcock's head." The literary pretensions of the onstage poet have become subject to a larger logic, one of the scene itself, where the outline of the actor puffing on his pipe becomes commonplaceable and visible as a stage type. Jonson has expressed the work of commonplacing (the transformation of Fasitidious Briske into a cuckold) into a single dramatic gesture. What is being commonplaced, ultimately, is not the poetry that Briske speaks but Briske himself, and tobacco facilitates this move. As something of "scarce no note," tobacco retains enough form, as a gesture, as the trace of an action, as a figure of false digestion (or indigestion) (*Every Man In* 1.4.45). It dissolves Briske in the environment of scene without turning him aside entirely. This passage serves to help audience members develop a mental commonplacing practice: one that does not require knowledge of the classics or even literacy. The solution to the coursing air and water of London, its ambient dangers, is to follow those courses where they flow, to read their composition and decomposition (their partial digestion) of urban types as themselves worthy of note. As itself something outside of the text, outside of commonplacing, outside of literature, even outside of thought, the New World becomes a vehicle for Jonson's theatrical innovations, a new kind of commonplacing custom built for the stage.

By reading Jonson's tobacco smoking not only as a piece of stagework, but a stage technology, we are invited to consider the ways that New World forms continue to act upon and transform Jonson's characters. But these transformations also produce a new way of thinking about Englishness and about Londoness that extends beyond Jonson and

beyond drama, producing and commonplacing new types that would soon come to populate London comedy well into the eighteenth century. If tobacco is the ambient medium of thought, it is also the medium of *Every Man Out's* humoral composition. We can see its distempering and transformative effects even on characters whom we never see "take the Whiffe." Clove and Orange, for instance, never smoke tobacco onstage (although they visit a tobacco stall) but residing in the innermost ring of the play's scenic layers, they are the most subject to tobacco's influence. Unlike Briske, who is a visitor to the city, Clove and Orange have been here for a while. They are "city born" and thus born into and borne up by its humors. Jonson's own description of them in the "Character Preface" of *Every Man Out,* presents them as the most crystallized example of his London natives and, not incidentally, the most un-English.

Briske transforms from a person into an archetypal cuckold. He is indigested by the scene and by his own tobacco smoking to become an urban type. But as an "inseparable case of coxcombs," Clove and Orange are not so much persons as they are a travelling scene that takes its frame with it, its case, wherever it goes. Frozen in an emblematic posture, they are "squeezed out," left as a husk of character. Their names mark them as a foreign import, but also something quintessentially English: a bit of rind, floating in a London sewer. Each serves only to practice upon the other, to further preserve and season him – just as oranges were seasoned and preserved by being stuck with cloves. As a piece of preserved refuse, they stand as an extreme example of the changes the city's perj'rous air has wrought on humors.

At the innermost ring of *Every Man Out*'s urban ecology, Clove and Orange are a paradigmatic example of Jonson's character theory. They are the most native to the city,

but also the most estranged from Englishness: as another character notes, "they speak the strangest language." In fact, Clove and Orange's inane dialogue mirrors the headlong and overly punctuated language of Briske's smoking speech, as well as the faux-rhetorical pretension and italicized Latin of the tobacco billet: "By this church, you ha', la! Nay, come, begin – Aristotle, in his *Daemonologia,* approves Scaliger for the best navigator in his time" (3.1.175-177). As *native* speakers of tobacco, who are also "strangers to the whole scope of the plot," Clove and Orange mark the endpoint of smoking: the transformation of the smoker into an indigenous type. In Jonson, the more native one is to the city, to its perj'rous air, the more foreign one becomes. We might remember, here, that tobacco's disordering effects – its tendency to make the smoker overvalue trifles, either material or linguistic – reflected English ideas about indigenous tobacco smokers. If tobacco makes one speak in nonsense, producing a kind of wonder cabinet of linguistic oddities, it does so as a parody of indigenous language. A routine feature of Virginia settlement accounts was an italicized and fragmented 'dictionary' of supposedly Algonkian words. As a Londoner, this would have provided a model for something like tobacco speech, a botched transcription of indigenous language indigested by a distempered settler. Jonson's urban types speak this language.

It is this intermediate status between native as English and native as a foreign language, a tobacco language, that interests me here. We have only to turn to later dramas to see evidence that indigenous figures were presented largely at work in an environment. These representations owe much to the natural historical frame around laboring indigenous people in early modern travel narratives. Most famous among them were Theodor De Bry's popular woodcuts, which accompanied the 1590 edition of Thomas Hariot's *Brief*

and True Report of the Newfound land of Virginia. Characters like Clove and Orange present us with this vision of the native body as a kind of natural scientific specimen. Always at work in an environment, they sink into it, their labor itself defines their character. They are a perverse echo of the bodies of indigenous people presented for display in England, a reference that is itself preserved in *The Tempest*'s note about men who will pay "a piece of silver to see a dead Indian." They figure the transformation of person into thing, a piece of exotic fruit dried up and preserved in and by the city. In this way, they draw explicitly on indigenous archetypes, but urbanize them, placing them within a different milieu. But as I've been arguing here, Jonson's cast of seasoned and indigested characters produce out of the overlap of this indigenous archetype and representations of distempered urban travelers something less like either and more like a settler. The idea of 'settler' as an identity, rather than a temporary state, would not have been available to Jonson during this period. The prospect of plantation and continuous habitation would be posed in the decades after these plays. But Jonson's seasoned characters persist in a state of un-settlement. Like the straggling settlers returned from the New World, they are not native to the Americas *or* England, but to a third place foreign to both. In the overlap of a London type and a stranger, we can see the settler *as type* beginning to surface.

In fact, the formal process of uncommonplacing as I have articulated it here is not merely the inverse of commonplacing. As an account of the working of environment on English persons and English character, Jonson's dramas also *preserve* racialist language about bodily dissolution. Jonson's uncommonplace seasons his characters. In James Ist's terms, it "Indianizes" them within his American London, framing them as distempered settlers

who have gone "native" by being "borne up" by the city. The categories of "settler" and "native" do not produce a single archetype (something like the "English savage" often noted by critics), but are overlapping identities that share the habit of tobacco smoking. At this juncture, where the urban type occupies both the qualities of early modern stereotypes about indigenous people *and* stereotypes about the settler, we can trace another kind of formal movement. The constitution of settler as a point of transit between indigenous and English, native and foreign, that Jonson imagines here, would later provide the crucial vector for the transfer of sovereignty from native peoples to settlers *as* native. Jonson's digestion of the New World points us not only to the context of his own creative control, his use of tobacco as a scenic effect, but also to the ways that settlement was becoming foundational to English representations, to representations of Englishness and Londonness. Jonson institutionalizes the New World in his drama as it becomes, increasingly, a crown project. These histories, both a history of dramatic aesthetics and a history of settlement, make up the uncommon place of Jonson's American London. They are sunk into the quicksand of city comedy's dramatic geographies.

3. Theatrical Failure in *The Tempest*

The Tempest's (1611) link to the Americas reaches back to its initial publication.[201] The frontispiece to the First Folio edition of the play featured a woodcut of an indigenous spearfisher. An image from American settlement, then, makes up the play's first paratext. But the connection has endured through many critical movements in the field, from its Victorian association with the "Bermuda papers," a grouping of letters emerging out of the wake of the 1609 shipwreck, to its influence on decolonial movements in South America and the Caribbean, and influence on postcolonial scholarship in North America.[202] There have been two main methods of linking the play to the Americas: the first, emerging out of the European tradition, relies on a specific connection to archival documents and intertexts (such as Montaigne's *Of Cannibals* or specific flora and fauna found in the Bermuda letters), while the second, coming from the Americas and the Caribbean, depends more on the play's thematic proximity to events in colonial history. This tradition has identified what Tiffany Lethabo King calls the "discourses of conquest" in the play, foregrounding Prospero's subjugation of Ariel and Caliban.[203] Roberto Fernández Retamar, one of the first Caribbean thinkers to claim Caliban as a Caribbean native, places the origin of this latter tradition in the late nineteenth century,

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[201] *The Tempest* was published in the 1623 First Folio but was most likely first performed between 1610 and 1611. The fact that this was also the period of the Jamestown Starving Time has made the connection to the Americas seem an inevitable part of the play's compositional context.

[202] For a comprehensive history of Caliban and Ariel in Caribbean scholarship, see Susan Gillman, "Otra Vez Caliban/Encore Caliban: Adaptation, Translation, Americas Studies," *American Literary History* 20, no. 1/2 (2008): 187–209; For contemporary accounts of Caliban that are directly indebted to Caribbeanist readings see Jeffrey L. Hantman, "Caliban's Own Voice: American Indian Views of the Other in Colonial Virginia," *New Literary History* 23, no. 1 (1992): 69–81, https://doi.org/10.2307/469158; Alden T. Vaughan, "Shakespeare's Indian: The Americanization of Caliban," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (1988): 137–53, https://doi.org/10.2307/2870626.

[203] Tiffany Lethabo King, "New World Grammars: The 'Unthought' Black Discourses of Conquest," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (October 12, 2016), https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/article/633275.

connecting it to the writing of the Cuban revolutionary and thinker José Martí.[204]

Thematizations of Ariel and Caliban as indigenous figures within a colonial framework

continue to influence recent postcolonial work on the play, which has owed as much to

Caribbean scholarship as it has to the European tradition. But recent postcolonial critics

have also troubled these early associations between *The Tempest* and the Americas,

pointing out that the many images, references, and ideas that earlier scholars took as

representative of the American experience make the play equally available to placement

in Ireland, the Mediterranean archipelagoes, Northern Africa, or the Arabian Peninsula.

The "notorious difficulty of locating the play's island" is the preoccupation of *The*

Tempest and its Travels, a collected volume of essays that dedicates a section each to all

the "zones" of the world on which the play could be said to border.[205] Each one stands as

a partial schematization of the island, but none can take a comprehensive view; they must

always come to terms with the alternative readings that bracket their account. The island

continues to be too "hazy," too "plural," too "ontologically other," and too "ambivalent"

to contextualization and emplacement to be read as any specific geography.[206]

While almost all critics of the play acknowledge that there does seem to be *some*

relationship to the New World, none can precisely agree on where in the text that

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[204] Roberto Fernández Retamar et al., "Caliban: Notes towards a Discussion of Culture in Our America," *The Massachusetts Review* 15, no. 1/2 (1974): 7–72, 35. In this tradition, Caliban becomes the common origin or articulation of the Caribbean identity, a figure of culture dispossession that nevertheless produced, for Latin American writers, a "Calibanesque vision of [their] culture" a particular aesthetic disposition, worldview, and origin distinct from Spain and from North America. Along with Ariel, Caliban figures forth, in Shakespeare, a kind of prehistory for Caribbean and colonial identity that exceeds the text. These early Caribbean and South American treatments, by figures such as Aimé Césaire and George Lamming read the play through translations, revisions, restagings, and rewritings of its premise.
[205] Crystal Bartolovich, "'Baseless Fabric': London as a 'World City,'" in *The Tempest and Its Travels*, ed. Peter Hulme and William Sherman, Critical Views. (London: Reaktion, 2000), 13–26.
[206] Bartolovich, 18; John Gillies, "The Figure of the New World in The Tempest," in *The Tempest and Its Travels*, ed. Peter Hulme and William Sherman, Critical Views. (London: Reaktion, 2000): 193.

relationship is most clearly articulated. Even the play's most critically cited connection to New World documents, William Strachey's *True Repertory of the Wrack,* is now only a doubtful intertext. Earlier critics cited the document as an influence on the play's first scene – a shipwreck at sea – noting the use of technical maritime language, as well as the wreck's effect on social and political formations (including a later mutiny, also referred to in Strachey), and echoes of "words, phrases, and ideas."[207] Contemporary scholarship however, has complicated this easy equivalence, pointing variously to the fact that the letter might not have been accessible at the time of the play's composition, and that Strachey's document also reused text and description from other Bermuda documents, including Silvester Jourdain's *Discovery* and Richard Eden's translation of Pietro D'Anghiera's *Decades.*[208] If we are to believe David Lindley's claim that "the Strachey letter is a possible source for *The Tempest* [but] not a necessary source," that may be because Strachey's letter itself seems less likely to be a match than the events which it describes, taking place at first in the Bermudas, but later in Virginia.[209] As recent critics of the connection between the Strachey letter and the play have argued, any analogues between the two could be explained by Shakespeare's access to a common source document, to one of the other accounts of the wreck (there were several), or, in a thematic reading, to commonly held ideas about the "inchaunted" Bermudas, or rumors about the

[207] Alden T. Vaughan, "William Strachey's 'True Reportory' and Shakespeare: A Closer Look at the Evidence," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (2008): 245–73, 271. See also Barry R. Clarke, "The Virginia Company and The Tempest," *Journal of Drama Studies* 5 (July 2011): 13–27. On the controversy surrounding this account since the period in which Edmund Malone first made the claim see Rea, John D. "A Source for the Storm in 'The Tempest.'" *Modern Philology* 17, no. 5 (1919): 279–86.
[208] Roger Stritmatter and Lynne Kositsky have made this connection and created a master list of textual parallels "Shakespeare and the Voyagers Revisited," *The Review of English Studies* 58, no. 236 (2007): 447–72, see especially 458.
[209] David Lindley cited in Stritmatter and Kositsky 'Re: Kermode (*Tempest* Reference)', *The Shakespeare Conference: SHK 12.0655,* Tuesday, 20 March 2001. http://www.shakesper.net/archives/2001/0650.html.

wreck, or other similar wrecks, circulating in London. In the absence of a clear textual

connection, thematic links to the New World have also been called into question,

including the suitability of various tropes, figures, and references to an American

context.[210] Ariel, who appears to be indigenous to the island, is also a figure from a

European masque, while Caliban appears in various critical readings as, alternately, a

wild man, a "missing link," a Grendel-type pagan monster, an American Indian, and a

sentient fish.[211] A record of 'contact' between European and native characters in the play

is equally elusive. Prospero seems well settled on the island when we meet him, and

Miranda's encounters are largely with other Europeans. Even among critics who

acknowledge that there does seem to be *some* relationship to the New World, there is

little consensus on where in the text that relationship might be found.

And yet, while *The Tempest* has resisted a placement within a single geography – it has

belonged to "every place and no place, every genre and no genre" – its openness to

recontextualization continues to make it attractive to scholars working in the Global

Renaissance.[212] The disappearance of the Americas from criticism becomes the condition

of possibility for this new scholarly approach, one that tends not to emphasize a particular

geographic setting for *The Tempest*, but instead turns to theatrical worldmaking itself as

an object of critique.[213] Scholars such as Cyrus Mulready, Peter Hulme, Shankar Raman,

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[210] Rachel Bryant provides a roundup of contemporary critiques of the play's colonial connection in "Toward the Desertion of Sycorax's Island: Challenging the Colonial Contract," *ESC: English Studies in Canada* 39, no. 4 (2013), 95.

[211] James Phelan and Gerald Graff, eds., "A Portfolio of Images of Caliban," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 161–68; on the history of Caliban in representation, see Julia Reinhard Lupton, "Creature Caliban," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (2000): 1–23, https://doi.org/10.2307/2902320.

[212] Peter Hulme and William Sherman, *The Tempest and Its Travels*, Critical Views. (London: Reaktion, 2000), xi

[213] The term "worldmaking" is central to Ayesha Ramachandran's argument in *The Worldmakers: Global Imagining in Early Modern Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

and John Gillies have read the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century as the moment when cartography entered the theatrical scene.[214] In their writing, dramatists saw within globes and maps a potential analogy to the worldbuilding they engaged in, turning drama into a literal play of scale. The "turn towards the world" in early modern criticism, then, reproduces this imagined relationship between theater and cartography in the early modern period just as maps help dramatists to reconfigure the "mobile array of social and spatial relations" that structured early modern lives.[215] If there is a scene of contact here, it is not colonial contact but the moment in which cartography encounters theatricality.

The New World's disappearance from *The Tempest*, a history that I have sketched in brief here, opens the play up to a wide range of thematic interpretations that read colonialism back into the play without committing to any particular instance of it. The impossibility of locating its setting (is it an island in the Bermudas, Ireland, England, the Mediterranean?) is thus precisely what makes it interesting. Its placelessness is evidence of its successful attempt to "condense new literary materials … into manageable forms," subjecting them to theatrical control.[216] Most travel plays are in the business of adapting new settings to the stage, but *The Tempest* crucially thematizes this process within its fiction. As the uncharted island of its setting becomes a "provision" of Prospero's "art" (1.2.3), it is also a provision of English theater. The play's "common textualities of literature and cartography" connect Prospero's "mastery of space" and subjugation of

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[214] Cyrus Mulready, *Romance on the Early Modern Stage: English Expansion Before and After Shakespeare*, 2013 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Peter Hulme and William Sherman, *The Tempest and Its Travels*, Critical Views. (London: Reaktion, 2000); Shankar Raman, *Framing "India": The Colonial Imaginary in Early Modern Culture* (Stanford University Press, 2001); John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[215] Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality*, 1st edition (Abingdon, UK; New York: Routledge, 2012), 16.
[216] Mulready, 146.

Ariel and Caliban – the island's indigenous inhabitants – to England's aspirational

accumulation of new territories.[217] Its "bare island" expresses the "bare stage" of the

popular theater which, like cartography, reterritorializes the dramatic world in its image

(5.1.326).[218] By linking the island and the stage together based on their 'bareness' and

thus their openness to representation, the play reproduces one of the signatures of

cartography, in which an emptying out of a place's particularity becomes the occasion of

territorial conquest.[219] As simultaneously the most placeless, "undecidable," and

"indeterminate" of Shakespeare's settings and the most formally enclosed, most self-

conscious, and most masterful, *The Tempest* conquers the unplotted expanses of its

fiction, performing a feat of theatrical domination.[220] At both scales – Prospero's

pageants and *The Tempest* – something unconventional becomes conventional; something

unknown becomes an extension of theatrical territory.

It may seem odd, then, to move back to an account of *The Tempest*'s connection to the

New World. Yet that is precisely what this essay will do. The New World that *The*

Tempest takes up, however, is not the one familiar to us, nor does it appear in

recognizable forms. I contend that *The Tempest*'s obsession with chronicling the

conventions of its staging is a reckoning, not with fantasies of conquest or an attempt to

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[217] Mulready, 10-11.

[218] On the conventionality of the "bare stage" in early modern theatricality see Mariko Ichikawa, *The Shakespearean Stage Space* (Cambridge University Press, 2013): 154; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 4 edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 202. All references to the play are from William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Reprint edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and will be cited parenthetically throughout.

[219] Raman discusses this in *Framing "India"* when he notes that "placelessness could be utilized to call into question the possession of that space, and ultimately to re-inscribe its possession by another," 9. J.B. Harley discusses the colonial strategy of projected possession in his *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, ed. Paul Laxton (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 86.

[220] Bartolovich, 19, 24.

produce an explicitly colonial setting, but instead, with an acknowledgment of colonial failure, of *un*settlement. By the time *The Tempest* was first performed, two major colony collapses in Virginia (1585) and Maine (1608) had each sent a ship of settlers back to England. And when these settlers returned, they told others about their experience, much to the chagrin of investors. While critics have focused on textual and thematic links to settlement, through the lens of conquest or through specific intertexts (for example, Strachey's *True Repertory*), I see the play evoking settlement by incorporating the formal vocabulary of settlement's early failures – representations of displacement, spatial disorientation, and strandedness – into its theatrical vocabulary. If the play is the site of a "stagewreck," as I argued in my introduction, it is also *itself* a stagewreck. Reading for the theatricality of settlement gives us access to a radically different kind of theatricality, one more archipelagic and less metatheatrical, one more "unsettled."

"We Split! We Split!": Getting Lost in *The Tempest*

The conventional way of assessing *The Tempest*'s American connection has been to identify rhetorical moves in the text, evidence that it may have imported the language of settlement documents or was adapting its plot from famous incidents. These strategies might ask that we analyze specific rhetorical patterns in the play that evoke settlement texts, to demonstrate how Shakespeare might be adapting settlement vocabulary. Rather than drawing a neat line between prose narratives and plays, I consider how drama incorporated unsettlement's representational crisis into its metatheatrical vocabulary, the ways that it talked about and reflected on its own form. Theater's metatheatrical language arises from the contingencies of performance. Along with explicitly self-referential passages, the trace of presentational effects such as conventions of staging, acting, and

relating allow us to access the "habits of thought" that defined drama as a medium.[221] The scenes of dramatic unsettlement that I consider articulate what New World catastrophe might have meant to dramatists, both by offering a range of techniques for rendering scenes of material crisis and as a term of art for the representational turbulence that changing scenic conventions posed.

As a putatively "New World play," with a frustratingly opaque geography and a self-reflexive sense of its own theatrical powers, *The Tempest* is well-positioned to speak to these intertwined and unsettled histories: both the history of New World conquest and the history of drama's own formal development. Act I Scene I notably opens with a shipwreck, an event in which New World disaster and the disintegration of the dramatic scene are folded together. What takes place in this scene, or rather what introduces the "place" of the fictional scene onto the physical stage space, has less to do with the ship or its implied colonial context than it does with establishing the play's theatricality. In other dramas of the period, the action of the shipwreck might happen offstage, or through reportage or narration. But as I've argued, *The Tempest*'s shipwreck takes place onstage as a *stage*wreck, through a series of opening deictic commands, such as "Take in the topsail" (1.1.6), "To cabin" (1.1.18), "Down with the topmast" (1.1.34), and "Bring her to try with the main course" (1.1.35), which direct the non-speaking characters (referred to only as "mariners" and "others" in the stage directions), to perform different actions that will correspond to parts of the stage. By foregrounding the movements and gestures of the mariners, the event of the shipwreck redirects us from the setting as a stable place for

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[221] Henry S. Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1.

theatrical action to something more like the "scene." While the setting is a place within the fictional world, the scene might more properly be said to be a place within theatricality. The scene includes the represented setting *and* the presentational techniques that "set" this setting – that break up the play into units of sense and establish a shared social world for the characters. As mariners work to establish this shared social world, they point to the techniques that set the scene of the wreck.

The sorting of characters with different kinds of theatrical knowledge that emerges from this shipwreck – those who thought the wreck was a natural occurrence and those who didn't – has a lasting impact on the play's formal composition and plotting. As we soon learn, the scene of the shipwreck is not the whole scene; it is only a part. What seems to be a moment of convention-setting – an indication of the presentational assumptions that govern dramatic worldbuilding – is itself enclosed by a larger set of conventions and assumptions: the event of Prospero's pageant. Prospero, as we find out, was the true orchestrator of this wreck. He directed Ariel to perform the event of the wreck "to point" (1.2.238), leading the other characters to "suppose that they saw the King's ship wrecked / And his great person perish" (1.2.236). As the separate groups of characters are washed ashore, each is on a different part of the island; each has a different vision of the whole. When the shipwrecked characters land on the island, they do not collaborate to produce a single scene, but instead mark their own distinct position: each retains a different limited view of the theatrical whole.

The fragments of the ship turn to a fragmented island space, what early editions of *The Tempest* referred to in scene headings as "another part of the island." In Act II Scene I, we encounter the shipwrecked noblemen, Alonso, Sebastian, Adrian, Antonio, Gonzalo,

Francisco, and "others," in the aftermath of the wreck, wandering through the island landscape for the first time. Their description of the island unfolds in the form of an argument, articulating divergent perspectives on a single scene – that is, like the sailors, figuring it in parts, although this time, far from harmoniously. While Adrian claims that the island "seem[s] to be a desert … uninhabitable and almost inaccessible," he notes also that the "air breaths upon [them] most sweetly" (2.1.39, 47). But Sebastian differs with this account. He argues, instead, that the air is "rotten" (2.1.48) – and Gonzalo contradicts this account in turn, maintaining that "here is everything advantageous to life … how lush and lusty the grass looks. How green!" (2.1.50,52). This conversation might be familiar to a reader of settlement accounts. It bears a striking resemblance to George Percy's vacillation, in a time of hardship, from the "fertill soile" he noticed at the beginning – "great plenty of fish of all kindes" shares the same space as "meere famine" and "bare cold grownd."[222] The noblemen conclude the scene, both by reflecting on the contingency of their situation – "I wish mine eyes / Would, with themselves, shut up my thoughts," "Do not omit the heavy offer of it / It seldom visits sorrow; when it doth, it is a comforter" (2.1.189-190, 192-193) – and imagining how they might overcome this condition to build an imaginary commonwealth: "Had I plantation of this isle, my lord" (2.1.141). Like settlers, then, they acknowledge the future hope of prosperity, of mastery, while also lamenting their current abject position. Here, this hope is also deferred. Their descriptions of the island ultimately reflect their position (confused, stranded, "split off" from their fellows) but do nothing to materially improve it.

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[222] Percy, "Discourse," 930-31, 933.

I would like to pause on this scene, not least because it continues the mandate of the initial shipwreck. In their attempt to control the scene, the noblemen render it in parts: like the mariners, they evoke an absent totality. They render the scene in negative (what the noblemen do *not* see and do *not* know). In the shipwreck scene, the portions of the ship, or the actions that make them up, each fell separately into the darkness of the backstage and the storm. In this scene, however, the composition of each part is more a question of perspective than task, role, or position. Or rather, perspective *is* position. If this scene is composed largely through character and conversation, we might read it as disordered *because* the characters, themselves scenic technologies, are also disordered. The noblemen account for their environment in an unsettled way because they are unsettled in their temperaments. What Gail Kern Paster calls the "porous and volatile humoral body, with its faulty borders and penetrable stuff," variously constituted by the fictional world enclosing it, is produced in reverse.[223] Whereas classically (or at least, in classical humoral theory) the world was thought to act upon the body, here the actions of the character-actors produce a porous and differently constituted world, where the scene is at once the source and product of the noblemen's unsettled position, their strandedness, confusion, and loss. But this scene does not merely echo unsettlement rhetorically – i.e., through a use of stylistic parallels, "words, phrases, and ideas," the grumblings of the stranded nobles echoing the complaints of historical settlers, it also produces unsettlement formally as a quality of theatrical representation: here, a friction between character and scene, or more properly between character "part," the small strip of paper containing a single character's dialogue, given to actors to memorize, and "plot," the

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[223] Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 23.

larger schematic of the play, generally kept backstage.[224] Each nobleman provides a

partial conjugation of the whole. As they describe it in reaction to their awareness of their

limitation, each produces a possible construction of it. The description breaks the "plot"

into individual little fiefdoms that are incompatible with each other. Each one imagines

and occupies a different scrap of theatrical space. The shipwreck had dramatized the

process by which unsettled space could form out of discursive character descriptions, out

of a fusion of character and scene ("we split, we split!") – but in this scene, it is produced

out of a gap between them, where the split perspectives of characters are at odds with the

glimpses of an uncanny theatrical wholeness that might belong to the scene itself.

What makes the noblemen's accounts partial is precisely the scene's theatricality, which,

to the noblemen, stands in for the element of foreignness, of strangeness, within it.

References to a theatricality that they can sense, but not understand, effectively

subordinates their divergent perspectives to a larger scenic logic, further emphasizing the

limitedness of their knowledge. These are by no means metatheatrical characters

especially *because* they can point to theatrical phenomena. First, the noblemen note that

they hear music throughout the scene – "Upon mine honour, sir, I heard a humming,"

"Even now, we heard a hollow burst of bellowing" – a refrain that could be "a quality of

the climate" (as Caliban will later attest), the result of Ariel's intermittent invisible

presence ("Enter Ariel invisible, playing solemn music") or a faculty of the stage itself,

the humming and bellowing of backstage action leaking into the performance. The

second concern is whether their costumes are wet or dry. When Gonzalo notes that their

"garments, being, as they were, drenched in the sea, hold notwithstanding their freshness

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[224] Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007).

and gloss," Antonio disagrees, claiming that "if but one of his pockets could speak, would it now say he lies?" (2.1.61-63). The distinction between this argument and the first is largely that it is clearer in the second argument where the confusion lies. Gonzalo has not understood that the initial shipwreck was not only theatrical in the broadest sense (because it is in a play) but that it was also theatrical within the fiction, a product of Prospero's art. But the distinction of what is or is not *fictionally* theatrical seems to break down in this scene, when it becomes unclear whether the sailors are responding directly to Prospero's scenic conventions or to those of the play.

We might assume that the composition of the island itself is not due to Prospero's interference, although Ariel does spend quite a lot of time keeping various shipwrecked groups separated, confining them to parts. But the "freshness" of Gonzalo's garments is more ambiguous: the operative question here is whether the clothes are wet *in the fiction*, a question that Gonzalo and Antonio's disagreement evokes – after all, even if the shipwreck was a "pageant" to Prospero, it was a disaster to those who suffered through it, to the play's audience, and to Miranda. It does not follow that the noblemen's clothes must necessarily be dry as a result (although Ariel seems to suggest that this is the case). To Antonio, they must of course be wet, because they have been shipwrecked. They may also be wet *as actors,* a common way of signaling a recent shipwreck onstage.[225] To Gonzalo, they were indeed once "drenched" but are now "fresh," evidence of Prospero's intervention, of a dim awareness of his own position within a play, or of the mere passage of time. This ambiguity is compounded by the presence of Ariel, who stands for Prospero's theatricality more broadly, and the theatricality of the island itself, which has

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[225] Dessen, 15.

conventions, rules, modes of representation that may be unavailable, or even hostile to Prospero (after all, he was shipwrecked as well). We thus have many different layers of theatricality here to contend with, and it is not clear whether any of them corresponds to the theatricality of *The Tempest,* although many of them clearly could.

In response to this confusion, the noblemen retreat into yet another layer of theatricality, one that might give them a reprieve from their situation. To ground themselves in the scene, they abandon description for reenactment and stage a play. They imagine one of their number, Gonzalo, as an Aeneas or an Amphion, who will make "impossible matter … easy" and lead them to victory (2.1.87). They claim that "he will carry this island home in his pocket and give it to his son for an apple … and sowing the kernels of it in the sea, bring forth more islands" (2.1.88-90). While Gonzalo tries to move past this casting of him to return to the problem of their simultaneously wet and dry clothes (reminding them of their larger predicament), this aside becomes a main topic of conversation for the noblemen, who use it to conjure the vision of spatial mastery that they lacked at the beginning of the scene. Through this metaphor, the entire island becomes an apple – nourishing, familiar, even Edenic – that they can take up and command at will. If the noblemen can pick up this apple-shaped island, then they can finally assume a position outside of it, assuming the metatheatrical position that they lack by replacing it with a hyper-fictional one. The placement of the island in the pocket of the conqueror imagines that the noblemen would be able to be both inside and outside of the space that they occupy. The noblemen do not know the conceptual or spatial contours of their position (what to a traveler would be the shape of a continent is here the metatheatrical knowledge that they are in, fact, in a performance). But even as they are

not aware of the innate theatricality of their situation, they reproduce its logic nonetheless, through their interior fiction of the island-as-apple: a small manageable totality (like a stage) that is nested *within* the fictional landscape, rather than encompassing and governing it.

The island-as-apple metaphor functions as an antidote to their partial knowledge and limited perception, producing an alternative space in which the island is completely perceptible and accessible and where unsettlement settles into clear and convincing mastery. But this is not how the scene ultimately concludes. The apple is, of course, just another representation of the island; it produces another in a list of conflicting descriptions that serves only to further complicate their situation. To make the island something comprehensible, they have transformed it into something that they can comprehend, but that thing is emphatically not the island, although it is a proximate version of it. The vision of the island that this metaphor inspires ultimately turns the noblemen against each other as they vie for leader of this imaginary republic. They conclude the scene in much the same position as they began it in: stranded, hungry, separated from their ships and their comrades, and keen to continue arguing about what the island, now an imaginary commonwealth with "no occupation" and "no sovereignty," would look like (2.1.153, 155). The metaphor of the apple, then, ends up being more apt that it initially seemed to be. It does describe their situation, but only to undercut its intended goal as a metaphor to make "impossible matter … easy" and aid them on their way (2.1.87). While the first half of the image does seem to promise a kind of mastery, the second half undercuts it. The apple produces "kernels" or seeds that spur more conquest (2.1.90). But, in doing so, it also escapes its own representation and the pocket

that contained it. The seeds are new objects of conquest, but they are also versions of the already-conquered apple and will produce "more islands" like it (2.1.91). The apple in the pocket is turned out to scatter across the sea (2.1.88,90). Both the apple within the metaphor and the island that it symbolizes to the noblemen are placed out of reach, as a collection of "kernels" – impressions, unsuccessful attempts, fragments – that are conjugated through a series of increasingly elaborate registers but, nonetheless, cannot be grasped as the object of perception. The image of the apple reproduces, within itself, the very problem that the noblemen were attempting to escape from. The island and the apple that stands in for it disintegrate into their component seeds, taking with them the image of perfect totality that they summoned. Their single scene fragments into its possible alternatives: a moment of enclosure, of false totality, of limitation, becomes a moment that foregrounds theatrical possibility. All the layers of theatricality that become visible here are brought into alignment with each other through the noblemen's inability to render them visible, to make them knowable. In their attempt to control the scene, they figure forth and make explicit the very inaccessibility of stable representation, of totality, representing it as an *excess*, each seed a reading of the scene, each one a whole in part, none of them the scene *in toto.*

But what is the scene *in toto* exactly? Can we identify explicitly where the fiction ends and the play that is *The Tempest* begins? The strange proto-metatheatricality of the noblemen, their ability to point to, and to italicize, the conventions of theater, without knowing where or what those conventions are, is itself part of the scene's composition. Their italicization is a pointing gesture; it allows us to trace a signal, a cue, a moment in which theater is reflecting on the conventions governing its form. But can we know what

it is to which they are pointing? Characters' knowledge – what they know, and how they know it – has been central to other critical readings of Shakespeare's scenic technologies, most notably in the work of Erika Lin. In her reading, characters are central to the scene. Not only do they italicize what is there, pointing to scenic conventions, but they are themselves scenic technologies, just as material as any other part of stagecraft. They make invisible qualities, such as states of mind, sightlines, and points of view, present onstage as material stuff of performance.[226] Lin argues, for example, that when one character eavesdrops on another character that is unaware, the relationship between them is set up as a theatrical barrier, something almost akin to the workmen's "Wall" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[227] Characters with knowledge of the play's conventions, or an ability to manipulate them (in the case of the eavesdropping character), materially alter the composition of the playworld and produce a set of expectations, of readings, about its texture and affordances. For example, a knowing character like Prospero who refers to the shipwreck as a "pageant" might occupy a more flexible and less localized space, something more like a stage than a place, than the stranded noblemen. He signals to the audience that the rules for the creation and presentation of theatrical fictions are different from his perspective than they are for other, more epistemologically limited figures, such as the noblemen.

But characters are notoriously fragile vehicles for theatrical localization – the creation of what Jeremy Lopez calls "metaphoric space," and what we might call the place of the playworld.[228] Made up of air, props, words, and stage paint, often transforming

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[226] Lin, 8.
[227] Lin, 21.
[228] Lopez usefully categorizes different kinds of theatrical space-making: "When I use the term 'physical space' I refer to the actual stage, its physical features, and the physical and spatial relationships between

themselves (Hal in *Henry V* comes to mind) or being transformed (Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) over the course of a single performance, or even a single conversation, they are fallible and unreliable in their ability to perform their tasks: to communicate to the audience how a scene or location or unlocalized "commonplace" should be read.[229] The idea that character is central to theatrical italicization is not a new one, but what is new here is the centrality of *ignorance*, of being *unsettled*, to its formulation. Characters that are limited in their knowledge can only point to what they do not know, and what they do not know is greater than what one character could possibly know about the theatrical scene. That is, in this scene where theatrical limitedness is explored as a constitutive component of scenic composition, it can communicate more about the relationships that govern the theatrical world (the world that it also works to create) than Prospero ever could.

We can now return to the initial confusion about the topography of the island, this time with a twist. The noblemen's argument over the composition of the scene was, ultimately, an accurate description of it. A careful reader will soon note that the noblemen's descriptions are an example of this practice – that they are only *apparently* conflicting. We already know at this point in the play that the island can host these seemingly incompatible perspectives. The island described in this scene follows the logic of settlement narratives, but it also follows the scenic conventions of the early modern stage, where an entire island can be represented at the same time and at the same scale as one of

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characters and other characters, and props or set, and characters and the audience. When I use the term 'theatrical space' I refer to the metaphorical 'space' which the physical space of the theatre allows to be created," 6. I frequently use "stage" to refer to physical space and "playworld" or "fiction" to refer to theatrical space.

[229] For more on the scene as "commonplace" connected to the English rhetorical tradition see Lorna Hutson, *Circumstantial Shakespeare*, 1st edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015).

its parts. On stage, a single bedroom can take up the same scenic space as an entire continent, and locations can radically shift in scale (that is, in the physical stage space they take up) between scenes.[230] At the end of the previous act, Caliban had described it as containing both "unwholesome fens" and "fresh springs," both "barren places and fertile" (1.2.338). What, to Caliban, accounted for the character of the entire island, the noblemen evoke as both whole and part. The portion of the island that they occupy is narratively a part; they are separated from the other characters and occupy a discrete fragment of the island space. But their accounts also stand in as a microcosm of the whole island that Caliban described in the previous scene: a whole shrunk down to the size of the stage. The island's topography, in other words, makes the most sense as a theatrical convention, a miniaturized totality that can reflect both part and whole simultaneously, allowing characters in one part of the play to still represent the entirety of the island. The reduction of vast subject matter into the "wooden O" of the stage (Prologue.13, *Henry V*) is perhaps one of the most familiar and conventional accounts of early modern scenography. But the noblemen, interestingly, do not see these conventions as familiar. That is, the topography that they see is neither entirely fictional (or entirely theatrical) but a combination of the two, an uncanny transferal of an island space into the compressed sphere of the English proscenium stage.

If, as Henry Turner claims of the early modern stage, "problems of epistemology [are] inseparable from problems of representation" – that is, if the stage foregrounds the process by which "artificial constructions" (here, an image, a description, a scene, or a

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[230] On the various kinds of theatrical localization common to the public theater, see Dessen's chapter, "The Logic of 'Place' and Locale," in *Elizabethan Stage Conventions and Modern Interpreters*, 84-104.

metaphor) might "assist in the production of knowledge … or impede it" – then the

noblemen's account of their theatrical strandedness is worth paying very close attention

to, for it does nothing less than expose the logics by which unsettled space is produced

and maintained onstage, how new theatrical indexicalities, new "artificial constructions"

of scene, are being developed to bring it forth, to (re)present it.[231] The noblemen's

theatrical failure, their inability to understand the conventions that they recognize, derive

from *The Tempest*'s peculiar ability to swallow its own theatricality: that is, to produce

within the fictional world a point of view, a topography, or a construction that should

properly belong to the theatrical one. Prospero's point of view (a perspective that I'll

return to later) and his framing of the shipwreck as a "pageant" allows audience and

reader to experience the italicization of theatrical conventions in this scene as a *fictional*

property, something that the theatrical world contains and looks in on, but that is not

selfsame with the play. Or is it? The noblemen's grasping at straws – their composition of

fragmented and unsettled space – *is* the scene, of course: the noblemen are characters,

they are scenic technologies, but so too is the scene produced by Caliban, or the

perspective on the scene from the metatheatrical Prospero, or Ariel (invisible while the

noblemen sleep). The noblemen produce a scene here that, from their perspective, is

fractured and irrational and from another, is a compressed version of the whole. Both

these positions on the scene *are* and *are not* the scene that they occupy. The "scene" as a

theatrical whole (marked out by act and scene numbers, and by entrances and exits in the

"plot") is precisely constituted through the friction between these multiple understandings

of the scene, the moving between a whole part and a partial whole. Through this series of

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[231] Turner, *The English Renaissance Stage*, 26.

unsettling displacements, an awareness of something strange that both is and is not in the scene, a convention that both is and is not conventional, *italicizes* all of the degrees of knowing, including theater's ability to know itself (to perform is to bring *something* into being, without necessarily identifying that being as something knowable).

Insular Theatricality and the European Theater

The Tempest's setting becomes visible to the audience only though its articulation as estranged from character knowledge. The effect of this is to consolidate the play's articulation of unsettlement around character: each character registering its effects and each, through dialogue, description, and gesture, deploying scattered strategies for navigating an unsettled space and making it perceptible. What makes this topography distinct from other travel dramas of the period is its emphasis on conditions of strandedness and limitation, on the one hand, and its undercutting of conventional modes of expertise (theatrical, navigational, conceptual, literary), on the other. Each character thus models a form of failure: an inability to grapple with the demands and expectations of an unfamiliar world. The world of *The Tempest* comprises the strategies, frameworks, and techniques that characters turn to when their expectations are thwarted and begin to break down. Since there is no external marker of what this fictional world looks like (we might turn back here to the "notorious difficulty of locating the play's island"), weight is placed more squarely on the multiple informed opinions that characters articulate in response to this uncertainty: responses that are both constitutive of the island and framed as partial, unable to account for it as a whole – to move from the seed to the apple. Characters assemble a world that is fundamentally confusing and disorienting, that has no clear shape. The pluralistic and conflicting accounts of *The Tempest*'s island from

characters who are struggling to place themselves within it allow us to access a more messy and confused conception of dramatic worldbuilding than we're used to. This, in turn, changes how we read the position of the dramatist. Instead of the dramatist as cartographer, interested in crafting an infinitely expansive space of romance, and instead of a stage that can accommodate a plenum of accounts, each further reinforcing its infinite plasticity, scenes are composed by a collection of rambling characters who hypothesize about the dramatic whole, but whose knowledge is confined to their "part." Each scene of strandedness articulates a distinct strategy for modeling scenic incoherence, and thus a unique way of imagining or figuring unsettlement.

But what about a character who is less theatrically limited, one who seems to have more knowledge about the making and maintenance of theatrical fictions – a character, for instance, like Prospero? What kind of theatricality, what compositional principles – technologies of scenic production – can we ascribe to him? I have largely staked my claim on *The Tempest*'s subplot because it is the most theatrically interior: the most fictional, most recessed place in the drama. It thus amplifies unsettlement by presenting characters that are unaware of the rules of the dramatic world that encloses them (although they can see them). These scenes that feature only minorly in critical accounts, I argue, are key to the aesthetics of unsettlement that *The Tempest* attempts to produce. Through these scenes, theater reflects on the frailty of expertise that implicates the play as it attempts to render, through impossible conflicting description and theatrical pageantry, its own unsettled account. It asks us also to look again at Prospero, that consummately metatheatrical character, to consider the elements of self-delusion, of partiality, in his seeming mastery over the island.

Like the nobles, Prospero's aim is to create and maintain totalities, to ensure that the

island is wholly within his purview – but his attempts, at least at first glance, are far more

successful. Theater, in his hands, becomes a tool with which to navigate the island and to

settle it in representation. Like the ship's captain in Act I Scene I, his speeches unfold a

series of dramatic commands designed to control other characters and to mobilize them to

translate his theatrical vision. His first words to Miranda about the shipwreck, "Be

collected / No more amazement" (1.2.1), "ope thine ear" (1.2.38), "I pray thee mark me"

(1.2.67) and "mark his condition and th'event" (1.2.117), establish a directorial tone that

extends beyond this occasion, to conversations with Caliban: "hag seed, hence" (1.2.365),

"come forth" (1.2.319-320); the nobles: "sit here" (4.1.32), "no tongue, all eyes, be

silent!" (4.1.61), "please you draw near" (5.1.318); and Ariel: "go, bring the rabble"

(4.1.37-38), "come!" (4.1.165). Through the remaining scenes, he requires Ariel to

shadow the shipwrecked mariners throughout the play, drawing them into the "maze" of

his art with illusionary performances as a "nymph of the sea" (1.2.301) or with "shape

invisible" (4.1.186) so that he can then stage their rescue. He produces states of confusion

to make himself immune to them; through shipwrecks, and through the island's "maze[s],

forth-rights and meanders" (3.3.3), he consolidates and stabilizes his own position. And

he depends on subordinates (both as audience members and actors in his dramas) to carry

out his plans. In the first scene in which he appears, he claims to have been the cause of

Act I Scene I's shipwreck, telling Miranda that it was not a wreck at all, but a "direful

spectacle" ordered by his "art" (1.2.14). According to his account, he was present (or his

will was present) during the shipwreck, even though he was not technically onstage. His

first words in the play, "be collected" (1.2.1), represent a larger project, where a drawing

together of other characters into theatrical service also draws the island's contingency, and his own vulnerability (as a shipwreck victim himself) into a seamless theatrical whole, a drama that he can watch from the outside, through the "mind's eye" perspective that other characters lack.[232] By assuming responsibility for this tempest, he affirms to Miranda his desired role as a stage manager, someone able to understand and manipulate fictions, including his own.

Prospero's description of his environment as a "full poor cell" (1.2.20) and a "bare island" ("Epilogue," 8) reproduces the noblemen's conversion of the island into an apple. It argues that the act of representing the island as something conceivable (a stage, for example) will make it conceivable to represent. The stakes of Prospero's project have been extensively documented by critics. As Cyrus Mulready has recently argued, Prospero's ultimate "plot" (3.2.103) is to transform the rich and varied topography of the play into a blank stage on which he can work his magic.[233] Mulready leverages the triple meaning of "plot" as a piece of land, a strategy, and a narrative device to argue that Prospero manipulates the other characters to gain spatial and narrative control over the island. In response, Prospero relocate himself from the island to a theatrical version of the island: a space more squarely in his control, and from where he can thwart all plots, since he alone knows the theatrical rules by which they operate. His interest is in "managing time and space, and preventing incipient plots, narratives, and histories, from expanding into the dramatic space of the play."[234] The implication here is that Prospero's knowledge of theater within the play translates into a knowledge of the play as theater – an ability to

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[232] David McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England*, 2013 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[233] Mulready, 168-169.
[234] Mulready, 168.

reflect on his own fictional position – and that his will to turn the island into a stage will make it indistinguishable from the stage on which the play *The Tempest* is performed. If he can succeed in harnessing the pluralism of the island, and the discursive potential of subplots, minor characters, and lush description, he can effectively steer the island, like a ship, back to mainland Europe. To Mulready, the triumph of his project can be gleaned in the structure of the play itself: it's the only one of Shakespeare's plays to have a unity of time, place, and action, evidence that Prospero has been successful. The occasion of Prospero's "pageant" has become the occasion of the play – both are happening in one time and one place: the time and place of the stage. We can then conclude that theater has successfully wrestled with the representational and formal challenges posed by settlement, and that it has domesticated them. Theatricality and theatrical modes of knowledge become a definitive solution to the representational *and* spatial unsettlement of the New World.

It is tempting to accept this reading, not least because of what it would mean for *The Tempest* as a dramatic document. If, as Prospero believes, theater can settle the representational problem that the New World poses, if it can resolve failure and ground undecidability in a grammar of aesthetic authority, then theater, and, by implication, *The Tempest,* can assume a position in the theatrical lexicon as a successful mapping project: a play that thematizes states of material and representational crisis but has the resources (theatrical and otherwise) to move past them. It is a domestic mapping project, successfully bringing a remote island (Caribbean, Virginian, Mediterranean) onto the stage as a mere wonder or curio: robbed of its strangeness and anesthetized into a "wonder": little different from the curio boxes of New World curiosities that English

lords and ladies kept on their shelves (or, were I being uncharitable, the collection of dramatic references – "tobacco," "Bermoothes," "Caliban," "Virginia" – in many critical readings of the play's New World connection). Theater's ability to domesticate strangeness would also domesticate the New World in representation, would make it representable to English audiences – in fact, would stage its domestication. But this reading, while attractive (not least because it produces an implied analogue between Prospero's art and Shakespeare's), is not borne out by the play itself. Mulready's reading, and the critical history of *The Tempest* on which it relies, take Prospero's performance of metatheatricality – his ability to carve out a position external to his own performance – at face value. They assume that he knows what he says he knows, and that his theatrical asides wink at the audience, at the idea that the play is indeed a play being performed in a theater, rather than reading them as the alternative: that he is responding to an audience in the play (an occasionally invisible audience, in the case of Ariel, who is potentially present in almost every scene), and is not aware that there is anything outside of it. We must question our assumption that Prospero's theatrical knowledge is the theatrical knowledge of the play, and that when he gives characters stage directions, such as "Lend thy hand and pluck my magic garment from me" (1.2.24-25), "No tongue all eyes. Be silent" (4.1.59), or describes a dramatic scene, "Spirits, which by mine art I have from their confines call'd to enact / My present fancies" (4.1.134.136), the "charmed circle" that he creates is coextensive with the circle that bounds his own performance.

Prospero's theatricality amplifies the forms of unsettlement that we've already seen at work in the play – the multiple overlapping points of view, a use of ill-informed character perspectives to establish the scene, and an undercutting of metatheatrical knowledge –

even as he promises to resolve them. His attempts to transform the island into a theater

hinge on a retroactive ordering or "collection" of dramatic actors and materials, but these

theatrical resources are frequently at odds with the occasions from which they are drawn.

The distance between Prospero's theater and everyone else's highlights his powerlessness

to command any real or enduring control over the island. It is always something

unmanageable, slipping out of his grasp, to which his "art" responds (1.2.26). When

Prospero describes the shipwreck to Miranda, for example, his account is designed to

reassure her that all is well, claiming that

> The direful spectacle of the wreck, which touched
> the very virtue of compassion in thee
> I have with such provision in mine art
> so safely ordered that there is no soul
> no, no so much perdition as an hair
> betid to any creature in the vessel
> which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. (1.2.24-32)

We might be inclined to read this "spectacle" as an acknowledgement of the theatricality

of the wreck within the larger play – the fact that it is a performance, and that as a

performance, it has caused no real harm. To make this claim would be to follow

Mulready's line of reasoning, to claim that Prospero manages (not without a struggle) to

bite back at the forces of romance in the play – contingency, disaster, vulnerability – and

replaces them with his own, more domestic, virtues. He does here seem to be swapping

out one genre of theater for another, moving from the "cry[ing]," "sink[ing]" and

"perdition" to "compassion," "provision," "virtue," and "spectacle." But the move that he

makes here – we might call it a resolution of romance, or a conversion of tragedy, "which

thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink," into comedy – is precisely what this

monologue calls into question. By foregrounding these theatrical descriptions – genre forms that would have been immediately discernable to theatergoers as courtly and paratheatrical, rather than commercial and public – the play casts Prospero's theatricality as an interior production of the play, rather than as a reflection on its form. His knowingness is not about the conventions of the larger fiction, but exists only in his ability to create fictions within the play that have a discrete set of conventions: his "high charm(s)," (3.3.89), masque, and "pageant" (4.1.56) are generically dislocated from the drama that encloses them.

What for others is an experience of terror and dread, the direful wreck, is opposed to the "direful pageant" of that wreck; the latter is carefully enclosed and reassigned the status of a harmless display. But Prospero, even as he introduces this reframing of the disaster, even as it separates it, we might even say "split[s]" it off from the position that he occupies (thus separating it from his own shipwreck, which remains a tragic occasion), he seems unsure whether his sleight-of-hand, his act of theatrical intrigue, has really been successful. When Ariel arrives on the scene, Prospero requests confirmation that it has been performed to his specifications ("to a point") and then asks if the occupants were left unharmed: "But are they, Ariel, safe?" (1.2.218, 220). Prospero's hesitation derives from his reliance on Ariel's action to translate the wreck, the limitation of his mastery rather than its expression. Embedded in this question is another, whether Prospero really possesses the metatheatrical knowledge that he claims. Ariel's third point of view – the view of the one who caused the wreck, rather than directed it or witnessed it – provides the precise interlocking of various conflicting points of view that we saw in the scene with the noblemen. Prospero's reliance on the conventions of theatricality to recreate the

wreck, his reframing of an onstage event as an offstage "pageant" unable to occupy the same slice of the playworld on which he stands, his insistence on gathering a witness to this event, and his reliance on Ariel's will and ability to carry it out, all necessarily stage alternative readings of the wreck, making it impossible to manage as a single, totalizable theatrical occasion. The inevitable discursiveness of the island, of romance, of unsettlement, seizes back the ground that it had lost, making his voice just one among others. He creates a seemingly metatheatrical position for himself, a position outside of the fiction, by translating events that were initially continuous with the theatrical world into events that are recessed within it, even more interior, even more fictional – the spectacles, masques, and banquets that feature in almost every act of the play give him space to step out of a fiction, but this fiction is not the one that he occupies. The more Prospero attempts to demarcate a version of the island as a "bare stage," available to his interests – the more he segments it – the more of the island he leaves out, and the smaller his sphere of influence is.

But let us step out now from within the circumference of Prospero's "charmed circle." It would be impossible to speak of unsettlement without examining how this history also *italicizes* character in turn. The characters who produce and who stand in for a kind of diffuse and unknowing production of New World experience *in and as* unsettled theatrical representation are also themselves marked as characters of a certain kind – as settlers, as Europeans, and, in the case of Ariel and Caliban, as indigenous or proto-indigenous figures. Indigenous to where or to what? If the theatricality of strandedness has been defined thus far as a decomposition of scene onto the provisional and unreliable assortment of characters that are *victim* to it, what do we make of the theatricality that

characterizes Ariel and Caliban's experience on the island? It has been customary to read Ariel and Caliban as disrupters, as un-settlers. Their work of unsettlement is of course different than *The Tempest*'s. They work to remove Prospero and the other Europeans from the island in order to obtain their freedom and, in Caliban's case, to reclaim their privilege of a land that Prospero seized from them. While Prospero has been associated with themes of totality, mastery, dominion, and magic (the very stuff of metatheatricality), Ariel and Caliban produce sites of theatrical compromise, where Prospero must reckon with another character's account of the island, one that is not reconcilable with his pageantry. But their difference does not arise from this disruption: that is, their identity as characters is not entirely circumscribed by their intervention in Prospero's theatricality, the extent to which they can challenge his totality. To unsettle settler identity – to figure *The Tempest*'s settlers as recognizable as such, only through their limited epistemology, their expression of unsettlement – and to turn to Ariel and Caliban as effortlessly *composed*, coherent (i.e., as merely disruptive), would be to deny them the very compositional principle that I mark as foundational to the play and to the treatment of both the New World and its occupants, both settlers and settled. What kinds of knowledge do they possess? How is their character also marked by a theatrical point of view, a proximity to forms of scenic making or unmaking that defined the experiences, and the theatrical identities, of the noblemen, the mariners, and Prospero?

Critics of *The Tempest* have tended to define Ariel and Caliban's theatrical contributions in terms of their subjection to Prospero. This criticism has marked their respective characters in two distinct ways, for an early critical tradition emerging from New Critical and Old Historicist readings of the play distinguished between Caliban and Ariel, both

ontologically and aesthetically. While Caliban has been marked as a "savage man"

(ambiguously proto-human, demi-devil, indigenous, African, Irish, or a composite

"anthropophagi of traveler's tales"), Ariel is an extension of Prospero's theatricality, and

thus is crypto-European: as a metatheatrical device, he is native, not to the island, but to

the tradition of the European court masque.[235] Each character's origin determines their

theatrical value, their ability to act in or produce fictions – ontology begets aesthetics, a

simple question of "nature against art."[236] In these readings, Prospero and Miranda's

indictment of Caliban is taken as representative of *The Tempest*'s point of view and

renders more concretely the distinction in nature, kind, sympathies, and theatrical agency

that Prospero sets up – a perspective ultimately derived from a hierarchical "great chain

of being" idea of Elizabethan and Jacobean culture, which could acknowledge difference

only in terms of its ultimate similarity or distance from a perceived European ideal. This

older scholarly tradition has now solidly been replaced by colonial readings of the play

(for good reason), which recover Ariel and Caliban wholesale into the category of "other"

defined in terms of Prospero's theatricality – his attempts to establish a colonial order but

opposed to this order as a force of resistance. Ariel and Caliban thus no longer have a

distinctive theatrical aesthetic that distinguishes them from Prospero (to produce one

would have to contend with the enormous representational gap between the two figures).

Rather, they are connected as *references* to an idea of indigenousness in and as revolt.

Drawing from a scene in the play where both Ariel and Caliban are "slaves" and the fact

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[235] Daniel Wilson, "The Monster Caliban," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 146.
[236] Frank Kermode, "From Shakespeare: The Final Plays," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 215–23, 220.

that Ariel's presence on the island seems to predate both Prospero and Caliban, these readings rely on the capaciousness of a historical category as "other" or "non-European" to link them in representation.[237] In these readings, ultimately deriving from both early Caribbean theorists of the play (such as Retamar and Lamming) and to North American New Historicism, the play's colonialist sympathies *produce* an "other" to subdue, while simultaneously permitting the other to be taken "as evidence of a struggle to restrict the other's disruptiveness to that role."[238] This is largely a poetics of demystification, where Prospero's perspective is still taken to be representative of Shakespeare and the play writ-large. The emphasis is instead on exposing that perspective as an articulation of violence or what Paul Brown terms "naked power."[239] For Caliban and Ariel to be recovered in readings, they must be liberated from the play itself, which is deconstructed, analytically disassembled, and its agenda revealed.

I provide this extended critical history of Ariel and Caliban in order to position myself within these conflicting discourses: one that permits a certain distinctiveness to Ariel and Caliban, only to figure it as "base" (in Caliban's case) or co-extensive with Prospero's (in Ariel's), and a second tradition that denies these figures a distinct theatricality – a way of moving, acting, being, speaking – instead marking them as figments of a colonial imaginary, shallow reactions that merely subvert Prospero's colonial goals. I share the

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[237] For classic essays of this last type, see Hantman, "Caliban's Own Voice"; Kevin Pask, "Caliban's Masque," *ELH* 70, no. 3 (October 1, 2003): 739–56; "Peter Hulme: 'Stormy Weather: Misreading the Postcolonial Tempest,'" accessed March 7, 2017, http://emc.eserver.org/1-3/hulme.html. Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, 1st edition (Manchester : New York: Manchester Univ Pr, 1989); Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1797*, New edition (London; New York: Routledge, 1992).

[238] Paul Brown, "'This Thing of Darkness I Acknowledge Mine': The Tempest and the Discourse of Colonialism," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 268–92.

[239] Brown, 284.

skepticism of Meredith Ann Skura toward overdetermined and underdetermined readings of native figures, both of which assume a continuity between the play and the positions that it affords its characters. As she argues, "the play's emphasis lies not so much in justifying as in analyzing that [colonial] vision, just as Shakespeare had analyzed the origin of dominance in earlier plays."[240] I do not share Skura's optimism, however, about the play's analysis of Prospero. An "analysis," it seems to me, does not necessarily lead to a more progressive or affirming outcome for non-European characters, and I would tend to describe the possibility of such a reading as a happy accident of contemporary recognition and interpretation, rather than an artistic intention on Shakespeare's part. But I *would* like to take seriously her injunction to trouble easy indexicalities between the play and historical discourses of colonization (what we've already referred to as "official accounts") in order to re-ask Ania Loomba's classic question: can Ariel and Caliban "ever exist outside the territories allowed … by *The Tempest*?"[241] I thus return to an old problem, namely, is there room for reading Ariel and Caliban as having a unique theatricality, one that does not merely counter or respond to Prospero's but is defined through distinct theatrical practices, modes of scenic representation, description, gesture, and theatrical knowledge? Is there a way to recognize this without merely collapsing it into something lesser than, or more "natural" or contingent than, Prospero's – positing another theatricality as artful as his, and just as constitutive of the shape of the theatrical world? That is, can we acknowledge Ariel and Caliban as indigenous figures without

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[240] Meredith Anne Skura, "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in The Tempest," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 351–87, 383.
[241] Ania Loomba, "From Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 389–400, 3.

making them reducible to actual indigenous peoples (which they only vaguely allude to) and while still according them a place within the theatricality of the play that parses settlement from a perspective outside of the theatrical imaginary of Prospero or the other Europeans?

While Loomba ultimately replies in the negative, my understanding of character as a scenic property – a theatrical form that unfolds the playworld through a limited perspective – attempts to uncover such a space. It elaborates the ways in which ethnic and cultural difference gets reinscribed as a difference in point of view and epistemology. Character helps us to see structures that would normally be too large or too complex to access. They render and "personate" these structures as character-specific insights, "discourses contained within the person."[242] In the early modern period, as we've already noted, character first featured as a mark or written text – it referred to textual rather than to theatrical subjectivity. But here character is also spatialized and scenic; it is "mark'ed" (1.2.117) (to use Prospero's language) through a character's attempt to understand and to resolve an engagement with unsettled theatrical space. A new question then becomes: what is the scenic logic that defines Ariel and Caliban, that marks them as different while still constructing their difference as a question of theatricality, of fiction-making: figuring them not as mere responses to Prospero, a turbulence lurking below the surface of the play, but as co-creators of theatrical space? Elaborating this logic would mean identifying Ariel and Caliban as subjects that are capable of unsettling Prospero (enclosing and subordinating his theatricality within a larger scenic logic) while also pointing to their

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[242] Bonnie Lander, "Interpreting the Person: Tradition, Conflict, and Cymbeline's Imogen," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (2008): 156–84: 156.

own unsettlement: Prospero's treatment and imprisonment of both Ariel and Caliban to serve his theatrical and material ends – his attempts to totalize his control over the island, and his attempt, ultimately, to escape that totality.

Just as I identify the sailors and noblemen as epistemologically limited characters because of their perspective on the scene, the technologies they use to create it and to represent it to themselves, so too do Ariel and Caliban share in common a distinctive theatrical position, even if they occupy very different positions in the play: Caliban sequestered in a "hard rock" kept "from the rest o' th' island" (1.2.343-347), and Ariel as an all-seeing and frequently invisible ambassador to Prospero. What they have in common, I argue, is their indigenousness, *not* as a historical identity, but as a *theatrical* one. The status of indigenous people historically during this period is vexed and complex: Ronald Takaki has defined Virginian accounts of the Paspagheh and Powhatan tribes as a question of "cultural" rather than racial difference, and has echoed other critics of early settlement by noting that "the initial encounters between the English and Indians opened possibilities for friendship and interdependency."[243] The settlers were suspended between nearby sovereign chiefdoms and remote investors in England. We know that this story inevitably results in violence: by 1616 and the rise of the Virginia tobacco trade, the English would attempt to drive tribes they had formerly traded with from their land, burn down villages, loot graves, and steal food and supplies. But *The Tempest,* set in a period in which relations between the English and surrounding tribes were still relatively stable, would have had to rely on a far more unstable archive of representations for representing

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[243] Ronald Takaki, "The 'Tempest' in the Wilderness," in *The Tempest: A Case Study in Critical Controversy*, ed. James Phelan and Gerald Graff, 2nd edition (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008), 192, 195.

native people. It is thus to be expected that we cannot rely on any single intertext to account for Ariel and Caliban's relationship to the land or to a specific ethnicity or even region. What I mean by indigenous or native to the *theatricality* is more of an etymological distinction than a historical one. What I mean to say is that Ariel and Caliban are both native to the *fiction.* Their accounts of the island are definitive, authoritative, expansive, learned. Unlike Prospero or the noblemen, they articulate a distinction between abstract, non-representative ways of marking scene or place, typical of early modern theatricality, and a kind of geographic concreteness and consistency within the world itself that subtends and encloses Prospero's theatrical mastery. That is, the final "outside" of the performance is not Prospero's theater or *The Tempest,* or the stage on which it was performed, but rather the fiction which, in *The Tempest,* remains out of play, offstage, beyond the pale of representation. This is the place of Ariel and Caliban.

Let us consider two scenes in which Ariel and Caliban talk about the island in concrete terms. The first is Ariel's account of the shipwreck that Prospero ordered him to carry out, and his description of the aftermath. The second includes Caliban's descriptions of the island and its properties and his offstage noise during Prospero's masque. While Prospero imagines the fictional world of *The Tempest* as just another stage to manipulate, native characters continue to produce representational space that Prospero cannot access or control: offstage landscapes and locations that are a threat to his metatheatrical project, his attempt to make all spaces neutral. For example, when Prospero requests that Ariel "perform" the "dire spectacle of the wreck" "to a point" (1.2.194) – that is, perform it precisely – Ariel confirms that he completed the task to "every article" (1.2.195), but his

description of the wreck ends up contrasting with, not echoing, Prospero's "direful spectacle": rather than identifying himself as the source of the wreck, he instead figures it as a real storm that is brought under his control. It is a source of unsettlement, that he is nevertheless not unsettled by. He states:

> I boarded the King's ship. Now on the beak
> Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
> I flamed amazement. Sometimes I'd divide
> And burn in many places; on the topmast,
> The yards, and bowsprit would I flame distinctly,
> Then meet and join. Jove's lightning, the precursors
> O' the dreadful thunderclaps, more momentary
> And sight-outrunning were not. The fire and cracks
> Of sulfurous roaring the most mighty Neptune
> Seem to besiege and make his bold waves tremble,
> Yea, his trident shake. (1.2.195-206)

In this description, Ariel produces the colonial fantasy of a geography that is controllable and coherent – one able to be neatly parsed out on stage. He describes himself as a cartographic instrument that can translate Prospero's orders to the "bold waves" and ensure that the dangerous and uncharted territory of "most mighty Neptune" may be brought under control. But when Ariel describes the wreck, the "distinctness" of his own movements stands in direct contrast to the confusion of "dreadful thunderclaps," "sulfurous roaring," "foaming brine," and "fever of the mad" (1.2.209): all qualities that complicate, rather than confirm, Prospero's influence over the oceanscape. Ariel lingers over descriptions of shipwreck, contrasting the floundering and "mad" European sailors to his own "distinct[ness]," lucidity and controlled mobility (1.2.200). While the sailors yell "we split, we split" (1.1.56), Ariel "meet[s] and join[s]" (1.2.201) with the storm. He contrasts the incoherence of the wreck with his intactness as a moving locus, thereby asserting his ability to control both the sea and his own performance. He then compares

his performance against the "desperation" (1.2.210) of the shipwrecked Europeans, evoking Prospero's own shipwreck on the island. Through his description of Prospero's "strong bidding task," then (1.2.192), Ariel assumes command over the sea while representing the storm as a local force particular to the island and its inhabitants – not a tame theatrical effect. Ariel does not allow the performance of the shipwreck to collapse into the neutral stage space that Prospero governs. Instead, he insists that he hid the ship "in a deep nook, where once thou call'd me up at midnight to fetch dew from the vexed Bermudas": here, the first, and only, mention of a place name outside of Europe (1.2.227-229). If the theater is a "space," then Ariel's accounts of lighting the ship ablaze are places – hardened pieces of geographic matter that are present onstage even as they, like the initial island, remain in negative, known but not understood.

Caliban continues this practice when he supplies Prospero with information about the island's interiors, showing him "all the qualities o' th' isle" – both physical qualities like "wood" and topographical qualities like the "fresh springs, brine pits [and] barren places[s]" (1.2.340-41). Caliban stands as Prospero's primary source of local information about the island, but he also, like Ariel, finds space within the locus of his enforced servitude to develop his own cartographic project. Even as Caliban promises to produce a comprehensive topography of the landscape, he withholds critical information: the sonic map of "noises, sounds, and sweet airs" (3.3.130-131) that echo from the island's depths. He will later emphasize the importance of the noises to Ferdinand and Trinculo, but they still stand as a striking omission from the earlier description he narrates to Prospero: a description that allows Prospero to seize a place that Caliban describes as his inheritance "by Sycorax my mother" (1.2.334). Caliban claims that the island is "full of [these]

noises": the benign "airs" that he and Ariel sing, the "tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning" that signals the ship's capsize (1.1.0), and the "strange hollow and confused noise[s]" that interrupt Prospero's courtly masque (4.1). The island's aural qualities are central to a thick description of the terrain, and Caliban's omission of them ultimately frustrates Prospero's attempts to represent all parts of the island onstage. They hint at a larger and hollower emptiness that lurks behind the flat plane of the performance: a world that extends outward past the occasion of the theater and connects to other places (both to the ocean and to the world beyond the theater). The "hollow[ness]" of the noises comes, ostensibly, from the same place that the "tempestuous" noises did: the evocative world backstage. They signal that the playworld is at the margins of a larger, deeper, hollower reality that can never be completely requisitioned or represented.[244] The sounds also connect the island to a more expansive geographic soundscape (the tempestuous noise of the ocean) and to the hidden unrepresentable features of the island that are only known to its native inhabitants. Early modern cartographers would frequently use native sources to collate topographical information, only to replace local place names and markers of native social organization with new European equivalents.[245] We might think of Prospero's theatricality – especially his masque – as an extension of this project. But Caliban's soundscape cannot be presented on stage or exist exclusively within the confines of the theatrical scene.

Sound always exceeds the instance of its representation. It spills over into other spaces and signals the island's density and fictional depth. Caliban's "hollow and confused

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[244] On sonic mapping in the play, see Michael Neill, "Noises, / Sounds, and Sweet Airs': The Burden of Shakespeare's 'Tempest," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (April 1, 2008): 36–59.
[245] Harley, 170-171.

noise" (4.1) deepens the landscape from the physical space of the stage into the open realm of sound and locates the island in a place abounding, not with "wheat, rye, barley, vetches, oats and peas," (as Prospero's masque defines it) (4.1.61), but with atmospheric "infections," the "noise of thunder," and a land "exposed unto the sea" (2.2.1-2, 3.3.71). This alternative map of the island reminds the play's audience that every performance has both a backstage and a fictional interior: a place beyond the presented locus of fiction. Caliban constructs the "beyond" of *The Tempest* with a soundscape that extends inward and outward to the surrounding ocean – an ocean that connects it to another place: Europe. The sounds from backstage – from deeper within both England and within the playworld – connect one place to the other and signal the permeability of cultural boundaries without disregarding their difference. The hollow noises hint at the possibility of an inter-theatrical and transcultural moment, where the particular place of the theater in Europe and the unrepresentable depths of the fictional island converge on each other through the permeable medium of theatrical fiction to enclose Prospero's theater in a larger fictional world. The density of the island as a place echoes from backstage, signaling to the audience that they too live in a world that extends past the space of theatrical representation, a world that cannot be contained on a single island (here, both England and the insular fiction of the stage).

Ariel and Caliban both leverage accounts of geographic concreteness and backstage space to enclose Prospero's theatricality, and ultimately the theatricality of *The Tempest* itself. Caliban does so by making noises from backstage during the masque and throughout – "*Caliban [Within]*: There's wood enough within" (1.2.316) – but Ariel does so largely through his invisibility. The scene of the initial shipwreck is repositioned from

a tragedy (the mariners' experience and Miranda's perception of it), to a spectacle (Prospero's view), to a specifically European tragedy (Ariel) – a figuration of limitation, loss, and unsettlement to which Prospero is also subject (after all, his was the island's first shipwreck). Ariel's description of the scene places him there, invisibly, during the first act, before we receive Prospero's account of the island. Although there are not exits or entrances that mark his presence, he places himself there as a shaping and constitutive manager of the scene, a position offstage or even backstage, aligning him with the same negative space occupied by the island and the storm, the void into which the sailors and mariners fall: "plunged in the foaming brine" (1.2.210). Peter Womack has defined the "off-stage" as an "unstable cohabitation" between the totality and enclosure of the platform stage and the secrecy and "magic" of the offstage, its virtuality and potential.[246] The interior of the stage is the place from where all theatricality is sourced. The real "outside," that is, is "inside": inside the tiring house and the back of the stage where the props, plots, and materials of fiction-making are kept. It is this ability for theater to look both ways, as a "meeting point" between what is and what could be, that allows what cannot be said, known, or represented to nevertheless come into representation.[247]

The Tempest, as the most "closed" of any of Shakespeare's plays (as previously mentioned, it is the only one that can be said to abide by the unities) relies necessarily more on offstage space than many others. Offstage is the space of reportage, of revision, of accounts heard but not seen, like Caliban's noise and Ariel's flight. If *The Tempest* is a play about the impossibility of staging a play – that is, if it is about the difficulties that

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[246] Peter Womack, "Off-Stage," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 71–92, 77.
[247] Womack, 80.

attend the experience of unsettlement, and the pressure that these new unknowns place upon theatrical representation – then it makes sense that this fiction would take the backstage as its locus: the place where fictions are built. And it also makes sense that this place would have natives: not to English theater, but to its opposite, its unsaid. Indigeneity here is a "being at home" in unsettlement, a sense of closure with theatrical possibility – a place outside of convention that nevertheless shapes convention and estranges it from itself. The island represented in *The Tempest* looks inward to the presentational space of the stage – and exists on the fringes of it – but also expands out into the world, connecting England to other ways of knowing, producing, and performing: causing theatrical conventions to undergo, in short, a "sea change into something rich and strange" (1.2.404-405). Unrepresentable fictions enclose and unsettle English theatricality.

Prospero's Wooden O

So far, I've claimed that in *The Tempest,* Shakespeare was developing an archive of representational practices to figure the New World onstage. Rather than identifying it via the setting or "plot," he instead represents the struggle to represent this setting. These attempts figure the New World as a place defined and marked through the theatrical italics of both scene and character. Ultimately, what makes *The Tempest* a drama about settlement is its displacement of theatricality from a position of stability, comfort, and knowledge. It dwells on and in states of unknowability, displacement, antitheatricality (or at least anti-metatheatricality) that all nevertheless produce theatrical, that is, scenic, effects. But the play is also, of course, a drama of resolution, and we must contend, as we pick up and examine these pieces, with the possibility that the play might just be working

against us, folding up all the threads that we have just unraveled. I turn now to this final

scene, the scene that "harmonizes" the play that seems to restore its specificity, its

mastery of the stage, a scene where fictional space is consumed by the dilating locus of

Prospero's final epilogue. It begins:

> Now my charms are all overthrown,
> And what strength I have's mine own,
> Which is most faint. Now 'tis true,
> I must be here confin'd by you,
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got,
> And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell,
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails. ("Epilogue," Lines 1-12)

This epilogue is like many that we know from Shakespeare. In it, Prospero exhorts the

audience; he concludes that his "charms are all overthrown" and asks them to approve his

labors with applause. We've seen other actors make similar pleas: perhaps most famously

Puck, in the epilogue to *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* But this epilogue is unique in

Shakespeare for its refusal to move beyond the terms of the fiction.[248] Prospero's desired

freedom is not a freedom from fiction, it is freedom *in* fictional terms and corresponds to

movement within the fictional world. Prospero wants to be "sent to Naples" and to his

restored throne. This scene is thus curious in that it seems to be functioning as a

metatheatrical plea, even as Prospero is unable to realize – to place – his fictional

situation. When we consider a character such as Prospero, we must imagine him both in

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[248] William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Reprint edition (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008) 204, note 319.

terms of his properties (the way he is created from theatrical materials, and is associated with certain ways of organizing and presenting theatrical space), and as the agent of those properties: what one critic has called an "agent-concept," something that is fashioned by the performance (by actors, by the scene) but is also, as it accumulates fictional continuity as a character through repeat performances, something that is also shaping them.[249] Prospero's function as an explicitly theatrical character would seem to place him more in the former category. Because he can refer to theater as an object, he initially seems to be more "actor" than character. But a closer attention to Prospero's performance indicates his limited knowledge of the fiction that he occupies. Prospero is not only a failed theatrical magician – unable to marshal or extend the theatricality he creates, unable to produce the "bare cell" or stage that would subtend the action of other characters and would produce it as part of a whole – he is also an epistemologically limited character: a fictional construct, constrained to the form of his part (the lines used to make up his textual contribution to the play) and unfolded at the same pace, and through the same motions and language, as stage space itself. He has no more awareness of the conventions of the fiction that he occupies than any other character: in fact, he has less.

We've talked already about how Prospero relies on an internal audience for his theatrical fictions, and that he occupies a fictional position within the play when he stages them. We've also discussed how he doesn't seem to be aware of the theatrical potential of other characters, even as he relies on their theatrical labor. But even if we were inclined to limit

[249] Trevor Ponech, "The Reality of Fictive Cinematic Characters," in *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance and Theatrical Persons*, ed. P. Yachnin and J. Slights, 2009 edition (Basingstoke, UK; New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 51.

or to question his theatrical mastery up to this point, he emerges here as a lone figure, with no other characters to challenge him or intrude upon his vision. Has he then finally been successful? Most critical readings of Prospero would say that he is. He is consistently read as the ultimate "platea character": one who straddles the world of the audience and the world of the play and who therefore has what Erika Lin calls "theatrical privilege."[250] Characters with "theatrical privilege" can act on the conventions of the fictional world in ways that the other characters cannot. Their knowledge of theater allows them to act on their own fiction and to assume the perspective of an audience member: after all, as Lin explains, the "theatrical semiotics [within the fiction] *is* the system by which playgoers create meaning in the early modern playhouse."[251] If Prospero's previous theatrics were not occupying the same space as the drama – they were too courtly, artful, or spectacular to be taken as the conventions of the popular theater – the final scene of the Tempest does demonstrate a facility with popular theatricality: Prospero's last trick. Even in pessimistic readings of the play, it is evidence of Prospero's triumph as an imperial puppeteer. It is surprising then, that at this most metatheatrical of moments, Prospero does not really seem to have that much privilege. He seems to focus the audience's attention from his "charms" to his current "strength" – perhaps modeling a transition from character to actor. But there are markers here that suggest that his translation between the material space of the theater ("your good hands" and "breath") and the fictional space of the world ("sent to Naples," "my dukedom," and "my sails") doesn't quite work. His audience cannot release him to Naples. Because he is

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[250] Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance*, 37; For locus and platea see Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).
[251] Lin, 37.

a fictional character (he's still "in character"), they also cannot release him into London.

These problems are reflected in the language of the epilogue. All the references to

audience and applause appear to point to locations outside the fiction but are relocated to

point back to places within it (like Naples). Prospero does then seem to be stranded or

think that he's stranded. Although he has used theatricality throughout to leverage control

over other characters – referring constantly to his "art" (5.1.50) – he seems really lost

here: trapped by the very theatrical "spell" that he used to ensnare others. And his

knowledge of theatrical conventions (the very thing that marks him as a metatheatrical

character) is not helping him out.

I would like to suggest that in this moment, Prospero fails precisely because he *thinks* he

is a metatheatrical character (and, I might add, in doing so, casts doubt on other

characters that we tend to read as metatheatrical). He assumes that the conventions of his

"spectacle" are the conventions that govern the playworld: that his theatrical mastery

works in *our* theater. In short, he believes Lin's claim that these two theatricalities are

selfsame. I think in this moment, we're seeing Prospero playing the role of an actor

within his own personal metatheater. And it's not clear whether there's a lot in common

between the theatrical semiotics in the fiction and the theatrical semiotics of the fiction.

Prospero might not think he's speaking to the actual theater audience, but to an audience

within his "charmed circle": the theatrical space that he produced within the play, and to

which many fictional characters – Miranda, Ariel, Caliban – were witnesses and audience

members.[252] The less typically metatheatrical characters, such as Caliban and Miranda,

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[252] This is further supported by the fact that there would be actors presumably sitting on the stage in Blackfriars who Prospero may be in fact misreading as audience members in this theater – asking him to aid him in his departure in the same way he relied on Ferdinand's sails to provide him with his escape. See, for staging conventions in Blackfrairs, Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds., *Moving Shakespeare*

get to leave the stage. Prospero remains. By remaining within the terms of his own theatrical language ("spell," "confin'd," and "bands" are all terms he's used to refer to Ariel's imprisonment) he is bound to a logic of theatrical *confinement*, not freedom. Prospero's control over the island shrinks, from his initial "spectacle" in the first act, to his banquet, to the masque. Finally, the only person left standing in his "charmed circle" is himself.

I focus on this moment because I think it helps me to illustrate a lot of what I've been talking about here. Prospero produces a fictional whole, "a theater" that seems to be the theater in which the actor playing Prospero performs (Blackfriars, the court, or what have you). This theater within the theater might produce a metatheatricality, but this is not *the* metatheatricality of the play. It is a world within a world, a theater that can't leave the theater, with another set of rules, and a different concept of how stage space might be traversed, manipulated, or translated into fiction. The theater in which *The Tempest* was performed never quite materializes. Prospero has created a set of ideas – of formal expectations – about what his world is, and what his place is within it, but his mastery is premised on fiction. Once he enters the space of the epilogue, his theatrical mastery doesn't translate well. Even if the audience claps, does this release him to Naples, or to the theater-writ-large, or to his own personal theater? Can it? Prospero's use of theatrical knowledge to try to manipulate or attain control over theatrical space, ultimately doesn't work. He is stranded on his island of fiction. In the epilogue, at the very point in the play where metatheatricality, movement between different fictions, intertheatricality, and

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Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

interaction are most amplified, Prospero cannot benefit from them. Our "platea" is his "locus."

In my reading, *The Tempest*'s alliance to New World ideas is less a question of where it is placed, and more how it talks about that place. This is a place where European metatheatrical knowledge breaks down in the face of new representational and spatial possibilities. Prospero assumes that his knowledge will save him, that his knowledge is the one that encloses the other characters. But this is a fiction. The inside of the tree in which he promised to trap Ariel – that round wooden O – is the bare stage of Prospero's theater. It is all he can imagine for the island, and it is the only grounds on which he can assert his authority. Prospero's refusal to think past the grounds of his own performance mark his Eurocentric theatricality as a particularly impoverished mode of insular fiction. It cannot create explanatory totalities, hopeful imperial vistas, or even insular island space to seal itself off from the outside world. Its conventions and ways of managing space are radically inadequate to accommodate New World experience. Prospero's inability to release himself from his theater, and the clear limitations of that theater within the larger world of the play, demonstrate its growing pains – its struggle to become a medium of representation that could meaningfully account for the New World, for unsettlement. This point (Prospero's failure to create real metatheatrical mastery) is precisely being highlighted by the play. It points us to all the other partial strategies that characters use to compose the space of the playworld, and to turn their sense of where they are into a form – a pattern of spatial reasoning – that they might share with others. The fragility of Prospero's approach, in fact, activates these other strategies. It proliferates ways of rendering the same fictional space, each conflicting with and

enriching the others. Prospero's way of gathering these models together, his tacit attempt to make the world a stage, is precisely the strategy that the play highlights as being most inadequate. It thus uses Prospero to comment on its own limitations as a medium and crumbles into different fictional conditions and points of view, each straining to conceive of the island. Prospero's theater, his impoverished replacement for an island that he cannot represent, is highlighted by the play as an example of theatricality's failure to provide a meaningful indexicality or a position of mastery in conditions of unsettlement.

Unsettling *The Tempest*

 My goal has been to work through the aesthetic vocabulary of settlement in these plays, attempting to follow the seeds where they fall, and ultimately theorizing the role that theater plays in coming to terms with settlement. After all, these plays are also plays about theater. They straddle both the experiential use of theater for settlement (a topic I will return to in my fourth chapter) and settlement for theater, even as they also process that theatrical use within the popular medium of the London stage. Unsettlement is expressed in terms that evoke its ability to move, to shift, to change the grounds on which perception happens. To be "unsettled" is to be altered by an environment, to feel it act upon you. "Unsettlement," then, in many ways, is a way of expressing ambient hostility and social vulnerability in spatial terms. *The Tempest* does this largely through conflicting description: it decomposes single scenes into a series of constitutive character actions. More than any other play, it is formed to reduce a single mode of reasoning into a series of constitutive parts, holding these out as a series of building blocks for theatrical fiction. None of the characters here quite seem to know that they're in a play, but they do recognize the source of their frustrations – a torn theatrical space that cannot

accommodate seamless passage, and instead seems designed as a maddening plot to enclose, separate, and strand them. Theatricality here is something that *happens* to characters, and which they are often confused by, as though they were unsure on which time or scale theatrical action was really happening. These representational tools for rendering that failure, and for aestheticizing it and reflecting upon it, will also be taken up in other drama interested in pushing against traditional ways of marking and rendering experience, particularly spatial experience, and stretching itself beyond its insular confines. The New World here does not only come to be associated with failure; it is also that which opens up the formal potential of failure as a dramatic aesthetic. It announces failure as an inherent part of an artistic work, and often (as I note here) the preoccupation of that work.

What I have termed theatrical unsettlement is not only the narrative displacement of characters, but the scenic displacement of theatrical conventions from themselves, of theater from theater, of layers upon layers of theatrical knowledge sedimented around the noblemen, contributing to their ignorance, articulated only *through* their ignorance, and of the movement between these different modes of scenic composition (Ariel's, Prospero's, the noblemen's). It follows Jeremy Lopez in claiming that theatrical moments that are "anomalous" or "surprising" can sometimes direct our attention to the "artificial relationships between dramatist and performer, performer and role, stage and audience."[253] His is a model of italicization that, like Erika Lin's, is concerned with all of the co-present collaborations that both enable a moment of theatrical awareness (a recognition that theater foregrounds its own conventions and assumptions) and are, in

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[253] Lopez, 4.

turn highlighted by it (as themselves conventions). But rather than identifying these

conventions as such, that is, as specific technologies of representation belonging to

theater, and reproduced over time as a marker of "functionality and pleasure" or even as

their opposites, as what doesn't work, I consider the ways that character's inability to see

themselves as capable of participating in the italicization of theater, that is, their

bracketing off as precisely the *least* metatheatrical, the least able to comment on and

articulate the theatrical conventions that subtend them, can help to displace "convention"

as a singular concept and instead foreground the process by which these rules or

commonplaces governing theater become articulable as "belonging to" the theatricality of

the play.[254] Thinking in negative about performance allows us to see all the modes of

theatrical sense-making that are not merely "conventional," sedimented in representation

as something *known.* The relationships that the noblemen's or Prospero's limited

knowledge of their own state exposes are precisely relationships between all the possible

versions of "theater" and "convention" that are governing the scene and that make it up.

These are as much a "form" (a visible structure of "patterned action" that tells us

something about how the play is put together) as they are a deformation (another *negative*

term like unsettlement) of this form.[255] Unsettled theatricality exports the vulnerability

and limitedness of stranded characters into the scene itself to render the unsettlement (an

expression of limitation and illiteracy, a dislocation of part and whole, a complete

strandedness, a loss of cultural expertise) all associated with the New World as a

movement between form and deform, convention and fiction, theater and Theater, a

series of perpetual displacements that allows us to see forms and conventions that are

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[254] Lopez, 4.
[255] Dessen, 121.

becoming but not yet made, not yet a thing you can point to *as* conventional. This is the work of unsettlement.

In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, geographic expansion outside theater mirrors a corresponding expansion of the dramatic scene. The theater of this period has been marked by its ability to accommodate these changes, but in *The Tempest*, we can see a record of how difficult, how conflicted, how *unsettled* this accommodation was. As Lisa Lowe has argued, imperial archives are always engaged in acts of self-mystification. They aim to create a grand narrative, to represent colonial domination as inevitable, and thus to winnow out successes from failures.[256] But the history of unsettlement gives us new insights into how popular drama was responding to and cataloging the early failures that later colonial accounts would work to forget. It does so not because it was critical of the colonial project, but rather because it shared its representational pessimism. New World failures provided theater with a nonrepresentational vocabulary with which to chronicle its own crisis of expansion. Situated in a decade of unsettlement, *The Tempest* invites us to reconsider the legacy of unsettlement in other dramas as well: from *The Island Princess* (1620) and *The Sea Voyage* (1622) – plays that take up *The Tempest*'s settings directly – to Jonson's city comedies, where London becomes a "Bermudas" (*Bartholomew Fair*, 2.6.60), to maritime plays like *Fortune by Land and Sea* (1609) that don't seem to be about the New World at all. Strategies for theatricalizing settlement's failures, for drawing them into the language of metatheatricality, become the preoccupation of dramatists interested in articulating theatrical unintelligibility. In a period of unprecedented geographic and theatrical expansion, accounts of settlement

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[256] Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2015), 4.

catastrophe – taken up and adapted in drama – make conditions of illegibility, illiteracy, and limited knowledge the signatures of the British worldmaking project.

4. New World Labor in Shows and Entertainments

I have argued that early modern dramatists drew on accounts of representational and methodological crisis to set the scene for a New World theatricality. But drama is only part of this story. Drama, a commercial form performed by professional actors for a public audience, was not the only site of theatrical innovation in the early modern period, nor was it set apart from other popular theatrical modes such as pageants, festivals, and shows. Drama was, in fact, inclusive of these modes, and this inclusion was itself undergoing revision during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. *Tamburlaine*'s (1588) imperial pageants, and the dramatic masques in Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humour* (1599)*,* Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), and Fletcher and Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (1622), make festive theatricality a presentational technology: a tool of worldmaking. In *Tamburlaine*, the main character constructs a series of spectacular tableaux: "sights of power to grace my victory / And such are objects fit for Tamburlaine / Wherein as a mirror may be seen / His honor that consists in shedding blood" (5.2.411-414).[257] These "sights of power" from scenes of torture and torment – "two Moors drawing Bajazeth in his cage" – to a royal progress, "cometh Tamburlaine all in scarlet," allow Tamburlaine to represent his conquests while he continues to conquer new lands.[258] The captive lords in his retinue, continually humiliated and abused, become figures for their own conquered lands, as when he chains the King and Queen of Persia to his cart and drives them before him in a perverse inversion of a triumphal entry (4.2.1). While Marlowe turns primarily to shows of power,

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[257] Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine, Parts One and Two* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2011).
[258] Marlowe, 4.2. Stage Direction; 4.4. Stage Direction.

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such as the coronation entry and the imperial triumph, Jonson and Shakespeare turn to the

Jacobean masque. In Jonson, an early version of a court masque becomes the final

container for his ungovernable humors, as "[t]he Actor portraying the Queen passes over

the stage" and silences all the actors, including the Grex.[259] This notion, of the court

overrun with distempering humors and vapors that the body of the monarch must dispel,

would also be the main theme of Jonson's later masque *Hymeniae* (1606). The fact that,

by this point in the play, these are implicitly New World vapors makes the restoration of

the audience's humoral composition in *Every Man Out* an Englishing project. Jonson

would go on to create many masques during this period to shore up the Englishness of

James, a Scottish king, by contrasting him with racialized characters within the anti-

masque's fictional locus. As Martin Butler has argued, "masques worked by staging the

monarch's ability to assert his power in the face of forces that contested it or were

antithetical to it … representatives of the exotic were thus intrinsic to the legitimization

of the monarch and court."[260] Conventionally, the masque proper – performed by

courtiers in their own persons, who embody the virtues of the court – would be

challenged by the antimasque, a skit performed by lower-class actors who are then

ultimately subordinated to the formal logic of the masque's triumphant conclusion. In

The Tempest, Prospero's masque presents a core of harmonic European plenty in *The

Tempest*'s desert landscape, but turns out to be inside, not outside, of the antimasque.

While Prospero reterritorializes the landscape with his retinue of European nymphs,

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[259] Ben Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humor*, ed. Helen Ostovich, The Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 5.4. Stage Direction.
[260] Martin Butler, "The Masque of Blacknesse and the Stuart Court Culture," in *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed. Garrett A. Sullivan et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 159.

Caliban's noises backstage erupt into the foreground and prevent the masque's apotheosis: the abolition of the chaos represented by the antimasque and the restoration of courtly harmony. In their dramatic composition, then, all the plays that I have considered so far have foregrounded the interplay within festive and commercial forms of theatricality. And their use of festive theatricality as a dramatic mode points out the multimedial nature of commercial drama itself.

The main way of reading these festive components of drama has been to interpret them as residues of an older medieval tradition, and therefore as somehow prior to commercial drama's emergence as a popular theatrical form.[261] Festive theatricality, we are to understand, had a more visual presentational vocabulary than commercial drama, a distinction thematized in early modern plays themselves. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), the rude mechanicals' performance of *Pyramus and Thisbe* allow presentational effects to overwhelm language. As Egeus claims, the play seems only "some ten words long," far too brief for performance and yet nevertheless extended by actors invested in personating inanimate objects like "Moon" and "Wall" (5.1.61-62).[262] But this understanding that commercial drama (like *Midsummer Night's Dream*) was less visually elaborate than festive drama (like *Pyramus and Thisbe*) was itself undermined by the fact that commercial drama borrowed extensively from festive forms. The dumb show or tableau vivant was a signature theatrical unit throughout this period, appearing in contexts from commercial dramas, such as the *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) and *Hamlet*

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[261] David M. Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Harvard University Press, 1962), 2.
[262] William Shakespeare, *The Oxford Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

(1609), to masques, coronation entries, triumphs, and Lord Mayor's Shows.[263] The

tableau was not a relic of an older time. It was an ever-evolving and formally flexible

technology. As George Kernodle has argued, "when new interest in space, new needs of

the exploitation of the picture in space, appeared in the fifteenth century, the painters and

sculptors and devisers of *tableaux vivants* were ready. They developed the new

Renaissance patterns of background for new romantic and political subjects."[264] From the

allegorical personations that heralded Mary Tudor's entry into Paris, to the New World

tableaux of laboring indigenous figures that populated Lord Mayor's Shows, tableaux

were sites of formal and thematic innovation during the period. Their ubiquity, their

relative mobility as forms, and their popularity made them well suited to respond to, and

to thematize, England's increasing investments abroad, both in Europe and the Americas.

When dramas cite tableaux, they might do so directly: as when Hieronimo in *The Spanish*

Tragedy encounters his son hanging from an arbor. In this scene, the tableau is evoked by

the presentational effect of a figure on a still background framed by processional

scaffolding. But dramatic use of tableaux was also indirect. The early modern stage was,

in fact, constructed to mimic the presentational scaffolding of festive theatricality. When

we encounter characters within the frame of the discovery space in the Globe, they occur

in situ (in tableaux), for the discovery space's arch was itself drawn from street theater's

processional arches. The commercial theater was both directly and indirectly indebted to

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[263] Jeremy Lopez, "Dumb Show," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 292.
[264] George R. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre Form and Convention in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 17.

festive theatricality, and specifically the tableau vivant's structure since its inception, regardless of whether this citation is explicitly referenced in the play itself.[265]

In this chapter, I mean to focus on the tableau as an instance of commercial drama's multimedial engagement with other theatrical forms, not only because of its ubiquity and its relation to news, but also because it represents, for me, the best signature of commercial drama's methodological pluralism. One of the most foundational stylistic components of New World texts is a shift of genre or mode that becomes a methodological shift, a different way of describing the world and assigning value to it. When George Percy's account of the Jamestown Starving Time begins with a description of an "excellent ground full of Flowers of divers kinds and colours ... and fine beautiful Strawberries, fore times bigger than ours in England," he borrows the generic framing of natural history and of romance: rich description and variety.[266] But on the next page, this generic framing shifts. His account of settler deaths reads more like a ship's itinerary than a literary text: "the fifteenth day, their died Edward Browne and Stephen Galthrope. The sixteenth day their died Thomas Gower."[267] Shifts like these acknowledge the insufficiency of any single explanatory or representative mode to account for the variability of the colonial experience. It is no mistake, I argue, that the dramas that consult with New World forms are also the ones most interested in the tableaux structure, and in forms of festive theatricality more broadly. In drama, shifts between different theatrical modes did not only evoke the association between festive theatricality and news

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[265] Kernodle, 8.
[266] George Percy, "Discourse," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn, 1st edition (New York: Library of America, 2007), 924.
[267] Percy, 932.

– its connection to popular shows, to imperial self-display, and to assumptions about the festive nature of Amerindian spectacle and ritual – but were also modeling a formal shift within drama that was responding to the disintegration of conventional forms of theatrical expertise, the insufficiency of any one dramatic mode to set the scene or to make intelligible new "romantic and political subjects."[268] The tableau is thus not only a component of commercial drama: within commercial drama, it also comes to represent a particular way of thinking about an interpreting dramatic form and convention.

Much criticism on festive theatricality in drama – and specifically festive theatricality connected to a New World context – has focused on the masque form. Masques were highly controlled spectacles performed at court to a royal audience and invested in promoting and explicating James' sovereign agenda. They impose and maintain hierarchies of kind, between the order of the masque proper and the chaos of the antimasque, as well as distinctions in race, gender, and class. They produce power as an illusion for the audience to consume, as the courtly participants are invited to participate in the harmonious conclusion. They also have a close relationship, for this reason and others, to the New World project. Masques feature famously in John Smith's *General Historie of Virginia* (1624), where he claims to have witnessed a "Virginia Maske" in which "thirtie young women came naked out of the words … singing and dauncing with most excellent ill varietie, oft falling into their infernall passions."[269] This description, like a conventional masque, plays on the inside/outside structure of the masque form, wherein the courtly viewer (here, the English reader of Smith's history), looks in upon an

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[268] Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre Form and Convention in the Renaissance*, 17.
[269] John Smith and Philip L. Barbour, *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith (1580-1631) in Three Volumes* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), II 183.

antimasque of native dancers. The desire to assert representational control over settlement

and over indigenous peoples (especially native women) borrows the form of the masque,

from Smith's text to Caliban's masque in *The Tempest.* Masques could present

indigenous personations in their imagined cultural context, as in the instance of the

dancing women, while also circumscribing that context with an English frame and

English audience. In *The Masque of Blacknesse* (1605), for instance, the black queens are

in court (and thus subject to James), but the opening tableau also places them in a remote

location and thus distant from English customs and sensibilities. They appear "in a great

concave shell like mother of pearl" borne up by "six huge sea-monsters varied in their

shape and dispositions." [270] Much of the masque form was distinguished by this

perspectival manipulation: the king seated at the head of the court opposite the

circumscribed antimasque tableau and flanked on the sides by courtly dancers. In

dramatic and prose reworkings of the masque, we necessarily encounter a way of viewing

that is filtered through this masque structure (even when the show, as in Prospero's case,

has been interrupted).

But for the London audience watching these plays, masques would not have been the

primary reference point for reading these instances of festive theatricality. Most London

audiences would have likely never seen or read a masque. Masques were performed for

only a select few of the king's innermost circle: ambassadors and other literate elites.

They were a rarified entertainment. But masques, although they have tended to dominate

readings of festive theatricality in New World contexts, made up only a small fraction of

[270] Ben Jonson, "The Masque of Blacknesse," in *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 47–60, Lines 46-51.

all entertainments during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Popular

theatrical forms – that is, forms of theatricality that were accessible to the wider public

and hosted for free in outdoor locations – share many features that link them to the festive

tradition. They, like the masque, are organized around the frame of processional

scaffolding: either stationary stages under a thematic arch (in the case of coronation

entries) or a mobile progress constructed on pageant wagons. They all used emblematic

tableaux: allegorical or abstract personations within a festive frame. They shared an

investment in mythology, in allegory, in emblematic personae, that could contribute to a

repertoire of ephemeral material reused by later entertainments. Unlike the masque,

however, they presented a more open and flexible form. They did not have established

sightlines or seating for their audiences, and because they were staged in the open air,

they had to contend with constant interruptions. To talk about the masque in theater, then,

is also to evoke these other modes of festive theatricality: that is, to talk beyond the

masque. For the very thing that would have made the masque recognizable as a mode is

the very thing missing (the fixed perspective, the courtly milieu, the uninterruptability). It

is through these other forms of popular theatricality that we should instead read

representations of festivity in drama. They invite us to think about festive theatricality

more broadly. If we expand our reading of festive theatricality to popular and less strictly

literary forms, as Jody Enders, Erika Lin, and Tracey Hill have advised us to do, and if

we *also*, as I suggest, shrink down our focus to the tableau as the "basic unit" of this

theatricality, we can track the ways that different genres of popular performance were

working together to respond to developments in racialized representation, innovating

theories of labor, and constructing a theatrical place and aesthetic connected to the New World before plays would turn to address New World themes or settings directly.

Emblematic Theatricality in the Lord Mayor's Show

For a theatergoing audience, the primary aesthetic context of festive theatricality would not have been the masque at all, but the Lord Mayor's Show: a continually interrupted and highly emblematic pageant staged each year in London that attracted a range of playgoers, upper and lower class alike. The Lord Mayor's Show celebrated the accession of London's new Lord Mayor from a position in one of the Livery Guilds (such as the Fishmongers, Spicers, Grocers, and Goldsmiths) to London's highest civic seat.[271] The show began as a parade route that would lead the Lord Mayor through the city in the style of a coronation entry. By the mid sixteenth century, the rising prominence of London and its mayor and the increasing proscription of religious festivals had led to the conflation of the two events.[272] The show began to incorporate pageantry and scaffolding previously belonging to religious entertainment, such as Corpus Christi plays. While the coronation entry relied on the juxtaposition of different processional arches under which the king passed (and thus had more static emblematic tableaux) and occurred only upon the accession of a new king, the Jacobean Lord Mayor's Show had a more dynamic structure that was continually renovated. Every year, the show followed the Lord Mayor on his journey through London's major neighborhoods and often making use of the Thames as a transport for the processional floats. The shows were designed and funded by the London

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[271] Hill, *Pageantry and Power*, 16.

[272] Sara Trevisan, "The Lord Mayor's Show in Early Modern London," *Literature Compass* 11, no. 8 (2014): 539.

Livery Companies, so had a very close connection to New World investment. The very

guilds promoting the Virginia lottery system were using the show to promote their

respective Lord Mayor, but also used the show to advertise New World investment to

their popular audiences. For example, *The Triumphs of Reunited Britania* (1605)

celebrated the inauguration of Sir Leonard Holliday, a Merchant Taylor, and featured a

pageant ship with "rich return" from the Indies, "laden with Spices, Silkes, and

Indico."[273]

Due to their frequency, and their connection to London's merchant companies, Lord

Mayor's Shows were able to respond to current events and news from abroad. They often

had a similar relationship to their audience (based on financial appeal) as settlement texts

themselves. Prose accounts of settlement, such as Thomas Hariot's *A Briefe and True*

Report (1588), appealed to readers for more money to support fledgling settlements and

promised return on investment. Lord Mayor's Shows were also, in some sense,

advertisements for current investment opportunities and propaganda for settler

repopulation. As Rebecca Bach has argued, "Lord Mayor's pageants envision lavish East

Indian treasure [and] … associate that bounty with profit from Atlantic world efforts."[274]

The lack of distinction between the East and West Indies was, then, precisely the point, as

investors aimed to create the idea of an "undifferentiated India" that could draw on the

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[273] Munday, Anthony, 1553-1633. *The Trivmphes of Re-Vnited Britania. Performed at the Cost and Charges of the Right Worship: Company of the Merchant-Taylors, in Honor of Sir Leonard Holliday Kni: To Solemnize His Entrance as Lorde Mayor of the Citty of London, on Tuesday the 29. of October. 1605. / Deuised and Written by A. Mundy, Cittizen and Draper of London* London, By W. Jaggard, 1605. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240906980?accountid=13626, 5V. Because the show pamphlets are not numbered, I will cite the electronic page number in the EEBO database with V indicating Verso and R indicating Recto.

[274] Rebecca Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World,1580-1640*, 1st edition (Houndmills, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 150.

imagery of wealth and abundance associated with the East, and use it to advertise investment in the struggling English settlements in the West.[275] As sites of mythmaking about Indians and Indianness beyond the Americas, these shows constitute an archive of early modern "Indography," the construction of Indianness as an emergent racial category.[276]

As a popular form that was continually incorporating new materials and presentational techniques to reflect London and the Lord Mayor's changing character and affiliations, Lord Mayor's Shows were uniquely poised to become the route through which prose accounts of settlement would pass on their way to onstage representation. Dramas and Lord Mayor's Shows shared the same audience, even as they offered this audience distinct interpretive positions. In the Lord Mayor's Show, the sequence of devices moving through the city would have blended with, and interacted with, a crowd of people of different social ranks. As Scott Trudell has argued, shows "tend not to have stable viewing and hearing positions [and] do not make clear distinctions between their presentational and ambient components."[277] A tableau in a show, then, could not be visually excerpted from other tableaux, from the progression of the show as a whole and from the opportunities extended to audience members as participants. The ambient environment of the theatrical occasion was always part of the performance, a claim that William West has also made about the theater. But Londoners attending a Lord Mayor's

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[275] Bach, 150.

[276] Jonathan Gil Harris, ed., *Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*, 2012 edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 3.

[277] Scott Trudell, "Occasion," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 231.

Show would have also had the ability to see others as part of the procession.[278] In the Show, unlike on the stage, the foreground and background, who is performing and who is witnessing the performance, could easily switch places. Both audience and spectacle would have occupied the same festive space, instead of being divided by presentational components like the stage or the visual hierarchies of the masque. While the Lord Mayor's Shows featured foreign personations, they were not circumscribed by the antimasque's fictional locus. They were part of the theatrical landscape of the city. Anthony Munday's show *The Golden Fishing or the Honour of Fishmongers* (1616) displays, for instance, a tableau of "the King of Moores, gallantly mounted on a golden Leopard," who precedes European characters in the procession, including another tableau with a "faire Tombe, where on, in Armour lyeth the imaginary body of Sir William Walworth, ſometime twiſe Lord Maior of London."[279] The "King of Moores" here refers not only to Africa or India but also to the "Moor-gate" part of the procession, honoring William Walworth and the Fishmongers.[280] In *Chruso-thriambos or The Triumphs of Gold*, a tableau featuring native figures holding trowels precedes the tableau where "Mint-Maiſter, Coyners, Gold-Smithes, Ieweller, Lapidarie, Pearle-Driller, Plate-Seller [are] all liuely acting their ſundry profeſſions."[281] All labor to produce golden commerce.

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[278] For this understanding of processional perspective see Edward Muir, "The Eye of the Procession: Ritual Ways of Seeing in the Renaissance." In *Ceremonial Culture in Pre-Modern Europe,* ed. Nicholas Howe, 1st edition., 129-54. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

[279] Munday, Anthony, 1553-1633. *Chrysanaleia: The Golden Fishing: Or, Honour of Fishmongers. Applauding the Aduancement of Mr. Iohn Leman, Alderman, to the Dignitie of Lord Maior of London. Taking His Oath in the Same Authority at Westminster, on Tuesday, being the 29. Day of October. 1616. Performed in Hearty Loue to Him, and at the Charges of His Worthy Brethren, the Ancient, and Right Worshipfull Company of Fishmongers. / Deuised and Written by A.M. Citizen and Draper of London* London, by George Purslowe, 1616. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240909367?accountid=13626, 5V, 6V.

[280] Munday, *The Golden Fishing*, 4V.

[281] Munday, Anthony, 1553-1633. *Chruso-Thriambos the Triumphes of Golde. at the Inauguration of Sir Iames Pemberton, Knight, in the Dignity of Lord Maior of London: On Tuesday, the 29. of October. 1611. Performed in the Harty Loue, and at the Charges of the Right Worshipfull, Worthy and Ancient Company*

Different processional scaffoldings and festival floats are imaginatively linked to each

other in the show's emblematic logic and to specific features of the city through which

they pass. All these emblematic tableaux, however, are figures for London itself. They

are representations of its increasingly metropolitan character as well as its involvement in

colonial traffic and resource extraction in the Americas, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

Lord Mayor's Shows thus present us with an opportunity for reading racialized

representations as potential provocations for affiliation and disaffiliation for English

viewers and participants. Shows often guide their viewers toward an understanding of

their ideal qualities as London citizens by remediating their perspective through the

juxtapositional logic of different tableaux, and through their use of emblematic

attributions that attach ideas to people and things. Printed shows such as Thomas

Dekker's *Troia-Nova Triumphans* (1612) claim that spectacle should instruct the

audience to arrive at the correct interpretation. The show should "dazzle and amaze the

common Eye as to make it learne."[282] And shows did require interpretation, especially

when it came to new emblematic subjects. For instance, the first tableau of *The Triumphs*

of Honor and Virtue (1622) displayed a woman in blackface representing India who was

flanked by merchants representing Commerce, Adventures, and Traffick, a far cry from

traditional emblematic personations like Prosperity and Truth. A figure called Knowledge

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of Golde-Smithes. Deuised and Written by A.M. Cittizen and Draper of London London, Imprinted by
VVilliam Iaggard, printer to the Honourable Citty of London, 1611. https://search-proquest-
com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240929543?accountid=13626, 4V.

[282] Dekker, Thomas, ca.1572-1632. *Troia-Noua Triumphans London Triumphing, Or, the Solemne,*
Magnificent, and Memorable Receiuing of that Worthy Gentleman, Sir Iohn Svvinerton Knight, into the
Citty of London, After His Returne from Taking the Oath of Maioralty at Westminster, on the Morrow Next
After Simon and Iudes Day, being the 29. of October. 1612. all the Showes, Pageants, Chariots of Triumph,
with Other Deuices, (both on the Water and Land) here Fully Expressed. by Thomas Dekker London,
Printed by Nicholas Okes, and are to be sold by Iohn Wright dwelling at Christ Church-gate, 1612.
https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240850657?accountid=13626, 3R-4V.

then appears as the sun over the black queen, crowning her the "queen of

merchandise."[283] The queen then gives a speech to the merchants and audience,

informing them of the virtues of her blackness. India, here, doesn't have the qualities that

she is grouped with per se. She is not holding a specific item to establish emblematic

attribution (for instance, Peace holding an olive branch or St. Catherine holding a wheel).

Instead, her attributions are made up of other personations. They're attached to her to

create an impromptu composite tableau. She then acquires the values associated with

these other personations *as* her attributions. The viewer is asked to piece together a single

figure – "India" – from many. In shows, tableaux often had an emblematic structure,

combining qualities of allegorical personation, speech, physical scaffolding, and

exposition. Emblems are, after all, themselves multimedial forms; they include the

inscription or written description of the emblem, the subscription or heading (such as

India or Virtue) and the image itself. What I refer to elsewhere as the "emblematic

perspective" of popular entertainments often invites viewers not only to move between

speech and the visual personation or image but also, in the case of Lord Mayor's Shows,

to trace a series of visual analogies from one tableau to another. Thus, while the "device"

of India is a tableau because it is composite and theatrical – interpretively, it is also an

emblem.

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[283] Middleton, Thomas, d.1627. *The Triumphs of Honor and Vertue. A Noble Solemnitie, Performed through the City, at the Sole Cost and Charges of the Honorable Fraternitie of Grocers, at the Confirmation and Establishment of their most Worthy Brother, the Right Honorable Peter Proby, in the High Office of His Maiesties Lieutenant, Lord Maior and Chancellor of the Famous City of London. Taking Beginning at His Lordships Going, and Perfecting it Selfe After His Returne from Receiuing the Oath of Maioralty at Westminster, on the Morrow After Simon and Iudes Day, being the 29. of October, 1622. / by Tho. Middleton Gent.* London, Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1622. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240916283?accountid=13626, 4V.

What makes Lord Mayor's Shows exciting for my purposes is their position at the center of a new English emblematic and iconographic archive, one that was invested explicitly in commenting on and constructing racial and ethnic difference and asking audience members to participate in that construction. As a new emblem, one explicitly topical and interested in commenting on racial and ethnic difference, "India" was not self-evident to audiences and did not trade in universal truths as older representations of Virtue or Error might have. India did not have "credibility" as an object of interpretation.[284] Instead, Lord Mayor's Shows create these composite emblems by drawing on relationships between new and old ideas to build webs of association from visual objects, framing structures, and text. They ask audiences to do real interpretive work and to accept that attributions and interpretations are not yet fixed. Personations like "India" were themselves drawn into a repertoire of emblematic tableaux that stood for the hosting guild's own virtues (associating the Grocers, in this case, with New World wealth). But she also floated free from it, appearing in other shows throughout the seventeenth century. Collectively, then, Lord Mayor's Shows were themselves a composite emblem library for London's virtues. They bodied forth and personated the attributes of London and its citizens.

Working the New World

We've now established that Lord Mayor's Shows were interested in responding to current events, that they were interested in developing interpretive scaffolding around emblematic tableaux, and that they were reflecting the financial links between London merchant companies and New World settlement. But none of this explains how Lord

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[284] Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures: English Emblem Books and Renaissance Culture* (London; New York: Longman, 1994), 47.

Mayor's Shows were responding to settlement's *failures.* To look at Lord Mayor's Shows, in other words, we might be tempted to imagine that any residual interpretive scaffolding they import into drama would be a celebration of future success, another imperial projection in line with the that of the masque. Indeed, depicting representations of indigenous people in a land of plenty was a key promotional strategy for New World investors. It showed that the land was able to be cultivated, and that there was the potential for English people to thrive in the New World environment as indigenous people did.[285] This link between representations of laboring indigenous people and the future viability of European plantations had already been the central theme of Theodor De Bry's famous woodcuts accompanying Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report* (1590). These woodcuts showed representations of indigenous figures *in situ,* a match to the lavish personations and native laborers of Lord Mayor's Shows. These woodcuts frame native people at work within the elaborate scaffolding of the tableau and the romantic backdrop of a lush landscape. This framing, as in Smith's "Virginia Maske," shows native people both inside an unfamiliar cultural context at the same time as it presents that context (and their labors) to an English audience, using it as to imagine a future for failing settlements. They show that labor itself was one of the New World's products.

In the years in which Lord Mayor's Shows experienced increasing popularity, accounts like Thomas Hariot's were also having a heyday. Hariot's report about the status of the first Roanoke voyage was republished several times by the end of the sixteenth century. It

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[285] Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576-1642*, 1st edition (Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123.

was first published with John White's watercolor drawings of Algonquian peoples in

1588 and then was republished in 1590 with Theodor De Bry's woodcut engravings. Both

White's watercolors and De Bry's woodcut adaptations of them displayed Algonquian

people "in [their] own habitat," as natural spectacles for European viewers, and is

"generally credited with having forged the European concept of American Indians until

the eighteenth century."[286] The extent to which White's drawings were taken up and

repurposed in other representations of native people during the early modern period is

evident by their appearance in an Italian costume history only a few years later: Cesare

Vecellio's popular *De gli habiti antichi et moderni di diversi parti del mondo* (1590). In

Vecellio's work, versions of John White's watercolors appear in the section on the

clothing of the Americas alongside Inca nobles from the Spanish conquest of Peru. The

decorative scaffolding around the images and the use of landscape backgrounds continue

to promote the association between the images, the atlas (in the *theatrum mundi*

tradition), and the theater. They invite the audience (the reader) to access the tableaux by

looking through an elaborate gilded frame. As Joyce Chaplin observes, "White shows the

Indians as if they were actors in a drama that the English watched – appreciatively. His

experience with dramatic presentations in London had had an unintended outcome."[287]

We can see here a clear continuity, then, in generic and theatrical kinds back and forth

across the Atlantic. White draws on entertainments for his presentation of indigenous

[286] Michael Zogry, "Lost in Conflation: Visual Culture and Constructions of the Category of Religion," *American Indian Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (2011): 4, 6.
[287] Kim Sloan and Joyce E. Chaplin, *A New World: England's First View of America* (British Museum Press, 2007), 63.

figures (either intentionally or unintentionally) and these images, then, produce even more entertainment for English audiences.

The presentational structure of Hariot's document (that of a commodity list) also complements and reproduces the logic of John White and De Bry's illustrations. The descriptions of each product frame it as a kind of ekphrastic natural historical specimen: "*Openauk* are a kind of roots of round form, some of the bignes of walnuts … which are found in moist and marish grounds growing many together," "*Tsinaw* … grow manie together in great clusters and do bring foorth a brier stalke" (887-888). What few acknowledgments of native labor remain occur in the most subordinated position in the list within this natural historical framing structure, one that grounds individual commodities in a broader context, like a specimen engraving or wonder cabinet. Each commodity description in Hariot's list elaborates its place in the natural world, but also displaces it, suggesting connections between other iterations of that same product and potential uses. As Kevin Boettcher has argued, Hariot's text presents the Algonquian as "epistemological stowaways: the traces of their presence and their knowledge, and Harriot's dependence on both, cling to the commodities in situ and in transit."[288] These products have roots, then, but they do not only lead into "moist and marish ground," they also lead to the grounds of Algonquian cultivation and use, present in the Algonquian names used to describe them. This attempted displacement of Algonquian people as planters from the scene of colonial knowledge production (as they become part of the commodities that Hariot exports in his list) is precisely what shifts representations of

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[288] Kevin Boettcher, "Trafficking in Tangomóckomindge: Ethnographic Materials in Harriot's A Briefe and True Report," in *Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England*, ed. Jonathan Gil Harris, 2012 edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 81.

native labor from the Spanish model, where native labor is seen as a physical resource, to the English model of reading Algonquian expertise as a knowledge commodity, one that could help failing settlers thrive in the landscape. Hariot's commodity list leads to knowledge theft rather than commodity theft. Algonquian expertise is displaced from the place of expertise (the land) and exported *in situ*, in the scene of labor, allowing the English planter to (hopefully) to take its place. We can see a shift in terms, here, that allows for the acknowledgement of indigenous expertise and authority in English accounts. And in Lord Mayor's Shows, this backdoor recognition that the fragile English enterprise might entirely depend on the success of indigenous work, expertise, and political security takes center stage.

When John White composed his initial watercolors in the 1580s, no Lord Mayor's Shows featured Indian personations. But by the time that his watercolors had become engravings, the Indies (both East and West) were everywhere. In Lord Mayor's Shows, settlers and "natives" (that is, indigenous personations) are "on the same ground in the same time."[289] They can occupy the same space, allowing one to displace the other. But the Shows also demarcate the place of the New World as already English, as circumscribed by English laws and English people. They present indigenous people in a natural historical frame – their "own habitat."[290] This presentation inverts the relationship between insider and outsider: who is looking out and who is looking in. Instead of failing English colonies surrounded by successful Algonquian plantations, we have successful

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[289] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), xi quoted in Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 33.
[290] Zogry, "Lost in Conflation, 6"

native laborers surrounded by English settlers and future settlers, subordinated to London and the English state. The elaborate, emblem-like structure of the tableau vivant allowed native labor to exist always in frame while the juxtapositional processional logic of the Show also translated this labor into emblematic and actual commodities that could belong to the city. And like White's watercolors and Hariot's commodities, the emblematic personations of the Lord Mayor's Show were highly portable and movable. They allowed the presentational logic of the Show's composite moving emblems to be imported into other theatrical contexts: to move back yet again, that is, from the street to the stage.

But in my reading, Lord Mayor's Shows go beyond merely positing indigenous laborers as hopeful counters to failed settlement. In addition to presenting native personations in a festive context and showing native people at work in an environment, as De Bry's woodcuts and Hariot's text attempt to do, Lord Mayor's Shows are uniquely preoccupied with developing a vocabulary for theatrical labor at the same time, and on the same scale, as they are presenting emblematic depictions of actual labor. This is because Lord Mayor's Shows, unlike the masque, are designed to reveal the theatrical labor that went into the production: the composition of props, the work and the commerce of the companies, the athleticism of the actors, and the rhetoric of the poetry. As Kara Northway has noted, the performance of labor inhered in the show's dense and knotty rhyming structures (174).[291] The laborious verse, in other words, was another way that the guilds showed their work. And this laborious quality extended to the (literal) paratext of the plays in print. For instance, Thomas Middleton's *The Triumphs of Love and*

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[291] Kara Northway, "'To Kindle an Industrious Desire': The Poetry of Work in Lord Mayors' Shows," *Comparative Drama* 41, no. 2 (July 25, 2007): 174.

Antiquity (1619) argues in its preface that the city's virtues will be "richlie expreſt in the

Body of the Triumph, with all the proper Beauties of Workemanſhip, that the Citie may

(without Iniury to Iudgement) call it the Maiſter–piece of her Triumphs; the Credit of

which Workemanſhip."[292] As a testament to "Workmanship," the procession reveals

rather than conceals labor. It unmasks the courtly game of sprezzatura that was common

to royal and aristocratic entertainments, where the labor that went into producing the

occasion would be concealed from view. The goal of the show is to make evident the

workmanship (both material and conceptual) that went into its making. But it does so not

only by showing the gilded labors of the London guilds but the origins of these labor

systems, many of them directly reliant on colonial products.

While early Lord Mayor's Shows featured emblematic personations *in situ,* these later

shows further complicated the work of interpretation by enhancing the "vivant" aspect of

tableaux vivant through movement. For instance, in the *Triumphs of Honor and Industry*

(1617), native laborers work the landscape: they are shown "severally imploide."[293]

Representations of New World labor often explicate the visual logic by drawing a line

between guild labor and native labor, spice farming and the spices on display in London.

But because, in the Lord Mayor's Show, representations of work are also *presenting* that

[292] Middleton, Thomas, d.1627. *The Triumphs of Loue and Antiquity an Honourable Solemnitie Performed through the Citie, at the Confirmation and Establishment of the Right Honourable Sir William Cockayn, Knight, in the Office of His Maiesties Lieutenant, the Lord Maior of the Famous Citie of London. Taking Beginning in the Morning at His Lord-Ships Going, and Perfecting Itselfe After His Returne from Receiuing the Oath of Mayoralty at Westminster, on the Morrow After Symon and Iudes Day, October 29. 1619. by Tho: Middleton. Gent* London, Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1619. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240895978?accountid=13626, 13V.
[293] Middleton, Thomas, d.1627. *The Tryumphs of Honor and Industry A Solemnity Performed through the City, at Confirmation and Establishment of the Right Honorable, George Bovvles, in the Office of His Maiesties Lieuetenant, the Lord Mayor of the Famous Citty of London. Taking Beginning at His Lordships Going, and Proceeding After His Returne from Receiuing the Oath of Maioralty at Westminster, on the Morrow Next After Simon and Iudes Day, October 29. 1617* London, Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1617. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240919800?accountid=13626, 4V.

work as the foundation of the Show itself, these readings leave narratives about imperial discourse behind to examine the forms of affiliation and disaffiliation between settlers, English citizens, and indigenous farmers that emerged at a pivotal moment in settlement history, when conquest was not yet certain but when attempts to settle had failed. These representations show us how figures of native success become threats to settlers *precisely* because indigenous people can thrive in the landscape that the settlers so hoped to settle in. In the wake of failure, these histories are essential to understanding that forms of identification between indigenous and English laborers could be both sources of positive representation – carving out a particular theatrical aesthetic and position for indigenous work within the London livery system as a co-creator of the triumph – but they could also showcase the fragility of affiliation, prompting a brutal settler backlash and setting the terms for future racialized representations that commodify indigenous bodies and their labors as products within an English emblematic and commercial economy. In the readings that follow, I aim to establish this broader conversation around indigenous labor as it moves from settlement texts like Thomas Hariot's *A Briefe and True Report* (1590) into Lord Mayor's Shows, culminates in the composition of visual tableaux which show native personations at work in a festive environment, and ultimately makes its way into drama.

I will now consider two Shows that present indigenous people at work in an environment. Each foregrounds the link between indigenous and English labor that Hariot's text worked to set up. But each Show also works to establish another relationship, between texts like Hariot's about the Americas and the West Indies, and ideas about the gold and wealth of South America and the East Indies which were under Dutch, Portuguese, and

Spanish colonial control. In the overlap of indigenous pageantry and indigenous labor is a point of affinity, common ground, between London guilds and native workers, not on the basis of shared or prospective material labor (as in Hariot) but on the basis of an unshared co-production of the show's theatrical world. Each of these shows was highly elaborate and constructed. The production of the show took work as well as thematizing work. And these shows asked a lot of their audiences, from requiring them to interpret composite emblems like India to treating labor itself as an emblematic attribution, part of the construction of the Indies and the Indian. As Laura Weigert has argued, when we read the texts left behind by shows and pageants, there is no way of knowing whether emblematic persons were performed by live actors.[294] Beyond the frame of the processional scaffolding could be an image (perhaps in watercolor, or an enlarged version of an emblem from a popular emblem book) or could be a combination of painting, statuary, and living performers. We know that "India" was probably performed by a live person, since she is assigned a speech. But in other cases, the figures of native persons presented in the show might be stationary, pictorial, or performed. While Weigert has talked about the difficulty of interpreting these historical pageant materials through prose accounts and artworks of pageants, I emphasize the interpretive labor that these multimedial and highly emblematic shows required from their contemporary audiences. The relative novelty of the Show's emblematic repertoire would have compounded the labored quality of the imagery and the language, requiring additional interpretive labor from the audience as well as showcasing the conceptual and poetic labor that the guilds invested in these emblematic personations. Presentational elements such as scaffolding, painting, statuary,

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[294] Laura Weigert, "Stage." In *Early Modern Theatricality,* ed. Henry S. Turner, 24-46. Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013: 41.

and speech, as well as the movements of living actors, trace ideas like "Commerce" or

"India" across media but also across the parade ground itself, which was constantly

moving away from the viewer. In this visual field, verbal and visual elements would have

vied with the normal noise and clutter of the city for dominance. But by asking the

audience to take part in the interpretation of these moving emblematic tableaux, the

guilds also invited them to take part in the labor of producing new visual forms to

populate the English emblematic archive.

I begin my own interpretive work with a scene from Anthony Munday's *Chruso-

thriambos* (1611), financed by the Goldsmiths' Company (or guild), which presents

indigenous labor as an emblematic expression of London's wealth. The triumph begins

with a declaration linking it to Roman "triumphall showes and devices" ("device" is a

common English substitute for the French "tableau"), placing it within an imperial frame

of reference (2R).[295] But there are two "triumphall shows" here, and one soon encloses

the other. The first is that of the Lord Mayor himself, who travels on a barge "with all the

other companies towards Westminster" (2R-3V). While the Lord Mayor is on the water,

however, he encounters another progress in-progress. Munday asks the reader of the

pamphlet to:

> Imagine then, that from the rich and Golden Indian Mines, ſundry Ships, Frigots, and Gallies, are returned home; in one of which, Chioriſon the Golden King, with Tumanama his peereleſſe Queene, are (*at their owne entreaty*) brought into England, with no meane quantity of Indian Gold, to behold the Countries beauty, and the immediate day of ſollemne tryumph. Diuers Sea-fights and skirmiſhes are actiuely performed, both in the paſſage on to Weſtminſter, and backe againe, each Gallant hauing his Indian Page attending on him, *laden with Ingots of Gold and Siluer, and thoſe Inſtruments that delued them* out of the earth. In which manner

> they march along by Land likewiſe, the Indian King and his Queene beeing mounted on two Golden Leopardes, that draw a goodly *triumphall Chariot*. (3V, emphasis mine)

Munday's parenthetical, "at their owne entreaty," sits uneasily next to the following claim that these Indian royals have been "brought into England." The entreaty frames this as a diplomatic royal visit. Choirison and Tumanana are on a diplomatic pleasure voyage on the Thames, which has been transformed into a version of the Atlantic with "Divers, Seafights, and Skirmishes." The source of this wealth – they come with "no mean quantity of Indian gold" – is a royal gift freely given. But they are enclosed within the frame of England's own maritime and mercantile achievements. The queen and king and their pageantry have both been "brought" into London as part of the quantity of Indian gold that accompanies them: in other words, as a commodity.

By marking this entry as a "triumphall" one, and marking these personations as "Queene" and "King," Munday identifies these figures as cultural ambassadors in two senses. In the first, in the sense of a royal visit, and in the second in the sense most familiar to the English, as potentially unwilling captives. In Virginia and the Arctic, English navigators often relied on indigenous intelligence to determine whether mines were close by. The use of kidnapped indigenous interpreters for voyages linked indigenous people with gold as its index. The use of "triumphall entry" signals both of these contexts. It links to the royal entry of a reigning king and queen into a new city, but it also evokes the marching of Cleopatra as a Roman captive through the imperial city (a subject that Shakespeare would explore through festival imagery and ekphrasis). Here, we have a vision of traffick that includes not only gold but also its placement within a cultural milieu, within the

"triumphall entry" of Choirison and Tumanana and their re-entry into London as English cargo. The association of gold with pageantry here draws explicitly on Spanish representations of Mexica (Aztec) gold displayed in decorative and ceremonial contexts. And the English would have been deeply familiar with the association between Indian gold and the West Indies, considering they were active in pilfering Spanish gold shipments during this very period. Instead of gold being the site of conquest or seizure here – as it was in Spanish colonial history – it is a figure of transport. These figures appear *in situ* with their gold. They *and* it are transported to London, coming to represent both a figure of Indian wealth and a figure for London commerce. The link between Indian figure and Indian gold on the basis of native agency, "at their owne entreaty," but also as a figure of traffick is not necessarily an imaginative conflation of the East and West Indies, as has often been argued with representations of native gold. It is an engagement with the narratives around the discovery and transport of gold that existed within the Spanish and English Americas at this time. In the context of these accounts is an acknowledgement of settler failure, of reliance on the "entreaty" of indigenous interpreters and intelligence to obtain access to golden cargo. This link between Indian gold and Indians themselves would also have reflected an even more local context. It might have functioned as an advertisement for the lottery system and the money that Londoners could win (but most likely would lose) from it. [296] The Virginia Company established its lottery the year the show was staged (and lottery billets represented indigenous people in an emblematic and festive frame).

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[296] Hollis, *The Absence of America*, 130.

These are the historical contexts of the pageant, but what of the theatrical context – the "portable public context" – that the pageant sets up around these personations? If we follow the presentational markers that Munday leave us, we arrive at a figure of ambassadorial and mercantile ventures in the Americas, one that turns on the difference between a merchant progress – the return of English ships and a display of their (often) pilfered cargo – and a royal progress *or* triumphal entry, a context in which these ships imaginatively become parade floats that display their human cargo. In these progresses, and in the progress of the Mayor himself, the Mayor takes the place of the English King as London's representative. His presence in the pageant moves between the commercial and diplomatic contexts, between the triumphal entry, the royal progress, and the merchant progress. His multiple roles represent the conflicted status, then, of the settlement project as a whole: was it a commercial project, a diplomatic venture, a financial investment, imperial conquest, or all four? If we are to read this entire portion of the show as a single tableau or "device" in the progress, as Munday advises us to do, then we perceive these narratives as both the background and the foreground of the pageant. Depending on where we look, we are in the Indies, the Americas, England, or a composite of all three.

Although we seem to have a vision of the Indies and the Americas as a space of effortless wealth and plenty (a place where the only labor is the prospective English labor of identifying and recovering the gold themselves "at their owne entreaty," loading it from ship to ship) the Indian pages that accompany the King and Queen present us with another framework for understanding how the pageant is thinking about labor, the theatrical labor of the guild that financed it (the Goldsmiths') and source of that financial

prosperity in the Americas. We might remember that in the King and Queen's wake is a retinue of "Indian page[s] … laden with Ingots of Gold and Siluer, and thoſe Inſtruments that delued them out of the earth." The reference to the "page" constructs the float as a royal retinue (again drawing on Spanish accounts of Mexica wealth as well as representations of India and the East Indies). But the presence of the "Instruments" also recalls the more familiar (to England) context of native labor and the means by which gold is found and mined. As "Indian page[s], these dramatic personations are identified as Indian by virtue of their association both with gold "Ingots" and with "Instruments." In an emblematic sense, these are both their attributions. Here, as in Hariot, the presence of the Ingots and the Instruments is an invitation to imagine the action of "delv[ing] out of the earth," but we don't see this action happening. These forms are static, or rather the only movement in the scene is the movement of the English ships that carry them. But theatrically, the scene itself moves backward from tableau to tableau. It begins here with the gold – the retinue of pages – and then returns to the process of excavating it. But the people excavating it are not the pages, they are English people: merchants and laborers. As the float moves forward, then, it also moves from the New World back into the Old.

On the next float, we see a triumphant emblem of the Goldsmiths themselves: a "Quadrangle frame, of apt conſtructure, and anſwerable ſtrength [on which] we erect a Rocke or Mount of Golde, in ſuch true proportion, as Art can beſt preſent it" (3R). Within this frame, "Pioners, Miners, and Deluers doe firſt vſe their endeuour and labour, to come by the Oare of gold and Siluer hidden in the Rock" (3R). Much like in Hariot, we encounter the gold through its association with work and the presence of Indian pageantry (the pages) that contextualize it as socially and politically significant to native

people and as the product of negotiations and diplomatic relationships. But when we see evidence of the labor that goes into the excavation of the gold, we enter the space of the colony and the visions of a colonial future. That is, the association of the gold with labor is detached from the native laborer and becomes a provision of colonial labor: both in the New World and in London. These workers "doe first use their endeuor and labour to come by the Ore of gold and Silver hidden in the rock." The "ore of gold and Silver" is "hidden." And only through "endeavor and labour" can it be found. By reframing labor as an act of finding and discovering, the pageant imagines the origin of gold to be the industry of the Goldsmiths' Company and the settlers. Around the rock in which the delvers work is the scaffolding of the Goldsmiths' own laborers: the "quadrangle frame, of apt conjecture." The signals of the theatrical labor that went into the show's production – "apt conjecture," "we erect" "such true proportion" and "as Art can best present it" – showcase the material labor of the workers. The previous floats are then positioned as the product of this process, which is now placed "first." The true origin of the gold is the financial, material, and theatrical labor of the Goldsmiths' livery company, who financed the show and produced the props. Labor itself transfers hands from the pages to the Goldsmiths' Company. The result is a chain of emblematic associations, compounded and organized under the sign of the Goldsmiths, that connects the Indies to the New World, New World gold to London gold and London gold to theatrical (prop) gold. That is, even while the Indian laborers (the pages) are characterized and racialized by their position at the point of overlap between the triumphal progress and New World labor economies, ultimately both these places are occupied by the company of settler

Goldsmiths. The notion that settlers could learn from natives, but also displace them, is one of the show's foundational conceits.

The difference between the concealment of native labor and the revelation of settler labor that characterizes this show is also a methodological and generic difference, between the courtly form of the progress and the civic form of the show. In the first, labor is indecorous, and in the second, it is central. By consigning native people to the former, the show registers a difference in genre that is also a difference in kind. The concealment of indigenous labor, or its displacement in favor of a performance of English labor (represented by the static tableaux of pages and the active tableaux of working Miners) echoes a generic difference. Native personations are part of the "triumphall" progress which is enclosed inside of the civic Mayoral progress. Thus, native personations belong to the tradition of sprezzatura – the artful concealment of labor – while the English laborers belong to the civic environment of London, and thus to the revelation of labor (both colonial and theatrical). In *Chruso-thriambos,* we can see the merging of theatrical labor and material labor, here associated with the laboring characters of the "Miners and Delvers" who perform the work of building the pageant. Within this context, indigenous figures make up the background, not the foreground, of the pageant. Their labors are invisible, or rather, their labors are only visible as a product that has been itself transported into an English context. Indigenous labor becomes itself the product, another way that the show imagines its way out of the scene of colonial failure.

I've already talked about how *Chruso-thriambos* shifts the scene of New World labor from an Indian context to an English one. There, the action of labor – i.e., the cultivation and extraction of resources in a New World agricultural context – and the gold this action

produces transfers to settlers. But "Labor" and "Gold" in their abstract and festive sense remain emblematic attributions of Indians and India. In later shows, however, ones that take up the cultivation of the New World more directly, the scene shifts again. *The Triumphs of Honor and Industry* (1617), staged a few years later, goes beyond the framework established in Hariot and in *Chruso-thriambos.* It represents indigenous people at work in an environment and – filtered through the frame of John White's popular watercolors – imagines a cultural context and a theatrical context that is indisputably Virginian rather than English. Within the theatrical labor economies of the show, however, this reproduction of indigenous pageantry and indigenous work undercuts, and exists uneasily alongside, the aesthetic and material labor of the London companies. Thus, while *The Triumphs of Honor and Industry* retain the association of indigenousness with pageantry and effortless labor, they transition from a static representation of these qualities in the form of emblematic attributions, and instead represent indigenous people at work in England, placing that work on the same grounds as the *effortful* labor performed by the livery companies themselves.

The Triumphs of Honor and Industry was staged for the ascension of George Bowles, a Grocer, to the position of Lord Mayor, and the "first invention" features

> A Company of *Indians*, attired according to the true Nature of their Country, seeming for the most part naked, are set at worke in an Iland of growing spices; some planting Nutmeg Trees, some other spice trees, of all kinds, some gathering the fruits, some making vp bags of Pepper, euery one seuerally imploide; These Indians are al actiue youths, who ceasing in their labours, dance about the trees, both to giue content to themselues and the spectators.[297]

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[297] Middleton, *The Tryumphs of Honor and Industry*, 4V.

Here, we have an almost literal reproduction of a John White watercolor. In the

foreground, is an ethnographic representation of Indians "attired according to the true

Nature of their Country," and in the background is a romantic landscape of almost Edenic

abundance which doubles as an advertisement for the Grocers' goods. Rhetorical

elements of Hariot's texts are here present, including his detachment of indigenous labor

from indigenous people. Note that the Indians are "set at worke" rather than working: the

"set" here suggests simultaneously the "setting" of a theatrical tableau – and thus points

to the theatrical labor of the Grocers who funded the performance – but also that the

laboring native figures have been set at work by the Grocers themselves in a New World

context, that their work is directed by the Grocers and for the Grocers and their English

customers: every one "severally imploide." The ambiguous passivity of "set at work" and

"severally imploide" glances at the structure of the Spanish plantation system – set at

work by whom? – even as the link between "Company of Indians" and the company of

the guild itself suggests that native labor might be a model for the industrious settlers

who forcibly displace them. Representations of native labor lie at the crossroads of the

colonial project here, the uncertainty of its future, in that they seem to adopt the

conventions of both the Spanish extractive colonial model and the model of genocidal

settler colonialism that the English would increasingly come to adopt. Here, native labor

is itself an exported product, as the description of the fruits and vegetables vies with

descriptions of native bodies "seeming for the most part naked" and the entertainment of

the "active youths." The entertaining quality of indigenous work, and the turn from spice

farming "labours" to "dance" entertainment, makes explicit that labor itself is one of the

"fruits" on display. The shift to representations of indigenous labor also shifts the space

of work in the New World, from settlers laboring in a settler space to representations of indigenous work in space that seems both native and English. While *Chruso-thriambos* had presented us with a view of resource extraction in the Americas, and only indirectly with the prospect of settler labor replacing indigenous labor, this show presents us with the notion that native lands and native work could themselves be circumscribed and directed by the will of English investors. The plantation here is one that is governed by the Grocers, even as native people work it. This is a recognition that settlers themselves were not successful on their own plantations. This show was staged only a few years after the Jamestown Starving Time. There was an even more mainstream acknowledgement, then, that settlers could not extract their own resources. This invention sets the scene for the martial seizure of native agricultural lands that was to follow in these years prior to the institutionalization of settlement as a crown project.

But this staging of indigenous labor, if it cedes sovereignty over the colonies to the Grocers (and thus to the Lord Mayor) who direct this work and harvest these products for their own use, also ends up ceding theatrical authority to the indigenous actors. When being "set at worke" turns to a figure of theatrical labor, it does so at the direction of the "active youths" themselves who "cease their labors" and turn to entertain the audience. The competing protocols of ethnographic description (which promises the "true Nature" of the New World's naked inhabitants) and the need to point to the theatrical scaffolding – the occasion – that encloses it results in "the work" shifting meaning from the work of the performance to the fictional work of the Indian entertainment. While *Chruso-thriambos,* in other words, pointed to the scaffolding of the occasion itself, thus pointing to the theatrical labor that went into the production of the show, *Triumphs of Honor and*

Industry does not break the (quadrangle) frame. Instead, it fictionalizes theatrical labor, representing it as a spontaneous production of the "active youths." That is, in the act of commodifying indigenous labor, it concedes the grounds of theatrical production temporarily, placing the fictional "active youths" and the Grocers as the dual producers of the entertainment. The conventions of the Lord Mayor's Show, its tendency to conflate different kinds of labor (labored language, performances of labor, and the work of putting on the show), has resulted in the "active youths" taking the place of the livery company, or at least existing on the same performative ground. They pay tribute to the Lord Mayor as a "Company of Indians" distinct from the directives of being "set at work" that would place them under the sign of the Grocers. This temporary inversion of the hierarchy – produced out of the jumble of conflicting generic conventions and directives – is reinforced in the next scene. The very next invention is a pageant of India featuring "Commerce" and "Industry" as attributions (4R). In other words, in the visual hierarchy of the Lord Mayor's Show, the "commerce" and "industry" that these floats commodify is split. On the one hand, these qualities are a provision of the Grocers (who stage the Show and put the "active youths" to work) and on the other, these are attributions of India and Indians themselves, part of the ethnographic display of native bodies at work. The Grocer's interest in presenting exotic "Indians" *in situ* ends up foregrounding theatrical labor, and the theatricality of the whole "invention," as itself indigenous. Theatrically, it competes with the work of the livery company rather than being subordinated to it.

Throughout Lord Mayor's Shows, this tension between the commodification of the indigenous body as an entertainment and the presentation of theatrical labor as a

provision of indigenous personation is present everywhere. In *The Triumphs of Honor and Virtue* (1622), the first float depicts the continent of India, which seems to be the unification of the particular and general Indias. This time, we are only told that "[t]he Continent of India [is] *a triumph* replenished with all manner of spice-plants and trees bearing odor" (emphasis mine); the float depicts a woman in blackface representing India, who is flanked by merchants representing Commerce, Adventure, and Traffick.[298] *The Triumphs of the Golden Fleece* (1623) shows "[s]ixe Tributarie Indian Kings, holding their ſeuerall dominions of Media, and liuing in vaſſalage to her: are commaunded by her to rowe the Argoe, all of them wearing their Tributarie Crownes, and Antickely attired in rich habiliments."[299] This pageant then merges the royal progress with a performance of theatrical labor, but labor that is subordinated to the mystical personage of Media. The Indian Kings are vassals. Their "Tributarie Crownes" mark them as festive personations and as advertisements for the Drapers' guild, with their "rich habiliments" and captive kings who labor within and as part of the pageant machinery. Their theatrical labor drives the progress forward. It is both the thematization of New World labor, as a provision of the progress, and also the means by which it is presented. It is part of the presentational scaffolding of the pageant itself.

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[298] Middleton, Thomas, d.1627. *The Triumphs of Honor and Vertue. A Noble Solemnitie, Performed through the City, at the Sole Cost and Charges of the Honorable Fraternitie of Grocers, at the Confirmation and Establishment of their most Worthy Brother, the Right Honorable Peter Proby, in the High Office of His Maiesties Lieutenant, Lord Maior and Chancellor of the Famous City of London. Taking Beginning at His Lordships Going, and Perfecting it Selfe After His Returne from Receiuing the Oath of Maioralty at Westminster, on the Morrow After Simon and Iudes Day, being the 29. of October, 1622. / by Tho. Middleton Gent.* London, Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1622. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview, 4V.

[299] Munday, Anthony, 1553-1633. *The Trivmphs of the Golden Fleece. Performed at the Cost and Charges of the Auncient and Honourable Societie of the Drapers: For the Enstaulment of their Worthy Brother Mr. Martin Lvmley in the Maioraltie of London. on Wednesday, being the Nine and Twentieth Day of October 1623. / Written by A. Mvndy, Citizen and Draper of London.* London, Printed by T.S, 1623. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240898249?accountid=13626, 5V.

New World Labor on the Early Modern Stage

Throughout this chapter, I have aimed to show that the coronation entry and Lord

Mayor's Show were key popular contexts for indigenous figures in drama: firstly,

because indigenous people were often linked to figures of royalty and wealth, and

secondly, because, increasingly, the Lord Mayor's Show was the primary form in which

most audience members would be confronted with the indigenous labor and New World

goods that were increasingly becoming part of London's self-constitution as a worldly

city – both in a material sense (through the money sent abroad to fund New World

ventures) and theatrically, as part of the emblematic repertoire that characterized London

and the New World in dramatic representations. We might remember that many Lord

Mayor's Shows were written by guild members who were also dramatists, including

Anthony Munday, Thomas Middleton, and Thomas Dekker. The very first Jacobean Lord

Mayor's Show, no longer extant, was written by Ben Jonson for the Haberdashers.

Jonson was during this same time himself a member of the Tylers' and Bricklayers'

Company.[300] These dramatists were adapting techniques from commercial drama

(including plot-like elements and more dynamic visual languages) even as they were

exporting the resulting emblematic imagery back into drama in the forms of inset

tableaux and festive stagings.[301]

During the "heyday" of civic festivals in England, festive theatricality becomes a

theatrical paratext, part of the implicit perceptual scaffolding of performance that asks

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[300] Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life*, Reprint edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 91.
[301] Sergei Lobanov-Rostovsky, "The Triumphes of Golde: Economic Authority in the Jacobean Lord Mayor's Show," *ELH* 60, no. 4 (1993): 879.

dramatic audiences to rely on festival logic: the archive of emblems and personations

common to festive entertainments and the kinds of visual, spatial, and racial hierarchies

that often attended them.[302] The paratexts of dramatic documents have often been read

along the same lines as other textual paratexts: fixed, dependable aspects of the medium

that guide interpretation while not belonging to the body of the text proper.[303] For a

dramatic text, the paratext might be the presence of a shortened name marker for who

"she" refers to in the dialogue or the marker "a tragedy" on the cover. On a map, the

paratext might be a legend that helps to establish distance and relationships between

places. Across media, however, the paratext is less stable. For the same cue (for instance,

a legend, or a name marker) might not function in a dependable way. It might refer less to

a feature within the text, and more to the kind of text in which it normally appears. A

cartographic paratext in a literary document, for instance, might signal that we should

read the text as having an investment in cartography. It might cue the reader, in this way,

to expect a different kind of reading experience, one equally attuned to the conventional

provisions of literary documents as cartographic ones. Across texts or across media, then,

a paratext becomes more of a border resource in the media historical sense, than a

paratext in the book historical sense. When festival theatricality appears in drama, often

through the tableaux vivant but also through other festive contexts, such as Ariel's status

as a nymph or the appearance of the queen at the end of a Jonson play, it cues the viewer

to produce a set of assumptions and conventions native to the other contexts in which that

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[302] Tracey Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010), 1.

[303] Amy Lidster, "Shakespeare and the Implications of Paratextual Attribution," *Shakespeare Studies (0582-9399)* 46 (January 2018): 150–55.

presentational element appears. These other contexts then become part of the implicit frame of interpretation.

As William West has argued of early modern drama, "the play [was] not the basic unit of early modern theatricality, and not the most privileged one."[304] Allusions within a given play would recall other performances directly, as when *The Sea Voyage* reproduces themes and characters from *The Tempest*, but they could also recall other dramas indirectly, by participating in the same "horizontally organized repertoire" of "lines, gestures, characters, situations, genres, and other smaller elements" that "mak[e] the audiences … responsible for elaborations or explanations that the plays omit."[305] The vision of theater that West constructs is voracious and dilettantish, a vision of theater as "made out of other performances that is neither wholly allusive nor wholly citational."[306] I propose that we think of festive theatricality as part of this repertoire, as what a media historian would call a "portable public context" for interpretation, one that appears in drama as part of the dramatic "repertoire" but is also framed as implicitly outside of it, as belonging to something and somewhere else.[307] If we can read festive theatricality as a presentational paratext, as an instance of conceptual scaffolding, one that summons the interpretive frameworks native to other theatrical contexts into the moment of performance, then we can begin to understand the ways that commercial drama and festive theatricality were both made out of *each other's* performances. In other words, the tableau vivant structure and other "basic unit[s]" of festive theatricality function not only

[304] William West, "Intertheatricality," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 154.
[305] West, 154, 156.
[306] West, 155.
[307] John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid, "Borderline Issues: Social and Material Aspects of Design," *Human-Computer Interaction* 9, no. 1 (March 1994): 13.

as a literal scaffolding in performance (an arch, the framing of the tiring house, a puppet theater or dumb show) but as a conceptual and generic scaffolding that evokes another context and the assumptions and forms of theatrical interpretation that attend it.

Within this larger project, however, Lord Mayor's Shows intervene at a crucial moment. Their foregrounding of performative and theatrical labor, and their use of dynamic and composite visual tableaux, made them particularly suited to theatrical adaptation. But the association between indigeneity and festivity that features in these shows had a much longer history. Indigenous people were appearing *in situ* – within a festive emblematic frame – prior to Lord Mayor's Shows. For example, cloves represent a figure of the "undifferentiated Indies" that appeared in Elizabethan progresses and coronation entries: the characters "Clove" and "Orange" from *Every Man Out of His Humour* invite this association with the festive materials of the coronation entry when they go on progress through St. Paul's Walk during the play's first act. As a "Clove" and an "Orange" they are sentient emblematic attributions, a remainder of the cornucopia stuffed with fruits that accompanied both emblems of the Indies and emblems of Plenty and Abundance in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1603). Clove appears in later Lord Mayor's Shows in this context as a piece of "ships luggage," "our Pepper … our Cloves and Mace," imported from the Moluccas or "Spice Islands," off the coast of Indonesia.[308] Like an emblematic image, a moving theatrical tableau, they occur in a frame, a "case" that combines the parody language of tobacco speech, the movement of a progress, and the attributions of exotic produce to represent an emblem of the native as strange: a figure of both

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[308] Munday, *The Trivmphes of Re-Vnited Britania,* 5V.

Englishness and foreignness that seems to figure London and the New World at once.[309]

Here, then, we have an anticipation of the moving dynamic tableaux of Lord Mayor's

Shows at the intersection of an emblem and a theatrical character.

In *Tamburlaine,* meanwhile, Bajazeth's presentation as literally in frame (his placement

within a cage onstage) and his position as one of the drawn carts of Tamburlaine's

imperial progress also presents him as a New World captive, drawing him into analogy

with both the "triumphall show" of Roman entries and the scenes of Spanish violence that

fueled the Black Legend and accompanied Bartolomé De Las Casas's *Brief Description

of the Destruction of the Indies,* first translated into English in 1583. De Las Casas's

account draws a line between Turkish and "Sarazen" conquest, Roman conquest, and

Spanish conquest of the New Word.[310] The emblems of torture are stark and horrific, and

they always occur *in frame.* This frame presents both the torn open and cutaway interiors

of Arawak homes and (sometimes simultaneously) the outline of a horrific machine for

torture. Las Casas frames his woodcuts as an instance of violent trans-cultural contact.

Spanish torture becomes the mechanical frame that replaces the outline of native

dwellings. The composition of the emblem thus enacts torture visually through the

deconstruction of homes and the segmentation and crowded presentation of native bodies.

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[309] For a more detailed discussion of this point, see my second chapter, "Ben Jonson's American London," especially pp. 120-122.

[310] Casas, Bartolomé de las, 1474-1566. *The Spanish Colonie, Or Briefe Chronicle of the Acts and Gestes of the Spaniardes in the West Indies, Called the Newe World, for the Space of Xl. Yeeres: Written in the Castilian Tongue by the Reuerend Bishop Bartholomew De Las Cases Or Casaus, a Friar of the Order of S. Dominicke. and Nowe First Translated into English, by M.M.S* London, By Thomas Dawson] for William Brome, 1583. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/2240862993?accountid=13626, 3R.

In addition to these literary and theatrical paratexts, figures of indigenous people within an emblematic framework also figure broadly in the history of cartography. In American maps, such as Pieter van der Keere's Map of the World (1611), Samuel de Champlain's fold-out map from *Les Voyages de la Novvelle France Occidentale* (1612), and John Smith's *Map of Virginia* (1612), indigenous people are displaced and cleared away from their lands and instead become ornamental devices beyond the pale of colonial territory: an inversion of the settler reality where successful indigenous agricultural fields and towns ringed starving settlements. These figures are also explicitly emblematic, many of them drawn from costume history atlases like Vecellio's.[311] These histories of representation set the scene for the Lord Mayor's Show's representations of indigenous personations. The Lord Mayor's Show represents indigenous figures already entertaining or already on progress. India itself is a "triumph," Indians are entertainers or already on progress within the show's compositional logic. They are a show within a show, a "case" within a frame. This presentation of indigenous personations already in frame requires the audience to participate in interpretive and theatrical labor. It showcases the multimedial nature of theatricality: its investment in co-presenting different media for interpretation, and its adaption of emblematic logic and frames of reference to do so.

But the Lord Mayor's Show does not just demand interpretive labor because it draws on an emblematic composition, it also thematizes it. Lord Mayor's Shows are unique in their foregrounding of labor as such, their display of the process by which the show's components are produced, and their interest in representing the various kinds of work that

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[311] Valerie Traub, "Mapping the Global Body," in *Early Modern Visual Culture: Representation, Race, and Empire in Renaissance England*, ed. Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 51.

go into producing London as a whole: the work of fishmongers, goldsmiths, builders, grocers, and the administrative labor and governance of the Lord Mayor himself. When they draw on these festive and emblematic traditions, then, and present them in this new context, they also pave the way for a new kind of indigenous representation, one where festive labor (an association with festive theatricality) distinguishes representations of native people, and one where being shown *in situ*, in frame, does not only demand interpretive labor from the audience but also shows the native person at work in a festival environment. Ariel and Caliban in *The Tempest* and the native "Amazons" in the *Sea Voyage* were staged during the heyday of Lord Mayor's Shows (1611 and 1622, respectively). They are recognizably indigenous, not primarily because they have specific concrete attributions that we might recognize as part of the English imaginary (which had not yet decided upon a distinct racial category for native people), but because of their association with consuming labor within an elaborate festive frame. The primary marker of indigenousness during this period is theatrical rather than ontological. Indigenous characters perform tasks that cause them to recede into the elaborate festival frame that encases them. They are sites of aspirational affiliation – their expertise is what allows us to gain a rich sense of the provisions of the world in which they live. They are also sources of knowledge and intelligence about that world. If we can identify an "indigenous theatricality" in English sources, then, it is through this link between festival aesthetics and the performance of theatrical labor. Indigenous characters in performance are distinguished by their theatrical attributions, and these attributions are not *always* (as we might expect them to be), a naked body, or an association with trifles, feathers, or fruit; instead, these attributions might be the provision of a festive paratext or an abstract

attribution such as "Industry" and "Commerce": attributions that become visible through the industry of theatrical worldmaking and the commercial context of festive theatricality. The moving emblems of Lord Mayors Shows can show us how New World labor histories were first constructed in plain air before their moved into the smoky interiors of the public and private theaters.

Readings of early modern theatricality have often hinged on an interpretation of character stagework. Stagework gives us a sense of how theatrical worlds were built and what presentational tools governed their making. These tools ranged from gesture, deixis, and description, to stage directions, entrances and exits, and other markers of performance. While entrances and exits and stage directions are provisions of a play's plot, things like gestures, deixis, and description belong more properly to a play's dialogue. They are, as Peter Womack has claimed, "actions that a man might play."[312] Identifying stagework is the task of the theatrical critic, who deduces from a given line of dialogue the trace of a presentational effect. Any character can perform stagework. But following the cues in the edited play text is made easier when stagework is performed by a self-conscious theatrical practitioner, like Prospero or Hamlet: a character who gestures, speaks, and describes both in and out of his theatrical person or character. Metatheatrical characters are a significant resource for critics of theatricality because they speak beyond their persons. As self-conscious theatrical practitioners, they discourse on the scene, on theatrical conventions themselves. That is, their presentational effects – their stagework – enters representation rather than remaining as the invisible scaffolding of performance.

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[312] Peter Womack, *English Renaissance Drama*, 1st edition (Malden, MA; Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), electronic location 3087.

These characters seem to speak for the play. When scholars of theatricality attempt to recover a the "baseline assumptions and expectations" that governed theatrical performance, they often turn to characters like these as a guide.[313] Characters like Ariel and Caliban and like Middleton's "active youths" perform stage work but do not comment on that stage work with self-reflexive authority. Their labors are visible but are not commented on.

As an indigenous personation, Caliban's theatrical labor and his material labor are, like the "active youths," linked. Within the play's fiction, he describes features of the natural world to Prospero. But his descriptions are also stagework; they ground the scene within a circumscribed fictional locus – "*Caliban* [*Within*]: There's wood enough within" (1.2.313).[314] His association with the presentational scaffolding of the drama is more enduring even than Prospero's – the difference being that he "acts" from offstage, activating the grinding machinery and "hollow confused noise" that characterized popular theatricality and that disrupt Prospero's masque. Ariel, too – one of the most theatrically gifted but also theatrically constrained of all *The Tempest*'s characters – is linked to this "outside" of theatricality, one that is not outside the fiction but deeper in: one that reaches an understanding of the presentational scaffolding of theatricality only *through* fiction. Throughout the play, Ariel carries the echoes of the offstage onstage. More frequently than Prospero – and often without him – he is present but absent, behind the action, observing it, and acting upon it in the wings: "Enter Ariel, invisible with music and song"

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[313] Erika T Lin, *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6-7.
[314] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Reprint edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

(2.1. stage direction); "he vanishes in thunder" (3.3. stage direction); "Prospero and Ariel remain, invisible" (4.1. stage direction). Yet Ariel's theatricality, although it is often shared with Prospero, retains the connection to fiction and festivity – within-ness – that Caliban's stagework maintains. Ariel extends and revises Prospero's pageants, seeing them as only the edge of a larger fictional world that continues backstage. As a critical term, "offstage" includes the backstage, the tiring house, and other places where props are kept. But it also refers to any space that evokes an interior to the represented world: the space of reportage, or revision, of events heard and not seen, like Caliban's noises and Ariel's flight.[315] Characters like these are often bracketed off from what Robert Weimann would call the "platea," where the characters speak more as actors than as fictional persons.[316] These characters belong more to the recesses of the fictional setting or "locus." Onstage, indigenous laborers like Caliban and Ariel are marked theatrically by their representation "within" a natural environment or an emblematic or festival frame. They are not able to speak about theater because they are always *in* – always circumscribed by – the fictional world. Yet their labors are nevertheless constitutive of that world and the theatricality of the play writ large.

It is my contention that these kinds of characters, characters who are more "native" to the fiction, who inform us about it — who function as intermediaries between the space of theatricality (the space of the stage) and the space of the foreign locale represented by it — were increasingly racially marked in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

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[315] Peter Womack, "Off-Stage," in *Early Modern Theatricality*, ed. Henry S. Turner, Oxford 21st Century Approaches to Literature (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 73.
[316] Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, ed. Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 193.

In most critical accounts of English drama, belonging to the fiction is a social privilege, it is a mark of wealth. Rich characters live within the locus, while lower-class characters like clowns occupy the space of the platea. But during the boom in travel drama that occurred during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the notion of belonging to the fictional setting increasingly meant that a character belonged to a non-European place – in other words, it meant that they were foreign. Foreign characters have, of course, always appeared in commercial drama. And English dramas often take place in European settings outside of England. But the characters I consider are different from these. The characters I consider emerge from the colonial context of the period, when travel dramas were becoming distinguished from dramas that took place in foreign settings. In a travel drama, the travelling character is distinguished by their lack of place-based knowledge; this outsider position reinforces their alignment with an English audience. Characters who are not travelers, conversely, are distinguished by their embeddedness within the world of the fiction. These characters, from *Tamburlaine*'s (1587) Bajazeth to *The Sea Voyage*'s Portuguese Amazons (1622), are less theatrically mobile and less theatrically privileged even as they do much of the descriptive work to "set" the setting through gesture and description. They are drawn from the context for English navigation and expansion in Ireland and the New World, where an embeddedness in the land and an ability to thrive in an environment that the English found deeply disorienting distinguished native people from travelers or settlers. Through these figures, we can understand how indigenousness, a sense of being native to a place, was figured formally in festivals, entertainments, and drama during this formative period in settlement and theatrical history. During a time when the theatrical scene was itself split

into different parts and perspectives, these theatricalities become visible to us as the formal echo of unsettlement. Just as the "active youths" unsettle the Grocers' presentation of their labor in *The Triumphs of Honor*, Ariel and Caliban's labor undoes Prospero's dominion of the island and Bajazeth unlinks Tamburlaine's theatrical affinities. We can see in these other theatricalities the formal residue of English drama's engagements with the Americas. These theatrical laborers push English drama beyond its insular confines into new conceptual territories.

Coda: Settlement's Futures

Thus far, I have examined how theatricality takes up the language of settlement. But ending this claim at the theatrical context suggests that these ideas terminate in drama, that the payoff of this work is largely an aesthetic one, a question of where and how we identify early modern drama's aesthetic debts. But this is far from the case. The ideas about New World labor and New World genre forms that developed across commercial drama and entertainments during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries set the terms for settler accounts in the New World. Later settlers, such as John Smith and George Percy, increasingly take a difference in (literary) genre to stand in for a difference in kind. In these texts, composed during the 1620s in the wake of the Jamestown Starving Time and its aftermath, romance and festivity become associated with indigenous habitation and land cultivation, presenting native agricultural success as a point of aspirational identification. But in the settlement context, this very identification becomes the source of a problem. In Lord Mayor's Shows, provisional identification with indigenous laborers as laborers in London – as a "Company" – placed New World settlement as the potential source for London's wealth and an influence on its conventions of aesthetic self-presentation. But in Jamestown, settlers and indigenous people did not seem to share the same ground, even as settlements and indigenous landholding existed side by side. In settler accounts, this unshared ground of native success and settler abjection contrasted good native planters with bad English ones, making settler failure seem to be a quality of settlers themselves, rather than as a contingent historical fact – a stroke of bad luck.

Among the texts that have drawn on theatrical and festive intertexts, John Smith's

Generall Historie (1624) has loomed large, primarily for its "Virginia Maske," but also

for its many references to theatricality. The text I consider, however, was not a composed

document of settlement, reframing colonial conquest as a romance in which Smith

himself played a key role; instead, it is a record of unsettlement and abjection in which

romance features sparingly but significantly, as a generic marker attached to indigenous

agricultural labor. John Smith was in England during the Jamestown Starving Time of

1609 to 1610, a particularly brutal winter in which two-thirds of the colonists in

Jamestown died due to starvation or exposure. But George Percy, Smith's lieutenant and

Jamestown's mayor, remained in the colony during the Starving Time. Historians have

identified Percy's accounts of these times, his *Discourse* (1606) and *Trewe Relacyon*

(1612), as particularly compromising accounts of the early settlement project. They have

alternatively termed these texts "destabilizing," "contested," and full of "rhetorical

problems" and "confusions."[317] They compare Percy unfavorably to more established

early settlement writers, like Smith and Hariot, who had more rhetorical control over

their accounts and used more conventional modes of description and narration. But other

critics have begun to revisit Percy's text as interesting for precisely the reasons that these

critics have dismissed it. What distinguishes Percy's text for Kathleen Donegan is the fact

that there is no "I" (representing a centralized and controlled subjectivity like that found

in Smith's account), but instead only a "vacated first person plural 'we'."[318] This 'we'

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[317] Forrest K. Lehman, "Settled Place, Contested Past: Reconciling George Percy's 'A Trewe Relacyon' with John Smith's 'Generall Historie,'" *Early American Literature* 42, no. 2 (January 1, 2007): 235–237; Mark Nicholls, "George Percy's 'Trewe Relacyon': A Primary Source for the Jamestown Settlement," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 113, no. 3 (January 1, 2005): 212–75.

[318] Kathleen Donegan, *Seasons of Misery: Catastrophe and Colonial Settlement in Early America*, 1st edition, Early American Studies; Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 80, 85.

marks the disintegration of colonial identity, but it is also the site of an identity

formation, an identity that is forged on the basis of shared suffering and abjection. In

Donegan's reading, this new colonial identity is organized around the role of "planter" –

a position Percy shares with other starving colonists on failed plantations. Contra to

Donegan, however, I read Percy's emphasis on "planter" as a more capacious category,

as an attribution (in an emblematic sense) that can attach itself to anyone planting in a

New World context. And, in fact, Percy's account's primary reference point for what a

"planter" might look like is precisely the same reference point as the Lord Mayor's

Shows that we've already looked at. His texts continually juxtapose scenes of native

planters working in a romantic landscape with scenes of colonial starvation and abjection.

The difference between these positions is not a distinction in role or place (they are

presumably in the same place at the same time), but rather a difference in genre or kind

that persists *despite* affiliation in role and in place – "we planters."[319]

In the Jamestown Charter, the settlers were told to settle "prouided alwais and our will

and pleasure herein ys that the plantacion and habytacion of such of the saide Colonies as

shall laste plante themselues as aforesaid shall not be made within one hundred like

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[319] I am aware, here, that the colonists did not adopt the position of husbandmen or planters officially until around 1622 (and am indebted to Chris Blakley for bringing this to my attention). However, I hope to show that Percy's strong emphasis on native agriculture and his many references to colonial attempts to plant – and their failures – introduces the possibility of a colonial agricultural economy a bit earlier. This shift was also accompanied by a generic transition in late sixteenth-century romance from commercial quests to husbandry and domesticity (as Linton outlines) and the two may be related in Percy's account – each anticipating the other. For references on planting and plantations in Percy, see 930, 1097, 1109 and the long comparison that Donegan mentions on 1093-94 where Percy attempts to forge an identity within a larger European plantation community. All references to Percy's texts refer to Percy, "Discourse"; George Percy, "A Trewe Relacyon," in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, ed. James Horn, 1st edition (New York: Library of America, 2007), 1093–1114 and will be cited parenthetically throughout.

Englishe miles of the other of them that firste beganne to make theire plantacion as aforesaide."[320] Here, the colonists are advised to divide up the land into "Englishe miles" and also to "plante themselues" – a command that is just as easily transitive as reflexive. The demand to plant oneself implies that the fertility of the landscape can support colonial habitation and settlement, but it also suggests that the colonists will need to plant other things before they can plant themselves – they will need to work the landscape. By telling the colonists to "plante themselues," the charter imaginatively substitutes, as Hariot does, native planters for English ones. It presents English settlers with a descriptive romantic vista that has been evacuated of inhabitants. When vegetation or "Comodityes" are described, it is always "the land" that takes the subject position, not the natives as planters: "the soyle … produceth of one corne of that Country"; "our mould, which fosters it and keepes it greene"; "it naturally yields."[321]

Percy, too, participates in this fantasy when he describes New World agriculture and cultivation, but his landscape is not the evacuated land of the charter; instead, it is inhabited and "settled" by the Paspahegh. Percy does note that the country would be a "great a profit to the Realm of England" because it is so "fruitful" (931-32) and he repeatedly comments on the anticipated agricultural success of the English "planting in the Countrie," but he communicates this by detailing native habitation and husbandry (932). He describes following a path through the woods to a Paspahegh town surrounded by "faire flowers of sundry kindes, as though it had been in any Garden or Orchard in

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[320] Philip L. Barbour, ed., *The Jamestown Voyages under the First Charter, 1606-1609: Documents Relating to the Foundation of Jamestown and the History of the Jamestown Colony up to the Departure of Captain John Smith, Last President of the Council in Virginia under the First Charter, Early in October 1609*, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society ; 2nd Ser., No. 136-137; Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society 2nd Ser., No. 136-137 (London, published for the Hakluyt Society [by] Cambridge U.P., 1969, n.d.), 27.
[321] Barbour, 100.

England" (929). In fact, this is a garden or orchard, as we see in the next paragraph –
Percy notes that after visiting the Paspahegh women and eating Stawberries with them, he
was directed to "the Wood side, where there was a Garden of Tobacco, and other fruits
and herbes" (928). Percy's depictions of native hospitality and domesticity also extend to
the private work of native wives and mothers through an account of bread-baking (931).
This description trades in romance tropes of abundance and ends with a tableau of a
native woman at home *in situ*: a pastoral fantasy. Here, Percy locates the place of this
home both in the Americas and in England. He links it to a "Garden or Orchard in
England," but fills this orchard with American produces such as "tobacco" and "herbes."
And as he sits in the house with the women, as he steps into this tableau of domestic
merchandise, the difference between England and the New World blurs. In the house of
the Paspahegh "queen," Percy occupies, momentarily, the role of the native planter. The
woman and her children appear as a surrogate family: an image of what Joan Pong Linton
calls the "productive close of … labor" that settlers imagined as the culmination of the
colonial enterprise.[322] Percy's description of native domesticity produces, in the site of
the domestic tableau, a place where English planters and native planters each
imaginatively substitute for the other through the generic frame of romance. The native
family takes the place of the English one – the one that Percy would have had if the
Jamestown settlement were indeed a commercial success. By lingering over scenes of
native domesticity and habitation in the landscape, Percy unintentionally frames them as
fulfillments of the Virginia Company prescription that "the plantacion can never flourish
till families be planted, and the respect of wiues and Children fix the people on the

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[322] Joan Pong Linton, *The Romance of the New World: Gender and the Literary Formations of English Colonialism* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.

Soyle."[323] Percy's interaction with native women and children, and his emphasis on markers of habitation such as towns, gardens, orchards, kitchen work, and cultivated fields (all populated with native inhabitants) hints at the romantic project of "planting families," but presents native families instead of English ones – families that are clearly "fix[ed]" on the land. Thus, while Percy depends on this domestic scene to advertise the fecundity of the land and establish the agricultural prospects of the settlers, he also demonstrates the fact that the Paspahegh laborers are much more "settled" than the English.

Percy's descriptions of Paspahegh husbandry ensure that the Paspahegh's role in his colonial romance does not fall into a Europeanized archetype. The Paspahegh fulfill the role of "planter" in the domestic reinvention of the landscape, but they never collapse into a specific Europeanized body – one that would flatten them into familiarity. In Percy, romance does not crystallize around a single subject – Percy's narrative has a notoriously diffuse subjectivity. Instead, it sets up a range of vacated generic frames or tableaux that can accommodate anyone who meets the generic requirements of "husband," "planter," or "family" when inside of them. These roles are available to native planters and to settlers in Percy's account, positioning the native family – women and children – at the center of the narrative. But while this implied parallelism between native and English planters is set up during the romantic opening of the account, the grounds of this affiliation shift when the genre shifts from the frame of romance into the Starving Time.

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[323] Virginia Company of London, *The Records of the Virginia Company of London*, ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), vol. 3, 493.

By the final pages of the *Discourse*, Percy has abandoned the tropes of generic romance and the tableau frame altogether, and with them his hopes for a colonial future. He, instead, begins to list a series of escalating catastrophes

> The fourth day of September died Thomas Jacob Sergeant. The fifth day, there died Benjamin Beast. Our men were destroyed with cruell diseases as Swellings, Fluxes, Burning Fevers, and by warres, and some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of meere famine … in the morning their bodies trailed out of their Cabines like Dogges to be buried: in this sort did I see the mortalitie of diverse of our people. (933-935)

Here, the gradual death of the settlers from "meere famine" and their transformation into "Dogges" stands in direct contrast to figures of prosperity and industry only a few pages before. The colonists may dwindle down through starvation during the winter, but the native planters seem to remain in perpetual summer, still participants in the generic romance that Percy set up at the beginning of the narrative. This "fertill grownd" (1103) is still there – indicated by the harvest of "Corne, Fish [and] Flesh in great plenty" (934) that the Paspahegh bring the colonists as relief from beyond the borders of Jamestown. But it is increasingly unclear whether this "grownd" and Jamestown are in the same place (or in the same genre). Percy's narrative features two frames superimposed on each other, on the same place but not on the same ground. In one, is the romantic land occupied by native planters and replete with "goodly tall Trees" (924), meddowes" (924), "pleasant springs" (927), "Garden[s]" (929), and "Orchard[s]" (929). On the other, is the "bare cold ground," "miserie," "meere famine," and "miserable distresse" that mark the Starving Time and the remainders of settler occupancy of the colony (933). Percy writes within a narrative that has been displaced from the land he described earlier in his *Discourse*, but

that land still taunts him from the fringes of Jamestown's no-place: the abject location of the settlement community which dwells in famine in a land of "great abundance" (927). Percy's transition from descriptions of native habitation to the unravelling horrors of English unsettlement represent native people in the position of "settlers" and "husbandmen" within colonial romance, while the colonists are positioned against them in a state of abjection and depravity. It is in response to this abjection that Percy desperately attempts to recover settler identity by comparing himself to other European "planters" as Donegan describes. But this attempt is immediately undercut by the real presence of the native planters who are still occupying a land of plenty. The role of "planter" was set up within the generic frame of aspirational New World romance, a position occupied by the Paspahegh who are still *in situ*. The Paspahegh do not become romantic heroes in any formal sense. But Percy's use of genre markers to register their distance from the struggling colony, even as their villages, stable political organization, and flourishing agriculture are just over the horizon, cede the world of romance that his *Discourse* opened with to them.

This is when the "we" of Percy's tale gets confused. If the colonists have indeed become "abject" within the landscape and no longer function as an "I" within it – if they are indeed locked out of "Paradise" (929) and trapped in the dystopic confines of Jamestown – then they are unable to be even called planters. George Percy and the other colonists occupy a space that resists any categorization. They have become ontologically marooned; the more they assert their separation from the "Savages," the more they become corpses (925). Only "unsettlement" marked by death and resistance and enclosure can retain subjectivity, through the long list of English names that mark the

dead colonists.[324] The roles of "English," "colonist," or "planter" mark positions of colonial subjectivity by renouncing them – they are ultimately all listed as a catalogue of corpses. The only remaining point of identification (the only civilization or organized settlement) is the native settlement and the native people that populate and live within it as planters even during the horrors of the Starving Time. The "we" that dissolves into "they," in the case of the colonists' radical ontological disintegration, is crystallized back into a "we" when it describes native civilizations and native success. That is, the "place where meaning collapses" in reference to the colonists is also the place where native stories and native successes become the new center of the colonial account.[325] The "we" radically de-centers and de-authorizes the colonists as the tellers of their story. They become a marginal community not inside or outside their own narrative but on the fringes of another larger and more successful narrative. Native habitation in the landscape ceases to figure the possibility of future colonial success through the imaginative substitution of one "husbandman" or "planter" for another. Instead, it is figured as success full stop and stands in stark contrast to images of colonial failure. Percy's story is indeed about planters but not ones living in the barren confines of Jamestown. Instead, these native planters are thriving in the romantic landscape that Percy initially describes. The narrative is not left as a vacated one, but a populated one – one populated by natives, not colonists. The phenomenological blurriness of Percy's account – that is, its dissolution of boundaries that define an "I" – produces a ground for identification with native tribes after colonial identity has been vacated.

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[324] Donegan, *Seasons of Misery*, 101.
[325] Donegan, 88.

The generic conventions of Percy's romance persist through the Starving Time, but he is no longer able to occupy the ground that they demarcate, catalogue, or describe. He cannot even resort to horizontal identity formation across "planter" classes in a shared heritage of misery, for the role of planter is already being occupied by the native peoples who still reside in the Discourse's land of "great plenty" (934). The frailty of colonial subjectivity here – one that can only express itself either as an absence or through abjection – poses complications for the future that the colonists envision for themselves. For if identity is established relationally within the world of colonial romance, and if the status of "planter" is the only role that the colonists can aspire to as disenfranchised former Englishmen, then the presence of native planters becomes more of a threat than a useful illustration of land value or agricultural potential. Native planters cannot be permitted to exist within the narrative as a coherent subject position – a "we" – in the absence of a colonial one. This is the conclusion that Lord De La Warr comes to when he imposes martial law on the colonists and begins burning native villages in the wake of the Starving Time. Percy begins by "burne[ing] [Paspahegh] howses" and "Cutt[ing] downe their Corne groweing aboutt the Towne," and then proceeds to torch "amongste the rest a Spacyous Temple Cleane and neatly keptt" – all signs of native habitation, domesticity, and husbandry that Percy showcased earlier in his account (1104-1105). It is as if they cannot tolerate the signs of native settlement in the landscape – ones that stand in contradistinction to the settlers' own social disintegration and depravity.

The themes and ideas explored in Lord Mayor's Shows and in Hariot's popular account were being taken up by settlers in later contexts and were part of the long history of indigenous representation in England and the Americas. Indigenous labor (its use,

exportation, and potential benefit to colonists), as well as a provisional identification with colonists and natives as two kinds of "planters," would continue to inflect how indigenous people were represented. As Gavin Hollis reminds us, "from the inception of the Virginia Company – indeed, one year before the founding of Jamestown – Native Americans were being deployed as pitchmen, to speak on its behalf to encourage investment in and migration to the nascent colony."[326] These advocates included actual native people: for instance, Sassacomoit, Maneddo, Skicowaros, Amoret and Tahanedo (all Abenaki), who George Waymouth had kidnapped and transported to England in 1605. These witnesses, in Hollis's reading, served to establish a continuity between native bodies and English bodies, arguing that if native people could thrive in the Virginian landscape, then so too could settlers.[327] But in Percy's account this tendency to retain records of native success as a testament to settlement's prospects, does not rely on a similarity in bodily kind, but in generic kind. Native success is in the genre of romantic fantasy, in descriptions of gardens, homes, and fields that make up the colonial fantasy but contain within them native subjects. George Percy's account, then, does not only take up the visual logic of Hariot's *True Report* (in its framing of native people *in situ*: in the scene of romance) but it also reproduces its link between aesthetic and material labor. In Percy, native people do the generic labor of sustaining the genre of romance that sustains England's hope of a settler future. They keep romance alive, in other words, even as settlers face the desolation, depravity, and isolation. What marks the place of settlement and the indigenous settlements that surround it is, in Percy, a question of genre and of kind as much as it is of culture or race. In fact, genre here becomes itself a marker of

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[326] Hollis, *The Absence of America*, 120.
[327] Hollis, *The Absence of America*, 123.

race. Romance, and specifically the romance logic of festive theatricality, becomes native to indigenous people, while colonists occupy the space of the inventory and of the list.

We can see here a vantage point from settlement's failures to settlement's futures. I have focused here largely on settlement's early history, but the representational modes, the forms of failure that I have detailed here continue into settlement's futures. I have focused on this early literature because of its tendency to move between different generic and literary forms to carve out subject positions before they can be fully represented or inhabitable as positions. I also turn to work before the institutionalization of the New World project, because of the relation that these writers have to Englishness and to England. All of the writers I consider, from Martin Frobisher and Humphrey Gilbert in the 1580s to George Percy in the 1620s, write primarily from an unsettled position. They are not crown subjects, subordinated to a clear institutional hierarchy. They are, instead, merely venturers, dependent on an informal network of investors and merchant companies. Their political context – if they have one at all – is within an indigenous context. And it is this uncertain position that gives them the ability to speak about failure. Later colonial ventures, including the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, of Rhode Island, and later times in the pre-republican period, were still plagued with violence, with famine. These writers lurched uneasily between states of vulnerability, states of exclusion, and the martial state imposed by Lord De La Warre: the turn to genocidal violence. These are the long histories of conquest that Tiffany Lethabo King directs us to in her own work on the Americas.[328] They point us to the intertwined

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[328] Tiffany Lethabo King, "New World Grammars: The 'Unthought' Black Discourses of Conquest," *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (October 12, 2016), https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/article/633275.

destinies of New World planting, from figures of indigenous labor in Thomas Hariot and the history of a burned Paspahegh village to indentured laborers in Virginia and the history of plantation slavery. But this history of conquest is also shot through with failures, and with the vocabularies that attend conditions in extremis. The forms of New World failure appear at many times and in many places. They run through the history of American prose writing, its fixation on conditions of calamity, of exception and exclusion and into Lord Mayor's shows, progresses associated with the London guilds, to the heart of early modern drama itself. Through the crown's seizure of the Jamestown colony in 1622 (the endpoint of my study) to the inception of the American republic, aesthetic work continues to perform real historical work, to reproduce early settlement histories. What begins as an aesthetic or formal distinction – say, between the genre of a Paspahegh village and a ship's inventory, or between a float of "active youths" and a Grocer's stall in London – can quickly become a distinction of nation, of race, or of kind. And a distinction in kind can become an aesthetic difference, a difference marked as a difference of theatricality. If we submit to the notion that English drama was not insular, that it was drawing on and repurposing dramatic forms from abroad, then we must also be willing to see its unwilling concessions to the aesthetic influence of its own colonial enterprise. Forms emerging from settlement's early histories – forms of failure, of catastrophe, of violence, hardship, and loss – exist uneasily alongside discourses of mastery. Critical work on settlement has largely focused on the ambitions of the imperial center, but the forms and conventions of colonial catastrophe took on a second life in popular drama, where they continued to shape perspectives on the New World into the seventeenth century, and beyond.

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