"THE VICES MALE AND FEMALE": RETHINKING THE VICE ON THE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN STAGE

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

The Vice figure retained presence on the early modern stage long after previous studies have argued it disappeared. These studies, following the pattern set by Bernard Spivack's *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (1958), constrain the Vice in teleology and an overemphasis on the literal stage, and thus fail to perceive the places and times the Vice exceeds their impositions. Unbound by these constraints, it becomes clear that the Vice developed with the changing times, gaining advanced metatheatrical properties which reflect back on the tradition for didactic effect, while retaining its utility in representing corruption or manipulation on the stage, a point borne out by the emergence of a distinct female Vice subtype appearing in the 1580s, the Poetomachia and afterwards, which serves less as a clown and more as a moral source of evil.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

This Thesis is entirely the work of Sarah Medea Wells except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE

The Resilience of the Vice

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

The Devil is an Ass by Ben Jonson seems at first glance to evoke the past of English theatre as much as it explores the present. As the title might suggest, the play satirically presents Pug, a devil character who is routinely outwitted by the human characters as he attempts to tempt and corrupt them, leaving him to observe in Act Two: "Can any fiend Boast of / a better Vice than here by nature ... / to hear men such professors / Grown in our subtlest sciences!" (2.2.7-8, 11-12). Pug here compares human beings to the Vice, a stock character of the morality plays which, in the words of David Bevington, constituted:

> a distinct genre of dramatic literature in the tradition of *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Mankind*, flourishing notably in the later fifteenth century and continuing strong into the early and middle years of the sixteenth century. The genre was characterised primarily by the use of allegory to convey a moral lesson about religious or civil conduct, presented through the medium of abstractions or representative social characters. (9)

The morality plays staged personifications of virtues and vices, and, like *The Devil is an Ass*, devils. The Vice and vices are separate, if related, entities. Both represent sin, but Vice as a stock character represents sinfulness per se whereas the vices each represent a specific sin and operate more as a group or, perhaps at a stretch, in the manner of a chorus. The seven deadly sins are characterised in this way in *The Castle of Perseverance,* each representing a specific sin, yet working collaboratively. In contrast, the Vice was seemingly something in-between devil and vice (or, as I will suggest in later chapters, between devil and clown), an entertaining evil character who survived the morality tradition to influence the Elizabethan stage. Bernard Spivack describes the Vice's important role in the earlier tradition: "The moralities wanted a homiletic showman and satirist—a nimble trickster, dissembler, and humorist—on the side of evil" (Allegory 132). This dissertation is chiefly concerned with the role of this villainous trickster and dissembler in the later Elizabethan drama that is conventionally understood as having supplanted medieval theatrical traditions. The seemingly anachronistic presence of the Vice in Jonson's Seventeenth Century play makes for a useful starting point from which to examine the nature of the "Vice tradition" and the perseverance of this figure during the shift from one theatrical paradigm to another.

I say anachronistic, because the common narrative associated with the Vice figure is one of the decline of a figure that is essentially attached to the morality drama. Most of the major scholars

on the Vice before Alan Dessen seem to accept Spivack's notion of the Vice becoming a "diluted hybrid", or dwindling to nothing after a certain point (Greenblatt, 32; Cox 79, Spivack 32-33, 62). In this sense Jonson's Vice, who goes by the name of Iniquity, appears as an oddity, what Spivack calls a "strange appearance among the plays" post-1590 (252). Yet this very strangeness should be the prompt for more questions rather than the end of the matter. In the final appearance of Pug and Iniquity in the play, Pug is taken onto the Vice's back and rides him off stage, which is a comical inversion of a stock image from morality plays: the Vice figure entering while riding a devil. The joke only works, of course, if the audience or, for that matter, the playwright, know the image that it inverts, which prompts me to ask: why should Jonson assume there is any comic mileage to be gained from inverting a stock image that few members of his audience are likely to have ever seen staged in their lifetime? Indeed, why assume that his audiences would even understand the role of the figure that, by modern scholarly reckoning, is supposed to have vanished from the stage decades earlier? It may be tempting to disregard such questions by simply asserting that this is Jonson, after all, a playwright typically characterised as being dismissive of the tastes and knowledge of his audiences. The devil in the detail—or the detail of the devil—demands closer attention, however. Such a specific detail requires that Jonson, and not just his audience, was well aware of the morality play traditions he was inverting. For this to be the case, it is worth asking the related broader question: how strange was the appearance of the Vice in a play in 1616?

Rather than view such appearances as oddities, this dissertation will clearly show that Vice figures were well-used on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. The presence of the Vice in a play as late as *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) appears less like an outlier when it becomes clear that Vice figures also feature prominently in plays across the period, from Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1581) to John Marston's *Histriomastix* (1599), and the fact that Spivack developed the notion of a hybrid Vice to explain the presence of the figure in several of William Shakespeare's plays must already speak to the relative prominence of a dramatic figure long after Spivack and others believe it had fallen into disuse. The first half of my argument, then, is that we can obtain a clearer understanding of the Vice figure by viewing it not as something which declines and decays, but something which develops and grows and adapts according to the needs of the stage. This requires that we abandon all notion of the Vice as something fixed, ephemeral, and clearly defined. The Vice is both less linear, and more diverse than has previously been considered by scholarship.

In addition to demonstrating that the Vice exceeds the bounds imposed on it by scholarship, and the fruits of exploring outside these bounds more broadly, I will also present evidence for a subtype of the Vice hitherto ignored by scholarship as a result of these artificial constraints: the female Vice. While there have of course been female Vice figures examined under the more general

study of the Vice (though arguably such figures have been under-examined), this distinctly female subtype of the Vice functions differently to her better understood counterparts. The most obvious distinction is a diminished significance of the more stagecraft-oriented or clownish activities of the Vice, in favor of an emphasis on functioning as the source of corruption. In this sense, if the Vice can be said to occupy the intersection of the clown and the Devil (as I will argue), the female Vice is far less of the clown, and far more of the Devil.

Naturally, the evidence required to sustain my two main arguments is largely textual in nature. It is predominantly within the plays themselves that we will find both the persistence of the Vice on stage, and the female Vice subtype. To demonstrate this process by which the Vice was taken up by Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, and to examine the diversity of ways in which they adapted the figure for later stages, this dissertation is by necessity heavily focused on close textual analysis.

There has long been a focus during the "cultural turn" in this field on the archive of contextual evidence and its efficacy in providing new avenues for reinterpreting and repositioning the plays of the early modern period (Bruster 4). While I certainly utilize this extensive body of scholarship, my focus in this thesis is on the evidence within the plays themselves. The plays, after all, are themselves a significant archive of contextual evidence, and given that this thesis is primarily concerned with the persistence and nature of the Vice figure on the early modern stage, it should be unsurprising that the majority of my evidence for the ongoing and shifting Vice lies with those very stage texts.

Thus, while this thesis contains extensive critique of the existing scholarship on the Vice, as well as a measure of contextual evidence, the better part of it lies in a series of close readings of the various plays which draw out the ongoing presence of the Vice, obscured from modern audiences, but intimately familiar to the original audiences of the plays. My intention is thus not to return to a mode of scholarship that consists primarily in "the analysis of works considered in isolation" (Bruster, 4); rather, it is to examine each work closely in order to better understand its links to other works that also utilise the same figure, thereby mapping the reach of this figure decades beyond the cultural moment to which it was previously thought to have belonged.

My central argument is that the Vice figure is not so easily contained within the neat definitions of previous scholarship, because it was a living, developing set of stage practices and images which changed over time in response to the changing needs of the stage. The oddity of the Vice Iniquity in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* has been much commented upon, as I will show, and yet still stands at odds with the widespread conception of the Vice figure as a tradition in decline. Only through drilling down to the minutiae of the text can it become possible to explain exactly

how Jonson's clever reversal of the stage image of the Vice riding the devil, or, for example, Richard of Gloucester's assumption of the Vice's role in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, function to an audience who has supposed to have long left behind the Vice figure. My approach of viewing the Vice as something which develops and persists, and seeking to explain the presence of the figure in the later plays rather than to explain them away, perfectly accommodates these later plays. Taken together and not viewed as studies in isolation, these close readings of the plays allow me to situate the later Vices as part of an ongoing tradition, rather than as vestigial elements of a dead or dying stage practice, or pretentious references to the theatre of the past on the part of Jonson, Shakespeare and their contemporaries. Most significantly, this broader aerial view, constructed from a series of close readings, allows me to identify relatively localised shifts, such as the emergence in a cluster of plays of a female Vice figure, on which I will concentrate later sections of this dissertation. Instead of one-off references, these later uses of the Vice can thus be understood as contributing to and shaping a persistent cultural phenomenon, a view which arguably better accounts for the vibrant and complex Vices of post-1580 theatre.

One benefit of this approach is that it will enable me to shift the focus to some extent away from Shakespeare but not simply for the sake of demanding that we pay more attention to his coevals. The goal will rather be to situate Shakespeare's work within a broader theatrical tradition that continues beyond his work as well. Instead of writing off the Richard example as perhaps an isolated reference to an old tradition, I can demonstrate that Richard's function as the Vice is in fact far more integral to the character and the world of the play and, furthermore, I can show that the play therefore engages with that older tradition in vibrant and meaningful ways which, in turn, inform later developments. Jonson's Vice Iniquity, for all that it is over a decade later, can thus also not be so easily dismissed as a throwaway reference. While the Vice and Devil plot of *The Devil is an Ass* is comparatively smaller than the plots involving the human characters, it underpins Jonson's whole argument about the wickedness of the city in a manner that is captured neatly in two key reversals of the Vice and devil stage image. The first in the opening scene implies that it is devils, not humans, who need to learn sin, as the Vice treats the devil Pug like his human ward, offering to "teach thee cheat, child, to cog, lie, and swagger, / And ever and anon to be drawing forth thy dagger" among other things. The second is in Pug and Iniquity's final departure from the play, as we have seen, in a reversal of a familiar stage image of the Vice leaving the play on the Devil's back. Iniquity self-consciously makes a note of this, continuing to underpin Jonson's point that evil has outgrown devils: "The devil was wont to carry away the evil; / But now the evil out-carries the devil." These stage images imply the continuance of the Vice tradition at least until around 1616, not simply because Jonson uses them in this 1616 play, but because his whole point,

not to mention the jokes in those reversals, were carried by a stage image which would need to have been recognisable to his audience. Far from dying out decades earlier, the Vice tradition would need to be ongoing and comprehensible to the audience of 1616. *The Devil is an Ass* could not have been an isolated throwback, but a continuance of the Vice tradition in which Shakespeare, and many others, play a part.

Where then did the notion of the Vice's decline come from? The received narrative of the Vice in decline at this time is largely the result of the work of Bernard Spivack, the scholar who "wrote the book" on the Vice figure, so to speak. His *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* (1958) is perhaps the most significant work in this particular field of study, and a foundational book that sets up all further research on the Vice tradition. A recognition of the Vice was evidently not very widespread at the time Spivack was writing, given the rather mysterious way in which he presents his material; he holds back on naming the figure in the early chapters, instead alluding to "this figure who appears at least four times in Shakespeare ... the hybrid product of two conventions that met and merged in him," calling the Vice-figures in Shakespeare collectively the "family of Iago" (25, 47). This suggests Shakespeare's Iago as the core of Spivack's book, and the entry point for his argument. As "the family of Iago" might suggest, Iago is not alone, and from this character, Spivack draws several parallels to other Shakespearean characters: Aaron the Moor, Don Jon, and Richard III. Having established the Vice (or at least hybrid descendants of the Vice), through establishing the "family of Iago", Spivack proceeds to examine the history of this figure, as well as its key attributes (35, 32).

For all that Spivack does to introduce the various qualities of the Vice—his special relationship with the audience, facility with dissembling, propensity towards absurd weeping and laughter, and his demonstration of sin—what ultimately makes Iago a Vice-figure for Spivack is the nonsensical impetus for his actions: "Iago's conventional motives are at once unmistakably valid and unmistakably invalid […] Is it possible that we are dazzled by the simultaneous reality and unreality of these motives only because we are victims of an illusion which merges into one figure the person to whom they do belong and another person to whom they do not belong?" (28-9). Read in this way, Iago's "motives" are a part of a mask, and Iago "grows more vivid as he discards the human garments to which literal criticism clings in its baffled effort to apprehend them" (21). For Spivack, Iago is a hybrid between the kind of "realistic" character he supposes were populating the Shakespearean stage (as if the characters were real people, with psychological complexity), and the Vice, the most popular of the characters from the Morality drama; and therein lies the problem. Spivack subordinates the earlier tradition to the later, seeing in the Vice a greater secularity as he progresses on the stage and becomes more "realistic." This is comparable to the view of David

Bevington who subscribes to a similar school of thought in his 1962 book *From Mankind to Marlowe*, where he argues for the gradual secularisation of the morality play: "Its emphasis became increasingly secular in the mid-sixteenth century, preaching lessons of civil, rather than religious conduct" (10).

Similarly, while Spivack goes into great detail about the origins and nature of the Vice, he paints it as a transcendent archetype which theatre achieved only for a while before the figure was diluted and swallowed up by what he regarded as the "literal" Elizabethan stage. Indeed, it seems as if he sees the Vice tradition as immediately in decline with the passing of the allegorical to a literal theatrical paradigm. In an article published in *Shakespeare Quarterly* a year earlier, he had already closed off the possibility of the survival of the allegorical figures of the morality era when he described the melding of allegorical figures with "literal" figures, such as the mankind figure, and noted that: "None of the surviving moralities maintains this allegorical purity, which dictates that a substance and its personified accidents cannot appear together as parallel entities" (Spivack, "Falstaff," 452). His concern in his 1958 book was with the homiletic nature and purpose of the Vice in morality plays, and he tied the Vice's decline to the twin rises of secularisation and "the demand of his age for what in our one is called 'realism.'" (Spivack, *Shakespeare*, 44). Indeed, the advent of secularisation and what he calls "realism," or the "literal" stage, seem to go together for Spivack, as scarcely in his book is one discussed far from a discussion of the other. This archetypal Vice is problematic, because it obscures the actual nature of the stage figure, which is nothing so transcendent or tightly defined, but rather an organic response to the needs of the stage which changes and grows and manifests in different ways over time. In much the same way that pre-Shakespearean drama is sometimes read as specifically "pre-Shakespearean", with a sense of the inevitability of Shakespearean drama, so too can the Vice be seen as an inevitable outgrowth to which drama first advanced, and then gradually outgrew.

The influence of Spivack's work cannot be overstated, as much of what he identifies regarding the Vice remains accepted among most scholars to this day, and every scholar writing on the topic deals with him in some manner. Some scholars, such as Leah Scragg, Mathew Winston, and Charlotte Steenbrugge, cite him virtually unchallenged as the authority on this subject. Steenbrugge, for example, in her 2014 book *Staging Vice: A Study of Dramatic Traditions in Medieval and Sixteenth-century England and the Low Countries* takes Spivack's position as a given, though admittedly her focus is more on Dutch traditions and how they compare to the English Vice. For her it is Spivack who stands in for the study of the Vice, alongside W.M.H. Hummelen, her expert for the Dutch counterpart to the Vice, and she does not directly challenge either of them; rather, she investigates "diachronic developments and synchronic comparisons

between these characters" (9). Scragg, on the other hand, challenges Spivack's designation of Iago as derived from the Vice, arguing that he is instead derived from stage devils, but she takes Spivack's own definitions of the Vice and its distinctions from the devil as a given, instead relying on the inconsistencies in Spivack's reading of the figures to sustain her argument.

Winston contrarily notes Spivack's success in establishing a connection between the Vice and Iago, but is critical of the fact that he "completely ignores *Troilus and Cressida, All's Well That Ends Well,* and *Measure for Measure,* the plays that immediately surround Othello" (229). Winston's "Craft against Vice" (1981) begins with a neat summary of the work done in this field, suggesting that several critics "have helped to develop a new sense of what I call the continuity of perceptual set, or how the dramatist's and audience's familiarity with earlier plays shaped their expectations and perceptions" (229). This notion fits directly in with what I am exploring: to use his language, I am examining the growth and development of that portion of the "perpetual set" which pertains to the Vice tradition. Additionally, he acknowledges the problems of such study, that "it is impossible to prove what overtones are actually present; all we can do is accumulate a mosaic of supportive, but never conclusive, evidence" (229). By contrast, I would argue that more can indeed be done to extract additional, potentially conclusive evidence via more detailed close reading. Ultimately, Winston's work is one of extension, rather than challenge, and Spivack is taken as the authority on most key aspects of the definition of the Vice, which stymies closer textual analysis.

Some scholars do critique Spivack's work in order to pave the way for undertaking their own approaches. John D. Cox shares Spivack's notion that the Vice's stage presence ends (or at least severely diminishes) sometime around 1580 (71). Cox's attention lies elsewhere, however, as his book *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama* (2000) looks back on the scholarship of devil figures, vices, and the Vice, noting a tendency towards historical teleology and evolutionary narratives (40). He critiques Spivack's narrative which paints the Vice as a more secular figure than the devils, a figure which inexorably grows in popularity and supplants the devil figures as society becomes more secular, at the cost of the Vice itself becoming a diluted hybrid as the Vice is forced to become more human to survive on a changing stage. Cox examines this perspective alongside that of Bevington who, as I have noted, also carries these evolutionary assumptions, and observes that both Spivack and Bevington seem to be indebted to E. K. Chambers who, in his 1903 *The Medieval Stage*, "began with an oppositional scheme that interpreted stage devils in a narrative of teleological secularization" (Cox 1, 40-1). Cox argues instead that upholding the community was a religious act under a world view in which religious and spiritual notions were permeated throughout everyday life, as was the thinking tied to the morality tradition (Cox 10-12). Indeed, this is not the only issue Cox takes with Spivack and Bevington's arguments concerning the morality drama and

the Vice. For Cox this story of a so-called secular Vice replacing devils is problematic, for while "the morality play authors preferred the Vice," the devil preferring mystery plays continued to be staged throughout the same period, and "devils continued to be staged ... long after the Vice had become unfashionable" (77). This is true even within the Morality play itself, as devils are likewise staged more frequently in the later tradition, "they do not somehow give way to vices as the morality play "progressed," "developed," or "matured." Cox concludes that "it would be more accurate to say that in the course of the sixteenth century vices eventually gave way to devils" (40). For Cox, then, the Vice is simply "a phase in the history of stage devils, rather than an evolutionary stage in a story of growth and development" (77). While I agree with his critique of Spivack, this subordination of the Vice to the devil tradition is not without its problems which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Four, in which I will argue instead that some re-examination is needed of what constitutes stage devils and Vices, and the sometimes blurry border between them.

David Wiles takes a more measured approach, critiquing some aspects, while accepting Spivack's general argument, but like Cox his attention is focused elsewhere; in this case, the clown tradition. In *Shakespeare's Clown* (1987), Wiles follows in Robert Weimann's footsteps somewhat, accepting his notion of the folk origins in the Vice's ancestry, in particular tracing the Vice to the "fool of folk festivals" (3). Wiles begins his book by observing that "The Clown's ancestry in the Tudor 'Vice' is a generally accepted fact of theatre history. The precise nature of the Tudor 'Vice' is less clear" (1). This sets the scene for comparisons between the two figures, before Wiles proceeds to a reading of *Mankind* which challenges Spivack's evolutionary perspective: "The complexity of *Mankind* is an important corrective to the evolutionary perspective ... Bernard Spivack's argument that the Vice originates as *radix malorum* finds no support in this play" (2). The notion of the *radix malorum* is central to Spivack's assertion that the Vice was originally a leader-vice whose sin was the root of all the evils in the play, and though it does not appear to feature strongly in *Mankind*, as Wiles argues, it can be seen in some of the later plays which I will examine in this dissertation. Indeed, the distinction between the stagecraft elements of the Vice and the Vice's role as moral source of evil is one of the key points raised in my study of a distinct type of female Vice.

In his book, Wiles proceeds to compare the Vice to various folk figures, such as the Lord of Misrule, figures he also applies to the clown (3, 110); but though "the word 'vice' is often used as a synonym for fool in the sixteenth century" (4), a notion backed by Charlotte Steenbrugge, who notes that "[vice] was used in court records seemingly to refer to fools and jugglers" (Steenbrugge 31), Wiles stops short of conflating these two figures. Instead, he draws a sharp distinction:

> The contrast between the Vice and the misrule traditions becomes plain when we compare [Tarlton's] clowning with that of his fellow comedian and improvisator in the Queen's Men, Robert Wilson […] While the Vice's art lies in adroit metamorphoses, the clown is a constant, equally vacuous in any situation […] While the Vice exists in a moral/philosophical dimension, the clown exists in a social dimension. While the Vice represents a negative pole in relation to virtue and wisdom, the clown is a negative pole in relation to urbanity and status. (22-3)

Just as the Vice is established by Spivack and others as connected but distinct from the devil tradition, Wiles here establishes both a connection and distinction between Vice and clown, allowing a comparison of the two to exist without confusing the two figures. It should thus be acknowledged that Wiles challenges Spivack in many areas, such as his claim that the notion of the *radix malorum* has no support in *Mankind* (2), or in his observation that "When Spivack writes of morality drama that 'such a stage was fundamentally a pulpit and its audience fundamentally a congregation', he ignores the fact that early interludes generally used an unbounded *platea* rather than a raised stage. There was no physical line of demarcation to set apart the fictive world of the play from the real world of the audience" (3). He also challenges to some degree Spivack's attempts to subsume the Vice wholly into the allegorical, noting that: "In *Hickscorner*, the fantastic illogicality of Hickscorner, Freewill and Imagination is not in any obvious sense the product of an allegorical imagination" (3). Yet he accepts Spivack's etymology of Heywood's "un-Vice-like" Vices, and shares his view that they are something else, taking them not as Vices but as clowns: "Heywood has here taken the first step in detaching the stage clown from the morality tradition." (4). This underlines the issue that Wiles largely accepts Spivack's narrative because he is not so much interested in the Vice as he is in the clown.

One scholar who directly challenges Spivack, and who is predominantly concerned with the Vice, is Alan Dessen. Rather than adhering to Spivack's notion of the Vice's decline or falling ultimately into agreement with Spivack's narrative of the Vice as diluted or persistent on a stage as a hybrid to "explain" later references to the figure, Dessen argues that the Vice tradition and allegory persisted beyond the point which Spivack and those who've followed him have set for the Vice's decline. Dessen is also concerned with the tendency of scholarship to construct the morality tradition in terms of decline to the "literal" stage: "Many scholars, valuing irony and verisimilitude over didacticism and allegory, have viewed the late moralities (or 'pre-Shakespearean drama' in general) as the last gasp of an expiring medieval tradition soon to be dispossessed by 'the triumph of realism'" ("Homilies" 243). Dessen builds on this reasoning later in his chapter, focusing on how

the morality develops, rather than "degenerates" ("Homilies" 252). Through this lens the surprisingly fruitful presence of the Vice in periods like the decade of the 1580s or during the Poetomachia at the turn of the century becomes part of a narrative of growth and development, connecting the late Vices of Jonson and Shakespeare to the Vice of the morality plays. Dessen's framework allows a broader understanding of the morality tradition persisting well beyond its supposed historical limits. This provides the foundation for a reconsideration of the Vice in this regard, which is the primary objective of this thesis. Looking at the Vice tradition as something developing and growing in this period instead of seeing it as merely a prelude to later drama allows us to discover new aspects and elements previously ignored, such as a distinct and female Vice-type which functions differently from the Vice figures more familiar to scholarship.

The purpose of Dessen's study, in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays*, of the impact of the moral tradition on Elizabethan drama was not to "[present] to the reader a didactic Shakespeare or an allegorical Shakespeare (or a slavish Shakespeare who merely followed in the footsteps of the moral dramatists), nor do I support any reductive treatment of his characters and images (as in Spivack's conclusions about Richard III and Iago)" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 167). Rather, he was attempting to bridge "the gap between modern assumptions and the actual evidence" regarding moral plays, and, more importantly, to open up further models through which early modern theatre could be examined and understood by means of broadening our understanding of the elements of moral drama which may have influenced the Elizabethan playwrights (Dessen, *Late Moral* 10):

> Many features of this moral drama were then superseded or rejected in the age of Shakespeare (and no one laments the passing of fourteener couplets as the poetic norm), but, as argued throughout this book, some features or paradigms were still available as models to be adapted for later use by Shakespeare and his contemporaries (e.g. Humanum Genus, dual protagonists, the public Vice and the two phased action). Particularly in the late moral drama of Shakespeare's boyhood, other resources also were available for solving various problems in theatrical presentation, problems that did not disappear in the 1590s. (Dessen, *Late Moral* 139)

While Dessen deals with two particular models in great detail, the two-phased play, and the dual protagonists, I am more interested in the ways the Vice figure persisted beyond the late moral drama.

There are gains to be made, I propose, by considering some key points of intersection between Dessen's work and that of Charlotte Spivack, Bernard's wife and fellow scholar, who

included some consideration of the Vice in *The Comedy of Evil on Shakespeare's Stage* (1978). The focus of her study is the nature of "the comedy of evil," including the propensity for characters like the Vice to be both comical and evil. For Charlotte Spivack this co-appearance of comedy and evil is understandable given the "definition of evil [which] remained remarkably constant from the origin of Christianity to its intellectual decline in the seventeenth century ... [that] evil has no reality but is defined precisely as the diminution or privation of reality" (14). This being the case the response to evil for the medieval mind is clear: "taught that evil is not what it seems to be, that it is really nearest destruction when it seems to be soaring with success, that it is literally approaching nothingness when it seems to be everything, medieval man could not do otherwise than laugh at the fundamental absurdity of evil" (26). Her argument is more compelling than this brief overview can perhaps portray, and it has interesting implications for my study. If the origin of the Vice as the comic master showman lies in the medieval conception of evil as self-defeating and absurd even when it appears strongest, what does that say about Jonson's Vice and devils who are self-defeated without appearing strong at all? More to the point, it can provide a useful lens through which to read a Vice-derived character like Falstaff (in Shakespeare's *Henry* plays), who makes a show of strength while visibly succumbing to age and weakness. Charlotte Spivack's argument concerning the comedy of evil characters certainly also seems consistent with Alan Dessen's observations concerning the two-phase Vice play in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays*.

To briefly summarise the point where Dessen's work intersects with Charlotte Spivack's, Dessen was examining a tendency for Vice figures in late moral plays to appear in control and powerful in the first "phase" of the play, enjoying the Vice's typical audience interactions, but be very much diminished in the second "phase" in response to the advent of a positive counter to their power:

> The spectator was therefore regularly confronted with a lively, often funny figure who sets up a special bond with his audience and then acts out with wit, energy, and comic violence the power of some corrupting force upon society (e.g., Covetousness, Revenge, Newfangledness, Infidelity, Inclination) only to be defeated or transcended in the play's final movement […] Quite a few plays, then, exhibit a consistent pattern: a jesting Vice, who embodies a force that threatens society as a whole, brandishes his dagger of lath and has his moments of fun and dominance (often while one or more victims are led into sin) only to be arrested or eclipsed in a second climactic movement that brings him, his weapon, and what he has come to represent under control. As in the various allusions, the Vice can be both jester and threat, for his is a

> "dangerous sport" that initially entertains us but, in the long run, has ominous implications. (Dessen, *Late Moral* 24)

This is the format of the two-phased play: the Vice at first appears in power and entertains the audience, his comedy presenting the very problem of the Vice's comedy which both Charlotte Spivack and Dessen are addressing. But the comedy is ultimately limited and contained in the second phase as the Vice is countered by the positive forces in the play. The comedy of the Vice is thus presented as the very futile, self-defeating comedy of evil which Charlotte Spivack puts forward.

In support of his construction of the two-phased Vice play Dessen lists the plays *King Darius* (1565), *Nice Wanton* (1550), *The Trial of Treasure* (1567) (whose Vice is contained twice, first by Just and Sapience, only to be released by Lust, and then contained by Just again!), John Pickering's *Horestes* (1567) whose Revenge is abruptly banished by the appearance of Amity (25-7). He also cites Thomas Garter's *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (1569), whose Vice Ill Report attempts to pass himself off as "Will" Report when he is ultimately countered by True Report (whom he tries and fails to convince is "Hugh" Report). Dessen observes:

> In *Susanna,* as is typical of these plays, the formerly successful comic violence and disruption now are brought under control […] Then, instead of going directly to Hell, the Vice is taken off to be hanged, and the Devil enters to forecast Ill Report's fate in Hell owing to his failure to destroy Susanna. Again, the same figure that had controlled the action (and entertained the audience) throughout much of the play is judged, arrested, and taken off for hanging in a final phase characterized by an ideal judge, Daniel, and the Vice's symbolic opposite, True Report. (26)

Here, then, are the two pillars of Dessen's argument: the public Vice and the two phase play. The Vice representing the ills of a whole society appears to dominate in the first phase, only to be opposed and brought to account in the second phase by a better armed virtuous force, leading to containment, death or damnation (via leaving on the devil's back) of the Vice. He ties the memory of these stage images to the memory of the structure of the plays they appeared in: "That the dagger of lath and the exit to Hell are remembered well in the next generation is then a tribute to both the energy of the dominant Vice in phase one and the importance of his fate in phase two when his dagger fails him and only Hell or hanging lies ahead" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 37). The comic violence and disruption of these Vices is thus tied by Dessen inextricably to their ultimate downfall, which

he uses to offer a fresh examination of the defeat of Richard of Gloucester in *Richard III* (an otherwise much examined example of Shakespeare's use of the tradition), arguing that Richmond is for Richard what True Report is for Ill Report (46-52).

Dessen thus provides a more complex picture of the later Vice figure by observing the dual nature of the Vice, being both a comic character and "the Evil" (19). However, I would argue that Dessen still doesn't go far enough. For all the acknowledgements he makes of the continuance of the older traditions, he seems hesitant at times to break down the barriers between what might be called Elizabethan "literal" drama and the allegorically charged traditions which are the concern of this study. In the opening to *Jonson's Moral Comedy*, for example, Dessen notes: "Certainly there is little profit in combing through Jonson's plays in the hope of reducing his successful comic creations to moral abstractions in order to prove a point" before proceeding to explore the allegorical remnant in Jonson's work (41). In a later work, "Allegorical Action in Elizabethan Staging," he argues for the persistence of allegorical elements beyond the line demarcated by Spivack and others, and suggests there may have been gestures and practices which would have been familiar to the audience, but are lost to us due to the often text-bound relationship we have with the plays.

All of these scholars seem to miss, to varying degrees, the ongoing Vice tradition, and, more to the point, the state of the tradition as a living, growing stage practice, rather than a decaying relic of a previous age's theatre. In light of the eminence of some of the scholars who do not perceive the persistence of the Vice, it might seem improbable that the Vice tradition could indeed have been continuing at this time. But the evidence from a significant number of plays clearly shows that it is, and it has eluded the scholars I have mentioned because each of them has something which draws them away from simply looking at the Vice. Spivack is too literary, and too caught up in the textual Vice. It is far easier to draw a line between "literal" characters named Aaron or Richard and allegorical characters named things like Lust or Iniquity, when you are examining a printed work; far harder, I suggest, when these characters are before you on the stage carrying out familiar routines and practices. Dessen is perhaps the opposite: he focuses on the persistence of the stage practices of the allegorical, to some degree at the expense of the recognition of the consistency of a stage figure, despite its shifting and developing nature. Cox, Wiles, and Steenbrugge have their own focuses, be it devils, clowns, or the Dutch *sinnekens*, and though the first two challenge Spivack to some degree, they do it in passing rather than to overhaul our understanding of the Vice figure.

As such, the key to this project is to keep the focus on the Vice, and discern just what it is. Through this process, it is important to keep my key notions in mind: that the Vice is better viewed through the lens of development and change rather than painted as a static type which declined and

diluted. Furthermore, and perhaps the key discovery of this research bears out the notion that the Vice figure exists in more forms than scholarship has acknowledged, as my later chapters will demonstrate through an exploration of a distinct female Vice-type which serves as a corrupt commander or source of evil. This type is exemplified by Lady Lucre of *The Three Ladies of London*, who functions as that play's *radix malorum* or source of evil, and as leader of the Vices in the play, yet leaves the more familiar knavery of the Vice figure to her subordinate Vices, especially Dissimulation. We see this figure again appearing in other plays of the period, yet because she is different in nature to the more commonly observed Vice (though arguably not different in essence) this figure has been thus far overlooked by a scholarship with a too-tight conception of what the Vice figure is.

It is important for me to clarify that I am not going to be arguing for a specific date or time the use of the Vice figure died out. It is both beyond the scope of this project, and antithetical to my primary approach of viewing the Vice through the lens of development rather than decline. But what I am arguing is that the evidence present in plays beyond the scope ordinarily set for the Vice figure speak to the figure's persistence. Indeed, as my discovery of a subtype in the female Vices of some of these later plays suggests, and as my central argument implies, the Vice exceeds both the temporal and interpretive bounds which have been imposed upon it. This is particularly noteworthy and potent in the metatheatrical tricks of Jonson and Wilson, which play on the audience's understanding of the tradition—Jonson through a reversal of the Vice riding the devil stage image in order to hammer home his central thesis that the evil of London has overtaken even the devils; and Wilson through deploying within a play lorded over by moral Vices a play within a play which contains a stage Vice the stage audience rejects.

But beyond these advanced metatheatrical tricks—which double down on the Vice's own tradition of metatheatricality—the Vice far exceeds the limits which scholarship has placed upon it, and is thus in need of further examination. The tendency to wrap the Vice up in neat definitions, often around audience interaction or clowning, has led previous scholars to overlook a species of Vice which deemphasises these stagecraft aspects in favour of serving as a moral source of evil and corruption. The female Vice is best typified by Wilson's Lady Lucre in *The Three Ladies of London* (1581) and Venus alias Lust in *The Cobler's Prophecy* (printed 1594), though I have found related characters in Lady Pride of John Marston's *Histriomastix,* and Shakespeare's Maria (*Twelfth Night*) who is female Vice in function more so than in identity. This female Vice is the focus of my final chapters, and represents one of the major discoveries yielded by my research into the Vice figure. The sequence of chapters thus divides neatly in two, with the first part concerned predominantly with the persistence of the Vice figure beyond the point set for its dissolution, but also examining

the cluster of traits, stage practices, and images covered by the term "Vice"; and the second part is concerned with a discovery that builds on this foundation by zeroing in on the female-Vice subtype, and exploring its distinct qualities. This product of my approach, revealed when we turn from requiring the Vice tradition to be but a lingering trace, suggests the strength of this approach, and I suggest opens up new avenues for investigating the Vice figure.

As I began this project with Jonson's late plays in mind, it seems fitting to begin with his work by way of introduction to the topic, and many of the issues involved, in Chapter Two. This will set the pattern for my project, which only loosely follows the chronology of the plays in favour of following more closely the flow of ideas about the Vice. I begin my chapter on Jonson with an introduction to many of the scholarly readings I will be challenging in this dissertation, which are problematised by the oddity of the Vice figure in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*. My analysis in this chapter feeds into the sense of the Vice as exceeding the bounds set for the Vice figure by looking at the way Jonson deploys his Vice: firstly, in an introduction which seems initially to prepare the audience for a Vice play. The audience sees upon stage a devil with his Vice in hand ready to work through this Vice for the corruption of humanity. Reading the play outside of its original context, and with the advantage of hindsight, it is obvious to the contemporary reader that *The Devil is an Ass* is not the play that the opening scene seems to be introducing. To the early modern audience, however, this is a subversion of their expectations which plays into Jonson's major point about the role of vice in London. This subversion presupposes an understanding on the part of the audience which itself suggests the Vice as ongoing rather than defunct. The joke only works if the Vice itself was still a familiar figure on the early modern stage, as I have indicated here already. Moreover, the ongoing relationship between audiences and the figure is further suggested by the manner in which Jonson reverses the common stage image of the Vice riding the devil, which can be demonstrated in even more detailed examination of the play. The presence of the stage image in this play has certainly been noted by scholarship, but I would argue that the importance of its presence for the continuance of the Vice tradition has not been fully appreciated.

Parallel to this main point about the continuance of the Vice tradition are what *The Devil is an Ass*, and Jonson's other oft quoted play concerning vices, *The Staple of News* (1625), can tell us about the relationship between the Vice, evil, comedy, and the devil. One key image Jonson produces, and what I would argue is his masterstroke in *The Devil is an Ass*, is the contrast made between the two demonic possessions in the play: the one very familiar to scholarship at the end of the play which is performed by Fitzdotterel (who serves largely as the gormless target of the mischief in the play) with the assistance of human scoundrels, and succeeds in deceiving a human judge; and the other performed by the play's devil Pug throughout most of the play, which fails

because it lacks the theatre of devilry. Through presenting evil and the Vice in this way Jonson decentralises the Vice, and suggests that vice, as the substance of demonic or evil power, is already present in London among the people, beyond just the specific character so labelled "the Vice". This is certainly also a characteristic of *The Staple of News* in which it is noted that the Vices are "attir'd like / Men and Women o' the time, the Vices Male and Female!" a remark which speaks also to my discovery of the distinct female-Vice type as I will address in my later chapters (*Second Intermean* 17-18). This suggests the dual notion that the Vice with all its stage imagery and recognisable characteristics continued to carry currency among the audiences well into the 1620s, but that the Vice also became able to present as a literal character without such imagery, and *still remain the Vice*. These are all key themes of this dissertation which are each explored in greater detail as my argument proceeds. But crucial to this section is the notion that the ongoing understanding of the Vice tradition which Jonson expects from his audience in *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News* suggests that scholarly narratives relying on a Vice tradition in decline have fallen short.

As I have suggested, the persistence of the Vice figure is one of two key issues I will be exploring in the coming chapters. Works like Spivack's and Cox's see the Vice in terms of decline and establish a sense of the Vice figure becoming diluted and unpalatable to the early modern stage. Chapter Three deals with the thread of Spivack's key arguments in *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* which, despite its age, is still frequently used as the "go-to" text for addressing the Vice figure. While there is much in the book which holds true—indeed I reference his work frequently throughout this dissertation—there are also serious issues with the way he defines the Vice figure, and the assumptions he makes. At this point it may seem that my argument is based on a simple redefinition of the Vice, which of course yields a range of new references to the Vice and new ways of looking at it; this is not the case. How I would contrast my work with Spivack's is that I would seek not a clear-cut definition of the Vice, but rather an understanding of what the early modern audiences and playmakers understood by "the Vice," particularly the nature of that understanding in the later plays involving the figure. Spivack writes almost as if there is some ideal, transcendent Vice whom later Vice-derived characters can only bastardise; it is this position I will challenge in my early chapters, arguing that the definition of the Vice is far more nebulous and mutable than has been accepted.

I trace Spivack's understanding of the development of the Vice figure from his notion of an "arch-Vice" which was derived from the vices of the moralities, a pattern he finds clearly played out in Covetousness from *The Castle of Perseverance* (1400-1425). However, his other example, Titivillus from *Mankind* (1465-1470) is no Vice at all, but a Devil, one Spivack is forced to adopt by his own teleological argument. This introduces an issue which plagues Spivack's work: he is

forced to downplay the stage devils in favour of the Vice, despite devils sharing many of the Vice's most noteworthy traits, even in plays that predate the Vice. This feature of his argument becomes a focus for the critique of his work by Cox and others, as we have seen. The second major issue with Spivack's idealised and teleological construction of the Vice is that he is forced to dismiss the first characters designated as "*the Vyce*" in the dramatis personae because they do not fit his rather static understanding of what the Vice figure is. This is quite a stark instance of a scholar telling the early modern play-makers they are using their own terms incorrectly, and should be a clear signal that something has gone amiss in Spivack's argument, and in his definition of the Vice.

The negotiation between the Vice, and similar figures such as devils and clowns, and the ways they overlap, is perhaps key to understanding the nature of the Vice figure. This is the topic of my forth chapter. In particular I establish their difference by looking at signifiers associated with each of these figures, some of which do overlap, but many (particularly costuming) which establish them as essentially separate, and therefore recognised as distinct by the audiences of early modern plays. I do, however, acknowledge the strong overlaps in the stage practice of the Vice and the devil, a feature which complicates any reading of characters not specifically designated as either Vice or devil as the Vice. This is certainly the case with Shakespeare's Iago, whom Spivack takes as a prototypical Vice in his book, a position which has been challenged by Scragg, who reads Iago as derived from devils, largely on the basis of Spivack's own definitions of the Vice. Central to this conflict over the identity of Iago is their shared notion that the Vice is essentially amoral, lacking in motivation beyond demonstrating the art of corruption. Any other "motives" attached to the action of the Vice, Spivack has argued, are just the seeping corruption of the Vice conceding to literal and human characteristics. This is a position I challenge, pointing to the clear motivations in plays too early to harbour such corruptions of the figure, motivations that complicate any attempt to construct the Vice figure as completely aloof and abstract. One key example comes from a line in *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* which Spivack uses to justify this very position: "My selfe will blow the leaden Trumpe of cruell slaunderous fame, / Lo thus my Dad I please I trow, and thus my nature showe". Spivack makes much of the Vice's motive being to show his nature, but completely ignores the first part of the line, the Vice's desire to please his "Dad." As that quote likewise suggests, it is not just the similarities of the figures which is of concern, but their relationship, for those Vices which appear with devils are very much tied into the heirarchy and kinship of devils, as my examples from *The Devil is an Ass* would suggest.

Having dealt thorougly with Vice and devil, I close out Chapter Four with an examination of the relationship between Vice and clown, drawing on the work of Wiles. This particular issue will become significant in my later examination of *The Three Ladies of London* where the distinction

between the clown Simplicity and the Vices, Dissimulation in particular, is starkest. Nevertheless, the clown and Vice have the strongest overlap in costume, with the key distinction between the figures being the darker element the Vice has through its relationship with devils. The thread of Chapters Two and Three culminate in an examination of the manner in which scholarship has defined—and thereby constrained our understanding of—the Vice. Concordantly, in Chapter Five I proceed to pull together an understanding of the Vice figure, building both on the foundation of the the earlier chapters and the qualities other scholars have identified in the various plays in which the Vice or Vice figures feature. The focus of this chapter is exploring many commonly accepted ideas about the Vice figure, and attempting to achieve at least a rough sense of the figure in the absence of a clear-cut, set in stone definition, something which can allow us to continue to identify the figure in appearances where it is not clearly demarcated as such. I begin this chapter with an examination of the Vice's origins, touching briefly on the connection to folk elements before examining the morality play itself, and the serious issues with the notion of morality play introduced particularly by Bevington and Dessen: namely, that "morality play" is not early modern terminology, but what later scholarship has imposed on a grouping of similar plays. In dealing with the morality play, and the impositions of scholarship, I also look at the manner in which such plays considered inferior to later drama, and indeed read in terms of "leading to" later drama in much the same way that the Vice figure itself is read in terms of what it leads to in later plays, particularly those of Shakespeare. This brings me to the supposed decline of the Vice figure itself, and the viewpoint found in the work of Spivack and those who have followed his line of thinking that the Vice figure becomes diluted and dies out.

In Chapter Six I examine the persistence of Shakespeare's engagement with the Vice tradition across most of his career, briefly summarising some of the key readings made regarding the presence of the Vice and the allegorical tradition in plays throughout his career, and filling in some of the under-examined instances of the Vice figure in his plays with readings of my own. Dessen's *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Play* offers fresh readings of the most prominent of Shakespeare's Vices, Richard III and Falstaff—both of whom are identified with the Vice in their respective plays—while simultaneously observing that it is not fresh thinking to connect these figures to the Vice. But while Shakespeare is perhaps the most discussed author with regard to the ongoing allegorical and Vice traditions, there are still aspects which have been missed, or not examined to their fullness. I approach this body of work chronologically, beginning with *Titus Andronicus*, and a reading of Aaron the Moore as the Vice Lust, mounting not just Tamora, but an entire family who are caught in his corrupting framework, and who act as extensions of his vice. His function as Lust mirrors that of "Venus alias Lust" in Wilson's *Cobbler's Prophecy* and serves

as an interesting frame of comparison to her, a notion I explore in more detail in my explication of the female Vice. *Richard III* likewise casts Richard as a Vice, a reading familiar to scholars. Rather than waste time reinventing the many breakdowns of Richard's traits as the Vice I will instead briefly summarise the most compelling of those I have encountered—Dessen's reading of *Richard III*—in the service of my ultimate goal of establishing Shakespeare's career-long employment of the Vice. Dessen establishes how Richard's vice-like characteristics, and the seeming loss of them in the final scenes, are key to the structure of the play. Although Dessen is hesitant to identify Richard as the Vice, or Falstaff for that matter, instead suggesting that they merely follow the pattern of the Vice's action on stage, I suggest that he could very well be the Vice in actuality, not merely a character who compares himself to the Vice and plays out the role of the public Vice, an argument which informs the rest of the chapter (*Late Moral* 46-7).

From there I examine the other elements of the Vice tradition in Shakespeare's work, many of those, like Aaron the Moore, which scholars are aware of but, for whatever reason, have not favoured with considerable readings, such as Robin Goodfellow of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* I also examine Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*, though I argue he is more properly an embodiment of the devil rather than the Vice, with the role of Vice falling to his servant Launcelott Gobbo (a notion that parallels my construction of Maria as Devil). In fact the many associations Shylock has with Iago uphold the reading of the latter as Devil rather than Vice in the context of Shylock's own strong association, both with the figures of the Devil, and the ideas about Jewishness in early modern culture. Robin Goodfellow, in contrast, I take as a Vice figure, though probably not a Vice in his own right. This is in spite of the strong association between the Robin Goodfellow character, and the "Puck" name with devils; for example, Robin Goodfellow features as a devil in *Grim the Collier* and Puck is cognate with all manner of similar words all referring to mischievious or evil spirits, devils, and goblins (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). Furthermore, Puck and Oberon seem to be spirits of different species, as is hinted in the dialogue between them. There are even hints that Robin might be Oberon's own Vice, but these are fleeting and not much is made of it by Shakespeare. Robin is, at best, an echo of the Vice rather than a Vice proper. Nevertheless, the trickster Robin is, like Anaides in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, both jester and a spirit of a suspicious nature, and as I will argue, the Vice fits most prominently at the overlap of clown and devil. I close the chapter with a response to Winston's reading of *Measure for Measure* which casts Duke Vincentio as a kind of positive-Vice. While this reading is not without its issues given Vincentio's complex moral action, the notion of a positive counterpart to the Vice (or a kind of "crafty Virtue") remains compelling. The positive-Vice concept is related to a similar reading of Hal's relationship with Falstaff, and the manner in which the former overcomes the latter. This innovation, and

playing, with the Vice tradition on the part of Shakespeare underpins my notion that the Vice tradition was an ongoing and living tradition, and not in decline and decay as others have characterised it. This largely rounds out my first section of this project.

My next chapter concerns the odd propensity for the use of the Vice tradition by the playwrights of the Poetomachia and the interesting ways they develop the Vice figure. This includes, for example, a play ruled over by moral Vices containing a play-within-a-play featuring a Vice which the characters mock. It functions as a transition between the early chapters which are strictly concerned with the nature and persistance of the Vice, and the later ones which begin to introduce the female Vice subtype I have discovered. Rather than be sidetracked by the issue of what the war of the theatres actually was, I establish at very least its existence through reference to Dekker's "To the World" section in *Satiriomastix*, which references the action of the poetomachia along with most of the plays examined in this chapter. I begin with Marston's *Histriomastix* (1599), a play lorded over by allegorical figures, and arguably Vices, which is consistent with my own arguments about the Vice's longevity, so much so that it is often suggested that *Histriomastix* is a reworked vice play (with no substantial evidence, as I understand). It is in this play we get our first glance of the subtype which concerns my later chapters, the female Vice, for the action of the female Vice Pride is very much in line with my exploration of this type. *Histriomastix*, as the opening volley of the Poetomachia is also the play which sets the scene for my exploration of the other plays in this chapter, for the use of the allegorical and Vice tradition in the later plays are bouncing somewhat off the strong presence of it in this one. Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) is likewise lorded over by a Vice, in this case Envy. Though only appearing in the opening of the play, Envy permeates the play's meaning. In fact, through setting up the strong imagery of Envy in the opening, Jonson is able to co-opt the power of the Vice by connecting this imagery to the stand-ins for his rivals in the Poetomachia. There is likewise strong use of the costume of the Vice, which is again connected to Jonson's rivals. In effect, Jonson uses the Vice tradition to refigure his opponents as Vices, though not in any charismatic or appealing manner; instead he renders them the Vice being punished at the close of the play.

After a brief examination of Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1601), I conclude this chapter with an extended reading of Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (1600). While *Satiromastix* has only a sequence of references, in *Cynthia's Revels* I find a character who is positioned to be the Vice, and arguably meant to be recognizable as the Vice of that play, but who fails to live out that role effectively. In this I engage with Alan Dessen's notion that this is a Vice play without the Vice, arguing instead that in *Cynthia's Revels* Anaides functions as the Vice Impudence—arguably the sin for which all the characters fall afoul of Cynthia at the denouement. I examine the nature of Anaides, and the way

the other characters talk about him, in particular the manner in which he, like the Vice, is connected to both clowns and devils. It is perhaps the absence of a meaningful relationship with the audience which best disqualifies him as Vice, but I argue that Anaides is a failed Vice. He has enough of the characteristics to be recognisable, at least to a reader, but seems un-Vice-like only because Jonson failed to deploy the tradition well. Closing out the chapter with Jonson allows me to look back at how I began this study, connecting Jonson's later *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News* to an ongoing use of the Vice tradition among Jonson and his contemporaries, rather than any "hearkening back" to an older tradition on Jonson's part.

Following the Poetomachia, I continue my reverse chronology, following the trail left by the Vice figure in plays to the decade of the 1580s, a period in which the Vice is meant to have died out, or at very least be dying out, despite the strong presence of the Vice tradition in the later plays of the Poetomachia and the plays of Jonson. Such a period is important in establishing the Vice as not just resurgent but ongoing, for examining the later plays alone does not exclude the possibility that the Vice enjoyed an "afterlife" on the stage. What I would expect to find, given my observations and approach, is Vice plays bridging the gap, and consistent with this position, Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1581), and its sequel *The Three Lords and Ladies of London* (1588) continue the Vice tradition strongly. In fact, there is a lot to examine in both of these plays and in the differences between them. As I have noted, something of the distinction between the Vice and the clown is present here in the differences between Dissimulation and Simplicity, as Wiles has argued. In fact, part of what makes the first play so interesting—from the perspective of this study—is the manner in which the traits of the Vice are shared between Dissimulation, Simplicity the clown, and Lady Lucre, the arch-Vice and *radix malorum*. While *Histriomastix*'s Pride embodied much which I have discovered about the female Vice subtype, *Three Ladies*'s Lady Lucre is perhaps the clearest expression of the figure I have found. As such, I devote much of this chapter to the differences between Dissimulation (and his three fellow vices) and Lucre's particular brands of the Vice, and how they both function and change.

Three Lords greatly diminishes the role of Lady Lucre, unfortunately, in favour of a presentation of vice as inherently foreign, setting up an opposition between the Virtues of England and the Vices of Spain. In the wake of the failed Spanish Armada, Wilson has rather cleverly reworked Spanish virtues as vices, which he elucidates in a particularly memorable scene in which the Spanish Vice-Lords present themselves as virtues, and are discerned by the English Virtue-Lord Policy. Policy does this through a recognition of the Vice-Lords' imagery, which underlies the moral lesson. There is more to the imagery of the Vice-Lords than a recognition of their nature as Vices, however, for they share a colour scheme with Dissimulation through their "partie-coloured

plumes." Much is made of Dissimulation's motley-head as an indicator of his Vice nature throughout both plays, and while these plumes certainly connect the Vice-Lords to the figure of Vice generally, in the context of the Vice-Lords presenting a false-face which is uncovered by Policy, this imagery also certainly connects them specifically to Dissimulation. In essence, Dissimulation has expanded in this play to fill the void left by Lucre, taking on both his own stagecraft-focused Vice-nature, but also filling out Lucre's role as the source of evil. This is in keeping with the supernatural aspects attached to Dissimulation in the second play which more strongly connect him to devils. In these two plays, in the decade in which the Vice tradition should be dying, we see the Vice tradition functioning in a very organic way, some aspects of the role growing, some shrinking, a living stage tradition in action which justifies the presence of the Vice well after this decade.

While Lucre is diminished in the second play, the subtype she spawned lives on, and it is that subtype which I explore in more detail in Chapter Nine. I begin with a brief examination of the presence and role of the goddess Vice in Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1599) and the manner in which she serves primarily as figurehead of Vice, while her male representative carries out the direct action (or worship) of Vice. However, more significant to my overall argument, this chapter concerns in particular two female characters who are Vice-like in the sense I have been developing with Lady Lucre. The first is Maria from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), whom I argue functions as the devil of that piece in the manner in which she operates through Feste. This is not to say she is completely divorced from the hands-on of corrupting and manipulating her target, Malvolio. As Malvolio's own speech makes clear, Maria has been at work in a very Iago-like fashion for some time before the play begins. It may seem counterintuitive in the context of my wider argument to then argue that Maria is an embodiment of the devil figure rather than a Vice; however, as I establish in earlier chapters that the devil and the Vice had considerable overlap in their stage practice (to the point that devils are often taken as Vices) Maria can be seen as an outgrowth of the similar female Vice. As such, Maria's devilish nature, her function as "that most excellent devil of wit" and the nature of her relationship with the play's Vice Feste is very similar to the overseer function of Lucre and the other Vice I will be examining in this chapter, Venus.

Venus alias Lust, in Wilson's *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (1590) is often overlooked in favour of her male counterpart Contempt, who functions as a more traditional Vice. Yet, as I argue, Venus alias Lust functions as a Vice in her own right, especially when one considers her in the context of this trend of the female Vice, which embodies Vice more as a moral aspect than in the stagecraft sense of Dissimulation and Contempt. Venus, like Lucre, corrupts an individual directly, but she also serves as the head of a heirarchy of evil, a framework which, for Venus, includes Contempt but

is not dominated by him. This subtype of the female Vice is borne out by an intriguing reference to the Vice figure in Thomas Dekker's 1618 *The Owles Almanack* which features many of the Vice's characteristics I discuss in this dissertation:

> Now issued in from the Reareward, Madame *Vice*, or olde *Iniquitie*, with a lath dagger painted, according to the fashion of an old *Vice* in a Comedy, with a head of many colours, as shewing her subtlety, and at her backe two Punkes that were her Chamber maides, the one called *Too little,* the other *Too much,* and these two had like *Quick-silver* eaten the worlds *Goodnesse* to the heart. (12)

In addition to the common stage elements of the Vice which I will examine in more detail in my chapter on Vices, devils and clowns, such as the head of many colours, the dagger of lath, and the name Iniquity, this distinctly female Vice also serves as the head of a moral framework: she is Madame over her two Punkes/Chambermaids who have eaten the world's goodness.

In keeping with the theme of exploring and expanding the definition of the Vice figure, then, my early chapters are focused on challenging the narrative of the Vice's decline and dissolution. My later chapters extend the Vice in a different manner, however, focusing on the identification of a subtype of the Vice figure, a kind of female Vice who emphasises the aspect of the figure concerned with serving as a moral source of evil, and de-emphasises somewhat the familiar stagecraft aspects. Chapter Seven, which concerns the persistence of the Vice figure throughout the Poetomachia, begins to introduce the idea without dropping my primary concern with the persistence of the Vice figure. But my arguments concerning the female Vice are especially the focus of my examination of Lady Lucre of *Three Ladies of London* (1581) in Chapter Eight and all of Chapter Nine, which deals explicitly with the type.

But an examination of the female Vice-type will have to wait until the second part of this dissertation, as I instead take up the oddity of the Vice in the later works of Jonson with which I began this study: *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News.* For the familiarity with the Vice tradition which Jonson expects from his audience in these plays, especially *The Devil is an Ass*, implies the ongoing Vice tradition which the late examples in other plays confirm. In addition, the changes made to the figure under the differing circumstances in which it appears, and the emergence of a new subtype, suggests that the persistance of the Vice is not because the Vice is in decline, but rather that the Vice tradition is living and growing. Too long has the Vice been viewed, like allegory more generally, as something that decayed in the face of the might of Elizabethan drama. This has obscured the true Vice behind the declining holdover scholarship has expected to

find. My key notion is perhaps that the Vice is better viewed through the lens of development and change, a lens which has yielded a much richer perspective than the simple split between the older medieval tradition and the innovative (albeit early) modern Elizabethan stage could countenance.

CHAPTER TWO

"Lend me but a Vice": A Staple of Jonson's Views

In this chapter I begin to examine the nature of the Vice and devil traditions, and the supposed decline of those traditions. As I shall demonstrate, the appearance of these traditions in such late plays bespeaks an ongoing familiarity with the Vice (and devils) which goes beyond a mere memory of long dead stage practices. As suggested in my introduction, my entry point for these arguments are Jonson's late plays *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) and *The Staple of News* (1625). The two plays I will focus on in this chapter feature clear references to the figures involved in the Vice and devil traditions, and *The Devil is an Ass* in particular embodies such figures onstage by name and with their familiar imagery. Indeed, as I pointed out in the introduction, *The Devil is an Ass* relies on the audience's familiarity with the Vice tradition in order to make its key points through a series of clever inversions which only work if the audience understand them as inversions, so Jonson's use of these elements suggests that the Vice and devil traditions were ongoing, rather than defunct. This chapter will offer a more detailed reading of the same play, and *The Staple of News*, to examine several humorous reversals Jonson makes using the Vice and devil traditions that occur in the play, in order to understand what these traditions were, and what they have become by Jonson's time.

The relationship between Jonson and the moral elements in his plays is a complex one, unpacked in great detail in Allan Dessen's *Jonson's Moral Comedy*. There does appear to be shifts in Jonson's thinking, and his position on moral play elements, such as the Vice figure, is not easily discovered. Dessen notes, for example, regarding the moral elements in *The Devil is an Ass* that scholars "have sensed an inconsistency between this blatant 'devil play' and Jonson's derisive comments which classify fools and devils as '*antique reliques of barbarisme*'" (*Jonson's Moral* 222). Often scholars have suggested Jonson lowers his standards over time, a position Dessen argues against, finding it incompatible with Jonson's own attitude to the devil and Vice in the play:

> But such relaxation of standards is not in keeping with the belligerent attitude towards his audience that Jonson manifested in many public pronouncements throughout a long career. The Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, the intermeans of *The Staple of News*, and the choric commentary of Damplay and the Boy in *The Magnetic Lady* all attest to his continuing desire to bring the "understanders" up to his liver. In the case of *The Devil is an Ass*, Jonson was apparently not ashamed of his devil plot and, in fact, specifically called attention to that feature of the play. The description recorded by Drummond is prefaced by a statement that "according to

> Comedia Vetus, in England the divell was brought in either wt one Vice or other, the Play done the divel caried away the Vice." But Jonson's play as he describes it "brings in ye divel so overcome wt ye wickednes of this age that [he] thought himself ane ass" (11. 409-13). Jonson has thereby sketched in for Drummond a dramatic convention of the "Comedia Vetus" or morality and then summed up what he felt to be the basic irony of the play, that "the wickednes of this age" was too much for the poor devil. He *is* admittedly using "popular traditions" as Herford argues but in a typically self-conscious manner as in his deliberate inversion of the traditional relationship between devil and Vice. Rather than catering to the expectations of his audience, Jonson is once more violating those expectations to make a sardonic comment about contemporary society. (*Jonson's Moral* 222-3)

I should note that the whole notion of Jonson lowering his standards to introduce moral elements to his plays is a reading steeped in the presupposition that such elements are inferior, an idea Jonson himself seems to have held as the remarks Dessen cites suggest. Perhaps Jonson is himself almost a microcosm of scholarship's relationship with the allegorical and morality traditions, for both have viewed "fools and devils as 'antique reliques of barbarisme'", yet Jonson, like the very recent scholarship on these traditions, seems to have come to understand their value. Not so much a lowering of standards, then, as coming to appreciate something formerly neglected. Jonson's relationship with moral elements is, as Dessen notes regarding stage devils, "rather complex", but, as we shall soon see, he deploys the Vice and devil traditions with an ingenuity which bespeaks an intimate familiarity (223).

The play opens in Hell, with the titular devil, Pug, begging Satan to allow him to go up to Earth to prove himself, beginning the devilry plotline; Satan allows this on the condition that Pug take the form of a human, a thief who had recently been hanged. The same plotline closes with Pug dragged back to Hell, having been beaten, used and tricked, and finally arrested; he begs Satan to recall him to Hell and receives a sharp rebuke. This culminates in an entertaining scene in which Pug, trapped in prison bemoaning his treatment, meets the Vice who delivers the "good news" that Satan has extended Pug's allotment of time on Earth, much to Pug's horror. Following this the scene closes and the play returns to the "human" plotlines.

Appearing after the period Cox set for the Vice's fashionability (he characterises "a play written between 1571 and 1580" as "near the end of the Vice's stage career"), *The Devil is an Ass* is ostensibly about a devil character, though this is complicated as the play progresses (Cox 71). While the play's title and its opening scenes set up a play about devils, Pug's role is very much secondary to the machinations of the human characters as they make a play for the fortune and wife of Fitzdotterel.

Pug's "master" and target while on Earth, Fitzdotterel is depicted as a foolish human character obsessed with devils, but comically unable to recognize Pug as a devil because he comes in the form of a human, and therefore lacks cloven hooves.

As for the Vice, in contrast to his propensity to be the star of the show in the moralities, the Vice of Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* seems at first glance to be a minor character, more a humorous reference to the tradition than a "proper" use of the Vice. Both of the Vice's appearances in *The Devil is an Ass* have the substance of satirical inversions, playing up the perceptions of the relationship between devils and Vices; the Vice character—who is, it should be recognized, specifically the Vice, bearing the popular name Iniquity which Richard of Gloucester refers to in Shakespeare's *Richard III* in the line: "Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity, I moralize two meanings in one word"—is downplayed and this is, in itself, the first of several inversions involving the Vice that Jonson makes in his play, which points to the key theme of the play: the idea that humans have become better devils than the devils themselves. Importantly, however, Jonson's satirical use of both Vices and devils has the potential to teach us something about how both these figures were seen to operate traditionally. The comedic inversion only works, after all, if it can be understood as such, that is, if there is first an accepted convention or idea which is made strange in Jonson's play. As such, it is pertinent to examine these inversions for the ways in which they elucidate the nature of these two figures.

Remarking on a common objection to the resurgence of devils in post-Reformation Protestant drama, Cox observes that devils are less frequently staged and less interesting than the Vice (though I will challenge this notion somewhat in a later chapter): "Even in plays where devils do appear they usually do so only briefly, at the beginning or end of a play, leaving the most visible and effective work of evil to the Vice" (102). *The Devil is an Ass* seems to suggest the truth of this formula by inverting it completely, for it is the Vice who appears only at the beginning and the end of the play, leaving the devil Pug to go about his own devilish work. This particular inversion functions because at the outset of the play, when the Vice appears and delivers his lines it seems to the audience as if he will be the star of the show.

Indeed, when the Vice Iniquity is called upon he immediately takes control of the stage, stealing the show in much the same way as the figure was wont to do in earlier plays. During this brief display of strength and significance, Iniquity monologues all the evils he can introduce the Devil Pug to, subordinating Pug to the role of proxy human mark while Pug, rapt, interjects to extol the quality of this Vice to the silent Satan. As I have noted, the Vice will proceed to disappear from the action after this scene until the very end, but the expectation of Jonson's audience at this point is no doubt that the Vice will proceed in this play to serve in the same leading role as he has done in countless plays past.

Much like seeing the play open in Hell might suggest to the audience that this will be a play primarily about devils, the audience could be forgiven for taking from the Vice's appearance and activities the notion that he will be the star of the show. In fact, Jonson's play may go so far as to suggest the superiority of the Vice over the devil by comically showing up a Vice-less devil.

Of course, the humorous inversion only works if the pattern of an uninvolved devil commissioning the Vice is a standard feature of such plays. It should be noted, however, that this is not a complete inversion, for while Cox has noted that the Vice did the "most visible and effective work of evil," the works of the devil Pug are neither. The attempts of Pug to work evil on the Earth are largely abortive and tend to fall on his own head as they collapse ineffectually. He, for example, encourages his master's wife to commit adultery and offers to facilitate and conceal such acts, thinking himself the master tempter, only to have her assume he is a spy sent by her husband, and rat him out, leading to a sound beating. Pug's acts even lack visibility, as several scenes pass by without his presence. In effect, a separation is drawn between the Vice and the devil; Jonson places the devil Pug in a Vice-like role, and Pug fails to deliver, for if the Vice was the star of the morality stage, the "homiletic showman and satirist—a nimble trickster, dissembler, and humorist—on the side of evil" as Spivack regards him, Pug certainly fails to live up to this pedigree (132).

Perhaps the key line of the play concerning these notions, and the one for which this chapter is named, is uttered by Pug as he makes his request to Satan: "You do not know, dear Chief, what there is in me./ Prove me but for a fortnight, for a week,/ And lend me but a Vice, to carry with me" (1.1.35-7). Pug shows himself dependant on the Vice he was denied, which upholds to a degree the part of Spivack's argument concerning the devil as reliant on the work of the Vice. Yet this is tempered by the acknowledgement of the thematic supremacy of the devil as highlighted by Cox. The Vice is effectively commodified, something for the devils to take with them to carry out their plans. Spivack's showman is also Cox's devil subordinate. Ultimately behind the Vice, Jonson seems to suggest, is the devil.

Through his Vice, Jonson demonstrates the ultimate weakness of the devil figures of the play in this new sinful London, foreshadowing Pug's failure in the human world. The Vice's speech in this first scene takes the form of a kind of audition as he extols his abilities to Satan and Pug, listing all the mischief possible with him at the helm. With Pug merely interjecting praises for the Vice, and Satan quietly observing, the energetic Vice is very much the focus of the action as he gives the audience a false glimpse of the play to come, as he sets down his vision for the action to follow. But this becomes a strange picture, because as Iniquity tells of the things they will do, he is playing his old role corrupting his ward, with Pug the devil taking the place of the human character to be corrupted.

INIQUITY. I will teach thee cheat, child, to cog, lie, and swagger,
And ever and anon to be drawing forth thy dagger;
To swear by Gog's nowns, like a Lusty Juventus,
In a cloak to thy heel, and a hat like a penthouse,
Thy breeches of three fingers, and thy doublet all belly,
With a wench that shall feed thee, with cock-stones and jelly. (1.1.48-53)

This stretches on for several more lines, seemingly all directed at Pug, as if Pug were the human target of the Vice's corruptive influence. While Pug is showing how he would use Iniquity to achieve his end, Iniquity puts Pug in the place of a corruptible human, reflecting that the evil of humans has outgrown the capabilities of the devils. By replacing a human with a devil as target of the Vice's temptations, Jonson ironically suggests it is the devils that need to learn to sin, rather than the humans.

This is taken further in the Vice's second appearance to reposition the devil figures through comically playing on the Vice tradition. As the devil plotline comes to a close, Pug is returned to Hell on the back of Iniquity in a self-conscious reversal of the Vice departing on the devil's back which was present in earlier plays such as *The longer thou livest the more fool thou art* (1559), *Like will to like* (1568), and *Enough is as good as a feast* (1560) (Cox 102-3; Dessen, "Allegorical Action" 393-4). As Iniquity takes Pug on his back, he says:

Iniquity takes [Pug] on his back
INIQUITY. Mount, darling of darkness, my shoulders are broad:
He that carries the fiend is sure of his load.
The devil was wont to carry away the evil;
But now the evil out-carries the devil. (5.6.74-77)

In saying this, Iniquity highlights perhaps the key distinction between devils and Vices, one present from before the Vice, when the seven deadly sins and other such vices named for evils take the stage. For while the Devils are certainly evil in the sense that they have evil objectives and carry out evil actions, the Vices are evil itself. Or, to put it another way, the Vices are the evil that characterises Devilish behaviour, the substance of devilish actions. Spivack's claim that the Devils are powerless without the Vice is partially true, but only in the same sense that written words are powerless without

letters. The substance of devilish action is vice, making comparing the power of Devils and Vices nonsensical because the *Vice* is the devil's power. Or such was the case of the earlier plays.

In *The Devil is an Ass*, the situation has changed, and these scenes of reversal reflect the play's theme that humans are the better devils, as enunciated by Satan:

> SATAN. Faith, would your predecessor,
> The cutpurse, think you, ha' been so? Out upon thee!
> The hurt th' hast done, to let men know their strength,
> And that they're able to out-do a Devil
> Put in a body, will forever be
> A scar upon our name. Whom hast thou dealt with,
> Woman or man, this day, but have outgone thee
> Some way, and most have proved the better fiends? (5.6.55-62)

As the devils and the Vice pack off back to Hell, the humans continue, carrying out their own plots as if nothing had happened, leading to Jonson's master stroke, with which I will close this reading of the play. For in the final scene the foolish Fitzdotterel enacts a false possession, deploying several tricks under the instruction of the projector Merecraft, to deceive a judge and convince him that he was ensorcelled (the early modern insanity plea), and it works. Yet, the characters had all already been in the presence of an actual possession the entire play, in the form of Pug's possession of the dead thief, of which they had been completely unaware. It is as if Jonson switches Pug's possession out for that of Fitzdotterel in order to invite the comparison. Building on the momentum of the earlier pictures, Jonson shows us human characters who do the theatre of devilry better than the devils themselves. Strangely enough, for all I reject his evolutionary argument, I am left agreeing with Spivack's notion that the Vice became more human, though perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the humans became more Vice (at least, in Jonson's estimation, the humans of London). As Pug observes in Act Two:

> PUG. Can any fiend
> Boast of a better Vice than here by nature
> [...]
> To hear men such professors
> Grown in our subtlest sciences! (2.2.7-8, 11-12)

The Vice is already among the people of London, and it is not the old Iniquity of the Moralities, but in the human characters. In effect, the devils and Vices leave the play in the hands of their dramatic and demonic superiors, much as the Vice tradition, and eventually the devil tradition faded from the stage. Yet, as the intimate recognition Jonson demands from his audience implies, both traditions persisted long beyond the point suggested by scholars who would view the Vice tradition through the lens of decline and dilution, which is the first major issue I am addressing in this dissertation.

Indeed, Jonson's toying with the Vice tradition was by no means limited to *The Devil is an Ass.* Jonson seemingly had a fascination with this particular stage practice, for one can see the Vice tradition rear its head again in Jonson's 1625 *The Staple of News*. In this later play he again draws attention to the Vice figure and its associates, here utilising humour which depended on a degree of familiarity with the tradition, which we can assume the audience possessed. *The Staple of News* employs no Vice in the main action, but between the acts four gossips, Censure, Mirth, Expectation, and Tattle, discuss the play, and give their own readings, often speaking of fools, Vices and devils, and even reading some of the characters.

The gossips' accounts should not be disregarded, despite Jonson's own criticism of them in his pre-Act message to the readers; they are an integral part of the play that provide an internal frame for interpretation of the characters and the play as a whole. Indeed, Dessen argues that Jonson uses his gossips to take a higher view of moral elements than contemporaneous devil plays, and uses the *Staple of News* to distinguish his own work from another play utilizing such elements, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, through the voice of these gossips:

> The gossips' main recollection of *The Merry Devil of Edmonton* (in an account that appears to have been deliberately garbled by Jonson) is of the antics and buffoonery which they associate with Smug the Smith. Echoing the tastes and prejudices of the popular audience, these foolish gossips demand the titillation provided by clowns and devils rather than the moral enlightenment of a more ambitious play. As with Littlewit's puppet play, Jonson is objecting not necessarily to the subject matter per se (Hero and Leander, the devil play) but rather to the reduction of such raw materials "to a more familiar straine" in order to "please the people." (*Jonson's Moral* 223-4)

I agree with Dessen where he distinguishes a distaste of the "titillation provided by clowns and devils" from a deployment of such elements in service of "moral enlightenment". As we have seen with *The Devil is an Ass*, a play less than a decade earlier, Jonson is certainly not above the use of morality elements in his plays, but he uses them in service of what he sees as a higher purpose than pleasing the

people. In light of this, the fact that Jonson also highlights the Vice tradition in the setup of this play makes it pertinent to examine the inner world of the play for traces of it.

The clearest expression of the Vice tradition in *The Staple of News* comes in the second such "Intermean". Censure complains about the lack of a Devil or Fool in the play, before Mirth asks after the Vice of the play:

> CENSURE. *Why this is duller and duller! intolerable! scur-*
> *vy! neither* Devil *nor* Fool *in this Play! pray God*
> *some of us be not a* Witch, *Gossip, to forespeak the matter thus.*
> Mirth. *I fear we are all such, and we were old enough:*
> *But we are not all old enough to make one* Witch. *How like*
> *you the* Vice *i' the Play.* ("The second Intermeane after the second *Act*." 54, 1-7)

Mirth separates the Vice from the fool, for while Censure has already bemoaned that absence of a fool, Mirth brings the presence of the Vice up. The identification of the fool and the Vice is thus not absolute, an issue I will take up in my next chapter. More than this though, Mirth is reading the play as a morality, and despite what Spivack would call the "literal" presentation of the characters, reads characters as if they were Vices regardless of whether they were strictly allegorical, or strictly a named "type" character in the way that Spivack would suggest. Indeed, this is a reflection of Satan's observations in *The Devil is an Ass* regarding what Vices look like in Seventeenth-Century London:

> Had it but been five hundred—though some sixty
> Above, that's fifty years agone, and six -
> When every great man had his Vice stand by him
> In his long coat, shaking his wooden dagger,
> I could consent that then this your grave choice
> Might have done that with his lord chief,
> [...]
> They have their Vices most like to Virtues;
> You cannot know 'em apart by any difference:
> They wear the same clothes, eat the same meat,
> Sleep I' the self-same beds, ride I' those coaches,
> Or very like, four horses in a coach,

As the best men and women. (82-87; 121-6)

Jonson seeds into *The Devil is an Ass* an idea he later revisits in *The Staple of News*: the notion that Vices cannot be distinguished from humanity any longer. The Vice has transcended the stage properties associated with it, the wooden dagger and coat, and instead looks like ordinary people. This is presented as an extension of the Vice's propensity to mask as a Virtue, for the new Vices are "most like to Virtues; / You cannot know 'em apart by any difference". This notion is borne out in *The Devil is an Ass* which sees even counterfeit possession taken over the genuine article, as I have argued. Jonson makes this notion even plainer in *The Staple of News* in the lines that follow on from those quoted above, which reminisce in much the same way that Satan does in *The Devil is an Ass*, but in greater detail:

EXPECTATION. *Which is he?*
MIRTH. *Three or four: old* Covetousness, *the sordid* Peni-
boy, *the* Money-bawd, *who is a Flesh-bawd too, they say.*
TATTLE. *But here is never a* Fiend *to carry him away.*
Besides, he has never a Wooden Dagger! I'ld not give a Rush
for a Vice, *that has not a Wooden Dagger to snap at every*
body he meets.
MIRTH. *That was the old way, Gossip, when* Iniquity
came in like Hokos Pokos, *in a Juglers Jerkin, with false*
Skirts, like the Knave *of* Clubs! *but now they are attir'd like*
Men and Women o' the time, the Vices *Male and Female!*
Podigality (sic.) *like a young Heir, and his* Mistris Money
(whose Favours he scatters like Counters) prank't up like a
prime Lady, *the* Infanta *of the* Mines.
("The second Intermeane after the second *Act*." 54, 8-21)

From "*the* Vice i' the play" to vices, like Spivack's teleology in reverse, Mirth reads several characters as simple vices. Tattle interrupts, pointing to the lack of obvious iconography, and the exchange gives us a useful list of what this iconography was, which builds on what was present in *The Devil is an Ass*: a juggler's jerkin (likely the motley we have encountered already), false skirts, wooden dagger (the dagger of lath) and riding the devil. The remark about the Knave of Clubs reflects Simplicity's

observation in both *Three Ladies* and *Three Lords* that the Vices therein are a set, like the four Knaves in a pack of cards. As he remarks in *Three Ladies*: "And nowe all the Cardes in the stack are delte about, / The foure knaues in a cluster comes ruffling out" (A4^{r}). This is seemingly also a feature of the lost *The Play of Cards*, as Dessen observes: "four knaves of the deck, like Dissimulation and his group, [who] plot against characters who represent various 'estates' or 'vocations'" (*Late Moral* 26).

However, the passage ends with the observation that the Vice is now attired like men and women of the time. This could be taken as evidence of Spivack's claims, it certainly seems similar to his arguments concerning the Vice becoming wrapped in the trappings of "natural", literal characters. However, it is interesting to note that these are still considered proper Vices, for all their human attire. There is not a doubled tension, as Spivack suggests with Iago, of the literal in conflict with the allegorical even as it legitimises the allegorical's presence on the stage. As he writes of the allegorical inside the literal: "This is the earlier of the two Iagos. The process of conventionalizing him, when the theatre could no longer take him straight, produced for a time a hybrid […] until he is bred out of the drama altogether," (32-33). Contrary to his position, it is perfectly natural for the Vices to be attired as humans, and this should not be surprising. After all, as early as *Mankind,* the vices are attired thus, in *Mankind* as vagrant labourers, but no less vice. Indeed, Arnold Williams has remarked on the indistinguishability of some of the earliest vices from human characters, that the audience do not necessarily see Mischief and his fellows as Vices but rather as "four small-time hoodlums, a priest, a real, live devil, who, however, is invisible to the actors on stage, and a good hearted but weak and somewhat dim-witted English peasant" (18). Additionally, it would seem, given how late allegory still exists on the stage that for the early modern audiences that there was no need to hide allegory, that the notion that the audience "could no longer take [the allegorical Vice] straight" as Spivack contends is inaccurate (32).

Both *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News*, then, stand against the received narrative of the decline of the Vice, despite efforts to fold these plays into a narrative of "throwbacks" or "revivals". As my previous point might suggest, the tendency to read the Vice solely through the literary obscures the Vice. It is accepted by Spivack and those who have followed him that not all Vices are referred to as "the Vice" in the stage directions or dramatis personae, but *The Staple of News* and *The Devil is an Ass* suggest that the persistence of the Vice is such that not only is the Vice not necessarily always labelled as such, but that he may likewise be without obvious allegorical name. The Vices are now "attir'd like Men and Women o' the time" and called things like Aaron, or Richard, or even Venus. This is not to say that these allegorical trappings have completely passed away in the later uses of the Vice tradition, but rather that the Vice can appear with or without them. The narrative of the

Vice's decline and dissolution, perhaps informed somewhat by a reduction (but never complete desistance) of "allegorical type-names", is thus countered by Jonson's observations concerning the nature of the Vice tradition, and by the familiarity of the Vice tradition to both Jonson and his audience.

It is my objective in this dissertation, and especially in this first section of it, to challenge the notion of the Vice's decline as popularised by Spivack. As such, it is pertinent that I spend my next chapter directly addressing his seminal text on the Vice, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*, and discussing some of the problems which arise from assuming his position. In particular I will challenge both the teleological narrative of the Vice's development which sets up the Vice as something transcendent and perfect, and the narrative of the Vice's decline which this idealisation implies. In place of this teleological understanding of the Vice figure, I hope to develop a far more fluid understanding of the Vice which can better accommodate the rather organic relationship the figure's development had with the play-makers operating at the time of its tenure on stage.

CHAPTER THREE

Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil, a Critique

The key proponent of the view that the Vice declined and diluted is of course Bernard Spivack. While in my preceding chapter and introduction I began to critique his arguments (and will continue to do so throughout this dissertation), given their reach and impact on the scholarship of the Vice, it is worth spending an entire chapter dealing with his body of work. Virtually everyone writing after his book *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil* was published on matters pertaining to the Vice figure, or even allegory and its decline more broadly, cites him, often as the overriding authority. Just last year an article on *Richard III* published in a major journal—Jacheol Kim's "The North in Shakespeare's *Richard III*"—directs the reader to Spivack's book as the authority on the use of morality play elements in that play (460). Given, then, the persistence of his hold over scholarship, and broad acceptance of problematic aspects of his arguments, it is important that his work is examined in depth.

In this chapter I consider in detail the problems that arise from Spivack's "evolutionary" construction of the Vice figure which sees theatre developing towards and then moving away from some idealized perfect expression of the Vice. In response I offer my own definition of the Vice, which sees the figure as a flexible cluster of stage practices and references rather than anything transcendent or fixed. This in turn challenges the narrative of the Vice's decline, for the Vice is no longer positioned as a once-perfect image in decay, but rather as ever-growing, ever-changing.

One of Spivack's key arguments is that the Vice was derived from the vices of earlier plays, the Vice coming from a kind of "arch-vice". This is not a particular point of contention in my argument, but it does lead to some of the issues I have with Spivack, primarily the very linear and neat way he envisages the Vice's formation. In making this argument he draws on two key plays, *Mankind* and *The Castle of Perseverance.* The play *Mankind* (c. 1470) features four vices, Mischief the leader with his minions, Newguise, Nowadays and Nought; a virtue, Mercy, who appears only at the beginning and the end; Titivillus, a devil; and Mankind, a figure representing all of humanity, a stock character of the tradition as much as the Vice is. Like *Mankind,* the *Castle of Perseverance* (c. fifteenth century) also features a Mankind-figure, as well as a range of vices and virtues competing for Mankind's soul under the guidance of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh. It also features a vice set apart from the others, in this case Covetousness, and it is "arch-vices" like Covetousness and Mischief who form the focus of one story of the Vice's origins, the idea being that these major vices evolved over time on the stage to become a solitary intriguer "the Vice". Spivack argues that these "arch-vices" function as:

> the brains of the intrigue, the seducer par excellence, and making his the heavy role of the play […] Such a plot, the persistent structural feature of the whole morality drama, required the services of a single intriguer, a voluble and cunning schemer, an artist in duplicity, a deft manipulator of human emotions. His operation upon his human victim is closet work, close and private. After he succeeds in breaking down the pales and forts of virtue and insinuating himself into the bosom of mankind as servant, counsellor, or crony, he brings his subordinates through the breach. (142)

Essentially, it is the role of the "arch-vice" in these early moralities to worm his way into the human heart, and, as a prime sin, allow the lesser sins a way in, because the nature of Intrigue required a singular intelligence.

Other than the obvious distinctions made between Covetousness and Mischief in their respective plays, perhaps the key quality which distinguished the "arch-vice" from his fellows was his function as what Spivack terms the *radix malorum*, the source of the evils in the play (141). The distinction between the lesser vices and the "arch-vice" continued into the later moralities, and eventually became the solitary role: "one of the vices is homiletically supreme in the hierarchy of evils that appear, and his role gradually expands in individuality and dramatic prominence while the roles of the other vices diminish and fuse in the same ratio" (145). This narrative of the Vice's development from a leader-vice is not without its problems. It is certainly impressive how well Covetousness fits this role in *The Castle of Perseverance*. As Spivack points out, he is clearly set apart from the other six vices in several ways. Like the Devil, the World, the Flesh, and God, Covetousness gets his own scaffold in the staging of the play (143). He's also the sole Vice belonging to the World, whereas the other six are split evenly between the Devil and the Flesh (143). Most importantly, he functions as a very clear *radix malorum*: it is he who introduces the Mankind-figure to the other vices, and in the battle at the end of the play it is he alone who succeeds when the battle fails by corrupting the Mankind-figure through intrigue, rather than combat, allowing the other vices in again (143). He is even called the root of sin: "Swete Jhesu, jentyl justyce, / Kepe Mankynde fro coueytyse! / For I-wys he is, in al wyse, / Rote of sorwe & synne" (143).

While Covetousness fits Spivack's pattern exceedingly well, Mischief fits the pattern somewhat less well. He is clearly identified in the play as the head vice, and has the most prominent role of the three, however he falls short in the corruption of Mankind much the same way as the other vices, causing him to call upon a higher power, someone better able to corrupt than he is: a devil. It is Titivillus, the devil, who succeeds in corrupting Mankind in *Mankind*, and Spivack observes that this

mirrors the action of *Perseverance,* with the devil, like Covetousness, switching to "craft where they failed by open aggression" (92). Mischief fits the pattern Spivack wants to see in the development of the Vice figure so poorly, and the devil character, Titivillus, fits so well that he is forced to assume the devil as his proto-Vice in this play with a rather thin justification: "In *Mankynd* it is Titivillus who is prominent as the successful intriguer, who is acknowledged by the other vices as their leader, who is pointed out by Mery as Mankind's chief enemy since he is supreme over all the evil forces in the play– 'he ys master of them all'" (144). Spivack's outline of Titivillus's actions in the play, and his interactions with the audience are dripping with all the qualities he attaches to his conception of the Vice figure:

> Now he announces his special intention […] He invites the audience to observe carefully each step of his device […] And in the name of their entertainment and instruction he invokes their cooperative silence […] and invites the admiration of the audience for his skill and success so far […] He discusses with them the remainder of his intrigue, promises them more fun if they will be patient, and heralds the reappearance of his victim […] Once more he invites the attention and silence of his audience […] His purpose achieved, his virtuosity fully demonstrated, Titivillus takes his leave of the spectators, not, however, without a homiletic valedictory that keeps the moral record straight [...] (124-5)

In this passage we see much of what Spivack attaches to the Vice, and what I would agree are some of its key characteristics in the earlier plays: a relationship with the audience which at once instructs and entertains them, and also, in a sense, invites their complicity. In this regard Titivillus becomes the perfect example of the Vice figure for Spivack and plays out the Vice's stage purpose as if written precisely to be used as such an example in a textbook on the Vice. It is unfortunate for Spivack's argument, then, that Titivillus is very much not a Vice. Titivillus is identified clearly in the play as a devil, in fact far more clearly than the other villains are identified as vices, for though on the page they may look as such, on the stage it is a different matter entirely, as Dessen and Williams observe (Dessen, "Homilies" 253; Williams 18). Titivillus even had an identity beyond this play as a devil. According to Kathleen M. Ashley and Gerard NeCastro, editors of the Middle English Texts Series edition of *Mankind*, Titivillus was "The fun-loving devil whose work it is to collect all the idle words, carelessly-spoken prayers, and errors (especially those in Latin, spoken by priests); he stores them up in a huge satchel or wallet or writes them down on a scroll to use against the souls on Judgment Day" (note for line 301). With a character so clearly defined as a devil, to the point that he has, at least in the

minds of the audience, a real life existence beyond the action of the play, it is palpably odd that Spivack treats him as a Vice, something he continues to do in later sections of his book (152-3, 188) with little more justification than he offers here: "Titivillus is a figure in transition from devil to vice" (125). There is something deeply troubling about the way Spivack bends the evidence to fit his theory here, which is perhaps indicative of the somewhat narrow focus of his study. If Titivillus was the character referred to as a devil with Vice-like characteristics it could be overlooked, but with the line between devil and the Vice as blurry as it is, Titivillus serves not as what is inherently the Vice, but what is possible for devils.

This is not the only time, however, that Spivack sidesteps evidence which runs contrary to his theories. His arguments above culminate in the eventual recognition of the Vice figure in the dramatis personae of plays, yet the play he chooses is *Respublica* (1553):

> It was inevitable that sooner or later the distinction should receive formal theatrical recognition in the players' lists, in the stage directions, and even on the title pages of the printed plays. The first of them to grant such recognition is *Respublica* (1553). In that play there are four unmistakeable "moral" vices, but in "The partes and Names of the Plaiers" [Avarice appears as] "The vice of the plaie" [while the others appear as "gallaunts."] (145)

Yet two of the plays of John Heywood, *The Play of Love* and *The Play of the Wether*, contain "the Vyce" in the dramatis personae. For Spivack, these two instances of "the Vyce" do not count; rather, he holds that "the Vice" predates Heywood and was "lifted out of his allegorical and homiletic context and cultivated in comedy of the type Heywood was writing" (136). Indeed, he is somewhat scornful of the recognition of these plays: "contrary to the usual assumption that the earliest theatrical reference to the role of the Vice exists in Heywood's *Weather* and *Love,* two plays largely outside the morality convention, it appears that similar reference occurs in unimpeachable moralities belonging, according to the best evidence, to the same decade as Heywood's two comedies" (137).

For Spivack, then, Heywood's Vices are disqualified because they lack the homiletic aspects that Spivack prizes in the role. Heywood focusses on the "comic side of his role, frequently overstressed by scholarship to the neglect of his homiletic meaning and of the tragedy he always tries to, and often does, inflict" (136). For Wiles also, this is the moment when the Vice becomes a dramatic role rather than a personification: "The word 'vice' is first used as a technical theatre term by John Heywood in 1532 […] The characters are so labelled because the characters are no longer personifications of one particular vice, yet the actor fulfils the same dramatic function as Mischief,

Fancy, and the rest" (Wiles 4). This suffers from the same kind of imposition as his assumption of Titivillus into the role of the Vice. Spivack is functionally telling the early modern writers that they are using their own terms incorrectly because they do not fit with his 1958 conception of what the Vice is allowed to be. "The Vice" is clearly a figure which, for the early moderns at least, could indicate both the kind of homiletic villain which interested Spivack, and the kind of farcical comedian Heywood wrote. Furthermore, it ignores other uses of the term "the Vice", for Heywood is not alone. Charlotte Steenbrugge notes in *Staging Vice* (2014), "[vice] was used in court records seemingly to refer to fools and jugglers" (31), and David Wiles observes in *Shakespeare's Clown*, "the word 'vice' is often used as a synonym for fool in the sixteenth century" (4). While Wiles agrees with Spivack's etymology, he also establishes one of the biggest reasons for rejecting Spivack's arguments: the existence of non-morality Vices acting as the fools in May games which pre-date Heywood's work. The Vice of the Maygame was a professional comedian employed to help facilitate the games alongside the unpaid Whitsun lord, a "humble nobody elected to high office […] the Vice of the may-game had to be something of a specialist […] A Vice provided 'pastime' before and after a miracle play at Bungay" (4-5).

This notion of the Vice as fool lasts at least until the post-1625 play *The Tragedy of Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*. Mentz, the Bishop, has drawn the role of the Jester in a roleplay the characters are to engage in. Upon reporting this, the visiting Edward, Prince of Wales, takes him for the Vice, even using one of the names given to a Vice character in his description:

> *Mentz.* I am the Jester.
> Edward. O excellent! Is your Holiness the Vice?
> Fortune hath fitted you y'faith my Lord,
> You'l play the Ambodexter cunningly.
> *Mentz.* Your Highness is to bitter in your Jests. (11, C4^{v})

Spivack certainly recognises the connection between Vice and fool, and even cites, among others, the above example: "In his own time and after, the Vice is often identified explicitly as the fool of the play, or his behavior is described in such a way that the association is unmistakable […] It is unnecessary to pursue all such notices […] to realize that the comedy of the Vice made an extraordinary impression on the theatrical audience or that his role was vividly recollected well into the seventeenth century" (199). His resistance to Heywood's Vices, and the blurring of the definition of "the Vice" which this demands, is thus all the more perplexing.

At first Spivack's claim seems almost reasonable. As troubling as it is that Spivack argues, essentially, that the early modern practitioners are incorrect in their first extant use of the term "the Vice" in plays, the Vices of John Heywood can be viewed as not fitting the commonly accepted understanding of the Vice. However, in the interests of avoiding a reductive reading it is more productive to view Heywood's Vices in terms of what they have in common with other Vice figures, rather than what they do not, and here we find much that is similar. For example, the drama in which they were formed shares with the moral allegory a tendency to have characters who are more a representation of a type than an individual:

> Because action centres on the conflict of ideas and social attitudes, the "characters" required are usually types. Only Johan Johan, Tyb, Syr Johan, Jupiter, and Merry Report have "proper" names, the rest being labelled, fixed in their estates: "a Gentylwoman", "the Pedler". "Lover unloved" and so on. (Heywood, Axton and Happé 12)

Additionally, as Axton and Happé observe in *The Plays of John Heywood*, there are antecedents to Heywood's named Vices, though in Heywood's earlier plays, rather than in the vices or devils of the morality drama, singling out the Pedler and the Potycary from *The Foure PP* (13). The second of these, the Potycary of *The Foure PP* has qualities which indicate some overlap with the Vice's, if not outright announcing similarity in formation:

> The Potycary… has two strongly marked "Vice" for his railing at pardons and relics, and his admission of "no virtue at all" is the beginning of self-knowledge. (19)

Later they note that there is also some indication of a control over the audience's viewpoint demonstrated by the Potycary, perhaps a relative of the Vice's more firm control of, and rapport with, the audience: "Such devices enclose the play-world tightly, yet skilfully manipulate the audience's viewpoint. Similar devices and gestural business are provided for the Potycary—further evidence, perhaps, for his being partly a Vice" (20-21). These traits were no doubt derived, as Spivack argues for Heywood's designated Vices, from a Vice tradition which precedes Heywood, but the presence of such Vice-ly characteristics in Heywood's other work suggests the error of excluding Heywood's Vices from the Vice tradition.

Even more significantly, Axton and Happé suggest that late moral plays may have had some influence over Heywood's writing, tying his Vices back to the source, noting that: "The disguising of

serious doctrine in comic entertainment is a remarkable development of techniques found in *Fulgens and Lucres* and *Magnyfycence*. He probably owed something to these plays in their comic subplots, and in the way in which folly—in different disguises—is made to comment on the action" (21). The big question regarding the development of these earlier characters in Heywood's drama which supposedly influenced his Vices is why they were not themselves labelled as such. If the term was available for these characters that are Vices or Vice-like, why did Heywood not use the "Vyce" terminology like he did in *Wether* and *Love*? Yet, this is not a problem with Axton and Happé's argument alone, for in tracing the development of the Vice figure both before and after *Respublica*, Spivack takes as the Vice many characters who are not labelled as such, seeking instead after the stage practice and traits of such characters.

As his position on Heywood's Vices might suggest, for Spivack the key trait of the Vice is not the comedy, the relationship with the audience, or the showmanship. These are certainly the qualities that made the Vice popular, but they are not what define the Vice. Rather, what makes a Vice is the conjunction of such traits with a state of being ultimately allegorical, a personification. Spivack takes the true Vice as purely homiletic, and frames Vices with more human characteristics as corruptions or dilutions of the form (198). This biggest threat to the "purity" of the Vice on the early modern stage was not, however, his non-allegorical comedic siblings, but rather the so-called "realism" of the early modern stage which tried to fit the allegorical Vice into the "literal" stage. Spivack characterises this as: "The gradual contamination of his allegorical nature by traits and appetites belonging to humanity, a process that was inevitable over the long years of his vogue on the stage" (198).

This propensity of Spivack to focus on one specific manifestation of the Vice and read every subsequent manifestation according to that paradigm has been observed before by Alan Dessen, albeit with regard to the Mankind or Humanity figure:

> The dramatic historian who establishes his "idea of the morality play" solely in terms of Mankind and the fifteenth-century model is thereby forced into the awkward position of minimizing or even criticizing much of the available evidence because it does not fit with his theory. Remember too that terms like "morality play" and "moral interlude" were invented by eighteenth-century scholars in defiance of the evidence to support a now discredited developmental theory of the rise of English drama. Without overstating the "evolutionist" position or questioning the important contribution of the Mankind figure, one can still have significant doubts about any account of the morality legacy that does not build upon all the evidence, especially the many and varied plays from the 1560s, 1570s, and 1580s. (Dessen, "Homilies", 251)

Spivack's narrative of the corruption and decline of the Vice figure presupposes a perfect version of the Vice which arguably did not exist. The Vice figure was not created and defined by philosophers or scientists with an aim to achieving the accuracy of terminology required of semantics or natural laws. Instead, the Vice was a stage term used to roughly encapsulate a cluster of stage practices. There is no perfect version of the Vice.

Nevertheless, given that Spivack's narrative of the corruption of allegory through hybridisation is something with which I must inevitably deal, especially with regard to the Vice figure, it is perhaps worth considering what he takes as uncorrupted, "pure" allegory. The first point is that allegorical characters should not coexist with literal characters, nor have the "habiliments" of literal characters themselves. The appearance of abstractions, chiefly the Vice, alongside literal characters is woven into a narrative of the secularisation of society which ultimately serves his notions of a development towards realism:

> By the end of the fifteenth century the purely eschatological theme was worn out, a victim of the secular revolution of the Renaissance […] the motor of the Psychomachia, the Vice, continued to function with undiminished vitality in plays that in all other respects were no longer in the allegorical tradition–a fact that touches the heart of our problem. For while allegory, by the very process of its adjustment to secular themes, suffered a constant decay, until by 1590 it had practically disappeared from the professional stage, its most significant and vital personage did not. The abstractions all about him gave way to the concrete and individualized men and women of the literal drama […] The stage ceased to be a pulpit or the audience a congregation, the action and the actors retreating into a discrete and independent world that no longer acknowledged the presence of the audience or sought their moral improvement through formal homily. (59)

Despite tying the Vice to the allegorical, and seeing in the alleged secularisation and literalisation of the stage the death of the theatre which spawned the Vice, this social shift plays an important part in his narrative of the ascension of the Vice as he casts the Vice as a more secular figure than the devil, and therefore the figure more likely to survive the secular stage. For Spivack, who begins his study with Iago, the later Vice-derived figures are hybrids between the kind of "realistic" character he supposes were populating the Shakespearean stage (as if the characters were real people, with psychological complexity), and the Vice, the most popular of the characters from the Morality drama; and therein lies

the problem. Spivack subordinates the earlier tradition to the later, seeing in the Vice a greater secularity as he progresses on the stage and becomes more "realistic".

This is comparable to the view of David Bevington who subscribes to a similar school of thought in his 1962 book *From Mankind to Marlowe*, where he argues for the gradual secularisation of the morality play: "Its emphasis became increasingly secular in the mid-sixteenth century, preaching lessons of civil, rather than religious conduct" (10). However, as Cox observes, he and his contemporary David Bevington both retain this teleological narrative, noting: "The first broad challenge to Chambers' legacy came in the important revisionist work of Bernard Spivack and David Bevington, writing just after the middle of the century, yet both retained a narrative of organic incremental development with secularization as its goal" (Cox 9). While I am inclined to agree with Spivack's notion of the Vice as the more "secular" figure than the devil, in truth I find the whole question of secularity more complicated than Spivack's argument is able to accommodate. Attempting to discern which of the figures is more secular misses the point somewhat, as it frames secular and spiritual society as having clearer borders than is practical in reality. I am inclined to agree with Cox, who argues that the religious and non-religious parts of society are not so easily separated in the early modern period, drawing on the work of John Sommerville:

> John Sommerville's argument for a nuanced and sociologically informed theory of secularization is helpful. He contrasts "a people whose religious rituals are so woven into the fabric of their life that they could not separate religion from the rest of their activities" with "a society in which religion is a matter of conscious beliefs, important primarily for the times of one's most philosophical and poetic solitude. The first is a "sacred" culture; the second, "secular." (10)

Cox also challenges Spivack's story of the so-called secular Vice replacing vice replacing devils, which is underpinned by this notion of the Vice as more secular. It is problematic because the Vice didn't rise to subsume the devils at all, for, as I've previously noted, the "devils continued to be staged ... long after the Vice had become unfashionable" (77). This is true even within the Morality play itself, as devils are likewise staged more frequently in the later tradition, "they do not somehow give way to vices as the morality play "progressed," "developed," or "matured." Cox concludes that "it would be more accurate to say that in the course of the sixteenth century vices eventually gave way to devils" (40). For Cox, then, the Vice is simply "a phase in the history of stage devils, rather than an evolutionary stage in a story of growth and development" (77).

In line with this rejection of the teleological narrative, Cox also takes issue with the notion of hybrids which Spivack shares with Bevington. While Cox is specifically discussing the mixing of personifications with quasi-historical characters, as in Spivack's so called "hybrid plays" the same argument could also apply to Spivack's notion of hybrid-Vices like his poster-child Iago, a mixture of the qualities of the Vice masked in a naturalised character which Spivack goes so far as to characterise early in his book as "crossbreeding between widely different species" (Spivack, *Allegory* 13). Cox argues that "The use of 'hybrid' as a metaphor for growth and progress in early drama is a problematic manifestation of evolutionary assumptions […] the argument is circular: taking hybridization as evidence of secularization, this line of reasoning defines 'hybrid' according to a particular period and genre, explaining away or ignoring examples elsewhere" (41). Bevington and Spivack thus ignore examples of quasi-historical characters alongside personifications in the earlier medieval mystery plays "presumably because these examples are too early or because they are not morality plays" (41). The same argument could apply to Spivack's placement of Iago as a hybrid-Vice because he is Vice dressed in "human garments," which ignores the plethora of human-like characteristics taken on by Vices from their inception, such as the much earlier Vice and vices of the morality *Mankind* (c. 1470) who present themselves in human trapping as itinerant labourers (Spivack, *Allegory* 21). A narrative of clear abstractions developing into human characters falls flat when we recognise that the vices always had human characteristics.

The other sense of hybrids, that of the mixing of personifications with "literal" character, has its own set of problems. This is Spivack's second key element to a pure allegory as he makes clear in his paper "Falstaff and the Psychomachia", elements of which he later incorporates into *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*. In it he quite convincingly traces the origin of the allegorical plays to Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, noting that the poems' widespread popularity—"More than three hundred surviving manuscripts attest to the popularity and influence of Prudentius throughout the middle ages" (450)—and establishing it as the pure form of the allegorical conflict played out in morality drama:

> In its original form, as in the poem of Prudentius, the allegorical conflict occurs directly between two antithetic groups of personifications, who objectify the opposition of good and evil in human nature. Man himself cannot appear as a figure in the action because, in the logic of the metaphor, he is the battleground on and for which the battle is fought, or he is the castle besieged and defended […] None of the surviving moralities maintains this allegorical purity, which dictates that a substance and its personified accidents cannot appear together as parallel entities. (Spivack, "Falstaff and the Psychomachia", 452)

The pure allegory, as well as containing only purely allegorical characters, cannot have a Mankind figure, for that would have the allegorical beings alongside the creature for which they are qualities. However, as he acknowledges, no extant plays reach this degree of purity, which should give us pause. He seems to be suggesting that such plays exist, in which case he has essentially assumed their existence without evidence. This would presuppose that there were plays which did have this purity, before the format was "corrupted". The alternative is no better, for his narrative of the corruption of the format becomes somewhat thin if such purely allegorical plays never existed, and the presence of allegory in plays was always already a corruption.

Finally, if these negative allegorical figures are indeed the agents of the devil, and the devil is a distinct and historical/mythical being as he also supposes—"Although the ultimate adversary is the Devil, he is not a personification but a concrete, historical figure in the Christian mythos. His agents, however, who carry out his assault upon man are personifications of the destructive tendencies that invade the human heart" (450)—it follows that the allegorical vices have always mixed with historical and literal figures. The presence of the historical devil alongside allegorical vices, such as in *Castle of Perseverance* and *Mankind* the very early plays Spivack uses, throws out the whole sense of the narrative of corruption with historical personages creeping onto the stage as the stage ostensibly becomes more literal and ultimately more secular, something he observes regarding the Mankind figure but ignores regarding the arguably more literal and historical devil: "Since [Mankind] is not a personification, his appearance in the allegory is actually the first of a series of literal intrusions that ultimately bring the metaphorical drama to an end" (453). By Spivack's own logic the allegory has always already been intruded by literal and historical figures, and a figure like the devil is at the very least coeval with the Vice's inception, if not predating it.

I would substitute the teleological narrative of the Vice's development espoused by Spivack and others with a more fluid development, and a less prescriptive definition of the Vice more in keeping with the myriad of ways the early modern audiences used the term. To cast the Vice in a teleological model is to assume the naturalness of the Vice's development, that it could not have happened any other way, and to restrict one's notions of what the Vice can be to a rigid definition that excludes many manifestations of the Vice the early modern writers themselves used. This is the trouble with Spivack's treatment of devils who display too many of the characteristics he wanted to use to exclusively locate the Vice, like Titivillus, and it is also the cause of his rejection of Heywood's Vices, the first use of "the Vyce" as a technical term in theatre. My goal is not to impose a definition of Vice based on looking back and seeing what the Vice became, or to choose from the many manifestations of the Vice

one or two which are the “proper” Vice against which to measure all other Vices. Nevertheless, a measure of clarity is needed if I am to navigate the Vices who are not explicitly labelled as such. With that in mind, I will examine in detail the relationships the Vice has with clowning and especially devils: figures with considerable overlap with the Vice figure, and with whom the Vice can easily be confused and conflated. This examination makes up the matter of my next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Vices, Devils, and Clowns

In this chapter, I will be addressing the similarities and differences between the Vice and both devils and clowns. In a sense the Vice is suspended between these two figures, with considerable overlap on both sides, though with arguably very little overlap between devil and clown on their own. The Vice could be thus considered the point where devil and clown meet: a kind of conjunction of moral evil and comic stage action. These two aspects of the Vice will become far more important in my later chapters as Vices appear to lean more heavily toward the moral aspect of the figure, especially in case of the female-Vice subtype. I should note that as the Vice's relationship with the devil on stage is far more detailed, and its thematic connections leave it far more prone to a conflation of the two figures, the majority of this chapter will therefore concern the Vice and the devil, though I will address the clown and the Vice at the end of the chapter.

Since 1997, when Stuart Clarke's *Thinking with Demons* established the need to take seriously the early modern belief in demons and witchcraft, it has become popular to see the influence of devil figures in all the places where scholars were once eager to see the Vice. It should be noted though that even as early as 1977 the Vice ancestry of Spivack's focus, Iago, was challenged by Leah Scragg in "Iago–Vice or Devil?". In some cases the influence of the Vice tradition is obvious; both Falstaff and Richard of Gloucester are referred to with reference to the tradition, yet even pre-1590, when "the Vice" still regularly appeared in the dramatis personae or stage directions of plays there are ambiguities about what is Vice and what is devil. Indeed, there is much overlap between the practice and representation of these figures over the course of their histories, and a tendency to conflate or confuse them. Spivack himself takes Titivillus, the devil of *Mankind* (c. 1470) as an example of the Vice with very weak justification, presumably because it is more convenient to his teleological argument regarding the Vice's development. In a similar fashion, John D. Cox, in *The Devil and the Sacred in English Drama, 1350-1642* (2000), counters the tendency to focus on the Vice, and suggests that the Vice is actually a subset of the devil tradition.

The Vice also shares a relationship and overlap with the clown or fool, so much so that many definitions contemporaneous with the figures conflate them (Dessen *Late Moral*, 18). Though the presentation of two characters in *The Three Lords and Ladies of London*, one typifying the fool and the other the Vice (in both costume and action) frustrates any attempt to merge the two (Wiles 22-3). In fact, despite some overlaps and leakage between fool, Vice and Devil, one of the key traits which can

be useful in discerning the identities of individual characters (where their identity is not otherwise listed) is costume and other stage properties, particularly for the clown and the Vice.

Between them, the devil and the fool, lies the Vice figure, and this chapter will aim to navigate the differences and similarities between all three of these figures, and establish some key traits in both practice and expression. With regard to the devil there is far more to discuss, however, and so I will deal with it first. In particular, I will consider the history of both the Vice and the devil and the considerable overlap in the performance of their intrigues, and their relationship with the audience. I will, however, reject the notion that these figures can easily be merged together through consideration of the visual signifiers tied to both figures, which would inevitably separate them in the audiences' minds. Beyond this I will also consider the most common trait used to separate Vices from Devils, their supposed amorality and detachment, through an examination of the arguments employed by Leah Scragg and especially Bernard Spivack. Spivack, particularly, seems to contradict himself in what he proposes the Vice is, and the stage of its moral agency.

It makes sense to observe that the Devil and the Vice are distinct figures. This may seem self-evident, but there are those, as we shall see, that would paint the Vice as a kind of Devil, rather than a distinct figure. The key support for this point is the observation that when the Vice figure is staged with the devil, the Vice and the devil are recognised as separate figures. *Mankind*'s Titivillus is clearly represented as distinct from his coterie of vices in *Mankind*, though, as Arnold Williams has observed, and Alan Dessen emphasised, the dramatis personae with its vice type-names can paint a misleading picture of the actual live performances, as the audience would not be seeing abstractions, but (in the case of *Mankind*) "four small-time hoodlums, a priest, a real, live devil, who, however, is invisible to the actors on stage, and a good hearted but weak and somewhat dim-witted English peasant" (Dessen, "Homilies" 253; Williams 18). Moreover, there are whole stage images which depend on a distinction between the two, such as that of the Vice riding the devil**,** and which appears in *Histriomastix* (1599): "Enter a roaring Diuell with the Vice on his back, Iniquity in one hand; and Inventus in the other" as well as several other earlier plays as Alan Dessen observes:

> Consider, for example, a device found in the late moral plays and echoed in a later generation of dramatic works: the Vice's exit to Hell on the Devil's back at the end of the Vice's career. Only one extant play, Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568) features this specific action; according to the stage direction, the Vice (Nichol Newfangle) "rideth away on the Devil's back." Similarly, in William Wager's Enough Is as Good as a Feast (1560), Satan praises Covetousness (the Vice figure) and then is directed to "Bear him out upon his back." (Dessen, "Allegorical Action" 393)

I have already examined this stage image in my chapter on Jonson, but for now what is significant about it is that it prevents us from conflating the two figures; the Vice and the devil were clearly distinct.

There are likewise those who would see the Devil as a mere residue, subsumed by the Vice figure in a teleological narrative of the stage's development. For Bernard Spivack in particular the devil is a largely irrelevant figure. He certainly acknowledges that the Vice has its heritage in the devil tradition, when he notes that "Far back in Iago's ancestry theme were devils and cronies of devils" (Spivack 52). It would seem, however, that during the period of the morality tradition the devil's role diminishes in favour of the Vice:

> It is only in the late period of the moralities when the allegorical convention is rapidly losing its hold on the stage, that he once more appears with any frequency, and then he has very minor roles in five plays, all of which are also adulterated by other nonallegorical features. In none of these latter plays is he anything more than the functionless and undifferentiated source of all evil, whose deputies in the real action of the plot are the vices. (Spivack 131)

Spivack attempts to counter the later resurgence of the devil by framing these appearances as weak and diminished in terms of the stage. And he certainly does have some evidence for this "weak devil":

> In *The Conflict of Conscience* he exists only as a prologue. In *Enough is as Good as a Feast* he comes in once, at the end, to clear the stage by lugging off the corpse of Worldly Man to hell. In *Like Will to Like, Virtuous and Godly Susanna,* and *All for Money* he associates exclusively and briefly with the Vice, commissioning him to his work, while the Vice belabors him with insults and treats him generally with mocking contempt. In all these plays he is for the most part a grotesque and lugubrious figure, without verve or alacrity–a lumbering, helpless target at whom the Vice shoots his scurrilous jests. He never has any part in the intrigue itself and never associates with its human victims. His sole, easily dispensable, business is to commission the Vice, without whose aid he is helpless. It is only in the later Elizabethan drama of literal plot and compact human characters that the Devil reasserts himself as a dramatic figure of some consequence, as in *Doctor Faustus, Grim the Collier of Croydon, A Knack to Know a Knave,* and *Histriomastix,* to confine ourselves to the plays of the sixteenth century. (Spivack 131)

Given my earlier observation that Spivack takes the devil Titivillus as a Vice because the devil fulfilled the significant, corrupting role of the intrigue far better than any of *Mankind*'s other characters, and after the initial failure of the play's vices, it is curious that the devil's role apparently diminishes so far as to become the pathetic figure Spivack describes here. The pathetic figure who utters the lines to Vice: "Ohe my friend Sinne, doe not leaue me thus" with the stage directions "here Satan shall crie and roare". However, one wonders why, if the Devil's sole role was so easily dispensable, the Devil reappeared at all in these plays? Perhaps the devil was indeed that "same figure […] full of the same sound and fury, except that he is now completely impotent and reduced to imploring the help of the whimsical Vice" (133), but if the devil is merely vestigial, why is he being reattached to drama that had bred him out?

The answer to these issues, I would argue, Spivack somewhat overgeneralises in service to his argument for the Vice's supremacy; plays contemporaneous to *All for Money* such as *Like Will to Like* and *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* present the devil as a far more powerful figure, and his relationship with the Vice is that of Lord and Father or Master. While the devil does endure the Vice's insults in these plays, they are more the back talk of a servant to his master than anything that frames the devil as the helpless figure of *All for Money*. Moreover, while the Devil's purpose in these plays is likewise to commission the Vice, the Vice can be said to be acting on behalf of the devil, with the Vice functioning as an exercise of devilish power, much as it served in my opening arguments concerning *The Devil is an Ass*.

In *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* for example, though the Vice Ill Report does make some fun of the Devil in the beginning, the Vice is perpetually hearkening back to the Devil's commission of him, and his relationship with his "Dad". While the Vice is the key infernal player within the scope of the play, he reminds the audience that the devil is very much active in the play's world, and continually frames himself in relation to this work, as he does in his speech outlining his purposes:

> My selfe will blow the leaden Trumpe of cruell slaunderous fame,
> Lo thus my Dad I please I trow, and thus my nature showe,
> Thus shall ech man my power and might in euery corner blow,
> And say that though the Deuill himselfe, could not tempt Susans grace
> The wit of Mayster Ill Report hath her and it defaste,
> Oh goodly wit, oh noble brayne, whence commeth this deuyce. (A4^{v})

It is worth noting that as well as setting out "to illustrate his name and nature and to reflect upon the audience the single moral idea he personifies" (which Spivack highlights concerning this speech), the Vice also sets out to please his "Dad" (Spivack 134). Moreover, "though the Deuill himself, could not tempt Susans grace", as the play's conclusion reveals, neither could Ill Report. Indeed, this pathetic subordinate Devil figure is nowhere less evident than in the Devil's last speech concerning the Vice, with its visceral description of the fate the Devil has in store for Ill Report:

> Well Ill Reporte thou villayne boy, thy bones I meane to gnaw,
> Because of that I gaue thee charge, I am no whit in aw.
> Why stand I heare and suffer him, all this whyle to take rest,
> His soule, his bones, his flesh and all, by me shall be possest.
> And what there is in Hell to harme, or punish him withall,
> Or what I may deuyse anew, his flesh shall feele it all.
> Oh Boy, oh knaue, oh foolish Sot, shouldst thou be put in trust,
> And haste not wit to bring to passe, that thing I after lust.
> Well, well thou villayne Boy and wretch, I ioy thy selfe art come,
> And what I would haue done to her, thou shalt haue all and some.
> From hence therefore euen presently, my iorney I will take,
> And hye me fast for tyme it is, to myne infernall lake. (F3^{v})

Though Ill Report has dominated the action in the play, the audience is reminded throughout the play, and especially at the end, that the Vice acts on the Devil's behalf; it is, after all, the Devil's "infernall lake". The Vice being ultimately beholden to the devil in this play, and the emphasis on the horrors he is to face in consequence for failing the devil, dismiss both the notion of the aloof Vice, free of consequence, and also any intention to separate the Vice from the Devil's ultimate control.

Another angle Spivack ignores in downplaying the stage Devil is that earlier plays, featuring devils with the old "sound and fury" (and the cunning and dominance of the play that Spivack sees as properly the attributes of the Vice) continued to be shown. As Titivillus reminds us, the fact remains that the qualities that are used to look for the Vice are already present in devils, and as I shall demonstrate, Titivillus is not alone.

In the early history of these figures, it is clearly demonstrated that the qualities of the Vice in terms of stage practice—speaking and relating to the audience, scheming, dissimulation and intrigue—

are also in the realm of possibility for the devil. Cox, for example, compares Satan with the vice Folly, and with later Vices:

> The York Satan's dissimulation with Eve is a credible precedent for Folly's cunning way with Manhood, though Satan does not address the audience directly. In another pageant, however, and in pursuit of another innocent, he acts even more like Folly in *Mundus et Infans.* Entering "into the playce" in the N-Town *Passion Play II,* Satan rages in alliterative verse, addressing the audience directly as he describes the assault he plans on Jesus, just as Titivillus describes his plan of attack in *Mankind.* Satan's tirade is interrupted by a fearful subordinate who warns him that if Jesus comes to hell, its power will be broken. Hearing this, Satan reverses course, announcing a change of plans to the audience, in the manner of the Vice who first appeared many years later […] Eventually […] it becomes clear that Satan has over-reached himself in his cleverness, again in a manner reminiscent of the Vice.
> (Cox 78-9)

All the qualities so precious to the Vice, are already present in devils, and though Spivack has focused on examples of apparently weak and un-"Vice"-like devils, these qualities are arguably sustained in the memory of the early modern audience as qualities of the devil by any repeat performances and revivals of earlier devil plays. It is useful to return to Cox's observations on the persistence of the mystery plays, and their far stronger devils, throughout the period of the Vice (Cox 77). Furthermore, these qualities re-emerge as devils return to popularity, such as in Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus.*

Given the manner in which the devil and the Vice overlapped in stage practice but were nevertheless recognised as distinct figured by early modern audiences, it is perhaps the devils who have been read as Vices which represent the most problematic error in this field. I have already discussed Titivillus, and the manner in which Spivack assumes him as a Vice to protect his theories, at length. Now I turn to the other side of the tradition, and the late devil of *Doctor Faustus*, Mephistopheles.

Spivack, oddly enough, has no mention of Mephistopheles, but with his pranks, his jokes, and his corruption of a human character, it is easy to see how a scholarship intent on seeing only the Vice might be inclined to take Mephistopheles as a Vice, in much the same way Titivillus is taken as one. As recently as 2000 he is referred to as such:

> Marlowe imports a number of emblematic characters from the morality play: the Good and Evil Angels probably derive from the fifteenth century morality *The Castle of Perseverance*; the Old Man assumes the customary role of Good Council or Mercy, contesting with the Vice Mephistopheles for the soul of the protagonist. (Deats and Bevington 6)

Once again the habit of taking "Vice-like" devils as Vices impacts on how plays are read, and this in a play in which the devil in question is clearly presented as a devil, not just in the dramatis personae but the very plot of the play, which relies on Mephistopheles's identity as a devil. What is interesting is that the exact same account acknowledges that Satan shares these Vice characteristics mere lines earlier, a point which makes it obvious that these vice-like characteristics are not exclusively the provenance of the Vice: "The morality play Vice descends from the Satan of the mystery play and like his infernal progenitor is a conniving, comic hypocrite who delights in chicanery for its own sake and speaks directly to the audience, inviting their complicity in his schemes to corrupt the Mankind figure" (Deats and Bevington 6). Furthermore there is an interesting parallel with the arguments concerning the Vice's apparent amoral nature, as the assumption that the Vice is feeling-less is implied by the next sentence: "However, in his Mephistopheles, Marlowe creates a tempter unlike any Vice that had ever trod the early modern stage, a potentially tragic devil capable of both compassion and suffering" (Deats and Bevington 6). This presentation of the devil as capable of very human-like capacities is appropriate considering the key difference between the devils and the Vices: that the former are real entities in the worldview of the early modern playgoers, whereas the latter are but stage figures personifying something lifeless but very real.

Despite any one individual scholar's potentially greater experience with one figure or another, it seems logical to take early modern playmakers at their word when they designate one character as a devil and another as a Vice. Of course for many characters examined through the lens of the Vice and devil traditions (indeed many which I will examine later in this thesis) neither designation is made, but for those that are so designated it is counterintuitive to think that we, removed from the early modern stage by centuries, know better than the playmakers what they meant when they used certain terms. As such, it seems clear that Mephistopheles is not a Vice capable of human-like feeling; he is a devil because Marlowe writes him as such.

Having dealt with the subordination of the Devil tradition, let us consider the reverse, the subordination of the Vice tradition. John D. Cox critiques Spivack et al, suggesting that the arguments of these scholars for the supremacy of the Vice over the stage devil is less to do with the Vice itself, and more a function of scholarship's obsession with Shakespeare:

> [the Vice's] fame is due in part to the same teleological thinking that has predominated in treatments of stage devils and vices ... the afterlife of the Vice in plays written for the London commercial stage (especially those written by Shakespeare) has been the principle motivation for investigating the Vice himself, and evolutionary narratives have seemed the most obvious way to organize what critics found. (Cox 76)

Cox sees devils and vices as serving identical purposes, even going so far as to hint that they're all but the same figure:

> Vices are just as effective as devils in corroding sacramental order in the plays we have seen […] because vices serve the devil's purpose in destroying the spiritual health of individuals and the wellbeing of community. Importantly the same function is performed by personified vices alone (i.e., unaccompanied by devils) in, other pre-Reformation plays. The virtual identity of devils and vices when they appear together should make this no surprise, yet it needs to be pointed out in detail, because it has not been noticed in previous studies of how evil was staged in early English plays. Moreover, attention to plays that stage vices alone helps to account for the essential dramaturgical continuity between devils and the Vice, as he emerged in the early sixteenth century. (52)

Cox ties this mutual identity of vices with devils to the Vice figure itself. While Cox is certainly correct to critique Spivack's subordination of the devil tradition to the Vice tradition, the Vice is not as neatly subordinated to the devil tradition either, as Steenbrugge's arguments concerning costuming make clear. In as much as Vice and devil both draw on similar tactics and stage business, the fact they are distinguished by costuming means they were distinguished by the audience viewing them. Furthermore, as Steenbrugge later observes, there is a key thematic difference between the devil on one hand, and the Vice and vices on the other: unlike the Vice and vices, "the devil is not a personification but rather a 'theological-mythological being'" (Steenbrugge 28). It is perhaps more useful to consider Stuart Clark's argument in *Thinking with Demons* which reframes the discussion around the supernatural elements of the early modern worldview (such as witchcraft and demons); this section is worth quoting in full because it appropriately summarises this important shift:

> This means that demonology, like astrology or alchemy, has invariably been regarded as an "occult" or "pseudo" science and, therefore, incompatible with scientific insight and progress. Usually, reasons other than those intrinsic to it have been sought for its popularity and longevity; it was the product, so it has been said, of lingering superstition, of irrationality, or, worse still, of collective derangement. But the history (as well as the anthropology) of science shows that the percieved boundary between nature and supernature, if it is established at all, is local to cultures, and that it shifts according to tastes and interests. The one now generally in force among the tribes of the West is only as old as the scientific production that goes with it. Before "Enlightenment" and the coming of the "new" science, things were different, metaphysically speaking, and nature was thought to have other limits. In fact, the ontology of the demonic was entirely the reverse of today's. In early modern Europe it was virtually the unanimous opinion of the educated that devils, and, *a fortiori*, witches, not merely existed in nature but acted according to its laws. They were thought to do so reluctantly and (as we shall see) with a good many unusual, or 'preternatural' manipulations of phenomena, yet they were always regarded as being inside the general category of the natural. Devils, wrote one typical witchcraft theorist, "cannot advance natural things without natural causes being present"; witches, he deduced, could do nothing "that surmounts the forces of nature". (152)

Clark argues that we need to examine devils not through a contemporary lens which excludes such entities from the natural world, but rather through the lens of people for whom the devils are very real, and active parts of the real world. In this sense the stage devils are as real to the collective audience as the historical kings: fictional depictions of something real. The element here which is of concern to us regarding the nature of the devil and by extension stage devils is that regardless of what modern scholars may think about demons and the devil, the early modern audience took the devil to be a real part of the natural world, and thus inevitably distinct from the abstracted Vice or vices who are more metaphorical or allegorical in nature, staged personifications of something rather than a staged personage (168).

For all our efforts to separate the two figures, however, even in the texts themselves things become ambiguous. As if to highlight the ambiguous relationship the Vice figure shares with both the Devil and the Fool, the Vice-like intriguer Anaides in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), for example, is referred to on multiple and separate occasions as both a Jester and a Devil, though never individually as a Vice (though he is considered a vice collectively with most of the other characters). Earlier, the Vice Dissimulation in Robert Wilson's *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1588), as I shall detail

further in Chapter Eight, talks about assuming the form of a devil and is referred to as the serpent of the Eden, with the implication that he has perhaps become more than a Vice. Nevertheless, Dissimulation continues to wear the motley which marks him (as he indicated to the audience in the play's prequel) as a Vice, and in the context of *Cynthia's Revels* Anaides is very obviously not the devil. Instead these instances of "misdenoted Vices" suggest a self-conscious acknowledgement on the part of the early modern playwrights of the ambiguities inherent in the Vice figures.

Which brings me to the search for a quality which can clearly distinguish Vices and Devils, and therefore allow us to distinguish their descendants on the stage. One such approach is suggested by Leah Scragg in her chapter "Iago–Vice or Devil", which challenges Spivack's identification of Iago with the Vice by challenging Iago's supposed amorality. Leah Scragg's argument is a simple one. She contends that if the qualities by which we determine that a character who is not explicitly identified as a Vice is a descendant of the Vice were also qualities associated with the devil, the whole process would be suspect: "if the characteristics which are thought to be typical of the Vice, and which are used by these critics as a kind of hallmark to detect his literary progeny, were found before, during and after the period of the popularity of the Morality play in the figure of the Devil, it would be equally arguable that it is to the Devil, not the Vice, that Iago is indebted" (48).

Scragg proceeds to address the question of whether Shakespeare (and his audience) are likely to have been familiar with the Vice-like Devils of the Mystery plays and pageants. This is obviously a difficult question to answer, for while Shakespearean characters like Richard of Gloucester, Feste, and Falstaff are directly connected to the Vice in their respective play texts, Iago is, as it were, "up for grabs". She works through a fairly thorough examination of the persistence of such plays, and the Vice-like qualities of their devils: "The Devil of the single pageant extant from the Newcastle plays, which originated before 1462 and were played until 1567-8, has similar characteristics. He exists on intimate terms with his audience, confiding in them his plans to corrupt Noah's wife (lines 109-13). He too exhibits a light-hearted approach to his deception and insinuates himself into the confidence of his dupe" (51). Scragg fields several further examples, most notably:

> Quires N, P, Q, R, of the *Ludus Coventriae* (originated *c.* 1400-*c.*1450) probably had a separate existence before their inclusion in the cycle and the Devil of these sections is of a very different kind from the demon filled with overt hatred found in other parts. He shares the characteristics noted in earlier Devils, particularly the intimacy with the audience to whom he introduces himself (26, 1-2), recounts with pride his aim in the world […] and recites his past triumphs and his skill in entrapping souls (26, 23-4). He also confides to them his plans for the destruction of Christ

> (26, 50-3), invites them to become his friends (26, 61-3) and finally departs with a declaration of alliance (with obvious homiletic significance) between himself and his listeners […] The Devil here has much in common with the Vice and clearly shows that Vice-like characteristics are not solely the province of amoral beings. (51)

She concludes that the qualities of the Vice, traits usually used by scholars to locate the Vice, first appeared on stage in the Devil figures, and moreover, that these Devil figures were still very much present on the stage in the sixteenth century, and would have potentially even influenced the plays of the early seventeenth century:

> Thus in three out of the four major Mystery cycles extant (if the Chester cycle is regarded as a partial exception), as well as in those pageants surviving from the Newcastle and Norwich plays, the Devil shows many of the characteristics which typify the Vice, and which have been identified by Brandl, Cushman and Spivack as vestigial traces of the Vice in the self-explanatory villains of the Elizabethan-Jacobean stage with their curious combination of malice and merriment. It seems fairly safe to assume that these Devils were typical of those in the Mystery plays as a whole, which originated before the emergence of the allegorical drama, were performed throughout the period when the Morality play enjoyed its popularity, and, judging from the number of copies made at the close of the sixteenth century, would still have been familiar after they had actually disappeared from the stage. (52)

In essence, Scragg has here established that the characteristic often used to identify the Vice—a relationship with the audience, the "self-explanatory villain" as she describes it—is also a property of the mystery devil which was played alongside the morality Vices. Given that this characteristic is one of the Vice's more striking features, it is safe to say that Cox is not far off the mark in suggesting that the Vice is "a phase in the history of stage devils" for the figures, both also having an allegiance or association to the forces of evil, would have certainly seemed quite similar in practice (Cox 77).

Nevertheless, it should not altogether trouble us that the some of the Vice's characteristics were first used by devils, indeed these characteristics have appeared in other non-Vice characters. As well as the Devil of the Mystery and pageant plays, the Vice figure has also been tied to a particular incarnation of Pilate in the Towneley pageant play, as well as an earlier incarnation of the Herod character. In *Suffering and Evil in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* Douglas Cole observes:

> The Herodian image reappears in the Towneley Pilate, who is lavish in his own boasts, threats of violence, and oaths by Mahomet. But there is something else in his character which is not in the others, something which does not look back to the older liturgical drama but ahead to the morality play. Pilate boasts directly to the audience, not only of his material prowess, but of his naked evil as well […] By disclosing his malicious motivation and strategy beforehand, Pilate makes possible a dimension of grim irony in the trial scene which is unique in the cycle plays; no other Pilate is so thoroughly reprehensible as this one. But what is even more important, Pilate's sense of glory in his own wickedness, the exemplary quality of his particular brand of evil, the joy he professes in the destruction of Christ, and the self-revealed plot of hypocritical deceit, are all dramaturgical elements which foreshadow the characteristic behavior of the morality Vice as he appears in the sixteenth-century drama. The Towneley Pilate is the most conspicuous progenitor of a long line of English stage-villains including Marlowe's Barabas; he is the great-grandfather of the sons of Machiavelli. (19-20)

Again, the key characteristic of the Vice, that he interacts with the audience, shares his plans and makes the audience complicit in them is found in earlier figures, figures which here are seen as directly leading to the development of the Vice figure. These earlier examples of the Vice's characteristic traits muddy the waters for any attempt to pin down, not only the beginnings of the Vice, but also the borders between Vice and other figures where the clear designation "the Vice" is absent. The other qualities here, such as the Vice's villainous intriguing, are likewise tied to the Machiavel, a later figure whom Cole argues is distilled from a similar (but clearly distinguishable) villainous essence: "Like the Vice of the morality play, Lorenzo reveals himself as a villain to the audience, but his principles and slogans are not so much inversions of Christian doctrine as they are examples of Machiavellian 'policy'" (137).

What is significant about the Vice and the devil's shared characteristics, though, is that the Vice and the devil continued to share the stage for a significant period of time, such that it can be difficult to identify whether a character is a Vice or a devil (or derived from either) in the absence of a clear indication in the script.

Having thus established the strong overlap in the stage practice and qualities of the Vice and the Devil, then, Scragg seeks some difference by which she can separate the figures, and she finds this in Spivack, whose very argument she had set out to overturn. This quality, which both she and Spivack rely on is the Vice's alleged amorality. As she argues: "Above all, [the Vice] was an amoral being whose behaviour was completely unmotivated–he simply demonstrated the nature of the abstraction he represented. In this respect, as Spivack points out, the Devil and the Vice are completely distinct" (49).

Unless she and Spivack are incorrect in this respect, then, her argument regarding Iago's identity as a devil derivative would seem to follow, for as she observes: "in their dramatic presentation the Vice and the Devil have much in common, those characteristics which I have outlined as typical of the Vice being found in the Devil of the Mystery plays over a hundred years before the emergence of the allegorical figure […] in this earliest surviving dramatic presentation of a tempter on the English stage, the attitudes of the later Vice figure are already evinced" (49).

With this in mind, it is worth considering a further example of a Vice-like devil which Scragg finds in the Wakefield cycle, which

> also presents vivacious Devils eager to destroy their human victims. Their chief, Titivillus, introduces himself on his first entrance, priding himself on his dexterity in entrapping the unwary and commenting with cynical glee on the lasciviousness and general corruption of the times which give him his opportunity to win souls. Although a Devil, Tutivillus does not comment in any way on the motive for his antagonism. He shows no cause for his hostility towards mankind– his whole being is involved in an attitude of merriment, almost glee, not hatred and resentment […] He has the energy, life and homiletic function which a claimed to be typical of the Vice, together with his professional pride in his work (50)

This particular example raises an interesting issue, one which challenges both Spivack and Scragg's assertion that the Vice can be distinguished from the Devil by his amorality: when are we to impute motive to a character in a stage play? As Scragg observes, regarding this example "The Devil is beginning to appear on the stage with the motive for his antagonism taken for granted, while he simply exhibits his delight in evil and his dexterity in entrapping souls", yet this presents the devil as curiously like the Vice in Spivack's formulation (Scragg 51):

> Nothing illustrates more clearly the difference between the genus vice and the genus Devil than the contrasting ways they are motivated. The latter in all his stage appearances is invariably anthropomorphic and passionate, for his assault upon mankind has its cause in emotions that make him a moral personage. He is moved by hatred of God and by envy of man, and his purpose is to achieve revenge upon the Creator by destroying the creature. (Spivack 133)

Of course, being not real beings, stage characters have no motive in the strictest sense, they do what they do because they were written to do so, and when an interpretation of the play relies on some

oddity of motivation this fact is always a useful counter. Sometimes the "motives" of a character do not fit not because they are the result of a fusion of two stage traditions, or because they are actually an amoral character without real motive, but because they are poorly written. But speaking within the world of the play, is not the fact that Titivillus offers no comment "on the motive for his antagonism" and "shows no cause for his hostility towards mankind" actually relevant? While we can accept the audience is capable of assuming that he is motivated in a similar way to all devils, both on the stage and (in the minds of Christians, both in the early modern period and in the present day) in the real world, why can we not do the same with the Vice? Do the audience assume that there is no motive for Titivillus's actions, or do they impute motivation to him because he is a devil, and if the devil is motivated because he is a devil, what is it about Vices which excludes them from this kind of reasoning? In light of this, the parallel Scragg draws between this particular devil and the Vice falls flat, but it neatly raises the problems with the Vice figure's supposed amorality and its odd connection to the Vice figure's motivations.

For Spivack though, it is clear that Iago is the Vice and not the devil precisely because of Iago's ambiguous motivations. In fact, his chapter on Iago which introduces his arguments concerning the Vice has little to say about the stage practices which Scragg is so interested in. Instead, what makes the Iago so clearly the Vice is that his motivations defy explanation, and this is also the case for the other villains in his study:

> they do not hate or envy them any more than the sculptor hates or envies the clay which is the material condition of his art. Furthermore, the evil in the plays in which they appear is never really committed; it is only suffered. For the agents of evil are not moral; only their victims are. *Evil* is a word that describes the human and moral view of what they do. But since at the bottom they are neither human nor moral, evil is for them solely an organic function and an artistic pleasure. (Spivack 45)

For Spivack, this is borne out with regard to Iago in his contradictory and seemingly irrelevant motives, which to Spivack bespeak a tension between an amoral stage figure and a literal character:

> His opinion of his several victims is a chaos of contradictions. Whenever he is engaged in the exposition of his injuries he presents them uniformly in one light. Whenever he regards them as his victims, which is most of the time, he pronounces upon them a moral commentary different in the extreme. For it is not merely that *we* cannot for a moment believe his accusations; he himself

> does not believe them, and plainly says so. He declaims at one instant his suspicion that the "lusty Moor" is guilty of adultery with Emilia. Yet in the very same soliloquy–only four lines earlier in fact–adulterous Othello "Is of a constant, loving, noble nature" and will make Desdemona "A most dear husband." (18)

Spivack finds that all of Iago's stated reasons for his actions are all dismissed as the play progresses, as if they were never important to Iago's impetus to action in the first place. For this reason, he regards Iago's motives as merely a flimsy disguise for an essentially amoral and motiveless character.

And, yet, the argument is not that Iago, as Vice, is without motives. It cannot be because Spivack ascribes very clear motives to both the Vice figure, and Iago. This is despite his clear separation of the Devil and the Vice which turns on his ability to demonstrate that the Vice is an amoral figure motivated by the need to demonstrate his allegorical meaning, and the Devil is motivated because he's a real being. Consider this section in which Spivack emphasises the hostility Iago has towards his victims and their goodness, an emphasis which is supposed to allow the reader to make the connection between Iago's empty "human" motives and his vice-like intentions, but which instead undermines his whole argument:

> [Iago's motives are] like a clutter of opportunisms for an action that was inevitable before they were ever thought of […] He is aware of a rumor which he has no reason to believe, but will use it as a sufficient pretext for bringing about what his hatred of Othello, antecedent to all suspicion, provokes him to desire. (8)

This hatred, while perhaps not explained by his human motivations is nevertheless explained by Iago's inhuman motives. Spivack makes much of Iago's complaint that Othello "hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly" (12), and co-opts them as unearthly motives: "These are not simply additional motives of the kind to which we are already accustomed; they belong, if we examine them carefully, to a different world of causation; and their close merger with Iago's jealousy and ambition suggests something very much like crossbreeding between widely different species. Their existence in the play is a second element of the confusion inhabiting his motivation in general, creating, in effect, a double equivoque" (13). But what remains is that, human or "spirit of hate" Iago is driven by motives (13). He later cites the Vice of *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* in order to establish that the Vice's only motive was to display the nature of his sin: "My selfe will blow the leaden Trumpe of cruell slaunderous fame, / Lo thus my Dad I please I trowe, *and thus my nature show*" (emphasis in original, 134). Yet, as I have

earlier observed regarding that play, the Vice is also very much motivated to please his "Dad". He claims that "The purposes of the Devil are those of a complex moral being. The whole purpose of the Vice is to illustrate his name and nature and to reflect upon the audience the single moral idea he personifies" yet, this does not gel with the clear motivations, however unearthly, that Iago, nor any other Vice displays (134). By Spivack's own admission, Iago hates in a way that is more in line with his own description of the devil, he hates as a moral being rather than a wooden (if exciting) didactic demonstration of sin. It is here that Spivack's circular reasoning unravels. Iago is precisely a Vice because his motives do not add up, yet Spivack admits that his "Vice-hybrids" sometimes have motives. The other characteristics of the Vice are shared, as we have seen, by clowns and devils; therefore, any "Vice" he identifies which also possesses motives could equally be a "hybrid" of either of these figures, especially the Devil.

At this point I might consider Scragg's argument successful, but for the clear motivations of other Vices. Consider the money-grubbing scams run by the vagabond vices of the early *Mankind*, or Dissimulation's complex scheme in *The Three Ladies of London* to escape a potential rise of virtue by marrying Love. Such simple, human-like traits frustrate Spivack and Scragg's attempts to turn the Vice into something transcendent, something beyond the world of the play in a greater sense than just his metatheatrical relationship with the audience, "an abstraction and a professional artist, a laughing *farceur* who had no further purpose than to confound his human victims by a series of intrigues that illustrated the meaning of his abstract name […] the villain as artist, who, deeply considered, has nothing to do with evil" (Spivack 56).

In light of their clear similarities and shared history, it may be tempting to simply conflate the two figures and be done with it. After all, with their strong associations, and in context of the theatre it can be easy to forget the subtle mythological distinctions between the two figures and see the Vice as merely one of the host of Hell. It is in the context of the theatre, though, that the Vice and the devil are distinguished in their clearest manner: their material presentation to the audience. This is a point Charlotte Steenbrugge makes in her book *Staging Vice* (2014). Responding to Cox's insinuation of the Vice into the devil tradition, she argues that "The distinction between the devil on one hand and the Vice […] and minor vices on the other seems to have primarily been one of costume" (Steenbrugge 28).

The material presentation of both characters is perhaps key to their endurance on the stage. With consistent costumes, the figures become something immediately recognisable, visually connected to the history of the manifestation of the figures on the stage. This is certainly true of devils, as Cox observes: "One reason devils endured on stage was that the material base of culture changed very little

throughout the time they were popular: the slow pace of economic and technological change meant that costumes and the materials for assembling them remained the same" (5). The key features of the costumes of devils appear to be the colour black, and feathers, and this theme continues over multiple years, from the fourteenth century through to the late fifteenth century:

> "The devill in his fethers" (presumably black feathers) appears in costuming lists from Chester, both for the mystery plays and for the annual Midsummer Show, which reputedly endured from 1499 to the 1670s. At Coventry a charge is recorded "for making ye demone*s* head" in 1543 and "for a yard of canvas for ye devylles mall [maul] in1544. "the dymons cote" (p. 240), "the devells hose" (p. 246), "pwyntes [points (for attaching the hose to the doublet)] for the deman" (p. 218), and "a stafe for the deman" (p. 238) add details to the picture at Coventry. The St. John's College Cambridge Register of Inventories lists "ij blak devell*e*s cootes w*i*th horn*e*s" in 1548-49. […] The earliest reference to devils' costumes discovered so far is from York in 1433, where "garments," "faces," and "Vesernes [visors]" for devils are listed, the latest before the closing of the theatres is from Thomas Nabbes' masque, *Microcosmus* in 1637, where a stage direction specifies "A divell in a black robe: haire, wreath and wings black." The wings were presumably made of black feathers. (Cox 5-6)

Steenbrugge cites, among others, *Mankind* whose "devil Titivillus is described as 'a man wyth a hede that ys of grett omnipotens'" and later evidence from "the 1561 inventory of a Leyden chamber which lists a paper devil's mask, and from the engravings of the 1606 entries for a Haarlem competition which show distinctly diabolical characters wearing masks" (Steenbrugge 141). We thus have a pretty clear picture of what the devil looked like on stage. But what of the Vice?

In the plays there have been references to a costume of the Vice in several places. In *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), the character of Satan speaks wistfully in Act One Scene One of the time "When every Great Man had his Vice stand by him, In his long Coat, shaking his wooden Dagger," and the vice Dissimulation in *The Three Ladies of London* (published 1584), who clearly expects to be recognized by the audience in the play's opening scene: "Nay, who is it that knowes me not by my partie coloured head?", though it should be noted that his brother (and arguably lesser) Vices appear to have no similar identifying features exclusive to the Vice (*Devil* 1.1.84-5; *Ladies* A2^{v}). He likewise wears a "long coate," the coat in this case, of a farmer. This "partie coloured" motley is used again in *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* to mark out the four Spanish Lords as Vices, a clever use of the Vice imagery to mark the Spanish Lords as both Vices, and, in the context of only Dissimulation

originally using this costuming, as Dissimulation who ascends to a far more significant moral function, as I will argue in my chapter on those plays.

It would certainly be far easier to demark the limits of the Vice figure if the figure had a singular costume which marked it out. Plays after the above examples, such as the works of Shakespeare, which evoke the Vice possess little or no overt costuming elements which can be used to recognise the Vice. We do not know what Jonson's Iniquity wore in *The Devil is an Ass* and *1 Henry IV*'s reference to the dagger of lath may appear only in speech (though Wiles suggests that Falstaff's sword is a wooden staff, functioning as his dagger of lath) (121). More to the point, as Jonson writes in *The Devil is an Ass*—"They wear the same clothes, eat the same meat […] As the best men and women" (123-6)—and later, in *The Staple of News*, the Vices of his time are clad just like ordinary people:

> *That was the old way, Gossip, when* Iniquity
> *came in like* Hokos Pokos, *in a Juglers Jerkin, with false*
> *Skirts, like the* Knave *of* Clubs! *but now they are attir'd like*
> *Men and Women o' the time, the* Vices *Male and Female!*

Here again we see the suggestion of a specific Vice costume in the pre-Jonson period. Yet earlier than this we again see the Vice clad as an ordinary person, in the pre-1580s plays which David Bevington examines in *From Mankind to Marlowe*:

> More often, player's costumes seem to run to types that could be represented by easily exchanged elements of the stock wardrobe: "Enter Lust, like a Gallant" (*Trial of Treasure*, p. 263); "Theologie commeth in a long ancient garment like a Prophet" and "Gluttonie and Pride dressed in deuils apparel" (*All for Money*, 11. 99, 485). Bale's *Three Laws* stipulates, "Lete Idolatry be decked lyke an olde wytche, Sodomy lyke a monke of all sectes, Ambycyon lyke a byshop, Couetousnesse lyke a pharyse or spyrituall lawer, false doctryne, like a popysh doctour, and hypocresy lyke a graye fryre" (p. 87). (Bevington, *Mankind to Marlowe* 93)

Despite Jonson's and Wilson's suggestion that there was a recognisable "Vice costume" the problem remains that finding this costume is frustrated by the fact that Vices are often in different garments relevant to their particular manifestation in the play. Even if this costume exists, it exists alongside Vice figures who do not utilise it at all. Interestingly, it would seem the "deuil's apparel" is far more

standardised than that of the Vice, and this instance of vices clad as devils continues the theme of overlap between the two.

The above reference in *The Staple of News* returns us to motley, upholding the distinctive costume as surely as it is dismissing it as no longer applicable. Further references to motley are found in Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1602). The character representing Jonson is said to "bite euery Motley-head vice by'th nose[…]" and there are futher associations made between Jonson and Vice when his wits are characterised as many-coloured: "Now Master Horace, you must be a more horrible / swearer for your oath must be (like your wittes) of many col-/lours" (45, 46). Likewise, a reference in the 1618 *The Owles Almanacke* matches the notion in *Satiromastix* and *Three Ladies* that it is the Vice's head which is motley-ed: "Now issued in from the Reareward, Madame *Vice*, or olde *Iniquitie*, with a lath dagger painted, according to the fashion of an old *Vice* in a Comedy, with a head of many colours, as shewing her subtlety" (12). Despite these references which strongly connect the many-coloured coat or head to the Vice, it also functions as a demarcation of the fool, even in Jonson whose Vice associations have been so strong thus far. *Every Man out of his Humour*, for example, bears the line: "I, and rare ones too: of as many Colours, as e're you / saw any fooles coat in your life." (32). This is consistent with Wiles's observations, and further blurs the Vice and fool roles:

> In Armada year, English Catholics in Rome dressed a Protestant traveller in "a fool's coat […] half blue, half yellow, and a cockscomb with three bells". And in the court of Queen Mary we find a gown of yellow and blue fabric being chopped up to make "two vices' coats for a play". The Revels documents of Edward VI use the terms "vice", "fool" and "dizard" interchangeably for a man who wears a suit of many colours and carried as his props a ladle with a bauble pendant and a dagger. (5)

While the key signifiers for the devil were feathers, possibly a mask, and the colour black, the key signifier for the Vice, in terms of costume, was his multicoloured coat, though in the text of plays Vices are associated with coats generally with no (textual) mention of their colours. Throughout the plays I have examined I have noted several instances of a coat, or a coat and cap which makes up the costume of the Vice. My suggestion that the cap and gown/coat may have made up part of the token costume of the Vice is given additional support by the Vice Covetous in W. Wager's *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* (1560). Covetous "places much emphasis upon his cap, gown and chain" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 60). Note that this is a play of the 1560s, what Dessen might have referred to as a late moral play; indeed, all references that I have found to the costume of the Vice involving a cap *and* a gown or coat are late

in the tradition, and this might suggest a transition from a more iconic costume, such as might be worn by the differentiated vices of the earlier plays.

One curious source of support for the "cap and gown" costume of the Vice comes from long after the Elizabethan period in documents from the 1800s. For example, the 1879 *A Cyclopedia of Costume or Dictionary of Dress* has this to say about the Vice and the Devil:

> As a sop, however, to the people, drolls or buffoons were always introduced into these plays, however serious or sacred the subject[sic]; a much greater profanity than any it was professed to correct. There were generally two[sic]; the principal being the Devil, and the other called the Vice, who was attired in a fool's habit, a cap with ass's ears, and a sword or dagger made of a thin lath, with which it was his business to beat and torment the Devil. He was also furnished with a long pole, with which he laid about him, tumbling the other actors over one another with great noise and riot. The performers were the monks themselves, and of course, where they had special characters to sustain, they assumed some sort of disguises, the decorations of the theatre being the church ornaments. (384)

This surprisingly detailed description of the Vice's costume includes most of what we have come to expect: a cap (apparently with ass's ears), a fool's coat, and the dagger of lath. Likewise, it is interesting to note that the Dictionary of Dress recalls the Devil as being the primary of the two "buffoons", another reminder that the devil cannot be ignored in any serious study of the Vice figure.

A similar description to what we see above appears in *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare Vol 1,* though it largely derives its notion of having the Vice wear "The costume is that usually assigned to this personage-—the long petticoat guarded with lace, the cap with ass's ears, and the dagger of lath" from *Henry IV*, *Richard III*, and especially Samuel Harsnett's *A declaration of egregious popish impostures* (256). While these later documents are perhaps questionable given their age and distance from the period of the plays, they provide a surprising amount of detail regarding the costume of the Vice which I have not seen elsewhere. More importantly, they derive their perception of the Vice from sources that are not questionable, and are contemporaneous to the period of the Vice which are worth examining in detail. The section in Harsnett in particular is worth quoting in full:

> It was a prety part in the old Church-playes, when the nimble Vice would skip vp nimbly like a lacke an Apes into the deuils necke, and ride the deuil a course, and belabour him with his woodden dagger, til he made him roare, wherat the people would laugh to see the deuil so vice-

> haunted. This action, & passiō had som semblance, by reason the deuil looked like a patible old *Coriden*, with a payre of hornes on his head, & a Cowes tayle at his breech; but for a deuil to be so vice-haunted, as that he should roare, at the picture of a vice burnt in a pece of paper, especially beeing without his hormes, & tayle, is a passion exceeding al apprehensiō, but that our old deere mother the Romish church doth warrant it by Canon. Her deuils be surely some of those old vice-haunted cassiered woodden-beaten deuils, that were wont to frequent the stages, and haue had theyr hornes beaten of with *Mengus* his clubbe, and theyr tayles cut off with a smart lash of his stinging whip, who are so skared with the *Idea* of a vice, & a dagger, as they durst neuer since looke a paper-vice in the face. (114-5)

Here we have, for the Vice, the wooden dagger, and apparently also a whip. Moreover, the Vice had such a recognizable visage that one could be depicted on paper to torment a devil. The devil's costume in Harsnett's account has the familiar horns, but also a cow's tail.

As Harsnett's passage suggests, other possible signifiers distinguishing the Vices and Devils include mannerisms and stage practices. For example, a possible signifier for the devil lies in his laugh. Both in *Histriomastix* (1599) and *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) the devil laughs in a distinctive "Ho ho ho" fashion (1.1.1; C4^{r}). There is also a potential suggestion of a set of facial expressions common to the Vice is made in Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels.* In Act Two Scene Three Mercury, in the form of a page boy, describes the faces of various professions: "I will now give you the particular, and distinct face of euery your / most noted *species* of persons, as your marchant, your scholer, your soul/dier, your lawyer, courtier, &c. and each of these so truly, as you would /sweare, but that your eye shall see the variation of the lineament". He gets to courtier "theorique" and: "Your courtier theorique, is hee, that hath arriu'd to his sardest, and doth now know the court, rather by speculation, then practice; and this is his face: a fastidious and oblique face, that lookes, as it went with a vice, and were screw'd thus" (112). Of course such facial expressions are inaccessible to us, along with any other keys to identifying the Vice or the Devil in terms of stage practice or characterisation not present in the texts we have. But the fact that this is commented on lends credence to the notion that stage practice and theatricality are crucial elements in defining and distinguishing the Vice. Moreover, though there are many such practices lost to us, there are others are present in the text, such as the repeated stage image of the Vice riding the devil, as I have already established.

Harsnet's account includes the Vice tormenting the devil, an image consistent with the relationship between Vices and devils that Spivack emphasises which paints the devil as a pathetic figure. The torment in Harsnet includes the Vice riding the devil, though this image is more frequently

deployed to the Vice's detriment as he is carried off to hell. The stage business of the Vice riding the devil's back, in fact, relies on the two figures being recognisably separate. As argued in Chapter Two, one example of this is the Vice riding the Devil's back, self-consciously inverted in *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) to comic effect. Dessen, in tracing the persistence of allegory on the Elizabethan stage presents quite a comprehensive list of allusion to this particular stage image, including Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568) in which the Vice Nichol Newfangle "rideth away on the Devil's back", and William Wager's *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* (1568) in which Satan bears out Covetousness on his back. Thomas Nashe, in 1592, and Samuel Harsnett in 1603, both refer back to this tradition. In Wager's *The Longer Though Livest* (1559), Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589), and *A Knack to know a Knave* (1594) it is a human characters who are thus borne out, the protagonist Moros, the "clownish Miles" and Bailiff of Hexham (the father of the four knaves) respectively (Dessen, "Allegorical Action" 393-4).

There are other evocations of this tradition, none more striking than the Jonson one in 1616, but one other certainly demonstrates the persistence of this image and its utility in conveying meaning. Scholars have observed the references to the Vice in *The Tragedy of Alphonsus Emperor of Germany* (printed 1654), in which the characters begin a role play and are assigned their roles at random. A bishop is assigned the role of the Jester, which Prince Edward connects to the Vice tradition:

> MENTZ. I am the Jester.
> EDWARD. O excellent! Is your Holiness the Vice?
> Fortune hath fitted you y'faith my Lord,
> You'l play the Ambodexter cunningly.
> MENTZ. Your Highness is to bitter in your Jests. (C4^{v})

To my knowledge a later stage direction which has the Priest, playing the role of the Jester/Vice exit the stage riding on the back of the villainous character has as yet been unnoted:

> MENTZ. Have with thee Marshal, the fool rides thee.
> *Exit. On Alex. Back.*
> ALPHONSUS. Now by mine honour, my Lord of *Mentz* plays
> the fool the worst tht ever I saw.
> EDWARD. He do's all by contraries ; for I am sure he playd
> the wiseman like a fool, and now he plays the fool wisely. (E3^{r-v})

This example is curious, because to an audience schooled in the Vice tradition, a character verbally associated with the Vice leaving stage on the back of another character makes a suggestion about the nature or role of the other. In this case it perhaps foreshadows the villainous acts in store for this character, by subtly associating him with the devil, suggesting in a similar manner to Jonson's use of the stage image that understanding the suggestion the image makes is something that can still be expected from the audience of the play at this time.

I have thus far been exploring almost exclusively the Vice's relationship (and overlap) with the Devil. But there is another considerable overlap which I have mentioned in passing, but will now deal with in detail here, the Vice's overlap with the clown. Naturally David Wiles's book, *Shakespeare's Clown*, which deals with the clown figure in detail, makes much of their connecting, and it is to Wiles's work I turn. Wiles notes several traits the Vice and the clown have in common: for example that fools and Vices use the same or similar costumes, and that both fools and Vices can be divorced somewhat from the main plot of the plays they appear in, at least by the Elizabethan period (Wiles 5, 9).

Perhaps the most obvious overlap between the Vice and clowning is their shared relationship with the audience: "The spectators are always within the purview of the play, and at every opportunity their presence is acknowledged and exploited" (119). Likewise, as Wiles has observed: "the Elizabethan clown's performance rested on the assumption, or illusion, that the audience are active participants, necessary helpers in the creation of theatre" (x). Interestingly enough, this audience connectivity is tied in the allegorical Vice to the figure's homiletic purpose:

> the allegorical drama grew out of homiletic pageantry, in which the virtues and vices defined themselves and their moral effects in human life by speeches they addressed to the spectators the virtues solemn and hortatory, the vices sardonic, boastful, and indecent. […] In *Perseverance,* for instance, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, each on his separate stage, disclose their qualities and purposes in declamations filled with vaunt and seriocomic malice; and the Deadly Sins, when they are summoned by their three overlords, do the same, parading themselves before the spectators and expatiating on their names and natures. (119)

The audience connection based on the didactic purpose of the homily is tied to the humour:

> the continuous rapport throughout the play between its most important evil personage and the audience, whom he enlightens and amuses by conversing with them in a series of dramatic

> monologues (not to be confused with the soliloquies of the later drama) and sardonic asides. The range of this one-way conversation is large, but essentially it is an exposition of the speaker's allegorical nature and of his activity as a contriver and manipulator of a play of intrigue. (119)

In essence, then, the Vice shares one of its most prominent characteristics with the clown figure.

Sustaining his argument concerning the overlap between the clown and the Vice, Wiles, like Spivack, reads Falstaff, though he focuses on different elements:

> He has prose as a clown should, but a very distinctive prose. His social status is ambiguous: he is a common cutpurse, but at the same time a knight. In respect of plot structure, he is both separate from and bound up with the chronicle of aristocratic rebellion. Like other clowns, his wooing is unresolved […] The ever-present emblems of Falstaff's knighthood reinforce the sense that this is a clown in role. With a great show of formality, the page bears on at the start of Part Two the sword and buckler that are to be recognized as Falstaff's accoutrements from Part One. Sword and buckler are manifestly not the weapons of a gentleman; quite the reverse—the short sword and buckler were part of the traditional uniform of serving-men in blue livery coats. (119-121)

However, there are elements of Falstaff which point rather more to the clown than to the Vice. Wiles has previously noted the distinction between Vice and clown with regard to *Three Ladies* and the distinction between Dissimulation and Simplicity. Of particular note, then, is Falstaff's manner of speaking which fits Tarlton's manner of speaking (and clowning):

> When Falstaff elaborates his account of the rogues in buckram, impersonates the king in the Boar's Head, or manipulates the Hostess to whom he owes money, he creates the impression that he is extemporizing, inventing verbal ploys on the spur of the moment. He shares Tarlton's skill of extracting himself from a situation of hopeless disadvantage. (129)

Likewise, Feste's assumption of the Vice role in *Twelfth Night* upholds Wiles's reading of the Vice as "on the verge of becoming the Clown" when he is placed within the "framework of a historical/melodramatic/romantic narrative" and when he speaks of the conventions, he speaks of "The conventions governing the role of clown/Vice" (7).

Alan Dessen likewise supports the overlap between Vice and fool, noting that early modern dictionaries and translators associated the two figures (Dessen, *Late Moral* 18). Furthermore, in the

1821 Abstracts *and Extracts of Smyth's lives of the Berkeleys, illustrative of ancient manners and the constitution* the Vice is presented as a fool in the documents' definitions of various kinds of fools: "The Fool in the antient Mysteries and Moralities. This was the Vice, whose office it was to teaze the Devil. He ceased to be in fashion at the end of the fifteenth century" (61). Likewise, in *The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakespeare*, the two figures are further associated through the harlequin: "The modern Harlequin, who is the lineal descendant of the Vice, retains the [dagger of] lath."

John D. Cox also considers the clownish aspects of the Vice figure, and neatly critiques an alternative narrative to the emergence of the Vice from the devils and vices of earlier plays:

> One of the principal objections to identifying the Vice with a continuous history of stage devils and personified vices has come from those who have construed the Vice as mirthful rather than vicious—a fool rather than a knave—and who have therefore sought his ancestry in French farce and popular folk drama, rather than religious drama. Evidence cited for this view is that the first use of the term "the Vice" is by John Heywood, in *The Play of the Weather* (1519-28) and *The Play of Love* (1533-34), where the Vice bears little resemblance to the devil of traditional religion. E.K. Chambers argued that Heywood derived his Vice from the domestic fool or jester, as an appropriate native addition to the continental traditions that he was adapting. Chambers thus gave rise to a strain of criticism that has identified the Vice with various folk traditions in Robin Hood and the St. George plays, in addition to the Roman *mimus*, the fabliau, and the French *sottie*." (77)

Cox's counter to this line of thinking is that it often leads to misreading the Vice as socially subversive, a figure undermining the official narratives, whereas: "When fools and folk elements appear in religious drama, they support traditional religion […] At the same time, they remain critical of social oppression, as has been readily recognized in the Townley *First* and *Second Shepards' Plays*, though the same critique is virtually ubiquitous in pre-Reformation drama of all kinds" (77). In essence, he is subordinating the fool and folk elements to the didactic purposes of the drama, upholding traditional religion and critiquing social ills. But while Cox's argument takes into account the angle such arguments takes, he doesn't counter the presence of these elements. Indeed, unlike Spivack he acknowledges Heywood's vices.

For myself, I would say that the clear overlaps between the objectives and the stage activity of Vices and devils firmly establishes the devil tradition as the origin of the Vice; further, I see no reason why the dramatists who worked with the figure cannot have drawn from both folk elements and the

devil and vice traditions in using the Vice, though of course my focus in this dissertation has been on the Vice's relationship with evil and devils rather than with folk elements.

Confusion and overlap between the fool and the Vice appears to be a given for early modern thinkers. As Dessen proceeds to note, however, the Vice has an additional darker element which distinguishes it from the fool. Citing Philip Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583) who connects the vice to blasphemy, Gabriel Harvey who "can equate 'jesters and vices' yet elsewhere attack Robert Greene as 'the second Toy of London; the Stale of Paul's, the Ape of Euphues, the Vice of the Stage, the mocker of the simple world,'" and especially, as I have also noted in my chapter on Jonson, the notion of the Vice as "the Evil". As Dessen observes, for "Stubbes, Harvey, and Jonson, that same scoffing or jesting figure could be linked to a different tone, a different set of implications–a mocking of the world, a blasphemy of heaven and earth, Evil" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 18-19).

These separate allusions to the Vice, the first as fool and clown and the second as sin itself, establish the web of associations in which the Vice figure sits in the early modern stage tradition. Perhaps this web of associations can be a clue to discovering Vice figures who are not directly named as such; a character regarded as both a clown/jester and devil by the other characters (though not intended to be interpreted as an actual devil) may prove indeed to be a Vice, revealed by occupying the Vice's position in the web of associations which surround the Vice. In as much as these associations and overlaps frustrate our attempts to pin the Vice figure down, they also broaden our understanding of the figure, and help us to recognize it. Indeed, it may very well be that the wider web of associations around the Vice figure, composed of costumes, stage business, and references, associated with the Vice, but not exclusively or universally, may be the best definition of the figure which can be distilled. Nevertheless, an examination of the role of the Vice in the various plays can perhaps tighten our definition or at least understanding of the Vice.

CHAPTER FIVE
What is the Vice?

In the interest of establishing for the reader a sense of what the Vice is, and what it isn't, I have thus far dealt in detail with the problems inherent in Bernard Spivack's construction of the Vice figure, and have begun working to define the Vice by exploring its relationship with the similar stage devils and clowns. In this chapter I build on this foundation by setting down an alternative understanding of the Vice, one I would argue is closer to the early modern understanding of both the term and the figure. The ultimate objective of this understanding is of course to explore what lies beyond the too tight constraints placed upon the figure, both in terms of chronology, and in definition. Unfortunately, as the last two chapters have made clear, the Vice is such an imprecise term that it is hard to pin down in a clear definition, rife as it is with changes, developments, and strong overlaps with similar figures. As much as I would like to step back and provide a clear and tightly bordered definition of the Vice, sounding something like "a figure is the Vice if and only if it possesses such and such qualities and lacks such and such other qualities" the Vice remains inherently nebulous. Instead, as I observed at the end of the previous chapter, the Vice is perhaps best discovered within the web of associations and overlaps. As such, in building this sense of the Vice and its associations it is worth examining the way the term has been used by the early modern playmakers, and some common traits shared among many characters who function as the Vice. This web of associations will be the focus of the chapter. As such it will be of benefit exploring the traits that other scholars have attributed to the Vice as a foundation for further exploration in the plays in which the Vice figure appears. Exploring the web of associations around the Vice, however, requires that I further problematise the Vice figure, as I explore its blurry borders. Throughout this chapter, my focus will build on the dual nature of the Vice as explored in the previous chapter, the Vice as clown or showman, and the Vice as the manifestation of devilish power or evil.

With all my talk of the difficulties in pinning down the nature of the Vice, a reader unfamiliar with the tradition may get the impression that the evidence for the Vice's existence is scarce. Not so. There were certainly plays which had a character in the dramatis personae or the stage directions labelled as "the Vyce". As early as 1530 John Heywood's plays *The Play of the Wether* and *The Play of Love* both exhibit this, although there has been some contention over whether these two Vices should be accepted as such in a wonderfully bizarre case of scholarship deciding early modern playwrights are using their own terms incorrectly. "The Vyce" has likewise been referred to in non-stage documents.

Alan Dessen finds a wealth of examples in early dictionaries, translated texts and tracts, often connecting the figure to jesters and clowns:

> Randle Cotgrave translates the French *mime* as "a vice, fool, jester, scoffer" and *sot* as "a fool, or vice in a play"; John Florio translates the Italian *mimo* as "a jester, a vice in a play"; John Minsheu translates the Spanish *mómo* or *mómio* as "a Vice or jester in a play." In his translation of Pliny, Philemon Holland expands the Latin *mima* into "a common vice in a play" and, a sentence later, describes "such another vice that played the fool and made sport between whiles in enterludes." In his *Art of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham sees rhyme misused by "buffoon or vices in plays," while one of the Marprelate tracts describe a figure "as merry as a vice on a stage." (Dessen, *Late Moral* 18)

It is interesting to see the focus on the comedic aspects of the Vice role in this set of references, indeed the near equivalence with clowns. Yet, as Dessen proceeds to remind his reader, the Vice also embodies "the Evil" as my opening arguments regarding the role of the Vice uphold (18). Vices are the embodiment and exercise of Devilish power. Nevertheless, when examining what Matthew Winston calls the "Vice turned villain", it is important to remember that the Vice is first and foremost equipped with the entertainment and audience engagement of the clown (232). As such, readings which focus overmuch on the Vice as villain are perhaps missing the Vice altogether. For example, Spivack characterizes them as amoral artists of sin, and frames their development in terms of a gradual concession to the stage becoming less allegorical and more literal (though he uses the term "realism") (44). While he certainly addresses much the same comic features as the others, painting the Vice as a "creature of leaping jubilation and sardonic mirth" (17), he sidesteps the evil of the Vice by framing it instead as a demonstration of craft, characterizing the Vice as "an artist eager to demonstrate his skill by achieving a masterpiece of his craft" (30). The artistry of the Vice is one of Spivack's main points, and is tied into the Vice's amorality:

> They are, then, first of all great artists, and if, incidentally, they are also great criminals, that is because the traditional expression of their talent moved from its origin in one dramatic convention, where they were full of meaning in their artistic amorality, into another, where they were no longer viable without a surface accommodation, at least, to moral values. The source of our trouble with them is that by Shakespeare's time they had lost their original import without

> losing their dramatic popularity, so that they had to undergo a gradual reprocessing to meet the demand of his age for what in our one is called "realism." (44)

Spivack's study ties the Vice's so-called amorality, and later manifestations of the character, to a teleological development of the early modern stage based on a flawed notion of the stage's "realism". I will further discuss the problems with such teleological assumptions in Chapter Eight on the 1580s plays *The Three Ladies of London* and *The Three Lords and Ladies of London.* Suffice it to say for now that Spivack's "naturalistic" assumptions pervade his study and the notion of the Vice, as further citations will reveal.

In as much as these citations contain the two primary characteristics of the Vice, the Vice as clown, and as manifested evil, however, my primary point here is the vast scope of the Vice's time on the stage. References to the Vice figure appear in extant plays as early as the 1530s (and arguably even earlier than that given Covetousness can be understood as the Vice in *The Castle of Perseverance*), and at least until 1625 (and possibly even later, depending on when we date *Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*), and the appearance of the figure itself (as opposed to allusions) occurs as late as 1616 (in the aforementioned *The Devil is an Ass*). Understandably for a figure persisting so long on the stage, through changing times and the changing needs of the performers and audience, a precise definition of the Vice eludes scholarship. There is debate as to what constitutes "the Vice" where a character is not clearly labelled as such, especially in later plays, and considerable slippage in terminology for the early moderns between similar figures such as clowns, fools and, as I have outlined in detail in the previous chapter, devils.

There has been some debate as to where the Vice originates, largely along a spectrum between two schools of thought. One of them, arguably the less common notion, points to folk or clown elements, which I will address in more detail later. The other, with which I began my introduction, ties the Vice to vices and devil figures from the morality tradition, citing Bevington's definition of that drama. However, Bevington notes that the term "Morality" and its sister term "Interlude", both often used to describe plays featuring the Vice, have been frustratingly difficult to define, noting: "The terms "interlude" and "morality" are frequently used in the nomenclature of pre-Shakespearean drama, especially popular drama. Historians have attempted with little success to make a clear distinction between the two labels" (Bevington 8). He suggests that the distinction could be that moralities are "those plays, exemplified by *Everyman,* which aimed at moral edification through the medium of allegory, whereas the interludes were the lively and realistic farces, exemplified by John Heywood's *Four PP,* which had freed themselves from allegorical abstraction and didactic aim" (Bevington 8-9).

He does so, however, to immediately dismiss such a distinction, noting that the suggested definition of interlude is "manifestly at odds with late medieval and Tudor practices […] The term so employed is intended to suggest nothing more specific than any sort of Tudor stage presentation; in short, a play" (Bevington 9-10).

Alan Dessen, like Bevington, takes issue with the terms normally applied to such plays, in particular that of the "morality play", preferring to rely on the term "moral" in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Play*. In "Homilies and Anomalies: The Legacy of the Morality Play to the Age of Shakespeare" he goes into considerable detail regarding the issues with the term "morality" and the manner in which it has been imposed on the past:

> a skeptic looking closely at all the evidence might seriously question the existence of an entity called "the morality play." The only term generally available in the English Renaissance is "morall" (in various spellings), but, despite modern expectations, I was able to find far more use of this term (often in lists such as "tragedy, comedy, history, morall") in the early seventeenth century than in the sixteenth […] For a wide range of figures that includes Heywood, Webster, and Marston, the morall was a recognizable form in an age when morality plays (in our sense) were no longer fashionable or available […] The existence during the height of Shakespeare's career of a dramatic form (with or without allegory) that is apparently to be defined by its didactic purpose should give us pause when we generalize too confidently about the demise of the morality tradition or the essential shape of the morality play. (Dessen, "Homilies" 256)

The "morality play", then, is seemingly an invention of scholarship, with the closest early modern equivalent "moral" at best referring only to late "morality plays". It is, however, beyond the scope of this project to redefine the whole notion of the morality play. It is sufficient for me to note here that there are a cluster of plays which employ allegory, and from which the Vice figure springs, which I shall, for convenience sake, refer to as morality plays or morals. Furthermore, what is clear, is that these plays have been regarded as distinct from the Mystery cycles, and distinct as well from the later plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Perhaps because of this they have often been regarded as inferior works. Despite Roger C. Jones's claim in 1973 that "We no longer sniff at morality plays and moral interludes as mere 'specimens of the pre-Shakspearean [sic] drama,'" the notion of the morality plays as deficient or poorly written persists (45). In *Will in the World* (2004), Stephen Greenblatt, examining the influence of the morality plays and the Vice on Shakespeare, characterised the former as "relentlessly didactic and often clumsily written" and suggests that "morality plays came to seem old-

fashioned and crude" (32). For Greenblatt the "subversive humor" of the moralities were "often centered on the stock character known generally as the Vice" (32). These two elements, his focus on the Vice, and impression of the moral plays as an overly didactic mess bespeaks the bias through which the plays are often read. This is in spite of the efforts of scholars such as Alan Dessen, David Bevington, and Roger C. Jones to investigate the strength and persistence of such dramatic forms. David Bevington, for example, argues against the denigration of the morality plays in *From Mankind to Marlowe* noting that such dramatic forms "[have] been made to appear "primitive" in the worst sense—plotless, fragmented, and stereotyped. The form of the morality has not been analyzed because it has not been recognized as artistically significant. It is considered something that merely happened" (2). He cautions against this dismissive approach as "critically naive" and suggests an explanation for this perspective among the scholars of his time in the absence of a clear contemporaneous outline of the rationale of drama: "Tudor popular dramatists had their preconceptions of form, never fully stated or analyzed because theirs was an unselfconscious art" (Bevington 2). Despite Bevington's argument and suggestion that the limitations are with us, as scholars and historians, rather than with the dramatic forms being examined, these misconceptions about the inherent inferiority of morality drama evidently persist. Concordantly, just as scholarship has had the tendency to read the morality drama according to imposed non-early modern standards, so too is the Vice misread.

For the modern reader "the Vice" and vices are the stars of the show, and virtues are declining, vestigial moralisers, tacked on for the sake of the authorities, or the church, or whomever supplies a sufficient reason for authors to have ruined their plays with didacticism. Jones, for example, considers it one of the key problems that "the bawdy, scurrilous vices tend to steal the show from the wholesome but tiresome virtues" ("Dangerous Sport" 45). For Jones the solution, which he demonstrates through readings of *Mankind* and *The Four Elements*, is that the audience's engagement with the vice figures is meant to serve as a temptation which they are meant to ultimately reject by the end:

> Thus we are made to see that our very responses to the play are actual manifestations in ourselves of the better and worse impulses in man that are being represented on-stage; and we can accordingly place our delight in the vices as something in us to be guarded against […] The techniques I have been describing here depend on the satirical bite that stings us into an awareness of what our laughter means and, in the case of The Four Elements, a spirit of mirth that is engaging enough to have caught us up, with Humanity, in the mood of the tavern so that we can then be made conscious, with Humanity, of the perils of getting lost in that mood. (Jones, "Dangerous Sport" 52)

Here Jones offers a potential explanation to the issue with the comedy of evil, and the notion that it is the characters representing evil which are the ones the audience most enjoy. The mirth of the Vice, vices and devil is here rendered as bait, luring the audience in as Mankind or Humanity is lured in by vice, in order that the lesson may be all the more potent when ill consequence befalls either humanity, or sometimes Vice. Particularly striking, and supportive of his argument, is his observation that in *Mankind* the vices cease to be fun and engaging, and become troubling and darker when they appear to have won: "As Mankind awakens with his faith in Mercy entirely broken, our old friends the vices return to welcome him into their company. But they return with a difference. Bawdy songs and raucous pranks have been replaced by bloody murders and the hangman's noose […] Moreover, their demeanor toward us has changed as well. Whereas they had earlier wooed us into sharing their festive spirit, they now shoulder us aside rudely as they come on" (58-9).

Consistent with this is Alan Dessen's observation that the notion of engaging vices and boring virtues is a modern imposition, as he convincingly argues in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Play*. While ultimately arriving at a similar position to Jones, with his observations concerning the theatrical impact of the ultimate defeat of the Vice (and through it vice), Dessen unpacks the complication in viewing the virtues as less engaging than the vices, especially with regard to the conclusion of such plays, noting that the later Vice plays often began with the Vice ruling the play in fun and sin, and ended with the Vice contained and the virtues (or other resident moral authority) victorious:

> But is there any basis for the assumption that the endings of these moral plays lacked force or integrity for their original audiences? For one witness to the contrary, consider the testimony of Ralph Willis who describes the final moments of *The Cradle of Security* where two old men, representing the end of the world and the last judgement, "struck a fearful blow upon the Cradle" so that everyone vanished except for the corrupted prince who represented the wicked of the world. According to Willis writing some sixty or seventy years later: "This sight took such impression in me, that when I came towards man's estate, it was as fresh in my memory, as if I had seen it newly acted." Certainly, not all theatrical sermons had such an effect upon their spectators (although the allusions to the Vice's exit on the Devil's back suggest that other features of the moral climaxes were also remembered vividly). But when dealing with an age in which preachers drew enormous audiences, can we, largely on the basis of a modern aversion to the didactic, casually dismiss the original logic of these moral plays, especially if that logic may help us to understand more fully some facets of the drama in the age of Shakespeare? (35)

Indeed, Dessen finds that numerically speaking, we cannot reduce the story of the moral drama to one of decline and dissolution: "a look at one scholarly guide reveals forty to forty-five titles of extant or lost moral plays between 1400 and 1558 but, in contrast, 50 titles between 1559 and 1590 […] such figures make it difficult to envisage 'the morality play,' however defined, withering away during the second half of the sixteenth century" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 58). However, the focus of this dissertation is not on the endurance of the moral drama, except insofar as the Vice figure is concerned, but the continuance of the moral drama does suggest that the Vice may be more active in later drama than in the accounts of Spivack et al, and more resilient than even Dessen suggests.

This brings us to the apparent death of the Vice figure, because a common view is that by the time of Shakespeare what remained were mere echoes of the Vice, showing up in the odd reference or in hybrid figures which blended some essential Vice-ness with the trappings of literal characters. All of the scholars I have mentioned above, with the exception of Dessen, hold this view to some degree. Cox characterises "a play written between 1571 and 1580" as "near the end of the Vice's stage career" (79). Beyond this point Spivack sees the Vice as going undercover, existing only as the inner core of a "hybrid" for a "theatre [that] could no longer take him straight" until this hybrid is also "bred out of the drama altogether" as part of a wider disappearance of allegorical elements in theatre (Spivack 32-33). In his conception, beyond the 1590s the allegorical drama has well and truly departed, leaving only echoes: "The same period, however, marks the dead end and dissolution of the allegorical drama, at least on the popular stage. After 1590 its whole method is rather imitated than repeated in a few ingenious pieces which make a strange appearance among the plays of their own time" (252). Elsewhere Spivack draws the line even earlier: "They compose a substantial body of dramatic literature with prominent common traits and with a significant development from the time of its origin until it is supplanted, in the period between 1570 and 1585, by the literal drama of the Elizabethan stage" (62).

Yet there continue to be allusions to the Vice well into the 1600s, including references in Shakespeare's work. Most notable of these, or at least most often noted, is that in *Richard III* (1592-3) wherein Richard of Gloucester dissimulates and remarks: "Thus like the formal Vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word" and in *1 Henry IV* (1596-7) when Falstaff is called "that reverend vice, that grey iniquity" and threatens to beat Hal out of the Kingdom "with a dagger of lath" a prop associated with the Vice. Even more obvious is the use of the figure in Ben Jonson's 1616 *The Devil is an Ass*, which, rather than having a character self-consciously acting "like the formal Vice Iniquity" actually has Iniquity himself. Jonson relies on the audience recognising the Vice figure, and its relationship with evil and the devil in order to make one of his key points clear. This suggests an

ongoing familiarity with the Vice tradition that runs contrary to the common characterisation of the figure as defunct at this time and suggests that the Vice figure might not have been as dead as scholars have assumed.

Because of his wider argument which sees the Vice, and allegorical elements more broadly, as finished by the time of this play, Spivack waves away the morality elements in later plays, framing them as sparsely reanimated remnants of a dead tradition. The issue with this, of course, is that if, as he argues, the Vice tradition specifically, and allegorical elements more broadly, were dead, why were they already being reanimated? This is not so much a matter of revival long after the fact, but the resilience of elements for which there was clearly still a need (310). But I have already addressed the issues with Spivack's argument in Chapter Three and I do not wish to relitigate them here. For now, it is worth seeking after the common traits of the Vice.

As others have also noted, the Vice's key relationship is with the audience, and plays a big part in the audience's interpretation and relationship with the play:

> He is outside the play in another sense. He is the showman who produces it and the chorus that interprets it, and his essential relationship is with the audience. His monologues are intended to be unqualified public addresses, and when properly delivered that is what they are, without any pretence at self-communion overheard by an eavesdropping auditory. Words of his, to some of which we have already listened, begin to suggest their proper import when restored to their right, their unnaturalistic, perspective. (Spivack 31)

Consider, for example, Aaron's speeches expressing his naked villainy, which warn the audience of his evil before the other characters understand, just one of his Vice traits I will be exploring in Chapter Six in my consideration of Shakesepeare's Vices. Despite this key role in elucidating the plot, Spivack also notes that the Vice often "paid no more than lip service to the particulars of the plot in which it happened to appear" (43) especially in later drama. In fact, this particular quality, while seemingly contradictory to being the showman who produces the plot, was to Spivack a function of the Vice being incorporated into drama that was not designed around him as a result of his popularity.

A further issue on which Spivack and I disagree is the degree to which the Vice is divorced morally from his actions. Spivack suggests that:

> Their monologues, as it has already appeared in the case of Iago, are not simply overheard ruminations, but are, in fact, buoyant announcements of intention and triumphant declarations of

> achievement addressed directly to the audience. And if they maintain their original character to the end, as Richard III does not, the last scene finds them defiant, triumphant, and utterly careless of the "cunning cruelty" of the punishment in store. (Spivack 45-46)

This ties into Spivack's construction of the Vice as essentially an amoral artist. He is not there to do good, or evil or achieve any other aims, but rather to display his artistry to the audience:

> He is an artist in dissimulation, seduction, and intrigue; and his purpose on the stage is to display his talent triumphantly at work against the affections, duties, and pieties which create the order and harmony of humane society. His specialty is the destruction of unity and love. (Spivack 46-47)

This investment in the Vice as an aloof amoral artist, however, complicates Spivack's readings, and it not without problems. For one thing, Alan Dessen's reading of Richard III as fitting a two-phase Vice play format renders Richard's seeming abandonment of his "original character", and his untriumphant ending crucial to the function of the Vice in that play sees Richmond functioning as the Virtue which disarms Richard's Vice (*Late Moral* 49).

Unsurprisingly, given that his work is on the clown figure, the qualities David Wiles connects to the Vice are very much steeped in the Vice's relationship and overlaps with the clown. Many of the traits he identifies are similar to those presented by Spivack, although Wiles is very much looking at earlier incarnations of the Vice. The first quality is the Vice's skill at improvisation: "When we look at the activities of the Tudor Vice, two features demand our attention. First was his skill in improvisation […] Just as the fool in a morris dance broke formation and danced where he pleased, so the Vice swept aside the confines of a script" (4-5). Concordant with this, the Vice existed to break boundaries "between play and playful context" (Wiles 5). In the context of the early festivals which Wiles connects to the early Vice, the Vice would have a key role both inside and outside of what we might call the play: "We must beware of imposing upon the Tudor world our own conceptual separation of a 'play' from a festival. The Vice who makes pastimes within an interlude cannot be dissociated from the Vice who is given a function within the festival" (5). This quality of existing between the play world and the world of the audience continued beyond the Vice in these festivals and is consistent with the observations of Spivack above. The vices of *Mankind* depart the stage, ostensibly to rob local businesses, amid a bunch of references to locations and figures local to the audience. Ashley and NeCastro suggest in the notes for lines 505-15 in which the vices list the activities they're going to

pursue in the village that the actors would change the places and people listed based on where they were performing to connect the play world to the real world of the audience. Likewise, as Wiles later observes, in Preston's *Cambises*:

> The Vice acts as a link between the exotic and remote world of the play and the immediate world of the audience […] In a sequence of monologues Ambidexter [the Vice] gives a running commentary on the state of the action. Confidentially he describes his feelings in the scene that has passed and lets his listeners into the secret of what is to come […] We are unsure whether the actor or the character is speaking. Similarly, in the course of describing the royal wedding, 'Ambidexter' imagines a proposal of marriage from a maid in the audience. And again it seems to be the *actor* who regularly directs remarks to his 'cousin', a cut-purse supposedly operating amongst the audience […] The actor detaches himself from the character's emotions and responses, and presents his grief for the sheer pleasure of demonstrating his skill as a performer.(6)

The aspect of the Vice's performance Wiles highlights here, the ambiguity between actor and role, and the tension this potentially creates between the world of the play and that of the audience is also a key feature of Wiles's arguments concerning the fool. Though this tension might exist, it is hard to ratify without seeing the performance of the role as it was done at the time. An ambiguity between actor and role in the case of the Vice may equally overlap the play world and the real world instead, enhancing the Vice's impact as it reminds the audience of the manner in which vice functions in the world of the audience. Regardless, the relationship of the Vice to the audience, and to individuals among the audience create an intimacy between the audience and the Vice that gives the Vice a privileged position among the characters in the drama. This position inevitably diverts the audience's attention and allegiances, if not to the Vice, then around the Vice, in ways which enhance and colour the Vice's dramatic impact, and this relationship continues beyond what many would consider the period of the Vice into later characters influenced by the Vice, such as Launcelet Gobbo from *Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice* of whom Wiles observes: "The clown establishes a rapport with the audience when he opens and closes his first scene with monologues […] The deceit of the father is set up for the audience's entertainment: Launcelet explains clearly to the audience who his father is and what he intends to do to him" (Wiles 8).

In addition to this seeming spontaneity and intimacy with the audience, Wiles highlights several other features of the Vice, and, as Wiles's characterisation of Gobbo as a clown might suggest, several

overlaps between the Vice and fool and clown figures which will be the focus of later chapters. One significant quality, not always present and reminiscent of the Vice's relationship with the earlier vices is the emblematic names of some Vices, "Since the nature of a Vice was encapsulated in his name" (Wiles 8). While Spivack makes far more of this, Wiles notes that "it was common for a Vice to expound the meaning of his name" (Wiles 8).

Matthew Winston continues the theme of the Vice acting as the audience's key co-conspirator, and notes their propensity for wordplay, showmanship, and association with stage Devils. In his paper '"Craft Against Vice": Morality Play Elements in *Measure for Measure*" he describes them thus:

> in the cast divisions that accompany the texts of many early Tudor plays, only the actors playing the protagonist and the Vice do not take on multiple roles. The Vice is frequently a comic assistant of the devil. He tends to speak rhymed nonsense, and he takes pleasure in twisting people's words to other meanings, just as he delights in causing confusion and in leading fools and clowns to quarrel with another. He is also a master of ceremonies who introduces that actors, who keeps the audience apprised of what is going on, who tells us exactly what he is doing, who jokes with the audience, and who is never disconcerted, even if, at the end of the play, he is hanged or is carried off to Hell on the devil's back. His stock property is a wooden dagger, which he waves about with great abandon. (Winston 232)

Of particular importance here are some of the more practical elements, such as the wooden dagger, or dagger of lath, the stage image of being carried to Hell at the end on the devil's back (both properties of great interest to Dessen), as well as the actor playing the Vice not taking on multiple roles.

Alan Dessen describes the Vice as "a lively, often funny figure who sets up a special bond with his audience and then acts out with wit, energy, and comic violence the power of some corrupting force upon society (e.g., Covetousness, Revenge, Newfangledness, Infidelity, Inclination) only to be defeated or transcended in the play's final movement" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 24). Dessen notes the dearth of scholarly treatment on the memorable stage images of the Vice, and the potential significance of such images for teasing out the relevance of the Vice figure to later dramatists:

> except for glosses on three or four passages in Shakespeare's plays, few scholars have treated the dagger of lath as a significant image, while the Vice's exit on the Devil's back is rarely considered an essential feature of the moral drama or an action worthy of note. The association of the Vice with buffoon, fool, or jester does fit well with various scholarly analyses that call

> attention to that figure's role in "morality variety shows," but the link to the Devil in the famous exit and Jonson's equation of the Vice with "the Evil" introduce another set of associations usually omitted from such discussions […] the association between the two figures (with the consequent linking of the Vice to sin, Hell, and damnation) is prominent both in the extant plays and the memories of the next generation. Thus, the entertainment function of the Vice-comedian *is* to be found in the late moral drama and *is* remembered, but the diabolic associations (as well as the implications for the Vice's victims and society) give that humor a distinct edge. (Dessen, *Late Moral* 22)

The Vice is precisely of interest because he represents a fusion of entertainment and warning. As Spivack suggests, he is a homiletic showman who preaches against sin through the embodiment, and just as the charge of his audience appeal represents to the audience the appeal of sin, his ultimate containment or destruction, and his negative impact on the play world, serves as a warning of the consequences of this appealing evil.

Dessen suggests "the Vice" (as opposed to the more specific and diverse "vices") developed in order to embody society's ills, a point that runs contrary to Spivack's construction of the Vice's development: "Whatever his origins, the emergence of the Vice as the central figure in the interludes of the 1560s and 1570s represents a practical theatrical answer to this problem" the problem being that "mid century dramatists who, whatever their political or religious stances, wanted to display on-stage a sinful world or a society corrupted by a particular force and then provide their answer" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 24). In this way the Vice, their response to this need, was "an answer that apparently satisfied a wide range of dramatists and audiences" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 24). Dessen also makes much of the staging of the Vice, arguing that two elements of the Vice's performance were well remembered and commented on long after the plays featuring these elements were thought to have died out. These were the Vice's dagger, and the Vice's exit from the stage on the devil's back, though the latter is not as widespread in the extant plays of the late fourteenth century as later allusions to it might suggest. Regardless, this staging is framed by Dessen as crucial to the meaning making of the play.

David Bevington, like Dessen, sees the Vice figure as developing from a confluence of stage need, and his approach deals far more with the staging side of the playing. In his examination of George Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* in *From Mankind to Marlowe* Bevington describes the central role of the Vice and his interactions with the audience:

> The Vice receives one embassy and then another, dispatches his lieutenants all in different directions, and is inevitably left alone in the intervals to comment on the action, to gloat, or to amuse the audience with his witticisms while his fellow actors prepare for new entrances. (150-1)

The Vice serves both a technical role, in keeping the audience entertained while the other actors switch between parts, but also unifies the many plot lines and episodes of the play:

> These examples are tied together by the all-important Vice, the leading player, relieved of any important doubling. Because he focuses so much episodic material, relating the various elements to each other through the force of his character, it is imperative that he represent all aspects of evil. He is the constant entity in the midst of constant variation, and yet of course is changeable as the Vice must be. (151)

In this we are offered another explanation for the distillation of the Vice: not only must the Vice serve the function previously served by the Seven Deadly Sins, but the Vice must also tie together the more specific evils afflicting the play world. Bevington agrees with this notion of the Vice as representing both a specific evil and the evils of the play-world united, as expressed in his reading of the Vice's role in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like Quoth the Devil to the Collier* (printed 1568): "Nichol, played by the leading actor, partakes of all their villainous practices and so must be related generically to every sort of vice. He represents the godless "new Gyse" of abandoned living in mid-century England, as seen from a Calvinist point of view" (158). In the same reading he also observes the technical aspects of the Vice's role, noting the manner in which the Vice engages with the audience in part in order to allow the play to function logistically: "Nichol Newfangle the Vice encourages all these scoundrels, and soliloquizes between episodes, facilitating costume change" (158).

In both these plays, the Vice functions not only as a means of uniting the play's underlying thesis, but also of facilitating the practice of operating the play on the stage; as distraction for the audience from the practical considerations of having more characters than actors. Indeed, it could be said that the Vice, functioning in this way, either allows the plays to have far more characters than they otherwise would given the limited players in the troupe, or else have far fewer actors (depending on the perspective you take on the construction of the plays and the relationship between them and the construction of troupes).

Moreover, we also have a consistent sense of the Vice as needing to represent all evils. Even with the presence of the other, lesser, vices in the play, the Vice needs to represent them all at the very

least in its connection with these henchmen. In some sense this turns Spivack's notion of the *radix malorum* on its head, as these examples of the Vice figure are not so much the sources of these subordinate evils, but nevertheless embody them also as a gestalt of their henchmen. The Vice is father of the vices in the play not so much from being the source of evil as from being the one who ties the evils together in the same manner that it ties the play together.

It is important to note that this notion that the Vice figure tied together all the evils of a play appears to predate the use of the term "the Vice" in plays. Bevington traces the development of the figure before the term "the Vice" was even in use, a problematic assertion, perhaps, but one that relies on a cluster of traits shared between Vices. Bevington sees the Vice figure emerging in the form of Folly in *Mundus et Infans*. Reading *Mundus et Infans* as a boiled down and polished *The Castle of Perseverance,* Bevington considers Folly to be the sins of *Perseverance* merged into one:

> Folly is without a doubt one of the ancestors of Nichol Newfangle and Ambidexter. He indulges in comic profanity and scurrility, makes ribald comments about his female auditors, jests about friars, fights a ludicrous duel with Manhood, and in a series of asides keeps the audience posted on the intent of his machinations, sinister beneath their comic exterior
> […]
> This early "Vice" derives his bag of tricks from the several divisions and subdivisions of sin in medieval allegorical drama, all compressed into a single generic or root evil. The Vice is, in his dramatic origin, this epitome of evil. Two structural factors, then, contribute to the creation of this remarkable figure: the need to fit a previously expansive representation of vice into the limited capabilities of a small troupe, and the emergence of a leading player whose acting talents suited the engrossing tactics of the Vice manipulator. In *Mundus et Infans* the Vice is not yet all-powerful, but his dramatic origins are admirably clear. (122-3)

While tracing the path of the Vice's development in the past before the term "the Vice" was used in stage directions and dramatis personae is important, similar efforts are required also of tracing the Vice's development after the term ceased to be overtly used in the dramatis personae or stage directions (for of course, characters still referred to themselves or others as the Vice in dialogue). Continuing our tour of the scholarly descriptions of the Vice figure, then, we come to Leah Scragg whose paper "Iago–Vice or Devil" was such a focus in my previous chapter on the differences between devils and Vices. Regarding the traits of the Vice, Scragg's list is quite comprehensive, but as in the above contains many qualities not necessary to the Vice:

> The attributes which typify "The Vice", the figure which emerged after 1500 from the group of vices engaged in the psychomachia of the early Morality plays, and which are said to characterize his descendants, are as follows. He was a gay, light-hearted intriguer, existing on intimate terms with the audience, who he invited to witness a display of his ability to reduce a man from a state of grace to utter ruin. He invariably posed as the friend of his victim, often disguising himself for the purpose, and always appearing to devote himself to his friend's welfare. He treated his seduction as "sport" combining mischief with merriment, triumphing over his fallen adversary and glorying in his skill in deceit. So far the analogy with Iago is obvious. He provided for his audience both humour and homiletic instruction. (Scragg 8-9)

From here we can see again the emphasis on mirth, intrigue, intimate interaction with the audience, sport or play-making, disguise, and homiletic didacticism. We also have an unnecessary emphasis on the Vice being on friendly terms with a victim which works for Scragg's paper on the nature of Iago but isn't necessarily so comprehensive as she implies.

Unlike Wiles, but like Scragg, Stephen Greenblatt also ties the Vice both to pleasing the audience and inherent wickedness, focusing on the carnivalesque aspects of the Vice role:

> This jesting, prattling mischief-maker–bearing in different interludes names such as Riot, Iniquity, Liberty, Idleness, Misrule, Double Device, and even, in one notable instance, Hickscorner–embodied simultaneously the spirit of wickedness and the spirit of fun. The audience knew that he would in the end be defeated and driven, with blows or fireworks, from the stage. But for a time he pranced about, scorning the hicks, insulting the solemn agents of order and piety, playing tricks on the unsuspecting, plotting mischief and luring the innocent into taverns and whorehouses. The audience loved it. (32)

Between all these lists of traits, distilled as they are from the scholarship on the Vice figures, we have a series of trends usually used to identify the Vice figure—or figures related to it in drama which does not specifically use the term (both before and after the term was used). These traits include a relationship with the audience, a propensity for intrigue, manipulation or working corruption in those around him, humour and clownishness, and a connection to devils, devilry or serving as a moral source of corruption. These traits do not give us a clear-cut definition of the figure, and individually they are neither necessary, nor sufficient to mark out the Vice. But these traits do give us a sense of the Vice, a

sense arguably enjoyed in greater clarity by the early modern play-makers and play-goers. This sense of the Vice is what allows the audience to recognise the Vice in characters not clearly demarked as such. Afterall, though the Vice figure does not have clear cut borders, if the audience's ongoing recognition of it is anything to go by, it certainly was recognisable, and memorable.

Having dealt predominantly with scholarship on the Vice in these three chapters in order to establish this sense of the Vice's position in a web of associations, I now return to the work introduced by my second chapter, the idea of the Vice's persistence over time which is indicated by the audience's understanding of the figure implied by Jonson's Iniquity. In finding the Vice in these plays I do indeed rely on the traits established in these chapters, but in particular, as this dissertation progresses, one particular trait will become more and more important: the Vice's function as moral source of evil. Indeed, in the later chapters a dichotomy between Vices who emphasise the moral role, and those who emphasise stagecraft or clowning, will become one of the cornerstones on which I build my observation of the distinct subtype of the female Vice.

CHAPTER SIX
Shakespeare and the Vice

I have spent considerable time thus far building a sense of what the Vice is, and to establish the Vice as a living tradition in an ongoing relationship with the play-makers of the early modern period. It seems pertinent, then, to apply this understanding to the canon of a well-known playwright operating in the period of interest to this study, to examine the ways they interact (or don't) with the Vice tradition. Given the vast body of scholarship on his work, and the fact of his operating during the period in question, Shakespeare fits the bill as an obvious body of work within which to test some of the arguments I have made thus far.

Shakespeare's engagement with the Vice and allegorical traditions has received more attention than probably any other author, as the scholarship I have surveyed thus far suggests. For this reason, it seems appropriate to end the first section of this thesis with Shakespeare because it allows me to apply my approach not just to the scholarship of the Vice, but the author on whose work a lot of the scholarship is built. Fittingly then, we find that Shakespeare's own engagement with the Vice tradition is sustained over most of the length of his writing career, with perhaps the most prominent entries falling at either end, as would be expected if my notion of the Vice as a growing and living stage tradition is true. My focus in this chapter is to examine Shakespeare's ongoing use of the Vice tradition, moving through *Titus Andronicus* (1593), *Richard III* (1593), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-6), *Henry IV Part 1* (1596-7), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-7), *Twelfth Night* (1601), *Othello* (1603-4) and *Measure for Measure* (1604). Many of these plays will be familiar to those with an interest in the Vice figure, and indeed strong readings for some of them already exist. Shakespeare's use of the Vice is a difficult topic on which to write fresh material simply due to how much work has already been done in the area. Mathew Winston in "'Craft Against Vice': Morality Play Elements in *Measure for Measure*" gives a neat summary of the study of the morality tradition's impact on Shakespeare since Spivack, outlining concerns which are echoed by later scholars such as Cox and Wiles (Cox 76, Wiles 1-2):

> Many critics have placed Shakespeare's works in the framework of the Tudor morality play. However, this enterprise has frequently been based on an oversimplification of the drama which preceded Shakespeare, and morality concepts have too often been applied in a reductionist fashion. Finally, theatre historians who take this approach tend to restrict the application of their own methodology to a very narrow range. (229)

More recently Stephen Greenblatt, in a summary of the influence of the moralities on Shakespeare observes the Vice was a very big influence, and affected the development of characters and characterisations throughout his career:

> The Vice, the great subversive figure of the moralities, was never far from Shakespeare's creative mind. With mingled affection and wariness, Hal refers to Falstaff as "that reverend Vice, that grey Iniquity" (*1 Henry IV, 2.5.413*); the mordantly funny, malevolent Richard III likens himself to "the formal Vice, Iniquity" (3.1.82); and Hamlet describes his wily, usurping uncle as "a vice of kings" (3.4.88). The word "vice" does not have to be directly invoked for the influence to be apparent: "Honest Iago," for example, with his air of camaraderie, his sly jokes, and his frank avowal of villainy, is heavily indebted to this figure. It is no accident that his diabolical plot against Othello and Desdemona takes the form of a practical joke, an unbearably cruel version of the tricks played by the Vice. (33-4)

As such, while that list of plays is long, it is my intention to briefly summarise the plays that have been well covered—such as *Richard III*, *Henry IV Part 1*, and Winston's own arguments concerning *Measure for Measure*—and examine in more detail some hitherto unrecognised or understudied examples of the Vice discernible in other works by Shakespeare. Throughout these readings, it is my intention to establish the persistence of the Vice in Shakespeare's work. The Vice tradition was something Shakespeare kept coming back to, suggesting not that he was dredging something up from an outdated and defunct theatrical tradition, but that the Vice was something ongoing that Shakespeare applied to his work where he felt it was effective and appropriate. Certainly, the thread of the Vice throughout his work, and the varying ways in which he applied it imply the continuity of the Vice during this period.

I have already touched on Iago's relationship with the Vice tradition in my examination of Spivack and Scragg's work in earlier chapters, so I will only briefly revisit it here in service to my goals of establishing Shakespeare's ongoing relationship with the Vice, and arguing for the existence of hitherto unrecognized Vices in Shakespeare's plays. For Spivack it is the ambiguous nature of Iago's motives which marks Iago as Vice: his human (or "literal") motives and identity are just the shell or mask which (he contends) the Vice figure needs to be accepted on the early seventeenth century stage. In fact, many of the problems with Spivack's work I have addressed throughout this study stem from his Shakespeare-centric thinking; the fact that he focuses most prominently on Iago suggests this.

Indeed, given that Iago is the character on whom Spivack's inquiry is initially built, one would expect this flaw as he constructs the Vice figure from the hybrid he sees the Vice becoming. He examines similar Shakespearean characters from "the family of Iago" as well, though some of these characters, including Iago himself, are arguably closer to the stage devil in formulation than the Vice figure as Scragg argues. This is not altogether an issue for my study, as even if *Othello* is struck from the record on account of Iago actually being a devil, there are other Shakespearean plays in the early seventeenth century which draw on the Vice tradition, such as *Measure for Measure*. In this sense it is like *Twelfth Night,* whose Maria is more fruitfully examined in Chapter Nine alongside the female Vices with whom she shares characteristics. Maria is very much like a devil, and is paired with the Vice Feste, sustaining *Twelfth Night*'s place in the thread of my argument that Shakespeare continued to be engaged with the Vice tradition throughout his career. Indeed, while Iago's devilish imagery and cunning dissimulation equally could paint him as devil or Vice, I'll argue that there is something distinctly devilish in the relationship Maria has, both to Feste her "Vice", and also to the plot itself.

Before I embark on my exploration of Shakespeare's ongoing relationship with the Vice tradition, there is another issue I would like to address. It is a notion I wish to counter in this chapter, the distinction Robert C. Jones draws between the Vice and these vice-like Shakespearean characters. He argues that:

> Though the Shakespearean villain and Jonsonian knave appeal to us theatrically, they do not openly interact with us, or even (except by way of inviting our applause at the end of a comedy) overtly acknowledge our responses as an audience. For all the versatile theatricalism that allows them their explanatory soliloquies and mocking asides, they no longer jostle us, taunt us about our behavior toward them, or invite us to join in their activities as their earlier counterparts in the interludes had done. In the move from hall to theater, from "place" to stage, the Vice's heir has detached himself from us to this extent. He may still play to us, but he does not make us participating actors in his play; he does not make us self-consciously act out our conspiratorial engagement with him ("Ande euer ye dide, for me kepe now yowr sylence"), or our dissociation from him ("Ye have no pity on me, you, I see, by your laughing"). ("Dangerous Sport" 63)

Jones overstates his point here. While Shakespeare's Vices apparently do not involve the audience to quite the same extent as we see in earlier drama, this is not necessarily an indication that the Vices of Shakespeare and Jonson are merely "the Vice's heirs". The "explanatory soliloquies and mocking asides" *are* the Vice's interactions with the audience, and in carrying on their ploys before the audience

onstage without interruption they do "invite us to join in their activities" through allowing it all to take place. While the silence of Iago or Aaron's witnesses is a far less blatant complicity than the audience of *Mankind* having to pay to summon the devil, it is still complicity. Moreover, as noted in Chapter Two, the image of a Vice directly inviting the audience's complicity was certainly still available, as in Jonson's 1601 *Poetaster*. It is not as if some distance has suddenly arrived between player and playgoer, which is what Jones appears to be imposing. Additionally, we of course do not have complete understanding of how Shakespeare's dramas were staged, and they could very well have involved far more extemporization and audience interaction than the texts which remain to us suggest.

Given that my major point in this chapter is to demonstrate the persistence of the Vice tradition by using Shakespeare as a subset of writing in the period, it makes sense to proceed through Shakespeare's plays which incorporate the Vice tradition chronologically, demonstrating his ongoing engagement with these elements. As such, I shall begin with *Titus Andronicus*, and follow it with *Richard III.*

Aaron the Moor is very much the Vice of *Titus Andronicus*. He is unabashedly evil, and villainous to an almost irrational degree. His final speech is chilling, but absurd, bespeaking a total commitment to evil, even without hope of gain from such actions:

> Ah, why should wrath be mute and fury dumb?
> I am no baby, I, that with base prayers
> I should repent the evils I have done.
> Ten thousand worse than ever yet I did
> Would I perform if I might have my will.
> If one good deed in all my life I did,
> I do repent it from my very soul. (5.3. 183-189)

Spivack is correct to identify him with the "family of Iago" because the two are very similar (vii). Like Iago, Aaron hangs over the whole play, bringing about the disasters in the plot, and serving abjectly as the "breeder of these dire events" (5.3.177). Like Iago he maintains a relationship with the audience, explaining his plans, twists the other characters to his purposes, and is associated with devils and devilry, called "incarnate devil", "fiend-like", and plainly "devil" (5.1.40, 45, 145). He takes it further, imploring:

> Some devil whisper curses in my ear,

And prompt me that my tongue may utter forth
The venomous malice of my swelling heart. (5.3.11-13)

The tantalizing possibility that the actor playing Aaron here engages in metatheatre by gesturing to the stage prompt outside the world of the play further feeds into his recognizability as the Vice. Not only does it recall the metatheatrical interactions of previous Vices, it ties his own words and actions to devils, making him the embodiment of devilish action or evil, and creating an interesting picture of diabolic inspiration that plays on contemporaneous concerns about the theatre. He wears the association with devils proudly, wishing he were indeed a devil without committing himself to belief in them:

If there be devils, would I were a devil,
To live and burn in everlasting fire,
So I might have your company in hell,
But to torment you with my bitter tongue. (5.1.147-150)

His relationship with the audience carries not just his plans but the same professions of evil he makes at the end when he is finally undone. It is no surprise to the audience that Aaron is revealed to be a monster, for he has taken the audience with him on his ride, noting in one of many asides: "Oh, how this villainy / Doth fat me with the very thoughts of it! / Let fools do good, and fair men call for grace, / Aaron will have his soul black like his face" (3.1.201-204). This naked villainy, relationship with the audience, and connection to devils is what has been used to demark Iago as Vice. It marks Aaron even more-so. Like Iago he professes "I'll speak no more" once his crimes are revealed, only going back on this to protect his son, the one seemingly human quality he has in the play (5.1.58, 70). Like Richard of Gloucester, also of Spivack's "family of Iago", he is labelled a hellhound, called not just "inhuman dog", but also "hellish dog" (5.3.14, 4.2.77).

Beyond all of this, there are two other signifiers familiar to students of the Vice, and presumably to Shakespeare's audience. The first is Aaron's characterisation of one of his crimes as "O Lord, sir, 'tis a deed of policy," recalling the similar use of that word as expounded by Spivack in relation to later Vices as a kind of replacement of the word "geare," which previously demarcated the knavish tricks of the Vice (4.2.147, 374-5). The other is the conjunction of tears and laughter as expounded by Spivack: "An even more vivid characteristic of his role, condensing his duplicity into its most acute dramatic form, is the Vice's trick of tears and laughter. His weeping feigns his affection and concern for his victim; his laughter, for the benefit of his audience, declares the triumph of his subtle

fraud and his scorn for the puny virtue of humanity" (161). Admittedly, Aaron's tears are not a mask for his laughter, but an extension of them; his mask has already served its purpose:

> When for his hand he had his two sons' heads,
> Beheld his tears, and laughed so heartily
> That both mine eyes were rainy like to his; (5.1.115-117)

Having briefly summarised the general marks of the Vice represented in Aaron, it is worth now considering his function as a corruptor in more detail.

We first briefly see Aaron among the prizes trailing Titus as he returns to Rome, but his second appearance in the very next scene (and Act) is by far the more significant. He enters alone and speaks directly to the audience, explaining his situation and plans, as well as his connection to Tamora:

> Now climbeth Tamora Olympus' top,
> Safe out of fortune's shot, and sits aloft,
> Secure of thunder's crack or lightning flash;
> Advanced above pale envy's threat'ning reach.
> […]
> Upon her wit doth earthly honor wait,
> And virtue stoops and trembles at her frown.
> Then, Aaron, arm thy heart, and fit thy thoughts
> To mount aloft with thy imperial mistress,
> And mount her pitch whom thou in triumph long
> Hast prisoner held, fettered in amorous chains
> And faster bound to Aaron's charming eyes
> Than is Prometheus tied to Caucasus.
> Away with slavish weeds and servile thoughts!
> I will be bright, and shine in pearl and gold
> To wait upon this new-made empress.
> To wait, said I? to wanton with this queen,
> This goddess, this Semiramis, this nymph,
> This siren that will charm Rome's Saturnine,
> And see his shipwreck and his commonweal's. (2.1.1-4, 10-24)

Here he plays a blend of servant and master as he explains how he has corrupted his "Imperial Mistress" and effectively controls her through her lust for him, bound as she is in "amorous chains". In this sense he plays out the familiar role of the Vice: servant to the one he is corrupting, and the passage makes clear that Aaron embodies the sin of Lust. The imperative he gives himself, to "mount aloft" serves the double meaning of painting a rather graphic picture of him performing his lust with Tamora, but also ties him to her rise. He rises too, for he uses her as a stepping stone or, more accurately, as a mount. Aaron, through controlling Tamora, is a Vice who is "safe out of fortune's shot," out of "pale envy's threat'ning reach" both, I would suggest, in the sense of envy the vice as it appears in Tamora and his rivals, but also Envy the Vice, who, while not appearing in this play, is certainly remembered by the audience watching Aaron as Lust outdo both fortune and fellow Vice. More importantly, Aaron, through mounting Tamora, shares in the line which sees "virtue stoop". Through exercising and demonstrating for the audience the power of Lust, Aaron has outdone not only fortune and fellow Vice, but virtue as well!

Fittingly, as the key Vice of the play, Aaron's influence extends beyond just his "mistress", and the chains of lust in which he has bound Tamora are echoed in Tamora's sons. It is Aaron who guides them in the rape of Lavinia, and at the end of the play he takes proud credit for their crimes: "Indeed, I was their tutor to instruct them […] let my deeds be witness of my worth" (5.1.98, 103). The exchanges in act four between Aaron and Tamora's sons make this even clearer, painting a picture of a family united in unholy lust under Aaron:

> DEMETRIUS. But me more good, to see so great a lord
> Basely insinuate and send us gifts.
> AARON. Had he not reason, Lord Demetrius?
> Did you not use his daughter very friendly?
> DEMETRIUS. I would we had a thousand Roman dames
> At such a bay, by turn to serve our lust.
> CHIRON. A charitable wish and full of love.
> AARON. Here lacks but your mother for to say amen.
> CHIRON. And that would she for twenty thousand more.
> DEMETRIUS. Come, let us go and pray to all the gods
> For our beloved mother in her pains.
> AARON. Pray to the devils! The gods have given us over. (4.2.37-48)

The rape and mutilation of Lavinia, which Aaron rather darkly characterises with "use his daughter very friendly", hangs over this scene, which marries the evocation of their lust and enmity to the imagery of a wholesome religious family meeting, expressed in their talk of prayer, gifts, a charitable wish, and their mother saying amen. Indeed, the "friendly" rape is directly connected to the "charitable wish" which is how Chiron characterises Demetrius's desire for "a thousand Roman dames" to rape as well, inverting the notion of charity as it becomes abusive and self-serving. Moreover, their thirst has only grown from fulfilling their desire for Lavinia, the enabling facilitated by Aaron having only deepened their hunger. This perhaps forms a useful counterpoint to a Vice I will examine in Chapter Nine who also embodies lust: "Venus alias Lust" in *The Cobbler's Prophecy.* Both bind their victims in chains of lust, though Venus is less active in scheming and interacting with the audience, typical of the female-Vice type which is the focus of the later chapters.

Aaron, unlike Richard who I shall examine next, isn't specifically labelled a Vice in the dialogue, but his structural role as a "servant" who has self-consciously corrupted his charges, his strong association with evil, and his ongoing relationship with the audience surely play off the audience's ongoing relationship with the Vice figure. That it is relatively easy to characterise Aaron as a particular kind of Vice, to read him as an embodiment of "Lust", is not hindered by his name being "Aaron" in the script. Arguably the audience would have recognised him by his stage practice and his role in the plot, for they had seen such characters before who were overtly named "Lust". *The Cobbler's Prophecy*, after all, had only been performed a couple of years earlier.

Shakespeare's engagement with the Vice tradition continues with Richard of Gloucester who, like Iago is one of the Shakespearean characters who has received the majority of the attention of scholarship alongside Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays, not the least because both Falstaff and Richard are directly referred to as the Vice in their plays.

Of all the readings of "Richard of Gloucester as Vice" as Vice (and there are many) it is Alan Dessen's I find the most compelling. Dessen argues that the wider plot of *Richard III* incorporates a structure inherited from the late moral drama. Instead of the rather ad hoc human-Vice hybrid inserted into a 'literal' play because of the Vice's persisting popularity, the incorporation of Vice-like elements into the character of Richard becomes far more strategic:

> I prefer to work with the assumption that here, early in his career, Shakespeare is providing his version of a dramatic paradigm obscure today but well known to his intended audience and is therefore taking for granted a horizon of expectations that assumes, even demands, that a Vice-

> like figure be confronted, exposed, arrested, and punished once his dramatic career has been played out. What if, in the minds of the original artist and spectators, both the Vice-like villain-hero and his symbolic opposite (to whom most of the supposedly tacked-on platitudes are given) were both constituent parts of one available paradigm or dramatic strategy? How would such an alternative model drawn from the late moral plays affect our sense of the shape of *Richard III*? One immediate result is a rationale or logic behind Richmond's role and presence. (Dessen, *Late Moral* 46-7)

What follows these remarks is a reading of not just Richard, but Richard's place in the world of the play, the manner in which his qualities are mirrored thematically in other characters, and the development of the character of Richmond as Richard's thematic opposite.

While he observes that "scholars linking Richard to the Vice often skip over the last two acts" because "In this final movement of the play, Richard no longer displays his special Vice-like relationship with the audience or characteristic demonic humor" (49), Dessen focuses on what this "un-Vice-like" ending says about Richard's role as the Vice in the framework of the whole play, for it is the final movement of the play which builds Richard's opposite, a role which to a contemporary reader might appear a simple *deus ex machina* tacked on at the end, but in fact is greater: "Richmond's role as an alternative, moreover, is not limited solely to Act V, for even discounting the brief prophetic moment with Henry VI (*3 Henry VI*, IV.vi.65-76), Shakespeare has carefully prepared us for his appearance" (47). Dessen proceeds to detail the manner in which Richmond is set to contrast Richard, first mentioned "just after Richard's high water mark as deceiver and manipulator (his duping of the Mayor and citizens in III.vii) and just before our first view of him as king" and established as inhabiting an "alternative space", an escape from Richard in the advice of Dorset's mother and the Duchess of York (47-8). In this manner, Richard muses on Richmond's supernatural connections through the prophecies which are continually returned to in the play, and something Richard himself fears: "As I remember, Henry the Sixth / Did prophesy that Richmond should be king / When Richmond was a little peevish boy. […] How chance the prophet could not at that time / Have told me, I being by, that I should kill him?" (4.2.94-6, 98-9).

Moreover, Richmond's emergence functions as an answer to the prayers and curses made throughout the play by the characters whom Richard has wronged, such as the three Lords who are being taken off to be killed. They appeal to God and add their voices to the curse already on Richard: "Then cursed she Richard. O remember, God, / To hear her prayers for them as now for us!" (3.3.16-17). The Duchess of York also appeals to God, and adds her voice to the curse:

Therefore take with thee my most heavy curse,
Which, in the day of battle, tire thee more
Than all the complete armour that thou wear'st!
My prayers on the adverse party fight (4.4.177-180)

When he finally appears, Richmond adds to this appeal to the divine his prayer before battle, a clear contrast to Richard's earlier performance of piousness for the sake of the populous:

O Thou whose captain I account myself,
Look on my forces with a gracious eye.
Put in their hands Thy bruising irons of wrath
That they may crush down with a heavy fall
The usurping helmets of our adversaries.
Make us Thy ministers of chastisement
That we may praise Thee in the victory.
To Thee I do commend my watchful soul
Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.
Sleeping and waking, O, defend me still! (5.3.106-115)

Thus, when he finally appears Richmond is thus established as the fulfilment of prophecy and prayer, a messianic king backed by the armies of heaven, and a clear contrast to the poisonous Vice Richard who is ultimately brought to ruin: "God and good angels fight on Richmond's side, / And Richard falls in height of all his pride" (5.3.173-4).

Richmond is the answer to Richard, a virtuous counter associated with the loss of Richard's entertaining Vice-like relationship with the audience, and with the success of his scheming. As Dessen observes, there are repetitions of Richard's activities from earlier scenes in the later part of the play, stratagems which succeeded in the beginning, but with the ascendancy of Richmond no longer succeed: "Richard employs the same tactics he had before, but they all fail for some reason. Like Revenge faced with Amity, Ill Report faced with True Report, or Courage faced with Authority and Correction, the Richard who had seemed unstoppable is now stymied, even flustered, when forced to confront his symbolic opposite" (Dessen, *Late Moral* 50). Dessen's approach is compelling, an examination of the Vice not in terms of its particular stage practice, or relationship with the audience, but in terms of its

relationship with the other characters; this is similar to the approach I will be taking with Maria in Chapter Nine. While Richard in isolation certainly has these Vice qualities, they are rendered more meaningful and vivid in light of the play's structure, which ultimately counters the Vice with a powerful figure of Virtue.

This figure of Virtue faces a powerful figure of Vice, for though Richard is ultimately neutralised, for the time he is ascending his larger-than-life nature is characterised in the very supernatural terms that Richmond is built to match. He is portrayed as a hell-hound, tyrant, and agent of evil:

> From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
> A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
> [...]
> Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
> […]
> That excellent grand tyrant of the earth,
> That reigns in galled eyes of weeping souls (4.4.44-5, 66, 52-3).

Beyond these appellations applied by his victims, his supernatural nature is before the audience all throughout the play in a manner that ties him directly to the Vice figure. As Elihu Pearlman observes: "Once Shakespeare allowed Richard to absorb the characteristics of the Vice, he immediately transformed him from a confrontational warrior to a creature of indirection, irony, and dissembling" (422). It is not insignificant that the line in which Richard compares himself to the Vice—"Thus, like the formal Vice Iniquity I moralise two meanings in one word"—he is specifically referring to the Vice's manipulative and deceitful powers, for Richard's key quality is his silver-tongue, of which the audience are frequently given examples, not all of which are obviously directly relevant to the plot. The seduction of Anne is a memorable example, but a better one is found in Act Two Scene Two when we hear the response Clarence's sons have to their father's murder and are given an insight into the power Richard has had over his nephews, and the manner in which he has poisoned their minds:

> SON. Then, grannam, you conclude that he is dead.
> The King my uncle is to blame for this.
> [...]

DUCHESS OF YORK. Peace, children, peace. The King doth love you well.
Incapable and shallow innocents,
You cannot guess who caused your father's death.
SON. Grannam, we can, for my good uncle Gloucester
Told me the King, provoked by the Queen,
Devised impeachments to imprison him.
And when he told me so, he wept,
And hugged me in his arm, and kindly kissed my cheek,
And Bade me rely on him as in my father,
And he would love me dearly as his child. (2.2.12-13, 16-25)

While having the King and Queen blamed for his brother's death certainly fits with Richard's plans, it hardly seems a significant plot point for Richard to have deceived the nephews he later has killed. The true function of this scene is as part of the ongoing effort of the play to establish Richard's manipulative Vice-qualities.

The key point I wish to make here, however, is that the intricacy of the way Shakespeare utilises the pattern of the Vices of the late moral plays, in Dessen's argument, bespeaks an understanding of the Vice tradition which, as we shall see, is ongoing. Richard is just one of the many Shakespearean characters in this chapter who are strongly influenced by the Vice tradition, arguably to the extent of being proper Vices. As Dessen has also argued elsewhere, in the physicality of performance on the stage, the line between what constitutes an "abstraction" or "allegorical figure" can be blurry indeed:

> Interesting avenues open up when we begin to "see" the morality plays. Particularly illuminating is the juxtaposition of earlier and later figures that perform similar functions. For a viewer as opposed to a reader, how much would actually separate Fellowship (*Everyman*) or Riot (*The Interlude of Youth*) from later good fellows or riotous companions with names like Pistol and Bardolph? How different are the murderers of Clarence in *Richard III* or Banquo in *Macbeth* from the villains who kill Smirdis in *Cambises,* even though the latter figures are called Murder and Cruelty? How large is the gap, again from the perspective of an audience, between the Good Counsel figure of the moralities, usually dressed as a clergyman, and the many friars or moral spokesmen in later plays, figures like the Old Man in *Doctor Faustus* or Friar Francis in *Much Ado About Nothing?* ("Homilies" 254)

In as much as Richard of Gloucester is presented as an historical figure, his function as a Vice in the framework of what Dessen calls the "two phased moral play" is so prominent as to avoid being eclipsed by the literal character. This isn't so much what Spivack characterises as "crossbreeding between widely different species" but rather the presentation of the Vice as usurping king, in much the same way as *Mankind*'s Mischief was a vagrant, *Respublica*'s vices were gallants or the positive figure Sincerity in *Three Ladies* was a priest (Spivack 12). Nevertheless, Vice or Vice-derived, Richard stands as an example of the Shakespearean engagement with the Vice tradition which continues as we proceed through our timeline of plays.

In as much as Richard is a villainous Vice, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Puck, or Robin Goodfellow takes things in the other direction, with a far greater focus on the clownish side of the Vice figure. As Robert C. Evans has observed of Puck as a "trickster" figure:

> Like the Vice, Shakespeare's Puck delights in making mischief and enjoys a unique conspiratorial rapport with his audience. The Robin Goodfellow of the anonymous play *Grim the Collier* (published in 1662, but probably written in the late sixteenth century) apes the Vice by administering a severe beating to a priest and identifies himself as the devil in doing so (447-448). Another distinctive trait of the Vice—his gleeful "ho ho ho" - was incorporated into most late Tudor and Stuart representations of Puck/Robin. With a few notable exceptions, however, Puck/Robin is represented in the late Tudor and early Stuart period not as a devil or demon, but as a harmless, albeit mischievous, prankster who has more in common with continental folk trickster figures like Till Eulenspiegel. (352-3)

Yet, Evan's observations serve to confuse matters regarding Puck/Robin's identity. In particular, while he is inclined to associate the character with the Vice rather than the devil, the "ho ho ho" he considers a key characteristic of the Vice is more properly a trait of the devil. While laughter and mirth are indeed important parts of the Vice figures I have examined, I have yet to encounter an unequivocal Vice who laughs in the distinctive "ho ho ho" manner; in contrast, I have noted several devils, such as those of *Like Will to Like* (1587), *Histriomastix* (1599), and *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), who laugh in this manner.

Additionally, the Robin Goodfellow of *Grim the Collier* not only identifies himself as the devil, he is listed as the devil Akercock alongside Belphagor the eponymous devil of the alternative title "the Devil and his dame" and several others. Yet Akercock is certainly in a Vice-like position, acting as the devil Belphagor's servant, and serving as a trickster in the plot (see Spivack 142). While *Grim the*

Collier is considered a play written after *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it is still worth considering in reading Shakespeare's play, given *Midsummer*'s influence on the development and emergence of the Robin Goodfellow figure. Concordantly, Evans attributes the sudden appearance of Puck/Robin in late Elizabethan literature in part to "the considerable impact of Shakespeare's Puck" (354).

Likewise, Shakespeare's Puck/Robin is a trickster servant, and it might be tempting to read Oberon, his master, as a kind of devil. Finding in their relationship the interplay familiar between the Vice and the devil would certainly aid this argument, and, after all, Puck/Robin does refer to Oberon as "king of shadows":

> OBERON. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
> Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.
> PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
> Did not you tell me I should know the man
> By the Athenian garments he had on?
> And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
> That I have 'noited an Athenian's eyes;
> And so far am I glad it so did sort,
> As this their jangling I esteem a sport. (3.2.345-353)

Yet there is little else to commend the notion that Oberon is the devil to us, and unless we read Puck as sarcastically subtle, he seems genuinely penitent regarding the mix-up he makes regarding the lovers. His respect for Oberon during the play seems sincere, especially in act two scene one, and in the exchange above he doesn't mock Oberon or make play with him; rather, he defends himself and apologises, especially in the lead up to the above exchange. There seems to be nothing distinctively devilish in Shakespeare's Oberon, nor anything typical of the Vice in Puck/Robin's relationship with the Vice.

The above exchange does, however, contain the fun-loving nature of the Vice. Puck/Robin's closing line "And so far am I glad it so did sort, / As this their jangling I esteem a sport" speaks to the playful, gamemaking nature of the Vice as established as part of my earlier definition. Puck is "a Puck" (2.1.40, 5.1.421, also stage direction preceding 5.1.357) named "Robin Goodfellow" (2.1.34) and called by both designations. Indeed, he is called Robin Goodfellow first, and Oberon, with whom he converses most, refers to him by both names, but more often by Robin. He is also called "Hobgoblin" (2.1.40), and "mad spirit" (3.2.4), calls himself "Goblin" (3.2.399), and serves as Oberon's jester

(2.1.44). In act three scene two, Oberon contrasts himself and Robin/Puck with other kinds of spirits, an exchange which can perhaps shed more light on Puck/Robin's identity:

> PUCK. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
> For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
> And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
> At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there
> Troop home to churchyards, damned spirits all,
> That in crossways and floods have burial,
> Already to their wormy beds are gone,
> For fear lest day should look their shames upon:
> They wilfully themselves exile from light
> And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.
> OBERON. But we are spirits of another sort;
> I with the Morning's love have oft made sport;
> And like a forester the groves may tread
> Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
> Opening on Neptune, with fair blessed beams
> Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
> But, notwithstanding, haste, make no delay;
> We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit*]
> PUCK. Up and down, up and down,
> I will lead them up and down.
> I am fear'd in field and town,
> Goblin, lead them up and down.
> Here comes one. (3.2.378-400)

It is an odd exchange. Puck/Robin is adamant that they must be quick, because dawn approaches at which time "ghosts" or "damned spirits" must return to their graves, "lest day should look their shames upon". Yet Oberon counters this with the observation that he and Robin are different from such spirits, and reflects on his own encounters with morning, before assuring Robin that they will be done in time. Oberon clearly has no issue with the day, but Robin, apparently unbeknownst to Oberon, seemingly does. Indeed, he is elsewhere styled the "merry wanderer of the night" (2.1.44). While there is no

precedent for Vices having an aversion to sunlight (at least not to my knowledge), the remark about shames is telling, and the whole exchange suggests that Robin is a spirit of a different order than Oberon. Is Robin not just Oberon's jester but Oberon's Vice? Indeed, the interplay between these identities–Jester, Devil, and Vice–form something of a pattern in Vice-figures which I will again revisit in my chapter regarding the War of the Theatres.

Robin is admittedly a more ambiguous entry into this timeline than Aaron or Richard. Were it not for such strong entries in Shakespeare's forays into the Vice tradition after this play, it would be tempting to paint this as a trend of decline. There is certainly a lot that is very familiar in Robin's actions and role, but for all that he is the impetus of much of the action of the play, his activity on stage is comparatively limited. The hints the audience gets in Robin's suggestion of being a different order of spirit than Oberon, his association with damned spirits, and the associations the name "Robin Goodfellow" had are mere suggestions which evoke the Vice, but not quite draw it forth, so to speak. Nevertheless, to use Greenblatt's description above, these suggestions are further evidence that "The Vice, the great subversive figure of the moralities, was never far from Shakespeare's creative mind" (33).

A far less ambiguous example of Shakespeare's use of the Vice is Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays. Falstaff, along with Iago and Richard is another major Shakespearean character upon whom considerable reading as the Vice has been built. Spivack treats Falstaff in some detail, going so far as to break down Falstaff's allegorical heritage:

> If we turn now to the unfought military Psychomachia in *Nature,* for which the vices assemble after the summons comes to them in the midst of their tavern junkets, we confront several of a set of images that survived on the stage until Shakespeare put them together in one figure who marched to a Psychomachia of his own–at Shrewsbury. The image of Gluttony (whose pseudonym is "Good Fellowship"), as fat no doubt as bombast could make it, claims our attention first. As the direction has it, to the other vices gathering for the fray "then cometh in Glotony wyth a chese and a botell" and protests that these are sufficient harness since he does not intend to fight anyway […] [Falstaff's] military equipment is identical. As for his military sentiment ("Give me life") and his catechism on the theme of honor, they are so much an improvement upon their original that we can forgive the borrowing. But borrowed they are. Bodily Lust (Lechery), summoned to Medwall's Psychomachia, has the same opinion on the same subject, and his is earlier. (455-6)

These parallels are far more impressive and far less ambiguous than Spivack's reading of Iago, helped in part, no doubt, by the fact that Falstaff is specifically associated with the Vice in scene four of act two of Shakespeare's play, as in Falstaff's exclamation "If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom / with a dagger of lath and drive all thy subjects afore thee like / a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more" (2.4.123-125), or Hal's designation of Falstaff as both Vice and Devil:

> There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; A tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humors, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend Vice, that gray Iniquity, that father Ruffian, that Vanity in years? (2.4.406-413)

There is more to Spivack's anatomising of Falstaff into his allegorical elements, the comedy of his boasting of military prowess, and the cowardice it covers. He examines the morality *The Four Elements* to "uncover another branch of Sir John's lineage on the military side" in Sensual Appetite, leader of the other vices:

> IGNORANCE. Hast thou any of them slayn, than?
> SENSUAL APPETITE. Ye, I have slayn them every man,
> Save them that ran away
> IGNORANCE. Why, is any of them skapyd and gone?
> SENSUAL APPETITE. Ye, by gogges body, everychone,
> All that every were there.
> […]
> IGNORANCE. Than thou has quyt the lyke a tal knyght! (qtd. In "Falstaff and the Psychomachia" 456; *The Nature of the Four Elements*, 42-43)

Falstaff's own military bravado and boasting is reminiscent of this exchange, as Sensual Appetite claims to have slain every foe, "Save them that ran away" only to have to clarify that all of them had escaped (456). However, as Dessen argues, there is a danger to focusing so much attention on Falstaff's supposed nature as the Vice but ignoring the role he plays within the structure of the plays. And as we shall see, he argues convincingly that Falstaff functions as two different kinds of Vice in the two Henry

IV plays. The continuity of the character is subordinated somewhat to the function of the character as Vice within the drama.

With regard to *Henry IV part one*, Dessen cautions us about reading the play solely in terms of a Mankind figure being tempted or corrupted by Falstaff-as-Vice:

> Using Hal's analysis as their cue, scholars have offered a detailed account of Falstaff's dramatic bloodlines that often includes considerable reference to the Vice and the allegorical tradition […] it is an easy leap to seeing Prince Hal, the Vice's companion, as a Humanum Genus figure, an Every Prince with a psychomachia conflict […] But the rebels are allotted equal time […] To describe Hal as Every Prince and *1 Henry IV* as analogous to *Mankind* or *Lusty Juventus* or *Wit and Science* is therefore to simplify and distort Shakespeare's carefully wrought structure, to let a preconceived notion of "the morality play" take precedence over the evidence. (*Late Moral*, 55-6)

The notion that Hal and Falstaff shares the play with Hotspur and his companions is compelling and dismisses any reductive reading which highlights only Hal and his relationships. However, this is not to say that Falstaff doesn't embody the Vice in this play. As I have argued above, and as the earlier references comparing Riot with Pistol and Bardolph might suggest, I would argue that the audience are supposed to recognise Falstaff as Vice, and potential corrupter of Hal, which plays into their understanding of Hal as a character. That Hal ultimately gets the best of Falstaff—not only by putting away his riotous behaviour and becoming a King, but by taking on the best of Falstaff's traits, his way with words and cunning—positions King Henry the fifth almost as a kind of positive vice-figure in his own right. The notion of a positive vice-like figure, intriguing and cunning, but operating not as corruptor but as someone who brings about a restoration of order is one we will revisit later in this list.

After the Henry IV plays we have *The Merchant of Venice*, and the villain, Shylock, who certainly seems to possess a Vice-like attributes. In Act One, Scene Three he communicates with the audience in asides, and giving these motivations for his enmity with Antonio:

> I hate him for he is a Christian,
> But more for that in low simplicity
> He lends out money gratis, and brings down
> The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
> If I can catch him once upon the hip,

I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him. (1.3.36-41)

As has been noted, the relationship with the audience is one of the key aspects of the Vice figure, especially concerning the figure's propensity to outline its plans to the audience. More specifically the motives for his actions are of particular interest because they connect him to another of Shakespeare's great villains, Iago. In this speech, he outlines his hatred and his opposition to charity, and while he is also opposed to Antonio because his charity is affecting Shylock's business, his visceral ambition to "feed fat the ancient grudge" bespeaks an enmity which transcends mere business considerations. On the surface, this could be explained by Shylock's embodiment of the figure of the Jew as presented on the early modern stage, though as Helen Ostovich notes there are issues with a reading which ascribes villainy to Shylock on the basis of his Jewishness: "history tells us that we should not assume that all Jews were unanimously reviled in 1590s London or treated unfairly in law" (270). Even if it is the case that his construction as "the Jew" by Shakespeare is in part the source of his villainy, I would argue that Shylock takes this grudge to an even greater extreme. In Act Four Scene One, in particular, he gives his reasons for his pursuit of his goals when asked by one of the other characters:

SHYLOCK. So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?
BASSANIO. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty! (4.1.59-64)

These descriptors, "lodged hate", "certain loathing," and especially "ancient grudge" are reminiscent of another of Shakespeare's villains said to be derived from the Vice: Iago. In his construction of Iago as the Vice, Spivack argues that under Iago's surface intentions—such as his confessed suspicion of his wife's infidelity, or his jealousy of Cassio's promotion—are hidden motivations which reveal Iago's true nature as not properly a literal human character. These driving forces "are not simply additional motives of the kind to which we are already accustomed; they belong, if we examine them carefully, to a different world of causation; and their close merger with Iago's jealousy and ambition suggests something very much like crossbreeding between widely different species" (13). He draws out in particular Iago's complaint that Cassio "hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly" (12).

Later he clarifies this position, and points to the many contradictions in Iago's actions and what he says about them:

> His opinion of his several victims is a chaos of contradictions. Whenever he is engaged in the exposition of his injuries he presents them uniformly in one light. Whenever he regards them as his victims, which is most of the time, he pronounces upon them a moral commentary different in the extreme [...] At one moment all his victims are guilty of moral turpitude and devious faithlessness; at another they are all exemplars of virtue, all honest fools whose simple-minded rectitude and credulity render them his natural prey. (18-19)

By this Spivack aims to establish Iago as both a "spirit of hate", and an embodiment of the Vice figure and the key to this interpretation is Iago's response to his "victims" (13). This connection between the underlying hatreds of Iago and Shylock may appear to attach Shylock to the Vice figure instead of the devil. But if we follow Scragg's line of thinking, as outlined in my earlier chapter on the Vice or devil, Iago may equally well be a derivative of the stage devils, rather than a stage Vice, or some combination of the two. This infernal hatred certainly appears to position both Iago and Shylock as more devil than Vice. Indeed, Shylock's "ancient grudge", and Iago's enmity with Cassio are perhaps both much more reminiscent of the Devil in *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* who remarks to the Vice:

> But if thou shouldest want any part of my ayde,
> I will be at thy hande then be not afrayde,
> And let us see if God with all his myght,
> Can defende this soule from our auncient spyght. (A3^{v})

Just as Shylock pursues his "ancient grudge", *Susanna*'s devil operates out of an "auncient spyght". Furthermore, Shylock's wealth of other devilish associations clearly establish him as devil, rather than Vice, his similarity to Iago in this regard challenging the association between Iago and Vice pioneered by Spivack.

Shylock is referred to as devil multiple times throughout the play. Antonio responds to Shylock's use of scripture with one example: "Mark you this, Bassanio: / The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose" (1.3.91-2). Likewise Solanio comments: "Let me say amen betimes, lest the devil cross my / prayer, - for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew" and Salarino responds to Shylock's proclamation against his daughter "She is damn'd for it" with the observation "That's certain, if the

devil may be her judge" (3.1.17-18, 3.1.27-8). During the trial in scene one of act four, Shylock is described as "cruel devil" by Bassanio and later: "I would lose all—ay, sacrifice them all / Here to this devil—to deliver you" (4.1.215, 4.1.284-5). Launcelot Gobbo's comments to the audience during his first scene are even more blatant:

> I should stay with the Jew my master, who —God bless the mark—is a kind of devil. And to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who—saving your reverence—is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation. And in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run. Fiend, my heels are at your commandment; I will run. (2.2.19-27)

Also compelling is the position of Shylock's introduction in the play, and what it precedes. Act two scene one is the very next thing the audience sees after Shylock's departure in the previous scene and Antonio and Bassanio's discussion, and it begins with the entry of the Prince of Morocco. The association between blackness and the devil in the early modern mind, played on so extensively in *Othello*, could risk decoupling Shylock from the devilish associations already established. It is telling, then, that the virtues of this Moor are extolled, disassociating him from devilry, and strengthening, through contrast, the association between Shylock and the devil (2.1.1-22). The Prince is evoked in this scene in order to further establish Shylock the Jew as the true devil of the play.

It should, however, be noted that while Shylock is clearly presented as a devil figure in the play (or rather derived from the stage presence of the devil figure), he is also very much presented as a Jew. His rather sympathetic speech—beginning "Hath a Jew not eyes?" (3.1.49)—maintains his identity as Jew; this should not trouble us, as the same character can surely function as both figures simultaneously.

While Shylock is the Devil of *The Merchant of Venice,* much like *Twelfth Night*'s Maria he is paired with a figure reminiscent of the Vice, the aforementioned Launcelot Gobbo. Elsewhere David Wiles has unpacked Gobbo's identity as the Vice in *Shakespeare's Clown*:

> Since the nature of a Vice was encapsulated in his name, it was common for a Vice to expound the meaning of his name. Shakespeare follows convention to the extent of using a name that is emblematic and contrasts with the Italian nomenclature [in *The Merchant of Venice* with Launcelot Gobbo] of the other characters. Putting centuries of tradition aside, we return to the First Quarto and Folio to find—to our surprise—that the clown's correct name throughout is Launcelet Jobbe […] The *O E D* tells us that a "launcelet" is a small lance or lancet, and "jobbe" is the regular Elizabethan spelling of our "jab" […] The name "Launcelet Jobbe" therefore signifies both the lecher and the overeater. It suggests that he is a moral Vice who jabs those who toy with him. (8)

Like Iago, or the Vice Dissimulation from *Three Ladies*, Launcelot's name is repeatedly attached to "honest" (albeit in a speech he makes to himself) (2.2.6-7,12-13). He also has a strong relationship with the audience as Wiles observes: "The clown establishes a rapport with the audience when he opens and closes his first scene with monologues […] The deceit of the father is set up for the audience's entertainment: Launcelet explains clearly to the audience who his father is and what he intends to do to him" (8-9).

Intriguingly, Launcelot leaves Shylock's service early in the play, in a curious inversion of the Devil's sending out of the Vice. While the Devil of *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* sends the Vice to complete a specific task, Launcelot breaks ties with Shylock early in the play to sign on with Bassanio, arguably the hero of the play (2.2.127-9). As the play progresses it becomes clear that he isn't there to corrupt Bassanio, as might have been the role of the protagonist's Vice-servant in earlier plays. In fact, despite the Vice characteristics which make Launcelet of interest to this study, he is a secondary figure in the plot like Robin Goodfellow, rather than key to the play's thematic objectives like Richard, Aaron, and Falstaff are for their plots. The focus is far more on the devilish Shylock, than on the Vicely Launcelet. However, in the context of all the plays in this chapter this should not be taken as a diminishment of the Vice tradition but an ongoing engagement with it, characterised by many diminishments and increases according to the needs of each individual play. Indeed, the next play I shall examine brings the focus strongly back to the Vice.

I have thus far proceeded through most of the plays in the sequence of Shakespeare's engagement with the Vice tradition. Having examined *Othello* in previous chapters and, given that I will be examining the elements of the allegorical tradition in *Twelfth Night* in my chapter about the female Vice, I will not be touching on them in this one. Let it stand that both these plays likewise contribute to the continuity of Shakespearean engagement with the Vice tradition. The final play I will

examine in this chapter, then, is *Measure for Measure*, a play whose principle antagonist doesn't seem to harbour the traits of the Vice at all, until one recognises that these traits lie instead in one of the protagonists.

I am greatly indebted to Matthew Winston for the reading he makes of *Measure for Measure* which first ignited my interest in the play. Winston reads it as portraying "elements of the struggle between the morality Vice and the beneficent force which opposes him" (230). Specifically, he finds in Duke Vicentio a surprising amount of the Vice's stage practice:

> Duke Vincentio applies his craft against vice in an attempt to bring about the measure of equity. His transitional speech at the end of the third act is in a verse form reminiscent of the old morality plays, and he addresses the audience directly, in the Vice's manner, in order to suggest the context in which he uses techniques associated with the Vice–deviousness, disguise, and even duplicity–for the purposes of virtue. He employs the tricks of Iniquity toward the goal of equity. He is most Vice-like in the last act, where he mischievously delights in changing costumes, encouraging others to take positions that will undo them, and stage-managing the scene for Shakespeare's audience, which knows all the secrets and so is free to watch him maneuver. His actions serve to correct injustice, to soften Isabella's rigidity, and to control liberty in Angelo and Lucio […] In order to restore measure to his dukedom and to correct the disorder that resulted from his governmental laxness, the Duke in *Measure for Measure* becomes a Counter-Vice, or Anti-Vice, or, to use his own term for this figure, a "Craft." (243)

His reading of the Duke is compelling, far more so than his reading of Lucio as the Vice, perhaps because there is simply far more of Duke Vincentio in the play, and partly because, if Winston's reading is correct, the Duke is displaying the characteristics of the Vice far more prominently.

However, Vincentio is not so easily folded into a simplistic reading of him as a positive-Vice, and it must address his moral complexity if I am to commandeer Winston's reading in service to my own. In contrast to Winston's argument that Vincentio embodies (or seeks to embody) Equity, working as he does from Bevington's earlier reading of Equity into *Measure for Measure*, Andrew Majeske argues that Equity is absent from the main action of the play:

> Bevington associates Duke Vincentio with the rigorous enforcement of law in the play, when clearly Angelo is the one responsible for this—Duke Vincentio solicited Angelo as proxy ruler precisely because he anticipated Angelo would act this way. Bevington identifies Isabella with

> mercy, whereas the play clearly lodges the merciful element in the person of Duke Vincentio […] Isabella may seek mercy for others, but she is in no position to render any herself. Finally, Bevington characterizes Escalus as representing equity, which he has identified as the mean between what he characterizes as the extremes of law and mercy. But Duke Vincentio intentionally passed over Escalus as proxy ruler in favor of Angelo. (172)

I would agree with Majeske's critique of Bevington's attribution of these characteristics, save that I would argue that for all the Duke's problematic behaviour, the Duke is best read as Winston does. For Majeske the Duke is not seeking Equity, but rather attempting to re-establish the state through reapplying the strict rule of law and applying mercy to clean up the issues that arise from this. Arguably, though, the extremity of the Duke's actions are precisely his efforts to attain the Equity Majeske attributes to Escalus, through the process of re-founding the state. The Duke is, as the idiom goes, trying to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to re-establish the law grown lax on his watch, requiring he use Angelo to deflect criticism from himself:

> Sith 'twas my fault to give the people scope,
> 'Twould be my tyranny to strike and gall them
> For what I bid them do: for we bid this be done,
> When evil deeds have their permissive pass (1.3.35-38)

Yet in refounding the state in so short a time requires, as Majeske argues: "extreme, even shocking measures, if it is to be quickly and effectively accomplished" (169). I would argue that it is because of his desire for Equity that Vincentio remains in Vienna, to deal with the consequences of these shocking measures, embodied by Angelo's rule.

The biggest issues Majeske presents to salvaging Winston and Bevington's reading of the Duke as Equity is the pardon of Barnadine. Equity seems absent in this judgement: Barnadine is an unrepentant murderer, for whom the pardon is less a mercy than a suspension of justice itself. Majeske folds this seemingly irrational pardon into his argument that all the pardons in some way serve the Vincentio's objective to re-establish the rule of law:

> The Duke's apparently inexplicable act of mercy in Barnardine's case precisely balances and counteracts Angelo's confoundingly strict application of the law in Claudio's case. The pardon produces a necessary "shock," a seemingly "unaccountable disruption," one that "[undoes] the

> past" and compels the people to forget and forgive not only Angelo's severity and misdeeds, but also the Duke's laxity in enforcing the laws that caused Vienna's problems in the first place. (178)

This is, like the Duke's Friar disguise, a kind of mask, a trick, the craft of Vice turned toward the good of the state. Like the Vice the Duke controls the narrative of the play, paradoxically restoring Law through its suspension, and Equity through the inequity of Barnadine's pardon. Escalus as Equity is passive and insufficient for the challenges facing Vienna. What the state needed was not Equity the Virtue, but Equity the Vice (or "Craft" to use Winston's terminology).

Regardless of whether Vincentio's strategies and their consequences can be easily reconciled, this notion of the Counter-Vice, and the idea that a positive character (to invert Steenbrugge's use of the phrase "negative character") can embody the characteristics of Vice is certainly of interest. In passing, Winston himself connects this "Craft" to "Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* and Prospero in *The Tempest*" and notes that Northrop Frye had drawn similar conclusions about Edgar in *King Lear* (243-4):

> with his bewildering variety of disguises, his appearance to blind or mad people in different roles, and his tendency to appear on the third sound of the trumpet and to come pat like the catastrophe of the old comedy, seems to be an experiment in a new type, a kind of tragic "virtue," if I may coin this word by analogy. (Frye 274)

To my knowledge, however, not much has been made of these other figures as the offspring of a kind of "positive Vice figure". Nevertheless, if we turn once again to *The Merchant of Venice* it is easy to see that the label could apply to Portia. Like Edgar and the Duke she employs disguises and exposes the hidden natures of the characters. Curiously, then, *The Merchant of Venice* is a play with the devil-like Shylock, the Vice-like Launcelot, and the Craft/Anti-Vice Portia.

Of even greater interest to my study, and particularly with regard to my discovery of the female Vice as a source of evil with less of the focus on the Vice's stagecraft, is the fact that Portia is more like the Duke than, for example, Lady Lucre is like Dissimulation. Which is to say that the trend of the distinct female Vice serving as some kind of emanation of evil, with the stagecraft aspects of the Vice's role diminished does not seem at the outset to apply to positive inversions of the character, or at least not this one. However, it is worth noting that by her cunning she brings about the restoration to order, and by her wealth she sustains the other characters, placing her in a central "emanative" position in

terms of her effects on the other characters, perhaps reflective of the differing role of the female Vice type.

It is fitting we end this chapter with *Measure for Measure*, for the innovative approach to the Vice tradition which Winston's argument implies paints a picture of not only a persisting stage tradition but, as I have been at pains to establish in these early chapters, a growing one. Shakespeare continued to be engaged with the Vice figure throughout his career, and deployed the Vice in a variety of ways, and to a variety of extents. The difference between, say, Puck, who emits only traces of the tradition, and Aaron who is very blatantly the Vice of his play bespeaks an eclectic but persistent engagement with the tradition. Shakespeare was not slavishly devoted to a fixed and solid tradition, nor was he dredging up the scattering traces of a fading stage figure. The ebbs and flows of the Vice in Shakespeare's work are not a function of the Vice tradition or its popularity on the stage. Rather, these ebbs and flows in his work are a function of the manner in which the tradition was useful to the individual author, itself indicating the persistence and continuance of the tradition. As this implies, and as coming chapters will establish, this is not just a quirk of Shakespeare or Jonson. The Vice figure is not a fixed point towards which Medieval theatre moved, and from which early modern theatre drifted, but rather a living stage tradition which the play makers of the early modern period inherited, adapted, and developed according to their needs for the stage. That the tradition has remained so recognisable over this period of time is remarkable, and speaks to its popularity with audiences, even well beyond it was supposed to be supplanted by the so-called "literal" drama. In the proceeding chapters I will continue to establish the resilience of the Vice figure and build on the foundation laid by these early chapters, but we will also see, as I have foreshadowed in these chapters, the emergence of a new subtype of the Vice figure: the female Vice.

PART TWO
The Emerging Vice

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Persistence of the Vice during the Poetomachia

I began in my previous chapter to apply the understanding of the Vice figure set out in my first section, by examining the persistence of the Vice in the work of one author: Shakespeare. However, in this chapter I am concerned not with the career trajectory of a single author, but that of a group of playwrights applying their craft to similar ideological ends, in cluster of plays constituting what is known as the Poetomachia, or the 'War of the Theatres'. These plays not only contain strong evidence for the continuation of the Vice tradition, they provide a glimpse of the female Vice figure that will be more fully explored in my final chapters.

As Edward Gieskes describes it, "The Poetomachia, a 'stage quarrel' among writers who were emerging as leading professional dramatists, was at its height from 1598 to 1601. The most important participants were John Marston, Thomas Dekker, and Ben Jonson" (77). While the exact nature of the Poetomachia remains somewhat controversial–as John Enck observes throughout "The Peace of the Poetomachia" (386, 388, 392)–the fact that plays such as Marston's *Histriomastix* and Dekker's *Satiromastix* were part of something called the Poetomachia is surely not under reasonable question, given, for example, Dekker's observations in his note to the readers of *Satiromastix*:

> *I care not much if I make description … of that terrible* Poetomachia*, lately commenced betweene* Horace the second*, and a band of leane-witted* Poetasters. *They have bin at high wordes, and so high, that the ground could not serve them, but* (*for want of* Chopins) *have stalk't upon stages …* Horace *hal'd his* Poetasters *to the Barre, the* Poetasters *untruss'd* Horace: *how worthily eyther or how wrongfully,* (World) *leave it to the Iurie …*
>
> –Thomas Dekker, "To the World" *Satiromastix* (1602) (qtd in Gieskes 82)

Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels* is likewise taken as a volley of the Poetomachia (Simons 2). The close timing of these plays, and their intriguing similarities, nevertheless allow us to largely avoid being sidetracked into a lengthy argument concerning the exact nature of the veracity of the Poetomachia in favour of examining the continuance and dramatic meaning of the persistent elements of the Vice tradition in all three plays.

Beyond the so-called decline of the Vice figure and allegory in the 1580s we have a late play in 1599 rife with allegorical figures in John Marston's *Histriomastix; or The Player Whipped* (acted in 1599, registered in 1610), an obscure play to be sure, but one which provides an interesting glimpse at thinking regarding the Vice tradition well beyond the period in which it is conventionally considered to have died out. The play is so rich in allegorical elements for a late play that Spivack characterises it as a rehashing of old material rather than a new play: "*Histriomastix,* which is doubtlessly an old moral play made over into a satire on the theater and the times, is rife with the choric comment of moral personifications" (310). His only evidence for this position is that it doesn't seem to fit his rather restrictive timeline for the Vice. Elsewhere he rather oddly groups it with the "later Elizabethan drama of literal plot and compact human characters" which downplays the play's strong allegorical structure (131). There are vices (small v) present throughout the play, looming over each act and defining the action to come. Further, this play shares the distinction of being the only non-Jonson play in the Poetomachia to directly feature the Vice figure and demonstrates that maintaining the Vice tradition was not merely a quirk of Jonson's.

I will observe in a later chapter that the *Three Ladies* and *Three Lords* plays in the 1580s are problematic to Spivack's argument regarding the decline of the Vice, but *Histriomastix*'s date makes it an even greater conundrum, and he is forced to deal with it by essentially erasing it from the canon of later Vice plays. Firstly, he characterises it as a "literal" play:

> It is only in the later Elizabethan drama of literal plot and compact human characters that the devil reasserts himself as a dramatic figure of some consequence, as in *Doctor Faustus, Grim the Collier of Croydon, A Knack to Know a Knave,* and *Histriomastix,* to confine ourselves to plays of the sixteenth century. (131)

This is an awfully strange designation given the strong allegorical elements which hang over the whole of the play. Indeed, each Act is ruled over by a court of different allegorical figures which demonstrate trends in society. If Spivack's spectrum has plays like *Mankind* and *The Castle of Perseverance* at one end, representing "real" allegory, and "literal" plays at the other end, one might ask the question, "what separates this play from *Mankind*?" As noted previously, on the page it is clear that *Mankind's* vagrants are vices, but on the stage things become far more ambiguous. If anything, the allegorical figures in *Histriomastix* are even more clearly designated as such than the earlier play, but without a separation

from the “literal” figures which might suggest the allegorical figures were merely “tacked on”. Instead, the allegorical elements are integral to the play, and so are the interactions between the play’s allegorical and “literal” elements. Indeed, the so-called “literal” characters make reference to the effect the allegorical figures are having on them, intertwining the two elements of this play:

> PERPETUANA. Oh husband, I am sick, my cheeke is pale
> With ——
> VELURE. With what my sweete?
> PERPETUANA. With *Enuie,* which no Physick can preuent (E3^{r})

One could more easily argue that *Histriomastix* was an allegorical play with “literal” elements tacked on, if one accepted the problematic distinction between the allegorical and the “literal” which Spivack seems to be employing here.

Related to but distinct from this designation of the play as literal is Spivack’s contention that this play, and the other such ‘later’ dramas, are more secular than their earlier counterparts, a position seemingly demanded by his dogmatic teleology. For Spivack, it is the focus of these plays on society as a whole, rather than a “Mankind/Humanus Genus”-type individual representative of humanity, that evidences this shift:

> In almost all these plays the supreme value is social unity, brought about through the harmonious submission of the several estates to their established place and function within the hierarchic order. The supreme evil correspondingly is represented by vices that instigate social division, bending their efforts to destroy the bond of mutual trust and loyalty which holds the commonwealth together and guarantees peace and justice. (210)

The imposition of secularity onto these plays is an ongoing issue because it artificially separates the later plays from earlier ones in order to fit them to a narrative about the decline of the allegory. As noted earlier, Cox’s recognition (via Sommerville) of the notions of a sacred culture which views the harmony of members of society and the community’s good as non-secular concerns is again relevant here (Sommerville qtd in Cox 10).

Later, however, Spivack seems to go back on his initial designation of the play as literal, and instead seeks to reconcile this late period morality with his developmental narrative, noting: "*Histriomastix,* which is doubtlessly an old moral play made over into a satire on the theater and the times, is rife with the choric comment of moral personifications" (310). This position seems fallacious: because *Histriomastix* is a play with more allegory than Spivack expects of the late 1590s, it cannot possibly be a true 1590s play, and instead he must commit himself to the position that *Histriomastix* is the resurrection of an earlier play, despite offering no evidence for this position (and to my knowledge no such evidence exists).

Additionally, *Histriomastix* as an allegorical play at this time directly contradicts Spivack's notion that the Vice had to be clothed in a literal figure because: "theatre could no longer take him straight" (32-3). Note that this is the case even if we grant his earlier point that *Histriomastix* is a reworking of an earlier play. At this point the audience is not supposed to be able to take clear and literal allegorical figures, yet the allegorical rulers of *Histriomastix*'s acts prove that this is not the case.

While *Histriomastix* is full of vices the play lacks a character overtly fulfilling the role of "the Vice" (with the possible exception of the Vice Pride) in the sense that such a role functions pre-1580. By this I mean that there is no central character denoted as "the Vice" who persists throughout the play and is predominantly responsible for corrupting humanity or manifesting an ongoing rapport with the audience. Instead, the play nods to the Vice tradition in a short play-within-a-play which takes place at the end of Act Two. This play-within-a-play, put on by travelling players for the Nobles and Gentles, begins with a Prologue, and proceeds to an exchange between Troilus and Cressida before the following stage direction takes place:

> Enter a roaring Diuell with the Vice on his back, Iniquity in one hand; and Inventus [Juventus] in the other. (C4^{r})

It is worth noting that the onstage audience dislike the play. Landulphos heckles with, "Fie, what vnworthy foolish foppery, / Presents such buzzardly simplicity." Mauortius agrees: "No more, no more, vnless twere better, / and for the rest ye shall be our debter" (C4^{r}). At this the play-within-a-play ends, and the play audience are given a song instead, following which the act ends.

It is perhaps possible to interpret this as the sophisticated 1599 play-makers looking down on earlier stage traditions, as is indeed the interpretation of similar moments in later plays involving

allegorical elements. The Vice Iniquity in Jonson's 1616 *The Devil is an Ass* is read as such, even within the play itself: Satan remarks on how outdated Iniquity is compared to the Vices at work in seventeenth century London. However, there are a couple of problems with reading the play in this way.

As Allan D observes in "Allegorical Action and Elizabethan Staging" regarding allegorical elements of *Histriomastix*, we simply do not have a large enough sample to decide which stage practices were "outdated" and which were still running strong:

> To the readers of later generations, Histrio-Mastix initially appears as a curiosity or a throwback, especially when juxtaposed with contemporary plays such as Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (1599) and *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1601). Yet, as only a small percentage of plays have survived from the late 1590s and early 1600s, on what basis should a student of theatrical practice characterize what constitutes a norm for this period? Would Envy's or Ambition's breathing in the midst of a group of susceptible figures be seen as merely a bizarre onstage anomaly? Or could this stage action have signified elsewhere in what we today read as verisimilar situations? (397)

As it is certain we do not have the full picture of Elizabethan stage practice we need to be cautious about how we read moments in plays such as this, and the even later plays *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News.* Furthermore, the position of this scene in the play offers further clues to whether this is a joke at the expense of an earlier tradition, or a comment on audience's interactions with the tradition. While the audience of the play within the play deride the stage Vice, and his fellows the devil and Iniquity, the audience of the real play are watching a play whose acts are governed by serious vices. It cannot be said in this case that the tradition is treated as outdated by a play arguably in that very tradition. Instead I would argue that something subtler is going on in this play than a simple mockery of the "outdated" Vice tradition. This moment serves as a warning not to disregard the lessons inherent in such play making, for while the nobles and gentles mock the stage devil and stage Vice, the vices of the play are about to bring forth their ruin.

It is surely too much to conceive that it is only a coincidence that the very next entrance made is that of Pride and her train as Act Three opens:

Enter Pride, Vaine-glory, Hypocrisie and Contempt: Pride casts a mist, wherein Mauortius and his company vanish off the Stage, and Pride and her attendants remaine. (D1^{r})

As if their contempt of the stage Vice has conjured them forth, Pride, Vainglory, Hypocrisy, and Contempt arrive to usher in the third act, and with it the decline of the characters and world; a decline that will only abate in the play's last moments when Pride and her successors Envy, War, and Poverty give up their sceptres to Peace.

While, as I have mentioned, the play lacks a central Vice, Pride fulfils much the same purpose. As Dessen suggests:

> As is often the case, the stage business that is to accompany the allegorical action is rarely spelled out. At the outset of act III, Lady Pride plays the role of temptress in the manner of the moral play Vice figure. Pride instils in the group of lawyers and merchants a desire for the latest fashions and a disdain for sumptuary laws and other regulations but no actions or gestures are signalled. (396)

He does not mention Pride's casting of a mist here, despite making much of Envy's similar actions later in the play, moving among the characters and breathing on them to infect them. Nevertheless, Pride remains and continues to play a part in her act, seemingly taking a far greater interest in the proceedings than the positive allegorical figures who preceded her.

Like the more clearly denoted Vice figures who have come before her, Pride engages with the audience, delighting in her corruption and explaining her plots in asides to the audience which make them complicit in her schemes. She observes in aside as the human characters resume the stage:

> PRIDE. O these be Lawyers! Concords enemies,
> *Prydes* fuell shall their fire of strife increase. *aside* (D1^{v})

A few lines later she introduces herself to them, and explains her allegorical significance, in so doing explaining it also to the audience:

> PRIDE. Fortune and health attend you Gentlemen.

FURCHER. We thanke you Lady; may we craue your name?
PRIDE. Men call me *Pryde*, and I am *Plenties* heire.
Immortall, though I beare a mortall showe.
Are not you Lawyers, from whose reuerend lippes
Th'amaxed multitude learne Oracles?
Are not you Merchants, that from East to West,
From th'antarticke to the Artick Poles,
Bringing all treasure that the earth can yeeld?
ALL. We are, (most worthy Lady)
PRIDE. Then vse your wisedome to enrich your selues, (D1^{v})

While Pride's schemes and asides are just what we might expect from the Vice, her openness about her name and nature to the other characters is not. There is a tradition of the Vice changing its name to the closest virtue to mask its true nature when around those it is deceiving and misleading. The 1553 play *Respublica*, highlights the importance of this by listing the four vices under both their original and assumed names. Avarice masks as Policy, Insolence as Authority, Oppression as Reformation, and Adulation as Honesty.

Respublica (1553).
Avarice. allias policie, The vice of the plaie.
Insolence. " Authoritie, the chief galaunt.
Oppression. " Reformation, an other gallaunt.
Adulation. " Honestie, The third gallaunt. (Spivack 145)

This practice of the Vice presenting itself as a Virtue serves the didactic purpose of reflecting what sin and vice are concealed as outside of the play. Insolence, for example, relies on a difference in status, and it is far harder to see when clothed in authority. Likewise, Adulation is harder to counter when it is marketed as simple honesty. While Pride does not re-brand herself in quite this way there is a very clear nod to this aspect of the Vice tradition: Pride's temptation is successful, not because she masks vice as virtue, but virtue as vice. In a speech to those she is manipulating, a group of Lawyers and Merchants, Pride refigures charity and virtue as pride and vice respectively:

PRIDE. For take this note: *The world the show affects,*
Playne Vertue, (vilie cladde) is counted Vice,
And makes high blood indure base preiudice.
[...]
LYON-RASH. But men will taxe vs to want charity.
PRIDE. True charity beginneth first at home,
Heere in your bosomes dwell your deere-lou'd hearts,
Feed them with ioy; first crowne their appetites,
And then cast water on the care-scorch't face,
Let your owne longings first be satisfied,
All other pitty is but foolish pryde. (D2^{r})

Not only does she mask virtue as vice, but she turns virtue, that of compassion and charity, into Pride, the very sin she represents. In a reversal of the masking of vice as virtue, Pride masks virtue as vice, though this has a similar didactic effect, because it demonstrates how vice is excused and virtue ignored. "Charity begins at home" becomes a call to selfishness as the Merchants and Lawyers are implored to satisfy their own hearts, lest they fall victim to the "foolish pryde" that is "All other pity". Having thus corrupted the wealthy, she is left alone to share her victory with the audience:

PRIDE. The puft vp spirits of the greater sort,
Shall make them scorne the abiect [abject] and the base,
Th'impatient spirit of the wretched sort,
Shall thinke imposed duties their disgrace,
Poore naked neede shall be as full of pryde,
As he that for his wealth is Deifide [deified]. (D2^{r-v})

Later in act three this nod to the masking of Vice is taken even further as the human characters echo this re-branding in the much more conventional sense of the vice being presented as a virtue. The scene features rich ladies throwing their privilege around, and one near the end notes: "Pleasure as bonslaue, to our wills is tyed, / We Ladies cannot be defam'd with Pride, / Come, let's haue a play, let poore

slaues prate / Ranck pride in meanest sort, in vs is state" (D3^{v} (15)). Their demand for a play (which is not fulfilled onstage) must surely recall the Vice play earlier which ended with Pride's entry, and here Pride is re-branded as State. This serves the function that the Vice changing her name would have served, that of exposing what in society the Vice is masked as.

As I have suggested Pride, and the stage Vice of the play-within-a-play stand juxtaposed, the Vice playing to clichés while Pride, for her act, functions in much the way actual stage Vices functioned. I would suggest that this serves as a warning to the audience, and to those with an interest in the Vice tradition. While it might be tempting to frame the development of the Vice post-1580 in terms of decline and decay, with the figure, as Spivack puts it, "out of Vogue", a play in 1599 presents those very attitudes, played out on stage, to the ruin of the characters.

Moreover, the play emphasises the moral aspect of the Vice, in stark contrast to the notion that the Vice's resilience, especially beyond the 1580s, was a function of its entertainment value. Pride, while sharing many of the Vice's moral functions, lacks something of the figure's celebrated panache and showmanship. She's clearly not in the play to entertain in the clown-like manner that has been suggested as the reason for its resilience. Rather, she is playing out the function of the Vice as described by Dessen being: "to display on-stage a sinful world or a society corrupted by a particular force and then provide their answer" (*Late Moral* 24). Here we see a female Vice functioning more as a moral Vice than one built around stage craft, a notion I will take up again in the next two chapters. In a broader sense, as these late appearances of the Vice remind us, the figure was still a useful tool in the hands of early modern play-makers, able to represent what dramatists needed it to represent, and entertain audiences in the process.

Spivack's notion of the *radix malorum* is worth examining in *Histriomastix*. The first aspect to this is the cyclical nature of the play's arrangement of allegorical figures. Each ruling figure who appears leads to the others: Peace leads to Plenty who leads to Pride who leads to Envy, who leads to War. This is particularly evident when War, the ruler of Act Five, enters with his subordinates, and refers to his predecessor:

> WAR. Rule fier-eied *Warre*, reuell in blood and flames,
> *Enuy*, whose breathe hath poysoned all estates
> Hath now resigned her spightfull throne to us (F1^{r})

The *radix malorum* embodied the nature of the vice leading to other vices, that "The sins that grow in our lives are not coeval, but spring from each other contingently: one is the root and trunk […] of which others are branches and still others twigs" (Spivack 142). Each individual allegorical ruler is assuredly in a doctrinal sense "the pioneer beating a way for other moral evils to follow" (Spivack 154), though of course in this play two of the allegorical figures are positive rather than negative (Peace and Plenty).

Just as the *radix malorum* was initially a leader-vice who was the source of his minions, three of these allegorical figures have their own followers who could be said to follow in the wake of their sin or virtue. Peace is accompanied by Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy; Pride enters with Vainglory, Hypocrisy and Contempt, and Ambition, Fury, Horror and Ruin follow War. The two exceptions are Envy, the only one to enter without a train, and Plenty who enters with gods associated with plenty: Plutus (god of wealth), Ceres (goddess of agriculture and fertility), and Bachus (also known as Dionysus, god of wine, theatre and religious ecstasy).

Given the prominence of the Vice tradition (and allegory more generally) in *Histriomastix*, and the status of the play as the opening volley of the War of the Theatres, the other plays of the Poetomachia bear examining for further evidence of the ongoing Vice tradition. It is important to read the war of the theatres in light of this first volley, for it sets the context for the later plays, and informs the audience in their comprehension of them. As such, while taken in isolation some references to the tradition in the plays of the wars seem weak, they take on greater strength when read in light of the prominent position of the Vice tradition in *Histriomastix.* With that in mind, I will now turn to considering the plays which follow *Histriomastix* in the Poetomachia*,* most notably Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601) and *Cynthia's Revels* (1600) and Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1601).

Like the acts of *Histriomastix*, *Poetaster* begins allegorically, with a long speech from Envy (not mentioned in the "Persons of the Play") who is eventually silenced by an armed Prologue who crushes Envy into the Earth by "Noble Industry" (275-7). Reminiscent of the role of Envy and Pride in *Histriomastix,* the speech frames Envy as the source of the play's ills; though its snakes are not individual characters, it can be said to function as their *radix malorum* in a sense:

> Here will be subject for my snakes, and me.
> Cling to my necke, and wrists, my louing
> wormes,

And cast you around, in soft, and amorous foulds,
Till I doe bid, vncurle: Then, breake your knots,
Shoot out your selues at length, as your forc't stings(?)
Would hide themselues within his malic't sides,
To whom I shall apply you. (275)

Envy is not overtly gendered by the play, but there is certainly some evidence to identify this figure as female: it is accompanied by her brood, and the Gorgon imagery associated with this Envy is potentially suggestive of a distinctive femininity. Nevertheless, Envy cannot lend credence to my notion of a distinct female Vice subtype in the absence of a clear indication of its gender.

While it is of indistinct gender, it is not indistinct in its deployment of the Vice tradition, as the parallels between it and the Vice-like traits of other characters. Just as Iago found that Cassio "hath a daily beauty in his life / That makes me ugly", (a key aspect in Spivack's identification of the Ancient with the Vice figure) Envy is repelled by the light of the audience, and seeks to have them darkened (Spivack 12-13):

Stay! The shine
Of this assembly here offends my sight,
I'le darken that first, and out-face their grace. (275)

Envy speaks as if already victorious, assured of victory and thus the authority to darken and conceal the grace of the audience. Envy is also apparently diseased and bloated, as it describes its "infected bulke", painting an image of a disgusting but self-assured creature, either a credible threat or a creature who attracts even more derision through its absurd assurance. Like most Vices or Vice-derived figures it makes clear its objective to the audience:

For I am riffe here with a couetous hope,
To blast your pleasures, and destroy your sports,
With wrestlings, comments, applications,
Spie-like suggestions, priuie whisperings,
and thousand such promooting sleights as these. (275-6)

The list of objectives Envy lays out before the audience are certainly not the kinds of things the audience could get behind. While the mirth, tricks and fun offered by other Vices have a certain appeal—the "dangerous sport" as Jones put it (62)—Envy seeks to put an end to pleasures and sports which sets up the next part of the monologue in which Envy calls for the players and the audience to assist it, a very direct example of a Vice or Vice-like figure making the audience complicit in his or her schemes (or at least attempting to):

> Now if you be good deuils, flye me not.
> You know what deare, and ample faculties
> I haue indow'd you with: Ile lend you more.
> Here, take my snakes among you, come, and eate,
> And while the squeez'd juice flowes in your blacke jawes,
> Helpe me to damne the Authour. Spit it foorth
> […]
> What? doe you hide your selues? Will none appeare?
> None answere? What, doth this calme troupe affright you?
> Nay, then I doe despaire: downe, sinke again.
> This trauaile is all lost with my dead hopes.
> If in such bosomes, spight haue left to dwell,
> Enuie is not on earth, nor scarse in hell. (276)

Envy positions itself as among the audience and a part of them as it accredits itself for the audience's own capacity for envy. More than that, Envy offers to enhance the "ample faculties" it has "indow'd" the audience with, to feed the audience with the venom of its snakes. This is all in service to Envy's goal to "damne the Authour" in which Jonson has effectively set this Vice against himself, and therefore set himself in league with "pleasures, and […] sports", and also the audience, as the second half of that speech suggests. For when no one volunteers, and Envy comes to a conclusion almost opposite to that of the later *The Devil is an Ass,* to wit: that there is neither Envy on Earth or in Hell.

More properly, however, the lack of support for Envy functions as support for Jonson against his rivals. This implied initial rejection of Envy at the outset of the play is consistent with the function

of the Vice's association with the audience in Jones's "Dangerous Sport", particularly his observation that:

> most dramatists were careful to prod the audience into dissociating itself from the Vice early in the play, in the very process of being entertained by him. Nichol Newfangle's opening confrontation is the more common technique. In *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576), for example, where the Vice Courage, along with his allies and victims, has the first three-fourths of the play to himself before we get a glimpse of a virtue, we are made to act out our initial rejection of Courage at once by not taking up his opening invitation to join him on the Barge of Sin […] All of them work on our awareness of the way we respond to the vices who so directly confront us; all turn our experience of the play, at some point, into an expressed rejection of these vices. (62).

Nevertheless, while Envy as a character does not reappear in the play, the sin of Envy hangs over it in much the same way that the sins of *Histriomastix* hang over their respective acts. Far later in the play, when Horace (usually identified with Jonson himself) (Pierce, 20) speaks against his rivals who are on trial, he identifies them with Envy through repeating the snake imagery, including describing their "poys'nous head" and crying "Out viper" (341-2). Further, the trial makes it very clear that his rivals are in trouble because of their Envy (344). This connects the audience's initial rejection of Envy to a rejection of Horace's rivals. By playing out the rejection of Envy, when Jonson later connects his rivals with Envy's imagery he is implicitly co-opting the mechanism by which playwrights would have the audience reject and disassociate with the Vice to have them reject and disassociate with the audience, a technique which implies an intimate understanding of the Vice tradition in Jonson, and an ongoing familiarity with the pattern of the Vice in Jonson's audience.

In a similar fashion, references to the trappings of the Vice tradition appear throughout the rest of the play. Tucca, the disbanded soldier moving with Lucca against Horace in 5.3 cries "Looke to him, my party-colour'd rascalls; looke to him," which, according to the Oxford World's Classics Edition, is directed at the Roman Soldiers because their uniforms look more Elizabethan than Roman (Jonson and Kidnie, 73, 446) (336). Nevertheless, regardless of other potential meanings, in the context of a play beginning with Envy, and written in response to a play with as strong a Vice presence as *Histriomastix,* this line recalls the costume of the Vice, such as when Dissimulation in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* asks the audience "Nay, who is it that knowes me not by my partie coloured head?" ($A2^{v}$).

Indeed, Horace himself, amongst the snake imagery which connects his rivals to Envy also evokes this tradition: “And why, thou motly gull?”(341). Another recollection of the costume lies in the pronouncement made upon Demetrius (usually identified with Dekker) by Virgil (Jonson and Kidnie xii):

> With CAESARS tongue, thus we pronounce your sentence.
> DEMETRIVS FANNIVS, thou shalt here put on
> That coate, and cap; and henceforth, thinke thy selfe
> No other, then they make thee: vow to weare them
> In euery faire, and generous assembly,
> Till the best sort of minds shall take to knowledge
> As well thy satisfaction, as they wrongs. (347)

A cap and coat are inflicted on Demetrius as his punishment, and he is instructed to think himself “No other, then they make thee”. He is further told to wear them in respectable company. Given the overlap between the costumes of both Vice and fool (and, concordantly, the overlaps between the roles themselves) this can be seen as Jonson reducing his rivals to fools, but in a manner that echoes the other side of the Vice. In essence this is an extension of the earlier connections Horace makes between Envy as she appears in this play, and the two rivals. M. J. Kidnie connects this costume to fools, noting: “This staging is supported by a reference in *Satiromastix* to the ‘fool’s cap’ in which Horace dressed his poetasters (4.3.247-8)” (85, 449). It is fitting that the reference here is to another play of the Poetomachia, as it plays to the through-line of the Vice tradition in these plays.

These plays, while not specifically featuring the Vice, play to the continuity of the Vice tradition, and reinforce the notion implied by *The Staple of News* and *The Devil is an Ass* that the tradition was alive and well. Just as I argued concerning these later Jonson plays, the ongoing referencing of the Vice tradition suggests an audience familiarity with the tradition which goes against the notion that the Vice was too allegorical, and not literal enough for the Elizabethan audience. As we shall see, Dekker’s *Satiromastix, or The Untrussing of the Humourous Poet* (1601) continues this pattern of referencing the Vice tradition begun by *Histriomastix*.

Satiromastix draws attention yet again to previous plays, acting as a rebuke to Jonson’s *Poetaster.* At the end of the play Horace is tied up, accused, and attempts the “they envy me” defence

which made up the bulk of *Poetaster*'s argument, and the other characters counter it with ease. As the reuse of Horace suggests, *Satiromastix* recycles (and satirises) the character names from its predecessor, and mocks Jonson's assumption of a lofty identity through Tucca's accusation: "you must be call'd Asper, and Criticus, and Horace, thy tytle's longer a reading then the Stile a the big Turkes: Asper, Criticus, Quintus, Horatius, Flacucs" (D1^{r}). There is earlier in the play a reminder of *Poetaster*'s vice-charged beginning with the line "*Enuy feede thy Snakes so fat with poyson till they burst*" and this is instead connected to Jonson's character in the later characterisation of him as a "Serpentine rascal" (A4^{r}, H2^{r}). Similarly, there are also references recalling the allegorical elements of *Histriomastix*, and the primary Vice of that play Lady Pride. Sir Walter Terril's wife, Caelestine, is four times referred to as Lady Pride by about the half-way mark: twice by Sir Vaughan (B4^{r} and F4^{v}), then by her husband Sir Terril (G1^{v}), and later again by Vaughan (G2^{r}). However, Caelestine is not herself a Vice or even Vice-like; unlike her predecesor she does not corrupt and rule, suffering instead the unwanted attentions of the lecherous King. Beyond these references, the only trace of the Vice traditions are Tucca responding to Demetrius with "The whoreson clouen-foote deuill in mans apparell lyes" (F4^{r}), and Tucca's later accusation that Horace/Jonson did not act as he did to retire from the world to seek his muse:

> But to bite euery Motley-head vice by'th nose, you
> did it Ningle to play the Bug-beare Satyre,
> & make a Campe royall of fashion-mongers quake at your paper Bullets;
> you Nastie Tortois, you and your itchy Poetry breake out like
> Christmas, but once a yeare, and then you keepe a Reuelling,
> & Araigning, & a Scratching of mens faces, as tho you were
> Tyber the long-tail'd Prince of Rattes, doe you? (L3^{v}).

This stream of insults begins with a reminder of the Vice tradition and hearkens back to 'partie-coloured head' descriptor in Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* which I will discuss in my next chapter. These references remind us that the Vice tradition was still very much on the minds of the authors of the Poetomachia, and presumably still comprehensible to the audience. More to the point they set up Jonson's association with the Vice tradition that continues in Jonson's counter-volley, which purports, through the voice of the player "spoiling" the plot for the audience, to be itself a vice play.

Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, like *Histriomastix*, is one of the two volleys in the War of the Theatres which function as very clear and obvious continuations of the Vice tradition. It is fitting that we close this chapter with Jonson for, as I have suggested in my introduction to this topic, some of the strongest evidence for the ongoing Vice tradition lies in Jonson's later work, specifically *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) and *The Staple of News* (1625). *Cynthia's Revels*, while certainly hearkening back to the tradition in some respects is clearly lacking a unifying Vice. As Dessen argues, this weakens the play overall:

> Instead of providing a Vice-like figure to initiate an intrigue which might convey a thesis, Jonson relies upon an inert, static, central symbol which the false courtiers send for in Act II and then dutifully await throughout Act IV. Meanwhile, the failings of these pretenders to courtly virtue are seldom demonstrated by any significant action or interaction but rather are commented upon for our benefit by Jonson's spokesmen (Crites, Mercury, Cupid) who take even less part in the world of the play than had Macilente or Carlo Buffone. In spite of a general correspondence to some late moralities, what is absent from *Cynthia's Revels* is just that feature that had given the "estates" morality its direction and vigor, the emphatic presence of the insidious, intriguing public Vice who initiated and carried out the actions which set forth the thesis of the play [...] The peculiar flavor (or lack of flavor) of Jonson's play is largely a result of the absence of such action. (56-7)

For Dessen *Cynthia's Revels* is a Vice play from which the Vice has been extricated. The Vice is present as absence, potentially reminding the audience of the Vice tradition (especially in light of the reminders in the earlier plays of the Poetamachia) through the play's "peculiar flavor". Indeed, *Cynthia's Revels* is considered a failure by many scholars, and the Vice is perhaps, as Dessen suggests, part of the reason why (Logan and Denzell 73-4; Dessen 57). It simultaneously lacks the Vice and reminds the audience just how much fun they are missing out on due to its absence. I will suggest, however, that the Vice is far more present in *Cynthia's Revels* than Dessen's argument allows.

Initially it seems that Dessen is correct: what qualities of the Vice remain are dispersed among the other characters, particularly the courtiers, whom the Third Prologue, resolved to spoil the plot for the audience before the play's main action has even begun, describes thus:

3 CHILD. O, the night is come (‘twas somewhat dark, methought),
and Cynthia intends to come forth; that helps it a little yet. All
the courtiers must provide for revels; they conclude upon a masque,
the device of which is -- What, will you ravish me? -- that each of
these Vices, being to appear before Cynthia, would seem other than
indeed they are; and therefore assume the most neighbouring Virtues
as their masking habit -- I’d cry a rape, but that you are
children. (183)

The courtiers are vices, but not of the sort that we are interested in. Their conceit—taking on the role of “the most neighbouring Virtues”—is, as I have discussed earlier, a familiar property of vices, and especially “the” Vice. But here it serves only to remind the audience of the absence of that engaging figure.

However, there is one character who echoes the Vice far more than any of the others, and, I would suggest, is Jonson’s attempt at constructing the figure in this play: Anaides. Never explicitly referred to as Vice (except in the general sense that all the courtier characters are), Anaides is, however, tarred with two very similar brushes, that of fool and devil. Anaides’s infernal associations come through multiple references to his being a devil (though given the context it is clear he is not an actual devil). In 2.2 Hedon playfully refers to him as such in a friendly exchange:

ANAIDES. Is that thy boy, HEDON?
HEDON. I, what think’st thou of him?
ANAIDES. S’hart, Il’d geld him; I warrant he has the philosophers stone.
HEDON. Well said, my good melancholy deuill: Sirrah, I haue devisde
one or two of the prettiest othes (this morning in my bed) as euer thou
head’st, to protest withall in the presence.
ANAIDES. Pray thee, let’s heare ‘hem
HEDON. Soft, thou’lt vse ‘hem afore me.
ANAIDES. No (dam’me then) I haue more othes then I know how to vtter,
by this ayre. (119)

Note also Anaides's oath, "damn me then", as innocent as Hedon's devilish description in isolation, but meaningful in light of the ongoing association between Anaides and devilry. Act Three Scene Two again features Hedon and Anaides, with Anaides, very much the master deceiver, schooling Hedon (whom he refers to as Envy) in attacking Crites (209). It begins with Hedon sharing his plan with Anaides, as if seeking approval and feedback:

> HEDON. Well, I am resolu'd what Ile doe.
> ANAIDES. What, my good spirituous sparke?
> HEDON. Mary, speake all the venome I can of him; and poyson his reputation in euery place, where I come.
> ANAIDES. 'Fore god, most courtly.
> HEDON. And if I chance to bee present where any question is made of his sufficiencies, or of any thing he hath done priuate, or publike, Ile censure it slightly, and ridiculously.

Anaides is all encouragement as he prompts Hedon to lay out his envious plans, but he shortly takes over, shaping Hedon's attacks against Crites into a far subtler approach, diverting praise for his foe toward others rather than directly countering it. In this way Crites cannot defend himself without appearing a braggart hungry for praise:

> ANAIDES. At any hand beware of that, so thou maist draw thine owne iudgement in suspect. No, Ile instruct thee what thou shalt doe, and by a safer meanes: Approue any thing thou hearest of his, to the receiu'd opinion of it; but if it bee extraordinarie, giue it from him to some other, whom thou more particularly affect'st. That's the way to plague him, and he shall neuer come to defend himselfe. S'lud, Ile giue out, all he does is dictated from other men, and sweare it too (if thou'lt ha'mee) and that I know the time, and place where he stole it, though my soule bee guiltie of no such thing; and that I thinke, out of my heart, hee hates such barren shifts: yet to doe thee a pleasure, and him a disgrace, I'le dam' my selfe, or do any thing.

HEDON. Gramercies, my deare *deuill*: weele put it seriously in practice, yfaith. (210)

At the close of the exchange Hedon once again continues the devilish association by referring to Anaides as "my dear devil", and once again Anaides connects himself with damnation. Later the Nymphs speak of moments such as these, suggesting that Anaides has been hard at work corrupting Hedon for some time: "'tis the swaggering coach-horse ANAIDES, drawes with him there, has beene the diuerter of him" (120 Big). This corruption of Hedon, even to the point that he can accurately refer to him as Envy is reminiscent of Venus (alias Lust)'s corruption of Mars in *The Cobbler's Prophecy* which culminates in Mars taking on the costume of the Vice, as I shall argue in Chapter Nine of the Female Vice.

While the above, in accordance with my earlier arguments, might suggest that Anaides is more properly a devil than the Vice, the play does not name him as such, except through Hedon's mouth. The associations attached to Anaides are just that, and, in conjunction with the general sense of the characters as vices, set Anaides apart as something higher than vice, in the lower-case sense. His corruptive prowess is certainly evocative of the role of the Vice figure. But before I draw my conclusions on Anaides there is another set of associations attached to him which also come to bear on his potential as the Vice: his association with clowns and jesters.

Much of the commentary throughout the play comes through two gods who have taken the form of serving boys: Mercury and Cupid. These characters take the Vice's usual place between the play and the audience, and comment to each other, making observations which are no doubt intended to guide the audience's reception of the play and its action. One such observation comes from Mercury, answering an inquiry Cupid makes, and it concerns the character of Anaides:

CUPID. Is that a courtier too?
MERCURY. Troth no; he has two essentiall parts of the courtier, pride, and ignorance; marry, the rest come somewhat after the *ordinarie* gallant. Tis *impudence* it selfe, ANAIDES; one, that speakes all that comes in his cheekes, and will blush no more then a sackbut. Hee lightly occupies the jesters roome at the table, and keepes *laughter* GELALIA (a wench in pages attire) following him in place of a squire, whom he now and then tickles

with some strange ridiculous stuffe, vtter'd (as his land came to him) by
chance. He will censure or discourse of any thing, but as absurdly as you
would wish. (200)

Anaides is regarded by Mercury as a jester, which, in conjunction with the devilish associations and the name Impudence, suggests he is more properly the Vice than either devil, clown or vice. His designation as a gallant recalls the gallant-vices of *Respublica* or *The Three Ladies of London* and *The Three Lords and Ladies of London.* Additionally later remarks by Mercury in the same speech—"Hee is a great proficient in all the illiberall sciences, as cheating, drinking, swaggering, whoring, and such like" (112)—reflect the curriculum the Vice Iniquity offers to teach the devil Pug in Jonson's later *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), whom he appears to mistake for a corruptible human being to comic effect and in line with that play's thesis:

INIQUITY. I will teach thee cheat, Child, to cog, lie and swagger,
And ever and anon to be drawing forth thy Dagger:

It appears, then, that Anaides as Impudence is the most likely candidate for the Vice in this play, carrying as he does the associations with both Devil and Jester. Moreover, Impudence fits as the central Vice of the play, as in the denouement it is the vice's impudence in approaching Cynthia that brings them under her judgement (and that of her delegate Crites):

CYNTHIA. And yet, how much more doth the seeming face
Of neighbour-vertues, and their borrowed names,
Adde of lewd boldnesse, to loose vanities?"
Who would haue thought that PHILAVTIA durst
Or haue vsurped noble STORGES name?
Or with that theft haue ventred, on our eyes?
Who would haue thought, that all of them should hope
So much of our conniuence, as to come
To grace themselues, with titles not their owne?
In stead of med'cines, haue we maladies?

> And such impostumes, as PHANTASTE is,
> Grow in our palace? we must lance these sores,
> Or all will putrifie. (264- 266)

In a sense, then, despite Dessen's contention to the contrary, *Cynthia's Revels* does indeed have a Vice figure in Anaides/Impudence. There is much about the play which echoes the Vice plays we have previously seen: a menagerie of vices of all kinds who take on the names of virtues and demonstrate the evil of the central Vice (and perhaps even *radix malorum*), Impudence. The failure of *Cynthia's Revels* is perhaps not a result of it lacking a Vice but in it deploying the Vice tradition ineffectively. Anaides is not striking enough a character, nor obvious enough a Vice to carry the play. He has something of the moral aspects of the Vice, and something of the showmanship, but not enough of either. His intrigues and villainy fade into the background, with the interaction between Mercury and Cupid, and their observations of the group of vices as a whole instead taking centre stage. Nevertheless, Jonson's attempt to utilise the Vice tradition, however unsuccessful in this particular play, carries the thread of the Poetamachia's evocation of the Vice tradition, and more obviously Jonson's ongoing relationship with the Vice.

I began this study with an examination of the Vice in Jonson's latest works, but these plays were not without precedents. Instead of abruptly looking back to an older tradition in order to make a point through allusion, Jonson and his contemporaries clearly had an ongoing relationship with the Vice figure, one which manifested in both allusions, and the presence of actual Vices in plays well beyond 1590. The ongoing Vice tradition is threaded all the way through the Poetomachia, and what it lacks in the primacy of an ongoing, clear Vice figure present on the stage and directing the action, it makes up for in the manner in which the Vice is utilised as a moral source of evil hanging over the whole play. This appears to be a trend taken up in later plays utilising the Vice figure, but it is arguably most prominent in the appearances of the female-Vice subtype which—as we shall see in the coming chapters—becomes a kind of commander or queen of darkness ruling over the play and leaving the more clown-like aspects of the Vice to a male counterpart.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Vices of the 1580s, and the Emergence of the Female Vice

In this chapter I examine the nature of the Vice tradition during the 1580s, arguably a key period due to its position between the Vices in an allegedly post-Vice period, and their forebears. Moreover, as Dessen observes, it is the mid-1580s that marks the border between the theatre scholarship has largely ignored, and the theatre for which there is a wealth of scholarly attention (Dessen, "On-stage Allegory" 147). In this decade, consistent with my arguments against the decline of the Vice, and with the strong presences of the figure throughout the Poetomachia and the works of Shakespeare, there are a range of incredibly significant developments which speak to a dynamic ongoing living tradition. Not the least of these developments is the continuing emergence of a female-Vice subtype which I began to introduce through Lady Pride in my previous chapter. Here the figure comes into full bloom in the form of Lady Lucre, though I will address the further implications of the figure in more detail in my next chapter.

To begin with, it is worth considering the place of the Vice just before this period. David Bevington confirms the dominance of the Vice figure in the period just prior to the 1580s, through an examination of two markers. The first is the position of the Vice in the dramatis personae; the Vice would appear either at the start of the cast list, or at the end, emphasising the character's importance:

> The dominance of the Vice in the plays mentioned so far can be demonstrated neatly by the position of his name on the printed casting lists. In nearly every case so far mentioned, the Vice is named first or last among the list of characters, and the grouping on the page is often such that the Vice's name receives typographical prominence. His name is first in the casting lists of *Three Laws, New Custom,* and *Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*. It is last in *Impatient Poverty, Trial of Treasure,* and *Like Will to Like*. Only in *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* is his name placed between those of other players. (81)

Bevington has clearly found a trend in the prominent placements of the Vice's name in the dramatis personae of plays at this time. This is no hard and fast rule, as *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* suggests, but the name appearing either first or last in so many cast lists which bespeaks the character's central role at this time.

The other marker Bevington uses—the line by line count of the Vice's presence on the stage compared to other characters—makes the Vice's prominence at this time even more obvious:

> In a majority of popular plays, the Vice has indisputable command of the stage. In *Three Laws* Infidelity is the recognized chieftain of "the six vyces," and is actually on stage for 1561 of the play's 2081 lines, far ahead of the nearest contender. [...] Several other plays confirm the dominance of the Vice. In *Impatient Poverty,* Envy, although not named as such, appears to be the Vice. He is present on stage for 532 of 1100 lines, more than any other character, and doubles only with the "Sommer" (Summoner) who appears briefly toward the end of the play for 99 lines. "Idleness the vice" in *Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* doubles only with prologue and epilogue, like Infidelity in *Three Laws.* Idleness occupies the stage for 669 lines of 1290. In *Trial of Treasure,* "Inclination the Vice" is the only one of five players not required to double. All the others have at least three parts. Inclination is on stage for 723 of 1148; the nearest role, Lust, is considerably far behind with 487 lines. Again, "Nichol Newfangle the Vice" in *Like Will to Like* is assigned to player five without doubling, whereas the other four players have at least three roles each - frequently four. Newfangle is an unusually dominant Vice, being on stage almost continually, for 1077 lines of a total 1277. Tom Tosspot is second with a mere 408 lines, Virtuous Living third with 265. The Vice of *New Custom,* "Peruerse Doctrine, an olde Popishe priest," has an equally dominating role. He appears in all but 110 of the play's 1076 lines. Some part of his dominance stems from his being the mankind hero as well as the Vice, converted to true Christianity at the end of the play. He is the only player of four not required to double. (80-81)

It is worth quoting this passage in full, for it clearly lays out the prominence of the Vice in these plays numerically, in a manner that builds on the prominence of the Vice's name in the dramatis personae. Bevington's findings were that the Vice rarely doubled and was on stage in these plays *as the Vice* for the majority of the action. It is easy to see how the Vice can function as both the "master of ceremonies" and the link between the audience and the world of the play when it effectively functions as the play's constant.

The last play he mentions, *New Custom*, is of particular interest as an exemplar of a Vice who blurs the role, and in so doing frustrates any attempt for a clear delineation or definition of what makes the Vice. If the Vice is capable of repentance, how can he be only the aloof "artist of evil" as Spivack

and others would define him. More to the point, if the key to Iago's identity as the Vice is his amoral nature, how is it that Perverse Doctrine can become a Christian? It may very well be that Perverse Doctrine is not a Vice, despite his Vice-like characteristics, which would make him a very early version of the kind of "literalisation" that has framed the received narrative of the Vice's development.

Of particular interest to this chapter, though, are two plays full of allegorical elements, including examples of the Vice tradition: Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1581) and its sequel *The Three Lords and Ladies of London* (1588). These two 1580s plays present an excellent example of the manner in which this tradition was still very much alive. This is in contrast to the viewpoints I have examined in earlier chapters which sees late Vice plays as oddities or revivals and holds that the 'true' Vice died out long before *The Devil is an Ass.* It is my intention in this chapter to chart the growth and development of the Vice figure between these two plays, beginning with two characters in *Three Ladies* who are perhaps the best candidates for being "the Vice" in that play: Lady Lucre and Dissimulation. I argue that they both function as the Vice in different ways, Lucre acting as the Vice in a more moral sense, and Dissimulation functioning as a more theatrical and clown-like Vice. Moreover, the nature of these Vices challenge the 'growth and decline' narrative which normally accompanies study of the Vice. By the time of the sequel play, while Lucre's role diminishes, Dissimulation functions still in his stagecraft sense of the Vice, and arguably takes on the moral sense previously held by Lucre. The presentation of the four Vice-lords is a revelation of exactly the kind of two-faced disguise exemplified by Dissimulation, and the Vice-lords are fittingly in Dissimulation's own colours.

It is pertinent to begin with an examination of the period in which Wilson wrote these plays; the 1580s is a significant moment for the Vice tradition, as it is conventionally thought of as the decade marking the dissolution and decline of allegorical drama, and therefore the decline of the "proper" Vice figure. Stephen Greenblatt certainly characterises this period as the end for the morality drama when he observes that: "they were in vogue for a long period of time, extending into Shakespeare's adolescence" (by 1590 Shakespeare is 26) (32). Likewise, both Bernard Spivack, and John D. Cox hold this view, particularly in terms of the Vice. Cox considers "a play written between 1571 and 1580" as "near the end of the Vice's stage career" (79). Beyond this point Spivack sees the Vice as going undercover, existing only as the inner core of a "hybrid" for a "theatre [that] could no longer take him straight" until this hybrid is also "bred out of the drama altogether" (Spivack 32-33). In his conception, beyond the 1590s the allegorical drama has well and truly departed, leaving only echoes: "The same period, however, marks the dead end and dissolution of the allegorical drama, at least on the popular

stage. After 1590 its whole method is rather imitated than repeated in a few ingenious pieces which make a strange appearance among the plays of their own time" (252). Elsewhere Spivack draws the line even earlier: "They compose a substantial body of dramatic literature with prominent common traits and with a significant development from the time of its origin until it is supplanted, in the period between 1570 and 1585, by the literal drama of the Elizabethan stage" (62). For many scholars, then, this decade is a period of transition between the period offering proper moralities, and a period that sees the Vice figure replaced by literal figures who commandeer some of his more popular qualities but are not properly allegorical.

However, this view is problematic. As Allan D observes in "Allegorical Action and Elizabethan Staging" (2015) there is a wealth of allegorical elements in plays beyond this point, including Rumor "painted full of tongues" in Shakespeare's *The Second Part of Henry the Fourth* (1597-8), the Good and Evil Angels in Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1592) and Fortune, Virtue, and Vice in Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1599) among others (Dessen 391-2). As I have already demonstrated, nowhere is the continuance of the allegorical tradition more apparent than in the work of Ben Jonson, particularly Jonson's 1616 play *The Devil is an Ass*, which features the Vice Iniquity, and his 1625 *The Staple of News.* While the presence of so late a Vice character can be read as evidence of the decline of the Vice figure, rather than its persistence, such a mocking deployment of the Vice relies still on the audience's recognition of the stage business, figures and images which are being played for laughs. This bespeaks an ongoing familiarity of the audience with the tradition that is supposed to have been choking out its dying breaths two decades earlier.

There is much in the two Wilson plays that also does not fit the received narrative of the Vice's development. For one thing, rather than a singular character functioning as "the Vice", these plays are full of vices (or "Vices", multiple instances of "the Vice"). The richness of the presence of these Vices in *Three Ladies* and *Three Lords*, and the allegorical elements more widely, suggests that, rather than dying or becoming a diluted hybrid, the Vice figure develops and grows.

To begin with, it is worth looking at the characters named on the title page of the play. As David Bevington observes, the title often offers a clue to the identity of the main Vice figure around whom the play's action is built:

> The dominance of the Vice in the plays mentioned so far can be demonstrated neatly by the position of his name on the printed casting lists. In nearly every case so far mentioned, the Vice is

> named first or last among the list of characters, and the grouping on the page is often such that the Vice's name receives typographical prominence. His name is first in the casting lists of *Three Laws, New Custom,* and *Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*. It is last in *Impatient Poverty, Trial of Treasure,* and *Like Will to Like*. Only in *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* is his name placed between those of other players. (81)

The title of the 1584 printing of *Three Ladies* reads as follows:

> *A right excellent and famous comoedy called the three Ladies of London. WHEREIN IS NOTABLIE DECLARED AND SET foorth, how by meanes of Lucar, Loue and Conscience is so corrupted that the one is married to Dissimulation, the other fraught with all abhomination*

Alongside the positive figures of Love and Conscience, the negative figures Lady Lucre and Dissimulation are named, setting them apart from the other negative figures in the play. This is particularly true for Dissimulation who, together with Fraud, Usury, and Simony forms part of a set of four vices but is only one of these named in the title. It is also worth observing that, while both Dissimulation and Lucre are named, it is Lucre who is given the active role: she is singled out as the corrupting influence in the play, while Dissimulation is evoked in conjunction with his marriage to Love, which is brought about by Lucre; Dissimulation is thus positioned as a result of Lucre.

Consistent with her prominence in the title page Lady Lucre is certainly the Vice of *Three Ladies* in a moral sense. She is the source of the play's evils, very clearly fulfilling what Bernard Spivack calls the *radix malorum*, the Vice who embodied the prime sin from which the others derived: "The sins that grow in our lives are not coeval, but spring from each other contingently: one is the root and trunk […] of which others are branches and still others twigs" (142). Put another way, the vice who functions as the *radix malorum* is "doctrinally […] the pioneer beating a way for other moral evils to follow" (154). As the title page would suggest, Lady Lucre certainly fits this description, as the degradation of the city is her doing, and the evils of the play and the downfall of the virtues ultimately spring from her. Likewise, she is mistress of the other vices, who serve her in her household in various capacities. They function like the vices under Infidelity in *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene*, one of Spivack's *radix malorum* exemplars, whose vices are "his "impes" and his "ofspryng," his auxiliaries obeying his directions" (145).

Functioning as the *radix malorum*, there is a sense in which Lady Lucre's drawing in of the other vices are an inevitable result of her presence. When the play opens with a brief scene in which the other two eponymous ladies, Love and Conscience, bemoan the power of the absent Lucre, Love evokes Lucre's minion Usury in her expression of concern: "Oh Conscience, I feare, I feare a day, / that we by her and Usurie shall quite be cast away" (A2^{v}). Love's fear looks to the future, for in the very next scene we meet Usury, not yet appointed by Lucre, but on his way to seek that very position: "And to London we hye it is our chiefest intent, / to see if we can get entertainment of the ladies or no" (A4^{r}). Love's fear is essentially that usury will flow from lucre, a fear realised in the plot of the play as Lucre employs Usury.

It is this sense that Alan Dessen draws on when he regards Lucre as the Vice in *Jonson's Moral Comedy*: "The central allegory of *The Three Ladies* presents the degradation of Love and Conscience in a world in which Lucre "rules the rout," […] The subjection of Love and Conscience and the ascendancy of the four knaves or vices (Dissimulation, Fraud, Simony, and Ursury), who by gaining important positions in the service of Lady Lucre become active forces let loose in London, effectively embody the author's vision of his society" (23-4). Dessen more recently draws attention to how Lucre's moral corruption and ascendancy over London can be staged in "Staging Allegory in *The Three Ladies of London*", a review of the staging of the play at McMaster University in 2015. In particular, he makes note of the manner in which this production exploits opportunities woven into the text for allegorical presentation, such as Lucre's use of Simplicity as a table in the process of offering a godly priest thinly disguised nothingness:

> By involving Simplicity directly in this process ('let me write on thy back'), the playwright allegorically calls attention to the naïveté, even simple-mindedness that underlies this attempt to advance a worthy but poor candidate in a world dominated by Lucre and Simony. (3)

While not strictly a part of the stage directions of the original text, the point is that there is more to the framing of Lucre's power and position as the moral Vice than bound up in the written text. Lucre assuredly is presented as such, but the production Dessen draws attention to reminds us that the manner in which the play is staged makes these opportunities the text presents all the more obvious and emphasised, potentially enhancing Lucre's presentation as the source of the play's evils beyond what is already in the text.

Lady Lucre's presence as a *radix malorum* so late in the tradition, among a bevy of other Vices, certainly complicates Spivack's teleological narrative of the Vice's development; a narrative which sees the *radix malorum* as a stepping stone between the vices of the medieval plays and the singular Vice characters on the cusp of becoming masked in a "literal" persona (Spivack 22, 30, 145). However, more interesting is her lack of the Vice's other characteristics, for although she is clearly the source of the play's evils, Lucre is not "the Vice" of this play in the wider theatrical sense of the word. She lacks the traits which normally mark out the Vice as "a gay, light-hearted intriguer, existing on intimate terms with the audience" or a "a homiletic showman and satirist–a nimble trickster, dissembler, and humorist–on the side of evil" (Scragg 8-9; Spivack 132). Her charm in seducing Conscience late in the play notwithstanding, she is perhaps the inverse of what David Wiles observed regarding Heywood's Vices: that they were "so labelled because the characters are no longer personifications of one particular vice, yet the actor fulfils the same dramatic function as Mischief, Fancy and the rest" (4). Lucre is the opposite, clearly embodying the position of Vice from a moral standpoint, but not serving the theatrical function of the Vice. For that we turn to two other characters: the Vice Dissimulation, and a non-vice character named Simplicity.

The second scene of *Three Ladies* introduces the four main Vices Lucre attracts, as well as Simplicity, opening with Dissimulation who enters alone and immediately begins his interactions with the audience, expecting them to recognise him by his costume: "Nay, who is it that knowes me not by my partie coloured head?" before explaining what he is ($A2^{v}$). David Wiles has established an association between Dissimulation's "partie" colours and the role of the Vice, and this line suggests audience awareness of the tradition (5, 22). The didactic lesson of Dissimulation is made clear through the Vice's self-description, and the repetition of the word "honesty"—a word which lingers on Dissimulation in much the same way as it does for "honest" Iago—when Simplicity enters and takes Dissimulation for the honest man he professes to be. However, this deception is as short lived as Dissimulation's monopoly on audience interaction. While Simplicity is temporarily deceived by the honest seeming Dissimulation, he quickly recognises the other three vices who arrive on stage, and by association recognises Dissimulation. Rather than any of the Vices it is Simplicity who maintains a rapport with the audience throughout the play, and offers commentary on the action; and wherever the Vices do not introduce themselves, it is Simplicity who explains them to the audience:

SIMPLICITY. O that vile Usury, he lent my father a little mony, and for breking one day,

He tooke the fee-simple of his house and mill quite away:
[…]
And you deale with him sirs, you shall finde him a knaue full of spight. (A4^{r})

This is reminiscent of the Vice's role as "a link between the exotic and remote world of the play and the immediate world of the audience" (Wiles 6). Simplicity likewise incorporates the audience earlier when responding to Fraud's objections to his warning of the consequences of sin, and this time he attributes his own perspective to the audience as well, positioning himself with the audience:

SIMPLICITY. And now thou art so proud with thy filching and coozning art,
But I thinke one day thou wilt be proud of the Rope and the Cart:
take a wise fellow's counsell Fraud, leave thy coozning and filching.
FRAUD. Thou horeson rascall swad avaunt! ile bang thee for the brawling.
How darest thou defame a Gentleman that hath so large a living?
SIMPLICITY. A goodly gentleman Ostler? I thinke none of you al beleeve him. (A3^{v})

This is somewhat reflective of the Vice figure's tendency to make the audience complicit with him through explaining his plan, and then carrying it out before them, putting the audience in an intellectually superior position to that of the audience by ensuring they have more understanding than the characters. But instead of positioning the audience with Vice, Simplicity's association with them in this scene positions them as apart from Vice, as clever enough not to be fooled by the snares of the Vices. This drastically affects the manner in which the play's meaning is produced, because rather than being, in a sense, in league with the destructive force in the play, the audience are tied to Simplicity who recognises and shuns the vices, but is ultimately powerless to stop them from ruining the city, and by extension ruining his own capacity to survive. As Dessen observes, "Although the true subject of *The Three Ladies* is London, Simplicity represents hapless and unprotected humanity in a Lucre-dominated society" (*Jonson's Moral Comedy* 25).

This connection between the audience and Simplicity is upheld by one of the more interesting readings of the Dissimulation and Simplicity roles by David Wiles. Although he does not name the play, given the context there can be little doubt that he speaks of *Three Ladies*:

> The contrast between the Vice and the misrule traditions becomes plain when we compare [Tarlton's] clowning with that of his fellow comedian and improvisator in the Queen's Men, Robert Wilson. Soon after the formation of the company, Wilson published a script with parts for two principal comics. The character of "Dissimulation" is marked out as a Vice by his parti-coloured head. "Simplicity" the miller is marked out as a simple clown by his gaping mouth and mealy white face. While the Vice's art lies in adroit metamorphoses, the clown is a constant, equally vacuous in any situation. There can be little doubt that the part of Simplicity was written for Tarlton, who was so adept at seeming to be outwitted. In a sequel to the play written a few months after Tarlton's death, the role of Simplicity is constructed in the form of an elaborate tribute to the dead comedian. (Wiles 22-3)

Wiles recognises the significance of both of these roles, and attributes the playing of Simplicity to Tarlton, as the arch-clown, and the playing of Dissimulation to Wilson himself, connecting them to what he views as two separate styles of clowning, the Vice/fool and the clown. Wilson uses this as an example to distinguish the clowning he is exploring from the Vice tradition, but there is more here than he explores. As I have suggested, the role of the Vice in *Three Ladies* is complicated by the dispersal of the qualities that identify the Vice. My earlier suggestion that the relationship between the audience and Simplicity has something of the representative function of the Mankind figure is upheld by this reading for, as Wiles notes elsewhere, "Tarlton's licence to play the fool derives from the assumption that, through being the ugliest, poorest and stupidest member of the community, he is entitled to the office of Lord of Misrule" (21). There is a sense here that Tarlton as Simplicity is "one of us" as part of the community.

This perhaps explains the lack of Lucre's audience-associated intriguing. Rather than acting out the sin by proxy, only to see it brought low at the end of the play (and learn a moral lesson), as they would have if Lucre had taken them into her confidence explained her plans to them, the audience are taken in by Simplicity. They are instead acted on by proxy, suffering alongside Simplicity as surely as they laugh at him. This repositioning of the audience, however, diffuses the familiar elements of the Vice. The audience participates not in the intrigue of the Vice but in the decline of Simplicity, emphasising the immediacy and danger of vice to London, but also dispersing it, rather than focusing it in a single figure.

Three Ladies is thus a play in 1581 without a clear-cut central "the Vice", rather the elements and roles of the Vice are not focused into a single intriguer but shared among the characters, especially Lucre, who takes the moral function, and Dissimulation and Simplicity who take the intriguing and audience interactive elements. There are thus many who play the Vice. Instead of the singular, tightly defined archetype that Spivack espouses, the Vice is mutable and transcends the definitions that have been imposed on it. More than thirty years after *Respublica* in 1553 which Spivack marks as the first play to include "the Vice" (though Spivack excludes the Vices of John Heywood in the 1530s because they are inconvenient to his construction of the Vice) we have a play in the decade before the Vice is meant to have been buried beneath literal characters which runs completely contrary to the received pattern of the Vice boiled down to a singular character who is then masked in the "literal" (Spivack 32, 145). *Three Ladies*, positioned as it is in the decade marking "the dead end and dissolution of the allegorical drama, at least on the popular stage", exposes the received story of the Vice's development as flawed.

If the dispersion of vice in the 1581 *Three Ladies* suggests the development of the Vice figure beyond where the line of its decline has previously been drawn, the play's sequel *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* confirms the ongoing Vice tradition. Contrary to the notion of the decline of allegory *Three Lords* is perhaps even more allegorically charged than its predecessor. In addition to what the play inherits from *Three Ladies*, several new characters join the cast, notably the lords and their pages, who each have allegorical names. The matching of each Lord with his page, and eventually each Lord with his Lady, is rife with homiletic meaning which the play outlines in great detail.

The emphasis of Dissimulation and his fellows in this sequel, as well as the drawn-out dramatisation of the Vice-lords of Spain are perhaps compensating for one noteable lack: Lucre. While *Three Ladies* clearly designated Lucre as the source of the play's evils, and of the other Vices, *Three Lords* downgrades her to lost soul in need of redemption. She is grouped with the other ladies, rather than against them, and redeemed by her Lord in the same manner that they are. Her new role does not disqualify her Vice role in the previous play; even if we could reasonably expect that level of continuity between a play and its belated sequel, there is precedent for the Vice becoming a Mankind figure in need of redemption in the vice Perverse Doctrine from the 1573 *New Custom* whom, as Bevington notes, functions as "mankind hero as well as the Vice, converted to true Christianity at the end of the play" (Bevington 81). Nevertheless, Lucre lacks the vibrancy and agency she possessed in the previous play and, more importantly, any of the indicators which distinguished her as the Vice.

Fittingly, then, the title page of *Three Lords* reflects this change, referencing none of the characters specifically, just the Lords and Ladies generally:

> *The pleasant and Stately Morall, of the three Lordes and three Ladies of London.*
>
> *With the great Joy and Pompe, Solempnized et their Mariages: Commically interlaced with much honest Mirth, for pleasure and recreation, among many Morell obseruations and other important matters of due Regard.*

Interestingly, the title not only fails to reference Dissimulation this time, but as the *three* Lords, rather than the *six* Lords, it markedly also excludes the Vice-lords of Spain. Where once the Vice was demarcated in the title, now the Vices are relegated "among many Morall obseruations". As I shall demonstrate, despite this seeming diminution of the tradition on the title page, the Vice tradition is still strongly present in *Three Lords*, albeit with a different focus to *Three Ladies.*

While *Three Ladies* focused on the immediacy of vice and its source in the city, *Three Lords* projects the source of evil as foreign, especially Spanish, consistent with the recent failure of the Spanish Armada (Nakawaki 4). The recurring Vice characters are either redeemed, as is Lady Lucre (who seems to lose her inherent evil nature at the same time as she loses her agency), or else given further back story not present in *Three Ladies* which establishes them as foreign elements. This is the case with the four main Vices returning in *Three Lords*, Dissimulation, Simony, Fraud, and Usury, who, late in *Three Lords* are revealed to not be English at all:

> USURY. Whatsoeuer ye doe, be not traitors to your natiue countrie.
> SIMONY. Tis not our natiue countrie, thou knowest, I Simony am a Roman, Dissimulation a Mongrel, half an Italian, halfe a Dutchman Fraud so too, halfe French, and halfe Scottish: and they parentes were both Jewes, though thou wert borne in London, and here Vsury thou art cried out against by the preachers: ioine with us man to better they state, for in Spain preaching toucheth us not. (F4^{r})

This distancing of Vice from England comes to a head with the arrival of the Spanish Lords who are clearly identified as Vices, both in the text and visually. Just as in *Three Ladies* Dissimulation is identified as the Vice by his "partie coloured head", the Spanish lords, Vices themselves, are introduced with "party coloured plumes" (G1^{r}). Additionally, the Lords names are all changed, masking their nature as Vices with the name of their closest virtue, another piece of stage business long associated with the Vice (Spivack 158). As the Vices-Lords are introduced by their herald "Shealtie", the clever English Virtue-Lord "Policy" interrupts, correcting the Vice-Lord's names and revealing their true natures:

> SHEALTY. The first (now quake) is Spanish Maiesty,
> […]
> his woord is Non par illi, none his like:
> Yet is his page or hench-man Modesty,
> […]
> POLICY. Whisdome indeed aboue the heauens he was,
> Could he haue kept him in that blessed state,
> From thence for pride he fell to pit of paine,
> And is he now become the pride of Spaine?
> And so his page not Modesty but Shame.
> […]
> SHEALTY. Don Honor is the next grand peere of Spain,
> Whose ymprese is a Courser valiant,
> […]
> His Page is Action tempering stil with state
> POLICY. Himselfe Ambition, whom the heauens do do hate,
> SHEALTY. And Loue the Lady that he hopes to gaine,
> POLICY. His thoughts distract from foule distempered brain
> Proves him the verie firebrand of Spain:
> And in his shield his black disordered beast,
> Scaling the skies, scornfull to tread the graund,
> And hath his words, proud words prooue perfectly

Action his page to be but Treachery. (G3^{r-v})

The audience are made aware of two readings of the Spanish Lords. The first and false reading by Shealtie, which presents them as virtues to rival the Virtue Lords of England and relies on both each Lord's motto, and their henchman. But this reading is overturned by Policy which has the familiar effect of revealing what vice is masked as in society. The process continues in much the same manner as the excerpt above for all the Spanish Lords, with Shealtie introducing his Lords, and Policy interpreting their natures, and revealing their true names, and while Shealtie names Lord, henchman and motto for each of the Lords of Spain, Policy unravels the illusion usually through recognising the imagery of the Vice Lords, as in the "black disordered beast" on the shield of the Vice Lord Ambition. The lesson, that Vices can be recognised by their signifiers, reflects the earlier instance of this in the first play: in Dissimulation's own introduction at the beginning of *Three Ladies*, where he expects the audience to recognise him by his own imagery, his "partie colored head". It is interesting to note that Wilson effectively exploits the stage business of Vices masking their natures with the virtues most close to their sin to re-figure the Spanish as corrupt; any good qualities the Spanish may or may not appear to possess are in fact vices not virtues, a cunning piece of propaganda nowhere more obvious than when Policy says: "The Gouernment of Spaine is Tyrannie" (G3^{v}). The allegory becomes refigured not as social satire or moral lesson, but as post-Armada propaganda (Nakawaki 4).

In addition to the activity of the Lords, both Virtue and Vice, the Virtues and Vices of *Three Ladies* make their return, including both Dissimulation and Simplicity who become even more starkly the figures they were in the first play (the Vice and clown respectively). As Wiles observes: "There can be little doubt that the part of Simplicity was written for Tarlton, who was so adept at seeming to be outwitted. In a sequel to the play written a few months after Tarlton's death, the role of Simplicity is constructed in the form of an elaborate tribute to the dead comedian" (22-3)

The four returning Vices are introduced in *Three Lords* in much the same way as they were in the first play, arriving together in a scene accompanied by Simplicity, though this scene is far later in *Three Lords* than in *Three Ladies*, and in *Three Lords* Simplicity has already had his own scenes separate from the Vices. Simplicity's role in this parallel scene remains to expound the natures of the Vices to the audience in places where the Vices themselves did not, and he maintains the relationship with the audience associated with this role in the first play, as in the line: "And many of you crafty knaues liue merilyer than we honest men" (D1^{r}). Due in part to the focus on the virtuous and vicely

Lords, these Vices now have diminished importance, especially Dissimulation whose role was largest of the four Knaves in *Three Ladies* but who now has more of an equal share with his fellows. However, this is not to say that he is diminished as a character, as he remains as crafty and entertaining as he was in *Three Ladies*, with his ability to anticipate trouble and evade it. In *Three Ladies* his plans to marry Lady Love are motivated by a desire to attach himself to a virtue to survive a possible future decline of vice; he tops this in *Three Lords* during a scene in which he (counterfeiting as "Semblence"), Fraud (counterfeiting as "Skill") and Usury (approaching without concealment), seek positions with the victorious Virtues. While "Skill" is helping the Virtues to brand Usury, before being betrayed and sent to prison by them himself, the audience are treated to the sight of Dissimulation perceiving how things are going to play out for the other Vices and quietly slipping away, only to return pages later to surreptitiously bail Fraud out of his impending execution on stage ($H3^{r}$, $I3^{v}$). In fact, despite his diminished role earlier in the play, he very much drives the entertaining "geare" of the last act.

Of greater interest, however, is the manner in which the character of Dissimulation develops in *Three Lords*, and in particular through his account of what he has been up to between the plays. While Dissimulation was clearly revealed as a Vice in the first play by costuming and stage business, he takes this even further in the second play, connecting himself to the supernatural in his description of his action in the break:

> DISSIMULATION. Fraud, after my scaping away at the Sessions where I shifted
> as thouh knowest in three sundry shapes, one of a Frier, and they can
> dissemble: another like a woman, and they doo litle else: the third as
> a Saint and a Deuill, and so is a woman. ($D1^{r}$)

Dissimulation has been taking many shapes associated with the sin he represents, emphasising his nature as more than just the deceiver "Davy Dissimulation", a "literal" character, but as dissimulation itself, much as his speech regarding the audience's familiarity with him functions in the first play. Furthermore, his shapeshifting ties him to the supernatural. Even if we assume in favour of a "literal" reading and take these sundry shapes as mere disguises, his assuming the form of a devil reminds the audience of the relationship between devils and Vices and serves to further complicate the distinction between these figures. This slippage between Devil and Vice with regard to Dissimulation is upheld

later in the play when he is more clearly denounced as a devil and associated with the serpent of Eden by his ex-wife, Love:

> LOVE. O gall in hunnie, serpent in the grasse,
> O bifold fountaine of two bitter streames,
> Dissimulation fed with Divers flesh,
> Whose wordes are oyle, whose deedes the dartes of death;
> Thy tongue I know, that tongue that me beguil'd,
> Thy selfe a Deuil, made'st me a Monster wild.
> From thee welle knowne, well may I blesse my selfe,
> Deere bought repentance bids me from thy snare.
> CONSCIENCE. O happie Loue, if now thou can beware.
> SIMPLICITY. Marie, but heare ye motley-beard, I think this blindfold buz-
> zardly hedge-wench spoke to ye, she knowes ye though she see ye not. ($D3^{v}$)

As surely as Dissimulation's relationship with devils, and possible status as a devil himself, is established, we are also reminded of his status of a Vice in Simplicity's line drawing attention to Dissimulation's motley. This reminder is, however, purely textual, for of course Dissimulation has been visibly in motley the whole time. His status as the Vice has been before the audience continually, Simplicity's line merely draws the audience's attention back to it.

As I have noted, the characteristics of the Vice are shared between the characters, both in *Three Lords* and *Three Ladies.* I suggested in my examination of *Three Ladies* that the primary embodiments of "the Vice" figure were Lady Lucre, who served as the moral source of evil, and Dissimulation who played the Vice in the stagecraft sense, with Simplicity the clown taking on the majority of audience interaction. In the Lucre-less *Three Lords*, Simplicity's role with the audience is even larger, but Dissimulation's role seems about the same. However, Dissimulation's position as the Vice has arguably expanded to include some of the moral aspects once displayed by Lucre, for there is a sense in which each of the Vice-Lords are themselves an embodiment of Dissimulation. The presentation of the Vice- Lords recalls the "two-headed" state of Love (she wears a mask) after she marries Dissimulation, for each of the Vice-Lords is himself a dissimulation, a vice covered with a second face, that of a virtue, in the same manner that Love renames herself Lust ($F1^{v}$). Of course, this reading of

Dissimulation as underpinning the dissimulation of the Vice-Lords is far less obvious than Lucre's obvious position as *radix malorum* in *Three Ladies*, but it is strongly suggested in the text through the Vice-Lord's parti-coloured plumes. In as much as I earlier suggested that they mark the Vice-Lords as Vices, they also mark them as the same species as Dissimulation, suggesting that, like the Vice more generally, Dissimulation has developed beyond embodiment in a single character.

While the Vice tradition has often been characterised in terms of decay or decline as the stage advanced towards Shakespeare and Elizabethan era, *Three Ladies* and *Three Lords* suggest an ongoing and adapting tradition still very much alive. Far from the "last gasp of an expiring medieval tradition soon to be dispossessed by "the triumph of realism" the Vice tradition is still active and developing in novel and interesting ways (Dessen, "Homilies", 243). The continuance of the tradition in some characters of Shakespeare, and more explicitly in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* (1616)—which features the Vice Iniquity, and humour which relies on an understanding of the Vice tradition—should not be surprising. These plays of the 1580s are not the death-throes of a tradition, but the continuation of the allegorical drama and the homiletic Vice and suggest that this decade is a key period in tracing the movements of the Vice figure. Moreover, the manner in which the tradition has developed over the course of these two plays hints at a potential new way of looking at (and for) the Vice. Alan Dessen has argued convincingly for a dispersal of the role of the Mankind figure among the various estates. In *Three Ladies* we see the embodiment of the Vice going in two directions, one emphasising the moral function and one the stagecraft function. A similar thing occurs in Wilson's later play *The Cobbler's Prophecy*, which I will treat in detail in the following chapter. *The Cobbler's Prophecy* again has a male Vice and a female Vice, with different roles along gendered lines: the Vice Contempt plays the Vice in the stagecraft sense, while "Venus alias Lust" serves to corrupt others, particularly Mars, though unlike Lucre or Pride who serve as the source of evil, it is the conjunction of the two which feeds the plays evils. This pattern raises questions about both the role of gender in relation to the Vice figure, and the manner in which these two roles of the Vice can be separated or conjoined. For, as my examination of the Vice figures in *Three Lords* would suggest, this is not a trend towards separation like the move from Mankind to Estates moralities Dessen observes, but rather something that can ebb and flow. In *Three Lords*, as I observed, the roles again converge in Dissimulation, as he functions both as clown-like Vice, and as source of evil, his sin embodied not just personally but in the Vice-lords as signified by their shared colouring.

In my next chapter I will be examining the female-Vice type specifically, and the manner in which she consistently serves as a specific source of the plays' evils. However, I want to stress that this is a trend, not a rule. As I have tried to make clear in my explication on previous scholarship on the Vice, relying too heavily on hard and fast rules causes us to miss the ongoing Vice tradition. Instead we need to remember that the Vice, like the sins it represents, ebbs and flows and takes many shapes.

CHAPTER NINE

The Female Vice, An Unrecognized Subtype

The focus of research on the Vice has been almost entirely focused on male Vices, due in part to the extant plays available, almost to the point that one could assume a female Vice figure would be an exception. Yet, as my examination of the *Three Ladies of London*'s Lady Lucre, and the various female Vices present in the War of the Theatres, such as Lady Pride, might suggest, I am interested in examining this often-overlooked aspect of the Vice. Moreover, as I have argued, there is something distinctive about the way female Vices are constructed. For while there is a general shift in the focus of Vice figures in these later plays, towards the more moral aspects of the Vice, these moral aspects are most distinctly demonstrated by female Vices such as Lady Lucre. Using the example of *Three Ladies*, I would draw a distinction between the more Dissimulation-like Vices, and the female-Vice for whom Lady Lucre serves as prototypical. With this in mind I will examine in this chapter two other female characters whose natures can be further illuminated by the Vice tradition: Maria from *Twelfth Night* (1601) and Venus from another Wilson play, *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (1590). I will also touch briefly on the Goddess Vice in Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* (1599). As I have found with my examples thus far, the female Vice often de-emphasises the more stagecraft focused aspects of the figure in favour of an emphasis on being the source of evil or vice. This is not, however, to ignore the female Vice's role in corrupting others directly, as in Lucre's treatment of Love and Conscience, or Lady Pride's interactions with the estates. As I shall demonstrate, *The Cobbler's Prophecy*'s Venus fits this pattern well. Lucre's spotting of Conscience, symbolising the change of state as Conscience is corrupted is mirrored again in the change in garb Venus effects in Mars. However, just as many of the characteristics of Vice are shared with Devil figures, so too are these distinctly female vices; Maria from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* has many of these qualities, though I would suggest that she is instead a devil figure, operating through her Vice Feste in much the same way that the devils of older plays operated through their Vices.

What I am arguing for in this chapter is the existence of a hitherto unidentified species of the Vice-figure, one perhaps most clearly hinted at in one particularly suggestive mention of the female Vice present in the 1618 *The Owles Almanacke*:

> Now issued in from the Reareward, Madame *Vice*, or olde *Iniquitie*, with a lath dagger painted, according to the fashion of an old *Vice* in a Comedy, with a head of many colours, as shewing her subtlety, and at her backe two Punkes that were her Chamber maides, the one called *Too little,* the other *Too much,* and these two had like *Quick-silver* eaten the worlds *Goodnesse* to the heart. (12)

This description carries many of the qualities we have come to expect from the figure, not just the female Vice but the Vice in general, notably bearing the popular name Iniquity, as is referenced by Richard of Gloucester, and used by Jonson in *The Devil is an Ass*. Winston has provided a useful overview of the term Iniquity as it applied in Shakespeare's time, and suggests that it became synonymous with Vice:

> Prince Hal calls the Vice "Iniquity." Similarly, while picking up on a different trait of the old Vice, Gloucester in *Richard III* tells us in an aside, "Thus, like the formal Vice, Iniquity, / I moralize two meanings in one word" (III.i.82-83). The Vices in only two surviving plays of the Tudor period have the name Iniquity, in *Nice Wanton* and *King Darius,* but it appears to have been common. Iniquity is the name of the Vice in Ben Jonson's *The Devil Is an Ass,* and Jonson's Epigram 115, "On the Townes honest Man," speaks of someone who, "Being no vitious person, but the vice / About the towne … Acts old *Iniquitie*."[10] And in Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus,* when one character insults another by calling him a "Vice," he receives the retort, "Most true, my little leane Iniquitie" (I.ii.93).[11] The words "iniquity" and "vice" were more or less synonymous, and it is often impossible to tell in Renaissance literature when they are abstract nouns and when allegorical or quasi-allegorical characterizations. We cannot be sure which is the case when the Prologue to the play within *Sir Thomas more* laments, "Vice dooth encrease, and vertue decayes, / Iniquitie having the upper hand")ix or IV.i).[12] Or, if we turn to a work which, like *Measure for Measure,* is concerned with a man trying to force a woman sexually, Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece,* we find Lucrece making such pointed observations as "what virtue breeds iniquity devours" (1. 872) and "sparing justice feeds iniquity" (1. 1687). (Winston 233)

It is not a perfect overlap, however, as of course Iniquity, the Vice, and the Devil each appear as separate figures in the play-within-a-play in *Histriomastix.*

Beyond the name there is Madame Vice's costume and companions. I have made much of the head of many colours in my treatment of *Three Ladies*' Dissimulation, and the manner in which that very colour scheme connects the Vice-Lords of *Three Lords* with him. Likewise, the presence of the dagger of lath, not specifically covered in this thesis, but of great interest to other scholars, such as Alan Dessen. Importantly, here we have the imagery of the Vice figure connected to a specifically female Vice, which to my knowledge does not occur in any extant play, suggesting that a dearth of visibly female Vice figures is perhaps due more to the loss of specific plays than to their non-existence or lack of popularity. More pertinent to my argument in this chapter, however, is her title "Madame" and her allegorically connected maids, denoting a position of authority over the negative allegorical figures, which is borne out by my observations of the moral function of female Vices in the 1580s, the War of the Theatres, and further in this chapter.

This notion of the female Vice is also present in Jonson's 1625 *The Staple of News* in Mirth's observation regarding shifts in the way the Vice is played on the stage, a passage I have already examined in detail in my earlier chapter on Jonson:

> *That was the old way, Gossip, when* Iniquity
> *came in like* Hokos Pokos, *in a Juglers Jerkin, with false*
> *Skirts, like the* Knave *of* Clubs! *but now they are attir'd like*
> *Men and Women o' the time, the* Vices *Male and Female!* ("The second Intermeane after the second *Act*." 54, 15-18)

Finally, we turn to Thomas Dekker's 1599 play *Old Fortunatus* which has an arrangement very similar to that of *The Three Ladies of London.* What might be called the stage action of the Vice, in cunning dissimulation and tricks is carried out by Andelocia, a male character associated with vice though not overtly the Vice, unlike Dissimulation. Yet the moral function of the Vice is carried out by the Goddess of Vice, who, like Lady Lucre, is the Vice bereft of the clownish elements.

Vice first enters in scene three of act one, followed closely by Virtue:

> *Music sounds. Enter Vice with a gilded face, and horns on her head; her garments long, painted before with silver half-moons, increasing by little and little till they come to the full; in the midst of them, written in capital letters, is* "Cresit Eundo." *Her garments are painted behind with fool's*

faces and devil's heads and underneath it in the midst is written, "Ha, Ha, He." *She, and others wearing gilded vizards, and attired like devils, bring out a fiar tree of gold with apples on it. After her comes Virtue, with a coxcomb on her head, her attire all in white before while about the middle is written* "Sibi sapit" *Her attire behind painted with crowns and laurel garlands, stuck full of stars held by hands thrust out of bright clouds, among them is written,* "Dominabitur astris." *and other nymphs, all in white with coxcombs on their heads, bring a tree with green and withered leaves mingled together, and with little fruit on it.*
After her comes Fortune, with one nymph bearing her wheel, another her globe; and last, the Priest. (30-31)

There is a lot at play in this sequence of stage directions. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the three goddesses are immediately identified by their names Virtue, Vice, and Fortune in the first line uttered, such that it is made plain to the audience who they are. Secondly, note the imagery connected to Vice: she is associated with both fools and devils through the painted images on her garments, connecting the two in much the same way as Anaides in *Cynthia's Revels* brought "jester" and "devil" together in the body of Vice. Surprisingly it is Virtue, not Vice who is wearing a fool's cap, though it is soon explained that this hat has been inflicted upon her:

VIRTUE. Virtue abhors to wear a borrowed face.
VICE. Why hast thou borrowed, then, that idiot's hood?
VIRTUE. Fools placed it on my head that knew me not,
And I am proud to wear the scorn of fools. (33-4)

Note however that her attendants are "nymphs, all in white with coxcombs on their heads" as well, suggesting that they are just extensions of her. This makes the Vice's accompaniment, who are "attired like devils," all the more poignant, for they expose her own devilish traits.

Vice and Virtue both establish their trees, which in turn establish their connections to the characters in the "literal" plot; the two Goddesses, Vice and Virtue are matched by Fortunatus's sons Ampedo and Andelocia. This is particularly striking when Andelocia eats of Vice's tree in act four scene two and grows horns. This connection between Andelocia and the Vice goddess is made even

plainer in the very next scene when Andelocia dreams and is examined by the goddesses, with Vice boasting and Virtue grieving:

> FORTUNE. See where my new-turned devils has built his hell.
> VICE. Virtue, who conquers now? the fool is ta'en.
> VIRTUE. O sleepy sin. (91)

Vice and Virtue both hold out their apples to Andelocia, and though he rejects them both, Fortune explains that he has been serving Vice this whole time:

> ANDELOCIA. O me, what hell is this? Fiends, tempt me not.
> Thou glorious devil, hence. O now I see,
> This fruit is thine, thou has deformed me:
> Idiot, avoid, thy gifts I loathe to taste.
> Away: since I am entered madness' school,
> As good to be a beast, as to be a fool.
> Away, why tempt you me? Some powerful grace
> Come and redeem me from this hideous place.
> FORTUNE. To her hath Andelocia all his life
> Sworn fealty; would'st thou forsake her now?.
> ANDELOCIA. Whose blessed tongue names Andelocia?
> FORTUNE. Hers, who, attended on by destinies,
> Shortened thy father's life, and lengthens thine.
> ANDELOCIA. O sacred Queen of chance, now shorten mine,
> Else let thy deity take off this shame.
> FORTUNE. Woo her, 'twas she that set it on thy head.
> ANDELOCIA. She laughs to see me metamorphosed. [*Rises.*
> VIRTUE. Woo me, and I'll take off this ugly scorn.
> VICE. Woo me, and I'll clap on another horn. (92-3)

Though Andelocia ultimately converts to virtue (the offer of another horn apparently doesn't appeal), his cunning and entertaining action throughout the play during the period of time he was unwittingly serving Vice reflects the action of the Vices under Lady Lucre who acted as extension of her, in a sense, while she served as the source of the evil. Vice here is perhaps more explicitly the source of the evil, and though she does not act much during the play, her disfiguring effects on those she has corrupted, not to mention the image of Virtue corrupted by being forced into the garb of Vice, are patterns we shall see repeated in other plays with female negative characters. This brings us to Maria from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* who, while arguably a devil figure not a Vice, nevertheless follows the similar pattern of the female negative character seen in the Goddess Vice, Lady Lucre, and Lady Pride.

In *Twelfth Night*, a villainous character associated with the devil is paired with a clownish figure: Malvolio and Feste. This pairing, and its allegorical associations, are set out for the audience and the reader in Feste's departure in Act Four Scene Two, in which he sings to Malvolio:

> CLOWN [*sings*]. I am gone, sir, and anon, sir,
> I'll be with you again,
> In a trice, like to the old Vice,
> Your need to sustain.
> Who with dagger of lath,
> In his rage and his wrath,
> Cries, "Aha" to the devil,
> Like a mad lad,
> "Pare thy nails, dad;
> Adieu, goodman devil." (4.2.114-123)

This reference to the stage traditions of the Vice and the devil serve as clues to the audience as to how the characters are to be understood, alongside other clues in the action which we, displaced as we are by centuries from the original performances, perhaps no longer have access to. It is true what Alan Dessen observes in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays* that "to link Richard III and the Falstaff of *I Henry IV* to the Vice is to follow Shakespeare's own cues as set up by specific lines within the two plays", though of course it is important to back these cues up with other evidence from the text (39).

Following Dessen's lead a case can perhaps be made that Feste is an embodiment (or at least echo) of the Vice figure and Malvolio an embodiment of the devil. Feste certainly fits as the Vice, as the connection between the Vice and the clown has been well observed, especially in David Wiles's *Shakespeare's Clown*. Moreover, there are plentiful slippages between the terms in early modern plays as I have observed in earlier chapters. Recall the example in the late play *Alphonsus Emperor of Germany*, in which a Bishop is assigned the role of the jester in a roleplay within the play, and the following exchange occurs, directly referencing the Vice figure:

> MENTZ. I am the Jester.
> EDWARD. O excellent! Is your Holiness the Vice?
> Fortune hath fitted you y'faith my Lord,
> You'l play the Ambodexter cunningly. ($C4^{v}$)

Yet, contrary to Feste's designations, I argue if any character embodies the Devil figure, it is not Malvolio, but rather Maria, the Mastermind of the action against Malvolio. This may at first seem counterintuitive. For one, Maria's central role in *Twelfth Night*'s subplot is sometimes completely overlooked, as it is in Albert C. Labriola's "Twelfth Night and the Comedy of Festive Abuse". He writes: "The underplot of this play is a series of holiday revels presided over by the two principal festive celebrants, Sir Toby as the Lord of Misrule and Feste as the clown and fool" (4). Indeed, the characters in the underplot divide nicely into these two groups: the festive celebrants, including also Maria and Fabian, and their victims, Malvolio and Sir Andrew" (5). Moreover, Maria was likely played by a boy, a potential objection to the notion that Maria serves in such a powerful role, though I would agree with Richard Madelaine's argument that Maria was likely played by the clown's apprentice, and thus perhaps uniquely suited to playing the similar devil figure (71, 80).

As I shall argue, the subplot actually centres on Maria in a way that, especially in relation to Feste, marks her as distinctly devilish. For while Malvolio's position perhaps fits the narrative of a pathetic devil beleaguered by the Vice, as popularised by scholars such as Bernard Spivack, Maria fits the relationship between Vice and devil presented in Vice plays, such as *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* and *Like Will to Like*: the devil who functions as the mastermind whom, by use of the Vice, effects its will on the world. Maria is clearly "the brains of the intrigue, the seducer par excellence" as Spivack

describes the Vice, though she functions in a manner better befitting the devil than the Vice (142). But before I uncover the devilish traits of Maria, let us consider the nature of Malvolio and stage devils.

My initial concept for this reading came about after reading Matthias Bauer's "Count Malvolio, Machevill and Vice" which makes the strange move of interpreting Malvolio as the Vice figure, rather than Feste, though he notes that "Whereas Richard III compares himself to the Vice, so the relationship seems more concealed in the case of Malvolio" (235). He further cites Bernard Spivack's similar position which includes the point that Malvolio's name is allegoric in a fashion comparable to the moral plays in which the Vice predominantly operated, and he speaks of "the puritan rigor of Malvolio, whose name implies what his behavior confirms" (Bauer 235; Spivack 411). For Bauer, "The fact that it is Malvolio who is actually the Vice is underlined by his 'vice' of self-love being is[sic] the target of all the revenge taken on him" (2.3.152-53). Malvolio, to apply Heywood's definition of the Vice in his Play of Love, is 'nother louer nor beloued.'" (236).

This position is problematic; firstly, Heywood's Vice "nother louer nor beloued" is hardly meant to be taken as representative of the whole tradition of the figure. The quote is not so much a definition as it is the name given in the dramatis personae for the vice figure of that particular play, alongside the other characters of the set: Lover not loved, Loved not lovyng and Lover loved. Furthermore, while Malvolio is indeed targeted by the intrigues of the other characters for his self-love, this is hardly consistent with the traditional action of the characters denoted "the Vice" on the stage, who are normally the ones targeting other characters with their intrigues. Moreover, he can hardly be said to be corrupting the world of the play with his self-love. As Dessen observes in *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Play* the function of the Vice, at least in the "interludes of the 1560s and 1570s" is as a solution to a particular stage problem, the problem being that "mid century dramatists who, whatever their political or religious stances, wanted to display on-stage a sinful world or a society corrupted by a particular force and then provide their answer" (24). The Vice, their response to this need was

> an answer that apparently satisfied a wide range of dramatists and audiences. The spectator was therefore regularly confronted with a lively, often funny figure who sets up a special bond with his audience and then acts out with wit, energy, and comic violence the power of some corrupting force upon society (e.g., Covetousness, Revenge, Newfangledness, Infidelity, Inclination) only to be defeated or transcended in the play's final movement. (24)

Malvolio is assuredly not this figure of Vice. If anything Malvolio is closer to the pathetic state of the devil in the late moral tradition as characterised by Spivack, as I suggested earlier. For ease of reference, here again is the key passage from Spivack:

> A century later, in the decline of the moralities, the same figure reappears occasionally, full of the same sound and fury, except that he is now completely impotent and reduced to imploring the help of the whimsical Vice. In the late morality of *All for Money* he is brought on stage by the following direction: "Here commeth in Satan the great deuill as deformedly dressed as may be." A moment later, having treated "Sinne" the Vice with insufficient deference, he is inundated by a shower of abuse and threats of bodily harm. The Vice calls him "bottell nosed Knaue" and worse epithets besides, threatens to forsake him, and keeps the dismayed demon at a distance by offers of violence: "Stande backe in the mischief, or I will hit you on the snout." Satan has no recourse except to cajole and implore ("Ohe my friend Sinne, doe not leaue me thus"), while a stage direction has him hysterical with grief and impotence: "Here Satan shall crie and roare." (133-4)

It is tempting, perhaps, to find what we are looking for in this description, fitting the evidence to an argument establishing Malvolio as a devil: he acts with insufficient deference, he is "deformedly dressed", he is made fun of by the Vice (Feste) and in his penultimate moments, bound in darkness, he is reduced to begging the aid of this Vice. But the altogether stronger Devils contemporaneous to *All for Money* challenge Spivack's readings. Moreover, there are other issues with identifying Malvolio with the devil.

Despite being identified with the Devil in Feste's song, then, Malvolio does not fit this pattern. For one, Malvolio is *not* Feste's master; they both serve Olivia, and Feste associates with Maria far more, assisting her in her intrigue against Malvolio, and is introduced to the audience with her at the beginning of scene five, though it is worth noting that the audience meets Malvolio in the same scene not that long after they meet Feste and Maria. Indeed, while Malvolio is certainly described as the devil multiple times, including by Maria herself in the explication of her plot, it is Maria who wears the title more powerfully; as Sir Toby Belch exclaims upon observing her successfully gull Malvolio, Maria is "thou most excellent devil of wit!" (2.5.105), and if Mathew Winston's appraisal in "Craft Against Vice" that "The Vice is frequently a comic assistant of the devil" has any bearing on this play, Maria is that very devil, assisted by her Vice Feste (Winston 232).

Maria is, however, an unseen devil. She is identified by her relationship with the Vice, as it is partially by the Vice that she works Malvolio's ruin, though like the devil in *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* some of her devilish deceptions take place off-stage. For example, as Malvolio enters, in Act 2 Scene 5, the scene in which Maria deploys the letter by which she misleads Malvolio, it becomes clear that Maria has been at work on Malvolio since before the play's beginning. Malvolio's opening lines in this scene recall such an event:

> Tis but fortune, all is fortune. Maria once told me
> she did affect me, and I have heard herself come thus
> near, that should she fancy, it should be one of my complex-
> ion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than
> anyone else that follows her. What should I think on't? (2.5.20-24)

Iago-like, Maria has planted a seed in Malvolio's mind which he has himself watered. Like Iago, Maria then traps Malvolio, not with what she says, but what she suggests: the framework she presents to Malvolio which he fills in himself.

Maria's influence is heightened throughout the scenes leading up to Feste's evocation of the Vice and devil traditions, as the presence of devilish imagery in the play intensifies. This is especially true of Act Three Scene Four, two scenes before Feste's song, as if Shakespeare is preparing the audience's minds for the image of the Vice and the Devil. When Malvolio follows the instruction of Maria's planted letter in Act 3 Scene 4, he is described as possessed on account of his unusual garb by Maria. On his entry he inadvertantly helps her characterisation of him thus by laughing in the manner of the stage devils: "Sweet lady, ho, ho." (3.4.17). An example of this characteristic laugh can be seen in the last scene of Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568), though its presence also in Jonson's 1616 *The Devil is an Ass* suggests it persisted as a signifier of the Devil. Later in the same scene Malvolio is again associated with possession, this time by Sir Toby Belch: "If all the / devils of hell be drawn in little, and Legion himself pos-/sessed him, yet I'll speak to him" (3.4.78-80). Once again Maria plays off this association, and establishes herself as the source of Belch's conceit, noting in response to Malvolio's remarks "Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him; did / I not tell you?" It is noteworthy that Maria is connected to both these further associations made between Malvolio and possession, or Malvolio and the devil, as if by her actions she has *made* Malvolio possessed. Thus, though Malvolio is

the one specifically associated with the Devil in these moments (and later by Feste), Maria is responsible for this transformation.

There is a brief respite in the increase of devilish imagery between Act Three Scene Four and Act Five Scene Two, but the latter brings us back to Maria and Feste, beginning with a nod to the Vice and devil tradition which calls the audience's attention back to what has been building throughout the end of the Third Act. Maria asks Feste to put on a gown and beard and pretend to be a curate in the next phase of her scheme against Malvolio, and Feste responds: "Well, I'll put it on, and I will dissemble myself in't. / [He puts on gown and beard.] And I would I were the first / that ever dissembled in such a gown" (4.2.4-6). This is another nod to the Vice tradition; as Su-kyung Hwang observes in "From Priests' to Actors' Wardrobe: Controversial, Commercial, and Costumed Vestments" there was a history of stage Vices putting on vestments in plays such as John Bale's *Three Laws* (1538), Lewis Wager's *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (1558), and R. Weaver's *Lusty Juventus* (1550) (298). She argues that such roles were costumed in the actual vestments used by Catholic priests: "The full-blown and more deliberate strategic movements to degrade Catholic vestments included costuming Vice characters or evil religious characters in religious attire" which suggests that in Feste's line actor, priest and Vice are brought together (297-8). Finally, in the role of the Priest Feste calls Malvolio Satan, and Malvolio unconsciously takes on the role through his description of his surroundings: "Fie, thou dishonest Satan. I call thee by the most modest terms, for I am one of those gentle ones that will / use the devil himself with courtesy. Say'st thou that house is dark? / *Mal.* As hell, Sir Topas" (4.2.29-33). Malvolio thus marks himself a devil immediately before Feste's song with which I began, and in the context of the play and the intrigue against Malvolio it is clear that Malvolio is a devil here, bound in darkness, because Maria has made him so.

The audience have been presented with two devils, both identified by their relationship with the Vice. Malvolio is specifically called the Devil in the very passage with which Feste also identifies himself with the Vice, at the culmination of a gradual build up of devilish association, and Maria is the instigator and architect of those associations, assisted by the Vice. Of the two, it is Maria who most intrigues me, for it is most surprising, though not without precedent. As I suggested in my introduction to this chapter, she is perhaps reminiscent of Lady Lucre from Robert Wilson's 1580s play *The Three Ladies of London* who functioned as the source and mistress of evil over four vices and London itself. However, Lady Lucre is a Vice figure, though, and as I have established, the two figures are easily conflated. Perhaps, then, this reading of Maria's devilish heritage, and her relationship with Malvolio

and Feste, presents a new way to examine and separate the easily conflated devil and Vice. Though Vice and Devil can operate in the same insidious intrigues, it is ultimately the Vice who brings about the final strike against their victims, operating as an exercise of devilish power, with the devil instigating. Maria, after all, disappears from the plot at the end, her role culminating in employing the Vice much like the devils of old. Perhaps by looking for such instigators, and their henchmen, there are more devils and Vices to be found in the work of Shakespeare, and on the early modern stage generally. Nevertheless, Maria's reflection of the devilish elements shares much with my search in this chapter for the female Vices, especially those of the more moral-leader *radix malorum* species reminiscent of Lady Lucre, and Maria certainly has something in common with them in much the same way that the Vice has considerable overlap with the Devil figures. Perhaps in seeing the Devil-like Maria scheming on stage, the audience are reminded of the Vices of this chapter.

Having discussed a potential female-devil with very Vice-like characteristics, reminiscent of Wilson's Lady Lucre, I now turn to Wilson's later play, *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (1590) which contains another suggestive example in the form of the Goddess Venus, or "Venus, alias Lust" as she is frequently named in the play. It has been argued that the primary Vice of *The Cobbler's Prophecy* is Contempt, not the least by Dessen whose description of the play in *Jonson's Moral Comedy* focuses on Contempt's interactions with the characters standing in for the estates:

> Although the scene is ostensibly Boeotia, Wilson presents his social thesis by having the Vice, Contempt (who stands for "envy and dissension among the several estates and for the resultant turmoil and injustice in the realm" [Spivack, p. 210]), practice his wiles upon selected types from sixteenth-century English society. Sateros, the noble soldier, whose main concern is for the health of the state, is contrasted with Emnius, the treacherous and lecherous courtier, and the cowardly country gentleman, who tries to bribe his way out of military service. The duke, his daughter, the priest, and the scholar, all of whom are endowed with representative failings, undergo a reformation in character by the end of the play, so that once they have made their pledges and burned the cabin of Contempt, peace and prosperity return to the kingdom. When the soldier and the scholar embrace in the finale, the health of Boeotia-England has been symbolically restored, for arms and art have regained their true toles as supports of the state. In the midst of the mythological machinery and comic buffoonery of this play, the health of the kingdom is dramatically explored by means of representative "estates" who act out their parts within a larger

> allegorical framework centered around a Vice which epitomizes those attitudes responsible for the evils in the kingdom. (27)

This is due primarily to his argument in that chapter concerning the development of the morality play form from a focus on a Humanus Genus or Mankind figure towards the interactions between a public Vice and figures representing the estates. Venus he only mentions at the close of the chapter, pairing her with Contempt as he mentions "the duke, his daughter, the priest, the scholar, the soldier, the courtier, and the country gentleman act out the effects of the ascendancy of Contempt and Venus in Boetia" (35-6). Spivack, of course, only looks at Contempt: "Its Vice is named Contempt, and he stands for the envy and dissension among the several estates and for the resultant turmoil and injustice in the realm" (210).

However, there are some interesting echoes of Lady Lucre Wilson carries over to this play from *Three Ladies* which suggest that Venus alias Lust should not be overlooked. Just as the earlier Lucre maintains a household of vices, including Dissimulation, Simony, Usury and Fraud**,** Lust is mistress of a household of lesser vices: Niceness, Newfangle (notably also the name of the Vice of *Like Will to Like*), Dalliance and Folly (E1r**)**. Upon discovering Venus's treachery, Mars rails against her servants, calling them "helhounds, Ministers of shame" and demanding they "Vanish like smoke, for you are lighter farre" (E2r**)**. On the one hand, these are insults leveled at the servants in Mars's rage, but they also speak to the servant's natures as spirits or vices.

Venus is in an adulterous relationship with Mars, while also cheating on Mars with Contempt, whom she knows as Content, in yet another deployment of the dual-naming tactic of the Vice. Given Contempt's earlier involvement in the plot, it may seem from the outset that he is the Vice of *The Cobler's Prophecy.* The play certainly gives him a prominence not unlike Dissimulation in *The Three Ladies of London*, albeit with far less of Dissimulation's stagecraft, and the favour of the play's gods is only restored when the people of Boetia have repented of their sins and burned Contempt's cabin.

Yet, much like Lucre, Venus operates as more of a moral Vice, actively corrupting Mars and functioning, essentially, as the Vice Lust. In the relationship between Contempt and Lust, it is Lust who initially has primacy, directing the action and their interactions with Mars. In a parallel of the old Vicely action of changing the clothes of their charge, much as the vices of *Castle of Perseverance* change the outfit of Humanum Genus, or the vices of *Mankind* change Mankind's attire, Mars has been

much transformed by his exposure to Venus, wearing, as the other characters observe upon meeting him:

> SATEROS. Be not offended sir, we seeke God Mars.
> MARS. Why and Mars haue you found sir, whats your will
> with him?
> RAPH. Are you he I cry you mercie, I primise you I tooke you
> for a morris dauncer you are so trim.
> MARS. What sayes the villaine?
> SATEROS. If thou be Mars, the cause which makes me doubt, is that I see
> thy bodie lapt in soft silke which was wont to bee clad in hard
> steele, and thy head so childishlie laid on a womans lap. (D3^{v})

Indeed, perhaps it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that Mars appears almost Vicely, his Morris-like garb appearing recognisably like the motley of Dissimulation and his fellows. In this sense, just as *Twelfth Night*'s Maria has worked in Malvolio the conditions which resulted in him becoming devil-like, something of Venus/Lust's Vice-like nature is revealed in the presentation of her corruption of Mars.

The changes Venus/Lust has wrought in Mars have a further implication, in that they present Contempt as resulting from her; just as, in *Three Ladies*, Usury can be seen as a result of Lucre, so Lust has brought Mars to Contempt as Mercury observes:

> MERCURY*:* Now Mars thou seemest lyke thy selfe,
> Thy womens weeds cast off,
> Which made thee be in heauen a scorne,
> On earth a common scoffe. (F1^{r})

Venus/Lust, far from being Contempt's victim, produces and empowers him through her own corruption of Mars, and in conjunction with him brings ruin.

The conjunction of Contempt and "Venus alias Lust" producing ruin is made even more plain to the audience through a somewhat lengthy exchange between the god Mercury and Venus's maids concerning the progeny of Contempt and Venus:

MERCURY. Whose child is that you beare so tenderly?
RU. My Ladies child, begotten by contempt.
MERCURY. O is it so, and whether beare you it?
INA. To nurse.
MERCURY. To whom?
RU. Vnto securitie.
MERCURY. Is it a boy or girle, I praie ye tell?
INA. A girle it is.
MERCURY. Who were the godmothers?
RU. We two are they.
MERCURY. Your names I craue.
RU. Mine Ru and hers Ina.
MERCURY. And whether name I praie yee beares the girle?
INA. Both hers and mine.
MERCURY. And who is the godfather?
RU. Ingratituge that is likewise the grandfather.
MERCURY. Ruina otherwise called Ruine the child,
Contempt the father, Venus alias lust the mother,
Ru and Ina the godmothers,
Ingratitude the Oodfather and grandfather,
And Securitie the nurse,
Heres a brood that all Boetia shall curse.
Well damsels hie you hence, for one is coming nigh
Will treade your yong one vnder foot.
INA. Tis Mars, O let vs flie. *Exeunt.* (F1^{r})

In uncovering the family tree of Ruina/Ruine, Mercury builds the allegorical framework which has resulted from the union of Contempt and Lust. But it is worth observing that Ruin's name is derived from those of Venus's handmaids, Ru and Ina. Just as Lucre was served by Simony, Usury, Dissimulation and Fraud, Lust is already served by Ruin in the form of her maids, indeed she doubles up on bringing forth Ruin, both in conjunction with Contempt, but also through her subordinates. Just like the image of "Madame *Vice*, or olde *Iniquitie*" from the earlier cited *The Owles Almanacke*, who was accompanied by "two Punkes that were her Chamber maides, the one called *Too little,* the other *Too much,* and these two had like *Quick-silver* eaten the worlds *Goodnesse* to the heart", Venus alias Lust sits at the top of a moral framework which incorporates Contempt, but is not dominated by him (12).

There are further suggestions of Venus/Lust's corruption emanating forth from her into the world of the play. Her nature is expounded somewhat by Mars in his rage, a speech which is directed at women in general, but which has come about as a result of his experience with Lust:

> Gainst wantonness proclaime I open warre.
> Vnconstant women I accuse your sexe,
> Of Follie, lightnes, trecherie and fraud,
> You are the scum of ill, the scorne of good,
> The plague of mankinde, and the wrath of heauen,
> The cause of enuie, anger, murder, warre,
> By you the peopled townes are deserts made:
> The deserts fild with horror and distres.
> You laugh Hiena like, weepe as the Crocodile,
> One ruine brings your sorrow and your smile,
> Hold on in lighnes, lust hath kindled fire,
> The trumpets clang and roaring noise of Drums,
> Shall drowne the ecchoes of your weeping cries,
> And powders smoke dim your enticing eyes.
> These wanton ornaments for maskers fit,
> Will Mars leaue off, and sute himselfe in steele,
> And strumpet Venus with that vile Contempt,

|

I will pursue vnto the depth of hell.
Away with pittie, welcome *Ice* and Rage,
Which nought but Venus ruine shall wage. (E2^{r-v})

It is perhaps fitting that Mars, god of war, opposes something by declaring war upon it, and by opening with a declaration of war against wantonness Mars places the accusations against women which follow in the context of his war against lust, making the accusations against women effectively accusations against Lust/Venus. As such, when the unconstant women are accused of being "The cause of enuie, anger, murder, warre" he is effectively subordinating a list of sins to Venus, placing her in a very *radix malorum*-like position by having the "plague[s] of mankinde" spring from her. It is interesting that he unconsciously places himself in her power, as among the listed troubles is warre itself, making himself reactive and ultimately subject to her and her actions. Venus/Lust becomes not just the sources of the sins and troubles in the play, but of Mars's own trouble, war. Despite this, Mars is indeed set against her and Contempt, as the close of the speech makes clear, but the fact that Mars is both brought out of war, and back in again by the power of Venus/Lust cannot be ignored.

Of particular note also is the line "You laugh Hiena like, weepe as the Crocodile" which recalls the sudden switches between extreme laughter and insincere weeping which Spivack finds characteristic of the Vice: "An even more vivid characteristic of his role, condensing his duplicity into its most acute dramatic form, is the Vice's trick of tears and laughter," (161). Surely the audience would recognise the conjunction of these expressions as emblematic of the Vice, here applied to Venus/Lust rather than Contempt, adding to the impression that she functions as a moral Vice if not a stagecraft one. The laughing and weeping imagery is repeated later in the plot when the Duke denounces Emnious the Courtier who has proven himself treacherous and two-faced in his pursuit of the Duke's throne: "So smiles Hiena, when she will beguile, / And so with teares deceiues the Crocodile" (E4^{r}). However, the Hyena is referred to in the feminine, reminding the audience of the earlier remarks regarding women generally, and Venus/Lust specifically, as if to suggest the human courtier wears the treachery of Venus/Lust in a similar fashion to the way Venus/Lust has dressed Mars in contemptible motley-like garb.

I have here emphasised Venus/Lust's role as a Vice-figure after the fashion of Lady Lucre, and perhaps even Maria (though I have suggested the role of Devil for the latter). I would argue that there is

strong evidence of a "female Vice" tradition, a subset of the Vice figure more familiar to scholarship, but distinct in some key ways: the female Vice's superior position in the moral hierarchy, and less of a tendency towards the familiar stage business of the Vice being chief among them. It would be remiss of me, however, to neglect to address some problems with viewing Venus as the Vice, though arguably these are not as problematic if we consider the female Vice as a distinct subset of the Vice figure.

The chief problem with this reading of Venus/Lust as Vice, especially my suggestion of a superior position in a moral heirarchy, is that Venus/Lust is deceived by Contempt's presentation of himself as Content. The familar routine of the Vice changing his name to mask his nature begins from Contempt's first entrance—"*Enter* Sateros *a souldier, and* Contempt *naming himselfe* Content" (B2r)—and is expounded in the very same scene by a Scholar who recognises Contempt by his name:

> *Enter Emnius a Courtier, with him a Scholler, and*
> *a Countrey Gentleman,*
> COUNTRY GENTLEMAN. Haile to Contents diuinest exelence.
> SCHOLAR. Content our sweetest good, we doo salute thee.
> COURTIER. Though last I am not least in duteous kindnes
> To thee Content although thou be no God,
> Yet greater in account than all of them.
> SCHOLAR. But if ye knew his name wer *Olygoros,* which signifieth
> Contempt, you would not mistake him, and name him Content.
> CONTEMPT. O Mas scholler be patient, for though you like not my
> name, you loue my nature (B2^{r})

As a side note, it is interesting that Contempt, like Venus, has a Greek name in Olygoros which, as the scholar observes, means Contempt. In that sense he is not dissimilar to Venus alias Lust, for it is not inconceivable that Venus, representing desire and sexuality could be seen as also signifying Lust, as Olygoros signifies Contempt. My main point here, however, is that the fact that while the scholar can recognise Contempt, Venus is blind to his true nature until she is cast out of the heavens and rejected by him. While she had some measure of supremacy as a goddess, she is overcome by his deception, which complicates my reading of her as Vice. His rejection of her is brutal, with her clinging to him,

and he pushing her away multiple times, as the stage directions outline. However, there is a measure of power alotted her as she is rendered responsible for Contempt's own fall:

Enter Contempt, Venus following him, hee pushing her from him twice or thrice

CONTEMPT. Awaie thou strumpet, scandall of the world,
Cause of my sorrow, author of thy shame,
Follow me not, but wander where thou wilt
In vncouth places loathed of the light,
Fit shroude to hide thy lustfull bodie in,
Whose faire's distaind with foule adultrerous sin. (F4^{v})

Contempt blames Venus's sin for both their falls, and lives out the nature of his name clearly in his rejection of her. Still deceived by his presentation as Content, she clings still to him, and exclaims that she has operated as Lust and corrupted Mars for his sake. In response Contempt makes his identity plain to her:

CONTEMPT. Shape of collusion, mirrour of deceit,
Faire forme with foule deformities defilde,
Know that I am Contempt in nature scornefull,
Foe to thy good, and fatall to thy life:
That while I ioyde in glorie and account,
Disdainde all vertue, and contemnd all vice.
Good, bad were held with me of equall price.
And now the waning of my greatnesse comes,
Occasiond by thy loue, whome Mars aspected,
And I that all despisde am now reiected.
For which I thee reiect, disdaine and hate;
Wishing thee die a death disconsolate. (G1^{r})

Again he affirms to Venus, and the audience, that she is responsible for his downfall, creating a curious situation in which Venus alias Lust becomes almost a meta-Vice, her destructive nature corrupting and bringing low not just Mars but her partner Vice contempt. This is mirrored, however, by Contempt's corruption of Venus into Lust, for Venus likewise holds Contempt as responsible for her downfall. But just as she is far more active and dominant in her scenes with Contempt, so she is more active in her downfall. While Contempt blames her directly for his downfall, Venus speaks more of how she acted with him, and blames him for abandoning her once they had both fallen. Thus, even in their fall Venus holds primacy over her fellow Vice.

Bereaved and abandoned by Contempt, she turns to the audience and outlines the consequences of Lust. Though she speaks like a fallen woman, rather than with the comedy or confidence of the earlier Vices positioned aloof from serious consequence (see Spivack, 197-8), she is no worse than her partner Contempt in this regard. Moreover, while Contempt has just demonstrated his nature to the audience, Venus again takes her function as Vice a step further than Contempt as she explains directly to the audience, outlining the lesson:

> O what is fauor in an obscure place?
> Like vnto Pearles that for the swine are bought:
> Beauty and fauor where no vertue bides,
> Proues foule, deformd, and like a shadow glides.
> Ah that my woe could other women warne,
> To loue true wedlock or the virgins life:
> For me too late, for them fit time to learne,
> The honour of a maid and constant wife,
> One is adorde by Gods with holy rites,
> The last like Lampes both earth and heauen lights.
> But the foule horror of a harlots name,
> Euen of the Lecher counted as a scorne:
> Whose forhead beares the marke of hatefull shame,
> Of the lust-louer hated and forlorne.
> O such is Venus, so shall all such bee
> As vse base lust, and foule adulterie. (G1^{v})

In this way Venus alias Lust carries out the moral functions of the Vice figure as outlined by Spivack, without functioning as the grinning audience-focused intriguer he outlines (though, as my earlier arguments might suggest I take issue with the tight definition of the Vice figure which privileges such a relationship). Venus, like Lady Lucre and Pride functions as the Vice in a manner that appears to be distinct to these female Vices, with less emphasis on getting rough and involved with the audience and slapstick, and more emphasis on serving as the moral source of evil, and as a kind of overlord(lady) to lesser vices. While I have argued for a devilish designation for Maria, the parallels are obvious. She corrupts Malvolio only offstage, leaving the key staged deceptions to the Vice Feste. These female negative figures share a hands off approach to their evils even as they harbour both the power to corrupt individuals (as Lucre to Conscience, Maria to Malvolio, and Venus to Mars) as well as functioning as a moral centre from which evil emanates, serving very much as Spivack's *radix malorum*, a crucial function of the Vice figure.

Identifying this subtype demonstrates that not only is the Vice-figure, as it functioned on the early modern stage, more broad than traditional critical definitions, but also that there are still discoveries to be made regarding the figure. The evidence for a female Vice invites much of the same kind of opportunities for reading and rereading plays which the overall Vice figure has stimulated; what can be found in the works of Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe and their contemporaries which fits this pattern of the female figure serving as the corruptive General of evil? The implications of this discovery are considerable. The pattern becomes obvious once we accept the premise that the Vice was a living tradition, continuing to develop and fluctuate, instead of something old and fixed. My predecessors in the study of the Vice miss this distinct subtype precisely because they are intent on confining the Vice-figure to too-tight definitions build around our cultural fixation on the work of Shakespeare, and his contemporaries as something to which theatre advanced.

CHAPTER TEN
Conclusion

I set out in this project to answer a question raised by the seeming disconnect between scholarship and the evidence of the plays: did the Vice persist beyond the point when it is often spoken of dying out, that is, the period just before the 1580s? What I discovered was that the Vice, or references to it, continue to appear long after this time. The true test of the continuation of a dramatic tradition, however, is not in its echoes but in its ongoing evolution and development, and this is what I found in these later plays incorporating the Vice: the Vice proves to be not fixed in time as a perfect archetype, but is instead a vibrant, living stage tradition. Thus, as I began to explore what Spivack calls the Vice's "afterlife", what I would call its persistence, a related, methodological question also emerged: instead of viewing the Vice as in-decline—a stopover on the way to Shakespeare which becomes a holdover—what if we read changes to the figure as growth, and saw the Vice as something continuing to develop in its own right?

I have made much of the fact that the use of the Vice in the early seventeenth century relies on an intimacy between the audience and the Vice tradition which goes against the notion that the Vice was either defunct, or well in decline at this time. Indeed, the complexity of the metatheatrical deployment of the Vice suggests a living tradition with which the audiences and playmakers of the early seventeenth century were still very much engaged. This metatheatrical use of the Vice, which goes beyond the obvious metatheatricality of the Vice's interactions with the audience, and allusions to the world outside the play, can be seen in many of the plays late in the Vice tradition, not just those of Jonson. While Jonson's reversal of the expected pattern of the Vice riding the Devil is one example of this advanced metatheatre, so too is the juxtaposition between *Histriomastix*'s Vice of the play-within-the-play, who is scorned by the player audience, and the Vice Lady Pride who brings destruction and the downfall of those very characters within the very next scene. These metatheatrical tricks reinforce the notion that the Vice is indeed continuing to develop and the traditions potential on the stage is still very much under exploration for the playmakers in this period, lending further support to the veracity of the re-envisioning of Vices which sits as the central goal of this study.

In the service of this goal of rethinking the Vice tradition on the English Stage, I have spent considerable time in this dissertation dealing with two interrelated aspects of scholarship on the Vice:

the decline of the Vice figure, and the reading of the Vice made by Bernard Spivack. In truth these may as well be the same issue, for the decline of the Vice is inherent in Spivack's reading, and the popularity of Spivack's work as a "go-to" for study on the Vice underpins the popularity of viewing the Vice through the lens of the tradition being usurped by "realism". It was therefore necessary to devote a significant section of the first part of this dissertation developing a detailed critique of Spivack's main arguments in order to clear a path for my refiguring of the Vice tradition as being in organic flux long after the period of decline was said by Spicack to have set in. It is my hope that this dissertation has pointed the way beyond Spivack's outdated figuring of the Vice and might provoke less uncritical acceptance of its programmatic teleology.

The received narrative of the Vice's decline, after all, has implications beyond this study. For if we wrongly assume the Vice to have died out earlier than it did, we lose the Vices present after that time. Perhaps they become invisible, read as "literal" characters, their Vice-traits ignored or framed as "inspired by" the Vice. Or perhaps late Vice plays are assumed to be displaced in time, read as revivals or references forever hearkening back to something gone by the manner in which scholarship imposes the decline narrative onto our reading of history. The Vice's persistence or decline puts at stake the whole project of early modern theatre history, affecting how we read plays, reconstruct stagings, interpret characters, and infer tastes. It affects also our presentation and performance of early modern plays in the present. Perhaps most important of all, the narrative of the Vice's decline conceals from us the possibility of Vices hitherto unexamined, which in turn blinds us to the development of different types of Vices, as is the case of the female Vice-type I have identified here.

The discovery of a female Vice-type is, I feel, the most significant discovery yielded by this project. As I hope to have made clear, the female Vice is not simply an instance of the Vice figure who happens to be female. Rather, I am highlighting the existence of a distinct subtype perhaps worthy of a clearer designation, which often serves as a kind of moral source of evil; more passive, perhaps, than the more familiar Vices, but only in the sense that an army's commander acts less directly than its foot soldiers. This subtype seems to come into being in the 1580s, as I have been unable to find evidence of it appearing earlier, and the prototypical example is Robert Wilson's Lady Lucre. Emerging as she does most prominently (and, to my knowledge, originally) in the plays of Wilson, particularly *The Three Ladies of London* and *The Cobler's Prophecy*, the fact that we can see reflections of it also in the plays of the Poetomachia, and in Shakespeare's Maria (though, admittedly Maria is probably more likely a devil derivative) suggests that it is a character type which took hold, though not nearly as strongly as

the Vice tradition overall. In fact, the example of Maria lends itself to a further examination of the relationship between the devil and the female Vice, because both are arguably more passive than their more stagecraft-oriented Vice counterparts. Just as Maria and the Devil of *Godly and Virtuous Susanna* leave the on stage practical application of the devilry to their Vices (though both have been at work on their targets offstage) so too do female Vices Lucre and Venus defer the clowning and most of the interactions with the estates to the Knaves and Contempt respectively, instead preferring the more intimate corruption of operating on an individual, such as Conscience and Mars.

The female Vice subtype challenges our sense of what the Vice figure is, especially for adherents to Spivack's definitions. She demonstrates that the Vice figure transcends both the imposed timeline of the Vice's development and decline, and moves beyond the borders of the definitions imposed on the Vice by Spivack. The clowning aspects so important to other manifestations of the Vice are almost non-existent for this subtype, and the corrupting and intriguing takes on a very one-on-one intimate tone, as is Lucre to Conscience, or Venus to Mars, or Maria to Malvolio (though Pride certainly seems to corrupt *en masse*). But the corrupting is less important than the function as a source of evil. Additionally, the seeming eschewal of the stage properties of the Vice, which seems to occur in later plays, comes to a head in the female Vice, who does not need to belabour anyone with her dagger to serve her moral purpose. This is, of course, assuming that such properties are not simply absent from the text, but present in the action. It is entirely possible that such stage actions made even plainer the Vice status of the female Vices in a similar fashion to the echoes of allegorical action Dessen finds in "Allegorical Action and Elizabethan Staging," which suggest the presence of even more action which are not preserved on page.

Certainly, Madame Vice in the *Owles Almanack* is furnished with signifiers of the Vice, the wooden dagger and so forth. The presence of Madame Vice also lends support to this notion of a female commander Vice, though it is certainly curious that the presentation of Madame Vice bears the wooden dagger and motley characteristic of the more common Vice figure; the extant female Vices we have seen examples of do not seem to employ these obvious signifiers (at least, not in the written texts). This may perhaps suggest a wealth of female Vices in lost plays, both members of the subtype and of course those outside of it. Madame Vice's significant overlap with the subtype is in her position, "Madame" and her subordinates; Madame Vice, like Venus alias Lust, or Lady Lucre has allegorically significant servants. These servants furnish the female vices with richer allegorical meaning and, as I discussed briefly in my discussion of Lady Lucre's moral functions, play into the manner in which the

female Vice functions as a moral source of evil. She is served by, and even draws other vices to her side, at a time when the Vice was supposed to have embodied all the evils in one character. Rather than functioning as the whole of evil distilled into one convenient laughing form, the female Vice is the head of a group, like the earliest vices, bringing about the corruption of the space through her underlings: the four knaves and other hangers on in the case of Lucre; her maids, her Ruinous spawn and her lover Contempt in the case of Venus alias Lust; Pride and her very obvious underlings in *Histriomastix*.

Strangely then, the female Vice is in many ways more like what Spivack saw the Vice as than what the conventional Vice becomes but exists long after Spivack's Vice is supposed to have withered away. In as much as the female Vice upholds his notion of a *radix malorum*, it challenges his timeline and notion of the Vice's development and decline. In this sense, the female Vice becomes for other Vices what the devil is for Vices in general, that is a source of corruption held back from most of the direct action, which renders the male Vice distinctly clownish as he takes on the more theatrical aspects of the figure. As I have attested, there are also even glimmers of the female Vice in the Poetomachia, which proves to be a key transitional period for the development of the Vice. This is perhaps to be expected given its position between the 1580s and the performances of Shakespeare and Jonson's later work. Admittedly, the presence of the Vice at first seems diminished in these plays, relegated as it is to a rather secondary role. But the striking image of Lady Pride, contrasted with the "Vice" staged in play within the play powerfully uses the audience's ongoing familiarity with the Vice tradition to cast their understanding of vice in a new light, rendering the trappings of the stage vices and devils mere theatre in the light of an "actual" figure of Vice, though, of course, Lady Vice and her underlings are as staged as their counterparts in the play within a play. As I have argued in the relevant chapter, these images imply an ongoing engagement with the Vice tradition, and the experiment presenting stage Vices alongside "stage Vices" is perhaps the brightest product of this ongoing development of the Vice tradition during the period of the Poetomachia.

In discussing the plays after the Poetomachia (as well as *Cynthia's Revels* within the Poetomachia) the intersection of devils and clowns appears roughly where the Vice figure is located, with the female Vice leaning more heavily on the devil side of things than the figure overall. As I suggested in my examination of the devil's relationship with the Vice, perhaps the key differences between the two figures is that from the perspective of the original audiences the devil is a literal character, the devil onstage representing a devil present in the real world as a literal creature. The Vice, on the other hand, is an abstraction, albeit one which increasingly takes on human characteristics,

though it had always appeared with such to some degree, ever since *Mankind*'s vagrant labourer vices. This tells us, however, what the Vice and Devil *are*, not how they were recognised as such, and with many of the later extant Vices leaving off many of the visual signifiers which accompanied earlier Vices (at least textually), such as the dagger of lath and Dissimulation's motley, discerning the Vice becomes a matter of recognising a stage practice which, as I argued, overlaps considerably with that of earlier stage devils.

Perhaps the lesson is that the Vice is to be found at the intersection of devil and clown, for while the Vice and the devil are clearly seen as closely related, but visually distinct, the visual signifiers of either are not always present or available. There is a sense in which Cox is right, since Dissimulation and Anaides both are associated with both clown and devil, yet serve as Vice, and traces of the devil have often been used by scholars to find the Vice. This brings me to Mephistopheles, the devil often taken as a Vice, though of course he is clearly presented within the play as a devil. And yet one could argue that Mephistopheles is a Vice in a very similar fashion to the way I established *Twelfth Night*'s Maria as devil and Feste as a Vice. The key lies in Mephistopheles' relationship with Lucifer: in addition to the general Vice-like characteristics which has led to Mephistopheles' mis-designation as a Vice, Mephistopheles very distinctly serves under the devil, while Lucifer himself has a very limited role. The pattern of a Vice serving a devil practically leaps off the page or stage, but only later in the plot when Lucifer is revealed to Faustus. Moreover, Mephistopheles serves Faustus, taking on the role of a servant in order to corrupt his earthly "master" on behalf of his true master in the familiar manner of the Vice. Could it be that Mephistopheles was a Vice all along?

It is entirely possible that Mephistopheles is both; that the Vice is present once again masked as a literal character, though this time the literal character happens to be a devil. This, however, is a bit of a trip down the proverbial rabbit hole, and it is important to remember that these plays are performative texts first; the characters presentation to a live audience in the moment of performance is far more significant that what can be derived after the fact through careful research. It is far more likely that Mephistopheles is exactly what he says he is: a devil. Whether the audience recognised his actions as Vice-like, or remembered the devil's Vice-like traits from the ongoing devil plays is fascinating, but largely irrelevant and irretrievable. Maria, in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, is in a similar position to Mephistopheles. She is identified with the devil metaphorically, and in her relationship with the Vice of this play, is seemingly structurally a devil as well. And yet, Maria is not a literal devil, her Vice no literal Vice. In this sense, despite the imagery of devilry associated with her, she has a lot in common

with the female Vices I have been examining. She sits at an intersection of devil and female Vice, masterminding the downfall of Malvolio by means of her Vice Feste, in a similar fashion to the manner in which Lucre and Venus are empowered through their subordinates.

It seems pertinent, then, to return to where I began this investigation, Ben Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass*, and the continuing presence of the Vice figure on the English stage. And it should be noted that, while scholars of the school of Spivack uphold the notion that the Vice figure dies out, it is the contention of Jonson in *The Staple of News* that the Vice instead becomes more humanlike: "attir'd like / Men and Women o' the time, the Vices Male and Female!". This is a contention played out in *The Devil is an Ass* whose human characters are far greater vices than the Vice Iniquity: "To hear men such professors / Grown in our subtlest sciences!" It would be a true coup de grace to proceed to argue here that there is a female Vice in *The Devil is an Ass* of the kind I have been examining, but I am not sure I could sustain such an argument. I would certainly suggest, however, that there is something in my incomplete examination of the positive-Vice in Fitzdotterel's wife Frances, which recalls my suggestion of a possible female counterpart to the male positive-Vice (or "Craft" as Winston calls the figure). In my chapter on Shakespeare I certainly argued that Shakespeare's Portia is, in a sense, comparable to Winston's reading of Duke Vicentio as positive Vice.

Frances, however, takes this incarnation of the positive-Vice in a different and less active direction. Indeed, she is only recognisable in comparison to Portia. But while Portia, Duke-like, employs disguise and direct manipulation to take control of her situation, Frances is more like a positive inversion of Lady Lucre. There is something almost Lucre-like about the manner in which Fitzdotterel's wife turns the cunning male characters to her ends, reminiscent of how Conscience and Love are undone by Lucre and her four Vices, leaving Lucre in control of London, and Frances in control of her household, marriage, and fortune. In an inversion of Venus's corruption of Mars, Frances instead turns a man away from sin. She frustrates the audience's desire to see Frances joined with a man more worthy of her than Fitzdotterel, and instead makes the worthy Frances the head of her own house by means of these men. This is but a speculation, however, a momentary fancy which lacks the support of the text to be more than an interesting thought experiment (or cautionary tale about reading too much into things) at least in the absence of any further evidence. I include it merely as an example to suggest where future reading of the distinctly female vice trope might be of benefit in future research.

Concordantly, the most significant outcome of this study generally, and the female Vice

specifically, is that it opens up opportunities to finding further connections between "literal" characters, and the Vice figure in the manner that Jonson suggests in his later plays *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News.* What Vices have we lost by the simple fact that they are not identified explicitly as such in the text? Or, more to the point: what characters would the Elizabethan and early Jacobean audiences have recognised as Vices by their staging, costume or context in the drama that remain invisible to us? By viewing the Vice tradition as ongoing and developing, and with the aid of the female Vice explored in this study as a model, what further discoveries could be made? There may be female characters who have not previously been connected to the Vice tradition by scholars beyond those explored in this dissertation. As a result of my findings, there is the potential for a significant amount of new work on the Vice and, indeed, other allegorical aspects of early modern drama.

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