

Gown Before Crown: Scholarly Abjection and Academic Entertainment Under Queen Elizabeth I

Linda Shenk

In 1592, Queen Elizabeth I and the Privy Council made a rather audacious request of their intellectuals at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. The Christmas season was fast approaching, and a recent outbreak of the plague prohibited the queen's professional acting company from performing the season's customary entertainment. To avoid having a Christmas without revels, the crown sent messengers to both institutions, asking for university men to come to court and perform a comedy in English. Cambridge's Vice Chancellor, John Still, wished to decline this royal invitation, and for advice on how to do so he wrote to his superior, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who was not only the Chancellor of Cambridge but also Elizabeth's chief advisor. In this letter, Vice Chancellor Still implies the impropriety of having academics participate in such a performance:

how fitt wee shalbe for this that is moued, havinge no practize in this Englishe vaine, and beinge (as wee thincke) nothinge beseeminge our Studentes, specially oute of the Vniuersity: wee much doubt; And do finde our principale Actors (whome wee haue of purpose called before vs) very vnwillinge to playe in Englishe; Wherefore wee thoughte it not only our duties, to giue intelligence hereof vnto your Lordship as being our cheife hedd and governor; but also very expedient for vs, to craue your Lordships wisdome, either to dissuade the matter withoute any displeasure vnto vs, yf wee shall not seeme meete in your Lordships iudgment for that purpose; or to advise vs by your Honorable direccion, what manner of argument wee should ch[o]use, and what course is best to followe. Englishe Comedies, for that wee neuer vsed any, wee presentlie haue none.¹

Finding that the request is “nothing beseeminge our Studentes, specially oute of the Vniuersity” and emphasizing that they “neuer vsed any” English comedies, Still insinuates that the crown has crossed a line by asking university men to perform in the vernacular—especially the lighter fare of a comedy. They are academics, after all, not professional stage-players.

By asking intellectuals to come *to court*, to perform *a comedy*, and a comedy *in English*, the crown is treating its university subjects as entertainers who can be called upon to provide diversion solely for amusement. The issue here is

not simply that the crown wants scholars to perform a play, for the universities had already prepared many productions for the crown—some even in English.² The issue, rather, is that the crown requested a rather *unacademic* combination: a stand-alone comedy, in English, at court. In the past, university productions for the queen and nobility had always been produced on university soil, always performed at the end of a day of learned activities, and always scheduled between evenings that contained plays treating weightier material. When the crown asks for performances that occur without these learned contexts and the medium of Latin and Greek, it is asking for performances that ignore university men's identities as intellectuals. As such, the state treats them as court players rather than future political advisors, clerics, and ambassadors.

The crown's request to the universities crystallizes a trend that had become a uniquely Elizabethan phenomenon in English history: university men repeatedly performing for the crown. Before Elizabeth's reign, university plays were private, university-only affairs, but after her first progress to Cambridge in 1564, the queen and court frequently attended university productions. The importance of these performances has not been lost on theater and university historians. Scholars such as Frederick S. Boas, John Elliott, Jr., and Alan H. Nelson have mined the accounts and university records, and their descriptive work has contributed substantially to our understanding of university culture and early modern staging practices. What scholars have not yet fully examined are the *implications* of these performances—the implications, essentially, of the gown entertaining the crown. How does having the monarch in the audience affect university drama? How might these performances, on a more profound level, affect the relationship between the monarch and intellectuals? Lastly, how might this relationship imply that the Elizabethan regime had created its own version of the humanist idea that the scholar should serve the state as a wise counselor?³

Answering these questions, in part, involves looking at the choices the universities made when preparing plays for the court. These performances begin with Elizabeth's 1564 and 1566 progresses to the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford (respectively) and then include a series of later interactions when the universities hosted and performed either for the court or on the court's behalf, such as for the Polish Palatine Alberto Laski's visit to Oxford in 1583. These historical examples reveal that the universities (especially Oxford) increasingly linked drama with the crown by tailoring their productions to satisfy the court's preferences for lavish spectacle and royal flattery. As Nelson has demonstrated, some private university productions did contain elaborate, costly spectacle.⁴ The university productions for the court, however, not only made much of highly scenic effects but specifically involved court-affiliated alumni to assist in making these productions pleasing to the courtly audience.

This interest in making university productions more court-like, though, had changed direction by 1592—a year full of events that shared a common concern: the need to distinguish university “actors” from professional stage-players. Early in the year, the famous controversy over academic drama flared

between John Rainolds and William Gager,⁵ and Gager had defended university men, emphasizing that “*ludii nos nec sumus, / nec esse cupimus*” (“We are not professional players nor do we care to be”).⁶ Similarly, during the queen’s final visit to Oxford that September, Gager and the university overall continued to emphasize that their productions were bookish and inexpertly executed instead of spectacle-filled and skillfully performed. The meteoric rise of the professional theater, now put alongside an increasingly theatrical connection between crown and gown, was taking its toll. Before the rise of the public theater, performances for royalty were often conducted in aristocratic homes and at the Inns of Court, but the high visibility of the professional actor on the popular public stage began to loosen dramatic entertainment’s previously exclusive connections. University men faced the conjoining of two separate trends: the popularity of the professional actor (who, unlike the intellectual, possessed no established right to a political voice) and the rise of the universities’ dramatic connections with the crown. Pressed to keep these two trends from becoming conflated, many university men had a change of heart sometime around 1592 when the controversy over academic drama raged and Vice Chancellor Still wrote his letter to Lord Burghley. University men seemed to realize that their performances for royalty had cast them in the role of royal entertainers—a role that, particularly through its similarity with professional players, diminished the political authority their learning was supposed to give them.

These trends in drama offer a perspective on the political relationship between crown and gown, which is central to the idea of humanism and the scholar’s authority in early modern England. When the crown turned to university men for diversion more than disputation, it undercut the humanist mythology of the scholar serving the state as a learned advisor. I have argued elsewhere that the Latin orations Elizabeth delivered at the ends of her university visits reveal that the queen sought to contain the scholars’ authority through a language of learned absolutism and, later, of divinity.⁷ Turning to university men for entertainment similarly worked to contain the scholars’ influence by redirecting intellectual energy into a form that focused on pleasing Elizabeth. I contend that even university-educated playwrights for the professional stage recognized this trend and sought to capitalize on it. In the small window of years surrounding 1592, university “wits” Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and Thomas Nashe wrote works that portray university men performing spectacle *to please royalty*. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (circa 1589–92), Greene’s Friars Vandermast and Bungay compete to out-magic each other, while the Emperor and visiting royal dignitaries cheer them on; the protagonist in Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (circa 1588–1592) sells his soul for empowering knowledge, yet ends up creating merriment for Emperor Carolus and Duke Vanholt; and in *The Vnfortunate Traveller* (1594), Nashe’s intellectuals at Wittenberg try to impress their visiting Duke with ridiculous orations and a poorly acted comedy, but end up making fools of themselves.⁸ In his article on the magician-scholars in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *Faustus*, and *The Tempest*, Andreas Höfele explains that these characters,

in their acts of performance, provide “a portrait of the artist, especially of the artist in society.”⁹ The theatrical spectacle-making that these figures depict, I propose, also provides a portrait of the university scholar in relation to his monarch. Modern historians have not examined in detail how these literary representations speak to the historical relationship between crown and gown. University drama implies that these institutions and their scholars were becoming satellites of the state. This trend matches university historian Penry Williams’s observation that the crown’s influence over the universities increased during Elizabeth’s reign so that, by the end of the sixteenth century, “the university’s independence had been heavily mortgaged.”¹⁰ By 1592, university men were beginning to acknowledge that their role as entertainers for the court tied them more closely (and abjectly) to the crown’s authority.

Despite this power dynamic, the decisions regarding drama did not arise as top-down, crown-imposed scenarios but, rather, evolved through a slow compilation of choices and requests made by both crown and gown. Though I began with the universities’ wary unease of 1592, I will now return to the early stirrings of this trend in the 1560s and then trace the subsequent events that comprise the gradual progression. Moving through the early university productions for the court and crown, through the literary representations, and finally to the events of 1592, I will demonstrate how the image of the scholar as a royal entertainer not only came into being but also revealed the universities’ increasing focus on the court’s preferences and authority. In fact, Oxford tended to follow this trajectory more so than Cambridge. The early modern period celebrated the scholar’s role in political life, but the dramatic activity between the crown and the universities in Elizabeth’s reign added entertainment to this idea of service. This idea, in turn, helps explain the rise of the entertaining intellectual throughout the 1590s—from the numerous scholars who did go on to perform for the court while still studying at the universities to the scholars hired to write entertaining prose against Martin Marprelate.

Elizabeth’s Early Progresses: Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1566

On 12 July 1564, William Cecil, then Chancellor of Cambridge, notified his university that the rumors were indeed true: the queen intended to spend nearly a week visiting the university, and the university was to prepare orations, disputations, sermons, and plays for her visit. Elizabeth’s progress was unprecedented in English history. Never before had an English monarch conducted such a lengthy visit to one of the universities, and never before had an English monarch slept on university soil as a guest.¹¹ Over the course of her reign, Elizabeth would eventually conduct three such lengthy progresses to her universities (1564 to Cambridge; 1566 and 1592 to Oxford), and through these visits Elizabeth fostered a relationship between crown and gown that was markedly different from that created by the previous

Tudor monarchs—a difference that underscores the image of the intellectual as an entertainer.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Elizabeth's Tudor predecessors had occasionally called upon the universities to offer learned opinion regarding important matters of political policy. Henry VIII asked both institutions to provide public responses concerning the "great matter" of his divorce; Edward's administration staged a disputation against the Mass at Cambridge; and Mary countered this disputation by organizing one in support of the Mass at Oxford. Even though the universities always produced the desired "answer" and affirmed the current monarch's agenda, these demonstrations acknowledged the humanist notion that the enlightened prince should consult the wisdom of educated subjects. Elizabeth, however, never asked the universities to participate in political policy. Instead, her administration asked them to act as the queen's hosts in a fashion similar to her progresses to private, aristocratic homes. They were to lodge her and prepare suitable entertainment. Cecil's initial letter to Cambridge before the first progress makes these two priorities clear, asking the university to "consider what lodgyng shalbe metest for her maiestie & nexte what maner of [plaies]/ plesures/ in lernyng may be presented to her maiestie."¹² As editor Alan H. Nelson's brackets above denote, Cecil initially wrote "plaies" before striking through this choice and replacing it with "pleasures." Cecil's initial impulse was to specify dramatic entertainment before deciding to broaden the possibilities. His emphasis on pleasure (and his conflation of this idea with plays) is in harmony with the repeated use of "entertain" and "entertainment" in the accounts of the progresses. In essence, the universities were called upon to entertain their queen—a role that did not necessarily have a condescending air in the 1560s because many royal entertainments were staged in aristocratic homes and through connections with the Inns of Court. These two venues help explain why the universities would not have taken offense at royal requests for plays. The universities, after all, had a long-standing dramatic tradition in England and, as Siobhan Keenan notes, these plays offered a venue for university men to counsel their monarch.¹³ In these performances of the 1560s, both Oxford and Cambridge sought to balance court-pleasing theatrical elements with material that retained a connection to learning's association with political comment. Even within this balance, however, the foundations for the image of sheer (non-academic) entertainment were being built and would soon be strengthened with the rise of professional theater.

For Elizabeth's visit, Cambridge planned a series of plays that demonstrated not only breadth of learning and an interest in showcasing the university's Protestant affinity with the court but also intellectual opinion on current political issues. In fact, the topics of three of the four plays the Cambridge men prepared hinted at the two most politically sensitive issues for Elizabeth in 1564: marriage and religion. On the first evening of the queen's visit, the university presented Plautus' *Aulularia* in Latin, which culminates with the main character, Euclio, giving the pot of gold alluded to in the title to his virtuous daughter as a wedding present. The next night, Elizabeth watched another play that included a tale of love (but now with

a tragic ending) when she attended *Dido*, written in Latin by Cambridge's own Edward Haliwell. For the third performance, the university switched the subject-matter to religion and presented *Ezechias* in English, a revival of Nicholas Udall's comedy about the Old Testament King Hezekiah.¹⁴ Because Hezekiah had ordered the destruction of idolatrous images and the brazen serpent (an image theologians associated with the cross), this king often served as the biblical model for Protestant rulers. In other venues and even earlier in that day's academic exercises, others had already likened Elizabeth to King Hezekiah, and what is more, Udall himself had similarly alluded to Hezekiah when he lauded Henry VIII's Protestant reforms. As Margaret Aston notes, however, the production of *Ezechias* for Elizabeth may have also housed criticism with compliment. Elizabeth still kept a cross in her private chapel (hence, the significance of a reference to the brazen serpent), and certainly many Protestants felt that her private devotions as well as her public policies were not sufficiently reformed.¹⁵ These potential aspects of criticism may explain the cryptic phrase in Nicholas Robinson's account that "after the performance had been *viewed long enough*, it was time for rest."¹⁶ Did the queen leave partway through the performance?¹⁷ If so, the production may have smacked too much of counsel. If she did retire before the play concluded, this act may suggest a subtext to her claims of fatigue the next night as the reason for canceling that evening's performance, which was to be a Latin version of Sophocles' play *Ajax Flagellifer*.

The queen may have had enough of such politically driven entertainment, but a few of her Cambridge men were not finished using drama to make their points about religion. In a letter written to the Duchess of Parma, the Spanish ambassador Guzmán de Silva relates that several intellectuals from the university followed Elizabeth to her next stop at Hinchinbrook where they put on a baldly anti-Catholic performance:

The actors came in dressed as some of the imprisoned Bishops. First came the bishop of London carrying a lamb in his hands as if he were eating it as he walked along, and then others with devices, one being in the figure of a dog with the Host in his mouth. They write that the Queen was so angry that she at once entered her chamber using strong language.¹⁸

According to the Spanish ambassador, Elizabeth was none too pleased to have her subjects offer such a strident depiction of Catholic practice. Considering that this description occurs in a letter written by a Spanish (hence Catholic) figure to the wife of another prominent Spanish leader, Elizabeth's reaction may have been exaggerated; however, it would be no surprise if Elizabeth did react negatively. Not only were diplomatic affairs with Catholic Spain rather delicate at the moment but also such blunt and radical representations were hardly in tune with Elizabeth's much more religiously conservative *via media*. As with this representation and the production of *Ezechias*, Cambridge men may have taken too much political license with their entertaining fare. On the one hand, their choice to use Udall's

play shows, in part, an interest in calling upon a playwright who had successfully entertained previous Tudor monarchs, but on the other, these men may have strayed too far from their entertaining role. Oxford, especially with its dangerously Catholic recent history, would not make the same choice.¹⁹

Two years after the visit to Cambridge, Oxford stayed more clearly in the realm of entertainment by selecting and commissioning pieces that more overtly incorporated royal compliment and awe-inspiring spectacle. Oxford also added another factor to ensure success—not just a playwright who had pleased a previous monarch but one who was doing so currently—Richard Edwardes. Elizabeth had appointed Edwardes, an Oxford alumnus, as her Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal in 1561. Oxford had him come to campus two months early both to complete an English comedy for the visit (*Palamon and Arcyte*) and to share his expertise in courtly performance for the other productions.²⁰ As a university graduate, Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal, and member of Lincoln's Inn, Edwardes had a career that integrated the three premiere institutions that fostered drama: the court, the universities, and the Inns of Court.²¹ The productions associated with the 1566 progress represent the height of this fusion—learned sources grounded in English tradition, political themes, and impressive spectacle reminiscent of court masques. Perhaps through Edwardes's expertise, Oxford's productions surpassed those at Cambridge in that they better resembled the strategies playwrights were using at court to honor their queen's power. Though these plays still possessed political posturing, they also mark an increased focus on university productions as entertainment.

Oxford tapped into Edwardes's court experience throughout the progress, beginning with the opening production, *Marcus Geminus*. In this performance, Edwardes had helped with the staging, and the set for this production reveals how the performance used staging and topicality both to honor Elizabeth's supreme authority and to forge good relations with her. As Heather Kerr notes, *Marcus Geminus* was based on chapters thirty-eight and thirty-nine of Sir Thomas Elyot's *The Image of Governauce* (1540).²² Choosing this story and this author was particularly shrewd. The tale's legal scenarios would have given the appropriately learned air to the dramatic action, and Elyot had been one of Elizabeth's father's supporters (at least for awhile) as well as a champion of the learned prince. Kerr notes that even the arrangement of the stage, when considered with the action in the story, emphasized Elizabeth's enlightened status as a wise ruler-judge. "Elizabeth was to sit in 'a state' placed on the stage raised at the western end of the Hall. Alexander Severus, sitting 'in astate' [*sic*] in 'The Theatre of Pompey,' and giving his 'last judgement in his own person,' is a potential mirror-image for the Queen as wise judge," for it was "a flattering allusion to Elizabeth as an ideal ruler."²³ Unfortunately, all this careful deference was almost completely for naught. Elizabeth made her feelings about Oxford's historically strong ties to Catholicism quite known and avoided all activities on the Sunday of the scheduled performance. Even so, this play shows how Oxford shaped its entertainment to

honor Elizabeth, using the stage configuration (much like a court masque) to showcase her power over all, even over their scholarship.

Just as Edwardes applied his court experience to the staging, he also incorporated his particular forte: court-pleasing spectacle. On the next two evenings, his flair for the visually and dramatically pleasing was evident when the university men put on his two-part play *Palamon and Arcyte* (an adaptation of Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*). All were thoroughly entertained. It was "acted with very great applause in Christ Church Hall. [...] Afterwards the Actors performed their parts so well, that the Queen laughed heartily thereat, and gave the Author of the Play great thanks for his pains." Merriment and enthusiasm typified the audience's reaction to this play, which was full of energetic spectacle. In the scene when Theseus goes hunting with his hounds, some students stood in the quadrant outside to create the effects of the "howndes *with* a trayle at a ffox." Apparently, they were so successful that "ye ladyes in ye wyndowe crydd nowe nowe & hallowed oh excellent said ye Quenes *maiestie* those boyes ar readye to leape oute of ye windowe to follow ye howndes."²⁴ In choosing Edwardes, Oxford elicited the desired response: Elizabeth was delighted. Edwardes (and even Udall, to a lesser extent) demonstrates the beginnings of a fusion between performances for crown and gown. Their plays, while not diminishing the learned aura of academic productions, show how diversion at the universities begins to possess many of the trappings of diversion at court.

The Court's Intellectuals: Performance and Honoring the Crown

In entertaining the queen, the universities, particularly Oxford, were so successful that these "performances" begat more productions. The court began to call upon the universities to host court figures and even foreign dignitaries on its behalf. This string of entreaties in the 1570s and '80s opens the door for the crown's explicit request in 1592 to intellectuals to perform at court. Through these events, the court treats the universities as an extension of itself, and, similarly, the universities use drama to express increased association with queen and court. Plays become one facet of a growing intimacy between crown and gown, and this intimacy heightens the academy's focus and emphasis on the crown, which erodes the semblance of it as an autonomous institution. The image of the performing academic, rather unwittingly, becomes a symbol of the crown's power to have its intellectuals at its bidding. Having drama as a central form of service additionally separates the intellectual from his serious, political stature that was the source of his authority. Events of the 1570s and '80s do not represent such a clear portrayal of these power dynamics, but they set into motion the ingredients that will later facilitate them.

The first of the crown's requests for entertainment came in 1569 when Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, planned to bring to Oxford Odet de Coligny, Cardinal de Châtillon (an ambassador representing the Huguenot leader Condé). The university began preparations, which included a play, *The Destruction of Thebes*.

Although this visit was eventually cancelled, a sufficient number of the university population would have known about the plans, because they were announced during Convocation. In 1578, Cambridge scholars were given the opportunity to perform—this time for Elizabeth—when she visited nearby Audley End. This event was like a mini-university progress, and for it they prepared a shortened itinerary of a comedy, orations, and disputations. This connection between the queen and performing comedy (even though Still will downplay this connection in 1592) was already forming, and this visit was an instance when intellectuals traveled to perform for the queen (though they did not travel far). Unlike the comedy that would be requested in 1592, the comedy the Cambridge men prepared was still performed alongside learned demonstrations. In keeping with this idea of staging comedy for the queen, St. John's started an annual tradition, sometime before 1588, of performing a comedy on Elizabeth's Accession Day.²⁵ These performances may have begun far earlier; in fact, records at King's College begin listing expenses paid to musicians for work contributing to festivities on the Queen's Day in 1577.²⁶ Although Elizabeth would not have attended these performances, it is interesting that, at least by 1588, the university started to honor this day with drama—and a comedy, no less. By choosing this more festive genre, St. John's helped solidify the relationship between entertainment and royalty.

Such focus on the court as a force that prompts and inspires drama, in turn, would have encouraged university men to believe that the crown was now a potential audience for university productions. Nelson speculates that university playwright Thomas Legge wrote his ambitious trilogy *Richard Tertius* with Elizabeth in mind, and certainly this trilogy's grand spectacle and theme of Tudor propaganda would have made it a crown-pleaser.²⁷ Several of Legge's actors were Robert Greene's classmates, and this connection may help explain why Greene chose to depict scholars performing for royalty in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Greene and his Cambridge peers Marlowe and Nashe may have received further inspiration from the repeated university hostings that became quite frequent at Oxford throughout the 1580s. In 1580/81, John Harington and Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, attended a university production of *Pedantius*, the infamous production that playfully satirized Gabriel Harvey. On a much larger and well-publicized scale, Oxford was called upon in 1583 and 1585 to entertain court and foreign dignitaries with an itinerary similar to that prepared for Elizabeth years earlier. In 1585, Oxford hosted Leicester, and to make this event sufficiently sumptuous for their Chancellor, officials contacted John Lyly at court to assist them with costumes. This visit, however, paled in comparison to the elaborate visit that had taken place at Oxford in 1583. For this earlier visit, Oxford received a request directly from the crown to host the Polish Palatine Laski, and entertainment remained clearly on the agenda.²⁸ On the first night of his visit, because the palatine "sought rather rest in his lodging than recreation in anie academicall pastimes, strange fire works were shewed."²⁹ The next day, these "academicall pastimes" (my emphasis) of orations, disputations, and plays began, and once again the plays provided an opportunity for the university men to present a learned product that contained

strong courtly influences. The university prepared two plays—the comedy *Rivales* and the tragedy *Dido*—both in Latin and both by in-house playwright William Gager. The two plays offered much opportunity for spectacle, especially *Dido*, whose special effects prompted the following admiration in Holinshed's *Third Volume of Chronicles* (1587), beginning with Dido's banquet scene:

wherein the queenes banquet (with Eneas narration of the destruction of Troie) was liuelie described in a marchpaine patterne, there was also a goodlie sight of hunters with full crie of a kennell of hounds, Mercurie and Iris descending and ascending from and to an high place, the tempest wherein it hailed small confects, rained rosewater, and snow an artificiall kind of snow, all strange, maruellous, and abundant.³⁰

With a tempest, artificial snow, and even a hunting scene (perhaps reminiscent of Edwardes's theatrical coup years earlier), this play included all the spectacle of a courtly presentation. Christ Church spent a total of £86 on the productions—almost one fourth of the entire cost (£350) for Laski's visit.³¹

The similarity to courtly presentation stemmed, at least in part, from the university again seeking assistance from its alumni who had landed employment entertaining the court. For this visit, the university called upon George Peele to help with the theatrical arrangements.³² Peele, just like Edwardes before him, had proven himself a successful court dramatist, as his recent play *The Arraignment of Paris* attested. He, like Edwardes, provided tested success with courtly audiences. As Thomas John Manning notes, the two plays performed during Laski's visit also called for staging techniques that Peele particularly liked. For example, the same kind of machinery that Peele's play used to make the tree of gold rise and Pluto ascend from the underworld could have been used for Sichaeus' entrance from below in *Dido*, and both plays include a storm. Peele may even have suggested the rosewater and confectionary hailstones used in the production, for as Manning also observes, they "seem more appropriate to the sumptuous world of Peele's mythological pastoral than to the austerity of Gager's neo-Senecan tragedy."³³ With such spectacular productions in conjunction with the care put into the rest of Laski's visit, it was no wonder that "y^e Prince Laskey [...] made such report here of y^e great entertainment you gaue him." Leicester, then Chancellor of Oxford, wrote these words in a letter dated 28 June 1583. In this letter—read during Convocation—the Chancellor expresses thanks not only on his behalf but also on behalf of Elizabeth.³⁴ It is one thing for Leicester as Chancellor to express his thanks, but when he indicates that Elizabeth expresses hers as well, he implies that the university entertained on the crown's behalf, thus making this entertainment an extension of the court's hospitality. In effect, the crown was treating the university as a royal ancillary.

The Entertaining Academic: Character in Vogue on the Public Stage

One year before assisting Oxford University with preparations to entertain Leicester, Lyly took his play *Campaspe* to court. In the play, he represents such famous philosophers as Plato and Aristotle entertaining their ruler, Alexander the Great. This dramatic scene, which David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen call “the royal quiz-show,”³⁵ is a precursor to the trend that will materialize historically in the next few years. In *Campaspe*, Alexander not only charges the intellectuals “to instruct the young with rules, confirm the old with reasons,”³⁶ but, more importantly, goes on to question them for his own amusement. Throughout this scene, the philosophers are all deference, eagerly expressing such sentiments as “We are all here ready to be commanded, and glad we are that we are commanded” (1.3.75–6). The scholars’ willingness to provide entertainment, Lyly implies, goes hand-in-hand with submission. Lyly, however, lightly criticizes their subservient stance by juxtaposing it with the cynic Diogenes and his resistance to comply with Alexander’s summons to court. According to Melippus’ report of Diogenes’ response, the Cynic had said, “If Alexander would fain see me, let him come to me; if learn of me, let him come to me” (1.3.17–18). Refusing to budge, Diogenes stands firm on his position as an advisor, more fit to instruct than to entertain. As of *Campaspe*’s court-performance in 1584, England’s academic men had not yet been requested to entertain the crown at court, but Lyly is already associating scholars with entertainment and at-court entertainment with a subservient position—connections that, eight years later, come into literary vogue and royal request.

In the late 1580s and early ’90s, the figure of the academic enjoyed brief popularity on the professional stage and in the bookstalls.³⁷ Although scholars have long noted the popularity of the foolish scholar character in this period (and the frequent representations of this figure as a magician), they have not stressed that these examples all involve performing for royalty. These literary representations written by university alums suggest that some university men did notice that the traffic between crown and gown had become increasingly focused on courtly entertainment. While these university wits surely over-represent the foolishness of the entertaining scholar to boost sales and box office revenues, their works make evident why Vice Chancellor Still expressed such nervousness at having his university men called upon as professional stage-players, and why, earlier that same year, William Gager emphasized that his university men were not like Roscius, the famous professional actor from Roman antiquity. These literary representations express the concerns that the university men themselves could not voice so overtly: that when scholars perform for royalty, the nature of the learned activities is skewed towards entertainment, and without this emphasis on their learned authority, they become disempowered.

Greene in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and Nashe in *The Vnfortvnate Traveller* each took particular care to depict university scenes that pointedly matched Elizabeth’s progresses.³⁸ In *The Vnfortvnate Traveller*, narrator Jack Wilton and the Earl of Surrey witness a royal visit when, from “the verie pointe of

our entrance into Wittenberg, we were spectators of a verie solemne scholasticall entertainment of the Duke of Saxonie thether."³⁹ Jack proceeds to describe a visit almost identical to Elizabeth's progresses. The Duke is greeted with orations by both university figures and a town dignitary, is honored with shouts of well-wishes from the university men lined up according to degree, and then proceeds to attend disputations and plays. Likewise, Greene bases *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* somewhat on the visit to Oxford in 1583 when Polish Palatine Laski was lavishly entertained with sumptuous banquets and entertainments full of spectacle. Friar Bacon honors the royal entourage with an exotic buffet, and Greene emphasizes that such a gluttonous feast⁴⁰ is sharply out of place at a university by having Bacon first bring out the scholar's meal of broth and pottage (scene 9). Greene also alludes to Laski's visit when he has Friar Bacon, as England's pride,⁴¹ soundly defeat Germany's scholar, Friar Vandermast—an event that exacts revenge on one of the visitors present at the 1583 visit: hermetic philosopher Giordano Bruno. Bruno, who visited Oxford in Laski's train, had mocked Oxford men in his *La Cena de le Ceneri* (1584). Greene turns the tables on Bruno's expressions of triumph by depicting his Vandermast as clearly inferior to Bacon.⁴²

Greene similarly demeans Vandermast by including this character as part of the sequence that links scholars with royal entertainment. This theme begins before the royal entourage arrives at Oxford, when the university officials are deliberating about what events to prepare for the royal guests. Significantly, they suggest only plays until they realize they should plan a disputation because Vandermast is coming: "We must lay plots of stately tragedies, / Strange comic shows, such as proud Roscius / Vaunted before the Roman emperors."⁴³ Their ideas for plays cover the standard range typically prepared for important royal guests: both tragedies and comedies; however, they liken the kind of plays to those that Roscius—a *professional* actor from antiquity—put on for his political leaders. They take a professional actor's choices as their model. Interestingly enough, though, we never see any of these plays, and the closest we get to entertainment for the royalty is the disputation between Vandermast and England's own Bungay. The disputation begins quasi-seriously with a discussion of "whether the spirits of pyromancy or geomancy be most predominant in magic" (9.24–5); yet, this hermetic question soon devolves into a conjuring match. And the royal company actually prefers the change in tone. After watching in silence as Vandermast and Bungay dispute, they suddenly perk up with interest when the learned men try to out-magic each other. Enthusiastically, the Emperor of Germany cheers, "Now, English Harry, here begins the game, / We shall see sport between these learned men." After Bungay responds with his (rather inferior) magic, King Henry chimes into this "sport" with pride in his own team, saying, "What say you, royal lordings, to my friar? / Hath he not done a point of cunning skill?" (9.76–7, 9.84–5). These royals prefer spectacle to entertain them. Intellectual contest cannot compare.

Although this disputation in Greene's play begins as learned demonstration, Nashe implies that entertainment is already built into academic demonstration when scholars perform for royalty. Throughout the scene at Wittenberg, Nashe

repeatedly emphasizes this theme of mirth. Jack describes the Duke's visit as "scholasticall entertainment"; the events the scholars plan for the Duke are "the chiefe ceremonies of their intertainment" (2.246); the University Orator's speech is described as "pageant" (2.247); and Jack bores easily when Luther and Carolostadius dispute about the Mass: the "particulars of their disputations I remēber not [...]. [T]hey vttered nothing to make a man laugh, therefore I will leaue them. Mary, their outwarde iestures would now and then afford a man a morsel of mirth: of those two I meane not so much as of all the other traine of opponents & respondents" (2.250). Jack cares not at all for the substance of the arguments—he gauges the success of the whole progress solely on the basis of amusement. Although this interest is clearly in line with Jack's own pleasure-seeking nature, Nashe uses his narrator to make a point. Nashe plants this emphasis on entertainment through Jack's voice but then extends it to the ridiculous nature of the events themselves—acts that clearly are trivial pleasures. Several of the disputants sink particularly low. One intellectual, "seeing the Duke haue a dog he loued well, which sate by him on the tarras, conuerted al his oration to him, and not a haire of his tayle but he kembd out with comparisons" (2.251). Another scholar "commented and descanted on the Dukes staffe, new tipping it with many queint epithites" (2.251–2). Although speeches on such frivolous themes occur frequently in the tradition of oratory, they still reduce the scholar to a foolish comedian, wishing more to please than to enlighten. Once the monarch becomes an audience sheerly for entertainment, the semblance of wise counsel is gone.

Marlowe, too, gets in a jab at intellectuals who seek to amuse royalty—an amusement that repeatedly resembles theater. In fact, scholar Thomas Healy comments on theater-making as perhaps the dominant force in *Faustus*, observing that this "play's preoccupations with creating theatre, with organizing performances, may come to seem its ultimate rationale."⁴⁴ When Faustus returns from his world-tour with Mephistopheles, his colleagues at Wittenberg respond appropriately to Faustus's role as a scholar. The Chorus relates that,

Touching his journey through the world and air,
They put forth questions of astrology,
Which Faustus answered with such learned skill
As they admired and wondered at his wit.⁴⁵

When Faustus arrives at the Emperor's court, however, his learned skill is called upon for entertainment. He presents the Emperor with life-like representations of Alexander and his paramour and then satisfies this ruler's ridiculous curiosity about whether Alexander's paramour had a mole or wart on her neck. In the B-text, this moment is presented essentially as theater, specifically as a dumb show: Alexander slays Darius and then crowns his paramour. Although the extent of Marlowe's hand in the B-text is controversial, it is interesting that the 1616 text emphasizes the theatricality of this moment. Even after this scene, Marlowe continues the vein of foolish performance for rulers when Faustus next visits the

Duke and Duchess of Vanholt. As Faustus enters with the Duke, the Duke thanks him for “merriment.” Faustus continues to amuse him by putting horns on the knight’s head and then getting grapes for the pregnant Duchess.

In such instances of entertainment, one could argue, as Alan Shepard does, that the ruler looks as foolish as the academic because the ruler is so easily pleased with ridiculous pranks and trivial knowledge.⁴⁶ Like Sir Philip Sidney’s discussion in *A Defence of Poetry*, pleasing literature is ideally suited to sugarcoat virtue and wisdom for children.⁴⁷ These moments in the plays thus depict royalty as having the academic maturity of a child. Yet the scholar-figures do not seem to notice the discrepancy; in fact, they follow along, completely willing to pander to and sustain the monarchy they amuse. Friar Bacon begins Greene’s play hoping to serve England by surrounding it with a protective wall of brass (an appropriate interest for Greene to include, considering the recent defeat and continuing threat of the Armada). In the end, however, Bacon abjures all magic except for one last prophecy in which he foretells the arrival of a queen (Elizabeth) who will reign in peace. Interestingly, his emphasis on Elizabeth’s ability to create peace negates any need for the service of protection he originally hoped to create.⁴⁸ Elizabeth is a queen who does not need such service. Bacon’s position of flattering this future “Diana’s rose” also represents the complete reversal of authority. As Peter Mortenson notes, Bacon’s powers are repeatedly “related to aspects of the moon goddess: celestial Luna; earthly Diana, chaste goddess of love and beauty; and underworld Hecate, witch goddess of death, destruction, and necromancy.”⁴⁹ Early in the play, Bacon likens himself to Luna-Hecate, when he vows to “circle England round with brass” (2.171), but at the end, he gives over his connection with Luna-Hecate to honor instead another Luna-figure: Elizabeth as Diana. His power, connected to his “scholarly” service, is subsumed into royal flattery.

In *Faustus*, Marlowe follows a similar trajectory that leads to abject adulation. Faustus initially turns to magic because it promises “a world of profit and delight, / Of power, of honour, of omnipotence” (1.1.55–6), but he ends up performing superficial spectacle and voicing obedience to rulers. He pulls a prank on the sarcastic knight by putting cuckold’s horns on the nobleman’s head and claiming that he did it not so much to revenge the knight’s nasty comments as to delight the Emperor: “My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he offered me here in your presence as to delight you with some mirth” (4.1.90–92).⁵⁰ In his interest to amuse, appropriately enough, Faustus is all humility and deference: “My gracious sovereign, though I must confess myself far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable to the honour of your Imperial Majesty, yet, for that love and duty finds me thereunto, I am content to do whatsoever your Majesty shall command me” (4.1.13–18). He uses similar language again right before he exits: “Now, my good lord, having done my duty, I humbly take my leave” (4.1.96–7). No longer the Faustus who stood ready to pursue forbidden knowledge to gain absolute political power, he ends up voicing duty and obedience. This change is particularly striking in his obeisance to the Duke of Vanholt who has minimal authority as the ruler of a small kingdom. Faustus’s last line to him

echoes his earlier humility to the Emperor: “I humbly thank your Grace” (4.2.37). The Faustus who began the play hoping to have the world bow to him has been reduced to performing trivial spectacle and acts for royalty—and thanking them for the favor they promise as reward for his acts of amusement.

Although such instances of entertainment demean the scholar, Greene and Nashe save the greatest degradation for scholars performing plays (which makes Nashe’s prose work particularly appropriate). By 1594 when Nashe wrote *The Vnfortunate Traveller*, Elizabeth had already made her requests for a comedy in English to both Oxford and Cambridge. Nashe may have included the Duke’s progress to the University of Wittenberg in *The Vnfortunate Traveller* to comment on this situation or, more generally, on the crown’s repeated requests for plays during the various progresses. Pointblank, Nashe has Jack explain that having scholars perform a comedy is as ridiculous as having a drunk “townie” attempt a learned oration. Jack explains that “The Duke laught not a little” at the townsman’s “ridiculous oration, but that verie night as great an ironical occasion was ministred, for he was bidden to one of the chiefe schooles to a Comedie handled by the scollers” (2.249). True to the scholars’ ineptitude for theater, they prove to be terrible actors—able only, appropriately enough, to portray hunger convincingly. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Greene takes this emphasis on theater one step further. He overtly blurs the boundaries between professional and academic drama—an idea that he has already hinted at through humor earlier in the play. Rafe, who is Prince Edward’s fool (and is posing as the prince), declares, “Doctors, whose doting nightcaps are not capable of my ingenious dignity, know that I am Edward Plantagenet, whom if you displease, will make a ship that shall hold all your colleges, and so carry away the Niniversity with a fair wind to the Bankside in Southwark” (7.69–73). Playing on the idea of the ship of fools, Rafe not only teasingly likens academics to his own vocation as a fool but also describes moving the university to the Bankside—the current location of the professional Rose theater and the district that would later house both the Swan (1595) and the Globe (1599) theaters as well.⁵¹ Indeed, the accounts place both recorded Elizabethan productions of the play at the Rose (1592 by Lord Strange’s Men and 1594 by a joint effort between the Queen’s Men and Sussex’s Men). Through this allusion, Greene begins to merge the university and the public stages, the scholar and the professional actor, and, interestingly enough, he puts these words into the mouth of a character who is impersonating royalty.

1592: University Man vs. Professional Player

Rafe’s playful, “royal” threat to bring the university to a professional theater may have seemed pure humor in 1589–92 (or it may be the professional theater’s attempt to solidify its status as artistically superior to the socially elite university men). This parallel between professional and academic theater is not so farfetched, however, when the crown expected university men to present comedies in English for its entertainment in 1592. What makes the queen’s expectations so striking is

not that the academic and the courtly stages were worlds foreign to each other, for they had crossed over repeatedly and increasingly during the reign. What is striking is that the crown makes this request in the *same year* that the university stage has made particularly pointed efforts to distinguish itself from the professional theater. Throughout the 1580s, university officials had sought such distinction by repeatedly prompting the crown to issue injunctions that banned professional players from performing within a five-mile radius of each university. Yet the events of 1592 suggest a new urgency in separating the university actor from the professional player. This pivotal year began with controversy over academic drama when John Rainolds openly condemned it as immoral and frivolous. This attack prompted William Gager to defend academic drama as precisely that—academic. Gager stressed the educational and pedagogical functions of university productions, emphasizing that they allowed scholars to practice Latin and Greek as well as essential skills in oratory. Within days of Gager's response, his position received (perhaps quite by accident) the highest official support: the crown announced its plans to revisit Oxford. The crossover between Gager's defense of university drama and the choices the university made for (what would be) Elizabeth's final university progress reveal that, by 1592, university men, like their fellows writing popular plays professionally, were becoming aware of the implications of their and the crown's frequent interactions involving entertainment—and they realized that the crown needed reminding of the distinction just as much as anyone else. In response, they sought to preserve and to emphasize their identity as university men.

At the heart of Gager's defense of university drama is the separation between academic and professional playing. Gager begins this distinction in the final two epilogues to his play *Hippolytus*—the two epilogues that will eventually spark Rainolds's ire. For the first epilogue, Gager created the figure of Momus, a figure Rainolds believed referred to him. Then, the speaker in the second epilogue answered all of Momus's objections by emphasizing that, in part, university men are not professional actors who are skilled in this art, for “non histrionam didicimus, Roscii / nescimus artem. ludii nos nec sumus” (ll. 369–70) (“We have not studied acting, we are ignorant of Roscius' art. We are not professional actors” [2.215]). When Gager responds to Rainolds's attack five months later, he continues this argument. He claims that he thought Rainolds's original criticisms were “spoken agaynst *Histriones*, and not agaynst *Schollares*” (4.258), and then emphasizes later in the letter how different (and essentially lacking) university playing is from its professional counterpart:

Next I denye that we are to be termed *Scenici*, or *Histriones*, for cumminge on the Stage once in a yeere, or twoe yeere, sevne, ten, or somtyme twentye yeeres. [...] First therfor I saye, we differ from them alltogether in the manner bothe of setting owte Playes, and of actinge them. thay did it with excessyve charge; we thriftely, warely, and allmost beggerly; thay acted their Playes in an other sorte than we doe, or can, or well knowe

howe; but so exquisitly, and carefully, that we may seeme, compared with them, eyther for skill, or diligence, rather *Recitare*, which you doe not dislike, than *Agere*. [4.263]

Gager claims that university productions pale in comparison to the professional stage in “beggerly” production and careful but not skillful acting, and yet history—specifically the productions of Gager’s own plays—contradicts his claims. Gager is selective in his memory of what university productions have entailed, particularly at Oxford. In the previous nine years alone, the university had mounted lavish entertainment and productions of Gager’s plays for Laski’s and Leicester’s visits. Even if Gager considered these productions as anomalies, many typical productions at the universities included spectacle throughout the sixteenth century.⁵² Significantly, Gager disregards the high-profile instances that contradict his claims—instances that would not have escaped Rainolds who had acted at Oxford for Elizabeth in 1566. Rainolds had played Hippolyta in *Palamon and Arcyte* and had received a financial reward from the queen herself, no less, for his *skillful* performance.

Such productions for the queen would seem to offer perfect support for university drama, and yet Gager does not draw attention to the fact that Elizabeth had attended numerous university productions. Because Gager glosses over these events, it is no wonder that he similarly emphasizes university productions as private, university-only affairs: “We contrarywise doe it to recreate owre selves, owre House, and the better parte of the *Vniversitye* [...] to practyse owre owne style eyther in prose or verse; to be well acquantyed with *Seneca* or *Plautus*; honestly to embowlden owre yuthe; to trye their voyces, and confirme their memories; to frame their speeche” (4.263).⁵³ Considering that Gager emphasizes private performances and drama’s educational function, it is most ironic that, ten days after he writes his letter, the crown notifies Oxford that Elizabeth will visit. Although his works are back in the court’s limelight, Gager and the university officials do not take steps to create productions that so clearly resemble court performances. Gager’s emphasis on academic drama in his letter to Rainolds can explain the choices made for Elizabeth’s final visit. The university does *not* demonstrate the same enthusiasm for performing for the queen, as both it and Cambridge had done in the 1560s. Modern scholars have often attributed some of this waning exuberance to Elizabeth’s age. In fact, the visit prompted only one rather lackluster account, which was not written until James I’s reign. When the university’s choices are placed in the context of the controversy and topical literary representations of the scholar, these decisions resonate with anxiety over the issue of the intellectual as courtly entertainer. The plays Oxford chooses to perform for the queen, the amount of money spent on the productions, and even the fact that the surviving account is written by Philip Stringer, who was a Fellow and Senior Bursar of St. John’s College, Cambridge, as well as one of the University’s Esquire-bedels,⁵⁴ all point to the university’s interest in debunking any connections the crown may make between its university subjects and those studied actors who perform at court.

Although the queen stayed at Oxford for seven days (22–28 September), the university prepared only two plays (in Latin), spent only £31 on those productions, and selected plays already written rather than commissioning new works. They performed *Rivales* by Gager and *Bellum Grammaticale*, thought to be by Leonard Hutton. In the epilogue that Gager wrote for the latter play, we find him making claims similar to those he articulates to Rainolds when he emphasizes the lack of finesse and spectacle that comes with university productions:

nullus ubi dulcis puer,
 nec vestis exquisite, nec symphonia.
 non histrionis Roscii hic vel discitur,
 vel ars docetur. Nostra superavit modum
 inscitia. [ll. 8–12]

[There is no sweet boy here, no elegant costumes nor instrumental music. Here Roscius' art is neither learned nor taught. Our lack of skill surpasses all bounds. (2.249)]

Drawing attention to the lack of both spectacle and skill in acting, Gager reminds his queen that she is watching learned men, not individuals who have studied acting. To emphasize this contrast, Gager mentions that “nullus ubi dulcis puer” (“There is no sweet boy here”), and his use of “puer” may allude to pupils from such grammar schools as his alma mater (Westminster with Udall as its headmaster for years). Because this phrase comes after the idea of teaching and learning acting, however, this reference most likely alludes to the professional troupes of boy-actors who often performed at court as well as the masters who taught them, such as Edwardes, Lyly, and Peele. Significantly, many of those masters of the children’s companies were the same men who had come to Oxford to help the university men prepare for the court’s visits. No Udall, Edwardes, Lyly, or Peele had been summoned from court to assist with these later productions.⁵⁵ Without such court-focused assistance, these productions are indeed only university drama, which Gager makes quite clear in the prologue he wrote for *Bellum Grammaticale*, noting the play’s purely academic subject-matter: “rex nominalis rexque verbalis solent, / academica mera iurgia ac rixae irritae” (ll. 14–15) (“That is to say, the sort that the Noun King and the Verb King are accustomed to hurl, really [are] just academic wrangling and ineffectual squabbles” [2.249]).⁵⁶

Clearly, though, Gager’s and the university’s efforts to depict a gulf between their productions and the professional stage were not successful, for less than three months later, the crown made its request to both universities for a comedy at Christmas. Vice Chancellor Still’s letter is dated 10 December, and the timing of this letter begins to shed light on why Stringer, in his meager account of the plays for the Oxford progress, may have purposely written his descriptions so sparingly. In December of 1592, Stringer had also participated in Cambridge’s attempts to distinguish between professional and academic productions. According to Still’s

papers, a Mr. Stringer was also sent to court on what looks like 10 December—the same day that Still wrote his letter to Lord Burghley. The entry reads: “Alowed vnto Mr Stringer for his charges in A iourney to the Courte the [x] which laye then at Hampton Courte beinge then sent vp with *lettres* for thaduertisinge of the Lord Treasurer of thelection of the Vicechauncellor and the others of the councill for the Renewal of a sute made for the restraunte of <.....> the plaiers beinge then abroad seuen daies.”⁵⁷ If Stringer was at court to encourage the continued ban on professional players and was there at the time when other representatives from Cambridge came bearing Still’s letter, it would explain why his descriptions of the plays are so uninspired. Stringer clearly was not in favor of the professional stage and probably knew about the crown’s request. He certainly would have known about it by the time he wrote the account years later when Oxford was preparing to host James I and wanted descriptions of the visits that had been prepared for Elizabeth. Whether in that December or later, he would have been aware that Elizabeth had treated her university subjects as performing academics. He might not have wished to proliferate this image and thus encouraged Cambridge not to continue on this trajectory.⁵⁸

Just as Gager’s efforts did not affect the crown’s request, so in turn Stringer’s no-nonsense description did not deter the universities from perpetuating and even intensifying the image of university productions as courtly diversion. For James’s visit in 1605, Oxford had the court’s arch spectacle-maker, Inigo Jones, assist them in the preparations. By Charles I’s visit in 1636, university and courtly productions were essentially one and the same: “Although the texts of the royal plays of 1636 were written by Oxford men, the performances themselves were, in every other respect, the product of the king’s usual purveyors of court entertainment.”⁵⁹ By looking back at Elizabeth’s reign, we can see this blurring of the boundaries already beginning early on; in fact, the notion of university men as entertainers for the court continued through at least the 1590s, if not the rest of Elizabeth’s reign. In 1595, some university scholars temporarily did become professional actors performing for the crown when Francis Bacon and the Earl of Essex hired scholars from both Oxford and Cambridge to perform in their Accession Day piece, *Of Love and Self-Love*. Perhaps encouraged by the success of this performance, the crown once again asked the universities to perform at court only a month later, during the Christmas season of 1595. Through such instances, some scholars were indeed becoming entertaining academics for the court.

As Elizabeth and her court increasingly turned to the universities for theatrical entertainment, they diminished the public image of the scholar as a serious figure, and this treatment, I believe, sparked literary production beyond the fawning, entertaining academics that Marlowe, Greene, and Nashe created in their plays for the professional stage. It is in harmony with the crown’s decision to hire scholars such as Lyly and Nashe to write humorous rebuttals to Martin Marprelate’s mocking tracts—requests that call upon intellectuals to adopt an entertaining persona and support the crown’s authority in doing so. In turn, the connection between entertainment and subservience may also explain the popularity of the

underemployed satirist in the 1590s. Literary critics often depict these men as humanist failures of sorts, and yet these writers, by claiming failure to obtain court and government service, articulated a position outside the bondage of entertainment that yoked their university fellows to the crown. University productions for the queen and court were far more than entertaining performances. They altered the intellectual landscape in Elizabethan England and prompted university men to reconsider the type of humanist service they offered to their monarch.

Notes

- 1 Alan H. Nelson, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 1.347.
- 2 In fact, intellectuals at Cambridge had performed a few comedies in English—and one of those (Nicholas Udall's play *Ezechias*) for Elizabeth herself in 1564. By 1592, Cambridge had performed the following comedies in English: *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *Ezechias*, and *Comedy Satirizing the Mayor of Cambridge*. (The latter play is no longer extant but was most likely in English.) For a list of all productions at both universities, see "Appendix IV" in Frederick S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1914), 385–90. In addition, university plays had long been included in the academic curriculum, particularly with the rise of humanism, and many colleges in Cambridge, for example, had gone so far as to institutionalize the performance of plays in their college statutes: St. John's 1545, Queen's 1559, and Trinity 1560. See Alan H. Nelson, "Contexts for Early English Drama: The Universities," in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, ed. Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 141. For a discussion of humanism's influence on Tudor theater, see Kent Cartwright, *Theatre and Humanism: English Drama in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 3 For a discussion of the effect of the monarch's presence on early modern plays, see Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).
- 4 Alan H. Nelson, "Cambridge University Drama in the 1580s," in *The Elizabethan Theatre II*, ed. A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee (Port Credit: P.D. Meany, 1990), 20.
- 5 Critics had long attacked public stage-plays, but 1592 marks the year when university drama also came under attack, beginning with John Rainolds's letter to William Gager. For an overview of antidramatic texts, see chapter seven of J.W.H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism: The Renaissance* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1947); and also Paul D. Streufert's essay in this volume.
- 6 William Gager, *The Complete Works*, 4 vols., ed. Dana F. Sutton (New York: Garland Press, 1994), ll. 370–71; 2.215. For all citations from Gager's Latin works, I follow the quotation in Latin with Sutton's translations, and each

reference includes first the line numbers for the Latin and then the volume and page numbers for the translation. Subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text.

- 7 Linda Shenk, "Transforming Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy: Elizabeth I's Learned Persona in Her University Orations," in *Elizabeth I: Always Her Own Free Woman*, ed. Carole Levin, Jo Eldridge Carney, and Debra Barrett-Graves (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 78–96.
- 8 Even the upstart crow William Shakespeare was intrigued by the entertaining academic. Not only does he liken the artisans to scholars who greet Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* but also in *Love's Labors Lost*, his comic, learned characters Holofernes, Don Armado, and Sir Nathaniel perform a pageant of the Nine Worthies for the king, the princess, and their followers.
- 9 Andreas Höfele, "'So Potent Art': Magic Power in Marlowe, Greene and Shakespeare," in *The Iconography of Power: Ideas and Images of Rulership on the English Renaissance Stage*, ed. György E. Szónyi and Rowland Wymer (Szeged: JATE, 2000), 54.
- 10 Penry Williams, "Elizabethan Oxford: State, Church and University," in *The Collegiate University*, ed. James McConica (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 440, vol. 3 of *The History of the University of Oxford*, 8 vols., 1984–97.
- 11 In the thirteenth century, Henry III had used Oxford as one of his royal residences, but Elizabeth's status as a visitor staying at an English university was unprecedented.
- 12 Nelson, *Cambridge*, 1.227.
- 13 Siobhan Keenan, "Spectator and Spectacle: Royal Entertainments at the Universities in the 1560s," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 86–103. Also in this collection, Jayne Elisabeth Archer and Sarah Knight include commentary on Elizabeth's first two university progresses in their essay "Elizabetha Triumphans" (especially 13–19). These two essays, in addition to Louise Durning's edition of *Queen Elizabeth's Book of Oxford* (trans. Sarah Knight and Helen Spurling [Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2006]) are important recent studies that demonstrate the political centrality of Elizabeth's progresses to the universities.
- 14 Scholars suggest the last few years of Henry's reign as the possible date of composition for *Ezechias* because, in 1545, Udall made an explicit reference to Hezekiah in the preface to *The Paraphrase of Erasmus*, which he addressed to Henry VIII. See William L. Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall* (New York: Twayne, 1965), 82.
- 15 Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 123.
- 16 Quoted in Edgerton, *Nicholas Udall*, 83, my emphasis.
- 17 Elizabeth may indeed have stood up and left this performance. She was never bashful about expressing her disagreement in this fashion, as when she walked

out of a Christmas service in 1559. The Bishop of Carlisle refused to heed her instructions not to elevate the host. Elizabeth made known her (Protestant) disapproval by getting up loudly, turning her back on the priest, and leaving right after the reading of the Gospel. See Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), 51.

- 18 Quoted in Boas, *University Drama*, 383. This section from Guzmán de Silva's letter reads as follows: "entraron los representantes, en habitos de Algunos de los obispos que estan presos, fue el primero, el de Londres, lleuando en las manos vn cordero, como que le yua comiendo, y otros con otras deuisas, y vno en figura de perro, con vna hostia en la boca La Reyna se enojo tanto segun escriuen *que se entro, a priesa en su camara, diziendo malas palabras*" (Nelson, *Cambridge*, 1.242–3).
- 19 Unlike Oxford, Cambridge felt sufficiently comfortable in its affiliation with Elizabeth's religious policies to produce plays that touched on religion. As Edward VI's disputation against the Mass at Cambridge suggests, this university had a strong Protestant tradition. Oxford, in contrast, had been not only the site of the disputation *for* the Mass but also the site where Elizabeth's godfather Thomas Cranmer was burned at the stake for his Protestant practices. In response to religious tensions with Oxford, Elizabeth did not attend any activities on the Sunday of her progress to that university—no sermons, no disputations—not even the play.
- 20 For Nicholas Robinson's account of Richard Edwardes's participation in the visit, see Charles Plummer, ed., *Elizabethan Oxford: Reprints of Rare Tracts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1887), 178–9. See also Ros King, *The Works of Richard Edwards: Politics, Poetry and Performance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 63–87.
- 21 Thomas John Manning, "The Staging of Plays at Christ Church, Oxford, 1582–1592" (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Michigan, 1972), 60.
- 22 Heather Kerr, "Sir Thomas Elyot, 'Marcus Geminus' and a Comedy for Elizabeth I at Oxford, 1566," *AUMLA: Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association* 73 (1990): 142.
- 23 Kerr, "Sir Thomas Elyot," 145–6.
- 24 John R. Elliott, Jr., and Alan H. Nelson (University), Alexandra F. Johnston and Diana Wyatt (City), eds., *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford*, 2 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 1.129. In "Queen Elizabeth at Oxford: New Light on the Royal Plays of 1566," *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988): 220–21, John R. Elliott, Jr., provides both extant versions, and I think the other text more clearly encapsulates this moment of mirth: When the cries of the hounds were mimicked outside, "the young Scholars, who stood in the windows, were so much taken (supposing it was real) that they cried out 'Now now!—there there—he's caught, he's caught.' All which the Queen merrily beholding said, 'O, excellent! those boys in very troth, are ready to leap out of the windows, to follow the hounds.'" These two accounts are also found

- in John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (London: Printed by and for J. Nichols and son, 1823), 2.210–12.
- 25 Nelson, “Contexts,” 142.
- 26 Nelson, *Cambridge*, 1.278.
- 27 Nelson, “Cambridge University Drama in the 1580s,” 21.
- 28 “The Queen’s Ma^{tie} hath willed me to signifie unto you y^t y^e Palatin Lasky y^e nobleman that is nowe out of Polonia mindeth shortly to come downe and see y^e universitie of Oxford, & that her highnes pleasure therefore is y^t he be received of you wth all y^e curtesy & solemnitie y^t you maye” (Quoted in Manning, “The Staging of Plays,” 113, from Bodleian, Twyne MSS. xvii, fol. 170).
- 29 Raphael Holinshed, *THE Third volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587), 1355.
- 30 Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 1355.
- 31 “Such an entertainment it was, that the like before or since was never made for one of his degree; costing the University with the Colleges (who contributed towards the entertainment) about £350” (Nichols, *Progresses*, 2.409).
- 32 In Christ Church’s disbursement book for 1582/83, Peele has given his signature to confirm receipt of £20 “in respect of the playes & intertayment of the Palatine laskie etc. Receiued by me George Peele the xxvjth day of May anno 1583” (quoted in Manning, “The Staging of Plays,” 133). In addition, two other items suggest Peele’s assistance: one that University Archivist Philip Bliss told to Peele’s first editor Alexander Dyce “It(e)m the chardges of a Comedye and a Tragedye and a shewe of fi[r]e works,” and another document listing a Mr. Pille (quoted in David H. Horne, *The Life and Minor Works of George Peele* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952], 62).
- 33 Manning, “The Staging of Plays,” 135. Peele teaming up with Gager was a win-win combination, because even Gager would most likely have brought with him some experience performing for the court. Gager had received his grammar education at Westminster School, whose students, under Udall’s direction, had often performed before Elizabeth at court.
- 34 Quoted in Boas, *University Drama*, 191, from Bodleian, Twyne MSS. xvii, fols. 172–3.
- 35 David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen, “Introduction,” in Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus, A- and B-Texts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 15.
- 36 John Lyly, *Campaspe*, in *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, 3 vols., ed. R. Warwick Bond (Oxford: Clarendon, 1902), vol. 2, 1.3.91–2. Subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text.
- 37 In fact, these representations form an early cluster, but their effects continue beyond this period, as Shakespeare has his Sir Nathaniel and Holofernes put on the laughable pageant of the Nine Worthies for the king in *Love’s Labor’s Lost*; the scholar-figures Studioso and Philomusus consider becoming professional

- actors in the *Parnassus* plays; and Bacon in *John of Bordeaux* conjures up the rape of Lucrece for Emperor Ferdinand.
- 38 University historian Roderick Robertson actually begins his article on drama at Oxford with a quote from *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, making clear the parallels between this play and Elizabeth's progresses; see his "Oxford Theatre in Tudor Times," *Educational Theatre Journal* 21 (1969): 41.
- 39 Thomas Nashe, *The Vnfortunate Traveller*, in *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols., ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 2.246. Subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text.
- 40 For a discussion of this feast as a demonstration of gluttony, see Albert Wertheim, "The Presentation of Sin in 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,'" *Criticism: A Quarterly for Literature and the Arts* 16 (1974): 273–86.
- 41 Frank Ardolino discusses the role of national pride in this play, and he mentions a particularly interesting idea about the close relationship between Oxford and Henry III in the thirteenth century. At this time, Oxford served as a royal residence and the site of many key councils. See his "'Thus Glories England Over All the West': Setting as National Encomium in Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*," *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 9.3–4 (1988): 227. This close relationship reveals the reverse of what I see happening in Elizabeth's reign where the universities were encouraged to be more like the court (and at court) rather than bringing the court to the academy.
- 42 For more discussion of Bruno's visit to Oxford, see Robert McNulty, "Bruno at Oxford," *Renaissance News* 13 (1960): 300–305. Also, see Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964). For connections between Marlowe's *Faustus* and Bruno, see Hilary Gatti, *The Renaissance Drama of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
- 43 Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, ed. Daniel Seltzer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 7.8–11. Subsequent citations will appear parenthetically in the text by scene and line number.
- 44 Thomas Healy, "Doctor Faustus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. Patrick Cheney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 189.
- 45 Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus, A- and B-Texts*, ed. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 4.Chorus.8–11. Subsequent citations, which are taken from the 1604 A-text, will appear parenthetically in the text.
- 46 Alan Shepard, *Marlowe's Soldiers: Rhetorics of Masculinity in the Age of the Armada* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 188–95.
- 47 Sir Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, ed. J.A. Van Dorsten (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 39–40.
- 48 Depicting Elizabeth as a queen who can replace a learned character's contribution to national defense makes sense in light of my recent work on Elizabeth's learned persona. I demonstrate that Elizabeth's educated status

- was often conjured to augment England's image of strength when the nation faced international threat. See my "'To Love and Be Wise': The Earl of Essex, Humanist Court Culture, and England's Learned Queen," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 13.2, Special Issue 16 (2007): 3.1–27; and "Queen Solomon: An International Elizabeth I in 1569," in *Queens and Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Robert Bucholz and Carole Levin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming).
- 49 Peter Mortenson, "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: Festive Comedy and 'Three-Form'd Luna,'" *English Literary Renaissance* 2 (1972): 202–3.
- 50 In the B-text, this moment may contain a reference to the oft-praised scene with the hounds during the performance of *Palamon and Arcyte* before Elizabeth in 1566. Faustus elaborates on the knight's appearance as Actaeon, threatening that "I'll raise a kennel of hounds shall hunt him so / As all his footmanship shall scarce prevail / To keep his carcass from their bloody fangs" (4.1.146–8).
- 51 I am indebted to Jonathan Walker for noting that Rafe's allusion refers specifically to the Rose.
- 52 Nelson, "Cambridge University Drama," 20.
- 53 In contrast, Alberico Gentili, who will enter the fray with Rainolds in 1593 and 1594, defends university playing by emphasizing that Elizabeth and the court have attended productions. See Alberico Gentili and John Rainolds, *Latin Correspondence by Alberico Gentili and John Rainolds on Academic Drama*, trans. Leon Markowicz (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur Universität Salzburg, 1977), 45.
- 54 Boas, *University Drama*, 253.
- 55 This connection between boy-actors and university men performing for the queen merits further study.
- 56 Not only is *Bellum Grammaticale* a wise choice because its subject-matter is exclusively academic but also this choice proves that a moral man can write plays. Hutton had his B.D., and his education in divinity perhaps was useful in disproving Rainolds's criticism that university drama corrupts intellectuals. Rainolds was present at this progress; in fact, on the Tuesday of the visit (26 September), he gave a divinity lecture at 9 A.M., and Gager's play *Rivales* ended that day's activities. The juxtaposition was obvious, and Elizabeth evidently supported her university playwright, for after she delivered her Latin oration at the end of the visit, she "schooled Dr. John Rainolds for his obstinate preciseness, willing him to follow her lawes, and not run before them" (Nichols, 3.146). Such reprimand may have included both Rainolds's Puritan views, which often conflicted with Elizabeth's more conservative Protestantism, as well as his opinions regarding academic drama.
- 57 Nelson, *Cambridge*, 1.346.
- 58 Stringer also wrote an account of James's visit to Oxford in 1605—an account that theater historian John Orrell describes as "rather sniffy"; see his "The Theatre

at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1605,” *Shakespeare Survey* 35 (1982), 130. Clearly, Stringer did not approve of plays, either for the court or for anyone else.

- 59 John R. Elliott, Jr., “Plays, Players, and Playwrights in Renaissance Oxford,” in *From Page to Performance: Essays in Early English Drama*, ed. John A. Alford (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), 191.