

Beyond the Bad Quarto: Exploring the Vernacular Afterlife of Early Modern Drama

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Abstract

Alongside the irregular 'stage history', early English plays also had a 'vernacular afterlife', comprising both a professional strand of performances by strolling players and puppet-masters, and a 'folk' strand of performances by local youths under customary, festive auspices. And while continuity on the high road of theatrical performance, thanks to intervening revolutions in staging and production, is mainly literary, continuity along the low road of the vernacular afterlife, thanks to intervening textual degradation, is more in regard to performance aspects, offering a different set of insights, not least on the matter of relationships between performance and text. Of the various options available, the article undertakes comparative analyses juxtaposing passages found in mummers' plays from ca 1780-1920 with their sources in specific early English stage productions (two plays, an opera, a Tudor interlude, and a droll). They reveal the impact on texts of both re-contextualization and recollection from memory in performance, and point to areas inviting further research, including the persisting significance of the Clown, and a neglected folk drama of amateur, festive performances independent of the mummers' plays, of which a concluding illustration is provided. The exercise is also designed to open up a new research avenue between Theatre History and Folklore, with folk traditions now seen as derivative from, rather than a source for, theatre productions.

Keywords: *Folklore, Mummers, Performance, Plays, Textual degradation*

We are not the London Actors
That act upon the stage
We are the country plough lads
That ploughs for little wage.

Mummers' play from Clayworth,
Nottinghamshire, c 1913-1916
(Tiddy 1923, 241-244)

1. *The Low Road*

Introductions to standard editions of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays designed for academic and critical use have over recent decades included ever-lengthening surveys of their post-Restoration 'stage history', culminating in



television and film productions, evidently on the understanding that this theatrical afterlife is integral to what the play concerned fully is, or in other ways provides a valid avenue of approach to its study and appreciation. This article initiates an exploration of whether the same may also apply to what will be termed the ‘vernacular’ afterlife of early modern dramatic productions – an alternative trajectory comprising non-institutional, extra-theatrical performance traditions. Based on a rather different kind of continuity, this historical low road potentially offers insights usefully supplementing those provided by the high road of literary, ‘legitimate’ theatre, encompassing as it does both specific connections and more general analogies. Indeed it is anticipated that whatever this vernacular afterlife of early English drama has to offer on specific plays, equally valuable may prove the retrospective light it sheds on Elizabethan and Jacobean stage conditions more generally, including those complex relationships between text, print and performance which are the focus of the studies in this volume. To the extent some of the controversial ‘bad’ quartos of early stage plays reflect the impact of preparation for performance, changes in performance or the aftermath of performance under popular auspices (not least if ‘memorial reconstructions’), they should be considered the first phase of this vernacular afterlife, the latter in turn documenting what happened when the same or similar pressures continued operating thereafter, in the trajectory of a play beyond the bad quarto.

‘Afterlife’ is preferred to the *Nachleben* (of which it is a translation) more current in studying the perdurance of Classical and medieval literature – but which would of course be technically correct for a major segment of the topic, the popular success of early English plays in German-speaking lands. ‘Vernacular’ here invokes cultural production corresponding to the ‘Little Tradition’ of Peter Burke’s ground-breaking study (1978), where emphasis is on the hand-made, the local and useful; the achievement of artisanal rather than artistic skills. His title, *Popular Culture*, might be more appropriate for the quantitative and qualitative excesses of the modern mass media, but the Little Tradition does encompass early forms of popular professional entertainment as represented by itinerant entertainers. One significant strand of the vernacular afterlife of early English plays therefore comprises performances by such professionals, particularly the humblest of the latter day strolling players, whose treatment of Shakespeare’s plays seems to have differed in degree rather than in kind from that depicted in Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, not least in the American frontier theatre chronicled by Lawrence Levine (1984). But similarly in England, as noted by Sybil Rosenfeld in her survey of eighteenth-century conditions,

the strollers ... were slow to adopt the methods and organisation of the London companies. They continued in fact to differ but little from the companies of Shakespeare’s day, and can therefore throw light on the methods and manners of the Elizabethan theatre. (1939, 9)

This strand also encompasses the puppet theatre, which by the nineteenth century, at least in Germany, had done interesting things with Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (Mahal 2007, 111-131).

2. *Mummers' Plays: The End of the Line*

What follows will however focus rather on the 'folk' tradition constituted by amateur, local performances under seasonal, festive auspices. Of this folk drama the most intensely studied form comprises the so-called 'mummers' plays':¹ winter house-visit perambulations which, although documented from over a thousand English communities during the 'long' nineteenth century (ca. 1780-1920), have never been fully acknowledged and studied as a form of drama in their own right,² but consigned to an essentially auxiliary role in the study of English theatre history. Initial responses, prompted by the ubiquitous figure of St George, assumed a derivation from late-medieval miracle plays, while more recently it was confidently asserted that since the mummers' plays went back to an ancient fertility ritual, discerned parallels in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama must be a result of 'folk-play influence', or even 'ritual origins' (Pettitt 2005b).

While still occasionally encountered in theatre studies, academic folklorists refuted such notions several decades ago (in the footsteps of anthropologists even earlier), and the most likely scenario now seems to be that the mummers' *plays* only emerged when, from the seventeenth century onwards, various dramatic interludes were inserted into several perambulatory calendar customs which already encompassed a non- or sub-dramatic entertainment. This latter could include various permutations of song, dance and the exhibition of decorated artefacts, the cavorting of beast-figures, or even a sequence of speeches addressed directly to the audience (a pan-European feature identified in German scholarship as the *Reihenspiel* and established in the carnival plays or *Fastnachtspiele* by the fifteenth century). Such shows were performed by men in a 'guise' that might function as *disguise* in concealing identity, and/or as costume in attempting a degree of representation. Customs of this sub- or semi-dramatic kind had certainly developed by the later Middle Ages, and in this form might well have featured in or had influence on stage plays. But the forms with dramatic interludes cannot be documented until after the emergence of the English popular theatre, and any transfer of dramatic material is therefore more likely to have been in the opposite

¹ 'So-called' because the term is rarely encountered among those involved (and is in some ways misleading). The scholarly context for the following is usefully surveyed in Millington 2002, esp. 139-164; see also Fees 1994.

² For a belated attempt, on the basis of desperately few now-living traditions, see Brown 2011, and, from a much wider, international perspective, Tillis 1999.

direction, from stage to custom, by one route or another, in some instances perhaps via those same itinerant entertainers comprising the down-market professional segment of early drama's vernacular afterlife. In such instances, or in transfers via other intermediaries, the mummers' plays are 'the end of the line', the point where, when performances are discontinued (as often in the aftermath of the Great War), development ceases.

In principle these considerations apply to all the dialogue and dramatic action definitive of the major sub-genres of nineteenth-century English mummers' plays and which are common, nationally or regionally, to many local traditions (Chambers 1969; Millington 2002): the mortal combat of the Hero Combat Plays; the execution of the Fool in the Sword Dance Plays, in each instance usually leading to the 'cure' of the slain figure by a quack doctor; the courtship of a Lady by multiple wooers and/or a Fool in the Wooing Plays. But unless or until specific sources are identified it is equally possible that such interludes are better understood as new permutations of established theatergrams (Clubb 1986; Henke and Nicholson 2008; 2014) or dramatic formulas (Pettitt 1988; 2017) common to a broad and extended swathe of western drama from Greco-Roman theatre, through liturgical Easter Plays, German carnival interludes (*Fastnachtspiele*), French farces, and the *Commedia dell'arte*, to the Elizabethan stage and beyond.

What follows, therefore, will examine those few English local traditions, by this same token idiosyncratic, which supplement or substitute the plots and dialogue conventional in the mummers' plays generally with unique material that has been identified as deriving from specific early-modern dramatic productions. It has been suggested (Pettitt 2005a; Petersen 2010), borrowing a leaf from Swiss folklorist Max Lüthi's work on folk narrative, as subsequently applied to ballads (Pettitt 1997, 118), that the changes discernible in some Elizabethan and Jacobean bad quartos (and derivative German scripts) are not altogether haphazard, but can take an original play some steps towards a *Zielform*, an ultimate because inherent shape that, like rock formations after weathering, would fully emerge after further sustained subjection to the stresses of performance tradition. As the *Endform* of one particular line of development in the vernacular afterlife of the stage material concerned, its condition as performed in a mummers' play is technically qualified for assessment as its *Zielform*, but given the sometimes fragmented nature of the material, such assessment would need to be undertaken variously at the level of work, scene, dialogue sequence or even single speech. This aspect will be offered at most passing attention in the essentially exploratory survey that follows, which will focus rather on whether those same discernible discrepancies between folk performance and stage source can provide hints of the path taken by the material concerned on its way to where and how it is now.

From this it will emerge that there existed a parallel but neglected village folk theatre involving amateur performances of plays or extracts from plays

(and other early-modern stage genres) under seasonal, festive auspices other than the perambulatory mummers' plays. As yet we have no textual witness to the forms of say *Doctor Faustus* or *Mucedorus* as performed in this village theatre in the eighteenth century (which they evidently were), but this study will conclude with an instance where we have both the published original of a seventeenth-century stage droll and transcripts of it as performed not merely within a mummers' play but also under these alternative festive auspices one and a half centuries and more later.

Discussion will accordingly find only little room for the wider perspective, that despite or perhaps because of their humble, customary auspices, the mummers' plays offer potentially enlightening survivals of, or analogies to early English drama in matters such as performance 'in the round', all male companies, extensive doubling of parts (with a correspondingly imperfect distinction between player and character), ubiquitous and sometimes improvising clowns/fools (explored by Billington 1984, 117-188) very much in the Elizabethan stage tradition, and a 'presentational' dramaturgy consorting awkwardly with conventional dramatic representation and mimesis. Meanwhile the hundreds of surviving hand-written mummers' play texts include an ample supply of authentic reported texts or 'memorial reconstructions' (written down or dictated by performers), alongside a dozen or so texts printed in chapbook format and 'offered for acting', whose relationship to performance tradition is manifestly of considerable interest, but as yet not fully resolved. Altogether the comparatively simplex mummers' plays may offer a laboratory for developing, testing and refining textual approaches ahead of their application to more complex, early-modern, materials.

3. Case Studies

The following, the as yet only known specific instances of derivative stage material in mummers' plays, were all spotted and discussed by early students of folk drama with an academic background in English Literature (Baskervill 1924; Chambers 1969; Tiddy 1923), but with the exception of the first, there have hitherto been no close, comparative analyses of the respective original and derivative texts from the perspective adopted here.

3.1 *Truro (Cornwall)*: Rosamond

The shortest chronological gap between source and recipient is manifested by the occurrence (presumably spoken) of passages from Joseph Addison's opera *Rosamond* of 1707 in a mummers' play from Cornwall recorded eighty or so years later. The connection has been known for a little over a century, but decisive textual and contextual clarification was achieved by Peter Millington's rigorous re-examination (2003). The 'Play for Christmas', published by local

folklorist Thurstan Peter (1916), was copied in 1905 from a manuscript in the possession of John D. Enys, the head of a major landowning family in the county. Enys stated that it was performed in Mylor, a community adjacent to his main estate (near Penryn), and it was assigned to this place and period in standard works thereafter. However, the text of the play also specifies the names of its five performers (who by doubling managed fifteen characters), and on the basis of official records Peter Millington was able to identify them all as cordwainers resident in the town of Truro and the adjacent parish of Kenwyn, some eight miles from Mylor. Furthermore they would all have been of the usual age (late teens to mid-twenties), and status (unmarried), customary for mummers' play performers, in the late 1780s. Millington also retrieved the original manuscript (misplaced in the interim) from among the Enys family documents now curated by the Cornwall Record Office, and found that paper and orthography likewise pointed to this earlier period. In the process he also determined that its four sheets had at some time before 1905 become disarranged, so that Thurstan Peter's transcript and subsequent editions (Tiddy 1923, 148-156; Chambers 1969, 71-82) misrepresented the structure and coherence of the play.³

The document has, as Millington notes, a 'smudgy appearance' due in part to 'wear and tear', suggesting it may have functioned as a script for performance (2003, 56). That it emerged from, and/or functioned within, a performance context, is also indicated by its consistent attribution of speeches to named performers rather than specific characters. Association with both Truro and Mylor can be explained by the contextual circumstance that Truro and the adjacent parish from which the 1780's players hailed together constituted a manor, of which that same Enys of Mylor family were lords,⁴ and there is a discernible tendency for the earliest recorded mummers' plays to have significant connections with the great houses of the vicinity, including that of the manorial lord, of whom the performers are likely to have been tenants, employees or dependents in some other way. The Truro cordwainers may therefore have performed their Christmas play at the Enys manor houses (as perhaps respective residences of different sub-households) at both Truro and the main estate adjacent to Mylor, a day's walk distant.⁵

³ The play will accordingly be quoted from Millington's online transcript at Traditional Drama Research Group, Folk Play Research Home Page: 'Truro [Formerly Mylor]: "A Play for Christmas", 1780s', <www.folkplay.info/Texts/78sw84em.htm>, accessed 10 January 2019.

⁴ For such contextual information see the Enys Family Archive Project, <<http://enysfamilyarchive.co.uk/>>, accessed 10 January 2019.

⁵ On the basis of local knowledge folklorist Edith Rudkin noted that groups performing Lincolnshire mummers' plays could visit venues up to eight miles from their own community, which would allow them to get back overnight in time for the start of work the next morning (1952, 25). Eight miles a day was also the speed expected of vagabonds and masterless men trudging home after expulsion from major cities in accordance with a royal proclamation of 1551 (Hughes and Larkin 1964, 516).

There is also an understandable tendency for these great house performances to be somewhat more extensive than those vouchsafed to humbler parlours and kitchens, and of what might properly qualify as the ‘Enys Christmas Play’ we can note that its idiosyncrasy largely resides in its extensive textual additions to a fairly standard Hero Combat mummings’ interlude that could function perfectly well without them. The additions comprise substantial passages from a variety of sources, and among those that have been identified we find two sets of speeches from Addison’s opera, *Rosamond*.

The first occurs at the point in the standard Hero Combat plot where the figure slain in the fight is brought back to life by the quack Doctor. He not infrequently gives expression to his bewilderment, but uniquely to this version, rather than the most common formulation (with its own Elizabethan echoes),

Oh horrible, terrible, the like was never seen,
A man drove out of seven senses into seventeen (Chambers 1969, 56)⁶

it comprises the exclamation of wonder by Addison’s Queen Eleanour on first seeing the pleasure-park in which her husband, Henry II, has secluded his mistress, Rosamond:⁷

1.1.	<i>Rosamond. A Tragic-Opera.</i>	Truro ‘Play for Christmas’
	<i>Queen</i>	<i>P. Langdon 14 [Turkish Knight]</i>
1.	What place is here! What scenes appear! Where’er I turn my eyes, All around	What places is are what sees appare whare ever itorn mine eye tis all around
5.	Enchanted ground And soft Elysiums rise: Flow’ry mountains, Mossy fountains, Shady woods,	in chantin ground and soft delusions rise floury mountins mosy fountins
10.	Chrystal floods, With wild variety surprise. As o’er the hollow vaults we walk, A hundred echoes round us talk: From hill to hill the voice is tost,	what will verietty surprize tis on the alow walks we walks an hundrd ecos round us stock from hils to hils the voices tost
15.	Rocks rebounding Caves resounding, Not a single word is lost.	rocks rebounding ecos resounding not one single words was lost.

⁶ Chambers notes the similarity to an outburst by the Clown, Mouse, in the sixteenth-century romance-comedy *Mucedorus*, but at least the expression ‘horrible, terrible’ may have been a catchphrase of Elizabethan clowns more generally.

⁷ Addison’s play *Rosamond* (1707) is quoted from the 1778 edition.

This might, if rather lengthy, be accepted as a plausible outburst of confusion, but any vestige of plausibility is lost when the victor in the combat, St George, continues (it can hardly be qualified as a reply) with lines in a similar spirit originally spoken by Queen Eleanor's Page a little later in the same scene:

	<i>Page.</i>	<i>Henry Crossman 15 [St George]</i>
35.	Behold on yonder rising ground the bower, that wanders In meanders, Ever bending, Never ending,	Behould on yander risen ground the bour that woander ever ending ever bending
40.	Glades in glades, Shades in shades Running an eternal round.	glades an glades shades an shades running on eternal round.

With this the standard Hero Combat interlude is concluded, and there follows the sub-dramatic entertainment, a *Reihenspiel* of speeches to the audience by a series of unrelated figures, starting with Beelzebub.⁸ But when the last of them, the 'King of France', expresses fear of an impending invasion by a 'King Henry', he effectively initiates a second dramatic interlude, a sequence of 7 speeches dramatizing the beginning of Henry V's 1415 invasion that culminated at Agincourt. This does not qualify as part of the vernacular afterlife of Shakespeare's play, but is constructed of dialogue from two ballads, one as yet unidentified, the other the very popular 'King Henry Fifth's Conquest of France', which by the 1780s would have been available both as multiple broadside printings and in oral tradition (Child 1965, 3.320-326).⁹ It provides a scene in which a page delivers Henry's demands, and when the French King insultingly responds with the familiar offer of tennis balls, the page heralds Henry's imminent arrival. But the words are now Addison's, originally spoken by a quite different page concerning a quite different King Henry:

	<i>Rosamond. A Tragic-Opera.</i>	Truro 'Play for Christmas'
1.1.		
	<i>Page.</i>	<i>Penty Landin 24 [Page]</i>
68.	Hark, hark! what sound invades my ear? The conqueror's approach I hear.	Hark hark wot sonding vads my ears the conquars a porch I hear
70.	He comes, victorious Henry comes! Hautboys, trumpets, fifes and drums, In dreadful concert join'd, Send from afar A sound of war,	tis Henrys march tis Henry tune / I now he comes he comes victorus Henry comes with obboys Tropats fifes and drums send from a far and sound of war
75.	And fill with horror ev'ry wind.	foll of grief and every wind.

⁸ Millington (2003, 56-57) notes that, independently of other confusions, this speech of 'Belzey Bob' has been misplaced in the MS; as indicated by the numbering of speeches it belongs here.

⁹ It may qualify as a *Henry V* 'residual' in B.R. Smith's sense (Smith 2006, 195).

Given the congruence in names and circumstances this is a quite astute intrusion, but again plausibility is sacrificed by the sequel, when the Page continues with an unmotivated emotional outburst actually spoken by Addison's Rosamond in a later scene:

1.4.	<i>Rosamond.</i>	[<i>Penty Landin 24 cont.</i>] [<i>Page</i>]
1.	From walk to walk, from shade to shade, From stream to purling stream convey'd, Through all the mazes of the grove, Through all the mingling tracts I rove,	from walk to walk from shade to shade from Strim to poolin strim comvaidd thru all the minglin of the groove thru all the minglin tracks of love
5.	Turning, Burning, Changing, Ranging, Full of grief, and full of love!	tyrmin burnin changin Rangin full of grfe and full of woe
10.	Impatient for my Lord's return,	impashent from my Lords return.

This is our first glimpse of the 'end of the line' in the vernacular afterlife of material from a stage production, but in this instance its first seventy years or so followed not the low road of increasingly popular performance, but the broad avenue of print. In a study prompted by Millington's (Pettitt 2003), I established, on the basis of minor textual variations, that the passages interpolated into the Truro play were specifically from *Rosamond. A Tragic-opera*, printed in London by J. Harrison and J. Wenmann in 1778 (accordingly the edition cited in the above comparisons). This was nonetheless something of a cultural come-down, an octavo volume in a cheap series of dozens of popular theatre classics. Aimed at what a modern publishing historian has called 'the lower end of the trade', it was probably within the financial means of our Truro cordwainers, but may also have been aimed at, and accessed via, the period's circulating libraries (Bonnell 2008, 180-181).

In the remaining ten or a dozen years before transcription in the Enys manuscript these passages have nonetheless undergone, if not much by way of approaching a *Zielform*, at least a rapid vernacularisation. While the play manuscript may have been designed to function as a script for later performances (a 'pre-text'), the discrepancies from the printed source suggest it was also a transcript of anterior performances (a 'post-text'). The changes are not those of scribal copying. The transcriber evidently wrote down what he heard, in the dialect in which it was spoken, and some discrepancies may result from this process alone: say 'seens appare' for 'scenes appear' (1.1.2), or 'round us stock' for 'round us talk' (1.1.13). At some point these modulate into what are more likely a transcriber's rationalizing of what he heard, such as 'the conquars a porch I hear' for 'The conqueror's approach I hear' (1.1.69). But 'Soft delusions rise' for 'soft Elysiums rise' (1.1.6), is, however and by whomever achieved, a viable substitution.

Other changes result from inexact recall on the part of the performers, not least the few instances of internal verbal contamination, established in

ballad studies as symptomatic of transmission via memory and performance: that is, when formulation at one point in a word-sequence influences that at another, producing a verbal repetition (Pettitt 2005a). The Truro play has instances of this both at close proximity (a single word):

<i>Rosamond. A Tragic-Opera.</i>	Truro 'Play for Christmas'
1.1.13 A hundred <u>echoes</u> round us talk: From hill to hill the voice is tost, Rocks rebounding Caves resounding	→ an hundred <u>ecos</u> round us stock from hills to hills the voices tost rocks rebounding → <u>ecos</u> resounding.

and at a distance (a phrase):

<i>Rosamond. A Tragic-Opera.</i>	Truro 'Play for Christmas'
1.1.75 And <u>fill</u> with horror ev'ry wind. ...	→ <u>fol</u> of <u>grief</u> and every wind.
...	[... eight lines intervene]
1.4.9 <u>Full of grief, and</u> full of love!	→ <u>full of grfe</u> [<i>sic</i>] and full of woe.

Particularly intriguing is the one point at which the Truro play *adds* a line to a speech of Addison's:

<i>Rosamond. A Tragic-Opera.</i> <i>Page.</i>	Truro 'Play for Christmas' <i>Penty Landin 24</i> [= Henry's Page]
1.1.68 Hark, hark! what sound invades my ear? The conqueror's approach I hear.	Hark hark wot <u>sounding vads</u> my ears the conquars a porch I hear
70. He comes, victorious Henry comes!	<u>tis Henrys march tis Henry tune / I now</u> he comes he comes victorus Henry comes

This is not an addition of external material, however, for the line concerned derives from a speech by a quite different character in a later scene of Addison's *Rosamond*:

1.4. <i>Sir Trusty</i> (Rosamond's guardian)	<i>Penty Landin 24</i> [= Henry's Page]
71. But hah! a <u>sound</u> my bower <u>invades</u> , And echoes through the winding shades; ' <u>Tis Henry's march! the tune I know</u> ...	Hark hark wot <u>sounding vads</u> my ears the conquars a porch I hear <u>tis Henrys march tis Henry</u> <u>tune / I now</u>

This is technically another instance of internal verbal contamination, only now at a considerable distance, triggered, it would seem, by the occurrence of 'sound ... invades' in an adjacent line at both points. But it also has implications for the trajectory by which the Addison material reached the end of this particular line, for the contamination could of course occur only if the performer concerned was also familiar with the speech in a different scene from which this line derives. This in turn has to mean that the originating scene was previously part of one of his roles, suggesting either that the passages from Addison's *Rosamond* in the Truro Play were previously more substantial, but subject to loss in the interim, or more plausibly that our Truro cordwainers performed *Rosamond* as a whole (not a long text anyway, but perhaps in a cut-down form) under auspices other than the mummers' play and which will emerge in subsequent discussion here. This would also explain the presence of those speeches from Addison which are dramatically inappropriate for the new context in the mummers' play.

3.2 *Brant Broughton (Lincolnshire): Wily Beguiled*

There is a longer gap between the mummer's play from Brant Broughton, Lincolnshire, recorded in 1824 (Baskervill 1924, 250-258), and the late-Elizabethan stage play, *Wily Beguiled*, last printed in 1638 (Maxwell 1922, 206 n. 1), which provides a segment of its dialogue. Baskervill locates the former to the Broughton close to Brigg in north Lincolnshire, but in his detailed folkloristic study of the Lincolnshire plays Robert Pacey suggests rather the Brant Broughton (known locally simply as 'Broughton') further south (Pacey 2014, I, 104-105). It is one of several mummers' Wooing Plays in a manuscript collection which was probably assembled at the behest of a gentry household, the Bromheads of Thurlby Hall, perhaps because they had witnessed performances. As already noted groups perambulating with a mummers' play were particularly attracted to the great houses of the locality, and the two other plays in the collection for which a location is specified, Bassingham and Swinderby, were respectively one and a half and three miles from the Bromhead residence, Brant Broughton itself six miles distant.

Of the Brant Broughton Play the manuscript collection actually contains three texts, in different hands, which have a complex and as yet not fully resolved relationship to each other, to performance, and to a possible lost original (Baskervill 1924, 250 n. 2), although they vary only in details. Baskervill published the version he called 'A' which was in a clear hand, correct spelling and neatly set out, but the text cited below ('B', established from Baskervill's collation) is preferred here as its scribe 'wrote crudely' with 'many ... errors ... in grammar and spelling' and so is more likely to have been a performer, Baskervill noting of the collection more generally that 'It is obvious not only from the handwriting but from spelling and other features of the text that some of the plays were written down by uncultured actors who performed in them' (1924, 241). And indeed in a couple of details B is closer to the formulation in

the source than is A. The writer of text B signed himself at the end ‘Thomas Carr 1824’, almost certainly the person of this name registered in the England and Wales census of 1851 as living in nearby Bassingham (which was also his birthplace). His age in 1824, on the basis of the ‘estimated’ birth date specified, would have been around 21, quite typical for a mummers’ play performer, as was his bachelor status (he married in 1833), and indeed (in view of the Truro tradition) his occupation of cordwainer.¹⁰

Wily Beguiled meanwhile is an entertaining love-and-money ‘Pleasant Comedy’ (which in other respects may be indebted to folk traditions), but the material that made it into the Brant Broughton play derives exclusively from the Jonsonesque metadramatic Induction, where a figure personifying the Prologue is informed that the play to be performed is *Spectrum* (evidently a moral satire), but successfully insists it be replaced by *Wily Beguiled*. This is achieved in some lively comic dialogue, extracts from which interrupt the Brant Broughton play with considerable awkwardness: in their absence, the sequence of dialogue and action would have been much more logical and indeed traditional, and we may again be in the presence of a local play enhanced with additional material for a special, great house, performance.

As recorded, the play begins with a conventional enough Presentation in which a figure who introduces himself as the Fool, but who is interestingly labelled by this reporter as ‘Merryman’, greets the audience and heralds the arrival of the performers (Baskervill 1924, 250-252)¹¹:

Enter Merryman.
Gentlemen and Ladies
I’m com’d to see you all
This merry time of Christmas,
I neither knock nor call
I come in so brisk and bold
with confidence I say.
What can you expect of a Fool
w[h]ich knows no other way.

¹⁰ For the 1851 census (in which Bassingham was covered under Nottinghamshire): ‘England and Wales Census, 1851’, database with images, *FamilySearch* (<<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:SGDY-6RN>>, accessed 10 January 2019), Thomas Carr, Bassingham, Nottinghamshire, England; citing Bassingham, Nottinghamshire, England, p. 8, from ‘1851 England, Scotland and Wales census’, database and images, *findmypast* (<<http://www.findmypast.com>>, accessed 10 January 2019); citing PRO HO 107, The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey; for the 1833 marriage: ‘England Marriages, 1538–1973’, database, *FamilySearch* (<<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NVK7-XBH>>, accessed 10 January 2019), Thomas Carr and Hannah Moore, 14 Oct 1833; citing Bassingham, Lincoln, England, reference, index based upon data collected by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Salt Lake City; FHL microfilm 1542190 IT 2. The records have no plausible candidates for a Thomas Carr at the northern Broughton.

¹¹ The line numbering is Baskervill’s, but lineation has been rearranged here for purposes of comparison.

10. for A Fool I know I am
indeed and so do you
for fools and little children
for most parts speaks true.

Having introduced himself it is the next task of such a Presenter to introduce the performers, but our Merryman does so in a stanza that mixes the traditional ‘make room’ formula with phrases from the Induction to *Wily Beguiled* (underlined):

My name is noble Anthony
as live and as blyth and as mad
and as melancholy as A mantletree
make room for noble Anthony
and all his Jovial Company.

It would be appropriate enough for material from a stage Induction to form part of its folk play equivalent (conventionally termed the Presentation), but the play-proper begins immediately with the entry of the Lady, complaining of her lack of suitors (ll. 18-25). She would, as normal, have at once been wooed by a series of ‘Ribboners’ (beribboned dancers), had not the first of them (First Ribboner) instead engaged with the Merryman in the entirely unrelated dialogue extracted from *Wily Beguiled*:¹²

Wily Beguilde
London: Clement Knight,
1606 Induction (Baskervill
1924, 251-252, n. 10)¹²

Brant Broughton Wooing Play
Baskervill 1924, B-version

Prologue.
What hoe,
where are these paltrie Plaiers?

stil pouring in their papers
and neuer perfect?
5 for shame come forth,
your Audience stay so long,
their eies waxe dim
with expectation.

26. *[Merryman.]*
Heigh, O
w[h]ere is all this paulty and poor
Still paulty in this place
and yet not perfect
for shame, step forth

peoples eyes looks dim
with the very red expectations.

Enter one of the Players
How now my honest Rogue;

1st Ribboner
How now me Hamorous George

¹² Line numbering supplied here.

- [cf. ll. 31-33] 30. as live and blyth and as mad
and as melancholy
as a Mantletree
10. what play shall we haue
here to night?
Player
Sir you may looke vpon the
Title.
Prologue
What. Spectrum once again?
Why noble Cerberus,
15. nothing but patch-pannell stuffe,
olde gally-mawfreies
and cotten-candle eloquence?
out you bawling bandogge
20. fox-furd slaue:
you dried stockefish you,
out of my sight.
Exit the Player
...
Enter a Iuggler
Iuggler
Why how now humerous George?
what as melancholy as a mantletree?
Will you see any trickes of Leigerdermaine,
slight of hand, clenly conuayance,
35. or deceptio visus?
what will you see Gentleman
to driue you out of these dumps?
Prologue
Out you soust gurnet, you Woolfist,
be gon I say and bid the Players dispatch
40. and come away quickly,
...
Merryman
Zounds what a man have I got here
45. *Iuggler*
O Lord sir ye are deceiued in me,
I am no tale-carrier, I am a Iuggler.
I haue the superficial skill
of all the seuen liberall sciences
at my fingers end.
40. *1st Ribboner*
you Quiet mistake in me.
i'm no talker I'm a Juggler.

50. Ile shew you
a tricke of the twelues,
- And turne him ouer the thumbes
with a trice.
Ile make him fly
55 swifter then meditation.
Ile shew you as many toies
as there be minutes in a moneth,
and as many trickes
as there be motes in the sunne.
- Prologue*
60 Prithce what trickes canst thou doe?
Juggler.
Marry sir I wil shew you
a trick of cleanly conueiance.
Hei fortuna furim nunquam credo,
With a cast of clean conueyance,
- 65 come aloft Iack
for thy master's aduantage
(hees gone I warrant ye.)
- Spectrum is conueied away:
and Wily beguiled, stands in
the place of it*
- Prologue*
Mas an tis wel done,
now I see thou canst doe something,
70 holde thee thers twelue pence
for thy labour.
Goe to that barme-froth Poet
and to him say,
He quite has lost the title
75 of his play,
His Calue skin iests
from hence are cleane exil'd.
Thus once you see
that Wily is beguil'd.
- I can shew you
the trick of the twelves,
- as many tricks
as is days in A year
- toils and moils
and motes of the Sun.
I have them all upon
my Finger end
- Jack and the loft
quick and be gone.
- Merryman.*
now man I'l warrant the
1st Ribboner
Hey now man
I see thou can do something
hold thy hand, here's a Shilling
for thy labour;
take that to the paultry of thee poor
and thus to them say¹³
50. thou hast quiet lost the title
of this play,
callyflaskin jest
shall slenge our sight
- and you shall hear a new delight.

This is the full extent of the inserted material, after which the First Ribboner finally does proceed with his addresses, ‘Well met fair Lady in this place’ (l. 54).¹³

In addition to its manifest textual reduction and degradation the extract from *Wily Beguiled* has also lost its central stage action, the magic trick by which the Juggler switched titles on the placard displaying the name of the play to be performed. The Brant Broughton performer of the drastically reduced speech at this point may now make some other kind of gesture, or the words may have no practical meaning.

The discrepancies can doubtless be assigned both to an original adapter and to one or more of the players who had performed these roles in the interim. To the latter we may attribute the symptoms often associated with transmission through performance and memory, which also indicate that this is a reported text (a post-text), reflecting earlier performances. These include for example the verbal repetition patterns achieved by an instance of multiple textual contamination. In *Wily Beguiled* the Juggler’s greeting as he enters,

- Juggler*
31. Why how now humorous George?
 what as melancholy as a mantletree?¹⁴

while lost at this point in the Brant Boughton play, reappears earlier as a substitute for the Fool’s greeting to the Player, only now transferred to the Ribboner who has taken over the latter’s role (the ‘Hamorous’ substituted for ‘humorous’, presumably reflecting the Wooing Play context):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Prologue</i></p> <p>9. How now my honest Rogue;</p> | <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>1st Ribboner</i></p> <p>30. How now me Hamorous George
 still as live and blyth and as mad
 as a Mantletree.</p> |
|--|---|

And it was presumably from here that (together with the new ‘...blythe and ... mad’ line) it contaminated Merryman’s opening speech as Presenter, which in itself is not derivative from *Wily Beguiled*. An evidently derivative variant of this speech (with nothing else reminiscent of *Wily Beguiled* but including the added line) appears in the play from Revesby, Lincolnshire (Pettitt 2018, 2.2.6-11, and see below), indicating that the Brant Broughton Play must have been performed with these insertions before 1779.

Other changes, deliberate or otherwise, transform the character of the scene, most notably the redistribution between the characters of such speeches as remain.

¹³ This is one of the points where B is closer to the source than A.

¹⁴ The phrase also occurs in the body of the play at ll. 2474-5 (Malone Soc. edition), in reference to a morose figure. Fleay assumes without comment that it should properly be ‘melancholy as a myrtle-tree’ (1891, II. 159).

The Player has been omitted – incidentally bringing the episode into conformity with Axel Olrik’s ‘law of two to a scene’ characteristic of folk narrative (1965) – and his single line assigned to the First Ribboner. The latter now speaks all the lines that remain of both the Juggler’s part and the Prologue’s, in the latter instance usurping the part initially played by the Merryman who, after the Ribboner’s entry, has only three one-line speeches, none deriving from *Wily Beguiled*. He is effectively reduced to the straight man responding to the Ribboner’s semi-nonsensical solo harangue. On its own terms, and in a vernacular context, it is something of a comic tour de force – exuberant (‘Hey now man; ‘How now; ‘you rolling bolling bangling fool’), nonsensical (‘the paultry of thee poor’), but soundful (‘callyflaskin; ‘tuffcoat calely old callymufus’). Like the familiar harangue of the Quack Doctor, a theatergram which the mummers’ plays share with many forms of early theatre (and which also includes boasting of professional skills), it would not be out of place on the Elizabethan stage. It is appropriate therefore that one of the additions deploys a familiar stage device:

10	<i>Prologue</i> what play shall we haue here tonight	What play have you got here today? <i>Merryman</i> ‘play’ boy? <i>1st Ribboner</i> Yes play.
----	--	---

I have supplied punctuation to indicate that it involves one character querying a term just used by another: it is fairly common in Elizabethan stage dialogue involving the Clown (not least in possibly ‘bad’ texts such as the A-Text of *Doctor Faustus*, *The Taming of A Shrew* and *The Famous Victories of Henry V*), and might even have been inserted by a frustrated performer in the role of Merryman.¹⁵

3.3 *Revesby (Lincolnshire)*: The Interlude of Youth

With a documented performance in 1779, the Revesby Play has long been hailed as the earliest complete mummers’ play text, and on this account, alongside its unusual length and complexity, it has been the object of extensive analysis and discussion (reviewed in Preston 1972). Like several others examined here it is a medley, composed of material from a variety of mummers’ play genres and other customary perambulations. The British Library manuscript, long the only text available and the source of all printed editions (notably Chambers 1969, 105–120) is headed ‘The Plow Boys, or Morris Dancers’ (Preston, Smith and Smith

¹⁵ In Baskervill’s A text the same device figures in another of the added lines, if with the roles reversed (*Merryman*. Zounds what a man have I got here? 1st Ribboner. man? you mistake me ...), but our B text lacks the repetition of ‘man’.

1976), suggesting an at least historical association with plough-trailing, and correspondingly that the interlude will include a wooing plot. This it does, but the wooers include a set of dancers who also perform sword dances, and although Revesby is some way outside the normal geographical range of Sword Dance plays, this one includes its characteristic interlude, in which the Fool is executed in the traditional way by a ring of interlaced swords around his neck (Pettitt 1981).

Such complexity in relation to regular customary house-visit shows again suggests special circumstances, and in this instance a specific great house connection is indicated by both internal and external evidence. The British Library manuscript has a note to the effect that 'October ye 20 1779 the Morrice Dancers ... acted their merry dancing &c at Revesby in their Ribbon dresses ...' (Preston, Smith and Smith 1976, 5)

Revesby Abbey in Lincolnshire was the seat of Sir Joseph Banks, celebrated botanist and antiquarian, where he lived with his sister, Sara Sophia Banks, who wrote her name and the date 1780 at the top of one of its pages (Preston 1972, 81 – this page not included in the Preston, Smith and Smith facsimile). Most of the dramatic material in the play is traditionally associated with mummers' plays of Christmastide, and one segment of the play makes specific reference to performance at this season. October 20th therefore indicates a special occasion in calendrical as well as social terms, and it is generally reckoned that the play in this form was produced in connection with the annual fair at Revesby, when, Sir Joseph remarked in 1783, 'according to immemorial custom I am to feed and make drunk everyone who chooses to come, which will cost me in beef and ale near 20 pounds' (Malcolmson 1973, 69). The fair of 1779 might have been particularly significant in marking the first appearance of Sir Joseph's new wife at his country seat (Helm 1965, 125): there is sporadic evidence that in elite families nuptial revels, which anyway could involve out-of-season performances of customary shows, might be extended to include the bride's introduction to her husband's household (the nuptials themselves normally celebrated at the home of the bride's family).

These great house auspices have prompted the suggestion that the whole show may have been a rather artificial concoction, perhaps even composed by a member of the Banks family (Helm 1965, 125; Hutton 2001, 130). This would consort well with the generally tidy appearance and organized feel of the British Museum manuscript, which would then have the status of the original script (pre-text) for the bespoke performance. Fortunately this issue was settled when the indefatigable quest of Michael Preston and Georgina and Paul Smith for more information on the Revesby production unearthed another manuscript of the play in the Lincolnshire Archives (Preston and Smith 1999). Also once the property of Banks's sister Sara Sophia, it was earlier than the British Library text both chronologically – she had signed this one in 1779 – and in relation to the performance. It was manifestly a reported text, written down by one of the performers, in a pretty rough hand and primitive spelling, of which the British Library manuscript provided a corrected fair copy, and Preston and the Smiths identified the copier/corrector with some confidence as the Steward of Revesby estate at this time. They also identified the performers named in the BL

manuscript as local residents, some of them tenants of the Banks estate (Smith and Smith 1980, 8). And, as Michael Heaney has pointed out, Sir Joseph himself commented almost thirty years later that shows by ‘morrice dancers’ involving matters corresponding to major parts of the 1779 version were traditional in his part of Lincolnshire ‘in my time, tho now I beleive extinct’ (Heaney 1988, 192).

What we have from Revesby therefore is a retrospective memorial reconstruction of the October 1779 performance, presumably made at the behest of the big house people who, far from having written it, wanted a memento of it. The character of the Lincoln Archives text as a report is also indicated by speech headings which are in the past tense, ‘sislay said’; ‘fool said’, and stage directions which are narratives of what happened: ‘*the next man cauld in pepper bretcheshee said*’ (Preston and Smith 1999, 34, line 1).

The Revesby Play is a vernacular dramatic production, emerging from local tradition, and any intertextual intrusions from an early-modern play are therefore part of the latter’s vernacular afterlife, although in this case the play concerned is remarkably early:¹⁶

	<i>The Interlude of Youth</i> , ca 1513-1514 (Lancashire 1980b) ll. 40-56.		The Revesby Play, 1799 (Pettitt 2018) 2.2.68-75 ¹⁶
	<i>Youth</i>		<i>Blue Britches</i> .
40.	Aback, felows, and give me room, Or I shall make you to avoid soon! I an goodly of person; I am peerless wherever I come		I am a <u>Youth</u> of <u>Jollitree</u> ,
45.	My name is <u>Youth</u> , I tell thee. I flourish as the vine tree Who may be <u>likened unto me</u> In my <u>youth and jollity</u> ?		Where is there one <u>like unto me</u>
	<u>My hair</u> is royal and <u>bushed thick</u> , <u>My body</u> pliant as a <u>hazel stick</u> ;	70.	<u>My hair</u> is <u>bush'd</u> very <u>thick</u> , <u>My Body</u> is like an <u>Hasel stick</u> , My Legs they quaver like an Eel, <u>My Arms</u> become my Body weel, <u>My Fingers</u> they are long & small,
50.	<u>Mine arms</u> be both big and strong; <u>My fingers</u> be both fair and long, My chest big as a tun; <u>My legs</u> be full light for to run,	75.	Am not I a jolly Youth proper & tall.
55.	To hop and dance and make merry. By the mass, I reck not a cherry Whatsoever I do!		

¹⁶ Line references are to the ‘working edition’ of the BL MS (Preston, Smith and Smith 1976) fully collated with that in the Lincolnshire Archives (Preston and Smith 1999) prepared for this study (Pettitt 2018); it should in due course be superseded by an authoritative edition by Smith and Preston.

The relationship between the three renditions of this passage (source play; performance report; fair copy) is indicated by a rare case (the second line quoted) in which there is a small but significant textual discrepancy between the British Library and Lincoln Archives texts of the Revesby play. In the latter the reporter garbles a word in Youth's 'My body *pliant* as a hazel stick' (l. 49) to produce what might for him have been a more familiar image, 'my body is *planted* licke a hesel stick' (that's how nut trees were propagated).¹⁷ The reviser preparing the British Library version for educated readers recognizes this as nonsense, but with no access to the original opts for simply excising the offending word: 'My Body is like an Hasel stick' (2.2.71).

The source passage occurs at the point in *Youth* where the moral interlude's central, everyman figure first introduces himself to the audience. Parts of his speech have been redeployed in the Revesby play in the sequence where the sword-dancers enter in turn with self-descriptive speeches (another *Reihenspiel*) prior to their engagement in the wooing interlude. Some of the discrepancies are evidently deliberate, and quite competent, revisions, by whoever introduced this material into the Revesby tradition. The couplet form of the original is sustained, but in addition to retaining both lines and their rhymes from the original ('thick'/'stick'), new line pairs are achieved by retaining one line and constructing the other out of words from different lines in the original ('tree'/'me'; 'small'/'tall'), or by composing a new line and adapting another to match its rhyme ('eel'/'weel'). This brief passage has no symptoms of textual disturbance through memorization and recollection.

The Blue Britches speaking here is followed by Ginger Britches, who speaks more traditional lines, after which the next dancer introduces himself with what is left from the introductory speech of Youth from *The Interlude of Youth*:

57-59

I am the heir of all my father's land

And it is come into my hand --
I care for no mo!

90-93

Pepper Britches.

I am my Fathers eldest Son

And Heir of all his Land

And in a short time I hope

It will fall into my Hands.

Here too the derivation is clear enough, but while the Revesby play-cobbler has thus far reproduced the original's couplet form he here restructures the phrases into a ballad quatrain (and has either mistaken or chosen not to deploy the for him archaic sense of 'and' in the corresponding line from *Youth*, where it means, 'If it were come ...').

¹⁷ A country life context, not least in Lincolnshire, may lie behind the quivering eel image in an added line.

In the Introduction to his edition of *Youth*, Ian Lancashire invokes this connection with a Lincolnshire mummers' play in support of the north-east England provenance of this moral interlude (1980a, 26), which would have been more relevant if the influence had been in the other direction, and anyway implying that the mediation occurred locally and directly, so presumably independently of London printings. But in his discussion of 'Source and Analogue Materials', he speculates that the Revesby playwright 'might have used *Youth* in original quarto form' (1980b, 258), adding in support that if his 'Youth of Jollitree' (68) for the original's 'My name is Youth ...' has been influenced by Youth's 'youth and jollity' three lines later, then he evidently 'had a quarto copy before him' (Lancashire 1980b, 258, n.7).

In which case it is relevant that the *Interlude of Youth* appeared in three early quartos, the last (William Copland's) from 1562-1565, and while thereafter the rights to print the work are registered in documents up to 1582 or perhaps 1627, there is no indication that it was actually printed later than the 1560's (Lancashire 1980a, 5). The ultimate source for the Revesby passage was undoubtedly a copy of one of the quartos, but it cannot for now be determined at what point in the evolution of the Revesby Play the material was inserted. The manifestly deliberate textual revisions, not least the rendition of some lines into a ballad quatrain, leave open the possibility of transmission via some intermediate, vernacular, performance tradition. It may be relevant here that beyond the specific textual indebtedness just examined the Revesby Play more generally has strong echoes of the early popular theatre, not least thanks to its energetic Clown ('Pickle Herring' – the standard name for the clown among the English players travelling in Germany). A couple of his comic scenes (Pettit 2018, sections 1.3 and 2.3) in terms of dramatic style and technique (including what looks like occasional ad libbing) are very much in the style of the Elizabethan stage clown.

3.4 *Ampleforth (North Yorkshire): Love for Love*

A more complex instance of the transfer of material from the early modern stage to a mummers' play, with stronger hints of an intermediary phase, is provided by the use of William Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) in the Sword Dance Play from Ampleforth in North Yorkshire. In the version concerned this is a medley of more than one type of mummers' play, its dances interspersed with a series of dramatic interludes: a Fool's Wooing and a Multiple Wooing (similar to those of the Wooing Plays of the East Midlands); the usual execution of the Clown with the swords of the dancers; his revival by a Quack Doctor. We owe our knowledge of it to the efforts of Cecil Sharp, who (in pursuit of the dances) visited the area in 1913. He acquired an incomplete account from a local farmer who (like his father and grandfather) had been one of the dancers, and a full text from a George Wright, who as a young man

had been a dancer too, but had also performed the central role of the Clown. Wright's memorial reconstruction was recorded in two forms: as transcribed by Cecil Sharp during his visit, and as subsequently written down and sent to Sharp by George Wright's daughter, reflecting his further recollection efforts and including lines omitted in the first instance.¹⁸ Given the informant's age (75) at the time, this version should represent the Ampleforth play as it was in the years either side of 1860.

Along with substantial material which is original or from as yet unidentified sources, the first of its wooing sequences has mined scattered snippets of dialogue from the third act of Congreve's *Love for Love*, but with the significant difference compared to those discussed so far (except for those few lines at Revesby) that the source text has been deliberately and substantially reshaped and reformulated prior to insertion, more specifically with the conversion of Congreve's elegant prose into ballad quatrains, which (as often in wooing plays) are sung by the performers.

This re-writing makes it unnecessary (and effectively impossible) to pin down the precise edition (or local stage production) of *Love for Love* that might have inspired the insertion of this material at Ampleforth, but aspects of the play's afterlife, vernacular or otherwise, may have a broader contextual relevance. This very popular play seems to have been in print without interruption since 1695, and in their provisional but highly informative consideration of the Ampleforth Play, Steve Roud and Paul Smith observe that *Love for Love* 'was regularly produced on the London stage, and elsewhere, up to about 1830, albeit in increasingly bowdlerised and shortened versions'. It declined in stage popularity thereafter, but in the meantime (introducing yet another strand in the vernacular afterlife of early-modern drama):

The dialogue scene which appears embedded in the Ampleforth sword play was one of the most popular parts of the play, at least in the eighteenth century, as shown by its regular inclusion in medleys—stage performances which included favourite bits from regular plays interspersed with songs, dances and skits. (Roud and Smith 1998, 506)

¹⁸ Photographic reproduction of the original manuscripts (with modern transcriptions), including the headnotes explaining the auspices of collection are accessible at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Digital Archive, respectively: <<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/11/3/49>>, accessed 10 January 2019; <<https://www.vwml.org/record/CJS2/11/3/73>>, accessed 10 January 2019. The latter will be quoted here. There are substantial discussions of the play from other perspectives in Boyes 1985, 24-27, Brody 1971, 83-93, and Chambers 1969, 131-149.

This indicates that the play in general or this scene in particular may already have been known and popular in the locality, but the versification was evidently undertaken under other than professional stage auspices (for which evidence will be invoked in the concluding discussion here on village theatre).

In the scene concerned,¹⁹ Sir Sampson Legend was anticipating the arrival of his younger son Ben, a sailor; his lines now contribute to the part of the Ampleforth Clown, although some sentiments are transferred to the lady who will shortly be the object of a wooing sequence, now designated as ‘Queen’, the more traditional role performed by this player in another part of the Ampleforth play (underlining signals verbal echoes):

Congreve, *Love for Love*
1695

Ampleforth Play
ca 1860 (reported 1913)

3.

(p. 39)
Sir Sam.
Is Ben come? Odso, my son Ben come?
Odd, I'm glad on't. Where is he?
I long to see him.
Now, Mrs. Frail,
you shall see my son Ben.
Body o' me, he's the hopes of my family.

I han't seen him these three years—
I warrant he's grown.
Call him in, bid him make haste.
I'm ready to cry for joy. (q.v.)

Enter Queen. Clown (sings)

Madam behold a lover!
You shall quickly see my son.
Queen (sings)
Long time have I been waiting
Expecting Ben would come;
Ben's grown a sweet young fellow
And his face I long to see

After some intervening business omitted in the Ampleforth play, ‘Ben’ duly arrives, and although still addressed as such, he is designated in speech headings as ‘King’, this performer’s more traditional role in another segment:

¹⁹ Quoted here from *Love for love a comedy: acted at the Theatre in Little Lincolns-Inn Fields by His Majesty's servants* (London, Printed for Jacob Tonson ..., 1695), online transcript at <<http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A34302.0001.001>>, accessed 10 January 2019. In this edition, each act consists of only one scene (and lines are unnumbered); others follow the French convention of registering a new scene each time a character enters or leaves (by which standards the extracts in the Ampleforth play are scattered among scenes 4, 6 and 7 of act 3).

(p. 41)

Ben.

Where's father?

Serv.

There, sir, his back's toward you.

Sir Sam.

My son Ben!

Bless thee, my dear body.

Body o' me, thou art heartily welcome.

Ben.

Thank you, father,

and I'm glad to see you.

Sir Sam.

Odsbud, and I'm glad to see thee;

kiss me, boy, kiss me again and again,

dear Ben. [*Kisses him.*]

Ben.

So, so, enough, father,

Mess, I'd rather kiss these gentlewomen.

Clown (sings)

Here's one that doth me follow

And perhaps it may be he.

O Ben how dost thou do, my lad?

Thou'st welcome from the seas

King

Thank you father, how do you do?

I am well at ease.

Clown

O Ben let me kiss thee

For with joy I am fit to cry (see above)

King

O father I'd rather kiss

That lady standing by

Clown

O Ben come show thy breeding

Give to her a gentle touch

She's got such a face to feed upon,

The seas could afford none such

She's a sweet and modest creature

And she's of a noble fame;

She's a sweet and modest creature,

And Susannah is her name.²⁰

20

That 'lady standing by' is a quite different character in Congreve, here conflated with the 'Queen' so the wooing can proceed, after a brief exchange of family news between father and son:

²⁰ There is no one of this name in Congreve's play. In his Prologue this Ampleforth Clown boasts of courting 'Miss Susannah Parkin / She was so fine and gay'.

Sir Sam.
 Thou hast been many a weary league,
 Ben, since I saw thee.
 Ben. *King*
 Ay, ay, been! Been far enough,
 an' that be all. Father that's well remembered
 Well, father, and how do all at home?
How does brother Dick, and brother Val? *How* is Dick and Val?
 Sir Sam.
 Dick—body o' me— *Clown*
 Dick has been dead these two years Did not I write last summer
 I writ you word
 That pale death has closed his sides
 when you were at Leghorn.
 Ben. *King*
 Mess, that's true; marry! I had forgot. Its as true as I'm a sinner!
 Dick's dead, as you say. I had forgotten quite.

And the young man expresses views on marriage that do not augur well:

(p. 42)
 Ben. *King*
A man that is married, d'ye see,
 is no more like another man
 than a galley-slave
 is like one of us free sailors;
 he is chained to an oar all his life,
 For when a man gets married
 He's down like a galley slave
 Bachelors like sailors
 When the liberties there air

Accordingly the wooing is a fiasco, in both Congreve and the Ampleforth play, but there are only exceptional moments where the latter's eight stanzas of dialogue seem to be drawing directly on *Love for Love*, and the individual passages are not necessarily in the same order or assigned to the same speaker:

(p. 43-45)
 You need not sit so near one,
 if you have anything to say,
 I can hear you farther off,
 I an't deaf.
nor I an't dumb,
 ...
 you may learn to give good words,
 ...
 you cheese-curd you:—marry thee?
 ...
 you stinking tar-barrel.
 Don't stand so near hard by me
 Stand further off I pray
 I have not lost my hearing
Nor yet I am not dumb;
 Thee might give me better words
 thou Mistress Cheesemouth?
 for thou smells of pitch & tar.

There are moments when the Ampleforth dialogue sustains the situation and characters of Congreve's play in new quatrains which have no verbal indebtedness to the latter; two are quoted above (the advice on wooing), and there is another in the lady's spirited last words in the confrontation:

Take along with thee my wishes
 To the bottom of the sea;
 Thou's fitter for the fishes
 Than a woman's company.

Taken together with the transmutation into quatrains this suggests that the initial aim was to construct an entertaining sequence corresponding to, and partly borrowing from specific scenes in *Love for Love*, but not necessarily in the context of the mummers' play. On this occasion material from the stage play is inserted into the customary host as a complete, rounded unit, and somewhat artificially: commencing at a point when the two figures initially involved (Clown and King) have actually just announced their exit, and followed by a new unit which the Clown returns to introduce. And it may have been a short-lived insertion, perhaps for some special occasion: when the American folklorist James Madison Carpenter visited Ampleforth twenty years later, consciously following in Cecil Sharp's footsteps, he interviewed men not much younger than Sharp's informant who remembered him in the role of the Clown, but the fragments of the play they remembered included only a couple of snippets from this wooing scene, none of the lines concerned from Congreve's play (Roud and Smith 1998, 507). For its part this wooing sequence would be quite viable as a free-standing entertainment, which as an extract from a stage play would qualify as a droll; in being in the form of a song it is perhaps more correctly considered a jig – although there is no indication in reports that the performers danced as they sang.²¹

3.5 *Keynsham (Somerset)*: *Diphilo* and *Granida*

At this juncture therefore it is appropriate to examine, as the final instance of the transition of material from theatre to custom, the vernacular afterlife of a stage droll, *Diphilo and Granida*, from one of the standard seventeenth-century collections, published in 1673 (Elson 1932, 295-296). In most cases a droll itself represented one early (if often short) strand in the vernacular afterlife of the play from which it was extracted (like *The Merry Conceited Humors of Bottom the Weaver* in relation to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). In this instance, exceptionally, the dramatic source has not been identified, but the documented

²¹ On the jig as stage (and folk) genre see Baskerville 1965.

further afterlife is relatively extensive.²² The single scene constituting the droll is very much in the manner of romantic comedy with a princess lost in a forest encountering and falling in love with a shepherd who is of course royally born (the original play presumably explained why and how they each got there). Its 44 pentameter lines constitute 22 couplets, a little more than half of which, following their respective opening soliloquies, comprise dialogue, including several instances where the lines of a couplet, in a manner more familiar in early French drama, are shared between the two speakers.

Diphilo and Granida re-emerges in the early nineteenth century in the mummers' play from Keynsham, Somerset, yet another medley, where it is inserted between a typical combat and cure scene and a traditional wooing sequence. Here too we are working with a text documenting performance, the antiquarian to whom we owe its preservation, Joseph Hunter, remarking, 'I have obtained from a Country youth who was one of the performers a copy of the Dialogue in a play which I witnessed at Keynsham in Somersetshire on the 27 of December 1822'. The British Library has both the text written down and signed by this performer, James Cantle, and Joseph Hunter's corrected transcript of it (Baskervill 1924, 268-272).²³

Diphilo and Granida is inserted into the Keynsham play as a single, uninterrupted unit, reduced by extensive subtractions to a third of the original (15 lines), but sustaining a generally coherent sequence of dialogue: perhaps qualifying as a *Zielform*. Its autonomy is however compromised somewhat at the joins with the traditional materials of the host play. Thus at the outset the mummer performing the traditional compere role of Father Christmas, having previously, in accordance with the ambient, presentational dramaturgy, 'called on' the champions, St George and Slasher for the Hero Combat sequence, intervenes again when they are done to call on the princess (now a 'shepherdess'), only to proceed, manifestly with no costume change, to woo her himself:²⁴

²² On a possible derivation from a Dutch play of 1605 (or from their common, probably Italian, source), see Bolte 1891, 286-287.

²³ Of the two men of this name in the 1861 census both born and resident in Keynsham, this reporter is most likely the James Cantle, basket-maker, who in 1822 would have been 24. 'England and Wales Census, 1861', database with images, *FamilySearch* (<<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:M7J8-MML>>, accessed 10 January 2019), James Cantle, Keynsham, Somersetshire, England; from '1861 England, Scotland and Wales census', database and images, *findmypast* (<<http://www.findmypast.com>>, accessed 10 January 2019); citing PRO RG 9, The National Archives, Kew, Surrey.

²⁴ Baskervill notes (1924, 270, n. 4) that the attribution of this and following speeches of the Shepherd to Father Christmas is the antiquarian, Hunter's. This is reasonable enough, given this figure's role as Presenter, but the performer transcribing the words has at this point ceased to specify speakers, and the role might in theory be played by the last speaker in the previous episode, Saint George (which would be no less incongruous).

Diphilo and Granida (1673)*Diphilo*

I once a shepherd was
 upon the plains,
 Courting my Shepherdess
 among the Swains.
 But now that Courty Life I bid adieu,
 And here a melancholy Life pursue.
 ... [eight more lines to this effect]

Espies Granida

But ha, what's here?
 What shining Beauty's this?
 Which equally desires
 my shady bliss.

Granida

I'm lost in this dark Wilderness of Care,
 Where I find nothing to prevent despair.
 No harmless Damsel
 wandring, no, nor Man:

I am afraid I shan't be found again.
 I am so thirsty, that I scarce can speak.

Diphilo

Can she grieve thus,
 and not my heart-strings break?
 Miracle of Beauty,
 for you are no less;
 Water is waiting on such happiness.
 It is as clear as Crystal,
 and as pure.

Granida

O bless me, Heavens,
 are you a Christian sure?

Diphilo

Madam, I am no less,
 pray quench your thirst.

Granida

Kind Sir, I will,
 but let me thank you first.

Drinks

Indeed 'tis good,
 but you must better be,
 In being so courteous,
 as to give it me.

Keynsham Mummers' Play (1822)

*Father Christmas*²⁴Walk in Shepherdess.

Once I was a Shepherd
 walking on the plain
 Courting of my Shepherdess
 all among the swain

See, see, who comes here.
 What shining beautys this
 Which takes my delight
 all in the shady bliss.

Shepherdess

'Tis I and my harmless damsel
walking on the plain
 I am lost, I am lost,
 I fear I shall not be found again.

Father Christmas

Miracle thy beauty,
 I am sure you are no less

Mistress take this little bottle
 and quench your thirst.

Shepherdess

Yes kind Sir
 let me thank you for it first

It is very good indeed Sir,
 - much better may you be

I thank you kind Sir
 for giving it to me.

<i>Diphilo</i>	<i>Father Christmas</i>
Praise it not, sweetest Madam, for you know	
On common Creatures this we oft bestow:	
If I had any worthy thing call'd mine,	If I had a thing as I could call my own
I should be proud to offer't to your Shrine.	How proud and lofty I should be
<i>Granida</i>	<i>Shepherdess</i>
Thou hast enough,	Thou has said enough
for Love hath shot his Dart,	to shoot the dart
And to thy Weeds	So let us gain
I'le yield my Princely heart.	the prince's heart.
...	

This is the full extent of the inserted material at Keynsham. The droll devotes another fourteen lines to reciprocal expressions of devotion and the giving of a ring before Granida invites Diphilo to

... lead on forwards to my Fathers Court,
We'l grace our Nuptials with some Princely sport'.

But nothing vital is lost by their omission, and as can be seen, whoever was responsible for its integration into the Keynsham play did fairly a neat job of wrapping up the scene while retaining the rhyming words of a couplet which originally did something else. The 'prince' whose 'heart' is now to be won derives verbally from the lady's 'Princely heart', but in the absence of the original the audience was presumably to take him as an authority figure – father, ruler, or both – who can bless their union. This would also motivate an exit, but as it happens a figure labelled 'Prince' comes on immediately after this line, and in another awkward transition he proceeds to woo the shepherdess for himself. But he addresses her as 'Moll', and she repudiates him as a 'clod', the interlude having now transitioned into a traditional rustic wooing scene.

Subtractions within the dialogue can also occasion some awkwardness, for example offering the lady water is now unmotivated, as her reference to thirst is omitted. And what remains of this speech has been seriously disturbed, one line reformulated to make it seem she is *accompanied* by a 'harmless damsel' rather than being one herself (there is no other indication at Keynsham she had a companion). That the shepherd has now acquired a 'little bottle' for the water suggests an alertness to staging practicalities worthy of Shakespeare's rude mechanicals in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Verbally, as already indicated, the inserted material is selected/adapted with a certain competence, except that in one couplet we have lost the rhyme ('own'/'be' for 'mine'/'Shrine'), and one line, 'Miracle thy beauty ...', lacks its mate (although this could be a simple omission in later transmission).

Some changes are indeed probably memory-induced contaminations in performance from other lines, but would need to be reassessed in the light of the second (perhaps intermediate) text also forming part of the vernacular aftermath of this droll.

4. *Alternative Festive Venues*

There were instances above where some features in the textual comparison prompted the suggestion that prior to its insertion into a mummers' play the material concerned may have been performed locally, perhaps even by these same performers, under auspices other than the mummers' play concerned. The possibility is supported by the tantalizing glimpses of early stage plays performed in this festive 'village theatre' encountered sporadically in external sources.²⁵

4.1 *Village Theatre*

The account of late eighteenth-century village life in the north of England provided by C.W. Dilke in 1815 (cited in Baskerville 1965, 125-126) mentions dramatic entertainments put on 'during the Christmas festivals by young men for the amusement of their friends' (125), and is based partly on the reminiscences of an elderly gentleman who among other exploits of the kind had played the role of Achilles in Heywood's *Iron Age*. The 'amusement' was not entirely innocent of pecuniary interest since spectators evidently paid to see the performance. They were sometimes offered full-scale plays, but might also (admission half price) see a droll, and Dilke himself recollected one such derived from *The Merchant of Venice* concluding happily,

Bassanio. Here's a health to thee, Antonio.

Antonio. Thank thee heartily, Bassanio.

Chorus. In liquor, love, and unity,
We'll spend this evening merrily (Ibid.)

These pieces were however sung, technically qualifying them as 'jigs', which indeed seems to have been the local term. Dilke's informant had furthermore been offered money to compose such a 'jig' from 'some scenes of a play which was brought to him' (126), implying a vernacular element

²⁵ In which context, as I have noted elsewhere (Pettitt 1999, 274-276), it would be wrong not to mention the heavily traditionalized performances of *3 Henry VI* and *Richard III* under the auspices of Christmas festivities among the English-speaking descendants of African slaves on the Honduran mainland and the adjacent Bay Islands (George 1952), perceived by Lene Petersen as approximating to the *Zielform*, of the plays concerned (Petersen 2010, 68-69).

to textual re-composition as well as mediation. It might be precisely under such circumstances that passages from Congreve's *Love for Love* were, as we have seen, rendered into verse quatrains at Ampleforth.

Analogous, customary but outdoor, performances by amateurs (only now rewarded solely by ample refreshment) occurred in connection with village wakes in eighteenth-century Shropshire. They were offered on a stage comprising a couple of wagons drawn up before a tavern which the actors used as their tiring house, this early-modern ambience reinforced by the use of boys for female roles and the presence of an improvising Clown. Favourite items in the repertoire included *Prince Mucidorus*, *Valentine and Orson* and *Dr. Forster* (i.e. *Doctor Faustus*, perhaps in a revised form; Burne 1883, 493-500).

The connections with professional theatre are not hard to imagine. Those young men who performed at village wakes and Christmas revels will certainly have been in attendance at regional fairs, where the professional entertainers were a major attraction, just as, conversely, the latter will have gravitated to the more local village wakes and Whitsun ales, where they would perform alongside more traditional pastimes and entertainments:

Tarts and Custards, Creams and Cakes,
 Are the Junketts still at Wakes:
 Unto which the Tribes resort,
 Where the business is the sport:
 Morris-dancers thou shalt see,
 Marian too in Pagentrie:
 And a Mimick to devise
 Many grinning properties.
 Players there will be, and those
 Base in action as in clothes:
 Yet with strutting they will please
 The incurious Villages.
 (Herrick 1963, 255: H-761, 'The Wake', ll. 3-14)

Similarly it is reported that in the eighteenth century farmers might hire a company of professional players to perform at their harvest suppers, with the barn fitted out to function as stage and auditorium as well as a banqueting-hall (Wood 1931-1932, 41).²⁶ And as it happens, this village theatre is represented by a version of the droll, *Diphilo and Granida*, whose afterlife in the mummers' play at Keynsham has just been examined.

²⁶ For strolling players performing for country folk in stables and cowsheds see Thaler 1922, 272-273 and Rosenfeld 1939, 21-22).

4.2 *Cricklade (Wiltshire): Revisiting Diphilo and Granida*

There is a strong likelihood that *Diphilo and Granida* was also inserted into the mummers' play from Castle Cary, Somerset (25 miles to the south of Keynsham), which had a scene (called 'The Shepherd') between a Shepherd and a Shepherdess, but for which we do not have the text (Helm 1981, 33-34). But it was also performed in customary festive contexts quite independently of mummers' plays at the small town of Cricklade in Wiltshire, where it was known as 'The Shepherd and the Maiden'. Alfred Williams, avid collector of the folklore of the upper Thames valley, recorded the text (sometime in the period 1913-1916) from a local resident (nicknamed 'Wassail' for his engagement in seasonal custom), reporting that 'It was acted at "Bark Harvest", the summer festival of the tanyard workers at Cricklade' (Williams 1971, 170-171).²⁷ This was evidently the equivalent of a harvest-home in the local tanneries, observed at the beginning of June when the collection and storing of the bark (used in the tanning process) was completed, the workers feasted by their employers with food and beer, then spending the evening in various amusements (Williams 1922, 232; more generally Babb 1980). Williams furthermore reported that 'The Shepherd and the Maiden' was also performed there 'at Christmas-time by players at the farmhouses', but manifestly as a free-standing dramatic interlude in the context of household winter revels: the mummers' play Williams also recorded from Cricklade at this same time does not include this material (1971, 170; 306-313).

The vernacular afterlife of *Diphilo and Granida* accordingly offers unusually favourable circumstances for the study of text in relation to performance, enabling triangular comparative analysis of not one but two 'reported texts', from different customary contexts, in relation to the original composition from which they both derive.

The Cricklade interlude comprises about half of *Diphilo and Granida*, still somewhat more than Keynsham, the difference particularly noticeable at the beginning, where Cricklade retains all but two lines of the Shepherd's opening speech (those revealing his noble origins), and in more complex fashion at the end, where (after a considerable gap and the insertion of two new lines) Cricklade concludes with the same couplet as the droll:

²⁷ The text of the performance quoted in what follows from Williams 1971 corresponds exactly to the photographic reproduction of the manuscript in the Alfred Williams collection at the Wiltshire Record Office accessible online in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Digital Archive, <<https://www.vwml.org/record/AW/4/60>>, accessed 10 January 2019. (The Digital Archive also has a photocopy of the relevant pages from Williams' book, and a cutting of the same text published by Williams in the *Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard* in 1916). There is also a transcript by Chris Wildridge (2010) of the Williams MS at the Wiltshire Record Office's online service, Wiltshire Community History, Folk Play Information, <<https://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/community/getplay.php?id=513>>, accessed 10 January 2019.

Diphilo and Granida
Granida

Then lead on forwards
to my Fathers Court,
We'l grace our Nuptials
with some Princely sport

Cricklade Play
Maiden

Since lost I was
about the woody ground,
Receive me here,
and keep what thou hast found.
Come! lead me forward
to my father's court,
And we'll grace our nuptials
with some friendly sport.

That inserted 'Since I was lost' couplet constitutes two of the in all nine new lines in the Cricklade text, supplementing or substituting for lines in the original, in each case not merely conforming to the droll's metre and style, but either, as here, forming a new couplet, or completing one with a line retained from the original, altogether suggesting that the Cricklade performance recorded by Williams, whatever other changes occurred in the interim, was based on a deliberate revision of the droll.

One of the most complex interventions is the Cricklade adjustment of the proffering of water to the thirsty shepherdess:

Granida and Diphilo

Granida
[asks him if he is a Christian]
Diphilo

Madam, I am no less,
pray quench your thirst.

Granida
Kind Sir, I will,
but let me thank you first.

Cricklade

[omitted]
Shepherd
She sees me not;
then I'll accost her first.
Pray! take this bottle
and so quench your thirst.

The Cricklade interlude retains the original's 'quench your thirst' (and 'pray'), and maintains the rhyme between its 'thirst' and 'first', but pivots their relationship so that instead of following 'thirst', as with Granida's 'let me thank you first', the rhyming line, an additional line ending 'I'll accost her first', comes before it. The trigger seems to be the introduction of the phrase 'take this bottle', perhaps (as suggested for Keynsham) by way of a stage direction for untrained performers, but whatever the motivation this is a neat piece of artisanal re-versifying strictly within the metrical system and rhyme scheme of the original.

Further changes will have occurred thereafter in the transmission of the text via memory and performance, for example when ‘the Fruit which grows about the Field’ becomes (with dialect spelling) the Shepherd’s ‘mates’ rather than his ‘food’. Other instances may best be seen in the context of relations between all the three texts. Although Cricklade is (by country roads and footpaths) some 36 miles to the east of Keynsham (and Castle Cary even further) it is hard not to speculate on the relationship between the two vernacular derivatives of *Diphilo and Granida*. That there *was* a relationship is suggested by their shared addition of that ‘bottle’, their respective lengths making is most likely, in accordance with the scenario sketched above, that the Cricklade interlude is intermediary between the original droll and the Keynsham mummers’ play. That Keynsham retains two whole lines from the original which are lost at Cricklade (‘Miracle thy beauty, I am sure you are no less; ‘Yes kind Sir let me thank you for it first’) probably reflects the circumstance that the Keynsham mummers’ play was recorded almost a century earlier, and so may derive from a more complete version of the Cricklade interlude than the one current later. For otherwise Keynsham seems to take further alterations (of the kind induced by memorization and performance from memory) initiated by Cricklade. In the latter, for example Granida’s regret in the original droll at finding in the forest

No harmless Damsel wandring, no, nor Man’,

is simplified to be about herself:

I am a harmless damsel wandering on the plain’.

The ‘I am’ looks like a contamination from that beginning the line following (original, ‘I am afraid’), or the one two lines earlier, while ‘on the plain’ repeats the Shepherd’s statement about himself in the first line of the droll. The Keynsham mummers’ play, in handling this line

Tis I and my harmless damsel walking on the plain

(in addition to implying that the ‘harmless damsel’ is another character), also, following Cricklade, has her ‘on the plain’, but rather than ‘wandring’, which Cricklade retains from the original, Keynsham substitutes ‘walking’, which has also been inserted into the Shepherd’s opening ‘on the plain’ line. It may even be a contamination from the Shepherd’s instruction, ‘Walk in the shepherdess’ while he was still in his role as Father Christmas. Similarly in the next line, where Cricklade replaces the original’s ‘I am afraid’ with ‘I’m lost and fear’ (the ‘I’m lost’ presumably from the speech’s first line), Keynsham repeats the repetition (‘I am lost, I am lost I fear’), but has in the interim omitted the first line from which it derived.

5. *Concluding Remarks*

It is evident that folklorists interested in traditional drama would do well to expand their focus beyond the mummers' plays (no longer privileged by exploded notions of ritual origins) to these linked but independent traditions of festive performances. It would be well if they there encountered theatre historians coming in the opposite direction, for as Peter Millington has noted in another context (2004, 5), the Restoration to Great War period desperately needs its own equivalent of the Records of Early English Drama project which has so revolutionized the study of English theatre history prior to the mid-seventeenth century; more particularly, given the ample academic coverage of metropolitan and urban stages, one that took us out of the theatres and into the fairgrounds, taverns and farm kitchens.

Further exploration of these cultural and chronological borderlands must await later opportunities, but with regard to the concrete material addressed here it can be remarked, firstly, that for a study of the relationship between folk drama and the early theatre the above, appropriately for the present context, has a distinctive textual orientation, and, secondly, that, by the same token, it is unusually well-founded. Its five case studies each juxtapose the original text of an early English stage play or other dramatic genre with documentation of a 'vernacular' performance, decades or centuries later, of that same item or dramatic material extracted from it. There is no doubt about which is the original, which the derivative. And while in some cases the folk text may also have functioned as a script for up-coming performances, in all cases it qualified as a transcript documenting anterior performances. Its discrepancies therefore register, as exactly as feasible under the circumstances, what has happened to that original text, deliberately or unconsciously, before performance, between performances, during performance, through that particular strand of its vernacular afterlife. In this it does no more (but no less) than a recording of the most recent production of a given Elizabethan stage play in the latter's theatrical afterlife. But the latter, for all it can do by way of critical 'interpretation' of the play, can offer little or nothing by way of scholarly reconstruction of historical stage conditions and the relations obtaining there between text and performance. The reverse is true for the documentation from the vernacular afterlife of the stage materials offered above, and to the extent they result from the impact of a sustained popular and festive performance tradition, may be useful in identifying and understanding the internal processes and external factors that gave us some of the more notorious Elizabethan and Jacobean 'bad' quartos.

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