Andy Kesson, University of Roehampton

'I would mine eyes were turned also into ears': what did London's earliest playhouses sound like?

The earliest approving reference to literary form in London's new playhouses is to prose: in 1579, Stephen Gosson recommended the Bel Savage for its excellent 'prose books', which he valued above 'the poets [who] send their verses to the stage upon such feet as continually are rolled up in rhyme at the fingers' ends'. Citing Gosson, Martin Wiggins claims that 'the [earliest] surviving texts [written for the playhouses] show most playwrights using a hodge-podge of often irregular verse forms, especially "fourteeners"', a statement reflecting conventional theatre historiography which opposes such fourteener-based drama to the late-'80s turn to blank verse.

Perhaps surprisingly, though, extant plays do not endorse conventional historiography. Of the 21 plays likely to have been written by 1588 (a year after blank verse makes its first attested appearance on the professional stage), eight were in prose,[1] five were almost entirely in iambic pentameter,[2] four made use of iambic pentameter alongside more substantial uses of irregular verse and prose,[3] and only four were in entirely irregular verse forms (including but never limited to fourteeners).[4] If we take 1585 as our cut off point, these numbers change considerably (3 extant plays in prose, four in irregular verse forms), but still suggest that the relationship of prose to verse and of mixed verse forms to the more consistent use of iambic pentameter merits revisiting.

This paper considers the effect of sound, rhythm and rhyme in both prose and verse on the performer and their audience. It revisits the above debate on the aural aesthetics of the earliest extant playhouse plays before turning to Wilson's *Three Ladies of London* and Lyly's *Galatea*, a play whose prologue promises to 'neither offend in scene nor syllable', setting up a sustained exploration of theatrical communication as a dialogue between scene and syllable: hearing signs, as one of its characters puts it.

Biographical note

Andy Kesson is a Reader in Renaissance Literature at the University of Roehampton, the author of *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* and, with Emma Smith, the co-editor of *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*. He is currently leading the project 'Before Shakespeare: The Beginnings of London Commercial Theatre 1565-95' (beforeshakespeare.com).

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[1] Seven of Lyly's eight plays (written between 1583 and 1590), *The Famous Victories of Henry V* (1586).

[2] *The Spanish Tragedy*, the two-part *Tamburlaine, Alphonsus* (1587), *The Battle of Alcazar* (1588).

[3] *Suleiman and Perseda*, *The Wounds of Civil War*, *Doctor Faustus*, *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (1588).

[4] *The Three Ladies of London* (1581), *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (1582), *Fedele and Fortunio* (1583), *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584).

Jennifer Richards, Newcastle University, UK

Talking Books in the Age of Print

Reading literature is regarded as silent, despite the fact that we love to talk about books: in reading groups, book clubs, university English Literature seminars. Sales of audio books are also booming, although they are not usually listed on literature curricula, while texts that have their origins in live performance – plays – are often studied separately. Theatre studies is a field that sits uncomfortably within – or alongside – English Literature. When we do bring drama and literature together, the risk is that plays are silenced, and that playwrights become 'literary dramatists' best appreciated by 'readers'.

This paper will identify and challenge one paradigm that has shaped the stories we tell about what literature and how we came to read as we do: that the shift from orality to literacy was hastened by print. It will recover the role of the voice in the printing process, focussing on the function of the corrector. It will also suggest that correcting is a creative resource for prose writers of the late sixteenth century. Using the 'proser' and dramatist Thomas Nashe as its example, I will explore the dramatic potential of his prose writing. Nashe, I will argue, developed an 'ear' for the look of a printed page over the course of his short writing career, and he also increasingly helped his readers to 'audit' – imaginatively if not in practice - his noisy prose writing. He made 'sound' crucial to wit and judgement.

Biographical note

Jennifer Richards is the Joseph Cowen Chair of English Literature at Newcastle University. She is the Editor of *Renaissance Studies*, and Chair of the English Association's HE Committee. In addition to her published books and essays on Tudor literature, she is a general editor of a new edition in 6 volumes of The Oxford Thomas Nashe (forthcoming 2021/22). She is completing a new monograph, 'Voices and Books in the English Renaissance' (forthcoming with Oxford University Press in 2018/9).

Eric Vivier, Mississipi State University

Discrediting Discredit in Gabriel Harvey's *Foure Letters, and Certaine Sonnets*

Too few modern critics have appreciated either the copious mastery of Gabriel Harvey's anti-satirical prose or the impossibility of Harvey's position in his encounter with Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe.[5] In his attempt to discredit discredit—both the specific abuse Greene and Nashe had leveled against Harvey's family in *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* and *Pierce Penilesse*, respectively, and the latter's larger satirical project—Harvey piles phrase upon phrase in endless, sonorous, and mesmerizing periods, demonstrating stylistically the extent of his learning as well as

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[5] A notable exceptions is Jennifer Richards, who recognizes that "Harvey is more playful, more self-mocking, and far more anti-Scholastic than his critics, contemporary and modern, have allowed." Richards, "Gabriel Harvey's Choleric Writing," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603*, ed. Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 655-70; 666.

his conviction that "Right artificiality . . . is not mad-brained, or ridiculous, or blasphemous, or monstrous: but deepe-conceited, but pleasurable, but delicate, but exquisite, but gracious, but admirable: not according to the fantasticall moould of Aretine, or Rabelays, but according to the fine modell of Orpheus, Homer, Pindarus, & the excellentest wittes of Greece, and of the Lande, that flowed with milke, and hony" (*Foure Letters*, ed. Grosart, 1.217-18). But even as he tried to hold himself above the "grosse scurility, and impudent calumny" of his detractors (1.204), Harvey found that he could not discredit the blame that had been levied against his family without paradoxically—and self-damningly—discrediting the authors of that blame. In Harvey's sometimes schizophrenic vacillation between irony and indignation, between moderation and mockery, between condescension and condemnation, we can glimpse one of the most brilliant thinkers of the English Renaissance at war with himself about how best to answer a fool.

Biographical Note:

Eric Vivier is an Assistant Professor of English at Mississippi State University, where he specializes in early modern drama, satire, and religious history. He has published in *ELR*, *JEMCS*, and in a forthcoming Arden *State of Play* series on Thomas Middleton's *Revenger's Tragedy* (ed. Gretchen Minton).

Kate De Rycker, Newcastle University

Beginning where the stage ends:
The dramatic non-dramatic texts of Thomas Nashe

While early modern critics are used to thinking about the transformative effect that print has on play-texts, and how the two products of 'performance' and 'play text' interact with each other,[6] we are less used to thinking of the way in which non-dramatic prose texts may be thought of as being equally 'performative' . Although recent scholarship has indeed explored the connection between drama and prose-fiction,[7] the sense that "prose fiction is the poor relation of poetry and drama"[8] still colours the way we read that relationship, so that non-dramatic texts are often seen as the sources of their dramatic counterparts.

In contrast, this paper will look at the way in which prose satire took on the performative techniques of the early modern stage, by focussing on one of the most dramatic prose-writers of the 1590s, Thomas Nashe. By contrasting two 'anatomies' of Nashe, his best-seller *Pierce Penilesse* (1592) and his earlier *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (1588/9), this paper will argue that the distinctively 'Nashean' prose style

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[6] See Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) and *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England* eds. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006)

[7] For example, *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare,* eds. Mary Ellen Lamb, Valerie Wayne (London: Routledge, 2009) and Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

[8] Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writings in the English Renaissance 1545-1625*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1998. p.134

which resulted, grew out of Nashe's attempt to restructure his satire into a more effective and entertaining mode. The fact that he did so at a time when he was involved in a take-down of the anti-theatrical writer Philip Stubbes, had unexpectedly consequences for the way Nashe viewed his own dramatic, non-dramatic writing.

Biographical note

Kate De Rycker is a research associate at the University of Newcastle as part of the AHRC funded *Thomas Nashe Project*, for which she will be editing Nashe's *Terrors of the Night*. She has published articles on the reception of one of Europe's first professional writers, Pietro Aretino in *Specialist Markets in the Early Modern Book World* (Brill, 2015) and *Literature Compass* (vol.12, 6, 2015) and her current work builds on this by examining the development of the professional author in the Elizabethan period.

Daniel Knapper, Ohio State University

'Thunderings, not Words': Pauline Prose and Late Shakespearean Verse

My paper will examine the formal relations that exist between Saint Paul's prose style in his New Testament epistles and Shakespeare's dramatic verse style in one of his romance plays, *Pericles*. Recently, literary scholars have critiqued traditional conceptions of Shakespeare's late style on historical grounds, even as they has sought to define its signature features more precisely. Scholars have not yet asked, however, what precedents or models may have informed its development, despite its appearance in a period of literary history deeply aware of artistic tradition and cultural authority. To address this gap, I'll examine Shakespeare's use of a group of grammatical and rhetorical forms in his late verse—*ellipses*, *asyndeton*, *hyperbaton*, and *anacoluthon*—that biblical humanists consistently identify with Saint Paul's eccentric prose style. That Shakespeare knew Paul's writings directly critics have long maintained, based on references and allusions to them throughout his work; but as he adapted the distinctive features of Paul's language to the demands of dramatic romance, Shakespeare also consulted, I suggest, commentaries on Paul's letters and handbooks on biblical rhetoric, which define Paul's style in grammatical and rhetorical terms and represent him as a sacred author of unique power and eloquence. In support of my comparative analysis of Paul's prose and Shakespeare's verse, I'll also highlight the cultural associations between Paul and Pericles, whom biblical humanists linked on the basis of their styles.

Biographical Note

Daniel Knapper earned his BA at Calvin College, his MA at the University of Virginia, and he is currently a PhD candidate in the department of English at The Ohio State University. His research interests include English Renaissance literature and culture (especially drama), Renaissance rhetorical theory and practice, Reformation history and theology, and the Bible as/and/in literature. He is working on a dissertation that explores the reception of biblical styles in the Reformation and their influence on English literary writing of the period.

Mary Adams, Western Carolina University

Baldwin's *Beware the Cat* and the Colonial Soundscape

In *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, Bruce Smith uses the first English novel, *Beware the Cat*, to explain the idea of "soundscape." *Beware the Cat*'s protagonist, Gregory Streamer, uses a special recipe to purge the "filmy rime" at the bottom of his ear hole that keeps him from hearing—and understanding—the noise in the world around him. Many authors have discussed the relationship of print, orality, and manuscript in this text, while others have discussed how Baldwin, as a staunch Protestant, sees "Englishing" non-English languages. I build on these arguments but make a different argument. Beware the Cat's protagonist, Streamer, becomes a figure, albeit a ridiculous one, of Christian empathy precisely through his attention to sound and his command of linguistic difference. The experience of listening to cats, which by sound, time, and location are associated with non-English speaking Catholics of Ireland and Cornwall, allows him to identify with these communities. While the novel uses many strategies to muddy its message, its moral to "live openly" commands us, perhaps, to abjure our cruelties, not just our superstitions.

Biographical note

Mary Adams is an associate professor at Western Carolina University. She has published two books of poetry for which she was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She has published an article in Milton Studies and is working on several articles about Shakespeare's use of chiasmus.

Kristen Abbott Bennett, Stonehill College

"Harsh truths for tender ears": Soundscapes and Satire in Thomas Nashe's Anatomie of Absurditie

Thomas Nashe's immediate invocation of "the olde Poet Persaeus" and allusions to Erasmus's The Praise of Folly throughout The Anatomie of Absurditie's dedicatory epistle recall Folly's citation of the ancient poet when she censures the "sour wisemen" who "make harsh truth grate upon their tender ears" – specifically, on the tender ears of Princes. Amidst the polyglot intertextual cacophony that lives up to the title's promise of multiplied dissonance, it is unsurprising that the harsh truths Nashe levels at his Queen seem to have gone unnoticed. But his epistolary invocation of "heauenborne Elizabeth" only postures as praise (6.15). Nashe situates his sovereign and her court amidst the intertextual babble of the House of Fame. This polyvocal mock-encomium informs The Anatomie's overarching attack on the abuses of knowledge perpetuated by those who have dissected "arts at the expense of eloquence," and have subsequently sacrificed the practice of moving auditors toward sound thinking. Throughout, Nashe participates in the culture he condemns as he generates excessive textual noise to both deliver and disguise vicious subtexts of Crown criticism. Ultimately, The Anatomie articulates a scene of post-lasparian babel that has been transposed on to late sixteenth-century English soil.

Biographical note:

Kristen Abbott Bennett earned her PhD. at Tufts University in 2013 and teaches English and Interdisciplinary Studies at Stonehill College. She published an edited collection entitled *Conversational Exchanges in Early Modern England* (2015)*,* plus a number of articles discussing the works of Nashe, Marlowe, Shakespeare and their contemporaries, as well as late medieval writers including Chaucer and Hoccleve. She is on the scholarly advisory committee for the Folger Institute's *Digital Anthology of Early Modern Drama* and is on the editorial advisory board for *This Rough Magic: A Peer-Reviewed, Academic, Online Journal dedicated to the teaching of Medieval &Renaissance Literature.* She is a Research Partner with Northeastern University's *Women Writers Project,* and the 2016-2017 Pedagogical Partner with the University of Victoria's *Map of Early Modern London.*

Louise Wilson, Liverpool Hope University

After-dinner speaking in early modern prose: the physiology of recreational reading and listening

This paper will examine scenes in early modern prose fiction that feature dialogues about reading. It will trace the interplay between the material and immaterial in the printed representations of reading aloud and conversation about narratives in texts that would then themselves be read aloud. These scenes tend to occur around mealtimes in the fiction and call attention to the physiological experience of reading alongside necessary - and often shared - activities, and so my discussion will engage with the ways in which reading light fiction is enmeshed in discourses on approved habitual recreational pursuits.

My examples will be taken from shorter prose fiction of the late Elizabethan period, particularly Robert Greene's *Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588) and Anthony Munday's *Zelauto: The Fountain of Fame* (1580). These contain narrative devices that emphasise the impact that both reading aloud and recounting and discussing oral narratives has on the material reader and listener; for example, *Perimedes the Blacksmith* has a frame narrative of a husband and wife reading and telling each other stories every night after supper; and *Zelauto,* among its many representations of literary performance, includes an episode in which the dialogic narrative is interrupted by Astraepho giving his friend, Zelauto, a novella to read alone while he fetches dinner for them. By drawing on recent theories from performance storytelling on the embodied listener as well as work on the material history of reading, I will use these examples to think through ideas on the relationship between literacy and participation in communal reading in early modern society.

Biographical Note

Dr Louise Wilson is Lecturer in Medieval and Early Modern Literature at Liverpool Hope University. She has a BA (Hons) from Oxford University and an MA and PhD from the University of York. Her research specialisms are in book history, the history of reading, prose fiction, translation, and health humanities. She is the co-editor – with Helen Smith - of *Renaissance Paratexts* (CUP, 2011; ppbk 2013) and – with

Neil Rhodes – of *English Renaissance Translation Theory* (MHRA, 2013). Louise is currently completing a monograph on *Reading for Pleasure in Early Modern England* and a scholarly edition of Anthony Munday's translation of *Palmerin of England* (forthcoming: MHRA, 2017). She is also working on two shorter studies of after-dinner reading in the sixteenth century, and eighteenth-century annotations of early modern chivalric romance.

Claire M. Busse, La Salle University

From the Streets to the Workshop: Ballads in Deloney's *Jack of Newbury*

When Henry VIII visits the workshop of weaver John Winchcomb in Thomas Deloney's *Jack Of Newbury* (c1597) he is greeted by two types of performance common to the civic spaces of England. The first is a series of allegorical set pieces typical of the civic pageants performed by citizens for their monarchs. Interspersed within those set pieces are two encounters with Jack's employees at work, the men at their looms and the women spinning and carding fleece, with both sets of workers singing ballads similar to those sung on the street by balladmongers advertising their wares. The general message of the men's ballad is not that different from the allegorical set piece that precedes it, for both argue the necessity of weavers for the well being of the commonwealth. But the ballad presents a far more radical vision in not only challenging the nobility for destabilizing the country with their penchant for wars, but suggesting that England would be better served were the nobility to labor like clothmakers. While less directly political, the women's song depicts members of the nobility as individuals driven more by desire and dishonesty than honor.

Jack of Newbury is dominated by the ballad form, directly through songs and indirectly through vignettes whose short form and subject matter echo that found in popular ballads of the time. As a writer of broadside ballads, Deloney would have been aware of their potential to challenge authority. Ballads appealed to the poor as well as the members of the citizen classes. For, while it required money to purchase the broadside, anyone could listen to the ballad singer marketing his wares. Ballad subjects ranged from lessons in morality to radical questionings of power. This paper explores the ways in which Deloney incorporates the popular form of ballads into his prose and argues that Deloney draws upon these songs in order to promote the interests of the working Englishman.

Biographical Note

Claire M. Busse is an Associate Professor at La Salle University. She is finishing her manuscript *Children as Commodities in Early Modern England* and beginning a project on the function of song in popular literature in early modern England.

Robert Hornback, Oglethorpe University in Atlanta

Sounding the Renaissance Stage Clown's Prose:
John Singer with the Admiral's Men

This essay explores the sounds of Renaissance stage clowning, particularly in response to the acoustical challenges at the Rose and Fortune theatres, in extant plays featuring the prosaic roles of the celebrated performer John Singer. The latter, formerly of the oft-improvising Queen's Men, became the chief clown in the Admiral's Men from 1594 until his retirement by 1603. He was a famed improviser not in previously favored jangling rhyme but in clownish prose within scenes in which his improvisation was often planned. His extant parts, likewise in prose, approximate his improvisational style and, some evidence suggests, occasionally transcribe it. Ultimately, contemporary descriptions of clowns and the sonic conditions in which they worked underscore Singer's volume, noted "drawling," and "blabbering" prose as responses to that soundscape.

Biographical Note

Robert Hornback is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA. He has published widely on Renaissance comedy and is the author of *The English Clown Tradition from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare* (D.S. Brewer, 2009).