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“The Civil Quill”: Print, Civility, and Conversation in the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel

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## ABSTRACT

“The Civil Quill”: Print, Civility, and Conversation in the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel

by

Andrew Christopher Miller

This essay investigates the pamphlet feud between the scholar Gabriel Harvey and the pamphleteer Thomas Nashe in the 1590s in light of contemporary notions of civil discourse. A survey of Harvey’s marginalia shows a sustained interest in the use of jesting and laughter to project a genially urbane public persona capable of carrying out a civil form of conversation. In turn, his pamphlets are a complex combination of ironic libel and a claim to bear the “civil quill.” Nashe’s contributions to the quarrel ridicule and dismantle Harvey’s stance of civility and in the process create a subversive world of printed orality and physicality. Placed in the context of the Martin Marprelate controversy of the late 1580s and the Bishops’ Ban of 1599, the insults and invective of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel take on a sense of urgency in their engagement with the concept of civility and its relation to the commonwealth.

## **Introduction: The Bishops' Ban of 1599**

In June of 1599, John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Bancroft, the Bishop of London, issued a ban to the Stationers' Company. The ban named and prohibited a series of satirical works, all English histories ("excepte they bee allowed by somme of her majesties privie Counsell"), and all plays ("excepte they bee allowed by such as have aucthorytie"); any publications of this nature were to be "presentlye broughte to the Bishop of London to be burnte" (McCabe 188). Richard McCabe argues that this Bishops' Ban, although it touched moral issues of decency and obscenity, was primarily motivated by a political concern for "public order and policy" (189). Indeed, whereas it reserves potential "aucthorytie" for histories and plays, the ban stipulates that "noe Satyres or Epigramms be printed hereafter" (188). A vogue for verse satire had been ushered in by the first three books of Joseph Hall's *Virgidemiarum* (1597), which had directly called for successors: "I first adventure: follow me who list, / And be the second English Satyrists" (Corthell 49). The next two years saw Hall (who continued to publish and reissue his works) joined by other satirists, including John Marston with *The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image and Certain Satyres* and *The Scourge of Villanie* and Thomas Middleton with *Micro-cynicon: six snarling satyres* (all, Hall included, listed in the ban) (McCabe 191). As the authors of these verse satires and epigrams grew increasingly attuned to the "full potential of their medium as a vehicle for social complaint," the prospect of unrest (due in no small part to a monarch "visibly approaching death") pushed Whitgift and Bancroft to exercise their ecclesiastical and

political power (as a member of the Privy Council and the head of the High Commission, respectively) and clamp down on these publications (192-3).

In addition to the categories of satires and epigrams, histories, and plays, the ban named a fourth category of books that posed a pressing threat to social order. After the other proscriptions, it decrees “That all nasshes bookes and D Harvyes bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be found and that none of their bookes bee ever printed hereafter” (188). The war of pamphlets between Gabriel Harvey and Thomas Nashe between 1592 and 1596 may seem at first to be oddly situated among a set of socially destabilizing publications.<sup>1</sup> Packed with personal insinuation and insult, they form a self-consciously printed conversation that appeals to a modern reader primarily for Nashe’s lively wit and proto-professional-journalistic verve and for Harvey’s comical pedantry. The terms of this conversation, however, are ultimately those of the state and its stability. Situated within a discourse on civility and set against contemporary anxieties of religious dissent and war with Spain, the feud takes on a new urgency.<sup>2</sup> Harvey’s *Four Letters, and Certain Sonnets: Especially touching Robert Greene, and other parties, by him abused* (1592), which began the chain of published attacks in earnest, quite accurately locates this debate in a “tumultuous age, and in a world of warre: wherein not Bacchus, but Mars: not Venus, but Mercury: not Ryot, but Valour, not Phansy, but Pollicy, must strike the stroke” (1:192). Elsewhere in the pamphlet, Harvey darkly foretells the

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<sup>1</sup> The standard account of the quarrel is that of R. B. McKerrow, included in his magisterial edition of Nashe (5.65-110).

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis similarly notes that while Nashe is “the perfect literary showman, the juggler with words who can keep a crowd spell-bound by sheer virtuosity,” there is a sense of darkness underlying his writing: his comic images “are comic only if you see them in a flash and from exactly the right angle. Move a hair’s breadth, dwell on them a second too long, and they become disturbing” (414).

culmination of the feud's matter in 1642: "here is matter inough for a new civill war, or shall I say for a new Trojan siedge, if this poore Letter should fortune to come in print" (1:163).

### **"Private presumption, publike disorder, and universall confusion": The Marprelate Controversy and the Discourse of Civility**

Although the genesis of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel is somewhat convoluted, the personal slights that erupted in print in the 1590s had been catalyzed by the events of the immediately preceding years. Between 1588 and 1589, England was rocked by a series of tracts authored by the pseudonymous Martin Marprelate and lobbed at the bishops and their government of the established church.<sup>3</sup> The tracts offered, among other qualities, "fictional strategies, a racy, colloquial prose, anecdotes anchored in the everyday details of their readers' lives, and a willingness to put into print the personal failings of individual bishops," a set of polemical strategies that "dovetailed with the political and social implications" of Martin's Presbyterian message and "sought to encourage wider participation in ecclesiological debate" (Black 709). The Marprelate satires began as a response to John Bridges' *A Defence of the Government Established in the Church of Englande for Ecclesiasticale Matters* (1587), and *The Epitome* (1588), a "stopgap" Martinist publication in response to this weighty tome, was supplemented in its brevity by the request that "the Puritans may one day have a free disputation with you about the controversies of the Church" (Anselment 34, 47). The church's response to this tract,

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<sup>3</sup> For the background and contexts of the Marprelate controversy – "the great controversy of the reign of Elizabeth" – see Pierce (2).

Thomas Cooper's *An Admonition to the People of England* (1589), denied this request, reflecting the official position that any such public discussion should be suppressed (48).

Joseph Navitsky voices a critical commonplace when he credits the Marprelate tracts with "a vocabulary of direct address that compels readers to consider ecclesiastical reform as a matter of oral exchange, as a common concern of neighbors and friends"; the polemical power of this textual "scene of speaking" was such that Matthew Sutcliffe's *A Remonstrance* (1590) inveighs against "'Dialogizing' and 'Martinizing' in a single breath" (185). Despite all efforts to seize the Martinist press, the pamphlets continued to proliferate, leading Cooper to fret that Martin "will prove himselfe to bee, not onely *Marprelate*, but *Mar-prince*, *Mar-state*, *Mar-lawe*, *Mar-magistrate*, and all together, until he bring it to an Anabaptisticall equalitie and communitie" (49). These multiple combinations made possible by the pseudonym's structure suggest a dangerous flexibility on the part of the tracts; they may name the potential subject-matter for a new set of satires, but insofar as "Martin Marprelate" denotes a discrete textual persona they may also name a new set of satirists (as in "Martin Junior," the "editor" of the *Theses Martinianae* [1589]).

The nature of this infectious style and the perceived danger of "Dialogizing" are clarified by Francis Bacon in *An Advertisement Touching the Controversies of the Church of England*, written in the midst of the controversy in 1589. For Bacon, the danger of the conflict lies in "this immodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertained, whereby matters of religion are handled in the style of the stage" (76). He condemns this style for its tendency to "turn religion into a comedy or satire; to search and rip up

wounds with a laughing countenance; to intermix Scripture and scurrility sometime in one sentence.” The greatest offense of this style, however, is its “extending and multiplying the controversies to a more general opposition or contradiction” through the medium of print (79). It is thanks to the “undue and inconvenient propounding, publishing, and debating of the controversies” that they have taken such a root with the public, but “whatsoever be pretended, the people is no meet judge nor arbitrator, but rather the quiet, moderate, and private assemblies and conferences of the learned” (79, 94).

It is in a prefatory epistle to the Reverend Richard Harvey’s *A Theological Discourse of the Lamb of God and His Enemies* (1590), however, that the Marprelate controversy takes the shape in which it is referred to by his brother Gabriel. Decrying “vaine and fond pamphlets, good for nothing either in doctrine or discipline, but fostering a licencious veine,” Harvey establishes a clear connection between “private presumption, publike disorder, and universall confusion, both in the Church and in the Commonwealth”: having “already mard himselfe,” Martin “went about to marre all” (Nashe 5:177). The crux of the issue is Martin’s tendency to “handle reverent matters so unreverently” with a “knavish and ungracious wit,” affecting “stale jestes and balde toyes” and presenting himself in “his bald ridiculous vayne.” Harvey heaps title after title upon Martin – “A busy fellow, a spitefull rayler, an odious jester, a factious head, a contentious wit, a seditious commotioner, a most insolent Libeller, in briefe, one of the most pernicious and intollerable writers that ever I had read” – and in doing so equates his “intollerably odious” style with his “notoriously seditious” influence on the

commonwealth. “I jest not,” Harvey writes; “it becommeth me not, specially in such causes: I easily yeeld to *Martin* in that veyne.” Evoking a tradition of censure for the kind of “scurrility” Martin exhibits, Harvey notes that “*Rabelays* is no good reformer of Churches and States: if Saint *Augustine* be insufficient, *Lucian* is more unmeete: If it be a great and most weighty business for the very learnedest and wisest in the world, it is not for every *Scoggin* or *Martin* to undertake” (177-8). The entire epistle is intended as a reminder that “civill men use a civill form of speaking and writing” (177).

### **“An honest, commendable kind of living in the world”: Civility and Government**

As Anna Bryson has shown, this concept of “civility” underwent an important conceptual change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On one side of this change lies the view, expressed in Thomas Starkey’s *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* (1529-32), that “Cyvle Lyfe” might be understood as “lyving togydder in gud polytyke order,” a “cyvyle order” guaranteed by “cyvyle law”; civility here is primarily a political construct, as it had been in classical and medieval Latin (50). On the other side lies the view, expressed in Stefano Guazzo’s *La civil conversatione* (1574), that civility is “an honest, commendable kind of living in the world” and can be “of our tongue, and of our behavior”; civility has been established as “a criterion of individual social conduct as well as of political order” with the former mapped onto the latter so that “government of the household and the self” can be seen as constitutive of “social

harmony and the overall peace of the community” (54-5, 70).<sup>4</sup> As Guazzo explains it, “by the sound of words, we gather the inward qualities and conditions of the man,” and so in order to express a “Civilitie” that “differeth from the nature and fashions of the vulgar sort, it is requisite that we inforce our tongue to make manifest that difference in two principall things: in the pleasant grace, and the profounde gravitie of words” (56<sup>r</sup>). These individual acts of civil discrimination and differentiation map onto the commonwealth as a whole, but they also seem particularly bound to the concept of the city. Indeed, Angel Day’s *English Secreterie* (1586) claims that while the word “*Urbanitie*” is “not common amongst us,” it is easily understood as “being derived of the Latin word *Urbanus*, which is civile, courteous, gentle, modest or welruled, as men commonly are in cities and places of good government” (38). Civility and urbanity are very nearly interchangeable here, and both rely on and uphold a system of government.

The direct correspondence between civil forms of discourse and “good government” was made particularly poignant by the excesses of the Marprelate tracts. A royally issued *Proclamation against Certaine Seditious and Schismatical Bookes and Libels* (1589) decries “secretly published . . . schismatical and seditious bookes, diffamatorie Libels, and other fantastical writings” which aim at the “abridging, or rather to the overthrowe of her Highnesse lawfull Prerogative, allowed by Gods lawe, and established by the Lawes of the Realme” (Black 711). As Lorna Hutson has shown, anxieties over Martinist and anti-Martinist writings were a manifestation of a larger concern regarding “unauthorized publication” in a time rife with “openly expressed

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<sup>4</sup> This development is not, of course, strictly linear. See Gillingham for the argument that Bryson’s work fits into one of the “grand evolutionary narratives that we need to get away from” and that medieval “courtesy” and early modern “civility” are in many ways continuous (287).

dissatisfaction with the monopolies of economic, political and religious authority exercised by Crown patronage” (198).<sup>5</sup> Richard Harvey is again the exemplary voice calling for a civil form of writing situated within a larger governing structure. His aforementioned preface to *The Lamb of God* claims the individual authorization of a lord who “hath vouchsafed the honourable patronage of this Treatise,” which in turn authorizes the work as “the dutifull subscription of one smal member to the most authentick and soveraigne doctrine of the whole body, even that catholick body, whereof the Lamb is the head” (Nashe 5:176). The potential penalty for unauthorized opinion was severe; as the historian John Strype would later recall, 1593 saw the suspected Marprelate author John Penry executed “upon the statue made against *seditions words and rumours uttered against the Queen*” and two separatists, Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, executed at Tyburn after being “condemned at the sessions without Newgate, for writing seditious books and pamphlets tending to the slander of Queen and government” (Hutson 200). A host of dissenting voices ranging from puritans to poets like Spenser in his malcontent *Mother Hubbard* (1591) threatened to undermine the political order, and such published acts of “individualism” or personal license “could not be tolerated if the printed word were to be an instrument of divine and civil authority within the state” (201).

Harvey’s epistle goes on to single out Thomas Nashe (in effect commencing the Harvey-Nashe quarrel) as a figure detrimental to the commonwealth for his failure to reconcile himself to an authorizing power structure. Nashe, in a preface to Robert

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<sup>5</sup> The anti-Martinists were a group of writers, including Lyly and Nashe, most likely sponsored by Bancroft to wage their own pamphlet war against Martin. For a brief overview of the development of Martinist and anti-Martinist discourse, see Black. For an effort to separate the Menippean voice of the Martinists and the more grotesque and carnivalesque style of the anti-Martinists, see Navitsky. For the direct influence of the controversy on Nashe’s style, see Summersgill.

Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), had displayed what Hutson wryly calls "the temerity to publish an unsolicited review (his own opinions) of the contemporary state of English literature, without the auspices of a patron" (201). Harvey condemns Nashe as a "famous obscure man," "one whome I never heard of before" and who is little more than a "piperly makeplay or makebate" (Nashe 5:180). Despite all of this, Nashe goes about "peremptorily censuring his betters at pleasure, Poets, Orators, Polihistors, Lawyers, and whome not? and making as much and as little of every man as himselfe listeth": he "taketh uppon him in civill learning, as *Martin* doth in religion" (179-80). Harvey suggests that the new decade will be continuous with the turmoil of the late 1580s; both are subject to "the rash presumption of this age," in which "every man pleaseth in the abundance of his owne swelling sense." This attempt to peg Nashe as the new Martin speaks to the anxieties underlying the succeeding war of pamphlets. Rather than a mere flyting or a clash of personalities, the feud was a forum for a vitriolic debate on the reconciliation of civil discourse to publication.

**"No publike security without private moderation,": *Foure Letters* and the Politics of Publication**

When, therefore, jabs at the Harvey family in Nashe's *Pierce Penillesse, His Supplication to the Devil* and Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (both published in 1592) moved Gabriel to write in defense of his family (and in promotion of himself), he did so by directly aligning himself with his brother's interest in civility and the commonwealth. The dedicatory epistle to *Foure Letters* lays out the pamphlet's task of

overthrowing the memory of Greene, who, “Although pitifully blasted, & how woefully faded,” “still flourisheth in the memory of some greene wits, wedded to the wantonnesse of their owne fancy, and inamored uppon every new-fangled toy” (1:156). The need for this should be self-evident; “To stop the beginning, is no bad purpose: wher the end may prove pernicious, or perillous.” Harvey claims for himself a moderate style that is neither “blinded with affection, nor enraged with passion: nor partiall to friend, nor prejudiciall to enemy: nor injurious in the worst, nor offensive to any” but instead “mildly & calmly” shows “how discredite reboundeth upon the autors” of such calamities “as dust flyeth back into the wags Eyes, that will nedes be puffing it up” (1:157).

Picking up his brother’s thread of argumentation, Harvey places his corrective mission in the midst of “this Martinish and Counter-martinish age: wherein the Spirit of Contradiction reigneth, and everie one super-aboundeth in his owne humor” (1:203). In 1589, Harvey had written a piece entitled *An Advertisement for Papp-hatchett, and Martin Mar-prelate* (a response to John Lyly’s anti-Martinist *Pappe with an Hatchet*, published in the same year). It was not printed until 1593, at which point Harvey included it with his attack on Nashe in *Pierces Supererogation, or A New Prayse of the Old Asse*. The perceived equivalence between the Marprelate controversy and the feud of the 1590s leads Harvey to write that “Ink is so like Ink, spite so like spite, impudencie so like impudencie, brocage so like brocage, and Tom-Penniles now, so like Papp-hatchet, when the time was; that I neede but overrun an old censure of the One, by way of new application to the Other” (2:121). The connection between the perils of Martinism and the activity of figures like Greene and Nashe is equally present in *Foure Letters*, where

personal excesses of style directly threaten the well-being of the commonwealth. As Harvey writes, “Every private excesse is daungerous” on its own but is made even more so when print allows for the proliferation of “publike enormities, incredibly pernicious, and insuportable: and who can tell, what huge outrages might amount of such quarrellous, and tumultuous causes?” (1:165). An attack on the individual may “perillously threaten the Commonwealth”; “Many will sooner loose their lives, then the least jott of their reputation,” and so literary provocation is inseparable from “mortall feudes,” “furious combats,” “cruell bloudshed,” and “horrible slaughterdome.”

At one point in *Foure Letters* Harvey portentously states that “The Quippe knoweth his reward, and the Supplication to the divell, expressly dedicated to the Prince of Darknesse, I committe to the censure of Wisedome, and Justice, with favour” (1:205). The most obvious reference here is to Greene’s death, which Harvey savors in Sonnet XVIII, “Come, fellow Greene, come to thy gaping grave,” the sentiment of which is neatly summed up in the line “Vermine to Vermine must repaire at last” (1:249). Greene’s physical death (“These hungry wormes thinke longe for their repast”) is not only gleefully equated with the death of his writing (“Thy Conny-catching Pageants are past”), but is posited as the result of his immodest style, his having “over-long . . . plaid the madbrain’d knave” and having “over-loud . . . rung the bawdy bell.” The kind of textual-physical relationship that allows Harvey to metonymically refer to Greene as “the Quippe,” however, also suggests that the “reward” of which he speaks is Greene’s very entry into the marketplace. At least six editions of Greene’s *Quip* appeared in 1592, marking it as the sensational and successful product of an “unusually popular

writer” (Miller 116). It is with evident disdain that Harvey wishes “some Buyers had either more Reason to discern, or lesse Appetite to desire such Novels” as Greene’s “luxurious, and riotous Pamphlets” with their “straunge fancies” and “monstrous newfanglednesse” (1:190-1). Greene is a figure “with the running Head, and the scribbling Hand, that never linnes putting-forth new, newer, & newest bookes of the maker,” and it is “A mad world, where such shameful stuffe is bought, and sould” (1:187). Aral Kumaran proposes that Greene learned from the Marprelate controversy how he might “transform his real-life personality into a verbal construct, a popular signifier, and a pamphleteering force,” a tactic that explains the newly self-conscious promotion of Greene’s later pamphlets (252). When Harvey declares that there may be “No publike security without private moderation,” he at once decries the licentiousness of Greene’s work and the immodesty of this deliberate effort to be a print personality (1:191).

Despite his condemnation of Greene’s success in the marketplace, however, there is much to suggest that Harvey entertained a similar fantasy of becoming a prominently published figure. The primary source for this evidence is Harvey’s letter-book; the manuscript, which Harvey composed over the years 1573-80, is an amalgam of correspondence written and received and of pieces of Harvey’s own verse and half-completed projects.<sup>6</sup> Parts of the letter-book were put towards Harvey’s publications, but much of the content not only went unpublished but remains “scribbled” and buried in

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Edward Long John Scott edited the text in 1884, a task described by Josephine Waters Bennett as “almost superhuman” and by Harold S. Wilson as a testament to Scott’s “monumental patience” (Nielson 45). For debate regarding the real-world referents of Harvey’s manuscript world (most notably Spenser), see Bennett and Albright. For the shortcomings of Scott’s edition insofar as it “occludes the actual vexedness” of the manuscript in favor of “smooth-reading normalcy” and “artificial legibility,” see Nielson (52).

what Scott calls “an almost illegible and undecipherable scrawl” (vi).<sup>7</sup> There does, however, emerge from this palimpsest a clear preoccupation with the possibilities of print and publication; as Josephine Waters Bennett proposes, the letter-book corresponds to a period in which Harvey, a scholar published in Latin, developed an “ambition to distinguish himself by publication in English” (167). There is a good deal of trepidation that accompanies this ambition, as Harvey himself notes the conditions of a marketplace in which “nothinge is reputid so contemptible, and so baselye and vilelye accountid of as whatsoever is taken for Inglishe” (Scott 66). These misgivings rub up against a pervasive sense of the letter-book’s “scrupulousness with regard to an eventual reader” and, more explicitly, the fantasies of publication that attend all of Harvey’s drafts and projects (Nielson 78).

The most conspicuous of all these fantasies is a page in the letter-book that appears as a drafted title page for a collection of Harvey’s works, dedicated “To the right worshipfull gentleman and famous courtier Master Edwarde Diar, in a manner oure onlye Inglishe poett. In honour of his rare qualityes and noble vertues” (89). This dedication was originally followed by “Volens nolens praesentith the Dedication of his frendes Verlayes, together with certayne other of his poeticall Devises” and two separate but overlapping tables of contents (Nielson 69). Alterations in Harvey’s hand suggest an interest in lending more gravity to the publication as a potential printed object; “praesentith” is scratched out in favor of “commendith” and “Dedication” replaced by “Edition.” “Volens nolens” (“willingly or unwillingly”) undergoes a more extensive

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<sup>7</sup> In a comment that exemplifies Harvey’s canonical minority, Scott adds that “were it not that [the manuscript pages] contain so much unpublished matter of great interest and value relating to Spenser, they would certainly never repay the incredible labour and weariness of making them out” (vi).

transformation into “QuodvultDeus” (“what God wills”), “Benevolo,” (“I will well”) and back to “Quodvultdeus,” leaving behind an “unsummable differential equation” of strikeouts and emendations (69). Nielson reads this “trip of three inflections” of the Latin *velle* as a deliberate alienation of publicational intent: Harvey must be published whether he likes it or not, at first through the impersonality of God’s will being done (“an impersonal extramundane fatality” that can assume the “onus” of publication) and then through a “fully projected embodiment of that volition in an *other*” (70).

This sense of alienation persists in another fiction of these “Verlayes” that Harvey crafts through correspondence (Bennet calls the letters “the beginning and the end of a daydream” of guilt-free publication) with a “frend” imagined as the commender of the would-be work (172). Harvey appears completely powerless as he is swept into the marketplace:

And nowe forsoothe, as a mighty peece of worke not of mine own voluntarie election, which might have chosen a thousand matters both more agreeable to my person and more acceptable to others, but they muste needs in all haste no remedye be sett to sale in Batholomewe and Stirbridge fayer, with what lack ye Gentlemen? I pray you will you see any freshe newe bookes? Looke, I beseeche you, for your loove and buie for your moonye. Let me yet borrowe on crackd groate of your purse for this same span new pamphlett. I wisse he is an University man that made it, and yea highlye commendid unto me for a great scholler. I marry, good syr, as you saye, so it should appeare in deede by his greate worke: by my faye he hath

taken veye soare paynes, beshrowe my hart else. What? Will iij<sup>d</sup> fetche it? (Scott 59-60)

This is surely in some ways an exemplary instance of what Lori Newcomb calls “bibliographobia” stemming from the recognition of print as a “proto-democratizing force” and the stationer’s shop as a site of blurred distinctions between cultural elites and the reading public (762-3). The labors of a “University man,” when set out in order to be “fetched” at a given price, quickly become “ilfavorid copyes of my nowe prostituted devises” that Harvey would have “buried . . . in the centre of the erthe” (Scott 63). The ambivalence of pairing the degraded form of the “freshe newe booke” with the ennobling recognition of the “great scholler” and his “greate worke” is persistent in the letter-book, which always returns to what Alexandra Halasz calls a “double movement of fear and desire” engendered by the marketplace (94).

### **“Renaissance Self-Forgery”: Harvey’s Publishing Hoaxes**

It merits remembering, however, that even at the places where the manuscript appears to be most nakedly and embarrassingly revelatory Harvey is deeply involved in what Nielson calls “Renaissance self-forgery”; the dramatic situations are concocted by Harvey as elaborate means of alienating his publicational intent. Early on in the letter-book Harvey drafts a description for a work composed “immediatly uppon the report of the deathe of M. Georg Gascoigne Esquier,” a “A neue Pamflett conteininge a fewe delicate poetically devises of Mr. G. H., extemporally written by him in Essex, at the earnest request of a certain gentleman a worshipfull frende of his” and subsequently

“Published by a familiar frende of his, that copyed them owte praesently after they were first compiled with the same frends praeface of dutifull commendation, and certayne other gallante appurtenances worth the readinge” (Scott 54-5). In a familiar act of ventriloquism, Harvey is subject to the whims of “a worshipfull frende” who not only insists on the work’s publication but is also responsible for the advertisement’s vulgar interest in the form of the “neue Pamflett.” Bennett points out the prevalence of this manner of “literary hoax” in which Harvey writes materials he would have come from others (174). In another instance, Harvey develops a plan to publish letters written (purportedly to an individual “in an Inne of Courte”) “immediately before [Harvey’s] Masters Commencement” (Scott 77). Once again, the choice to publish is displaced from the “Autor,” Harvey, who is more open to “trespas” than complicity:

Twooe letters [the addressee] fownde nowe perchaunce amongst a number of myne oulde scatterid papers, and in sum considerations thought it not greatly amisse (nonwithstandinge the levity of the argument in bothe) to crowde them in for cumpanye sake amongst the rest; praesuminge, as in the reste, of the Autors pardon, if any trespas be committid herein, or matter of juste offence any way ministrid. (77)

Even the issue of the “contemptible” status of “Inglissh” in the marketplace seems to melt away as Harvey imagines another publication:

Certayne younge conceytes and poeticall devises, copied owt of a schollars paperbooke, and publisshed by a gentleman of his acquaintance, who first borrowed them of the author as once his private exercises of pleasure at idle

hovers, and now lendith them unto the reader as still appliable to lyke publique use of recreation at vacant tymes. (143)

In addition to the now-familiar agency of another “gentlemen,” this passage features a marginal note that speaks to Harvey’s ambitions as an author: “Not a word more by any meanes. In this on[e] treatise all the poetically Devises that ever I made in Inglish sett in as Witty, & fine order as may be, Aretinelyke” (Bennett 171). Newcomb claims that Harvey held a particular contempt for the reading public’s “tastes for novelty and pleasure,” but he would also have his “private exercises of pleasure” made available for “publique use of recreation at vacant tymes” (762). The “new, newer, & newest” pamphlets of Greene that Harvey decries in *Foure Letters* seem little different from each “neue Pamflett” that drifts through the letter-book (1:187).

The tension between Harvey’s own persistent dreams of publication and the vehemence with which he attacks Greene’s practices is striking. This incongruity may be partly explained by the difference of climate between the 1570s and the 1590s. In *Pierces Supererogation*, Harvey muses on what “might be atcheeved in an age of Pollicy, & a world of Industry. The date of idle vanities is expired: awaye with these scribling paltryes: there is another Sparta in hande, that indeede requireth Spartan Temperance, Spartan Frugality, Spartan exercise, Spartan valiancye, Spartan perseverance, Spartan invincibility” (2:95). Had Nashe “begun to Aretinize, when Elderton began to ballat, Gascoine to sonnet, Turberville to madrigal, Drant to versify, or Tarleton to extemporise; some parte of his phantasticall bibble-bables, and capricious panges, might have bene tollerated in a greene, and wild youth: but the winde is chaunged, & there is a busier

pageant upon the stage” (2:95-6). Harvey’s own writings, however, show that the incongruity between his viewpoints is not simply a matter of this change of wind.

**“I cannot see how the Doctours may well be reoncild”: The Status of Aretinizing**

This notion of Nashe’s “Aretinizing,” connecting as it does to Harvey’s interest in “Aretinelyke” publication, is revelatory of his polemical strategy. In his published letters to Spenser, Harvey praises “that singular extraordinarie veine and invention, which I ever fancied moste, and in a maner admired onelye in *Lucian, Petrarche, Aretine, Pasquill*, and all the most delicate and fine conceited Grecians and Italians” (1:93). Numerous pieces of Harvey’s early marginalia attest to a sustained admiration of Pietro Aretino. Perhaps the most effusive praise is an account of “Aretines glory, to be himself: to speake, & write like himself: to imitate none, but him selfe & ever to maintaine his owne singularity. yet ever with commendation, or compassion of other” (Smith 156).<sup>8</sup> In *Four Letters*, however, Harvey cites “*Archilochus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Julian, Aretine*, and that whole venemous and viperous brood, of old & new Raylers” to show that there must be “no Liberty without boundes: nor any Licence without limitation,” even for poets (1:164). This volte-face was surely occasioned in large part by Nashe’s own admiration of the man Harvey had once praised as “Unico Aretino” (Smith 124). In *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe declares that “we want an *Aretine* here among us, that might strip these golden asses out of their gaie trappings, and after he had ridden them to death with railing, leave them on the dunghill for carrion”; he then promises to send for Aretino’s ghost so that

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<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere he admiringly describes “Machiavel, & Aretine” as “Two curtisan politiques” who “had lernid cunning enowgh: and had seen fasshions enowgh: and cowld & woold use both, with advantage enowgh” (147).

“hele repaire his whip, and use it against our English Peacockes” (1:243). As David McPherson argues, Harvey’s feud with Nashe (hailed by Thomas Lodge as “the true English Aretine”) was perhaps the catalyst for an already present unease with Aretino’s scurrility (1555). Eleanor Relle has more recently shown, however, that Harvey’s praise of Aretino persisted into and beyond the feud and that his private admiration “did not square with the severe attitude he adopted in public” (415).

Harvey’s criticism of Aretino in *Four Letters* is situated within a broader plea for civil discourse. Decrying railers like Greene who, in their “attempting to pull downe, or disgrace other without order,” have become “odious & intollerable to all good Learning, and civill Governement,” he claims that “Invectives by favour have bene too bolde: and Satyres by usurpation too-presumptuous” (1:164). In *Strange Newes, Of the intercepting certaine Letters, and a Convoy of Verses, as they were going Privilie to victuall the Low Countries* (1592), Nashe seizes upon the opportunity to give Harvey “a demonstration wherein Invectives have been too bold”: Harvey’s own attempts at satire, found in his letters to Spenser.<sup>9</sup> Harvey had anticipated this criticism, explaining in *Four Letters* that he “was then yong in yeares, fresh in courage, greene in experience, and as the manner is, somewhat overweening in conceit”; having read (“for varietie of study”) “invectives, and Satyres, artificially amplified in the most exaggerate and hyperbolical kinde” he was merely eager to display his learning (1:178). McPherson suggests that by the 1590s Harvey “had burned his fingers writing satire” (Greene’s *Quip* alleges that Harvey was

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<sup>9</sup> Nashe refers to two separate satirical passages. One is a set of hexameter verses on an Italianate Englishman entitled “Speculum Tuscanism” (1:84-6), which Lyly seems to have brought to the attention of Edward de Vere as a personal attack. The other is a passage ridiculing an “olde Controller” (Dr. Andrew Perne, a rival from Harvey’s Cambridge days) (1:72).

imprisoned in the Fleet for his writings) and had developed a genuine distaste for the role (1557). Nashe, however, recognizes no such contrition and instead delights in setting quoted snippets of Harvey's satires against snippets of his disavowals of the mode, as when he notes that "Nonwithstanding all this, *you defie cut and longtaile, that can accuse you of any scandalous part either in word or deede*" (1:283). The focus is not on Nashe's own inventive wit but on Harvey's self-contradiction:

Answer me briefly, I say, to the point, have I varied one vowell from thy originall text in this allegation? If not, I cannot see how the Doctours may well be reoncild, one while to commend a man *because his writings savor of that singular extraordinarie vaine, which he onely admired in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretine, Pasquil:* and then in another booke afterward, to come and call those *singular extraordinarie admired men, a venemous and viperous brood of railers.* (1:284)

Nashe assesses Harvey's change of heart with a sharp eye and suggests that if "*Tully, Horace, Archilochus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Julian, Aretine*, goe for no paiment with you" it is because "they have broght in a new kind of a quicke fight, which your decrepited slow-moving capacite cannot fadge with" (1:283). Regardless of the truth of this claim, Nashe's critique is so penetrating because it highlights the contrived nature of Harvey's new position: "Tush, tush, you take the grave peake upon you too much: who would think you could so easily shake off your olde friendes?" (1:283). Harvey clearly adopted this stance with a definite sense of purpose. In 1589, he wrote a letter to Sir Robert Cecil petitioning for the Mastership of Trinity Hall; noting his ability to write works "of publique importance," he claims that if he "were settled in a place of competent

maintenance” he could “in one year publish more, than anie Englishman hath hetherto dun” (1:xxvi-ii). Harvey’s sustained attempt over the next decade to make himself the representative of “civill Government” suggests that he saw the Marprelate controversy as an opportunity to stake his public reputation on the pressing issue of civil discourse, and to do so necessitated that he suppress his interest in Aretino and his style.

### **“A mirth very full of civility”: Searching for Profitable Discourse**

Throughout *Four Letters*, Harvey seems to court the status of civil discourseser with a nod towards Roger Ascham’s warning in *The Scholemaster* that “of quicke wittes in youthe, fewe be found, in the end, either verie fortunate for them selves, or verie profitable to serve the common wealth” (34). Harvey’s attack on Greene (that in turn serves as an admonition to Nashe) seems to be built upon establishing the unprofitability of his opponents in Ascham’s terms. *The Scholemaster* decries the “over quicke, hastie, rashe, headie, and brainsicke,” noting that “Headie and Bransicke” in particular are “fitte and proper words” for the “condition” of “over moche quickenes of witte” (33). Greene’s rashness and lack of judgment in coming into print are a persistent concern throughout *Four Letters*: “What durst not hee utter with his tongue; or divulge with his Penne; or countenance with his face?” (1:189). In a “due Commendation of the Quipping Autor,” Harvey versifies on this reckless licentiousness, calling Greene “A rakehell: A makeshift: A scribling foole: / A famous bayard in Citty, and Schoole” (1:161).<sup>10</sup> As he continues,

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<sup>10</sup> According to the *OED*, as early as the late fourteenth century a “bayard” or bay-colored horse was (via phrases and proverbs of uncertain origin) “the type of blindness or blind recklessness”; by the sixteenth century it also referred by extension to one “blind to the light of knowledge” and having “the self-confidence of ignorance.”

Harvey directly recalls the chief affliction of the quick-witted: “Now sicke, as a Dog: and ever brainesick: / Where such a raving, and desperate Dick?” (1:161). Ascham warns that such quick-witted men are in their youths “readie scoffers, privie mockers, and ever over light and merry,” and this characterization carries over to Greene, “the mocker of the simple world: the flowter of his friendes, the Foe of himselfe; and so foorth” who rails “Lucianically & scoffingly” against good order” (Ascham 33; Harvey 1:166, 189).

Harvey ultimately finds Greene “a Storehouse of bald and baggage stuffe, unwoorth the aunswering, or reading: a Triviall, and triobular Autor for knaves, & fooles: an Image of Idlenes; an Epitome of fantasticalitie; A Mirroure of Vanitie: *Vanitas vanitatum, & omnia vanitas*” (1:190).

Beyond these notions of profit and industry, Ascham also claims that quick wits are “like trees, that shewe forth, faire blossoms and broad leaves in spring time, but bring out small and not long lasting fruite in harvest time: and that onelie soch, as fall, and rotte, before they be ripe, and so, never, or seldome, cum to any good at all” (33). Such is the case of the “Flourishing M. *Greene*” who is “most-wofully faded,” leaving Harvey in the position of “bemoaning his over-pitteous decay; & discoursing the usuall successe of such ranke wittes” (1:193). As he warns Greene’s companions in a sonnet, “The flourishing, and gaily-springing wight, / That vainely me provok’d with vile reproch, / Hath done his worst, and hath no more to broche”: “Your greenest Flower, and Peacockes taile is gone” (1:239-40). Ascham’s botanical imagery seems to have appealed to Harvey, particularly as it maps onto his denunciations of those “greene wits” and “greene youths” that are “greenest” (1:156, 193, 240). At one point, mourning the fact that the ancients

have grown “as stale, as oldest fashions” in favor of some new amusements “more freshly current,” Harvey claims that “even *Guicciardines* silver history, and *Ariostos* golden Cantoes, grow out of request: and the Countesse of Pembrookes Arcadia is not greene inough for queasie stomackes, but they must have *Greenes* Arcadia: and I beleewe most eagerlie longed for *Greenes* Faerie Queene” (1:191). This sense of play between the adjectival (sickly, bilious, unripe, immature, undeveloped) and nominal forms of Greene’s name culminates in Harvey’s claim that the idle vanity of Nashe’s publications amounts to nothing more than “his good olde *Flores Poetarum*, and Tarletons surmounting Rhetorique, with a little Euphuisme, and Greenesse inough, which were all prettily stale, before he put hand to penne” (1:202).

Harvey’s clever play on “Greenesse” may seem incidental, but it actually touches the core of his rhetorical strategy. Henry Peacham’s *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577, expanded in 1593) refers to this sort of wordplay as the trope *asteismus* (“in Latine *Urbanitas*”), “a wittie jesting in civill maner, and gracing of speech with some merie conceipt” (33). Construed broadly, it may be “taken for any mirth or pleasant speech which is voyd of rusticall simplicity and rudeness”; more specifically, it may take the form of “*Equivocation*, as when a word having two significations, is exprest in the one, and understood in the other” (33-4). If it is “discreetely used with the due observation of circumstances,” *asteismus* “ministreth grace, and pleasure, and mirth to the hearer” and is “pleasant and commendable, especially among good wittes” (34). Richard Sherry’s *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550) concurs on the urbane polish of “Astymus,” calling it “*Festiva urbanitas*” and a “mery conceyted speakyng” (C.iii.46). George

Puttenham's *The Art of English Poesy* (1589) upholds this tradition, calling it "the Civil jest, because it is a mirth very full of civility and such as the most civil men do use" (275). Puttenham draws particular attention to the fact that (unlike other related tropes) it is "very witty" and yet "there is no grief or offense ministered"; "the sense is far-fetched, and without any gall or offense." In many ways, it seems like the ideal tool for Harvey in his attempt to denounce the scurrility of the Marprelate tracts and speak (as had Bacon and Richard Harvey) for civil discourse. Even this most civil of jests, however, is subject to many of the very dangers its use promises to overcome. Peacham cautions that *asteismus* must be used carefully so that it "offend not against charitie, chastitie, nor pietie," particularly "when the occasion of mirth & laughter is taken from the abuse of reverend matters" (35). Puttenham considers it a speaking "by manner of pleasantry or merry scoff, that is, by a kind of mock," and for all of its gentle qualities it is always "spoken in plain derision" (275).

Harvey sets himself in opposition to pamphleteers and railers who "might very well bee spared in Christian, or politicke Commonwealthes: which cannot want contagion inough, though they bee not poysened with the venemous potions of Inckhore witches" (1:203-4). Figures like Greene, whose "witte was nothing but a minte of knaverie," have no place in such a commonwealth, and it is "better an hundred Ovides were banished, then the state of Augustus endangered, or a soveraigne Empire infected" (1:190, 192). Indeed, "Fine plesant witt was ever commendable: and judiciaall accusation lawfull: but fie on grosse scurrility, and impudent calumny: that wil rather goe to Hell in jest, then to heaven in earnest, and seeke not to reforme any vice, to backbite,

and deprave every person, that feedeth not their humorous fancy” (1:204). Richard Harvey had renounced all jesting in order to stake out a “civill form of speaking and writing” in the post-Marprelate landscape. Gabriel, however, chooses not to abandon “plesant witt.” Instead, he shows an interest in establishing his position through the civil jests of civil men.

### **“The remedy at hand for all major things”: Eutrapelus and the Uses of Laughter**

As Gerard Passannante has shown, Harvey took a great interest from his university days onward in the “subtle, but deadly, assault” of ironic quotation and its ability to “devastate a literary rival” (803, 806). By quoting and imitating with a kind of winking knowledge of context, Harvey was able to display his superior learning and sense of humor. This sort of “game-playing” was “almost a compulsion” for him, and in the margins of his copy of Lodovico Domenichi’s *Facetie, motti, et burle, di diversi signori et persone private* he describes himself as one who “examines all the commonplaces and plucks out only those things that are especially useful in terms of his target” (Passannante 803, Stern 181).<sup>11</sup> Harvey clearly saw a great vigor and force in such strategies; elsewhere in his Domenichi he notes that “the irony of Eutrapelus [one of Harvey’s marginal personae] is impregnable” and lauds the power of “Irony within, elegance without, enetelechy round about” (Stern 182-3).<sup>12</sup> He goes on to describe irony as “the remedy at hand for all major things,” and in Lodovico Guicciardini’s *Detti et fatti*

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<sup>11</sup> “Omnes excuti texcellentissimos Locos Com[unes] est sola decerpit suo scopo maxima coducentia.”

<sup>12</sup> “Eutrapeli, ironia, inexpugnabilis”; “Intra Ironia: extra euschemosyne: circa entelechia.”

*piacevoli, et gravi* he calls it “a present restorative to all oppositions, or afflictions” (183).<sup>13</sup>

This capacious view of the irony exercised by the marginal persona of Eutrapelus is in keeping with the breadth and depth of accomplishment that Harvey gives to him. As Virginia Stern notes, Eutrapelus is the most persistent persona of the many that populate Harvey’s marginalia, and he also seems to be the most accomplished. On one page of Harvey’s *Domenichi*, for example, he is said “to pronounce more sensibly, to expresse more lively; to speake more effectually; to resolve & persuade more powrefully, then anie heretofore. Lett Eutrapelus excell all other in speaking, designing and doing: or lett Eutrapelus be accounted a meacock, & a base fellow” (177). His unmatched efforts suggest the ideal “orator-ruler” of the Renaissance, the “divine emperor of men’s minds” that Wayne A. Rebhorn has set against a classical model of republican oratorical competition (79). This raw power, however, is balanced against the qualities of the “true citizen,” the *vir civilis* that Quintilian presents in his *Institutio oratoria* as a good man with “all the virtues of the mind” and “a true understanding of an upright and honorable life” (Skinner 74).<sup>14</sup> Harvey writes in his own copy of Quintilian that “whatever may occur in the course of human affairs, Eutrapelus is a great man . . . Without great knowledge and enormous virtue no one is a great man, for the highest knowledge requires a loftier spirit and is animated by enduring virtue” (Stern 153).<sup>15</sup> As a figure

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<sup>13</sup> “Maiorum omnium praesens remedium, Ironia.”

<sup>14</sup> “Omnes animi virtutes”; “rationem rectae honestaeque vitae”

<sup>15</sup> “Quicquid humanitus acciderit, Eutrapelus semper Megalander . . . Sine magna scientia, et ingenti virtute, nemo megalander. summa enim scientia excelsiorem requirit spiritum, et viuaci virtute animata, inuicte corroboratur.”

“always earnest and absolutely steel-like in his most worthy studies,” Eutrapelus excels “in chemistry, in politics, or pragmatic manners, in polemics, or stratagems,” and also “in the most powerful secrets of the world or new practices which are dug up from the depths and very greatly amplified” (181).<sup>16</sup> In his boundlessness Eutrapelus deploys the kind of eloquence that Crassus in Cicero’s *De oratore* credits with embracing “the origin and operation and developments of all things, all the virtues and duties, all the natural principles governing the morals and minds and life of mankind” (III.XX.76).

Even at their most dizzying heights, however, the powers of Eutrapelus remain based on his use of irony and jest. If “Eutrapelus is he who laughs at solemn matters and very deftly accomplishes serious things everywhere,” he can only accomplish the latter through the former (Stern 182).<sup>17</sup> Harvey marks this relationship more clearly when he explains that Eutrapelus is “all spirit and pure industry and nevertheless sport and jest precede accomplishment itself” (183).<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the “secret metamorphosis” of Eutrapelus is that he “changes great matters into small ones, small into great ones” and in particular sees that the “serious matters of others must be converted into jests” (160-1).<sup>19</sup>

Harvey’s interest in laughter as a part of the orator’s equipment is far from singular; classical rhetorical theorists and their successors in the Renaissance alike focus

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<sup>16</sup> “Semper serius, et prorsus adamantius in suis dignissimis studiis Eutrapelus. In chymicis: in politicis, aut pragmaticis: in polemicis, aut stratagematicis: in mundi denique potentissimis arcanis, aut neopracticis; quae sunt de profundis eruta fortissimeque multiplicata.”

<sup>17</sup> “Ridet graves iste Eutrapelus: et levissimus peragit longe gravissima.”

<sup>18</sup> “Totus est spiritus, et mera industria Eutrapelus; et tamen ludus iocusque prae ipso Enteleche.”

<sup>19</sup> “Magna in parva mutat Eutrapelus: parva in magna. arcana metamorphosis Eutrapeli. Aliorum seria, in iocos convertenda: tui ipsius ioci in seria.”

on laughter as a powerful means of arousing emotion.<sup>20</sup> As Caesar explains in *De Oratore*, “it clearly becomes an orator to raise laughter” both to credit himself and to discredit his opponents (II.lviii.236). In his copy of Thomas Wilson’s *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Harvey notes that the book is “One of mie best for jesting: next Tullie, Quintilian, the Courtier in Italian, the fourth of mensa philosoph.” (Stern 160). All of these authors are particularly interested in accounting for what Sidney’s *Defence of Poesie* calls the “scornefull tickling” of laughter, the expression of contempt that makes mirth so effective at undermining the arguments of an opponent (Skinner 202). Indeed, scorn is inextricable from these theories of laughter, in which, as Quintilian puts it, “mirth is never very far removed from derision [*a derisu non procul abest risu*]”; he asserts that laughter is caused by the “deformed or disgraceful,” just as Cicero defines “the proper field and as it were the province of laughter” as the “unseemly or disgraceful” and Castiglione describes the most effective jests as being “seasoned with deceit, or dissimulacion, or mockinge, or rebukinge, or comparason” (200-1). In the kind of combative terms common to many classical rhetorics, Cicero sees such a pointed jest as a weapon that “shatters or obstructs or makes light of an opponent” (II.lviii.236). (Harvey came to be well acquainted with this manner of jesting attack in the 1590s; where Wilson describes how even a wrongful accusation can be strengthened by wit and humor, Harvey appends a note naming “Nash the rayler” [Stern 142].)

This scornful jesting, of course, must remain mindful of its limits. Castiglione warns against jests “bytter and discourteous . . . passynge measure” and identifies undue

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<sup>20</sup> For a concise account of laughter (particularly as an expression of scorn and contempt) in classical and Renaissance rhetoric, see Skinner 198-211. For a more detailed account of classical theories of laughter, see Grant.

harshness as a “token . . . of a commune jester” (134). Cicero similarly distinguishes the orator who “speaks with good reason, not just to be thought funny” from those others who go about “jesting from morning to night, and without any reason at all” engage in “buffoonish [*scurrilis*] raillery” (*De or.* II.lx.244-7). There must be a distinction between jests that are “coarse, rude, vicious, indecent,” and so “unfit for any gentleman,” and those that are “refined, polite, clever, witty,” and so “becoming to the most dignified person” (*De off.* I.xiix.104). Jestings is to be reigned in by a sense of propriety and should never be excessive or illiberal.<sup>21</sup> This is the kind of “Witty Jestings” that Wilson advocates for “pleasant gentleman,” who, if “well practiced in merry-conceited jests,” may “have both such grace and delight therein that they are wonderful to behold” (Holcomb 72).

Cicero’s interest in jesting as a weapon, “uttered generally in repelling, though sometimes in delivering an attack,” is tempered by a similar interest in how merriment “naturally wins goodwill for its author” (*De or.* II.lviii.236). As Mary A. Grant suggests, his treatises often focus not on “ill-natured ridicule” but on the “liberal jest” that can reflect the “gentlemanly nature” of the orator and a sense of “good-natured” laughter bound up with his *ethos* (145, 75). In short, jesting shows the orator to be “a man of finish, accomplishment, and taste [*urbanum*]” (II.lviii.236). This notion of *urbanitas* is at the heart of jesting as *ethos*; Quintilian calls for a teacher who can show his pupils “how fierce is the invective and how full of wit the jests [*quanta in maledictis asperitas, in iocis urbanitas*]” of a model oration, balancing *urbanitas* against the *asperitas* of ridicule (*Inst. or.* II.v.8). This *urbanitas* is somewhat ineffable or at least exceedingly difficult to

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<sup>21</sup> For a more detailed primary account of propriety in jesting, see Cicero, *De Or.* II.lviii.237-lix.239.

pin down, as Cicero shows by gesturing loosely towards “the fragrance of manners [*odor urbanitatis*]” or “a certain urban colouring [*urbanitate quadam quasi colorata oratio*]” (*De or.* III.xl.161, *Brut.* xlvi.170).<sup>22</sup> When Brutus pushes for a more precise account of the latter, Cicero “can’t exactly say”: he “only knows that it exists” (xlvi.171). It is clear, however, that this urbanity is what Edwin S. Ramage calls a “specifically local” ideal, “a certain intonation and quality which is characteristic of the city” (399). It often takes the form of humor or *facetudo*, but this humor is a manifestation of a larger sense of urbane cultural cultivation which is often set against rusticity and also gestures towards older and idyllic Roman values.

Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* continues to expand Ciceronian *urbanitas* in attempting to define it. At one point it is described as “language with a smack of the city [*gustum urbis*] in its words, accent and idiom” which can suggest “a certain tincture of learning derived from associating with well-educated men [*sumptam ex conversatione doctorum tacitam eruditionem*]; in a word, it represents the opposite of rusticity” (VI.iii.17). Quintilian struggles with prior definitions of *urbanitas* – which is “peculiar to this city [*nostrae civitatis*]” – that seem so broad as to include “all the virtues of oratory,” and yet he himself locates it “not so much in isolated sayings as in the whole complexion of our language” (VI.iii.103, 106-7). As Ramage has shown, *urbanitas* is in its broadest sense “the whole aim of education as it is outlined in the *Institutio oratoria*,” and Harvey recognizes as much in a marginal note that follows the *proemium* in his own copy:

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<sup>22</sup> For a more detailed account that attempts to track the nuanced development of *urbanitas* across Cicero and Quintilian, see Ramage.

“Eloquence and Urbanity, the two most agreeable ornaments of the citizen” (Ramage 411, Smith 114).<sup>23</sup>

**“Thine own pleasure, & foelicity: thy adversarys extreme greife, & vexation”:**

**“Pleasaunt Behavior” and Wounding Irony**

At another point in his Quintilian, Harvey provides a list of authors to be consulted on “pleasaunt behaviour” and on “delighting the Hearers, and stirring them to Lawghter”; in addition to Cicero, Castiglione, and Wilson, he cites Gioviani Pontano’s *De Sermone* (Smith 114).<sup>24</sup> In Pontano, the Ciceronian connection between *urbanitas* and *facetudo* coalesces in a “social ideal” of the *vir facetus* whose wittiness is “both an aesthetic and a moral quality” (Luck 120). Pontano’s account of *facetudo* as a virtue is based on an Aristotelian concept that is connected to Roman *urbanitas* and serves as the source for the textual persona of Eutrapelus. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle praises those who are “playful in a fitting way” and so called “witty [*eutrapeloi*]—‘supple-witted’ [*eutropoi*], as it were”; *eutrapelia* is the virtue of moderate amusement “fitting for decent and civilized people” that falls between boorishness and buffoonery (IV. 8.1128a10-b5). More than a simple rhetorical flourish, *eutrapelia* emerges in Thomas More’s *Dialogue of Comfort* as “a good vertewe, serving to refresh the mynd & make it quikke & lusty to labour & study agayne where contynuall fatigacion wold make it dull and dedly” (Prescott 425). Smith proposes that by the name Eutrapelus Harvey means

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<sup>23</sup> “Duo maxima gratiosi ciuis ornamenta, Eloquentia, et Vrbanitas.”

<sup>24</sup> “De jocis, et facetijs, conferendi Lib : 2. de Oratore : jl secondo libro del Cortegiano del Conte Castiglione : Jouiani Pontani de Sermone urbano, et faceto libri sex : praesertim tertius : M. Secretary Wylsons Rhetoric.”

“merely ‘the man of the world,’” but beyond this Harvey is deliberately grafting himself onto a tradition of urbane wit that figures like Melanchthon had defended “not as a combat weapon but as a component of civilized intercourse among friends and equals” (Smith 252, Bowen 148).

Such a defense, of course, had been prompted by *eutrapelia*’s rocky incorporation into the Christian tradition. The Vulgate rendered it (in Ephesians 5:4) as *scurrilitas*, effectively linking it to a Roman tradition of base jesting and severing it from the *eutrapelia* that persisted in Latin Aristotles (Screech 133). This initiated a tradition in which St. John considered *eutrapelia* a vice and St. Bernard renounced all traces of mirth (“*Quid nobis cum fabulis, cum risu?*”), condemning not only excessive jesting but “all jesting [*omnes iocos*]” (134). In turn, Aquinas argued for the “sporting and jesting” of *eutrapelia*, Cornelius a Lapide described it as “honourable and becoming a Christian,” and Erasmus spoke “in favor of jokes anywhere, provided they be seasoned with salt,” but the issue remained a vexed one (135, 139).

In some ways, Harvey’s focus on irony in relation to Eutrapelus suggests an attempt to distance himself from the danger of scurrilous jesting. In *De oratore* Cicero claims that irony – “when the whole tenor of your speech shows you to be solemnly jesting [*severe ludas*], what you think differing continuously from what you say” – is particularly *urbanus* and “suited to public speaking [*oratoriis dictionibus*] as well as to the conversation of gentlemen [*urbanis sermonibus*]” (II.lxvii.268-71). Irony is described in *Brutus* as “a choice and clever way of speaking” that marks a man “as free from conceit, and at the same time witty [*faceti*],” and according to *De officiis* it is irony that

made Socrates “fascinating and witty, a genial conversationalist [*dulcem et facetum festivique sermonis*]” (*Brut.* lxxxv.292, *De off.* I.xxx.108). A character in Erasmus’s *Colloquies* similarly commends Socrates for writing “so chastely, so piously, and so religiously” that his manner might befit a Christian (Screech 130). The irony that Harvey so enthusiastically attributes to Eutrapelus seems to overcome the potential of jesting to sink to disreputable buffoonery.

In his copy of Petrus Ramus’s *Oikonomia*, Harvey gives a more detailed account of his desire to be “A continual Ironist, like Socrates, Sanazarius, & our Sir Thomas More”:

“Suer in the sweetist, & finist kinde. No such confutation of Anger, rage, chiding, carving, brawling, rayling, threatening, scoffing, mocking, or such like: as witty, & pleasant Ironyes. A most easy Apology, & the finest of all other. Thine own pleasure, & foelicity: thy adversarys extreme greife, & vexation” (Smith 155). He praises irony for its connection to the gently civil mirth of *eutrapelia*; setting himself genially against the boorishness of another, the ironist displays “courtesy and forbearance,” qualities identified by Cicero as most “becoming” the “pre-eminently great man” (*De Off.* xxv.88). Harvey remains mindful, however, of the ability of irony to extend beyond character-building and instead deal “extreme greife, & vexation.” In his Quintilian, Harvey offers another paean to urbane ironists, calling “Tully as pleasurable, and as full of his conceytid jestes and merrimentes, when he floorished—as our Sir Thomas More of late memory” (Smith 113). Their gentle merriment has a “speciall grace, and fylicity” attributable to a natural proclivity; they were men “borne with a jest in their mowth.”

There is a certain ambivalence, however, in this praise of ironic felicity: Cicero and More are “to be reckoned in the number of those, whom we term very good at a Kutt” (113-4). Harvey’s interest in gentle and urbane irony is never far removed from his interest in (as he writes in Erasmus’s *Parabolae, sive Similia*) “*Ironia perniciosa*” and “*Pestilens ironia*” (140, 138).

The wounding power of irony was not lost on contemporary rhetoricians; as Dilywn Knox argues, even irony taken to be a joke was “predominately thought derisive” by its theorists in the Renaissance (82). When Quintilian illustrates his discussion of irony with the example of Cicero, he commends the earlier orator’s speaking “*in risu*,” recalling his earlier claim about the nearness of the risible and derisible (VIII.6.56). Tudor rhetoricians seized upon these kinds of liminal assessments and much more explicitly developed the “inherently ridiculing character” of certain tropes (Skinner 206). Sherry calls *ironia* “a mockyng whiche is not perceived by the wordes” and Puttenham classifies it as a tool to be used “wen ye speake in derision or mockerie,” while Peacham claims that it “pertaineth cheifly to reprove by derision and illusion and also to jest and move mirth by opposing contraries” (207). The gentle mirth-making of Harvey’s “continual Ironist” is here an afterthought to derisive reproach; indeed, Peacham elsewhere cautions that using irony too often makes one out to be nothing more than “a common mocker” (Holcomb 133).

The ancients themselves were not free from such charges. Macrobius claimed that Cicero “welcomed every chance to make a humorous remark,” and his enemies called him “the consular buffoon [*consularis scurra*]” (Holcomb 45-6). Socrates had not fared

much better, earning the title of the “Attic buffoon [*atticus scurra*]” from Zeno the Epicurean (Screech 127). Those who followed their examples were susceptible to the same criticisms; the anonymous *Souper of our Lorde* calls More “Master Mocke,” and the index to William Tyndale’s reply to More’s *Dialogue* includes an entry for “More. skilful. subtile. a jester. a mocker. a dissembler” (Holcomb 146). François Garasse’s *Le Rabelais Reforme Par Les Ministres* sums up a body of related criticisms and also identifies the source of this indecorous mockery. Recalling the example of Lucian, whose “scoffing and impiety” aimed to destroy Christianity, Garasse labels Rabelais, Calvin, Erasmus, Aretino, and Plautus as “Lucianic atheists” for having picked up the “buffoon-like and ironical” humor of Socrates (Screech 149). When Puttenham introduces a series of mocking tropes (headed by *ironia*), he notes that “derision or mockery” may take place in many different ways: “sometime in sport, sometime in earnest, and privily, and apertly, and pleasantly, and bitterly” (273). Harvey’s desire to use irony to project a kind of urbanity is greatly vexed by the difficulty of properly separating these different situations and uses.

**“I cannot raile, what-ever cause to rail”: *Four Letters* and the “Civill quill”**

Harvey seems to have anticipated his entrance into some kind of public arena; in his Quintilian, he writes of his desire to be “An extemporall Discourser upon every suddayn occasion. never unfurnished to pleade his owne, or his frendes Cause . . . allwaies sufficiently provided to undertake the Defence of any matter, apperteining his Prynce, his Lord, himselfe, or his frende” (Smith 118). Harvey sees this “praesent habilitie

to maintayne, and justify his owne, or his frendes Right” as crucial, claiming that “A man, is but A chyld to speake of, and a very Cyphar in comparison, until he hath perfittly attaynid this faculty.” In order to prove himself while remaining on the side of good order, he relies heavily on the same kind of projection of volition visible throughout the letter-book. Harvey commences *Foure Letters* with the claim that he “was first exceeding loath to penne, that is written: albeit in mine owne enforced defence” and that he is now “much loather to divulge, that is imprinted” (1:155). He capitalizes on the distinction between his own intentions “ever to conceale” his own work “and to Dedicate unto none, but unto obscure Darknesse, or famous Vulcane” and the “extraordinarie provocations” of his present situation coupled with the advice of “certain honourable and divers worshipfull persons, to interpreate my intention in more expresse termes” (1:180-1). His own coming into print is made moderate and socially acceptable through his own professed unwillingness to do so.

Harvey’s sustained interest in the power of jesting and particularly of pointed irony, however, gives *Foure Letters* a much more complex stance with regard to civil discourse than is apparent in Richard Harvey’s denunciations of Martinism. The position that Gabriel carves out for himself is what he describes in Sonnet VI as “a dettour to the Civill quill” (1:241). Setting himself above the accusations of “cutting Huffe-snuffes,” he proclaims “little skill” in “Alehouse-daggers” and assures his reader that he does not stoop to borrow the “phrase of knave or queane.” (Such a style is better attributed to Nashe and his “divers new-founde phrases of the Taverne” [1:195].) Asserting that it is “restorative unto my hart, / To heare how gentle Cheeke, and Smith convers’d,” Harvey

claims a preference for urbane conversation among the learned that at once characterizes his civility as a love for linguistic purity and a desire for the maintenance of proper social order. In Sonnet III, he similarly claims that, even though he has been “provok’d with vile reproch,” “I cannot raile, what-ever cause to raile: / For Charity I lovingly imbrace, / That me for Envy odiously deface” (1:239). “All the Invective and Satyricall Spirites” are the “Familiars” of figures like Nashe and Greene; “scoffing, and girding is their daily bread: others professe other faculties: they professe the Arte of railing” (1:204). In Sonnet IX, Harvey’s response to this railing is to “in amicable termes entreat / Some forward witts to change their headlong guise, / And lesse in print, and more in mint to sweat” (1:243). In these ways, Harvey’s refusal to countenance the “scoffing” of his opponents places him firmly in his brother’s position.

In the dedicatory epistle to the pamphlet, Harvey proclaims his desire to deliver his civil admonitions “without the least oversight of distempered phrase”; if he has “failed in some few incident termes, (what Tounge, or Pen may not slipp in heat of discourse?)” he hopes that “a little will not greatly breake the square, either of my good meaning with humanity, or of your good acceptation with indifferency” (1:157). If any one portion of the pamphlet seems most open to such a “slipp” it is surely Harvey’s libeling of the late Greene and description of his sordid life that ended “not of the plague or the pockes, as a Gentleman saide, but of a surfett of pickle herringe and rennish wine” (1:162). (Nashe appropriately describes the libel as “afflicting a dead Carcasse” [1:299].) Harvey’s claims range from the general (decrying Greene’s “scandalous, and blasphemous raving”) to the bitingly specific (reporting “his forsaking

his owne wife, too honest for such a husband”); as Harvey relates with some relish, the “particulars” of Greene’s debased conduct “are infinite” (1:168-9). (They are also in keeping with Ascham’s suggestion that quick wits lead a “misordered life” given to “any riot and unthriftines” [33].) As Hutson has shown, Harvey employs the libel as part of a deeply ironic strategy, but it is “one place in which Harvey’s much disputed admiration for Lucian and Aretino . . . has borne rather dubious fruit” (204). Harvey concludes his libel by claiming that Greene “never envyed me so much, as I pittied him from my hart” and then apostrophizes the debased individual (i.e. Green himself) who could possibly manipulate such circumstances to his own credit: “Oh what notable matter were here for a greene head, or Lucianicall conceit: that would take pleasure in the paine of such sorry distressed creatures?” (1:171-2).

Harvey more directly characterizes his ironic stance later in the pamphlet as he criticizes Nashe for the excesses of *Pierce Penilesse*, placing it among a body of “Unreasonable fictions” that “palpably bewray their odious grosnesse: and he that will be a famous deviser in folio, must be content with the rewarde of a notable Lier, not to be credited, when he avoweth a trueth” (1:200). The solution to this predicament is to see that “It is a piece of cunning in the most fabulous Legends, to interlace some credible narrations, & verie probably occurences, to countenance and authorize the excessive licentiousnesse of the rest”; it is with a winking acknowledgement of the lurid particulars of Greene’s life already put on display that Harvey notes that “Even Lucians true tales are spiced with conceite.” The irony stems from the dramatic incongruity of Harvey operating outside of his self-proclaimed avoidance of the “distempered phrase” and

instead taking on the libeling voice he elsewhere deplores in Greene. Just as Socrates in the *Protagoras* decimates sophistic in his “utter command of its use” in a long sophistic analysis, Harvey seems to out-Greene Greene in an effort to show the shallowness and bankruptcy of his method (Gordon 135). Harvey’s emphasis on credit and authorization, however, speaks to the extent to which he is consumed by the goal of accumulating credit for himself through publication, a focus that puts him in an ambivalent relationship with the public service he claims to be performing (Hutson 203). This prevailing interest in shaping his own image, that is, seems to draw him away from the social virtue of *eutrapelia* and towards the vindictive (and potentially socially disruptive) use of irony that flickers through his marginalia: “*Pestilens ironia.*” Speaking of his good intentions in writing *Four Letters*, Harvey assures his reader that “I am so far from being a Saturnist by nature, or a Stoick by discipline, that I can easily frame a certaine pleasurable delight unto my selfe, by ministring some matter unto them, that now are faine to make something of nothing: and wittily to plaie with their own shadows” (1:181). In *Strange Newes*, Nashe rewrites this passage with a keen awareness of Harvey’s strategy: “Lord that men shoulde bee so malitiously bent *to frame a matter of some thing; he takes a pleasurable delight to behave himself so that he may be laught at;* how would you prate and insult, if you knewe as much by him, as he knows by himselfe” (1:297).

Indeed, one of Nashe’s primary projects in *Strange Newes* is to undercut Harvey’s pretensions to a sort of civil public service and to display his opponent’s shamelessly egotistical interests. Responding to Harvey’s libeling of Greene, Nashe biting notes that “hee made no account of winning credite by his workes, as thou dost, that dost no good

workes, but thinkes to bee famosed by a strong faith of thy owne worthines: his only care was to have a spel in his purse to conjure up a good cupp of wine with at all times” (1:287). Greene’s interest in publication is refigured as a practical means of attaining “a spel” instead of a subversive force, and it is Harvey’s interest in his “owne worthines” that makes him out to be a figure “that dost no good workes” (a slight at once to Harvey’s skill as an author and status as a bastion of civil order). Harvey assures the reader of *Foure Letters* that his intent has been to show how

fellow-schollers . . . [and] fellow-writers, may bee made friendes with a cup of white wine, and some little familiar conference, in calme and civile termes. I offer them my hande: and request theirs: which I will accept thanckfully: & kisse lovinglye: and ever commend the good Nature, that would; and the better government, that coulde master Affections with Reason, and sweeten gall with humanity. (1:216)

Nashe sees this entreaty as another manifestation of the nominally civil irony that Harvey uses to so viciously attack the dead Greene’s memory while disclaiming such low practices:

so *Gabriel*, when he hath stird up against me what tumults he can in Stationers Shops, and left the quiver of his envie not an arrow undrawne out, hee finds, by the audit of his ill consumed defectes, that he is not of force inough to hold out; wherefore in pollicie to avoid further arrearages of infamie, hee tires the text of reconciliation out of breath, and hopeth by the intercession of *a cuppe of white wine and sugar, to be made friends with his fellow writers*. (1:327)

All attempts to establish a pleasant and civil form of humor ring hollow when “for all hee would have *Pierce* make no warres on him, he makes warres on *Pierce Pennilesse*” (1:327). By referencing warfare, Nashe is able to reverse Harvey’s ascription of perilous “Martinish and counter-Martinish” sedition to writers like himself and Greene. Just as critically, Nashe sees that when Harvey “tires the text” and attempts to get the last word over his opponents he exhibits a markedly antisocial desire to terminate all conversation.

### **An “honest stryving togyther”: Humanist Conversation and Competition**

In attempting to rehabilitate Harvey’s image in the wake of the feud, Jennifer Richards has recently made a sustained effort to paint him not as an inflexible pedant but as a humanist greatly invested in the power of debate and dialogue. His annotations of James VI’s *Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie*, for example, are said to be “a considered contribution to a humanist debate about the cultivation of eloquence and the formation and sustaining of the bonds of commonwealth”; as he “tests and extends” the king’s “laws” of vernacular verse (even to the extent of inserting his own competing verses in the margins), Harvey engages in a humanist dialogue that maps onto a “political ideal” of the citizen in conversation with authority (“Politics of Reading” 319-20). In much the same way, she suggests that the annotations to his Castiglione show him “practising civility in the margins of this book” (*R&C* 63). Richards finds strong support for this argument in Harvey’s *Rhetor*, a lecture delivered to his students at Cambridge in 1575 and published in 1577, in which he presents “a number of ‘practical’ and adversarial

exercises that nurture eloquence” and locate authority “not in rule-bound pedagogy but in the shifting dialogue between a pupil and teacher as they test the established rules” (“Politics of Reading” 312). Harvey dedicates the work to Bartholomew Clerke, and in a prefatory response to this dedication Clerke emphasizes the importance of collaborative learning:

Nothing causes me greater grief than that I studied alone, read alone, wrote alone, and published my books alone. It is very important to have someone to whom you can communicate your thoughts, and to hear the advice of another, even one who is perhaps less wise than you. For two eyes can see more than one, as the proverb says, and every person is blind when it comes to his own offspring. (v)

Harvey urges his students to not “only admire” or “childishly imitate” the ancients but instead to “emulate them . . . vie to go beyond them, [and] struggle to surpass them” (19). This competitive relationship is in turn qualified by Clerke’s praise of Harvey, who, “having read over and studied many writers, and harvested many things from them,” gives these writers “a fair and honest appraisal” and has “not instead of honey poured the poison of venomous words over those from whom [he has] gathered fruits and flowers (as certain ones do, wishing to be wiser than their limited minds allow)” (iv). When Harvey vies with the ancients he does so graciously and collaboratively, acknowledging their excellence even while attempting to surpass it.

The larger context for this activity is a Ciceronian ideal of friendship in which a “rivalry of virtue [*honesta certatio*]” creates a sense of collaboration and competition that is “productive *and* sociable”; Richards has shown how this tradition dictates the efforts of

Tudor humanists to create what Roger Ascham calls an “honest stryving togyther” in which “every one maye waxe bothe cunninger and rycher” (*R&C* 15, 77). Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum*, for example, imagines the commonwealth as “a multitude of free men collected together and united by common accord . . . for the conversation of themselves as well in peace as in warre,” and in *De recta et Emendata Linguae Graecae Pronuntiatione* Smith asserts that through “courtesy and grace” he and John Cheke have been able to elucidate matters through debate and “learn from each other without bitterness” (84, 82).<sup>25</sup> The failures of this conversational model in practice are readily apparent. It is often compromised by a “paternal role” that haunts dialogues like Ascham’s *Toxophilus* and the use of a straw-man interlocutor in Smith’s *De Recta* (78, 84). Perhaps most representative is Ascham’s account of *De oratore* in his *Scholemaster*; he talks of Cicero speaking “in the person of *L. Crassus*, whom he maketh his example of eloquence and trewe judgement in learning” and again refers to “*Crassus*, or rather *Tullie*,” thereby overlooking the contribution that Antonius makes to the dialogue by eschewing rules and “choosing instead to disseminate his oratorical practice by engaging in conversation” (Ascham 94, Richards 126). As E. Armstrong argues, *De oratore* does not make an “either/or” Crassian/Antonian proposition but instead calls for a “both/and” view in which “*both* comprise one conversation, one dialogue” that is in turn contained within “a discursive form that is only knowable in action,” a narrative that Cicero shares with his brother (97-8). A univocal misreading of Cicero is not incidental.

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen Gardiner, who opposed the new Greek pronunciation advanced by Smith and Cheke, claimed that Smith had acted tyrannically in his relationship with Cheke and that his evocation of Ciceronian *amicitia* in reference to their relationship was “singularly disingenuous” (*R&C* 85). When Harvey writes in *Four Letters* that “It is restorative unto my hart, / To heare how gentle Cheeke, and Smith convers’d,” he invokes a fraught model of civil conversation (1:241).

Its failure to come to terms with the importance of conversation in action speaks to the conflicts that drive the Harvey-Nashe quarrel. Richards' rehabilitation struggles to reconcile the Harvey of the *Rhetor* or of his marginalia with the Harvey of the feud; as she must concede, it is with more acuity than not that Nashe sets out to depict Harvey as an "uncivil conversationalist" (*R&C* 119).

### **"Drawing M. *Spencer* into everie pybald thing you do": Dismantling Harvey's Friendships**

For Nashe, the practice of civil dialogue that Harvey advocates in his rhetorical orations is nothing more than an affectation. Refuting Clerke's account of productive competition, he more bluntly calls "*Gabrielis Scurvei Rhetor*" a work "wherein hee thought to have knockt out the braines of poore *Tullies Orator*" (1:268). If the relationship has been productive for Harvey, it has been so in a decidedly discreditable way. Mocking Harvey for his taste for Ciceronian tags and periods (treated with an amiable self-effacement in a second oration, *Ciceronianus*), Nashe claims "he hath manie legges, many lockes fleec'd from *Tullie*, to carry away and cloath a little body of matter" (to little effect, since "yet hee moves but slowly, is apparaild verie poorely"), and assures his foe that "From this day forward shall a whole army of boies come wondring about thee, as thou goest in the street, and cry *kulleloo, kulleloo, with whup hoo*, there goes the Ape of *Tully*: tih he he, steale *Tully*, steale *Tully*, away with the Asse in the Liones skinne" (1:302, 290).

This sycophantic relationship extends beyond the ancients to Harvey's friendship with Spenser. In *Four Letters*, included among the "Satyres by usurpation too-presumptuous" is Spenser's "Mother Hubbard," who "in heat of choller, forgetting the pure sanguine of her sweete Feary Queene, wilfully over-shot her malcontented selfe: as elsewhere I have specified at larg, with the good leave of unspotted friendship" (1:164). Nashe delights in dissecting every aspect of this reference. Beginning on the public level with a nod to the work's controversial topicality and allusiveness, Nashe asks "Who publikely accusde or of late brought *Mother Hubbard* into question, that thou shouldst by rehearsall rekindle against him the sparkes of displeasure that were quenched?" (1:281). In *Four Letters* Harvey had decried "Martin Junior and Puny Pierce" for the "lusty stirring of lively coals, and dead cinders" of sedition while denying any charge of his "sturring more coales" himself, and Nashe pointedly reverses these terms to cast him as a source of public discontent (1:233, 215). Nashe continues the attack on a more personal level, charging that "A *pure sanguine* sot art thou, that in vaine-glory to have *Spencer* known for thy friend, and that thou hast some interest in him, censerest him worse than his deadliestemie would do" (1:281). Refusing to accept Harvey's appeal to "the good leave of unspotted friendship," Nashe goes on to assure "Immortall *Spencer*" that "no frailtie hath thy fame, but the imputation of this Idiots friendship" and that his "gorgeous attired *Fayrie Queene*" would go unspotted "but that this mud-born bubble, this bile on the browe of the Universitie, this bladder of pride newe blowne, challengeth some interest in her prosperitie" (1:282). Harvey's appeals to his friendship with Spenser and their practice of civil conversation are here reduced to the reductive univocality of so

many Tudor humanists, and his friend's repute becomes nothing more than a diversion from his own libeling tactics. "You will never," Nashe writes, "leave your olde trickes of drawing M. *Spencer* into everie pybald thing you do" (1:323).

Harvey's friendship with Spenser is of particular interest to Nashe as a result of the publication in 1580 of *Three proper, and wittie, familiar Letters*, consisting of correspondence between the two. A dedication to the work is provided by "a Welwiller of the two Authors" who procured the letters "by meanes of a faithfull friende, who with much entreaty had procured the copying of them oute, at *Immeritos* handes" (A.ii). The similarities to the publicational fantasies of Harvey's letter-book are so clear as to obviate much commentary; *Foure Letters*, however, maintains that "it was the sinister hap of those infortunate Letters, to fall into the left handes of malicious enemies, or indiscreete friends: who adventured to imprint in earnest, that was scribed in jest" (1:180). In *Strange Newes*, Nashe quotes from the dedication to *Three Letters* and slyly writes that "You must conceit, hee was in his chamber-fellowe *wel-willers* cloke when he spake this: the white liverd slave was modest, and had not the hart to say so much in his owne person, but he must put on the vizard of an *undiscreete friend*" (1:296-7). The sonnet at the end of *Foure Letters* from Spenser ("Your devoted frend, during life") "To the right worshipfull, my singular good frend, M. Gabriell Harvey, Doctor of the Lawes," receives the same treatment (1:253-4). It is with a derisive nod to Harvey's own technique of invoking Spenser's name that Nashe, coming to the sonnet in the course of systematically confuting *Foure Letters*, writes that "I will not looke upon it too, because (*Gabriell*) though I vehemently suspect it to bee of thy owne doing, it is popt fourth under M.

*Spencers* name, and his name is able to sanctifie any thing, though falsely ascribed to it” (1:326-7).

Harvey’s strategy of using names to “sanctifie” his activities has drawn the attention of modern critics as well. Nicholas Popper calls attention to Harvey’s “inveterate list-making” and takes it to be an exercise in *copia* with an eye towards establishing intellectual mastery and prestige for the categorizer (364).<sup>26</sup> Harvey writes in his Chaucer of 1598, for example, that there were “Not manie Chawcers, or Lidgates, Gowers, or Occleves, Surries, or Heywoods, in those dayes: & how few Aschams, or Phaers, Sidneys, or Spencers, Warners or Daniels, Silvesters, or Chapmans, in this pregnant age”; his taste in prose (so keen as to pick out the “few”) articulates a “canonical corpus of English authors” (Smith 231, Popper 364). In *Pierces Supererogation* Harvey employs this listing strategy in reverse, bemoaning the fact that “Albertus Secrets, Poggius Fables, Bebelius jestes, Scoggins tales, Wakefields lyes, Parson Darcyes knaveries, Tarletons trickes, Eldertons Ballats, Greenes Pamflets, Euphues Similes, [and] double Vs phrases, are too-well knowne to go unknowen” (1:215-6).<sup>27</sup> By invoking these figures so that he may set them against “Sidneyes daintyes, Aschams confites, Cheekes succats, Smithes conserves, and Mores junkets,” Harvey simultaneously creates and sets himself apart from a class of debased cultural production (1:216). Newcomb, drawing on Bordieu’s sociology, has shown how such “social-*cum*-aesthetic judgments” and their “ideologies of distinction” arose from a

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<sup>26</sup> For more examples of these lists, see Grafton and Jardine 43, 54-5, 61, and Popper 354.

<sup>27</sup> The last of these is Lyly, who signs the dedicatory epistle to *Pappe with an hatchet* “Yours at an houres warning / Double V.” (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>).

late Elizabethan print culture in which anxious social and cultural elites felt a need (one “more acute than ever before”) to delimit and marginalize popular forms of print, and these judgements are certainly in keeping with Harvey’s denunciation of Greene and Nashe.

If Nashe performs any comparable acts of naming, they are in order to populate his pamphlets with extra disputants. Throughout his two contributions to the feud proper, *Strange Newes* and *Have with you to Saffron-walden. or, Gabriell Harveys Hunt is up* (1596), Nashe creates a host of Harveys through a set of burlesque nicknames including but not limited to “Gamaliel Hobgoblin” (1:289), “Gabriell Howliglasse” (1:298), “Gilgilis Hobberdehoy” (1:299), “Gibraltar” (1:300), “Gregory Habberdine” (1:301), “Gabriel hangtelow” (1:308), “Gabriel Grave-digger” (2:181), “Gorboduck Huddleduddle” (3:23), “Pinego Rimino” (3:22), “Gabriell Scurveis” (3:27), “Frigius Pedagogus” (3:29), “Gobin a grace ap Hannikin” (3:31), “Gregorie Huldricke, my Antagonist” (3:31), “Domine Dewse-ace” (3:31), “Jenkin Heyderry derry” (3:32), “Hibble de beane” (3:46), “Himpenhempen Slampamp” (3:54), “Gurum Hidruntum,” (3:65), “Archibald Rupenrope” (3:65), “Gabriel Ergo” (3:67), “Talatamtana or Doctour Hum” (3:75), “Dagobert Coppenhagen” (3:77), “Gabienuus” (3:81), “Master D. Garropius” (3:83), “Wrinkle de Crinkledum” (3:89), “Domenico Civilian” (3:96), “Tapthartharath” (3:100), “Graphiel Hagiell” (3:107), “Stramutzen Gabriel” (3:119), and “Gnimelfe Hengist” (3:130). Taken collectively, the effect of these epithets is simultaneously to mock Harvey and to do so in a kind of conversation with each imagined figure who is confronted.

Harvey prefers to name, however, in order to perform the same kind of work that Nashe sees in the invocation of Spenser and his friendship. In Sonnet XIII of *Four Letters*, “*His intercession to Fame*,” Harvey provides a rather stultifying list of praiseworthy men:

Live ever, valorous renowned Knights;

Live ever, Smith, and Bacon, Peereles men:

Live ever, Walsingham, and Hatton wise:

Live ever, Mildmayes honorable name.

Ah, that Sir Humfry Gilbert should be dead:

Ah, that Sir Philip Sidney should be dead:

Ah, that Sir William Sackevill should be dead:

Ah, that brave Walter Devoreux should be dead:

Ah, that the Flowre of Knighthood should be dead,

Which, maugre deadlyest Deathes, and stonyest Stones,

That coover worthiest worth, shall never dy.

Sweete Fame, adorne they glorious Triumph new:

Or Vertues all, and honours all, adieu. (1:246)

As the sonnet sequence proceeds, Harvey comforts his reader with the knowledge that “Vertues all, and Honours all survive” and compel “Brave mindes to platfourme, and redoubted handes / To doe such deedes, and such exploites achieve, / As they, and they couragiously perform’d”; it quickly becomes difficult to see the heir to this tradition as anyone other than Harvey himself (1:247). Indeed, “To live in motion, and action hoat: /

To eternize Entelechy divine” like these men is avowedly his ultimate goal, and he “is pitifully bestead, than in an Age of Pollicy, and in a world of Industry (wherein the greatest matters of Governement, and Valour, seeme small to aspiring capacities) is constrained to make woeful Greene, and beggarly Pierce Pennylesse . . . the argumente of his stile” (1:247, 222-3). The devolution of Harvey’s sonneteering to hyperbolic naming reveals a larger desire, visible throughout his letter-book and marginalia, to adopt multiple personae and wrangle them all into a complex act of self-assertion. The truth of Nashe’s accusations of forgery is immaterial, for his criticisms poignantly reflect the univocality of Harvey’s writing. Bacon had called in the midst of the Marprelate controversy for “the quiet, moderate, and private assemblies and conferences of the learned,” but Harvey seems to push the notion of such a private assembly to its limits. His attempts to prove himself in print are impossibly divided between the need to stand as a proponent of civil conversation and to stand out as an “Aretinelyke” success. It is, after all, “Aretines glory, to be himself: to speake, & write like himself: to imitate none, but him selfe & ever to maintaine his owne singularity. yet ever with commendation, or compassion of other”: Harvey seems to find this “yet ever” insurmountable (Smith 156).

### **“Verie seditious and mutinous in conversation”: Rewriting Harvey’s Civility**

In comparison to Harvey and his complex conversational reservations, Nashe appears to embrace the prospect of printed discussion. *Have With You* takes the format of a “dialogus” or “honest conference” that “you may suppose (if you will)” takes place “in some nooke or blind angle of the Black-Friers,” and Nashe would not “have you imagine

that all these personages” participating in the conversation “are fained, like *Americke Vesputius*, & the rest of the *Antwerpe* Speakers in *Sir Thomas Moores Utopia*” (3:21). Instead, “there are men which have dealt with me in the same humour that heere I shaddow,” just as Nashe’s character “Piers Pennilesse Respondent” justifies the work’s lengthy composition via his need for “some further time to get perfect intelligence of [Harvey’s] life and conversation, one true point whereof, well set downe, wil more excruciate & commacerate him, than knocking him about the eares with his owne stile in a hundred sheetes of paper” (3:29). This “honest conference” is packed with digressions and interjections that drag it away from the formal conventions of a prose dialogue; in its “striking violation of decorum and verisimilitude” and its “readiness to assimilate other literary genres” that “dissolve into various argumentative prose forms” (trials, impromptu orations, long digressions), the work fits loosely into a tradition of Tudor “anti-genre” dialogues that Roger Deakins traces primarily to the influence of Erasmus’s *Colloquies* (21). The pamphlet can also be placed in a closely related tradition of Menippean satire that Hutson calls “the grotesque testament or the dying confession of conventions that it appears to mishandle” or “a foolish, incompetent representative of its chosen genre” (130). In both contexts, the work seems to actively erode the kind of good order advocated by the Harveys.

Indeed, the apparent disorder of *Have With You* resonates with the charges Harvey levels at Nashe and Greene in all of his pamphlets. When, for example, in *A New Letter of Notable Contents* (1593) Harvey praises the “wiser sort . . . of the heathen Philosophers” for their abstemiousness, he surely evokes his own lifestyle and its

superiority to those of his scurrilous opponents, who are severely lacking the philosophers’

neat, & exquisite choice of their pure diet, undefiled society, Virgin manners, unstained discourses, and unspotted actions. What so clarified, as their witt: so purified, as their minde: so sweetened, as their conference: so vertuous, as their instruction: so powrefull, as their experiments: so exemplary, as their life : so unblemished, as their fame? (1:288)

Nashe, fantastic and indulgent, can provide no such order; “It is for Cheeke, or Ascham [and, implicitly, Harvey], to stand levelling of Colons, or squaring of Periods, by measure, and number,” for Nashe’s “penne is like a spigot, and the Wine-presse a dullard to his Ink-presse” (2:278).<sup>28</sup> *Have With You* is not, however, an incidentally slipshod or careless work. It is instead a Menippean deconstruction of the position of civility that Harvey attempts to portray in his pamphlets.

One of Nashe’s most pointed rewritings of Harvey’s stance pertains to the first letter in *Foure Letters*, written by “Your loving frend Christopher Bird” of Saffron Walden to “my very good frend *M. Emmanuell Demetrius*” of London as a commendation of “M. Doctor *Harvey*, my good frend” (1:159). The letter makes Harvey out to be a “very excellent generall Scholler . . . desirous of your acquaintance and friendship” who is “very honest, and thankfull.” As might be expected, Nashe says the letter “should seeme, by all reference or collation of stiles, to bee a Letter which M. *Birds* secretarie, *Doctour Gabriell*, indited for him in his owne praise, and got him to sette his

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<sup>28</sup> For a more detailed theoretical account of Nashe’s relation to these notions of order and measure, see Crewe.

hand to when he had done . . . We will not beleeve it except wee see the Towne seale sette to it” (1:273). Even more fundamentally, however, Nashe takes issue with the notion that any such a letter could be authoritative or even relevant:

but, say wee should beleeve it, what doth it make for thee? Have the Townesmen of *Saffron Walden* ever heard thee preach, that they should commend thee for an excellent generall scholler? or (because thou professest thy self a Civilian) hast thou solicited any of their causes in the bawdy Courtes thereabouts? If not, go your wayes a dolt as you came; Maister *Birdes* Letter shall not reprove you from the ladder. (1:274)

The grisly concluding image and the crime implicitly attendant on it speak to the larger issue of Harvey’s ironic duplicity throughout *Foure Letters*; just as he intends to highlight Harvey’s indecorously derisive irony despite every contrary assurance of intent, Nashe intends to assess Harvey’s flaws regardless of the character professed in Bird’s letter.

In *Have With You*, Pierce Respondent has come across a new piece of evidence from earlier in Harvey’s life: a “coppie of his Tutors Letter to his father I will shew you, about his carriage and deameanour; and yet I will not positively affirme it his Tutors Letter neither” (3:64). Everything about the letter, including its playful and self-conscious fictiveness (it is signed “Yours assuredly, and so forth, *Johannes sine nomine, Anno Domini* what ye will”), reflects the essence of Nashe’s polemical position against Harvey (3:69). With reference to Harvey’s egotism and attempts to garner public credit through print, his “tutor” fears that Harvey “is, beyond all reason or Gods forbod, distractedly enamourd of his own beautie, spending a whole forenoone everie day in spunging and

licking himselfe by the glasse.” This self-love feeds into his superficial affectation of a desire for friendship and conversation, as when he

useth everie night after supper to walke on the market hill to shew himselfe, holding his gown up to his middle, that the wenches may see what a fine leg and a dainty foote he hath in pumps and pantoffles, and, if they give him never so little an amorous regard, he presently boords them with a set speach on the first gathering together of societies, and the distinction of *amor* and *amicitia* out of *Tullies Offices*.

Beyond all of these things, but of course at the root of them as well, is the fact that Harvey is always

verie seditious and mutinous in conversation, picking quarrels with everie man that will not magnifie and applaud him, libelling most execrably and inhumanely on *Jacke* of the Falcon, for that he would not lend him a messe of mustard to his red herrings; yea, for a lesser matter than that, on the Colledge dog he libeld, onely becuase he produly bare up his taile as hee past by him.

The credentials that Harvey marshals for himself are so easily and thoroughly turned inside-out that they must be irrelevant, and if Harvey’s numerous claims to wielding the “civill quill” can hold no water then he is only left with his savagely ironic libel of a dead opponent.

Nashe performs this kind of reversal several other times. Harvey includes in *Pierces Supererogation* some commendatory verses from John Thorius; in *Have With You*, Pierce Respondent claims to have “a Letter under his owne hand, which hee sent

mee to be printed, utterly disclaiming the wrong which the Doctour (under his name) hath thrust out against me” (3:135). The letter (“To my very good friend, M. *Nashe*”) revisits the familiar charge that Harvey has commandeered the voice of Thorius as he has that of Spenser or the “well-willer.” Thorius asserts that he “Wrote certaine verses in [Harvey’s] commendation; but that *Sonnet* which in his booke is subscribed with my name is not mine, and I gesse at the mistaking of it. Indeed the *Stanzaes* are, though altered to your disgrace in some places.” More pointedly, however, the letter recalls the tutor’s characterization of Harvey as “verie seditious and mutinous in conversation”; against this quarrelsome nature, Thorius beseeches Nashe “to let my carriage towards you alwaies beget but thus much in your opinion, that I would never have beene led with so much indiscretion as to raile against any man unprovoked, or to offer him wrong that never offended mee.” Signed “*Yours to use,*” the sly playfulness of the letter suggests that Nashe has no intention of establishing a verifiable record of Harvey’s character. His only intent appears to be to prevent Harvey from doing the same.

There is, however, a certain seriousness that underlies these efforts. The dedicatory epistle to the work offers a prayer for “the reprobate brace of Brothers of the *Harveys*: to wit, witlesse *Gabriell* and ruffling *Richard*” who for “this foure and twentie yeare” have “plaid the fantasticall gub-shites and goose-giblets in Print, and kept a hatefull scribling and a pamphleting . . . and left no Arte undefamed with their filthie dull-headed practise” (3:12). These accusations reflect the findings of *Strange Newes* and *Have With You*, in which Nashe’s direct engagement with the text of Harvey’s pamphlets allows him to anatomize the antisocial hostility that underlies his studied ironic stance.

Harvey's irony is one of contextual incongruity, and when it is parceled out under Nashe's watchful eye it is difficult to disagree that Harvey "is such a vaine *Basilico* and *Captaine Crack-stone* in all his actions & conversation, & swarmeth in vile Canniball words" (3.102). The gathered friends and interlocutors of *Have With You* agree; Harvey is not a model for polite conversation, but nevertheless "His life and doctrine may both be to us an ensample, for since the raigne of *Queen Gueniver* was there never seene worse."

### **"Hem, cleare your throates, and spit soundly": Orality and Embodiment**

While much of the conversation that Nashe uses to pick apart Harvey's position is intertextual, his work comes increasingly to blend this with a taste for orality and its printed representation. Just as the 1590s saw verse satirists sharpening their medium as a form of social complaint, Nashe spent the decade honing his ability to "reconstruct" what Neil Rhodes calls the "popular oral forms" of everyday London life ("On Speech" 378). Many of his efforts are typographically complex; his contributions to the quarrel make use of Roman, italic, and black-letter fonts of varying sizes in order to "mark out the different voices" of Nashe and the Harveys. *Strange Newes*, for example, uses a black-letter font to mark quotes from *Pierce Penilesse* and also in a terminal list of errata. The existence of such an appendix is conventional, and the one attached to Harvey's *New Letter of Notable Contents* goes about directly correcting the "slight faultes" of the pamphlet (1:298). Before making these types of corrections, however, Nashe's appendix adds to the typographical and conceptual conversation within the text as it explains in black-letter that

Item, whatsoever for the most part is here in this booke in change of letter, is our adversaries owne Text and unvaried words, either in this his convicted *Foure Letters*, or some other fustie treatise, set forth by him heretofore.

Then, that I am wrested and utterly divorced from my owne invention, & constrained still, before I am warme in any one vaine, to start away sodainely, and follow him in his vanitie. (1:335)

This is immediately followed by a list of errata in Roman type. In *Have With You*, Nashe uses a block of Roman capitals to make a dyer's sign out of Harvey's words, a representation that Rhodes calls "the visual equivalent of the street cries" of London (379). Most strikingly, after the prayer for the Harveys in the dedicatory epistle Nashe includes a blank box decoratively set apart from the text. "Purposely that space I left," he explains, "that as manie as I shall perswade they are *Pachecoës, Poldauisses*, and *Dringles* may set their hands to their definitive sentence, and with the Clarke helpe to crye *Amen* to their eternall unhandsomming" (3:13).

As Rhodes notes, this textual "polyphonic technique" bleeds into a more direct interest in print as a "form of secondary orality" (381, 386). The interjections of speakers in *Have With You* are elicited by the text's avowed desire to pick apart Harvey's works and life through a kind of spoken conversation: "Hem, cleare your throates, and spit soundly; for now the pageant begins, and the stufte by whole Cart-loads comes in" (3:42). As the work comes to a close, Pierce Respondent stops to call out an "Oo yes," (that is, the street cry of "oyez!") and wonders "What more have I in my Proclamation to yalp out?" (3:133). Harvey's work, on the other hand, seems to defy this

kind of immediate orality. Demanding in *Strange Newes* that Harvey back up his charges of licentiousness with a single period, Nashe notes that “I talke of a great matter when I tell thee of a period, for I know two severall periods or full pointes, in this last epistle, at least fortie lines long a piece” (1:329). The criticism is one borrowed directly from Marprelate, who at one point quotes a particularly lengthy and turgid passage from Bridges’ *A Defence* and simply responds, “Wo,wo! Dean, take breath and then, to it again!” (Anselment 44). Travis Summersgill argues that through his involvement in the Marprelate controversy Nashe picked up from his adversary “a conversational ease and offhand brilliance hitherto unknown in English prose,” and this “Marprelatian technique of dialog” is at the heart of such works as *Have With You*, the full title of which marks it as “*Containing a full Answer to the eldest sonne of the Halter-maker. or, Nashe his Confutation of the sinfull Doctor . . . As much to say, as I said I would speake with him*” (Summersgill 146, 158; Nashe 3:3).

In Nashe’s hands, this kind of oral immediacy can take on a darkly abusive quality. As Rhodes writes, Marprelate and Nashe both do much “to recreate a vigorously physical environment in print form where adjuncts (that is, epithets) are burliboned and syllogisms have elbow room” (376). This carnivalesque blending of the “speech performances of fairground and market” is potentially destabilizing in itself.<sup>29</sup> As Harvey frets in *An Advertisement for Papp-hatchett*, “It was Martins folly, to begin that cutting vaine: some others oversight, to continue it: and double Vs triumph, to set it agogg. If the world should applaude such roisterdoisterly Vanity . . . what good could grow out of

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<sup>29</sup> For a sustained and brilliant reading of Nashe’s works within this context of carnival and festivity, see Hutson.

it, but to make every man madbryaned, and desperate; but a generall contempt of all good order, in Saying, or Dooing but an Universall Topsy-turvy?" (2:131). Just as critically, in Nashe's hands this direct form of oral address seems to lend itself to the penchant for violence and the "carnival grotesque" so characteristic of the runaway strain of anti-Martinist discourse (Navitsky 195). At one point in *Strange Newes*, Nashe calls on Harvey to respond directly to his criticisms – "Answer me *succinctè & expeditè*" – before descending into what Hutson calls "splutteringly impotent invective" (Nashe 1:329, Hutson 207). "If I were by thee," he rages, "I woulde plucke thee by the beard, and spit in thy face."

Douglas Bruster has identified a trend of "embodied writing" in the last years of the sixteenth century; found in a host of English books "remarkably thick with the personal," such writing exhibits "an intensively familiar approach to others' bodies and identities—to their *persons* as objects of discourse" (49). The Bishops' Ban, he argues, reflects this by "collocating the satiric, the political, and the erotic" as a series of works "that took liberties with bodies considered either above mention or above certain kinds of mention," publications considered "transgressive in their embodied familiarity" (53). This is ultimately the same threat of the overly familiar "free disputation" sought by the Marprelate tracts, and it is this conflation of printed and personal address – Nashe's ability to spit in Harvey's face with each pamphlet – that helps to explain why Whitgift and Bancroft found "all nasshes bookes and D Harvyes bookes" so socially destabilizing. As Senior Importuno, Harvey's surrogate in *Have With You*, explains to Nashe, to let Harvey's insults go unanswered is worse than to have "suffred his face to be made a

continual common wall for men to spit on: spittle may be wip't off, and the print of a broken pate or bruse with a cudgell quickly made whole and worne out of mens memories, but to be a villaine in print . . . is an attainder that will sticke by thee for ever" (3:27).

### **"As civil as a civil orange": Nashe and Urban Circulation**

Bruster argues that the "personalization of print" occurring alongside the feud was made possible by the new phenomenon of best-sellers and "textual celebrity" (63). The exemplary title is Lyly's *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* (1578), which enjoyed extensive reprinting; the similar success of its sequel, *Euphues and His England* (1580); and the spread of other texts by writers such as Greene, Lodge, and Dickenson that rushed to "hail" these works and "Euphues" himself (59). Due to decades of the name's omnipresence in every corner of London, "it remains no exaggeration to call Euphues the first textual citizen of early modern London, an artificial person that one could expect to meet with some frequency in this rapidly expanding metropolis." Harvey himself was responsible for advancing the "strange commodities" of "Euphuism," "Greeneness," and "Tarltonizing," among others, neologisms that variously conflate author with text, author with literary style, and literary style with lifestyle (60). In turn, Nashe plays with these relationships as *Have With You* draws near its end:

There is two or three mouth fulls of my *Oo yes* yet behinde, which, after I have drawne out at length, you shall see me (like a Crier, that when he hath done kire-elosoning it, puts off his cap, and cries God save the Queene, & so steps into the

next ale-house) steale out of your companie before you bee aware, and hide my selfe in a Closet no bigger than would holde a Church Bible, till the beginning of *Candlemas Terme*, and then, if you come into *Poules Church-yard*, you shall meete me. (3:132-3)

This combination of orality and an existence situated firmly within London recalls the *urbanitas* of the Roman orators, and if it is a kind of textual embodiment at the heart of the Bishops' Ban it is also quite appropriately at the heart of Nashe's pamphlets.

Harvey frequently uses such notions of urban circulation to denigrate his opponents. At times, the locations that Harvey describes are general, as when he condemns writing that "smelleth . . . rankly of the Taverne, the Alehouse, the Stewes, the Cuckingstool, or other such honest places"; frequently, however, Nashe is linked to specific locations in London as "an Oratour of Bedlam, a Rhetorician of Bridewell, or a Discourser of Primrose Hill," at once a "powting waspe in Ramme-ally" and a "winching jade in Smithfield" or the "poukat of Pouls-churchyard" (2:220, 246). Similarly, it is with evident glee that Harvey is able to locate the "dangerously sicke" Greene "in a shoemaker's house near Dow-gate" and place him in "Banckside, Shorditch, Southwarke, and other filthy hautes" (1:162, 169). These locations do not merely accommodate but instead constitute an indecorous style, for "pure Nashery" is better termed "the Rethorique Lecture of Ramme ally" (2:230). Nashe's "emphaticall terms of the ally" and "divers new-founde phrases of the Taverne," Harvey implies, are debased *loci communes* to which Nashe must turn after having "searched every corner of his Grammar-schoole witte" to no avail (2:230, 1:195).

Nashe's strategy in responding to such charges is to revalue these accusations of urban association. Harvey includes among the sordid details of Greene's death that "his doublet, and hose, and sword were sold for three shillings" and that his "winding sheete . . . was foure shillings"; while such particulars are economically derisive, they also allow Harvey to continue to pin his late enemy down "in the New-churchyard neere Bedlam," where he was buried for "six shillings, and foure pence" (1:171). In response to this, Nashe claims that he and one of his "fellowes, *Will. Monox* (Hast thou never heard of him and his great dagger?)" were "in company" with Greene "at that fatall banquet of Rhenish wine and pickled hearing (if thou wilt needs have it so), and then the inventorie of his apparell came to more than three shillings (though thou saist the contrarie) (1:287-8).<sup>30</sup> Nashe knows "a Broker . . . shall give you thirty shillings for the doublet alone, if you can helpe him to it"; Greene "had a very faire Cloake with sleeves," and if Harvey should only "play the good husband and listen after it," he might "buy it ten shillings better cheape than it cost him." Dismissively accepting the scene that Harvey has set, Nashe subverts the denigrating narrative by reassessing the value Greene's "moveables" and celebrating their real currency in London (1:288).

Indeed, having so thoroughly dismantled Harvey's pretensions to civility, Nashe revives a version indebted to Day's direct equivalence of civility with urbanity. Nashe proclaims himself in *Strange Newes* to be "as civil as a civil orange": "I lurke in no corners, but converse in a house of credit, as well governed as any Colledge, where there

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<sup>30</sup> McKerrow was unable to identify this "*Will. Monox*," inciting a handful of later scholars to try the same. Despite some rather desperate attempts to link him to Edward de Vere and the Shakespeare authorship "controversy," they have been similarly unsuccessful. More important than his identity is the way that Nashe references him as a personal acquaintance with a local reputation in order to needle Harvey for his presumed unfamiliarity ("Hast thou never heard of him and his great dagger?"). The effect is to make Nashe out to be what Rhodes calls "the man on the spot" with a certain cachet in London (*Grotesque* 24).

bee more rare quallified men and selected good Schollers than in any Noblemans house that I knowe in England” (1:329). The flippant nature of Nashe’s pun surely undercuts Harvey’s own verbose stance of civility, but it also speaks to an alternate form of that civility. A Seville orange is made “civil” by visual and sonic contiguity, and through its importation and circulation through the city is becomes by these contiguous relationships a kind of civic commodity. This is a version of civility recalling the specifically local *urbanitas* of the Roman orators. Nashe can claim Quintilian’s association with “well-educated men” while retaining the “smack of the city”; as a circulating figure, he is at once in “a house of credit” and at banquets with Monox and Greene.

This movement makes Nashe difficult to pin down, just as the concept of *urbanitas* itself had been for Cicero and Quintilian. The interlocutors of *Have With You* toy with the difficulty of locating him in various sites of urban exchange:

*Importuno*: What, *Tom*, thou art very welcome. Where hast thou bin this long time; walking in Saint *Faiths* Church under ground, that wee never could see thee? Or hast thou tooke thee a chamber in *Cole-harbour*, where they live in a continuall myst, betwixt two Brewhouses?

*Consili*: Indeed we have mist you a great while, as well spiritually as corporally; that is, no lesse in the absence of your workes than the want of your companie: but now by your presence you will fully satisfie us in either. (3:21, 25)

Nashe and his work are conflated here so that both might be thought of in terms of a satisfying “presence”; his “companie” has been distributed throughout the city and, when absent, is “mist” rather than derided. The itinerary that Nashe has taken “as well

spiritually as corporally” sets him above Harvey and his “*Magna Charta*,” *Pierces Supererogation*, which Nashe has “kept idle by me in a by settle out of sight amongst old shoes and boots almost this two yere” (3:19). Contending that Harvey has drawn upon his opponent’s “most saleable” name in order to “helpe his bedred stuffe to limpe out of *Powles Churchyard*,” Nashe reconfigures mobility as a virtue, one that Harvey has lamely grasped at in order to move his “unconscionable vast gorbellied Volume” that “else would have laine unreprivably spittled at the Chandlers” (3:35). (Nashe evokes a similar kind of spatial mastery in *Strange Newes*, where he claims to be able to move Harvey’s stillborn *Foure Letters* “up Newgate, up Holburne, up Tyburn, to hanging” [1:301].)

Harvey would have *Pierces Supererogation*, dedicated “neither to Lord, nor Lady, but to Truth and Equitie,” achieve a transcendent status (2:123). When he locates his writing he does so in a textual field; he traces his practice of “confutations,” for example, to having “floted in a sea of encountring waves,” situated among “Aristotle against Plato, and the old Philosophers . . . Justinus Martyr, Philoponus, Valla, Vives, Ramus, against Aristotle . . . Perionius, Gallandius, Carpentarius, Sceggius, Lieblerus against Ramus . . . [and] Talaeus, Ossatus, Freigius, Minos, Rodingus, Scribonius, for Ramus against them” (2:45). In Nashe’s account, however, *Pierces Supererogation* can be located elsewhere: “at *Wolfes* in *Powles Church-yard*,” where Harvey, “lying in the ragingest furie of the last Plague,” set about “inck-squitting and printing” for “three-quarters of a yere thus cloystred and immured . . . not beeing able almost to step out of dores” and

“barricadoed up with graves, which besieged and undermined his verie threshold” (3:87).

Tracing Harvey to such a concrete and limited location – “cloystred and immured” in a printer’s house – in some way recalls a certain game of hide-and-seek that had been so pressing in the late 1580s. Marprelate’s *Oh read over D. John Bridges, for it is a worthy worke* (1588) opens with a coy play on the frantic attempts to track down and suppress the mobile Marprelate press:

May not a pore gentleman signifie his good will unto you by a Letter, but presently you must put yourselves to the paines and charges of calling foure Bishops together, John Canterburie, John London, Thomas Winchester, William of Lincolne, & posting over citie & countrie for poore Martin? Why, his meaning in writing unto you was not that you should take the paines to seeke for him. Did you thinke that he did not know where he was himselfe? Or did you thinke him to have bene cleane lost that you sought so diligently for him? (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

Martin’s roving nature placed him outside of the secure limits of civil government, and his unpredictable itinerary mapped onto his destabilizing effect on the commonwealth. Nashe, owing so much of his stylistic versatility and interest in polyphony to the Martinist “Dialogizing” reviled by Sutcliffe, is now the figure of restless urban circulation, and Harvey’s avowed interest in stable social order leaves him in a single spot, impotently “inck-squitting and printing” stillborn pamphlets.

### **“Content thy selfe, I will not”: Contentious Conversation**

The urbanity that Nashe flaunts as he dismantles Harvey’s claims to civility professes no interest in the maintenance of good order and government. The position that Nashe claims for himself in the feud is a personal one that may very well contribute to the disorder of the commonwealth rather than providing a mirror of proper government. While Harvey attempts to distance himself from the violence lurking in and around the physicality of Martinist and anti-Martinist discourse, Nashe playfully suggests that *Have With You* be thought of “after the same manner that one of these *Italionate* conferences about a *Duell* is wont solemnly to be handled,”; Nashe has, after all, been “specially toucht in reputation,” and having been “challenged to the field” he must plot a course of action (3:21). This likening of Nashe’s work to the duel, a violent and socially disruptive activity pursued for personal satisfaction, shows his unapologetic lack of civility and the affinity of his style to a social evil Lodowick Bryskett’s *A Discourse of Civil Life* (published in 1606, written in the 1580s) calls “barbarous . . . and contrary to all honest and civil conversation” (Gillingham 288).

Rhodes has shown in some detail how Nashe is an exemplar of Quintilian’s “smack of the city,” arguing that he is a writer who “makes use of his immediate surroundings, gathering material from the tavern conversation or the contents of a kitchen” (*Grotesque* 24). Nashe’s extensive coinages are “super-colloquial, super-idiomatic,” simultaneously picking up and inventing the language of London life. Just as importantly, however, they work – in the manner of his exemplary neologism

“palpabrizize” – to render the abstract as comically palpable; indeed, the “grotesque” style that Nashe partakes in is characterized by the conjunction of “images which have a physical similarity, but which normal experience classifies quite separately” (14). It is quite easy to see how this “palpabrization” leads to the dangers of embodied textuality and the liberties that the Bishops’ Ban sought to suppress. When Nashe writes that Harvey’s “complexion” is “of an adust swarth of chollericke dye, like restie bacon, or a dride scate-fish” he is drawing from a stock of urban experience that is in no way courteous or civil and instead directly mocks his foe (3:93).

Indeed, Nashe makes no claim to be a civil conversationalist himself. In his *Galateo*, an etiquette book translated into English in 1576, Giovanni della Casa warns that a spirit of jest may prompt one to be “clownishe nor lumpishe” in response to others, like those who “never give a man a good countenance . . . [and] say, No, to all things”; instead of this “carterlike and clonwish” contrariety, one should always “answer after a gentle sort” (Holcomb 91). Nashe makes little effort to contain himself in this way. In *Four Letters*, amidst his censure of Greene and of Nashe for following his example, Harvey beseeches Nashe to “be a devine Poet indeede: and use heavenly Eloquence indeede: and employ thy golden talent with amounting usance indeede: and with heroicall Canotes honour right Vertue, & brave valour indeede . . . and I will bestow more complements of rare amplifications upon thee” than those ever bestowed on figures like Sidney and Spenser (1:217-8). He even goes so far as to include Nashe among

the deere Lovers of the Muses: and namely . . . the professed Sonnes of the same;

*Edmond Spencer, Richard Stanihurst, Abraham France, Thomas Watson, Samuell*

*Daniell, Thomas Nash*, and the rest, whome I affectionately thancke for their studious endeavours, commendably employed in enriching, & polishing their native tongue, never so furnished, or embellished as of late. (1:218-9)

Refusing to answer after della Casa's "gentle sort," Nashe contemptuously notes that "thou goest about to bribe mee to give over this quarrell . . . Thou flatterest mee, and praisest mee. To make me a small seeming amendes for the injuries thou hast done mee, thou reckonst me up *amongst the deare lovers and professed sonnes of the Muses*" (1:325). Nashe's terse response to all of this is in keeping with his leveling of Harvey's insincere courtesy: "*With a hundred blessings, and many praiers, thou intreatst mee to love thee. Content thy selfe, I will not.*" This contentious reply does not merely establish Nashe as willfully belligerent and contrary to good order. It brings Harvey to the same level, making him a briber and flatterer with only his own selfish interests in mind.

### **"Demolition work": The Quarrel and the Bishops' Ban**

In *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe boasts that "I have tearmes (if I be vext) laid in steepe in *Aquafortis*, & Gunpowder, that shall rattle through the Skyes, and make an Earthquake in a Pesants eares" and expresses a cavalier sense of his propriety in using such destructive terms to mock Richard Harvey: "have I not an indifferent pritty vayne in Spurgalling an Asse? . . . Tell me, what doe you thinke of the case? am I subject to the sinne of Wrath I write against, or no in whetting my penne on this blocke?" (1:195, 199). In *Pierces Supererogation*, Harvey decries such a practice, for "Though strong drinke fumenth, & Aqua fortis fretteth; yet I will not exchange my Milke-maides Irony, for his

Draff-maides assery” (2:245). In picking apart Harvey’s stance of civility, Nashe shows that the two modes are only nominally distinct.

Nashe’s sustained critique of Harvey, apart from its aforementioned celebration of urban circulation and its focus on Nashe’s own “Aretinelyke” verbal skill, offers little by way of an alternative stance. Hutson describes how *Foure Letters*, after having ironically libeled and “thus done the necessary demolition work on the character and morals” of Greene, proceeds to build up Harvey’s own credit (205). Nashe’s Menippean inversion of Harvey’s civil mode of discourse performs a comparable amount of “demolition work” but shows a marked indifference to the task of erecting something new in its place. In this way his ridicule of Harvey ties him to what Ben Parsons has shown to be a medieval tradition of radical Juvenalianism, a “purely negative form of mockery” that works “without necessarily privileging a norm as it attacks” and creates invective with “a life of its own, not subordinate to any sanctified system of values” (112). Without the univocality or consistent ethical stance of a more corrective mode of satire, it is difficult to see how this writing could ever be conformable to the “aucthoritie” of Whitgift and Bancroft.

Norbert Elias’s work on the “civilizing process” of Western society traces the rise of a “monopoly of physical power” transferred from individuals to “central authorities”; once this has occurred, violence and retaliation become a privilege “reserved to those few legitimized by the central authority” in times of war or revolution (201-2). These “temporal or spatial enclaves within civilized society” that do still remain “in which belligerence is allowed freer play” become over time “more impersonal, and lead less and

less to an affective discharge” with the “immediacy and intensity” of a more medieval system of personal satisfaction (202). In many ways, the Harvey-Nashe quarrel stands as one of these “enclaves” at the close of the tumultuous sixteenth century. The free play of belligerence (disavowed by Harvey and embraced by Nashe) in these pamphlets seems almost regressive in its pointedly personal nature, and the issue was more easily dealt with through prohibition than through a continuation of the runaway manner of uncivil conversation that Harvey calls the “cutting vaine” of Martinism.

The identical fate of Harvey’s “Milke-maides Irony” and Nashe’s “Draff-maides assery” in the prohibitions of 1599 suggests an uneasy relationship between the state, the printing press, and what Richard Harvey calls a “civill form of speaking and writing.” The insult and ridicule that retrospectively make the Harvey-Nashe quarrel so entertaining were in the 1590s a point of serious contention. Bryson points out that jesting, as an activity that can “either reinforce the sociability of a gathering or destroy it,” provides an opportunity to show oneself “most civil or most uncivil” (237). Keith Thomas similarly sees early modern laughter at once as an “affirmation of shared values,” a “powerful source of social cohesion” expressed through derision or mockery of others, and as a “radical, critical” tool for challenging the pretensions of social and religious hierarchies (77-8). By the time of the quarrel, the popularity of the Marprelate tracts and their mockery of the bishops had disconcertingly suggested the force of a cohesive Presbyterian agenda, while the anti-Martinist campaign had constructed what Kristen Poole calls a “world of social madness and hierarchical inversion” (59). In the wake of such public anxiety, Harvey’s fraught use of irony and other “civil jests” is in

itself a tenuous effort to at once affirm shared values of good government and establish himself as an “Aretinelyke” wit. When subjected to Nashe’s own mockingly deconstructive technique, this ridicule seems to be a consistently destabilizing force. The Bishops’ Ban did not permanently suppress the issues at hand, but it did punctuate the quarrel in an appropriately confrontational manner. As Nashe writes at the end of *Have With You*, “Herewith the Court breakes up and goes to dinner, all generally concluding with *Trajan*; The gods never suffer anie to be over-come in battail, but those that are enemies to peace” (3:139).

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