

CHAPTER I

*Styles of the Stage*  
*Addressing the Public in the Post-Reformation Period*

The multitude is now to be our Audience.

Thomas Dekker, *The Magnificent Entertainment* (1604)

In the course of the sixteenth century, the English people began to play a part in religious and political debates. The Henrician Reformation of the 1530s saw the first concerted effort to address the people at large in order to promote and facilitate the change of religion among the entire populace, including the common people. And as the century progressed, religious, dynastic and political conflicts were increasingly carried out in public, with members of the regime and oppositional groups both appealing to the people for support. Peter Lake and Stephen Pincus have accordingly characterised the post-Reformation period as one in which contested issues ranging from church reform to royal marriage were no longer confined to a debate among elites, but strategically communicated to the public at large:

[D]uring moments of perceived crisis or emergency, religio-political controversy and public pitch making were conducted both by members of the regime, its supporters, loyal opposition and overt critics and opponents. A variety of media – print, the pulpit, performance, circulating manuscript – was used to address promiscuously uncontrollable, socially heterogeneous, in some sense ‘popular’ audiences. Such activity implied the existence of – indeed, notionally at least called into being – an adjudicating public or publics able to judge or determine the truth of the matter in hand on the basis of the information and argument placed before them.<sup>1</sup>

Lake and Pincus are careful to portray the post-Reformation public sphere as limited. Rather than a permanent realm of debate, the period saw a succession of temporary public spheres, created only at moments of crisis, and with a limited degree of judgement granted to a popular audience. Often enough, as in campaigns against courtiers such as Leicester and Essex or in

<sup>1</sup> Lake and Pincus (2007b), 6.

the case of the notorious Marprelate tracts, public address took the form of libel or satire and aimed to persuade through humour and slander rather than to encourage rational debate. In the post-Reformation public sphere, publics were called into being mostly to influence public opinion so as to put pressure on the regime and to garner support for a particular religious or political course. Lake and Pincus note, however, that these popular publics sometimes proved to be wayward, and their judgement and reaction could not easily be controlled. As debate moved into the public realm and address increasingly included the mass of common people, the question of how to successfully mobilise *and* contain a public became a pressing concern of the period. The aim of this chapter is to show that, in pursuit of this question, many turned to the theatre as a model for addressing popular audiences. For the stage seemed to have perfected a mode of address that never failed to engage its audiences – by appealing to their passions.

The idea that theatre strongly affected those who attended it was widespread in the early modern period. As playing developed into a profession and became a regular pastime for many Londoners in the second half of the sixteenth century, a debate over the potential dangers and benefits of theatre emerged in pamphlets and ordinances, as well as in sermons and plays. Although opponents and defenders of the stage disagreed about whether regular performances of plays should be allowed, both groups believed that theatre exerted power over its audiences by affecting them emotionally. “The poets that write plays, and they that present them upon the stage, study to make our affections overflow”, Stephen Gosson warned in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), a sentiment John Rainolds seconded in *The Overthrow of Stage-Plays* (1599), stating that “senses are moved, affections are delighted, hearts though strong and constant are vanquished by such players.”<sup>2</sup> The stage appeared as both a dangerous anomaly and the fascinating epitome of an early modern obsession with emotions. The humanist revival of rhetoric, and the emergent scientific interest in the workings of the mind, had led to a surge of interest regarding the nature and function of emotions, variously called ‘affections’, ‘perturbations’ or ‘passions’.<sup>3</sup> Numerous tracts explored the operation of the passions in the human mind and the ways that they could be disciplined, but also the ways in which they could be strategically moved. Translations of classical works on rhetoric, especially those of Aristotle and Cicero, as well as vernacular handbooks on the subject, provided instructions on how “to move

<sup>2</sup> Gosson (1582), Fiv; Rainolds (1599), 18.      <sup>3</sup> See Wright (1604), 8.

(*permovere*) and incite souls, and to lead them to a certain emotion.”<sup>4</sup> Rather than intimate and private experiences, passions were understood to be fundamentally social, physical and effective in the world. Most importantly, the common people seemed particularly prone to passions. Thomas Wright, in his seminal work *The Passions of the Minde* (1604), expressed the widely shared belief that “the common people or men not of deepe judgement are more perswaded with passions.”<sup>5</sup> And many writers on the subject were convinced that theatre was particularly effective in moving the passions of an audience. Jean-François Senault, whose *The Use of Passions* was published in a translation from the original French in 1649, suggested that “if you will examine the Common people, they will confess, that Stage-Poetry doth strangely move them, and that it imprints in their souls the feelings of those personages which they represent.”<sup>6</sup> Passions, it was believed, could be transmitted from actor to audience, and be imprinted in the souls of spectators so that they were permanently affected by their experience.<sup>7</sup> When Thomas Heywood defended the stage in his *Apology for Actors* (1612), he thus lauded theatre’s capacity for stirring patriotic valour in audiences and claimed that “so bewitching a thing is lively and well spirited action, that it hath power to new mold the hearts of the spectators and fashion them to the shape of any noble and notable attempt.”<sup>8</sup> But if noble feelings could be evoked in audiences, the same was true for “unchaste, whorish, cozening, deceitful, wanton and mischievous passions”, which could easily “infect the spirit”, as a response to Heywood argued.<sup>9</sup> Opponents of the stage feared that dangerous passions could spread like a disease, and that theatregoers were at particular risk of infection, as theatre was forcefully contagious. How easy it was, Rainolds argued, to catch “diseases of the mind” at the theatre, where “senses are moved, affections are delighted, hearts though strong and constant are vanquished by such players.”<sup>10</sup> The theatre, its enemies argued, was so dangerous because people went there willingly, eagerly following the action on stage and subjecting themselves to the passions displayed. The “pleasures of the stage”, as Anthony Munday called them in *A Second and Third Blast of Retrait* (1580), seduced spectators

<sup>4</sup> Melancton, quoted in Vickers (1981), 120. On the role of rhetoric and the increasing interest in the passions see Vickers (1983), 411–35; Roach (1985), 23–57; James (1997); Müller (2002); Cockroft (2003); Plett (2004).

<sup>5</sup> Wright (1604), 174. The book first appeared in 1601, with the enlarged edition following in 1604. Other contemporary works on the subject include Wilson (1585); Peacham (1593); Reynolds (1640); Fenner (1642).

<sup>6</sup> Senault (1649), 171.

<sup>7</sup> On the transmission of passion in the theatre see Hobgood (2014), esp. 13–15.

<sup>8</sup> Heywood (1612), B4r. <sup>9</sup> I. G. (1615), 39. <sup>10</sup> Rainolds (1599), 20, 18.

to expose themselves to emotional manipulation, and even proponents of the stage such as Philip Sidney claimed that theatre subjected audiences by a “sweet violence” that could not be resisted.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that early modern commentators, though emphasising theatre’s emotional dynamic, seldom referred to the most prominent classical authority on theatre, Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Instead, they drew almost exclusively on rhetoric to conceptualise theatre’s emotional dynamics. Emphasising the social impact of aesthetic experience, they agreed that theatre evoked emotions not to purge them in a process of catharsis, but to make them persist and produce effects in society at large.<sup>12</sup> To conceive of theatrical emotions in terms of rhetoric also emphasised the political dimension of passions as implicated in a power dynamic of control and subjection. Francis Bacon highlighted this political aspect of theatre in an oft-quoted passage of *The Advancement of Learning* (1623):

The action of the theatre, though modern states esteem it but ludicrous, unless it be satirical and biting, was carefully watched by the ancients, that it might improve mankind in virtue; and indeed many wise men and great philosophers have thought it to the mind as the bow to the fiddle; and certain it is, though a great secret in nature, that the minds of men in company are more open to affections and impressions than when alone.<sup>13</sup>

Like the writings in the (anti-)theatrical debates, Bacon’s image of the theatre as a bow to play on the mind suggested it as an extremely useful instrument of governance. His juxtaposition of the wisdom of the ‘ancients’, who used state-run theatres to collectively move and educate the public, and the dismissal of theatre by his contemporaries, however, is misleading. Not only was the thriving professional theatre of the period carefully watched by the authorities, but it also inspired a wide range of practices that aimed to address a public beyond the stage.

As I will show in this chapter, the impact of theatre on strategies of public address was widespread and extended into a range of different fields, from

<sup>11</sup> Munday (1580), 87; Sidney (1595), F4r.

<sup>12</sup> The *Poetics* were rediscovered in the fifteenth century, and though translated into English only in 1623, editions in Latin and Italian were available. The notion of *catharsis*, however, became the subject of debate in England only in the eighteenth century. See Reiss (1999); Dewar-Watson (2007), 15–27; Greenberg (2011), 163–96; Craik and Pollard (2013b); Rist (2013). One notable example is Sidney’s argument that tragedy “with stirring the affects of admiration and comiseration, teacheth the vncertainty of this world” (Sidney 1595, F3v–F4r). In this case, though, these emotions are not evoked in order to be purged, but to make the teachings of a tragedy more persuasive. On the educational aspects of tragedy see Cronk (1999) and Reiss (1999).

<sup>13</sup> Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623), II.13, translation in Gurr (1987), 219. The observation was included only in the Latin edition of *The Advancement of Learning* and is missing in the 1605 English edition.

religious service and polemical pamphlets to regal representation. With its alleged capacity to attract audiences with pleasurable entertainment and move their passions effectively, theatre provided a model for the addressing of the increasingly popular publics of the post-Reformation period. Explicit links to the theatre were, to be sure, frequently disavowed because many contemporaries perceived the stage as ludicrous and trifling, deceptive and corrupt, and in any case unfit to engage in serious debate. Theatrical strategies of addressing the public occasioned criticism: when matters of religion were “handled in the stile of the stage” in the satiric Marprelate tracts of the 1580s, many joined Francis Bacon’s call for an immediate “ende and surcease” of such “immodest and deformed” discourse.<sup>14</sup> But while such anti-theatrical attitudes were widespread, stage practice persistently informed strategies to address the people at large. If we look for the style of the stage in post-Reformation attempts of public address, we will thus come upon a dynamic of theatrical means and anti-theatrical sentiment, both of which could be employed strategically in the contest for public support. Sometimes a public would be addressed in theatrical ways even while theatre itself was being condemned. As this chapter begins to chart the variety of (sometimes contradictory) theatrical strategies, it demonstrates that the style of the stage promised an effective way of addressing the multitude of common people that, in the period following the Reformation, was to become the audience of public address.

To suggest the range of theatrical strategies at a time when an emergent public developed into a crucial political factor, the chapter provides three case studies that address the relationship between theatre and religious worship, theatre and the printed word and theatre and regal power. While all three contexts have received sustained scholarly attention, I offer a fresh perspective by considering their impact on the formation of early modern publics. Though the post-Reformation period witnessed some spectacular campaigns during which a broader public was addressed, often through print, the public spheres that emerged were short-lived and confined to a specific agenda, such as royal marriage or religious controversy. These temporary appeals to public opinion, however, took recourse in shared ideals – such as the commonwealth or true religion – that were established through modes of address that exceeded temporary pitch-making.<sup>15</sup> These modes of address were performative rather than textual: public performances such as sermons, entries, processions and proclamations continually addressed the people as members of a community – the community of true believers,

<sup>14</sup> Bacon (1589), 164.      <sup>15</sup> See Lake (2007), 59–60.

of a city, of a nation – in a way that encouraged them to identify with this community, share its values and feel strongly about them. Though debate and participation in the sense of a public sphere were not encouraged on a regular basis, boundaries between the ways in which the public was addressed were fluid: the regular exhortations by preachers or the spectacular ceremonies of power, for example, could become a part of campaigns that sought to influence public opinion on specific religious or political questions.<sup>16</sup> As preachers, politicians and pamphleteers addressed people as part of a community, soliciting their acclaim and even appealing to their judgement, they developed strategies of address that shaped the public and provided the foundation for the public sphere that emerged in the post-Reformation period.

The first section of this chapter provides a multilayered perspective on theatricality in the context of post-Reformation service, parsing reformers' apparently contradictory attitudes towards theatricality and outlining three important traits of the theatre that informed styles of preaching. Whether at Paul's Cross or in small rural parishes, sermons were the performance that most people would have witnessed regularly, and the debate about their delivery indicates the appeal as well as the predicaments of theatrical strategies of addressing the public. The second case study looks at the way in which theatrical styles could be translated into texts, and thus informed the publics who were addressed through printed pamphlets in temporary, purposeful campaigns. Regarding the example of the Marprelate tracts, I show how theatre's potential for satire, critique and exposure was used to incite debate and appeal to a popular audience even in the medium of print. The third case study, then, attends to spectacular public performances to which most would attribute theatricality, the royal entries of Elizabeth Tudor and James Stuart. To contemporaries, these events provided occasions to reflect on the variety of theatrical styles, but also on the possible failure of a style to engage the people and the persistent dilemma of controlling public response. In the remainder of the chapter, I then reflect on the type of public constituted by these theatrical styles. Following Michael Warner's assumption that publics are shaped by the way in which they are addressed, I ask what it means for us to consider the early modern public in terms of a theatre audience. If we acknowledge that the people were regularly addressed by theatrical strategies, our idea of the early modern public needs to embrace the belief in theatre's power as well as the agency and potential waywardness of theatre audiences. As such, this public had

<sup>16</sup> On sermons as political commentary see Killeen (2011).

the potential to be at once passionate and rational, obedient and unruly – and to become a powerful but incalculable agent in the social, religious and political struggles of the period.

### **Winning Attention: Performances in the Reformed Church**

Lake and Pincus date the emergence of an early type of public sphere to the Henrician Reformation and its aftermath, following Collinson's notion of a long reformation that continued throughout the reign of Elizabeth and into the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup> As Protestantism only slowly replaced older traditions among the populace, the effort of promoting religious (and political) change to the people extended over decades. And throughout, complex attitudes towards theatre impacted attempts to address the people at large. These attitudes already played out during the Henrician Reformation, when Henry's decision to break with Rome in 1534 inaugurated the period's first campaign to address a broad public. Under the auspices of Thomas Cromwell, a variety of media including pamphlets, printed illustrations, sermons, and iconoclastic actions, but also plays, disseminated and promoted the religious changes to the English populace, including the common people. In the course of this campaign, players performed propagandist interludes such as those written by the reformer John Bale in churches across the country. Unlike pamphlets and printed sermons, interludes communicated the reformers' ideology directly and entertainingly to the illiterate majority of the people, and persuaded through lively example rather than through theoretical argument.<sup>18</sup> But if reformers embraced theatre to reach a popular audience, these interludes themselves regularly employed anti-theatrical tropes. In an attempt to discredit the Catholic Church and its services, interludes showed priests as actors hiding behind a mask of piety, or portrayed mass as a stage-play.<sup>19</sup> As Paul Whitefield White observes, the apparent inconsistency of using and attacking theatre at the same time seems not to have troubled the reformers:

Bale and his contemporaries never seemed to question the moral propriety of theater itself, but they routinely used the concept of theater negatively as a metaphor to expose the hypocrisy, deceitfulness, and spiritual emptiness of the wicked, which they usually associated with Roman Catholicism . . . Indeed, throughout the early modern period, this uneasy mixing of the theatrical and antitheatrical, of the iconic and the iconoclastic, is a feature of Protestant propagandist and mainstream "secular" drama alike.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Lake and Pincus (2007b), 3; Collinson (1988).      <sup>18</sup> See White (1997), 135.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 136–8.      <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

What White calls the “uneasy mixing of the theatrical and the antitheatrical” is a dynamic that can be witnessed throughout the century, and not just in drama, but also in political and religious struggle. Theatre provided an effective means of reaching a broad audience; at the same time, anti-theatrical sentiment provided tropes for attack and critique. Such use of (anti-)theatrical strategies was not necessarily inconsistent: in the case of the Reformation interludes, the simultaneous criticism and employment of theatricality implicitly differentiated between two kinds of theatricality: one of sensuousness (and deceit) associated with Catholicism, and another of exposure, visibility and education associated with the new religion. Both kinds focussed on different aspects of theatrical practice that could also be found on the public stages of the period, and that were promoted or attacked during the fiercely polemical debates that followed the erection of playhouses in London in the 1570s. Reading the writings of reformers and post-Reformation manuals for preachers in conversation with the pamphlets of these (anti-)theatrical debates, I will outline the way that different notions of theatre informed different theatrical strategies employed by reformers and the Protestant Church. On the one hand, reformers accommodated anti-theatrical sentiment, since theatre was seen as a potentially corrupting influence, a sentiment that could be used to attack Catholic ritual. But they also appreciated theatre as a medium for addressing illiterate audiences, and even a model that preachers could imitate to address and move congregations at church.

When early reformers, especially Calvin, attacked the Roman Church as theatrical, they often aimed at the sensuous spectacles of mass. Calvin criticised the ritualised service, elaborate vestments and rich decorations of the Catholic Church as “colde and plaielike trifles” that brought “none other use but to deceive the sense of the amased people” and derided “that playerlike apparell which the Papistes use in their ceremonies, where appeareth nothing els but an unprofitable visor or gainesse, and excesse without frute.”<sup>21</sup> His verdict was taken up by others, such as John Foxe, who accused the Catholic Church of beguiling the people with puppets, or John Jewel, who complained that mass turned the Lord’s Supper “into a stage-play, and a solemn sight; to the end that men’s eyes should be fed with nothing else but with mad gazings, and foolish gauds.”<sup>22</sup> With such anti-theatrical tropes, reformers attacked Catholic service as make-believe and

<sup>21</sup> Calvin (1578), IV, 10.29, 502r; IV, 17.43, 593v. Thomas Norton’s English translation of Calvin’s *Institutio Christianae Religionis* (Basel 1536) was first published in 1574, and went into multiple editions. For other references to the theatricality of Catholic sacraments see Barish (1981), 159–65.

<sup>22</sup> John Jewel, Works, 3:64, quoted in Kapp (1990), 45; on Foxe see Diehl (1991), 154.



deceit to blind and detract the people. This discomfort with sensuous pleasure was further heightened in the anti-theatrical pamphlets of the period. In one of the earliest attacks against the stage, Anthony Munday decried theatre's sensuous allure, the "abominable speeches", "songes of love" and "unseemlie gesture" that provided audiences with "the pleasure of the flesh; the delight of the eie; and the fond motions of the mind", and thus brought "confusion both to our bodies and soules."<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Stephen Gosson declared that theatre's multisensory appeal, which included "every streine that musicke is able to pipe" as well as "the beautie of the houses, and the Stages" and "Gearish apparell, maskes, vaunting, tumbling [and] dauncing" served only one purpose: to "ravish the beholders with varietie of pleasure."<sup>24</sup> To the anti-theatrical polemicists, outward show was not so much unprofitable as outright dangerous because it evoked inordinate passions and seduced into sin.

Sensuous delights were thought particularly effective in moving the passions on an immediately physical level. In his discussion of passions, Wright observed that the "senses no doubt are the first gates wherby passe and repasse all messages sent to passions."<sup>25</sup> While they were necessary to connect the mind to the outer world, the image of gates also captured the concern for a potential assault on the mind. Through the open gates of the senses, harm could enter: Anthony Munday warned that through the "two open windowes" of the eyes, "death breaketh into the soule."<sup>26</sup> And Henry Crosse maintained in *Vertues Commonwealth* (1603) that sensuous pleasures subjected spectators to violent emotions regardless of their will and consent, since "it cannot be but that the internall powers must be moved at such visible and lively objects."<sup>27</sup> The senses could relate information only on the outward appearance of things. As a result, they were untrustworthy, easily deceived by illusion and show and rendered the mind vulnerable.<sup>28</sup> It is no wonder, then, that theatre's opponents routinely emphasised the dangerous enticement to the eyes and ears that the stage provided.<sup>29</sup>

Such attacks on the stage shared with Protestant iconoclasm the renouncement of show and spectacle, and the belief that sensuous pleasures were deceitful and dangerous.<sup>30</sup> The blending of anti-Catholicism with

<sup>23</sup> Munday (1580), 56, 100, 88, 64.    <sup>24</sup> Gosson (1582), Err.    <sup>25</sup> Wright (1604), 150.

<sup>26</sup> Munday (1580), 96.    <sup>27</sup> Crosse (1603), P2v.    <sup>28</sup> See Reynolds (1640), 4–5; Wright (1604), 150.

<sup>29</sup> On the concern with theatre's "delights" and their emotional appeal see Lin (2012), 107–33, esp. 111. On the numerous aspects of theatre practice that appealed specifically to the senses see Butterworth (1998); Graves (1999); Smith (1999); Jones and Stallybrass (2000), esp. 173–268; Harris and Korda (2006).

<sup>30</sup> For the connection between iconoclasm and anti-theatricalism see O'Connell (2000).

anti-theatricalism, introduced by reformers in the first half of the sixteenth century, was in fact continued by later anti-theatrical writers who used it to capitalise on a widespread anti-Catholic sentiment.<sup>31</sup> Anti-theatrical tracts reiterated denunciation of “*Popish Priests*, who . . . transformed the celebrating of the Sacrament of the *Lords supper* into a *Masse-game*, and all other partes of *Ecclesiastical service* into *theatricall sights*”, and on mass as “a Satyricall stage playe of fooles consecrated to the Devil, [rather] than a sober service of wise man instituted to God.”<sup>32</sup> The association of theatricality with Catholicism has also reappeared in the suggestion by modern scholars that the spectacles of the Roman Church found refuge in the spectacles of the stage after the Reformation.<sup>33</sup> But as the use of interludes during the Reformation suggests, the reformers’ attitude towards the theatre was not monolithic, and the new religion was not opposed to theatre in general. The Reformation interludes themselves made use of theatre’s visual appeal precisely to exhibit the falseness of the Roman Church. Here, theatricality served to expose rather than to deceive, to show rather than hide. In their interludes, Bale and other reformers directed anti-theatrical tropes against the hypocrisy and spectacle of the Catholic Church, not against theatre in its entirety, which ironically seemed a viable means to criticise church theatricality.<sup>34</sup>

The assumption of an opposition between the Reformed Church and a theatre associated with Catholic spectacle has been challenged most notably by Huston Diehl, who instead argues for their mutual influence. To begin with, as Diehl observes in *Staging Reform*, the reformers were not indiscriminate in their anti-theatrical fervour, but attacked mostly those elements of mass in which silent action and ceremony were detached from words and became ends in themselves.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Diehl argues, the reformers not so much eradicated as replaced the theatricality of Catholicism with one of their own:

Even though the reformers condemn the theatricality of the Roman Church, a theatricality they associate with externals, hypocrisy, and seduction, they rely heavily on dramatic genres and theatrical modes of presentation, and they develop their own dramatic forms to replace the “idoltrous” spectacle and theatricality of the Roman Church.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See White (1997), 140. Also see William Crashawe’s attack on plays in Wilson (1950), 375.

<sup>32</sup> Rainolds (1599), 161; Philip Stubbes, *The Theater of the Popes Monarchie* (1584) A2, quoted in Döring (2005), 20.

<sup>33</sup> See Montrose (1980); O’Connell (1985); Siemon (1985).

<sup>34</sup> On the idea of theatre as a means to expose illusion and deceit see Diehl (1991), esp. 159–60.

<sup>35</sup> See Diehl (1991), 158. <sup>36</sup> Diehl (1997), 5.

Among the “dramatic forms” of reformers Diehl enumerates spectacular acts of iconoclasm, but also the reformed ritual of the Lord’s Supper and the ways in which dramatic modes were used to articulate spiritual experience.<sup>37</sup> Her study, which focusses on the development of a Protestant aesthetic in post-Reformation plays, seeks to complicate our understanding of the relationship between church and theatre, even if Diehl ultimately reiterates a narrative that casts Protestantism and theatre as opposites and regards the 1642 prohibition as the ultimate victory of Protestant anti-theatricality over theatre.<sup>38</sup> While I will discuss the motives behind the prohibition in Chapter 2, I will here inquire into the shared aspects of theatre and reformed religion. Going back to Diehl’s initial observation of the complex attitude of reformers towards theatre, I want to lay out the ways in which reformed preachers embraced theatrical strategies and made use of theatre’s power to move. My discussion is indebted to Diehl as well as to other studies that have attended to the exchanges and intersections between church and theatre after the Reformation, from theatrical elements in church service and the performance of plays in churches to the tropes and subject matter shared by preachers and playwrights.<sup>39</sup> Whether through “affective technologies” (Williamson) such as props and vestments or through a “logic of practice” (Targoff) that emphasised ritual and participation – the reformed Church moved congregations not simply by the word, but also through performances that bore a resemblance to the way in which theatre addressed its audiences.

When Catholicism was finally abolished for good under Elizabeth I in 1559, services in the English Church began to be held according to the Book of Common Prayer. The new service aimed to ensure conformity and provide a sense of ritual through set forms and speeches, but also included an individual performance: the minister’s delivery of the sermon.<sup>40</sup> This element of service was designed specifically to instruct the people and to move their passions. Calvin himself had stressed that prayer and sermon should constitute an enticing and effective rhetorical performance, when he reminded his readers that “those wordes are a lively preachinge, which may edifie the hearers, which may inwardly pearce into their mindes, which may

<sup>37</sup> On the reformation of the Lord’s Supper see Diehl (1991). On the dramatic framing of spiritual experience and religious identity see Kendall (1986).

<sup>38</sup> See Diehl (1997), 215–17.

<sup>39</sup> See Knapp (1993); White (1997); Lake and Questier (2002); Williamson (2009); Degenhardt and Williamson (2011). On performances in churches see particularly Wasson (1997) and McCarthy (2008); on the performative aspects of religious practice see Targoff (2001).

<sup>40</sup> On Common Prayer service see Targoff (2001).

be emprinted and settled in their hartes.”<sup>41</sup> And early reformers had advocated using the English vernacular rather than Latin specifically because it could “stir . . . the people to more devotion.”<sup>42</sup> In the sermon, preachers could choose the rhetorical delivery and mode of address that they believed best served the purpose of reaching and moving their audiences. But their task was a difficult one. As frequent complaints about the inattentiveness and indifference of congregations indicate, people apparently found it difficult to follow sermons attentively.<sup>43</sup> The problem became even more pronounced in the 1640s, when Parliament replaced the Book of Common Prayer with the Directory for Public Worship that further emphasised free preaching.<sup>44</sup> A London parishioner had reason to complain to his preacher that “some may sleep and lie snorting in their sins for many years and scarce ever be awakened by so sweet preaching as yours is.”<sup>45</sup> Confronted with audiences that, in the words of the minister and poet George Herbert, were often “thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a point of Zeal and fervency”, preachers needed to turn sermons into engaging performances to ensure the attention of their audience and stir them to devotion.<sup>46</sup> From the moment that sermons in the vernacular were introduced into service, ministers thus had to be schooled in the discipline that players had perfected: the art of action.

Thomas Heywood argued in his *Apology for Actors* that theatre derived its appeal largely from the “lively and well spirited action” of performers who used their bodies and voices to impersonate vivid, engaging characters.<sup>47</sup> Such action had the power “to new mold the hearts of the spectators” in a way that most preachers could only dream of. Again, contemporaries understood this appeal in terms of rhetoric, notably the art of delivery (*actio*) that involved speech and pronunciation, but also gestures, posture and imitation in the display of strong passions. If accomplished skilfully, such action was believed to be outright infectious:

[The] affection poureth forth it selfe by all meanes possible, to discover unto the present beholders and auditors, how the actor is affected, and what

<sup>41</sup> Calvin (1578), IV, 17.39, 591. On Christ as a model for the use of rhetoric see Prideaux (1659), 1.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Cranmer, *An exhortacion unto praier thought mete by the kynges maiestie* (London 1544), A9v, quoted in Targoff (2001), 24.

<sup>43</sup> See Targoff (2001), 42–3.

<sup>44</sup> See Durston (2006). Similarly, the preacher Stephen Egerton complained that “wee pipe, and no man danceth, we mourne and no man weepeth, wee preach peace, but no man sorroweth for his sinne”; see Egerton (1623), A3v.

<sup>45</sup> Letter by Nehemia Wallington quoted in Capp (2012), 114.

<sup>46</sup> George Herbert, *The Country Parson* (London, 1652), 233, quoted in Targoff (2001), 98.

<sup>47</sup> Heywood (1612), B4r. Also see “personation”, *OED*, and Gurr (2001), 99–100.

affection such a case and cause requireth in them: by mouth hee telleth his minde; in countenance he speaketh with a silent voice to the eies; with all the universall life and body he seemeth to say, Thus we move, because by the passion thus we are moved, and as it hath wrought in us so it ought to worke in you.<sup>48</sup>

Even in antiquity, actors were seen to have perfected this art of passionate performance. Cicero himself recommended the actor Roscius as a model for oratorical action, and early modern authors defending the stage often stressed the connection between actors and orators to valorise theatre as a powerful art.<sup>49</sup> John Webster famously emphasised the link in his sketch of “An excellent Actor” when he suggested that “[w]hatsoever is commendable in the grave Orator is most exquisitely perfect in him; for by a full and significant action of body, he charmes our attention.” As Webster noted, skilled action was not a spontaneous outburst of passion, but governed by decorum: the actor “doth not strive to make nature monstrous,” his voice is “not lower then the prompter, nor lowder then the Foile and Target” and his action seemed to natural that “what we see him personate, we thinke truly done before us.”<sup>50</sup> Through artful and precise action, performers evoked very real and corporal passions.

Reminiscent of Bacon’s bow metaphor, both Wright and Webster suggested that there was a mechanical accuracy to *actio*, a calculability of both the actor’s body and the minds of the audience as instruments that could be played at will by a skilled actor. Such action was often seen as inescapable: Wright claimed that it would “admit no tergiversation” by the audience subjected to its power, and in 1612, a playgoer actually noted in his diary that he “went often to stage plays wherewith I was as it were bewitched.”<sup>51</sup> This powerful hold on the minds of an audience naturally concerned preachers and religious writers, who feared the “blind zeal” with which audiences would follow the stage’s example “how to be false, . . . how to murder, how to poison, how to disobey and rebel against princes.”<sup>52</sup> But theatrical action also attracted interest as it addressed and moved audiences so effectively. Some authors even suggested that if preachers were,

<sup>48</sup> Wright (1604), 176.

<sup>49</sup> Cicero (1967), I.130. For the connection between actors and orators in classic rhetoric and the early modern period see Plett (2004), 255–72. Unlike their professional counterparts, unlicensed players were still classed as rogues and vagabonds in Elizabeth’s *Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds* of 29 June 1572; see Wickham, Berry and Ingram (2000), 62.

<sup>50</sup> Webster (1615), 42–3.

<sup>51</sup> Wright (1604), 175; *The Journal of Richard Norwood*, quoted in Pollard (2012), 468. Also see similar statements in Munday (1580), 71, 97; Heywood (1612), B4r.

<sup>52</sup> Northbrook (1577), 66–7.

like actors, to train themselves in rhetoric, and particularly in action, they too could sway their audiences with almost mechanical precision.

Wright, for one, equated “the godly Preacher” with a “Christian Orator” who, “perfectly understanding the natures and properties of mens passions, questionlesse may effectuate strange matters in the mindes of his Auditors” and would find it easy to “perswade a multitude.”<sup>53</sup> For Wright, preachers were orators, and their task was to use the right means to move their audience. Since the 1550s, preachers who lacked a talent for engaging public speaking could turn to a proliferating number of rhetoric manuals like Wright’s that offered advice for the effective delivery of sermons.<sup>54</sup> Preachers learned that it was their task to teach, but also to entertain and move their audiences to ensure their spiritual edification.<sup>55</sup> “[E]xcept men finde delite, they will not long abide: delite them, and winne them: wearie them, and you lose them for ever,” Thomas Wilson noted in one of the most prominent rhetoric handbooks, *The Art of Rhetorique*.<sup>56</sup> If the sermon were to engage congregations, its delivery had to be lively and engaging, well pronounced and accompanied with gestures. In *The Practise of Preaching*, Andreas Hyperius accordingly advised the use of action and decorum, maintaining that “the moderate pronounciation of a lyvely voyce together with a decent and comely gesture of the speaker, doth adde greate force and importaunce to the movinge of affections.”<sup>57</sup> Most importantly, Wright noted in *The Passions of the Minde*, the preacher had to work himself into a state of passion in order to move his congregation, and “the more vehement the passion is, the more excellent action is like to ensue.”<sup>58</sup> To do so, Wright suggested that preachers should closely study the passion of others, “what and how they speake in mirth, sadnesse, ire, feare, hope, &c, what motions are stirring in the eyes, hands, bodie, &c.” They should then imitate this passion – but “leave the excesse and exorbitant levitie or other defects, and keepe the manner corrected with prudent mediocritie.” Strikingly, Wright even called upon preachers to follow the example of “stage plaiers, who act excellently; for as the perfection of their exercise consisteth in imitation of others, so they that imitate best, act best.”<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Wright (1604), 3.

<sup>54</sup> The first edition of Thomas Wilson’s *The Art of Rhetorique* appeared in 1553; on this and other tracts see Müller (2002), 17–53.

<sup>55</sup> On the impact of rhetoric on preaching, including opposition to rhetoric, see Shuger (1988); Armstrong (2011); Kneidel (2011).

<sup>56</sup> Wilson (1585), 3.

<sup>57</sup> Andreas Hyperius, *The Practise of Preaching* (1577) Giiiir, quoted in Armstrong (2011), 128.

<sup>58</sup> Wright (1604), 177. On the idea that an orator had to be moved himself in order to move others also see Roach (1985), 50–6.

<sup>59</sup> Wright (1604), 179.

It should be noted that while rhetoric handbooks emphasised the role of preaching, the portion of prayer book service not structured and prescribed by liturgy was relatively small. Some preachers, however, made use of it to impress their congregations with impressive performances, taking the advice of Wright and others to heart. John Rogers of Dedham reportedly used the pulpit as a stage, enacting the torments of hell by roaring and clinging on to the supporters of the canopy before the eyes of his awestruck congregation.<sup>60</sup> Other preachers supplemented their words with the use of props such as skulls and hourglasses to drive home a point, following Wright's advice that "to perswade any matter we intend, or to stirre up any passion in a multitude, if wee can aptly confirme our opinion or intention with any visible obiect, no doubt but the perswasion would be more forcible, and the passion more potent."<sup>61</sup> And in 1643, the preacher William Spurstowe claimed that he used weeping as an aid to repentance, there being "a peculiar aptness in tears to stir up bowels and to beget Compassions." Offering advice to others, Spurstowe even outlined the appropriate forms of crying and claimed that those who could not bring themselves to public tears should express "inward tears" by groans and sighs.<sup>62</sup> Adhering to the rules of actorly decorum, these preachers used theatrical action to address their congregations, subjecting them to passionate performances in order to win their attention and ensure their spiritual edification.

Some preachers even went a step further. To ensure their audience's attention, they broke with the rules of decorum as they followed the example of another staple of the English stage: the antics of fools. Stemming from a long tradition of popular theatrical performance, the repertoire of fools included acting, but also ad-libbing, the telling of jokes, physical tricks and tumbling, audience address and all other kinds of excesses beyond the scripted text. The violation of decorum by clowns through excessive speech and gesture, direct audience address and irreverent jokes had always alienated anti-theatrical critics and scrupulous playwrights. Even defenders of the theatre reprimanded the "lascivious shewes, scurrelous jeasts, or scandalous invectives" of fools and their "extreame shew of doltishnes, indeed fit to lift up a loude laughter and nothing els."<sup>63</sup> But fools were extremely popular. Even critics of the stage acknowledged that

<sup>60</sup> See Rhatigan (2011), 92.

<sup>61</sup> Wright (1604), 156. For the use of props see Wright (1604); 158; Williamson (2009); Rhatigan (2011), 93–5.

<sup>62</sup> William Spurstowe, *England's Patterne and Duty in Its Monthly Fasts* (1643), quoted in Durston (1992), 135.

<sup>63</sup> Heywood (1612), F4r; Sidney (1595), K2v.

they were “the thing which most pleaseth the multitude,” and that their immediate and visceral performance style was highly effective in captivating an audience.<sup>64</sup> Robert Weimann has noted that fools, like the vice of medieval mystery plays, often occupied the fringes of the stage, the area where the world of the play and the world of the audience overlapped.<sup>65</sup> This allowed actors to drop a fictional character’s mask, digress from the plot of the play, extemporise and address the audience directly.<sup>66</sup> As clowns established a direct and intimate communication with spectators and alluded to contemporary events, locations and persons, audiences no longer just reacted to the fiction of a play, but to an immediate engagement with shared knowledge and experience, which could include topical satire, criticism and the conventions of the theatre itself. Their ability to both step into and out of the fiction of the play, and the fact that they were not bound by rules of decorum endowed fools with an authority and popularity that could actually exceed that of impersonating actors.<sup>67</sup>

The style of fools, then, was a potential into which rhetoric manuals for preachers also sought to tap. *The Art of Rhetorique* noted that preachers, too, “must now and then play the fooles in the pulpit, to serve the tickle eares of their fleting audience, or els they are like sometimes to preach to the bare walles.”<sup>68</sup> It was clear to Wilson that if congregations needed to be enticed into following a sermon, the preacher needed to become an entertainer: “The multitude must needes be made merie: & the more foolish your talke is, the more wise will they compt it to be. And yet it is not foolishnesse, but rather wisdom to win men, by telling of Fables to heare of Gods goodness.”<sup>69</sup> William Glibery, a vicar in Halstead, reportedly followed this advice, using foolish speeches and scurrilous terms in his sermons, addressing his congregation mockingly and even bursting into laughter in the pulpit. These entertaining performances earned him the acclaim of parts of his congregation, and the disapproval of others, who were shocked by his lack of decorum and instructiveness.<sup>70</sup> Though such antics would have been the exception, popular appeal was important: preachers sometimes resorted to the same material – moral stories of scandalous excesses or outrageous crimes – as pamphleteers and dramatists.<sup>71</sup> And those

<sup>64</sup>I. G. (1615), 27. The idea that the laughter of comedy could cure melancholy also prominently occurred in Burton (1621), 348–9, and was employed in defence of the stage in Heywood (1612), F4r. Also see Lin (2012), 113–21.

<sup>65</sup> See Weimann (1978), 73–85 and (2000), 180–215.

<sup>66</sup> On Tarlton’s jests, which included attacks on bishops and Oxford doctors, see Hornback (2009), 14–16.

<sup>67</sup> See Lin (2012), 36, 24.

<sup>68</sup> Prideaux (1659), 1.

<sup>69</sup> Wilson (1585), 198.

<sup>70</sup> See Craig (2011), 178–9.

<sup>71</sup> See Lake and Questier (2002), 425–48.



preachers who turned their sermons into entertaining and moving performances regularly attracted large audiences.<sup>72</sup>

Three main aspects of theatrical practice thus informed attempts to win the attention and move the passions of audiences at church: sensuous appeal (an approach most often identified *ex negativo* in contrast to Catholic ritual, but which would become more important again in the return to ceremony and pomp under Laud), preachers' passionate delivery according to the rules of actorly decorum and antic breaks with decorum in the tradition of stage clowns.<sup>73</sup> But if such strategies effectively moved congregations, they were also problematic. In response to reformers calling for individualised, spontaneous preaching, Bishop Richard Hooker observed that in such a case the efficacy of service would ultimately rely not on the sermon itself, but on its ephemeral, 'accidental' delivery – not on *what* was preached, but on *how* it was preached:

[It] must of necessity follow the vigor and vital efficacy of sermons doth grow from certain accidents which are not in the [sermons] but in their maker; his virtue, his gesture, his countenance, his zeal, the motion of his body, and the inflection of his voice who first uttereth them as his own, is that which giveth them the form, the nature, the very essence of instruments available to eternal life.<sup>74</sup>

Hooker was not alone in his discomfort with the idea of the preacher as actor, and with his fear that the lively performance of the sermon could become an end in itself. Henry Crosse complained that “many that hold places in sacred assemblies, become affected to their phrases, Metaphors, Allegories, and such figurative and superlative termes, and so much vaine eloquence, as they yeeld no fruite at all to their auditors, but drive them into amazement”.<sup>75</sup> Wright claimed that he had witnessed silly, unwise preachers who had captivated their audiences simply because they excelled in action, and some contemporaries indeed judged sermons by the preacher's performance rather than by its content.<sup>76</sup> If John Donne described disapprovingly how people in the early church had rehearsed in the church “all that had been formerly used in Theaters, *Acclamations* and *Plaudites*,” English audiences, too, seemed to mistake the church for a theatre, with their “hussing and bussing”, their “periodicall murmurings,

<sup>72</sup> Craig (2011), 182. <sup>73</sup> On Laudian style see Chapter 2.

<sup>74</sup> Hooker, *Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Policie* [c. 1590], 2, 107–8, quoted in Targoff (2001), 49. For a detailed discussion of the Admonition Controversy see *ibid.*, 38–43; McGinn (1949).

<sup>75</sup> Crosse (1603), O2v. <sup>76</sup> Wright (1604), 176; see Armstrong (2011), 120–1.

and noises”, their judgement and “acclamations”.<sup>77</sup> Even William Prynne, though insisting that “there is little or no analogie between the action, the elocution of Players, of Orators and Divines”, complained that “Theatrical gestures” and “Play-house phrases”, though “unsutable for Ministers” were all “too frequent in our Sermons”.<sup>78</sup>

There obviously was a conflict between the use of theatrical style thought unfit for religious service and the necessity to adopt an adequate and effective style to address and move the congregation. But some divines were willing to live with that conflict and advocate for a middle way. In *The Art of Prophecyng* (1607), William Perkins suggested that “the Minister may, yea and must privately use at his libertie the artes, philosophie, and varietie of reading, whilst he is in framing his sermon” but should take care “in publike to conceale all these from the people, and not to make the least ostentation. *Artis etiam est celare artem; it is also a point of Art to conceale Art.*”<sup>79</sup> And even Richard Hooker, though concerned about the church’s reliance on rhetorical performance, strikingly argued that such rehearsed appeal to the passions was tolerable because by these means the church “under hand, through a kind of heavenly fraud, taketh the souls of men as with certain baits.”<sup>80</sup> In such a pragmatic view some deceit could be tolerable as long as it ensured that congregations were truly moved. But Church officials rarely embraced the idea of a “heavenly fraud” openly, and in most cases, references to the theatre and the accompanying notions of deceit and outward show were exclusively negative. Different aspects of theatricality ensured that the dismissive label was remarkably flexible: early reformers derided mass as a dumb show, critics of Protestant preachers claimed that their rousing rhetoric was borrowed from plays and radical reformers considered the practice of reading large portions of the liturgy in Common Prayer service “as evil as playing upon a stage, and worse too”, because players at least learned their parts by heart.<sup>81</sup> While theatrical strategies could be used to address a broad and popular audience, anti-theatrical sentiment was routinely and strategically used to attack opponents. The former was

<sup>77</sup> John Donne, sermon preached at Paul’s Cross; Hugh Latimer, *Frutefull Sermons* (1572), both quoted in Craig (2011), 188.

<sup>78</sup> Prynne (1633), 932–3; 935.

<sup>79</sup> William Perkins, *The Art of Prophecyng* (1607), excerpts quoted in McCullough, Adlington and Rhatigan (2011), 525. For a discussion of the principle of *celare artem*, the hiding of artifice in art and rhetoric, see Plett (2004), 423–7.

<sup>80</sup> Hooker, *Lawes*, quoted in Targoff (2001), 56.

<sup>81</sup> John Field and Thomas Wilcox, *An Admonition to the Parliament* (1572), quoted in Targoff (2001), 38. Also see Calvin (1578), 17.39, 591; Prynne (1633), 935.

usually disavowed, but the latter was loud and vocal: as a result it seems that theatricality was almost always thinkable only as the style of another.<sup>82</sup>

We have seen, however, that the well-known attacks on the theatricality of the Catholic church as deceptive and keeping the people in ignorance were accompanied by at least a cautious embrace of theatricality by some preachers and rhetoric handbooks that suggested the potential of theatrical styles to engage and ultimately educate congregations. These different conceptions of theatricality betrayed different attitudes about the people as audience and their capacity for understanding and education. Those who condemned theatricality did so because they believed the people to be easily deceived: those who advocated for the use of theatrical styles believed that the people were capable of learning. The resulting debates challenged the inclusivity of a notion of “the people”, and the idea of the public’s capacity to learn, judge and participate in debate. In particular, the theatrical styles that were so effective in winning the attention of the people in fact threw conflicting notions of the desirability of publicness into sharp relief. As we will see, the intricacies and limits of a project of public education became apparent when theatrical address aimed no longer only at spiritual edification, but also at encouraging public debate about matters of church government.

### **Inciting Debate: Martin Marprelate and Theatrical Writing**

During the post-Reformation period, the English people were permanently addressed in a long campaign that sought to accommodate them into the new religion and stir them to devotion and virtue. At times, however, religious minorities and other oppositional groups, but also members of the regime itself, made use of printed tracts and broadsides to influence public opinion and mobilise popular support on particular topics from Church governance to royal marriage negotiations. As Lake and Pincus note, these appeals did not constitute a permanent public sphere, but a series of temporary public spheres around specific issues.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, these campaigns, facilitated by the emerging print market, actively engaged the people in the formation of public opinion; challenged them to become involved in political, religious and social debates; and tested out strategies for addressing the people as a public. Looking at one of the most successful campaigns that temporarily involved people across the realm, and across social strata,

<sup>82</sup> The phrase is Stephen Greenblatt’s, who observes that atheism “was almost always thinkable only as the thought of another” in the early modern period (Greenblatt 1988, 22).

<sup>83</sup> See Lake and Pincus (2007b), 3.

I will show that even in the medium of print, theatrical strategies were particularly effective in engaging a popular audience and inciting public debate. The pamphlets written under the pseudonym Martin Marprelate that were surreptitiously printed and widely disseminated in the late 1580s constituted not only “the biggest scandal of Elizabeth I’s reign”<sup>84</sup>, but also a key moment for the post-Reformation public sphere. On the one hand, the Marprelate tracts indicated the limits, both within the Church and among the Puritan opposition, of opening debate about religious matters to the public at large. On the other hand, they highlighted the importance of theatricality for public address as they demonstrated how theatrical styles could be translated from live performance into the medium of text.

Before I turn to the Marprelate tracts themselves, I should lay out the concept of theatrical writing on which I base my discussion. At first glance, the idea of a theatricality of writing may appear paradoxical, especially because many early modern authors in the debates on theatre sharply delineated between the liveness of theatre and the written word. When John Rainolds argued that plays should not be acted, but could be recited, or Thomas Heywood remarked that “description is only a shadow received by the ear, but not perceived by the eye”, both authors demarcated theatrical performance and the reading of texts as two very different forms of aesthetic experience, the one infinitely more affective (and hence potentially dangerous) than the other. Such a medium-specific approach corresponds to modern distinctions between performance and dramatic text, and to a theory of theatricality as “theater-minus-text”.<sup>85</sup> I propose, however, that theatrical writing, a style of writing that aimed to approximate the qualities of performance in the medium of text, was one of the most important sites of early modern theatricality. This phenomenon historicises notions of medium specificity, showing that the distinctions between media were considered rather porous at the time. While early modern authors made attempts to delineate different media, the relationship between them was often one of constant, productive exchange and interplay. Theatrical writing is a case in point: at the intersection of text and performance, it made use both of theatre’s immediacy and efficacy in addressing an audience, and of the durability, disposability and reach of writing in the developing print

<sup>84</sup> Hill (1985), i, 75.

<sup>85</sup> Barthes (1972), 25. The classification has been taken up by theatre historians who privilege the physical co-presence and the liveness of theatre as the uncircumventable condition for theatricality, a fierce defence of their object’s unique characteristic in an age of increasing virtuality and mediation. See especially Phelan (1993); Sauter (2000); Fischer-Lichte (2001, 2008); Féral (2002); Worthen (2005, 2010).; For criticism of the insistence on liveness see Auslander (1999); Schneider (2011).

market. My approach departs from the studies of the page–stage relationship in the early modern period as undertaken by Robert Weimann or W. B. Worthen, in that I am less interested in the practices of performing a text than in the performative aspects of text itself. While the former has been fruitfully explored in regard to the specific qualities of text *in* performance, the latter attends to the stylistic elements of a text that make it possible to explore the text *as* performance.<sup>86</sup> The notion of theatrical writing is informed by a concept of performative writing, discussed by Della Pollock and others, that challenges the distinction between writing/textuality and performance while not letting it collapse altogether, a practice of writing that induces interaction between text and reader in order to provide an emphatic experience of exchange.<sup>87</sup> If performative writing, however, is understood as “precisely not a matter of formal style”, the theatrical writing of the early modern period made use of an identifiable set of stylistic devices that aimed to emulate live action, and employed idioms derived from the stage.<sup>88</sup> Situated at the intersection of text and performance, a discussion of theatrical writing abandons the focus on co-presence as the *conditio sine qua non* of theatricality, pointing instead to a productive understanding of theatricality beyond the material liveness of action.

When early modern writers discussed theatre’s efficacy, they regularly highlighted its visual, life-like action that allowed for immediacy and provoked spectators to react to something “before [their] eyes”.<sup>89</sup> But the distinction between the immediate physical presence of an object in the theatre and the absent, abstract idea mediated through text was not as clear as such arguments suggested. As early modern treatises on perception emphasised, information collected by the senses did not enter the mind unmediated. Before it could be processed, it had to be translated and sorted by the “inner sense” of the imagination, a process described by Wright in *The Passions of the Minde*:

First then, to our imagination commeth by sense or memorie, some object . . . , the which being knowne . . . , presently the purer spirits, flocke from the brayne, by certaine secret channels to the heart, where they pitch at the dore, signifying what an object was presented.<sup>90</sup>

Unlike the outer senses, which were conceived of as corridors through which sensory impressions passed into the mind, the imagination was an

<sup>86</sup> See Maassen (2001). On the relation between text and performance see Weimann (2000); Worthen (2005, 2010); Weimann and Bruster (2008).

<sup>87</sup> See Pollock (1998); Madison (1999). <sup>88</sup> Pollock (1998), 75. <sup>89</sup> Stubbes (1583), 6r.

<sup>90</sup> Wright (1604), 45. Also see Clark (2007), 39–44.

active faculty. It served as a platform upon which sensory impressions were put on display (as frequent allusions to an ‘inner eye’ or *oculus imaginationis* suggested) and to which the mind could react with strong passions. Wright further notes that sensory impressions were not the only information presented on this stage. Insubstantial images and objects summoned from memory could also make their entrance, since the imagination also apprehended and communicated the “likenesse[s] and shapes of things of particulars received, though they bee absent”.<sup>91</sup> It was this capacity of the imagination to evoke the images of absent objects that allowed poets to use language in order to create lively images and impressions on the stage of the imagination. Like sensuous objects perceived in the real world, these poetic images could “quicken and rayse the Minde with a kind of heat and rapterie”.<sup>92</sup> Through skilful writing, poets could thus re-create the liveliness and emotional efficacy of the theatre in the minds of their readers.

In *Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture*, Heinrich Plett outlines the long tradition within rhetoric of employing stylistic devices to create presence, physicality and action and calls attention to a rhetorical tradition that demanded poets to “simulate theatrical action as much as the orator, in other words, transform himself into an actor, the reader into a spectator and the text into a linguistic theatre production”.<sup>93</sup> Plett claims that two rhetorical devices were particularly effective in instructing readers’ imaginations to create an experience that approximated the immediacy of liveness in writing: *pragmatographia* and *prosopopoeia*. *Pragmatographia* constituted a detailed and lively description of actions and events. The aim of this rhetoric device was to offer the readers a vivid representation of an event so that, similar to the experience at the theatre, “it semeth to the reader or hearer that he beholdeth it as it were in doynge”.<sup>94</sup> *Prosopopoeia*, on the other hand, was employed when the poet assumed a fictive role, such as a historical or allegorical figure or even an object, to address his readers. This device confronted readers with the engaging imaginative performance of a fictive character that was “brought in upon the stage speaking as if he were present”.<sup>95</sup> Both devices, Plett argues, created “an effective mise en scène of language – with the poet as fictive actor and the reader as equally fictive spectator”.<sup>96</sup> The capacity of texts to use readers’ imaginations to

<sup>91</sup> *Batman uppon Bartholome*, 15r, quoted in Clark (2007), 42.      <sup>92</sup> Reynolds (1640), 18.

<sup>93</sup> Plett (2004), 274.

<sup>94</sup> Richard Sherry, *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550), quoted in Plett (2004), 278. For its focus on lively action, the trope was consequently paraphrased as “counterfait action”; see Puttenham (1589), 246.

<sup>95</sup> Prideaux (1659), 68.      <sup>96</sup> Plett (2004), 277.

evoke powerful images and stir the passions in some sense even liberated poets from the restrictions of the stage. In *Theatre of the Book*, Julie Stone Peters argues that while the imagined reality of live performance was still bound to the concrete space and bodies and their limitations – everyone knew that the woman kissing Romeo was in fact a boy, or that the actor playing Hamlet did not actually die at the end of the play – the medium of text could set the imagination free. Although reading lacked the immediate sensuousness of live performance and relied heavily on the reader's imagination, it also lacked the risk of an actor forgetting his lines, an accident happening on stage, the restricted visibility and audibility for members of the audience or the audience disturbing the performance:

In reading . . . , imagination was liberated. The conflict between the real world and the reception of the represented object seemed to disappear, in part because words were so different from stage objects . . . Words inhabited a zone liberated from space and time, and hence could become free vehicles of the imagination.<sup>97</sup>

While Peters accordingly claims that the reader was “always the ideal spectator”, it is important to note, however, that during the early modern period, texts were often received in other ways than through silent, solitary reading.<sup>98</sup> The boundaries between such practices as reading, reciting, declaiming and enacting were indeed porous, and the attentive silent reader assumed by Peters would still have been an anomaly. Historians of the book have stressed the social dimension of printed texts that were often shared, handed on or read out to an audience.<sup>99</sup> Of course, some texts would have lent themselves to such practices more than others, and a colloquial pamphlet could be read out and passed along more easily than an expansive, learned tract with marginal notes and Latin passages. But it is important to realise that reading was not primarily a solitary act, but sustained by, and in turn supporting, social relationships. While such practices of reading on the one hand often precluded the complete immersion in a text “liberated from space and time”, they also provided an effective network for dissemination and engagement on the other hand. Particularly in the cities, where literacy rates and demand for printed texts were high, texts could reach a wide audience, and the printed word became a pervading presence.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Peters (2000), 175.      <sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>99</sup> On the History of the Book see Chartier (1990); Raven, Small and Tadmor (1996), 1–21; Price (2006); Colclough (2007), 1–28. On the recent return to textuality see Richards and Schurink (2010).

<sup>100</sup> See Chartier (1990), 69.

Theatrical writing, then, was the strategy of using rhetoric devices such as *prosopopoeia* and *pragmatographia* to create lively images in readers' imaginations and move their passions. Such a style of writing aimed at imitating the effects of theatrical action, though it was not itself theatre; but it was not just a text either, as it strove to cross over into the realm of performance. At the intersection of the two media, it sought to bring together an emotional efficacy ascribed to lively action with the imaginative possibilities of text and the networks of dissemination and exchange that print provided. The device was used not just by poets, but also by pamphleteers who wanted to reach and engage a broad audience.

Among these, one group of pamphlets certainly stood out in terms of their success, and in terms of the explicitness with which they employed theatrical writing. The Martin Marprelate tracts, seven pamphlets secretly printed and published in 1588/89, were notorious at their time and can indeed claim the status of "the most famous pamphlets of the English Renaissance".<sup>101</sup> They emerged in a climate of increased frustration among those who sought further reformation of the English Church. The Protestantism reinstated by Elizabeth in 1559 compromised between traditional Catholic worship and the demands of more fervent reformers, often denounced as 'Puritans'. Under Elizabeth, the Church retained Catholic elements, such as allusions to transubstantiation in the liturgy, ceremonial vestments, and the hierarchy of bishops.<sup>102</sup> Reformers believed that these remnants needed to be abandoned, just as the mingling of religious and secular authority, the practice of non-residency, and the appointment of preachers by bishops instead of the parishioners. The conflict between the reformers and the Church increased over the following decades, and by the 1580s ecclesiastical authorities had resorted to oppression in their efforts to silence dissent. Under John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Church ensured uniformity through press regulation and censorship as well as by excommunicating and trying dissenters before the court of High Commission, an institution that contemporaries compared to the Inquisition.<sup>103</sup> At the same time, pro-establishment sermons and theological publications were used as forums to publicly advocate the status quo. In addition, most of such publications were aimed at a learned readership, making the debates inaccessible to a common public. John Bridges's monumental *Defence of the Government Established in the Church of England* (1587) asked its readers to follow a painstakingly pedantic dismissal

<sup>101</sup> Black (2008), xvi. <sup>102</sup> See Haugaard (1968); MacCulloch (1990).

<sup>103</sup> See Pierce (1909), 86.



of calls for reform over 1,400 pages. As the authorities worked to persecute dissenters and exclude the common people from debates on ecclesiastical issues, a small group of reformers decided to challenge the authorities by mobilising public opposition through print.<sup>104</sup> Writing under the pseudonym “Martin Marprelate” – an aptronym for the fictive author who called for ecclesiastical reform, especially the abandonment of prelates – they used an underground press to print pamphlets that were aimed at the broadest possible audience.<sup>105</sup> They rehearsed familiar reformist arguments, but the tone of the Marprelate tracts stood in stark contrast with the established style of religious debate. Rather than addressing the learned in sober style, the Martinists used a theatrical style of writing that aimed particularly at attracting a popular audience. Not only was Martin Marprelate constructed as a prosopopoeia, a fictional character that addressed his audience with an engaging voice; he also employed the theatricality of fools and jesters to combine popular appeal and entertainment with biting criticism and a contestation of traditional ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>106</sup>

The first Marprelate tract, known as the *Epistle*, was an explicit reply to Bridges’s *Defence*, but one written in a light, accessible and outright irreverent style.<sup>107</sup> It opened by addressing the bishops as “Right poisoned, persecuting and terrible priests”, and stated that “you are to understand that D. Bridges hath written in your defence a most senseless book”.<sup>108</sup> Martin announced that as he was to answer Bridges’s *Defence*, he planned to “play the Duns for the nonce as well as he, otherwise dealing with Master Doctor’s book, I cannot keep *decorum personae*”.<sup>109</sup> This kind of direct assault was without precedent. Martin daringly refused to respect the authority of his opponents and avowed an antic style of ‘playing the dunce’ in order to challenge their authority – and to allow his readers the pleasure of witnessing the humiliation of church officials. The fictional character behaved like a stage clown, using storytelling, topical satire, antic scurrility and audience address with virtuosity, all the while moving seamlessly between irreverent sneering and sincere debate. He directly addressed his targets, the bishops, in an exalted manner and with indecorous familiarity: “Popish Hone, do

<sup>104</sup> On the ongoing Presbyterian challenge to the established Church see the introduction in Pierce (1909), 69–131, Black (2008) and the documents compiled in sections I and II of Arber (1967).

<sup>105</sup> On the possible authors of the tracts see Pierce (1909); Arber (1967); Black (2008). On the non-conformist tradition of employing dramatic modes see Kendall (1986), esp. 176–83.

<sup>106</sup> On the satirical function of jesters see Hornback (2009), 13–20.

<sup>107</sup> The first Marprelate tract lacks a title, but is usually referred to by its running title as *The Epistle*; see Black (2008), 3.

<sup>108</sup> *The Epistle [Oh read over D. John Bridges, for it is a worthy work]* (October 1588), 1. All quotations of Marprelate tracts as well as publication dates are taken from Black (2008).

<sup>109</sup> *Epistle* 1.

you say so? Do You? You are a knave, I tell you!”<sup>110</sup> He broke into inarticulate outcry: “Wohohow, brother London”; “I cannot but laugh, py hy hy hy”.<sup>111</sup> And he slipped into the rural dialect often employed by stage fools for the amusement of their audience: “If you demand whether bishops be ecclesiastical or civil governors, they themselves say beath, and ai say, brethren, that for the stopping of your meaths and other causes, I wad counsel them, if they wad be ruled bai me, to be neither nother”.<sup>112</sup> His style also included impersonation of individual bishops in what might be called ‘*prosopopoeia-within-prosopopoeia*’, as when he imitated the Bishop of Gloucester’s sermon upon St John’s day: “John, John, the grace of God, the grace of God, the grace of God: gracious John, not graceless John, but gracious John. John, holy John, holy John, not John full of holes, but holy John”, an impersonation followed by Martin’s ironic judgement “if he showed not himself learned in this sermon, then hath he been a duns all his life”.<sup>113</sup> Through these theatrical devices, the text themselves became a performance, with Martin’s voice “an almost physical presence at the reader’s side”, as Joseph Black notes.<sup>114</sup>

As they engaged readers’ imaginations to envision a lively performance, the authors of the Marprelate tracts drew on the popular theatrical tradition of fools that provided them with an idiom for ridicule, witty remarks and personal attacks. Martin eagerly took up theatre’s model for the exposure of truth by fool’s license. Promising to “paint [the bishops] in their colours”, Martin embraced the task to “hold as ‘twere the mirror up to nature.”<sup>115</sup> Needless to say, he was determined to expose the resulting image to the world:

But you see, my worshipful priests of this crew to whom I write, what a perilous fellow M. Marprelate is: he understands of all your knavery, and it may be he keeps a register of them: unless you amend, they shall all come into the light one day. [All] your dealings shall be made known unto the world. And I’se be sure to make you an example to all posterities.<sup>116</sup>

Like a fool on the stage, Martin coupled an energetic performance with a theatrical gesture of exposure. Even his jesting style was professedly employed to serve this end, as Martin claimed that his antics reflected not his own lack of decorum, but that of his opponents: “I jested, because I deal against a worshipful jester, D. Bridges, whose writings and sermons

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.      <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*; *Hay any Work for Cooper* (March 1589), A3r.

<sup>112</sup> *The Epitome* (November 1588), Fir. The tract referred to itself as an “epitome”, and the term has been taken up by scholars.

<sup>113</sup> *Epistle 47*.      <sup>114</sup> Black (2008), xxvi.

<sup>115</sup> *Epistle*, 41; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III.ii.22.      <sup>116</sup> *Epistle*, 37.

tend to no other end than to make men laugh.”<sup>117</sup> Similar to the Reformation interludes that unmasked Roman priests, Martin’s strategy of exposing the bishops included the use of anti-theatrical sneers and allusions. He had it in for Bridges, whom he ridiculed as a “worthy writer” of stage interludes and as a fool that should receive “a good motley cloakbag for his labor”.<sup>118</sup> The fact that Martin used anti-theatrical tropes even while embracing a theatrical style himself attests to the assumed strategic value of anti-theatricality. The use of such tropes highlighted a discomfort with some of the theatre’s attributes – notably indecorousness, show, insincerity and foolishness – that prevailed even if theatre’s potential for efficacy and popularity was consciously exploited. And it shows that a complex attitude was possible in which some elements of theatricality were openly embraced, while others could be attacked.

As Martin himself took up the tradition of stage fools, he unabashedly acknowledged that this theatrical style was strategically adopted in order to draw a broad readership into a debate on ecclesiastical issues:

I saw the cause of Christ’s government, and of the bishop’s antichristian dealing, to be hidden. The most part of men could not be gotten to read anything written in the defence of one and against the other. I bethought me therefore of a way whereby men might be drawn to do both, perceiving the humors of men in these times to be given to mirth.<sup>119</sup>

The strategy was highly successful, and the Marprelate tracts enjoyed immense popularity. Not just Martin himself noted that he was “favored of all estates”, and that “every man talks of my worship”: government officials, too, were concerned by the spread of the pamphlets.<sup>120</sup> The queen issued a royal Proclamation against writings “in rayling sorte”, clergymen denounced Martin in sermons and learned writings, and Archbishop Whitgift ordered the prosecution of clergymen suspected of collaborating with the Martinists while his agents tried to locate the Martinists’ underground press.<sup>121</sup> Yet as Martin continued to produce new works, the authorities decided to play him at his own game – with a popular theatrical campaign. The strategy was twofold: in the summer of 1589, theatre companies in London performed anti-Martinist jigs, in which Martin was ridiculed as an ape, a fool or a wild Morris dancer, to the amusement of audiences.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, Whitgift called on professional writers to answer the

<sup>117</sup> *Epitome*, A2r.

<sup>118</sup> *Epistle*, 10; *Epitome*, G1r.

<sup>119</sup> *Hay Any Work*, 14.

<sup>120</sup> *Epitome*, A2r.

<sup>121</sup> Arber (1967), 109.

<sup>122</sup> See *Chambers*, iv.229–33; Black (2008), lxv. The campaign paralleled the use of pro-Reformation interludes under Cromwell, adding to the complexity of the relationship between church and theatre discussed earlier.

Martinists “after they owne vayne in writinge”<sup>123</sup>, and to compose pamphlets as witty and raucous as Martin’s – among them John Lyly, Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe.<sup>124</sup>

These anti-Martinist writers planned to turn Martin’s strategy of ridicule against himself. Martin had been charged with indecent theatricality early on: at a trial in connection with the tracts, an official announced that Martin’s approach to the matters of religion was only “fit for a vice in a play”.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, the anti-Martinists used Martin’s kinship with stage clowns to attack Martin as a scurrilous curiosity “late skipt out upon our Stage”, deeming him a ridiculous clown who was unfit to discuss matters of religion.<sup>126</sup> Martin was thus associated with the most irreverent figures of the popular theatre, and the anti-Martinists strategically employed these associations to discredit their opponent. To drive home the point, they announced that Martin could fill the shoes of the most famous of all stage fools, the recently deceased Richard Tarlton: “Now *Tarlton’s* dead the Consort lackes a vice: / For knaue and foole thou maist beare pricke and price.”<sup>127</sup> Acknowledging Martin’s theatrical style, the anti-Martinists suggested that he had aptly translated Tarlton’s performance style from the stage into text: “*These tinkers termes, and barbers iestes first Tarlton on the stage, / Then Martin in his books of lies, hath put in euery page.*”<sup>128</sup> This dismissal of Martin’s style, however, was problematic in view of the target audience that the anti-Martinists wanted to reach. While it was easy to condemn a theatrical style of jesting that “pleaseth the multitude”<sup>129</sup> from a standpoint of neoclassical decorum, it was harder for the anti-Martinists to sneer at precisely the foolish “common sort” that they sought to win over.<sup>130</sup>

Martin’s opponents in fact felt that they had to fight his appeal to a broad audience by embracing his popular style in their own pamphlets. To begin with, they employed prosopopoeia to create a line of entertaining adversaries for Martin. The first, and most persistent, of these fictive characters was “*the venturous, Hardy and renowned Pasquil of England, Cavaliero*”, who challenged Martin to a duel: “*Pasquil hath taken up your Glove, and desires you to charge your weapon at him like a Man*”.<sup>131</sup> Others joined

<sup>123</sup> Letter by Whitgift, quoted in Black (2008), lxii.

<sup>124</sup> For a discussion of authorship and attribution of the anti-Martinist pamphlets see Nicholl (1984), 62–79.

<sup>125</sup> *State Trials I*, 1265, quoted in Black (2008), xxvii.

<sup>126</sup> *A Whip for an Ape, or Martin Displaied* (London 1589), A2r.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, A2v. <sup>128</sup> *Mar-Martine* (London 1589), A4v.

<sup>129</sup> I. G. (1615), 27. <sup>130</sup> *Mar-Martine*, A4v.

<sup>131</sup> *A countercuffe given to Martin Junior by the venturous, hardie, and renowned Pasquill of England caualiero* (London 1589) Aiiiv. Pasquil also featured in two other pamphlets, *The Returne of Pasquill* and *Pasquils Apologie*; see Nicholl (1984), 72.

in the assault: *Martins Months Minde* was written by “Marforius”, and the aggressively titled *Pappe with an Hatchet* was signed by the enigmatic “Double V.”<sup>132</sup> All of these pamphlets employed disorderly and railing prose that evoked Martin’s own style, shifting between addressing the reader to relate derogatory anecdotes about Martin and addressing Martin himself to insult him and challenge him to a battle of wits. *Pappe with an Hatchet*, attributed to John Lily, is an example of the variety of theatrical devices used by the anti-Martinists. Creating Double V as a spirited prosopopoeia, the tract also used pragmatographia, as in a comic scene in which a sleeping Martin is surprised by a physical and verbal attack (the second italics in this case indicating Martin’s surprised response):

Good morrow, goodman *Martin*, good morrow: will ye anie musique this morning? What fast a sleepe? Nay faith, Ile cramp thee till I wake thee. *O whose tat?* Nay gesse olde knave and odd knave: for Ile never leave pulling, til I have thee out of thy bed into the streete; and then all shall see who thou art, and thou know what I am.<sup>133</sup>

As Double V promised that “all shall see who thou art”, he also turned Martin’s sensational gesture of unveiling against him, teasing “[d]oost thou think *Martin*, thou canst not be discovered?”<sup>134</sup> The tone of confrontation and the antic style of the pamphlets made them an attractive read and a popular success: *Pappe with an Hatchet* was published in at least three editions.<sup>135</sup> But as with the Martinist tracts, the pamphlet became the target of anti-theatrical critique for its use of antic style. Its author was criticised as a “professed jester. . . a playmunger, an Interluder”, while Martin himself gleefully denounced his opponents as “rimers and stage plaiers”.<sup>136</sup> The authors tried to blame their style on the precedent set by Martin: “I was loath so to write as I have done, but that I learnde, that he that drinkes with cutters, must not be without his ale dagger; nor hee that buckles with *Martin*, without his lavish termes,” Double V explained, imploring his readers to keep in mind that “whatsoever shall seeme lavish in this Pamphlet, let it be thought borrowed of *Martins* language”.<sup>137</sup> In trying to shift the blame onto Martin, though, the authors explicitly placed themselves within a Martinist tradition. Their emphasis on Martin’s strong influence on their own style at times even takes the form of proud acknowledgement: “[if] this veyne bleede but six ounces more, I shall prove a pretie railer, and so

<sup>132</sup> See Nicholl (1984), 73; *Pappe with an Hatchet Alias, a Figge for my God Sonne* (London 1589), 4.

<sup>133</sup> *Pappe*, Br. <sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, B4v. <sup>135</sup> See Lily (1902), iii.389.

<sup>136</sup> Gabriel Harvey, *An Advertisement for Pap-hatchet*, quoted in Black (1997), 721; *The Just Censure and Reproof of Martin Junior* (1589), A2r.

<sup>137</sup> *Pappe*, A2v–A3r, A4r–A4v.

in time may grow to be a proper Martinist".<sup>138</sup> While the abandonment of the proper bounds of *decorum* thus increased the popularity of anti-Martinist writings, it also highlighted their inherent contradictions: as they adapted his theatrical style, the anti-Martinists, too, became vulnerable to anti-theatrical attacks. They indeed walked a fine line as they condemned Martin's theatrical language while simultaneously feeding off the same theatricality in their own writing. The fact that church authorities resorted to the same popular means as the Martinists and opened debate on ecclesiastical policy to a broad public was a cause of concern to learned elites both within the Church and among reformers.<sup>139</sup> Francis Bacon called a spade a spade when he famously demanded that an end should be put to "this unmodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertayned, whereby matters of religion are handled in the stile of the stage".<sup>140</sup> His lament that religion was turned "into a comedy or Satyre" signalled that while the anti-Martinists had set out to stop Martin from discussing religious matters in a style fit for the stage, they had actually fostered irreverent public discussion of religion by lay pamphleteers.<sup>141</sup>

By the end of 1589, the Marprelate controversy drew to an end as church authorities took Bacon's advice and ended their sponsorship of anti-Martinist writing, while the authors of the Marprelate tracts themselves disappeared after discovery of their press. In the short run, the success of the Martinist tracts was questionable: they did not achieve ecclesiastical reform but instead alienated many among the reformers and led to an increase in anti-Puritan polemic.<sup>142</sup> They had been successful, however, in troubling the authorities to the point of hysteria and in involving a broad public in a discussion of religious policies hitherto reserved for elitist circles. While they had violated the bounds of *decorum*, Martinists and anti-Martinists had made matters of religion and politics accessible to the uneducated, even illiterate masses. Though they were partly critical of their own style, and employed anti-theatrical tropes, both Martin and his opponents had nevertheless embraced theatricality. Their theatrical style constituted an effective means of addressing the people, inciting debate, but also laughter, irreverence and surprise. At the same time, the tracts made use of the potential that the print market offered: they were widely disseminated and could be copied, shared and read out, ensuring a wide reach and evading control by the authorities. This translation of the popular style of the stage into

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.    <sup>139</sup> See Clegg (1997), 170–97; Black (2008), lxxiv.    <sup>140</sup> Bacon (1589), 164.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 164. On the increasing critique of the anti-Martinists' adaptation of Martin's style, see Black (1997), 721–5.

<sup>142</sup> See Collinson (1995).

printed discourse had a lasting impact on the development of the English print market, and on the development of public debate.<sup>143</sup>

### **Appealing for Support: Regal Style and the Judgement of the People**

As has become evident in regard to both the Marprelate tracts and the Reformation interludes, theatrical strategies proved particularly useful for such purposes of contestation and confrontation. Campaigns that appealed to the public were often disruptive and challenged official policy and established authorities, even if they originated within court circles.<sup>144</sup> Especially if they effectively engaged the public, these communicative strategies and the unruly publics they called into being constituted a threat to stability and order, and the authorities were eager to suppress them. But not all appeals to the public in the post-Reformation period were challenges to authority. The authorities themselves regularly addressed the people through proclamations, sermons and public events, often drawing on traditional ritualistic forms. Habermas includes such moments of public address in his genealogy of the public sphere as elements of a “representative publicness”, a manifestation of authority that took place publicly, but did not aim at encouraging public debate and was thus “completely unlike a sphere of political communication”.<sup>145</sup> Often, these modes of address indeed cast the people as a passive audience, as the mere recipients of official decrees or witnesses of regal and ecclesiastical power. But even if public debate was not the intended outcome, the fact that the people were addressed as audience potentially allowed them to exercise the full range of audience agency – from passive enjoyment to active response and critical judgement. This became most apparent when new rulers sought to establish their authority through ritualistic public approval. Resorting to theatrical styles to win the support of the people, they effectively turned the people into an audience whose response was ultimately beyond their control.

Changes in government were theatrical procedures that marked the transfer of power and made use of theatricality’s popular appeal. From Lord Mayor shows to coronation entries, public performances served to encourage the people’s support for the new authority, to sustain order and to facilitate processes of transition.<sup>146</sup> Throughout the period, early modern rulers

<sup>143</sup> On the impact of Martinism on religious discourse and pamphlet writing see Lake and Questier (2002), 505–37; Weimann and Bruster (2008), 180. On the impact on the stage see Poole (1995); Black (2011).

<sup>144</sup> See Lake and Pincus (2007b), 3–4.

<sup>145</sup> Habermas (1991), 8; on representative publicness see *ibid.*, 5–12.

<sup>146</sup> For an excellent discussion see Wiggins (2012).

navigated the tremendous cultural, religious and political changes through elaborate performative practices, the “spectacles of state” that both represented their power and helped to constitute it.<sup>147</sup> Theatrical strategies thus represented and asserted authority, and the New Historicist dictum that theatricality was “one of power’s essential modes” accordingly remains an important influence on studies of the period.<sup>148</sup> In this mode, however, there was much variation, as successive rulers employed individual styles. The variety of styles made it possible even for early modern observers to compare and discuss different theatrical strategies – and to appreciate the importance of theatricality in addressing the people. This development was particularly pronounced when James Stuart succeeded Elizabeth Tudor on the throne in 1603. Attending to the two sovereigns’ different styles as manifested in their coronation entries, as well as to the way that this difference was reflected by contemporaries, I aim to show that a notion of regal theatricality emerged only as observers began to compare and evaluate individual styles in regard to their efficacy in affecting the people. As poets, pamphleteers and statesmen discussed the impact of the sovereign’s appearance and conduct on the audience, they established the idea that theatricality was indeed “one of power’s essential modes”.

Since the entries themselves have been extensively discussed elsewhere, I will limit my account to a few key aspects that highlight the different theatrical styles employed by Elizabeth and James respectively. Though there is a broad consensus among scholars that, as Kevin Sharpe laconically sums up, “the Tudors and especially Elizabeth had responded to what the public desired to see and hear of their sovereign, [while] James never got the message right”, James’s entry, too, followed a deliberate strategy of self-presentation.<sup>149</sup> And to contemporaries that witnessed the coronation entries in person or mediated through the published accounts, both entries seem to have appeared as spectacular, engaging performances that moved the crowds. My interest here is in the different ways in which this effect was

<sup>147</sup> Jonson (1631b), 377.

<sup>148</sup> Greenblatt (1988), 46. The idea of the “theatricality of power and the power of the theatre” (Goldberg 1983, xiii) has been well established, in spite of criticism of the New Historicist project, particularly its focus on the spectacle of power; see, for example, Gearhart (1997) and Leahy (2005), 25–51. Subsequent studies have challenged a top-down perspective and emphasised the distributed agency and contesting forces involved in the theatrical representation of power; see Frye (1993); Hackett (1995); Walker (1998); Cressy (2000); Doran and Freeman (2003); Montrose (2006). With his three-volume study of the image of rulers in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, Kevin Sharpe is certainly the most rigorous proponent of an approach that discusses representations of rule by attending to the different media and strategies, as well as the distributed agency involved; see Sharpe (2009, 2010, 2013).

<sup>149</sup> Sharpe (2009), xxv.



achieved, the contrast in style that became apparent and the way that these explicit differences encouraged attention to the theatricality of regal display. Rather than ranking the performance of sovereigns, I seek to explore how it came to be understood as a performance in the first place.

The procession of a new sovereign through the City of London for the occasion of the coronation was an established ritual, a spectacular event in which the new ruler presented itself to the public, and in which London displayed its wealth, power and loyalty to the new king or queen. Accompanied by a train of hundreds of nobles, ladies, magistrates, officers and soldiers, the sovereign progressed through streets that were lined with people and hung with banners, and stopped to hear speeches or to see elaborately designed allegorical pageants, manned with actors and musicians, along the way. When Elizabeth made her procession through London in 1559, on the day before her coronation, she thus followed an established protocol. She did, however, consciously diverge from the conventional ritualistic exchange between monarch and city and displayed an unprecedented engagement, as well as familiarity, with the people that has intrigued both contemporary commentators and modern scholars. The official account of the procession, ascribed to Richard Mulcaster, the author of the pageants, noted that Elizabeth listened attentively to the speeches and the pageants and showed that she was strongly moved by them.<sup>150</sup> When presented with an English bible, a symbol of Protestantism, at the pageant at Cheapside, Mulcaster vividly reported Elizabeth's passionate reaction: "But she, as soon as she had received the book, kissed it and with both hands held up the same, and so laid it upon her breast, with great thanks to the city therefor."<sup>151</sup> By responding with actions and a display of strong passion, the queen assumed an extremely active part in the procession and brought an element of improvisation to traditional ritual, which extended to her interaction with the people lining the streets. While accounts of earlier entries sometimes mentioned the enthusiastic reception of the sovereign by the people, Mulcaster was the first to describe the sovereign's reactions and interactions in great detail. He particularly highlighted the queen's attention to the common people, whom she greeted kindly, repeatedly stopping her litter to accept supplications and flowers, and answering the people's joyful acclamation with assurances of her own love for them.<sup>152</sup> Elizabeth's

<sup>150</sup> The account was commissioned by the City of London and published only days after the event.

Other contemporary sources corroborate the impression that the people indeed reacted enthusiastically to the queen's conduct; see Warkentin's introduction to *The Queen's Majesty's Passage*.

<sup>151</sup> *The Queen's Majesty's Passage*, 88.

<sup>152</sup> On Elizabeth's affective relationship to her people see Richards (1999), esp. 142–3.

interaction with her subjects was familiar to the degree that it “exceeded the bounds of gravity and decorum”, as the Venetian ambassador noted.<sup>153</sup> It was indeed remarkable that the queen chose to minimise the conventional distance of her elevated position by giving attention even to her lowest subjects, by engaging in individual exchanges, and by stressing her connection to the people in her speeches. In his ideal portrayal of reciprocity and exchange, Mulcaster accordingly promoted Elizabeth’s style as particularly effective in eliciting positive emotional responses from the people:

To all that wished her Grace well, she gave hearty thanks, and to such as bade ‘God save her Grace,’ she said again ‘God save them all,’ and thanked them with all her heart. So that on either side there was nothing but gladness, nothing but prayer, nothing but comfort. The Queen’s Majesty rejoiced marvellously to see . . . so earnest love of subjects so evidently declared, even to her Grace’s own person being carried in the midst of them. The people again were wonderfully ravished with the loving answers and gestures of their princess.<sup>154</sup>

As a young queen whose right to the throne was debated and who faced opposition by the Catholic establishment, Elizabeth clearly used her entry as part of a campaign to establish political legitimacy and promote religious change by popular support. She was supported in this effort by the City of London, which had organised the entry and commissioned a printed account that would be available to the public. Mulcaster’s account disseminated the event, and its appeal for emotional support, throughout the realm, and it preserved memories of Elizabeth’s passage and her familiar style even beyond her reign. It provided material for subsequent narrations of the progress, and was republished in 1604, when James Stuart held his progress through the City.<sup>155</sup> As the new king presented himself to his people, the memory of Elizabeth and her style were very much alive.

When James took the throne in 1603, he had to postpone his entry because of an outbreak of the plague, but the event took place the following year. There are several published accounts of his entry: two by the authors

<sup>153</sup> ‘Venice: January 1559, 16–31’.

<sup>154</sup> *The Queen’s Majesty’s Passage*, 75. Throughout the text, reciprocity is highlighted by tropes emphasising the exchange, such as “the people . . . and on the other side, her Grace”; “The Queen’s Majestie . . . and The people again” (75); “the Citie . . . and her Grace likewise on her side” (96).

<sup>155</sup> Mulcaster’s account was republished anonymously as *The Royall Passage of Her Maiesty from the Tower of London, to Her Palace of White-hall* (1604). It was printed verbatim in Holinshed’s *Chronicles* in 1587 and informed John Hayward’s *Annals of the First Four Years* (1612), as well as the first of Thomas Heywood’s Elizabeth plays, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody Part One* (1606) and Heywood’s later prose account of the queen’s early years in *Englands Elizabeth* (1631), all of which firmly installed the image of the popular queen with the common touch in the collective memory; see Logan (2001) and Grant (2003).

who wrote speeches for the pageants, Thomas Dekker and Ben Jonson; one by the pageants' architect Stephen Harrison, featuring illustrations of the individual pageants; and a colloquial pamphlet by one Gilbert Dugdale, written as an eyewitness account.<sup>156</sup> All the accounts suggested that James also attentively watched the pageants, though there was no mention of his direct exchange with the people, and at least Dugdale made the point that on several occasions, James did *not* engage with the people and instead tried to speed up the procession.<sup>157</sup> James's entry reportedly impressed the people mainly by the splendour of his train and the richness of the pageants that came to life as he passed by – a glorious show that appeared to Dugdale “as a dreame, pleasing to the affection, gorgeous and full of joy”.<sup>158</sup> James's conduct was thus more conventional: similar to pre-Elizabethan monarchs, he remained a silent observer of the pageants and speeches. In contrast to Elizabeth, his public conduct in fact highlighted distance and decorum.<sup>159</sup> Dugdale's account included an episode that took place some time before the event, and which indicated the difference in style. It described how James and his wife decided to witness the preparations for the entry during an incognito visit to the Royal Exchange, where people saw them and a crowd gathered to meet the royal couple. James, however, ordered that the doors of the exchange be shut to keep out the ‘multitude’ – there would be no improvisation, no spontaneous encounters with the common people.<sup>160</sup> The people might only have wanted to show their love for the king, Dugdale mused, but he reprimanded them for their rash attempt to interact with the king. He also instructed his readers on the proper way to pay reverence to a sovereign: “doe as they doe in Scotland, stand still . . . and use silence, so shall you cherish his visitation and see him”.<sup>161</sup>

On the day of the entry, James allowed his subjects to see him, but that was all: he rode through the city with a sumptuous train, “gallantly mounted that the eie of man was amazed at the pomp”.<sup>162</sup> Through pomp, but also through the quiet display of his authority, James sought to inspire awe, love and loyalty in his subjects, a power elevated above all others,

<sup>156</sup> See Dekker (1604); Dugdale (1604); Harrison (1604); Jonson (1604).

<sup>157</sup> See Dugdale (1604) B3v–B4v; Dekker also noted that a lot of the speeches printed in his extensive account were omitted in the event for the reason that “his Majestie should not be wearied with tedious speeches” (Dekker 2004, I4r).

<sup>158</sup> Dugdale (2004), B3v.

<sup>159</sup> See Goldberg (1983), 31. Sharpe has argued that James engaged with commoners at least when still in Edinburgh and on his way to London in 1603 (see Sharpe 2010, 89–93).

<sup>160</sup> See Dugdale (1604), B1v–B2r. <sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, B2r. <sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, B1v; Dekker (1604), D4r.

“(like the Sunne in his Zodiaque) bountifully dispersing his beames.”<sup>163</sup> The accounts highlighted that it was James’s mere presence that “strikes mindes mute, and puts good wits in maze”, moving the people, as well as the musicians and actors on the pageants, to “abrupt passion of joy” at his approach.<sup>164</sup> Unlike the intimacy ascribed to Elizabeth by Mulcaster, the accounts of James’s entry suggested that James carefully managed his presence. Dugdale notes that a popular touch was supplied by the Prince of Wales, who joyfully saluted the people, and Queen Anne, who “did all the way so humbly with mildenes, salute her subjects, never leaving to bend her body to them, this way and that, that women and men in my sight wept with joy”.<sup>165</sup> But though James’s own approach to the people was distant, with a strong emphasis on spectacle and decorum, it was described as equally effective in stirring joy and excitement among the crowd. Dekker reported that the people, filled with “a fire of love and joy” in the erection of the pageants, stood “glewed there together for many houres, to behold [the king];” that the city filled with “a world of people” whose eyes “ake[d] with rolling up and downe” until they could happily feast on “the glorious presence of the King”.<sup>166</sup>

Based on the accounts of their entries, Elizabeth’s and James’s style of royal display can be characterised by familiarity and distance, respectively.<sup>167</sup> While both styles allegedly evoked enthusiastic reactions from the crowds, however, the difference in style occasioned a debate over the most effective style that monarchs could use to move their people to loyalty, love and obedience. James himself was one to contemplate publicly on the effect of – and need for – an effective style of regal self-display. As King of Scotland, he had developed his own style of addressing the people and laid out his view on the matter in *Basilikon Doron* (1599), a book dedicated to Prince Henry, his son and intended successor.<sup>168</sup> The text, republished for an eager English audience on the occasion of his succession in 1603, offered an outlook on the decorous and elevated style that was to be expected from the new monarch and that was applied in his entry. The book showed a monarch keenly aware of the importance of appearance and style, and especially of the potential effects of excessive familiarity: “Be not over sparing in your courtesies,” James counselled, “for that will

<sup>163</sup> Dekker (1604), C1v.

<sup>164</sup> Dugdale (1604), B4r; Dekker (1604), F3v; see also Dekker (1604), D2r, E3r, E4v, F1v–F2r.

<sup>165</sup> Dugdale (1604), B2v–B3r. <sup>166</sup> Dekker (1604), B3r, C1v, D4r, F1r.

<sup>167</sup> For comparative discussions see Bergeron (1988) and Goldberg (1983), 28–54.

<sup>168</sup> The book was republished in London on James’s succession to the English throne; all quotes are from the 1603 edition.

be imputed to in-civility & arrogancie: nor yet over prodigal in jowking or nodding at every step for that forme of being populare, becommeth better aspiring *Absalons*, then lawfull Kings” (116). This insight, James confessed, came from experience: “where I thought (by being gracious at the beginning) to win all mens heartes to a loving and willing obedience, I by the contrarie found, the disorder of the countrie, and the losse of my thankes to be all my rewarde” (31).<sup>169</sup> Rather than advocating a style of familiarity, which he had found to be unsuccessful, James suggested a style that aimed at sober virtue: rather than being the object of love, the sovereign should be an instructive example for his subjects, drawing them not to love his person, but virtue itself. Echoing, most notably, terminology applied to the stage, James suggests to his son to become “a mirrouer to your people, . . . therein they may see, by your image, what life they should leade” (61):

preasse then to shine as farre before your people, in all vertue and honestie; as in greatnesse of ranke: that the use thereof in all your actions, may turne, with time, to a naturall habitude in you; and as by their hearing of your lawes, so by their sight of your person, both their eies and their eares, may leade & allure them to the love of vertue, and hatred of vice. (100–101)

To James, the superior rank of a prince needed to be accompanied by superior virtuousness, both in politics and in personal conduct. And the prince needed to display his virtuousness through actions to make it known to his subjects, and inspire virtue and loyalty in them. The belief that actions could incite those who observed them to strong emotional reactions and even to imitation was of course extremely prominent in the debates on the theatre. In *Apology for Actors*, Thomas Heywood reiterated the claim that theatre could transform audiences, particularly by representing noble heroes who stirred patriotic feelings:

What English blood, seeing the person of any bold English man presented and doth not hugge his fame, and hunnye at his valor, pursuing him in his enterprise with his best wishes, and as beeing wrapt in contemplation, offers to him in his heart all prosperous performance [?]<sup>170</sup>

*Basilikon Doron* suggested that, like the lively action of skilled actors, the virtuous conduct of a prince would move the people to admire their

<sup>169</sup> Having been enthroned as Scottish king at the age of one in 1567, and subjected to several factional plots before de facto assuming authority in 1583, James had learned to insist on the God-given legitimacy of his rule and a style that put him above all of his subjects; on James’s youth see Bingham (1979), 7–83.

<sup>170</sup> Heywood (1612), B4r.

sovereign and thus ensure their support. This support, however, was conditional, and depended on the actions displayed by the prince. Like actors on stage, elevated into a position of extreme visibility “in the broad eye of the world”, as Heywood notes, princes too had to make sure that their “manners, gestures, and behaviours saver of such good government and modesty to deserve the good thoughts and reports of all men.”<sup>171</sup> Like Elizabeth, who had shrewdly remarked that “princes . . . are set on stages, in the sight and view of all the world duly observed,” James was aware of the intricacies of royal visibility.<sup>172</sup> In *Basilikon Doron*, he commented on the obligations of the sovereign’s elevated position using the same theatrical metaphor as his predecessor:

Kings being publike persons, by reason of their office and authority, are as it were set (as it was said of old) upon a publike stage, in the sight of all the people; where all the beholders eyes are attentively bent to looke and pry in the least circumstance of their secretest drifts. (Arv)

Sovereigns on display were bound to be under permanent scrutiny for their manners, gestures and actions. And while their publicly projected image could move the people to admiration and loyalty, it could also accomplish the opposite. Princes on the public stage were at constant risk of exposure, as Henry Crosse noted: “every fault they commit, be it as small as a pebble, yet is it so big as a mill-stone, because they stand in the gaze of the world, and soon spied if they offend never so little.”<sup>173</sup> The elevated position of kings that allowed them to effectively appeal to the public also subjected them to the judgement of the people from whose discerning view little could be hidden. Even more than showing himself virtuous in his actions, a king had to evade any conduct that could encourage his subjects to doubt his integrity. In *Basilikon Doron*, James accordingly argued that the king’s outward appearance had to be controlled at all times so as to avoid unfavourable judgement. The style of decorum that he displayed during his entry corresponds to this strategy of careful restraint. Though the decision to make good on his cancelled coronation entry with a procession in 1604 indicated that James was well aware of the importance of display, his resistance to taking an active part, or to run the risk of overstepping decorum, betrayed an anxiety about the display of royal power. Rather than diverging from script with improvisation and familiarity that could be misconstrued, he chose to limit royal visibility and keep it within strict boundaries. Along these lines, the political theorist Edward

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, E3r.

<sup>172</sup> Holinshed (1587), 1583.

<sup>173</sup> Crosse (1603), P3r–P3v.

Forsett suggested, early in James's reign, that "it may seem to stand more with majesty, and to work more regarding, more admiring, and more adoring, if their presence be more sparingly and lesse familiarly vouchsafed".<sup>174</sup> Notably, Forsett advised a style of distance and limited visibility on the grounds of decorum, but also because he believed it fit for moving the people to admiration and adoration. Rather than following tradition, style was to be chosen according to its efficacy in addressing the target audience of the people.

But James's succession to the English throne encouraged reflections on regal style, especially that of his predecessor. On the occasion of James's entry, Mulcaster's 1559 account of Elizabeth's entry was republished and revived the memory of her style of familiarity and closeness that had been so different from James's. And in 1612, John Hayward offered an assessment of the queen's entry in a manuscript account, written for the private education of James's son, called *Annals of the First Four Years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. Combining a historical perspective with a strategic analysis for the young prince, Hayward suggested that Elizabeth had adopted a style that fused grandeur with familiarity to achieve a powerful and lasting effect on the people:

Upon the fourteenth day of January, in the afternoon, shee passed from the Tower through the City of London to Westminster, most royally furnished, both for her persone and for her trayne, knowing right well that in pompous ceremonies a secret of government doth much consist, for that the people are naturally both taken and held with exteriour shewes. The nobility and Gentlemen wer very many, and noe lesse honourably furnished. The rich attire, the ornaments, the beauty of Ladyes, did add particular graces to the solemnity, and held the eyes and hearts of men dazeled betweene contentment and admiration . . . The Queene was not negligent on her part to descend to all pleasing behavior, which seemed to proceede from a natural gentleness of disposition, and not from any strayed desire of popularity or insinuatione.<sup>175</sup>

Though his analysis of the event was based on Mulcaster's account, Hayward focussed almost exclusively on the queen, paying little attention to the content of the pageants or to the role of the city magistrates. In his account, Elizabeth controlled the event, fully aware of the impact of spectacle and her attention to the crowd. Though Hayward denied that

<sup>174</sup> Edward Forsett, *Comparative Discourse of the Bodies Natural and Politique* (1606), quoted in Pye (1990), 58.

<sup>175</sup> Hayward (1612), 15–16. Hayward's history, presented in manuscript to Prince Henry, never made it into print until its modern edition.

Elizabeth strategically aimed at popularity, his insistence that her behaviour “seemed” to proceed from sincere affection betrayed his awareness of the precarious nature of display: what could be judged was only the appearance – the seeming, not the being. Hayward’s claim that “if ever any person had *eyther the gift or the stile* to winne the hearts of people, it was this Queene” (6, my emphasis) left open the question whether her popular success had come naturally to Elizabeth, or if it was the result of strategic behaviour; the phrase suggested that both would have been equally effective. Hayward was interested not so much in whether that appearance matched an inner truth, but in the “[e]ffect of her behaviour upon the people” (18). And he found the result most satisfactory: the people, he claimed, were “strongly stirred to love and joye” by the queen’s most humble actions (18). Mulcaster, too, had reported such effects, but Hayward turned this observation into a lesson on regal self-presentation: “It is certine, that thes high humilities, joined to justice, are of greater power to winne the hearts of people than any, than all other vertues beside” (18). In his analysis, the queen served as a model for the successful employment of a popular style. His emphasis on “seeming,” then, not only highlighted a problematic discrepancy between appearance and intention, but also stressed the fact that the queen’s virtues were successfully put on display: it was important that the queen not only *was* loving and sincere, but that she also *appeared* as such to her audience.

Hayward’s celebration of Elizabeth’s popular style was addressed to Prince Henry, who had also been the target audience of *Basilikon Doron*. It seems that it became imperative for a designated ruler to think carefully about the style with which he wanted to present himself; and in court circles, both the difference in style and the intended emotional effects became objects of discussion. Those who had known Elizabeth began to voice, albeit tentatively, thoughts that her actions, like her physical appearance, might have been part of a calculated strategy.<sup>176</sup> By the beginning of James’s reign, Elizabeth’s familiar style of closeness became open to dissection, as well as to comparison with James’s notably different detached style of distance. Sir Thomas Howard observed that while Elizabeth “did talk of her subjects love and good affections, and in good truth she aimed well,” James talked “of his subjects fear and subjection, and herein I thinke he dothe well too, as long as it holdeth good”.<sup>177</sup> Howard’s qualification “as long as it holdeth good” suggested that a style would have to be judged by its effects and was no longer just a matter of personal taste. As an important

<sup>176</sup> See Haigh (1998), 160–9; Montrose (2006), 229–40.

<sup>177</sup> Quoted in Goldberg (1983), 28.



instrument to address and move the people, style had become crucial in sustaining regal power.

The increasing reflection of the strategic importance of style occasioned a shift in notions of regal theatricality. When Mulcaster compared London to “a stage wherein was shown the wonderful spectacle, of a noble-hearted princess toward her most loving people”, the metaphor still alluded mainly to theatre as display.<sup>178</sup> Hayward’s suggestion that the queen had acted familiarly and affectionately out of calculation and his emphasis on the importance of *seeming* noble-hearted, however, pointed to the more problematic aspects of theatre that included role-play, pretence and lack of substance. Hayward’s text was of course written for a limited, private audience; but *Basilikon Doron*, which was available to the public, similarly responded to this increased complexity of regal theatricality. Though advocating for different styles, both texts were concerned with the fact that monarchical authority was compelled to find a style by which to present itself to the people and subject itself to their judgement, to navigate between the risk of criticism and the possibility of winning support. The reason for the “theatricalization of regality”<sup>179</sup> under Tudor and Stuart sovereigns and the discussion of regal style thus was a rising concern for the public at large – and especially the “multitude” of common people who became the most important targets of regal performance.<sup>180</sup> Like the theatre, regal style drew on sensuous spectacle and action to move “the mindes of the common multitude”.<sup>181</sup> Hayward’s observation that “the people are naturally both taken and held with exteriour shewes” is exemplary of a strategic interest in winning the people’s affection – and at keeping them in obedience. Contemporary discussions of regal styles, then, attested both to the increasing attention paid to the people as audience and the desire to ensure their subjection – “to dazzle and amaze the common eye . . . that thereby the Gazer may be drawne to more obedience and admiration”.<sup>182</sup>

Promotion of different styles indicated, however, that no style was fail-proof in producing the desired audience response. The language of admiration and adoration employed in the accounts of the entries suggested that the people were compelled to react enthusiastically, just as texts on the theatre assumed that audiences “must be moved” by the lively action on stage.<sup>183</sup> But just as in the theatre, where audiences were in fact free to

<sup>178</sup> *The Queen’s Majesty’s Passage*, 76. <sup>179</sup> Sharpe (2009), 54.

<sup>180</sup> Dekker (1604), A4v. <sup>181</sup> Hayward (1599), 120.

<sup>182</sup> Thomas Dekker quoted in Munro (2005), 56. The quote is from the preface to Dekker’s 1612 Lord Mayor Show; on London’s Lord Mayor shows see *ibid.*, 51–73.

<sup>183</sup> Crosse (1603), P2v.

reinterpret what they saw, interrupt the action onstage or even start a riot, the people who observed the sovereign could also judge and respond to the display of power in unexpected ways.<sup>184</sup> To contain unwanted reactions, the judgement and responses of the people had to be carefully orchestrated as well. The enthusiastic accounts of popular support at Elizabeth's and James's entries are a case in point, as they effectively prescribed proper ways of judging and reacting to such events. In a similar vein, bonfires and bell ringing that began in the 1570s as allegedly spontaneous signs of popular support on Elizabeth's accession day were often commissioned and paid for by local authorities.<sup>185</sup> And yet it was impossible to control public response completely. As Jonathan Goldberg has pointed out, James returned to the stage image in *Basilikon Doron* to emphasise precisely this problematic aspect of regal self-fashioning: that the judgement of the people was ultimately not in his control.

It is a trew old saying, That a King is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly doe behold: and therefore although a King be never so praecise in the discharging of his Office, the people, who seeth but the outward part, will ever iudge of the substance, by the circumstances; and according to the outward appearance, if his behaviour be light or dissolute, will conceive prae-occupied conceits of the Kings inward intention: which although with time, (the trier of all trewth,) it will evanish, by the evidence of the contrary effects, yet *interim patitur iustus*; and praeiudged conceits will, in the meane time, breed contempt, the mother of rebellion and disorder.<sup>186</sup>

In the theatrical scenario described here, the king on display constantly faced the risk of misrecognition, occasioned by the smallest mistake and perpetuated as prejudice and false conceit. If outward appearance and actions were necessary means to convey the inner virtue of the prince, they could thus also be misconstrued, affected by preconception, and even scrutinised as strategic illusion. James's response to this dilemma was to adopt a style of distance and decorum that minimised the risk of light or dissolute behaviour, and to limit his interaction with the public to a minimum. But the problem he identified inevitably haunted any attempt to appeal to the people: anyone venturing onto the public stage in order to address and

<sup>184</sup> Irreverent responses to and transgressions of official performances and rites ranged from mockery of clergymen and travesties such as the baptising of animals to vandalism, iconoclasm and revolt. See Cressy (2000); Walter (2006).

<sup>185</sup> See Cressy (1989) 50–7; Sharpe (2009), 463–4.

<sup>186</sup> James I (1603), 103–4; see Goldberg (1984), 113–15.

move the people became subject to their judgement, including their potential misjudgement or lack of judgement. At the same time, anyone seeking to support a position or agenda through public approval needed to insist that the people were capable of judgement and lent their support freely and deliberately. While the entries of both Elizabeth and James aimed to elicit and orchestrate very specific responses rather than open debate, the emphasis given to the people's enthusiastic response and support granted the public, at least notionally, the authority to judge. This notion was not unproblematic, and many contemporaries feared, like James, that the people were easily misled in their judgement. But as members of the regime as well as of the opposition continued to appeal to the people, the authority granted to public opinion could not simply be taken away again – even if this authority appeared increasingly troublesome.

### **The People as Audience**

As the case studies in this chapter show, the people were addressed frequently, though not continuously, as a force in political and religious discourse during the post-Reformation period. Such address granted the public the power to judge, though many contemporaries had reservations about the people's capacity for judgement. In fact, the difference between the proponents and opponents of involving the people in debate lately rested on fundamentally different attitudes towards a project of education: while proponents of public debate believed that the common people could be educated to exercise their own judgement, their opponents were convinced that the people could only be directed, and not educated. This different outlook on public education, which would continue to inform attitudes towards the public, however, did not prevent the opponents of public debate from appealing to the public. For even those who doubted the people's judgement believed them prone to be moved by emotional means. The case studies in this chapter have shown a range of theatrical strategies of address that, even if they sought to convince by argument, always appealed to the passions in order to move their target audience of the people. Depending on the mode of address – from educational preaching and satirical criticism to spectacular display – the different strategies could result in a range of responses, from pliant subjection to active involvement, deliberation and debate.

Through theatrical strategies, then, the passions became utilised as a political instrument and an effective means of addressing a public that increasingly encompassed the common people. While they engaged this

increasingly broad public, they also promised a certain amount of control: “Experience shewed that to gain [the people’s] good will, their Passions must be won upon”, Jean-François Senault observed in *The Use of Passions* (1649), “and that the lower part of their souls must be mastered, so to assubject the higher part thereof”.<sup>187</sup> To Senault and other writers on the subject, passions were power. Theatre’s capacity for moving the passions, emphasised in writings on the passions as well as on the stage, thus linked it to a broader contemporary discourse of control in the face of an emerging public sphere. Unlike any other form of address, theatre seemed to realise rhetoric’s objective to move an audience. As it coupled this objective with the pleasures of spectacle, of lively action, and of popular styles and antics, it was perceived as highly successful in addressing, affecting and even directing an audience that encompassed the people at large – including those who could not read.<sup>188</sup>

But even the authors who advocated for the use of passions in addressing the public noted their potential destructiveness. In his treatise on the passions, Edward Reynolds warned of the violence and disorder that would ensue if emotions were not properly contained by the higher powers of reason:

*Passion* (though of excellent service in Man, for the heating and enlivening of Vertue, for adding spirit and edge to all good undertakings, and blessing them with an happier issue, than they could alone have attained unto) yet if once they flye out beyond their bounds, and become subject onely to their own Lawes, and encroach upon Reasons right, there is nothing more tumultuous and tyrannical.<sup>189</sup>

Like other authors on the subject, Reynolds imagined the mind as a well-ordered commonwealth, governed by the laws of reason, in which the passions were unruly subjects that were constantly trying to revolt, get the upper hand and subdue reason in a violent battle for the human soul.<sup>190</sup> In a tradition that went back to Plato’s *Republic*, early modern treatises portrayed the passions as beasts or slaves that had to be subdued, and advocated strategies to “tame these wild monsters, that we may reduce these rebels under obedience, and that we make such soldiers march under the banners of vertue, as have oftneft fought in the behalf of vice”.<sup>191</sup> The

<sup>187</sup> Senault (1649), 176.

<sup>188</sup> The point was also made in Heywood (1612), Fr3.

<sup>189</sup> Reynolds (1640), 45.

<sup>190</sup> On the internal battle for the soul and the rebellious nature of the passions see Wright (1604), 9–10; James (1997), 11–14; Müller (2002), 178.

<sup>191</sup> Senault (1649), 20–21. In Book IX.xii of *The Republic*, Plato described the passions as a “manifold and many-headed beast” (Plato 1963, ii 401).

microcosm of the human soul thus mirrored the macrocosm of the state, and if reason was the sovereign power, the passions were rebellious common people, tellingly referred to by Plato as “mob-like”.<sup>192</sup> The frontispiece to the English translation of Senault’s *Use of Passions* accordingly depicted the passions as characters in chains, watched over by reason on a throne (see Figure 1.1). Passions, like the common people, were useful only as long as they could be governed. And as the passions, with their “bestly sensual appetite”, could threaten the order of the mind, so did a mob overcome with passion threaten the order of the state.<sup>193</sup>

As a result, early modern authorities and subjects alike were troubled by the idea of a crowd of common people governed solely by passion – a phenomenon derogatorily labelled as a ‘mob’, the ‘vulgar’, a ‘multitude’ or, indeed, a ‘many-headed beast’.<sup>194</sup> The idea of the multitude as governed by excessive, violent passions and immune against appeals to reason was widely held and also featured prominently in early modern plays, from the “monster of the multitude” in *Coriolanus* to Claudius’s dismissal of the “distracted multitude, who like not in their judgement, but their eyes” in *Hamlet*.<sup>195</sup> In a comically apocalyptic scene in his play *Histrionomastix*, John Marston invited the audience to marvel at such a mob that, amidst confused shouts for liberty, called for the downfall of church and state as well as for free love and the abolition of private property:

See, see, this common beast the multitude,  
(Transported thus with fury) how it raves;  
Threatning all states with ruine, to englut  
Their bestiall and more brutish appetites.<sup>196</sup>

While Marston’s mob might have been a caricature, fear of the multitude was widespread, particularly in London, where the city’s extraordinary growth during the sixteenth century resulted in the continual presence of urban crowds.<sup>197</sup> If popular support became an important asset in political manoeuvring during the post-Reformation period, and appeals to the people intensified, the spectre of the dangerous multitude thus loomed over any attempt to mobilise a crowd and move their passions.

<sup>192</sup> Plato (1963), ii 407; for the parallel between city and soul see esp. Book IV.xi. On the association of the multitude with the passions in the *Republic* see Munro (2005), 108–9.

<sup>193</sup> Wright (1604), 49. <sup>194</sup> See Hill (1974), 181–204.

<sup>195</sup> Shakespeare *Coriolanus* II.iii, 11; Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, IV.iii, 4–5. On crowds in Shakespeare see Wiegandt (2012).

<sup>196</sup> Marston (1610), F4r. On other contemporary attacks on the multitude see Hill (1974), 183–6.

<sup>197</sup> See Munro (2005), 36; Hill (1974), 181–2.





Figure 1.1 Reason keeping her rule over the passions, from Jean François Senault, *The Use of Passions* (1649). © The British Library Board, E.1097 frontispiece.

The role of theatre itself was ambiguous when it came to the multitude. Playwrights usually caricatured or discredited crowds as a threat to order, and defenders of the stage commended theatre as an antidote against unruly multitudes because it would detract people from unrest and teach loyalty and obedience to authority.<sup>198</sup> Anti-theatrical critics, however, claimed that playwrights primarily educated audiences in sin and disrespect of authority, and that theatres were social hotspots that bred rebellion in the crowds assembled there.<sup>199</sup> But while critics and defenders of the stage disagreed about the way in which theatre moved its audience, their debate asserted theatre's power over the audience and the practically failproof way by which it attracted their attention, subjected them to specific passions and compelled them to specific actions. When Henry Crosse, in a sweeping attack on the stage, claimed that "it cannot be but that the internal powers must be moved at such visible and lively objects", he expressed a conviction shared by most writers in the debates on theatre.<sup>200</sup> In their writings, theatre appeared as an emotion machine that stirred passions in its audience whether they wanted to or not, and that thus did, in the words of Bacon, play on their minds like the bow on a fiddle. At a time when the need to mobilise public support was paralleled by fears of an unruly multitude, the idea that skilful art could govern people's minds was eminently political. George Puttenham, in *The Art of English Poetry*, asserted that "[he] that hath vanquished the minde of man, hath made the greatest and most glorious conquest".<sup>201</sup> And Thomas Wright assigned the title of "emperour of mens minds & affections" to the orator that moved "a whole multitude . . . which way him liketh best to have them".<sup>202</sup> Acknowledging the political dimension the passions, however, Wright suggested that mastery of the passions should be restricted to an elite: the means to control passions should "concerne Gentlemen and Noblemen" and "belong to Magistrates and officers, for discovery and manage of subjects".<sup>203</sup> In the hands of the authorities, passions could be used to handle the multitude and ensure order and stability.

As the use of passions in controlling the people was considered the prerogative of an elite, theatre caused the established authorities concern for its growing capacity to address and move the people. When Thomas Heywood, in the *Apology for Actors*, proposed theatre as an effective means of

<sup>198</sup> Thomas Lodge, in an early defence of the stage, claimed that if it wasn't for theatrical detraction, "the idle hedded commones would worke more mischiefe" (Lodge 1579, 41). The argument was discarded in Gosson (1582), C8r.

<sup>199</sup> See Crosse (1603), Qtr. <sup>200</sup> Ibid., P2v. <sup>201</sup> Puttenham (1589), 207.

<sup>202</sup> Peacham (1593), ABiiij; Wilson quoted in Müller (2002), 33, 42. <sup>203</sup> Wright (1604), lv.

addressing and educating audiences, he was promptly answered by a pamphlet that expressed fears of the stage's unsanctioned authority. In a slightly panicky admonition, the author of the *Refutation of the Apology for Actors* insisted that

God only gave authority of public instruction and correction but to two sorts of men: to his ecclesiastical ministers and temporal magistrates. He never instituted a third authority of players, or ordained that they should serve in his ministry, and therefore are they to be rejected with their use and quality.<sup>204</sup>

But even if the *Refutation* rejected the idea of theatre as a “third authority”, it reinforced the belief that theatres had become powerful institutions, which exerted an influence on the public that rivalled that of worldly or spiritual authorities. By the seventeenth century, early modern commentators on the public stages had firmly established the idea of theatre's (potentially dangerous) authority as a powerful means of addressing and moving an audience, and thus as a force to be reckoned with. As writers who engaged in the anti-theatrical debates picked up on the social implications of theatre's potential for controlling an audience, they gave these debates weight and moved their subject from the margins (where theatres were literally situated physically) into the centre of the emergent dynamic of public address and crowd control.<sup>205</sup> And like Bacon in his image of the theatre as a bow to play the mind, these writers suggested that theatre's powers could be calculated and used to instruct, direct or control an audience that potentially included the public at large.

As I have shown in the three case studies in this chapter, attempts to address the public thus often resorted to strategies derived from the practices and styles of the theatre that were believed to be particularly effective in moving audiences, even if their provenance in the theatre was a cause of discomfort and often disavowed or attacked. What, then, does it mean for us to understand the public of the post-Reformation period not only in terms of print, as a public of readers engaged in rational debate, but also in terms of the theatre, as an audience involved in rational as well as emotional, physical and collective response? When writers in the (anti-) theatrical debates promoted theatre's power to move an audience, they

<sup>204</sup> I. G. (1615), 57.

<sup>205</sup> Defenders of the stage usually emphasised the stabilising potential of theatre while its opponents suggested that it could move the people against the authorities; see Crosse (1603), P31–P3v; Heywood (1612), F3v. Interestingly, the only known attempt to use theatre to move the audience to specific action, the notorious performance of *Richard II* on the eve of the Essex Rebellion, was unsuccessful in mobilising a crowd; see Montrose (1996), 66–75.



imagined an audience that was both open to affection and united in unanimous emotional response – a pliable crowd, as it were, that could be governed by the skilful instrument of theatre. But it is difficult to gauge if this was actually the reality of early modern playhouse audiences. While plays, pamphlets and other printed works yield a plethora of information on theatrical practices and discourses, evidence on the actual composition, as well as specific reactions of playgoers, is scarce. What little information we have allows only for tentative, and potentially contradictory propositions.<sup>206</sup> To deal with the lack of evidence regarding the actual early modern audience, scholars have turned to notions of the audience presented in plays and prologues or in the debates on theatre. This audience, however, should be understood as an idealised construct, as Nova Myhill and Jennifer A. Low point out in the suggestively titled edited volume *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama*. Myhill and Low argue that the willingness by modern scholars, especially in the wake of New Historicism, to imagine the early modern audience as a collective entity homogeneously affected by the theatre (thus closely resembling the audience imagined by early modern anti-theatricalists) tends to both misrepresent and marginalise the agency of the quite heterogeneous early modern audiences.<sup>207</sup> Even if records of actual audience response are scarce, Myhill and Low argue that this evidence can and should be used to qualify the idea of the audience presented by early modern writers: while these often assumed that audiences were inevitably subjected to theatre's powers, records of individual audience reactions suggest that audiences were not so much subjected to as actively involved in the workings of the stage.<sup>208</sup> To understand the post-Reformation public in terms of a theatre audience, we thus need to qualify two assumptions early modern commentators held about audiences, as well as the multitude: that they were governed solely by passions and that they would passively subject to the power of performance.

When Stephen Gosson, in *Plays Confuted in Five Actions* (1582), claimed that stage plays “make our affections overflow, whereby they draw the bridle from that part of the mind that should ever be curbed”, he appealed to the widespread anxiety regarding the passions, and suggested that they broke free from the reins of reason at the theatre.<sup>209</sup> Anti-theatrical writers such as Gosson regularly emphasised that everybody in the audience would

<sup>206</sup> See, for example, the different conclusions drawn regarding the social composition of audiences in Harbage (1941); Cook (1981); Gurr (1987); Lopez (2003).

<sup>207</sup> See Myhill and Low (2011b).

<sup>208</sup> See *ibid.*, 9. For evidence on the response of individual spectators see Whitney (2006).

<sup>209</sup> Gosson (1582), Fiv.

be moved to violent passions by the action on stage, regardless of gender, age or class. Even theatre practitioners, who tended to insist that learned playgoers “that can judge” would contemplate and understand the play, expected the “vulgar sort” among the audience to respond not with reason, but only with passion.<sup>210</sup> But the distinction between men of judgement and the passionate multitude, which was also regularly made in treatises on the passions, was not as clean-cut as these authors suggested.<sup>211</sup> It was difficult to clearly separate affective responses from judgement: Wright himself described the passions as “bordering upon reason and sense”, assigning them a position of in-between-ness from which they operated in concert with sensuous impressions, but also with informed judgement.<sup>212</sup> Judgement was actively involved in the arousal of passions, as Thomas Wilson emphasised in *The Art of Rhetorique*, and influenced if the passions “move[d] us either this waie or that waie”: “If a wicked wretch have his desertes, we are all glad to heare it, but if an innocent should be cast awaie, we thinke much of it, and in stomacke repine against wrong iudgement.”<sup>213</sup> Though Wilson employed the passive notion of “being moved”, the process he described required active and critical assessment of a situation, the people involved and the reasons and circumstances of its occurrence.<sup>214</sup> The passions were thus closely connected to reason rather than opposed to it, receiving directions from judgement and in turn vesting it with force and motivation.<sup>215</sup>

This becomes evident when we look at the way that passions were moved at the theatre. Both opponents and defenders of the theatre regularly emphasised that audiences were inevitably moved, and thus passively subjected, by the action on stage. In reality, however, the moving of passions relied on the active complicity of audiences. Such complicity was essential for an early modern theatre that, for all its insistence on the “liveliness” and “fitness” of action, was all but illusionistic and constantly relied on the audience’s familiarity with stage conventions and its willingness to, as the chorus in *Henry V* implores them, “Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts.”<sup>216</sup> As theatrical conventions and

<sup>210</sup> Ben Jonson, prologue to *A Staple of News* (1631), quoted in Gurr (1987), 93. See also *ibid.*, 153–9.

<sup>211</sup> See, for example, Wright (1604), 174; Reynolds (1640), 4.

<sup>212</sup> Wright (1640), 8. On the emotional aspects of “understanding” and “judgement” in the early modern period see Hobgood (2014), 169–72.

<sup>213</sup> Wilson (1585), 130.

<sup>214</sup> That passion implied ethical judgement was suggested already in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*; see Staines (2004), 98; Gross (2006), 40.

<sup>215</sup> See Reynolds (1640), 31–48.

<sup>216</sup> Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Prologue, 19–28.

practices presupposed “competencies shared between the playwrights, actors, and audiences”, spectators were actively involved in the success of any theatrical performance.<sup>217</sup> And the necessary complicity extended to theatre’s supposed power to move. When Sir Thomas Browne remarked that he wept “most seriously at a Play”, he added that he knew full well that his passion was incited by “the counterfeit griefs of those knowne and professed impostures”.<sup>218</sup> William Cornwallis, a contemporary essayist, similarly observed that audiences sometimes actively pursued the experience of being moved to strong passion: “if we have no cause for what we feele, we will [weep] for what we see, for the losse of money, and things of that kinde: and if these be not readie, we will weepe at a Tale, or at a Puppet play”.<sup>219</sup> To Cornwallis, the arousal of passions was not necessarily an attack that could not be averted, but a pleasure willingly sought: although no one believed tales or puppet plays to be real, they provided the means for a pleasurable emotional experience by a complicit audience.<sup>220</sup>

As the success of performance relied on the consent of the audience, withdrawal of that consent could turn any performance into a failure. Playwrights offered variations of such failure in plays-within-the-plays, where audiences mocked the action on stage, refused to be moved or simply left the performance.<sup>221</sup> Such withdrawal of consent was by no means the prerogative of elite audiences. In *Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote*, Edmund Gayton bemusedly remembered the frequent refusal of a popular audience to submit to the performances offered on holidays, and enforce their own tastes upon the players:

I have known upon one of these *Festivals*, but especially at *Shrove-tide*, where the Players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bills to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to; sometimes *Tamerlane*, sometimes *Jugurth*, sometimes the Jew of *Malta*, and sometimes parts of all these, and at last, none of the three taking, they were forc’d to undresse and put off their Tragick habits, and conclude the day with the merry milk-maides.<sup>222</sup>

<sup>217</sup> Myhill and Low (2011b) 5. See also Lopez (2003); Lin (2012).

<sup>218</sup> Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici* (London 1642), 127–8, quoted in Pollard (2012), 468.

<sup>219</sup> William Cornwallis, “Of Discontentments”, in *Essayes* (London 1600–1601) K7r, quoted in Steggle (2007), 86.

<sup>220</sup> The same argument is compellingly made throughout Hobgood (2014).

<sup>221</sup> See, for example, the amused audience of *Pyramus and Thisbe* in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Claudius’s interruption of the *Mousetrap* performance in *Hamlet* or Philargus’s refusal to be moved by a performance in Massinger’s *The Roman Actor* (1629). On the latter see also Barish (1986); Pastoor (2006).

<sup>222</sup> Gayton (1654), 271. See also Lin (2012), 18.

Quite unimpressed by the “sweet violence of a Tragedy”<sup>223</sup> or by skilful acting, spectators sometimes violently demanded the type of comic entertainment for which they were in the mood. Rather than moving an audience at will, then, theatre frequently struggled to control its audience and relied heavily on their cooperation.<sup>224</sup> From everything we know, that cooperation was granted more often than not, and several accounts indeed attest to the willingness of audiences to enjoy the pleasures offered by the stage.<sup>225</sup> But rather than on a failproof coercive power, the efficacy of theatrical strategies relied on an audience, or a public, that understood the conventions at play and was willing to become complicit in a performance that moved their passions.

To understand the public of the post-Reformation period as a public of spectators, then, challenges modern conceptions of the public sphere as a realm of rational debate as well as contemporary ideas of the common people as a mindless multitude. It means to acknowledge the importance of the passions for the post-Reformation public without denying it the capacity for rational judgement. Instead, the challenge is to attend to the sometimes unexpected dynamic between the two, a dynamic that characterised theatre audiences as well as the public addressed by theatrical strategies. The interdependence of passion and judgement can be seen in the theatrical strategies discussed in this chapter, where appeals to the passions aimed to educate the people or incite debate, and where the displaying of passions became the subject of critical observation itself. While theatrical strategies often employed spectacle, action and entertainment in the hope of moving the people, the public thus addressed could respond in different ways ranging from acquiescence and emotional submission to critical evaluation and judgement, resistance or even refusal to play along. The multitude of common people that, as Thomas Dekker noted, became the audience of the period’s public performances, was passionate and unruly, but not void of judgement or the capacity for concerted, purposeful action.<sup>226</sup>

During the years preceding the outbreak of civil war in 1642, the people would be addressed with increasing frequency by Parliament, the king, religious conformists and reformers, preachers, players and pamphleteers, establishing a more permanent notion of the people as public, and as agents in the political struggles of the period. While many contemporaries

<sup>223</sup> Sidney (1595), F4r.

<sup>224</sup> On the constant challenge of both drawing and controlling a crowd see Menzer (2011).

<sup>225</sup> See Pollard (2012).

<sup>226</sup> On tumults as purposeful attempts by crowds to voice their discontent and to put pressure on the authorities see Munro (2005), 36–7; Walter (2006).

disapproved of engaging the common people and considered the pursuit of “popularity” indecorous and dangerous, and while fear of the multitude persisted, it had become imperative to address the people and solicit their support.<sup>227</sup> At a time when traditional authority became increasingly contested, the importance of public support could no longer be ignored. Facing a diverse public that included the mass of common people, theatrical strategies suggested themselves as an uneasy but efficient tool. In casting the people as audience, and in sustaining the tension between the aim of controlling them and the possibility for them to judge and react independently, such strategies shaped the public sphere that was to evolve in the course of the seventeenth century – and a public that was addressed, first temporarily and then ever more frequently, in the style of the stage.

<sup>227</sup> On popularity, in particularly in regard to Essex, see Hammer (2007); Doty (2010).