

## Shakespeare's bombastic blanks

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## Shakespeare's Bombastic Blanks

### Abstract

This article takes seriously Robert Greene and/or Henry Chettle's 1592 claim that there is something bombastic about Shakespeare's blank verse by focusing on its so-called 'metrical end-stop'. After sketching a survey of the metrical end-stop in early blank verse, it considers the resources with which Shakespeare sought to shift his verse style away from that particular prosodic feature. The article concludes by thinking about the late blank verse of *The Winter's Tale* as a metrical rejoinder to Greene, whose *Pandosto* it versifies – though it is a rejoinder that ultimately proves equivocal.

## Shakespeare's Bombastic Blanks

Around three years into his career as a dramatist, Shakespeare's blank verse came under attack:

there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country. O! that I might entreat you rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions.<sup>1</sup>

This passage from *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit* (1592) is the first recorded response to Shakespeare's writing and the first reference to Shakespeare in print. It was written by some combination of Henry Chettle and Robert Greene – although most scholars now think Chettle was the principal author, it was designed and marketed as Greene's (even John Jowett, the most assiduous proponent of Chettle's authorship, accepts that there are 'little fragments' by Greene, as well as intimations of Greene's 'disoriginated' voice, spread through the *Groatsworth*).<sup>2</sup> The passage can be characterised by 'lasts' as well as 'firsts'. It appears on the last pages of the *Groatsworth*, in a letter addressed 'To those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance that spend their wits in making plays'. And it emerged from the last days of Greene's life: **by the end of** 1592 he was dead and the *Groatsworth* would be published posthumously by Chettle.

Though typographically set off from the main text, the letter 'To those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance' is very much part of the *Groatsworth* in that we find Greene

‘desperately seeking to atone for past misdemeanours in life and print while at the same time frantically using up the last moments of his life in generating new printed texts which repeatedly rework the sins he claims to have abandoned’ (the concomitant of this being that Greene’s prodigality could be ‘played all the more exuberantly’ precisely ‘because it was destined to end in defeat’).<sup>3</sup> In the letter’s catalogue of abuses, Greene attacks Christopher Marlowe for his atheism, Thomas Nashe (or perhaps Thomas Lodge) for his wit, and George Peele for being neither Marlowe nor Nashe. Greene allows a little admiration for these three ‘gentlemen’ (his ‘sweet boy’ Nashe, and ‘the other two, in some things rarer, in nothing inferior’) – sufficiently so that Thomas Dekker could later stage Greene, Marlowe, Nashe, Peele and Chettle engaged in nothing worse than good-humoured spat.<sup>4</sup> It is only Shakespeare who emerges without anything like the ‘Million of Repentance’ advertised by the *Groatsworth*’s subtitle.

The *Groatsworth*’s salvo at an ‘upstart crow’ has long been considered an accusation of plagiarism (the ‘Shake-scene’ Shakespeare beautifying his plays with others’ feathers) or as a belittling remark about Shakespeare having been a mere actor (an ape for others’ inventions), and these two accounts have overshadowed alternative or accompanying explanations and observations.<sup>5</sup> For example, scholars have barely attended to Greene’s dramaturgical jab at the *Henry 6* plays: Shakespeare is a ‘Shake-scene’ because his stage wobbles with supererogatory armies marching on and off it (when Ben Jonson composed his poem about the dead Shakespeare, he appears to have turned Greene’s boiling indignation at Shakespeare’s stagecraft into a frosty Jonsonian praise: if only Shakespeare could ‘live again’, we might ‘hear thy buskin tread / And shake a stage’ (36-7)).

Scholars have paid even less attention to the *Groatsworth*’s remarks about Shakespeare’s blank verse: that he ‘supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of’ the best playwrights. To ‘bombast’ is to ‘stuff’ or ‘swell’. The *OED* gives three

sixteenth-century definitions of the verb: (1) ‘To stuff, pad, or fill out with cotton-wool, or the like’, (2) ‘To stuff, swell out, inflate’, (3) ‘To swell out, render grandiose’.<sup>6</sup> According to Greene, Shakespeare’s blanks are both too little and too much; he pads out their essential emptiness (their blankness) with portentous rhetoric and vacuous sound. In thinking about Shakespeare’s alleged ‘bombast’, we might consider whether he spoke others’ blank verse with a bellow (if he is one of the actorly ‘puppets [...] that speak from our mouths’) and whether his own blank verse was especially or exclusively bombastic, or whether the *Groatsworth* was condemning the blank verse of the period as typically and vexatiously loud, and then condemning Shakespeare for being unable, or all too able, to reach that miserable standard. We might wonder, in other words, whether the *Groatsworth* was right, rather than treating it ‘as something to attack, or a document from which Shakespeare needs defence or exoneration’.<sup>7</sup>

The *Groatsworth* gives ‘a deliberately twisted misquotation’ of *3 Henry 6*: ‘his *tiger’s* heart wrapped in a *player’s* hide’ leans on ‘O tiger’s heart wrapp’d in a woman’s hide!’ (1.4.138); the *Groatsworth* sets the quotation in a different type from the surrounding black letter to emphasise its referential or allusive purport.<sup>8</sup> As it appears in *3 Henry 6* the line is part of York’s long polemic against Queen Margaret, one of those ‘rhetorically charged high points’ that occur ‘in each of the play’s five acts’ (indeed, the octavo title of the play places York’s ‘True Tragedy’ before Henry’s).<sup>9</sup> Having treated him to a mock-crucifixion and wiped his face with his son’s blood, Margaret urges York to ‘Stamp, rave, and fret’ (92). York obligingly calls her ‘an Amazonian trull’ (115), ‘vizard-like’ (117), ‘as opposite to every good / As the Antipodes are unto us, / Or as the south to the Septentrion’ (136-8), ‘stern, indurate, flinty, rough, remorseless’ (143), ‘ruthless’ (157) and ‘abominable’ (134), ‘more inhuman, more inexorable – / O, ten times more – than tigers of Hyrcania’ (155-6). Could this be the ‘bombast’ which Greene (or Chettle) hears in Shakespeare?

The stuffing and swelling of ‘bombast’ can assume several shapes. It typically involves ‘turgid and inflated language’, with such ‘amplification’ often a matter of rhetoric (*amplificatio*): Goran Stanivukovic has identified *frequentatio* (accumulation or ‘heaping’) and various forms of rhetorical repetition (*commoratio* or ‘lingering’, *conduplicatio*, *anaphora*) as regular features of the bombastic style.<sup>10</sup> Although Greene most likely had such ‘linguistic inflation’ in mind when attacking Shakespeare’s writing, the grammatical object of Shakespeare’s ‘bombast’ in the *Groatsworth* is his ‘blank verse’, his prosody.<sup>11</sup> Greene appears to be recalling, or beautifying himself with the feathers of, another specifically prosodic criticism: that of Thomas Nashe in the preface to Greene’s romance *Menaphon* (1589), where Nashe had deplored the ‘idiot art-masters’ of the public theatre ‘who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) think to outbrave better pens with the swelling bombast of bragging blank verse’, in which the ‘spacious volubility of a drumming decasillabon’ is a poor substitute for ‘the just measure’ of a classical hexameter.<sup>12</sup> Something about Shakespeare’s metre, as well the diction and rhetoric within it, is itching at the author of the *Groatsworth*.

While *3 Henry 6* has a sense of styles, accommodating ‘straightforward language side by side with richly adorned speech’, its metrical register is more monotonous, mostly ‘forte or fortissimo’.<sup>13</sup> It has seemed ‘dreary’ to some modern critics, and perhaps seemed so to Shakespeare: E.M.W. Tillyard imagined him writing the play when ‘tired or bored: or perhaps both’.<sup>14</sup> Even the play’s advocates, like its most recent Oxford single-volume editor, concede that ‘the poetry of *3 Henry 6* is not the most original, the most powerful, or the most memorable that Shakespeare would write’ – though it was sufficiently memorable for Greene to expect his readers to recognise 1.4.138.<sup>15</sup>

Russ McDonald attributed the persistent bombast of *3 Henry 6* to ‘the correspondence between the main grammatical unit, the independent clause, and the chief poetic unit, the

pentameter line' – that is, Shakespeare 'seems to be thinking [and writing] in ten-syllable units' so that York's rage would sound the same even if its semantic import changed or varied.<sup>16</sup> However, York's ten-syllable style is not only a matter of syntactical end-stop. After all, he sometimes speaks lines which grammatically run over into subsequent lines (for example 114-5, 135-6, 153-4 and 166-7). It is even more a matter of (what we could call) *metrical* end-stop, for almost all York's lines end with a stressed tenth syllable. Like a rhyme in other verse forms, the stressed tenth syllable makes clear that we are at the end of a blank verse line (even though in grammatical and semantic terms some of the lines proceed beyond their typographical conclusion). It creates what Derek Attridge has described as 'self-arrested' lines.<sup>17</sup> It keeps juddering York's invective to a prosodic halt; he sounds as though he is barking individual expostulations rather than speaking at concatenated length. It sounds, in fact, like bombast, with almost every line showily stressed at its conclusion. While *3 Henry 6* may not be all Shakespeare's work, about ninety per cent of the play's lines end on a stressed tenth syllable and Marina Tarlinskaja's measurements suggest that the percentage is slightly higher in 'Shakespeare scenes' than 'non-Shakespeare scenes'.<sup>18</sup> Greene/Chettle had noticed a genuine, and quantifiable, problem in Shakespeare's tyro prosody: while it is always 'artificial and highly structured', it can also be stiff, cribbed, and at least susceptible to the accusation of bombast.<sup>19</sup>

\*

By the time Shakespeare was working on *3 Henry 6*, blank verse was newly old. Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, had translated Books 2 and 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English blank verse at some stage in the late 1530s or early 1540s (in an irony of literary history, Shakespeare would go on to write about Henry VIII – the man who ordered Surrey's

execution – in the blank verse form that Surrey had inaugurated). In 1554 Surrey's posthumously published translation of *The fourth booke of Virgill* appeared for sale at William Owen's shop under 'the sygne of the Cocke' in Paternoster Row. Surrey's translation of the second book appeared in 1557. While there is little or no dictional, circumstantial or material evidence that Shakespeare read any of Surrey's translation, he began his career working within some of its metrical paradigms. In her quantitative study of English Renaissance verse, Marina Tarlinskaja finds stress on ninety-five per cent of the tenth-position syllables in Surrey's translation of Book 2, much the same percentage she found in *3 Henry 6*.<sup>20</sup>

It is important to note that the printer of Book 2, Richard Tottel, sometimes conducted 'metrical experiments' upon the texts he printed.<sup>21</sup> In the most notorious case, he sought to regularise Thomas Wyatt's 'precarious metric' by, for instance, editing twenty-one lines of Wyatt's satires to pare them back from eleven syllables to a proper pentameterly ten – in the end, '[o]nly two [of the 306 lines in the Satires] remain with more than ten syllables and no excuse for the extra syllable'.<sup>22</sup> Yet even in John Day's printing of Surrey's Book 4, a similar number of lines end with a stressed tenth syllable. While Tarlinskaja does not provide figures for Book 4, my own count of the first two-hundred lines finds just five ending with an unstressed syllable (although there is more flexibility as to the number of syllables in the lines, with as many as eighteen lines having more or fewer than ten syllables).<sup>23</sup> In this respect, Surrey and Tottel seem to have wanted a similar acoustic stamp to their line endings (perhaps to replace the rhyme that was absent from this newly 'blank' verse form); even if there are two verse styles at work in Book 2, they were sufficiently similar to have been heard as one, as Surrey's, especially given the 1557 title page's declaration that the Book had been 'turned into English meter by the right honorable lorde, Henry Earle of Surrey'.<sup>24</sup>

We can see and hear the metrical end-stop (and other kinds of end-stop) at work throughout the Surrey *Aeneid*, for example in the Laocoön episode:



And first of all eche serpent doth enwrap  
 The bodies small of his two tender sonnes,  
 Whoes wretched limmes they byt, and fed theron.  
 Then raught they hym, who had his wepon caught  
 To rescue them; twise winding him about,  
 With folded knottes and circled tailes, his wast.  
 Their scaled backes did compasse twise his neck,  
 Wyth rered heddes aloft and stretched throtes.

(2.269-276)<sup>25</sup>

Surrey can edge beyond the individual blank verse line. Lines 269-270 syntactically or grammatically emerge from one another, as do lines 272-4 (in fact, Surrey syntactically or grammatically runs on about a quarter of the lines in his translation).<sup>26</sup> Yet the verse still sounds hemmed and hermetic; it reads, in C.S. Lewis's tart phrase, like 'Virgil in corsets'.<sup>27</sup> The lines' highly regular iambic stress patterns, including a crucial stress on the tenth syllable, mitigate their syntactical or grammatical enjambment (defined in Randle Cotgrave's 1611 French-English dictionary as an act of 'encroaching upon or striding over').<sup>28</sup> This is verse which aspires to be plastic but manages only to be wooden, aggravatingly unlike the serpents that wind around Laocoön and his sons. It is as though Surrey has imposed an invisible but audible virgule at the end of each verse line, end-stopping the poem's bodies lest they writhe over the line.

Surrey interestingly tries to suggest the snakes' movements – wrapping, biting, wringing – by introducing subclauses that coil along the limbs of his lines (e.g. at 272-4), nosing their grammatical object further and further down the page. He may cancel or neuter

this syntactical enjambment by insisting on a strong accent at the end of the line, but by displacing and delaying some parts of speech he tries to avoid the bombast we can otherwise encounter in a metrical end-stop. And while the ‘almost distressing stiffness’ of the metrical end-stop can chafe against the anguine drama of Laocoön, in some respects it suits an epic poem which has some teleological investment in the solidity of its endings, whether they be the abandonment of Dido (at the conclusion of Book 4, which Surrey translated) or the foundation of Rome.<sup>29</sup>

Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton’s *Gorboduc* (1561), the first ‘original’ English drama to be written in blank verse (with the exception of its rhymed choruses), has almost ninety per cent of its tenth-position syllables receiving a stress.<sup>30</sup> The metrical end-stops of the play’s blank verse align with many of its other novelties. For the second quarto of *Gorboduc* (printed in 1570) chalks up another ‘first’ for the play, in that it is the first drama to include printed commonplace markers (rendered as ” throughout the text). As we would expect, then, the play is fatly stocked with commonplaces and sententiae (though for Dermot Cavanagh they are ‘in a sophistic rather than a didactic mode’).<sup>31</sup> It is no surprise to find an early reader, William Briton of Kelston (1564-c.1636), copying lines from *Gorboduc* into his commonplace book under the salutary heading ‘the differenc between union & diuysion’.<sup>32</sup> The play’s metrical end-stops help to shape these moments of counsel, tendering them in memorable ten-syllable chunks which might otherwise have been lost to prolonged, enjambed argumentation. They allow a ‘neutral ground for the examination of complex problems’, where each ten-syllable chunk ushers forth an opinion (or part of an opinion) that can be balanced, *in utramque partem*, against an alternative ten-syllable opinion (or part of an opinion).<sup>33</sup>

The first ‘original’ English poem in blank verse, George Gascoigne’s *The Steel Glass* (1576), is also overwhelmingly end-stopped. G.K. Smart estimates that only eleven per cent

of its lines are syntactically or grammatically enjambed, and my own count of its metrical end-stops (Tarlinskaja has not produced figures for the poem) finds approximately ninety-five per cent of its tenth-position syllables loaded with stress.<sup>34</sup> Its lines terminate with ‘closural force’.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, in the first edition of the poem (though not in later ones) we can see the printer Richard Smith enumerating the lines of an especially strenuous passage from 1-10 in the right-hand margin, thereby reinforcing the rhetorical and prosodic iteration, even relentlessness, of Gascoigne’s verse.<sup>36</sup> The metrical end-stop here has a double, paradoxical aspect, at once clipping and abbreviating what might otherwise be an enjambed verse while managing to remain bombastically swollen.

Even leaving aside these pioneering instances of blank verse, there is a more or less straight line in the metrical end-stop’s trajectory from Surrey to Shakespeare. Tarlinskaja’s figures show a very high level of tenth-syllable stress (85-95%) in the early, extant blank verse written between the late 1530s and the late 1580s.<sup>37</sup> To take one example, George Gascoigne and Francis Kinwelmarsh’s blank verse play *Jocasta* (performed at the Gray’s Inn Christmas Revels in 1556 and first printed in 1573) stresses 90-95% of its tenth-position syllables, depending on which act of the play and which hand in the collaboration is measured.<sup>38</sup> In some works, like Anthony Munday’s sixty lines of blank verse comprising the ‘Complaint of Dives’ in the *Mirror of Mutability* (1579), every line sports a stress on its tenth syllable.<sup>39</sup> Even Greene – the scourge of Shakespearean bombast – writes a stressed tenth syllable into the majority of his blank verse. His (now) best-known play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (composed c.1589) bears stress on 85% of its tenth-position syllables, with corresponding figures of 79.2% for *Orlando Furioso* (composed c.1591) and 88.8% for the ‘extravagant blank verse’ of *Alphonsus, King of Aragon* (not printed until 1599 but performed in the late 1580s).<sup>40</sup> Probably in response to the failure of the latter play, Greene ‘sound[ed] a retreat from stage to page’ and did so in metrical terms.<sup>41</sup> In the preface to

*Perimedes* (1588), he scorned the ‘derision’ that had greeted *Alphonsus* ‘for that I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins, every word filling the mouth like the faburden of Bow Bell’.<sup>42</sup> Greene’s ‘retreat’ is more specifically from a theatrical kind of bombast – one that he claims, with prosodic prodigality, to have never found comfortable – and it could be heard to culminate in the dire metrical warnings of the *Groatsworth*. Yet, as the (albeit approximate) dates of the plays above would suggest, he never quite abandoned the metrical end-stop for his drama or, for that matter, managed to expurgate rhetorical bombast from his prose.

When prefacing *Perimedes*, Greene had Christopher Marlowe very much in mind. There, Greene compared his own attempts at blank verse to that of the ‘atheist Tamburlaine’ and those who ‘wantonly set out such impious instances of intolerable poetry’.<sup>43</sup> These ‘mad and scoffing poets’ had, Greene complained, spent too much time ‘frequenting the hot-house’; if Greene had ‘entered Marlowe’s dramatic universe without quite having his bearings’, as James Shapiro puts it in his reading of *Alphonsus*, then he now wants this to redound to his moral credit.<sup>44</sup> Marlowe’s blank verse, too, happens in metrically end-stopped units; depending on the play, Tarlinskaja finds between seventy-five and ninety per cent of his tenth syllables to be afforded a stress. ‘Marlowe’s mighty line’ (as Ben Jonson would later characterise it) derives some of its strength from this metrical immanence at its typographical endpoint. In making his lines relatively accentually resistant to enjambment, Marlowe seals them at the point where they might leak into other lines and other sorts of line (his blank verse is a little like Faustus’s blood, congealing before it can spill). So ‘[f]or all Marlowe’s reputation as an overreacher, only rarely did he overreach the poetic line’.<sup>45</sup> Marlowe’s ‘mouth-filling prosody’ – rammed with ‘audacious rant’, ‘epic rumble’, and a ‘stormy monotony of titanic truculence’ – draws upon the metrical end-stop for its high-

volume effects, and has accordingly been said to lapse into ‘a pretty simple huffe-snuffe bombast’.<sup>46</sup>

However, Marlowe’s metrical end-stop is a more vexed sort of ‘enclosure’.<sup>47</sup> In the two parts of *Tamburlaine*, for example, he begins fifteen per cent of the plays’ lines with ‘And’, attempting to coax the preceding lines over their typographical and metrical endpoint.<sup>48</sup> This back-and-forth tension in Marlowe’s end-stop is a smaller, though perhaps foundational, version of ‘the dialectic between aspiration and limitation’ in his writing and indeed in his likely stage space (the first Rose Theatre (c.1587) was only around five-hundred square feet and the second (c.1592) was barely any larger).<sup>49</sup> The line endings in the *Tamburlaine* plays become one of Marlowe’s dances between transgression and boundary; indeed, at times the line endings appear the only thing that can restrain the plays’ protagonist.

Marlowe’s self-contesting blank verse was influential. Of ‘the thirty-eight extant plays for the public theatre first performed in England between 1588 and 1593, ten show clear debts to *Tamburlaine*’, including in the business of style.<sup>50</sup> Among these plays are the three parts of *Henry 6*. Shakespeare’s authorship of the *Henry 6* plays has long been a contentious subject, at least since Edmond Malone’s *Dissertation on the Three Parts of King Henry VI. Tending to Shew That Those Plays Were Not Written Originally By Shakespeare* (1787). The first Arden edition of *3 Henry 6* – the play that Greene quotes as bombastic in the *Groatsworth* – argued that it was initially a collaboration between Marlowe and Shakespeare, and in 2017 *The New Oxford Shakespeare* revisited this claim in attributing the play to ‘William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Anonymous’, having then been ‘Revised by Shakespeare’. Thus in the accompanying *Authorship Companion*, John Burrows and Hugh Craig employ ‘Delta’ and ‘Zeta’ testing to argue that *3 Henry 6*’s most Marlovian line – ‘How sweet a thing it is to wear a crown’ (*3 Henry 6*, 1.2.29; see *1 Tam* 2.5.57 ‘The sweet fruition of an earthly crown’) – was actually written by Marlowe.<sup>51</sup>

Burrows and Craig did not conduct any ‘verse tests’ (the staple method of nineteenth-century attribution scholarship, which reached a peak with John K. Ingram’s proposal for a ‘Counting Committee’ to enumerate various metrical features).<sup>52</sup> Had they done so, they would probably have recognised a high level of metrical end-stop in both Marlowe’s plays and the *Henry 6* trilogy.<sup>53</sup> This may be evidence of Marlowe’s direct involvement in the *Henry 6* plays or of ‘the deep, fibrous intertextuality of Shakespeare’s early work’.<sup>54</sup> The question (‘Does Shakespeare imitating Marlowe differ, in demonstrable ways, from Shakespeare collaborating with Marlowe?’; that is, ‘the question of the degree to which language use can be voluntary [...] whether a prosody is also an identity’) is not one that this essay will pronounce upon.<sup>55</sup> Here it is sufficient to say (by paraphrasing Greene in the *Groatsworth*) that Shakespeare had become acquainted with the admired inventions of Marlowe’s blank verse – and, since the metrical end-stop pre-dated Marlowe, with the nascent tradition of blank-verse writing in English. Even if he had not read a single line of Surrey or Sackville or Gascoigne, Shakespeare was writing a metrical style that owed much to their prosodic innovations and continuations (which had become part of the ‘theatre traffic’ of the early 1590s).<sup>56</sup> There was, as Greene noticed, nothing very remarkable about the bombast of Shakespeare’s tenth-syllable metrical end-stop; it was a prosodic stock-in-trade of all the blank versers up to that point, hence Greene’s jab that Shakespeare ‘supposes he is *as well able* to bombast out a blank verse *as the best of you*’, which depicts Shakespeare as merely typical (or struggling to be typical) and not in any case exceptional. At this fledgling point in his career, Shakespeare’s blank verse was both belated and indebted.

The metrical end-stop stayed with Shakespeare. In some plays, including those written much later than the *Henry 6* trilogy, Shakespeare stresses over ninety per cent per cent of his tenth-position syllables. For example, while *Hamlet* is much more accentually various than the two books of Surrey's *Aeneid* it heaps almost the same number of stresses onto its tenth-position syllables (92.9% to Surrey's 95+%).<sup>57</sup> Actors from Peggy Ashcroft (who 'marked the lines by accenting the last word, like a bell chiming') to John Gielgud (who 'marked them by braying slightly on the last word') have long perceived a Shakespearean tendency to something like metrical conclusiveness.<sup>58</sup> So in stark statistical terms, reading only for stress on the tenth syllable, Shakespeare's blank verse 'bombast' continued long after Greene's death. However, one reason why the blank verse of *Hamlet* runs on more successfully or completely than that of Surrey's *Aeneid* is because its tenth-position syllables (however amply stressed) are not always its line-ending syllables. About a quarter of the lines in *Hamlet* (including the most famous line in 'the most famous speech in the English language') end with an unstressed eleventh syllable, a so-called 'feminine ending': 'To be or not to be, that is the question'.<sup>59</sup>

There are few feminine endings in Surrey's *Aeneid* translation (with 'feminine endings' here defined as pentameter lines with an additional unstressed syllable at their conclusion).<sup>60</sup> No more than one per cent of the lines in *Gorboduc* have feminine endings, and no more than three per cent in *Faustus* or the two parts of *Tamburlaine*.<sup>61</sup> There are also no more than three per cent in Greene's work.<sup>62</sup> Conversely, as early as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Richard III* Shakespeare was writing an additional unstressed syllable into around fifteen per cent of his pentameter line endings (this metrical difference between Shakespeare and Marlowe may do something to resist the *New Oxford Shakespeare's* attributions, as Brian Vickers has argued).<sup>63</sup> Shakespeare's Sonnet 20, perhaps also written in the early 1590s, is not only about the hermaphroditic quality of the poem's

‘master-mistress’ (2); it is also about the hermaphroditic quality of the poem, in which every line ending of the poem’s sometime masculine bawdy is feminine, a prosodic conceit that Shakespeare may have filched from Sonnet 17 of Samuel Daniel’s *Delia* (1592), in which every line ending is likewise feminine.<sup>64</sup> These early Shakespeare texts were in this respect metrical oddities (and the proportion of feminine endings in his drama slightly decreased through to c.1597, perhaps as he tried to stabilise and reify the blank verse line in the manner of his prosodic predecessors). They nonetheless hint at what was to come. From c.1597 the proportion of feminine endings in Shakespeare’s plays jags upward, from 18.8% in *Julius Caesar* and 19.5% in *Henry V* to 27.4% in *Othello* and 27.1% in *King Lear* to 33.4% in *The Winter’s Tale* and 35.6% in *The Tempest*.<sup>65</sup> The feminine ending in blank verse is a genuinely Shakespearean innovation. As Philip Timberlake puts it in his comprehensive study, ‘No dramatist before Shakespeare [...] closely approached the percentages [of feminine endings] to be found in the *Comedy of Errors*, *Two Gentlemen*, and *Richard II*. Further [...] no play of Shakespeare’s falls as low in feminine endings as at least one play (and in most cases all the plays) of every earlier dramatist’.<sup>66</sup> By 1609, nearly a decade after *Hamlet*, an average of every third or fourth verse line in Shakespeare’s plays bore a feminine ending and, with it, a metrical incentive to run across its putative conclusion.<sup>67</sup> While the tenth syllable in a line with a feminine ending is (necessarily) stressed, the extra unstressed syllable works to overcome and override the prosodic conclusiveness of its precedent syllable.

Nor was the feminine ending the only Shakespearean means of surpassing the metrical end-stop. Around 1597 Shakespeare’s caesura (or ‘dip’) started to slide from the sixth to the eighth syllable of a line; by 1605 it had lingered on the eighth and never really returned to its former position.<sup>68</sup> By shifting the line’s centre of gravity further to the right, this combination of feminine ending with late caesura encouraged a simultaneously metrical and syntactical run-on between verse lines. Then there are Shakespeare’s ‘shared lines’ – one



line spoken by more than one character – which also smudge or fudge the line's ending, in that it becomes more difficult to determine quite where that ending is. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, about ten per cent of Shakespeare's verse lines were shared between two or more characters; ten years later, the figure was as high as twenty per cent.<sup>69</sup> In forging his own sense of an ending, Shakespeare was trying to write himself beyond the metrical end-stop which had defined (and sometimes bedevilled) so much early blank verse – including his own.

Shakespeare added one more element to this line-broaching coalition of feminine ending, shared lines and late caesura: midline beginnings and endings within and across verse lines, where syntax begins in the middle of one verse line and ends in the middle of the next. The resulting syntactical segment is roughly ten syllables in length, like a surrogate verse line. These midline transitions bother our sense of what a verse line is, and where it is, and where and if it ends, and how it should appear on the page or sound from the mouth. In Shakespeare's midline verse, lines are fashioned only to be dissolved or superseded; as Charles Lamb had it, 'Shakespeare mingles every thing'.<sup>70</sup> When we turn to a page of verse in *The Tempest*, for example, whether in a seventeenth-century folio or a modern edition, we can see 'shadow pentameters' ghosting across the typographical lines, with the phrase or sentence often appearing 'to have taken the line into its own hands'.<sup>71</sup> This versification undoes any easy association between a typographical line and a specified rhythm because the iambic rhythm of a (roughly) ten-syllable segment can now transcend one verse line and find its culmination in another, subsequent line (what E.A. Abbott called 'amphibious verse'), or can be said to start in the middle of a typographical line rather than proceeding along the full length of it.<sup>72</sup> The prosody of Shakespeare's manuscript(s) was perhaps looser still: the folio scribe Ralph Crane's preference for contraction and apostrophe may have been an attempt, among other things, to 'make the freer' versification of the play 'more respectable' (though

Crane's changes to meter *per se* are 'largely adventitious' and 'of relatively small moment').<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, Crane's habitual deployment of minuscules at the start of a verse line would have suited – in fact, contributed to – the confusion of beginnings and endings in Shakespeare's tempestuous verse. Because Shakespeare's prosody in a later play like *The Tempest* can sound quite inimical to metrical 'bombast', we must remember that Greene's verb was partly a matter of timing. The upstart 'bombast' of Greene's 'Shake-scene' is a first description of Shakespeare's versification that would go on to seem the worst description, but only some years after it was written and printed. The whirligig of time would bring in Shakespeare's revenges.

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Yet Shakespeare also seems to have taken immediate umbrage at the *Groatsworth*. Chettle prefaced another (later) 1592 pamphlet with an apology, recognising how the *Groatsworth* had been 'offensively by one or two taken'.<sup>74</sup> He was 'as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault' (which in fact it might have been, though he was keen to conceal this from Shakespeare).<sup>75</sup> He proceeded to praise Shakespeare's 'civil' demeanour, 'uprightness of dealing', 'honesty' and 'facetious grace in writing' – the opposite of 'bombast'.<sup>76</sup> This may not have been the end of Shakespeare's dealings with Chettle. John Jowett has ventured that Chettle 'imped some of his own feathers' onto the first quarto text of *Romeo and Juliet* (1597) and Chettle appears to criticise Shakespeare in *Englands Mourning Garment* (1603) for not shedding 'one idle tear', one solitary poem, upon the death of Elizabeth.<sup>77</sup>

Nor was it the end of Shakespeare's dealings with Greene. Numerous scholars have made the case (with varying degrees of plausibility) for Shakespeare's continued preoccupation with Greene's 1592 criticism. Stephen Greenblatt has argued that Shakespeare

spent the late 1590s ‘transforming [Greene] into Falstaff’, that ‘sweet creature of bombast’ (*IH4* 2.5.330), culminating in Falstaff’s deathbed babbling about ‘green fields’ in *Henry V* (2.3.16-17).<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Bate has detected in Sonnet 112 another punning recollection of Greene’s criticism: ‘For what care I who calls me well or ill, / If you o’ergreen my bad, my good allow?’ (3-4), where Greene serves as the otherwise emblematic ‘critic’ of line 11.<sup>79</sup> Most tellingly, in *Hamlet* (written around the same time as Sonnet 112) Polonius objects to ‘beautified’ as a ‘vile phrase’ (2.2.111-2), probably recalling the upstart crow ‘beautified’ with others’ feathers. This recollection of Greene in *Hamlet* has become a mainstay of the lines’ criticism and interpretation, sufficiently so for the play’s most recent editors (Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, for Arden) to include it in their edition’s gloss on the lines.

We know that Greene’s criticism rankled in 1592, hence Chettle’s retraction and apology. We can reasonably conjecture, too, that Shakespeare **dwelt on Greene’s criticism after 1592** (especially given the possible recollections of the *Groatsworth* later in his writing career) and that his thoughts on the matter are unlikely to have been altogether benevolent. We might reasonably suppose, then, that Shakespeare’s prosodic development was in part motivated by a desire to render the *Groatsworth*’s criticism void, to escape the weight or purchase of Greene’s attack. The coalition of feminine endings, late caesura, shared lines and midline transitions worked to disestablish the tenth-syllable stress. Together or separately, these elements of Shakespeare’s later verse style may even have been intended to rectify Shakespeare’s early tendency to ‘bombast out a blank verse’ in the metrically end-stopped fashion of his blank verse contemporaries and predecessors.

We know that Shakespeare was thinking of Greene again in 1611 or thereabouts, for *The Winter’s Tale* draws heavily upon Greene’s 1588 prose romance *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* (reprinted in 1592, 1595, 1607 and 1609, though Shakespeare uses (at least) one of the earlier texts). In *The Winter’s Tale* Shakespeare appears to have had *Pandosto* ‘at his

elbow when he wrote' since 'There are more verbal echoes from *Pandosto* than from any other novel used by Shakespeare as a source', at least by Kenneth Muir's count (in Harold Love's terms, Greene is the 'precursory author' of *The Winter's Tale* even as Shakespeare is the play's 'executive author', 'the orderer, the wordsmith [...] the reformulator' of Greene's romance).<sup>80</sup> It may be better to think of '*The Winter's Tale* as a reception of Greene's *Pandosto* rather than *Pandosto* as a source for *The Winter's Tale*'.<sup>81</sup> In any case, the 'generational consciousness' of *Pandosto* – 'in which the errors of the old and the powerful are redeemed ultimately by the recalcitrant wanderings of the young' – is typologically suited to Shakespeare's recapitulation of the *Groatsworth* some twenty years later (and indeed tallies with the romance genre's own 'generational consciousness', with one of 'the memes of romance' being 'its perception of itself as something new that emerges from the locus of the old').<sup>82</sup> *The Winter's Tale* accordingly makes abundant reference to 'old tales', and to its own stories as such (see 5.3.116-7, 5.2.25 and 5.2.53-4 for example).

Scholars have tended to set a **benign** gloss on the relationship between *The Winter's Tale* and *Pandosto*, and between late Shakespeare and late Greene. Stuart Gillespie thinks Shakespeare's use of *Pandosto* 'can only imply approbation of some kind', a forgiveness narrative of the sort we might locate in *Pandosto* itself.<sup>83</sup> Steven Mentz regards *The Winter's Tale* as 'a self-conscious act of reconciliation', 'a nostalgic return to Shakespeare's Elizabethan roots', a play in which Shakespeare 'reconciles himself with Greene's legacy'.<sup>84</sup> Lori Newcomb is 'Certain' that 'Shakespeare drew affectionately on *Pandosto* and [Greene's] coney-catching pamphlets in *The Winter's Tale*' (adding that 'Autolycus, his ballad-selling rogue, may memorialize Greene himself').<sup>85</sup> These critics enlist the play's language of redemption and contrition (itself very far from naïve, sunny or absolute) in order to downplay Shakespeare's more fractious ability to hold a grudge.

It is just as possible to read *The Winter's Tale* as a late rejoinder to Greene and to the *Groatsworth*, a rejoinder that works in part at the level of the late blank verse line. Critics of the play scarcely remark upon the fact that Shakespeare chooses to *versify* Greene's prose romance – that is, to make his blank versification fundamental to whatever and however he is engaging with *Pandosto* (and, through *Pandosto*, with Greene). In undertaking this versifying, it would have been amazingly oblivious of Shakespeare not to recall Greene's attack on his blank versification in 1592, or for Shakespeare's late versification in *The Winter's Tale* to operate as a neutral or silent bystander in, or conduit for, any such recollection. It may be that Shakespeare's blank verse of 1611 and of his later career – a melting pot of feminine endings, midline shifts, late caesura and shared lines – signals a benign acceptance of Greene's 1592 criticism and constitutes an evidence of his having learned from it. However, it may also be that Shakespeare's blank verse of 1611 and of his later career – now far from bombastic – stands in more antagonistic relation to the *Groatsworth's* criticism, and serves to demonstrate his hard-won mastery over Greene. By transforming *Pandosto's* prose into the blank verse of *The Winter's Tale* (as Francis Sabie had done in two little-known texts of 1595), Shakespeare could demonstrate that his prosody had arrived at far more than 'bombast' – though bombast remained within his metrical arsenal.<sup>86</sup> Already a 'genre-stretching variant on revenge tragedy', *The Winter's Tale* could follow some of its own patterns of requital by ensuring that Greene's epistolary assault on the 'bombast' of Shakespeare's blank verse was finally returned to its sender.<sup>87</sup>

In the details of the versifying in *The Winter's Tale*, we can see and hear reasons to think that the latter reading is at least as plausible as the prevailing critical narrative of forgiveness, contrition, repentance, reunion, and so forth. For in its versifying of *Pandosto*, *The Winter's Tale* supplies an excruciating enacted critique of Greene's prose rhythms. When *Pandosto* (the corresponding figure to Leontes in Greene's romance) first turns jealous he

does so with a laboured logic. In Nandini Das's account of the play, he is like 'a conscientious scholar, with a firm faith in the enlightening value of existing precedence and full of confidence in his own powers of rational deduction'.<sup>88</sup>

First, he called to mind the beauty of his wife Bellaria, the comeliness and bravery of his friend Egistus, thinking that love was above all laws, and therefore to be stayed with no law; that it was hard to put fire and flax together without burning; that their open pleasures might breed his secret displeasures. He considered with himself that Egistus was a man, and must needs love; that his wife was a woman, and therefore subject unto love, and that where fancy forced, friendship was of no force.<sup>89</sup>

This is the rhythm of considered argument, constituted and reinforced by syllogistic conjunctions, a highly linear syntax, stylish parallelisms and inversions, and 'alliterative balance' ('where fancy forced, friendship was of no force').<sup>90</sup> Contrast Leontes's first jealous eruption:

Too hot, too hot!  
 To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods.  
 I have *tremor cordis* on me: my heart dances,  
 But not for joy, not joy. This entertainment  
 May a free face put on, derive a liberty  
 From heartiness, from bounty, fertile bosom,  
 And well become the agent – 't may, I grant.  
 But to be paddling palms and pinching fingers  
 As now they are, and making practised smiles

As in a looking glass; and then to sigh, as 'twere  
 The mort o'th'deer – O, that is entertainment  
 My bosom likes not, nor my brows! Mamillius,  
 Art thou my boy?

(1.2.110-122)

Leontes speaks with little of Pandosto's logic and linearity, yielding instead to what Stephen Orgel has called 'the poetics of incomprehensibility'.<sup>91</sup> Shakespeare is thereby writing 'against the linguistic assumptions' of Greene's romance.<sup>92</sup> Whereas language in *Pandosto* is a 'reliable medium of representation', Leontes's is wheeling, whirling, mountingly byzantine (and becomes more so as Act 1 continues). Hermione's 'fertile bosom', her 'entertainment' with Polixenes, and Leontes's own 'secret displeasures' (in Greene's words) prompt him to ask his son 'Art thou my boy?': both a fatherly endearment and a more searching question about Mamillius's paternity (this is one of 'Leontes's puns' which, Molly Mahood observes, are 'like steam forcing up a saucepan lid').<sup>93</sup> There is a kind of reason to all this, as though Leontes is following the **intimations** hidden between Pandosto's clauses. Yet Shakespeare strains Greene's parallelisms so that they nearly (and sometimes do) become repetitions: 'To mingle friendship far is mingling bloods', 'But not for joy, not joy', 'paddling palms and pinching fingers', 'My bosom likes not, nor my brows!', where the polished symmetry of Pandosto's arguments has become an obsessive fretting or frotting over individual words. It is as though Shakespeare is correcting Greene's notion of jealousy by more truly versifying it; turning it from something sane, sophisticated and logical to something cantankerous, pedantic, obtuse and crazed. In having us think anew about Greene's depiction of jealousy in *Pandosto*, Shakespeare may even be nudging us to think of Greene himself as madly jealous – not, as the *Groatsworth* might suggest, a considered, Pandosto-like interpreter of

Shakespeare's early stylistic folly but, as the *Groatsworth* might also suggest, a Leontes-like lunatic deranged with admiration for Shakespeare's precocious accomplishment. Any more exact description of such a 'compound emotion' would depend on how much of Greene's attack originated in esteem for Shakespeare, on whether he jealously feared an incubus-like Shakespeare draining his talent or envied the way he had 'advanced suddenly, and *per saltum*'.<sup>94</sup>

Leontes's blank verse through 1.2.110-122 has a suitably vexed energy. 'The tempo is rapid, the sense contorted'.<sup>95</sup> His dancing heart, busy with *tremor cordis*, moves 'But not for joy, not joy', where the unanticipated spasm on the second 'not' incarnates the heart's jolt within Shakespeare's blanks (in the folio text the second 'joy' is followed by a long triple-space, almost as time for the heart and voice to settle). He crams later lines with pyrrhics which suddenly yield to iambs so that the iambs come to sound over-eager, with the occasional regularity of the blank verse itself becoming suspect. Its caesuras are heavy ('likes not, now') and the stresses are strong and alliterative ('padding palms and pinching fingers'), as though Leontes is trying to secure a voice that is escaping from him. About half of his lines have feminine endings and almost all move from midline to midline; despite his efforts to load down the verse with stress and pause, it keeps sliding over the ends of his typographical lines. The metrical end-stop is a distant memory.

*The Winter's Tale* is therefore not only concerned with the destruction of Greene's metrical claims. It almost sets out to transcend – as much as to destroy – the notion of a blank verse 'bombast': Leontes's speech often achieves a kind of non-bombastic bombast, a bombast that animates the ear rather than appalling or offending it (this kind of bombast might be, as Goran Stanivukovic has put it, 'the place where [Shakespeare] expands the linguistic and cognitive potential of language').<sup>96</sup> The metrical versatility and irregularity of Leontes's speech is true of the play more widely. The majority of Shakespeare's lines in *The*



*Winter's Tale* are not ten syllables long, nor are their stresses isochronous (i.e. regularly spaced across a verse line), nor is there a consistently rising rhythm from unstressed syllable to stressed syllable and back again. It can be difficult to find five stresses in the lines, or to be clear where those five stresses fall: to return to this speech for an example, there are at least six possible stresses in Leontes's line about '*tremor cordis*' (I, tre[mor], cor[dis], me, heart, dan[ces]). Only three of Leontes's lines (above) are in unproblematic pentameter and only one or two are clearly and persistently iambic. The play as a whole is replete with midline transitions, feminine endings, late caesuras and shared lines, those resources Shakespeare had employed against the bombast of the metrical end-stop. By my count, there are ten midline shifts, nine feminine endings and five 'late' caesuras in the play's first fifty lines of verse alone (1.2.1-50). The Oxford 2 text prints seven of those lines as shared.

Yet despite the mounting of a prosodic **riposte** to Greene in *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare's blanks were never quite free of bombast. We have seen and heard how the stressed tenth syllable remained a fixture of his blank verse even while the percentages of feminine ending, shared line, midline shift and late caesura in his blanks gradually increased. In *The Winter's Tale*, 87.3% of the tenth-position syllables are stressed.<sup>97</sup> In *The Tempest*, written around the same time, the figure is 87.6%.<sup>98</sup> In this way, a Greenean 'bombast' remained the fulcrum for his blank verse right through to the end of his career. Every single one of Shakespeare's innovations in the form (late caesura, feminine ending, shared line, midline shift) made sure to maintain the stressed tenth syllable even as they worked against or outside it – partly because they needed it to exist *in order to* work against or outside it (a feminine ending in blank verse, for instance, requires a stressed tenth syllable to exist before it **can come into being**). Shakespeare's blank verse had become eccentric, in the 'radical etymological sense' of that word, in that it was constantly circling away from the stressed tenth syllable it nonetheless preserved.<sup>99</sup> The bombastic tenth syllable, the metrical end-stop

now not quite at the end of the line, had become the *sine qua non* of Shakespeare's blank verse, the early metrical failure that determined his later prosodic success – which means that Shakespeare's triumph over Greene must also be Greene's triumph over Shakespeare.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Greene / Henry Chettle, *Greenes Groats-Worth of Witte* (London, 1592), F2v. I have silently modernised the text here.

<sup>2</sup> John Jowett, ‘Johannes Factotum: Henry Chettle and “Greene’s Groatsworth of Wit”’, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 87 (1993), 453-486, 466, 481.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Maslen, ‘Greene and the Uses of Time’, in Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (eds.), *Writing Robert Greene: New Essays on England’s First Notorious Professional Writer* (Aldershot, 2008), 157-188, 183; Richard Helgerson, *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, 1976), 155.

<sup>4</sup> Greene, *Groatsworth*, F2v; Thomas Dekker, *A Knights Conjuring* (London, 1607), L-L1.

<sup>5</sup> For two notable divergences from this critical norm, see Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Shakespeare: Upstart Crow to Sweet Swan, 1592-1623* (London, 2011), 39, and Brian Vickers, ‘“Upstart Crow”? The Myth of Shakespeare’s Plagiarism’, *The Review of English Studies*, 68 (2017), 244-267.

<sup>6</sup> See also John Kerrigan on bombasted clothing, in *Shakespeare’s Originality* (Oxford, 2018), Ch.1 ‘Upstarts and Much Ado’, 19-40.

<sup>7</sup> Andy Kesson, ‘His fellow dramatists and early collaborators’, in Stanley Wells and Paul Edmondson (eds.), *The Shakespeare Circle: An Alternative Biography* (Cambridge, 2015), 235-247, 236.

<sup>8</sup> Bart van Es, ‘“Johannes fac Totum?”: Shakespeare’s First Contact with the Acting Companies’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 551-577, 569. All Shakespeare quotations correspond to *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford, 2005 [1986]).

<sup>9</sup> Randall Martin (ed.), *Henry VI Part Three* (Oxford, 2001), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Goran Stanivukovic, ‘Shakespeare’s Style in the 1590s’, in Jonathan Post (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare’s Poetry* (Oxford, 2013), 26-43, 28; Goran Stanivukovic, ‘The

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Language and Style of Early Shakespeare’, in Rory Loughnane and Andrew J. Power (eds.), *Early Shakespeare, 1588-1594* (Cambridge, 2020), 76-102, 82, 79, 80, 83.

<sup>11</sup> Stanivukovic, ‘Shakespeare’s Style’, 29.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Nashe, ‘To the Gentlemen Students’, in Robert Greene, *Menaphon* (London, 1589), A3r.

<sup>13</sup> Wolfgang Clemens, ‘Some aspects of style in the Henry VI plays’, in Philip Edwards, Inga-Stina Ewbank and G.K. Hunter (eds.), *Shakespeare’s Styles: Essays in honour of Kenneth Muir* (Cambridge, 1980), 9-24, 16, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Roman Dyboski, *Rise and Fall in Shakespeare’s Dramatic Art* (London, 1923), 9; E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare’s History Plays* (London, 1948), 90.

<sup>15</sup> Randall Martin (ed.), *Henry VI Part Three*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Russ McDonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language* (Oxford, 2001), 91.

<sup>17</sup> Derek Attridge, *The Rhythms of English Poetry* (London, 1982), 103.

<sup>18</sup> Marina Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare and the Versification of English Drama, 1561-1642* (Burlington, 2014), Table B.1.

<sup>19</sup> McDonald, *Arts of Language*, 90.

<sup>20</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.

<sup>21</sup> H.A. Mason, *Editing Wyatt* (Cambridge, 1972), 58.

<sup>22</sup> George T. Wright, ‘Wyatt’s Decasyllabic Line’, *Studies in Philology*, 82 (1985), 129-156, 156; John Thompson, *The Founding of English Metre* (New York, 1989), 26-7.

<sup>23</sup> Even with some margin for error or interpretive disagreement over my counting (disputing, say, the elision of a line, or the syllabic status of -e or -ed word endings), the figures for both Books are similar, within ten or fifteen per cent of each other.

<sup>24</sup> I will hereafter refer to the metre as Surrey’s, though some readers might like to think of Tottel-inflected quotation marks around his name.

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- <sup>25</sup> Emrys Jones (ed.), Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, *Poems* (Oxford, 1964).
- <sup>26</sup> Normand Berlin, *Thomas Sackville* (New York, 1974), 102. Surrey's first twentieth-century editor also estimates that a quarter of Surrey's lines in the *Aeneid* are 'run-overs' – see Frederick Morgan Padelford (ed.), *The Poems of Henry Howard Earl of Surrey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Seattle, 1928), 51.
- <sup>27</sup> C.S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford, 1954), 234.
- <sup>28</sup> Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London, 1611), 'enjambement'.
- <sup>29</sup> George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prosody* (London, 1906), 2 vols., 1.316.
- <sup>30</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.
- <sup>31</sup> Dermot Cavanagh, 'Political Tragedy in the 1560s: *Cambises* and *Gorboduc*', in Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603* (Oxford, 2009), 488-504, 494.
- <sup>32</sup> London, British Library, Add. MS. 61822, f.89v (Kelston is copying *Gorboduc* 1.2.117-121).
- <sup>33</sup> Joel B. Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley, 1978), 257.
- <sup>34</sup> G.K. Smart, 'Non Dramatic Blank Verse', *Anglia*, 61 (1937), 384-6.
- <sup>35</sup> Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington, 1994), 106.
- <sup>36</sup> George Gascoigne, *The Steele Glas* (London, 1576), C3r. All of the lines in this marked passage are metrically end-stopped.
- <sup>37</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.
- <sup>38</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.
- <sup>39</sup> Anthony Munday, *The Mirrour of Mutabilitie* (London, 1579), Cijr.

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- <sup>40</sup> Robert Maslen, 'Greene and the Uses of Time', in *Writing Robert Greene*, 157-188, 164.
- <sup>41</sup> James P. Bednarz, 'Marlowe and the English literary scene', in Patrick Cheney (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge, 2004), 90-105, 95; Ronald A. Tumelson II, 'Robert Greene, "Author of Playes"', in *Writing Robert Greene*, 95-114, 105.
- <sup>42</sup> Robert Greene, *Perimedes The Blacke-Smith* (London, 1588), 'To the Gentlemen readers', A3r.
- <sup>43</sup> Greene, *Perimedes*, A3r.
- <sup>44</sup> Greene, *Perimedes*, A3r; James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* (New York, 1991), 32.
- <sup>45</sup> Russ McDonald, 'Marlowe and Style', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, 55-69, 63; Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.
- <sup>46</sup> Harry Levin, *Christopher Marlowe: the Overreacher* (London, 1961), 30; Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind*, 10; Levin, *Marlowe*, 40; Algernon Charles Swinburne, *The Age of Shakespeare* (London, 1908), 1; T.S. Eliot, 'The Blank Verse of Marlowe', in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London, 1932), 86-94, 88.
- <sup>47</sup> Marjorie Garber, "'Infinite Riches in a Little Room": Closure and Enclosure in Marlowe', in Alvin B. Kernan (ed.), *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson* (Baltimore, 1977), 3-21, 19.
- <sup>48</sup> Levin, *Marlowe*, 61.
- <sup>49</sup> Julian Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History and Drama* (London, 2012), 73; Garber, 'Enclosure in Marlowe', 19.
- <sup>50</sup> Peter Berek, 'Tamburlaine's Weak Sons: Imitation as Interpretation Before 1593', *Renaissance Drama*, 13 (1982), 55-82, 58.
- <sup>51</sup> John Burrows and Hugh Craig, 'The Joker in the Pack? Marlowe, Kyd, and the Co-authorship of *Henry VI, Part 3*', in Gary Taylor and Gabriel Egan (eds.), *The New Oxford*

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*Shakespeare Authorship Companion* (Oxford, 2017), 194-217, 217. Similar testing has been done in Santiago Segarra, Mark Eisen, Gabriel Egan, Alejandro Ribeiro, ‘Attributing the Authorship of the *Henry VI* Plays by Word Adjacency’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 67 (2016), 232-256, and in Craig and Burrows, ‘A Collaboration about a Collaboration: The Authorship of *King Henry VI, Part Three*’, in Marilyn Deegan and Willard McCarty (eds.), *Collaborative Research in the Digital Humanities* (New York, 2016), 91-147.

<sup>52</sup> John K. Ingram, ‘On the “Weak Endings” in Shakspeare’, *Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 2 (1875), 442-464, n. 449.

<sup>53</sup> Tarlinskaja finds stress on 91.9% of the tenth-position syllables in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (a play sometimes thought to have been co-authored with Nashe), 83% in *The Jew of Malta*, 75.5% in *Doctor Faustus*, 85.6% in *The Massacre at Paris*, 86.5% in *Edward II*, and 75.3% in *1 Tamburlaine* and 77.2% in *2 Tamburlaine* – see *Shakespeare* Table B.1.

<sup>54</sup> Bart van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford, 2015 [2013]), 28.

<sup>55</sup> Gary Taylor and John V. Nance, ‘Imitation or Collaboration? Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare Canon’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 68 (2015), 32-47, 32; Joseph Loewenstein, ‘Marston’s Gorge and the Question of Formalism’, in Mark David Rasmussen (ed.), *Renaissance Literature and its Formal Engagements* (Houndmills, 2002), 89-112, 104.

<sup>56</sup> Janet Clare, *Shakespeare’s Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Completion in Renaissance Theatre* (Cambridge, 2014), 2.

<sup>57</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.

<sup>58</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.1.; Peter Hall, *Shakespeare’s Advice to the Players* (London, 2014 [2003]), 20.

<sup>59</sup> Douglas Bruster, *To Be Or Not To Be* (London, 2007), 101.

<sup>60</sup> On defining the feminine ending, see Philip W. Timberlake, *The Feminine Ending in English Blank Verse* [doctoral thesis, 1931]: ‘there has been no general agreement as to what

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constitutes a feminine ending; and as one investigator has thus counted words in one author which another rules out in his author, the resulting figures, however accurately done, have had only doubtful comparative value [...] Whichever of these systems of counting may be better, it is content for the purposes of comparison some one system must be employed' (1-2). The 'one system' employed here is also Tarlinskaja's. For a more detailed discussion of Surrey's feminine endings, see Timberlake, *The Feminine Ending*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Marina Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare's Verse: Iambic Pentameter and the Poet's Idiosyncrasies* (New York, 1987), 'Appendix' Tables 5.1 and 5.3; Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.4.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare's Verse*, Table 5.2; Brian Vickers, letter to *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 2017.

<sup>64</sup> Arguments in favour of the early dating of Sonnet 20 include A. Kent Hieatt, Charles W. Hieatt and Anne Lake Prescott, "When Did Shakespeare Write *Sonnets* 1609?", *Studies in Philology*, 88 (1991), 69-109, and Gary Taylor, "Some Manuscripts of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 68 (1985), 210-246.

<sup>65</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare's Verse*, Table 5.2.

<sup>66</sup> Timberlake, *Feminine Endings*, 124; see also his table of data on 121.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, 18, 126-7. The 'dip' is a missing stress on a normally stressed syllable.

<sup>69</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B.5.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Lamb, qtd. in Adrian Poole (ed.), *Lamb, Hazlitt, Keats: Great Shakespeareans Volume 4* (London, 2010), 48.



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<sup>71</sup> Nicholas D. Nace, 'Pointless Milton: A Close Reading in Negative', in Russ McDonald, Nicholas D. Nace and Travis D. Williams (eds.), *Shakespeare Up Close: Reading Early Modern Texts* (London, 2012), 125-134, 133; George T. Wright, *Shakespeare's Metrical Art* (Berkeley, 1991 [1988]), 210.

<sup>72</sup> E.A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar* (London, 1894), 426.

<sup>73</sup> A.C. Partridge, *Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama* (London, 1964), 85; T.H. Howard-Hill, *Ralph Crane and Some Shakespeare First Folio Comedies* (Charlottesville, 1972), 52-3.

<sup>74</sup> Henry Chettle, *Kind-Hart's Dreame* (London, 1592), 1v.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> John Jowett, 'Henry Chettle and the First Quarto of *Romeo and Juliet*', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 91 (1998), 53-74, 66; Richard Wilson, *Worldly Shakespeare: The Theatre of Our Good Will* (Edinburgh, 2016), 73-74.

<sup>78</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (London, 2004), 225.

<sup>79</sup> Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London, 1997), 19. For the dating of Sonnet 112 to the period c.1598-1604, see Macdonald P. Jackson, 'Rhymes in Shakespeare's Sonnets: Evidence of Date of Composition', *Notes and Queries*, 244 (1999), 213-9; and Jackson, 'Vocabulary and Chronology: The Case of Shakespeare's Sonnets', *The Review of English Studies*, 52 (2001), 59-75.

<sup>80</sup> J.H.P. Pafford (ed.), *The Winter's Tale* (London, 1963), xxxi; Kenneth Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources* (London, 1957), 247; Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2002), 40, 43.

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<sup>81</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb and Valerie Wayne, 'Introduction: Into the Forest', in Lamb and Wayne (eds.), *Staging Early Modern Romance: Prose Fiction, Dramatic Romance, and Shakespeare* (New York, 2009), 1-20, 11.

<sup>82</sup> Nandini Das, *Renaissance Romance: The Transformation of English Prose Fiction, 1570-1620* (Farnham, 2011), 7, 121; Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 2004), 4; Das, *Renaissance Romance*, 9.

<sup>83</sup> Stuart Gillespie, *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sources* (London, 2004), 211.

<sup>84</sup> Steven Mentz, 'Wearing Greene: Autolycus, Robert Greene, and the Structure of Romance in *The Winter's Tale*', *Renaissance Drama*, 30 (1999-2001), 73-92, 76, 74, 86.

<sup>85</sup> Lori Newcomb, 'Robert Greene', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004: <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11418?rskey=sNk29x&result=2>>

<sup>86</sup> Francis Sabie had previously turned segments of *Pandosto* into blank verse in *The Fishermans Tale* (London, 1595) and *Flora's Fortune* (London, 1595). There is little equivalent to Leontes's rages (see main text, below) in Sabie's versification, except perhaps the rant of Thirsis at E3v-r although even here the blank verse remains fairly rigid. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Shakespeare had read Sabie's two texts of 1595.

<sup>87</sup> John Kerrigan, *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon* (Oxford, 2000 [1996]), 210.

<sup>88</sup> Das, *Renaissance Romance*, 121.

<sup>89</sup> Robert Greene, *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time* (London, 1588), A4r-A5v. I have silently modernised the text here.

<sup>90</sup> Katharine Wilson, 'Revenge and Romance: George Pettie's *Palace of Pleasure* and Robert Greene's *Pandosto*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature*, 687-703, 699.

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- <sup>91</sup> Stephen Orgel, 'The Poetics of Incomprehensibility', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 42 (1991), 431-7.
- <sup>92</sup> Stephen J. Lynch, *Shakespearean Intertextuality: Studies in Selected Sources and Plays* (London, 1998), 83-4.
- <sup>93</sup> Molly Mahood, 'Wordplay in *The Winter's Tale*', repr. in D.J. Palmer (ed.), *Shakespeare's Later Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism* (London, 1971), 346-364, 348.
- <sup>94</sup> Bradley J. Irish, *Emotion in the Tudor Court: Literature, History, and Early Modern Feeling* (Chicago, 2018), 64; Francis Bacon, 'Of Envy' (1625), in John Pitcher (ed.), *The Essays* (London, 1985), 85.
- <sup>95</sup> John Lawlor, '*Pandosto* and the Nature of Dramatic Romance', repr. in *Shakespeare's Later Comedies*, 291-312, 306.
- <sup>96</sup> Stanivukovic, 'Language and Style', 82.
- <sup>97</sup> Tarlinskaja, *Shakespeare*, Table B2.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>99</sup> Geoffrey Hill, 'Poetry as "Menace" and "Atonement"', in **Kenneth Haynes (ed.)**, *Collected Critical Writings* (Oxford, 2008), 3-21, 4.