

John Lyly

Edited by
Ruth Lunney



The University Wits

John Lyly

The University Wits
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John Lyly

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 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2011 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

John Lyly. – (The university wits)

1. Lyly, John, 1554?-1606–Criticism and interpretation.

2. English drama–Early modern and Elizabethan, 1500-1600–History and criticism. 3. English prose literature–Early modern, 1500-1700–History and criticism.

I. Series II. Lunney, Ruth.

822.3-dc22

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010936054

ISBN 9780754628545 (hbk)

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Acknowledgements

The editor and publishers wish to thank the following for permission to use copyright material.

AMS Press Inc for the essay: Theodora A. Jankowski (1991), 'The Subversion of Flattery: The Queen's Body in John Lyly's *Sapho and Phao*', *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England*, **5**, pp. 69–86.

Cahiers Élisabéthains for the essay: R. Headlam Wells (1983), 'Elizabethan Epideictic Drama: Praise and Blame in the Plays of Peele and Lyly', *Cahiers Élisabéthains*, **23**, pp. 15–33.

Cambridge University Press for the essay: David Bevington (1990), "'Jack Hath Not Jill": Failed Courtship in Lyly and Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Survey*, **42**, pp. 1–13. Copyright © 1990 Cambridge University Press.

Comparative Drama at Western Michigan University for the essays: David Bevington (1998), 'Lyly's *Endymion* and *Midas*: The Catholic Question in England', *Comparative Drama*, **32**, pp. 26–46; Derek B. Alwes (2000/2001), "'I Would Fain Serve": John Lyly's Career at Court', *Comparative Drama*, **34**, pp. 399–421; Kent Cartwright (1998), 'The Confusions of *Gallathea*: John Lyly as Popular Dramatist', *Comparative Drama*, **32**, pp. 207–39.

Early Modern Literary Studies for the essay: Annaliese Connolly (2002), "'O Unquenchable Thirst of Gold": Lyly's *Midas* and the English Quest for Empire', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, **8**, pp. 1–36.

Hodder Education for the essay: Jocelyn Powell (1966), 'John Lyly and the Language of Play', in John Russell Brown and Bernard Harris (eds), *Elizabethan Theatre*, London: Edward Arnold, pp. 146–67.

Johns Hopkins University Press for the essays: Jonas A. Barish (1956), 'The Prose Style of John Lyly', *English Literary History*, **23**, pp. 14–35; Denise A. Walen (2002), 'Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama', *Theatre Journal*, **54**, pp. 411–30. Copyright © 2002 Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kent State University Press for the essay: Joan Pong Linton (1996), 'The Humanist in the Market: Gendering Exchange and Authorship in Lyly's *Euphues* Romances', in Constance C. Relihan (ed.), *Framing Elizabethan Fictions: Contemporary Approaches to Early Modern Narrative Prose*, Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, pp. 73–97.

John Wiley and Sons for the essay: Judith Rice Henderson (1982), 'Euphues and his Erasmus', *English Literary Renaissance*, **12**, pp. 135–61. Copyright © 1982 English Literary Renaissance.

Manchester University Press for the essay: Michael Pincombe, (1996), 'The Woman in the Moon: Cursed be Utopia', *The Plays of John Lyly: Eros and Eliza*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 174–89.

Oxford University Press for the essays: Catherine Bates (1991), "'A Large Occasion of Discourse": John Lyly and the Art of Civil Conversation', *Review of English Studies*, **42**, pp. 469–86. Copyright © 1991 Oxford University Press; Christine M. Neufeld (2007), 'Lyly's Chimerical Vision: Witchcraft in *Endymion*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, **43**, pp. 351–69. Copyright © 2007 Christine M. Neufeld; Leah Scragg (2005), 'John Lyly and the Politics of Language', *Essays in Criticism*, **55**, pp. 17–38. Copyright © 2005 Oxford University Press.

P.D. Meany Publishers for the essay: Anne Jennalie Cook (1990), 'The Transformation of Stage Courtship', in A.L. Magnusson and C.E. McGee (eds), *The Elizabethan Theatre XI*, Port Credit, Ontario, Canada: P.D. Meany, pp. 155–75. Copyright © P. D. Meany Company, Inc.

Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama for the essays: Maurice Charney (1979), 'Female Roles and the Children's Companies: Lyly's Pandora in *The Woman in the Moon*', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, **12**, pp. 37–43; Kate D. Levin (2001), 'Playing with Lyly: Theatrical Criticism and Non-Shakespearean Drama', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, **40**, pp. 25–53.

SEL Studies in English Literature for the essays: Jeff Shulman (1985), 'Ovidian Myth in Lyly's Courtship Comedies', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, **25**, pp. 249–69. Christopher Wixson (2001), 'Cross-Dressing and John Lyly's *Gallathea*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, **41**, pp. 241–56.

South Atlantic Modern Language Association at Georgia State University for the essay: Sara Deats (1975), 'The Disarming of the Knight: Comic Parody in Lyly's "Endymion"', *South Atlantic Bulletin*, **40**, pp. 67–75.

Taylor and Francis for the essay: Leah Scragg (2005), 'Speaking Pictures: Style and Spectacle in Lyllyan Comedy', *English Studies*, **86**, pp. 298–311.

University of Chicago Press for the essay: Robert S. Knapp (1976), 'The Monarchy of Love in Lyly's *Endymion*', *Modern Philology*, **73**, pp. 353–67.

Every effort has been made to trace all the copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publishers will be pleased to make the necessary arrangement at the first opportunity.

The editor wishes to thank Bob Logan, Series Editor, for his wise counsel; Hugh Craig, my colleague at Newcastle, for his comments and conversation; the staff at the Auchmuty Library, University of Newcastle, for their assistance; my family, for their encouragement and forbearance—and "old John Lilly" for the pleasure of his company.

Series Preface

In 1887, the literary historian and critic, George Saintsbury, coined the term “University Wits” to apply to six, university-trained Renaissance writers: John Lyly (1554–1606), Thomas Lodge (1558–1625), and George Peele (1558–1597), all graduates of Oxford, and Robert Greene (1558–1592), Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), and Thomas Nashe (1567–1601), Cambridge graduates. Although Marlowe has acquired a reputation among scholars and critics as the most prominent of the group, this series seeks to give equal attention to all six writers, making clear how they were responsible for major improvements in the course of English drama and how their works provided Shakespeare with a context of theatrical possibilities that helped spur him to success. Although the details are sparse, there is clear evidence that these writers either knew or knew of one another, even if they never formally acknowledged themselves as a group of educated elite.

To be sure, there are similarities in the University Wits that have had a lasting impact – for example, their heightened awareness of style and form, a likely stimulus for Shakespeare’s imaginative handling of stylistics. Moreover, in writing plays, the Wits learned to abide by the established aesthetic requirements and commercial demands of popular theater even as they sought to make changes that would permanently affect both conditions.

The volume editors evince a healthy skepticism toward attempts to isolate these six figures from their early modern context, and yet, concomitantly, manifest a desire to draw most of them from the shadows where they have remained for far too long. Thus, the volumes attempt to illuminate the distinctive characteristics of each writer through selections of the most perceptive, wide-ranging scholarship and criticism written about them. The reprinted pieces in each volume are preceded by generous introductions that not only offer fresh perspectives on the biography and literary output of the writers but also give a sense of what has been achieved by scholars over time and, in some cases, what needs still to be done.

These six volumes raise questions that bring into focus with fresh insight both familiar and new issues. For example: What do we know of the friendships among the six members of the University Wits and of the influence their bonds with one another, as well as their writings, may have had on each other’s works? What impact did the University Wits have on the rapidly developing course of English drama? To what extent did the Wits’ need to earn a living, along with the evolving standards and pressures of commercialism, determine the content and style of their compositions? How aware were the Wits of their status as university graduates? What were the personal and professional ramifications of Greene and Nashe’s unabashed snobbishness; was it the result of their status as university graduates? Are we able to detect the specific consequences of the Wits’ education in the substance and manner of what they write? What might Shakespeare have found in the behavior and plays of the University Wits to influence the mix of commercialism and aesthetics in his dramas? Are we able to detect any influence from the Wits on Shakespeare’s poetry? What longstanding myths about the University Wits do these volumes denounce? What patterns do we see in the criticism and scholarship on the University Wits? This six-volume series will provide answers to these

questions and many others of interest to students, teachers, and scholars eager to contextualize the work of writers in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

A substantial portion of the leading scholarship on the University Wits has been published in scholarly journals and volumes of collected essays. The editors of the six volumes have winnowed these pieces, organizing them coherently into successive sections that, taken as a whole, present an up-to-date view of where the scholarship and criticism have brought us. Portions of book-length studies have sometimes been included. When it was impossible to include texts because of their length, editors have nevertheless directed readers to them, indicating what they are likely to find of value. In addition, the editors have provided their volumes with extensive bibliographies. Students, teachers, and scholars will find the series invaluable for both research and pedagogy. All the editors have carefully reviewed the expanse of articles and monographs written about their authors in order to make manifest the most advanced thinking about them and, thereby, to provide a resource of enduring value. Highly accessible and authoritative, these volumes represent the most important work done to date on the University Wits.

ROBERT A. LOGAN

Series Editor

University of Hartford, USA

To the memory of my husband

Bill (William David) Lunney
(1927–2010)

storyteller, educator, true companion



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Introduction

The oldest of the University Wits, John Lyly might also have become the most fortunate. A celebrity in his mid-twenties for his wit and learning and then playwright to the royal court, he secured a patron from the old nobility and a wife from the landed gentry.¹ He belonged to a family of distinguished scholars and was distantly connected by both birth and marriage to Queen Elizabeth's Treasurer, Lord Burghley. The Queen appointed him Esquire of the Body in 1588, and important friends sponsored him four times as a member of parliament. His writings were influential: the two *Euphues* books (1578 and 1580) were reprinted for more than 100 years and were immediately so popular that imitators rushed to compete, including other 'Wits' like Lodge, Greene, and Nashe. His plays, though written for private theatre and court performance by boy choristers, offered new directions in comedy to public theatre playwrights such as Greene, Wilson, Shakespeare and Jonson.

Yet this was also a not-so-fortunate career. Like those other university-educated young men who arrived in London after him seeking fame and fortune, Lyly struggled to find any lasting financial security or indeed a position to match his aspirations and education. His family kept multiplying, with ten children born in less than 20 years (Eccles, 1982). His patron, the notorious Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, could be generous, but was constantly in trouble, financial and otherwise. The Queen's appointment was, it seems, honorary and not the lucrative position of the next Master of the Revels which Lyly believed she had promised him. By the time Lyly reached his forties, his literary efforts had declined from witty plays to witty begging letters. As his biographer and editor R. Warwick Bond remarks, Lyly was 'famous, clever, poor and disappointed' ('Life of John Lyly' [1902]1967, I, p. 79).

Lyly's life encompassed the reign of Elizabeth I. He was born around 1554 in Queen Mary's time and died in 1606 under James I. His father was an ecclesiastical official at Canterbury Cathedral; his mother came from a landed family in Yorkshire. His grandfather William Lilly, a prominent humanist scholar, had been headmaster of St Paul's School and the author of the standard Latin grammar used in schools for many years.² Lyly's father died in 1569,³ around the time he followed his grandfather and uncle to Magdalen College in Oxford, where he obtained a BA in 1573 and an MA in 1575 (he also qualified for a Cambridge MA in 1579). While at Oxford he contemplated an academic career, in line perhaps with family tradition and expectations, seeking Burghley's help to obtain a fellowship at Magdalen in 1574. This ambition may or may not have been serious, since he later expressed in *Euphues* his frustration

¹ For biographical details, a useful study is Hunter (1962). Relevant documents are included in Feuillerat ([1910] 1968). More recent summaries can be found in Pincombe (1996); and in two essays by Leah Scragg: 'John Lyly' (1987); and 'The Victim of Fashion? Rereading the Biography of John Lyly' (2006).

² On family background, see Hunter (1962, pp.15–27); Kinney (1986, pp. 158–60).

³ As the eldest son, Lyly was bequeathed his father's 'ringe of gold with a cornelyan stone' (Feuillerat, 1968, p. 518).

at the dry bones of university education. And there are contemporary comments that suggest a more prodigal or profligate career there.⁴

Lyly's reputation was established by *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and its companion volume, *Euphues and His England* (1580). His career was advanced by gaining the patronage of Edward de Vere. As Oxford's 'servant', Lyly may have acted as secretary or even managed accounts (Nelson, 2003, pp. 288–89) before becoming involved in writing plays for the court. In 1583 Oxford took advantage of temporary circumstances to gain control of the first Blackfriars playhouse.⁵ This was an auspicious year for Lyly, with his marriage not long after he was given the lease of the theatre and access to an amalgamated company of boys: the Children of Paul's and the (royal) Chapel, with Oxford's own troupe.⁶ His first plays, *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*, were presented at court early in 1584 after 'rehearsals' before paying audiences at the Blackfriars. By the end of 1584, however, Lyly had lost the lease of the Blackfriars and had been imprisoned for debt (he was rescued by the Queen (Feuillerat, [1910]1968, pp. 134, 532)) and the joint company of boys had been disbanded (Shapiro, 1977, p. 17; Gair, 1982, p. 104).⁷ Oxford gifted him revenues from rents, but he was obliged to sell his rights to these not long after the birth of his first child in 1586–87.

Lyly's most productive years as a playwright were associated with the Children of Paul's, who presented *Gallathea* and *Endimion* at court in early 1588 and *Midas*, inspired by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, in early 1590.⁸ Two other plays of this period do not claim court presentation on their title pages: *Mother Bombie* was 'sundrie times plaied by the Children of Powles', and *Love's Metamorphosis* was first performed by the Paul's Boys by 1590, and then revived by the Chapel Children at the second Blackfriars in the late 1590s. *The Woman in the Moon*, dated in the late 1580s or early 1590s, is described as 'presented before her Highnesse' without mention of the company; it is written in the newly fashionable blank verse rather than prose and is usually considered to be Lyly's final work for the theatre.

A turning point in Lyly's fortunes came in 1590 with the 'dissolving' of the Paul's Boys, a ban on their playing usually explained by some involvement in the Marprelate controversy.⁹ Lyly retired to his wife's home in Yorkshire, and did not return to London until 1596 except to attend parliament. He wrote no more plays although he may have taken some part in the

⁴ His one-time friend, Gabriel Harvey, accused him of 'horning, gaming, fooling and knaving' (Hunter, 1962, p. 41). On the cause of their falling-out, see Nelson (2003, pp. 225–28).

⁵ The entrepreneurial masters in charge of the Chapel and Paul's Children had died in 1580 and 1582 respectively; and the Blackfriars lease was in dispute 1580–1584.

⁶ Oxford also sponsored an adult company from the late 1570s (they later became Queen Anne's Men) as well as investing in entertainers, shows and tournaments; see Nelson (2003, pp. 239–48, 391–93).

⁷ An opposing view, that the joint company lasted till 1590 under the name of Paul's, is argued by Gurr (1996, pp. 218–29). A continuing association with Paul's is indicated by Lyly's lending of costumes to Christ Church, Oxford, in early 1585 (Hunter, 1962, p. 76).

⁸ *Gallathea* was probably written before 1585. By 1588 Oxford's patronage had become less significant; he had retired from court with a royal pension.

⁹ Lyly himself wrote a pamphlet, *Pap with an Hatchet*, in support of the bishops against the Puritans, and various contemporary comments hint at a satirical drama staged by the boys (or adults); see, for example, Hunter (1962, pp. 80–81). For a different view of the 'dissolving,' see Scragg (2006a, pp. 221–22).

resumption of playing by the Children in private theatres from 1596 or 1597 (Scragg, 2006a, pp. 215–216). Despite his assured social position and the continued printing of his prose and plays, Lyly felt that his services had been neither recompensed nor recognized adequately. For ten years he petitioned the Queen and appealed to influential friends to little or no avail. When the Queen died in 1603 his reward was only seven yards of black cloth for her funeral with four yards for his servants (Feuillerat, [1910]1968, p. 563). In 1605 a friend, then the Bishop of Durham, wrote of Lyly's distress at 'his years fast growing on and his insupportable charge of many children all unbestowed, besides the debt wherein he standeth' (Hunter, 1962, p. 88).¹⁰

Fortunate or unfortunate? G.K. Hunter's influential study defines Lyly's career in terms of 'the humanist as courtier' (who discovers that rhetoric does not lead to political influence) and the 'victim of fashion': Lyly is briefly a trendsetter, but within ten years his plays and prose are irredeemably old-fashioned when set against the stirring drama of Marlowe and Kyd or the colourful prose of Nashe and Greene. Michael Pincombe suggests that he became 'increasingly sceptical and hostile to courtliness' (1996, p. ix). More recently, however, Leah Scragg (2006a, pp. 214–20) has argued that he was a victim more of censorship than fashion, noting that he remained 'a prominent figure in the cultural landscape', still worthy of respect for his wit (Nashe comments in 1593, 'I my self injoy ... but a mite of wit in comparison of his talent') and eloquence (mentioned by Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia*, 1598). 15 editions of his writings were published between 1590 and 1606. Lyly's reputation made it 'imperative for contemporary writers to engage with his work'; indeed, 'the numerous parodies ... bear witness to the impact of *Euphues* on the imagination of the reading public, and the universal familiarity with its style' (Scragg, 2003, p. 18). He is fondly remembered by Edward Blount, who published the 'Six Court Comedies' in 1632: 'when Old *John Lilly* is merry with thee in thy Chamber, Thou shalt say, Few (or None) of our Poets now are such witty Companions' (quoted in Scragg, 1995, p. 7).

'Merry', 'witty': impressions of Lyly as a person are probably no more reliable than the guesses derived from the fragmentary glimpses of other University Wits. When not inferred from his writings, they are sometimes based on the comments of his younger contemporary Nashe in 1592: 'He is but a little fellow, but he hath one of the best wits in England'. Hence Hunter imagines him as 'a small, dapper, essentially frivolous and affected figure, his clothes to be presumed as elegant as his style was neat, forever blowing his epigrams through clouds of smoke' (1962, p. 42) – Nashe also mentions the smoking.¹¹ Bond considers Lyly's troubles as largely self-inflicted, the consequence of his being over-confident and sharp-tongued, brilliant but superficial; he envisages Lyly at court, 'stepping daintily about the ante-chambers, shrewd and humorous; with a keen eye for the follies, the fashions, the swagger and pretension of the courtiers ... with an insuperable affection for the motley show, the buzz of the great

¹⁰ Feuillerat (1968, pp. 247, 565–67) records that Lyly's wife was disinherited by her father in 1605. A glimpse of the family that year records six children still at home, the oldest 15; see Jones ([1933] 1966, pp. 365–407. Three older daughters were baptized between 1586–87 and 1589 (Eccles, 1982, p. 87). One of these, Elizabeth, died earlier in 1605; another, Jane (baptized 1589), survived to marry, as did (at least) a younger brother and sister; see the incomplete genealogical tables in Feuillerat ([1910]1968, pp. 2, 504).

¹¹ Jonson may allude to Lyly in the character of Fastidious Brisk in *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), who is addressed in euphuistic prose.

bazaar, surviving the clearest perception of its hollowness and inability to satisfy' (Lyly, [1902]1967, pp. 79–80).¹² Not so colourful, perhaps, but contemporary at least are Barnaby Rich's comments in 1584: 'a gentleman ... who can court it with the best and scholar it with the most, in whom I know not whether I should more commend his manners or his learning, the one so exquisite, the other so general' (quoted in Hunter, 1962, p. 71).¹³

Lyly's critical fortunes – Blount aside – could be defined as three centuries of oblivion and one century of increasing recognition. In part, this has resulted from his identification with 'euphuism', an elaborate, distinctive prose style marked by precision and balance, antitheses and parallels, learned allusions and astonishing natural history. Contemporaries praised 'his singular eloquence and brave composition of apt words and sentences' (William Webbe, 1586, quoted in Hunter, 1962, p. 80); the young Nashe at Cambridge thought *Euphues* was '*Ipse ille*' (Hunter, 1962, p. 72); and, 50 years after its publication, a nostalgic Blount recalled how '[a]ll our ladies were then his scholars, and that Beauty in court which could not parley Euphuism was as little regarded as she which now [1632] there speaks not French' (ibid.). But literary fashions change, and the literary world of the late sixteenth century was decidedly competitive and quarrelsome. Euphuism – despite, or perhaps because of, the continuing popularity of Lyly's books – was easily parodied and was soon derided as pretentious and old-fashioned. The style had to wait more than 300 years to be appreciated once again, although, for many, it remains too affected and ornate, more likely to provide an opportunity for the scholar than enjoyment for the general reader.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the first scholarly editions of Lyly's works, together with source studies and rhetorical analyses. In these, Lyly's prose style was viewed mostly as a historical curiosity and/or aberration, and his plays were valued mainly for their influence on Shakespeare's. The first major study, that of Albert Feuillerat (written in French, 1910), argued that Lyly had, above all, 'une valeur historique et philologique' ('Avertissement', Feuillerat, [1910]1968).¹⁴ This assessment was challenged mid-century by Hunter's *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier* (1962), which sought to define Lyly's life and writings in the context of sixteenth-century English humanism with its promotion of classical learning and reformist religion. He considered this necessary because:

No modern reader can be expected to enjoy *Euphues* or the plays without some preparation in the modes of thinking and writing which they exemplify. Lyly has left no works which speak directly to the human heart of the twentieth century as do many of the lyrics of the period. (Hunter, 1962, p. 1)

Hunter's identification of Lyly as a representative of sixteenth-century culture remains influential, although studies have since moved beyond Hunter's particular 'modes of thinking and writing' to consider the issues promoted as relevant or favoured by more recent critics: power and sexuality, audiences and class. More sources – literary, cultural, and historical

¹² But see Pincombe (1996, p. 86), who doubts that Lyly was in regular attendance at court.

¹³ Rich is actually describing *Euphues*. Wilson ([1905] 1970, pp. 136–37) describes Lyly as the most widely read of contemporary dramatists, except perhaps Jonson; Lyly also 'made it his business to know something of every art'.

¹⁴ Feuillerat ([1910]1968) addresses a scholarly elite rather than '*simples amateurs de belles-lettres*'. John Dover Wilson's early study ([1905]1970) is less comprehensive, with its focus on *Euphues* and defining Lyly's historical importance.

– have been proposed for both prose and plays, and Lyly's relations with his contemporaries have been explored more widely.

Another notable mid-twentieth-century contribution was Jonas A. Barish's 'The Prose Style of John Lyly' (1956), reproduced in Chapter 3 in this volume, which argues that the euphuistic style is essentially the expression of a philosophy, a belief in the paradoxical conjunction of opposites, in the 'doubleness' of natural and human worlds. A number of essays have developed the implications of this for the works, reflecting on matters such as antithetical structure, ambivalence and irony. Leah Scragg has recently claimed that Lyly's work is 'striking in its modernity, its radical destabilization of meaning speaking directly to contemporary concerns' (Scragg, 2003, p. 19). In the 50 years since Hunter's classic study, Lyly's works have indeed begun to 'speak directly', if only rarely as yet in live performance. The figure of Lyly, once so remote, is becoming more familiar.

One reason why Lyly may be speaking more directly today is that his writings are at last more accessible. For many years the only scholarly texts available were Bond's three-volume old-spelling *Complete Works*, first published in 1902, together with the 1916 modern-spelling version of the two *Euphues* books, edited by Morris W. Croll and Harry Clemons. The Revels Plays series now includes annotated, modern-spelling editions of all the plays: *Campaspe* (edited by G.K. Hunter) and *Sappho and Phao* (David Bevington) in 1991; *Endymion* (Bevington, 1996); *Galatea* (Hunter) and *Midas* (Bevington) in 2000; *The Woman in the Moon* (Leah Scragg, 2006); *Love's Metamorphosis* (Scragg, 2008); and *Mother Bombie* (Scragg, 2010). The Revels Plays Companions Library also includes Scragg's modern-spelling and annotated edition of *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and His England* (2003), the first publication of both works since 1916.¹⁵ The introductions to the Revels editions, though not included in this collection, should be essential reading. At the same time there are still only a few full-length studies devoted to Lyly: Bond (1902), Wilson (1905), Feuillerat (1910), Jeffrey (1928), Hunter (1962), Saccio (1969), Houppert (1975), and Pincombe (1996).¹⁶

About this Volume

The present collection of essays – the first to be compiled on John Lyly – aims to be varied, stimulating and approachable, while giving an overview of the main approaches to Lyly's prose and plays. Except for the first section, which covers the two *Euphues* books, the material is organized by topic. This is partly because many of the available essays treat more than one play or discuss Lyly as illustrating some cultural or historical feature. Critical enthusiasms have waxed and waned, from analysing the prose style (mostly before 1980) to explaining allegory in the 1970s and 1980s, to investigating royal authority and gender issues since 1990. Critical endeavours have been uneven: *Endimion* was the critical favorite in the 1970s

¹⁵ For details of these works, refer to the Select Bibliography. The other available editions are: *Gallathea* and *Midas*, edited by Anne Begor Lancashire (1966, modern spelling, annotated); *Mother Bombie*, edited by A. Harriette Andreadis (1975, old-spelling, annotated); Carter A. Daniel's 1988 edition of all eight plays (modern spelling); and Leah Scragg, *John Lyly: Selected Prose and Dramatic Work*, 1997 (this includes *Campaspe*, *Gallathea* and part of *Euphues*).

¹⁶ A number of studies nevertheless devote a chapter to Lyly. For surveys of criticism, see Houppert (1973); Salomon (1991); Donovan (1992).

as *Gallathea* has been since the 1980s. In total, there are many more essays on *Endimion* and *Gallathea* than on the other plays, but more essays on *Midas* than on *Endimion* since 1990; there are very few discussions of *Mother Bombie* or *Love's Metamorphosis* or *The Woman in the Moon* and relatively few of *Campaspe* or *Sapho and Phao*. An attempt has been made here, nevertheless, to include some detailed discussion of every work, as well as essays on Lyly's relationship with his contemporaries, including the other University Wits and Shakespeare.

Part I, 'Lessons in Wit', on the *Euphues* books, considers Lyly's cultural inheritance, the traditional 'modes of thinking and writing' in his humanist education and then the energizing influence of contemporary Italian writings. Also explored are the books' cultural values and their influence on Lyly's contemporaries. Part II, 'Courting the Queen', contains essays on the political dimension of Lyly's plays. Those most often discussed are *Campaspe*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Endimion* and *Midas*. The issues include educating the ruler, images of authority, the position of the female ruler, the role of the courtier, topical allusions and political language. Part III, 'Playing with Desire', looks to the plays as comedies of love, especially *Gallathea*, *Love's Metamorphosis* and *Endimion*. Essays are also included on *Mother Bombie* and *The Woman in the Moon*. Issues include: the role of play; the influence of Petrarch, Ovid and romance conventions; questions of gender, virginity and chastity; and the representation of courtship. Finally, Part IV, 'Performing Lyly', considers the plays in performance, including acting and staging, before looking at Lyly in unusual ways: as a popular playwright and as a playwright for modern actors and audiences.

Lessons in Wit

For Lyly, the move from Oxford to London, from university to city, brought literary as well as political opportunities. He met several other aspiring writers, including Gabriel Harvey and the poet Edmund Spenser (Pincombe, 1996, pp. 3–5; Hunter, 1962, pp. 47–48).¹⁷ He resided at the Savoy (a religious foundation offering lodgings to the well-connected) just across the Strand from Burghley's mansion (Hunter, 1962, pp. 46–47; Nelson, 2003, p. 36).¹⁸ Lyly's first literary effort, *Euphues*, may have amounted to a job advertisement: this suggestion is made by a number of writers, including Hunter (although he also suggests that 'the book reads like the pipe-dream of a disappointed don' (1962, p. 61)), Pincombe (who suggests that Lyly was seeking 'a secure and remunerative position in the established order' (1996, p. 3)) and David Margolies (who proposes that Lyly's ambition was to become a 'learned entertainer' (1985, p. 49)).

Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit was first published in 1578, with a revised edition in 1579. The book was a spectacular success, with multiple printings and several imitations even before *Euphues and His England* followed in 1580. That, too, with its shift of emphasis from the scholarly to the courtly and romantic and its cultivation of a female readership, was enthusiastically reprinted and imitated. Scragg describes the books as containing 'a kaleidoscopic assemblage of Renaissance concerns' (2003, p. 13). Hunter suggests that

¹⁷ Another associate was the poet and classicist Thomas Watson, later a friend of Marlowe (they were involved in a fatal brawl in 1589).

¹⁸ Nelson also notes (2003, p. 99) that Oxford also lodged at the Savoy after his marriage (he was in arrears of rent in 1573).

Euphues was popular because it was eclectic: ‘an enchanting treasure-trove of attitudes and traditions – serious, flippant, classical, contemporary, fantastic, immediate’ (1962, p. 61). Or it may just have been written and marketed to be fashionable, as Leah Guenther contends: the style, she comments, ‘came into the English language as a trendy form of verbal finery and, much like a passing sartorial fashion, was ushered out in threadbare condition’ (2002, p. 25).

The first two essays selected for this collection, by Judith Rice Henderson and Catherine Bates, offer contrasting views on the intellectual and cultural factors that shaped *Euphues*. They turn away from the older approach of rhetorical analysis towards identifying significant ‘modes of thinking and writing’ for illuminating Lyly’s intentions, sources, and style. Henderson’s ‘*Euphues* and his Erasmus’ (Chapter 1) considers the effects of Lyly’s humanist education on the style and structure of *Euphues*. The school curriculum – composition exercises, commonplace books, arguing both sides of a question¹⁹ – not only trained students to write, but also (it was believed) educated them in Christian virtue: wit was developed into wisdom through experience in writing. In *Euphues* Lyly demonstrated both his learning and his versatility in the various modes of writing familiar to many of his readers. Yet, Henderson suggests, even as Lyly exploits his education he questions its efficacy: the system teaches virtue but cannot offer the real-world experience that leads to wisdom. The argument that *Euphues* criticizes humanist values in some way is common to most essays on Lyly and humanism. Other essays on the topic worth consulting include that of Richard McCabe who also notes the influence of humanist education in discussing the work as ‘an anatomy, or analysis, of a problem central to humanist thought; the relationship between eloquence and truth’ (1984, p. 299). Arthur Kinney (1986) argues that ‘Lyly uses humanist eloquence to explore the unexplored inconsistencies and paradoxes found at the heart of humanist philosophy and practice’ (1986, p. 131).²⁰ Raymond Stephanson (1981) also notes the illogicalities but goes further, claiming that Lyly is less a preacher than a humorist, who rejects humanist notions in favour of the pragmatic ones of ‘common sense, suffering and trial by error’ (1981, p. 18).

Bates’s ‘“A large occasion of discourse”: John Lyly and the Art of Civil Conversation’ (Chapter 2)²¹ offers a double perspective on the *Euphues* books: the influence of Italian courtesy books and the significance of cultural values (‘courtly’ or ‘bourgeois’). The most famous courtesy book, Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*, had been translated into English in 1561, leading to a rush of translations and imitations.²² For elite readers, who might spend most of their time at the court waiting around, the courtesy book offered instances of ‘social intercourse for its own sake’, with witty debates about love and honour and proper behaviour. For Bates, the ‘civil conversation’ of the court functioned to restrain desire, since flirtation as a pastime did not lead to marriage – unlike ‘legitimate “bourgeois” love-making’ (p. 46).

¹⁹ On the literary effects of arguing both sides, see Altman (1978). The debate in the form of dialogue or soliloquy was a traditional technique in the drama.

²⁰ Kinney’s chapter on the *Euphues* books is too long to include here but is nonetheless essential reading, as is his discussion in other chapters of humanist education and Lyly’s sources.

²¹ The alternative version of this material in Bates (1992) prefers the terms ‘courtly discourse/debate’ to ‘civil conversation’, and ‘didactic’ to ‘bourgeois’.

²² For detailed parallels between Lyly’s works and Italian literature and culture, see Jeffrey ([1928]1969). On Italian models, see Kinney (1986, pp. 177–78). Kinney (1986, p. 122) emphasizes the serious moral purposes of Castiglione. On *Euphues* as a parody of courtesy books (and *Euphues* himself as ‘thoroughly insufferable’), see Steinberg (1979, pp. 27–380).

Tracing the 'courtly' elements in both *Euphues* books, she concludes that *Euphues and His England* should be placed 'within a courtly aesthetic' (p. 48), but that it nevertheless could also 'be assimilated ... into a tradition of 'bourgeois' narrative' (ibid.) as in the 'continuations' of Lodge and Greene. The reworking of Italian models is also the subject of Steve Mentz (2004), who discusses adaptations of the *novella* with its scandalous stories of 'amoral urbanity,' arguing that *Euphues and His England* showed later writers how the conventions of romance could 'inoculate narrative fiction against the novella' and promote 'English' values.

The next two essays in this collection, by Jonas A. Barish and Joan Pong Linton, represent old and new approaches to Lyly's style. Barish's influential essay, 'The Prose Style of John Lyly' (Chapter 3), opened up new possibilities in Lyly criticism by countering the older view of euphuism as excessive and ornate.²³ He employs rhetorical analysis to argue that Lyly's style expresses his apprehension of the world with its 'infinite inconsistency' and 'the perpetual ambiguities of human sentiment' (p. 59). For Barish, the basic principle of Lyly's style is 'logicality' which is seen both in the host of antitheses and in the impulse to classify and subdivide.²⁴ He extends his discussion to the plays, concluding that Lyly's 'logicality' made possible a 'viable comic prose' which could 'support an intricate plot without confusion and without prolixity' (p. 69).²⁵ Barish's insights on the plays have been developed by Leah Scragg in a series of essays, two of which are included later in this collection: 'John Lyly and the Politics of Language' (Chapter 12); and 'Speaking Pictures: Style and Spectacle in Lylian Comedy' (Chapter 22).²⁶

Linton's 'The Humanist in the Market: Gendering Exchange and Authorship in Lyly's *Euphues* Romances' (Chapter 4) represents more recent approaches to *Euphues* (as do Guenther, Bates, and Mentz, mentioned above). Since the 1980s the *Euphues* books have been viewed mostly in the context of other Elizabethan prose fiction and explored in terms of class and audience, gender and genre.²⁷ Linton's approach is complex: setting Lyly against Sidney she explores euphuism in terms of class and gender and the *Euphues* books as marking the shift from courtly practice to a market economy. Unlike Barish, she emphasizes the emotional qualities of euphuism: because the style relies on analogy, she suggests, it creates 'a fluid world of copious and incidental parallels' (p. 76), responsive to emotion rather than reason; hence it is more closely aligned with the negotiable values of the marketplace rather than the hierarchical and absolute truths of the court.²⁸ Linton considers the tensions inherent in Lyly's need to cultivate both the patronage of the court and an emerging middle-class female audience;

²³ Barish identifies Morris Croll's introduction to the 1916 edition of *Euphues* with the view that euphuism was ornamental rather than meaningful, based on 'figures of sound' rather than 'figures of thought.' For views in line with Croll, see Sandbank (1971); and Gohlke (1977).

²⁴ For other studies of style and structure in the *Euphues* books, see King (1955); and Lindheim (1975) (on the 'euphuistic soliloquy').

²⁵ Other analyses of the prose style and structure of the plays include Altman's important chapter, 'Quaestiones Copiosae: Pastoral and Courtly in John Lyly', in Altman (1978, pp. 196–228); and Tillotson (1942): Lyly's major contribution is the use of imagery.

²⁶ See also Scragg (1997).

²⁷ Despite this diversity of approach, *Euphues* is typically found to be an inadequate forerunner to other works and is typically relegated to a section of the essay or a chapter in a full-length study.

²⁸ Issues of class and market are also raised in Margolies's chapter on Lyly in *Novel and Society* (1985). The transition from courtly to commercial economy in the drama is explored by Johnston (2005).

she argues that he resolves these tensions by developing a ‘discourse ... of domesticity, as the basis of a new stability for the masculine subject’ (p. 73). What Linton terms the ‘discourse of domesticity’ is central to several essays which examine Lyly’s prose in the context of his contemporaries. Mentz (2004), as noted above, traces the conversion of dalliance into marriage in *Euphues and His England*. Louise Schleiner (1989) compares gender roles in Euphuist courtly fiction and the prose romance, both popular with non-aristocratic readers. Setting Lyly’s *Euphues* books against a number of others, including works by Greene, Lodge, Barnaby Rich, and Sidney, she concludes that both courtly tales and romance concern the ‘maturation of aristocratic youth into proper gender roles’ (p. 17) which, for women, means submissive devotion in marriage.

Courting the Queen

Winter was the festive time at Elizabeth’s court, from her Accession Day in November to Candlemas in February or Shrovetide before Lent. The entertainments might include pageants and masking (with disguise and dancing), tournaments and debates, minstrels and acrobats, and of course plays – from simple moral interludes to plays in Latin to splendid productions on classical or historical themes.²⁹ There were fine costumes and elaborate settings, and, as John Astington notes, ‘the spectacular effect of mass lighting,’ with plays ‘presented in a glow of candlelight which surrounded actors and audience alike’ (1999, p. 97).³⁰ Venues varied, but the usual practice was to construct tiered seating along three, or sometimes four, sides of a rectangular hall, with an elevated ‘state’ for the Queen facing the stage. In her essay on ‘pastoral entertainment’ (1982), Anne Lancashire suggests that the presence of the Queen – the symbol of ‘courtly and Christian order’ – ‘completes’ the imperfect world of stage action; hence ‘Arcadia is realized only through and at the court of Elizabeth’ (Lancashire, 1982, p. 49).³¹ The boy companies were popular at court in the 1580s, appearing as often as the Queen’s Men, the select group formed in March 1583.³² Children had performed at royal occasions for many years – delivering speeches at tournaments or pageants, providing entertainment for special visitors – but these activities were intermittent and often related to their humanist education.³³ By the mid-1570s, however, a ‘commercial juvenile drama’ (Pincombe, 1996, p. 18) had developed with entrepreneurial masters setting up private playhouses, supposedly to rehearse for court performance but also to offer entertainment for the better-off in the city.

²⁹ For a general survey, see Parry (1997).

³⁰ Astington comments that the Revels office aimed at ‘visual splendour’: ‘the play, whatever its subject, was part of a festival occasion, and a reflection of royal style’ (1999, p. 101).

³¹ She comments that this ‘perfection’ of stage action happens only at court in the 1580s; in private theatre staging the effect could well be ironic.

³² See the tables in Astington (1999, pp. 230–33). The formation of the Queen’s Men in 1583 may have inspired the boys’ amalgamation later the same year (Pincombe, 1996, p. 16), although Oxford’s primary motive may have been to consolidate his own position at court, having recently regained Elizabeth’s favour. McCarthy argues that the Queen herself was responsible for the amalgamation and her motive was ‘political: Elizabeth saw both types of companies as instruments of her court’s policies’ (2003, p. 439); McCarthy discusses the plays of both Peele and Lyly.

³³ Shapiro (1977, pp. 1–18) offers a useful historical survey of performances by children.

How Lyly courted the Queen has long preoccupied the critics. As well as his classical learning, his plays reflected the courtly enthusiasms for Petrarchan and Neoplatonic ideas, the complex political, cultural and literary imagery associated with the Queen and – for some – contemporary politics and events. Spectators and readers were, of course, tempted to make sense of the persistent euphuistic analogies relating one thing to another, or to apply their training in exemplary rhetoric – an important feature of both education and culture – to find messages in the words and action. Marion Jones (1966) comments that ‘parallels were in fact regularly drawn, with more or less satisfaction, by those who watched plays’ (1966, p. 177; see also Dutton, 1991, pp. 55–65). That Lyly expected this to happen is indicated by his claim in prologues to the court that the performance was to be but ‘the dancing of Agrippa his shadows’ (*Campaspe*) or to be imagined as in ‘a deep dream’ (*Sapho and Phao*); afterwards, nevertheless, he speaks of things being ‘misconstrued by your deep insights’ and of a ‘labyrinth of conceits’ (Epilogue to *Sapho and Phao*).³⁴ For his audiences then and scholars now there is ample material to spark speculation on topics ranging from general philosophical concepts to specific topical allusions.³⁵

The essays in Part II assume that playing at court had a political dimension, for Queen or courtier or playwright. The first two selected are R. Headlam Wells on the humanist ideal of advising the prince and Robert S. Knapp’s allegorical interpretation of *Endimion*. In ‘Elizabethan Epideictic Drama: Praise and Blame in the Plays of Peele and Lyly’ (Chapter 5). Wells considers three of Lyly’s plays and Peele’s *The Arraignment of Paris* in relation to two impulses: the humanist enthusiasm for educating princes and the tradition of idealizing Elizabeth as a queen of love. He suggests that the main figures in the plays function both as models to imitate and compliments to the Queen: Alexander is the pattern of princely virtue who resigns his personal interests for the ‘higher good’; Sapho embodies ‘chaste decorum’ in a warning against the dangers of erotic love (p. 122); Cynthia becomes ‘the remote idealized object of men’s affections’ (p. 114), the unattainable, paradoxical mistress of the Petrarchan tradition. A similar explanation of *Sapho*’s lesson, but in terms of Neoplatonism – the Queen is extolled as ‘exemplar of man’s highest pursuit towards the divine’ – is found in David Bevington’s early essay, ‘John Lyly and Queen Elizabeth: Royal Flattery in *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*’ (1966, p. 67).

The Petrarchan and the Neoplatonic were but two of the images of the ideal used to define the Queen in contemporary compliment, panegyric and political promotion. A lengthy survey of royal iconography worth referring to is that of John N. King (1990) which suggests that a shift in the Queen’s image from marriageable to eternal virgin occurred during the abortive Alençon marriage negotiations in 1579–1583, just before Lyly’s first plays were presented. Whereas in the 1560s Elizabeth was addressed as Pallas Athena (denoting wisdom and political virtue), in the 1580s there emerged an ‘esoteric iconography of the virgin goddess – Cynthia or Venus-Virgo’, together with increased references to classical mythology in literature and royal portraiture; *Endimion* represents this ‘apotheosis of the queen as Cynthia’. Another

³⁴ That Lyly enlists the individual spectator to construct and interrogate the visual, including royal images, is argued in Chloe Porter’s recent essay on *Euphues*, *Campaspe* and *The Winter’s Tale*, ‘Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Agency: Visual Experience in Works by Lyly and Shakespeare’ (2009).

³⁵ Lyly did have a reputation for satire and topical commentary in the 1580s; see Hunter, 1962, pp. 75–76. On the other hand, some commentators consider that allegories of the Queen or court would have been decidedly unwise.

idealizing tradition was the pastoral with its blend of classical and biblical ideas. The political uses of the royal pastoral are described by Louis Adrian Montrose (1980), who also notes the appropriation of symbols associated with the Virgin Mary.

Lyly's *Endimion* has consistently attracted allegorical interpretation; Knapp's 'The Monarchy of Love in Lyly's *Endimion*' (Chapter 6) is a representative example.³⁶ He discusses the play as 'a fable of redemption' in which the 'monarchy of love' rejoins heaven and earth 'in an ordered and uplifted hierarchy' (p. 123). While the characters initially depict the Petrarchan degrees between lust and love, the final reconciliations embody 'a ladder of love from earth to heaven' (p. 126), with the Queen challenged to become 'her full majestic self' in the exercise of mercy (p. 136).³⁷ Other essays finding religious messages in Lyly's plays include two by Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz – 'The Allegory of Wisdom in Lyly's *Endimion*' (1975) and 'John Lyly's *Midas*: An Allegory of Epiphany' (1978) – in which she argues that the language of each play corresponds with the date of court performance. For Lenz, *Endimion* echoes the readings in church for the feast of Candlemas, formerly associated with the Virgin Mary; *Midas* echoes those for the feast of Epiphany or revelation. *Endimion* offers an allegory of wisdom; *Midas*, one of epiphany. The connection with Candlemas is also noted by Peter Weltner in his Jungian analysis of the play as 'a matriarchal transformation-mystery'.

The next two essays turn from royal iconography and religious allegory to political allegory and contemporary events. David Bevington views *Endimion* and *Midas* against the political crisis of 1587–1588. Annaliese Connolly relates *Midas* to the imperialist activities of both England and Spain in the 1580s. Bevington in 'Lyly's *Endimion* and *Midas*: The Catholic Question in England' (Chapter 7) accepts the panegyric function of *Endimion* as central, but maintains that the play offers 'a reading of England's burning political, military, and religious crisis of 1587–88' (p. 142): the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the impending attack by Spain and the position of Catholic lords such as Oxford. On his patron's behalf, though not explicitly, Lyly asks for royal tolerance of loyal English Catholics.³⁸ In contrast, the political allegory of *Midas* (1590) is neither ambiguous nor polemicist. The play celebrates the Armada victory and satirizes tyranny; and the 'conciliatory ending' with its contrite king endorses Elizabeth's 'magnanimity' towards her enemies.³⁹

Connolly's essay, '"O Unquenchable Thirst of Gold": Lyly's *Midas* and the English Quest for Empire' (Chapter 8), offers a broader historical and contemporary perspective in arguing that *Midas* reveals scepticism about England's claims to Empire. Noting the classical identification of Phrygia with Troy, she contends that both *Midas* and Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (also a play for boys) question the use of the 'Trojan myth of descent' to endorse English imperialism (p. 164). The critique of imperialism is then

³⁶ See also Bryant (1956). For a full-length treatment of allegory in Lyly's plays, see Saccio (1969).

³⁷ Neoplatonic parallels are also drawn by Gannon (1976); and Saccio (1975).

³⁸ Bevington does not identify *Endimion* solely with Oxford, but rather with 'a generically ideal Elizabethan courtier' (this volume, p. 146, n. 11). The case for Oxford is urged by Bennett (1942). The other main candidate has been Leicester; see, for example, Brooke (1911).

³⁹ An instructive contrast is with Robert Wilson's Armada play, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, which is aggressively anti-Spanish. A Queen's Men play, it may also have been presented at court in 1588–89. The play featured pageantry, clowning and (perhaps influenced by Lyly) three witty singing pages.

extended by allusions to *Tamburlaine*. And if gold is the marker of imperial success, then Connolly points to the similarities between Spanish conquistadors and English privateers.⁴⁰ Connolly's distinction between the 'surface allegory' (the conflict between England and Spain) and other less direct but unflattering messages is representative of a number of essays that look beyond royal panegyric and iconography. Leah Scragg's essay, 'Campaspe and the Construction of Monarchical Power' (1999), discusses the 'dark potentiality that shadows the presentation of Alexander' so that the play both celebrates and subverts royal power. The play's hints of 'tyrannical violence' and rape are explored by Pincombe (1996),⁴¹ while Katherine Wilson (2008) discusses Greene's exploitation of the 'dark potentiality' of Lyly's Alexander.⁴² *Endimion*, too, can be seen as ambivalent: Marie Axton (1977, p. 43) comments on its 'mixture of exasperation and reverence' which echoes the sentiments of a number of Elizabeth's courtiers.⁴³ The Queen was not always flattered by her subjects: her reluctance to marry, in particular, prompted them on occasion to offer unwanted advice, from the young lawyers in *Gorboduc* warning of the disintegration of the kingdom to the unfortunate Stubbs protesting against the Alençon marriage.

Courting the Queen, it would seem, was stressful for the male courtier. The anxieties aroused by Elizabeth's position as female ruler are explored in the next two essays in this collection: Theodora Jankowski on Sapho's 'love sickness' and Christine M. Neufeld on reactions to 'the monstrous shadow cast by the Virgin Queen'. Jankowski's 'The Subversion of Flattery: The Queen's Body in John Lyly's Sapho and Phao' (Chapter 9), argues that the play may have been intended to flatter Elizabeth but 'unconsciously became a discourse for questioning both the monarch herself and the very nature of female rule' (p. 186). For sixteenth-century political theorists female rule was anomalous – Jankowski cites John Knox on the 'monstrous regiment of women' (p. 178) – hence for Sapho's love-sickness Lyly resorted to the conventions of romance with its irrational women.

Neufeld, too, in 'Lyly's Chimerical Vision: Witchcraft in *Endymion*' (Chapter 10), explores these anxieties but in relation to another contemporary anxiety, about witches. In his Prologue to *Endimion* Lyly labels the play a 'Chimera', implying a fantasy, but Neufeld looks to another sense: the monster made up of different animals, confusing 'natural' categories. Lyly's references to Medea and magic 'blur the boundaries between the monstrous witch [Dipsas] and the divine queen [Cynthia]' (p. 194); the mediating figure is Tellus, who 'represents the monstrous potential in all women' (p. 199).⁴⁴ Marriage might, at the play's end, 'defuse

⁴⁰ Avarice was a traditional topic in the morality drama, as in Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (early 1580s) with its Lady Lucre. Lyly was probably familiar with Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1589) and its depiction of the general 'desire of gold' (3.4.4). For Midas as an exemplum of avarice and ignorance, see Hilliard (1972).

⁴¹ Note, however, the very different depiction of Alexander in the earlier heroic romance, *Clyomon and Clamydes* (mid-1570s); see Pincombe, (1996, p. 48). A glamorous Alexander also appears in one of the dumbshows in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

⁴² Hieatt (1981) finds the Edward story in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* a romanticized 'refurbishing' of Alexander and Campaspe.

⁴³ The difficulties in courting the Queen are also noted by Bates (1992, pp. 83–89), suggesting parallels between *Endimion* and court pageants and entertainments.

⁴⁴ The Medea allusions are also discussed by Pincombe (1992, pp. 105–108). Von Rosador (1991) contrasts magic (Dipsas) with charismatic royal power (Cynthia).

dangerous female power' (p. 203), but Endimion himself falls silent: 'the male courtier remains a vulnerable and ineffective figure, still out of place within a newly restored social order that masks its spiritual entanglement' (p. 207).⁴⁵ Two recent essays not included in this volume explore the vulnerability of the male courtier in terms of Elizabeth as mother-figure. Jeanne McCarthy argues that Elizabeth's promotion of the boy companies in effect disciplined 'the disempowered courtiers into accepting a distant but loving childlike relationship with their maternal queen' (2003, pp. 460–61). The maternal is also invoked by Jacqueline Vanhoutte who contends that references to Elizabeth as stepmother in a range of writings – *Endimion* is discussed in conjunction with *Midsummer Night's Dream* – allowed 'indirect commentary on the Queen's strategies and fitness for rule, including her usurpation of masculine privilege and her handling of the succession' (2009, p. 320).⁴⁶

The final two essays in Part II are less concerned with the general relationship between Queen and courtiers than with the author and his use of language. Derek B. Alwes argues that the plays represent Lyly's own relationship with the court, especially in the servant figures. Leah Scragg explores the 'destabilisation of meaning' in *Campaspe*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Gallathea* and *Midas*. In his essay "'I Would Fain Serve": John Lyly's Career at Court' (Chapter 11), Alwes contends that Lyly 'creates multiple fictional self-portraits' in his plays (p. 214), sometimes as philosopher or artist or courtier, but more significantly as potential servant to the Queen – 'as panegyrist, advisor, courtier, censor, or Master of the Revels' (ibid.).⁴⁷ Alwes urges that Lyly's servants 'are by no means fools; they are clever, willful, and perceptive' (p. 220) and may increasingly reveal 'the bitter frustration of an unwilling court jester' (p. 230); in the later plays, he comments, the servants move into the main plot, and the earlier static scenes and debates are supplanted by 'ironic repartee and lively action' (p. 229).

Scragg's survey in 'John Lyly and the Politics of Language' (Chapter 12) offers a useful perspective on the political dimension of Lyly's plays by which to conclude Part II. She reminds us of Lyly's 'fascination with the malleability of language' (p. 239) first evident in *Euphues*: the word-play; the ambiguities and ambivalences; the multiple correspondences; the awareness in prologue and epilogue of different meanings for different audiences; and the recognition of 'socio-political constraints' in the use of language. In *Gallathea*, she suggests, the language reflects 'the instability of a dramatic universe in which a process of transmutation is insistently at work' (p. 246); by *Midas*, however, 'the process of signification itself is a central theme' (p. 246) and language is increasingly politicized. She concludes: 'the reality that Lyly projects is shifting and uncertain, and the world that he inhabits is both dangerous and inimical to freedom of expression' (p. 257).

⁴⁵ Philippa Berry associates the 'passive and meditative role of the male courtier' in *Endimion* with the 'isolationism' of the Burghley faction; see the chapter, 'Chastity and the Power of Interior Spaces: Lyly's Alternative View of Elizabethan Courtiership' in Berry (1989, pp. 111–33). Thomas (1978) argues from classical and contemporary Italian sources that the play expresses the frustrations of court life, with Cynthia blamed for Endimion's enchantment.

⁴⁶ An earlier essay by Vanhoutte discusses *Gallathea* as 'a male fantasy of control over the Virgin Queen' related to Elizabeth's 'androgynous rhetoric' of self-sacrifice; see Vanhoutte (1996).

⁴⁷ A similar point, that 'Lyly dramatizes his antithetical roles', is developed by Fienberg (1988); she notes (1988, p. 199) the ambiguities in 'serve'.

Playing with Desire

At our exercises, soldiers call for tragedies, their object is blood; courtiers for comedies, their subject is love; countrymen for pastorals, shepherds are their saints. (*Midas*, Prologue in Paul's 11–13)

In the 'hodgepodge world' of the late 1580s Lyly may not have pleased the soldiers (although Marlowe and Kyd succeeded), but he had certainly satisfied the courtiers and diverted city folk with pastorals, although not with particularly saintly shepherds. For courtiers and their ladies (Astington (1999, p. 165) notes that festive occasions were also female occasions⁴⁸), as well as the gentry or middle class, so keenly interested in aristocratic fashions in attitudes and conversations, Lyly was the playwright of love. After the first Blackfriars theatre was closed, Lyly's city audience attended the private theatre located within the busy social, commercial and religious center of St Paul's.⁴⁹ The playing conditions here would have differed somewhat from those at court: performances would have been less spectacular and, possibly, the behaviour of audiences less restrained — even if they were still addressed as 'Gentlemen' in the prologues.⁵⁰

Euphues and euphuism aside, Lyly's claim to critical attention has rested largely on his reputation as the playwright who introduced the comedy of love to the English stage, providing an example for Shakespeare and others to follow. Evaluations of his role, however, have varied. For some, his plays are limited, 'static' or artificial (Muriel Bradbrook describes them as 'gossip, laced with spectacle' (1963, p. 72)) and must be compared unfavourably with the works of later writers (Nashe, Greene, Shakespeare) which are more complex, dynamic or 'realistic' (see, for example, Berek, 1983; Jensen, 1972/73; Rose, 1984). For others, Lyly is a catalyst, opening up new possibilities in ideas and techniques (see Scragg, 1982; Mincoff, 1961; White, 1984). The essays selected for Part III, 'Playing with Desire', represent some of the diverse perspectives on Lyly's comedies of love, with subjects ranging from Petrarch to Ovid, from chastity to courtship, from desiring bodies to disordered minds.

But first, Jocelyn Powell's classic essay, 'John Lyly and the Language of Play' (Chapter 13), approaches Lyly through the importance of 'play' or recreation in the lives of courtiers and the experience of audiences. Powell evokes a very different world from the 'shifting and uncertain' one of Scragg's essay on the politics of language. He argues for the 'recreative function' of Lyly's work, *Euphues* included: in effect, the experiencing (reading, listening, watching) is more important than the ideas. The plays are allied to the physical games of the court, the exercise and display, in revitalizing the courtier's mind (in reason, fancy and memory) and senses (by word, spectacle and music).⁵¹ Recreation for rulers — but as a dramatic

⁴⁸ It is the women in the audience that Gallathea addresses in her Epilogue: 'Yield, ladies, yield to love, ladies' (line 5).

⁴⁹ On the many activities at St Paul's, see the lively description in Gair (1982, pp. 23–33); he suggests (pp. 72–73) that the playhouse offered entertainment to its neighbourhood and instances a servant attending in 1589. Church documents mention the playhouse as being 'in the shrowdes' or foundations; for differing views of its location, see Gair (1982, pp. 44–74; and H. Berry (2001).

⁵⁰ Andrew Gurr suggests that Lyly's appeals to the private audience are not 'entirely confident'; see Gurr (1987, p. 131). And without the 'state', the audience would have had closer access to the stage.

⁵¹ The process of learning through experience is explored by Bergeron (1983).

theme – is also the subject of Douglas L. Peterson's subject in 'Lyly, Greene, and Shakespeare and the Recreations of Princes' (1988) which surveys instances of princes at play in drama from early Tudor plays to Shakespeare's Prince Hal.

The next three essays in Part III offer contrasting perspectives on the comedies of love and playing with desire. The earnest Petrarchan stereotypes of *Endimion* (distant mistresses and suffering lovers) are approached through Sir Tophas by Sara Deats. The increasing influence of Ovid and the *Metamorphoses* is explored by Jeff Shulman, while the darker potential of the Ovidian is developed by Michael Pincombe. Whereas most essays on *Endimion* focus on allegories and serious concerns – about love as much as politics – Deats in 'The Disarming of the Knight: Comic Parody in Lyly's "Endymion"' (Chapter 14) looks to its ironic undertones, as seen in the hyperbolic words and actions of Sir Tophas and in the association of love with appetite and deformity. She excludes Cynthia from 'deflation', but insists that ambivalence is the intended response to Endimion's 'exalted passion' (p. 287).⁵² The discomforts of courtly love are also suggested by Sallie Bond (1974), for whom *Endimion* is essentially 'a "game" of court life' in which love inhibits and imprisons and is inferior to friendship. Other essays of the 1970s and 1980s focus on Neoplatonic rather than Petrarchan elements in the play; Robert J. Meyer (1981), for example, offers a Neoplatonic interpretation based on a study of emblematic images and iconography.⁵³

In 'Ovidian Myth in Lyly's Courtship Comedies' (Chapter 15)⁵⁴ Shulman challenges the view that Lyly's comedies reflect 'the erotic games of the court' and their 'Petrarchan ritual of flirtation' (p. 296) and traces the changes in Lyly's attitudes and use of Ovid from *Sapho and Phao* to *Gallathea* to *Love's Metamorphosis*. The later plays, he suggests, may retain 'Petrarchan coquettes', but Eros, in effect, defeats chastity; the shape-shifting, sexually experienced Protea in *Love's Metamorphosis* represents a new type of heroine, 'more interested in the fruitfulness of consummation than in the trifling gamesmanship of the court' (p. 309).⁵⁵ The Ovidian elements in *Love's Metamorphosis* have been reformulated in terms of the discourse of the body in Mark Dooley's 'The Healthy Body: Desire and Sustenance in John Lyly's *Love's Metamorphosis*' (2000). The play, he suggests 'promotes an active sexuality as chastity'; indeed, love, food and sex are all necessary to maintain healthy bodies and healthy societies.

⁵² Courtly love is treated more sympathetically by Huppé (1947); this article also itemizes sentiments common to *Euphues* and the plays.

⁵³ Neoplatonic influence is also noted by Dust (1975–76); and, allied with 'romantic' incidents, by Saccio (1975). See also the studies referred to in Part II: Thomas (1978); Gannon (1976). For Lyly as the source of the symbols of 'court marriage' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, see Olson (1957).

⁵⁴ Ovid's influence increased in the 1580s after Golding's translation of the *Metamorphoses* was published in 1576. Pincombe (1996, p. vii) acclaims Lyly as 'our first consistently 'Ovidian' writer in any genre'. The most extensive study of metamorphosis in Lyly and its influence on Shakespeare is Leah Scragg's *Metamorphosis of Gallathea*, with chapters on *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. The transforming power of love in *Love's Metamorphosis* and *Gallathea* is also explored in R.S. White's survey of the flowering of romance genres 1585–1600, 'Metamorphosis by Love' (1984). The difference between chastity ('mere physical restraint') and love is discussed by Parnell (1955).

⁵⁵ Critics generally approve of Protea (even Parnell, because she regrets her lapse with Neptune).

The Woman in the Moon is rarely discussed, despite its technical interest and thematic challenges. Pincombe's essay, 'The Woman in the Moon: Cursed be Utopia' (Chapter 16), describes the play as cynical and misogynistic, reversing Lyly's previous 'redemption ... of female sexuality' (p. 321) in figures like Protea (Pandora merely indulges in 'furtive copulations' off-stage (p. 318). As in Lyly's other plays, mythology is exploited, including the myth of the Golden World, but the tone has changed and the gods are now 'a gang of spiteful children' (p. 316).⁵⁶ A more sanguine view of the celestial meddling is seen in Johnstone Parr's chapter on the play, 'Astrology Motivates a Comedy' (1953). Suggesting that Lyly once again draws upon a courtly fashion, this time an obsession with astrology, he provides a detailed account of the astrological commonplaces used to shape the plot and 'embellish' the play.

Protea may be a new type of heroine and Pandora the victim of misogyny, but Gallathea and Phyllida have recently engendered more critical excitement. The next two essays in Part III concern *Gallathea*. The first, by Denise A. Walen, represents a group of essays, published since the late 1980s, which explore the relationship of *Gallathea*'s two heroines in terms of sexual identity and ask whether this implies lesbianism, virginal autonomy or androgyny.⁵⁷ The second, by Christopher Wixson, provides a contrasting perspective, arguing that these approaches have been too narrow and that 'socially conservative elements' such as social status and political order should also be taken into account.

In her essay, 'Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama' (Chapter 17),⁵⁸ Walen discusses *Gallathea* as part of a general survey of how 'female homoerotics' were represented in drama from the 1580s to the 1630s, including two of the Queen's Men's public theatre plays of the 1580s. Noting the availability of texts such as Ovid and Aretino⁵⁹ in the later sixteenth century, Walen suggests that playwrights typically fostered but then frustrated audience expectations so that female homoerotic desire was 'encoded' in the spectator's imagination.⁶⁰ The most notable exception, she suggests, is *Gallathea*, in which the girls are drawn towards each other's feminine qualities; hence their final affirmation of love is 'unique in early modern drama' (p. 345). Other discussions of the cultural implications of same-sex desire in *Gallathea* include that of Valerie Traub (2001),⁶¹ who relates the cultural awareness of women desiring other women to a range of writings including medico-legal texts and travel accounts; as for *Gallathea*, the play 'reproduces social orthodoxy, [but]

⁵⁶ Lyly's 'spiteful children' recall Marlowe's deities in *Dido Queen of Carthage*, a play of the Chapel Children (?1586). Whereas classical deities often interfere in Lyly's plays they are less common in the public theatre – although they are prominent in Greene's *Alphonsus King of Aragon* and Wilson's *The Cobbler's Prophecy*.

⁵⁷ Most of these essays are wide-ranging with only a few pages devoted to *Gallathea* (in Walen, about three out of 20).

⁵⁸ The material is repeated in Walen's *Constructions of Female Homoeroticism in Early Modern Drama* (2005), which explores the variety of representation in the drama 1570–1662; *Gallathea* is cited as an example of 'utopian lesbian erotics'.

⁵⁹ Printed in London, 1584.

⁶⁰ Note also Bruster (1993) on the 'cultural myth' that shaped spectator expectations: 'the mutual attraction of beautiful 'twins' in a separate place at an early or earlier time'; *Gallathea* shows the primacy of beauty in erotic attraction.

⁶¹ Traub's essay is described as a précis of her *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (2002).

it also gestures towards the enactment of erotic passion for one's own sex' (Traub, 2001, p. 252). In contrast, Mark Dooley sees female same-sex desire represented as both 'possible' and 'desirable' with Lyly offering 'a radical alternative to heterosexual marriage' (2001, p. 73).⁶² Theodora A. Jankowski (1996) argues for the possibility of self-sufficiency for virgins outside the patriarchal sexual economy.⁶³ Same-sex desire has also been linked to the idealized figure of the androgyne, set apart like Jankowski's virgins from patriarchal constraints; the concept is influenced partly by Neoplatonism with its union of souls and partly by the situation of the Virgin Queen. Meyer, for example, in developing a Neoplatonic interpretation of *Endimion*, suggests that 'the concept of ideal androgynous love' is relevant to the play (1981, p. 206). Ellen M. Caldwell sees *Gallathea* as urging Elizabeth to marry, with Gallathea becoming 'the image of woman as union of opposites and as controller of her destiny' (1987, p. 40). A related concept is the 'homonormativity', or the attraction of like to like, considered by Laurie Shannon (2000) to be 'natural' in the Renaissance.⁶⁴

Wixson's essay, 'Cross-Dressing and John Lyly's *Gallathea*' (Chapter 18)⁶⁵ provides a different approach. He accepts that gender and sexuality are central to the play's 'ideology of power', but argues that the cross-dressing should be considered in its theatrical context. He locates the play within the tradition of humanist court drama concerned with 'the maintenance, legitimization, and celebration of authority' (p. 354) and ending with the 'harmonizing of disputes and social balance' (p. 358). For Wixson, the girls' disguising breaches distinctions of gender and class as well as rebelling against divine will; as Gallathea warns, 'Destiny may be deferred, not prevented'. Same-sex desire does subvert the play's 'compulsory' heterosexuality (and Diana's nymphs offer a glimpse of 'a lesbian alternative'), but the lovers are, it seems, 'rewarded for their desire that does not transgress class boundaries' (p. 362) in a 'playful recognition of homoerotic desire' (p. 366).

The final two essays in Part III, by David Bevington and Anne Jennalie Cook, deal with the representation of courtship. In "'Jack Hath Not Jill": Failed Courtship in Lyly and Shakespeare' (Chapter 19) Bevington explores how the 'hazards and uncertainties' of courtship (p. 368) – for hapless young men especially – are dramatized in *Sapho and Phao* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. He remarks that Lyly's play 'begins and ends as the story of the rejected male' (ibid.), with the disparity in rank between queen and lover pointing to both psychological and social tensions. Phao's idealistic love is tarnished by resentment and misogyny; he is presented as 'comically absurd in his vacillations between vanity and vulnerability, self-awareness and stuttering incompetence as a wooer' (p. 369). Bevington's reference to a psychological element is uncommon in Lyly criticism. It is prompted in part by Robert Y. Turner's 1962 essay, 'Dialogues of Love in Lyly's Comedies' which suggests that the 'dialogues of hesitant

⁶² Hints of sexual practices amongst the ladies of Sapho's court ('lesbian' or 'obscene' rather than 'lesbian') are discussed by Pincombe (1998).

⁶³ Another essay by Jankowski, (1993), cites contemporary Protestant writings on virginity and chastity as well as tracing Catholic traditions of virginity/celebrity.

⁶⁴ Shannon discusses *Gallathea* and *Twelfth Night*. Rackin (1987) argues that gender in *Gallathea* is a social construct: 'arbitrary, unreal, and reversible'.

⁶⁵ Walen mentions cross-dressing but from the viewpoint of female character rather than boy player. Cross-dressing has inspired ample commentary, some of which mentions Lyly; see, for example, Jardine (1983, pp. 20–21; and Staton (1981/82). For a general discussion, see McLuskie (1987).

lovers' in *Campaspe*, *Sapho and Phao*, *Gallathea* and *Mother Bombie* constitute his 'major contribution to the technique of dramatizing love' (1962, p. 279); whereas earlier plays like *Clyomon and Clamydes* had represented the obstacles separating lovers, Lyly dramatizes the irresistible impact of love and increasingly exploits 'the comic possibilities in the limitations of language' (Turner, 1962, p. 286).

Mother Bombie has been neglected by critics, perhaps because it is unlike any of Lyly's other plays and not easily slotted into a critical narrative, grand or otherwise. Cook's essay, 'The Transformation of Stage Courtship' (Chapter 20) discusses *Mother Bombie* in the context of several contemporary plays – Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* in particular – arguing that Lyly 'takes full advantage of the dramatic possibilities inherent in Elizabethan courtship' (p. 400). She suggests that the representation of courtship on stage changed in the late 1580s with the inclusion of familiar Elizabethan courtship rituals, so that 'wooing moves from literary fantasy to something sometimes approximating actuality' (p. 401).⁶⁶ She comments that 'Lyly exploits such courtship concerns as parental authority, equality of birth and wealth, natural impediments, public spousals and valid marriages' (p. 394), offering a 'delicious anatomy of the technicalities of courtship' (p. 399).

Performing Lyly

Critics have been more inclined to praise Lyly's non-dramatic writings as 'dramatic' than to consider his plays performable. Certainly, the *Euphues* books, with their debates and dialogues and speeches of persuasion, lend themselves to reading aloud in company rather than solitary contemplation.⁶⁷ Many commentaries on the plays, nevertheless, insist upon their 'static', essentially non-dramatic nature, deriving at least in part from the circumstances of their acting and staging. Hillebrand notes the children's 'charm and vivacity' but also 'their inability to portray passion or any deep emotion' (1926, p. 263); Bradbrook describes the plays as 'a cross between a floor show and a prize-day recitation' (1963, p. 71); Hunter (1997) uses an analogy with 'the contrapuntal music the children were trained in ... [which] evoked discord only as a function of harmony' (1997, p. 145). The first two essays in Part IV, by Maurice Charney and Leah Scragg, question this conventional wisdom about the limitations of boy actors and court staging.

Writing for boys to perform meant rewards as well as restrictions: the point is a commonplace, though rarely developed in any detail.⁶⁸ Hunter (1991) provides a useful summary, noting the boys' 'highly disciplined talent' and teamwork, the 'polyphonic texture' of their voices, and the 'enunciative clarity' fostered by Lyly's dramatic prose.⁶⁹ Bevington (1996) discusses

⁶⁶ Cook does not speculate on the reasons for the change, noting it only as 'an introduction of new ways to treat the theatre's oldest subject: love' (p. 400).

⁶⁷ Similarly, the anti-Martinist pamphlet, *Pap with an Hatchet*, is more effective if read aloud. On eloquence and performance as aims of humanist writing, see Kinney (1986, p. 128).

⁶⁸ Most commentary on boy actors uses later examples, from 1600 onwards. For general information, see Gair (1982, pp. 33–43) on their education and conditions; and Shapiro (1977) on history, repertory, and style.

⁶⁹ Songs, dances and other displays of skill were undoubtedly important in performance, but have attracted little commentary; see R.S. White (1987).

the effects obtained by the varied ages and sizes of a boys' troupe and the possibility of an occasional adult actor.⁷⁰ Charney's essay, 'Female Roles and the Children's Companies: Lyly's Pandora in *The Woman in the Moon*' (Chapter 21),⁷¹ pays tribute to Lyly's most complex character. He presents Pandora as the culmination of Lyly's 'Ovidian girls in all their variety' (p. 405). Like Shakespeare's Cleopatra, she celebrates 'the triumph of the boy actor's skill' (p. 406) with 'a whole repertory of tragic and comic female roles' (p. 405).⁷² Nor are the play's challenges for the actors limited to Pandora. Leah Scragg notes the complexity of the servant Gunophilus, who is both 'the direct descendant of the nimble-witted underlings of previous plays' (2006b, p. 31) and a new type of character for Lyly, as the mediator between spectator and play world.⁷³

Whereas Charney focuses on the 'astonishing virtuosity' of *The Woman in the Moon* as something new in Lyly's plays, Scragg's essay, 'Speaking Pictures: Style and Spectacle in Lylia Comedy' (Chapter 22) outlines Lyly's progressive integration of 'style and spectacle': the patterns of euphuistic thinking with the resources available for creating visual and aural effects. Lyly inherited a tradition of staging based on multiple 'houses' or 'mansions' or set locations rather than the unlocalized settings of the public stages, and the assumed limitations of this staging style often shape discussions of how Lyly's plays were performed.⁷⁴ Scragg, on the other hand, looks to the possibilities, tracing Lyly's development in terms of his increasing exploitation of these traditional theatrical resources to achieve effects of antithesis, ambiguity and transformation. The staging of *Campaspe* is 'unambitious' with its traditional opposed 'houses', but by *Endimion* 'oppositions stalk the stage' and metamorphoses 'are enacted through a variety of spectacles' (p. 418), and by *Love's Metamorphosis* there are recurrent 'stage spectacles, structured upon opposites and promoting an awareness of flux' (p. 422). Euphuism has become, in effect, a dramatic mode.

Popular and performed: the final two essays in this selection also question conventional wisdom in their distinctive approaches to Lyly's *Gallathea*. Kent Cartwright challenges assumptions about humanist, court and popular drama and Kate D. Levin offers a Lyly for today, with an account of her production of *Gallathea* in New York in 1999. In 'The Confusions of *Gallathea*: John Lyly as Popular Dramatist' (Chapter 23) Cartwright redefines the audience appeal of Lyly's play by finding similarities with that of adult popular drama and its 'confusions' or 'pleasurable psychological agitation' (p. 430). Audience response to children performing is usually assumed to be quite different, with reactions to Lyly's plays typically seen from the perspective of the superior adult and described in terms such as a 'dual consciousness' of actor and character accentuated by visual disparities and formal acting styles (Shapiro,

⁷⁰ Similar points are made by Shapiro (1977, pp. 104–106).

⁷¹ See also Charney (1975). Charney's essay is one of the few available on this play.

⁷² Some commentators propose that the play was written for adult actors. Charney suggests that Lyly may have learnt from Shakespeare how to develop female roles (this depends on the date of the play); he also notes Lyly's response to Marlowe, with a parody of Tamburlaine's 'mighty line'.

⁷³ Scragg also records a 1928 production of the play in which Pandora was acted by a young Katherine Hepburn.

⁷⁴ See, in particular, two essays by Michael R. Best, 'Lyly's Static Drama' (1968a) and 'The Staging and Production of the Plays of John Lyly' (1968b). See also Lancashire (1982); Astington (1999, pp. 193–97); and Saccio (1969, pp. 11–25). Useful discussions of staging individual plays can be found in the Revels Plays editions.

1977, pp. 103–20);⁷⁵ as a shared enjoyment in ‘the virtuosity involved in ... manipulating the symbols of femininity, senility, godlike authority or whatever’ (Hunter, 1991, p. 35);⁷⁶ or as having erotic implications of various kinds.⁷⁷ In arguing that the theatricality of *Gallathea* is ‘comparable’ to that of the popular drama, Cartwright rejects the common view of Lyly’s plays as static and intellectual. Lyly’s legacy to writers of comedy, he suggests, was not just a catalogue of theatrical strategies but a ‘shift in the nature of theatrical experience’ (p. 452). When didacticism is set against theatrical uncertainties, ‘intellectualism yields to sensation and spectacle’ (p. 431), with action returning ‘repeatedly to a concrete interest in the body, in the physical, kinetic, and emotional dimensions of experience’ (ibid.).⁷⁸ Theatrical pleasure is generated and audiences are enticed to return to the theatre by ‘kinesthetic and emotional confusions’ (p. 428) and ‘transgressive fantasies’ (p. 438) such as those associated with the confusions of *Gallathea* and *Phyllida*.⁷⁹ Another link Cartwright finds between *Gallathea* and the popular drama is that it shares ‘conventions, strategies, and goals’ (p. 438) with the romance genre of plays, fashionable in the 1570s and early 1580s in both court and public theatres – parallels can be found in the use of mythological machinery and patterned language – while the incident of Hæbe (‘a comedy that Monty Python might envy’) ‘obliterates the most sacred of romantic conventions’, the virgin sacrifice (p. 440).

Levin in ‘Playing with Lyly: Theatrical Criticism and Non-Shakespearean Drama’ (Chapter 24)⁸⁰ challenges the dominant view that Lyly’s plays are ‘theatrically fossilized ... [and] implicitly ripe for condescension’ (p. 461). In directing a college production of *Gallathea* she discovered Lyly’s text to be ‘a robust, eminently theatrical script, capable of being adapted to and expressing the concerns and desires of present-day playgoers’ (p. 464). She considers three issues: allegorical interpretation, characterization, and euphuism. Allegory, she suggests, is not a coldly intellectual feature but potentially ‘a powerfully theatrical mode of expression’ (p. 466). The characters proved in rehearsal to be capable of emotion, conflict and even development; she notes the asides, the numerous cues for action, and (after Cartwright) the importance of ‘bodily expressiveness’ between the two heroines. The euphuistic language in performance had an ‘antithetical richness’ somewhat similar to Shakespeare’s, as well as emotional and comic potential: Hebe’s long speech while awaiting sacrifice evoked empathy in the audience as well as hilarity. Levin concludes that performance, in revealing the play’s ‘supple and vivid theatricality’ (p. 483), can be a valuable interpretive method.

⁷⁵ These are general comments, with few references to Lyly’s plays. Long declamatory speeches were also a feature of the adult drama.

⁷⁶ Note also Powell (this volume, pp. 278–79) on the children’s ‘self-awareness’ as part of the experience of ‘play’.

⁷⁷ Note the essays referred to in the discussion of Part III above, especially on cross-dressing.

⁷⁸ Cartwright (p. 438) also identifies ‘moments of subjective awareness’ in *Gallathea* and *The Woman in the Moon*; compare Bevington’s discussion of *Sappho and Phao* (Chapter 19).

⁷⁹ On ‘confusion’ in popular drama, see West (2008). On the pleasurable manipulation of audience response to *Gallathea* despite the unresolved ending, see Lopez (2003, pp. 190–200). An earlier essay by Kemper, ‘Dramaturgical Design in Lyly’s *Gallathea*’ (1976), discusses the effects of differing levels of awareness.

⁸⁰ For the staging history of Lyly’s plays see the introductions to the Revels Plays editions. *Gallathea* was staged several times in the late twentieth century; see Hunter (2000, p. 21).

Conclusion

What, then, can be resolved about John Lyly, University Wit, and his fortunate or not-so-fortunate career? The answers to this have been various but often quite selective, just as Lyly himself predicted about responses to his writings in prologues and epilogues and dedicatory letters:

Lovers when they come into a garden, some gather nettles, some roses, one thyme, another sage, and everyone that for his lady's favour that she favoureth; insomuch as there is no weed almost but it is worn. (*Euphues and His England*, 'To the Gentlemen Readers', p. 165)

The nettles and roses have been sought in a variety of places: Lyly's education and reading; sixteenth-century philosophies and beliefs; the analysis of euphuism; historical events and political situations; social and economic considerations; and Lyly's dramatic inheritance. In 1962 Hunter urged the study of sixteenth-century 'modes of thinking and writing' in order to understand Lyly, but Lyly is increasingly called upon to be a convenient point of entry to understanding the period itself.⁸¹ Lyly has thus achieved cultural significance for the modern reader, even though estimates of his reputation and influence – with a few exceptions – have remained relatively unchanged since Wilson in 1905: Lyly provides, in effect, a model for prose fiction which others improve upon and a model for comedy which is exploited but quite overshadowed by early Shakespeare.

The influence of the *Euphues* books on younger University Wits (Lodge, Greene, Nashe) has been explored in several studies (represented by Bates in Chapter 2 of this collection); there has been less interest, however, in any impact Lyly's plays may have had on his contemporaries other than Shakespeare, despite the early availability of most in print – *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao* in 1584, *Endimion* in 1591, *Gallathea* and *Midas* in 1592 – before and during the time (late 1580s, early 1590s) when the other Wits were writing for the popular stage. In this collection, Bevington's essay on courtship (Chapter 19) considers Lyly's influence on Shakespeare, while Neufeld (Chapter 10) and Walen (Chapter 17) include Lyly in a discussion culminating in Shakespeare (these represent common approaches). In Chapter 5 Wells finds common ground between Lyly and Peele; Connolly (Chapter 8) and Cook (Chapter 20) set Lyly alongside Marlowe; and Pincombe (Chapter 16), Walen (Chapter 17), Wixson (Chapter 18) and Cartwright (Chapter 23) find parallels in subject matter or approach between Lyly's plays and others of the 1580s and earlier. Lyly, these studies suggest, may well have been an avid playgoer as well as an 'omnivorous reader' (Wilson, 1939, p. 136). A few studies not included here deal with topics such as Greene's reworking of Lyly's themes and situations or Nashe's ironic treatment of boy actors and their plays in *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592). Of any personal relationship with Lyly the clearest traces concern Nashe, who defended the older Wit against Gabriel Harvey and also wrote anti-Martinist pamphlets.

To some degree Lyly matches the conventional profile of the University Wit: in learning, eloquence, energy, self-assurance, and ambition; in a preparedness to experiment with language and genre; and in the rejection of the conventional paths for advancement (church or university). His social position may have been more secure than Marlowe's or Greene's and his daily life, it would seem, more unadventurous (and burdened with children), yet he, too, was

⁸¹ See Scragg (2003, p.19); she also comments on Lyly's 'modernity'.

an opportunist in his writing, eager to exploit intellectual fashions and social enthusiasms. As a writer-entertainer by profession, if not entirely by aspiration, he shared the Wits' cultivation of their audiences, a need he may have felt more acutely in his positioning between court and marketplace. This is an aspect receiving more attention in recent criticism, especially in connection with *Euphues* (see Linton (Chapter 4) and Bates (Chapter 2) in this collection). And it is not impossible, despite received opinion, that Lyly also wrote for the popular stage. This point is made by Paul Whitfield White (2000), who suggests that Lyly may have written for Oxford's adult and child players before 1583 (*Campaspe* is already an 'accomplished comedy') and for adults again in the late 1580s during the Marprelate affair. A familiarity with popular audiences might also be inferred from the theatrical pleasures that Cartwright (Chapter 23) identifies in *Gallathea*. In any case, as Pincombe argues, the extant plays are not 'exclusively courtly', but rather 'written in the relatively new tradition of commercial juvenile drama' (1996, p. 18). They were certainly performed more often in private theatres for paying audiences than at court where only a few plays were chosen each year from amongst the competing companies, child and adult, for isolated, single performances.

In his *English Drama* Hunter sets Lyly apart from the other University Wits as less able to be defined in terms of a 'move towards individualism' and describes his plays as lacking 'political engagement between hierarchy and subversion' so that 'the principal effect ... is of distance, separation, and disengagement' (1997, p. 141).⁸² Certainly, the plays are restricted in subject matter and setting – to mythology and love rather than history and war, to Arcadia and timelessness rather than the city and vast geographical spaces – yet Lyly may be offering political advice in *Endimion* (Bevington) or reflecting anxiety about female rule (Jankowski, Neufeld) or presenting increasingly oppositional voices (Alwes, Scragg, Pincombe). Lyly's most notable divergence from the University Wit profile, however, lies not in any 'political' stance but in what Scragg (2003, p. 16) terms the 'self-conscious evasiveness' of both plays and prose, seen especially in the deferential and apologetic tone of his introductions. Marlowe gives the audience a choice ('applaud ... as you please') but in the course of promoting a revolution in the theatre. Lyly's humbler posture is more enigmatic: it may, of course, derive from convention (dedicatory letters often grovel before patrons, although very few plays of the period begin with apologies); it may anticipate more recent uncertainties; or it may, for that matter, offer a mask behind which the self-assured, superior wit can watch a small boy speak a prologue to tease and flatter an audience.

This selection of essays offers an overview of the main approaches to Lyly's prose and plays, yet it remains a selection. Other voices and insights to investigate are suggested in the notes and listed in the References. To appreciate the distinctive qualities of Lyly's work, however, the reader needs to turn to the two *Euphues* books and the eight plays themselves, so often given second billing in scholarly accounts. For all the formal posturing and long-winded speeches of their characters, Lyly's works overflow with energy, with dance and song and spectacle, with (sometimes bawdy) humour, with ironies and fantasies and absurdities, with

⁸² Hunter (1997, p. 142, n.35) disagrees with Robert Weimann's assertion that the prologue to *Midas* reveals an awareness of contemporary political heterogeneity and hence authorizes the play's 'mingle-mangle' of elements. For a recent version of Weimann's argument, see 'From Hodge-Podge to Scene Individable' (Weimann, 2004), a chapter in Bruster's and Weimann's *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre*.

the crazy medley of materials typical of 1580s drama and (not least) with the wit and intense observations of the young man from the university seeking his fortune in London.

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Part I

Lessons in Wit



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[1]

Euphues and his Erasmus

JUDITH RICE HENDERSON

THAT John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wyt* is a product of Renaissance humanism can no longer be questioned. Long before G. K. Hunter's important study, *John Lyly: The Humanist as Courtier*, critics had recognized Lyly's debt to the humanist movement, and several recent studies have explored the ways in which his prose fiction tests and even satirizes humanist precepts and values.¹ Furthermore, the source studies which constitute so much of Lyly criticism have traced his borrowings from classical and humanist literature. In *The Anatomy of Wyt* "A cooling Carde for Philautus and all fond lovers" paraphrases Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, "Euphues and his Ephoebus" is a translation of Plutarch's *De Educatione Puerorum* with passages added from his *De Garrulitate* and from Erasmus' *Colloquium Puerpera*, "Euphues and Atheos" may be in part a Christian adaptation of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and of the "Certeine Letters writ by Euphues to his friendes," that to Bottonio is an abridged translation of Plutarch's *De Exilio*, and those to Philautus and Eubulus have numerous antecedents in the traditions of dispraise of courtly life and of consolation respectively.² Within the

1. London, 1962. Before Hunter, see especially Albert Feuillerat, *John Lyly: Contribution à l'histoire de la Renaissance en Angleterre* (Cambridge, Eng., 1910), pp. 3-94, and Samuel Lee Wolff, "The Humanist as Man of Letters: John Lyly," *Sewanee Review*, 31 (1923), 8-35. Since the publication of Hunter's study, Walter R. Davis in *Idea and Act in Elizabethan Fiction* (Princeton, N.J., 1969) has argued that "The chief effort of courtly fiction [the works of Gascoigne, Lyly, and Lyly's Euphuistic imitators] was to cast a second and very critical glance at the assumptions of Tudor Humanism" (p. 94), and Richard Helgerson in *The Elizabethan Prodigals* (Berkeley, Cal., 1976) has traced a pattern of rebellion against the humanist ideal of political and military service to the state, followed by reformation, in the lives and letters of Gascoigne, Lyly, Greene, Lodge, and Sidney. See also Theodore L. Steinberg, "The Anatomy of *Euphues*," *Studies in English Literature*, 17 (1977), 27-38, and Raymond Stephanson, "John Lyly's Prose Fiction: Irony, Humor and Anti-Humanism," *English Literary Renaissance*, 11 (1981), 3-21.

2. Friedrich Landmann, "Shakspere and Euphism. *Euphues* an Adaptation from Guevara," *New Shakspeare Society's Transactions* (1880-1886), Series I, Part II, pp. 256-57; R. Warwick Bond, ed., *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1902; rptd. 1967), I, 154-59; Henri de Vocht,

narrative proper Lyly has taken Euphues' comments on the virtue of friendship from Cicero's *De Amicitia* and Lucilla's reply to Euphues' proposal of marriage from Ovid's *Heroides*.³ The theory that Guevara's *Libro del emperador Marco aurelio con relox de principes* as translated by North in *The Diall of Princes*, or his earlier version, *Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio*, as translated by Berners in *The Golden Booke of Marcus Aurelius*, was the model for the structure and style of *The Anatomy of Wyt* has been thoroughly discredited.⁴ However, cogent arguments continue to be made that Lyly drew his inspiration from the Latin prodigal son plays, beginning with Gnapheus' *Acolastus*, or from the legendary friendship of Tito and Gisippo in the original tale (Boccaccio's *Decameron*, X, 8) or

De Invloed van Erasmus op de Engelsche Tooneelliteratuur der XVI^e en XVII^e Eeuwen, Eerste Deel, in *Uitgaven der Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie*, V^e Reeks, 17 (Gent: A. Siffer, 1908), pp. 96–105; and Feuillerat, pp. 259–73. These sources are also footnoted in Morris William Croll and Harry Clemons, eds., *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit; Euphues and his England* (London, 1916; rptd. New York, 1964).

3. Laurens J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain: Friendship in Tudor Literature and Drama* (Bloomington, Ind.: Principia Press, 1937), pp. 183–87; Morris Palmer Tilley, *Euphues and Ovid's Heroical Epistles*, *Modern Language Notes*, 45 (1930), 301–08. Likewise in *Euphues and his England*, Euphues' initial description of Britain is a translation of Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, his advice to Philautus on marriage is a translation of Plutarch's *Conjugalia Praecepta*, and "Euphues Glasse for Europe" borrows extensively from William Harrison's *Description of Britaine*. See Bond, I, 154–59, and Croll and Clemons.

4. The theory that Lyly modelled *The Anatomy of Wyt* on North's translation of Guevara was proposed by Landmann, *Der Euphuismus* (Giessen, 1881), "Shakspeare and Euphuism," and his edition of *The Anatomy of Wyt in Englische Sprach- und Literaturdenkmale des 16. 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Heilbronn, 1887). It was accepted with important modifications by Clarence Griffin Child, *John Lyly and Euphuism*, in *Münchener Beiträge zur romanischen und englischen Philologie*, Heft VII (Erlangen und Leipzig: Deichert, 1894); Sir Sidney Lee, his edition of Sir John Burchier, Lord Berners, *The Boke of Huon of Burdeux*, Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. 50 (London, 1887), pp. 785–88, and his article on Lyly, *DNB*, XII, 327–32; Bond, I, 135–44, 154–56; and John Dover Wilson, *John Lyly* (Cambridge, Eng., 1905; rptd. New York, 1970), pp. 21–43. Chiefly they noted that Berners' translation predated North's, that both Berners and North worked from French translations rather than from Guevara's Spanish, and that Berners was writing a Euphuistic style by 1524, five years before the publication of Guevara's work in 1529. Furthermore, they developed Landmann's suggestion that George Pettie was writing a Euphuistic style two years before Lyly. Finally the theory was decisively rejected by Wilson in "Euphues and the Prodigal Son," *The Library*, Series II, 10 (1909), 337–61, and by Feuillerat, pp. 444–75. Although Wolff had accepted the Guevara theory in "A Source of *Euphues*. *The Anatomy of Wyt*," *Modern Philology*, 7 (1910), 577–85, by 1923 in "The Humanist as Man of Letters" he could write, "Some part of the arrangement, and some inappropriate details, of Lyly's mass of didactic and moralizing material probably came from Guevara's wholly didactic and moralizing *Libro del Emperador Marco Aurelio*, or rather from its translation *The Diall of Princes* (1557), by Thomas North, the translator of Plutarch's *Lives*. To this modest statement of indebtedness has Landmann's sweeping theory of the Spanish origin of *Euphues* been reduced" (p. 13).

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subsequent versions.⁵ Finally, *The Anatomy of Wyt* has been read in the Italian traditions of the *novella* and of the courtesy book.⁶ An English "courtesy book," Ascham's *The Scholemaster*, clearly gave Lyly the name of his main character, Euphues, some suggestions for characterization and setting, and perhaps the idea of anatomizing "wit."⁷

As Hunter has observed, *The Anatomy of Wyt* "was one of the most eclectic [books], in an age devoted to eclecticism" (p. 61). No wonder that it was described in the Stationers' Register as "Compiled by John Lyllie."⁸ None of these source studies has, however, explained the form of Lyly's compilation: a narrative with appended treatises and letters. Indeed, although they constitute more than half of *The Anatomy of Wyt*, the letters and treatises have been ignored by all but a few critics, and they are invariably omitted when the work is anthologized.⁹ I shall argue

5. The first suggestion, made by Wilson in "Euphues and the Prodigal Son," has been widely accepted and was developed into a full-scale study of Elizabethan fiction, *The Elizabethan Prodigals*, by Helgerson as recently as 1976. The second proposal was made by Wolff in "A Source of *Euphues*. *The Anatomy of Wyt*" and has been elaborated by Clement Tyson Goode, "Sir Thomas Elyot's *Titus and Gysippus*," *Modern Language Notes*, 37 (1922), 1-11; Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain*, pp. 182-92; and John Hazel Smith, "Sempronia, John Lyly, and John Foxe's *Comedy of Titus and Gesippus*," *Philological Quarterly*, 48 (1969), 554-61. Wolff's argument in *The Greek Romances in Elizabethan Prose Fiction* (New York 1912; rptd. New York, 1961), pp. 248-61, that Lyly is indirectly indebted to Greek romance because Boccaccio may have taken his story from the Old French poem "Athis et Prophilias," which may itself have come from a lost Greek romance, seems tenuous at best. However, it was accepted uncritically by Margaret Schlauch in *Antecedents of the English Novel 1400-1600 (from Chaucer to Deloney)* (London, 1963), pp. 185-96.

6. On Euphuistic fiction as an outgrowth of the Italian *novella*, see George B. Parks, "Before *Euphues*," in *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*, ed. James G. McManaway, Giles E. Dawson, and Edwin E. Willoughby (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 475-93, and Ludwig Borinski, "The Origin of the Euphuistic Novel and its Significance for Shakespeare," in *Studies in Honor of T. W. Baldwin*, ed. Don Cameron Allen (Urbana, Ill., 1958), pp. 38-52. Studies which relate Lyly's fictional works to the courtesy book are Wilson, *John Lyly*, pp. 64-84, and Violet M. Jeffery, *John Lyly and the Italian Renaissance*, Bibliothèque de la Revue de littérature comparée, tome 53 (Paris, 1928), esp. pp. 1-28. Theodore L. Steinberg in "The Anatomy of *Euphues*," *Studies in English Literature*, 17 (1977), 27-38, has argued that *Euphues* is a parody of such courtesy books as Castiglione's *Courtier*, Elyot's *Governour*, and Ascham's *Scholemaster*, an "anti-courtesy book."

7. See esp. Feuillerat, pp. 41-68; Percy Waldron Long, "From *Troilus* to *Euphues*," in *Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge* (1913; rptd. New York, 1967), pp. 367-76; Jaroslav Hornát, "Lyly's *Anatomy of Wyt* and Ascham's *Scholemaster*," *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philologica*, 1, *Prague Studies in English*, 9 (1961), 3-19; Hunter, pp. 49-50.

8. Edward Arber, ed., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640 A.D.* (London, 1875-94; rptd. Gloucester, Mass., 1967), II, 342. The entry is dated December 2, 1578.

9. Brief discussions of the appended letters and treatises can be found in Feuillerat, pp. 258-73; Hunter, pp. 51-53; Davis, pp. 119-21; and Joseph W. Houppert, *John Lyly* (Boston, 1975), pp. 38-41. The narrative is anthologized without the appendices by J. William Hebel, Hoyt H. Hudson, Francis R. Johnson, and A. Wigfall Green, eds., *Prose of the English Renaissance* (New

that Lyly's model was the humanist school curriculum, especially the composition exercises described by Desiderius Erasmus in *De Ratione Studii*, *De Duplici Copia Verborum ac Rerum*, and *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*. *The Anatomy of Wyt* can be read as a collection of composition exercises such as Euphuës (the well-endowed student described by Ascham) might have written in the Elizabethan educational system from upper grammar school through university. In providing a narrative which explains the circumstances of their composition, Lyly followed the advice of Erasmus in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis* and the practice of the English schoolmasters who, with few exceptions, adopted his teaching methods. Even the plot of *The Anatomy of Wyt* might have been suggested by Erasmus' most fully developed example of his method in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*. Furthermore, Euphuism can be explained as a variety—and at times, perhaps, a parody—of the abundant style encouraged in the Elizabethan schoolboy by Erasmus' *De Copia*.

The influence of Erasmian pedagogy on Shakespeare was explored in T. W. Baldwin's monumental study, *William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke*. Baldwin observed that "most if not all of the Renaissance literary types have their bases in grammar school theory, and we shall not understand either their origins or their evolution until we have cleared grammar school teaching and practice upon them."¹⁰ The approach to Renaissance literature thus outlined has proved fruitful for a succession of critics. R. R. Bolgar showed the importance to Rabelais of the notebook method of composition or *stile a mosaico* introduced to western Europe by Manuel Chrysoloras and codified by Erasmus in *De Copia*.¹¹ The commonplace book has long been recognized as the antecedent of the Baconian essay.¹² Recently, Margaret Mann Phillips has suggested in a comparative study of "Erasmé et Montaigne" that Erasmus' commentaries in the *Adagia* may have provided a model for Mon-

York, 1952), pp. 207–58; Robert Ashley and Edwin M. Moseley, eds., *Elizabethan Fiction* (New York, 1953), pp. 91–156; Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker, eds., *The Renaissance in England: Non-dramatic Prose and Verse of the Sixteenth Century* (Lexington, Mass., 1954), pp. 710–35; Roy Lamson and Hallett Smith, eds., *The Golden Hind*, rev. ed. (New York, 1956), pp. 209–25; and Merritt Lawlis, ed., *Elizabethan Prose Fiction* (New York, 1967), pp. 112–88.

10. 2 vols. (Urbana, Ill., 1944), II, 303.

11. *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge, Eng., 1954), esp. pp. 265–75, 320–23.

12. Jacob Zeitlin, "Commonplaces in Elizabethan Life and Letters," *JEGP*, 19 (1920), 47–65; William G. Crane, *Wit and Rhetoric in the Renaissance: The Formal Basis of Elizabethan Prose Style* (New York, 1937), pp. 132–47; Baldwin, II, 302–03.

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taigne's *Essais*.¹³ Others have studied the influence of Erasmus' *De Copia* on More and Marlowe.¹⁴ *The Anatomy of Wyt*, as a comic treatment of the composition training of the Elizabethan schoolboy, presents perhaps the clearest example of the influence of Erasmian pedagogy on English Renaissance literature.¹⁵

Erasmus first put his educational program to schoolroom use in England. As a tutor in Paris in the last years of the fifteenth century, he had written the first drafts of his principal pedagogical works before he made his first visit to England in 1499 and met through his English pupils the small circle of humanists which included William Grocyn, Thomas Linacre, John Colet, and Thomas More.¹⁶ Although Erasmus was not able to settle permanently in England as he had hoped, he made six visits altogether, and when Colet founded St. Paul's School on humanist principles, Erasmus revised for the school his curriculum, *De Ratione Studii*, and his "rhetorical-logical guide," as Baldwin called it, the *De*

13. In *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia*, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1972), I, 479–501. See also her "Erasmus and the Art of Writing," in *Scrinium Erasmianum*, ed. J. Coppens, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1969), I, 335–50, and "From the Ciceronianus to Montaigne," in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500–1700*, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge, Eng., 1976), pp. 191–97.

14. Edward Surtz, S. J., "Aspects of More's Latin Style in *Utopia*," *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1967), 93–109; Eric Jacobsen, *Translation, a Traditional Craft: An Introductory Sketch with a Study of Marlowe's Elegies*, in *Classica et Mediaevalia, Dissertationes VI* (Copenhagen: Gyldendals Forlagstrykkeri, 1958), pp. 104–19, 148–86.

15. Two previous studies have explored the influence of Erasmus on the prose of Lyly. De Vocht (see n. 2 above) traced Lyly's direct borrowings from Erasmus's works, primarily the *Colloquies*, *Similia*, *Apophthegmata*, *Adagia*, and *The Praise of Folly*. His work proves Lyly's use of Erasmus' pedagogical handbooks, especially his collections of illustrative material from classical authors. René Pruvost argued that Lyly's composition training under humanist schoolmasters, using Erasmus' textbooks, was the source of Euphuism rather than the imitation of a particular model. See *Robert Greene et ses romans (1558–1592): Contribution à l'histoire de la Renaissance en Angleterre*, in *Publications de la Faculté des Lettres d'Alger*, II^e série, tome XI (Paris, 1938), pp. 47–95. Pruvost's insights would have received greater attention in this essay had I been able to obtain his study of Greene before I completed my own manuscript. To my knowledge the only other study which has suggested that Erasmus' pedagogy may have encouraged Euphuism is William Ringler's introduction to his edition of John Rainolds, *Oratio in Laudem Artis Poeticae [Circa 1572]*, *Princeton Studies in English*, ed. G. H. Gerould, No. 20 (Princeton, N.J., 1940), pp. 1–23. Ringler argued that Rainolds' Euphuistic style was the result of imitating Cicero according to the method suggested in *De Copia*.

16. Since the publication of Frederic Seebohm's seminal work, *The Oxford Reformers: Colet, Erasmus, More*, 3rd ed. (London, 1887), numerous studies have corrected and expanded Seebohm's account of Erasmus' relations with England. The reader will find useful surveys of our current knowledge about Erasmus' six visits to England in Maurice Pollet, "Erasmus en Angleterre," in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia*, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1972), I, 161–74, and Vernon Mallinson, "Erasmus d'Angleterre et sa révolution pédagogique," *Revue générale* (janvier, 1975), pp. 41–57.

Copia.¹⁷ He also revised the Latin syntax written for the school by John Lyly's grandfather, William Lily, the first headmaster of St. Paul's. Erasmus' influence on Tudor education has been amply demonstrated by Baldwin, who concluded: "In the treatise *De Ratione Studii* by Erasmus is the fundamental philosophy of the grammar school in England. On these general principles it was organized and by these methods it was taught. What is more, the strategic textbooks in the system were suggested, prepared, or approved by Erasmus" (I, 94). The strategic textbooks included his *Colloquia*, his collections of *Similia*, *Adagia*, and *Apophthegmata*, the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*, and collections, translations, and commentaries of many of the classical authors which his curriculum prescribed: Cato, Aesop, Lucian, Terence, Cicero's *De Officiis*. Erasmus also improved the teaching of grammar by providing, in addition to his revision of Lyly's syntax, an epitome of Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae* and a translation of Theodore Gaza's Greek grammar, and for the religious and moral instruction of boys he prepared the *Concio de Puero Jesu*, *Institutum Hominis Christiani*, *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium*, and a catechism.

Erasmus followed humanist principles in reducing the amount of rote memorization of grammatical and rhetorical rules in the early stages of a boy's training and introducing him quickly to good classical literature—good as a model both of morality and of uncorrupted Latin—through easy authors such as Aesop in Latin translation and Cato. As the student became more adept at reading and speaking Latin and translating English sentences into correct Latin syntax, he would learn additional rules and study more difficult authors. When he reached upper grammar school, he would begin original composition. First he would be taught to write letters, learning through this exercise the main categories of rhetorical argument—judicial, deliberative, and demonstrative—and the methods of developing each as they were described by Erasmus in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*. He then turned to more advanced writing exercises designed to prepare him for the oration, especially those described in Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, and to writing verse. Finally he would learn to write a full-scale declamation or oration, although this final stage was sometimes reserved for the university. At the same time he would be developing an abundant style, learning means of varying his diction, sentence structure, and arguments with Erasmus' *De Copia* as his guide.

17. I, 99. My summary in the following paragraphs of Erasmus' influence on English education relies on Baldwin, whose work remains the definitive study of the subject. See esp. I, 75–133, 164–84, 219–320, 408–28; II, 176–96, 239–87.

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Erasmus' encouragement of imaginative composition was distasteful to the second generation of English humanists, particularly John Cheke and Roger Ascham, who were responsible for educating King Henry VIII's younger children, Edward and Elizabeth. They were influenced by the narrower Ciceronianism of the Protestant pedagogue Johann Sturm, who published the curriculum of his gymnasium at Strassburg in 1538. As the English school curriculum became increasingly standardized during the first years of the Reformation, the Ciceronian educators succeeded in modifying it to the extent of including Cicero's epistles earlier in the curriculum—using the collection made by Sturm—and introducing the older students to the original rhetorical works of Cicero and Quintilian after they had studied Erasmus' *De Copia*, as well as to Cicero's works of moral philosophy. In composition they insisted on close imitation of Cicero. This was the impulse behind, for example, Ascham's method of double translation, in which the student attempted to recapture Cicero's very words rather than freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit. But Ascham's *The Scholemaster* was not published until 1570, and there is little evidence that Erasmus' well-established techniques of teaching composition were much modified until after that date, if then. Baldwin concluded that "it was useless for Ascham to kick against the pricks of Erasmus; Erasmian methods of composition went on to be recommended by Brinsley in 1612, and still described by John Clarke a century later" (I, 87). While they modified the reading of John Lyly's generation, educated in the first years of Elizabeth's reign, the Ciceronians seem not to have affected significantly their writing exercises. For the King's School, Canterbury, which Marlowe certainly and Lyly probably attended, the 1541 curriculum survives, while for the Elizabethan period curricula of comparable cathedral schools such as Peterborough and Durham are extant. They show that Canterbury continued to use the methods and many of the textbooks of Erasmus throughout the century.

Erasmus based his composition exercises on the notebooks which he advised both students and teachers to keep as records of their reading. In *De Copia* he described the categories into which a notebook could be divided: first, "the main types and subdivisions of vice and virtue," for example, "Reverence and Irreverence" subdivided into "reverence towards God, patriotism towards one's country, love for children, respect for parents," and so forth; second, "examples" of "remarkable longevity, vigorous old age, old head on young shoulders, remarkable

happiness, remarkable memory, sudden change of fortune," and the like; and third, "commonplaces" such as, "It is very important what interests you develop as a boy; It matters what company you keep; His own is fair in each man's eyes; Offence is easy, reconciliation hard."¹⁸ Under these headings he instructed students and teachers to collect "whatever you come across in any author, particularly if it is rather striking . . . be it an anecdote or a fable or an illustrative example or a strange incident or a maxim or a witty remark or a remark notable for some other quality or a proverb or a metaphor or a simile" (*CWE*, XXIV, 638). That Erasmus himself followed this method in his reading is shown by the collections of *Similia*, *Adagia*, and *Apophthegmata* which he published for classroom use. Such notebooks provided materials for both the *propositio* and the *confirmatio* of student themes.

In the *De Ratione Studii* Erasmus advised the teacher to assign *sententiae* or wise sayings as the arguments of themes. If the teacher did not wish to invent his own *sententiae*, he could draw them from history, myth, apologue, apophthegm, or figures of speech such as climax, similitude, allegory, or commutation. From classical history, for example, might come the argument, "the rash self-confidence of Marcellus undermined the Roman state; the prudent delaying tactics of Fabius restored it." From myth might come, "Hercules won immortality for himself by vanquishing monsters." Apologue might provide, "the lark was correct to teach that one should not entrust to a friend business which one can finish by oneself"; apophthegm, "Socrates rightly condemned those who do not eat to live but live to eat"; proverb, "it is not for everyone to sail to Corinth"; figures of speech such as climax, "riches beget luxury, luxury excess, excess cruelty, cruelty widespread hatred, hatred destruction."¹⁹

In the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis* Erasmus explained how the teacher should present such topics to his students:

But a wise man does not present the material completely worked out, nor leaves nothing to the invention of the boys, nor yet nude, but somewhat surrounded with circumstances that they may learn as it were to direct their arrows to a fixed mark, and from these to devise *sententiae*, arguments and proofs of arguments, amplifications, and other figures.²⁰

18. Trans. Betty I. Knott, in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, XXIV (Toronto, 1978), pp. 636–37. Subsequent references are to this translation, hereafter cited as *CWE*.

19. Trans. Brian McGregor, in *CWE*, XXIV, 676–77.

20. The *CWE* translation has not been published at the time I am writing this. I quote

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As an example of the teacher's description of circumstances he told the following story:

Lucius and Antonius both young men but the one born to meager fortune, the other to very prosperous parents, loved each other from early years not other than brothers. In games, in banquets, in drinkings, in loves, and other pleasures and faults, in which that age so labors, each had the other as a confidant and companion. Lucius the elder, having spent his fortune evilly, and disgusted with an already public infamy and an unhappy love, secretly flees the country. At Paris, by chance, having found a certain paternal friend, being urged on by him, and likewise aided, he begins to burn not less zealously for good letters than before he had been inflamed with love of harlots. Here writing to his comrade Antonius left behind at Bruges, he both congratulates himself on his happily changed mind, and attempts to draw his ancient comrade from an evil life to the study of letters. Let this be the proposition of the whole argument, not without circumstances (II, 243).

The teacher, in effect, would narrate a story—one of his own invention, as Erasmus has apparently done here, or more probably one drawn from the history or literature which the boys have been reading—and from the circumstances and personalities which he would describe the boys would develop arguments for the basic categories of epistles which Erasmus treated. Here the exercise would be an *epistola suasoria*, a persuasive epistle, one of the subcategories of deliberative argument.²¹ The same story or other stories might provide occasions for writing other kinds of letters described by Erasmus in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*: letters dissuading, exhorting, admonishing, recommending, congratulating, thanking, consoling, and so forth.

This method had obvious advantages from the point of view of the humanist schoolmaster. First, it made an otherwise dry composition exercise more interesting to young boys; as Erasmus claimed, it would “allure that age with delightfulness as if baits” (II, 239). Second, the students would learn decorum, the adaptation of style to the particular

Baldwin, II, 243, who in his chapter on “Shakspeare's Epistles” has translated most of Erasmus' discussion of teaching methods in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*. For the original text, see Jean-Claude Margolin's edition in *Opera Omnia*, Series I, Vol. II (Amsterdam, 1971), pp. 227–66. Hereafter I cite this edition as ASD.

21. See ASD, I, ii, 315–432, for Erasmus' treatment of the *epistola suasoria* and the closely related *epistola dissuasoria*, *epistola exhortatoria*, and *epistola dehortatoria*. Erasmus' longest example of the *epistola suasoria* in the *Opus de Conscribendis Epistolis*, the *Encomium Matrimonii*, had an independent publishing history. See Margolin's introduction, pp. 192–96. An English translation of it was included in Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique*. See the facsimile of the 1553 edition, ed. Robert Hood Bowers (Gainesville, Fla., 1962), pp. 54–80.

argument, time, place, and persons described; as Erasmus said, they would be taught "to direct their arrows to a fixed mark" (II, 243). Third, the students would gain a better understanding of the classical literature and history on which the exercises were based. Fourth, since the boy must imagine himself as Helena or Nestor or some other character, the stories would have an immediacy for him which made them more valuable as moral *exempla*. In common with his medieval predecessors, the humanist schoolmaster allegorized the figures of classical literature and history rather than treating them as unique personalities, so that Paris and Helen became types of unlawful love, Penelope of the chaste wife, Nestor of the wisdom of age, and Socrates of the virtuous life ruled by philosophy.

Once the teacher had narrated a story illustrating a *sententia*, he would describe to his students the type of argument—judicial, deliberative, or demonstrative—which it required and its divisions into *exordium*, *propositio*, and *confirmatio*. Finally, "He must add to each part a rich store of reasons, confirmations, similes, examples, *sententiae*. He must show where commonplaces can aid to advantage, and how they can be treated" (II, 244). In other words, having provided his students with an argument from his notebook, the teacher would show them how to prove it, drawing again from the materials he and his students had collected in their reading. In the *De Copia* Erasmus described as one method of achieving abundance of subject matter (*copia rerum*) "the accumulation of proofs and arguments" (CWE, XXIV, 605). These included "illustrative examples," Erasmus explained. "We include under 'examples' stories, fables, proverbs, opinions, parallels or comparisons, similitudes, analogies, and anything else of the same sort" (CWE, XXIV, 607).

It is noteworthy for the study of Lyly that he recommended "illustrative anecdotes" taken not only from history, myth, and literature "but also from dumb beasts and even inanimate objects" (CWE, XXIV, 615):

To discourage lack of respect for parents, one could cite the young of the stork who are said to feed and carry the old birds about in their turn when age has made them weak; or when exhorting an audience to show proper care for their children, one could bring in the she-ass which will go through a raging fire to rescue its foal; or if one wanted to hold up ingratitude to obloquy, one could use the story of the lion which Gellius quotes from Apion, or of the snake which, according to Pliny, saved its rescuer when he was beset by robbers; or to censure a man entirely without affection, neither loving anyone nor being the object of anyone's love, one could introduce the dolphin that loved a boy,