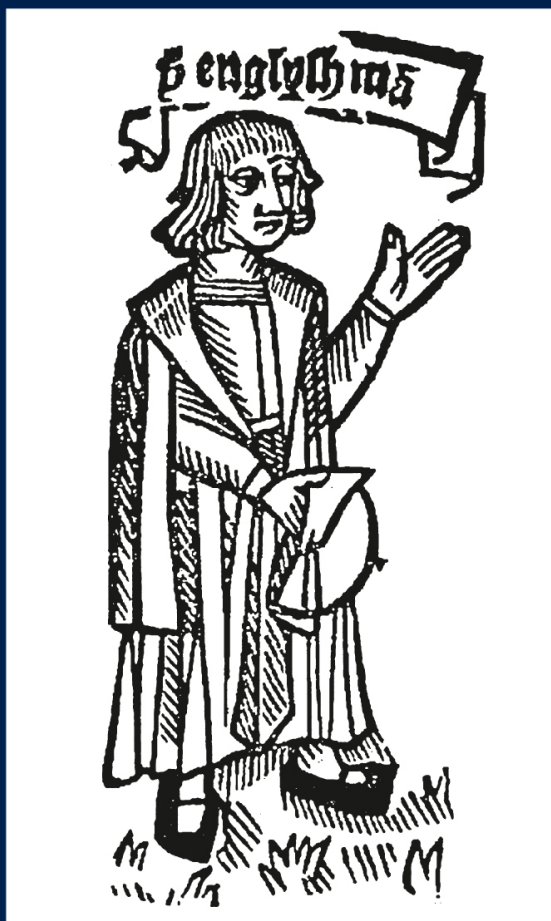


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edited by Jürgen Klein



Nicholas Breton and the English Self

Conny Loder

 PETER LANG
EDITION

Nicholas Breton and the English Self

BRITANNIA
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“I can no other answer make but thanks, / And thanks.”

J. Fanning, L. French, N. Hespelein, J. Klein, M. Klement, K. Lawler, H. Lemberg, K. Liu,
S. Pawlyk, C. Stefanowski, B. Walle, M. Wiggins.

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What is our life on earth? But as a play,
Where many a part doth come vpon the Stage,
Rich, poore, wise, fond, fayre, fowle, and great, and small,
And old, and young, death makes an end to all.¹

1. Introduction

Few will claim that Nicholas Breton excels in aesthetic writing. In fact, the twenty-first-century reader cannot but feel that Breton was a writer who seemed to focus on quantity rather than on quality, which quickly earned him the stigma of a hack writer.² It is largely due to Alexander Grosart, Jean Robertson and Ursula Kentish-Wright that most of Breton's works have become accessible in print at all. Anthologies usually neglect Breton and his works, or just mention him in passing. Although fellow writers praised Breton in the late sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century—among them, Frances Meres, George Puttenham, Thomas Dekker and John Suckling—from the late seventeenth century onward, he lost favour with his readership only to be rediscovered in the late nineteenth century.³ As fast as interest was rekindled in Breton, it also dwindled. Today, he remains neglected.⁴ One recent discussion of Breton's

1 Nicholas Breton, *Machiavels Dogge* (London, 1617). Here sig. 17^v, stanza 1.

2 See e.g. Fitzgerald Flourney, "William Breton, Nicholas Breton, and George Gascoigne," *Review of English Studies* 16.63 (July 1940): 262-73. Here p. 262.

3 See Eva March Tappan, "The Poetry of Nicholas Breton," *PMLA* 13.3 (1898): 297-332. Here p. 301-5.

4 Biographies and bibliographies about Breton date to the same time. The most complete bibliography is Samuel A. Tannenbaum, Dorothy R. Tannenbaum, *Nicholas Breton. A Concise Bibliography* (New York: unknown binding, 1947). One of the most recent works that elaborate on Breton at large is Marcy L. North, *The Anonymous Renaissance. Cultures and Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003). North discusses the general popularity of being an anonymous writer in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, elaborating on conventions, limits and the possibilities of anonymous print, especially with reference to pseudonyms, initials and anagrams. She draws attention to Breton's anagram "Salochin Treboun", see p. 16. Since initials became more and more fashionable in the sixteenth century, they not only stood for the authority of a specific print, but also contributed to confusion since some initials could indicate several authors at once, by which authority was decreased and anonymity increased, see p. 70-72. Misattribution during Breton's time already led to Breton having to correct printer's errors, such as in *The Pilgrimage to Paradise*, in which Breton attacks the printer Richard Jones for having falsely attributed poems to his name rather

texts was instigated by the University of Saskatchewan under the general supervision of Ronald W. Cooley.⁵ Major reasons for today's criticism of Breton and his works are summed up quickly. These reasons stem from several works that were falsely attributed to Breton or only nowadays correctly attributed to Breton; from the initials that close the "Ad Lectorem," which can be found in the first edition of Breton's pamphlet *Wil of Wit*,⁶ these being W.S. and ever

than to Philip Sydney. Still, as North points out, this misattribution increased Breton's fame rather than decreasing it, see p. 81. The confusion about which texts can be actually attributed to Breton has found a wider discussion, see Fredson Thayer Bowers, "An Addition to the Breton Canon," *Modern Language Notes* 45.3 (March 1930): 161-6. Bowers meticulously demonstrates that *Machivil's Dogge* is a work by Breton. Also see Edward Doughtie, "Nicholas Breton and Two Songs by Dowland," *Renaissance News* 17.1 (Spring 1964): 1-3 argues that some songs attributed to Dowland are actually by Breton. Further, Doughtie questions whether *The Passion of a Discontented Minde* can really be attributed to Breton, an attribution which has been suggested by Jean Robertson, see Jean Robertson, "Nicholas Breton's Authorship of 'Marie Magdalens Loue'" and "The Passion of a Discontented Minde," *The Modern Language Review* 36.4 (Oct. 1941). 449-59. Similarly, Mary Shakeshaft, "Nicholas Breton's The Passion of a Discontented Mind: Some New Problems," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 5.1 (Winter 1965): 165-74, addresses the question of authorship. Also see "John P. Cutts, 'The Strange Fortunes of Two Excellent Princes and The Arbor of Amorous Deuises,'" *Renaissance News* 15.1 (Spring 1962): 2-11 locates some lyrical songs which are attributed to Breton. Katharine K. Gottschalk, "Discoveries concerning British Library MS Harley 6910," *Modern Philology* 77.2 (Nov. 1979): 121-31 locates in Harley 6910 several poems which she argues are attributed to Breton but might have been in fact misattributed. Conversely, Hyder E. Rollins, "'A Small Handful of Fragrant Flowers' (1575)," *The Huntington Library Bulletin* 9 (April 1936): 27-35, and Hyder E. Rollins, *The Arbor of Amorous Devices 1597. By Nicholas Breton and Others* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1936) argue with support of some examples that the initials N.B. are not always to be identified with Nicholas Breton, which implies that many of the poems attributed to Breton are actually not his. For this study, works were selected that have been commonly agreed to be actually Breton's.

- 5 See Ronald W. Cooley et. al. "Turne Backe the Leaves," *Selected English Renaissance Religious Writing*. Dept. of English Home Page. U of Saskatchewan. 9 July 2012.
- 6 Although a pamphlet as a genre usually entails some sort of slander and libel, often associated with news, this does not really refer to Breton's pamphlets. Neither does Breton label his texts as pamphlets; yet, their conciseness and the fact that Breton wrote rapidly and had his works printed as small volumes suggests that the texts can after all be looked at as pamphlets. Pamphlets are usually categorised as being political (the main theme for pamphlets, yet only significant for England once the civil war broke out), being part of the horror genre (such as prison and rogue literature, notably rogue literature as entertainment) or being satires (criticising and ridiculing habits and spleens that are considered immoral and disruptive for the realm). Most importantly, as Andrea

since believed to belong to William Shakespeare; or from Ben Jonson's eulogy for Breton.⁷ Further, Nicholas Breton's stepfather, George Gascoigne,⁸ who surpassed Breton in poetic fame, entices scholars to at least take note of his stepson's works in passing. In contrast, much has been written about the person Breton, of which only little can be proven.⁹ In this study the private person Nicholas Breton is of little significance, since it is not my intention to shed any new light on the person. Instead, this study focuses on a selection of Breton's writings.

Grosart's late nineteenth-century collection of Breton's oeuvre is still today's standard edition, of course with Robertson's and Kentish-Wright's editions having added some significant and important works to the Breton canon. Breton's writing can be roughly separated into religious, satirical and political. All of Breton's writing concentrates on man: the Self, the human essence and

Halasz has argued, "no clear and stable lines can be drawn to distinguish between a pamphlet, a small book, and a book." Andrea Halasz, *Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997). Here p. 3. For further information see: Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003). Here p. 12; 14; George Saintsbury, "Introduction," *Elizabethan & Jacobean Pamphlets*, ed. George Saintsbury (New York: Books for the Libraries P, 1970): vii-xix; Saintsbury in his anthology of pamphlets includes Breton's *Wits Will*. Also see Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers. Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (London: Athlone P, 1983); Herbert Grabes, *Das Englische Pamphlet I. Politische und Religiöse Polemik am Beginn der Neuzeit. 1521-1640* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1990); Ulrich Bach, *Englische Flugtexte im 17. Jahrhundert: Historisch-Pragmatische Untersuchungen zur frühen Massenkommunikation* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 1997) and Paul J. Voss, *Elizabethan News Pamphlets. Shakespeare, Spenser, Marlowe & the Birth of Journalism* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne U P, 2001).

- 7 See Ursula Kentish-Wright, "Introduction," *A Mad World My Masters and Other Prose Works by Nicholas Breton*, ed. Ursula Kentish-Wright, vol. 1, 1929. (Grosse Pointe: Scholarly P, 1968): vii-xxx. Here p. xvii.
- 8 Cf. Cooley; Flourney; also see Eva March Tappan, "Nicholas Breton and George Gascoigne," *Modern Language Notes* 11.4 (April 1896): 113-114.
- 9 On Breton's life see e.g.: Alexander B. Grosart, "Memorial Introduction," *Nicholas Breton: The Works in Verse and Prose*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart, vol.1, 1879 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969): ix-lxxvi. Tappan, "Poetry of Nicholas Breton," 1898; James Neilson, "Nicholas Breton," *Dictionary of Literary Biography. 2nd Series, vol. 136. Sixteenth-Century British Nondramatic Writers*, ed. David Richardson (Detroit: Gale Research, 1994): 31-38; Jean Robertson, "Introduction," *Poems by Nicholas Breton. Not Hitherto Reprinted*, ed. Jean Robertson (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1952): xi-clix; Oskar Heidrich, *Nicholas Breton. Sein Leben und seine Gedichte*, Diss. U Leipzig, 1901 (Leipzig, 1901); Theodor Kuskop, *Nicholas Breton und seine Prosaschriften*, Diss. U Leipzig, 1902 (Leipzig: 1902).

the individual. These terms are viewed critically today, since they bear in themselves a certain complexity; they even appear to cancel each other out in late twentieth-century and early twenty-first century criticism.

Today, New Historicism is no longer a heterogeneous approach to Early Modern literature. Its focus on the marginal voices in literature makes Cultural Studies still appealing as an approach to Renaissance texts. With the aim to arrive closest at writing that was “not poetry or fiction but verbal traces less self-consciously detached from the lives real men and women actually live,”¹⁰ New Historicism concentrates much on non-canonised writers. New Historicists not only focus on a re-evaluation of post-modern understanding of literature, but also on the Self within its own culture.

A contrastive concept of the Self and the Other dominates not only New Historicism but also Cultural Studies and it has been attacked by some critics who argue that not contrast, but relation shaped Early Modern thinking.¹¹ Alistair Fox claims that it is less “through opposition” but “through a series of triangulations” and “of constructive selection, correction and assimilation” that the Early Modern man constructs his Self.¹² Being further criticised for describing Early Modern man too much as a cultural construct that is bound by epoch-making eras,¹³ some New Historicists now speak more of a tension between “the socially constructed character and the self-conscious individual”.¹⁴

Some criticism yet questions the validity of Early Modern individuality. Michel Foucault observes that the late sixteenth century created a state that “ignores individuals, looking only at the interests of the totality, or [...] of a class

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- 10 Catharine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practising New Historicism* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000). Here p. 21. Gallagher and Greenblatt refer here to Clifford Geertz and his view of anthropology that paved the way for New Historicism. Also compare to p. 10/11 and 14-16 where Gallagher and Greenblatt list what they consider to be the aims of New Historicism.
 - 11 See Richard Levin, “Thoughts in the New Historicizing of English Renaissance Drama,” *New Literary History* 21.3 (Spring, 1990): 433-447; also see Alois Wierlacher, Corinna Albrecht, “Kulturwissenschaft Xenologie,” *Einführung in die Kulturwissenschaft*, ed. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008): 280-306. Here p. 284.
 - 12 Alistair Fox, *The English Renaissance. Identity and Representation in Elizabethan England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997). Here p 14.
 - 13 See Olav Lausund, Stein Haugom Olsen, “Introduction,” *Self-fashioning and Metamorphosis in Early Modern English Literature*, ed. Olav Lausund and Stein Haugom Olsen (Oslo, Novus P: 2003): viii-xxx.
 - 14 J. A. Piesse, “Identity,” *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway, reprint (Malden: Blackwell, 2003): 634-43. Here p. 639.

or a group among citizens.”¹⁵ Foucault, who concentrates on the modern subject rather than on the Early Modern subject, sees the subject “historicized, [...] held to be wholly and only the product of history.”¹⁶ Robert M. Strozier concurs when he argues that as far as Early Modern man is concerned, one needs to speak of an “individual”, i.e. an “*individuum*” that signifies “the human material entity (including mind)” that is not yet “a cultural subject”.¹⁷ According to Strozier, the Early Modern man is not a self-determined cultural individual yet. For Elizabeth Hanson this lack of self-determination is also mirrored in the term “subject”. She argues that there are two “different grammars of knowledge. The first supposes that the subject knows transitively, taking the world as the object of his thinking. The second posits that to the extent that the subject knows (and this may not be his defining activity) he must do so self-reflexively, recognizing his place in the hierarchical order.”¹⁸ To Tina Belsey it is not only knowledge but also power that defines subjectivity. Her work concentrates on the difference between a “subject” as someone being subjected to a power of monarch and a “subject” as someone being an individual.¹⁹

If one accepts that, as New Historicism has suggested, the Early Modern man is less a being described by its human essence, than a construct, described by its social, political and cultural surrounding, then “individuality must be seen in the light of cultural context” and “any exposition of self is a manifestation of a series of options, rather than something intrinsically different from anything else.”²⁰ Some New Historicists even suggest that the Self is not part of a common consciousness. Instead, the Early Modern Self should be seen as a “de-centered, provisional, contingent self incapable of a unified subjectivity,”²¹ as for example Terry G. Sherwood suggests. Hugh Grady sees Early Modern period as bringing forth a “fragmented subject”,²² i.e. a subject, who performs

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- 15 Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-84. Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, vol. 3 (Penguin: London, 1994). Here p. 332.
 - 16 Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies. Theory and Practice*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008). Here p. 225.
 - 17 Robert M. Strozier, *Foucault, Subjectivity, and Identity. Historical Constructions of Subject and Self* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2002). Here p. 9.
 - 18 Elizabeth Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998). Here p. 2.
 - 19 See Tina (A.C) Besley, Michael A. Peters, *Subjectivity & Truth. Foucault, Education and the Culture of Self* (Peter Lang, NY: 2007). Here p. 4.
 - 20 Piesse, “Identity,” 635.
 - 21 Terry G. Sherwood, *The Self in Early Modern Literature. For the Common Good* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne P, 2007). Here p. 2.
 - 22 Hugh Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne. Power and Subjectivity From “Richard II” to “Hamlet”* (Oxford: OUP, 2002). Here p. 54.

roles and thus becomes a protean player.²³ If the Early Modern man, however, had no conception about his Self, how can plays and literary works engage in a discourse on mistaken identities, Levin wonders, and suggests that after all there must have been a notion of a fixed identity.²⁴

As already pointed out, Breton makes continuous reference to man's Self and his identity, drawing a distinction between a desired and an undesired identity, particularly within a cultural frame. It is the aim of this study to elaborate on Breton's understanding of man's Self. This study will use the term *individual* to signify the human entity, including both body and mind. The aim of analysis is to locate the individual and its power in Breton's texts: Breton's individual is after all a source of subversion, whose reflective and creative capacity could easily dislocate the individual from the community and from authorities' control.

At this point it also has to be stated that Breton's readership is chiefly male. This is also the case when Breton elaborates on women in his texts: while the ideal woman is discussed, be it as far as her character or her social position are concerned, it is, nevertheless, the male reader whom Breton addresses. This is also true for Breton's works that are specifically dedicated to a female patron. This study therefore will consider the Self and the individual as predominantly male, although not exclusively. I am aware that his might be received as gender discrimination or gender stereotyping, yet I would like to stress that I include both sexes in my analysis whenever Breton's texts imply that "man" includes both male and female and that the reception of his texts is directed towards readers of both sexes.

Although today only few read Breton, he was one of the most prolific writers of his time and left behind a vast oeuvre. Since the topic of this study is not Breton but rather Breton's reaction to the political, social and cultural English Self in the Early Modern period, only those works were selected that deal particularly with politically and culturally infused topics. As a consequence, this study neglects a large part of Breton's religious texts. The objection that culture and politics are interwoven into the shaping of a Christian identity is certainly valid; to call for an inclusion of religious texts into the discussion within this study is equally valid. Yet, Breton's religious texts are so complex and so nu-

23 See Grady, *Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Montaigne*, 56.

24 See Levin, "Thoughts in the New Historicizing," 443/4. Greenblatt reacts to these attacks against New Historicism in one of his latest books, claiming New Historicists' focus on the single voices helps to grasp individuality after all, see Gallagher/Greenblatt, *Practising New Historicism*, 16.

merous that including them would restrict them to a superficial discussion. A discussion that does these religious texts justice requires a study of its own.

This study reads Breton's cultural and political texts against Breton's own time and against the cultural and political context that preceded Breton: Pico della Mirandola, Machiavelli and More. Influences of Pico's unrestricted Prometheus, Machiavelli's deceptive *Übermensch* and More's pseudo-altruistic socialist can all be located in Breton's construction of the English Self. Furthermore, Breton's texts will be read against Montaigne, Bacon, Descartes and Hobbes.

Chapter 2 places Breton into the Early Modern context. The enthusiastic view that portrays man in his unlimited possibilities, his free will and his artistic skill to shape his own life is compared with Machiavelli's *Übermensch*. Equally it will be shown that man's unlimited possibilities can, as Montaigne argues, throw him into a state of flux: the Early Modern man is seemingly invincible, yet without an identity.

Against this context of the Early Modern man, chapter 3 discusses Breton's account of human nature. Despite criticism's bias against the concept of human nature, Early Modern man and his nature are essential questions of humanist thought. Breton discusses human nature from a *pre-lapsus* and *post-lapsus* perspective, elaborating on how far nature and nurture are interdependent. *A Dialogue full of pithe and pleasure*, *The Good and the Badde* and *The Pilgrimage to Paradise* form the primary texts for this chapter.

Chapter 4 explores Breton's view of man's rational faculty, his will and his intellect. In the pamphlet *Wits Trenchmour* Breton draws on Plato's dialogues, exposing man's intellectual frailty. In *The Pilgrimage to Paradise* Breton explains how man's cognitive action is directed towards spiritual salvation. Here Breton suggests that man's mind must be kept in spiritual motion.

Chapter 5 establishes the English Self. This chapter analyses how Breton addresses instrumental questions of his time, especially those of identity, the Self and nationality. The Self is thereby contrasted against the Other: the foreign, the unknown and the indecipherable. In this chapter, Early Modern culture is scrutinized under the aspect of unity or, to be more exact, lack of unity. It will be shown how Breton resists the dynamics of culture, dynamics that make any culture "contested, temporal, and emergent" as James Clifford has argued.²⁵ Read against a linguistic understanding of Peirce and Saussure, Breton's non-Englishman is an indecipherable sign, opposed to the transparent and uniform

25 James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986): 1-26. Here p. 19.

Englishman.²⁶ Breton's depiction of the English Self can be found foremost in his satirical texts, *An Old Man's Lesson*; *Strange Fortune of Two Excellent Princes*; *A Mad World my Masters*; *Strange News out of Divers Countries*; *Choice, Chance, and Change, or Conceits in their Colours*, the political texts, *Invective against Treason* and *A Murmurer* and the *Pasquil*-series. In these texts, Breton shows how man, when transgressing, becomes a threat to the commonwealth. It will become clear that for Breton intellectual activity and individuality are causes of a defective society.

Chapter 6 focuses on Breton's texts that deal with the consequences of individuality. Subjects that withdraw from the authoritative voice became political and moral trespassers who were seen as in need of being cured, both in a Christian and medical context. This withdrawal constitutes an undesired identity, which is exemplified by Breton's pamphlets *Invective against Treason* and *A Murmurer*. In these texts, the transgressor becomes a particular individual, located outside the English culture. The "private persons", as Breton labels the non-English outsiders, are mirrors of James I and his political propaganda. Further, it will be shown that when Breton draws on motifs of utopianism, dystopianism and England as *arcadia* or as New Eden, his view of man's destructive capacity foreshadows Hobbes's position on man in his *Leviathan*.

Chapter 7 elaborates on materialistic aspects in Breton's texts, particularly on man's social mobility. Breton's texts denounce excessive and illegitimately accumulated wealth and describe the consequences as far as morality and communal stability are concerned, which makes them essentially anti-capitalist. Underlying this anti-capitalist sentiment is Breton's xenophobia, which is amply demonstrated in *The Pilgrimage to Paradise*, the *Pasquils*, the *Vncasing of Machivils Instructions* and *Grimello's Fortunes*.

Finally, this study puts forward the argument that the individual in the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century thinking was present. Yet, the individual was perceived as a threat. Breton's construction of a patriotic, transparent and uniform Englishman not only rooted out problems from "Italianisation" or any other foreign "-isation" of the English culture, but also created a pseudo-individuality within a homogeneous community.

26 Breton's writing falls into both periods, Elizabeth's and James's. Since Breton wrote largely out of the perspective of an Englishman for fellow Englishmen, rather than from the perspective of a British subject, I decided to concentrate on the English perspective. Whenever Breton's text renders a distinction between English, Scottish or British I will address this specifically.

2. Setting the scene: the concept of man

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Italy began to take the lead in two concerns that shaped Europe and became known as humanism and the Renaissance. Italian philosophers reflected not only on the ideal government but also on the ideal man, the *vir virtutis*. Within humanism the view of an ideal man had surpassed the negative view of St. Augustine. The early Christian theologian put forward a view of man as a fallen man when he stressed man's evil disposition. Since man had disobeyed God he had brought sin and damnation upon future generations.²⁷ Contrary to this, humanism focused on the far more positive depiction of man as can be found in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Pico's *Oration of the Dignity of Man* endows man with skills for outstanding achievements:

Neither a fixed abode nor a form that is thine alone nor any function peculiar to thy longing and according to thy judgment thou mayest have and possess what abode, what form, and what functions thou thyself shalt desire. The nature of other beings is limited and constrained within the bounds of laws prescribed by Us. Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center that thou mayest from thence more easily observe whatever is in the world. We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as thou the maker and molder of thyself shalt prefer. Thou shalt have the power to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. Thou shalt have the power, out of thy soul's judgement, to be reborn into the higher forms, which are divine.²⁸

Pico's Adam features talents that make him a moulder of his own Self so to fashion his own identity, which either leads him down a degenerative path or up a regenerative path; he is the "new Prometheus."²⁹ Further, he is a "chameleon" who not only is offered choices,³⁰ but also is not "constrained", since his decisions are taken by free will, which ultimately suggests that Adam is set outside

27 See Karla Pollmann, "'And Without Thorn the Rose'? Augustine's Interpretations of Genesis 3:18 and the Intellectual Tradition," *Genesis and Christian Theology*, ed. Nathan MacDonald, Mark W. Elliott and Grant Macaskill (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012): 216-27. Here p. 217-21.

28 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, "Oration on the Dignity of Man," *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, ed. Ernst Cassirer et al. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1948): 215-54. Here p. 224/5.

29 See Stéphane Toussaint, "Goivanni Pico della Mirandola. Synthetische Aussöhnung aller Philosophien," *Philosophien der Renaissance. Eine Einführung*, ed. Paul Richard Blum (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999): 65-76. Here p. 68.

30 Pico, "Dignity of Man," 225.

predestination. This free will enables man to change his nature—man becomes his own maker.

Jacob Burckhardt suggests that this change in view from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance caused a change in paradigm by which man transformed from a member of a “race, people, party, family or corporation” to an individual.³¹ Man had just begun to expand his travels and man’s “cosmopolitanism,” Burckhardt argues, is “in itself a high stage of individualism.”³² Although Burckhardt’s view has been criticised for being romanticised,³³ he points to the changes that were taking place during the Renaissance. Man changed from a “fallen spirit to that of a fabricator.”³⁴ And so Francesco Petrarch shifted the focus from an authoritative voice onto the personal “I”, an I that would supplant the aloof rationality of the late medieval times, which still dominated the scholastic movement.³⁵ Petrarch’s “I” was to become a full human being, led by his will rather than his intellect.³⁶ Petrarch’s and Pico’s depictions of man suggest that “humans are capable of defining their own nature, and can fulfil nature’s noblest potential; the human spirit is immortal.”³⁷ As a result, this cosmopolitan—the world traveller—would attest to “the human capacity to reduce the element of chance in human affairs,” since Travelling Man shows that man can change his own life rather than wait for it to be changed.³⁸ This was however a process that is still at its early beginning, as Andrew Hadfield shows, since travel literature only started to gain significance in the middle of the seventeenth century.³⁹ Renaissance cosmopolitanism did not necessarily refer to actively travelling; rather it referred to taking in new impulses from foreign countries.

Pico’s enthusiastic view that portrays man in his unlimited possibilities, his free will and his artistic skill to shape his own life, was only one side of the

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- 31 Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy*, trans. G.C. Middlemore, reprint (Penguin: London, 2004). Here p. 99.
- 32 Burckhardt, *Civilization*, 100.
- 33 See for example Roberta Garner, “Jacob Burckhardt as a Theorist of Modernity: Reading The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy,” *Sociological Theory* 8.1 (Spring: 1990): 48-57.
- 34 Michael Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence. A Social History of Smart* (Malden: Blackwell, 2006). Here p. 49.
- 35 See Eckhard Kébler, *Die Philosophie der Renaissance. Das 15. Jahrhundert* (München, C.H. Beck, 2008). Here p. 21.
- 36 See Kébler, *Philosophie der Renaissance*, 24.
- 37 Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence*, 48.
- 38 Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence*, 51.
- 39 See Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance. 1545-1625* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1998). Here p. 4-6.

coin.⁴⁰ In the turmoil of the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and the battle over truth and salvation, the perception of man as his own creator also led to a crisis of the individual.⁴¹ And it is within the politico-religious turmoil that man becomes a body that could be shaped.⁴² Soon, focus shifted towards the frail and destructive capacity that the new maker of his own Self brought along. Shakespeare's Hamlet ponders on what a "piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving, how express and admirable in action, how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god! the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of dust?"⁴³ The outstanding abilities are reduced to man's essence: dust. Similarly, Shakespeare's notorious villain, Richard of Gloucester, signals less a resignation to man's frailty, but rather a subversive capacity of man's own creation. His will enables him to transform his countenance and course to exterior conditions in order to achieve his aim:

Why, I can smile, and murder whiles I smile,
And cry "Content" to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.
I'll drown more sailors than the mermaid shall,
I'll slay more gazers than the basilisk,
I'll play the orator as well as Nestor,
Deceive more slyly than Ulysses could,
And like a Sinon, take another Troy.
I can add colours to the chameleon,
Change shapes with Proteus for advantages,
And set the murderous Machevil to school.

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- 40 See Torben Hviid Nielsen, "The State, the Market and the Individual. Politics, Economy and the Idea of Man in the Works of Thomas Hobbes, Adam Smith and in Renaissance Humanism," *Acta Sociologica* 29.4 (1986): 283-302. Here p. 283
- 41 See Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-84. Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, vol. 3 (Penguin: London, 1994): 326-48. Here p. 332.
- 42 Michel Foucault, "Die Maschen der Macht," *Michel Foucault. Analytik der Macht*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005): 220-39. Here p. 231.
- 43 William Shakespeare, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," *The Riverside Shakespeare. The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997): 1183-1245. Here 2.2.303.8.

Can I do this, and cannot get a crown?
Tut, were it farther off, I'll pluck it down.⁴⁴

Richard's ability to deceive—to “add colours to the chameleon” and to change “shapes with Proteus”—installs Shakespeare's notorious tyrant as a machine that is no longer guided by the divine elements but that is beyond control. Shakespeare's Richard mocks Pico's enthusiasm when he demonstrates the abundance of evil of which man is capable, particularly when his idols, to which he compares himself, culminate in Machiavelli. The ability to add colours to the chameleon signals how easily man's capability to be his own master can be perverted. Robert Mason's *Reasons Academie* equally senses such a disturbing capability and argues:

let it suffice for a conclusion, that whosouer goeth about by policie, art, or vnnaturall meanes, to erect, set vp, or maintaine any course or way, by proportioning of time, place, or number, for the benefit, reliefe, or sustentation of mankind, then God himselfe hath set downe and prouided, in the making and preseruing of his creatures: goeth about as much as in him lieth, to reproue his creator for some defect or war: and to become himselfe in the nature of a God, to supply, succor, and make good the want, or defect. Wherefore I aduise, great warines to be taken, how men presume too much of their owne wisdoms: and to containe themselues within al humble obedience, to take what God hath prouided [...].⁴⁵

The chain of being as installed by God must be upheld and therefore man should not “seeke to alter, change, charge, or inkomber, the course and way, the Almighty power hath appointed in these things: least it turne to our vtter confusion”.⁴⁶

The tendency for man to perceive himself as a sculptor of his own identity, however, found ample resonance during the Renaissance. In that era, interest shifted “from the universal and transcendental to the particular, visible, material phenomena” of man's present-state life.⁴⁷ The need to sketch and sculpt, i.e. to replicate what man perceived with his senses, also required the perceived to be put into words. The translation from senses into words or physical objects, however, ultimately meant that men would manipulate what they perceived and clas-

44 William Shakespeare, “The Third Part of Henry the Sixth,” *The Riverside Shakespeare. The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J.J.M. Tobin, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997): 711–47. Here 3.2.182–95.

45 Robert Mason, *Reasons Academie* (London: 1605). *EEBO*. Here p. 26/7.

46 Mason, *Reasons Academie*, 46.

47 Vivien Law, *The History of Linguistics in Europe from Plato to 1600* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003). Here p. 213

sified, “to suit their needs and desires.”⁴⁸ This act of creativity marks the new artist:

[He has] the power to observe, dissect, analyze, measure, invent, and discover ideas of time, eternity, the human body, the earth, the distance between the planets, and the human intellect. This reorientation, moreover, gave enormous significance to the source of those powers: human intelligence.⁴⁹

If Richard is symptomatic of a generation of Renaissance fabricators, he shows how the transformation from passive man can advance a subversion of society. This capacity to be a fabricator also found its way into Machiavelli’s works, notably *The Prince*. There, Machiavelli follows the mirror-for-princes literary tradition but claims that only a strong and determined man, “*l’uomo impetuoso*”, who applies force, determination, fraud and efficiency, will succeed in the battle against Fortuna.⁵⁰ Machiavelli’s man learns empirically from history and applies this learning to install a prosperous future thereby outdoing Fortuna. Man would become his own master.

Machiavelli’s empiricism requires a stable entity and that is human nature. Thomas Greene points out that Machiavelli is “interested in changing political states rather than changing men,” since “the vertical flexibility of man is very limited, and such as it is, leads downward to the brute rather than upward to the angel.”⁵¹ Greene reads a consistency of human nature into Machiavelli, claiming that Machiavelli’s writings suggest that human nature cannot be altered. Nevertheless, one can take advantage of man’s consistency, i.e. of man’s egotism. Thus, Greene infers in his explication of Machiavelli, that man will not “be greater or more polished or even wiser in the full sense of the word; he will simply be warier, better armed with percept and cunning. The crucial process for Machiavelli is not metamorphosis; it is rather the endless, inconclusive struggle between fortune and human resourcefulness.”⁵²

When *post-lapsus* man inherited a chance to determine his own fate with an unlimited ability to create, this capability became an indicator of “a set of procedures that have a distinct goal in mind: the forging of a ‘thing’ (whether material

48 Law, *History of Linguistics*, 213.

49 Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence*, 49.

50 See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Adams, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton & Norton, 1992) Here p. 68/9.

51 Thomas Greene, “The Flexibility of the Self in Renaissance Literature,” *The Disciplines of Criticism. Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation, and History*, ed. Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, Lowry Nelson Jr. (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1968): 241-64. Here p. 257.

52 Greene, “The Self,” 258.

entity or abstract idea) that is stable, enduring and knowable.”⁵³ Yet this stability is not a given. As Keßler claims, Pico releases man into freedom to be unbound and to roam the planet without borders, while at the same time it is freedom that casts man out of Paradise and denies man a point of rest. The quest for stability, Pico implies, is derived from man having lost this stability in the first place.⁵⁴

Man’s infinite possibilities and his restlessness are topics that Michel de Montaigne reflects on in his *Essays*:

A man should not rivet himself too fast to his own humours and temperament. Our chief talent is the power of suiting ourselves to different ways of life. To be tied and bound of necessity to one single way is not to live but to exist. The best minds are those that are most various and supple. [...] If it were in my power to mould myself as I would, there is no form, however good, in which I should wish to be so fixed that I could not depart from it. Life is an unequal, irregular, and multiform movement. Incessantly to follow one’s own track, to be so close a prisoner to one’s own inclinations that one cannot stray from them, or give them a twist, is to be no friend to oneself, still less to be one’s master; it is to be one’s own slave.⁵⁵

Montaigne’s focus is not on mankind—but on “a man”, on the individual, and he, too, places man into the protean context; restlessness, the lack of boundaries, which Pico earlier described as a chance for man, became in the late sixteenth century a burden.⁵⁶ While man at the turn of the century still had to emancipate himself from the restraints of the Middle Ages, Early Modern man in the sixteenth century faced a religious turmoil that propelled man out of his struggle for emancipation into a state of instability. This instability can be found in Montaigne. Montaigne’s observations of life are, as he claims, “controlled and shaped to what I am, and to my condition of life. I can do no better”.⁵⁷ This statement implies a subjective perception of life. Life’s flux forces him not to “portray [man’s] being” but instead man’s “passage; not a passage from one ago to another or, as the common people say, from seven years to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute”.⁵⁸ Although this indicates consistency at first sight, it also shows that life is fleeting, not stable and cannot be fixed.

53 Thomas Healy, “Playing Seriously in Renaissance Writing,” *Renaissance Transformations. The Making of English Writing (1500-1650)*, ed. Margaret Healy and Thomas Healy (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009): 15-31. Here p. 18.

54 See Keßler, *Philosophie der Renaissance*, 119/120.

55 Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, transl. J.M. Cohen, reprint (London: Penguin, 1993). Here 3.3, p. 250/1.

56 See Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence*, 43.

57 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.2, 245.

58 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.2, 235.

Montaigne's "multiform movement of life" is Janus-faced, since it allows men with "various" minds to be other than what they are—pretences become the norm, simply because men can. Montaigne laments:

We have abandoned nature, and now wish to teach lessons to her who once guided us so happily and safely. [...] They also teach us how the reason, which we use as it suits us, ever discovering something different and something novel, leaves in us no apparent trace of nature. Men have treated it as perfumers treat oil; they have refined it with so many arguments and far-fetched reasonings that it has become variable and individual to each person, and has lost its own constant and universal aspect.⁵⁹

Montaigne criticises man's attempts to re-invent nature. By changing himself, man changes nature and thus the "multiform" life becomes in Montaigne an incoherent potpourri of heterogeneity and individuality. This heterogeneity leads to a destabilised society:

And yet do we find any end to the need for interpreting? Is there any progress to be seen, any advance towards peace? Do we need any fewer pleaders and judges than when this great mass of law was still in its infancy? On the contrary, we obscure and bury the meaning; we can no longer discover it without negotiating many fences and barriers. Men do not recognize the natural infirmity of the mind; it does nothing but ferret and search, and is all the time turning, contriving, and entangling itself in its own work, like a silk-worm; and there it suffocates, 'a mouse in pitch.'⁶⁰

Man encounters difficulties participating in life, since language begins to bar him from doing so. Truth is no longer an accepted fact, but an opinion to be negotiated and to be interpreted. Further Montaigne claims:

There is more trouble in interpreting interpretations than in interpreting the things themselves, and there are more books on books than on any other subject. We do nothing but write comments on one another. The whole world is swarming with commentaries; of authors there is a great dearth. [...] Our disputes are about words. I ask what is Nature, Pleasure, a Circle, and Substitution. The question is couched in words, and is answered in the same coin. A stone is a body. But if you press the point: And what is a body? – A substance. – And what is a substance? and so on, you will end by driving the answerer to exhaust his dictionary. One substitutes one word for another that is often less well understood. I know what Man is better than I know the meaning of Animal or Mortal or Rational. To resolve one doubt, they present me with three, it is the Hydra's head.⁶¹

Put into lexical terminology, the intellectual pursuit of bringing stability to the "multiform" life by observing, labelling and finding categories only increases the inability of man to communicate with other men. An increased taxonomy,

59 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.12, 326/7.

60 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.13, 347.

61 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.13, 349/50.

one could argue, destabilises society by hindering its subjects from communicating and from feeling like they belong to a specific society.

This multiform life must be contained so that man's identity is shaped and preserved. Greene draws attention to the dominant metaphor of the man as a wax figure, and argues that already in the early fifteenth century, humanism described the upbringing and education of children in that way: "The metaphor of fashioning implies that a man's nature is essentially formless, like wax, essentially neutral, and not, let us note in passing, tainted with original depravity. Education in humanist thought is the seal imprinted on the soft wax of consciousness."⁶² Current criticism sees this forming process more sceptically. Timothy J. Reiss, for example, claims that the fashion-metaphor as it is found in Erasmus's "homines [...] non nascuntur, sed finguntur"—men are not born, but shaped—is problematic, since to render *fingere* as *fashion* is an interpretation rather than a literal translation.⁶³ Independent of the difficulty of how one should read Erasmus's *fingere*—to form, to create, to fashion—it is the contrast that Erasmus provided between *nascuntur* and *finguntur*, which is of significance. Man's development is described as a process in which man becomes something other than what he is born.⁶⁴ When Erasmus describes this process in the passive voice he signals that this process is something that happens to the subject, rather than it being something that the subject actively influences. This suggests that Erasmus's shaping process reduces man to a passive object.

Pico describes this process differently when he puts man into the position of the active agent; there man becomes his own creator and the one who fashions his own life after his own free will. The "assertion of human freedom, particularly of the freedom to select one's destiny, to mold and transform the self" is what Renaissance man would later claim in a more explicit mode.⁶⁵ Thomas Greene, who writes in pre-New Historicism mode and thus predates Stephen

62 Greene, "The Self," 249.

63 Timothy J. Reiss, *Mirages of the Self: Patterns of Personhood in Ancient and Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2003). Here p. 353.

64 Within the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Post-Structuralism, Cultural Studies and Gender Studies have begun to focus on the concepts of body, man and the Self as a material to be shaped and inscribed by authorities and communities, to be sexualised and to be gendered. See for example Michel Foucault, "Macht und Körper," *Analytik der Macht*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005): 74-82. Here p. 74ff; "Die Maschen der Macht," *Analytik der Macht*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005): 220-239. Here p. 220 ff; See for example Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

65 Greene, "The Self," 243.

Greenblatt's notion of self-fashioning, claims that "one may still inquire how flexible the self does in fact appear in works of Renaissance literature, what capacities for change it allows, and what techniques, if any, it reveals for the willed metamorphosis of the personality."⁶⁶ Several years later Stephen Greenblatt responds to this and argues that the intention to fashion oneself is a distinct feature of sixteenth century England: "[...] there is in the early modern period a change in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures that govern the generation of identities."⁶⁷ While to fashion in the sense of "the action or process of making, for particular features or appearance, for a distinct style or pattern" had been used long before the sixteenth century, it "is in the sixteenth century that *fashion* seems to come into wide currency as a way of designating the forming of a self." Thus, "fashioning may suggest the achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving."⁶⁸ This mode as Greenblatt calls it, can be perceived most prominently in Montaigne's *Essays*.

Montaigne claims in "On Repentance" that he does not "shape the man" but "portray[s]" him and

offer[s] to the view one in particular, who is ill-shaped enough, and whom, could I refashion him, I should certainly make very different from what he is. But there is no chance of that. [...] Constancy itself is nothing but a more sluggish movement. I cannot fix my subject. He is always restless, and reels with a natural intoxication. I catch him here, and he is at the moment when I turn my attention to him.⁶⁹

Montaigne's view of man—himself in this case—appears at first external. His "view" is directed towards the "shape" with a desire to "refashion" man if the shape fails to please. Labelling constancy as "sluggish movement," Montaigne created a paradox that explains why he sees man as being in a passage—man's Self is in flux. Although Montaigne denies himself the ability to refashion man, also himself, as far as man's shape goes, he admits that some shaping takes place through man's surrounding. Man, being exposed to his surroundings, finds no rest and no calamity but instead is passively transformed. A normative approach to man's Self, as it is taken by what Montaigne calls the "others", be it the other writers or man's surroundings, is rejected in "On Repentance." That this influence can indeed be difficult to withdraw from becomes clear when Montaigne claims the following:

66 Greene, "The Self," 243.

67 Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980). Here p. 1.

68 Both quotes Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 2.

69 Montaigne, *Essays* 3.2, 235.

[...] the sight of another's anguish gives me real pain, and my body has then taken over the sensations of some person I am with. A perpetual cougher irritates my lungs and my throat; and I am more reluctant to visit a sick man to whom I am bound by duty and interest than one who has a smaller claim on my attention and consideration. As I observe a disease, so I catch it and give it lodging in myself.⁷⁰

The sense "of being altered in one's essential nature to the point of actually becoming another by force of material or other impression, of being *physically* one with a collective life-world, not as an unusual or one-off experience but as a general mark of being human, furnishes apparently more risible examples."⁷¹ Montaigne's passage entails empathy, as much as it suggests a certain notion of hypochondria. More importantly, Montaigne shows how other people's sensations can implant themselves in the observer and how the human perception overwrites logical judgement. The irrational conduct by which man can be shaped is beyond man's control. The lack of control indicates its subversive power: in Montaigne's description the observer is caught in a process of being shaped, and it appears as if there is little that the observer can do to reject the shaping or withdraw from it. The observer is reduced to a passive being, which is almost by force (and against its will) shaped by exterior circumstances. In Montaigne's description of man Pico's free will appears to have been annihilated and Early Modern man is faced with limitations in his freedom.

Montaigne, contrary to various conduct manuals, claims that his portrayal of man is descriptive, not normative. He rejects being compared with those who "have attempted to correct the morals of the world by new ideas," since all they achieved was to reform "the surface vices; but the essential ones they have left unaffected, if not increased. And there one must fear an increase."⁷² Even more radically, Montaigne claims that change comes through God alone:

For myself, I may wish on the whole, to be otherwise; I may condemn and dislike my general character, and implore God to reform me throughout, and to excuse my general weakness. But I should not, I think, give the name of repentance to this, and more than I should to my dissatisfaction at not being an angel or a Cato. My actions are controlled and shaped to what I am, and to my condition of life. I can do no better. And repentance does not properly apply to things that are not in our power, though regret certainly does.⁷³

Montaigne admits once more that the "condition of life" plays a major role in man's conduct. At the same time, he shifts from external to internal when he talks of fashioning morals and Christian virtues. He turns to self-study, claiming

70 Montaigne, *Essays*, 1.21, 36/7.

71 Reiss, *Mirages of the Self*, 381.

72 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.2, 242.

73 Montaigne, *Essays*, 3.2, 245.

that he “turn[s his] gaze inward” and looks inside because he has “no business but with [himself]” and thus he “revolves” within himself.⁷⁴ Gazing inward implies a shaping of the inner Self and the shaping is a reformation, modelled after religion.

Yet, what ensued once this shaping was no longer directed towards a Christian reformation? If man really became autonomous in his shaping, he posed a threat to the authorities Stephen Greenblatt argues:

Thus separated from the imitation of Christ—a separation that can, as we shall see, give rise to considerable anxiety—self-fashioning acquires a new range of meanings: it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of the elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony: it suggests representation of one’s nature or intention in speech and actions. And with representation we return to literature, or rather we may grasp that self-fashioning derives its interest precisely from the fact that it functions without regard for a sharp distinction between literature and social life. It invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one’s control, the attempt to fashion other selves.⁷⁵

Accordingly, one can argue that both real and fictional authors invent characters that can either be shaped as role models when they express identity, or alternatively as the Other when they reject identity. Paul Michael Privateer goes so far to argue that Western culture brought about “a human being” that “did not exist solely in terms of a cosmologically based hierarchy. In fact, this emerging non-hierarchical human, which we often associate with various hybrids of Romanticism, existentialism, and post-structuralism, had its origin in the Renaissance construction of the self.”⁷⁶ That the construction of the Renaissance Self is not stable shows Bacon’s warning that men need to know themselves and their limits, since “they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they sought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.”⁷⁷

It is thus that in the sixteenth century man’s self-confidence found expression in a different lifestyle and a new fashion. Fashion involves adaptation and change as Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass in *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* point out.⁷⁸ In sketching the development of the

74 Montaigne, *Essays*, 2.17, 219/20.

75 Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 3.

76 Privateer, *Inventing Intelligence*, 44.

77 Francis Bacon, *Essays. Or Counsels. Civil and Moral*, no ed. (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1995). Here XXIII, p. 64.

78 See Ann Rosalind Jones, Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (CUP: Cambridge, 2000). Here p.1.

word “fashion” in the second half of the sixteenth century, Jones and Stallybrass claim that the

innovative force of fashion was associated both with the dissolution of the body politic and with the exorbitance of the state’s subjects. And this too was registered linguistically. “Fashion” extended its semantic field to include the sense of mere form or pretence [...]. [...] to ‘fashion’ acquired a new meaning: to counterfeit or pervert.⁷⁹

Fashion is connected with appearance rather than with substance, since it pertains to the surface of man and not his essence, and so connotes a manipulation of things or beings in order to give them a different shape.⁸⁰ Man became a creator, and thus infringed on God’s monopoly of the act of creation. Consequently, man assumed the role of one who moulds and became an artificer, since he interfered with nature. This not only changed individuals, but also shaped whole communities.

This new lifestyle also shaped the view of man’s intellect. When Francis Bacon claims that man’s life is a result of the various stages of learning—and thus of man’s changeable intellect—he suggests that flux to some degree is a necessary element of progress.⁸¹ Further, in his *New Organum* he postulates a plea for proper reasoning, which, for Bacon is inductive reasoning, and which he describes as one of the human prejudices that stagnate the cognition process. Listing four “idols and false notions which are now in possession of the human understanding” and merely “trouble” mankind,⁸² Bacon offers under the “Idols of the Market Place” the following discussion:

For it is by discourse that men associate, and words are imposed according to the apprehension of the vulgar. And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the understanding. Nor do definitions or explanations wherewith in some things learned men are wont to guard and defend themselves, by any means set the matter tight. But words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw

79 Jones/Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 1. Although Jones/Stallybrass concentrate on non-English clothes in their discussion of fashion, the development of the French pendant—*façon*—is not traced in their studies. The *Dictionnaire de la Langue Française du 16e Siècle* lists for *façon* the following entries: *fantaisie*, *caprice* and notes that Montaigne made ample use of this term in his *Essays*. Montaigne for example speaks of “façonner de nouveau” in his *Essays*, 3.2, which is translated as “fashion” or “refashion.” Michel de Montaigne. *Les Essais*. La Page de Trismégiste. 8 August 2012.

80 See Jones/Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing*, 1.

81 See Bacon, *Essays*, LVIII, p. 143ff.

82 Francis Bacon, “The New Organon. Or True Directions Concerning the Interpretation of Nature,” *The New Organon and Related Writings*, ed. Fulton H. Anderson (New York: Liberal Arts P, 1960): 33-270. Here Book 1, aph. 38, p. 47.