

Drama Up North: The Queen's Men and Strange's Men
at the Lancastrian Stanley Household, 1587-1590

by

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B.A., University of Birmingham, 2006

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Abstract

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This study offers a comparative repertory-based approach to drama in early modern Lancashire. From 1587 to 1590, the Lancastrian Stanley household accounts record two acting companies' frequent visits to the Stanley household. The Stanleys were a powerful northern family in the troubled region of Lancashire. The companies, the Queen's Men and Strange's Men, were famous, and their patrons, Queen Elizabeth I and Ferdinando Stanley respectively, make their visits to the Stanleys noteworthy.

A comparative repertory approach examines how the companies' repertoires treat two contemporary concerns about Lancashire—region and religion. The companies' repertoires treat regional and religious issues differently because of their patrons' differing political agendas. Strange's Men's plays reject characters' associations to regions and punish religious diversity, and, above all, the plays praise the nobility's role in protecting the nation. Ultimately, Strange's Men's plays promote ideals that suited their patron's need to demonstrate loyalty to the realm. In contrast, the Queen's Men's plays value characters' associations to regions and allow religious diversity, and, significantly, the plays promote a vision of a forgiving, inclusive monarch. Fundamentally, the Queen's Men's plays support Elizabeth I's campaign to create a unified nation.

The implications of this thesis are groundbreaking for the treatment of provincial drama. This repertory-based project demonstrates that Lancashire hosted a lively dramatic tradition and suggests that the Stanley household was a crucial destination for both companies. The discussion of the themes of region and religion shows both patrons negotiated political agendas and religious attitudes in the drama that they sponsored. The

repertory-based approach re-examines discounted dramatic material and considers plays as part of overall trends in companies' repertoires. This thesis is the first to extensively compare two acting companies' repertoires and performances in a geographical location outside of London.

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Dedication

For Aaron, who offered love, support, and encouragement; he is my inspiration.

Introduction. “Drama Up North”: The Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men at the Lancastrian Stanley Household, 1587-1590.

Drama Up North

In early modern England, Lancashire was described as “the very sinke of popery”; a “dark corner” of the realm full of rebellious dissidents and violent, superstitious people.¹ Yet, two of England’s most prestigious acting companies, Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men, frequently visited the Stanley household in Lancashire. If Lancashire deserved such a bad reputation, why did these companies make these frequent trips “up north”? In order to address this question, it is time to move considerations of early modern acting companies to Lancashire. This thesis focuses on the recorded visits from 1587 to 1590 of Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men to the Lancastrian Stanley household and considers their repertoires in this Lancastrian context.² The Stanley household accounts show Lancastrian households functioning like courts with a constant stream of visitors and entertainment; these accounts, known as the *Derby Household Books (DHB)*, detail that the Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men visited the household on eight separate occasions: at least twice a year and likely for extended periods (see appendix A).³ The accounts create

¹ The Privy Council described Lancashire as the “sinke of popery” in 1574, as qtd. in Haigh, *Reformation* 223, also see Haigh’s discussion of Lancastrians’ violent reputation, 46-62. For details about the perception of Lancashire as a “dark corner”, see Hill; Bagley discusses religious dissidents in Lancashire and quotes a letter from the Privy Council to Ferdinando which ordered him to arrest recusants “lurkyng and resyding in these parts” (58). Bowd explores Lancashire’s reputation as a superstitious area, 238.

² For more on early modern repertoires, see Rutter; Munro, *Early Modern Drama*. Consult my methodology section, 19-29, for more on the repertory approach to early modern drama and how I identified both companies’ repertoires.

³ For more on how the Stanley household functioned like a court, consult Canino 190-191. My source for the Stanley household account is Raines’ edition which includes the manuscript records of Henry Stanley’s 1586 to 1590 household accounts. The accounts were kept by the household steward, William Ffarington, and his descendants preserved the records until they offered them to the Chetham Society for publication; the manuscript currently resides with the Lancashire Record office. The annual accounts detail the

a picture of a household that encouraged dramatic events at key festive occasions, like Easter and Christmas, and even details dignitaries who may have been in the audience.

This repertory-based reading of the companies' plays considers the implications of performances in Lancashire. I compare the significant differences between how the two companies treat contemporary concerns about region and religion and link this to the influence both companies' patrons might have had on their handling of these topics. I also place both companies' performances into the context of Lancastrian culture to investigate how the portrayal of these concerns would relate directly to issues germane to the region. By raising these questions, this study is the first to offer a comparative, repertory-based approach to drama in the north of England.

Literary critics' work on early modern English drama traditionally focuses on London and dismisses provincial drama, viewing drama in the north as "limited" and "unsophisticated," or worse, culturally irrelevant once Reformation interests halted the tradition of performing cycle plays. The focus on London can be explained partly because there is less hard evidence about cultural activities in the north. But there is also a longstanding critical bias that drama outside of London was merely "provincial" and thus discussion of London and its playwrights and playhouses was more meritorious.⁴ In short, why discuss the grim, dark north when there is much to be said about London, the

household's weekly expenses, visitors, regulations, and the Stanleys' whereabouts. Ffarington's terse writing style has frustrated historians, as Raines longingly notes "we could have spared much of what the Diarist has recorded to have enjoyed for a short time the table talk of the guests" (xv). Ffarington's notes on the companies at the household are brief; he notes players' arrivals, departures, or performances in the great hall, and does not record play titles. However, these accounts are significant since few household books survive and they are particularly rare in Lancashire; George notes only five household books with pertinent information about Lancashire's dramatic activity, *Lancashire* xxiv.

⁴ For an excellent overview of this anti-provincial attitude, see Somerset's "How Chances" and "Some New Thoughts." Bentley's view of touring companies is an example of an anti-provincial attitude; Bentley contended "touring was nearly always an unpleasant and comparatively unprofitable expedient" (179). There is a vast amount of research on early modern drama in London, consult Chambers; Grantley; Gurr, *Playgoing*; and Smith.

vibrant centre of the nation? Worse still, if London is set as the touchstone for how early modern drama is critiqued, then all regions outside of London must measure up to the capital's standards despite different contexts of production and meaning. The result of this comparison of the provinces to London is that the term "provincial" comes to imply that drama outside the capital is "backward, isolated, and unsophisticated" (White, *Drama* 2). In keeping with these trends, the majority of plays in the Queen's Men and Strange's Men's repertoires have rarely been discussed, and, when they are, arguments often focused either on authorship or on the plays as performed in London.⁵ It is true that there are fewer dramatic records for performances based in the north—but it is also true, that, until recently, less time has been spent examining the records that we do have and considering plays situated in contexts outside of London.⁶ This thesis demonstrates how consideration of both companies' repertoires in the Lancastrian Stanley household challenges assumptions about the dramatic tradition in the provinces, particularly about why companies toured. By showing that patronage affected repertory, my argument demonstrates how drama could be a potential medium through which patrons might negotiate power relations.

Current critical work argues that provincial drama was vibrant; this thesis pushes such arguments further. Recently, critics such as Alan Somerset and Paul Whitfield White have argued against the bias towards London as the only centre for sophisticated drama by noting that acting companies toured extensively, regardless of conditions in

⁵ For an example of this approach with the Queen's Men, refer to Stern, "The Curtain"; for Strange's Men, see McMillin, *Elizabethan Theatre*.

⁶ For an overview of the records of dramatic activity in Lancashire, consult George, *Lancashire* liii-xcix.

London.⁷ Evidence for this argument has come from the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) volumes, which show that much drama occurred across the country. I argue that the definition of “provincial” is too broad and that Lancashire’s dramatic activity merits its own study. As White says: “it makes more sense ... to consider [dramatic entertainment] within the local conditions of sponsorship, production, and reception” (*Drama* 5). Additionally, my work attempts to address Alan Somerset’s proposal that the “study of household performance activities is crucial to understanding the whole picture of professional provincial entertainment and indoor hall performances” (“Coming Home” 85).

Drama across Early Modern England

A local Cestrian’s letter demonstrates the significance of patronage for drama in the north-west. On 16 December 1583, Christopher Goodman wrote to Henry Stanley to complain that partly because of “coostome” and “partly fearing the displeasure of ... noble personages,” some in the City (the administrative body) of Chester were reluctant to ban dramatic activity (qtd. in Baldwin, *Lancashire* 202-03).⁸ Goodman appealed to the Earl of Derby to stop his players’ visits to Chester, which would encourage the City to ban “other noble mens servants retayninge to their Honors for such purposes, tendinge only to their owne private gaine and incommoditie of many” (202-03). The players

⁷ See White, *Drama* and Somerset, “How Chances.” Greenfield and Womack also focus on drama in regions across England. For studies on specific regions’ dramatic activity, consult Hopkins; Jensen; Johnston, *English Parish Drama*; Keenan; MacLean, “Saints on Stage”; Manley, “Motives”; Palmer, “Early English,” “On the Road,” and “Star Turns”; Somerset, “Coming Home”; Stokes; Wasson; Westfall; and White, “The Queen’s Men.”

⁸ Christopher Goodman was a Protestant minister; for further biographical information, consult Dawson. Goodman’s letters likely refer to the last performances of the Chester Cycle; for more on their significance, see Mills, “Some Precise Cittizins.”

Goodman refers to are most likely Derby's Players or, possibly, Ferdinando's Strange's Men. Goodman's letter is noteworthy for several reasons: it asserts that drama was taking place in the north-west and that it was viewed as part of the region's "coostome." The letter reveals a belief that Chester's dramatic activity was largely encouraged by noblemen's patronage of acting companies. Goodman argues that Chester's dramatic tradition is particularly stimulated by the Earl of Derby's patronage of his own company in the local area. As David Mills notes in his discussion of Goodman's letter, "[e]vidently the wearers of liveries were seen as, in a way, ambassadors invested with the power of their patrons, who might take offence if the players were not well received" ("Where"133). Goodman's letter helps demonstrate how the Stanleys wielded influence in the northwest and how their theatrical patronage worked as a reflection of their power. Although he cannot speak for a whole area, it is notable that Goodman's focus is on drama in his own county. Goodman's focus on his own county seems in keeping with dramatic records collected in *REED* volumes, which suggest the majority of English people experienced plays in their local areas.

With Goodman's letter in mind, this thesis contends that the identity of the companies' patrons makes the companies' visits to the Stanley household noteworthy. Patronage is key to considering both companies' repertoires in performance at the Stanleys, and recent work has begun to address the patronage of both companies. In their groundbreaking *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean argue that the Queen's Men were formed to travel throughout the country to promote the moderate Protestantism of their patron, Queen Elizabeth I (137).⁹ When

⁹ This work inspired further work on the Queen's Men's patronage, see Ostovich, *Locating* and Walsh. For a biography of Elizabeth I, see Collinson, "Elizabeth I."

Strange's Men visited the Stanley household they performed in the home of their patron, Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange and heir to the Earldom of Derby. Strange's Men and their patron Ferdinando have received critical attention because of their implication in the "Lost Years" theory but also because the company's repertory was recorded in Philip Henslowe's diary.¹⁰ My thesis is the first to extend this critical work by linking the companies' repertories to their patrons and by comparing their performances in Lancashire.

I explore the reasons both patrons might have had to sponsor acting companies. Since patrons used companies to promote positive views of themselves and their politics, I argue that companies, while not solely governed by their patron's goals, would have carefully considered their repertories' reputation, especially when performing in the Stanley household. Patrons were requisite for acting companies to perform, but functioning as a company's patron also became fashionable amongst the nobility and even a means to communicate and compete with one another (Blackstone 195-96). Mary Blackstone cites an example of direct "face-to-face competition" between the nobility when, in 1583, the Earls of Leicester, Essex, and Derby visited Chester together and an oration in honor of Leicester also complimented Derby (195). For the nobility, patronage of touring companies provided the opportunity "to establish, promote and extend their influence" (189). Evidence suggests that the Queen's Men's and Strange's Men's visits were highly organised events; for example, the *DHB* details that before each record of a

¹⁰ The "Lost Years" theory originates from the Lancastrian Alexander Hoghton's will, which cited a servant named "William Shakeshafte." Theory contends that Shakeshafte was, in fact, Shakespeare and Hoghton's will therefore proves that Shakespeare was in Lancashire in the period known as his "lost years" when he disappeared from records. This argument was first proposed by Chambers and followed by a number of critics like Honigmann. Bearman, Hamer, and Parry have troubled theory with evidence that Shakespeare and Shakeshafte are two different men. Henslowe's diary records two Strange's Men's performance runs: one period 1 Feb. 1592 to 22 June 1592 with 105 performances and another shorter run from 29 Dec. 1592 to 1 Feb. 1593 (Manley, "Playing" 115).

company's visit both Lord Strange and the Earl of Derby had returned to their households (see appendix A). Since so many were suspicious of the Stanleys' allegiances, Strange's Men could promote Lord Strange's family as loyal subjects to their sovereign; additionally, the company could promote a positive view of Lancashire – the much maligned region that gave the Stanleys their wealth and power.

While the Stanleys used acting companies to promote and compete for prestige with other nobles, the Queen Elizabeth I's company, the Queen's Men, were the "all-star" troupe of the land (McMillin and MacLean 1).¹¹ McMillin and MacLean suggest that "the Queen's Men were established not only to bring London's finest players into one unit for the court's pleasure, but also to curtail the growth of the expanding theatre industry" (13). The curtailment of England's theatre industry was achieved by removing the most famous actors from other acting companies and by offering the highest commercial rewards to the Queen's Men, thus effectively disbanding or rendering less demand for other companies.¹² This control of theatrical scene put the Queen's Men in a stronger position to promote the queen's sovereignty. In the 1580s, the cultivation of "Gloriana" worship of Queen Elizabeth was encouraged in the court and across the country.¹³ The Queen's Men on tour could visit parts of the realm that Elizabeth was unable to go to, as part of a "public-relations campaign" (McMillin and MacLean 26). In addition to representing Elizabeth's name across the country, the company disseminated the Queen's politics through their repertory; McMillin and MacLean argue that the company's plays

¹¹ Extensive research on the reasons behind the Queen's Men's formation can be found in McMillin and MacLean. This work is explored further in Ostovich, *Locating*; and Walsh.

¹² See McMillin and MacLean 1-36.

¹³ For more on "Gloriana," see Luke. For an overview of how contemporaries represented Elizabeth, see Riehl.

constitute “Protestant text” (35). Another possible reason to patronize a company was to use them for surveillance; even if the Queen’s Men did not actively spy, they would have given the impression of a “watchful monarch” (28-29). Such state-sponsored information gathering is not necessarily negative; the company could equally promote the notion of an “involved Monarch” who cared about her subjects across the realm. The Queen’s Men’s visits to the Stanleys could have been perceived as a sign that the Queen valued the family and wanted to reward them with a visit by her players.¹⁴

Consideration of how patrons shaped their company’s repertoires is informed by Leonard Tennenhouse’s theory that a “politics on display” operated in early modern drama. Tennenhouse contends that “dramatic forms participated in the political life of Renaissance England” (6). I argue that, to an extent, the companies’ repertoires act as displays of their patron’s politics. To qualify this, I am not suggesting that a company’s repertory simply mirrors their patron’s politics; companies had others invested in the repertory (for example, the players, the playwrights, and the publishers), and patrons had other means to disseminate their politics.¹⁵ However, given the control companies had over their repertoires, and the significant planning needed to tour and play in noble households, their choices would, partly, reflect an interpretation of their patron’s politics.¹⁶ Also, regardless of how consciously a company attempted to reflect a positive

¹⁴ Manley suggests this as a reason behind the Queen’s Men’s October, 1588 visit to New Park where he suggests they may have performed *The True Tragedy of Richard III* (“Motives”). I have not considered this play at the Stanleys as the estimated first performance date is after 1590.

¹⁵ We have little clear evidence of how involved patrons were in commissioning their company’s plays. Stern gives an excellent overview of the multiple interests invested in playwriting, *Documents*; for more on the variety of methods of patronage in the period, consult Adams; Brown; Dutton, “Region”; and MacCaffrey, “Place.”

¹⁶ For more on the control that companies had over their repertoires, see Munro, *Early Modern Drama* 6-14. For more on the organisation required to host players in noble households, consult Palmer, “Star Turns” and Westfall.

view of a patron, the repertory would have been perceived by contemporaries, in some way, as manifesting a patron's view.

Who were Strange's Men and the Queen's Men?

The Queen's Men and Strange's Men were two of the most prosperous and acclaimed companies in the market. As the Stanleys were enthusiastic patrons of drama, there is some confusion in the records around Strange's Men; the difficulty results partly from inheritances of titles, but also because there were multiple incarnations of both troupes with the same name. From 24 October 1572 to 25 September 1593, Ferdinando was known by the courtesy title of Lord Strange and he patronized Strange's Men; it is this company that this thesis focuses on. From 24 October 1572 to 25 September 1593, Ferdinando's father, Henry Stanley, known as the Earl of Derby, also patronized his own company; I distinguish this company with the name of Derby's Players. However, Henry was also Lord Strange before his father's death in 1572 and during this period he sponsored a company; I shall call this company Strange's Players. Later, when Henry Stanley died in 1593, Ferdinando became the Earl of Derby and his company thus became Derby's Men. At the time of the visits to the Stanley household, 1587 to 1590, only Strange's Men and Derby's Players were active. The real problem lies in disentangling whose company is noted in the period's records, Henry's or Ferdinando's, and to which company the plays belong.¹⁷ It is possible too that when Henry died his

¹⁷ Records frequently fail to distinguish between the two companies. For example, in the *DEEP* database *Rare Triumphs* is listed as "Derby's (Strange's) Men."

players and their plays may have passed onto his son's troupe.¹⁸ As a further complication, critics have noted evidence of players and plays shared between Strange's Men, Admiral's Men, and Pembroke's Men.¹⁹

The records reveal the complexity of Strange's Men's history, but we do know some solid information about the company. Strange's Men were very successful during their short life-span; Lawrence Manley calls them "unusually large and successful" ("Playing" 115).²⁰ The company visited the Stanley household during its "meteoric rise in the late 1580s," and was invited to perform an "unprecedented" six times at court in 1591 to 1592.²¹ This success was reflected in the records; by February 1592 the company had secured a place in London at the Rose and had the famous Edward Alleyn as a player in their company (Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing* 259). While the Queen's Men have been praised for having the best clowns in the land, Strange's Men's Burbage and Kempe were equally popular clowns and Alleyn was famous for tragic roles.²² However, much research focuses on Strange's Men's place in London and their possible connection to William Shakespeare and largely ignores their tours across the country.

¹⁸ The difficulty distinguishing between the two companies means that *Rare Triumphs* is the most tenuous of my attributions to Strange's Men's repertory; see my methodology section, 19-29, for a full explanation.

¹⁹ The majority of difficulties distinguishing Strange's Men from Admiral's Men originate from a cast list of players in *2 Seven Deadly Sins Plot* which critics contend either lists players in Strange's Men or Admiral's Men, a combination of the two, or perhaps neither. For more on this debate, see Kathman, "Reconsidering"; Gurr, "Work"; and McMillin, "Building Stories." Additionally, evidence has found that Pembroke's Men and Strange's Men shared players; for more on the complicated inter-related history of these two companies, see Knutson, "Pembroke's Men"; and Manley, "From Strange's Men."

²⁰ Much of the information on the company comes from Philip Henslowe's diary, which records two periods during 1592 of Strange's Men's performances at the Rose in London, see Henslowe.

²¹ Dutton, "Introduction" 22; Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing* 259.

²² Years later these famous actors were still proudly recalled; Baker's *Chronicle* (1674) remembered "Richard Bourbidge and Edward Allen, two such Actors as no age must ever look to see the like" (500). Will Kempe was so popular he produced his own pamphlet, *Nine Days Wonder* (1600), which detailed his nine day jig from London to Norwich.

With their popularity on the London stage and at court in their later career, Strange's Men staged more controversial plays and gained a possible reputation as "too proud." On 6 November 1589, Sir John Harte, the Lord Mayor of London famously complained to Burghley that when he instructed "the L. Admeralles and the L. Straunge's players ... to forbear playinge ... the L. Admeralles players very dutifully obeyed, but the others in very Comtemptuous manner departing from me, went to the Crosse keys and played that afternoon" (qtd. in Chambers, 4.305). As the company became more successful, the plays for which they became best known, *Spanish Tragedy* and *Jew of Malta*, were noted for their use of dominant blank verse. These tragedies demonstrated the company's skill at performing with elaborate staging. In fact, Lawrence Manley has called the company "remarkably pyrotechnical, if not pyromaniac" ("Playing" 116). Two of their playwrights, Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd, were investigated by the Privy Council for their religious beliefs, which Manley believes meant that "by the standards of the general norm Strange's Men were edging right up to, if not past, the limits of acceptability" ("Playing" 121). It has been suggested that the company's style superseded the Queen's Men's style in terms of popularity towards the end of the 1590s: Scott McMillin argues Strange's Men were formed to compete directly with the Queen's Men "in a commercial effort to capitalize on the older organization's decline" (*Elizabethan Theatre* 58). This thesis' comparative focus of the two companies' repertoires does reveal key differences between the companies' style that may account for the changing popularity of both companies.

The Queen's Men's acting history, even in the provinces, has received much more attention than that of Strange's Men; this focus on the Queen's Men is, in part, because of

their famous patron, Queen Elizabeth, who was the period's most coveted and powerful patron. In March 1583, twelve of the most famous actors were removed from their companies and amalgamated under the patronage of the Queen to form a new "super-troupe," known as the Queen's Men (McMillin and MacLean 1). In the 1590s, with the company's privileges to play theatres, court, and venues across the country, the Queen's Men became the most successful company in England; they were "quite simply, the best known and most widely travelled professional company in the kingdom" (1-2, 67).

Richard Tarlton was perhaps the company's most famous actor; Brian Walsh notes that "Tarlton was particularly noted for the physicality of his performances and for his genius of extemporizing" (65). The company fell out of popularity in the 1590s, McMillin and MacLean hypothesize this was partly because the political motives behind their formation had changed, but also because their dramaturgy was increasingly seen as old-fashioned (166-68).

In *The Queen's Men* McMillin and MacLean argue that the Queen's Men were formed to act as ambassadors for Elizabeth I across the country, to control theatre output, and to promote moderate Protestantism. The company was famous for its great comic actors; not only did the comic actors entertain but also they engaged directly with the audience and this brought them into issues in the world of the play. Tied into this need to engage with the audience is how the Queen's Men's dramaturgy placed great stress on the visual with processions, clowning, elaborate costumes, emblems, and pageantry (121-54). Because of their role in promoting their patron's politics, there is a visible concern in the Queen's Men's repertory to present information explicitly; as McMillin and MacLean note, the plays reveal a desire to, "tell the story plainly, and to tell it again, and to tell it so

that no one can possibly miss it” (134). These features enabled the company to appeal broadly to a variety of audiences across the country.

Early Modern Lancashire: A Popish County?

My research capitalises on critics’ work on the “lost years theory” that suggested Shakespeare was a player in Lancashire and therefore perhaps a secret Catholic or a Catholic sympathiser.²³ This work is useful as it has led to thoughtful research on early modern Lancashire; such findings about the county deserve examination in their own right for the drama produced there, regardless of Shakespeare rumours.²⁴ In addition to household drama, like that presented at the Stanley household, the county’s main dramatic activities, such as ales, rushbearings, “greens,” and bear baiting, have left few detailed written accounts (George, *Lancashire* xl-li). Nevertheless, there is evidence of significant dramatic performances. Lancashire is the only known northern county with its own Elizabethan playhouse (George, “The Playhouse”). Lancastrians were also passionate defenders of their local customs. In 1617, Lancastrians successfully petitioned King James I to allow their pastimes to continue on the Sabbath after Church (George, *Lancashire* xxv).²⁵ The problem with discussing entertainment in Lancashire is that there are few details about anonymous dramatic traditions. As few dramatic records exist from

²³ See note 10.

²⁴ While the “lost years” theory may have been discredited by Bearman, Hamer, and Parry, the work done on the county remains crucial to understanding cultural life in regions in early modern England. In particular, the marvellous work in Dutton’s *Region* and *Theatre* was initiated partly because of the “Lost Years” theory. The approaches taken in both Dutton’s volumes to how Lancastrian religious and political life connect to dramatic activity performed in the region inspired my focus on how patronage intersects with performing region and religion.

²⁵ For James I’s decree that Sunday pastimes were allowed in Lancashire, see *The Kings Maiesties Declaration to his Subjects*.

early modern Lancashire, the survival of the Stanley accounts is an important aid to understand dramatic production in Lancashire; the account book suggests a northern household that regularly staged drama, especially around celebratory events like Whitsun and christenings (see appendix A).

Lancashire had a poor reputation in Elizabethan England. Christopher Haigh suggests that there was a nationwide sentiment, even amongst local men, that Lancastrians “had a formidable reputation for theft, violence and sexual laxity” (*Reformation* 46). Lancastrians’ poor reputation was linked, most crucially, to the notion that they were religiously ignorant. Haigh quotes the Council of the North’s lament that it could not control Yorkshire simply because the “people could not be insulated from the evil influence of Lancashire” (46). Lancashire was an area known for political and religious radicalism with a reputation for “popery” and recusancy; David George argues that “Lancashire was to remain for centuries the most Catholic county in England” (*Lancashire* xxiv). The county had links to Catholic Europe, and was visited secretly by Jesuit missionaries like Edmund Campion (Baggley 60).

Yet, Lancashire was also associated with Protestant religious nonconformity, as Mary Blackstone points out: “the mobility of Jesuit priests in Lancashire was being matched by the mobility of Protestant preachers” (“Lancashire” 198). In 1609, Edmund Hopwood describing the south-east of Lancashire exclaimed “All fanatical and schismatical preachers that are cashiered in other countries resort into this corner of Lancashire” (qtd. in Haigh, *Reformation* 299). However, it was the perceived Catholicism of the county and its high recusancy rates that most concerned the Privy Council who, in 1574, called Lancashire “the very sink of popery, where most unlawful acts have been

committed and more unlawful persons holden in secret than in any other part of the realm” (qtd. in Haigh, *Reformation* 223).²⁶ Worse still there were a large number of land-owning recusants in the north-west; these were open Catholics with power (Bagley 59). The Privy Council wrote constantly to the Stanley family urging them “to take some speedy and strict order to see them [recusants] reformed or severely corrected and punished” (61). But this was an enormous job impossible to tackle with Lancashire’s inefficient administrative systems.

Indeed, the administration of Lancashire exacerbated the difficulty of governing Lancashire effectively. The reason the Privy Council struggled to control religious allegiances of Lancashire, and the reason they courted the Stanleys for help, was the county’s notoriously clunky and overlapping administrative systems.²⁷ In addition to being a County Palatine, Lancashire was also a Royal Duchy which meant that many of the county’s lands and honours belonged to and were administered on Elizabeth I’s behalf. In fact, “In 1556 the Duchy was described as ‘one of the most famous, princeliest and stateliest pieces of the Queen’s ancient inheritance’” (as qtd. in “History”). In short, Elizabeth was heavily invested in the county as it provided a principal piece of her income. In addition to the palatine and Duchy of Lancaster’s own separate law courts and administrative systems, there were also county and local government administrations and

²⁶ For more on the county’s recusant rates, see Haigh, *Reformation* 247-94.

²⁷ The Duchy of Lancaster’s website provides the following history of Lancashire. In 1182 Lancashire was formed into a county. In 1262, after the Barons’ War (1262), King Henry III of England awarded his grandson, Edmund, the first Earl of Lancaster, lands and towns in the county. On Edmund’s death in 1351, his grandson, Henry of Grosmont was given the title Duke of Lancaster and gathered more honours and land; thereafter, the estates became known as the Duchy of Lancaster. Lancashire also became a county palatine, which granted the sovereign further control over justice and administration in the county. Palatinate power was effectively royal power in an area far from the seat of government. In 1399, when Henry Bolingbroke, the Duke of Lancaster, took the throne, the Duchy became the “Royal Duchy” of Lancaster. Since then, the ducal lands were attached to the throne and administered from London (“History”).

Lancashire belonged to the northern assize circuit (George, *Lancashire* xvi). Concurrent with these governance systems were also ecclesiastical administrations. These overlapping administrative systems made Lancashire a challenge to control.

But Lancashire needed to be controlled and the Stanleys were a key power in gaining this control. The need for order was partly because of the crown's investment in Lancastrian land, partly because the crown recognized that, geographically, the county shared borders with Scotland, Wales, and held the main port to Ireland, partly because of the county's known Catholic European links, and partly because of the perceived high recusant rates. In light of this complex situation, to send the Queen's company "up north" suggests that there were further political ramifications than simply entertaining the Stanleys.

The Stanley Family

What was the appeal of the Stanley family that led Strange's Men and the Queen's Men to play so frequently at the Lancastrian household? Firstly, the family was incredibly powerful and wealthy in Lancashire and across the country.²⁸ They were key to gaining control in the region. Secondly, they were particularly adept at politics as a family.²⁹ As Richard Topcliffe allegedly said, "[a]ll the Stanleys in England were to be suspected as

²⁸ The Stanley family is still powerful today. The fourteenth Earl of Derby, Edward Stanley, was Prime Minister three times. The current nineteenth Earl of Derby, Edward Stanley still resides at Knowsley Hall; see "Family History."

²⁹ The Stanleys first came to particular wealth from the second Lord Stanley, Thomas, who made a last minute decision to support Henry Bolingbroke in his claim for the crown and was rewarded for his support with the Earldom of Derby. The Stanley family gained money, prestige, and land, see Coward 2-15.

traitors” (qtd. in Canino 190).³⁰ The period this project focuses on, 1587-1590, includes the execution of Mary Stuart in 1587 and the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. This was a time when government control over the country’s nobility tightened. The Stanleys were increasingly watched by the crown for their religious allegiances and politics. As Elizabeth neared the end of her reign in the 1590s, the Stanleys were also caught up in questions of succession as Ferdinando Stanley was put forward by some as a contender for the crown. Thirdly, patronage was a particular concern of this family. The Stanleys needed to promote their own claim to nobility and to do so they cultivated a reputation as the most loyal supporters of sovereignty through patronage of those who would disseminate this message.³¹ Patronage helped to promote the family’s name; serving as patrons themselves, they would have particularly understood the honour of receiving the company Elizabeth patronized.

The Stanleys had three major households in Lancashire: Knowsley Hall, Lathom House, and New Park.³² The Stanley household was of central importance to Lancashire; Barry Coward states, “the household of an earl could be the focus of the personal and political ambitions of a whole country, and its influence might extend even further afield” (85). Members of the audience for plays and sermons alike came from the surrounding area and were of mixed religious sympathies. In part, what makes the Stanley household

³⁰ Topcliffe was responsible in the 1580s for seeking, arresting, and torturing “enemies of the crown,” which often meant Catholics. While understandably vilified in Catholic literature, Topcliffe was strongly supported by the government, with even alleged support from Elizabeth I herself, see Richardson.

³¹ For example, the family sought to strengthen their place in the English chronicles by claiming that they had two Talbots in their ancestry who had fought against Joan of Arc (Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing* 258).

³² Lathom House was destroyed in a dramatic siege during the Civil War, see “The Siege.” All that survives of New Park is a small square earthwork on Ormskirk Golf Course, consult “The Medieval Deer.” Knowsley Hall is the current Earl of Derby’s main residence and still incorporates some early Tudor parts of the original building, refer to “Knowsley Hall.”

so fascinating is that they were “a site where people of Catholic, Anglican and Puritan sympathies were brought together” (Dutton, “Introduction” 8). The household was run in the same manner as the Royal Court, and they employed no fewer than 140 servants (George, *Lancashire* xxxvi). They even employed their own fool called Henry (*DHB* 27). The Stanley household showcased the family’s power, receiving acting companies like Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men would add to the family’s prestige. In fact, MacLean suggests that the Stanleys received these famous companies to assert their superiority over other local nobles. Other Lancastrian nobles tended to receive local troupes, musicians, and mummers, which has led MacLean to argue there was a conscious demonstration on the Stanleys’ part to show that they had “more sophisticated tastes for their personal entertainment” (“Family Tradition” 215- 17). It is highly likely that the performances of Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men in the households would have been discussed across the county. Additionally, evidence Barbara D. Palmer has gathered about other noble families (particularly the Cavendishes and the Cliffords) who received acting companies suggests that it was an important event to have an acting company at the household, and that companies might have consulted with the steward on which play they should present before the family and their invited guests (“Star Turns” 28). It seems likely, given the amount of time Lord Strange and the Earl of Derby were away from home, that these trips must have been organized so that the companies would arrive at times when the heads of households had recently returned (see appendix A).

Methodology

In this thesis, I explore how the companies' repertoires reflect their patrons' politics. Tennenhouse has focused on delineating the "statecraft" of Queen Elizabeth's politics in drama, and I build on Tennenhouse's thesis to consider how drama displays not only the Queen's power but also the Stanleys' power. J.J. Bagley argues that "[t]o [Henry Stanley] loyalty to the Queen was the supreme virtue" (59), but it would be more accurate to state that his most "supreme virtue" was the *appearance* of loyalty. The Stanleys needed to prove their status and yet downplay the risks this power held for the realm. I argue that the Stanleys' patronage results in a repertoire that promotes a strict conservatism towards social hierarchy, religion, and regional issues. The Queen's Men's tours were ideological events that utilized the company's repertoire to promote Protestant politics across the country (McMillin and MacLean 32). The Queen's Men's repertoire as such is marked by consensus, forgiveness, and a more light-hearted approach to issues around noble and royal conflict, religious issues, and regional considerations.

The solid evidence we have is as follows. Both the Queen's Men and Strange's Men spent time at Knowsley Hall, Lathom House, and New Park, the three Stanley residences in Lancashire. The *DHB* records eight visits by Strange's Men and the Queen's Men from 1587 to 1590 (see appendix A). This does not mean there were only eight performances but eight physical records of these companies in the household books; it is likely that the players stayed for some time. Also, judging from the brevity of the notes in the *DHB*, it is possible that a number of Strange's Men's productions and those by other companies were unrecorded since some accounts do not specify how many performances occurred. While Strange's Men are never named in the accounts, it can be

assumed that they are the unspecified “players” listed since all other troupes are called by the names of their patrons, for example “Lord Essex’s Players”; as well, it seems likely a household would not need to name its own company. The critical consideration of a variety of records and databases allows us to make this extrapolation.³³ Specifically, the survival of the Stanley accounts and their publication in the *DHB*, recently completed *REED* volumes,³⁴ the *DEEP* database,³⁵ and *Patrons and Performances*³⁶ website provide enough data to consider a repertory-based approach to compare Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men’s visits in the Stanley household.

The repertory-based approach argues that plays should be discussed as part of overall trends in companies’ repertories and encourages the discussion of plays outside of the sole consideration of playwrights or players.³⁷ Acknowledging that authors, players, patrons, and audiences exerted influence on the production of drama means thinking

³³ For support of this argument refer to Thaler; and MacLean, “Family Tradition.”

³⁴ *The Records of Early English Drama (REED)* since 1997 has sought to “locate, transcribe, and edit historical surviving documentary evidence of drama, secular music, and other communal entertainment and ceremony from the Middle Ages until 1642, when the Puritans closed the London theatres” (Johnston, “Index”). *REED*’s work is disseminated in volumes on individual counties. For an overview of *REED*’s impact on early modern drama, see Douglas and Walker. For a more cautious take on *REED*, consult Coletti who argues against using records outside of their context in “Reading *REED*” and “Fragmentation.”

³⁵ The *Database of Early English Playbooks (DEEP)*, available since late 2007, edited by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser is a “search engine of every playbook produced in England, Scotland, and Ireland from the beginning of printing through 1660” (“Index”). When compiling my repertory lists, I relied on the database’s synthesis of research for company attribution and play dates, in particular for Strange’s Men. See Farmer’s discussion of this “second-generation” resource in “Early Modern.”

³⁶ The *Patrons and Performances* website is an online project that utilises the findings of the *REED* volumes. The project allows users to trace acting companies’ touring routes, payments, performance venues, patrons, and includes genealogical information. It also features an interactive map that allows users to survey the early modern landscape and plot company routes. Much of this website’s work enabled me to trace both the Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men. For more on this resource, see MacLean, “Performers on the Road.”

³⁷ There has been a growing body of repertory based studies, see Bly; Collins; Dutton, *Oxford Handbook*, particularly “Part I Theatre Companies” 19-152; Gurr, *Shakespeare Company, Shakespearian Playing and Shakespeare’s Opposite*; Knutson, *Repertory and Playing Companies*; McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen’s Men*; Marino; Munro, *Children*; Walsh; and Ostovich, *Locating*. Additionally, the *Shakespeare and the Queen’s Men’s Project* performed plays from the Queen’s Men’s repertory to explore how performance research informed repertory research, see *Performing the Queen’s Men*.

about plays in the light of how companies actually functioned. McMillin and MacLean's influential repertory approach for the Queen's Men argued that acting companies were responsible for their plays and they would have carefully considered the plays they performed (xii). Their aim was to consider what made the Queen's Men unique; my approach shifts slightly from this question to identify uniqueness in two companies' repertories by comparing them as organizations that performed in a single household where, to an extent, they would have been competing. This comparison based on companies seems reasonable since the plays were so regularly linked to companies, not playwrights. Throughout most of the early modern period, the company's name was often stressed on plays' title-pages and in anecdotes (Munro, *Early Modern Drama* 2). Once purchased, plays "became the property of a company, and would be amended as that company saw fit" (*Early Modern Drama* 6). An avoidance of the "author-centric" approach fills in important critical gaps; for example, anonymous plays or plays where a single author has not been determined, like so many of Strange's Men's and the Queen's Men's plays, have received less attention from scholars interested in the work of a particular playwright. Munro neatly encapsulates the repertory-based approach as paying attention to the "full choir" rather than the soloist voice (*Early Modern Drama* 28). As the visits in the *DHB* do not name plays, a repertory approach allows me to consider the overall aims of the companies and to imagine the implications of all of the plays in the Lancastrian setting. To discover trends in the repertory is perhaps the only way to consider these plays in performance outside of London, especially in the north.

To determine the repertories of both companies, I have cross-referenced the dates of estimated first productions for plays attributed to the companies in the *DEEP* database

with the dates of performances at the Stanley household listed in the *DHB*.³⁸ I have followed McMillin and MacLean's "conservative approach" to attribution; that is, I have assumed that the title-page is the strongest evidence of company attribution, and where there is no title-page attribution I cite external evidence that suggests a play is part of a company's repertory (86). Sometimes the possible date range for a play indicates that it may have been performed during the years a company visited the Stanleys but I have only used the definite starting performance date provided by *DEEP* as evidence to include the plays in the repertories. Additionally, I have based all analysis on the earliest dated quarto available for each play.³⁹ For example, *DEEP* states that the Queen's Men's *True Tragedy of Richard III* was most likely first performed in 1591, as this is outside of 1587 to 1590, the dates that *DHB* records of the Queen's Men's visits, I exclude the play from my repertory list for the Queen's Men in this period (*DEEP*). I have also followed McMillin and MacLean's Queen's Men's repertory list. Since work on both Strange's Men's and the Queen's Men's repertories is ongoing, my repertory lists are subject to challenge and revision; that being said, my conservative approach is a useful starting point.

I believe the following six plays belonged to the Queen's Men's repertory during the years 1587 to 1590:

- *The historie of the two valiant Knights, Syr Clyomon Knight of the Golden Sheeld, sonne to the King of Denmarke: And Clamydes the white Knight, sonne to the King of Suauia.* The title-page of the anonymous *Clyomon and Clamydes*

³⁸ For a list of the dates the companies visited the Stanley household, refer to appendix A.

³⁹ For some of the plays there is only one printed playbook available, but for cases like *Looking Glass* and *Spanish Tragedy* there are multiple playbooks and revised editions. I have chosen to use the Malone editions of the first known quarto of each play where possible to aid consistency; if a Malone edition was not available I have used another facsimile edition.

attributes the play to the Queen's Men, the play's estimated first performance date is 1570 (c. 1570-1583), and the text was first published in 1599 (*DEEP*). The play is thought to have been composed early in c.1570 because of its "old fashioned" dramaturgy (McMillin and MacLean 95).

- *The famous victories of Henry the fifth: Containing the Honourable Battell of Agin-court.* This play is also anonymous and its title-page credits the play to the Queen's Men. *Famous Victories'* estimated first performance date is 1586 (c. 1583-1588), and the play was published in 1598 (*DEEP*).
- *The honorable historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay.* *Friar Bacon's* title-page credits the play to Robert Greene and to the Queen's Men. There has been some confusion about who owned this play, and the play has often been attributed to Strange's Men because Henslowe's diary lists Strange's Men as playing "Friar Bacon" in 1592 (Henslowe 16). This record is now believed to refer to another play, *John of Bordeaux*, which also lists a known Strange's Men actor in the text.⁴⁰ *Friar Bacon's* estimated first performance is 1589 (c. 1586-1590), and the play was printed in 1594 (*DEEP*).
- *The True Chronicle History of King Leir, and his three daughters, Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella.* I include the anonymous *King Leir* in the list of the Queen's Men's repertory despite its lack of title-page attribution. McMillin and MacLean convincingly argue that Henslowe lists performances of a *King Leir* in 1594 when the Queen's Men and Sussex's Men acted together at the Rose (88). Furthermore, Henslowe's earlier list of Sussex's Men's plays does not include *King Leir*, yet

⁴⁰ For more on this confusion, consult McMillin and MacLean 90 and Knutson, "Play Identifications" 7.

the 14 May 1594 entry lists *Friar Bacon* and *Famous Victories* – two plays attributed to the Queen’s Men alongside a *King Leir* reference (88). As further proof, the first stationer’s register entry lists Wright as the publisher who printed many plays attributed to the Queen’s Men (88). The play’s estimated first performance was 1590 (c. 1588-1594), and the play was first printed in 1605 (*DEEP*).

- *The pleasant and Stately Morall, of the three Lordes and three Ladies of London.* *Three Lords*’ title-page indicates that the author was “R.W.”— most likely a reference to Robert Wilson. Although no company is named on the title-page, internal evidence in the form of a lament for Tarlton, the famous Queen’s Men player, suggests that this was a Queen’s Men’s play (McMillin and MacLean 89). The play’s estimated first performance is 1588 (1588-1590), and the play was first printed in 1590.
- *The Old Wiues Tale. A pleasant conceited Comedie.* *Old Wives Tale* names the Queen’s Men on its title-page. Its first estimated performance was in 1590 (c.1588-1594), and it was printed in 1595 (*DEEP*).

For Strange’s Men’s repertory, evidence for attribution of plays to the company comes from Henslowe’s diary and external performance references such as court records. The information provided by Henslowe about the repertory is particularly helpful as it demonstrates how an adult company’s repertory worked in the Rose, a London theatre.⁴¹ Unlike for the Queen’s Men’s plays’ title-pages, few title-pages of the plays Henslowe lists cite the company, or any company, possibly because Strange’s Men held less

⁴¹ See Manley, “Playing” 115.

commercial interest compared to the Queen's Men, or, in the case of *Jew of Malta*, because the print date was significantly after the company had disbanded. Alongside this evidence, I cross-reference the *DEEP*'s estimated first performance dates for the plays with enough firm evidence to place them in Strange's Men's repertory. Overall, I include the following five plays in Strange's Men's repertory from 1587 to 1590:

- *A pleasant commodie, of faire Em the Millers daughter of Manchester with the loue of William the Conqueror*. The anonymous *Fair Em*'s estimated first performance is in 1590 (c.1589-1591), and its first printed date is estimated at 1591 (*DEEP*). This is the only play in the repertory that has a title-page that attributes the play to Strange's Men (*DEEP*). Additionally, internal evidence of a Lancastrian setting and references to possible audience members support the notion that this was a Strange's Men play.⁴²
- *The famous tragedy of the rich Iew of Malta*. *Jew of Malta* was written by Christopher Marlowe and is thought to have first been performed in 1589 (c.1589-1590) (*DEEP*). However, the first printed text that survives is from 1633 (*DEEP*). This late printing date may explain why the play was not attributed to Strange's Men on the title-page, since it was printed many years after the company disbanded. However, Henslowe lists the play as part of the company's regular repertory at the Rose in 1592-1593 (Henslowe 16).
- *A looking glasse for London and England*. *Looking Glass* was first performed in 1588 (1587-1588) and first printed in 1594 (*DEEP*). *Looking Glass* was written by Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge, as cited on the play's title-page (*DEEP*).

⁴² See Thaler.

While there is no title-page attribution to Strange's Men, the play is recorded in Henslowe's diary as being played by the company at the Rose on 8 March 1592. There was a suggestion that the play belonged to the Queen's Men because the clown in the play is named "Adam," which might refer to the Queen's Men's player John Adams; McMillin and MacLean persuasively dismiss this notion as weak, especially in light of evidence from Henslowe's diary that the play belonged to Strange's Men (91).

- *The rare triumphes of loue and fortune. Rare Triumphs* had its first known performance on 30 December 1582; court records indicate that *Rare Triumphs* was "Plaide before the Queenes most excellent Maiestie" (*DEEP*). *DEEP* lists this play as belonging to "Derby's (Strange's) Men." This is the least certain of Strange's Men's repertory because of the difficulty distinguishing between patron and company. It is quite likely that this *DEEP* reference refers to Ferdinando's father's Derby's Players and Strange's Players. However, I have decided to include it in the repertory because I believe it shows strong internal evidence of fitting Strange's Men's repertory, and also because Derby's Player's disappear from the records of provincial performance in 1583, so it is likely that Ferdinando's troupe inherited the play from Henry's troupe. The anonymous play was first printed in 1589 (*DEEP*).
- *The Spanish tragedie containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo. Spanish Tragedy* is perhaps, alongside the *Jew of Malta*, the most famous of Strange's Men's repertory during these years. *Spanish Tragedy* was certainly one of their most popular plays in

print and on stage. The play is attributed to *Strange's Men* from evidence in Henslowe's diary entry in 1592 (Henslowe 16). *DEEP* estimates this play, by Thomas Kyd, had its first performance in 1587 (c. 1585-1589); it seems to have been revised c.1597 and again in 1601-2 (*DEEP*). There are ten quartos of the play, the earliest of which was printed in 1592 (*DEEP*).

The methodology outlined above invites questions about the relationship between the repertories and the patrons' politics and religion. The two companies came to the Stanleys under different auspices. The Queen's Men visited the Stanleys as representatives of the monarch, and *Strange's Men* performed in their patron's home. I examine how the companies' repertories differ in their treatment of the key contemporary concerns of region and religion, subjects significant to both companies because of their patrons. Comparing repertories reveals how differently the two companies explore concerns around religion and region. While offering this analysis, I explore how much a patron's influence affects a company's treatment of these subjects. I also place both companies' performances into the context of Lancastrian culture and ask how the portrayal of these themes would relate to the region directly. While exploring these questions, I think critically about how far the differences and similarities can be attributed to both companies' own unique styles. To develop my complex thesis, and explore relevant questions, I have organized each chapter so that I first offer broad consideration of each topic, pointing out general trends across the repertory, but then conclude each chapter with a case study comparison of two plays from each company's repertory. Clearly, much more could be written about each of the plays listed above, not to mention about the two companies' repertories.

In chapter one, “Region in the Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men Repertories,” I examine how both companies identify “regional” spaces in their texts and to what purpose these spaces are used. After a consideration of setting and the use of place in the repertories, I analyze characters who are specifically marked as “rural” to ask what it means in both companies’ repertories to be identified explicitly as from a particular region. Because both companies’ represent patrons from different areas—Strange’s Men with their northern patron, and the Queen’s Men, with their court based “ruler” of the entire country – it is not surprising that their representations of land show different preoccupations.

In chapter two, “‘Cowardly craft’: Magic and Catholicism in the Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men Repertories,” I investigate the use of magic and magicians in both companies’ plays to query whether such representations constitute attacks on Catholicism. After exploring general trends in the repertory, I focus particularly on the Queen’s Men’s *Friar Bacon* and Strange’s Men’s *Looking Glass* and *Rare Triumphs* as case studies since these plays feature magicians who, in different ways, renounce magic. Since the Stanleys and their home county were viewed as potentially Catholic and also “superstitious” (Bowd 237), it is important to discuss how Strange’s Men present religion in comparison to the “official” Protestant view that the Queen’s Men were created to promote (McMillin and MacLean 24).

Since this thesis is the first to extensively compare two acting companies’ repertories and performances to a geographical location outside of London, its findings are potentially groundbreaking for the treatment of regional drama and household drama. While not all conclusions can be proven beyond doubt, this repertory-based project

proves that it is viable to discuss repertories outside of London and specifically in the less discussed area of the north. There was a lively dramatic tradition in Lancashire. The discussion of the topics of region and religion show that both patrons did negotiate political aims and religious attitudes in the drama that they sponsored. The comparative repertory-based approach is a promising way to consider much previously discounted dramatic material, such as many of the plays associated with the Queen's Men and Strange's Men. Finally, the focus on Lancashire initiates a larger project that addresses the dearth of criticism of drama in, from, and about the north.

Chapter 1: Region in the Repertories.

Introduction

Ferdinando Stanley described Lancashire as “this so unbridled and bad an handful of England”; this condemnation of his own region echoed contemporaries’ descriptions of Lancashire.⁴³ Lancashire was perceived as a “bad ... handful,” a “dark corner,” a region where recusants could be found “lurkyng and resyding.”⁴⁴ Contemporaries worried over the “far-away” county’s lawlessness and that Lancastrians were religiously ignorant, violent, and wilfully resistant to change.⁴⁵ In short, Lancashire had a bad reputation. Although the county was maligned, Lancashire was of critical concern to the Stanleys and the Queen because of their investments of wealth and power in the county. Yet, even if Lancashire was indeed this “bad handful,” the repeated visits by Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men suggest that their patrons were interested in the region. These visits were notable events in Lancashire; the Queen’s Men wore her majesty’s livery into Lancashire, a place she never visited on her Royal Progresses, and Strange’s Men performed in their patron’s seat of power, likely before their patron, and in the heart of a condemned region.⁴⁶ I explore whether the companies used their repertories to promote their patron’s

⁴³ Qtd. in Haigh, *Reformation* 46.

⁴⁴ For more on Lancashire as a “dark corner,” see Hill. The quotation on religious extremists in Lancashire comes from a Privy Council letter to Ferdinando Stanley that urged him to hunt recusants “lurkyng and resyding in these parts” and is qtd. in Bagley 58.

⁴⁵ For more on Lancashire’s reputation, see Haigh, *Reformation* 46 and George, *Lancashire* xiii-xxxviii.

⁴⁶ McMillin and MacLean first suggested that the Queen’s Men visited the Stanleys partly because the Queen had never journeyed to Lancashire on her royal progresses, see 59-60; for more on Elizabeth I’s royal progresses, see Smuts.

regional and national interests, and if the plays address Lancashire's poor reputation. This analysis reveals that the companies' repertoires respond differently to regions.

Lancashire has rarely been examined as a performance space for early modern drama.⁴⁷ As dramatic records from across Britain have become more readily available, especially since the publication of the *REED* volumes,⁴⁸ the study of regional drama has been re-invigorated and evidence attests that drama across Britain continued, if not flourished, after the Reformation.⁴⁹ While this evidence inspired several calls to consider plays in performance across the country, few studies have examined companies' repertoires outside of London.⁵⁰ This chapter builds on region-focused criticism to demonstrate that plays more traditionally associated with London playhouses could speak to a Lancastrian noble household's audience about regional concerns.

⁴⁷ Historical work on British regions in the early modern period has encouraged literary critics to consider drama in regional settings and to examine treatments of region within drama. This historical work has identified regions' unique socio-political and religious allegiances; for a Lancastrian example, see Haigh *Reformation*; for a study on Kent, see Peter Clark.

⁴⁸ Much early literary work on regions, particularly the north, concentrated on the cycle plays and religious drama in the middle ages. This work typically focused on questions over production, local community involvement, and how long drama continued after the Reformation; for more on the cycle plays, refer to King; MacLean, "Marian Devotion"; and Mills, *Recycling*. For a study of regional drama in the late Middle Ages, see Gail McMurray Gibson.

⁴⁹ Studies often survey records across England; see Greenfield; White's *Drama*; Womack. For examinations of dramatic records within specific regions, consult Badir; Johnston, *English Parish Drama*; particularly George, "Rushbearing"; Baldwin, "Rushbearings"; MacLean, "Saints"; and Palmer, "On the Road" and "Early English." Another strand of regional drama criticism explores singular performance dates, particular plays, or troupes on tour, see Keenan; Jensen; Palmer, "Star Turns"; Stokes; Wasson; and White, "The Queen's Men." Manley even imagined the October 1588 performance of the Queen's Men's *The True Tragedy of Richard III* at the Stanleys' New Park in "Motives." Additionally, some studies examine great country houses' influence on regional drama, but this focus still remains largely on genre, individual plays, or theatre history; see Hopkins; Somerset, "Coming Home"; and Westfall.

⁵⁰ McMillin and MacLean gave the first survey of the Queen's Men's tours and their repertory outside of London, see particularly 37-83 and 170-88.

Additionally, the consideration of how the plays present region contributes to the debate on how early modern drama constructed nation.⁵¹ Nations were self-consciously constructed in the early modern period, and this construction was partly fuelled by Elizabethan writers.⁵² While discussion of nation in early modern drama has primarily focused on genres, particularly history plays by famous playwrights like Shakespeare, McMillin and MacLean's *The Queen's Men* demonstrates how repertories could serve as polemics and how the Queen's Men promoted Elizabeth's moderate Protestantism across the nation; this work has inspired my own examination of how the companies negotiated regions and nations in their repertories.⁵³

A central question that concerns early modern region and nation is how the "centre" relates to the "peripheries."⁵⁴ Much of this debate focuses on the relationship of England (the centre) to other nation states (the peripheries); this concern is repeatedly raised in the repertories, particularly the relationship between England and Spain.⁵⁵ There has also been interest in how literature presents England (the centre) as it relates to Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the colonies (often constructed as the peripheries). This concern over peripheries and centres was fundamental to the identity of early modern

⁵¹ Initially, work on early modern nationhood in England challenged the received idea that nationhood was created in the nineteenth century, see McEachern 5. For more on the construction of nationhood, refer to Baker and Maley, *Nation*; Hadfield, *Literature*; Helgerson; McEachern; Maley, *Nation*; and Schyyzer.

⁵² Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood* examined a whole generation of Elizabethan writers to show how "nationhood" was constructed.

⁵³ For examples of studies of nation in Shakespearean drama, see Baldo; Cavanagh 58-79; Cohen; and Hadfield, *Shakespeare and Renaissance* and *Shakespeare, Spenser*.

⁵⁴ I have used Maley's and Baker's terms "centre" and "peripheries," see "Introduction" 1, refer to this introduction for more on the unity of England. Helgerson argues early modern maps attempted to balance the uniqueness of regions with the idea of belonging to the unified nation (105-46).

⁵⁵ For examples of this, see *Strange's Men's Spanish Tragedy* and the *Queen's Men's Three Lords*.

Lancashire since the county bordered Scotland and Wales and was a main port for Ireland.

This chapter also explores centres and peripheries in its analysis of whether the repertories present a unified England or a disparate England. Regional studies on early modern drama have identified a tension between regional and national identity; Robert Barrett argues Cheshire literature showed a concerted effort to praise Cheshire whereas Martin Elsky contends that proud regions demonstrated an effort to belong to the commonwealth.⁵⁶ Additionally, London often functions as a centre in opposition to the rest of the country as a periphery; the capital has traditionally been figured as the centre for drama and I question whether the repertories perceive it as such.⁵⁷ Another configuration of the London versus region paradigm is the more generalised comparison between the rural and the urban.⁵⁸ I explore how far *Strange's Men* and the *Queen's Men* express these tensions between region and nation in their repertories.

By placing the repertories in the Lancastrian Stanley household, this study explores the two companies' repertories' treatment of region and whether this treatment engaged with the idea of nation. Such analysis reveals that the two companies' different negotiations of region suggest that the companies had different reasons to perform at the Stanley household. The patrons of the companies affected their treatments of region. In addition to McMillin and MacLean's argument that the *Queen's Men's* repertory

⁵⁶ I prefer to use the term "nation."

⁵⁷ For more on London, see essays in Orlin and Manley, *Literature*. There has been much attention on London city comedies; this genre, Howard argues, responded to the changing state of London and helped to interrogate what the capital meant. For a useful overview of the debate on the definition of city comedy, see Twynning 354-56; also consult Gibbons who argues that city comedy was its own genre. See Leggatt; Leinwand; and Morgan-Russell.

⁵⁸ For more on the distinctions between urban and rural, see Williams. There has additionally been a surge in research on Shakespeare and eco-criticism, see Egan; and Watson, particularly 77-107.

promoted Elizabeth's politics across England (1-18), this chapter contends that Elizabeth promoted pride in the British nation with the company's repertory. Strange's Men's treatment of region stresses that a character's worthiness is divorced from their region's reputation; this supported the Strange's Men's patron's troublesome association to the maligned region of Lancashire.

The patrons of the Queen's Men and Strange's Men used patronage to promote regional and national interests. The Stanleys used patronage of writers as proof of the family's power not only in Lancashire, which they effectively ruled, but also across the nation; the works the family sponsored demonstrated how integral they were to the nation's continued success.⁵⁹ Their effectiveness at self-promotion can be seen in how they increasingly became figureheads for Lancashire to the point where the Earl of Derby became "too important to be bypassed, and the Crown ruled Lancashire through him" (Haigh, *Reformation* 105). Given the Stanleys' high status in Lancashire, the need to present region carefully by the Stanleys' company in their household would be of paramount importance. The Queen also negotiated regions and the nation as evidenced in her royal progresses and her own patronage of writers.⁶⁰ With an ensuing war with Spain and pressure from Catholic Europe, Elizabethan England was potentially divided by political and religious lines; Elizabeth needed to pacify potentially rebellious areas and

⁵⁹ For example, see Halliwell's edition of the *Stanley Ballads*, which praises the family for their bravery in the War of the Roses. The Stanleys also patronized writers like Robert Greene who dedicated *Ciceronis Amor* to Ferdinand, see Tumelson 106, and Thomas Lodge who served in the third Earl of Derby's household, consult Clugston, "Introduction" 4. The family even falsified their chronological history with the claim of two Talbots in their ancestry who fought Joan of Arc, see Gurr, *Shakespearian Playing* 258.

⁶⁰ For more on Elizabeth's patronage and promotional tactics, see Blackstone, "The Queen's Men"; Frye; Leahy; and Strong.

unite her nation as it expanded into the world.⁶¹ This thesis questions how the companies' promotion of region and nation intersects with their patrons' political aims, and especially with the patrons' sponsorship of performances at the Stanleys.

Not only did the companies' patrons invest in repertories to promote their regional interests but the companies, partly to achieve their patrons' different political aims, had to consider their different audiences and performance venues. The Queen's Men achieved fame across the land through constant touring; they toured, on average, four to five months a year (McMillin and MacLean 46). Additionally, the Queen's Men never sought a permanent London playing space, which troubles theory that London was every acting company's "home base." As the touring the Queen's Men often performed in various playing spaces, they required a flexible repertory.⁶² In contrast to the Queen's Men, Strange's Men did, for a short period, have a fixed London base at the Rose Playhouse (Henslowe 16-20).⁶³ As a result of Henslowe's records, critical attention has focused on the company's repertory in London, yet Strange's Men toured the country as well. However, records show that Strange's Men did not tour as widely as the Queen's Men; Strange's Men's presence at a London playhouse and their financial success there suggests that their repertory may have sought a more city based audience's favour. This study considers both companies' repertories in the Lancastrian setting of the Stanley household, but allows for the repertories' different requirements for tours and audiences.

⁶¹ See Carole Levin, who notes that the "mid 1580s were a time of crisis for the English ... problems of continental Europe deeply influenced English policy Threatening in a different way was the possibility of foreign domination in Scotland and Ireland" (57).

⁶² See McMillin and MacLean 37-83.

⁶³ Two performance runs are recorded in Henslowe's diary at the Rose, one from 1 Feb. to 22 June 1592 with 105 performances and another shorter run from 29 Dec. 1592 to 1 Feb. 1593, see Manley, "Playing" 115.

This chapter questions how the repertoires present region and whether regions exist in tension with the idea of nations. I use “region” to describe a large area of the country outside of London, like Lancashire and Cheshire; this is because I focus on areas like the north that have overlapping administrative systems or are undefined in the plays themselves. Therefore, “county” is too restrictive a term for the areas described in the plays, and I avoid “province” because of its ecclesiastical connotations.⁶⁴ In relation to the less restrictive “region,” several characters in the plays are “regional characters” because they are identified as belonging to a region outside of London. More specifically, both companies stage “rural” characters, who differ from the vaguer “regional” characters because they belong to the countryside; for these characters I use the definition of “rural” as it means “of or belonging to the Country or Village; rustical” (Blount, “Rural”).⁶⁵ “Rural” also implies the following connotations: “clownish, vplandish, or churlish, and vnmannerly” (Cawdrey, “Rurall”), and I explore whether the companies present rural characters with these traits. Finally, Claire McEachern defines nation as “the principle of political self-determination belonging to a people linked (if in nothing else) by a common government” (1);⁶⁶ I follow this definition for nation as it usefully highlights how nationhood depends upon the drive for unity and a sense of belonging.

⁶⁴ A 1604 definition of region equates it to “teritorie ... or the countrie lying about the citie,” see Cawdrey, “Region.” The *OED* description of region is useful as well; this describes region as “A land; a country; any large portion of the earth's surface considered as defined or distinguished from adjacent areas in some way, as by culture, government, topography, climate, fauna or flora, etc.,” see “Region.” Additionally, when the plays describe places as cities, I view them as urban spaces, and when places are situated outside of cities and towns, I include them in descriptions of the rural. For a 1607 definition of a city, see “citie.”

⁶⁵ In early modern dictionaries the defining feature of rural characters is that the person “belongs” to the countryside.

⁶⁶ There is debate over how far “nation” should refer to England or Britain, but given that “Britain” did not officially exist until the 1707 Acts of Union passed in England and Scotland, I refer to England when I discuss nation.

Strange's Men and the Queen's Men present region differently because of their patrons' differing investment in regional and national issues. The presentation of region was crucial to Ferdinando and his company as both were about to reach the peak of their careers; Ferdinando was soon to become the Earl of Derby, and his company was about to find security and fame in London.⁶⁷ Yet this fame was precarious because of the Stanleys' association with Lancashire; Ferdinando's company needed to present the Stanleys' best face and to dissociate them from their maligned region. Therefore, the company promotes Lancashire positively (as seen in *Fair Em*), but mostly avoids featuring British regions at all (as seen through predominant use of foreign settings). Strange's Men's plays present nobles from regional areas who are not characterized by their region but by their class; nobles are unsurprisingly presented as highly valued members of the realm. As part of their aim to show a person's worth is not associated to their region, the company features few rural characters, and, when they do, they are figures of fun because of their class—not their connection to a region. This focus on class suggests that Strange's Men's repertory was intended for higher status audiences, and the lack of focus on specific regions might mean that the repertory was more suited to the London stage. Strange's Men's repertory rarely promotes the concept of nation outright, but their plays do posit that strict social order is necessary for the nation of England to succeed. The Queen's Men visited the Stanley household during their most successful period, when they were the "company of the realm" (Ostovich, "Introduction" 12). A visit from the Queen's company was prestigious, and for the company to make the journey so frequently to the Stanleys, when it was much more lucrative to perform on the

⁶⁷ See Kathman, "Stanley" for Ferdinando's biography; for more on the company's popularity, see McMillin, *Elizabethan Theatre*.

southern circuit, suggests other reasons to play in the Stanley household (McMillin and MacLean 59-60). One reason was the Queen's need to secure the Stanleys' loyalty in potentially disruptive Lancashire. Elizabeth I, near the end of her reign, needed to spread a positive view of herself and her country to secure allegiance, loyalty, and unity. The north was a trouble spot and sending her troupe there so often confirms Elizabeth I's interest in the area. My research into presentations of region in the Queen's Men's repertory builds on McMillin and MacLean's thesis that the company was founded to promote a positive view of Elizabeth's regime; the analysis reveals the plays promote pride in all regions and rural life to demonstrate that all parts of the nation were similar and therefore unified.⁶⁸ While the Queen's Men do refer to southern locations, which suggests their plays were part of a southern touring campaign, overall, the majority of the Queen's Men's plays focus on the praise of "England" in general, which suggests the company aimed to promote pride in England above pride in singular regions. The company's promotion of pride in England can also be seen in how frequently rural characters are the play's exemplary figures; everyone is equally valued in the Queen's Men's repertory because everyone contributes to the Protestant nation. The Queen's Men reinforce this wide appeal with their inclusive clowning and audience interaction.

I explore both companies' nods to local Lancastrian concerns in the case studies: Strange's Men's *Fair Em* and the Queen's Men's *Old Wives Tale*. *Fair Em* features jokes about the terrain of the north-west and refers to local dignitaries who might have been in the Stanley household audience. As others have noted, this evidence suggests that *Fair Em* was adapted specifically for a Lancastrian performance, or that the play was written,

⁶⁸ See McMillin and MacLean 59-60.

even commissioned, to appeal to the company's patron. The play's promotion of a positive view of Lancashire is linked to Strange's Men's positive promotion of their patron. The Queen's Men's *Old Wives Tale* features concerns over parish corruption, which given the county's notoriously inept ecclesiastical system was a pertinent topic for the Lancastrian audience. Both case studies reveal how small scenes can become significant when discussed in a Lancashire context.

To explore differences between region and nation, I examine how regions function in the plays, whether the companies treat regional characters as unique, and whether they represent the rural character as "clownish, vplandish, or churlish and vnmannerly" (Cawdrey, "Rurall"). In the case studies, I ask if the plays address topics relevant to Lancashire and those in the audience. To do this, I examine trends across Strange's Men's repertory and close with the case study of *Fair Em*, and follow this with discussion of trends in the Queen's Men and finish with the case study of *Old Wives Tale*.

Strange's Men's Repertory: Class Dissociated from Region

Strange's Men emphasize that characters are judged by their class and not their regional associations and they criticize the nation with negative comparisons to other countries. This approach towards regions does not suggest disinterest in regional concerns, but a more guarded approach to the subject. To demonstrate this, I first consider the repertory's descriptions of regions, the use of foreign and domestic settings, and whether rural characters are praised or derided.

Strange's Men's use of foreign settings allows subtle criticism on the state of England, particularly social disorder and immorality, which suggests a careful

engagement with England's political problems. Additionally, the plays' focus on London might suggest the company sought to appeal to a more mobile audience. The majority of Strange's Men's plays are set outside of England:⁶⁹ *Jew of Malta* unsurprisingly in Malta; *Looking Glass* in the city of Niniue (Nineveh); *Rare Triumphs*' setting is not named but Italy is assumed;⁷⁰ and *Spanish Tragedy* is evidently set in Spain. In *Looking Glass*, the ungodly Nineveh serves as the looking glass for London and England. Indeed, the full wrath of the play's admonishments fall not on Nineveh but on England's immorality, particularly the central city's lack of social order and religious conformity:

London take heed, these sinnes abound in thee:

The poore complaine, the widowes wronged bee.

The Gentlemen by subiltie are spoilde,

The plough-men loose the crop for which they toild. (4.419-22)⁷¹

The play argues that just like Nineveh, England sins across society with its "spoilde" gentlemen, lazy "plough-men," neglected "poore," and abandoned "widowes."

Repeatedly, the play argues that, in both Nineveh and England, sin propounds this topsy-turvy social order. Additionally, despite the reference to England in the play's full title "*A Looking Glass for London and England*," the majority of the moralizing focuses on London. For example, Oseas, the prophet, only compares Niniue to London: "Looke London, look, with inward eies behold, / What lessons the euent do here vnfold" (15.1804). As *Looking Glass* features the most heinous sins in Nineveh, like murder and

⁶⁹ *Fair Em*, this chapter's case study, is the only Strange's Men's play set in England.

⁷⁰ This is a reasonable guess since Bomelio refers to arriving in Venice "a toder daye" (1061), and the characters' names are markedly Italian.

⁷¹ All quotations from *Looking Glass* are from the Malone edition; I cite first by scene number then line number.

adultery, and uses the prophet to compare Nineveh to England, Strange's Men use this distance to more safely criticize social disorder and religious attitudes in England. Additionally, the focus on London, especially at the end of the scenes with Oseas' speeches, suggests that the play appealed to a mobile noble audience, like the Stanleys, who knew London.

Conversely, the Strange's Men also compare England positively to foreign countries, specifically by alluding to contemporary political situations like the Anglo-Spanish conflict and praising English nobility's role in England's supremacy.⁷² *Spanish Tragedy* features a dumb show with three famous English knights, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, Edmund, Earl of Kent, and John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, who take Portuguese or Spanish Kings and their crowns prisoner. This dumb show highlights English nobility's triumphs over Portuguese and Spanish Kings and demonstrates how "English warriors likewise conquered Spaine, / And made them bow their knees to Albion" (1.4.586-87).⁷³ Additionally, the Lancastrian audience would appreciate the local connection to the Duke of Lancaster who conquers the Spanish King.⁷⁴ The dumb show explicitly praises England and, more importantly, the nobles' roles in the triumphs of "Albion"; these triumphs are notably triumphs over Spain, a country that continually threatened England in this period. The dumb show allows the Strange's Men to reference the Anglo-Spanish conflict and present the image of a triumphant England over its

⁷² In the early 1580s Spain had become a significant threat to England; for an overview of the Anglo-Spanish conflict, see "The War with Spain."

⁷³ All quotations from *Spanish Tragedy* are from Greg's edition and are cited by act, scene, and line number.

⁷⁴ The Duke of Lancaster controls the Duchy of Lancaster and was considered "one of the most famous, princeliest and stateliest pieces of the Queen's ancient inheritance" (qtd. in "History"). From 1399 the title was inherited by the ruling sovereign; however, the dumb show features John of Gaunt, the last noble holder of the Dukedom. For more on the significance of the Duke of Lancaster in Lancashire, see "History."

enemy.⁷⁵ However, this positive comparison is rare for *Strange's Men*, and not as effusive as the compliments paid to England in the Queen's Men's repertory. Significantly, too, it is not England as a whole that is signalled out as brave, but England's nobles.

While foreign settings allow covert criticism of England and emphasis on the importance of nobility, *Strange's Men's* use of ambiguous settings dissociates the judgement of characters from their location and instead stresses that characters must be judged by their social class. Places merely signify a character's situation. The company achieves ambiguous settings through use of vague place names such as a "court" and a "forest." These vague markers of location do not reflect upon characters but their situations; for example, in *Rare Triumphs* to Bomelio the forest ruins "the pleasures of the feelde" (3.1.805) because he is banished from court, but for the young lovers, Fidelity and Hermione, the forest represents a place of refuge where they "were wont to meete / in secret sorte eche other for to greete" (2.1.523-24).⁷⁶ Therefore, the forest represents a hopeful respite or a frightful punishment. When Bomelio tells the exiled Hermione that "A darksome den must be thy lofty lodging now" (3.964), he demonstrates how it is their noble roots that transform the forest into a worthy place. This same pattern of a character's social standing transforming region occurs in the *Spanish Tragedy*. After Hieronimo's son is murdered, all regions become suspicious to him because he views their inhabitants as murderers. For instance, Hieronimo describes the path to Lorenzo's

⁷⁵ There is some debate over whether *Spanish Tragedy* wholeheartedly praises England's triumph over Spain, see Justice and Ardolino, "Kyd's," or more subversively criticizes England, see Siemon and McAdam. However, regardless of whether England is overtly praised throughout the play, this scene asserts the dominance of English nobility.

⁷⁶ All quotations from *Rare Triumphs* are from Greg's edition and are cited by act, scene, and line number.

house, his son's murderer, as "unto a forest of distrust and fear, / A darksome place, and dangerous to pass" (3.11.1839-40). Not only does the path become dangerous and dark like the "forest," but the court too now seems a place where "murderers have built / A habitation for their cursed soules" (3.11.1847-48). In murderous Spain, broken boundaries between court and forest demonstrate all areas are potentially dangerous when socially ambitious people reside in them. No setting, court or forest, is marked as positive or negative in its own right; instead region is marked by the quality of the person in it.

Strange's Men's treatment of rural characters also demonstrates that region need not mark characters. Since the company praises noble characters for their ability to transform regions around them, it makes sense that Strange's Men are less positive towards rural characters with their lower social standing. In fact, rural characters rarely feature in the repertory and are never overtly praised, unlike in the Queen's Men's plays where rural characters are praised for their wisdom; Strange's Men are disinterested in characters who are marked by regions and praise noble characters who mould the regions they live in. In *Rare Triumphs*, Penulo's description of Bomelio's servant, Lentulo, as a "horseson peasant," identifies Lentulo as rural (3.1.683). Later, when Lentulo comments that "they say in the Cuntry tis a common guise/ That Gentlemen now a daies cannot see with both eyes" (3.1.698-99), his reference to "cuntry" wisdom links him further to rural characters. Additionally, although Lentulo's comment criticizes social climbing and reveals that rural characters may hold wisdom, it also concurrently pokes fun at Lentulo who tries to distance himself from his rural status through the very same social climbing. In general, rural characters, when mentioned at all, are objects of ridicule; what most offends other characters about Lentulo is not his country roots, although these are not

presented as admirable, but his flouting of social rules. As Bomelio accuses Lentulo, “You are de runaway from your master” (4.1.1078).⁷⁷ This is like *Looking Glass*’ rural character “Smith,” who critiques society but is treated contemptibly; his own servant takes his wife as a mistress and even tells Smith, “Begone Peasant, out of the compasse of my further wrath” (10.1352-53). The scene’s humour derives from the rural character’s punishment over his failed enforcement of social order. Overall, rural characters are rarely used in the repertory, are never overtly praised, and are attacked for their disregard of social order.

There is no systematic approach to the treatment of region in *Strange’s Men’s* repertory, but there are some key themes: a foreign setting is the norm; when compared to foreign lands, England receives limited praise and is mostly criticised; depending on the characters’ social standing within it, any region, court, city, or forest is potentially treacherous; rural characters garner little appreciation; and noble characters are lauded for England’s honourable reputation. According to *Strange’s Men’s* plays, if there is a nation to praise in England it is thanks to the nation’s nobles. I turn now to *Fair Em*, the one play in the repertory set in England, and, more importantly, in Lancashire.

Case Study: Region in *Fair Em*

Fair Em is one of the few surviving extant plays from the 1590s based specifically in Lancashire. The fact that this play belongs to *Strange’s Men*, a Lancastrian noble’s company, is difficult to treat as coincidental.⁷⁸ As has been discussed, Lancashire had a

⁷⁷ At this point in the play, Bomelio is in disguise and adopts a Venetian accent; hence his peculiar phrasing.

⁷⁸ There is debate over whether *Fair Em* is a touring edition of a play not based in Lancashire, whether it was written specifically for a Lancashire performance, or whether this version played across the country regardless of its north-western setting, see Henning, “Introduction” 17-27 and Thaler. There is also

poor reputation in this period; not only was the county accused of popery, but Lancastrians were stereotyped as hypersexual and violent.⁷⁹ I explore whether *Fair Em* presents this view of Lancashire, particularly asking if the Lancastrians in *Fair Em* demonstrate their “formidable reputation” (Haigh, *Reformation* 46). I also examine how representative the play is of the repertory’s attitudes to region. To address these issues, I discuss descriptions of Lancashire, scenes that reveal local knowledge of Lancashire, and regional and rural characters’ treatment.

Fair Em’s emphasis on the play’s north-west setting and the beauty of the region reveals pride in the region and stresses the region’s significance to England, which is further compounded by descriptions of England’s vulnerability. The play repeatedly refers to its Lancastrian setting; the play is set in the rural countryside of Manchester, the characters Manville and Valingford journey to Westchester, and William arrives in Liverpool after his trip to Denmark. Additionally, north-west locations are complimented for their beauty, and, while England itself receives praise, it is more moderate than praise of the north-west. The play opens in “faire Manchester” (2.99), and Valingford stays in Manchester’s “delightsoe soyle” (3.295) rather than journey abroad with his sovereign; however, in opposition to the positive references to Lancashire, the first references to England emphasise the nation’s vulnerability to attack. Lines such as “faire Britaines mighty Conqueror” (1.1) and “this haplesse Yle” (2.93) and William the Conqueror’s foolish abandonment of England demonstrate the country’s lack of order.⁸⁰ These

evidence that Edward Alleyn may have led the company to Manchester on the way to Chester; see George, *Lancashire* xxxi, which might support the argument that the play was written with the region in mind.

⁷⁹ See George, *Lancashire* xxi and Haigh, *Reformation* 46.

⁸⁰ All quotations from *Fair Em* are from Greg’s edition and are cited by scene and line number.

descriptions of Lancashire's fairness and delightful soil oppose the region's reputation as a "dark corner."

Furthermore, in addition to *Fair Em's* praise of Lancashire through descriptions of the region and use of Lancashire as a setting, the play demonstrates knowledge of the region that suggests the Lancastrian audience were notable to the company. Scene fourteen is set in Westchester (Chester), and features only north-western characters: Manvile, the Citizen of Westchester, and his daughter Elnor. The characters debate where Manvile's and Elnor's wedding should be, in Westchester (where Elnor's family are from) or in Manchester (where Manvile's family are from). The humour of this scene, I believe, relies on the audience's knowledge of the local area. The Citizen refers to the distance between Manchester and Westchester a total of four times during this short scene –in fact, nearly every time he speaks. The distance from Westchester to Manchester is approximately thirty-five miles, yet the Citizen grumbles, "I care not much to take horse and ride to Manchester" (14. 1061). The Citizen's frequent refrain of "not much" caring is meant to be, I think, comical because of how close Westchester actually was to Manchester. It may also have added humour because *Strange's Men* themselves frequently made this journey. Perhaps the Citizen's grumbles also refer to local jokes about a notoriously difficult road or a rivalry between the cities.⁸¹ Regardless of the exact reason behind the joke, the Citizen's repeated stress over the distance signals local knowledge and who would know better about Lancastrian in-jokes than *Strange's Men* who travelled between the two towns? Cestrian Elnor and Lancastrian Manvile's betrothal is another of *Fair Em's* nods to the Lancastrian audience. Haigh explains how

⁸¹ For years Manchester has held rivalries with other local north-west cities, for example, see Rohrer, "Scouse vs Manc," although I cannot find references to a Chester and Manchester rivalry during this period.

common Elner and Manvile's cross-county marriage was in Lancashire, "Between 1590-1640, 79% of all marriages ... were to girls from immediately adjacent counties" (*Reformation* 89). This was actually quite unusual among nobles in the rest of England who favoured cross-country matches and led to a "compact and inter-related ruling group" in Lancashire (89); this scene of north-western intermarriage would seem familiar to the noble Lancastrian audience at the Stanleys. These scenes that demonstrate local knowledge would appeal to the Lancastrian audience and also help heighten the county's importance.

Fair Em contains further evidence that the company knew Lancastrian dignitaries likely to be in their patron's household. The play contains two notable references to the ancestor of a possible audience member at the Stanleys, Sir Edmund Trafford.⁸² Sir Edmund Trafford served as the Sheriff of Lancaster, was a confidant of Henry Stanley, and was a strict Protestant who prosecuted many recusants (Baggley 60). Therefore, politically, Trafford was a suitable figure for Strange's Men to hold in esteem. In the play's first scene in Manchester, a Sir Edmund Trafford is openly praised by Sir Thomas Goddard: "Why should not I content me with this state? / As good Sir Edmund Trofferd did the flaile" (2.100-01). Alwen Thaler convincingly argues that the "flaile" refers to the Trafford's family crest of "a labouring man with a flail ... threshing" (650). This comparison emphasises nobility's suffering and Sir Thomas' humble attitude towards Sir Edmund reveals a high regard towards the Trafford family. At the end of the play, Sir Edmund Trafford is again praised by King William: "As good Sir Edmund Treford on the plaines" (17.1529). Between 1587 and 1590, the descendents of "Edmund Treford," Sir

⁸² Thaler first noted these references' significance as evidence that the play was written for performance in Lancashire.

Edmund Trafford and his son, often visited the Stanleys and it seems reasonable, as Thaler points out, to imagine they were in the audience during a production of *Fair Em*. This either suggests that the company had strong links to the county and knew Trafford's importance, or that the Stanleys had asked their company to pay this compliment to their friend's family. These nods to Lancashire suggest familiarity with the audience and the region.

Even with *Fair Em's* praise of Lancashire and the north-west, the play supports Strange's Men's insistence that characters should be judged apart from any regional associations by presenting north-western characters who behave as morally as southern noble characters. This equality stresses the normalcy of the north-west rather than the area's uniqueness. When the Citizen of Westchester and noble Valingford meet; they politely mirror one another. Valingford greets the Citizen with "God speed, sir; might a man crave a word or two with you?" to which the Citizen replies, "God forbid else, sir; I praye you speake your pleasure" (14.1072, 1073). This polite mirroring of speech reveals the Cestrian character's good manners. When Elnor, another Cestrian, hears of Manvile's other betrothal, she demonstrates her morality in her shock: "If I knew this to be true? / He should not be my husband were he never so good" (14.1099-1100). The Cestrians are moral equals to the noble, and presumably southern, Valingford. However, while north-western characters, like Elnor and her father, demonstrate impeccable manners it is not their regional identity that informs their behaviour. To show this, I examine the one Lancastrian who does behave badly in the play.

The play features that most vile man, Manvile, among its Lancastrian characters. Because Manvile is more clearly marked by his personality, not by his regional

upbringing, the play continues the trend found in other *Strange's Men* plays of dissociating a character's morality from his or her regional associations. While Manvile's behaviour is clearly despicable, it is not his being "of Manchester" that is reprehensible. Valingford describes Manvile as "Of Manchester, his father lyving there of good account" (14.1075). This scene, the only one that states where Manvile is from, impresses the morality of Manvile's background; for example, Manvile's father is well-known in Manchester and of "good account." The Citizen adds:

his father and I have beene of old acquaintance,
and a motion was made,
Betweene my daughter and his sonne,
Which is now thoroughly agreed upon. (14. 1088-90)

Fair Em emphasises Manvile's father's trustworthiness. Although Manvile's rage at Em's suspected adultery and his double betrothal represent the stereotypically violent and hypersexual Lancastrian, the only scene that mentions that he is Lancastrian emphasises his worthy roots. The majority of Lancastrian characters are treated positively, and Manvile's behaviour is reprehensible but not demonstrative of his upbringing in the region.

Fair Em features Trotter, *Strange's Men's* most identifiable rural character, and the criticism of Trotter's behavior is attributed predominantly to his social class. Trotter is linked to the countryside, but never directly named as Lancastrian: he is not Trotter "of Manchester" as the other local characters are described. Rather than being associated with a region, Trotter represents the peasantry; he is "the Millers man" (s.d. 2.57) and has much in common with the Queen's Men's *Clyomon and Clamydes'* Corin and *Old Wives*

Tale's Clunch. Trotter's speech pattern suggests he speaks in a dialect; he frequently uses colloquial terms and unusual pronunciations, for example: "you and your daughter go vp and downe weeping, / and wamenting and keeping of a wamentation" (2.70-71). As demonstrated in this amusing comment, Trotter's value in the play is his excellent clowning and comic relief. Trotter's alignment with labour and his role as Sir Thomas' servant demonstrates how disconnected Lancastrian nobles are to regional labour. To Em and Sir Thomas, Trotter's labour is "drudging labour and base pesantrie" (2.97). Sir Thomas treats Trotter benevolently and listens to his complaints: "Content thee Trotter, I will go pacifie them" (2.169). Yet the noble characters continually tease Trotter, dismiss his worries as easily solved, and ridicule his desire to marry Em. Trotter's rural associations are for humour and the nobles dismiss his connections to the land. He serves merely as a foil to demonstrate how far removed Lancastrian nobles are from associations with region.

Fair Em's descriptions of Lancashire, references to local conditions and audience members, and treatment of regional north-western characters, especially the rural character of Trotter, support the general trend of how *Strange's Men* engage with region, namely that region does not mark a character but social standing does. Additionally, the play makes references to the region that would appeal particularly to those in the audience at Lancashire. In *Fair Em* there is an effort to present individuals from the north-west as honourable and equal to characters from the rest of the country. In fact, while there is praise of Lancashire as a region; the play mostly stresses the normality of the county. When a character is marked as a rural, like Trotter, it is not his Lancashire connection that is stressed but his connection to rural labour that is stressed; Trotter is

judged because of his social class. Strange's Men portray a valuable Lancashire inhabited by trusted nobles who should be judged by their character and class, and not by their place of birth.

The Queen's Men's Repertory: Nationalizing Region

The Queen's Men highlight particular regions in their plays and signal out rural characters as praiseworthy and valuable but only to demonstrate the importance of all regions to the nation at large. To explore the Queen's Men's very different approach to region and how this connects to Queen Elizabeth I's propaganda messages, I analyse trends in the repertory's representations of regions as parts of England, the contrast between the country and court, and depictions of rural characters.

The majority of the Queen's Men's plays are set in England and mostly in the south, which implies the company's familiarity with the south. The focus on England in the plays is marked and suggests the Queen's Men sought to appeal to a wide audience across the country. Even the company's references to London may have been included to appeal to the mobile audience at the Stanleys who frequently visited the capital. These English settings are highlighted by frequent references to place names. For example, *Famous Victories* references locations across the south, particularly those close to London. The play's first scene names several southern locations: the setting is "about a mile off London," Prince Henry's friends argue over visiting taverns in "Feuersham" and "Eastcheape," Henry is informed that "the Towne of Detford is risen," and Dericke, a

“gentlemen Clownes in Kent” has just been robbed “Upon Gads Hill in Kent.”⁸³ *Friar Bacon*’s setting also jumps from one southern location to another, moving between Fresingfield, Harlston Faire, Oxford, and the Windsor Court. In addition to these southern settings, the characters often name nearby southern locations in their dialogue like “Henly-upon Thembs,” “Framingham,” and “Hampton House,” “Beckles,” and the “Ile of Eely.”⁸⁴ Despite the praise of the nation in general, a few Queen’s Men’s plays do refer frequently to London which suggests either favouritism towards London or a desire to promote the country’s famous capital. References to London are used to demonstrate pride in the city as a representative of the nation. For example, in *Three Lords*, London is privileged as the play’s title demonstrates and in Pleasure’s final speech: “On all the rest that in this Land doo dwell, / Chiefly in *London*, Lord poure downe thy grace” (sig. I4r),⁸⁵ yet the rest of England is also noted by the Queen’s Men. These southern location references suggest that the company held local southern knowledge (much like the use of north-western locations in *Fair Em*) and used it to appeal to a predominantly southern audience. However, this does not discount these plays for performance in the north since it is likely that the southern setting appealed to the mobile audience at the Stanley household.

The Queen’s Men utilise regional jokes to appeal to large cross-sections of England; additionally, the company often use humour to disseminate praise and demonstrate equality to all regions. In fact, key moments reveal local knowledge similar

⁸³ For these place name references, see 29; 103; 107; 35; 162; and 195 respectively. All quotations from *Famous Victories* are from Hanabusa’s edition and are cited by line number.

⁸⁴ See, 2.266-67; 13.1919; 4.480; 3.394; and 5.521 respectively. All quotations from *Friar Bacon* are from Greg’s edition and are cited by scene and line number.

⁸⁵ All quotations from *Three Lords* are from Farmer’s edition and are cited by signature number.

to that found in *Fair Em's* joke over the distance between Manchester and Westchester; however, in *Friar Bacon* the joke references the distance between Oxford and Fressingfield. When Prince Edward sees Lacy propose to Em in Friar Bacon's magic mirror he threatens to "stab them" (5.762), Friar Bacon drily responds "Twere a long poinard my lord, to reache betweene Oxford and Fresingfield" (5.766-67). The joke pokes fun at Prince Edward's rage and rewards the audience's geographical knowledge. Other characters in *Friar Bacon* also display their knowledge of place with jests. When Prince Edward boasts of Margaret's beauty, he relates it to her south-eastern roots: "A bonier wench all Suffolke cannot yeeld, / All Suffolke, nay all Britain holds none such" (1.43). In quick response, Ralph bets him "there is one better in Warwickshire" (1.48). This amusing joke ridicules the notion of a regional contest over a "best woman" and highlights the company's familiarity with regions across England. This joke exemplifies the Queen's Men's typical approach to issues around region: humour.

Overall, the Queen's Men tend to praise all of England's regions as jolly or merry; I argue this is part of the company's aim to praise the nation more than any specific region and to emphasise every region's similarity. The Queen's Men demonstrate pride in England through their use of descriptive praise of multiple regions. Multiple places in *Friar Bacon* are lauded; for example, Margaret's hometown is "merry Fressingfield" (1.10) and Oxford is a "towne gorgeous" (8.1118). The play also praises regions by comparing them to court; for example, Prince Edward argues the court "dames" cannot compare to "damsells" from "simple Suffolks homely towns" (1.68) because "Their courtly conesse were but foolery" (1.75). Here, Suffolk is praised as simple and homely, and the court is posited as deceptive. While the repetitive

compliments for each town outside of the city praise regions, they work to emphasise how similar and “gorgeous” all of England’s regions are.

The Queen’s Men celebrate the nation in the repertory by emphasising an understanding of contemporary conditions of regional life and by praising the people’s rural pastimes. The Queen’s Men stage scenes that demonstrate regional life as honourable and rural characters’ pastimes as valuable. In *Friar Bacon* a whole scene is dedicated to the Harleston fair. Although the Harleston fair scene is partly humorous, particularly in the comparisons it affords between the noble Lacy and the farming community, the scene also demonstrates real farmers’ concerns: “if this wether hold wee shall haue hay good cheape, and butter and cheese at Harlston will beare no price” (3.358-60). *Friar Bacon* also emphasises the need to entertain foreign royal visitors with drama: “We must lay plots of stately tragedies, / Strange comick showes, ... / To welcome all the westerne Potentates” (6.833-34, 36). Here, the play argues that drama promotes England. There is other praise for regional pastimes throughout the repertory; the strongest defence of pastimes occurs in *Three Lords*. With the imminent invasion of the three Spanish Lords, the three Lords of London urge, “that plaies be published, / Mai-games and maskes, with mirth and minstrelse, / Pageants and school-feastes, beares, and puppet plaies, (Sig. F2v). Notably, the play praises not only plays, the business of the Queen’s Men, but also other forms of recreation like bear-baiting and pageants. This praise of customs like bear-baiting and May-games would have been particularly popular in Lancashire where the Sabbatarian movement despaired of how passionately the county felt towards their local customs and performances on Sunday afternoons.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ For an overview of this, consult George, *Lancashire* xxi.

When the Queen's Men do criticise life outside of London, which is rarely, it is to admit that rural life is not suitable for royalty or nobility, but these caveats against regional life still suggest that rural characters and regions are worthwhile in their own right. Occasionally, the repertory hints that dissent may be fostered in regions; while this is rare it does reinforce the notion of a watchful Queen aware of all "dark corners" of her land. In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, the princess Neronis views rural people as admirable but the shepherd boy's life as "loathsome" (17.1529) and the hunt for a lost sheep is a "wild and wearie way" (17.1531).⁸⁷ While it is clear that labour is inappropriate for a princess, Neronis' view does demonstrate admiration for the hardship associated with rural life. A slight criticism of regions occurs in *Three Lords* when the knave Dissimulation describes how he found refuge in the countryside: "I was banished out of London by Nemo, to the countrie went I, amongst my olde friendes and neuer better loued than among the russet coates" (Sig. D1r). Dissimulation's remark suggests a suspicion that the countryside harboured knavery and this would strike an uncomfortable note in the Stanley household, as Lancashire was an area accused of fostering religious outcasts. Simony's remark that he too had hidden "abroad in other realms, ... not verie far of, I am secretly fostered," and that he "then hither ... came stealing ouer sea" (Sig. D1r) reinforces the threat the countryside could represent. Additionally, Lancashire was known to have links with the "other realms" of Catholic Europe and Ireland that Simony hints of here. However, these notes of caution towards the danger of regions are rare in the repertory. The Queen's Men continually emphasize the nation's worth more than that of individual regions; to do this the Queen's Men stress how every region promotes

⁸⁷ All quotations from *Clyomon and Clamydes* are from Greg's edition and are cited by scene and line number.

England's fame. Those characters marked as regional promote England, as a description of *Friar Bacon's* Margaret exemplifies: "Peggie, the louelie flower of all townes, / Suffolk's faire Hellen, and rich England's star" (9.1424-25). Margaret may be Suffolk's "Hellen" but the final praise of her rests on the description "England's star." Also in *Friar Bacon*, King Henry remarks triumphantly on England's shoreline: "To Englands shore, whose promontorie cleuees / Shewes Albion is another little world" (4.451-52) but his praise focuses on how the shoreline demonstrates the worth of Albion's "little world." It is unsurprising that in *King Leir* the threat of disunity from dividing England creates the play's central crisis. To demonstrate this anxiety over the disunity of nation, *King Leir* features repetitive references to the whole country: "within the bounds of Albion" (1.53) and "this British ayre" (7.584). *Famous Victories* also stresses pride in England rather than specific regions; before the battle of Agincourt, the heavily outnumbered Henry calls to his troops, "all England praieth for vs: / ... / ... like true English hearts, / With me throw vp your caps, and for England, / Cry S. George, and God and S. George helpe us" (1344, 1346-48). Again, Friar Bacon's defeat of Vandermast is not so much a demonstration of the genius of Oxford University but of England; upon Friar Bacon's success King Henry exclaims: "thou hast honoured England with thy skill" (8.1284). The final line of *Friar Bacon* stresses the nation's triumph: "Thus glories England ouer all the west" (15.2155). Throughout the Queen's Men's repertory the unity of England is stressed and the nation is promoted through drama, praise of specific towns, and depictions of success against other countries.

Rural characters are granted much license in the Queen's Men's plays, as seen by their humorous undermining of noble and royal characters and their comments on local or

contemporary conditions. The Queen's Men feature more rural characters than Strange's Men and sometimes the praise of these rural characters may appear to be at the overall narrative's expense. However, I argue the Queen's Men's plays sympathetically portray rural life, which promotes the company's patron, Queen Elizabeth I, as a monarch who understands her nation and forgives transgressions. *Famous Victories* promotes England as a noble land, yet the rural characters of Iohn Cobler and Derike consistently undermine this promotion. For example, when called by the Captaine to go to war with France, Iohn Cobler begs not to serve his King in the army because he has, "a great many shooes at home to Cobble" (1015-16). Later, having stolen away from the battle of Agincourt, Iohn and Derike undermine the King's noble purpose to win France when they openly discuss their cowardly conduct; Derike even feigns a nosebleed to escape fighting. Finally, Derike and Iohn note that as "the Duke of Yorkes funerall must be carried into England" (1624-25) then they will "go with it" (1627). While in one respect the character's unruly behaviour does undermine King Henry's boasts about the glory and honour of England, I would argue that such scenes demonstrate the play's efforts to portray the difficulties of rural characters' lives.⁸⁸ *Clyomon and Clamydes* also features Corin, a rural character who critiques his local parish. When Corin agrees that the disguised Neronis should become his shepherd's boy, he notes how Neronis' presence in Church will demonstrate how his parish priest is ineffectual and how his neighbours do not listen in Church:

⁸⁸ Other critics have viewed the disparity between the rural scenes and the royal characters' scenes differently. I agree with Karen Oberer's praise for how the play "defly interweave[s] the serious and the comic" but she argues this works "to critique not only generic purity but also class purity" (171). While I agree, I do think the focus of these scenes is more to show benevolence and understanding towards all classes rather than to critique class hierarchy. Louise Nichols argues the play is "more concerned with the way Henry is viewed by others that with Henry himself" (156); while I am not certain of the totality of this argument, I would agree that these scenes afford the lower classes a voice, which presents a monarch "in tune" with her nation's concerns.

“Thous go to Church in this coate, beuore Madge a sonday in her gray gown / Good lord how our Church-wardens wil looke vpo thee, bones of god zeest,/ There will be more looking at thee, then our sir Iohn the parish preest” (15.1320-22). These scenes promote a vision of the Queen’s Men’s patron as understanding the difficult living conditions in England and forgiving rural characters who criticize the state; in this sense, these scenes, fit into the Queen’s Men’s repertory’s aim to promote a unified nation with a monarch at the helm who knows her nation’s troubles.

Indeed, rural characters are often the most exemplary characters in the Queen’s Men’s repertory with plays regularly describing such figures as “merry” and showing how morally they behave. This exemplary nature is even shown in how rural characters invite audience participation, thereby including everyone in the world of the play. In *King Leir*, Cordella admires the “merry crue of country folke / To see what industry and paynes they tooke, / To win them commendations ’mongst their friends” (2099-2101). Not only are these country folke “merry,” but Cordella is impressed by their neighbourly work to help “their friends.” In *Friar Bacon*, the rural characters are generous beyond their means; Margaret’s family, though poor, insists that Lacie “Make but a step into the keepers lodge, / And such poor fair as woodmen can afford ... / You shall haue store” (3.438-39, 441). In *Clyomon and Clamydes*, Corin the shepherd, another excellent example of a Queen’s Men’s rural character,⁸⁹ presents the shepherd’s life as simple and (that key Queen’s Men’s word) “merry”: “But tis a world to zee what mery lives we shepheards lead, / Why where Gentlemen and we get once a thorne bush over our head”

⁸⁹ Corin is a shepherd, undoubtedly played by the clown in the company, who speaks in a marked south-western dialect. Littleton notes that the use of dialect of south-western dialect was the central conventional literary dialect for rustics (45), but the dialect does not occur in *Strange’s Men’s* repertory and does accord more to the Queen’s Men’s consistent use of southern regions in their plays.

(15.1293-94). Corin not only praises his simple life, partly for humour, but he also interacts with the audience when describing his neighbourhood: “But I may zay to you my nabor, Hogs maid had a clap, wel let the laugh that” (15.1298). Such praise of the merriness and morality of rural life coupled with the invitation to the audience, at times, to partake in it, demonstrates the exemplary status of the Queen’s Men rural characters.

In conclusion, while the Queen’s Men’s predominant use of a southern setting suggests favouritism towards their southern touring routes, the company praise England overall as an honourable nation of which her people should be proud. The repertory grants license to rural characters to criticise the state; indeed, rural characters enjoy a special status as the most exemplary characters in their plays. Rural characters’ status in the plays emphasises how England is to be admired across its entire society and how vital all parts of the nation are. The staging of regional and national concerns is done with much humour and light-heartedness, thus promoting a very appealing and inclusive nation.

Case Study: Region in *Old Wives Tale*

This case study focuses on *Old Wives Tale* since the play idealises regional life and includes much commentary on the nation. Additionally, the play is a useful comparison to *Fair Em* since it exemplifies a similar genre and is also set in England. I argue that the play’s setting is in the south-east of England, which fits with the Queen’s Men’s trend towards plays with southern settings.⁹⁰ I analyse whether *Old Wives Tale* features any of

⁹⁰ In the beginning of the play, Delia’s two brothers provide a finite sense of location when they note that their arrival “Vpon these chalkie Cliffs of Albion” (164). Presumably then, the play is set in Dover (the “chalkie Cliffs”), in the south-east of England.

the identified trends shown in the Queen's Men's repertory namely the praise of rural life, the feature of rural characters with exemplary behaviour, and the stress that all regions across England promote the nation. First, I examine the play's acknowledgement of rural life's difficulties and then contextualise how the portrayal of rural life's difficulties relates to performing in a Lancastrian household. I close my analysis with a focus on how rural characters are treated.

In *Old Wives Tale*, the Queen's Men idealise rural characters despite their seemingly knavish lifestyle; the play even privileges rural characters' opinions on parish corruption. This topic would have struck a familiar chord for a Lancastrian audience. The play makes an effort to show how despite their flaws, rural characters ought to be praised as ideal subjects who support their friends, uphold Christian morality, and stand against corruption. Midway through the play, two rural characters, Wiggen and Corebus, argue with two Church officials, Churchwarden and Sexton, over their friend's burial fee, contending that the Church officials refuse to bury Jack because the Church officials are corrupt: "shall a good fellow do lesse seruice and more honestie to the parish, & will you not when he is dead let him haue Christmas buriall" (561-63).⁹¹ The play supports Wiggen's and Corebus' view of corruption in the parish when the Sexton reveals he quibbles not on the Church's behalf but on his own account: "Parish me no parishes, pay me my fees, and let the rest runne on in the quarters accounts" (555-57). In other words, the Sexton wants his fee only for himself and does not care if the parish has to bear the costs. Wiggen appeals to the Church official's morality when he notes his unburied friend "gave foure score and nineteene mourning gownes to the parish when he died" (584-86).

⁹¹ All quotations from *Old Wives Tale* are from Greg's edition and are cited by line number.

The Churchwardens are corrupt and the rural men are admirable for their passionate defence of their friend's importance to the local parish. The corrupt parish was a well known problem in early modern Lancashire, and the praise of a rural character's inherent morality, despite parish corruption, would have encouraged the audience whose own region was known as an ignorant "dark corner."⁹² Furthermore, after the dispute is resolved, we see how indulged the rural characters are; Corebus announces that they will now go to "the church stile and have a pot and so" (508-09). The rural characters are not dismissed as knaves for carousing or for their physical violence against the Church; in fact, they are praised despite their faults, which proposes a powerful image of a benevolent, understanding, and, most importantly, forgiving monarch.

In *Old Wives Tale*, rural characters act as moral compasses; this praise focuses on the importance of the rural character to the local community because of their moral behaviour. This praise of rural characters fits with the Queen's Men's repertory's aim to appeal for unity across England by demonstrating the integral role of everyone in society. For example, it is Corebus and Wiggen who tell the Church about morals: "You may be ashamed ... to let a poore man lie so long about ground vnburied" (Sig. C4v 546, 548-50). Jack, the unburied friend, also appears later in the play as the knight Eumenides' moral guide; it is Jack who enables Eumenides to defeat the conjurer Sacrapant. Madge and Fantastic emphasise Jack's exemplary status when they discuss how well beloved Jack was in the parish, "O this Iack was a maruelous fellow, he was but a poore man, but very well beloued" (636-38), and this is further stressed by Corebus and Wiggen when they note that Jack was "As good a fellow as euer troade vppon Neats leather" (581-82).

⁹² For more detail on Lancashire's inept ecclesiastical systems, see Hill and Haigh, "Puritan Evangelism."

While the play admits some flaws in Jack's behaviour, through jokes that Jack was "not worth a halfpenny, and drunke out euey penny" (589-91), the play continually stresses how valuable Jack was to the local community and praises his morality.

Two other rural characters, Madge and her husband Clunch, are presented positively in *Old Wives Tale*. This positive representation again works to stress how valuable rural characters are to the nation and also how integral each social order is to England; this is seen especially when Madge and Clunch are compared to royalty. As the storyteller, Madge is central to the play; she remains onstage throughout and guides the audience with comments on the action. Madge and Clunch are marked as rural first by their location: they live in a cottage in the forest in what seems to be south-east England. Neither character specifically speaks in dialect, but they do speak in plain simple English: "What am I? Why, I am Clunch the Smith, what are you, what make you in my territories at this time of the night?" (44-46). Additionally, like Trotter's name in *Fair Em*, the name Clunch identifies this character as a rustic or a country fellow (Whitworth 2). From the beginning of the play, Clunch and Madge appear as exemplary lower class rural characters. Antic praises Madge's behaviour as "A good example for the wiues of our towne" (77-78). Clunch suggests simple pastimes that the group could partake in to pass the night: "Lay a crab in the fire to rost for Lambes-woolll what shall wee haauue a game at Trumpe or Ruffee to driue away the time" (84-86). When Madge is begged as "gammer" to tell a story, she first insists her husband go to bed because: "they that ply their worke must keepe good howrs" (116-17). Fantastic praises the couple and compares them to royalty: "This Smith leades a life as merrie as a King with Madge his wife" (88-

89). The intent is clear: good simple lower-class lives are equally as good as royal lives. Again, the play stresses the notion that rural characters are models of moral behaviour.

In conclusion, it is overwhelmingly positive for a Queen's Men's character to be marked as rural. The rural characters are "merry" and "jolly" representatives of the realm. The plays stress how honest, hospitable, and hard-working rural characters are and how important their lifestyle is to the nation. When *Old Wives Tale* makes efforts to present various aspects of rural life honestly, especially the characters' disapproval of the corruption of their parish Church and the loyalty to their tavern, the play seems part of the Queen's Men campaign to make their plays popular across a broad spectrum of society. The Queen's Men present a broader view of rural life than Strange's Men, while the scenes in *Old Wives Tale* could be applied to life in Lancashire, they could just as easily be applied across the entire country. The most important treatment of region in the Queen's Men's repertory is the need to show how valuable each and every member of the nation is, and how even those characters that transgress against the State will be forgiven and praised.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that both companies differ in their presentations of region and nation. Strange's Men's plays insist on a disjunction between a person's character and the region they are from by stressing that people ought to be judged by their social standing. The plays' proposal that characters' worth is detached from their regional connections could be attributed to several reasons. Nobles, like the Stanleys, may have sought to dissociate social worth from regional connections because of the changing organisation

of power in England. As the nation burgeoned, London became a centre for those seeking power, distinct from the more traditional power bases once held in regions. It is possible, then, that the plays reflect the Stanleys' desire to celebrate their London connections.

Additionally, the Stanleys sought power outside of their local region, and although the company's plays praise Lancashire, and therefore praise those linked to Lancashire, they also show Lancastrians as worthy regardless of their connections to Lancashire.

Certainly, the repertory's insistence that the nobility were crucial to the nation's success attempts to demonstrate the Stanleys' significance to the whole nation and not solely to Lancashire.

The Queen's Men's plays praise many regions, particularly the south. This supports McMillin and MacLean's central thesis that the company's repertory was part of a nationwide campaign to promote Elizabeth's Protestantism (33), but I argue the praise of region also reveals that the company sought to promote a more general pride in the English nation itself. The company's repertory features critiques of early modern life such as the local parish, but those who make criticisms are frequently condoned and often praised for their honesty. This understanding response to social pressures implies to audiences that the Elizabethan regime understood and forgave its subjects. Additionally, the plays stress the worthiness of rural characters and their place in the nation. Every region adds to the nation's honour and is integral to the nation's success, but the most prized categories in the Queen's Men's repertory are the nation and the nation's people. Through these attitudes to region and nation, the company promotes its patron, Elizabeth I, as a benevolent and inclusive monarch at the helm of a unified nation.

These conclusions show that the Queen's Men do not hold the only repertory with a propagandistic aim. In fact, both companies' reflect their patron's politics, regardless of how intentional this relationship was. What do we learn, then, about Strange's Men's propagandistic aim? Strange's Men consistently idolise the noble character and even the region the Stanleys come from, they present subtle criticisms about the nation, and they stress the importance of a conservative social order. To Strange's Men, the lower class characters are mostly objects of humour unimportant to the realm, although perhaps this is an inevitable conclusion in the face of the nobility's sheer importance. I argue the use of region in Strange's Men's repertory expresses their patron's beliefs that the nobility was integral to England and that social order must be maintained. When Strange's Men champion the noble, they help defend their patron's fragile position of power against societal changes.

It is no surprise that Strange's Men's plays have largely been considered in the light of a London performance space, since most of the evidence we have of their repertory and their existence comes from Henslowe's records of their London performances. However, it is inaccurate to assume the company was most concerned with London and the court. As this analysis has shown, while there was little engagement with specific regions in most of the repertory, the survival of *Fair Em* suggests Strange's Men did seek to engage with local concerns and involve local audiences, and that their concerns over social order and the state of the nation would speak to audiences outside of London, although the repertory may perhaps seem more suited to noble audiences, or at least aspiring audiences.

Each company presents its patron's most appealing "face." The Stanleys' company promote the notion that nobility is inherent and not associated with regional connections, while the Queen's Men promote benevolence and extend praise to all, particularly to the rural lower class characters. The Queen's act of sending her troupe to the Stanley household, with plays that praise normality and admit parish corruption, powerfully displays how benevolent and accepting the Queen could be. Additionally, repeatedly sending her company to the Stanley household affirms the value of both Lancashire and the Stanleys. This affirmation of Lancashire as a worthwhile destination for the Queen's Men is also found in Strange's Men's *Fair Em's* defence of Lancashire's reputation and of Lancastrians in general.

Both companies' repertoires partly reflect their patrons' propagandistic goals, but they communicate their ideas quite differently. It is strikingly clear that the Queen's Men's tactic to persuade the audience towards a positive view of the Elizabethan regime was to employ a tone of continual "jolly" clowning and light-heartedness. Strange's Men's tactic to raise and defend their patron's profile was to offer a consistently serious tone. The Queen's Men's plays, as a result, focus more on humorous escapades with consistent mistakes by all characters and forgiveness to all for misdemeanours; Strange's Men's plays seem more solemn by comparison. Although these tactics to appeal to those up north might contradict each other in performance at the Stanleys, it is clear that Lancashire was as varied as it was vast. The Stanley household itself hosted such a range of visitors that it is feasible that plays appealed on multiple levels. Amusingly, the companies' two different tactics of a serious and a light-hearted response to region would also appeal to a northern audience today if we believe in two commonplace clichés about

the north: firstly that the north is a place with a great sense of humour and secondly that it is “grim up north.”

Chapter 2: The “Cowardly Craft” of Magic and Catholicism in the Repertories

Introduction

On 16 April 1594, Ferdinando Stanley died at the premature age of thirty-four; Ferdinando had received the Earldom of Derby a mere seven months earlier. There was suspicion over the cause of death. Some contemporaries conjectured poison as the cause, but many believed it was Catholic magic. Lancastrian Catholics were accused of using their “magic” to murder Ferdinando as retribution for Richard Hesketh’s arrest.⁹³ In John Stowe’s detailed description of Ferdinando’s death, he posited that “the manner of his death, was wondrous strange”; as proof of this “strange” death, he cited Ferdinando’s peculiar dreams, the appearance of a “shadow,” and an old “mumbling” woman (767-68). To cement this evidence of a magical cause of death, Stowe reported that Ferdinando “cryed out that the Doctors laboured in vaine, because he was certainly bewitched” (768). Yet not everyone believed that murder was achieved through magic; some proposed poison as the cause of death. William Camden supported this contention when he criticised how the wax image “with haire, iust of the colour of those of [Ferdinando’s] head” that was found in Ferdinando’s bedchamber too neatly “remoued] the suspition of po[i]soning him away and father[ed] his death vpon the art of Wi[t]chcraft” (115). Ferdinando’s death demonstrates how accusations of magic fed into anti-Catholic polemic, and the proposal that poison killed Ferdinando reveals how his

⁹³ On 25 September 1593, Richard Hesketh approached Ferdinando Stanley and suggested Ferdinando should inherit the throne through the claim of his maternal grandmother Mary Brandon. This Catholic plot sought to secure the throne to a person with Catholic sympathies, and it was supported by William Allen and Sir William Stanley. Ferdinando revealed the plot to the government, and Hesketh was arrested and subsequently executed. For more on this, see Bagley 64-66.

contemporaries interpreted Ferdinando's death to support their diverse religious polemics. Catholics argued that Ferdinando's death was divine retribution for his betrayal of Catholics, but Protestants argued his death proved that Catholic magic was used against good Protestants.⁹⁴ Ferdinando's grim demise demonstrates the difficulty of separating religion from magic.

This chapter analyses how the Queen's Men and Strange's Men's repertories explore the dilemma of how to distinguish magic from religion. I consider both companies' staging of magic to ask if they explicitly connect magic to religion and, if so, whether these connections constitute an anti-Catholic polemic. Religion was the period's most divisive concern, and Lancashire was commonly perceived as the land's most "Catholic county."⁹⁵ Given this controversy over Lancashire's religious identity and the explosive subject matter of Catholicism in the post-Reformation period, the companies' repertories needed to present religious attitudes carefully; I argue that the staging of magic allowed the companies covertly to explore a range of religious attitudes and conservatively to condemn Catholicism.

The topic of magic in the early modern period has received much critical attention.⁹⁶ Many of these works explore how religion relates to magic, and all stress how ambiguous distinctions between magical acts and religious acts could be in the populace's mind and also in the Church.⁹⁷ Building upon this critical foundation, this

⁹⁴ For more on how Ferdinando's death could be utilised to support different religious sides, see Jeffcoate's overview of his death.

⁹⁵ George, *Lancashire* xxiv.

⁹⁶ Attention on early modern magic has been wide-ranging. Consult Thomas for a survey of magical practices. For more targeted considerations of magical thought such as scientific magic, see Vickers and Mebane; for a focused examination of witchcraft, see essays in Barry.

⁹⁷ For surveys of religion's relationship to magic in the period, consult Couliano; Parish; Thomas; and Waite. For more on magic in early modern drama, see Ettin; Richard Levin; Mebane; Reed; Rosador "Sacralizing

chapter interrogates magic in a comparative repertory study and especially considers how the staging of magic engages with both companies' patrons' religious attitudes.

Recent work on early modern religion re-evaluates the position that Elizabethan England was uniformly Protestant and stresses the fluidity of religious identity in post-Reformation England.⁹⁸ Critics identify religion's centrality to early modern life and call for more consideration of religion in the period's drama.⁹⁹ Although criticism discusses individual playwright's negotiations of religious attitudes, particularly Shakespeare's, few studies systematically focus on how an entire repertory might engage with religion.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, possibly because of their anonymity, few of the plays in the companies' repertories have received attention for their religious attitudes.¹⁰¹ I agree with

Sign" and "Power of Magic"; and Traister. Additionally, "magician" plays, like Marlowe's *Dr Faustus* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, garner much attention; for an excellent overview, see Traister; for individual studies, see Deats and Mowat. Butterworth's *Theatre of Fire and Magic* demonstrate how the early modern stage performed magic.

⁹⁸ There is disagreement over how smooth the transition was from a Catholic to a Protestant state, see Todd's excellent overview of these revisionist debates. For surveys of religious identity, see Haigh, *English Reformation* and *Plain Man's Pathway*. For post-Reformation Protestant identity, see Collinson, *Birthpangs*; for early modern Catholic culture, see Duffy; Corthell, *Catholic Culture*, particularly the introduction 1-18; and Holmes.

⁹⁹ For studies which focus on religious attitudes in early modern drama and literature, refer to Crockett; Diehl; Dijkhuizen; Hamilton; Knapp; Lake; Marotti; Poole; Shell; Williamson; and White, *Drama*. Part of the reason religious attitudes are rarely discussed in the period's drama stems from the reluctance to view a playwright like Shakespeare as anything but "a purely secular dramatist" (Knapp xii); Knapp suggests critics reconsider the notion that playwrights were "'Christian' only cognitively or subliminally" and approach plays as written "purposively and devotionally" (9).

¹⁰⁰ For religious attitudes in playwrights' work, review Battenhouse; Beauregard; Cox; Jensen; and Groves. There have been some surveys of religion in individual plays from the Queen's Men's repertory; for example, Blackstone's "The Queen's Men" examines the "potential religious impact" of *Selimus* when performed in Norwich; or for a wider discussion of religious polemic in the Queen's Men's repertory, see McMillin and MacLean, particularly 32-36. For religious attitudes in Strange's Men's repertory, consult Manley's "Playing" which notes the company's conservative religious attitudes. Gurr briefly discusses religious affinities in *Shakespeare's Company* 197-98. However, more work is needed on religious polemic in company's repertories, and my thesis is the first to compare religious polemic in companies' repertories.

¹⁰¹ For the Queen's Men, *Friar Bacon* has predominantly received attention for its religious engagement; see Ardolino, "Thus Glories"; Marion Gibson; LaGrandeur; Reynolds; Rosador, "Sacralizing Sign"; and Towne; also see Ardolino, "Protestant Context" on *Old Wives Tale*. For Strange's Men, *Looking Glass*, as the repertory's only Biblical drama, has been discussed by Newcomb. Much attention, however, has been paid to religion in Strange's Men's *Spanish Tragedy*, see Ardolino, "Kyd's"; Erne; Han; McAdam; and Rist. Religion has also been considered in the *Jew of Malta*; see Harmer; Kitch; and Moore. However, as

Paul Whitfield White's position that "it is anachronistic to disentangle too rigorously secular from religious interests" (*Drama* 5), and I analyse plays such as *Clyomon and Clamydes* and *Rare Triumphs* despite their apparently secular subject matter, as it is worth questioning how they fit within the companies' religious attitudes. Overall, my analysis interrogates whether the Queen's Men and Strange's Men present repertories that serve devotional purposes.¹⁰²

As discussed, religion was central to the early modern period and there is much exploration of religious material in both repertories to be done; I have had to narrow my focus to solely consider instances of "magic" to explore how repertories illuminate religious attitudes. First, I summarise the religious context of late sixteenth century England, and, as this thesis situates the companies' repertories in the Stanley household, I also provide a brief overview of Lancashire's unique religious position.

Religious Divisions in the Late Sixteenth Century

Although the Elizabethan Church was moderate in its reform goals, the Church was faced with continual strife because of the period's religious changes. From the start of her reign, Elizabeth I began a long process of reform to reinstate the Protestant Church (Cressy 5).¹⁰³ Elizabeth's conservative approach was reflected in reforms that were

Spanish Tragedy and *Jew of Malta* feature little staging of magic I will not feature them prominently in this chapter.

¹⁰² Knapp interrogated this concept of the devotional in his survey of playwrights' engagement with religion (9).

¹⁰³ For a useful overview of the Elizabethan Church's reform, consult Cressy, 5-7, and Carole Levin 22-37.

limited and fairly forgiving of religious deviation.¹⁰⁴ While factions multiplied in Protestantism and Catholicism, Elizabeth attempted to reform her country and yet was also “extremely ambiguous” about her actual religious positioning (Carole Levin 22). Over her long reign, Elizabeth created a fairly uniform Protestant Church, but the Church needed to constantly defend itself from extreme religious factions across England. Elizabethan England’s transition towards a Protestant state was uneven, and progression was varied across the counties, classes, and society.¹⁰⁵ Revisionist work highlights the insufficiency of the binary of Protestantism and Catholicism for this period; Jeffrey Knapp explains, “There is no single religion suffusing Renaissance England ... not simply Catholicism or Protestantism, but also kinds of Catholicism and kinds of Protestantism” (10). It was much more typical for an individual to shift religious identities throughout his or her lifetime than to hold a fixed religious identity; Donna Hamilton describes individuals’ shifting religious identities as people’s religious “malleability” and argues that most religious positions were “close and overlapping” (xvi-xvii).¹⁰⁶ Historical revisionists reveal that, despite mounting tensions about Catholicism, not everybody was hostile towards the old faith nor was the religion successfully eradicated from England; additionally, because people had fluid religious identities it was not always clear who was

¹⁰⁴ Cressy identifies these reforms as *The Revised Book of Common Prayer*; “An Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer and Divine Service, 1559”; and the 1563 “Articles of Religion”, 5-6.

¹⁰⁵ Historical revisionists stress that the Reformation was uneven, not entirely successful, and sometimes perceived as unpopular. There is some disagreement amongst revisionists about how steady religious change was, but they do agree that Catholicism was still practiced considerably during Elizabeth’s reign. One important revolution in these scholars’ thinking was to consider the provinces in their own right for attitudes to religious change. See Collinson, *Birthpangs*; Duffy; Haigh, *English Reformation*; and Todd, *Reformation*.

¹⁰⁶ In general, when I use the term “Catholic” I refer to those who view the Pope as the head of their Church, and when I use the term “Protestant” I refer to those who view the monarch as the head of their Church. However, as noted the binary of Catholic and Protestant is broad and many people had slippery religious identities or concealed their religious identities. However, as the plays themselves are never explicit about which type of Catholicism they attack and which type of Protestantism they promote, I have to use the binary terms.

in support of the Queen's religious reform and who was against it. In light of people's religious "malleability," Elizabeth's careful "middle" path towards conservative reform made sense since the vast majority of England had pluralistic religious attitudes.

Despite the Elizabethan Church's moderate reform, the English Church did at times heighten pressure on Catholics. In 1575, there was an ecclesiastical commission into offences against "Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy"; the commission resulted in instructions to bishops to find recusants and deal with them (Hamilton, 2). With news of European seminaries training English boys for the priesthood and of growing recusancy rates, fear grew that Catholics were mounting a resistance within England; concurrently, there was much fear that an attack on England was being launched by counter-Reformation Europe, which the reality of the Spanish Armada exacerbated.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, Elizabeth's refusal to secure an heir to the throne fostered paranoia in both Catholics and Protestants over the uncertainty of their next monarch's religion (Tennenhouse 20-22). Concern over the nation's lack of future religious direction encouraged religious strife, and while Catholicism became a useful scapegoat for Protestants' woes, as seen in the proliferation of anti-Catholic polemic in this period, there was still much toleration for different religious allegiances. I explore whether magic in the repertories functions as anti-Catholic vilification. Furthermore, since Lancashire itself encompassed the diversity of religious allegiances, it is a suitable performance venue in which to explore the slippage between religion and magic and attitudes towards Catholicism in the companies' repertories.

¹⁰⁷ See Hamilton for a brief overview of the pressure on Catholics, 2.

Lancashire's unique religious identity makes it a notable performance place for both companies. Haigh's study of the Reformation's impact on Lancashire argues that, because of the county's geographic isolation, the local gentry's religious control, and ineffective administration, "there can have been no momentum towards religious change, and the stability of life must have produced a temper antipathetic towards any alteration in religion" (*Reformation* 97). The stability of life in Lancashire is why Haigh argues the county remained predominantly Catholic, but there was also Protestant activity in the county, particularly in the south-east.¹⁰⁸ Regardless of how Catholic Lancashire actually was, it is clear that many were concerned with Lancashire's reputation as a Catholic county; the Privy Council went so far as to label Lancashire, "the very sink of popery, where most unlawful acts have been committed and more unlawful persons holden in secret than in any other part of the realm" (qtd. in Haigh, *Reformation* 223). This popish reputation stemmed partly from the county's high recusancy rates, which prompted much concern from the Privy Council and Queen as seen in their continual letters to the Stanleys to resolve this problem.¹⁰⁹ Some contemporaries felt that Lancastrians' hostility to religious change was demonstrated in their continued practice of "popish" pastimes like simnel plays, maypoles, lords of misrule, and rushbearings, which were particularly popular in Lancashire.¹¹⁰ The county's violent reputation was confirmed in 1600, when the Queen's own preacher was attacked at Garstand, probably by local recusants (George, *Lancashire* xxii). Additionally, the county's proximity to Ireland and Scotland and the fears that Lancashire held strong links with counter-Reformation Europe led to much

¹⁰⁸ See Haigh, *Reformation* and George, *Lancashire*.

¹⁰⁹ For more detailed discussion of these high recusancy rates in Lancashire, see Haigh, *Reformation* 247-94.

¹¹⁰ These pastimes were violently attacked by Puritans in the Sabbatarian movement; see George, *Lancashire* xxi.

concern over how to fix this popish region.¹¹¹ Unfortunately for the Stanleys, it was difficult for them to avoid the tarnish of their county's popish reputation because of their own family's reputation.

The risk of the link between Lancashire's Catholic notoriety and the Stanley family is demonstrated by Edward Fleetwood's letter in which he warns Lord Burghley to watch Henry's "humour of carelesse securitie in tolleratinge and no way soundly reforming the notoriows backwardnesse of his whole Company in religion, and chefely of the chefest abowte him" (qtd. in Dutton, Introduction 9).¹¹² As Fleetwood's report demonstrates, the Stanleys were watched closely by those with their own religious agenda, and because of the family's high visibility the Stanleys needed to express their religious opinions cautiously. Much suspicion against the Stanleys came from Catholicism in their own family: Ferdinando's grandfather was accused of employing a conjurer and his own mother of using witchcraft; Henry's brother, Sir Thomas, was involved in the Ridolfi Plot; and his cousin, Sir William, was said to have been "a serious threat to English security."¹¹³ Not only were Catholic associations within their own family troubling, but both Ferdinando and Henry received much suspicion for their own

¹¹¹ For more on Lancashire's connections to counter-Reformation Europe and links with Ireland and Scotland, see Dutton, "Introduction." For further detail on contemporary concern to "fix" Lancashire's Catholicism, consult Hill and Haigh, "Puritan Evangelism."

¹¹² Edward Fleetwood, the rector of Wigan, was a notable person to offend since, as Haigh notes, he had "friends in high places," see Haigh, "Puritan Evangelism" 38. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was Elizabeth I's trusted chief minister and much interested in Lancashire's Catholicism as seen by intelligence he commissioned regarding recusants in Lancashire, see MacCaffrey, "Cecil" and Dutton, "Introduction" 9.

¹¹³ In a letter dated 24 August 1570, the Earl of Huntington wrote to Lord Burghley of his worries about the third Earl of Derby, this included the note that the Earl kept "one Browne a Conjerour," and he even advised Burghley to send a spy to "dyssemble Popery" so that they "might understand all" (qtd. in Baines 519-20). Manley provides an excellent account of witchcraft accusations against Ferdinando's mother, see "From Strange's Men" 273-76. For more on Henry's troublesome family and the Ridolfi Plot, consult Dutton, "Introduction" 9. Additionally, Henry's cousin Sir William Stanley was a "serious threat" because, since his defection to the Spaniards in 1587, he continually planned invasions from Ireland, Anglesey, and Scotland into Lancashire to re-convert England to Catholicism and spread rumours about Henry and Ferdinando's involvement in his plans, see Rapple.

religious attitudes and constant pressure from the state to keep the religious peace and prosecute extremists.¹¹⁴ The Stanleys demonstrated a moderate religious conservatism in line with attitudes associated with the Elizabethan settlement to protect their county and family's reputation. For example, while Henry and Ferdinando Stanley both actively prosecuted recusants, they also employed known Catholic families in their household and conducted business with people of various religious beliefs. While the Stanleys' moderate conservatism courted criticism from religious extremists, it did help the family to maintain its position of power in the religiously turbulent Lancashire. I now provide a brief overview of why magic was often used to condemn Catholicism and how this condemnation caused problems for the Protestant Church.

Catholicism and Magic

The association of magic with Catholicism demonstrates conflicting religious positions, particularly how difficult it was to consistently uphold magic as an accusation of irreligious behaviour. This conflict stems from how "in the sixteenth century magic and religion were completely interwoven" (Waite 2). There was much confusion over how the Elizabethan Church should interpret magic post-Reformation and to what extent folk magic should be punished; however, in the Protestant faith there was a near universal tendency to label Catholicism a "kind of witchcraft" (Stuart Clark 54).¹¹⁵ William

¹¹⁴ Manley quotes the report of Ferdinando's position as a candidate for the succession from *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crowne of England*, where it was said of Ferdinando that his "religion, is held to be ... doubtful, as some do thinke him to be of all three religions [i.e., Protestant, Puritan, and Catholic], and others of none" (qtd. in "From Strange's Men" 278). For more on Elizabeth's government's pressure on the Stanleys to prosecute recusants, see Bagley 59-62.

¹¹⁵ This was not a problem found solely in the Reformation; in pre-Reformation England, Church authority struggled against rival belief systems which they attempted to dismiss as magic; see Thomas 26-50. Thomas stresses that the Elizabethan Church found prosecuting magic difficult and the State was reluctant

Perkins' assertion that "if a man will but take a view of all Popery, he shall easily see that a great part of it is mere magic" epitomises how anti-Catholic polemic associated Catholicism with magic (qtd. in Thomas 26). Protestants vilified and dismissed Catholicism when they associated the faith's practices and supposed miracles with "magic"—rather than God. The Elizabethan Church sought status as "the exclusive authority that could assure a spiritual result from a physical activity" and stressed that all their religious practices, like the sacraments, "presumed a divine covenant and hence the consent of the deity" (Borchardt 70). Therefore, Protestant practice repudiated accusations of magic as they proclaimed God's "truth," yet the Church's attempt to label Catholicism as magic was troublesome since the distinction between Catholic magic and Protestant truth often blurred. Additionally, Protestants required "non-Christian" magic against which to position their righteous miracles; therefore, ironically "as the Church proclaimed the miraculous, so it proscribed the magical" (Parish 14-15).¹¹⁶ Keith Thomas demonstrates this difficulty when he notes how initially Protestants called Catholic priests "conjurers," yet this insult backfired when extremist Protestants called all ordained English priests conjurers (68-69). The Elizabethan Church responded to religious factions' differences over magic with the promotion of moderate Protestantism.

The umbrella term "magic" describes a spectrum of magical acts and therefore usefully fits an analysis of fluid religious attitudes. I follow Valerie Flint's definition of magic: "the exercise of a preternatural control over nature by human beings, with the

to punish magical practice severely; for more information on their limited methods of prosecution, see Thomas, particularly 245-263. For more on the tactic in anti-Catholic polemic to associate Catholicism with magic, see Stuart Clark and Waite 87-150. Additionally, Lander's work on religious polemic provides a useful overview of how both sides of the Reformation utilised texts to support their arguments.

¹¹⁶ As an example, Parish cites how Saint's accounts "drew upon non-Christian legend, or relied upon the presence of non-Christian magic to create a battle ground between true and false religion" (15).

assistance of forces more powerful than they” (3). As a term, magic includes the “positive” state-condoned magic and the “negative” state-condemned magic. Thomas Elyot demonstrates the term’s multiplicity of meaning: “[magic] is in two sortes, one is the secrete knowlege of the naturall qualyties and hydde operations and causes of thynges, and that is called *Magia naturalis*, naturall magike: A nother is superstiousse & deuillische, called witche crafte, sorcery, or other lyke detestable names, whiche is vnlefull by the lawes of god and man” (“*Magia*”). The central problem with magic is that the ability to distinguish between Elyot’s “naturall magike” and devilish “sorcery” depends solely on the eye of the beholder; both sides, Catholic and Protestant, posited that their “magic” emanated from God and was “naturall magike” (Parish 15). In my analysis, I explore when magic is condemned as “deuillische” and constitutes anti-Catholic polemic, and when the line between approved and disapproved magic is blurred, especially since many people viewed magic and religion as “complementary rather than competing systems” (Parish 15). Both companies demonstrate difficulties distinguishing between religion and magic in their repertories.

Magic in the Repertories

The Queen’s Men and Strange’s Men’s representations of magic, and particularly how they participate in anti-Catholic polemic, differ significantly because of their patrons’ different religious stances. The Queen’s Men often directly criticize magic as part of an anti-Catholic polemic; sometimes their condemnation of magic adds to a vaguer criticism of heretical behaviour. By the end of the Queen’s Men’s plays, magic is renounced and belief in the Protestant Church restored. However, even though the repertory condemns

magic and its association with Catholicism, the Queen's Men offer a relatively light-hearted response to those who practice magic; magicians are often forgiven for their misdemeanours. Additionally, this light-hearted presentation of magic is seen in the use of clowns in magical episodes accompanied by entertaining stage trickery. The Queen's Men's lack of direct condemnation of all magical practices further demonstrates a more forgiving attitude; for example, magic used for a positive outcome, such as promoting England, is condoned, as is the Queen's Men's presentation of the vitality of "everyday" folk magic such as for treasure hunting.¹¹⁷ This presentation of magic fits with the company's aim to promote the Queen and her Protestantism across the country, as it depicts Protestantism as a measured, forgiving, and, most importantly, appealing religion. Lastly, just as the Church frustrated some with its lack of outright statements on magic, the repertories too present an ambiguous response to magic: it is neither condemned nor completely approved. This ambiguous presentation fits with Elizabeth's tendency to follow a moderate path through potentially explosive religious extremes.

In comparison to the Queen's Men's ambiguous and light-hearted response to magic and its relation to religion, Strange's Men's response to magic is much more conservative and direct; magic is abominable and they severely punish those who practice it. The company reveal a reticence to link magic to religion with how rarely they stage magic and how extreme their attacks are on magical practice. Unlike the Queen's Men, Strange's Men rarely feature clowns in their magical episodes; the company reserves its talent at stage trickery for displays of the divine power of Protestant truth and the dangers of Catholic magic. However, they avoid directly associating magic with Catholicism and

¹¹⁷ For more on this, consult Thomas' survey of folk magic, 212-52.

relate magic more to a lack of religious belief. In fact, magic is so frowned upon in the repertory that in *Rare Triumphs* Hermione directly warns the audience of how magic corrupts the soul. Overall, Strange's Men conform to a strict religious ideology that argues only Church-sanctioned magic is permissible and any other magic is sinful. This reaction to magic suits the Stanleys' need to defend their reputation because their own county and family had been accused of witchcraft and popery. The company's admonishment against those who practice magic reflects the Stanley family's conservative faith.

Crucially, the presentation of religion in the Queen's Men and Strange's Men's repertories reflected on their patrons' religious allegiances. I argue both patrons promoted a moderate approach to Lancashire's religious divisions through their companies' repertories, but because of the patrons' different political concerns they present different attitudes to magic. As many were suspicious of the family's religious identification and of Lancashire, the Stanleys defended their religious stance by promoting a picture of loyalty and strict adherence to Elizabethan Protestantism. The Queen partly needed to defend her religion position, but she primarily needed to persuade the nation to accept her brand of Protestant moderation. I argue both patrons' aims were achieved partly by their companies' staging of magic. To support this, I first consider trends in how the Queen's Men use magic and how explicitly it is linked to an anti-Catholic polemic and close with a case study of *Friar Bacon*. For Strange's Men, as they rarely stage magic I analyse *Looking Glass*' and *Rare Triumphs*' episodes of magic.

Magic in the Queen's Men's Repertory

The Queen's Men's repertory presents a full spectrum of magic ranging from *Old Wives Tale's* local wise woman to *Clyomon and Clamydes'* malevolent sorcerers. In this analysis, I largely focus on these two plays and refer to magical encounters in *King Leir*. I first examine how *Old Wives Tale's* Sacrapant, *Clyomon and Clamydes'* Bryan Sans Foy, and *King Leir's* King Leir are described as magicians. I close with a discussion of the breadth of magical acts featured in *Old Wives Tale*. This analysis reveals that descriptions of magic present an anti-Catholic polemic and promote Protestantism as a forgiving and understanding religion.

Descriptions of Sacrapant's magic, the sorcerer from *Old Wives Tale*, identify his magic as irreligious. The Queen's Men present Sacrapant's magic as dangerously disruptive to social order and their descriptions explicitly link his magic to hell. Through these condemnations of Sacrapant's magic, the Queen's Men condemn magic and link it to Catholicism. Ultimately, Sacrapant is the most explicitly Catholic magician in the company's repertory and therefore suffers the most visibly harsh punishment. In the play's opening, Madge impresses on the audience the power of Sacrapant's magic; Sacrapant is a conjurer who "could doo any thing" (Sig. B1v 149). Madge further emphasises Sacrapant's powerful magic when she lists his many feats: he stole a Princess, he shape-shifted into a dragon, he cursed Erestus to become a bear at night and an old man by day, he created a castle of Stone, and he turned Venelia insane (Sig. B1v 149-58). Sacrapant's magic either disrupts natural order, as seen in his shape-shifting, or disrupts social order, as shown by his kidnapping of a princess. Sacrapant's magic is associated with hell; he is, "Sacrapant that cursed sorcerer" (Sig. B3r 221), and his magic

is, “curssed and inchanting spels” (Sig. B3r 236). This link to hell and magic, is emphasised when Sacrapant identifies himself as cursed: “Each thing reioyseth vnderneath the Skie, / But onely I whom heauen hath in hate: / Wretched and miserable Sacrapant” (Sig. C2r 415-17). Sacrapant’s Catholic status is suggested by these associations with hell, and, as Ardolino argues, by his “priest-like name ... [,] conjuring,” and shape shifting into a dragon, a monster that commonly symbolised Catholicism (“Protestant Context” 157). Sacrapant, as the most Catholic magician, is murdered and then decapitated for his magical practice. The Queen’s Men’s condemnation and ultimate destruction of Sacrapant and his magic feeds into an anti-Catholic polemic.

However, in contrast to its treatment of Sacrapant’s magic, *Old Wives Tales* features two exemplary Protestant characters, Erestus and Jack, whose use of magic complicates the easy association of magic with anti-Catholic polemic. Erestus and Jack are typical examples of the Queen’s Men’s frequently ambiguous response to magic, and their use of magic suggests that the company was prepared to show a positive use of magic when it was practiced by Protestants. The play proposes that those who repent from immorality and follow Protestantism can use magic to defeat the irreligious, or in this case, Catholics. As Erestus’ homeland is Thessaly, an area famed for sorcery, he is immediately linked to magic. Erestus’ magical power is further indicated when he tells Delia’s two brothers, “marke well, my old spell” (194); this “spell” later divines the brothers’ future meeting with Sacrapant and acts as a charm to remind them that “Things that seeme, are not the same” (497). Erestus’ links to Thessaly and his ability to divine the future and provide protection suggests that he is a magician. However, Erestus’ magic is not associated with Catholicism since he is also an exemplary Christian who urges the

need for charity, neighbourly conduct, and repentance: “Bestowe thy almes, giue more than all, ... / dreame of no rest, / Til thou repent that thou didst best” (Sig. C4v 535; 537-38). Ardolino describes Erestus as “the presiding force for good who opposes Sacrapant’s evil magic” (“Protestant Context” 150), yet the play’s condoning of Erestus’ magic complicates the play’s direct condemnation of Sacrapant’s magic. Another magical figure, Jack, who as a ghost defeats Sacrapant, is also an exemplary character in *Old Wives Tales*. With magic’s help, it is Jack who becomes, “inuisible, and taketh off Sacrapant’s wreath from his head, and his sword out of his hand” (Sig. E4v 1011-12). In Jack’s burial scene, aspersions are cast on Jack’s morality, as apparently “He was not worth a halfepenny” (Sig. D1r 589-91). The play’s use of a ghost who interacts with the living, exercises magical powers, and has questionable religious beliefs complicates the possibility of using magic as straightforward anti-Catholic polemic. Furthermore, Waite argues post-Reformation Protestants attempted to “redefine the relationship between the living and the dead by closing communication between the two realms” (102), yet this play expresses no anxiety about the “goodly” ghost of Jack: “this was the ghost of the poore man, ... that makes him to help the wandring knight so much” (Sig. F3v 1160-63). The praise of Jack’s ghost, a figure who possibly has past religious misdemeanours, fits into the Queen’s Men’s promotion of a forgiving Protestantism. Overall, Erestus’ and Jack’s magic demonstrates the Queen’s Men’s ambiguous use of magic in *Old Wives Tale*.

King Leir also features an ambivalent response to magic’s connection to religion in an episode where King Leir is described as a magician. This episode features a character, the Messenger, who is incapable of distinguishing magic from religion; the

Queen's Men's honest acknowledgement of the difficulty of deciphering magic from religion promotes Protestantism as a patient and forgiving religion. This episode occurs when the Messenger, on orders to kill Leir and Perillus, finds the two men asleep over their religious books. The Messenger criticises Perillus' and Leir's religious practices and warns them, "You should haue prayed before, while it was time" (19.1507). The messenger continually remarks on Perillus' and Leir's irreligious behaviour; for example, he calls Leir: "A vyle old wretch and full of heynous sin" (19.1596). However, the scene makes Leir's cautions to the Messenger simultaneous with "thunder and lightening" stage directions, which suggests that Leir commands divine intervention; when Leir demands that the Messenger "Swear not by hell; for that stands gaping wide, / To swallow thee, and if thou do this deed," there follows "Thunder and lightening" (19.s.d.1634). The marrying of Leir's command with this stage effect prompts the Messenger to exclaim, "This old man is some strong magician: / His words have turned my mind from this exploit" (19.1637-38). The Messenger's inability to interpret Leir's words as righteous and the thunder and lightning as divine intervention coupled with the Messenger's accusation that Leir is a magician and sinful, reveals a company that can explore the ambiguity of distinctions between magic and religion.

Clyomon and Clamydes presents a less ambivalent response to magic with its descriptions of the cowardly magician, Bryan Sans Foy. With Bryan Sans Foy, which means Bryan "without Faith" (5.535), the play ties the use of magic to a lack of faith in God and therefore dismisses magic as irreligious. Magic is attacked for its weakness when opposed to the strength of Protestantism. The play mocks Bryan's dependence on magic to win love and honour and argues that true knights, like Clyomon and Clamydes,

adventure to earn their positions. Bryan's magic becomes meaningless when compared to faith in God; Bryan's magic is dismissed by Clamydes because "his force thou needst not feare, the Gods thy shield will be" (7.655). Bryan's magic is weak because its effects are temporary, and the laws of nature can overrule it; for example, Bryan can only make Clamydes sleep for ten days "Before nature shall overcome it" (7.67). The play posits the need for faith over the use of magic; the ultimate insult in the play is the accusation of faithlessness, as shown by Neronis' denouncement of Thrasellus as "devoyd of faith" (15.1268). The cowardly Bryan epitomises this lack of faith and his magic is presented as cowardly in the face of true religious belief. The play reassures Protestants that faith is enough to safeguard against magic and strictly aligns the use of magic with faithlessness. Bryan's imprisonment "vnto his dying day" (22.2124) is a less severe punishment than *Old Wives Tale's* Sacrapant receives, and presents a less anxious response to the danger of Bryan's magic. Overall, the character's lack of fear towards magic coupled with Bryan's cowardly behaviour, his magic's temporary power, and his imprisonment add up to a light-hearted response to magic.

Just as the Queen's Men attack some acts of magic as part of an anti-Catholic polemic while they praise other acts of magic, *Old Wives Tale's* celebration of "everyday" folk magic fits into the company's ambivalent response to magic. The play features scenes of magic that show how the Queen's Men were prepared to exploit the humour of magic for entertainment purposes rather than to add to an anti-Catholic polemic. Towards the end of the play, two unworthy daughters visit a well where a magical head grants them gold or their desires. The head magically summons Huanebango for the proud sister Zantippa with thunder and lightning and magically

creates gold for the ugly sister Celanta. In Celanta's scene at the well, the stage directions describe the magic that occurs: "A head comes vp full of golde, she combes it into her lap" (Sig. E4r 983-84). These "magical well" scenes demonstrate humorously how folk magic was used in the parish: firstly to solve a distress of a father over his daughters, secondly to provide a love match, and thirdly to provide treasure.¹¹⁸ The whole episode is an opportunity for entertaining stage trickery and clowning. Clearly, the Queen's Men were not opposed to staging magic for humorous purposes rather than as a serious commentary on religion.

In conclusion, there is a varied response to magic across the Queen's Men's repertory. While magicians and magic are never praised as a substitute for religion and are often condemned as part of an anti-Catholic polemic, the staging of magic can be ambivalent especially as the Queen's Men are prepared to show magic's value. The company also never miss an opportunity to stage magic as entertainment and therefore feature clowning and many stage effects in magical episodes. The following case study on *Friar Bacon* exemplifies the Queen's Men's approach to magic.

Case Study: Magic in *Friar Bacon*

Friar Bacon is the Queen's Men's most famous play to feature magic; I focus on the play's exploration of Friar Bacon's magic through his journey from pride in his magic to complete renunciation of magic.¹¹⁹ Through Friar Bacon's magical career, the play interrogates what magic means and how the state utilises it. Ultimately, *Friar Bacon*

¹¹⁸ See Thomas, 51-78.

¹¹⁹ Several critics have discussed magic in *Friar Bacon*, see LaGrandeur; Rosador, "Sacralizing Sign"; and Towne.

encapsulates the Queen's Men's ambivalent response to magic, especially its association with Catholicism.

The descriptions of Friar Bacon and his magic poke fun at Catholicism's use of magic and demonstrate the Queen's Men's light-hearted response to magic. This mockery of Catholic magic works to undermine Catholicism's threat. Friar Bacon is a fictional representation of Roger Bacon, the infamous Renaissance intellect who was often depicted as a magician in early modern discourse.¹²⁰ We first hear of Friar Bacon in the opening scene, when Prince Edward and his fool, Ralph Simnel, debate whether Margaret is the most beautiful maid in the country. Ralph argues that the only way to resolve the debate is to consult Friar Bacon: "Why is not the Abbot a learned man, and hath red /many bookes, and thinkest thou he hath not more learning than / thou to choose a bonny wench?" (1.50-52). Ralph's speech establishes how the Queen's Men present Friar Bacon's magic throughout the play: magic is introduced to solve a fool's bet, which demonstrates the light-hearted treatment of it in the play. Ralph explains that Friar Bacon is at Oxford and "is a braue scholler sirra, they say he is a braue Nigromancer, that he can make women of deuils, and hee can iuggle cats into Costermongers" (1.97-100). Ralph focuses on Friar Bacon's use of "necromancy" for tricks and women. This scene mocks Catholic priests for their association with lechery and also reveals how the Queen's Men view the Catholic threat and the religion's use of magic. This lack of fear towards magic is typical of the Queen's Men's treatment of magic.

However, Friar Bacon's magic is also associated with learning, and responses to his "intellectual magic" are varied; while Catholics are continually mocked, it is Friar

¹²⁰ Reynolds notes that there was "no figure more representative of the mysteries and magic than historical person of Roger Bacon" (79).

Bacon's magic that enables this mockery. Additionally, little is made of the sinfulness of Friar Bacon's intellectual magic. The conflicting responses to a Friar that uses magic, and in some cases, outright praise of magical practice, make the Queen's Men's response to magic and its connections to religion quite ambiguous. The scene in which Friar Bacon first appears demonstrates two conflicting responses to his magic. Friar Bacon, in his cell at "Brazennose" College, Oxford, receives "three doctors" named Burden, Mason, and Clement. When Miles, Friar Bacon's comical, unlearned servant arrives with Friar Bacon's "bookes vnder his arme" (2.172-73) these "bookes" are referenced as magical by the visiting doctors: "Bacon we hear, that long we haue suspect, / That thou art read in Magicks mysterie" (2.187-88). Books of necromancy, like Bacon's books, were banned during the Elizabethan period and are vilified in *Strange's Men's Rare Triumphs* (4.2), but in *Friar Bacon* there is little condemnation of this material and much more praise of "magicks mysterie." Later in the scene, another character's Catholicism is attacked. Burden becomes the butt of humour when the supposed "booke" that he "studied ... all night" (2.269) turns out to be a hostess from Henley; Rosador argues this represents "a parody of transubstantiation" since the word is made into flesh in the figure of the hostess ("Sacralizing Sign" 38). I agree that the play takes Catholicism as a target for parody, but it is notable that it is magic that enables this mockery. Furthermore, magical learning is not condemned outright as heretical in this scene; the Queen's Men continue to present an ambiguous response to magic.

The ambivalent response to Friar Bacon's magic and its connection to Catholicism continue when Friar Bacon's magic is called upon to promote the nation in a magic contest with the German scholar Jaques Vandermast. The magic contest shows

Friar Bacon's magic lauded for its defence and promotion of the nation, which conflicts with the earlier scenes of mocking the Catholic nature of Friar Bacon's magic. Richard Levin argues that this magic contest "introduces a new sense of nationalism" yet he contends the two monarchs watching the contest "have no personal stake in the contest itself – in fact, they view it as an entertaining 'game'" (205). I believe that Levin too readily dismisses the royals' investment in magic and how magic represents a country's pride; for example, Henry demonstrates his personal stake in the contest when he repeats, "now Monarcks hath the Germain found his match," and "How now Vandermast, haue you met with your match" (8.1243, 1262). The King, who had earlier described Friar Bacon as "England's only flower" (4.505) praises Friar Bacon's magic and the honour he has brought upon England. This contest reveals monarchs invested in the use of magic to promote their nations, which undermines earlier criticisms that connect magic to Catholicism.

Friar Bacon's renunciation of magic is one of the play's most direct statements about magic and its association with Catholicism, yet the play continually vacillates between critiques of magic as part of an anti-Catholic polemic and praise of Friar Bacon's use of magic for the nation. Friar Bacon renounces magic shortly before the Queen's Men close the play with an ode to royal lineage as a more stable means than magic of promoting the nation; ultimately, this ode reflects favourably on the Queen's Men's patron's importance. Friar Bacon renounces his magic in a specifically religious context; after his brass head fails and his magic mirror provokes two scholars' murders, Friar Bacon is appalled at the violence his magic enables and tells himself: "Bacon thy magicke doth effect this massacre" (12.1860). Friar Bacon breaks his magic glass, rejects

magic, and declares “The wresting of the holy name of God / ... / Are instances that Bacon must be damde/ For vsing deuils to counteruail his God” (12.1878, 1882-83). Friar Bacon sees the horror of magic in specifically religious terms as he recalls his use of the “holy name of God” and command of “devils.” But Friar Bacon comforts himself in his repentance by acknowledging he can return to his faith: “Yet Bacon cheere thee, drowne not in despaire, / Sinnes haue their salues repentance can do much, / ... / Bungay Ile spend the remnant of my life / In pure deuotion praying to my God” (12.1882-85, 1892-93). Ironically, only after his magic has failed, will Friar Bacon fulfill his role as a friar and offer pure devotion to God. Throughout the play, magic is asserted as a viable means to promote England by the scholars, prince, nobles, foreign courts, and the King himself. Still, the future of the play points away from the use of magic to promote England and towards the lineage of the English throne: “this roiall marriage, / Portendes such blisse vnto this matchles realme” (15.2117-18). By the play’s end, magic seems an outmoded means to provide the nation with security, and royal lineage becomes a viable solution to strife.

Overall, *Friar Bacon* presents an ambivalent view of magic or, as Brian Reynolds notes, the play demonstrates “fuzziness” in its attempts to distinguish Church-sanctioned magic from non-Church sanctioned magic (78). *Friar Bacon’s* scenes feature light-hearted clowning with magic, such as when the Henley hostess appears in Friar Bacon’s cell and when Miles exits the play riding a devil (xiv). The play does treat magic negatively and as part of an anti-Catholic polemic, as it draws attention to the danger of Friar Bacon’s magic. However, magic is never wholly condemned by the state, which fits

with the Queen's Men's lack of concern to attack all magic and their forgiving response to those who practice magic.

Magic in the Strange's Men's Repertory

Strange's Men's repertory presents less magic than the Queen's Men's repertory. Magic is never the subject of an entire play (like *Friar Bacon* and *Old Wives Tales*). Since magic occurs infrequently in Strange's Men's repertory, instead of surveying the repertory, I focus on two case studies which feature the most magical episodes, *Looking Glass* and *Rare Triumphs*. When magic is used, it is condemned quickly and less advantage is taken of the humorous opportunity that staging magic affords. In Strange's Men's repertory, magic is dark, desperate, and dangerous, often resulting in spectacular death or madness. Overall, the use of magic is more explicitly linked to religious extremity. I first analyse *Looking Glass* and close with *Rare Triumphs*.

Case Study: Magic in *Looking Glass*

In *Looking Glass*, I consider magical stage effects, the treatment of seditious material, and the difficulty of interpreting magical acts. In *Looking Glass* Strange's Men use staging effects to attack magic and those who believe in it. Strange's Men condemn the use of magic with visually frightening divine intervention and severe punishments of those who utilise magic. The use of magic encourages social disorder and damages the King's ability to rule; to Strange's Men, magic is pitted against God and always fails. The stage trickery in Strange's Men is not used for comic effect but for instilling in the

audience fear of quick retribution for practicing magic and for irreligious behaviour. The play features Magi and Sages in the King's court who are ridiculed for their associations with pomp and their uselessness in interpreting God's warnings. The Magi first appear in a show of outward richness: "Enter Rasni ... with him the Magi in great pompe" (5.514-516); they are connected to majestic vanity rather than religious worth. Rasni's first order to the Magi highlights their uselessness and their irreligiousness:

for loue of Rasni by your Art,

By Magicke frame an Arbour out of hand,

For faire Remilia to desport in.

Meane-while, I will bethinke me on further pomp. (5.516-20)

Rasni demands that the Magi's magic honour his incestuous marriage to Remilia, his own sister. While magic supports the social disorder caused by Rasni's marriage, it also wastes the monarch's time; Rasni spends his time using magic to attend to his vanity: "I will bethinke me on further pomp" (5.520). When Rasni refers to the Magi he uses religious language; Rasni's word choice reveals his belief that the practice of magic equates to godly exercise: "blest be ye man of Art that grace me thus" (5.526). However, after the Magi conjure the Arbour, the stage directions describe, "Lightning and thunder wherewith Remilia is strooken" (5.529-30). This stage effect signals divine intervention and a severe punishment, as the incestuous sister is struck dead. The play condemns magic directly not only through criticism but also by the divine intervention that follows magic on stage. The severe punishment for anyone associated with magic shows how harshly Strange's Men view the practice of magic.

Rather than the Queen's Men's more understanding take on the difficulty of distinguishing all magic from religion, *Looking Glass* condemns characters who fail to distinguish between magic and religion. Strange's Men stress the responsibility characters must have in knowing that magic is sinful and recognising divine intervention. In Strange's Men's repertory magic is contemptible and so are those that fail to recognise it. Rasni is repeatedly unable to decipher lightning and thunder as divine intervention: "What wondrous threating noyse is this I heare? What flashing lightnings trouble our delights" (5.531-32). Divine intervention occurs after every episode of magic onstage. For example, when Radagon disowns his starving family his mother, Samia, curses him:

Oh all you heauens, and you eternall powers,

That sway the sword of iustice in your hands,

.....

Powre downe the tempest of your direfull plagues,

Upon the head of cursed Radagon. (9.1224-25,1228-29)

The play identifies her curse as a "praier" in the stage directions (9.1230), and immediately after Samia's outcry "a flame of fire appeareth from beneath, and Radagon is swallowed" (9.1230-31). Rasni fails to interpret Samia's words as a prayer and instead suggests that she is responsible for the fire because she is a witch: "What exorcising charme, or hatefull hag" (9.1233). Furthermore, Rasni's sinfulness is shown in his astonished reaction that there could be one "more great then I ... / That hath bereft me of my Radagon" (9.1243, 46). Rasni's inability to distinguish between religion and magic nearly leads to the annihilation of his Kingdom. All characters who do not declare their

repentance from magic are killed or banished. Strange's Men directly link all magic to irreligious behaviour with absolutely no ambiguity.

Overall, *Looking Glass* demonstrates the dark side of magic. Stage trickery is used not so much to stage feats of magic but to show divine retribution for the practice of irreligious magic. The play's quick response to magic is frightening, swift, and deadly. Magic is associated with a lack of religious belief but never directly with Catholicism. In *Looking Glass*, Strange's Men display their strict policy on magic: magic is not condoned and use of magic leads to suffering.

Case Study: Magic in *Rare Triumphs*

Rare Triumphs' banished nobleman and magician Bomelio is a useful character to compare to the Queen's Men's Friar Bacon since Bomelio's journey parallels Friar Bacon's magical "career." I examine Bomelio's journey into and out of magic through examination of descriptions of Bomelio as a magician, the reaction to his magic books, and his forced renunciation of magic. Ultimately, Bomelio presents the danger of magic, and through his figure, Strange's Men condemn magic as irreligious.

The descriptions of Bomelio criticise him and mock his alienation from society. Strange's Men use Bomelio's state to show the uselessness and danger of magic and to stress that magic upsets social order and erodes a person's worth. In Act 3.1, Bomelio enters "solus like an Hermite" (3.1.571) and explains that he has divined something: "but what I cannot tell, / prouokes me forward more the wont to leaue my darksome sell" (3.1.608-09). In addition to his hermit disguise, Bomelio's divination makes clear he is a mystical figure. Bomelio's magic is portrayed as useless and self-indulgent with his

“musing” and “melancholie” (3.1.16, 17). Bomelio’s surly servant Lentulo mocks him: “hee’le doo nothing all day long but sit on his arse” (3.1.647). Lentulo’s criticism focuses particularly on Bomelio’s lack of wealth and industry, noting that for Bomelio’s sake he must go begging at a “rich mans gate” (3.1.663). Bomelio’s magic is viewed negatively because it causes laziness and upsets the social order. Initial impressions of Bomelio point to the uselessness of his magic and his lack of contribution to society.

Rare Triumphs features a rare humorous response to magic in *Strange’s Men’s* repertory, when Bomelio curses Armenio; however, this attitude is rare and the scene reinforces the ineffectuality of Bomelio’s magic as a solution to strife. As revenge for Armenio’s actions against Fidelity and Hermione, Bomelio strikes Armenio dumb, disguises himself as a “counterfeite physition” with a comical “foreign” accent, and visits Armenio’s father, the King, to offer counsel: “dis ting be done by Mashick cleane. / Tis true dat me tell, me perceiue it plaine, / No naturall pediment, but cunshering certaine.” (4.?.1153-54). The comical clowning in this scene between the dumb Armenio and his worried father does reveal *Strange’s Men* did use magic occasionally for humorous effect, but this incident is brief. Additionally, Bomelio’s purpose in using magic against Armenio is to rescue Fidelity from the court. Even Bomelio’s positive attempt to use magic to help others is doomed to failure, since the play insists that only divine intervention may resolve the crisis. To further stress how the play attacks magic as anti-religious, this scene is swiftly followed by Hermione’s horror of his father’s use of magic.

The most direct condemnation of magic comes from Hermione's reaction upon finding his father's magical books.¹²¹ This scene is unusual in *Strange's Men's* repertory as it features rare audience interaction from a noble character when Hermione directly advises the audience against magic. This outright condemnation stresses that magic leads to social disorder, sin, and the loss of a man's soul; in particular, Hermione stresses the ignobility of magic. Hermione enters the scene "solus, with bookes vnder his arme" (4.2.1332-33); these are his father's magical books and he demonstrates his opposition to magic when he directs his speech to "O Gods" (4.2.1334). The entire scene features Hermione's soliloquy where he attacks his father's use of magic because it distorts social order: "Inchaunting and transfourming that his fancy did not fit. / As I may see by these his vile blasphemous Bookes, / My soule abhorres as often as mine eye vpon them lookes" (4.2.1355-57). Hermione stresses that seditious material even infects those who look upon it, and he is offended to his "soule" by the magical books. Hermione is particularly appalled that someone with such a "noble minde" secretly uses "vile blasphemous Bookes" (4.2.1336, 56) and he argues that practice of magic leads to a man that "sell[s] his soule to sinne" (4.2.1359). Hermione directly argues magic is against God, and his extreme disgust is epitomised with his resolve to burn the books. This scene is one of the few moments in the play and the company's repertory where the audience is addressed directly.¹²² It is notable that Hermione is not a vice or clown figure, the type of character who most commonly addresses the audience in the repertories, but a noble.

¹²¹ This topic must have been worryingly close to the Stanleys and Lancastrian audience since a few years later they were charged to search their neighbour's houses for seditious material, priests, and Mass 'furniture,' see Bagley 62.

¹²² Vulcan, a vice figure, addresses the audience in the play's opening.

Hermione's direct comments to the audience demonstrate how seriously Strange's Men view the use of magic; Hermione tells the audience "And, Gentlemen, I pray, and so desire I shall, / You would abhor this study, for it will confound you all" (4.2.1370-71). This warning, from a noble, suggests that nobility stood against magic and demonstrates real fear over magic's powerful, secret hold.

Lastly, the madness that controls Bomelio because of magic's hold upon him demonstrates Strange's Men's serious attitude towards magic and its relation to irreligious behaviour. Strange's Men insist that only divine intervention will halt magic's hold over Bomelio. When Bomelio plans to use extra magic to sweeten the reunited lovers' bliss but discovers that his magic books are gone, his state of mind unravels (4.4.1462-4). He is uncontrollable and violent towards those he loves: "Gogs blood! Villins! The devil is in the bed straw Where are my books? My books! Where be my books, villin? Arrant villen!" (4.4.1494-1498). Bomelio is afraid that without his magic he cannot "helpe my self nor my freendes," but his logic is flawed since he is the person who actually attacks his friends. In this scene, the consequences of magic on the mind and on family relationships are severe. Bomelio is unable to help himself to be spiritually freed by renouncing magic; it is the Gods who release Bomelio from magic's hold. Strange's Men use Bomelio's journey from embracing magic to being forced from the practice of magic to demonstrate that magic leads to hell and madness.

In conclusion, while Strange's Men do not link magical practice to an anti-Catholic polemic explicitly, in *Looking Glass* and *Rare Triumphs* magic is condemned as dangerous and sinful. Magic's condemnation is shown particularly in the *Looking Glass* in the divine intervention when magic occurs, in *Rare Triumphs* through Hermione's

need to directly warn the audience against the practice of magic, and in *Rare Triumphs* with Bomelio's alienation and madness from the use of magic. The company also stress repeatedly how divine intervention is the only means possible to stop magic. The plays emphasise divine intervention and nobles who can distinguish magic from religion, thus promoting faith and the need for nobles. *Strange's Men's* condemnation and serious attitude towards the practice of magic fits their need to demonstrate their patron took magic seriously and was aware of magic's danger to society.

Conclusion

Religion was fundamental to all aspects of early modern life, and this thesis demonstrates how fundamental religion was in both companies' repertoires. Religion in Lancashire was a central concern of Elizabeth's government and a central part of the Stanleys' daily business when managing their estate and power. In turbulent religious Lancashire, the companies' responses to how magic relates to Catholicism highlight their patrons' different aims.

The focus on how, and if, the companies' presentation of magic links to an anti-Catholic polemic reveals that the Queen's Men staged magic much more frequently than *Strange's Men* and that *Strange's Men* were much more direct in condemning magic as irreligious. I agree with McMillin and MacLean's identification of a "Protestant text" running throughout the Queen's Men's repertory, but my analysis reveals that this Protestant text could be very ambiguous where magic is concerned. The toleration of characters that use magic displayed by the Queen's Men, even outright Catholic characters, is perhaps initially surprising to find in state-sponsored drama during a period

of religious crisis. However, this lenient approach to magic fits with the Queen's Men's tendency to present a forgiving monarch who is ultimately benevolent to all her subjects. The plays promote a queen who understands the importance of magic to everyday life and the uses that magic may have in promoting her nation. Lastly, the Queen's Men, true to form, recognize that magic affords them the opportunity to stage some excellent clowning. In fact, the light-hearted and ambiguous response to magic by the Queen's Men shows a monarch so secure in her control of the Protestant nation that she can reassure the audience that the realm is not afraid of, or even much concerned with, religious strife.

Given that Strange's Men's patron was frequently called into religious disrepute and had to continually assert his loyalty to the Protestant state, it is understandable to find more tentative staging of outright Catholic magic in the company's repertory. Instead, moments of magic are very brief, very spectacular, and very frightening. It is interesting to imagine the audience at the Stanleys on one night receiving a lecture from Hermione about the danger of magical books and on another night watching the Queen's Men's Miles ride off stage on a devil. However, Strange's Men were wise to avoid the risk of showing any support of magic. In fact, their most spectacular staging of "magic" are the moments of divine intervention that demonstrate the absolute power of God over magic. There is no room for ambiguity in Strange's Men's staging of magic.

Since McMillin and MacLean's *The Queen's Men*, critics have argued that state-sponsored drama could plausibly promote religious attitudes but there has been little exploration into whether other acting companies promote religious attitudes. I have

shown a religious agenda in Strange's Men's repertory as well as that of the Queen's Men, and that religious agenda, while understandably cautious, is undeniably there.

The analysis also reveals more about both companies' repertories' unique attitudes. The Queen's Men present conflicting views of magic; they associate magic with anti-Catholic polemic and then praise magic for its value in everyday life. The company uses their ambivalent response to magic to demonstrate the Queen's moderation. The Queen's Men never fix on what exactly is immoral about magic, but they never explicitly state what is moral about it either; therefore, they can present magic for humour and entertainment and concurrently criticise it without ever having to fix on one position and thus risk the charge of heresy. Strange's Men also avoid the charge of heresy, but do this with quick condemnations and harsh punishments for those who practice magic. In fact, Strange's Men stress their opposition to magic further when they interact with the audience directly in *Rare Triumphs* (which is much more typical of the Queen's Men's dramaturgy) to inform them that magic is irreligious. Strange's Men's black and white treatment of magic is a tactic to dissociate Lancashire and their patron Ferdinando from accusations of magic. Strange's Men are serious about the threat of magic and use their most impressive staging techniques to terrify their audience with their moral message. Magic and its relation to religion remains a divisive subject in the repertories just as it figured in the Stanley household where Ferdinando's mother was accused of witchcraft and Ferdinando's father was ordered to stop sinful Catholic superstitions.

Conclusion: “Not So Grim Up North”

This thesis has invited the reader to consider what happens to our understanding of early modern repertories when we place them “up north.” My comparison of the repertories of Strange’s Men and the Queen’s Men in the Stanley household has focused on two key topics pertinent to the companies’ patrons’ politics: the presentation of region and the association of magic with Catholicism.

While my analysis has focused on some major critical concerns in the period, the results have affirmed the value of considering these issues in the context of the north. My thesis has challenged the received notion of Lancashire’s bad reputation and added to recent critical work that has begun to view areas outside of London as vibrant, dramatic centres. If we take “grim” in its meaning as “Harsh or repellent of aspect; uninviting” (Def. “Grim” 5.a.), then the Stanleys’ busy ceremonial household with its frequent visits from acting companies proves that, at least in this part of Lancashire, the north was far from “grim.” My thesis also discounts the notion that the Stanleys were merely a stop along a tour route for the companies; instead this thesis posits that the Stanley household was a centre of dramatic activity and suggests that the Stanleys’ power drew the Queen’s Men to return frequently in these years. The findings of my thesis also encourage critics to think when approaching drama in the period: why London first? Why not another context? My approach and findings have suggested that, in fact, it was *not* so grim up north.

The methodology of this thesis is part of a new approach for exploring early modern drama. The repertory approach enables the analysis of plays that have been

largely discounted. Some of the most significant plays for my analysis have been the plays least discussed critically: *Fair Em*, *Rare Triumphs*, *Looking Glass*, and *Clyomon and Clamydes*. My analysis of these plays offers an alternative to what I have termed the “Shakespeare comparison” whereby the plays are valuable to critics only for the light they shed on Shakespeare’s plays. An example of the “Shakespeare comparison” can be found in Andrew Ettin’s description of *Rare Triumphs*: “A play by an unskilful hand, it is (like so many minor works of art) interesting not because it is good but because the (in this case anonymous) creator, not capable of fusing tensions into a coherent whole, has left exposed the disparate elements of divided thought”; the example Ettin goes on to give of a playwright who does demonstrate unified thought is, of course, Shakespeare (270). The implicit assumption in “Shakespeare comparison” criticism is that an anonymous work is somehow part of an undistinguished corpus of plays; it is the playwright’s status that gives a work relevance. I believe, however, that since so few plays have survived from the period, this response to an anonymous play is unnecessarily dismissive, and it is time to move away from the “Shakespeare comparison.” The repertory approach, with its call to examine trends across a repertory, rescues anonymous plays from this critical backwater. The repertory approach gives us a means to challenge suggestions that such plays exhibit “divided thought” (Ettin 270); looking across a number of plays by one company shows that this “divided thought” is not an aesthetic failing but a deliberate feature of a repertory. Although repertory studies are increasing in popularity, it still remains for critics to engage with these lively and deeply political plays.

When I began this study, I had not expected to find any clear differences between the companies’ repertories, or to be able to begin to answer McMillin and MacLean’s call

to identify the uniqueness of the companies' repertoires. The trends I did find puzzled me initially, until I had reflected more on the patrons behind the companies. My first major conclusion about the analysis is that both companies' are attempting to present their patron's "best face." This "best face" theory contends that the repertoires tend to offer a response to major critical crises in the period, like magic and Catholicism, that favours their patron's position. This analysis of companies' repertoires pushes the understanding of patronage politics to suggest that patrons put their politics "on display" through their acting companies.

Strange's Men "best face" is seen most in their consistent championing of nobles in their repertory: it is people's class that demonstrates how to view them, not their regional associations, and only the most ignoble of characters practice magic. It is a noble's duty to defend social order and religion; indeed, dutiful brave nobles are shown to be integral to the nation. What does the championing of the nobility reveal about how Strange's Men figured the perfect noble? Firstly, their plays suggest that nobility is inherent and that nobles even have the power to change the land. Secondly, a true noble condemns heretical behavior and is integral to supporting social order and the nation. In short, nobles are indispensable for England's continued success. In addition to the nation's nobles, the company demonstrates the need for social stability. The largest sin in any of Strange's Men's plays is the disruption of social order; this is a sin because social disorder undermines the company's champion—the noble.

Much work has begun to identify what made the Queen's Men unique. McMillin and MacLean set the ball rolling with their indispensable *The Queen's Men*, and their

impact has continued with critics re-examining McMillin and MacLean's thesis.¹²³ What comes across strongly in this critical work is that the Queen's Men were part of a propagandistic campaign to promote Elizabethan moderate Protestantism. My analysis has pushed further on how the Queen's Men present other sides of the Queen's "best face." I have found that not only does the repertory promote a "moderate Protestantism," but also it is moderate in its attitudes to class, religion, and regions. In fact, I would go so far as to argue that the plays present a forgiving and lenient monarch who is prepared to accept transgressions against social order and is unafraid of extending forgiveness rather than punishment. In other words, the Queen's Men's reactions to social disorder are normally the opposite of Strange's Men's. Additionally, whereas the noble is Strange's Men's champion, for the Queen's Men the champion is every English citizen, although perhaps with a bias towards lower-class characters. This bias may have been to appease the company's paying audience. The Queen's Men even praise individuals for attendance at plays. The Queen's Men's forgiving responses and praise of all individuals supports their main aim of persuading people across the country to accept and support the Elizabethan regime.

My final major point about what I have identified about both companies' "uniqueness" is a major difference in tone between the companies. The phrase that has best summarized the Queen's Men's approach to problems has been "light-hearted"; the phrase best associated with Strange's Men's reactions to issues has been "serious." Strange's Men's conservative attitude to royal authority, social hierarchy, and safeguarding nobility is most apparent in their tone; this attitude is understandable since

¹²³ For examples of this re-examination of the Queen's Men's repertory, see the wonderful *Locating the Queen's Men*, edited by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin, and Brian Walsh's *Shakespeare*.

these are serious issues for nobles in precarious positions like the Stanleys. For Strange's Men, their message is important and their plays are not solely entertainment for its own sake; the tone, as a result, is consistently serious. For example, the serious tone can be seen in the company's severe onstage executions. Life is grim and Strange's Men want playgoers to know that they take it seriously. In one way then, my study has ended up where I had hoped it would not: the northern patron's company can be described as grim. In this sense, Strange's Men do fulfill the north's label as "grim" meaning "Of stern or sinister import" (Def. "Grim"). The Queen, on the other hand, was fostering a sense of inclusion in her realm and attempting to create a unified England. One of the most effective ways of achieving a unified England was to present monarchs as all-forgiving, understanding, and most importantly inclusive; a light-hearted tone clearly sends this message. Another method to win mass support is to utilise popular methods of entertainment; it is no surprise that the Queen's Men consistently praise leisure, drama, and simple pastimes, and again this praise adds to their light-hearted tone.

The different tones in the companies' repertoires are relevant to the stakes that both patrons had in their companies. For both, patronage of a company was only part of a public relations campaign, but Strange's Men were in a less assured position than the Queen's Men. The Queen had multiple means of sponsoring her "best face," and, most crucially, she was never at risk of offending herself. It has been argued that Strange's Men were too conservative, but perhaps at the time it was felt that a conservative approach was a sensible tactic to ensure that their plays were morally upstanding and thus defended their patron's position as a noble; however, it may be true that conservatism

was a political risk and that they stressed the importance of nobility so much that the company became too proud.¹²⁴

Future work remains to be done on this project; a larger project might take into account the other companies that visited the Stanleys during these years and compare their repertoires. Additionally, the topics I examined could easily be expanded into considering other tropes featured in the companies' repertoires. Other topics might include representations of the ruling class, staging the foreign, and master and servant relationships. Additionally, a larger topic could consider both companies' entire repertoires, and even compare their performances across the country. Lastly, if space had permitted, I would have liked to chart out possible performance productions of the plays in what we know about the likely performance spaces at the Stanleys. To place the plays physically in the space would reveal more about both companies' dramaturgy when performed at the Stanleys. Finally, it would be rewarding to do a more expansive study of the north including other northern noble families and acting companies that performed across the north to hammer home the message that the critical focus now belongs "up north."

¹²⁴ Manley discusses his view that *Strange's Men* were too conservative in "Playing." The Stanleys were under constant risk and Ferdinando just four years after the period in discussion was possibly murdered.

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Abbreviations:

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Appendix A: The Queen's Men's and Strange's Men's Visits to the Stanley Household, 1587-1590.

This table chronologically lists the Queen's Men's and Strange's Men's visits to the Stanley household. The *Patrons and Performances*' tables are used as a model, but other sources are cited for details on household movement and notable occasions.

Household	Company	Dates	DHB Record of Visit	DHB Household Movement around the Date of the Visit	Notes concerning visit
Knowsley Hall	Likely Strange's Men	30 Dec. 1587	DHB records that the players leave Knowsley Hall: "on Saturday S ^r Tho. Hesketh, Players wente awaie" (<i>DHB</i> 46).	<p>"On Frydaye my L. the Earle came home from the Cowrte, & the same nighte came my L. Bushoppe, M^r Stewarde, M^r Receyver, M^r ffoxe; on Saturday S^r Tho. Hesketh, Players wente awaie" (<i>DHB</i> 46).</p> <p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earl of Derby: On 29 Dec. 1587 he returned from Court. • Lord Bishop: Chadderton, the Bishop of Chester. • Stewarde, Recyver, and M^r Ffoxe: Dignitaries on the Earl of Derby's council (Raines 109). • Lord Strange: He had arrived earlier, at least before 16 Dec. 1587. 	<p>This record suggests that Strange's Men were likely in residence in the household and performed over the Christmas period. However, only the company's leaving date is recorded, so we cannot tell how often the company would have played over this period.</p> <p>This was an important period for the family. The following week was New Years Day, Twelfth Day, and Lord Strange's daughter's christening.</p> <p>While some have thought this record refers to Sir Thomas Hesketh's players, the general consensus is that Ffarington's terse punctuation refers to Hesketh leaving as a</p>

					visitor and a separate company, Strange's Men, also leaving (for more information, see MacLean).
New Park	The Queen's Men	9-11 Oct. 1588	The Queen's Men arrive and stay for three days: "Thursday M ^f Jhon Bradley & the Quene's Players; on Fryday M ^f Dvtton, M ^f Brokes came, & on Satterdaye they wente" (<i>DHB</i> 51).	In the previous week on Friday 2 Oct 1588: "my L. came home" (<i>DHB</i> 51). The family have all returned at the end of September, Earl of Derby, L Strange and Lady Strange and "the little children of hers came" (<i>DHB</i> 50). Likely audience members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Jhon Bradley: A Lancastrian Magistrate "much in the confidence of Henry Earl of Derby" (Raines 122). • Mr Dvtton: Local gentry (Raines 173). • Mr Brokes: "Sherriff of Cheshire in 1578 and 1592" (Raines 174). 	The Queen's Men stay from Thursday until Saturday. It is possible that they performed on both Thursday and Friday. The likely audience members are highly distinguished local gentry. On 26 Sep. 1588, the Earl of Derby "retorne[d] from his Jorneye & Imbassadge from fflanders" (<i>DHB</i> 50). It is notable that the Queen's Men play just after his return (Manley).
Lathom House	Likely Strange's Men	31 Dec. 1588	Record of performance of a play in the hall of Lathom House: "on Tvesdaye ...at nyght a Playe was had in the Halle" (<i>DHB</i> 56).	"sondaye M ^f Carter pretched, at w ^{ch} was dyvers strandgers; on Monday came M ^f Stewarde; on Tvesdaye the reste of my L. Cownsell & also S ^f Jhon Savadge, & at nyght a Playe was had in the Halle, & the same nyghte my L. Strandge came home" (<i>DHB</i> 56). Likely audience members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Carter: According to 	The lack of company attribution and the fact that Lord Strange returns just before the performance suggests that this was Strange's Men performing at Christmas for their patron. It is likely they stayed for the whole season because the next record, 5 Jan 1589 records their presence (MacLean).

				<p>Campion, he was a Lancastrian minister who aimed to win Catholics round to Protestantism. He also dedicated a work to the Earl of Derby (Raines 128-129).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earl of Derby's Council. • Sr Jhon Savadge: "High Sheriff of Cheshire seven times and three times Mayor of Chester" (Raines 145). • Lord Strange: Ferdinando Stanley. 	<p>This performance is for a New Year's Eve celebration with the Lord's council, Earl, and Lord Strange, and important local dignitaries in attendance. This is the only time Ffarington notes the location, "in the Halle," which suggests the grandeur of the occasion.</p>
Lathom House	Likely Strange's Men	5 Jan. 1589	<p>Strange's Men play on Sunday evening: "Sondaye ... that nyght the Plaiers plaied" (<i>DHB</i> 56).</p>	<p>"Frydaye...Mr Hesketh, Mr Anderton, & mr Assheton came, & also my L. Bushoppe & sr Jhon Byron. Sondaye M^r Caldewall preched, & that nyght the Plaiers plaied" (<i>DHB</i> 56-57).</p> <p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Hesketh: Possibly "Mr Bar. Hesketh—noted recusant (Raines 124). • Mr Anderton: Possibly James Anderton "religious controversialist" who was "reported as hearing mass in 1592," but continued to hold favourable royal positions (Mullett). • Mr Assheton: "Sherriff of the County in 1593, 1598, and 1607, in the Commission of the Peace, 	<p>It is likely that these "Plaiers" are Strange's Men who had probably been in residence since at least 31 Dec 1588 (MacLean).</p> <p>A Sunday performance in Lancashire is surprising because of the strong Sabbatarian campaign in the area. Also notable is the likely presence of audience members with different religious allegiances.</p> <p>There is no record of a leaving date for the players but they probably would have departed soon after this, as on Wednesday the family</p>

				<p>and a Deputy Lieutenant” (Raines 190).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. Bushoppe: Chadderton of Chester. • Sr Jhon Bryon: “In 1572 he was Sheriff of Lancashire, and in 1574 [helped] ... convey[.] the body of Edward Earl of Derby.” In 1579 he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth” (Raines 165). • Mr Caldwell: Rector of Winwick and chaplain to the Earl of Derby: “a regular non-wearer of the surplice and a signatory of the 1590 preachers’ protest” (Haigh 37). 	moved to New Park.
Lathom House	The Queen’s Men	6 –7 Jul. 1589	The Queen’s Men perform on Sunday and for “several nights”: “Sunday ... the Quenes Players plaied ii severall nyghtes” (<i>DHB</i> 62).	<p>“Sunday Mr Stanley of Yollow & his daughter & his son in law, Mr Leigh, Mr Henry Stanley senior & Mr Henry Stanley junior, & many other gentn, & the Vicker of Ratchedalle preched the same daie the Quenes Players plaied ii severall nyghtes; Mondaye Mr Stewarde deputed; Tvesday Sr Rye. Sherborne, Mr Rec. generall & Mr ffoxe deputed; Wednesdaye Mr Edward Halsoll & Mr Cutebert Halsoll came, & soe dydde my L. Strandge & his foughters alsoe from Sr John Birons, & soe dydde Mr Holcrofte, Mr James</p>	<p>It is unknown how often the Queen’s Men played in this period because of the unspecified time of “severall nyghtes” (<i>DHB</i> 62)</p> <p>The household was busy during this period with the comings and goings of local gentry, members of the family, and the Lord’s council. Lord Strange returned with his daughters. This is perhaps because this period is shortly after Midsummer’s day (<i>DHB</i></p>

			<p>Anderton, Mr Poole, Mr Secretaryes mane, & the next daye deputed” (<i>DHB</i> 62).</p> <p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Stanley of Yollow & his daughter & his son in law: Local gentry (Raines 194). • Mr Leigh: Possibly “Mr To Leigh” a “great favourite” of the Stanleys (Raines 209-10). • Mr Henry Stanley senior: “Comptroller” of Edward, Earl of Derby’s household (Raines 97). • Mr Henry Stanley junior: Nephew to Henry Stanley the senior (Raines 96). • Vicker of Ratchedalle: Richard Midgley, “well known to the leading Statesmen ... for his ardent zeal” (Raines 180). • Mr Stewarde: of the household. • Sr Rye. Sherborne: Sir Richard Sherborne “one of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the North,” Deputy Lieutenant and Governor of the Isle of Man, “resigned all his offices at Knowsley before the 5th July 1589” (Raines 102-03). • Mr Rec. generall of the 	61).
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				<p>household.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr ffoxe: Part of Henry’s council and in 1589 “Clerk Comptroller” (Raines 110). • Mr Edward Halsoll: Lancashire Magistrate, Chamberlain of Chester, Recorder of Liverpool, Major of Liverpool 1579 and 1586 (Raines 116). • Mr Cutebert Halsoll: Local gentry (Raines 119). • Mr Holcrofte: Possibly T.Holcrofte (Raines 103). • Mr James Anderton: Local gentry (Raines 119). • Mr Poole: Possibly of Poole in Wirral, Esq (Raines 150). • Mr Secretoryes man. 	
Knowsley Hall	The Queen’s Men	6 –7 Sep. 1589	The Queen’s Men perform twice on Saturday evening and on Sunday afternoon; Essex’s Men follow them with a Sunday evening performance: “Saturdaie ... the Quene’s Players came & played at nyght, my Lo. of Essex Players came ... Sondaie ... the Quenes Players played in the afternoone, &	<p>“Tuesdaie Mr Egerton, Mr Sherington, the Lawier & his brother came, Mr Bouthe wente, my L., my L. Dudley, Sr Edw. Stanley, Mr Wm &c. went to Lathom to hunt, my L. Dudley his me(?) stayed; Saturdaie my L., my L. Dudley, & all the rest came home, my L. Dudley brother in law came; the Quene’s Players came & played at nyght, my Lo. of Essex Players cameSondaie M^r Leigh preached & the Quenes Players played in the afternoone, & my L. of Essex at nyght; Mondaie my L. and all went away” (DHB 65).</p>	<p>This record shows that the Queen’s Men performed twice, and the likely audience members who included Lord Dudley and local dignitaries suggests the grandeur of the occasion. Once again the household disregards the complaints of the Sabbatarian preachers and features playing on a Sunday.</p> <p>The record also points to some collaboration between the Queen’s Men and Essex’s because</p>

			my L. of Essex at nyght” (<i>DHB</i> 65).	<p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Egerton: “Solicitor General” (Raines 196). • Mr Sherington the lawyer and his brother: Local gentry (Raines 197). • Mr Bouthe: Possible of the Booth family, local gentry (Raines 215). • Lord of Derby. • L. Dudley: Edward Sutton, fifth Lord Dudley (161). • L. Dudley brother in law. • Sr Edw. Stanley. • Mr Wm: William Stanley, sixth Earl of Derby. • M^f Leigh: Rector of Standish who “appears to have been the favourite Chaplain of Henry Earl of Derby” (Raines 117-18). 	<p>Essex’s Men also perform on the Sunday.</p> <p>The household was busy with important guests in this time, and the presence of members of the family, including William Stanley who succeeded to the Earldom in 1594.</p>
Lathom House	Likely Strange’s Men	20–21 Feb. 1589/90	<p>Strange’s Men perform on Saturday evening: “Saturdaie ... Players played at nyght” (<i>DHB</i> 75).</p>	<p>“Mondaie my L. & Lady Strange dyned at Marshall; ffrydaie S^f Ric. Shearburne came & Mr Halsall junior; this Saturdaie my L. came home, M^f ffoxe came & a servant of the B. of Canterbury, Players played at nyght, M^f Halsall & Mr Osbaldeston junior came” (<i>DHB</i> 75).</p> <p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L. & Lady Strange: Ferdinando Stanley and Alice Spencer. 	<p>This performance was during the Shrovetide season; it is likely then that Strange’s Men would have been in residence during this period. (MacLean).</p> <p>Additionally, Ferdinando Stanley and his wife were actively visiting local dignitaries in the weeks before this performance; this suggests the family actively promoted</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S^r Ric. Shearburne: See above. • Mr Halsall junior: Local gentry (Raines 146). • my L.: Earl of Derby. • M^r ffoxe: See above. • Servant of B. of Canterbury: Servant of John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury (Williams). • M^r Halsall: Local gentry (Raines 143). • Mr Osbaldeston junior: Local gentry (Raines 169). 	<p>themselves in this period in the area, and a performance by their company would also have worked to this effect.</p> <p>MacLean notes there was a performance of Strange's Men on 15 Feb. 1589 but I cannot find this recorded in the <i>DHB</i>.</p>
Knowsley Hall	The Queen's Men	25–26 Jun. 1590	<p>The Queen's Men arrive on Thursday 25 June and leave on Friday 26 June: "on Thursday ... the Quene's Players came; on ffrydaye they deptd" (<i>DHB</i> 82).</p>	<p>"on Wednesday my L. returned; on Thursday Sr Jhon Savadge, Mr Dutton, & the Quene's Players came; on ffrydaye they deptd, & Sr Randle Brereton came" (<i>DHB</i> 82).</p> <p>Likely audience members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My L.: Earl of Derby. • Sr Jhon Savadge: "Eighth Knight" of the Savadges and descended from the first Earl of Derby. High Sheriff of Cheshire seven times and three times Mayor of Chester (Raines 144-45). • Mr Dutton: local gentry (Raines 173). • Sr Randle Brereton: "Son and heir of Randle Brereton of Malpas Esq" and also accompanied Earl of Derby on his embassy in 1584-5 to 	<p>It is likely that the Queen's Men performed on Thursday, and possibly Friday.</p> <p>The likely audience includes important local dignitaries and suggests this was an organised performance since the earl of Derby returned to his household before the Queen's Men arrived.</p>

				France (Raines 95).	
Knowsley Hall	The Queen's Men	10 Sep. 1590	This last performance date comes from evidence from Henry Scrope's letter: "Players travelled from Lancashire to Carlisle en route to Scotland at the request of James VI. Players in residence at Carlisle for 10 days prior to 20 Sept. (MacLean).	Letter of Henry, Lord Scrope, to William Asheby on 20 Sep. 1590: "vpon a lettre receyved from Mr Roger Asheton, Signifying vnto me that yt was the kinges earnest desire for to have hir Maiestes players for to repayer into Scotlande to his grace: I dyd furthwith dispatche a servant of my owen vnto them wheir they were in the furthest parte of Langkeshier, whervpon they made their returne heather to Carliell, where they are, and have stayed for the space of ten dayes" (qtd. in George, <i>Lancashire</i> 182).	This visit is not recorded in the <i>DHB</i> since the accounts end in August 1590; however, the letter from Lord Scrope suggests that the company had been in Lancashire from at least 10 Sep 1590, and it is likely they would have visited the Stanleys (MacLean).

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