Pavel Drábek

"Why, sir, are there other heauens in other countries?":
the English Comedy as a Transnational Style

Director Norman Marshall, in his book *The Producer and the Play* (1957), comments on the specifics of theatrical taste, comparing Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) with its main source, Nigel Playfair's 1920 revival of *The Beggar's Opera*.[1] He points out:

> The German production of *The Beggar's Opera* (entitled *Die Dreigroschenoper*), although inspired by the success of Playfair's revival, had nothing in common with it except that it was equally well suited to the taste of the audience. The Playfair version would inevitably have failed in Berlin. It was far too dainty – which was one of the reasons for its success in England […]. There was nothing dainty about the taste of Berlin in the 'twenties. Brecht re-wrote the text and the lyrics, the original score was scrapped and replaced by music which had much in common with the lewd husky

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[1] This essay develops the brief discussion in Drábek and Katritzky 2016, and has its origins in three talks: two conference papers presented at TWB conferences, "Worlds-in-Between and their Inhabitants: a semiotic study of theatre as a border zone" at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Germany (2012; organized by M. A. Katritzky) and "Tricksters, Enchantment and Trance-mission in Early Modern Theatre in Europe" at the Gallatin School, New York University, USA (2013; organized by Susanne Wofford); and a keynote lecture "Shakespeare and his Theatre of Holiness" given at the Concepts of Holiness Summer School, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany (2013; organized by Friedemann Kreuder). I would like to thank John Astington, Daniela Čadková, Nicoleta Cinpoeş, Alena Jakubcová, M. A. Katritzky, Peter Kirwan, Tomáš Kubart, Peter W. Marx, Josh Overton, Pavla Pinkasová, Bärbel Rudin, June Schlueter, Matthew Steggle, and Eva Stehlíková for their help and advice. All unattributed translations are mine.

ditties of the Berlin nightclubs. The predominant flavour of the production was that

peculiarly German mixture of sadism and sickly sentiment. (Marshall 1957: 250)

Brecht, working on a version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) with Elisabeth

Hauptmann, offered it to the actor-manager Ernst-Josef Aufricht, who recognized his

proposition as a great entrepreneurial opportunity. The fact that Playfair's London production

had enjoyed a staggering run of 1,463 performances was a significant criterion in Aufricht's

decision (McNeff 2006: 81–2). And yet, despite its affinities in plot and many points of contact

with the London production – including "vestigial remnants of original tunes in the final score"

of Kurt Weill (McNeff 2006: 82) – the Berlin production "had nothing in common with it

except that it was equally well suited to the taste of the audience," as Marshall observes.

Although there is material, historical and textual evidence of transnational exchange in *Die*

Dreigroschenoper, from a theatrical point of view there is perhaps more separating than uniting

the two productions, since both were written *within* a local theatre culture with specific tastes

and aesthetic expectations. This is a paradoxical situation and moreover one that poses a

significant methodological problem. On the one hand, the available evidence (mostly of a

textual nature) testifies to a rich circulation of material and personnel (stories and plots, words

and tunes, routines, structural patterns or theatergrams, actors and managers); on the other, the

resulting theatre performance adopts a local taste and, as it were, reflects the local cultural

identity. This paradox, which is inherent in all theatre adaptation and translation, has important

consequences for transnational exchanges as such.

In our own century, a similar process can be identified – for instance, when Katie

Mitchell invited dramatist Martin Crimp to adapt Euripides's *The Phoenician Women* for her

production at the Schauspielhaus in Hamburg (2013). Crimp's adaptation in English was then

translated into and performed in German, under the title *Alles weitere kennen sie aus dem*

kino (*The Rest Will Be Familiar to You from The Cinema*). It is also significant that the guest

director and dramatist drew on a classical Greek play (*Phoinissai*) – a transnational myth that

places the production within a transculturally resonant framework. Reflecting on the specific cultural particularity of the play, Crimp makes an interesting observation:

> Part of the particularity of the play that premiered in Hamburg is about the training of German actors; it's about the structures within which they operate, because there is a company. […] But then, say, we bring along a director from the UK, Katie Mitchell: she will then create an artefact which is part of her own personal vision of what theatre might be, just as the text, which comes from me, is part of mine. So it's quite hard to say where the actual cultural identity of that theatre artefact lies. (Crimp and Sierz 2016: 109)

Going some four centuries further back into theatre history, perhaps a similar observation can be made about the cultural particularity and the mixture of imported, transnational influences relating to the English Comedy (*Englische Comedie*), as practised by the popular travelling English troupes and their inheritors during the century between the 1580s and 1680s. Most scholarship on this phenomenon assumes that, dramaturgically, English travelling actors exported English plays, and performed them on the Continent with necessary adjustments. This essay elaborates a different perspective: the methodological discussion of historical theatre aesthetics presented here analyzes the English Comedy in its specificity, born on the Continent from predominantly indigenous material (stories, motifs, symbols), and presented in the innovative theatrical style imported from England. As such, it existed *in-between* – as a paradoxically local, idiosyncratic amalgam of numerous cultural identities. The English Comedy was born abroad, on the road, just like the Italian commedia dell'arte and perhaps even consciously emulating the success of the Italian troupes. More specifically, I analyze the characteristics of the English Comedy, and argue that it is a unique, recognizable, dramaturgical style that was itself a nexus of transnational influences. On a thematic level, the English Comedy appealed to a shared sense of transnational culture by means of different transcendental motifs – the Classical Greek and Roman heritage, and the pan-European folk

tales and themes, such as Heaven and Hell and their conventional dramatic agents: angels and devils.

1 A Transnational Dramaturgy

The first English performance recorded abroad was given by Lord Leicester's Men in Utrecht, on 23 April 1586 (Bald 1943: 395). One of the troupe was probably the famous Will Kempe, the clown for whom Shakespeare wrote numerous comedic roles. The company performed the *Forces* (or *Labours*) *of Hercules* – a typical acrobatic routine of the Italian comedians.[2] Apart from the connection to Italian performance practices that draws on the Classical heritage through the myth of Hercules, there is another line of interpretation stemming from pan-European folklore. Hoenselaars and Helmers characterize the 1586 *Labours of Hercules* as "a classical display of force and strength and a welcome alternative to a dramatisation of the (banned) life of St George on what used to be his name day" (2016: 145). Hercules is a suggestive, if not a conclusive symbolic substitute for St George; the classical hero perhaps seen as an unoffending replacement for the local saint St George, given the negative connotations of hagiography in a Protestant country. There may have been other reasons for the dramaturgical shift from the saint to the mythological hero – and, as an attempt at cultural complicity by the Earl of Leicester's Men with their (probably international) Utrecht audience, as a classical myth, Hercules would have been a convenient medium – perhaps not unlike Mitchell and Crimp's Hamburg version of Euripides. This figurative dramaturgy would also be in keeping with the cultural variants of Herakles (Hercules), as the "type of strong boy" in popular imagination documented by Karl Galinsky (1972: 2). Galinsky even suggests that the pagan god was, at times, put to a range of uses:

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[2] Katritzky 2006: 37–8, 221; Semler 2018: 56–9. I am grateful to M. A. Katritzky for drawing my attention to this tradition and the relevant literature.

Once the religious threat he posed had vanished, Herakles, along with other pagan

deities, conveniently entered into the realm of allegory and under the aspect of the

supreme exemplar of virtue and justice was eventually even identified with Christ.

(188)

This identification goes at least as far back as Dante, and is made explicit by the English writer

William Fulbecke in his *A Booke on Christian Ethics* (1587), and propagated by Edmund

Spenser in his *Faerie Queene* (1590) and later iterated in Milton's *Paradise Regained* (4.562–

71; Galinsky 1972: 202, 205–6). Spenser draws a comparison between St George and the

Arthurian Red Cross Knight, who fights with a dragon (*FQ* I, Canto 2), and with Hercules

(Cantos 7 and 11). An allegorical conflation of all the metamorphoses of Hercules seems to

have been a cultural commonplace of the contemporaneous English imagination – and also the

continental one, as will be shown below. Besides, Hercules carrying out the twelve *labores* set

him by his elder half-brother Eurystheus, or portrayed as the effeminate hero killed by

Deianira, was also a popular theme in early modern theatre throughout Europe.[3] With this in

view, the classical framing provided by the Earl of Leicester's Men's *Labours of Hercules*, in

Utrecht in 1586, could well have been an appropriate and fashionable way of marking St

George's Day.

Will Kempe, one of the Earl of Leicester's Men, is also noteworthy for another reason.

Not only was he an actor participating in some of the earliest recorded performances of English

actors in Continental Europe, but his presence on that side of the Channel became notorious. In

The Return from Parnassus (*Return* 1600), Philomusus greets Kempe when he appears: "What

M. *Kempe* / how doth the Emperour of Germany?" (4.3); in John Day, William Rowley and

George Wilkins's *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), Kempe meets "an *Italian*

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[3] Hercules on the early modern English stage, especially in Thomas Heywood's *The Brazen Age* (1613), is

discussed by Rowland (2017, esp. 133–52).

Harlaken" and they prepare to jointly "inuent any extemporall meriment" (9.78; Day, Rowley and Wilkins 1607) – as if Kempe's travels on the Continent were a well-known fact. However, even more than as a performer, he made a lasting impact through the comical routines and jigs that became a popular genre of the English Comedy throughout northern Europe, where they were known as *Singspiele* (see Drábek 2019). The most popular jig attributed to Will Kempe, known as *The Singing Simpkin* or *Pickelhering in the Box*, is based on a Boccaccio novel – by then a notorious transnational plot, that – like the *Labours of Hercules* or Euripides's *Phoinissai* – did not need much cultural localization, and was conducive to transnational theatre touring. In the true spirit of the English Comedy, Kempe's jig was a transnational creation, combining pan-European classics (Boccaccio), the popular Italian genre of the witty farce, and the flair of a local trickster folk tale.

Although routines and even plots were associated with individual performers (or stage personas), this does not warrant an authorial approach, let alone indicate any claim to the performer's invention of their material. In her discussion of the comedian-playwright Robert Armin in *The Actor as Playwright in Early Modern Drama*, Nora Johnson brilliantly articulates the early modern practices of authorial property:

> [Authorship] does not matter until notions of private property and subjectivity have made the connection between "the author and the work" appear inevitable. […] Armin thus makes himself up as a writer out of the voices of others, positioning himself not as the origin of the text – the questions come from other people – but as its last word, the one who delivers the witty quip as the closing line of the exchange. (Johnson 2003: 1– 2)

The same holds true for Kempe and the jig attributed to him. In this sense, he was more Barthesian *scribe* than *author*-originator, and in his case, the *episteme* he drew on was a transnational one. Not only does Johnson's articulation have bearing on questions of

authorship, but it can also help identify the type of creative novelty – the "added value"[4] – that English comedians brought to well known plays and plots. There are numerous instances of plays performed by the English actors based on continental stories, and "returned back" with them from England to mainland Europe, or maybe even taken up only while on tour, having no known variant performed in England. *Doctor Faustus*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (both: Drábek 2014), and *Saint Dorothea* (*The Virgin Martyr*) (Mikyšková 2018) are the most prominent examples.

The fluid textuality of Kempe's jig is characteristic both of the early modern *residually oral* culture (see Ong and Hartley 2002: 115–35), and of comedy as a theatrical mode fundamentally rooted in oral delivery and in the spontaneity of performance in the here and now. A modern example which may serve as an illustration is "The Bricklayer's Lament", originally performed at the Oxford Union on 4 December 1958 by Gerard Hoffnung, a German musician and cartoonist based in Britain (Russell 2015). Although this now classic comedy routine apparently has its creator-performer, it has become a stock story that exists in innumerable variants, and each performance (rather than textual version) varies in form and formulation, since every performer combines their own individual comical talents with the concrete performance event. So the resulting performance – often partly improvized – is adjusted to the audience, and primarily designed to raise laughter, rather than to retain the integrity of the original story. Such fluid textuality is also evident in the surviving early modern scripts of the English Comedy on the Continent, and it is in nature of theatre that it adjusts its delivery to "[s]uit the action to the word, the word to the action" (*Hamlet* 3.2.17–8), as Hamlet instructs the travelling actors arriving at Elsinore. (Significantly, this is an in-joke: from Utrecht, the Earl of Leicester's Men, including Will Kempe, Thomas Pope and George Bryan, toured on to Denmark, performing at Elsinore later in 1586; Limon 1985: 3). June Schlueter, in her analysis of the surviving scripts, hypothesizes that the plays published in the

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[4] A metaphor used by Jacques Lezra in the discussion at the TWB conference in Madrid in 2011.

1620 anthology *Englische Comedien und Tragedien* could have been written by the actors themselves, who "would have known what pleased their German audiences" (2016: 237). However, it should be emphasized that the surviving texts should not be read as performance scripts, but rather as documents of performances (as would probably be the case for the 1608 Graz manuscript of *Jemand und Neimand*), or at best as "pre-texts" for them (Drábek and Katritzky 2016: 1527–8). As David Mann observes in his study on the Elizabethan player: "Too much attention to the text […] can distort our view of its place in the performance" (1991: 1). With regard to differences between individual versions of plays – such as *Nobody and Somebody* or *Fortunatus* – a conventional, textualist stemma of transmission of the texts necessarily fails to do justice to the issue; the authority of performance and the *homeostatic* nature of theatre (Ong 2012: 46–9) play too fundamental a role in the resulting shape of the play. Also, it is known from Fynes Moryson's much-cited testimony from the Frankfurt Fair in 1592, that the English actors were "pronowncing peeces and Patches of English playes" (MS CCC94: 470) – an apt description for the formulaic nature of the oral medium. It would be inadvisable to infer that the clearly substandard show that Moryson witnessed ("having neither a complete number of actors nor any good apparel, nor any ornament of the stage") was typical. Yet the apparent effectiveness of the performance ("yet the Germans, not understanding a word they said […] flocked wonderfully to see their gesture and action"), testifies to the English actors' ability to adapt to the exigencies of the performance.

2 "What monstrous vgly hagge is this?": the Importance of Framing

> Everyone who acts on the stage knows how important a successful first scene is for the entire performance and for all its participants. (Bogatyrev 2016 [1937]: 169)

Given the textual fluidity of the surviving scripts, what can be said about the English Comedy as a style? An English provenance was not the necessary criterion for its plays, and they bear "a surprising degree of un-Englishness" (Drábek and Katritzky 2016: 1531). Nor were the

actors themselves limited to British nationality: from very early on, the English Comedy was also practised by comedians born in Germany, the Low Countries, the Czech lands or Austria. It was a distinctive theatrical style – just like the Italian comedy or the Italian *motions* (or puppet plays) that were practised by performers of any nationality (see Drábek 2015: 15–6). What then were the *distinctive* features of the style?

A recurrent pattern (or theatergram) in itinerant scripts of the English Comedy is dialogic inductions, introducing the main plot and any concluding dialogic epilogues rounding it off. An example can be found in *A Most Pleasant Comedy of Mucedorus*, a remarkable play for a travelling company, which enjoyed extraordinary popularity in print, with its staggering 19 editions, and a live performance history extending to as recently as the 1830s (Proudfoot 2002: 18; Kirwan 2015: 99–106; Chambers 1933: 190–1). *Mucedorus* is framed by a dialogue between the figures of Comedy and Envy, whose quarrel over the genre and outcome of the play establish its "mixed" nature as a tragi-comedy. While this is seemingly nothing more than an aesthetic disputation, such devices also fulfill other significant functions. By bringing on stage two allegorical figures, the play sets up the modality of *Mucerodus* and its world (for narrative modalities see Doležel 1998: 113–32; Richardson 2002). It is introduced by the overruling presence of Comedy, who opens the play and sets the tone:

> *Enter Comedie ioyfull with a garland of baies on her head.*
>
> WHy so? thus doe I hope to please:
>
> Musicke reuiues, and mirth is tollerable.
>
> Comedie play thy part, and please,
>
> Mak merry them that coms to ioy with thee: (*Mucedorus* Q1598, A2r)

Interestingly, Comedy's opponent is not the intuitive match, Tragedy, but rather Envy:

> *Enter Enuie, his armes naked besmearde with bloud*

En. Nay staie minion, there lies a block.

What al on mirth; Ile interrupt your tale,

And mixe your musicke with a tragick end.

Co. What monstrous vgly hagge is this,

That dares controwle the pleasures of our will? (A2r)

Envy is an allegory of the reversal principle, subverting Comedy's intent and playing off Comedy's positivism. These two antithetical figures, framing the plot, not only set the extreme limits within which the tragicomic story will unravel, but also launch the fictional modality of sudden and extreme switches between the two. So the two principles set up here are not only generic, but dramatic and relational (dialectical).[5] Also of importance is who plays the parts of Comedy and Envy. The doubling chart in the quarto's list of characters, which encouragingly advertizes that "*Eight persons may easily play it*", provides important evidence:

Enuie: Tremelio a Captaine,] *for one.*
Bremo a wilde man.

Comedy, a boy, an ould woman,] *for one.*
Ariena Amadines maide.

Comedy, played by the second boy, is a feminine factor associated with the romantic heroine (the "boy" in the list also appears in the play as Amadine's attendant). Envy is played by the *captain* of the troupe – who also doubles as the braggardly Captain Tremelio, who teams with

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[5] For an alternative reading of this induction see Hillman's fine analysis, rooted in the generic debate and perceiving Envy as a "displacement of the classically impeccable concept of tragedy" (1992: 3). Hillman sums it up as "clear […] redundancy of Comedy and Tragedy in *Mucedorus*" (4–5), failing to see the allegorical dimension of the actors' agencies.

the play's villain Segasto to try to murder Mucedorus, and, as the wild man Bremo, represents the play's darkest force, as a cannibal, abductor and potential rapist. So in his entry, Envy metatheatrically frames, and simultaneously announces, the dramatic function this stage persona would be, within all its roles as the hero's archetypal antagonist and adversary. In so doing, the framing induction of Comedy and Envy both sets the play's modality, and allegorizes the key agents appearing in Mucedorus's story. This device is also significant in structuring the interaction with the audience, and priming their judgements within the axiological frame.[6]

The same framing device appears in Johann Georg Gettner's *Die Heÿlige Martÿrin Dorothea* (c1690), a version of Thomas Dekker and Philip Massinger's *The Virgin Martyr* (1620) adapted by Gettner in the style of the English Comedy, and surviving in a recently discovered manuscript (for Christian Neuhuber's critical edition see Havlíčková and Neuhuber 2014: 83–182). Unlike *The Virgin Martyr*, the German play opens with a quarrel between two allegorical figures representing evil and good – the demon Harpax and the Engel (Angel):

> *Harpax der teüfl in Mensch‹licher› gestaldt.*
>
> HARPAX. Auß Plutonis grossen befehl habe ich eine Zeit lang das vnterirtische trawergezeld verlassen, menschliche gestald an mich genohmen, vnd den Erdboden betretten, vnter den nahmen Harpax, in willens dem groß=Cantzler Theophilo aufzuwarten, Ihn in seinem eyfer gegen die Christen zustärken, vnd entlich mit seiner Persohn vnser höllisches reich zuuermehren.
>
> *Engel in mensch‹licher› gestaldt.*
>
> ENGEL. diese gestaldt habe ich auf des allerhöchsten befehl an mich genohmen, vnd werde gesendet, denen nothleüdenden vnd beträngten Christen beyzuspringen,

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[6] For the theatrical frame see Goffman 1974: 124–55; for priming and influencing judgments see Kahneman 2011: 50–8.

absonderlich der Freyle D o r o t h e a aufzuwarthen, *<2v>* Sie in glaubens sachen zu

vnterrichten, vnd in ihren guten vorhaben zu stärken.

HARPAX. o wehe! was ist dieses? mein Erbfeind!

ENGEL. welcher kommen ist…

HARPAX. mich zu quälen?

ENGEL. deinen anschlag zuuernichten (1.1; Havlíčková and Neuhuber 2014: 96–7)

[*Harpax the devil in human shape.*

HARPAX. Through Pluto's mighty behest I have long departed the underworld's tearful

abode, taken on human shape and stepped onto the face of the earth under the name

Harpax, to serve the High Chancellor Theophilus, to give him strength in his zeal

against the Christians, and finally to use this person to increase our hellish empire.

Angel in human shape.

ANGEL. This shape have I taken on at the behest of the Almighty, and am being sent to

hasten to needy and oppressed Christians, and especially to serve the maid Dorothea,

teach her in matters of faith, and support her good intentions.

HARPAX. Alas! What is this? My archenemy!

ANGEL. …who has come…

HARPAX. …to torment me?

ANGEL. …to destroy your attack.][7]

This opening dialogue – which has a parallel in the quarrel between the Good and Bad Angels

in the B-text (Q1616) of the most popular English Comedy on the Continent, *Doctor Faustus*,

launches the allegorical mode of the entire play (importantly both spirits enter "in human

shape"), and frames the story as a *psychomachia*. In contrast to Comedy and its subversive

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[7] This translation is mine. Mikyšková's dissertation translates the whole Gettner manuscript (2018: 98–128).

variant Envy, it is appropriate for the genre of tragedy, in which *Die Heÿlige Martÿrin Dorothea* is written, that the opposing forces are axiological absolutes, and significant for setting the tragic genre that, unlike Comedy in *Mucedorus*, the evil force, Harpax, enters first.[8]

Another remarkable instance of an English play with a similar axiological induction, that "hath bene sundrie times publikely plaide", is Robert Greene's *The Scottish Historie of Iames the fourth, slaine at Flodden. Entermixed with a pleasant Comedie, presented by Oboram King of Fayeries* (c1590; Greene 1598).[9] It opens with a dance, followed by a dialogue between Aster Oberon, King of Fairies, and the Scots misanthrope Bohan:

> *Musicke playing within.*
>
> *Enter* Aster Oberδ, *King of Fayries, an Antique, who dance aboue a Tombe, plac'st conueniently on the Stage, out of the which, suddainly starts vp as they daunce,* Bohan *a Scot, attyred like a ridstall man, from whom the Antique flyes.* (*Greene* 1598: A3ʳ)

Oberon opens the play with his attendants in an *Antique*, setting the comedic mode. In contrast, grumpy Bohan then enters, now necessarily perceived as *comically* grumpy, his comicality further enhanced by his theatrical Scots accent. The conventional "Who's there?" appears in the dialogue too, including a punning allusion to Oberon as the devil:

> [*Bohan*.] whay art thou a King?
>
> *Ober*. I am.

> *Bohan.* The deele thou art, whay thou look'st not so big as the king of Clubs […] (A3v)

Oberon has called on Bohan since, as he says:

> *Ober. Oberon* King of Fayries, that loues thee because thou hatest the world, and to
>
> gratulate thee, I brought those Antiques to shew thee some sport in daunsing, which
>
> thou haste loued well. (A4r)

Bohan quarrels with Oberon over their reasons for hating the world, and as a graphic example introduces the comical history of James IV (actually based on a novella by Cinthio, *Hecatommithi* III.I; Sanders 1970: xxix):

> *Boh.* Now King, if thou bee a King, I will shew thee whay I hate the world by
>
> demonstration, in the yeare 1520. was in *Scotland*, a king ouerruled with parasites,
>
> misled by lust, & many circumstances, too long to trattle on now, much like our court
>
> of *Scotland* this day, that story haue I set down, gang with me to the gallery, & Ile shew
>
> thee the same in Action, by guid fellowes of our country men, and then when thou seest
>
> that, iudge if any wise man would not leaue the world if he could.
>
> *Ober.* That will I see, lead and ile follow thee.   *Exeunt.* (A4v)

Further dialogues between Bohan and Oberon are sandwiched between the acts, along with dances and capers; maintaining consistent framing throughout the play – with the exception of its very end, probably because that would have been provided for by the obligatory concluding jig. The induction in *The Taming of the Shrew* (which survives only in the 1623 Folio) follows the same pattern, except that here it is the Lord who brings on the play for the entertainment of the beggar Sly (see Stern 2009: 107). To my knowledge, it has not previously been pointed out that Shakespeare's induction is composed of pieces and patches of plays: the clownery between Sly and the Hostess (a Tapster in the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew*) has a parallel in *Mucedorus* (Scene 9 following Bate and Rasmussen 2013: 531–2). A parallel instance can also

be found in an untitled English Comedy in the German manuscript from Gdańsk edited by Bolte (1895), which he gave the title *Tiberius von Ferrara und Anabella von Mömpelgard*.[10] These English comedic routines between clown and tavern host are well worth further exploration – from the tavern origins of the English professional theatre at the Red Lion in 1567, through the birth of Pickelhering in Southwark (Katritzky 2014) to Kempe's (!) clowneries as Falstaff in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*. In this context, Wiles is indirectly indicating the English Comedy on the London stage: "When Kemp and Shakespeare became fellows, equal sharers in the new company, one of Shakespeare's first acts was to take an old play and to construct a part in it for Kemp based on Kemp's routines or 'merriments'" (1987: 73).

The framing of Dekker's comedy *If It Be Not Good, the Devil is in It* is methodical, and features Pluto with his many furies and followers (1611; Dekker 1612). The play opens with Charon calling on Pluto; he asks for a pay rise, or he will stop ferrying souls to the underworld. While Dekker's induction plot is consistent, and carefully elaborated throughout the comedy, it is known to have been used to frame other plays. It survives in a startlingly close variant, in the German marionette play *Doktor Johann Faust* from Ulm (first printed by Scheible in 1847; Günzel 1970: 447; see also Drábek 2014: 181). Significantly, the printed version of Dekker's play lacks Charon's opening line to which Pluto replies:

> *Enter (at the sound of hellish musick,) Pluto, and Charon.*
>
> *Plu*. Ha!
>
> *Cha*. So.
>
> *Plu*. What so.
>
> *Cha*. Ile be thy slaue no longer.

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[10] For a possible relation to the lost 1598 Comedy of a Duke of Ferrara, see Steggle 2016. Henke identifies another transnational motif in the induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*, namely the poor people's dreamlike kingdom of Cuccagna (2015: 140).

Plu. What slaue?

Cha. Hels drudge, her Gally-slaue. (Dekker 1612: B1r)

Charon. Pluto!

Pluto. Ho!

Charon. So!

Pluto. Was so?

Charon. Ich begehre, nicht länger dein Sklave zu sein.

Pluto. Was für ein Sklav'?

Charon. Dein höllischer Galeerensklav'. (*Doktor Johann Faust*; in Günzel 1970: 7)

Evidently, this particular theatrical script was one of the pieces and patches of English plays deployed by travelling comedians in their performances, alongside other routines and scenarios (see Drábek 2014: 181–94).[11]

3 "Peeces and patches of English plays"

The German script of *Fortunatus* published in the 1620 collection has no prologue, although Dekker's printed playscript includes one, composed for the performance before Queen Elizabeth (Q1600 A1r–v): "a version of the play specifically rewritten and elongated with music for court performance" (Stern 2009: 153). The 1620 German script lacks any introduction whatsoever, and starts with Fortunatus entering "in ragged clothes" (*in zerrissenen Kleidern*), bemoaning his fate. The "interim" or "intermean" entertainments are also missing; the text only indicates where they should be, with the stage direction: "Here acts Pickelhering" (*Allhier agiret Pickelhering*; Brauneck 1970: 137, 146, 154, 159), probably played by

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[11] That this might have been the case in London theatres has been indirectly suggested by John Jowett (Cohen and Jowett 2007: 575–6), and elaborated in respect of prologues and choruses by Stern (2009: 107–8).

Andalosia's Servant (*Diener*), the analogue of Dekker's trickster Shadow.[12] These interludes were probably routines – either solo or group – as they appear in other scripts. The opening play of the 1620 collection, *Comœdia von der Königin Esther und Hoffertigen Haman* (Comedy of Queen Esther and the Haughty Haman), is interlaced with bawdy jests of Hans Knapkäse and his Wife (and occasionally other one-off characters). These scenes have no relation to Esther's plot and comprise recognizable stock material (such as chauvinistic shrew-taming, food comedy or jealousy routines).[13] Hans Leberwurst, the clown of the Gdańsk *Tiberius and Anabella* play, provides the interludes with stock routines:

> (i) Act 2 Scene 3: Hans (solo) is desperately in love with Anabella, as a foil to his master Tiberius.

> (ii) Act 3 Scene 3: Hans (solo) rehearses what he will say to Anabella.

> (iii) Act 4 Scene 2: Hans wrangles with the Innkeeper over the comical list of food Hans has eaten.

> (iv) Act 5 Scene 3: Hans returns home to his old Father, in a parody of the Prodigal Son.[14]

Possible London stage parallels are (i): William Rowley's scenes as the clown Cuddy Banks, in Thomas Dekker, John Ford and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621); (ii): Orlando and Rosalind's rehearsal in *As You Like It*; (iii): Falstaff's list, discovered in his pocket in *King Henry IV Part 1*; (iv): Lancelot Gobbo and Old Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*. These routines belonged to Moryson's "peeces and Patches of English playes" (MS CCC94: 470) that circulated from performance to performance, and could be notionally attached to any play, as

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[12] The servant is called Hans Wurst in a German puppet play which follows the 1620 script surprisingly closely (*Glückssäckel und Wünschhut*, first published by Engel in 1874, newly edited in Günzel 1970: 185–226).

[13] For a discussion of the comical interlude in early modern biblical plays see Drábek 2019.

[14] Bolte compares the routine of self-important introduction with several jigs (1895: 208). David Wiles identifies Lancelot's scene as Kempe's characteristic routine (1987: 111, 122).

their comic interludes. They provided not only comic relief but, even more significantly, framed the play within an axiological and ethical discourse based on allegories, dialectical contrasts and subversion.

The axiological spaces created through framing – worlds of enchantment, fiction, mythology, folk or classical culture – are in a metaphorical, and occasionally allegorical, relationship to the lived reality. I would argue that while there clearly are literal links with historical realities in the surviving playscripts – as cultural materialists have amply confirmed over the last decades – the figurative, or (broadly speaking) suggestive, import of the plays has an equal if not a greater role in the theatrical aesthetics of the style.

4 "Why, sir, are there other heauens in other countries?": Tricksters, Transgressors, Borders-Crossers, and Harrowers of Hell

In his influential book *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre* (1978), Robert Weimann has discussed the clown and the devil as interconnected representatives of the popular, folk tradition in the late Middle Ages and early modern times, in relation to their mimetic and non-mimetic qualities in the performance space. While his interpretations are inspirational, and have reconsidered Shakespearean theatre from the perspective of Marxist philosophy of class and the popular element, Weimann narrows down the discussion to an ideological dialectics of early capitalism *vs*. the folk (proletarian) element. In doing so, he forecloses the transcendental ormetaphysical (or spiritual) aspect of early modern theatre, which still operates – as Weimann meticulously documents – within the frameworks of folk ritual. Richard Hillman departs from Weimann, proffering a poststructuralist approach to the Shakespearean text as trickster-like in nature, a "slippery discourse", in his detailed analysis of the "subversive dynamic through formal embodiments of disruption" as present in Shakespeare's plays (1992: 221). I would argue that the "slippery" nature of the plays and its characters is a mode that reaches beyond meaning, and even primes it. From this perspective, the *subversion* is an *ex post* rationalization of the structure of meaning; the characteristic nature

of English Comedy, as evidenced by the travelling actors' scripts, is not simply a pervasive logic in the plays, but rather a special modality of their worlds – one that creates the axiological space, and defines the mode of existence of the personas within it.

A conceptual framework corresponding more appropriately with my argument is based on Max Weber's sociological notions of *enchantment* (*Verzauberung*) and *disenchantment* (*Entzauberung*). Weber, in one of the founding books of sociology, *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), observes the process of the *disenchantment of the world* (*Entzauberung der Welt*), in which society breaks away from its traditional inclinations towards the spiritual or magical world of myth and religion. Rather than viewing this essential dichotomy of enchantment and disenchantment as diachronic, I view enchantment and disenchantment as concurrent, collateral modes of presence – the one representing the everyday world (the subject of history), the other present in the "enchanted" habitat of the creative and playful mind. This latter has been institutionalized in the theatre. Recent performance theory, such as Marvin Carlson's theatre "metaphysics" (2003), acknowledges the enchanted nature of performance; theatre is a "haunted" activity, with everyday audiences "visited" by inhabitants of the other, mythological world – in the likeness of humans, but representing always more and always less than individuals.

Early modern theatre played with a type of illusion, an enchanted world with its own rules – pastoral, mythical, utopian, fairy-tale-like but also as-if real (Fortunatus's Famagusta, Shylock's Venice, Romeo and Juliet's Verona). With a view to the "actual performance conditions", David Mann outlines their nature: "Illusion, certainly of the sort available in the Elizabethan theatre, operated not through tricking the audience but through their active willingness to enter into the deception", resulting in a "sort of clown–audience rapprochement" (1991: 3, 78–9). The illusion offered by performers of the English Comedy, especially their clown, was of a specific kind – in connection with the London stage, Mann talks of "the independent reality of the clown […that comprises] himself and the audience" (78). The nature of *enchantment* in the English Comedy was similar, and even more literally Weberian, in its

connections with magic, religion and mythological trickster figures. Arguably, it was this feature that became dominant in the "English" style; its stories were framed to exist within "enchanted" axiological spaces, induced through framing devices created by the clown.

The earliest surviving image of the English/Dutch/German clown figure Pickelhering (on the 1621 pamphet *Englischer Bickelhering*) portrays the character as a countryman with sloppy trousers, a bi-coloured coat, basket with goods on his back, and – somewhat surprisingly – a ragged aristocratic-like ruff (see Figure 9). In other words, his costume is a mixture of social classes. It is well known that later Pickelherings, as well as Hanswursts, share this eclectic combination of iconographic attributes. What is worth considering is the basket, and the character's ambulant or itinerant nature. Clearly, Pickelhering is a mobile character, portrayed as delivering commodities from one world to another. This was, I argue, a conventional, general, iconographic attribute of the clown – seen from the *disenchanted* world as coming from the other-worldly countryside.

<mark>[DRABEK FIGURE 9 INSERT HERE]</mark>

Figure 9. A broadsheet entitled "Englischer Bickelhering / jetzo ein vornehmer Eysenhändeler / mit Axt / Beyl / Barten gen Prage Jubilierende / Anno" [1621]. © Trustees of the British Museum (1948,0623.10).

Shakespeare's clowns share this too: the Clown of *Titus Andronicus* enters "*with a basket and two Pigeons in it*" (4.3.76.1); the Clown of *Antony and Cleopatra* brings "the pretty worme of Nylus […] That killes and paines not" (5.2.238–9). An untitled Elizabethan broadside ballad, of the Dance of Death tradition ("Mark well the effect, purtreyed here in all", 1580; see Figure 10), portrays Death and five human characters. The engraving at the beginning of the print shows them pursued by Death with a dart. The emblems underneath are these:

The Priest. "I praye for yov fower."

The King. "I defende yov fower."

The Harlot. "I vanquesh yov fower."

The Lawyer. "I helpe yov iiij to yovr right."

The Clown. "I feede yov fower."

Death. "I kill yov all."

Figure 10. "Begin. Marke well the effect, purtreyed here in all, etc. [A poem, printed below a large woodcut, representing Death with Bishop, King, Harlot, Lawyer and Clown.]" (London, 1580). © The British Library Board (Huth.50.(63)).

The identification of the Clown, as the caterer and as itinerant, is further stressed by his stanzas in the ballad:

> The contry clowne, full loth to lose his right,
>
> Puts in his foot and pleads to be the chiefe;
>
> What can they do, saith he, by power or might,
>
> If that by me they haue not their reliefe?
>
> For want of food they should all perish than;
>
> What say you now to me, the countrey man?
>
>
> For want of me they should both liue and lacke,
>
> For want of me they could not till the earth,
>
> And thats the cause I cary on my backe
>
> This table here of plenty not of dearth;
>
> I feast them all, their hunger I appease,
>
> For by my toyle they feede euen at their ease.

The two cited Shakespearean clowns are also mediators in another sense. Cleopatra's Clown uses culinary and demonic imagery, with the poisonous worm. The Clown in *Titus Andronicus*

acquires an equally demonic or other-worldly errand, as Titus ushers him with the words:

Enter the Clowne with a basket and two Pigeons in it.

Titus. Newes, newes, from heauen,

   Marcus the poast is come.

   Sirrah, what tydings? haue you any letters?

   Shall I haue Iustice, what sayes *Iupiter*? (*Titus Andronicus*, 4.3.76–9)

These Shakespeare clowns and clown-like figures, whose border-crossing nature can also be identified elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays,[15] are trickster figures of the kind described by psychological and anthropological studies, from those of Carl Gustav Jung or Paul Radin, to Lewis Hyde (1998), or William J. Hynes and William G. Doty (1993). Hynes and Steele describe the figure as:

A border-breaker *extraordinaire*, the trickster is constantly shuttling back and forth between such counterposed sectors as sacred and profane, culture and nature, life and death, and so on. Anomalous, *a-nomos*, without normativity, the trickster typically exists outside or across *all* borders, classifications, and categories. He neither norms nor is normed. (1993: 160–1)

This suggests a cultural image of the clown as trickster figure, traversing worlds and mediating

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[15] Hillman observes that:

the Fishermen in *Pericles* and the rustics who inhabit the sea-coast of Bohemia (that frankly impossible place produced by inverting the locales in Greene's *Pandosto*) mediate between the spheres of human vulnerability and human possibility, as well as between life and death: 'Die, keth 'a? Now gods forbid't, and I have a gown here!' (*Per.*, II.i.78–9); 'Now bless thyself: thou met'st with things dying, I with things new-born' (*WT [The Winter's Tale]*, III.iii.113–4). (1992: Chapter 8 "The Trickster Made Spirit and the 'Tricksy Spirit'", 220–50, 221–2)

them as a go-between and, theatrically, introducing a space of enchantment (or enchanted clown–audience rapport). In this sense, the English clown resembles in-between beings and other transversal entities that have always held an exceptional and valued, occult position in culture: the mythical frogs, salamanders and other amphibians, dragons, worms or werewolves of traditional fairy-tales; to a lesser extent perhaps even genetic prodigies (Katritzky 2012: 193–211), or magical objects such as dew, holly, or the mysterious mandragora, transformed in folk etymology into a man-drake, a linguistic cross between the human and non-human realm. Their magical attributes are connected with their existence in the border zone – as co-habitants in worlds-in-between. While early modern tragedians, comici, inamorati or divas are less easily categorized as magically allotopic, the role they play as mediators of the enchanted world arguably provides them with the aura of a prodigious nature. It is in this sense that Carlson speaks of the haunted stage (2003).

In his particular role as a "messenger" of enchantment, the English clown combines classical tradition with medieval and folk traditions. A Senecan tragedy opens with a materialized representation of vengeance, as in *Thyestes* – by turning an abstract concept into a personified embodiment. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* adopts this in the framing induction of Andrea's Ghost and Revenge, allegorizing the ensuing play within the revenge axiology. *Henry IV Part II* opens with an original creation, the personification of Rumour – a peculiar enchanted figure setting the play within a framework of surmise and tentativeness, a strange kind of ontological limbo. In *Pericles* – perhaps the first play to make use of the historicizing style, Gower ("From ashes, auntient *Gower* is come"), haunts the stage, "To sing a Song that old was sung" (*Pericles* 1.1–2).

The previously discussed inductions share an element of enchantment – very explicitly with Oberon, the King of Fairies in Greene's *The Scottish History of James IV*; the Scots idiom of the man-hater Bohan certainly adds to the strangeness of the play's world. Similarly, the induction of Dekker's *If It Be Not Good*, and its puppet play variant in the Ulm *Johann Doktor Faust*, take place on the *limen* of the underworld, with a dialogue between Pluto and Charon

the ferryman – the emblematic border-crosser. Gettner's version of *St Dorothea* in the English

Comedy style induces an enchanted world too, in the exchange between the devil Harpax and

the Angel. The induction of *Mucedorus* may seem to be an exception in this list – unless we

take into account its metatheatrical aspect, namely that Comedy doubles as a good character,

while Envy transforms into the murderous Captain Tremelio and the animalistic, evil Wild

Man Bremo. Also, in the Induction itself, Envy conjures up an offstage Wild Hunt, introducing

a note of violence and threat, as he announces:

> *Sound drumes within and crie stab stab*
>
> [*Envy.*] Hearken, thou shalt hear a noise
>
> Shall fill the aire with a shrilling sound,
>
> And thunder musicke to the gods aboue. (*Mucedorus* Q1598, A2v)

Envy's spectacular threat is of a metaphysical (or transcendental) nature, as he offers to accost

"the gods above" and "thunder musicke [that] shall appale the nimphes" (A2v).

With the enchanting framing convention in mind, it is also illuminating to revisit the

two *Shrew* plays. While the beggar is found by "*a Noble man and his men from hunting*" (*a

Shrew*), or "*a Lord from hunting, with his traine*" (*the Shrew*), the conventional appearance of

otherworldly personas in inductions might suggest that the sound of "*Winde Hornes*" (*the

Shrew*) followed by a train of hunters represents the Wild Hunt – the eerie turmoil of the

elements caused by the lord of the underworld (be it the French *Arlequin*, the German

Erlkönig, the Viking *Wotan* or the Celtic *Oberon*). The trickster-like pranks played on the

beggar by the Lord in the two *Shrew* plays support this reading.

The emblem of the opening of Hell was a traditional cultural commonplace – whether

portrayed on paintings as a Hell Mouth (often with animalistic, dragon-like features), or

through the narrative trope of Christ's Harrowing of Hell. Descent into the underworld was

associated with clown figures in France too, as Robert Henke documents, in particular in his

discussion of the pamphlets "from the camp of the French *farceurs*" (2015: 115), attacking

Tristano Martinelli, creator of the Harlequin figure, such as the 1585 print entitled:

> *Histoire plaisante des faicts et gestes de Harlequin commedien italien* (The Pleasant
>
> History of the Deeds and *Gestes* of Harlequin, Italian Actor) […] recount[ing] the
>
> voyage of Harlequin to the underworld, in a parodic version of the descent of Orpheus,
>
> in order to win back the poet's "Euridice": a famous Parisian bawd named Mère
>
> Cardine. (115)

Early modern English clowns retained this symbolism, and bore christological features. A
stock clown scene was the beating of a devil or the vanquishing of evil – as in Thomas Lodge
and Robert Greene's *A Looking-Glass for London and England* (1589/1590). Roma Gill has
analysed the moment in the play when the Clown (Adam) – perhaps "the first man", or named
thus simply because he was played by John Adams, a member of the Queen's Men – fights the
Devil, in what she refers to as the "kill deuil" *lazzo* (1979: 62):

> The devil appears, and offers to carry Adam – who has in him some traces of the
>
> Morality Vice – away to hell. His confidence strengthened by alcohol and incantation,
>
> the Clown stands his ground: '*Nominus patrus*, I blesse me from thee, and I coniure
>
> thee to tell me who thou art' (G3r). Reaching for his 'cudgell', he attacks until the devil
>
> pleads that he is mortally wounded, and then triumphs with the boast

> Then may I count my selfe I thinke a tall man, that am able to kill a diuell. Now who
>
> dare deale with me in the parish, or what wench in *Niniuie* will not loue me, when they
>
> say, there goes he that beate the diuell. (G3r; Gill 60–1)

The trickster Clown has "some traces of the Morality Vice", but also a Hercules-like club –
and, like Hercules, combats the forces of the underworld. In a mock Harrowing of Hell, Cuddy
Banks, the clown of *The Witch of Edmonton*, played by Rowley himself, confronts the Dog
(the devil in disguise), and drives him out in the traditional *kill devil lazzo*: "Come out, come

out, you Cur; I will beat thee out of the bounds of *Edmonton*" (*The Devil of Edmonton*, 5.1.211–2; Dekker, Ford and Rowley 1621).

In German-speaking Europe, the story of *Alcestis*, featuring Hercules's descent into Pluto's realm to retrieve the deceased queen for his friend, King Admetus, was wide-spread and popular throughout the early modern period. This selective list of school plays performed in Czech, Moravian and Silesian cities provides variant titles suggestive of the metaphorical significance of the story and its religious allegories:

1573 Olomouc (Olmütz): *Hercules* (performed in the Jesuit college)

1604 Olomouc: *Hercules on the Crossroads*

1657 Brno: *Heraclius triumphant with the Holy Cross*

1658 Brno: *St Heraclius*

1682 Hradec Králové (Königgraz): *Hercules of the Indian world, or holy apostle Francis Xaverius*

1690 Uherské Hradiště (Ungarisch Hradisch): *Christ in the Likeness of the furious Hercules*

1699 Wrocław (Breslau): *Capture of the Holy Cross by Emperor Heraclius over the Persians*

These apparently religious adaptations of the Hercules myth may well have been fulfilling a homeostatic agenda, under cover of the classical myth – and perhaps with some influence from Seneca's *Hercules Furens*. The central scene of the myth – as in Franck and Förtsch's Hamburg singspiel *Alceste* (1680) – is the arrival of Hercules from the underworld, with Cerberus overcome and bound in chains.

Cerberus – in popular imagery – was replaced by the Dragon, merging the classical myth with the hagiographic story of St George, as documented by several surviving German and Czech puppet plays that combine the two iconographies – including a Czech one entitled:

Herkules, or Ritter Herkules, or The Dragon-Killer, or The Strong Man Herkules, also

known as The Fight with the Devils, or Capture of the Home of Prince Pluto, or The Harrowing of Hell.

Also known as:

Theatre of King Atmedus and Queen Alceska, or How Herkules captured the Gate of Hell.

This provides a different context for the historical record of the Earl of Leicester's Men performing their *Hercules* show in Utrecht, on St George Day in 1586. The central part – in keeping with the theatrical convention of the clown with his cudgel and his Harrowing of Hell (or *kill devil*) *lazzo* – would probably be played by the company's comedian, that is Will Kempe.

The frequently staged Herculean story is that of retrieving Alcestis from the underworld – a variant of the Orpheus and Euridice myth. Alcestis plays the significant role of the innocent sacrifice with holy attributes. Like Saint Dorothea, this character type survives in the English play and its German variant. That character type was probably also what the popular play shared with another English Comedy that became a staple in the German-speaking Europe of the seventeenth century: *Crispinus und Crispianus*, based on William Rowley's *A Shoemaker a Gentleman* (c1618; Rudin 1980: 96). The central female character of Rowley's play is "*Winifred*, a Virgin of *Wales*", as the 1638 quarto identifies her. Saint Winifred's martyrdom may have played a similarly crucial function to that of Saint Dorothea, opposite Crispin and Crispianus's heroic and romantic feats. Although no German text survives (apart from short printed theatre programmes and synopses), it was probably this Christian hagiographic dimension that appealed to audiences – in the guise of a semi-pagan martyr.

5 "Yet the Pickelhering is quite good and funny": the Centrality of the Clown in the Play's Margins

Given what can be gathered about the allegorical theatre aesthetics of early modern English

Comedy, it is probable that the Utrecht show of 1586 featuring Will Kempe worked with Christian imagery, and that the classical story of Hercules provided allegorical resonances with the religious culture. The original creation of the English players – the clown Pickelhering – merged a cult born in the taverns of Southwark (see Katritzky 2014), the traditional trickster clown mediating the enchanted world, and the christological tradition of the fool Nobody, a 'linguistic' saint whose fictional hagiography, continuing the medieval tradition of Saint Nemo, was the subject of the sixteenth century Dutch play *Van Sinte Niemand, ende van sijn wonderlick Leven, groote Macht, ende Heerlichkheyt* (Of St Nobody and of his miraculous life, great power and glory), as well as the English comedy which inspired Isaac de Vos's 1645 *Iemant en Niemant* (Somebody and Nobody) play (Calmann 1960; Fricke 1998: 70, 141–81). It is probably not accidental that the name selected – a herring, the food of the poor (Alexander 2003) – combines cheap tavern food (Katritzky 2014: 160–1) and the tradition symbol of Christ as a fish. This peculiar combination, of secular mythology, popular tradition, religious doctrine and a certain degree of heresy and "enchanted" obscurantism, was specific to the English Comedy as a mode. It certainly provoked some, and added fuel to the period's antitheatrical prejudices (protesting against blasphemous shows), that saw the English plays as no more than "schmutzige[] Possen und prächtige[] Lappen" (scurrilous farces and exquisite rags; Goedeke cited in Bischoff 1899: 131). However, there was something in the clown Pickelhering, who stood at the heart of the English Comedy, that appealed even to church figures. Cardinal Ernst Adalbert von Harrach saw Johann Fasshauer and Carl Andreas Paulsen's company performing *Romeo and Juliet* in the Prague residence of Alexander Ferdinand Wratislaw von Mitrowitz on 25 June 1658 (Schindler and Rudin 2013: 180). The plot summary he noted in his diary (Harrach 2010: 6: 480) is recognizably a variant of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (rather than Lope de Vega's version, *Castelvines y Monteses*). And while he did not think much of the delivery of the "comedi […] von denen engellendern die jezt hie sein, […] nicht absonderlich khünstliche recitanten" (the play by the Englishmen who are here now; they are not particularly talented performers), what stood out for him was

their clown: "doch ist der Pickhelhäring gar guet unndt lächerlich" (and yet their Pickelhering is pretty good and funny; Harrach 2010: 6: 479). What the contribution of Pickelhering was, is unclear: apparently a marginal character in the plot, but a central figure in the English comedians' performance. In a later version of *Romio und Julieta*, associated with Johann Georg Gettner, who in the 1680s directed the Eggenbergs' court theatre in Český Krumlov, Pickelhering plays the role of ironic commentator and universal servant, who appears at any random point, to spice up the play with his frequently scurrilous rejoinders.[16]

The English comedians' clown is "the one who delivers the witty quip as the closing line of the exchange" (Johnson 2003: 2), and while located in the play's margin, takes a central role in its hallmark performance style. By the mid-seventeenth century, the name *Pickelhering* became a generic name for the clown in German and Czech (see Katritzky's discussion of Comenius' *Orbis Pictus*, 2011), and effectively managed to span the many divergent cultures in a Europe shattered by the prolonged Thirty Years War (1618–1648), and conjure up an enchanted world that audience can enter wherever they are. Thomas Dekker's *Old Fortunatus* is a play about travelling that travelled a great deal and was itself born out of a transnational mixture of influences from the classical Greek novel, the Mediterranean romance, the German folk tale and the English comedic tradition. Its clown, symbolically called Shadow (as the hero's alter-ego), responds at one point to his master, worried about setting out on a journey, in words that can serve as an emblem for a dramaturgy created with a view of different worlds – the secular, physical as well as the metaphysical and enchanted ones:

Shad. Why, sir, are there other heauens in other countries? (*Old Fortunatus* 2.2.170)

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[16] Kareen Seidler's English translation of Gettner's *Romio and Julieta* is forthcoming.