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**Recycling Pietro Aretino: the posthumous reputation of Europe's
first professional writer**

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Supervisors:

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2014

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Recycling Pietro Aretino: the posthumous reputation of Europe's first professional writer

Pietro Aretino (1492-1556) was an Italian writer who was one of the first to make a living from the printing press. As the 'scourge of princes' he was notorious across Europe for his acerbic wit. However after his death his fame sank when his entire works were placed on the Papal Index of Prohibited Books in 1559. In the century that followed Aretino was a controversial figure, associated with pornography and atheism in the popular imagination and, like Machiavelli, became synonymous with Italian vice in the minds of foreign readers. Despite the complex history of his posthumous reputation abroad, surprisingly little research has been done on the topic. Instead we are left with a few disconnected articles which tend to focus on specific instances of Aretino's works being used as sources for later writers. This thesis therefore provides the first unified approach to examining Aretino's posthumous reputation in the early modern period. It does so by treating his afterlife not as a finished product to be referred to by later readers, but uncovers the processes by which Aretino's reputation mutated through the mediation of editors, translators, writers, readers, engravers and purveyors of erotic art.

This thesis is divided into three main phases of Aretino's afterlife, which were previously compressed into a simple 'cause and effect' narrative of Aretino's work being censored in 1559 and his reputation immediately suffering because of it. In the first phase, Aretino's writing is still positively received by editors in England and the Low Countries attempting to restore his work back to their pre-censored state, and by English writers who see Aretino as an extemporal wit and a model for their growing professional aspirations. In the second phase, Aretino's reputation for bawdry and atheism is beginning to impact the way in which he is presented to later readers in Spain, the Low Countries, England, Germany and France, as translators and commentators begin to reframe his writing along newly enforced moral lines. In the third phase, two pornographic works with which Aretino initially had only a tangential relationship are misattributed to him and multiple images and texts from Italy, the Low Countries, England, and France are reproduced as 'Aretine' products.

While the majority of the literary references to Aretino in this thesis are to English writers, as this overview makes clear this is not a traditional bilateral comparative study of cultural exchange between Italy and England. Instead it places the English reception of Aretino within an European context, with the Low Countries proving to be unexpectedly prominent in the circulation of his work, even though up till now this connection has never been studied by critics outside of the Netherlands.

Reciclar Pietro Aretino: a reputação póstuma do primeiro escritor profissional da Europa

Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), escritor italiano, foi um dos primeiros autores capaz de se financiar através da imprensa. Conhecido como o 'flagelo dos príncipes', a sua sagacidade mordaz ficou famosa por toda a Europa. Contudo, depois da sua morte, a sua fama sofreu quando as suas obras foram listadas no Índice de livros proibidos em 1559. No século que se seguiu, Aretino tornou-se uma figura controversa, associada a pornografia e ateísmo na imaginação popular e, como Maquiavel, tornou-se sinónimo da imoralidade italiana nas mentes dos seus leitores estrangeiros. Surpreendentemente, apesar da complexidade da sua reputação póstuma fora das fronteiras italianas, a quantidade de investigação focada neste tópico é relativamente pequena. O que sobra são artigos avulsos que tendem a focar-se em casos específicos em que as obras de Aretino foram usadas como fontes para autores posteriores. Esta tese oferece uma primeira abordagem sistemática para examinar a reputação póstuma de Aretino durante a Renascença, tratando-a não como um produto acabado simplesmente referido por outros autores, mas expondo os processos através dos quais se transformou, mediada por editores, tradutores, escritores, leitores, gravadores e fornecedores de arte erótica.

Esta tese divide a reputação póstuma de Aretino em três fases principais, anteriormente compressas numa simples narrativa de causa-efeito, isto é, a narrativa de que a censura da obra de Aretino em 1559 levou a um golpe imediato na sua reputação. Na primeira fase, a escrita de Aretino é ainda recebida positivamente por editores em Inglaterra e nos Países Baixos que vêem Aretino como um talento fora do seu tempo e um modelo a seguir para as suas crescentes aspirações de profissionalização. Na segunda fase, a fama de devassidão e ateísmo de Aretino começa a afetar o modo como este é apresentado a leitores posteriores em Espanha, Países Baixos, Inglaterra, Alemanha e França, quando tradutores e comentadores reenquadram a sua escrita de acordo com linhas morais estabelecidas contemporaneamente. Na terceira fase, duas obras pornográficas com as quais Aretino mantinha apenas uma relação tangencial, são-lhe erroneamente atribuídas, e múltiplas imagens e textos italianos, neerlandeses, ingleses e franceses são reproduzidos como produtos 'Aretinos'.

Apesar da maioria das referências literárias a Aretino nesta tese provir de autores ingleses, como este resumo esclarece, este não é um tradicional estudo comparativo bilateral de transferências culturais entre Itália e Inglaterra. Em vez disso, este trabalho coloca a receção inglesa de Aretino dentro de um contexto Europeu, com os Países Baixos surpreendentemente proeminentes na circulação da sua obra, mesmo que, até agora, esta relação tenha apenas sido estudada por investigadores neerlandeses.

CONTENTS

Introduction. (p.1)

Aretino's posthumous reputation in England has been understudied despite being one of Europe's first professional writers, and the narrative of his fall from fame has not been properly examined. Rather than seeing the censorship of his entire works in 1559 as the end of Aretino's reputation as a witty author and vociferous satirist, this thesis will examine more closely the three stages of Aretino's changing reputation from 1580-1680.

Material reproductions:

1. Pietro and the Wolfe: the London editions of Aretino. (p.24)

3. Sexual and literary infection and the reframing of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* in Europe. (p.94)

5. Aretine Postures: Voyeurism and misattribution. (p.163)

Phase 1:
Aretino as Stylist

Phase 2:
Changing
reputation

Phase 3:
Misattribution

Literary and cultural responses:

2. English Aretines: Elizabethan Writers living by their wits. (p.61)

4. The Fight over Aretino's soul. (p.127)

6. Seventeenth century Aretino: A chapter on things Aretino never authored (p.194)

Conclusion. (p.228)

Drawing these phases together by highlighting the themes of posthumous reputations, vanished mediation, misattribution and mechanical reproduction.

Appendix 1: List of translations, Aretino's 'Life of Whores'

Appendix 2: Images

Extended Bibliography

Introduction

Three years ago, when I was just about to embark on writing this PhD thesis, I was asked by a security guard at the theatre I worked for what I was going to be studying. 'I'll be writing about an Italian author, Pietro Aretino, and how Elizabethan writers in England responded to his writing' I explained, and was met with a polite silence by the guard. The next time I saw him, he gave me a wink and told me that he'd just searched for Aretino online: 'filthy old man, wasn't he?' he said, 'what are you studying that sort of thing for?'

Pietro Aretino was, arguably, a 'filthy old man' but he was many more things beside. He had made himself into a celebrity through his prodigious writing and sharp wit, a fame which by the Eighteenth Century had faded into obscurity. For those who had heard of him, his name had become synonymous with pornography, atheism, and corruption. For the poet John Addington Symonds, Aretino represented all that was decadent and corrupt about 'the dissolution of Italian culture.' Aretino, he claimed, 'was a pander, a coward, a liar, a debauchee, who had wallowed in every lust, sold himself to work all wickedness, and speculated on the grossest passions, the basest curiosities, the vilest vices of his age.'¹

A more appropriate eighteenth-century reading to introduce the major themes in this thesis on Aretino is a sonnet by the Portuguese poet Bocage, as infamous as Aretino for his extemporal wit, satire and bawdy verses. His sonnet *Dictado entre as agonias do seu transito final* (Dictated during the agonies of his final passage, c.1805) is written in the voice of a repentant and dying Bocage, confessing his irreverent past. Most of all it is a poem about reputation. The sonnet opens with the line 'Já Bocage não sou!' (I am no longer Bocage!) while the first line of the final tercet mirrors this with 'Outro Aretino fui' (I was another Aretino).² By this, Bocage means that he rejects his previous lifestyle and verses which once made him 'Bocage' as well as 'another Aretino'. Although, like Symonds' dismissal of Aretino as a vile debaucher, 'Aretino' is here meant to suggest licentiousness, from the rest of the sonnet it is clear that 'Bocage' and 'Aretino' carry more meaning than this simple analogy.

Bocage writes how his 'estro vai parar desfeito em vento' (My 'estro' will end up scattered on the wind); 'estro' is hard to translate directly into English, as it means both

¹ John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: Italian Literature*. part 2. (London: John Murray, 1914-21) p.355

² 'Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage, 'Dictado entre as agonias do seu transito final', *Obras Poeticas de Bocage: volume I. Sonetos* (Porto: Imprensa Portuguesa, 1875) nr.308, p.319

'creative genius' and 'the rut' of an animal, and so carries a dual sense of genius and bestial sexuality. He writes also that he hopes to warn the 'mocidade/ Que atrás do som fantástico corria' (youth/ That ran following the fantastical sound). As in English, 'fantástico' can mean both spectacular and baseless. The theme of the prodigal life being used as a warning to youth is a major theme in the translations of Aretino that I discuss in chapter 3, but the slipperiness of meaning in words such as 'estro' and 'fántastico' also picks out the dual reputations of Aretino that I will be exploring in this thesis. He is both known as an extemporal wit, who claimed his genius was derived from nature, but he was known also for his lascivious and overblown style which, according to Montaigne, was also 'fantastic'.

The final tercet of Bocage's sonnet deals with the ultimate end for both Aretino and Bocage's writing:

Outro Aretino fui... A santidade
 Manchei!... Oh! Se me creste, gente ímpia,
 Rasga meus versos, crê na eternidade!

I was another Aretino....Sanctity
 Stained!....Oh! If you believed me, impious people,
Tear my verses, believe in eternity!

'Sanctity/Stained' is as applicable to Aretino as it is to Bocage, and I will be exploring his reputation for atheism in chapter 4. However, it is the final command to 'tear [his] verses' which really connects to the main topic of this thesis: that Aretino's posthumous reputation was formed by both the initial censorship of his works in 1559, and by subsequent 'tearing' of his texts and attempts to amend these torn pieces. Though a statue was erected for Bocage in his home town of Setúbal after his death, his works have effectively been out of circulation. Although some of his works were reprinted at the end of the Nineteenth Century and during the first Portuguese Republic in the early Twentieth, under the later Salazar regime, his name, just as Aretino's had been before him, was added to an index of forbidden books. Unwittingly, Bocage had once again become another Aretino.

Pietro Aretino, born into a poor family in 1492 in Arezzo, was one of the first professional writers to make a living from writing for the printing press. By the time of his death in 1556 (supposedly from asphyxiating after laughing too much) Aretino had become wealthy by manipulating a new market of print through his collaboration with the Venetian printer Francesco Marcolini,³ and had produced a prodigious amount of books: the most recent figure given by Amedeo Quondam stands at 152 editions.⁴ Aretino was significant as a professional writer also because of his connections with the great and the good of the mid Sixteenth Century, from political leaders such as Charles V, Francis I and the Ottoman admiral Barbarossa, to artists such as Titian, Jacopo Sansovino and Giorgio Vasari, many of whom appear in the six volumes of his 3,000+ letters. Through blackmailing and writing letters of malediction to some of his patrons, he earned the sobriquet 'flagello dei principi' (the scourge of princes), a persona that would inspire a later generation of English satirists such as Thomas Nashe and John Marston in the 1590s, and which I will discuss in more depth in chapter 2.

During his lifetime Aretino's fame had spread outside of Italy, primarily to France where his contacts told him that translations of his religious texts were to be found on every table.⁵ Aretino had also made connections with the English court, having gained 300 scudi from Thomas Cromwell as well as the appellation '*miracoloso* [miraculous]', for writing his *Prognosticon* (1534) in favour of Henry VIII's decision to divorce Katherine of Aragon.⁶ Encouraged, Aretino dedicated his second volume of collected letters to Henry in 1542, which was eventually rewarded with yet another 300 scudi from the English king. William Thomas, who had been travelling in Italy between 1545-9, in turn dedicated his pamphlet *The Pilgrim, A Dialogue on the Life and Actions of King Henry the Eighth* (c.1546) to Aretino. In his dedication to Aretino, Thomas refers to Aretino's fame as a scourge of princes, writing that Henry 'hath remembered thee with an honourable legacy by his Testament, the which

³ On Aretino's working relationship with Marcolini, see Amedeo Quonam 'Nel giardino del Marcolini: un editore Veneziano tra Aretino e Doni' in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 157, (1980) pp.75-116

⁴ This total includes the 6th volume of letters, which was printed posthumously. See Amedeo Quondam, 'Aretino e il libro: Un repertorio, per una bibliografia' in *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita*, 2 vols, vol.1, (Rome: Salerno, 1995) pp.197-230

⁵ See letter by Giuseppe Orologi to Aretino (Rouen, 13th October 1550) quoted in Élise Boillet, *L'Arétin e la Bible* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2007) ftn.59, p.24.

⁶ Referred to in Susan Brigden, *Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012) p.470

his enemies pretend proceeded from fear that he had lest thou shouldest, after his death, defame him with thy wonted ill speech.⁷

The English reception of Aretino in this period went further into English literary culture than these mutual dedications would indicate. Between 1536 and 1542, Thomas Wyatt wrote a paraphrase of the *Penitential Psalms*, using Aretino's *Parafrasi sopra i Sette Salmi della Penitenza di David* (1527) as one of his main sources.⁸ Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143 had often been grouped together around the theme of penitence, and since the late Middle Ages it was commonly believed that these psalms referred to King David's adulterous lust for Bathsheba and his killing of her husband Uriah. What appears to have drawn Wyatt to Aretino's paraphrase was his innovative use of a prose narrative to frame the psalms with the myth of David's passion for Bathsheba. This new narrative depicted David as a lover and rhetorician rather than as a repentant murderer, and gave the spiritual progression of the psalms a greater psychological depth.⁹ By using Aretino as his primary source, Wyatt was also introducing an Italian verse form to the English tradition, versifying Aretino's prose prologues in *ottava rima* and the psalms in *terza rima*.

Even if they include such examples of foreign reception of Aretino, most criticism of the writer has understandably chosen to focus on his biography. In Italian the work of Giuliano Innamorati and Paul Larivaille amongst others are still the most extensive,¹⁰ while in English, biographies by Edward Hutton, Thomas Caldecot Chubb, and James Cleugh were

⁷ William Thomas, *The Pilgrim, A Dialogue on the Life and Actions of King Henry the Eighth*, ed. J.A. Froude (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1861) p.1 This pamphlet was circulated in England in manuscript, though remained unpublished until this edition by Froude in the nineteenth century.

⁸ Printed posthumously as *Certayne psalmes chosen out of the psalter of David/ commonlye called thee .vii. penytentiall psalmes, drawen into englyshe meter by Sir Thomas Wyat Knyght, wherunto is added a prologe of the auctore before every psalme, very pleasaunt & profettable to the godly reader* (London: Thomas Raynald and John Harryngton, 1549)

⁹ For a detailed study of Aretino's *Penitential Psalms* see Boillet, *L'Arétin e la Bible*, pp.227-378. For a close comparison of Wyatt's text with his sources, see also Harold A. Mason, *Sir Thomas Wyatt: A Literary Portrait* (Bristol: Bristol Classics Press, 1987), and Susan Brigden, *Thomas Wyatt: The Heart's Forest*, pp.451-83. In addition to this structural innovation, Aretino also adds contemporary details to the psalms, for example mentioning the Alps in his first penitential psalm, while in the final four psalms he includes references to Jesus Christ, as the descendent of David and whose sacrifice saved man from original sin.

¹⁰ Giuliano Innamorati, *Pietro Aretino: Studi e note critiche* (Firenze: G. D'Anna, 1957) and his article on Aretino in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol.4, (Rome: Treccani, 1960), pp.89-104; Paul Larivaille: *L'Arétin entre Renaissance et Maniérisme 1492-1537*, (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1972) republished in Italian as *Pietro Aretino fra Rinascimento e Manierismo* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1980); Cesare Marchi, *L'Arétino* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1980), and Marga Cottino Jones, *Introduzione a Pietro Aretino* (Roma: Laterza, 1993)

also written of Aretino in the early Twentieth Century.¹¹ More recently Christopher Cairns and Raymond B. Waddington have fruitfully situated Aretino's biography within wider thematic contexts of Italian culture. Both Cairns' *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice* (1985), and Waddington's *Aretino's Satyr* (2004) and *Pietro Aretino: Subverting the System* (2014) can be read as collections of self-contained essays (in *Subverting the System* this is literally the case, as the majority of chapters are re-printed articles), which together cover a variety of themes, from Aretino and Erasmian humanism or his attempts to get a cardinal's position in his later career, to his use of personalised medals and the printing press to promote himself. Such in-depth chapters filled a gap in English language criticism, which has on the whole under-represented a writer who was once known across Europe.¹²

While Waddington devotes a chapter each to Aretino's influence on the artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo and the dramatist Ben Jonson in his most recent collection *Subverting the System*, the majority of his work is however more concerned with Aretino's use of 'new media and new literary kinds to project a construct of self' than it is on his reception by others.¹³ While I find useful Waddington's point that Aretino was constructing his public persona out of the material practices which were newly available to him, and will indeed be applying a similar materialist angle to this thesis, I want instead to look at what later consumers did with this myth of Aretino after it had been made. This thesis is therefore not so much concerned with Aretino's life, as it is with his posthumous reputation and the afterlife of the texts and images that remained after his entire works were placed on the Catholic Index of Prohibited Books in 1559.

Critical works on the posthumous reputation in England of writers such as Rabelais, Machiavelli and Castiglione are an example of the viability of looking at the posthumous reception of a successful writer abroad in the early modern period,¹⁴ yet the problem that

¹¹ Edward Hutton, *Pietro Aretino: Scourge of Princes* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1922), Thomas Caldecot Chubb, *Aretino: Scourge of Princes* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940) and James Cleugh, *The Divine Aretino* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966)

¹² Christopher Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches on Aretino and his Circle in Venice 1527-1556* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1985); Raymond B. Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr: Sexuality, Satire and Self-Projection in Sixteenth-Century Literature and Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004) and *Pietro Aretino: Subverting the System in Renaissance Italy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014)

¹³ Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* xvii

¹⁴ See Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Anne Lake Prescott, *Imagining Rabelais in Renaissance England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998); Alessandro Arienzo & Alessandra Petrina (eds), *Machiavellian encounters in Tudor and Stuart England: Literary and Political Influences from the Reformation to the Restoration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

such studies often encounter is that the relationship between the source and its reception is usually presented as a linear narrative, a methodological issue which I will return to later in this introduction. In *Writing after Sidney*, Gavin Alexander explains his use of the term 'response' to speak about Sidney and his later mediators because it implies agency on both sides, which the terms 'influence', 'imitation', 'reception' and 'afterlife' do not convey.¹⁵ Although I agree that 'response' implies that there is a dialogue between the works of the now defunct author and his or her audience, I hope to show that in the case of Aretino's posthumous circulation, we need not necessarily think of it as the dialogic relationship which Alexander imagines, but rather as an interconnected network of relationships that span across Europe.

I will return to discuss this issue and why I think it has caused Aretino to be researched in a dis-jointed way later in this introduction, but first it would be useful to discuss the current critical landscape in Aretino studies. The biggest boost to Aretino criticism occurred in 1992, when the quincentenary of Aretino's birth was celebrated with the first editions of an Italian *Edizione Nazionale* of Aretino's works, and has since grown to sixteen volumes over two decades.¹⁶ In the same year, an international conference between Rome, Los Angeles and Toronto was also arranged, out of which appeared a collection of essays entitled *Aretino nel cinquecentenario della nascita* (1995). Most contributions were understandably by Italian critics, though prominent foreign scholars such as Christopher Cairns and Paul Larivaille also contributed to the collection. Although the majority of essays were philological essays on specific Aretino texts, some read Aretino's dramatic texts within the context of theatrical history, while the 'Anglo-Saxon' element focussed on the cultural significance of Aretino's explicitly erotic writing.¹⁷ The wide range of these essays, together with the work of art historians on Aretino's significance in their field such as Luba Freedman's *Titian's Portraits through Aretino's Lens* (1995) or Bernadine Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment: The Renaissance Response* (Berkeley, 1998) during the 1990s

¹⁵ Gavin Alexander, *Writing after Sidney: the Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) xxxii

¹⁶ *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Pietro Aretino* (Roma: Salerno, 1992-ongoing) These sixteen volumes include the six volumes of Aretino's *Lettere* and two volumes of *Lettere Scritte a Pietro Aretino* (Letters written to Aretino), two volumes of poetry, three volumes of Aretino's plays, two volumes of his religious works, and two volumes of his *Operette politiche e satiriche* (political and satirical works), though surprisingly these do not include his dialogues on women, the *Sei Giornate* (Six Days), which is probably the work that has been the most translated and discussed by Anglophone critics.

¹⁷ *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentenario dalla nascita* 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1995)

would provide critics publishing later on Aretino with the material to produce a more interconnected study of his place in Italian culture.

What is noticeably lacking from the collection, however, is a sustained analysis of Aretino's circulation, reception, translation and reproduction outside of Italy. Albert N. Mancini sees this as an opportunity lost when he writes in his review of the collection that despite this having been an international conference stretching between Rome, Los Angeles and Toronto, the proceedings scarcely cover the international fortunes of Aretino, a writer whose work had so often been plagiarised, translated and rewritten by foreign writers.¹⁸

While the collection is wide-ranging, the problem is that each essay is necessarily restricted in length and depth by the form of the collection. Two of the essays on Aretino's reception abroad therefore centre on specific instances of literary appropriations, such as Caroline Fischer on the French dramatist Gabriel Gilbert's use of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* for his *Le Courtisan parfait* (1668), and Donald Beecher on Ben Jonson's use of Aretino's play *Il Marescalco* for his *Epicoene* (1609). The only other essay on Aretino's reception abroad is Maria Concolato Palermo's 'Aretino nella letteratura inglese del Cinquecento' (Aretino in Sixteenth-Century English Literature), which is primarily a summary of selected references to Aretino made by three English writers: two during his lifetime (Thomas Wyatt and William Thomas) and one writing after Aretino's death (Thomas Nashe).¹⁹ Palermo's conclusion is that Aretino wasn't simply known in England as a bad influence, but was also acknowledged as a good writer. However, because two out of the three examples that she uses were made by writers in the 1540s when Aretino's reputation in England had not yet begun to sink, this is not unexpected, as Palermo partly admits by emphasising how surprising it is that Nashe

¹⁸ 'le opere dell'Aretino, e risaputo, furono tradotte, imitate, plagiate e riscritte anche da scrittori stranieri. Il mito dell'Aretino eversore e la notorieta del personaggio maldicente, ateo e pornografo fuori d'Italia vanno legati a questi testi spesso anonimi o, comunque, di difficile attribuzione.' (the works of Aretino were well known, were translated, imitated, plagiarised and even rewritten by foreign writers. The myth of Aretino as a subversive and notorious slanderer of character, an atheist and pornographer outside of Italy, are related to these texts which are often anonymous, or at least, difficult to attribute.) Albert N. Mancini, 'Aretino italo e americano, Pietro Aretino nel Cinquecentenario della Nascita Pietro', *Italica*, 75.3 (Autumn, 1998), 441-453. p.452.

¹⁹ Caroline Fischer, 'Un'immagine di Pietro Aretino in Francia: *Le Courtisan parfait* di Gabriel Gilbert' (An image of Pietro Aretino in France: *The Perfect Courtesan* by Gabriel Gilbert), vol.1, 501-15 and Donald A. Beecher, 'Aretino's minimalist art goes to England' vol.2. 775-85. Maria Concolato Palermo, 'Aretino nella letteratura inglese del Cinquecento' (Aretino in sixteenth century English Literature), vol.1. pp.471-8. Palermo has also written on Aretino and Thomas Wyatt: 'Il Viaggio del testo: *I Salmi penitenziali* dall'Aretino al Wyatt', *Per una topografia dell'Altrove. Spazi altri nell'immaginario letterario e culturale di lingua inglese* ed. Maria Teresa Chialant & Eleonora Rao (Naples: Liguori Editore, 1995) pp.399-412.

should admire Aretino in the anti-Italian and anti-Catholic climate of late Elizabethan England.

One critic who has examined the posthumous reception of Aretino in England at greater length is Ian Frederick Moulton in *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (2000). Moulton has elsewhere written on the European circulation of Aretino's erotic dialogue on the life of whores, a text which I will be returning to in chapter 3.²⁰ Moulton's focus on Aretino's reception in England is limited to Aretino's erotic output, understandably because Moulton is interested in the representation of gender and sexuality in early modern literature. Such a focus does, however, mean that other aspects of Aretino's reception are overlooked, an imbalance which this thesis intends to redress.

This is not just a problem of imbalance, but also one of simplification. The story of Aretino's infamy and fall from fame in England as well as other European countries such as France and the Low Countries, has never previously been examined in a properly connected way. Instead, reference to his later reputation is usually compressed into a single cause-and-effect narrative, that explains how (cause) Aretino's works were suppressed when his works were put on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1559, and (effect) after this point he was known only by reputation as a pornographer. My problem with this is that the same could be said of Machiavelli whose works were also placed on the Index, and yet many more critics have been drawn to study the reception of Machiavelli in early modern England.²¹ Machiavelli's influence in England is not only discussed by political historians, but also by literary critics who speak of how he was represented by English writers, and how he was transformed into the 'stage Machiavel' in the works of Shakespeare and Marlowe.²² In contrast, while critics writing on Aretino often mention Aretino's notoriety in England and on the continent, they tend not to go into further detail on how this was constructed in quite

²⁰ Half of Ian Frederick Moulton's *Before Pornography: Erotic Writing in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) is dedicated to Aretino's erotic writing and to his influence, as well as notions of the Italianate, over English literature. His article 'Crafty Whores: the Moralizing of Aretino's Dialogues' in 'Reading Early Modern England', ed. Sasha Roberts, *Critical Survey*, 12, 2, (2000) 88-105, meanwhile focuses on the translations of Aretino's *Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa*

²¹ Mario Praz, 'Machiavelli and the Elizabethans', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 13 (1928) pp.3-51. Vickie B. Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2006); *Machiavellian Encounters in Tudor and Stuart England*, eds. Alessandro Arienzo & Alessandra Petrina

²² Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: a Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964); John Alan Roe, *Shakespeare and Machiavelli* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002); Alessandra Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Early Modern Translations of the Prince* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013)

the same way that critics of Machiavelli have achieved. This thesis attempts to rectify this silence on Aretino, by examining the ways in which his posthumous reputation was shaped by a tug of war between misattribution, misunderstandings, and failed attempts to clarify and restore his reputation.

Changing representations

Aretino's reputation now is as a writer of erotica, and this was equally true for the period covered by this thesis, from the late Sixteenth to the mid Seventeenth Century. I would argue, however, that while it was certainly the most prominent feature of his writing, to emphasise this one element of Aretino's afterlife would distort any further conclusions we could draw of Aretino's cultural significance as an Italian writer with an European circulation. By taking this reputation as read and not questioning how it came to be constructed would be to strengthen the stereotype of Aretino as a pornographer through reiterating, rather than questioning this narrative.

This is not just a problem with criticism of Aretino, it is a problem more generally with the trend for microhistories, i.e. the use of one historical event as a representative sample of an entire culture. Douglas Bruster suggests that this is due to the preference for the 'thick description' of localised events in contemporary criticism, which derives from Clifford Geertz's anthropological approach in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973), and which, in the hands of new historicists, had been used as a corrective to the grand-narratives of older historicism.²³ Ian Moulton's work on Aretino may not be micro-history, but his and other critics²⁴ interpretation of Aretino's cultural value in early modern England could have been pushed even further, by considering his reputation as an erotic writer in relation to his other

²³ For Bruster's argument that thick description is a problematic method of extracting culturally representative details from literary works, see chapter 2 'Deep Focus', in Douglas Bruster's *Shakespeare and the Question of Culture: Early Modern Literature and the Cultural Turn* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

²⁴ Other critics to focus on Aretino's *Sei Giornate* and *Sonetti Lussuriosi* are Saad El-Gabalawy's 'Aretino's Pornography and Renaissance Satire', *Humanities Association Review* 28 (1977); Lynne Lawner, *I Modi: The Sixteen Pleasures: Erotic Album of the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1988); Helen M. Whall, 'Parodies Lost: Aretino Reads Raimondi', *Images of Matter: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Yvonne Bruce (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2005) 125-135; Celia Daileader, 'The Courtesan Revisited: Thomas Middleton, Pietro Aretino, and Sex-phobic Criticism', *Italian Culture in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries: Rewriting, Reshaping, Refashioning*, ed. Michele Marrapodi, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2007) 223-238; Duncan Salkeld *Shakespeare among the Courtesans: Prostitution, Literature, and Drama 1500-1650* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012)

texts which were in circulation at the same time. By looking at his erotic writing in the wider context of 'Aretine' texts and images, we could begin to ask more meaningful questions not only about why some of his texts survived and why some failed, but also why certain ideas appear to have been culturally translatable at this time, and how a centralised power of 'cultural producers' such as the Catholic church together with the tactics of the populace—or the 'consumers' of a culture, intersect to affect the circulation and popularity of such texts, images, and ideas.²⁵

Both Waddington and Cairns have shown that multiple narratives of Aretino's biography can be entwined together. In *Aretino's Satyr* Waddington uses an interdisciplinary methodology which is partly dictated by the thematic variety of the range of media in which Aretino worked. In doing so, he makes connections across twenty years (1525-1545) by applying the methodologies of book history, art history, gender studies, and literary studies to overlapping aspects of Aretino's career. Rather than using an interdisciplinary methodology, in the first two chapters of *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice* Cairns shows how a network of relations between various Venetian patrons and their families helped Aretino to achieve a prominent position as a writer in the Republic by the mid 1540s.

Looking at historical networks and using an interdisciplinary approach are two fairly achievable techniques for flattening out a singular cause-and-effect narrative, yet nothing similar has been attempted when tracing Aretino's posthumous reputation. Partly this is due to the fragmentary and ephemeral nature of surviving texts and images thanks to ongoing censorship both by states and individuals, as I explore in greater depth in chapter 5. The main reason as it appears to me, however, is that there is a tendency in reception or comparative studies towards drawing dialogic connections between a historical person like Aretino and his readers in another culture, or between a single Aretino text and its perceived influence on another writer.

That was how I had first intended my thesis to look, a reception study of Aretino by English literary readers such as Thomas Nashe, as they appeared to be speaking of Aretino as a prototype professional writer who like them was making money from the press. This is still a large component of my thesis, with chapters 2 and 4 especially focussed on Aretino

²⁵ In referring to 'tactics', 'cultural producers' and 'consumers', I am alluding to the terminology of the social historian and philosopher Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

and Nashe. Yet as I conducted my critical review I found that research on his reception in England was disconnected, to say the least.

A few articles look at local literary influence between Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (Dialogues) and Thomas Middleton's *It's a Mad World My Masters*;²⁶ his comedy *Il Marescalco* and Jonson's *Epicoene*;²⁷ or his comedies and those of William Shakespeare.²⁸ Scholars such as Duncan Salkeld, Ian Moulton, Neil Rhodes, Wes Folkerth and Raymond Waddington,²⁹ connected Aretino not only with specific plays but with the output of Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson, or in the case of David McPherson, between Aretino, Nashe and Gabriel Harvey.³⁰ Finally, critical essays on the printer John Wolfe would often mention Aretino together with Machiavelli as two censored writers whose works Wolfe's press had pirated and sold back to the Italian market. The references to Aretino were, however, less developed as these studies were primarily concerned with Machiavelli. Wolfe is otherwise often mentioned by literary critics as the only known printer to have republished Aretino's works in England up until the Nineteenth Century.³¹

What was lacking was anything to tie all of these usually isolated connections together. They are isolated primarily because Aretino is never truly the subject of these studies; instead he acts as a source mined by the real subjects, Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights. In an attempt to strike more of a balance between Aretino and the later foreign writers who recycled and repackaged him for a new generation, I have attempted to find a range of different references from less well known writers together with the usual suspects

²⁶ Daileader, 'The Courtesan Revisited'

²⁷ Oscar J. Campbell 'The Relation of *Epicoene* to Aretino's *Il Marescalco*', *PMLA* 46 (1931) pp.752-62, and Beecher, 'Aretino's Minimalist Art goes to England'

²⁸ John M. Lothian 'Shakespeare's Knowledge of Aretino's Plays', *The Modern Language Review* 25, 4, (1930) pp.415-24; Christopher Cairns 'Aretino's Comedies and the Italian 'Erasmian' Connection in Shakespeare and Jonson' *Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance*, (eds.) James Ronald Mulryne, Margaret Shewring (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1991) pp.113-37

²⁹ Salkeld, *Shakespeare among the Courtesans*; Moulton, *Before Pornography*; Neil Rhodes *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Wes Folkerth, 'Pietro Aretino, Thomas Nashe, and Early Modern Rhetorics of Public Address', in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, eds. Bronwen Wilson, Paul Yachnin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010) pp.68-78; Waddington, *Pietro Aretino: Subverting the System in Renaissance Italy*

³⁰ David C. McPherson, 'Aretino and the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel' *PMLA*, 84, 6, (1969) pp.1551-8

³¹ Sonia Massai 'John Wolfe and the Impact of Exemplary Go-Betweens on Early Modern Print Culture', in Andreas Höfele, Werner von Koppenfels (eds.) *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) pp.104-118; Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England*; Adolph Gerber, 'All of the five fictitious Italian editions of writings of Machiavelli and three of Pietro Aretino printed by John Wolfe of London (1584-1588)', *Modern Language Notes* 22 (1907) pp.2-6, pp.129-35, pp.201-6

such as Jonson and Nashe. These more sustained references to Aretino sit alongside shorter, passing mentions which taken together pepper English literary culture with bits of Aretine shrapnel. Understandably many critics don't really know what to do with this background noise of fleeting references, and prefer to focus in on sustained interactions between one writer and another, such as Jonson's use of *Il Marescalco* as a source for *Epicoene*, or his references to Aretino in *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. Indeed, in the course of writing this thesis I have collected many more of these passing references than I have found space to include, and yet together these repeated moments of misunderstandings and stereotypes of Aretino helped to create the posthumous reputation that survives till today. It is exactly this accumulation of misunderstandings, ossifying into common knowledge, that interests me. A survey of references to Aretino had once been promised back in the Nineteenth Century, when Edward Meyer claimed that he had 'noted no less than 395 references to Machiavelli in Elizabethan literature, (and over 500 to Aretino which I hope to incorporate in the near future).'³² This, together with the promise of a survey of Aretino's reception in England by Oscar James Campbell in the 1930s, never materialised.

Another issue with current criticism on Aretino's foreign reception, is that it focuses on a single dialogue between Italy and one other country, usually France or England. One culture is seen to 'read' another, and depending on how much emphasis is placed on either the source or target culture, an artificial narrative is created in which one culture is represented as being more passive than the other in its interaction. By reducing cultural exchanges into a simple dialogue, a similar problem to that of reducing reception down to only one author's response to another is created. To stop this thesis offering a disjointed and jaundiced account of Aretino's reputation in England, I have attempted to place English reception back into its European context. To limit this thesis to England alone would have meant ignoring the intra-European history of such English texts as *The Crafty Whore* (1658) which I discuss in chapter 6. *The Crafty Whore* is an 'Aretine' text in the sense that it is an adaptation of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* (1534-6), yet it appears amongst other translations that stretch from Seville in 1547 across Lyons and Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam, to England in the mid Seventeenth Century.

³² Edward Meyer, *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama* (Weimar: Emil Felber Verlag, 1897) xi

By restoring such connections I hope to highlight the fact that any one culture's understanding of another did not happen in isolation, but as part of a trans-European exchange of texts, images and ideas. Because of this, whilst I was initially interested in English literary responses to Aretino, and have devoted the majority of chapters 2, 4, and 6 to this topic, the rest of the thesis covers the collaborative work of translators, editors, readers, censors, and other cultural creators from England, Italy, Spain, France, the Low Countries, and Germany. While a certain amount has been written on Aretino's circulation in France,³³ this thesis provides a new angle on Aretino's reputation in the Low Countries in the Seventeenth Century, an area usually overlooked when thinking of the spread of his reputation across Europe. In fact there are numerous connections between Dutch mediation of Aretino and English editions of Aretino (see chapters 1 and 4), the Spanish translation of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* (chapter 3), and the reprinting of erotic images and the *Wandering Whore* dialogue, both misattributed to Aretino (chapters 5 & 6).

By looking at the connections between the fortunes of both the material and literary representations of Aretino through a pan-European network, I hope to question the veracity of any singular narrative that seeks to contain the representation of Aretino. The novelty of my approach is that it allows me to broaden the usual range of 'Aretinos' that were in circulation by looking at various moments of consumption, some of which are necessarily interconnected with the textual circulation of Aretino's works in continental Europe. This is not purely because of who Aretino was as a 'foreign' and much circulated professional writer during his lifetime, but also because I want to highlight the relationship England had with the rest of Europe through networks of both a mercantile and intellectual nature.

By reframing Aretino as only one agent in a network of active agents, whether they be readers, censors, translators, printers, professional writers or consumers of erotic art, I am also attempting to move away from considering Aretino to be only a single historical person, but rather an idea constructed by various mediators. Reception studies may have grown out of a wish to destabilise the authority of the author as the creator of meaning, yet this iconoclastic impulse has mellowed into an analysis of how a balance is (or is not) struck between the hold that the original construction of a text has over its readers, and the actual

³³ For example Elise Boillet, *L'Aretin et la Bible* (2007), Elsa Kammerer, *Jean de Vauzelles et le creuset lyonnais: Un humaniste catholique au service de Marguerite de Navarre entre France, Italie et Allemagne (1520-1550)*, (Geneva: Droz, 2013) James Grantham Turner, *Schooling Sex: Libertine Literature and Erotic Education in Italy, France, and England 1534-1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

uses that this text is put to once it leaves the control of its producers. In doing so, literary studies have borrowed methods from the field of sociology. Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980, English transl. 1984) describes the balance of forces between the 'strategies' of control created by cultural producers and the 'tactics' used by individual members of a population, who recycle and reuse objects or systems designed for a specific purpose to fit their own circumstances: the shortcuts taken in an urban landscape, for example. We can see de Certeau's influence in the school of 'new materialism', for example in *Error, Misuse, Failure: Object Lessons from the English Renaissance* (2003) by Julian Yates, who despite never mentioning de Certeau, examines the role of the user's 'tactics' or misuse of objects, from portrait miniatures to privies, and priest-holes to books.

This way of reading the recycling of texts and objects is especially useful when thinking about how the person 'Pietro Aretino' was turned into a phenomenon, allowing his 'Aretine' features to be ascribed to other people, images and practices. The transformation by which Aretino became the phenomenon 'Aretine' was, however, not unidirectional. It was not simply a process of popularisation through 'tactics' such as pirating his works or gossiping about his reputation through word of mouth, nor was it due to the use of 'strategies' of censorship or alternatively attempts to reinstate him as a worthy humanist writer. How, then, to track this shifting development of Aretino's reception? If we are taking as our starting point the consumer, and the potential uses (expected and unexpected) that they made of Aretino, then we can begin by delineating different groups of audiences, and from there examine how each group may reach different conclusions due to the varied levels and forms of access that they had to Aretino. For example, there is a difference between the way that a university educated writer accessed Aretino's texts, printed by John Wolfe in the original Italian, and the way that an English audience member of a play such as Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess* (1625) thought of Aretino on hearing of a 'roome fil'd all with Aretines pictures.'³⁴ Importantly, this difference is not only due to the socio-economic background of each audience, but also the manner in which they engaged with the topic. Meaning could therefore be considered as being located in the relationship between various elements, rather than purely in the origin (author) or the destination (reader) of that relationship.

³⁴ Thomas Middleton, 'A Game at Chess' (a later form) ed. Gary Taylor, in *Thomas Middleton: the Collected Works*, (gen. eds) Gary Taylor & John Lavagnino (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2007) (II, ii, l.248), p.1853

A relational methodology

If it weren't for the convention and need to hand in my work as a printed codex, the following thesis would ideally be read as a series of interlocking sections, rather than a singular narrative thread, which is why I have laid out the contents page in a cross-hatching formation. On the vertical axis, three chapters are linked together thematically as the history of the material reproductions and mediations of Aretino's texts and images, both real and misattributed. The other three are connected together by the theme of literary responses to Aretino, which were of course largely based on the available (or sometimes, lack of available) material. The two sets of chapters therefore respond to each other, and are roughly chronological, moving from the 1580s to the 1660s further down the page. Along the horizontal axis, sets of chapters are connected together as three major phases of Aretino's posthumous reputation. In the first phase, Aretino is still being taken seriously as a writer and portrayed as an extemporal wit by both editors and other writers. His works are reprinted by humanist presses such as that of John Wolfe in London and the Elsevir press in Amsterdam, both presenting themselves as providing readers with a more accurate version of Aretino than had long been available after the censorship of his entire works in 1559. In England, satirists such as Thomas Nashe and John Marston called for a 'second Aretine' who would lambast patrons, and become self-sufficient through trading on their wit alone. Already in this section we can see that this more positive representation of Aretino was being challenged by translators such as Fernán Xuárez in Seville and writers like Gabriel Harvey in London.

The second phase traces how Aretino's association with courtesans and his mocking of the church were posthumously exaggerated in order to change the way that Aretino was presented to later readers. This was achieved through the reframing of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* with new paratexts reprinted in multiple European translations which represented him no longer as a sympathiser with prostitutes as fellow professionals, but as their nemesis. In England, Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey were arguing over the issue of whether an immoral man such as Aretino could also be a good writer. Their argument, together with the opinions of writers and churchmen such as John Donne in England, and in Holland the poet Dirck Rafaelsz Camphuysen, were drawing biographical conclusions about Aretino which would underpin his reputation as a sexually promiscuous atheist.

The final phase covers the misattributions which were made to Aretino, primarily a set of erotic drawings which would eventually be known as 'Aretino's Postures', and a prose text called 'The Wandering Whore'. Through the censorship of these erotic works and Aretino's willingness to have works which he had never written attributed to him during his lifetime, he would ultimately be recognised as the creator of both of these misattributed works. This process meant that Aretino would no longer be known as a witty satirist, but instead his name would be synonymous with pornography; as ever more works were attributed to him because of his reputation, so too was his reputation bolstered through increasing misattributions.

Although, to read through the text from chapter 1 to 6, the chapters are organised as if I were zigzagging down the contents page from material to literary and back again, this is of course only one way in which this material could be read. The grid-like contents page is also meant to suggest that these chapters can be read in other formations, for example, all the chapters on the material changes by translators, editors, and censors could be read together, just as all the literary responses to Aretino, primarily English, can be read together. It might even be possible to work backwards through the three phases, beginning with the mythology and returning to the attempts to preserve Aretino's authorial intention, which is essentially the process by which I had to approach Aretino while researching my thesis. My narrative, if read the way the chapters are laid out, would be that Aretino's notoriety was not a direct result of his censorship in 1559, but slowly took hold, sporadically challenged by interpreters who attempted to restore what they believed to be a more accurate representation of him. Secondly, that his reputation as a pornographer was cemented in the Seventeenth Century, but grew out of seeds sown by Aretino during his lifetime when he allowed works that he had tangentially been associated with to be attributed to him, possibly reasoning that there's no such thing as bad publicity.

The form of a big book thesis inevitably forces you into a linear narrative. In his iconoclastic *Metahistory* (1973) Hayden White identified this tendency to narrate events, and suggests that most academics do not openly acknowledge that by first selecting their sources, and then constructing a narrative from them, that they were not merely reporting history but remaking it in their own image. In answer to White, more humanities scholarship

has become self-reflective about the determinism of much academic writing.³⁵ A recent example of this is in the literary critic Frances Dolan's *True Relations* (2013). Dolan's topic is the purportedly 'true relation' texts which bore news of monsters, miracles, crimes, trials and disasters. Dolan is interested in how such relations were both trusted as evidence and distrusted as fabrication by their readers:

In many seventeenth-century texts, we find the supposedly postmodern claim that truth is a product or effect of narrative, that the story is not the opposite of reality, or the trope the opposite of truth, but the only means by which truth can be *related* both in terms of "conveyed to another" and in terms of "engaged with".³⁶

Significantly, she also suggests that historians cannot understand these 'true relations' without employing fundamentally literary methods. Dolan draws attention to 'the period's vexed attempts to relate truth through words; and the sometimes occluded relations between our methodological debates now and debates in the period.'³⁷ By foregrounding her own position as a twenty-first century scholar working within a field that is constantly negotiating the boundaries between academic disciplines, it becomes clear that the 'true relations' of Dolan's title are as applicable to current critical discussions as they are to the early modern period. What Dolan manages to do is to show that the conventions and reproducibility of print altered seventeenth-century readers' perception of the reliability of textual evidence.

A recent historical theory called 'histoire croisée' developed by Benedicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner also acknowledges the historian's role in conveying past narratives, and instead attempts to portray the past as an 'entangled' and 'shared' network. They attempt to trace the processes of cultural exchange across national, social and political boundaries, questioning relationships of cultural dominance and passivity, while also remembering that historians are themselves 'entangled' in the objects that they study,

³⁵ In addition to Bruster, Frances E. Dolan's *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) and Andy Kesson & Emma Smith's *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013) include analysis early modern attitudes towards truth and evidence, and popularity, while simultaneously looking at academic practices, and acknowledge our agency in creating forms of 'truth' or 'the popular'.

³⁶ Dolan, p.6

³⁷ Dolan, pp.1-2

acknowledging the difficulties faced by academics in making sense of a complex of information in unbiased terms.³⁸ What Zimmerman and Werner highlight is especially relevant to comparative study, as this genre often sets up binaries between various subjects: one reader and one writer, one language and another, one culture and another.

Partly this change in thinking of academic writing is due to the paradigm shift in how we now represent our world and the exchange of information within it. With the growth of network theory, digital tools available to visualise cultural networks as surface rather than linear structures, and our everyday use of 'social networks' and rhizomatic websites like Wikipedia, we have been challenged to think of information in an increasingly interconnected manner. Traditional works of cultural exchange have focussed on the bilateral transfer of cultures which often lift out isolated moments of cultural exchange as a case study. By considering cultural exchange in discrete, isolated moments, one runs the risk of oversimplifying the complex networks of cultural exchange in Europe, and thereby skewing European history into an especially nation-centred narrative. Recent scholarship such as *histoire croisée*, meanwhile looks at such processes in their entirety, as a noisy hubbub rather than a dialogue between binaries. Such an approach explores a network of different elements and characters, all of which are given equal agency in shaping each others' views of the world.

This zeitgeist has also grown out of a suspicion of master narratives and hierarchies of cultures. Many of these relational theories attempt to dislocate intentionality from any one subject, and move away from designating some 'actors' as being more passive and others more active within the historical narrative. This is done by relocating agency away from binary subjects, and instead imbuing agency into the moving web of relationships that occur between multiple actors, locating meaning within the relations between subjects rather than in the subjects themselves.

Through his concept of 'reading formations', Tony Bennett showed how this attention to discursive practices could be applied to Marxist theory. Bennett suggested that the problem with traditional Marxist theory was that it assumed that the relations between the text and its broader socio-political context were produced 'at the moment of their origin', and that it did not allow for any further meanings to build up: 'In effect, one move and one

³⁸ See Michael Werner & Benedicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, vol 45, no 1, Feb 2006, 30-50.

move only is possible: that ordained by the knowledge of the text produced by referring it to the originating conditions of its production.³⁹ Bennett instead suggests that 'Meaning is a transitive phenomenon. It is not a *thing* that texts can *have*, but it is something that can only be produced, and always differently, within the reading formations that regulate the encounters between texts and readers.'⁴⁰ Meaning is therefore not a noun so much as a verb; action rather than a singular subject defined at the beginning or end of a process. Like Bennett, Bruno Latour locates his research in the active relationships between what he terms 'actors' which are being rewritten and recycled to produce a constantly shifting field of meanings.⁴¹ His 'Actor network theory' or ANT seems especially suited to the world of the text, which is itself a space of interaction between the human and the non-human, between people— dead and alive— paper, ink, and machines.

Theories of reading such as Bennett's 'reading formations' and Dolan's 'relational reading' can offer yet another way of looking at literature as an active network of relations. In the same way that Latour tried to move away from considering the network as structure, Dolan also emphasises the agency of reading rather than its results:

This relational reading practice does not just grasp the relations a text implies nor does it join texts only to other texts...this practice unpredictably but robustly relates texts to events and persons and feelings, prescription to practice, fiction to fact, description to experience, thus muddying distinctions that structure many of our assumptions about early modern texts.⁴²

While Dolan's emphasis is on the reader as the active 'relater' and creator of meaning, she is considering the reader as an actor-network, who 'stands at the center of an ever-

³⁹ Tony Bennett, 'Texts in History: The Determinations of Reading and Their Texts,' in *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History*, ed. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington and Robert Young (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987) pp.63-82. p.70

⁴⁰ Tony Bennett, 'Texts, Readers, Reading Formations', *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 16, 1, (1983) pp.3-17. p.8

⁴¹ See Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For an argument of how ANT can be used in literary criticism, see Rita Felski, 'Context Stinks!', *New Literary History*, 42 (2011) 573-591; and for a literary application of Latour's ANT theory to Toni Morrison, see Heather Love, 'Close but not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn', *New Literary History*, 41 (2010) 371-391

⁴² Dolan, p.10

reconfiguring web, constituted through his or her practice of selecting and connecting.¹⁴³ Dolan draws on the criticism of writers such as Michel de Certeau and Roger Chartier, who look at the reader as both an active and 'relational' actor. Both are interested in the way that, despite the text and author's attempt to control the interpretation of the reader, ultimately this control fails. This happens because, as Chartier points out, 'reading is a creative practice, which invents singular meanings and significations that are not reducible to the intentions of authors of texts or producers of books.'¹⁴⁴ De Certeau echoes this:

The reader takes neither the position of the author nor an author's position. He invents in texts something different from what they 'intended.' He detaches them from their (lost or accessory) origin. He combines their fragments and creates something un-known in the space organized by their capacity for allowing an indefinite plurality of meanings.⁴⁵

Because readers as well as other 'actors' as theorised by Latour are active, the network of relationships that they weave between themselves is unstable, and as new relations are built, the entire network mutates. The network of relations is never completed, but only ever in a process of change; each actor within the network is either preserved or challenged through this constant mutation. Applied to the early modern period, we could say that Shakespeare is a successful 'actor' because he has survived the changes in the cultural network by mutating. He is also a stronger actor within the network because a larger quantity of relations have attached themselves to him as more criticism and reproductions are produced about him. We could also say that the stereotyping of Aretino as the scourge of courtesans or a prototype pornographer was initially a successful mutation because he survived some of the changes in the cultural network by being recycled in newly acceptable forms. However, because this mutation was as a stereotype rather than as another complex entity, in the way that Shakespeare was mutated, Aretino was ultimately a 'weak' actor, with few relations now associating themselves with him in the wider cultural network of literary criticism. In order for a text or a writer to be effective and useful to new users, it 'needs to

⁴³ Dolan, p.13

⁴⁴ Roger Chartier, 'Texts, Printing, Readings' in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Avery Hunt (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1989) pp.154-175, p.156

⁴⁵ de Certeau, p.169

have materially supported relations and bonds to other actors. It needs to be commented upon and it needs to circulate physically.⁴⁶ For Aretino, not only because he was stereotyped, but also because of the destruction of past copies and with them the likelihood of future copies being reprinted, his bonds to other writers would vanish, and with it his notoriety.

As I have suggested, some theorists have attempted to express this relational methodology by using the idea of cultural relations as a network of overlapping lines, 'entangled history' or 'actor network theory'. Others have called on metaphors taken from nature. Franco Moretti has controversially been at the forefront of using spatial models and graphic tools, usually the reserve of the social sciences, to represent literary trends, though this is becoming more prevalent with the growth of the digital humanities. To explain the organising principle behind his work, Moretti used the example of a tree diagram based on Charles Darwin's 'tree of life' from *The Origins of Species*. This arborescent structure mapped what Moretti called 'morphospace' in which one axis of time is correlated with the growth of new literary trends: 'it is this incessant growing-apart of life forms that the branches of a morphological tree capture with such intuitive force.'⁴⁷ Such a diagram allows the reader to perceive the almost impossible — the axis of 'diachronic succession' and the axis of 'synchronic drifting apart'. Moretti argues that this 'is the sign of a new conception of literary history, in which literature moves forwards *and sideways* at once.'⁴⁸

Despite his innovative use of visual representations to map literary history, literature and life are much messier than Moretti would wish. His use of an evolutionary tree diagram as a tool for representing cultural and literary changes is predicated on cultural categories existing in discrete units in the same way as species. Unlike this evolutionary model where the branches grow out from each other into separate, hierarchical subsections, a cultural model is much more like the process of anastomosis, where separate structures such as blood vessels are re-connected within the web of potentially cyclical exchanges. Or, in yet another biological image, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the image of the rhizome (a

⁴⁶ Hanna Kuusela, 'On the Materiality of Contemporary Reading Formations: the Case of Jari Tervo's *Layla*', *New Formations*, 78.3 (2013), pp.65-82. p.67

⁴⁷ Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (Verso: London; New York, 2005) p.70

⁴⁸ Moretti, p.91

ginger root, for example) in contrast to this arborescent conception of knowledge, which they argue still suggests a chronological causality and hierarchy.⁴⁹

In a lecture given to the Royal Society of the Arts (RSA) in December 2011, the Portuguese designer Manuel Lima explained how the visualisation of complex networks has developed over the past decade in a variety of fields.⁵⁰ Lima shows that a recurrent visual metaphor for organising information is indeed the tree, which he suggests expresses the human desire for hierarchy, universality and simplicity. Lima notes, however, the recent move towards visualising organisational concepts as networks. The tree metaphor can no longer hold the 'organised complexity' of the world that we are becoming more aware of, and so the current organising principle is that of the network, from the way that we represent the workings of our brain and cells, through to technological networks such as transport, electrical grids and the internet.

Lima returns to the example of the Darwinian tree of life, and shows that in fact later evolutionary researchers have now expanded on the tree of life diagram due to horizontal gene transfer. For example, a network of bacteria ties disparate species together, and so now Darwin's formal, subdivided model of the tree of life can be overlaid with a 'web of life'. This overlaid web or network now visualises a way we could represent the anastomosis model of culture, with connections being made in unexpected and recombining ways, rather than growing ever further apart with the progression of time.

The posthumous Aretino lends himself to this relational and recombining way of thinking about literature and culture, if we consider him not as a fixed entity but rather as a network of mutating processes. In his lifetime he was known across Europe and had collaborated with various writers and artists, so that he allowed his reputation to grow out of his personal control through misattribution. As a posthumously censored author the composition of his later readership was altered as he became less culturally acceptable. In the following chapters I will show the various tactics used by later editors, readers, translators and censors not only to reproduce his work, but also reframe them to suite new standards of morality. In this thesis I am interested in picking apart the simple story of cause

⁴⁹ See the introduction on rhizomes in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, transl. Brian Massumi (London; New York: Continuum, 2004)

⁵⁰ Lima's lecture was turned into an RSA 'Animate' video, which itself is an innovative way of visualising new concepts and making them open access. <http://www.thersa.org/events/rसानimate/animate/rसानimate-the-power-of-networks> For a more traditional medium, see Manuel Lima, *Visual Complexity: Mapping Patterns of Information* (Princeton Architectural Press: New York, 2011)

and effect of Aretino's posthumous reputation after the censorship of his works in 1559, by thinking of Aretino not as one side of a dialogic relationship between England and Italy or between a writer and reader, but as the name for an idea which was repeatedly transformed by a network of mediators. What follows is the story of Aretino, recycled.

Chapter 1

Pietro and the Wolfe: the London editions of Aretino, 1584-1589

Chapters 1, 3 and 5, are all concerned with the material responses that defined how Aretino could be accessed after his works were placed on the Index of Prohibited Books in 1559. Some of these material processes were already set in motion during his lifetime— for example the censorship of *I Modi* images with which Aretino was associated in the 1520s. Although not posthumous acts of mediation, they are mentioned in this thesis because of the repercussions that they had for Aretino's changing reputation in the century after his death.

This chapter will focus on three mediators who used humanist arguments in the paratexts to their editions of Aretino's work, which expressed, however, two very different intentions. That expressed by the two publishing houses— John Wolfe's London press in the 1580s, and that of the Elsevir family in Amsterdam in the Seventeenth Century— was to restore and preserve Aretino's words in a form which they believed had been hindered by previous editors. Aretino was presented as a source for learned readers, and themselves the anonymous mediators who had rescued him from censorship which had left his corpus in tatters. Rather than preserving the text as Aretino had supposedly intended, the Spanish translator Fernán Xuárez, working in Seville in the late 1540s, uses the rhetoric of a humanist in the early days of the Counter-Reformation to justify his alterations to Aretino's dialogue. These justifications are echoed in the words of later Italian expurgators, working around the same time as the Wolfe press, who explained that without their intervention, the works of morally dubious authors would have been lost forever. What both sides discuss is the need to rewrite and to rebuild reputations and texts. In looking at these attempts to resuscitate Aretino in this material strand of the thesis, I will be examining how mediators produced new meanings of Aretino through reframing his work in later editions and translations.

John Wolfe: the Italian printer of London

Up until John Wolfe's first Aretino imprint, titled *la prima [seconda] parte de ragionamenti di M. Pietro Aretino* on the 21st October 1584, English readers would have had to rely on the Italian editions that had either arrived in England before the banning of

Aretino's works in 1559, or that had been bought from Italian booksellers who were still selling various banned titles under the counter. His religious works were also accessible in translation, either in adapted form through Thomas Wyatt's version of Aretino's narrative framing device in *I sette salmi as Certayne psalmes chosen out of the psalter of David* (1549), or translated into French, for example in Jean de Vauzelles 's translations in Lyon, the *Trois livres de l'humanite de Jesuchrist* (1539), *La Pasion de Jesu-Christ* (1539), *Les sept Pseaulmes de la penitence de David* (1540) and *Le Genese de M. Pierre Aretin, avec la vision de Noë* (1542). If any manuscript copies were made, none appear to have survived today, though it is not impossible: manuscript translations of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* had been made in England and Scotland in the early modern period.¹

In whatever format, in England in the 1580s it appears that Aretino was one of various Italian writers being read by university students. In 1580 Gabriel Harvey (who would later be employed and published by Wolfe) complained that the students of Cambridge University were no longer interested in the writing of ancient Greek and Roman authors, but were instead immersing themselves in more recent Italian writers: 'Machiavel' is considered 'a great man; Castilio of no small reputation; Petrarch and Boccace in every man's mouth; Galateo and Guazzo never so happy; overmany acquainted with Unico Aretino.'²

Between 1584 and 1589, Wolfe's printing press produced new editions of eight Aretino texts (plus one with questionable attribution) under false imprints that could be traded around Europe. Many were sold back to Italy. The Aretino reprints fell in the middle of Wolfe's period of specialising in Italian texts between 1581 and 1591, during which he had printed around fifty Italian-related titles, and had sent the most books of any English printer

¹ For an analysis of two Machiavelli manuscript translations, see Petrina, *Machiaveli in the British Isles* (2009)

² Gabriel Harvey to Edmund Spenser, printed as *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters: lately passed betweene two universitie men: touching the earthquake in Aprill last, and our English reformed versifying* (London: H. Bynneman, 1580) p.28. Most of these show the fashion for Italian conduct books at the time. 'Castilio' is Baldassare Castiglione, the author of *Il Cortegiano*, a dialogue on courtly behaviour, published in 1528 and translated into English as *The Book of the Courtier* by Thomas Hoby in 1561. 'Galateo' refers to Giovanni Della Casa's *'Il Galateo: overo de 'costume*, a conduct book published in 1558 and translated into English by Robert Peterson in 1576. It was often compared to *Il Cortegiano*, though focussing more on the manners of the average Florentine citizen than the courtier. 'Guazzo' is Stefano Guazzo, whose *La Civil Conversazione* (1574) is a conduct book on issues of education, family and social life, the first three books of which were only translated into English in 1581 as George Pettie's 'The Civil Conversation', while the fourth and fifth books were in 1586 later by Bartholomew Yonge. 'Unico Aretino' usually refers to the poet Bernardo Accolti (1465-1536), but in the rest of his writing and marginalia, Harvey repeatedly uses this to refer to Pietro Aretino.

to the Frankfurt Book Fair.³ Wolfe had trained as a printer in Florence during the mid 1570s, his name appears on the titlepage of a *libretto* published there in 1576,⁴ and once back in England he was to become the *de facto* leader of the printers' rebellion in 1582. Despite such defiantly individualistic beginnings he was brought back into the fold of the Stationers' Company in 1583, and was made the company beadle three years later.⁵ During the printer's rebellion, however, Wolfe was being presented by his fellow English printers as suspiciously Italianate. Christopher Barker, the upper warden of the Stationers' Company, is reported to have told Wolfe to stop ignoring the patents of other printers and to 'leave your Machevillian [sic] devices, and conceit of your forreine wit, which you have gained by gadding from countrey to countrey.'⁶

Perhaps thanks to his Florentine apprenticeship a clique of Italian authors and editors soon formed around his print-shop. In his preface to *La vita di Carlo Magno* (1581), Petruccio Ubaldini says that 'Italian works can be printed no less easily in London than they are printed elsewhere (this being the first), through the skill and diligence of John Wolfe her own citizen' ('opere Italiane non men si possono stampar felicemente in Londra, che le si stampino altroue (essendo questo la prima) per studio, & diligenza di Giouanni Wolfio suo cittadino).⁷ Some have taken Ubaldini at his word, that this was indeed the 'first' Italian book Wolfe printed in London, yet two years earlier in 1579 Wolfe had printed *Una essortatione al timor di Dio* (Exhortation to the fear of God), by one of the Italian *spirituali* immigrants, Giacomo Aconcio. In his dedication of *Una essortatione* to the Queen, Giovanni Battista Castiglione writes that he had met in Wolfe 'a young man of this city recently returned from Italy where he with great industry learned the art of printing' (un giouane di questa Città venuto di

³ Seventeen titles were sent over eight years. See Soko Tomita, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Italian Books printed in England 1558-1603* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2009) p.17, David Paisey, 'German Book Fair Catalogues', *The Library*, 4.4 (2003) pp. 417-27

⁴ This reads: 'In Fiorenza, ad Istanza di Giovanni Vuolfio, Inglese' (In Florence, by petition of John Wolfe, Englishman). For more on Wolfe's Florentine career, see Gustavo Bertoli, 'Nuovi documenti sull'attivà di John Wolfe a Firenze (1576-7), con alcune considerazioni sul fenomeno delle stampe popolari', *Archivio storico italiano*, 153, (1995) 577-89

⁵ For more on Wolfe's career and his involvement with the printer's rebellion, see Harry R. Hoppe, 'John Wolfe, Printer and Publisher, 1579-1601', *The Library*, 14.3 (1933) pp.241-89; Clifford Chalmers Huffman, *Elizabethan Impressions: John Wolfe and His Press* (New York, AMS, 1988); Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp.27-50; Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*, pp. 185-198

⁶ Quoted in Loewenstein, *The Author's Due*, p.31

⁷ Petruccio Ubaldini, *La vita di Carlo Magno Imperadore* (London: John Wolfe, 1581), p.4. Ubaldini was wrong about this being the first Italian work printed in London, that honour goes to the *Cathechismo* of Michelangelo Florio (father of the famous John Florio) in 1553.

nuouo d'Italia, ou'ha con molta industria appresso l'arte de lo Stampare).⁸ In both prefatory texts, we can see that these Italian expatriates consider Wolfe as being in the unique position of having acquired the art of Italian printing, and because of this, allowing Italian works to be more easily available in London. Wolfe was to prove to be that much maligned figure in Elizabethan England: 'The Englishman Italianate'.⁹

Wolfe may also have turned to printing Italian texts because there were not as many restrictions for printing foreign works as there were for those in English. Maybe he saw the opportunity to trade banned books back to Italy. He worked with many Italian expatriates who were living in England as refugees fleeing from religious persecution in Italy, many well-connected to the Elizabethan court and universities. In real numbers, the Italian community in London was minor in comparison to the Flemish, Dutch and French communities, especially after the influx of religious refugees from the wars of religion in the Low Countries and France.¹⁰ The Italian community was influential in cultural terms, however, and the amount of Englishmen who attended the Italian church in Cheapside was unusually high, and often mocked for attending the church not to edify their souls but to practise their Italian.¹¹ The significance of this church for Anglo-Italian relations is suggested in the consistory minutes for 1570, which lists half of the church's elders as Englishmen.¹²

Wolfe's Italian imprints might therefore also have catered for this audience of Italians and Italianate Englishmen who congregated at the Italian Church. His works were printed

⁸ Giovanni Battista Castiglione, dedication to Jacopo Aconcio, *Una essortatione al timor di Dio con alcune rime Italiane, nouamente messe in luce* (London: John Wolfe, 1579) p.4

⁹ This phrase was originally from an Italian proverb: 'Inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato'— an Englishman Italianate, is a devil incarnate, and was often used in anti-Italian texts such as Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teaching children, to understand, write, and speake, the Latin tong* (John Day: London, 1570)

¹⁰ In 1571, 63 Italians were recorded as residing in London in the 'survey of aliens', in comparison to 1,102 from Germanic countries and 367 from French speaking countries. By 1593 only 32 Italians are recorded, along with a much-decreased number of Germanic people, totalling 594, and a stable number of French at 365. These figures quoted in Lien Bich Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) pp.102-3, p.120. As Luu points out, however, these surveys most likely underestimate the true number of immigrants, as the surveyors often found it difficult to tell who was a stranger, occasionally omitted children and servants, and ignored foreign servants in English households altogether.

¹¹ See Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 'they come thether to heare the Italian tongue naturallye spoken, not to heare Gods doctrine truly preached', p.28v

¹² O. Boersma and A.J. Jelsma (eds), *Unity in Multiformity: the minutes of the Coetus of London, 1575 and the consistory minutes of the Italian church of London 1570-1591* vol.56 (Ruislip: Huegenot society publications, 1997) p25. The English were not the only non-Italians in this congregation, however, as out of the 161 members of the Italian church, 63 were from the Lowlands, mainly from Flanders, who had joined the Italian church after divisions in the Dutch church over the question of armed resistance to Habsburg rule. See also M. Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations, c.1535-c.1585* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008) p.180

using high-quality typography and often dedicated and presented to aristocratic patrons. Some of these works were theological, such as the aforementioned *timor di Dio*.¹³ In 1587, the Italian Church's minister Giovanni Battista Aurelio published his *Esamine di varrii giudicii de i politica*, a discussion of Catholicism and Protestantism, with Wolfe.¹⁴ Wolfe also printed works by the exiled Scipio and Alberico Gentili, both jurists who had left Italy, persecuted for their Protestant beliefs in 1579. Alberico found a position as the professor of Roman law at Oxford University in 1581, and many of his works on jurisprudence were printed by Wolfe, such as the first study on diplomatic law, *Legalium comitiorum Oxoniensium actio* in 1585. In 1589, Wolfe printed the three parts of *De jure belli* (Laws of War), from lectures that Alberico had given at the height of the Anglo-Spanish crisis, in which he discussed what was legally justifiable in times of war.

It may seem strange to find Aretino's erotic, satirical and dramatic works being printed amongst such theological and legal titles by Italian Protestant immigrants, yet Wolfe was an eclectic printer, producing psalm books, books on animal husbandry and cooking, travel accounts, news stories and books of controversy. Part of Wolfe's strategy was to use big commissions, such as his patent for the Metrical Psalms, to pay for the more expensive humanist texts marketed at a literary elite who bought his books for their typographical elegance as much as for their content. One of Wolfe's specialisations was in Italian and Italianate literature, from English works such as Thomas Watson's *The Lamentations of Amyntas* (1587) and an edition of Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* (1590), to translations and annotations of Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, written by Scipio Gentili in both Latin (*Scipii Gentilis Solymeidos libri duo priores de Torquati Tassi Italicis expressi*, 1584) and Italian (*Annotazioni di Scipio Gentili sopra La Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso*, 1586). Wolfe's success as a printer of Italian literature may, however, have been thanks more to his choice of editor, Giacomo Castelvetro, who would prove to be crucial in the circulation of Aretino in England.

¹³ Aconcio was a reformer and military engineer from Trento who had arrived in London in 1559, after three years in Basel, Zurich, and Strasbourg.

¹⁴ Aurelio had brought a brand of French-Calvinism to the Italian Church when he became its pastor in 1570, yet under his ministry the church saw accusations of heresy and moral shortcomings which, mingled with English xenophobia, damaged the English perception of the Italian reformers in later years.

Aretino's editor, Giacomo Castelvetro

The names of Machiavelli and Aretino were almost inseparable in many Elizabethan pamphlets warning of the dangers of Italian influence. As Duncan Salkeld remarks, 'Together with Machiavelli, Aretino symbolised the very incarnation of decadent Italy.'¹⁵ Unsurprising, then, that at the same time that Aretino's works were being put through Wolfe's press in the mid to late 1580s, so too were Machiavelli's. The project to source, edit, and print these two writers' works would clearly have been too big a job for Wolfe to do by himself.

Although neither Wolfe's nor any other name appears on any of these false imprints, there are two main candidates for the role of Wolfe's editor. One is Ubaldini, who had moved permanently to London in 1562. His work with Wolfe began in 1581, and Wolfe printed four of his works over the next decade.¹⁶ A more likely candidate as the editor of Aretino and Machiavelli is Giacomo Castelvetro, an Italian Protestant who fled to Geneva with his uncle, the scholar Lodovico Castelvetro, after the latter had been denounced for heresy. Like many other of Wolfe's Italian connections, Giacomo had travelled through Europe, this time via Lyon, Basel and Vienna before arriving in London in 1574, and employed by Wolfe as an editor in 1580.¹⁷

What Mariagrazia Bellorini first argued and which Paola Ottolenghi, Michael Wyatt and Jason Lawrence echo, seems to me the most likely situation, namely that Ubaldini may have worked as a proof-reader for Wolfe, but Castelvetro seems more likely to have been the 'voice' of these prefaces.¹⁸ While Ubaldini had some works printed by Wolfe, we know for certain that Castelvetro worked as an editor for Wolfe, and that he wrote prefatory pieces such as his dedication to Sir Walter Raleigh for Francesco Benci's epic poem on the first voyage of Columbus, *Iulii Caesaris Stellae nobilis Romani Columbeidos Libri Priores Duo*

¹⁵ Salkeld, *Shakespeare among the Courtesans* (2012) p.70

¹⁶ These are: *La vita di Carlo Magno* (1581) *Descrittione del regno di scotia* (1588) and two editions of *Le vite delle donne illustri* (1591). See Cecil H. Clough's entry, Ubaldini, Petruccio, *ODNB*, 2004

¹⁷ For more on Castelvetro, see K.T. Butler, 'Giacomo Castelvetro 1546-1616', *Italian Studies*, 5 (1950) pp.1-42; Paola Ottolenghi, *Giacopo Castelvetro: Esule Modenese nell'Inghilterra di Shakespeare* (Pisa: Edizione ETS, 1982) and Maria Luisa de Rinaldis, *Giacomo Castelvetro Renaissance Translator: an Interface between English and Italian Culture* (Lecce: Milella, 2003). On Castelvetro's work with Wolfe, see the Appendix to Jason Lawrence, *'Who the Devil Taught Thee so much Italian?'* *Italian Language Learning and Literary Imitation in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005) pp.192-196

¹⁸ Maria Grazia Bellorini, 'Le pubblicazioni italiane dell'editore londinese John Wolfe (1580-1591)', *Miscellanea* 1 (Udine: Università di Trieste, 1971) pp.17-65. pp.33-4; Ottolenghi pp.39-43; Michael Wyatt, p.192, Lawrence, p.192

(1585) and another to Henry Percy for Giovanni Battista della Porta's work on cryptography, *Furtiuus literarum notis vulgo de ziferis libri* (1591).

Castelvetro's acknowledged dedications share with those of the anonymous Aretino and Machiavelli prefaces an expression of frustration over the scarcity of Italian texts in London. In his dedication to the dual copy of two pastorals (Battista Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* and Torquato Tasso's *Aminta*) to Charles Blount in June 1591, Castelvetro wrote that the reputation of Guarini's pastoral 'has awoken in the breasts of singular spirits a not inconsiderable desire to be able to see the thing itself, and they have asked me to make it happen, if I could' ('onde ne petti di molti di questi singulari spiriti destò un non picciol desiderio di poterla vedere, & me pregarono di far si, che n'hauessero.'¹⁹) Having finally obtained a copy from friends Castelvetro says that he reprints it here, after having seen how difficult it was to procure an original copy of it in London. His dedication of della Porta's work on cryptography similarly explains that since so many people had asked him about this work, first printed in 1563 and therefore long since unavailable abroad, he had decided to have it reprinted at his own expense. The same sense of supplying material for a frustrated émigré audience recurs in the prefaces to the Aretino editions. The pseudonymous 'Barbagrigia' speaks of the 'great desire' he has seen amongst his readers 'to see the works of the talented Mr. Pietro Aretino reprinted' (Mosso dal grandissimo desiderio (gentilissimi Leggitori) che piu d'una volta ho scorto in moti di voi, di vedere ristamparsi l'opere del valente M. Pietro Aretino) describing, not entirely objectively, 'the rumour, the noise and din' (Il rumore, lo strepito, e lo schiamazzo, che odo farsi da molti di voi) of his readers, eager for more works by Aretino.²⁰

Castelvetro was not simply acting as an editor, but also as a buyer of Italian texts for Wolfe. He claims that Juan Gonzalés de Mendoza's *L'Historia del Gran Regno della China* (1587), *Il Pastor Fido*, the works of Erastus, and della Porta's work on cryptography, were all printed at his instigation, and some even funded by him. This implies that he was trusted by Wolfe to suggest viable books, as well as editing them. Castelvetro was also an agent for

¹⁹ Castelvetro, preface to Guarini, *Il pastor Fido* (London: John Wolfe, 1591) sig.A2r (my translation, and unless otherwise stated, all other translations are mine.)

²⁰ 'Il Barbagrigia' preface, Pietro Aretino, *La prima parte de Ragionamenti di M. Pietro Aretino, cognominato il Flagello de precipi, il Veritiero, e'l Divino* (Bengodi [London]: [Wolfe], 1584) sig.A2r and, 'Lo stampatore', preface, Aretino, *La terza, et ultima parte de Ragionamenti del divino Pietro Aretino* ([London: Wolfe], 1589) p.3

Wolfe at the Frankfurt Fair, entrusted to sell Wolfe's books and find new stock.²¹ While it is acknowledged that Castelvetro worked as an editor for Wolfe's Italian books, what I propose here is that he had a much greater role to play in the dissemination of Italian literature and culture in London than has previously been considered, and may have taken responsibility for running Wolfe's Italian 'account'. As a source of material for Wolfe his finger was clearly on the pulse of popular Italian literature when he funded both the Latin translation of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* three years after it had originally been printed in Italy, as well as the reprinting of *Il Pastor Fido* only one year after it had first been printed in Venice. It is really Castelvetro, rather than Wolfe, to whom we should attribute the printing of Aretino and Machiavelli in England.

Why print Aretino?

Castelvetro and Wolfe might have expected an audience who were interested in reading contemporary Italian literary works such as *Il Pastor Fido* to have been similarly interested in Aretino's plays and dialogues; Aretino was after all popular with the young educated elite. There is also a more cynical reason why Wolfe was printing Aretino, however. The double edition of *Il Pastor Fido* and *Aminta* openly declare the involvement of Wolfe and Castelvetro, its titlepage reading 'Per Giouanni Volfeo, a spese di Giacompo Casteluetri' (By John Wolfe, at the expense of Giacompo Castelvetro), and the dedicatory letter to Sir Charles Blount is signed off 'Servitore affettionatissimo, Giacompo Castelvetri' (your most affectionate servant, Giacompo Castelvetro). Wolfe's name may have been Italianised, but this is more a part of his cosmopolitan persona than an attempt to anonymise himself. In contrast, neither Wolfe nor Castelvetro wished openly to associate their names with their new editions of Aretino and Machiavelli, and as such neither of their names appear on these editions.

The story of how these two writers were recycling in England was to be a schizophrenic one. On the one hand their works were being published by a humanist printer and editor, produced for elite readers and defended as a staple of humanist learning in their accompanying prefaces. On the other, as two of the most notoriously censored Italian

²¹ The London Port Book of September 1589 records the payment of petty customs on four crates of books (containing between 2,500 and 4,000 titles) that Castelvetro had imported from Germany. See R.J. Roberts, 'New light on the career of Giacomo Castelvetro', *Bodleian Library Record*, 13 (1990) pp.365-9

writers of the period, these books were mainly intended for sale back in Italy, smuggled along the usual trade routes over the Alps and by sea. Wolfe's books would have been given false imprints partly to get them passage, but partly also to distance them from association with Wolfe's press.

The prefaces that defended the content of these works were also anonymised by being attributed to fictitious (and sometimes real) Italian printers. For Machiavelli's *Il Principe* and *I Discorsi*, both published on 27th January 1584 and *Il Libro dell'Arte della Guerra* in 1587, Wolfe attributed the printing to 'Antonello degli Antonielli' in Palermo, while his *Historie* in 1587 was attributed to Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari in Piacenza. The printing of Aretino's *prima parte dei Ragionamenti* was meanwhile attributed to 'Barbagrigia' (Greybeard) in the fictional city of 'Bengodi', which translates as 'enjoy yourself well.' Barbagrigia was the nickname of the Roman printer Antonio Blado d'Ascola, and his spirit hovers over the next two Aretino imprints by Wolfe. Even when Barbagrigia has supposedly died, a later fictional printer 'Giovani Andrea del Melagrano' (which translates as 'of the Pomegranate') explains that he is keeping the promise made by Barbagrigia in a previous preface, and printing even more of Aretino's dialogues. These false imprints were so successful that it was only in 1897 that Salvatori Bongi and Alfred W. Pollard at the British Museum first questioned the authenticity of the 'Palermo' origin of Machiavelli's *Principe* and *i Discorsi*, and suspected that it might have been the work of Wolfe's press instead.²²

Although copies of Wolfe's Aretino books were owned and read by English readers, it seems unlikely that these were the primary audience that Wolfe had in mind. As Stephen Parkin points out, 'publishing books in a foreign vernacular for the domestic market is in the best of circumstances an artificial enterprise, more willed than spontaneous.'²³ It involved a specialised, self-selecting audience of either expatriates or Englishmen both able and willing to read Italian. Wolfe's editions seem to have been mainly exported to the continent; twenty-seven different titles by Wolfe can still be found in various libraries in Italy, of which his imprint of Scipio Gentili's *Annotationi...sopra La Gierusalemme liberata di Torquato Tasso* (1586) sold the most. Three times as many copies survive here than in England, which

²² See Gerber, 'All of the Five Fictitious Italian Editions 1.' pp.3-4

²³ Stephen Parkin, 'Italian Printing in London 1553-1900', in *Foreign-Language Printing in London*, ed. Barry Taylor (London: British Library Publishing, 2002) pp.133-174, p.134

suggests that this edition was intended for export to Italy.²⁴ Surprisingly, Wolfe was willing to give his name to works that would have been considered heretical in Italy, such as Aureli's *Esamine* (1587) and the religious letters of reformists Francesco Betti and Francesco Pescara (1589).

One of Wolfe's strategies was to print two copies of a text, one with open attribution to his press, and then a second intended for a continental market with a false imprint. For example, della Porta's *de furtivis literarum notis vulgo* was first printed 'Cvm Privilegio, Londini, Apud Iohannem Wolphium', and dedicated to Henry Percy by Castelvetro. It was later reprinted and given the false imprint of 'Neapoli, ap Ioa. Mar. Scotum, 1563' (Naples, by Giovanni Maria Scoto), with the Castelvetro dedication removed, and the dedication from the original copy-text to the Irish theologian, John Scotus, reintroduced. Fifteen copies of the first 'English' edition survive in British libraries today, and none in Italy. In comparison five copies of the second forged edition survive in Britain, while seven copies can now be found in Italy.

Other texts were given a false imprint from the beginning, such as Ubaldini's *Descrittione del regno di Scotio* (1588) which claiming to be from 'Anversa' (Antwerp), however the Machiavelli and Aretino editions make up the majority of falsely imprinted editions from the Wolfe press which survive in Italy today. Fifty-one copies of the five Machiavelli editions still survive, as do thirty-six copies of the three Aretino editions. Although minimal, these numbers are significant when we consider that these texts were more likely than others to have been destroyed by owners or officials due to censorship. Altogether, 160 copies of Italian titles printed by Wolfe can still be found in Italy today. Most likely, these copies were smuggled into Italy amongst a pile of other unbound books brought legally from continental book fairs. One example of how Aretino's works were being smuggled back into Italy is the case of Stefano Bindoni, a member of a well-known printing family, who in 1579 was punished for possessing a manuscript copy of Aretino's *Ragionamenti*. Stefano claimed that he had bought a pile of books from a poor Frenchman, amongst which he unearthed the Aretino edition. This he admitted to copying, though (so he claimed) not with the intent to print and resell it, but rather to read it out loud to his

²⁴ The Italian database *Edit 16* lists 31 remaining copies in both national and provincial Italian libraries, while the ESTC lists seven copies in the UK, and seven in libraries in the US. The titlepage also bears the false imprint of 'Leida', or Leiden.

friends.²⁵ The numbers of Aretino's works in Italy tell only a part of the story, however. In the next section of this chapter, I will be looking at the paratexts of these London editions in which 'Barbagrigia' discusses censorship and his plan to create an Aretino canon by grouping his texts together as a collected works, presenting both Aretino and the Wolfe editions as elite items.

Restoring torn texts

In the prefaces to the Machiavelli and Aretino editions, the voice of 'Barbagrigia' and his descendants created by the combined forces of Castelvetro, Wolfe and possibly Ubaldini, repeatedly argue that these works had in some way been mistreated, and that the Wolfe press was reinstating these two maligned writers by making their work available to discerning readers once more. Five main concerns appear in these prefaces and paratexts: (1) the accuracy of the reprint, (2) the lack of material available and the need to source copy texts, (3) the bad reputation of Aretino and Machiavelli, (4) the promise of providing the entire works of these two writers, and (5) the presentation of the reader as part of a humanist elite.

In a presentation copy of Mendoza's *L'Historia del Gran Regno della China* given to Sir Roger North, a handwritten note on the inside cover from Castelvetro reads: 'I determined to send to you this beautiful and delightful little history book, printed at my instigation, and to purge it of the many errors that were made in the first printing of it' (Mi diterminai mandare a Vostra Signoria Illustre questa bella, e diletteuole historietta, fatta fa me stampare, e da molti errori, scrosi nella primiera stampa, purgare).²⁶ In this note Castelvetro emphasises his own reconstruction of a text, purged of errors, and thereby correcting the 'first printing'.²⁷ In the preface to the *prima parte...Ragionamenti*, 'Barbagrigia' similarly explains that he reprinted these dialogues in order to restore the original 'text' that he believed Aretino had intended to be read, and which had been ignored by previous editors:

²⁵ See encyclopedia entry 'Augustino Bindoni' by Alfredo Cioni, *Treccani, Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 10 (1968) online publication.

²⁶ The note is dated 27th June, 1588. Translation from Lawrence, p.193

²⁷ Castelvetro shared, maybe even encouraged this concern with Wolfe, who also included lists of errata for his English texts from 1593 onwards. See Massai 'John Wolfe and the Impact of Exemplary Go-Betweens on Early Modern Print Culture' (2005) p.107, n.16 for the list of Wolfe's English texts printed with errata. Massai also points out that 'the prefatory material...devotes a remarkable amount of attention to the origin and quality of copy-text(s).' p.113

today I present them in the large part...redacted to the way he composed them, and in the same manner that he had intended of the first print, if another (against [Aretino's] will) hadn't by means of printing brought it into a very bad light...And yet I hope to bring out others, as he composed them, and not torn, as today your Florentines give it to you to read, with a thousand lacunai in them, that you might as well return to the first editions.

*oggi vi presento di loro una buona parte (e quelle peraventure piu da voi bramate) da me ridotte ne la maniera, ch'egli le compose, e nel i medesima maniera, ch'egli haveva diteruninato di farle la prima volta stampare, s'altri (contra sua voglia) non l'havessero prima di lui date per mezzo de la stampa in luce assai male acconcie.... Le quali anchora un giorno spero di darvi a leggere cosi compiute, come egli le compose, e non lacerate, come oggi i vostri fiorentini ve le danna a leggere, con mille ciandie loro, per farvi credere d'haver le ritornate a la prima lettura.*²⁸

This physical description of the text being 'torn....with a thousand lacunai in them' (lacerate... con mille ciandie loro) by 'your Florentines' (vostri fiorentini) suggests that Barbargria is blaming the typographical errors of previous editions by a Florentine press, maybe even the Giolito press, for destroying the reputation of Aretino, and instead delivering a message that Aretino never intended to be communicated. There is also a strong sense that these new editions aim to restore the text back to its original state: 'the way [Aretino] composed them', '[as] he had intended'. The preface refers to the 'first editions' as being more truthful than those printed 'against [Aretino's] will', acknowledging Aretino's active involvement in the printing process of his own works with his printer, Francesco Marcolini (as 'intended of the first print').

This desire for accuracy in reprinting, and more, to return the text back to an imagined 'original' is also apparent in Barbargria's preface to the double edition of *I Discorsi* and *Il Principe*, dated the same month as *La prima parte...Ragionamenti* in January 1584. Here the printer writes that Machiavelli's detractors make him even more determined that

²⁸ Preface to Pietro Aretino's *La prima parte...Ragionamenti*, sig.A2r-v

Machiavelli's works be printed in a form as close to the original as possible: 'and again to reassure you, that I tried every means possible to get it fixed as thoroughly as I could' (& anchora per réderti certo, che io m'habbia cercato ogni mezzo oer farlla quanto piu compiutamente mi fusse possibile).²⁹

The preface to a collection of Aretino's comedies entitled *Quattro Comedie* (1588) also claims that it is a more accurate edition than previous Italian presses had managed to produce. In a letter to the reader which appears immediately after the list of errata, the corrector lists as his copy texts the 1542 duodecimo editions of all four comedies by Giolito, which he says he compared with the octavo copies of Marcolino from 1553. He found these texts to be 'very corrupted' (testi molto corrotti), and three of the plays to be heavily amended (La altri tre ho anchora trovata piu ammendati), and everywhere he found 'entire lines were added...as anyone can see who cares to compare the two texts' (le line intiere di piu...come ognuno potre vedere, che si prendra piacere di confrontare i detti testi insieme).³⁰ He is greatly concerned with the accuracy of the text, explaining that the errors in this text are there either because his corrections were done at the point when the text was going to press, or because discrepancies of spelling are intentionally made by Aretino, who was trying to capture the colloquial speech and dialects of normal people.

Like the corrector of *Quattro Comedie*, the preface to Machiavelli's *Discorsi* details which copy texts he used and his worries about their accuracy, wishing instead that he had access to the author's autograph:

not having the ability....to find the texts composed and written in the hand of the author, I found instead that there were some printed in octavo by the sons of Aldo in Venice 15 [*sic.* i.e. 1546] and some in duodecimo by Giolito in 1550. I have found many things, but none of much importance, i.e. in the orthography, using many differently written voices...and although I tried to maintain always one and the same method of writing, it could not always be done.

non hauendo lo potuto...trouare il testo composto & scritto di mano dell'autore: ma ben trouai quello stampato in ottauo da figliuoli d'Aldo in

²⁹ Preface to Niccolò Machiavelli, *I Discorsi* (London: John Wolfe, 1584) sig.A3r-v

³⁰ 'Il Correttore' in Aretino, *Quattro Comedie del diuino Pietro Aretino*. ([London: John Wolfe], 1588) p.292

*Vinegia 15 et quello in duodecimo del Giolito 1550. i quali in molte cose, ma non gia di molta importanza, ho trouati varij molto, cioè nell'orthographia, vsando molto voci diuersamente scritte....et a benche io mi sia sforzato di mantener sempre vna medesima scrittura, pure no m'è poturo venir fato.*³¹

He also echoes the *Quattro Comedie* corrector's rhetoric by claiming that any irregular grammar is not his own failure, but Machiavelli's idiosyncratic language: 'I have let pass many ways of speaking that are totally contrary to the teachings of our grammarians, which he sometimes uses well and sometimes badly' (Ho anchora lasciato passare molte maniere di dire tutte contrarie agli insegnamenti de nostri grámatici, le quali vsandole egli alcune volte bene & alcune volte male).³² He has even left uncorrected Machiavelli's mistaken attributions, such as when he quotes a passage from Caesar and attributes it to Livy.

It is significant that in both these examples the Wolfe press identifies their sources and tries to explain any irregular orthography or grammar. This was not normal practice for the period, and as Michael Wyatt writes, it is 'a surprising proviso coming from an English printer in a period when one of the only consistencies in contemporary English spelling was its inconsistency.'³³ More importantly for this thesis, these prefaces also explain that they are reprinting authorial mistakes (idiosyncratic grammar, mistaken attributions, misspelling in order to convey colloquial language) and that they believe these are justifiably left in the text because although mistakes, they were mistakes created by the authors. This from a press which elsewhere dismisses the work of other printers for the smallest orthographic mistakes. That such different approaches to the editing of a text can exist in these prefaces shows that the author's intention is sacred in the eyes of the Wolfe press. They claim to be providing newly accurate editions on a 'micro' level by identifying other printers' errors, yet more importantly says that such textual inaccuracies impact the representation of Aretino and Machiavelli as authors.

The next main theme in these prefaces is their attempt to tackle the bad reputation of Machiavelli and Aretino by representing them in a purportedly non-judgemental way. In the first of the Machiavelli editions, Wolfe et al. attempt to persuade the reader not to dismiss this double edition of the *Discorsi* and *Il Principe* purely because of Machiavelli's bad

³¹ Preface, *I discorsi* sig.A3v

³² Ibid.

³³ Michael Wyatt, p.188

reputation, but to be more open minded. 'The Printer' writes in the preface that he too once held a negative opinion of Machiavelli because he had listened to rumour. Convinced by a learned friend that Machiavelli had been misrepresented, he read the book and found that the more he read 'marvellous new insights, and new ways to learn the true way to derive any profit from the beneficial reading of histories, and in short, I learned more in one day about the governance of the world than I had previously grasped in all of the histories I had read' (nouoa acutezza d'ingegno, & nuovi modi d'apprendere la vera via di trarre alcuno vtile dalla gioueuole lettura delle historie, & in brieue conobbi d'hauere piu in vn giorno da loro imparato de goerni del mondo, che non hauea fato nel resto della mia passata vita da tutte le historie lette).³⁴

This preface is an attempt to advertise the utility of the *Discorsi* and *Principe*, but it also repeats the message of the Printer's learned friend that one should actually read a writer's words rather than making your mind up based on rumour alone. This 'learned friend' was Alberico Gentili who in *De legationibus libris tres* (1585) read *Il Principe* as a republican text, regarding the true audience of the book to be the people rather than the prince, and that Machiavelli had not intended 'to instruct the tyrant, but by revealing his secret counsels, to strip him bare, and expose him to the suffering nations.' This, Gentili claims, is why those in power 'object to the survival and publication of [Machiavelli's] works.'³⁵ The frontispiece to Wolfe's edition mirrors the preface's text through the use of an emblem of a palm tree covered in serpents, with a crowd of frogs at its foot. The motto reads: 'Il vostro malignare non giova nulla' (your evil profits nothing) and exemplifies the content of the preface.³⁶ The palm of eternal fame and memory will continue to survive despite the words of venomous detractors, and so too will Machiavelli's writing.

If Machiavelli's political content is shown to be widely misunderstood, then in the preface to the *prima parte...Ragionamenti*, Aretino is defended not so much for what he says, but for the manner in which he says it. Aretino is presented as a defender of free speech, and an exposé of hypocrites such as those who attack Machiavelli without having first read his work. Aretino is described as a 'great friend of free men, mortal enemy of

³⁴ Preface, *I discorsi*, sig.A2v

³⁵ Alberico Gentili, *De legationibus libri tres*, translation quoted in Peter Donaldson, *Machiavelli and the Mystery of State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) p.89. For more on Wolfe's publishing of Machiavelli, see pp.90-6

³⁶ Wolfe was to reuse this emblem and its message of everlasting fame for the title page of Gabriel Harvey's 1593 response to Thomas Nashe *A New Prayse of the Old Asse*.

crooked necks, great lover of knowledge, cruel adversary of ignorance, follower of virtue, and bitter castigator of vices' (amicissimo degli uomini liberi, nomico mortale de colli storti, amator grandissimo del sapere, crudele avversario de l'ignoranza, seguace de la virtu, e agrorimorditore de vizi).³⁷ He is presented as a humanist (adversary of ignorance, lover of knowledge), a lone voice speaking against frauds, but also a friend to the common man. How true a representation of Aretino this is, is debatable as it repeats what Aretino boasted of himself.

While the editors shied away from the question of Machiavelli's censorship by suggesting instead that his bad reputation was derived from 'gossip' and 'hypocrisy', in the preface to the *prima parte...Ragionamenti* Barbagrighia more overtly asks his readers to defend Aretino against censors 'who leave no freedom to men' (chi non lascia la liberta a gli uomini) to discern the difference between good and bad by themselves. To print Aretino's works in an expurgated form would be to offend 'benign Nature' (la benigna Natura).³⁸ This is an attack directly aimed at the Roman Catholic church, as Barbagrighia declares that he could no longer leave Aretino's works 'languishing', and was 'not bothered by our Pater-noster chewers, and chasers/shitters of Hail-Marys, who will be scandalised by me' (non ho voluto piu lungamente lasciarvi di simil pena languire, percio, senza curarmi molti di certi Masticatori di Pater nostri, et Cacciatori/Caccatori di Avemarie, che di me si scandelezzeranno) for publishing Aretino's works.³⁹ By choosing these words, Wolfe & Castelvetro were clearly setting themselves in opposition to what they saw as the destructive methods of the Counter Reformation, and declared their right to publish the work of a man deemed morally unfit by the Council of Trent.

³⁷ Preface, *La prima parte*, sig.A2v

³⁸ Ibid,

³⁹ Preface, *La prima parte* sig.A2r. 'Cacciatori', or 'chasers' is printed in only one of the imprints: STC.19912a, which is dated by the ESTC to 1595 and attributed to John Windet, who had merged his business with Wolfe's in 1591. The other two copies, both 1584, instead use the more vulgar 'Shitters': 'Caccatori' (STC.19912) and 'Cacatori' (STC.19911.5). In either case, this line also reflects a line in the third part of the *Sei Giornate*, where a man who wishes to seduce Nanna is told by her landlady that she is a virgin and 'all she ever does is chew on Hail Marys', to which he replies that 'She who chews Hail Marys will spit out Or Fathers' (né le si vede altro che masticare avemarie...Che mastica avemarie sputa paternosti). English translation, Raymond Rosenthal, *Aretino's Dialogues* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1971) p.108 Original Italian also in Giovanni Aquilecchia, *Sei Giornate* (Bari: Gius Laterza & Figli, 1969) p.96. While other of Aretino's works have been included in the more recent *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Pietro Aretino*, these dialogues have not yet been printed.

Collected and collecting works

To rescue Machiavelli and Aretino from oblivion, the Wolfe press not only intended to reprint their entire works, but also planned to give these works a generic coherence by grouping them together thematically. This seems to have been a common way of thinking for Castelvetro. In his 1591 double edition of *Il Pastor Fido* and *Aminta*, Castelvetro says that he thought to supplement Guarini's new pastoral with the older *Aminta* for two reasons: first, because 'it seems not only to me but also to many others, that whoever wants to read *Il pastor fido* would also be willing to look through *Aminta*, and also because today one finds so few copies of the latter on sale' (perche non ur a me, ma anhora a molti altri pare, che chi legge il Pastor Fido diuenghi volonteroso di veder l'Aminta, & poi anchora perche di lei si ritrouano hoggi pochissimi essempli da vendere.)⁴⁰ While the second reason of making sure that *Aminta* or indeed any Italian book was still in circulation is a concern often repeated by Castelvetro, in his first suggestion that the two pastorals be read together, he is making a literary connection that highlights Guarini's work as a response and indeed a rival to Tasso's older pastoral.

The same comparative logic is apparent in the printing of Machiavelli and Aretino editions. *Il Principe* and *I Discorsi* are printed together to highlight Ubaldini's claims of republicanism in Machiavelli's texts, as well as thematic similarities on the differences between princes and tyrants, the governing of people for the greatest good, and distinguishing between mob-rule and a well-regulated community.⁴¹ Castelvetro also grouped together Machiavelli's literary as opposed to political writings in 1588, printing his allegorical poems, *Lasino Doro*, together with his satirical poems, the *Capitoli*; a verse chronicle in terza rima, the *Decennale*; his novella *Belfagor arcidiavolo*; and two comedies *Mandragola* and *Clitia*.⁴²

The project to print all of Aretino's works began in 1584, when the 'prima parte' of the *Ragionamenti* (otherwise known as the 'Sei Giornate' or 'six days' and discussed further in chapter 3) came off the Wolfe press. The edition appears to have been popular as it went through three imprints of the press in the same year. The second edition was supplemented

⁴⁰ Preface, *Il Pastor Fido* sig.A2v

⁴¹ All of which are themes picked out by 'Barbagrigia' in his preface to the double edition of *I Discorsi* and *Il Principe*.

⁴² This collection was based on the first edition of Machiavelli's collected works printed by Bernardo Giunta in Florence, 1549: *L'asino d'oro di Nicolo Machiavelli, con alucuni altri cap. & nouelle del medesimo*.

with a further dialogue on a similarly erotic subject: Annibal Caro's *Commento di Ser Agresto da Ficaruolo sopra la prima ficata de Padre Siceo*, a mock poem on figs (slang for women's genitals).⁴³ Four of Aretino's comedies (*Il Marescalco*, *La Cortigiana*, *La Talanta* and *L'Hipocrito*) were then printed together as *Quattro Comedie*, becoming the first collection of dramatic works by a contemporary author to be printed in England in 1588. Many examples of this edition still survive today across Europe, with E.K. Grootes listing fifty-nine editions, the majority in the United Kingdom (19) and North America (18), with the rest in Germany (7), Italy (7), Poland (2), the Netherlands (2), Belgium (2), France (1) and Hungary (1).⁴⁴ In fact, the number for Italy is inaccurate as there are actually eighteen copies in various regional Italian libraries, and I suspect that by the same logic further editions may surface in the regional libraries of other European countries.⁴⁵

Most of the known owners of the *Quattro Comedie* were book collectors or humanists. In the Low Countries, a copy was given to Utrecht's university library in 1602 by a lawyer named Evert de Pol, while in England copies of this and other of Wolfe's Italian imprints could be found in the libraries of book collectors like Edmund Coke, William Drummond and Francis Russell. Statesmen such as Lord Burghley and academics like Gabriel Harvey also owned this edition, though as both had worked with Wolfe's press, it is maybe not surprising to find that they owned many of his books. The translator and language teacher John Florio also lists Wolfe's *Quattro Comedie* as one of the editions he consulted in the bibliography to his 1598 Italian dictionary.⁴⁶ In 1589 the project to collect the works of Aretino came to an end with the publication of *La terza, et ultima parte de Ragionamenti* (1589). This 'third part' of the dialogue series contains the *Ragionamenti delle Corti* (the disputations of the

⁴³ The three imprints are the Worcester College copy of Oxford University (STC19912a) which does not include the errata or *Il Commento di Ser Agresto*. In the preface to this edition, the Caro text is promised to be printed later, because it is by a 'different but similar gentleman'; connecting these two writers in much the same way that *Il Pastor Fido* and *Aminta* were. These Caro texts appear in the later Worcester University copy STC 1991.5 and the British Library's STC 19912 copy. Caro had been part of the Roman 'School of Virtue', and had his works published by none other than the original 'Barbagrigia', Antonio Blado. It was Caro, too, who first refers to Blado as 'Barbagrigia' in the play *Gli Straccioni* (c.1543, first printed 1582) written together with Massimo Ciavolella. Amazingly enough, Caro was well known for having denounced Castelvetro's uncle, Lodovico Castelvetro (with whom he had fled to Geneva) to the Inquisition for translating the writings of Phillip Melanchthon.

⁴⁴ E.K. Grootes, *Dramatische Structuur in Tweevoud: Een vergelijkend onderzoek van Pietro Aretino's Hipocrito en P.C. Hoofts Schijnheilig* (Noorduijn; Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink, 1973) p.45

⁴⁵ This found using the database Edit 16 which lists texts from provincial as well as national holdings.

⁴⁶ See Soko Tomita, esp. pp. 257, 265-269, 275, 336. For Florio see *A Worlde of wordes: A critical edition*; introduction by Hermann W. Haller (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2013) p.5

court, 1538) and *Dialogo del Giuoco delle carte* (the dialogue of the game of cards, 1543), both of which were satires on the life of the court rather than the courtesans of Rome.

Although only eight of his many works were eventually printed, in the prefaces to these editions Castelvetro claims that he wishes to print the entire works of Aretino. Over the three editions 'Barbagrigia' and his heirs promise to print 'the remainder of the works of this fine spirit' (il rimanente de l'opere di questo bello spirito), such as some of his spiritual works (*Il Genesi, Sette salmi della Penitentia di David, Vita di Maria vergine*) and poems (*Lagrima d'Angelica, Capitoli, Strambotti a la Villanesca* and *la Serena*) together with the 'five volumes of erudite and ingenious letters, considered the best letters in the world' (cinque volumi de le sue dotte, & ingeniose lettere, da primi letterati del mondo desiderate).⁴⁷ Unfortunately, none of these were subsequently printed, with Wolfe's printing of Italian works almost completely finished by 1591.

By grouping these works together as 'dialogues', 'comedies', 'spiritual works', 'poems', and 'letters', the Wolfe press attempted to create a collected works for Aretino. By printing the two dialogues of women together (originally printed separately in 1534, 1536) in 1584, Castelvetro and Wolfe were imposing a unifying, Boccaccian structure to the dialogues between Nanna, Antonia, and Pippa. This was also printed together with the misogynist *Zoppino* dialogue, sometimes attributed to the Spaniard Francisco Delicado, but at the time believed to have been written by Aretino, in which an ex-pimp discusses a catalogue of Rome's courtesans.⁴⁸

The 1588 collection of four comedies, meanwhile, were previously collected together only once before in 1553 by Gabriel Giolito. As the preface to *Quattro Comedie* shows, the Wolfe press had attempted to go one better than Giolito by supplementing the four plays with Aretino's other comedy, *Il Filosofo* and his tragedy, *Hortensia*. Castelvetro had, it seems, been waiting for a year for good copies of these two plays, but this hope never materialised. 'I am unable to give them to you at present, but with the promise that if the aforementioned comedy and tragedy arrive in my hands, I will give them to you' (mi son incontanente dato a darui le presenti, con prometterui, che se la predetta comedia, e la predetta tragedia mi

⁴⁷ Preface, *La prima parte*, sig.A2v; and preface, *Quattro Comedie*, sig.A3r

⁴⁸ Though likely a misattribution, it is an understandable one as the *Zoppino* dialogue was also printed alongside *Il Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa* by Francesco Marcolini in Venice, 1539. I will be discussing this and the problem of misattribution in chapter 5.

verra alle mani, di darvela).⁴⁹ Touchingly, one owner of the *Quattro Comedie* completed this task by adding two Giolito editions of *Il Filosofo* from 1549 and *L'Horatia* from 1553 to this edition, now held in the British Library.⁵⁰

Clearly Castelvetro was frustrated at his inability to find the right texts. It is a refrain repeated throughout his prefaces that he finds it hard to locate good original editions from which to reprint and, throughout the *Quattro Comedie*, he repeatedly asks his readers to provide him with further Aretino texts. In the epilogue of *Il Marescalco*, for example, the character of the pedant gives a closing speech declaring that he will write another comedy which will discuss the joy of those who have never married, and the suffering of those who have. No such play seems to have existed, and so it is likely that this is merely an extension of the misogyny of the play and of the character of the pedant in particular. Nevertheless, this is taken literally by 'Barbagrigia' as these words are followed by an 'Avertimento al lettore' (advice to the reader) which says that the works which the pedant has mentioned were either never compiled, or if they were, the editor has never seen them; if the reader does have a copy, however, the printer would be most grateful to have it.⁵¹ The same occurs in the epilogue of *La Talanta*. Originally written for the Venice carnival of 1542, Aretino addresses his gentlemen audience by promising that he will write a tragedy of Christ to follow. Again, the English printer interrupts the text with a message to the reader: 'if you or any of your friends affix your sight on this tragedy of Christ, which he mentioned here above, please let me have it, in order that, through the medium of the press, I may return it to you, and to all over the world, in the guise of a resurrected Phoenix' (*se appote, od appo alcuno amico tuo, si ritroua la tragedia di Christo, di cui è qui disopra fatta mentione, degna farmela hauere; accioche, per mezzo della mia stampa, a te, & al mondo tutto la possa, a guisa della rinasciuta Fenice, ridonare*).⁵²

Finally, although never printed, Castelvetro clearly intended that Aretino's *Lettere* be collected together in one volume. In the *terza parte de Ragionamenti*, Barbagrigia's 'successor' seems less bothered with introducing the immediate content, almost dismissing it as something he is giving to his Aretino connoisseurs in compensation for the delay of his major project, the *Lettere*. He wished to produce:

⁴⁹ Preface, *Quattro Comedie* sig.A3r

⁵⁰ Copy 240. a10

⁵¹ *Quattro Comedie*, p.50

⁵² *Quattro Comedie*, p.211

all six books of such Letters in one folio volume, adding two other books of beautiful letters of many noble and serious characters written to [Aretino], all of which will be placed according to their genre...and not content with this, all the above things ordered alphabetically under a table in the earlier book.

*tutti i sei libri delle predette Lettere in un sol volume in foglio, co l'aggiunta di due altri libri di bellissime Lettere di molti nobili, e gravi personaggi scritte a lui; le quali tutte saranno poste setto a generi loro... e non content di questo, tutte le predette cose si poranno per ordine d'A.b.c, sotto uno tavola nella fin del libro.*⁵³

These layers of organisation create a text closer to a commonplace book than a collection of letters, and betray Castelvetro's humanist approach to editing texts. Wolfe never produced Aretino's *Lettere*, despite having entered them in the Stationers' Register in September and October 1588, implying that without the catalyst of Castelvetro, who was to move to the court of James VI in 1591, Wolfe abandoned this otherwise ambitious plan to print Aretino's collected *Lettere*. The majority of other works entered into the Register by Wolfe were taken over by fellow printers such as Robert Blounte and Adam Islip, neither of whom seem to have wanted the weighty project of printing Aretino's *Lettere*.⁵⁴ Other than the *Lettere*, Boccaccio's *Decameron* was the only other Italian work entered by Wolfe in 1587 never to be printed.⁵⁵

If the publication of Ben Jonson's *Works* in 1616 is seen as a major step towards a modern conception of authorship, then Castelvetro and Wolfe's decision to create a thematically organised collected works of a single author may be considered an even earlier example of author-creation in England, though admittedly a posthumous one, aided by the mediation of editors. While their frontispieces for the Machiavelli editions use emblematic

⁵³ Preface to *La terza et ultima parte* pp.3-4

⁵⁴ *A booke of secrets: Shewing diuers waies to make and prepare all sorts of Inke* was entered into the SR on the 30th April 1591 by Wolfe and produced by Adam Islip in 1596 for Edward White. On the same day Wolfe entered *Epulario, or the Italian banquet* eventually printed by Islip for William Barley in 1598. The next printer to publish the six volumes of Aretino's letters was Matteo il Maestro, in Paris, 1608-9.

⁵⁵ The first printed edition of the full *Decameron* in London would be the English translation (sometimes attributed to John Florio) printed by Isaac Jaggard in 1620.

woodcuts which would later be recycled for other Wolfe texts, for Aretino's *Quattro Comedie* and *terza parte...Ragionamenti* a woodcut of Aretino in profile is printed onto the frontispiece.⁵⁶ [fig.2. See also p.63]. By including a portrait of Aretino on their titlepage, the Wolfe press were continuing the practices of Italian editors of Aretino who had repeatedly used this image together with other portraits to illustrate the titlepages of his works. They were also showing that Aretino himself was prominent, not only by being named on the titlepage, but by being depicted there too. As Bianca Calabresi points out, 'In a move particularly appropriate to Aretino's own self-production' the titlepage also 'erases the presence of any particular publisher and print shop.'⁵⁷ Calabresi is suggesting that the Wolfe editions carry on the promotional work that Aretino was known for, his 'self-production', yet I think this is also indicative of both Wolfe and Castelvetro's attitudes towards their role as editors, and to the importance that they give to Aretino's authorship of these works. As the only name and image on the titlepage, it is as if they are claiming a lack of mediation, as if it really was simply a reproduction of his work as Aretino 'intended' it. By playing down their own involvement in this process, they emphasised even more the importance of Aretino's authorship of these texts, to a level which was not normal for the period.

The imagined reader

On the title page of the *Quattro Comedie*, the readers are addressed as 'connoisseurs' of Aretino, for whom this edition has been created: 'newly restored, through the medium of the press, at the request of connoisseurs of their value' (novallamete ritornate, per mezzo della stampa, a luce, a richiesta de conoscitori del lor valore). The accompanying prefatory letter is meanwhile addressed to 'those, who value the works of this great writer' (coloro, che stimano le opera di questo grande Scrittore), which not only describes the readers as those who value Aretino, but also gives his writing the collective and high-cultural term

⁵⁶ This image derives from an engraving originally made by Gian Giacomo Caraglio, and later turned into a medal by Leone Leoni. This multi-media image was then used by Aretino's printer, Marcolini in the 1530s and later printers of his work such as Antonio Bindoni in the 1550s, on the titlepages of various Aretino texts such as *Il Genesi*, *La vita di Maria Vergine*, *Marescalco* and *Cortegiana* and the *Lettere*. See Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* p.72, and Bianca Finzi-Contini Calabresi, "'Bawdy-Doubles": Pietro Aretino's *Comedie* (1588) and the Appearance of English Drama', in *Renaissance Drama: Italy in the Drama of Europe*, vols. 36/37, eds Albert Russel Ascoli, William N. West (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2010) pp.207-236, p.231, n.27

⁵⁷ Calabresi, p.215

'opera' or 'works'.⁵⁸ Wolfe and Castelvetro portray their audience as educated, and elsewhere even as 'humanissimo lettore': humanist readers.⁵⁹ Despite Aretino's later reputation as a pornographer, and despite the contemporary fear of 'bawdy' Italian comedies infecting the English stage [see also p.70], the readers of Wolfe's *Quattro Comedie* appear to have been addressed as an intellectual elite, able to find worth in such comedies.

These readers are also expected to be actively involved in the reproduction of the text; they are not meant to be reading for pleasure, but reading for knowledge. More importantly, they are expected to be reading in order to reprint these forbidden books, and put more editions into circulation.

The *Quattro Comedie* also contains an errata list, and with it a note from the corrector to the reader explaining how he was determined to include this list of corrections, despite the opinion of some readers that printing with errors prevents the sale of books, so that any reader who so wishes, may correct the text, and reprint these comedies perfectly. In this same letter, the corrector asks the reader to compare the Venetian copy texts with his own, and suggests that in comparison this edition is the most authoritative one yet printed.⁶⁰ In the errata list of the *Discorsi* too, the 'discrete reader' is told to 'correct for himself the other minor errors' (a discreto lettore ammendera da segli altri minori errori).⁶¹ The imagined reader of these texts is, as Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton have identified, an active 'goal-oriented' reader, for whom the act of reading was 'intended to *give rise to something else...this "activity of reading" characteristically envisaged some other outcome of reading beyond accumulation of information.*'⁶² In the case of the reader of the *Quattro Comedie*, he is not only expected to put this book to some personal use, but even to help in reproducing it in order to make it more widely available to other readers.

Although the presentation of these comedies is noticeably a very literary construction, self-aware of their reproducibility by the press, and presented as an aid for language learning rather than future performances, it seems highly likely that English dramatists drew

⁵⁸ Preface *Quattro Comedie*, sig.A2r

⁵⁹ Preface to *I Discorsi*, sig.A3r

⁶⁰ *Quattro Comedie* p.292

⁶¹ Preface to *I Discorsi*, 'L'aveduto, & discreto lettore ammendera da se gli altri minori errori' p.200r

⁶² Anthony Grafton & Lisa Jardine, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past & Present*, 129 (November, 1990) pp.30-78, pp.30-1. For more on 'active reading' see Kevin M. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

on Wolfe's edition of Aretino's comedies, in search of new material for the Elizabethan stage. Sometimes these borrowings are what Louise George Clubb terms 'theatergrams': plot patterns, character types, framing devices and so on, which were transferred and recombined in English theatrical culture, i.e. a rhizomatic form of cultural exchange.⁶³ Take for example, a sword fight from *La Talanta* (1542) between the impoverished knight, Tinca (a braggart and a coward) and the *zanni* character, a servant named Fora, who find themselves unwilling opponents in a near-duel. This scene reappears in William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (c.1601) between Viola and Sir Toby. Celia Daileader has also shown connections between Aretino's and Thomas Middleton's representation of courtesans as morally complex characters, and points out that the faked illness of the prostitute in Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters* (c.1605) used to extort money out of her lovers is the same trick described by Nanna in Aretino's *Sei Giornate*.⁶⁴

The closest we get in England to a full appropriation of a play by Aretino, however, is Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* (1609). As well as Plautus' *Casina*, the play is primarily based on *Il Marescalco* in which a practical joke is played on the homosexual stablemaster of the Duke of Mantua.⁶⁵ Donald Beecher suggests that Aretino's play 'contained an implicit formula apt for imitation and variation by future playwrights,' such as the main character being an anti-hero, as well as trickery and social climbing being used as a plot device for comedy.⁶⁶ *Marescalco* is told that he is to be given a wife by the Duke, and the rest of the play is spent with characters mocking his dismay at the idea of marrying a chattering woman, until *Marescalco* (happily) discovers that his new bride is in fact a young boy. In *Epicoene*, *Marescalco* has become *Morose*, an old man with an aversion to noise who resolves to marry in order to stop his dissolute nephew from inheriting from him. His nephew provides *Morose* with a new wife, *Epicoene*, who has the unusual quality of silence, though *Morose* does not realise that his new bride is in fact a young boy. As we shall see in later chapters in this thesis, many who reproduced or responded to Aretino also reframed him in either newly moral or immoral terms, to suit their purpose. Here we can see that Jonson has

⁶³ Louise George Clubb. *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989) esp. her introduction to 'theatergrams'.

⁶⁴ See Daileader 'The Courtesan Revisited' (2007) esp. pp.231-5

⁶⁵ On the similarities of the narrative, see Campbell, 'The Relation of *Epicoene* to Aretino's *Il Marescalco*'

⁶⁶ Beecher, 'Aretino's minimalist art goes to England', p.775

created a heteronormative version of Aretino's play, with the central character's fear of being married to a woman primarily due to misogyny, rather than his homosexuality.

It is a fair assumption that Shakespeare, Middleton and Jonson derived their knowledge of Aretino's comedies from Wolfe's *Quattro Comedie* because it was the most recent, uncensored, and local edition available to them, yet this English edition also circulated in continental Europe thanks to Wolfe's trading at the international Frankfurt book fair. The Dutch critic E. K. Grootes has shown through close analysis of another of Aretino's comedies, *L'Ipocrito*, that it was Wolfe's 1588 edition that was used by the Amsterdam playwright Pieter C. Hooft for his translation of Aretino's play into Dutch. Renamed *Schijnheyligh* (c.1618) Hooft had originally intended this translation for performance, and his translations survive in manuscript only.⁶⁷ Hooft's prose translation was soon transformed by Gerard Bredero, another member of his literary coterie the 'Rederijkers', into verse form, and this was later published as part of a posthumous collection of Bredero's plays in 1624.

We could conclude that Aretino's comedies were being advertised by the Wolfe press to an elite audience for their educational and literary merit, while being transformed by English playwrights such as Jonson, Middleton, and Shakespeare into more popular stage plays. This act of translation and adaptation would in some respects have devalued Aretino's works in the eyes of English readers. In 1612 Thomas Bodley wrote to his head librarian at the Bodleian Library forbidding the acquisition of English playtexts along with other printed ephemera such as almanacks and ballads, claiming that they were 'baggage books' containing 'very unworthy matters & handling.' He did not hold the same views for the plays 'of other nations'. They are 'not like English plays...because they are most esteemed for learning the languages, & many of them compiled by men of great fame for wisdom & learning, which is seldom or never seen among us.'⁶⁸ Bodley is making a clear value judgement here. Firstly, the topic of the play is almost irrelevant to him, as he simply states that contemporary foreign plays can be used by English readers to learn a foreign language. Secondly, Bodley believes that the compilers of these foreign plays are an educated elite, 'men of great fame for wisdom and learning', which by implication the producers of English

⁶⁷ Grootes mentions another seventeenth century manuscript translation in German which used *Quattro Comedie* as the copy-text for *Il Marescalco* and *L'Hipocrito* and which is now held in Vienna's Nationalbibliothek. p.25

⁶⁸ Thomas Bodley, *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, first keeper of the Bodleian library* ed. G.W. Wheeler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926) p.221

playtexts are not. English plays are for entertainment only while foreign plays, whether classical or modern, are of educational value.

Printed copies of foreign comedies such as the *Quattro Comedie* were on the one hand being taken more seriously than English plays by virtue of providing a way to learn a foreign language, yet on the other, they were suspected, as we shall see in chapter 4, of having a potentially debasing effect on the public if they were translated into English and performed in front of an unwitting audience. Aretino's comedies, as well as his other works, would continue to live this parallel existence: popular amongst a small group of connoisseurs, but adapted beyond recognition when such connoisseurs put his words into translation for a wider audience.

Wolfe, Elsevir and Xuárez's humanist rhetoric

Wolfe's editions were not the only posthumous reproduction of Aretino to ignore the edict of the Catholic Church which had placed Aretino on the Index of Forbidden Books. The famous humanist press of Elsevir in Leiden which later moved permanently to Amsterdam, reprinted Wolfe's *prima parte...Ragionamenti* under the new title of *Capricciosi & Piaceuoli Ragionamenti* in 1600, 1620, 1650 and 1660.⁶⁹ The Italian language reprint included the Barbargria preface, the main content of the *Sei Giornate*, the Zoppino dialogue and the Annibal Caro texts, and supplemented these with a second introduction and marginal notes to aid the reader with difficult Italian phrases. This second Elsevir introduction claims many of the same humanist tenets as that of Castelvetro and Wolfe: textual accuracy, an appreciation of authorial intention, and the argument that books themselves are not immoral, but that it is the reader who has good or bad intensions. This is an argument used by many others in defence of supposedly immoral books, and will be repeated throughout this thesis.

The Elsevir preface to the *Capricciosi* explains that the editor added marginal notes 'to smooth out the truth of things that are obscure, and show the true meaning of the difficult

⁶⁹ See John R. J. Ike, 'Romeyn de Hooghe: Porno-graveur? A Peek at Seventeenth-Century Dutch Erotica' in Walter Z. Shetter & Inge van der Cruysse (eds.), *Contemporary Explorations in the Culture of the Low Countries* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1996) pp.139-156, p.141. It suggests that the 1660 copy of the *Capricciosi* (from which the quotations in this chapter are taken) was printed for the international bookseller John van Ravesteyn, which implies that this edition was to circulate beyond the Low Countries.

vocabulary' (per spianare il uero senso delle cose più oscure, & dichiarare il uero significate de'vocaboli più difficili).⁷⁰ This editorial intervention should be read in contrast to the translations of a segment of the same text, the 'life of Whores', where the translators explain their mediation is to correct the immoral elements of the text for a new audience. This was the stance of the Spanish translator, Fernán Xuárez, whose *Coloquio de las Damas* (1547) was later used by later French, German and Dutch translators of Aretino, and whose moralising preface was often republished with their translations. More will be said of this reframing of Aretino in chapter 3, but for now it is necessary to mention Xuárez in relation to the Wolfe and Elsevir editions because he uses a humanist rhetoric similar to their own, but to entirely different ends. Like them, Xuárez argues that it is possible to read a bad book and not be affected by it if one is a good person. Unlike them, he presumes that it is not worth taking this risk, and therefore ends up suggesting a form of self-censorship to the reader. As such, the titlepage of the *Coloquio* comes with a warning: 'Dirigido al discreto Lector' (directed to the discreet reader).

Meanwhile, the Elsevir introduction primarily justifies any editorial intervention along grammatical and typographical lines. Like the corrector of the Wolfe editions, this introduction explains that the unusual construction of words found in the text are intentionally written by Aretino, 'to portray better the way that real people speak, and in this way depict things according to nature,' (per contra far meglio le uere maniere delle persone che parlano; & à questo modo dipinger le cose più viuamente al naturale) and that therefore 'our divine Aretin has still done very well in this, and very well observed the grace of decorum' (nostro Diuino Aretino ha ancora fatto molto bene in questo, & molto bene osseruato il decor del decoro).⁷¹ In contrast, the prefaces of the translations mention Aretino sparingly, and when they do they portray him not as a naturally gifted writer but reframe him—unexpectedly given his later reputation as a pornographer— as a moral arbiter.

⁷⁰ Preface, *Capricciosi & Piaceuoli Ragionamenti di M. Pietro Aretino, Il Veritiere e'l divino, cognominato il flagello de'Principi* (Amsterdam: Elsevir, 1660) p.3

⁷¹ Preface, *Capricciosi*, pp.7-8

The Elsevir preface praises Aretino's ability as a writer, repeating the sentiment that is reprinted in the Barbagrìgia preface which describes him as 'talented', 'divine', and a 'fine spirit'.⁷² [see also pp.63-66 on Aretino as 'divine'] It opens by declaring that:

most minds have always held these marvellous dialogues of Aretino in great esteem, not so much for the subject material, but for their extraordinary beauty, & the singular gentility of their acute conceits, subtlety & invention... In fact so much rests on the talent of Aretino, known to write with singular elegance on anything that is proposed to him, which is why he is surnamed 'divine', but above all of his writings, these whimsical and pleasant dialogues are most admired & esteemed.

*moltissimi ingegni hanno sempre hauuto in gran stima questi marauigliosi discorsi dell'Aretino, non tanto per il soggetto delle materie, quanto per la straordinaria bellezza, & la singolare gentilezza de gli acuti concetti, & delle sottili inuentioni...In fatti tanto fù il talento dell'Aretino, per scriuer con singolare eleganza di ogni cosa che si proponeua, che per questo egli fù cognominato il diuino: ma sopra tutti i suoi scritti sono ammirabili, & degni di stima, questi capricciosi & piaceuoli Ragionamenti.*⁷³

Other than their concern for accurate reproduction and an appreciation of Aretino as natural stylist, the Elsevir and the London editions are most at odds with the Xuares preface in the way that they address their readers. Wolfe and Elsevir portray their audience as able to take from a text what is good and ignore what is bad. The reader of Aretino is imagined as an educated man: 'For sure, it is not good for those who are slaves of vice, and dedicated to wrongdoings: but for wise men, virtuous, and with souls of moderation, I can assure you that this work will bring them great profit and delight' (Per certo, che non è buono per quelli, che sono schiaui del uizio, & tutti dedicati à far male: ma per huomini sauui, virtuosi, & di animo moderato, io ui posso assicurare, che questa opera arrecherà loro insieme grande utile & gran diletto).⁷⁴ This reflects the Barbagrìgia preface which had accused 'our Pater-noster chewers' of leaving no freedom to the reader to discern the difference between what

⁷² Preface, *La prima parte*, sig.A2v

⁷³ Preface, *Capricciosi*, pp.3-4

⁷⁴ Preface, *Capricciosi*, p.6

is good and bad. It also uses similar phrases to Xuárez who separates those readers 'inclined to vice' from those who are 'virtuous'. The difference, however, is that while Xuárez agrees that the reader is ultimately responsible (which conveniently removes any blame from him for having caused this translation to be printed) he concludes that if the reader knows that he is likely to sin by reading this translation, then why risk putting himself in harm's way by continuing to read it?

A short essay precedes Xuárez' translation, entitled 'THE DOUBT IS; if it is a sin to read books of profane stories: such as the books of Amadis & don Tristran, & this Dialogue' (ES LA DUDA; Si es pecado leer libros de historias prophanes: como los libros de Amadis y de don Tristan, y como este Coloquio).⁷⁵ In this essay Xuárez discusses the question of whether it is acceptable to read works of literature considered profane by the Catholic church, such as Aretino's *Sei Giornate*, and romances like Amadis de Gaul and Tristan and Isolde, both of which were in vogue in Spain during the Sixteenth Century. He goes into great depth about the levels of sin committed by reading such books, so that if read in order to seduce women, or to entertain thoughts of adultery, then it would be a mortal sin, but if read 'only for their subtlety and liveliness of wit in which they are said' (sino solo por la sotileza & bieuza de ingenio con que se dizen) then it would not. If read as a distraction from daily obligations, however, then it would be a venial sin.⁷⁶

As a coda to this, at the end of Xuárez' translation of Aretino, he includes three stanzas of couplets which claim that 'it is good that they are put in profane books, to be of warning to the readers' (es bien que se pongan en libros prophanes, para avisar a los lectores). These stanzas reiterate his previous message in a reduced format. The first explains that according to learned doctors, there is nothing so bad that one cannot extract some good from it. In the second he tells the reader to 'be prudent' (si fueres prudente) when reading this translation, and to be 'greatly careful never to incur something in which you could mortally sin' (Ten gran cuydado que nunca consientas/ En cosa que peques mortiferamente). In the final stanza, he reminds the reader that they must think of their eternal life and not be distracted by earthly pleasures.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ 'Es la duda', Fernán Xuárez, *Coloquio de las damas: agora nuevamente corregido y emendado* (Seville: 1607) p.11. (translation my own).

⁷⁶ 'Es la duda', Xuárez, p.13

⁷⁷ Xuárez, pp.140-1

With two paratextual health-warnings framing his translation, Xuárez is clearly attempting to show that he is not going against the Catholic faith by publishing this translation of a not-yet censored Aretino in 1547.⁷⁸ He is careful to distinguish between the potential for mortal and venial sins that the reader may incur by reading this translation, and in the last of his couplets says that the reader has been sufficiently 'warned', and will therefore 'reject the profane [within the text] according to the Catholic manner' (que suera ausiado/ Huyra lo profano catholicamente').⁷⁹

If Xuárez was expressing a confessional Catholic position, he is also 'catholic' in his prioritising of the universality of his readers over their individualism, when he implies that the majority of readers are impressionable and should not even begin to read his translation of Aretino, due to the likelihood that they will sin.

every Reader... be warned, that when reading such books, [you] go with care not to allow anything read there to become a mortal sin... if one realises that according to one's condition, one could not, or not without great difficulty, read such books without, while reading, consenting or amusing oneself with the things told there that are dishonest, or of such quality that one could not amuse oneself by considering them without falling into mortal sin, in such a case, one would mortally sin by reading these books, because one puts himself in a position to sin mortally, and in something that could be avoided.

todos los Lectores...tengan tal aviso, que quando los tales libros leyeren vayan con cuydado de no consentir en cosa que alli lean, que sea pecado mortal, ni holgarse dela pensar... y si vee que segun su conicion no podra, o no sin gran dificultad leer los dichos libros, sin que estando leyendo venga a consentir o holgarse de cosas que alli se cuentan, que son desonestas, o de tal calidad que la persona no puede holgarse en considerarlas sin que caygan en pecado mortal, en tal caso pecara mortalmente en leer estos

⁷⁸ This may be due to pressure from the Sevillian church on Xuárez, as at the same time that his translation was published, and in fact republished in 1548-9, the archbishop of Seville Fernando de Valdés had been made the Inquisitor general.

⁷⁹ Xuárez, p.141

*libros: Porque se pone en peligro de pecar mortalmente, y en cosa que puede excusar.*⁸⁰

Xuárez is taking a position which would later be officially voiced by the Council of Trent, that due to the possibility that a reader might mortally sin by the reading of fiction, it is better for the majority of readers to avoid fiction altogether. Although arriving at completely different conclusions about the potential danger of Aretino's writing to the reader, Xuárez shares a similarly elitist outlook with the Wolfe and Elsevir editors when he implies that the ideal reader of his translation is a studious person accustomed to reading, who can discern the difference between what is good and what is bad in the text. Practically the only situation in which Xuárez says that profane books can be read without danger is:

if one reads them as a moderate recreation, as if one accustomed to study would be ill, and could not be able to be without reading or listening to someone read something, and realises that to read scientific subjects will tire his intellect, such a one could with merit read these books, because this way of study is as a medicine.

*y si vno los leyese por manera de recreacion moderada, como si vno que esta acostumbrado a estudio, estuuiese mal, & no pudiesse sin congoxa estar sin leer o oyr leer algo, y vee que leer cosa de ciencia le fatiga el ingenio, este tal podria con merito leer los tales libros, porque aquella manera de lecion, es como medicina.*⁸¹

Because Wolfe and Elsevir's editions of Aretino were republished in Italian, it is easier to say that they intended these for a specialised audience of an educated elite who could read Aretino in the original Italian, but Xuárez's paratexts show that translation into the vernacular was not necessarily a populist act, as Thomas Bodley or antitheatrical writers feared. Admittedly the majority of the later translations which used Xuárez as their copy text excluded both his essay and couplets warning the unsuspecting reader of the moral danger of reading this book. A 1623 Latin translation from Frankfurt titled *Pornodidascalus* is also

⁸⁰ 'Es la duda', Xuárez, p.14

⁸¹ 'Es la duda', Xuárez, pp.13-4

'humanist' in its inclusion of an errata list and a supplemented history on the Fall of Rome, as well as being limited to those educated in Latin, while a Dutch translation from 1646, *Het Net der Wellustigheyt* (The Net of Lasciviousness) translates and even expands Xuárez's couplets into five stanzas. The anonymous Dutch translator removes the direction to read 'catholicamente', but instead warns that even if you are a 'King or a Prince', if you give yourself over to worldly pleasures, then you will 'stand before the judge's-chair, trembling and quaking'. (Sal voor die reghter-stoel, staen schidren en beven).⁸² While no longer a Catholic warning, the attempt to control how a reader should interpret a potentially dangerous text was still a feature of these later translations.

Conclusion: a defence against censorship?

The complaint of the Wolfe prefaces that the works of Aretino are being ruined by the inaccuracies of previous reprints is on one level an attack on the abilities of other printers, yet the suggestion that the writing has been 'torn' and left with 'a thousand lacuni' also points to something more sinister: the censorship and expurgation of banned authors in Italy and other Catholic countries during the final decades of the Sixteenth Century. These prefaces should be read in the context of other Italian printers and editors willingly taking part in the expurgation of vernacular literature from the 1570s onwards. Wolfe and Castelvetro were primarily trading their books to Italy, and so the defence of their editorial practices and their attempt to return Machiavelli and Aretino's writing to their original form becomes not so much an uptight editor's concern with the minutiae of orthography and accurate copy texts, but an issue of free speech. Usually, when it comes to discussing censorship, critics who deal with Wolfe's Italian editions tend to focus on the false imprints, or Wolfe's part as one of the leaders of the 1582 Printers' revolt.⁸³ The closest to discussing the paratextual language of the Aretino and Machiavelli texts are Michael Wyatt and Bianca Calabresi, the latter looking specifically at the corrector's comments and errata in the paratext of the *Quattro Comedie*, but still what has not been done is to combine this interest

⁸² I. de. L, *Het net der wellustigheyt*, (Amsterdam, 1646), reprinted with introduction by A.N.W. van der Plank, (Deventer: Sub Rosa, 1982) p.128

⁸³ See Huffman, *Elizabethan Impressions: John Wolfe and his Press* (1988); Fabio Massimo Bertolo, 'John Wolfe, un editore Inglese tra Aretino e Machiavelli', *Il Rinascimento Italiano di fronte alla Riforma: Letteratura e Arte*, eds. Chrysa Damianaki, Paolo Proacaccioli, Angelo Romano, (Roma: Vecchiarelli Editore, 2005) pp.199-208; Massai (2005); Lawrence, *'Who the Devil'*, pp.187-201; Loewenstein, pp.27-50; Michael Wyatt, pp.185-198

in Wolfe as a printer of pirated texts together with the ethical question of creating accurate reprints.

The question of morality and accuracy are expressed in the Aretino paratexts through the use of the language of 'resurrected' and 'torn' texts. Wolfe and Castelvetro's insistence on errata lists and accurate reproduction may be acknowledged as unusual English editorial practices for this period, but it has so far never been interpreted as an attempt to counteract the work that Italian censorship had done to these texts.

The initial 1559 Index of Prohibited Books had banned specific texts that it deemed either licentious or heretical, but in 1564 the Tridentine Act went one step further by introducing blanket bans on entire literary genres. It was meant to be a kinder act, and removed some specific texts from the original list, however it actually exacerbated the problems of censorship by replacing the earlier Index's specificity with a more vague prescription of licentious literature. Vernacular literature came under attack mostly because these were books that everyone read. In contrast, the readers of heretical texts in Italy at this time were a self-selecting few, who were willing to make the effort to find, buy and read banned, usually abstruse theological books.⁸⁴ The authorities had realised that the books that were insidiously damaging to religious orthodoxy were those in the vernacular and mostly fictional works which were both unedifying and irreverent towards traditional values.⁸⁵ Entire literary genres were being banned, from 'dishonest comedies', 'amorous letters', 'dishonest and lascivious madrigals', to 'works in Latin verse as well as scripture in the vernacular' and so on.⁸⁶ These blanket bans made it harder for booksellers, publishers, and readers on one hand, and the enforcers of the Index on the other to be certain about whether a specific work fell within the restrictions of the ban or not.

In these confusing times, a new approach to censoring books took hold in the 1570s and 1580s. Rather than destroying vernacular books deemed to be lascivious, they would be expurgated of unorthodoxy, then resold as 'rassetatura' (repaired) texts. This was the case with the 1573 and 1582 editions of Boccaccio's *Decameron* printed at the Giunti press,

⁸⁴ Gaetano Cozzi, 'Books and Society', *Journal of Modern History* 51. 1 (1979) pp.86-98, p.95

⁸⁵ On the effects of the Index on vernacular literature, see Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), though since Grendler's article, the study of the Index has been extended much further since the opening of archives of the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith in Rome in 1998. This has led to collections such as Gigliona Fragnito's *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, transl. by Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

⁸⁶ See Ugo Rozzo, 'Italian Literature on the Index', in *Church, Censorship and Culture*, p.205

which coincides with the time that Wolfe seems to have been apprenticed to them while in Florence, and to whom the reference to 'Florentines' as having 'torn' the Aretino texts in the Wolfe preface might also apply.⁸⁷ In a chapter on vernacular literature in Gigliana Fragnito's important study, *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (2001), Ugo Rozzo gives further examples of this practice of expurgating literary texts. Luigi Pulci's romantic epic *Morgante* (1483) was reprinted in 1574 by the printer Bartolomeo Sermartelli, and was 'purged in everything and corrected of past errors' in order for it to be brought back 'from death to life or at least from deepest slumber' and be 'more beautiful than ever', while the 1597 expurgator of Francesco Doni's *Mondi celesti, terrestri ed infernali* (1562) wrote in his dedication that if Doni were to return to life, 'he would thank the person who has corrected and emended his *Modi e Inferni*, thus providing him with an honoured and praiseworthy lesson.'⁸⁸

One of the most prolific expurgators of contemporary Italian literature was Girolamo Giovannini whose 'restored' texts were incredibly popular, with multiple reprints and editions. In the dedication to the expurgated edition of Nicolò Franco's *Dialogi Piacevoli* (1539, expurgated edition in 1590) Giovannini defended his work as a professional expurgator by explaining that by rewriting books such as Franco's which had been banned by the religious authorities, he was in fact restoring them to life in a form that was acceptable to the majority of readers. He claims that without his intervention, the work would otherwise have been effectively 'dead' through lack of circulation.⁸⁹ Xuárez comes to a similar conclusion in his letter to the reader ('El Interprete al Lector'). He writes in response to 'anyone [more] curious than it would be desirable' who 'mumble accusations' (Si por ventura alguno mas curioso delo que conuiene murmurando acusasse) that this translation has been altered, that

in diverse places of this Dialogue, there are many words which because of the liberty in which they are spoken and written in the place where they were printed [i.e. Venice], have suffered, which in our Spain it would not be allowed to be printed at all, due to their dishonesty. Because of this, in its

⁸⁷ For a summary, see Tim Carter, 'Another Promoter of the 1582 "Rassetatura" of the "Decameron"', *The Modern Language Review*, 81.4 (Oct., 1986), 893-899

⁸⁸ Rozzo, 'Italian Literature on the Index', pp. 194-222, p.216, p.217

⁸⁹ Rozzo, 'Italian Literature', p.219

place it was deemed fit to put more honest [words], taking care in every place not to dismantle the sentence, even if by different words except in some parts where the word was necessary; because it would be fruitless, and of much scandal, and gossip.

en diuersos lugares deste Coloquio, halle muchos vosablos que con la libertad que ay enel hablar y enel escreuir donde el se imprimio se sufren, que en nuestra España no se permitirian en ninguna impreßion, por la desonestidad dellos. De cuya causa en su lugar acorde de poner otros mas onestos, procurando en todo no desuiarme dela sentencia, aunque por diferentes vocablos excepto en algunas partes donde totalment conuino huyr della: por ser de poco fruto, y de mucho escandalo, y murmuracion.⁹⁰

In Venice of the mid 1530s, Xuárez writes, Aretino's work was allowed to be printed without any hindrance but in Spain of the late 1540s 'it would not be allowed to be printed at all.' The only option if the text was to be translated into Spanish was for him to remove any 'dishonest' elements from the text. The problem is that rather than resuscitating these banned texts, expurgators were rewriting them to such an extent that they were often made to express views which were antithetical to the writer's initial argument. Franco's *Dialogi Piacevoli*, for example, had been a work of anti-Roman polemic, now transformed into an apology for the Catholic church's orthodoxy. These transformations and rewritings are a recurrent feature of the material circulation of Aretino, and will be further discussed in this thesis.

What professional expurgators shared with the Wolfe press is the acknowledgement that censorship 'kills' texts through a lack of circulation. What they disagree on are the ethics and methods of reviving these banned texts. Both use similar language of light and resurrection. The *Quattro Comedie* is 'newly restored, through the medium of print, to the light' (novallamete ritornate, per mezzo della stampa, a luce) but so too is Salviati's expurgated edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron* which claims to be both 'rassetature (repaired) and authentic: 'newly reprinted, and compared in Florence to ancient texts' (di nouo ristampato, e riscontrato in Firenze con testi antichi). Sermartelli's cleaned-up version

⁹⁰ 'El Interprete al Lector', Xuárez, p.15

of *Morgante* is brought back 'from death to life or at least from deepest slumber', while Wolfe encourages his readers to provide him with Aretino's undiscovered (or nonexistent) 'tragedy of Christ' so that 'through the medium of the press, I may return it to you, and all over the world, in the guise of a resurrected Phoenix.' The same language is used to express opposing purposes. What one man considers to be the 'repairing' of a text to a more morally sound version of itself, the other considers to be 'tearing' the originally written text to pieces.

We might think it misplaced for 'Barbagrigia' to attack other printers rather than the religious institutions which justified such censorship, yet other printers and editors were complicit in reprinting these expurgated texts. In this context, we should not recoil when Barbagrigia claims to be reproducing the works of Aretino as he first intended them, 'redacted to the way he composed them, and in the same manner that he had intended of the first print'. This is not someone writing of an essentialist 'original' text, but instead speaking against the disregard and indeed aggression for Aretino by censors wishing to remove his lascivious works from circulation. We can also read the editors' encouragement of their readers to be actively involved not only as the usual presentation of humanist reading practises, but also as part of their plan to offset the many expurgated form of texts that are otherwise in circulation, by encouraging the reproduction of what they deemed to be 'accurate' texts.

All of these issues indicate that the meaning of these texts did not reside in the initial impetus of a subject such as Aretino, or the object or text that resulted, but rather in the process of making, undoing, and remaking new versions of this text. It is the making and breaking of contingent relationships between all of the various actors that is the main focus of the material section of this thesis. These relationships are being reworked to produce either the supposedly 'accurate' reprints from Wolfe's press or the expurgated reprints that these London imprints were competing with, both attempting to rewrite what has gone before, sometimes even negating it, and in both cases evolving the representation of Aretino with each new moment of recycling. 'Barbagrigia' as much as Giovannini realise that if this recycling work is not done, if the cessation of action (whether through censorship or disinterest) succeeds, the text will 'die'. This is why Castelvetro repeatedly raises concern at the scarcity of material available for him to reproduce, and why he and Wolfe attempt to shore up writers such as Machiavelli and Aretino by creating a 'collected works'.

When other critics have approached the issue of Aretino's censorship, it has been the type of censorship which leads to inaction: a ban on printing eventually kills off his work. In the rest of this thesis, what I am interested in is the balance between this form of censorship, and the form that Rozzo highlights, that more subtle form of censorship which gives the appearance of reproduction, yet remoulds the content into a more palatable form. Such active processes of censorship by expurgators and the translators and adaptors that I discuss in chapter 3 and chapter 5 could also arguably be read as aiding Aretino to evolve in a time in which his writing was no longer acceptable. His work had been cleaned up, re-suited and re-booted for an age more sensitive to satire on religious and sexual grounds. Although this thesis is about the posthumous reputation of Aretino, I hope to show an 'Aretino in the making' rather than an 'Aretino ready-made'.

Chapter 2:

English Aretines: Elizabethan writers living by their wits

This chapter together with chapters 4 and 6, make up a strand of literary responses to Aretino, primarily from England, from the 1580s to the 1660s. They are largely chronological, and show the three main stages in which Aretino's posthumous reputation changed in the minds of English readers in the century after his death, from admiration of his wit and satirical edge, through to questions over his morality and possible atheism, until finally references to his actual writing disappear, and instead Aretino's reputation as a pornographer becomes the primary subject for references, making the term 'Aretine' a metonym for eroticism.

Just as Thomas Bodley considered foreign plays to be useful for learning another language, irrespective of their subject matter, many of the Elizabethan writers of this chapter were approaching Aretino as a stylist from whom to learn a superabundant rhetoric, though as I hope to show in the case of the self-proclaimed 'English Aretine' Thomas Nashe, this did not necessarily mean mindless copying, but instead an attempt to follow Aretino in spirit, and develop one's own brand of extemporal English wit. This chapter and chapter 1 therefore share an emphasis on the reception of Aretino as a professional writer rather than as a representative of immorality as he would later be known. Both chapters show that, despite the cause-and-effect narrative of Aretino's decline into obscurity after the censorship of his entire works, decades afterwards he was still being talked about and discussed as a contemporary writer and stylist in England.

Divine wits, for many things as sufficient as all antiquity...Lilly, the famous for facility in discourse: Spencer, best read in ancient Poetry: Daniel, choise in word, and invention: Draiton, diligent and formall: Th. Nash, true English Aretine.

Thomas Lodge, *Wits Miserie*, (1596)

1596 had been a busy year for Thomas Lodge. In one year, six of the writer's books had graced the shelves of bookshops, from romances and religious texts to a volume of poetry and a satire called *Wits Miserie and the World's Madnesse*.¹ In this last book the sin of jealousy is represented by the devil *Belzebub* stalking the streets of London, slandering those more successful than himself, including a select group of 'divine wits' who Lodge says 'endure the reproofe' of his jealousy. These 'divine wits' are the five writers mentioned in the epigraph above: John Lyly, Edmund Spenser, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, and Thomas Nashe. Lodge advises them to 'unite [their] fames in publicke' and defend each other against their harshest critics.²

Despite this encouragement to band together as a group, Lodge ascribes specific literary skills to each writer: 'facility in discourse', 'best read in ancient Poetry', 'choice in word and invention', 'diligent and formal', and then, maybe unexpectedly, 'true English Aretine'. In contrast to the others, it seems an odd decision to ascribe the name of the notoriously bawdy Pietro Aretino (in its anglicised form 'Peter Aretine') to one writer in a list of stylistic features. Yet, despite Aretino's reputation in early modern Europe as the producer of erotic images commonly known as 'Aretine's Postures' and the pornographic prose text *La puttana errante*,³ to Nashe and this group of writers he was instead known for his vivid writing style which he claimed was derived from a naturally, even divinely, inspired wit. More than that, Aretino became a symbol for this new generation, as a fiercely independent professional writer who had managed to become rich by living on his wits alone.

Although the majority of texts which mention the term 'Aretine' from the 1590s onward associate it with concepts such as licentiousness, corruption, sodomy or atheism, for some writers the word 'Aretine' was not necessarily a negative word. On the contrary, in the university play *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus* (c.1601) Aretino is described as 'truth-telling' and 'plaine-dealing'.⁴ This honesty topos places Aretino in the company of many other satirists. In *The Cankered Muse* (1959), Alvin Kernan points out that there are two main satirical personae which, he argues, are often confused by readers and

¹ The other five titles are *Rosalynde*, *A Margarite of America*, *Prosopopeia*, *The Devil Conjured*, and *A Fig for Momus*

² Thomas Lodge, *Wits miserie, and the worlds madnesse: discovering the devils incarnate of this age*, (London: Adam Islip, 1596) p.57

³ In both cases these were misattributed. See chapter 5 of this thesis.

⁴ Anon, 'The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus', *The Three Parnassus plays*, ed. James B. Leishman, (London: Nicholas & Watson, 1949) (I.i.l.117) p.226; (I.ii.l.278) p.242

biographers alike with the real personality of the writer. When describing satirists such as Juvenal, Pope, Byron, Swift or Philip Wylie biographical critics 'seem always to be talking about the same proud, fiery, intolerant, irascible man whom no one would want for a neighbour', while describing Ovid, Chaucer, Langland or Skelton, these same critics describe them as 'straightforward, honest, pessimistic, indignant men who dislike ostentatious rhetoric, come from the country, and have simple moral codes.'⁵ Aretino, meanwhile, created a public persona for himself which drew on a combination of the two models: an honest man, who disliked the rhetoric and dishonesty of courtiers, while also a fiery, vicious blackmailer of princes.

This was done not only through his writing, but also through the medals which he gave out to patrons and friends portraying him *all'antica*,⁶ and with his lips slightly parted as if in speech.⁷ This image [fig.2] was copied from the frontispieces of many of his works together with mottos such as the *sententia* 'veritas odium parit' (truth brings forth hatred). This combination of image and text had become so successful, that it continued to represent Aretino in the posthumous foreign reprints of his writing. Think for example of Wolfe's 1588 & 1589 editions which reproduced this woodcut of Aretino encircled by the words 'D[ivino] Petrus Aretinus flagellum principum' (Divine Pietro Aretino, scourge of princes), and underneath this, the motto 'veritas odium parit'.⁸

The words that surround the engraving of Aretino, 'Divine Aretino, scourge of princes' were first used by Ludovico Ariosto in the third edition of his *Orlando Furioso* (1532): 'ecco il flagello/ De principi, il divin Pietro Aretin' (see the scourge/ of princes, the divine Pietro Aretino).⁹ Yet by the latter part of the century, naming someone divine was a practice that Michel de Montaigne deemed to be 'unworthily employed' and overused by Italian artists and writers. In 1580 Montaigne complained in his essay, *De la vanité des paroles* (on the

⁵ Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) p.16, p.22

⁶ *all'antica*: 'in the Antique style', was inspired by classical sculpture, architecture, and writing, and in the Renaissance became a fashionable style to adopt in portraiture, as the medal portrait of Aretino shows.

⁷ For more on these medals, see Raymond Waddington 'A Satirist's Impresa: The Medals of Pietro Aretino', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 42.4 (Winter, 1989) pp.655-681; and Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* (2004) pp.63-65; pp.98-100

⁸ This image was also reproduced on the 1589 cover of Wolfe's title page of Aretino's *terza parte de Ragionamenti*, while on the cover of the 1584 *prime parte* Aretino is named as 'cognominato il flagello de prencipi, il veritiero, e'l divino'

⁹ Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso di messer Ludouivo Ariosto nobile ferrarese nuouamente da lui proprio corretto e d'altri canti nuoui ampliato con gratie e priuilegii* (Ferrara: Francesco Rossa da Calenza, 1532) canto 46, 14

vanity of words), that whereas the ancients 'honoured one or two great men' such as Plato with the epithet of divinity, the Italians now applied it to anyone that they liked, to the extent that:

now the Italians, who rightly boast of having in general more lively minds and saner discourse than other people of their time, have made a gift of it to Aretino, in whom (apart from a style of writing stuffed and simmering over with pointed sayings, ingenious it is true but fantastical and far-fetched, and apart from his eloquence—such as it is) I can see nothing beyond the common run of authors of his century, so far is he from even approaching that "divinity" of the Ancients. And the title Great we now attach to kings who have nothing beyond routine greatness.

*et les Italiens qui se vantent, et avecques raison, d'avoir communément l'esprit plus esveillé, et le discours plus sain que les autres nations de leur temps, en viennent d'estrener l'Aretin: auquel, sauf une façon de parler bouffie et bouillonnée de pointes, ingénieuses à la vérité, mais recherchées de loing, et fantastiques: et outre l'eloquence en fin, telle qu'elle puisse estre, je ne voy pas qu'il y ait rien au dessus des communs autheurs de son siecle : tant s'en faut qu'il approche de cette divinité ancienne. Et le surnom de Grand, nous l'attachons à des Princes, qui n'ont rien au dessus de la grandeur populaire.*¹⁰

To Montaigne, Aretino appeared to be the least qualified of writers to be surnamed 'divine', a name which was also attributed to artists such as Michelangelo and Titian and writers such as Dante and Ariosto.¹¹ He does, however, acknowledge that Aretino's writing style is 'ingenious' and to a certain extent 'eloquent', even if he finds it overly imaginative (recherchées de loing/fantastiques) and verbose (parler bouffie et bouillonnée de pointes).

¹⁰ Michel de Montaigne, 'On the vanity of words', *The Complete Essays*, translated by M.A. Screech (London: Penguin Classics, 1991) p.344, and *Les Essais*, eds. Pierre Villey & Verdun-Louis Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France) 1992 p.307

¹¹ See Patricia A. Emison, *Creating the 'Divine' Artist: From Dante to Michelangelo*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004) on the use of the label 'divine' as a praise of artists and the emergence of artistic fame during the Italian Renaissance.

It is this verbosity and imagination which, though dismissed by Montaigne, was admired by that 'English Aretine', Thomas Nashe.

Aretino had in fact repeated the epithet 'divine' of himself prior to Ariosto on the title page of his *Laude di Clemente VII* (1524) on which he calls himself a 'Divino Poeta', yet Ariosto's endorsement made the epithet stick. In the same edition, Ariosto had referred punningly to Michelangelo Buonarroti as 'Michel, più che mortale, Angel divino' (Michael, more than mortal, Angel divine).¹² Aretino pounced on this pun on the artist's name, and wrote to his fellow 'divine' when he sent a letter 'al divino Michelangelo' in September 1537, telling him that the world had many divines, but only one Michelangelo.¹³ In a subsequent letter Aretino, frustrated with the artist for refusing to send him sketches of *The Last Judgement*, warns Michelangelo that 'while you may be divine, I am not made of water [a pun on 'divine,': di vino, 'of wine']...do not forget that I am one to whose epistles kings and emperors reply.'¹⁴

Whether 'divine' or 'di-vino', after his death and the censorship of his entire works, writers like Montaigne would dismiss Aretino's epithet as undeserved. Even the son of Aretino's friend Jacopo Sansovino considered Ariosto's epithet as a joke. Despite having dedicated his treatise *La Retorica* (1543) to Aretino, Francesco Sansovino later described him in 1581 as:

called the scourge of princes for the licentious presumption of his very biting pen, and he, dying, lost his reputation: since, being ignorant of letters and following his natural impulses, after death the deserved recompense of his impertinence was that his things were judged by the church unseemly for a Christian, and forbidden to all readers, and he would have been completely forgotten if Ariosto hadn't, joking about the epithet, that he had undeservedly taken, in the *Orlando Furioso* said, 'Behold the scourge of princes, the divine Pietro Aretino'

il quale fu cognominato Flagello de Principi per la licentiosa presuntione della sua mordacissima penna, & il quale morendo perdè del tutto il nome:

¹² Ariosto, canto 33, 2.

¹³ Emison, p.141, p.145.

¹⁴ Pietro Aretino, quoted in *Italian Art, 1500-1600: Sources and Documents*, eds. Robert Klein, M.D. Henri Zerner (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1989) p.122

poi che essendo ignaro di lettere, & operando per forza di natura ne suoi capricci, hebbe dopo morte il meritato premio della sua petulantia conciosia che essendo le cose sue reputate dalle Chiese poco christiane, furono vietate del tutto a lettori, & si sarebbe affatto cancellata la sua memoria, se 'Ariosto burlandosi del titolo, ch'egli si haveva preso indebitamente non havesse detto nel Furioso, 'Ecco il flagello De i Principi, il divin Pietro Aretino'¹⁵

For Sansovino, Ariosto was not praising but mocking Aretino's presumption in calling himself 'divine', and suggests that if it weren't for the popularity of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Aretino 'would have been completely forgotten', or as it is in the Italian even more destructively phrased 'have his memory erased' (*cancellata la sua memoria*). Aretino's own pun on the name 'divino' encapsulates the dual identity that he would be plagued with for decades after his death. On the one hand he continued to be identified by a loyal few as a divinely inspired, truth-telling satirist, while on the other he would be read as a fantastical and morally dubious writer, more full of wine than divinity.

The 'Metempsychosis' of Aretino into Nashe

This dual reputation of being a divine wit and morally dubious character would be transferred to Thomas Nashe through his affiliation with the Italian writer. This association between the two writers had even travelled out of the microcosm of the London literary sphere to the university city of Cambridge. The previous reference to Aretino as 'truth-telling' in the *Second Return from Parnassus* was made by the character Ingenioso, who opens the play reading aloud from a copy of Juvenal's *Satires*. Inspired by the great satirist's criticisms of the hypocrisy and corruption of urban society, Ingenioso promises to follow Juvenal's lead, but also that of Aretino's:

Soone should my angry ghost a story write
In which I would new-fostred sinnes combine,

¹⁵ Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia, Città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XIII Libri* (1581) quoted & translated in Emison, p.142

Not knowne earst by truth-telling Aretine.¹⁶

Out of context, this passage seems to bear no relation to Nashe at all. However, Ingenioso was first introduced in *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* (c.1599) in which he closely paraphrases the opening speech of Nashe's malcontented scholar and satirical persona, Pierce Penilless. The three Parnassus plays were performed in St John's College, Nashe's *alma mater*, and by the time of *The Second Returne* Ingenioso has moved to London and is working for Nashe's real-life printer, John Danter. Nashe was also known as a 'young Juvenal',¹⁷ and so Ingenioso's entrance must allude to Nashe, and in turn, suggest that Nashe is in competition to be a greater satirist than Aretino.

If fans of Nashe in Cambridge associated the writer with Aretino, then so too did Nashe's nemesis, the scholar and writer Gabriel Harvey. During the heated exchange of pamphlets between the two men which is now known (unimaginatively) as the 'Harvey-Nashe Quarrel', Harvey repeatedly suggests that Nashe wants to be the next Aretino. He describes how Nashe has 'haunted Aretine, and Rabelays, the two monstrous wittes of their languages,' and was 'shaken with the furious feavers of [Aretino].'¹⁸ For Harvey, Aretino is not a 'truth-teller' but 'monstrous' and furiously feverish, reminiscent of Montaigne's denunciation of him as 'fantastical' and 'far-fetched'. Though they may interpret Aretino's qualities differently, both the *Parnassus* play and Harvey describe the connection between Nashe and Aretino in supernatural terms: 'my angry ghost' and 'haunted', echoing Nashe's promise in *Pierce Penilless* (1592) to write to the ghosts of Aretino, Robert Greene, and Richard Tarlton amongst others. This metaphorical use of 'haunting' pervades the sixteenth-century understanding of literary imitation and influence, and is a subject that deserves its own book.¹⁹

In Thomas Dekker's *News from Hell* (1606), this literary influence is described by using similarly supernatural language. The narrator calls on Nashe to inspire him to fulfil Nashe's

¹⁶ *Second Returne from Parnassus*, (l.i. ll.115-7) p.226

¹⁷ In Greene's *Greenes Groats-worth of Wit*, the writer refers to a 'young Juvenal', which could be read as Thomas Lodge, though it is more likely to refer to Thomas Nashe, as the 'young Juvenal' is also referred to as a 'sweet boy'. Both terms are referred to by Gabriel Harvey: 'When the sweet youth haunted Aretine', and by Francis Meres, who speaking of Nashe's exile from London after writing *The Isle of Dogs* with Ben Jonson, is mockingly consoled as 'gallant young Juvenal.'

¹⁸ Gabriel Harvey, *A new letter of notable contents, with a straunge sonet, intituled Gorgon, or the wonderfull yeare*. (London: John Wolfe, 1593) sig.B3r

¹⁹ See Chris Salamone's unpublished PhD thesis on this topic, 'Authors, Apparitions, and Rhetoric Shadows: The Literary Ghosts of Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature.' Diss. Oxford University, 2010.

promise of writing a reply from the Devil to Pierce Penilesse. This text was never completed, and so Dekker provides a way to collaborate with the recently dead Nashe. It is not just Dekker who wishes to be inhabited with another author's spirit, as he imagines how Nashe had been similarly inhabited by Aretino:

thou into whose soule (if ever there were a Pithagorean Metempsychosis)
the raptures of that fierie and unconfinable Italian spirit were bounteously
and boundlessly infused...Thomas Nashe, from whose abundant pen,
honey flow'd to thy friends, and mortall Aconite to thy enemies.²⁰

It might not be immediately obvious that this 'Italian spirit' is meant to be Aretino, however Dekker's catch-words are repetitions of the way Nashe himself had described the Italian. In *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) Nashe had professed that Aretino set each page on fire with his writing, while in the preface to *Lenten Stuff* (1599) he describes Aretino's writing as being *in extremis*, the opposite of a 'demure, soft mediocre *genus*' which he saw around him.²¹ Harvey, Dekker and Nashe repeatedly describe Aretino in kinetic terms: enraptured with furious fevers and unconfinable. Dekker charges his description with adjectives of excess and surplus, Aretino and Nashe's writing style is 'inconfinable', 'bounteous', 'boundless', 'abundant'. There is no sense of a middle ground or compromise: 'honey flowed to thy friends, and mortal Aconite [a deadly poison] to thy enemies.' Nashe uses similar terms to describe his own Aretine style in *Lenten Stuff*: 'I had as lief have no sun as have it shine faintly.'²²

Dekker is describing a scene of invocation, a tradition of the epic genre, and of religious texts such as Nashe's invocation to God in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593) in which he 'disinherits' his own 'wit' and instead asks for God's 'fiery Cloven-tongued inspiration' to be his muse.²³ In Dekker, the call for inspiration is given a similarly dark dimension. His poet's incantation is made in Hell, and calls not on God, but on a recently deceased writer, who has himself transformed through metempsychosis into Aretino, and

²⁰ Thomas Dekker, *News from Hell; brought by the Diuells carrier* (London: W Ferebrand, 1606) sigs.C2r-v

²¹ Thomas Nashe, 'Lenten Stuffle', *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Ronald.B. McKerrow, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958) vol.3, p.152. All further references to Nashe, unless otherwise stated, are to this edition.

²² Ibid.

²³ Nashe, *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, vol. 2. p.15

can deal 'mortal Aconite' through his poisoned pen. Aretino himself is described as supernaturally uncontainable within the limits of one spirit, like Hotspur in *Henry IV* part 1, for whose spirit 'A kingdom....was too small a bound'.²⁴

Dekker may have described Nashe as being infused with 'Italian spirit', yet from his earliest works of literary criticism, Nashe was much more ambivalent to the idea of his or any English writer's work being so closely derivative of contemporary Italian writers. The next part of this chapter will show that Nashe was suspicious of the contemporary literary fad for all things Italian, and instead encouraged young English writers to create a home grown reputation for themselves as prose stylists. I will argue that he was actually closer to Aretino in spirit than this initial rejection of Italian style might first suggest.

Italian wit and a vivid style

If 'Aretine' was a charged term for Lodge to use in describing Nashe, then for Dekker to suggest that he was infused with an 'Italian spirit' was equally so. As Michael Wyatt points out, the Italian proverb 'Inglese italianato è un diavolo incarnato' (an Englishman Italianate, is a devil incarnate) 'was frequently reiterated by those who opposed both the Italianate fashion and presence of Italians in England.'²⁵ In John Lyly's *Euphues and his England* (1580) Philautus explains that the term 'Italianated' was used indiscriminately by the English: 'If any English-man be infected with any misdemeanour, they say with one mouth, hee is Italianated: so odious is that nation to this, that the very man is no lesse hated for the name, then the countrey for the manners.'²⁶ This attitude towards the infectiousness of Italian culture is also clear in Roger Ascham's *The Scholemaster* (1570) in which he bemoaned fashions which were picked up by Englishmen travelling in Italy, but also through the influx of Italian books into England: 'there be more of these ungracious books set out in print within these few months, than have been seen in England many score years before.'²⁷ In fact, Ascham continues, the books were more pernicious than the Englishmen returning

²⁴ William Shakespeare, 'The First Part of Henry the Fourth, with the Life and Death of Henry surnamed Hotspur', *William Shakespeare: Complete Works*, eds. Jonathan Bate & Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2007) (V.iii.1.91) p.959

²⁵ Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter* (2005) p.60.

²⁶ John Lyly, *Euphues and his England* (London: Gabriell Cawood, 1580) p.47

²⁷ For more on Ascham and the fear of Italian books in England, see Michael Wyatt, pp.159-63, and Michael J. Redmond, *Shakespeare, Politics, and Italy: Intertextuality on the Jacobean Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) pp.29-74

from their travels abroad, 'because our Englishmen made Italians cannot hurt but certain persons, and in certain places, therefore these Italian books are made English, to bring mischief enough openly and boldly to all states, great and mean, young and old, everywhere.'²⁸ The translation of Italian books into English is reversed in the translation of Englishmen into 'Italianate' creatures: 'subtile and secret papists at home, procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby over-many young wills and wits allured to wantonness'.²⁹

In the *Second Returne from Parnassus*, we see such foreign books being sold at St Paul's Churchyard. A pretentious student, Amoretto, tells his page to remind him to look for books by foreign authors, including Aretino, amongst the bookshops: 'Sirrha boy, remember me when I come in Paule's Churchyard to buy a Ronzard and Dubartas in French and Aretine in Italian, and our hardest writers in Spanish, they wil sharpen my wits gallantly...I hear a report of a poet newly come out in Hebrew; it is a pretty harsh tongue, and telleth a gentleman traveller.'³⁰ Amoretto leaves, at which point his page turns to the audience, and tells them the truth of his master's linguistic abilities and book buying habits. He explains that though Amoretto asks for books in Spanish in Italian, he is unable to understand these languages and turns 'through his ignorance the wrong ende of the booke upward...make[s] as though he read the first page and bites a lip, then with his naile score the margent as though there were some notable conceit', and to complete the charade finally 'throwes the booke away in a rage, swearing that he could never finde bookes of a true printe since he was last in Padua.'³¹

The mockery is targeted at the affectations of a fashionable young English gentleman who wishes to be seen as a cosmopolitan and educated man. He has heard of Aretino, as well as Pierre de Ronsard— a famous writer portrayed like Aretino as a libertine and atheist as well as Ronsard's rival Guillaume du Bartas. These French and Italian writers seem to be considered passé by Amoretto, however, and so he wishes to learn the 'hardest' writers in Spanish (who they are, he seems not to know), and has heard a rumour of a newly published book of Hebrew poetry, that, if bought, would mark him out as a 'gentleman traveller'. He

²⁸ Ascham, *The scholemaster* p.27v

²⁹ Ascham, p.27r. Though Ascham was also part of a network of translators in St John's College Cambridge, who created an English version of the Italian courtesy book. See Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2003)

³⁰ *Second Return*, (III.iii.II.1267-73) pp.301-2

³¹ *Second Return*, (III.iii. II.1281-9) p.302

imagines that by reading these new writers they will 'sharpen his wits gallantly', the primary purpose for learning a foreign language. His page undercuts all of this, exposing his master's ignorance, and pretensions in presenting himself as a student of Padua, dismissive of books printed in England. Already, there are signs that Aretino is simply someone to name-drop rather than actually being read, even among the supposed elite, yet what is important here is that he is still being associated with language-learning, rather than pure eroticism.

Nashe may have a university student such as Amoretto in mind in his preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), where he writes disparagingly of the 'common practice' of translating Italian books that he sees littering the bookshops of St Paul's Churchyard. At first in this preface, it seems that Nashe is anti-Italian in his praise for English writing. He praises Robert Greene for his extemporal wit, and claims that Greene is one of only a few English writers to use his innate wit, while the majority of books available are shoddily translated and abridged texts of Italian or French origin.³² Nashe is nationalistic by listing English writers such as 'divine Master Spencer, the miracle of wit' who he would bet on to 'bandie line by line for my life, in the honour of England, against Spaine, Fraunce, Italy, and all the world' as well as 'Mathew Roydon, Thomas Achlow, and George Peele', who he praises for their scholarship and wit, and hopes are 'most able men to revive Poetry'.³³ It is not only the Italians who can claim to be 'divine' and 'witty' now, Nashe seems to be saying. Yet, in the rest of this preface Nashe shows that unlike Ascham, it is not Italian writing *per se* that he objects to, but rather the imitation of fashionable foreign writers by English writers.

This issue of 'wit' is central to our understanding of what Nashe and Aretino believed was an important feature of the contemporary writer. While Nashe certainly rehearses the same stereotypes about Italians as his contemporaries, he also praises the Italians for their wit: 'God so love me, as I love the quick-witted Italians'.³⁴ When it came to writing, what mattered for Nashe was that Italians were witty, not that they were imagined to be jealous or deceitful. The greater sin was for an Englishman to translate or adapt Italian texts, rather than to match them and create something equally witty himself:

³² In fact, the plot of *Menaphon*, subtitled *Camilla's alarum to slumbering Euphues*, is not quite so extemporal, as it has clear parallels with John Lyly's popular euphuistic texts and Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.

³³ Nashe, preface to *Menaphon*, vol.3 p.322. See also Guy-Bray's reading of Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) in light of Nashe's call for an English national prose style. Stephen Guy-Bray, 'How to turn prose into literature', in ed. Naomi Conn Liebler *Early Modern Prose Fiction: The Cultural Politics of Reading* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.33-45

³⁴ Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, vol.1. p.180

Let other men (as they please) praise...the Italianate penne that...in disguised array vaunts *Ovids* and *Plutarchs* plumes as theyr owne; but give me the man whose extemporal veine in any humour will excel our greatest Art-maisters deliberate thoughts; whose inventions, quicker then his eye, will challenge the prowdest Rhetoritian.³⁵

This extemporal wit is described as a form of natural genius, contrasted to the deliberate, learned language of rhetoricians. It is, however, also nature at its most heightened; a writer's inventions are 'quicker than his eye', created so quickly that it is almost unconscious.

We should therefore read Nashe's criticism as being aimed at the derivative writing style of his fellow English writers rather than at Italian writers such as Aretino, Ariosto and Tasso. He complains that there are '[not enough] present Orators, as were able in any English veine to be eloquent of their owne, but either they must borrow invention of *Ariosto* & his countrimen, [or] take up choise of words by exchange in *Tullies Tusculans* & the Latine Historiographers storehouses.'³⁶

And yet, as the 'true English Aretine', how can Nashe be called 'Aretine' if he is against copying the style of any one writer, let alone an Italian one? He even claims to 'imitate' Aretino's style in the preface to his mock-compendium on the red herring, *Lenten Stuffe* (1599). What Nashe may well be referring to is Aretino's use of *ekphrasis*, a vivid, painterly style of writing which would bring his language to life. It is a quality of Aretino's writing which had also been commented on by earlier readers. The French translator of Aretino's religious texts in the 1540s, Jean de Vauzelles, gives new titles which highlight Aretino's vivid descriptions and ingenuity: 'La Pasion de Jesu-Christ, *visvement descrite*, par le *Divin engin* de Pierre Aretin Italien, et nouvellement traduite en Francois' (vividly/deeply described, by the Divine ingenuity of Peter Aretin) and the 'Trois livres de l'Humanite de Jesu-Christ, *divinement descrite*, et *au vif representée* par Pierre Aretin Italien' (divinely described, and vividly represented). Neil Rhodes has convincingly shown that Nashe and Aretino also share an interest in 'exaggerating repulsive minutiae to the realm of the absurd,' citing such

³⁵ Nashe, *Menaphon*, vol.3, p.312

³⁶ *Ibid*

examples as Aretino's description of a mother superior, 'her jaws looked like a bone comb for raking out lice, with two teeth' (e pareano le sue mascelle un pettin d'osso da pidocchiodi con duo denti) and Nashe's description of Gabriel Harvey's beard as being 'like a Crow with two or three durtie strawes in her mouth, going to build her neast' as similar examples of grotesque amplification of quotidian details.³⁷

Rhodes' stylistic comparison focuses on both writers' propensity to exaggerate the mundane for comic purposes, but their shared use of concrete imagery and physicality in their writing is also apparent in their more serious religious texts. Take, for example, *L'Umanità di Christo* (1535) and *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1593). Both texts are not only embellished but shockingly gory in their detail of human suffering. In *L'Umanita*, Aretino describes the Massacre of the Innocents in an onslaught of visually detailed and kinetic terms:

they wound the heads, slit the breasts, pierce the throats, open the kidneys, slash the thighs, tear the bellies, chop off the hands, and gouge out the eyes. Already the ground is soaked with blood: it is covered with entrails and cut limbs...There they are thrown in the fire in their infants' swaddling; burning and wailing they writhe and thrash in their bonds until death....As they hurl themselves downstairs clutching the cradles, at every step they spew forth blood, limbs, gore.

*giuso feriscono le teste, rompono i seni, forano le gole, aprono le reni, taglioano le coscie, sdrusciscono i ventri, mozzano le mani, e cavano gli occhi. Già la terra si bagna di sangue: si copre di viscere, si sparge di membra....Eccone là nel fuoco con i legami, chi ci fasciano ne i primi giorni; onde ardendo, e piangendo si torcono, e dibattendo l'una, e l'altra spalla si muoiono...E quelli avventati insieme con le culle giù per le scale danno ad ogni grado tributo di sangue, di membra, di cerebri.*³⁸

³⁷ Both quoted in Neil Rhodes, *Elizabethan Grotesque* p.30. On Nashe and Aretino's shared interest in the grotesque, see Rhodes pp.26-36

³⁸ Pietro Aretino, *L'Umanità di Christo* translation & quoted in Harald Hendrix, 'The representation of suffering and religious change in the early cinquecento', *Forms of Faith in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, eds. Abigail Brundin, Matthew Reherne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009) pp.149-170, pp.163-4

These grotesque images, Harald Hendrix suggests, were intentionally used to shock readers into feeling compassion for the people being described in these biblical passages through 'an extremely realistic rendering of scenes of human suffering and of agony.'³⁹ Nashe also uses this heightened language to portray human suffering in *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*, describing the starving inhabitants of Jerusalem 'like an over-hanging Rocke eaten in with the tyde, or Death that is nere picturd but with an upper chap only, so did theyr propendant breast-bones imminent-overcanopy theyr bellies'.⁴⁰ Describing a scene of slaughter in the temple, Nashe writes vividly how:

The Marble flore of it they made so slippery with theyr unrespited, and not so much as Saboth-ceased blood-shed, and bowel-clinging fatte of them that were slaine, that a man might better swimme than walke on it...The silver gates of the Temple no more were gates for devote workshippers to enter at, but slimie flood-gates, for thicke iellied gore to sluce out by....Her Alabaster walls were all furred and fome-painted with the bespraying of mens braines donge out against them.⁴¹

These are only some of many such passages in the text, further scenes of starvation and pestilence are equally graphic. The *copia* of this text is especially reminiscent of Aretino's writing, whether he is describing a massacre in *L'Umanita* or a gift of fruit that he has received in his collected *Lettere*. Nashe follows him in piling up image after image, and grotesquely exaggerating bodily features, such as 'bowel-clinging fat', and 'thick jellied gore'.

Nashe is also similar to Aretino in his dramatic use of language, his dependence on the quotidian in creating comically exaggerated metaphors, and the use of the perspective of the social outsider. In *Christ's Tears*, which is essentially a plague pamphlet written at a time that the pestilence had hit London in 1593, Nashe dramatises the voices of multiple personae including the matron Miriam who has just eaten her only son to save herself from starvation. He does so, as Aretino and others had done before him, in order to make the events of the biblical past more immediate than the usual language of contemporary plague

³⁹ Hendrix, p.149

⁴⁰ Nashe, *Christ's Tears*, vol.2, p.69

⁴¹ Nashe, *Christ's Tears*, vol.2 pp.66-7

sermons, which tended to anatomise the causes of, and preventative measures against, the plague.⁴²

Aretino discusses his own attempt to render the language of outcast women, such as his character Nanna, in the dedication to *Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa* (1536). Explaining his creative process, Aretino writes that:

I try to describe other kinds of characters with the same vividness that the admirable Titian portrays this or that face. And just as good painters greatly appreciate a beautiful group of sketched figures, so I allow my works to be issued in the same way, without at all caring to embellish my words, because the real work lies in the design, and if this is well done the colours are so lovely in themselves and do not prevent cartoons from being what they are —cartoons. The whole thing is a game, yet you must do it quickly and by your own hand.

*E perciò io mi sforzo di ritrarre le nature altrui con le vivicità che il mirabile Tiziano ritrae questo e quel volto; e perché buoni pittori apprezzano molto un bel gruppo di figure abozzate, lascio stampare le mie cose così fatte, né mi curo punto di miniar parole: perché la fatica sta nel disegno, e se bene i colori son belli da per sé, non fanno che i cartocci loro non sieno cartocci; e tutto è ciancia, eccetto il far presto e del suo.*⁴³

Aretino describes his attempt to capture the true spirit of a character through his writing. He is speaking not of Nanna as a stereotype in the same way that he spoke of hypocritical nuns in the dedication to the preceding dialogue, the *Ragionamento della Nanna e dell'Antonia* (1534), but as a rounded personality. He is proud of having captured what he believes to be the true way in which a woman such as Nanna would speak. This is Aretino as dramatist, thinking of the behaviour and speech of his characters, even if he uses painterly language in this introduction to describe his prose dialogue. Aretino compares his writing style to that of a sketch artist which suggests not only immediacy and skill, but also a

⁴² See Catherine I Cox, 'Voices of prophecy and prayer in Thomas Nashe's *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*', *Renaissance Papers* (2000), pp.51-71.

⁴³ Aretino, *Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa*, translation in Rosenthal, p.162. Italian edition in Aquilecchia, p.146

pose of artistic honesty in allowing his first sketches to be seen without further 'embellishment', even if later readers such as Montaigne and Harvey would say the exact opposite of Aretino's hyperbolic style.

What this preface also shows is why Nashe and his fellow writers, trying to make a living from their pens, might have been attracted to Aretino as the original 'professional writer'. Aretino uses the opportunity of this preface to advertise his other works, as well as his ability to write in a range of genres: 'Over there are my *Psalms*, further along is my *History of Christ*, beyond that are my *Comedies*, and here are my *Dialogues*, devout or entertaining works, according to the subject. And I have given birth to each work in almost a single day' (Eccovi là i *Salmi*, eccovi la *Istoria di Cristo*, eccovi le *Comedie*, eccovi il *Dialogo*, eccovi i volumi divoti e allegri, secondo i subietti; e ho partorito ogni opera quasi in un dì).⁴⁴ By reminding the reader that he can write both divine and entertaining works as the occasion allows, he is also reminding us that a professional writer is a pen for hire and must be pragmatic, but also prodigious. This is likely an exaggeration, yet it underlines Aretino's presentation of being a naturally born writer. He is a sixteenth-century Jack Kerouac, self-mythologised as writing *On the Road* in three weeks, typing continuously onto a scroll of paper in order to capture the immediacy of felt, lived-in experience. As Rhodes writes in *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* (1992) Nashe admired not only 'the violent edge of eloquence' that Aretino's extreme and ekphrastic style conjured up, but also his pose as a virtuoso writer, living by the sweat of his ink: 'Everywhere [Nashe's] obsession with his own stylistic virtuosity testifies to the fact that his self-sufficiency is guaranteed only by the power of his pen, and it is this fact which leads to his adulation of Aretino.'⁴⁵

The balance struck in his preface between extemporal language and self-promotion, continues into the main text of the *Dialogo*. Aretino speaks through Nanna when she says that her advice comes:

hot from the oven, for I make it up as I go, I improvise and don't drag things out by the hair, I say them right off in a single breath and not in a hundred years, as do certain worn-out style-doctors who teach us how to write

⁴⁴ Rosenthal, pp. 162-3; Aquilecchia, p.146

⁴⁵ Neil Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence and English Renaissance Literature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992) pp.129-30

books...and that's why everyone rushes to look at my gossip, printing it right away as if it were the *Verbum Caro*.

*...calda calda: perché io favello a la improvisa, e non istiracchio con gli argani le cose che io dico in un soffio, e non in cento anni come fanno alcune stracca- maestri-che-gli-insegno-a-fare-i-libri...e perciò ognuno corre a vedere il mio cicalare, mettendolo ne le stampe come il Verbum caro.*⁴⁶

'Calda calda' is simply 'hot, hot', but Rosenthal translates this idiomatically as 'hot from the oven'. A better translation, given that Nanna is talking about her gossip in relation to style-books would be 'hot off the press'. A parallel between the writer, the printed word, and the professionalism of the prostitute is in fact a recurrent theme in Aretino's writing.⁴⁷ Nanna is fully aware that her 'gossip' is available to buy in printed form in book shops, just as her body is available to buy in her own 'shop'. All of this is of course an illusion. 'Nanna' is no more than an authorial persona, which Aretino uses to boast of his own popularity. What Aretino taught the generation of Elizabethan writers was that if they created the illusion of natural speech in their writing, readers would rush to buy it if it was presented as improvised 'gossip', hot off the press.

Influence and imitation

In a note to Nashe's first reference to Aretino in *Pierce Penilesse*, his editor R.B. McKerrow says that it is difficult to estimate the extent to which '[Aretino's] reputation in this country [i.e. England] rested on a real knowledge of his writings', but that he himself had 'little doubt that many of those who praised him, including Nashe, did so rather because his name was the watchword of a coterie than because they were in any real sense his disciples.'⁴⁸ How authoritative McKerrow is on the subject is questionable, as he later writes: 'I must confess that my knowledge of the Italian satirist is but superficial.'⁴⁹ As we have seen,

⁴⁶ Rosenthal, pp.213-4; Aquilecchia, p.194

⁴⁷ On this theme, see Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* pp.34-44, and Moulton, 'Whores as Shopkeepers: Money and Sexuality in Aretino's *Ragionamenti*' in *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Juliann M. Vitullo, Diane Volfthal (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.71-86

⁴⁸ McKerrow, vol.4, p.15

⁴⁹ McKerrow, vol.5, p.129

Aretino could well be considered a watchword for quick-witted and satirical writing by English writers, but I would argue that certain allusions also show that 'Aretine' was not always used as shorthand, but could also show a deeper awareness of Aretino's style than McKerrow allows for.

If we examine what Nashe actually says about Aretino, we will see that he is associating himself with Aretino not purely by imitating his style, but by taking on Aretino's rhetorical pose of *sprezzatura*: the appearance of extemporal wit and concealment of the art which created it. In a letter to one of his followers, Niccolò Franco, Aretino wrote that:

Nature herself, and Simplicity, her handmaid, give me what I put into my compositions, and my own fatherland unloosens the knots in my tongue when it tries, superstitiously, to twist itself into foreign chattering....It is true that I imitate myself, because Nature is a boon companion who lavishes her inspiration on us, whereas literary contrivance is a louse that has to feed on others.

*La natura istessa, de la cui semplicità son secretario, mi detta ciò che io compongo; e la patria mi scioglie i modi de la lingua, quando si ragoppa ne la superstizione de le chiacchiere forestieri... È certo ch'io imito me stesso perché la natura è una compagna badiale che ci si sbracca, e l'arte una piattola che bisogna che si apicchi.*⁵⁰

As Nashe does in *Menaphon*, Aretino is making a nationalistic argument that he uses his own vernacular rather than 'foreign chattering'. Quoted out of context, as it often is, this would appear to show that Aretino chose only to draw from direct experience rather than from books for inspiration, yet this letter opens by arguing more subtly for the creative selection of (rather than slavish adherence to) literary precedents: 'Follow the path that nature shows you, if you wish your writing to stand out from the page. And laugh at those who steal famished words, because there is a great difference between imitators and

⁵⁰ Pietro Aretino, letter dated 25th June 1537, transl. Samuel Putnam, *The Works of Aretino: Letters and Sonnets* (New York: Pascal Covici, 1926) p.135, Italian, *Lettere* vol.1. in *Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Pietro Aretino* 6 vols. (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1997-2002) no.155, p.231-2. Unless otherwise stated, all other references to Aretino's letters are to this edition. This letter was initially addressed to Franco, though after Franco and Aretino fell out, later editions of this letter would be addressed to another follower, Lodovico Dolce.

thieves, and it is the latter whom I damn' (Andate pur per le vie che al vostro studio mostra la natura, se volete che gli scritti vostri faccino stupire le carte dove son notati. E ridetevi di coloro che rubano le paroline affamate; perché è gran differenza da gli imitatori a i rubatori, che io soglio dannare).⁵¹ To produce the illusion of spontaneity, Aretino had combined the principle of *sprezzatura* from Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del Cortegiano* (published 1528, though circulated in manuscript since 1508), with Pietro Bembo's argument for vernacular literature in the *Prose della Volgar Lingua* (1525) while rejecting his model of the fourteenth-century Tuscanisms of Petrarch and Boccaccio, and adding to this Erasmus' argument for eclecticism in *Ciceronianus* (1528) which favoured colloquial and spontaneous Latin. The combination of all three, Raymond Waddington argues, 'arriv[ed] at the logical extension of a spontaneous, colloquial vernacular style.'⁵²

In 1550, William Thomas appended a *Dictionary for the better understanding of Boccace, Petrarca, and Dante* to his *Principal Rules of the Italian Grammar*. Over forty years later, in his dedication to *A world of wordes* (1598) John Florio, the famous translator and language teacher, acknowledges Thomas as having 'done pretillie' in his work, but suggests that his and others' obsession with Italy's literary superstars meant that most dictionaries, commentaries and translations stopped at these three writers: 'Boccace is prettie hard, yet understood: Petrarche harder, but explained: Dante hardest, but commented'. If Boccaccio, Petrarch and Dante are hard to understand, then (asks Florio) how are English readers to understand the lesser known writers that populate contemporary Italian literature?

How then ayme we at Peter Aretine, that is so wittie, hath such varietie, and frames so manie new words? At Francesco Doni, who is so fantastically, & so strange?...How shall we understand Hanniball Caro, who is so full of wittie iestes, sharpe quips, nipping tantes, and scoffing phrases... How shall we understande so manie and so strange bookes, of so severall, and so fantastically subjects as be written in the Italian toong?⁵³

⁵¹ Ibid, pp.229-30

⁵² Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* p.46

⁵³ Florio, *A Worlde of wordes* (2013) p.5 For more on Florio see Frances Yates, *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934); Lawrence, 'Who the Devil Taught thee so much Italian?' (2005) esp. chapter 1, and Michael Wyatt *The Italian Encounter* (2005) esp. chapters 4 & 5

Florio's primary purpose here is to explain why his aristocratic dedicatees, well versed in Italian, may need his new dictionary.⁵⁴ He reminds them of the unexpected aspects of the spoken language, which after all was not the pure Tuscan that most English readers encountered by reading classical Italian texts. He gives further examples of writers who use extemporal wit, vernacular variations, puns, and neologisms, but what I want to highlight here is his reference to Aretino as a 'wit'. We can also see the logic of grouping these three writers together. Doni had been one of Aretino's followers, though, like Niccolò Franco, he later turned on his 'patron'. Annibal Caro too is associated by the Wolfe press with Aretino, when the editor Castelvetro described him as a writer similar to Aretino, and attached his mock encomium on figs to the edition of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* in 1584. Noticeably, though, Florio ascribes stylistic traits to Doni and Caro that are most often reserved for Aretino: Doni is 'fantastical and strange', as Montaigne had derogatively called Aretino, while Caro is seen as an aggressively witty writer— jesting, taunting, quipping, scoffing— all traits often ascribed to Aretino in the late Elizabethan period. Aretino, meanwhile, is identified by Florio as a witty writer, as someone who wrote in a variety of genres, and as a creator of neologisms.

After his dedicatory letters to his patrons, Florio includes a list of seventy-nine 'Bookes and Auctors, that have bin read of purpose, for the accomplishing of this Dictionarie'. Fourteen of these books, or one-sixth of these are by Aretino, and include both the misattributed *Puttana Errante* and John Wolfe's London edition of Aretino's comedies, *Le Quatro Comedie del'Aretino* (1588).⁵⁵ It seems that Florio, together with Nashe, was to be one of the later defenders in England of Aretino as a stylist, rather than as a personality.

What Nashe seems to have drawn from Aretino was a shared ethos on the choice between improvisation and imitation. Aretino is one of many writers who Nashe associated with *sprezzatura* and the appearance of extemporal wit. In *Strange News* (1593) Nashe quotes his rival Gabriel Harvey's list of foreign and ancient writers, taken from Harvey's *Four Letters, and certain sonnets especially touching Robert Greene* (1592). Quoting Harvey in italics, he writes:

⁵⁴ See also on Florio's preface, Bianca Calabresi 'Bawdy Doubles' (2010) p.219, and Michael Wyatt pp.225-231

⁵⁵ Florio, p.14

Tully, Horace, Archilochus, Aristophanes, Lucian, Iulian, Aretine, goe for no payment with you; their declamatory stiles brought to the grand test of your iudgement, are found counterfeit, they are a venomous and viperous brood of railers, because they haue broght in a new kind of a quicke sight, which your decrepiti slow-mouing capacitie cannot fadge with

Nashe is aligning Aretino together with six ancient writers who all exemplify quick-wittedness or 'a new kind of quick sight,' versus Harvey's 'decrepiti slow-moving capacity.' He had praised Greene in similar terms in the preface of *Menaphon* for his 'inventions, quicker then his eye,' and indeed this is also the purpose of *Strange News*, which Nashe had written to defend Greene's reputation. And yet, as Nashe points out in the next paragraph, Harvey had once admired these writers. 'Tush, tush,' scolds Nashe,

you take the graue peake vppon you too much, who would think you could so easily shake off your olde friends? Did not you in the fortie one Page, line 2 of your Epistles to *Collin Clout* [Spenser] vse this speech? Extra iocum, *I like your 'Dreames'* [Fairie Queene] *passing well: and they rather savour of that singular extraordinary vaine and ineuntion which I euer fancied most, and in a manner admired onely in Lucian, Petrarch, Aretine, Pasquil.*⁵⁶

By pedantically singling out an extract from his letter to Spenser, Nashe reminds Harvey that he too had once admired the writers he now terms 'railers', for their 'extraordinary' writing style and power of 'invention'. This admiration is borne out by Harvey's marginalia. In his copy of *The Courtier* alongside the jests described by Castiglione, Harvey praises the ancient Greek writers Aestippus and Diogenes for their 'salty sayings' and Aretino 'In deriving mens opinions, and frustrating the most probable expectation; Unico [i.e. Pietro] Aretino superexcellant...Without any offence, & with many delights.'⁵⁷

Both Nashe and Harvey describe Aretino as being quick-witted, inventive, 'singular' and unique. Harvey's description of Aretino as 'Unico' confused Pietro with Bernardo Accolti

⁵⁶ Nashe, *Strange News*, vol.1 p.283. 'Pasquil' is Pasquino, a Hellenistic statue in Rome that since 1509 had been covered in anonymous satires. See chapter 5, pp.163-5

⁵⁷ Quoted in Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: his life, marginalia, and library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p.175

(1465-1536) another poet from Arezzo who was known as *L'Unico* for his impromptu verse. Harvey repeatedly refers to Pietro Aretino with this term (e.g. 'Unico Aretino will scourge Princes' and 'over many acquainted with Unico Aretino'⁵⁸) and so, unwittingly, he is associating the later Aretino with the extemporal fame of his predecessor. He makes the same mistake in his preparatory notes for a dispute to be performed in front of the Queen in late July 1578. The Queen, who was on progress and staying at the estate of Audley End in Essex, is reported to have declared that Harvey 'looked something like an Italian', a fact which Harvey appears to have taken to heart as Nashe claims he 'quite renounst his naturall English accentd & gestures, & wrested himself wholly to the Italian *puntlios*, speaking our homely lland tongue strangely.'⁵⁹ A certain Italianate element does colour Harvey's part in the dispute, as his preparatory notes indicate:

Unico Aretino—in Italian, singular for rare and hyperbolic amplifications. He is a simple orator that cannot mount as high as the quality or quantity of his matter requireth. Vain and fantastical amplifications argue an idle brain. But when the very majesty [sic] and dignity of the matter itself will indeed bear out a stately and haughty style, there is no such trial of a gallant discourser and right orator. Always an especial regard to be had for decorum, as well for orators and all manners of parleys as in other actions.⁶⁰

Here, Harvey is arguing that Aretino is 'singular' in the sense that he is exceptionally known for 'rare and hyperbolic amplifications'. Harvey is neither entirely positive nor negative in his judgement of Aretino's style, writing that he is a 'simple' orator, and that his fantastically exaggerated style 'argue[s] an idle brain', yet he also says that this style can be decorous when the matter of the subject is majestic and dignified. Elsewhere in his marginalia Harvey is much more positive about Aretino as a 'singular' writer, who claimed to imitate no-one: 'Aretines glory, to be himself: to speake, & write like himself: to imitate none, but him selfe & ever to maintaine his owne singularity.'⁶¹

⁵⁸ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces supererogation or A new prayse of the old asse* (London: John Wolfe, 1593) p.10. Harvey's letter to Edmund Spenser in *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters* p.28

⁵⁹ Nashe, *Have with you*, vol.3, p.76

⁶⁰ Stern, p.175

⁶¹ Stern. p.156

Being 'singular' and individualistic was, however, not always a positive term in the Sixteenth Century. It implied that one was an eccentric and did not have a social role. Novelty and invention were met with equivocation, being simultaneously positive and potentially dangerous. Gabriel's brother, the theologian Richard Harvey, declared Aretino to be an atheist, and called on Christ to 'keep all students...from any such desperate minde, from such monstrous and unprofitable singularitie,'⁶² while even Nashe, who would himself be accused of 'singularity' by the Harvey brothers admits that while there are 'Many courses...which in themselves seeme singular & vertuous... if a man follow them they will be his utter subversion.'⁶³ Novelty may lead to 'utter subversion', and therefore needed to be sanctioned by somehow relating it to the natural or divine (hence Aretino's claims to be inspired by 'nature') and not from a perverse source of individualistic thought.

The potential danger of inventiveness is also apparent in a later satire by John Donne, called *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611). This satire takes the form of a dream, much like Dekker's *News from Hell*, in which the dreamer finds himself in the underworld and sees various innovators lining up to enter the gates of hell. Aretino arrives amongst ranks of men such as Paracelsus, Machiavelli and Columbus. All are asking for admittance to hell on the merits of their inventions, and all requests are resisted by Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, who is seated next to the Devil's chair and is determined to reserve all places in hell for members of his 'Society of Jesus'. Unlike Nashe and Harvey, however, Donne is arguing that, despite his reputation, Aretino is not actually as innovative as his young adherents imagine him to be. The narrator says that while he was 'sory to see [Ignatius] use *Peter Aretine* so ill as he did', Ignatius rightly told Aretino that:

when [Aretino] boasted of his licentious pictures [*i modi*], that because he was not much learned, hee had left out many things of that kind, with which the ancient histories & poëmes abound; and that therefore *Aretine* had not onely not added any new invention, but had also taken away all courage and spurres from youth, which would rashly trust,

⁶² Richard Harvey, *A theologicall discourse of the Lamb of God* (London: John Windet, 1590) p.96

⁶³ Nashe, *Christ's Tears*, vol.2, p.180

and relie vpon his diligence, and seeke no further, & loose that infinite & precious treasure of Antiquitie.⁶⁴

Donne here dismisses Aretino for being unlearned and derivative, yet he is simultaneously arguing that Aretino is to be neither blamed nor admired as the creator of pornography, as such erotic material had abounded since ancient times. Aretino can be accused of being unimaginative, but he cannot be blamed for the invention of erotic writing and imagery. Donne also focuses on Aretino's claim to rely on his natural ingenuity and being 'not much learned,' but refuses to read this positively as Aretino wished. Even if Donne did not think that Aretino was a true innovator, he satirises the fact that the 'youth...rashly trust' that Aretino had invented 'licentious pictures'. It seems that for many young readers in the Seventeenth Century, Aretino had managed to made the ancient appear thoroughly modern.

Aretino the satirist

While Harvey might have initially admired Aretino for his wit, Nashe admired him in equal parts for his reputation as the scourge of princes as for his exaggerated style. Towards the end of his best-selling satire on the sins of London, *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), Nashe complains of the meanness of patrons, and, in his own voice rather than that of Pierce, continues:

We want an Aretine here among us that might strip these golden asses out of their gay trappings, and after he had ridden them to death with railing, leave them on the dunghill for carrion. But I will write to his ghost by my carrier, and I hope he'll repair his whip, and use it against our English Peacockes.⁶⁵

Harvey had called Aretino a 'railer' and 'viperous', yet here Nashe is turning the poisonous quality of Aretino into a positive (remember that Nashe had been described as writing with 'mortal Aconite' by Dekker). Patrons, the 'golden asses,' are to be 'stripped' of

⁶⁴ John Donne, *Ignatius his conclaue or his inthronisation in a late election in hell: wherein many things are mingled by way of satyr* (London: Richard Moore, 1611). pp.93-4

⁶⁵ Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, vol.1. p.242

their wealth, metaphorically 'ridden to death' with the sheer power of the Aretine's language, and then left 'on the dunghill for carrion'. Aretino is here the literal, whip-wielding 'flagello dei principi' that Ariosto had named him in *Orlando Furioso*. In an article on Nashe and Harvey's references to Aretino over the course of their literary quarrel, David McPherson writes that the importance of this first reference to Aretino by Nashe 'can scarcely be overemphasized. Nashe chooses to see Aretino not as the symbol of atheism or bawdry, but as the modern Juvenal, the lashing satirist.'⁶⁶ The importance of this distinction between choosing to represent Aretino as a satirist rather than an atheist or writer of bawdy books will become clear in other sections of this thesis, when ever more readers would overlook Aretino's original reputation as a natural wit, and instead refer only to his reputation for immorality.

Nashe was not the only satirist to admire Aretino, however. In 1598, the title of John Marston's collected satires, *The Scourge of Villanie*, would allude to the association of 'the scourge' with the satirical genre, while in the same year Edward Guilpin would recall Nashe's address to Aretino in his *Skialetheia*:

Oh that the whip of fooles, great *Aretine*,
Whose words were squibs, and crackers euery line,
Liu'd in our dayes, to scourge these hypocrites,
VVhose taunts may be like goblins and sprights.
To haunt these wretches forth that little left them
Of ayery wit; (for all the rest's bereft them.)
Oh how the varges⁶⁷ from his black pen wrung,
VVould sauce the *Idiome* of the English tongue,
Giue it a new touch, liuelier Dialect.⁶⁸

Like Nashe, Guilpin wishes for a contemporary writer to act as the new Aretino: a 'scourge' of hypocrites, and a 'whip' of fools. He uses similarly violent metaphors to describe Aretino's writing as Dekker and Nashe: not only is he scourging hypocrites, his words are bitter and menacing, acidic 'varges' or verjuice is wrung from his black pen. They are also

⁶⁶ McPherson, 'Aretino and the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel' p.1553

⁶⁷ *varges*: verjuice, the acidic juice of unripe grapes, or other sour fruits

⁶⁸ Edward Guilpin, 'Satyre Prima', *Skialetheia, or, A shadowe of truth in certaine epigrams and satyres* (London: Nicholas Ling, 1598) sig.C5r

fiery, explosive words: 'squibs' and 'crackers', and darkly haunting: his taunts are like 'goblins' and 'sprights.' Guilpin also shares with Nashe the belief that Aretino's acidic terms would 'sauce' the bland, English language and refresh it into a 'livelier Dialect'. Guilpin seems to share Nashe's quest for a national literature to be proud of. Nashe, Guilpin and others like them seemed to be saying that what English literature needed was a generation who could write in the spirit of Aretino, not a generation who imitated him.

Given that he suggests a new English Aretine was still needed, Guilpin may not have believed that Nashe was successful in this role, but Harvey's more overt response to this passage from *Pierce Penilesse* accused Nashe of manoeuvring himself into this position. 'No such want in England, as of an Aretine, that might stripp these golden Asses out-of their gay trappings,' Harvey paraphrases *Pierce Penilesse*, and suggests it is Nashe who wishes to occupy this new role: 'a braue spirite to bee employed with his stripping instrument, in supply of that onely want of a diuine Aretine, the great rider of golden Asses...Lord, what an egregious Aretine should we shortly haue: how excessiue exceeding Aretine himselfe.'⁶⁹

'How excessively exceeding Aretine himself' says Harvey of Nashe. Reading this, we may remember Harvey's admission that Aretino's style was 'extra-ordinary' and 'superexcellent'. Add to this Dekker's choice of adjectives to describe Aretino: 'inconfinal', 'bounteous' and 'boundless', and it seems that Aretino is a writer of excess. We see this most clearly in Nashe's commentary on Aretino as a stylist in his prefatory letter to *Lenten Stuff*. Nashe explains to the reader that his use of 'huge words' derives from his allegiance to Aretino:

of all styles I most affect & strive to imitate Aretine's, not caring for this demure soft mediocre *genus* that is like water and wine mixed together, but give me pure wine of itself, and that begets good blood and heats the brain thoroughly. I had as lief have no sun, as have it shine faintly, no fire as a smothering fire of small coals, no clothes rather than wear linsey wolsey.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.18

⁷⁰ Nashe, *Lenten Stuffe*, vol.3, p.152

For Nashe, to write with an Aretine style is to be prolix and protean, it makes no half measures. Even his ever increasing list of comparisons piled up on each other attest to this sense of copia.

The greatest defence that Nashe makes of Aretino, however, appears in *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). The protagonist Jack Wilton and his master, the poet Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, have been imprisoned thanks to a trick played on them by a Roman prostitute. Luckily, they are released by the English ambassador John Russell, who engages the services of one 'Petro [sic] Aretino' to deliver the two men from prison. Nashe breaks off from the narrative at this point, and in his own voice tells the reader over the next few pages why he admires Aretino:

It was one of the wittiest knaves that ever God made. If out of so base a thing as ink there may be extracted a spirit, he writ with nought but the spirit of ink, and his style was the spirituality of arts and nothing else; whereas all others of his age where but the lay temporality of inkhorn terms...His pen was sharp-pointed like a poniard; no leaf he wrote on but was like a burning-glass to set on fire all his readers. With more than musket-shot did he charge his quill, where he meant to inveigh.⁷¹

In this passage, Nashe brings together Aretino's reputation as both a natural wit and a vicious satirist. For a man who admires the wit of English writers such as Lyly and Greene, Aretino is 'the wittiest knave' in the world. Although ink is 'base,' Aretino made his living and reputation through the printing press, and therefore writes with the 'spirit of ink'. Aretino lifts the baseness of ink into a style which is the 'spirituality of arts' while his contemporaries wrote with the 'lay temporality of inkhorn terms', an exaggeration by Nashe, but indicative of his own dismissal of the 'termagant inkhorne tearmes' of his rival Harvey.⁷² Finally, like Guilpin, Nashe refers to Aretino's aggressive form of satire: his words are 'sharp pointed' and stab 'like a poniard', he charges his quill with powder more powerful than 'musket-shot' and his words are like a 'burning glass' and sets 'all his readers' on fire with inspiration.

⁷¹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.264

⁷² Nashe, *Have with You*, vol.3, p.42

A similar combination of terms would be applied to Nashe's writing style. In *The Second Return from Parnassus* the Nashean character, Ingenioso and his copywriter friend, Iudicio, say of 'Thomas Nash',

Ingenioso: I, heer's a fellow, *Iudicio*, that carryed the deadly Stockado⁷³ in
his pen, whose muse was armed with a gagtooth and his pen
possest with Hercules' furies.

Iudicio: Let all his faults sleepe with his mournfull chest,
And there for euer with his ashes rest.
His stile was wittie, though he had some gal[l],
Some thing[s] he might haue mended, so may all.
Yet this I say, that for a mother witt,
Fewe men haue euer seene the like of it.⁷⁴

Nashe is also described as a furious (though gag-toothed) satirist, his pen sharpened like a 'deadly stockado'. His writing is soured with 'gall', much like Guilpin's description of Aretino's verjuice ink, though like Aretino, his writing is also 'witty' and naturally so, derived from a 'mother wit', which is shared by only a few others.

What Nashe hopes to share with Aretino is a powerful style that will stir up his readers. Aggressive it may be, but all the better for waking up readers who have had to struggle with the slow-moving pace of English 'temporisers' and their Senecan style: 'The Sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance bee drie,' writes Nashe, 'and *Seneca*, let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our Stage.'⁷⁵ Contemporary English writers are slowly letting the life-blood of classical writers, a slow death for any reader, or any audience member listening to such language on the London stage. What these lines lack, thinks Nashe, is wit. To return to Nashe's eulogy of Aretino, he describes how his writing sets his readers alight with his words. Dekker too had spoken of Aretino's unconfined fiery spirit— a writer whose style was so excessive that it could not be contained within the page, but spread out like wildfire, consuming his readers' imaginations. Even those who disliked Aretino and Italian writing in general admitted, in fact feared, that

⁷³ *Stockado*: stockade, or defence, but in this sense, the sharpened wooden stake used in a barrier

⁷⁴ *Second Return from Parnassus* (I, ii, ll.311-9) p.245

⁷⁵ Nashe, *Menaphon*, vol.3, p.316

his writing style was infectious. This is the sort of writer that Nashe wishes he could be, another Aretine.

'Prostitute my genius':

Despite the fact that Nashe writes often about the importance he places on style, relatively few literary critics since Neil Rhodes, Jonathan Crewe, and James Nielson in the 1980s and early 90s have focussed on his writing style, focussing instead on his cultural significance. Yet these need not be mutually exclusive approaches to his work. In striving to 'imitate' Aretino, Nashe paradoxically wished to imitate no man at all, which led him to create a form of writing bursting with body parts, consumer items and printers' ink. The significance of Nashe's emphasis on writing is just as much an economic concern as it is a stylistic one. Aretino stood for wit and excess, but he was also known as one of the first, if not *the* first modern professional writer to make money from his writing alone. He was not a courtier such as his translator Thomas Wyatt who wrote as a leisure activity, but, as he explained in a letter to Gabriele Cesano, dated 21st December 1538, he 'live[d] by the sweat of [his] ink.'⁷⁶

Aretino's earnings were, however, not made from writing for the press alone, despite his later reputation. He was a notorious blackmailer, and extorted money out of wealthy patrons. In reality, his followers discovered that their earnings from writing for the press was not enough to sustain them. Lodovico Dolce and Anton Francesco Doni both died in poverty, while Niccolò Franco was executed by the Inquisition for his heterodox works. For a later generation in England, Nashe and many others were equally unsuccessful despite their prodigious writing, Greene dying in poverty after a dinner of rhenish wine and pickled herrings, Thomas Kyd too died a broken man after imprisonment, and Thomas Nashe, in and out of debtors prison throughout his life, died in poverty. In these circumstances, having a unique style was not merely something to be cultivated for literary reasons, but a necessity to mark yourself out in the growing marketplace of print. In this context, Lodge's listing of contemporary writers by the styles that they were known for in *Wit's Miserie* acts as a form of advertisement for these young men, who were living by their wits.

⁷⁶ Aretino, quoted in Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr* p.46

When Aretino claims that he follows no one but learns only from nature, he is also making a point that his writing is not derivative of anyone else and therefore belongs to him alone. By claiming to be naturally gifted, he is also claiming a right to write: he may not be from the nobility, he may not be learned, but he has a natural way with words and therefore deserves his position as a professional writer. In his public argument with Harvey, Nashe would develop this rhetorical strategy of natural ingenuity. Not only was his style not derivative, but by presenting himself and his fellow writer Robert Greene as natural talents, he distanced himself and others from the system of patronage, and instead claimed a form of creative independence.⁷⁷

Living by one's wits was, however, uncomfortably close to prostitution in the mind of the sixteenth-century writer. In one of Robert Greene's coney-catching pamphlets, *A Disputation between a hee cony-catcher and a shee conny-catcher* (1592) a prostitute, Nan, describes how 'tis by wit that I live.⁷⁸ Nashe would use this analogy to accuse his literary rival, Gabriel Harvey of 'prostituting' himself for the press. Not to be outdone, Harvey would repeatedly accuse Nashe of being a 'minion' or 'catamite'. Referring to Nashe's erotic poem, the *Choice of Valentines*, Harvey speaks of 'the whole ruffianisme of thy brothell Muse, if she still prostitute her obscene ballatts, and will needs be a younge Curtisan of ould knauery.' Nashe gives as good as he gets: Harvey is an 'arrant butter whore...cotqueane & scratop of scoldes', a 'Curtezan that can deny no man.'⁷⁹

Harvey's accusation against Nashe is partly deserved. Nashe's poem *The Choice of Valentines* is otherwise known as *Nashe his Dildo*, and is written as a mock-epic trip to the

⁷⁷ On Nashe and print authorship see: Georgia Brown, *Redefining Elizabethan Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Steve Mentz, 'Day labor: Thomas Nashe and the practice of prose in early modern England', in *Early Modern Prose Fiction: the cultural politics of reading*, ed. Naomi Conn Liebler (New York: Routledge, 2007) pp.18-32; and *The Age of Thomas Nashe: Text, Bodies and Trespasses of Authorship in Early Modern England* eds. Steve Mentz, Stephen Guy-Bray, & Joan Pong Linton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). None of these, however, develop the idea that Nashe is modelling his authorship on Aretino, despite his own claims to affect the Italian's style, and his implication in *Pierce Penilesse* that he is a second Aretino. In addition to Neil Rhodes, in *Elizabethan Grotesque* and *The Power of Eloquence*, two articles which look at this connection are by Harald Hendrix, who shows how Aretino's 'natural style' and entrepreneurial approach to writing served as an example to Elizabethan writers, and Wes Folkerth who looks at the shared rhetoric of public address used by Aretio and Nashe. Harald Hendrix, 'The Construction of an Author: Pietro Aretino and the Elizabethans', in *Betraying Our Selves: Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts* eds. Henk Dragstra, Sheila Ottway, & Helen Wilcox (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000) pp.31-44. Wes Folkerth, 'Pietro Aretino, Thomas Nashe, and Early Modern Rhetorics of Public Address', pp.68-80

⁷⁸ Robert Greene, *A Disputation between a hee cony-catcher and a shee conny-catcher* (London: T. Gubbin, 1592) p.5

⁷⁹ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation* p.1, p. 12, p. 45, and Nashe, *Strange News* vol.1 p.299, *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, vol.3, p.27

protagonist Tom's' girlfriend and prostitute, Francis. He is unable to fully satisfy her, and so she resorts to using a 'eunuch dildo'. Nashe describes how this dildo is made of glass, with a hole at the top for it to be filled with warm water or milk, and covered with velvet or silk: 'Attired in white velvet or in silk,/And nourished with hot water or with milk; /Arm'd otherwhile in thick congealed glass'.⁸⁰ This may in fact be the first reference to a dildo in English, especially if Harvey is indeed referring to this poem when he writes in 1593 of Nashe's 'brothell Muse' and his 'obscene ballatts'.⁸¹ The word 'dildo' is linked to Italy for John Marston, with two of his Italian characters named 'Dildo' and 'Catz' ('cazzo' is penis in Italian) in his *Antonio and Mellida* (1601). Furthermore, Nashe's description of a glass dildo has clear associations with Aretino, who describes in his *Sei Giornate* how Nanna uses a glass dildo to masturbate while watching other nuns and monks having sex [see pp.96-7].⁸² He describes Nanna watching 'the nun with her Murano prodder' (con quella dalla pestinaca muranese) or 'glass contraption' (cotal di vetro), and seeing that the nun filled it (much as Nashe describes) with warm water. Nanna, ever grotesque, is impatient to use this glass dildo and so instead of warm water, there and then 'pissed right into the handle of the spade...Through a little hole that had been put there so it could be filled with warm water' (pisciai nel manico della vanga...per un bucolino fatto in esso perché si possa empire d'acqua tepida).⁸³ These terms reappear in Florio's *World of Wordes* (1598) under 'Pastinaca muranese' as 'a dildoe of glasse' and 'Pestello di vetro' 'a dildoe of glasse', terms maybe taken from Aretino given that Florio lists Aretino's *'Dialoghi, o sei giornate'* as one of the books consulted for his dictionary.⁸⁴

Despite having achieved his fame and wealth through the printing press, in a letter to his publisher Francesco Marcolini in 1537 Aretino says that he hopes to God 'that the courtesy of princes rewards me for the labour of writing, and not that small change of book buyers; for I would rather endure every hardship than to prostitute my genius by making it a day labourer of the liberal arts' (che la cortesia dei principi mi paghi le fatiche de lo scrivere, e non la miseria di chi li compra, sostenendo prima il disagio che ingiuriar la virtù, facendo

⁸⁰ Thomas Nashe, 'The Choice of Valentines', in *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, ed. and intro. J.B. Steane (London: Penguin, 1972) p.466

⁸¹ Till now this poem has been dated c.1600, based on the earliest material evidence of manuscript copies from this date.

⁸² On *Choice of Valentines* and its connections as erotic verse to Aretino, see Moulton *Before Pornography*, pp.158-193, and Salkeld, *Shakespeare among the Courtesans*, pp.81-5

⁸³ Aretino, Rosenthal pp.29-30; Aquilecchia pp.21-2

⁸⁴ Florio, p.460, p.476, p.21

mecaniche l'arti liberali). He compares himself as a writer going to pick up his money from books sold by the printer to a pimp or 'Roffiano' who takes the money from his prostitute before going to bed.⁸⁵ Tellingly, this letter was excised from later editions. Nashe, meanwhile, writes that he has 'prostituted' himself as a writer, when 'twise or thrise in a month...the bottome of my purse is turnd downeward.' Nashe admits that he must 'follow some of these new fangled Galiardos and Senior Fantasticos, to whose amorous Villanellas and Quipassas I prostitute my pen in hope of gaine.'⁸⁶ Nashe must write comical songs for effete followers of fashion, the type of men who Mercutio derides in *Romeo and Juliet* as 'antic, lipping, affecting Fantasticoes.'⁸⁷ In this case, Nashe is reversing Aretino's point. Aretino's letter implies that service to a 'prince' is preferable to working as a 'day labourer' for the press, yet this rings hollow when we know that Aretino is the famous 'scourge of princes'. Nashe instead describes writing for a patron as a form of prostitution. For Nashe, the press means freedom, not servility.

In *The Second Returne from Parnassus Ingenioso*, the Nashean hack, speaks of the many wannabe writers who stand with 'blotted pages' around St Paul's Churchyard hoping for a lucky break. 'Good faith they do as I do, exchange words for money'⁸⁸ says his friend Judicio of their competitors. Like Greene's prostitute Nan who declares that 'tis by wit that I live,' Judicio acknowledges that the new breed of writers must exchange a part of themselves for money. Writing was no longer a simple matter of producing something to sell; it was a way of commodifying yourself, much like Lodge's branding of Nashe as an 'English Aretine'.

Conclusion

In this and the accompanying chapter on the reprinting and attempted restoration of Aretino's censored texts, I hope to have shown that the usual narrative that Aretino's reputation was destroyed in 1559 is simply not the case. In the literary circles of England right up until the early Seventeenth Century Aretino was still being reprinted in humanist

⁸⁵ Pietro Aretino, "To Francesco Marcolini, 22nd June 1537", transl. by Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr*, p.43 in Italian, *Lettere* vol.1, Appendix 1 'Lettere pubblicate solo in M1-M2', p.513

⁸⁶ Nashe, *Have with You*, vol.3, p.31

⁸⁷ Shakespeare, 'The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet', (II.iii.l.22) p.1702

⁸⁸ *Second Return from Parnassus* (I.ii.ll.188-9) p.243

editions and spoken about as a natural stylist and a professional wit and writer, despite the fact that his entire works had been censored and were therefore in scarce supply. Indeed, with the Elsevir press republishing Wolfe's edition of the *Sei Giornate* up till 1660, Aretino would continue to be presented as a source of natural Italian wit amongst an equivalent group of readers in the Low Countries well into the Seventeenth Century.

This situation was, however, about to change as these ways of thinking about Aretino were becoming less frequent. In Venice his religious and dramatic works were often reprinted under the names of different, less controversial Italian authors, while in France his religious and poetic works would be anonymised or sometimes attributed to the translator. [see p.224] At the same time, his name was often still attributed to a much reduced version of his *Sei Giornate*, while his translators and other writers represented him as either a moral arbiter or an abomination to the decency of others. It is these opposing representations of Aretino which the next section of this thesis, chapters 3 and 4, will explore in more depth.

Chapter 3:

Sexual and literary infection and the reframing of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* in Europe

At the end of chapter 1 I argued that Wolfe and Castelvetro were in part responding to the expurgation of literary texts in Italy during the Counter Reformation by reprinting Aretino in what they imagined to be a restored form. Of such expurgated texts, those by Girolamo Giovannini appear to have been the most popular, with three of his texts reprinted five times each within the space of two years, 1589-1590. In the preface to his 1593 edition of Niccolò Franco's *Piacevoli Dialoghi* (Pleasant Dialogues) which he emphatically retitled *Dialoghi Piacevolissimi* (Very Pleasant Dialogues), Giovannini explained that he had printed the text under his own name because he considered the new edition to be a product more of his own work than of Franco's.¹ Indeed, he had rewritten Franco's *Dialoghi* in such a way as to convey the exact opposite meaning to what had existed in 1539, excised of any anti-orthodox sentiment, a move which appears to have made it only more popular with a new generation of readers.

Rozzo concludes that this was part of 'an operation of outright disinformation,'² and in this chapter I will argue that much the same can be said for the various translations and adaptations of one of Aretino's most famous works, the *Sei Giornate*. This text was not only literally translated, but also translated into a different cultural norm so as to fit a newly invigorated climate of orthodoxy. By looking at how a specific section of the *Sei Giornate*, the 'Life of Whores', was reframed for a new audience, this chapter will argue that these translations succeeded in mediating his reputation by making it seem as if Aretino had always been expressing what was in fact their posthumous rewriting of his text. This single section was retranslated into five different languages and reframed through the inclusion of a new 'argument', a new subtitle which presented it as a warning to young men, and a preface which emphasises the danger of venereal disease spreading from promiscuous women. Most of all, it transformed Aretino in the eyes of his later readers from a defender of courtesans, into their castigator.

¹ Ugo Rozzo, 'Erasmus espurgato dai 'Dialoghi piacevoli' di Nicolò Franco', in Achille Olivieri (ed.), *Erasmus, Venezia e la cultura padana nel '500* (Rovigo: Minelliana, 1995) 193-208, 194; and Rozzo, *Italian Literature on the Index*, p. 219

² Rozzo, 'Italian Literature on the Index', p.219

What were the *Sei Giornate*?

Before turning to how other mediators reframed Aretino's 'Life of Whores' for a new audience, it is first important to show what Aretino himself said about the morality of courtesans in his own writing. Before the multiple reprints, adaptations, and translations of the dialogues between whores was set in motion, Aretino's original Italian version was written in two separate texts as *Il Ragionamento della Nanna e della Antonia* (1534) and *Il Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa* (1536). Together these were known as the *Sei Giornate* (Six Days) and centre on the figure of Pippa, the daughter of the bawd Nanna who is deciding what Pippa should do with her future. In the 1534 dialogue, Nanna tells her friend, the prostitute Antonia, that she is uncertain whether Pippa should become a nun, a wife, or a prostitute. Conveniently, Nanna has been all three things in her life and the first three days are spent with her revealing the secrets of her past lives to Antonia. The paradox of this satire is that Nanna's life in the convent brought her into a den of iniquity, with nuns and friars having sex in a number of imaginative combinations, and Nanna voyeuristically watching them through hidden cracks in the walls. After being thrown out of the convent, Nanna manages to gull an aged man into imagining that she is a virgin and marrying her, and her life as a wife is filled with Boccaccian stories of cuckoldry.

Her final incarnation as a courtesan was the section translated into various languages over the next century, and it is surprisingly tame in comparison to her first tale of sexual indiscretions behind the closed doors of the convent. In it Nanna lists the tricks that she has played on various suitors by which she gained jewels, silks, furniture, even entire homes, and in this sense the text is much like Robert Greene's coney-catching pamphlets of the early 1590s in England. She sets one man off against another, steals one tight-fisted suitor's washing, and in a trick which was reproduced in Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World My Masters* Nanna and her doctor gull her suitors into thinking that she is close to death, and that they must pay the doctor for a long list of expensive treatments. Nanna is presented as a roguish anti-hero, admirable for her audacity and earthy wit, who in the end decides that Pippa should treat sex as a purely financial transaction and become a courtesan. Two years later the *Dialogo* was published, in which Pippa demands that she be trained in the art of prostitution. Nanna warns her daughter that she will have to be careful as it is a dangerous job, but assures Pippa that if she follows her advice, she will be safe and wealthy just like her

mother. What follows are further tricks of the trade, and a discussion on the role of the procuress, but more importantly Nanna's advice on avoiding mean, possessive, and potentially dangerous men.

The *Sei Giornate* hinges on the contradiction that the order of female sexual morality is reversed, so that it is the nuns who are the worst behaved and the prostitutes who, though dishonest in their trickery, are paradoxically more honest than nuns or wives in admitting that they use sex for advancement. This argument does not stop these dialogues being a misogynistic satire based on the convention of lascivious women, yet it fits Aretino's persona as 'Il Veritiero' (the Truth Teller) and 'Il flagello dei principi' (the scourge of princes), the person to lift the lid on the hypocrisy of the church and the court, and championing the honesty of working people.

It is the lives of the nuns and abbesses, together with male friars, priests, confessors and novices that is the most pornographic, involving multiple scenes of voyeurism, masturbation, and a variety of hetero- and homosexual acts. The sex scenes are meant to be not just titillating but ridiculous. One scene depicts Nanna peeking through a crack in a door at an orgy in which the Father General's desire for young men is made clear by his preference for the young friars, and which culminates in a 'jousting match' in which each 'tilts' at another with their penises or dildos until the final monk 'planted his little lance in [a nun's] backside, so that they all looked like a row of kebabbed souls that Satan was roasting on the fire for Lucifer's infernal carnival' ('piantò dietro a lei il lanciotto: di modo che pareano una spedonata di anime dannate, le quali volesse porre al fuoco Satanasso per il carnasciale di Lucifero).³ Already we can see the problem of translation, which I will return to later in this chapter, as the English translator, Raymond Rosenthal, uses the anachronistic 'kebabbed' to translate 'una spedonata', which in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* is listed as 'a spit-full, a broch-full'.⁴ Florio's second suggestion of 'broch', or 'brochette', does however suggest that 'kebab', while anachronistic, translates the more grotesque sense of 'spedonata' and the damned souls as morsels of meat to be eaten, which the term 'spit' alone might not do in English.

Group sex is made ridiculous by turning it into a game of jousting, but also blasphemous not just because of the sexual misdemeanours of the supposedly chaste

³ Transl. in Rosenthal p.32; modern Italian in Aquilecchia p.24

⁴ Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes*, p.669

members of the clergy, but also through Aretino's description of these devout people appearing like souls of the damned roasting on a spit. Aretino is not interested in realism here, but heightens the language ever more. His use of religious metaphor to describe sexual acts is repeated throughout the text; a nun's buttocks, for example, are compared to the Missal, the Father general's arsehole is a Credo-inspired '*visibilium*', and when Nanna fears that she has cut herself with her glass dildo, her hands are stained scarlet with blood 'like a Bishop's gloves on a high and holy day' (e vedendola con un guanto da vescovo parato).⁵ These comparisons are in equal parts disturbing and absurd even now, and clearly Aretino was aware of the offense that he could cause. In the dedication of the book to his pet monkey, Bagattino, Aretino pre-empts potential criticism:

Perhaps you would have liked, when it comes to what Nanna says of the nuns, that I hadn't been as malicious as she is. Nanna is a chatterbox, and she says the first thing that comes to her lips, but the nuns deserve every bit of it, since they exhibit themselves to the vulgar in a way that is worse than streetwalkers.

*che vorresti forse, per il dire che farà la Nanna delle moniche, che io fossi tenuto della buccia della tua malignità. La Nanna è una cicala, e dice ciò che lo viene alla bocca; e alle suore sta bene ogni male, da che si fanno vedere dal vulgo peggio che le femine del popolo.*⁶

Rosenthal translates 'della tua malignità' as 'as malicious as she is', yet the Italian reads 'your maliciousness', which is in reference to Bagattino, the monkey. Aretino compares the savagery of his attack to that of a wild monkey, yet justifies it on artistic grounds as he is reflecting the blunt language that his character Nanna would use. In fact, Aretino suggests that Nanna is so true to life, that he speaks of her as if she were real, when referring to her as a chatterbox.

Having moralised on the hypocrisy of the church in the preface of the *Ragionamento*, in the preface to the second half of the *Sei Giornate*, Aretino plays it safe by speaking only of his writing process. [see pp.75-6] In doing so, Aretino takes a neutral stance on his main

⁵ Rosenthal, p.28, p.30; Aquilecchia, p.20, p.22

⁶ Rosenthal, p.13; Aquilecchia, pp.4-5

topic of prostitution, a position which would later be undermined by his translators who would present Aretino as a castigator of the vices of prostitutes and good time girls. What is lost from their translation of only the 'life of whores' section of the dialogues is Aretino's presentation of Nanna as a loveable trickster, as well as her warning to Pippa about the dangers of men. In the *Dialogo* Nanna warns Pippa of the aggressiveness of some of these men, and points out the inequality of other courtesan satires which criminalise prostitutes yet do not acknowledge the violence of their male customers:

If you set on one side all the men ruined by whores, and on the other side all the whores shattered by men, you will see who bears the greater blame, we or they. I could tell of tens, dozens, scores of whores who ended up under carts, in hospitals, kitchens, or on the streets, or sleeping under counters in the fairs...thanks to having always whored for this man or that; but nobody will ever show me the man who, due to the whores, became an innkeeper, coachman, horse-courier, lackey, quack, cop, middleman, or mendicant bum.

Ma ponghinsi da un canto tutti gli uomini rovinati da le puttane, e da l'altro lato tutte le puttane sfracassate dagli uomini: e vedrassi chi ha più colpa, o moi o loro. Io potria anoverarti le dicine, le dozzine e le trentine de le cortigiane finite ne le carrette, negli spedalim ne le cocina, ne la strada e sotto le banche...bontà de lo aver sempre puttاناتo col favor di colui e di costui; ma non sarà niuno che mi mostri a lo incontro persone che per puttane sien diventati osti, staffieri, stregghiatori di cavalli, ceretani, birri, spenditori e arlotti.⁷

Aretino not only has Nanna shame her customers, but also accuse male preachers for their hypocrisy. He describes how they damn prostitutes from the pulpit, and blame all sexual sins on women rather than on men. Pippa asks Nanna 'Why don't they cry down the men as they do us?' (Perché non si grida agli uomini come a noi altre?) to which her mother replies:

⁷ Rosenthal, pp.268-9; Aquilecchia, p.245

That's what I wanted to say. His paternal reverence Messer Preacher should address their lordships and say "Oh you spirits of temptation, why do you force, why do you contaminate, why do you ram it into chaste women...? And if you can put it in any way you wish, why then do you rob them blind, why do you slash their faces, and why do you go about defaming them?"

*Questo voleva dire io: doverebbe la paternità de la Reverenzia di messer lo predicatore voltarsi a le loro Signorie, dicendogli: "O voi, o spiriti tentenni, perché contaminate, perché piegate le donne puracce...? E se pur le colcate donde vi pare, a che fine svalgiarle? A che proposito sfregarle? E che far bandirle?"*⁸

Here Aretino gets much closer to the voice of a prostitute than any of the 'repentant whores' who regret their decisions in other satires and plays of the period, many of which would be misattributed to him. He highlights the difficulty of the profession, and blames men for making life both harder and more dangerous for prostitutes than is necessary. The men are often as much the butt of the joke in the *Sei Giornate* as the courtesans that they visit. Much is made of men's impotence⁹ and the fact that the male body is just as grotesque as those of women. The later translations have removed Nanna's mockery of men to focus instead on the serious business of 'exposing' her tricks on unsuspecting male clients. If the 'life of whores' centred on stories of women's misconduct and the tricks they play on men, then it is benign in comparison to the examples of men's mistreatment of women listed in the *Dialogo*. While Aretino treats Nanna's trickery of her clients lightly, he suggests that it is unjust of a man not to pay for the goods that he has received:

as if [whores] didn't have to pay house rent, buy bread, wine, wood, oil, candles, meat, chickens, eggs, goat cheese, or water...And what the devil are they supposed to live on— the Holy Ghost? And why must they spread their legs gratis for everyone? Don't soldiers demand their danger money

⁸ Rosenthal, p.293; Aquiliecchia, p.267

⁹ 'Nanna: '...Ha, ha, ha!/Pippa: What's so funny?/ Nanna: I am laughing at the excuse men concoct when their tails won't stand up straight' (Nanna:Ah! ah! ah!/Pippa: Di che ridete voi?/ Nanna: Rido de scusa hanno trovata coloro ai quali non si rizza la coda) Rosenthal, p.175; Aquiliecchia, p.158

before they go into battle? Don't doctors argue cases in court for the good clink of hard coin?...So, if every job that entails hard work gets its compensation, why should we crawl under some fellow who expects it for almost nothing?

*e non altrimenti che le puttane non pagassero pigion di casa, né comprassero pan né vino né legne né olio né candele né carne né polli né uova né cascio né acqua....e di che hanno elleno a vivere, di spirito santo? e perché hanno esse a darsi in preda a ognuno in dono? I soldati vogliono la paga da chi gli manda in campo; i dottori dicano de le parole per la lite bontà dei soldi...e si ogni esercizio faticando è sodisfatto, perché doviam noi entrar sotto a chi ci richiede per nonnulla?*¹⁰

As a writer living by 'the sweat of his ink' and who may well have been expected to write/'spread his legs/give himself as prey to everyone' for gratis [see p.89, p.92], Aretino shows empathy with women who were themselves in a precarious career. He flattens out the distinctions between the prostitute and male careerists such as soldiers and lawyers, seeing their rights as equal when it comes to being paid for services rendered. By ignoring this protesting voice in the later dialogues and reproducing only the most traditional one from the 'life of whores', Xuárez and later translators were ignoring the rest of Aretino's social commentary, and instead focussed their satire solely on the courtesan and her deceptions. Aretino, while no defender of women, gives his character Nanna space in his text to express the dangers that a prostitute exposes herself to at the hands of men, and it is this voice which is unfortunately lost from later translations.

Aretino fragmented

When the third day of the *Sei Giornate* was isolated from its context in later translations, it would be reframed in order to fit a tradition of courtesan satires which presented prostitutes as well as lascivious women in general, as being intent on abusing the trust of young, naive men. While Ian Frederick Moulton places this initial act of isolation

¹⁰ Rosenthal, pp.260-261; Aquilecchia, pp.237-8

with the Spanish translator Fernán Xuárez, I have found another text which predates this, and which set in motion the process of isolating some of Aretino's work from the wider context of his *Sei Giornate*. Xuárez' translation of this section, the *Coloquio de las Dames* (Colloquium of the Ladies), was certainly popular, first published in Seville in 1547, and later reprinted there as well as in Zaragoza in 1548, in Medina del Campo in 1549, and again in Seville in 1607.¹¹ However, a pirated edition from c.1540, written in Italian and given the rather ungainly title of: *Dialogo del diuino Pietro Aretino, che scopre le falsità, rubarie, tradimenti, et fatuchiarie ch'usano le corteggiane, per ingannare li simplici huomini, che de loro s'innamorano. Intitolata la Nanna et Antonia* (Dialogue by the divine Pietro Aretino, which uncovers the lies, robbery, betrayal, and sorcery that is used by courtesans, to deceive the simple men, who fall in love with them. Named the Nanna and Antonia) seems to be the missing link between Aretino and Xuárez' translation. This edition has previously been listed in catalogues, and is mentioned in a bibliographical note in Donatella Gagliardi's edition of the *Coloquio de las Damas* (2011) but as far as I know, no other scholar has discussed this edition further.¹² There are only seven remaining copies of this edition, and while the *Edit 16* catalogue suggests that it has been given a false imprint of 'Pariis' but was most likely printed in Rome, four of the seven surviving copies are now held in French libraries, and none in Italy, which might imply that *pace* the *Edit16* catalogue, this was indeed printed in France.¹³ Unlike the Xuárez and later translations, this edition only removes the first two days on the lives of nuns and wives, so that the third day of the first part is essentially tacked onto the start of the *Dialogo*. The only remaining copy in England in the Bodleian (Bod Holk.f.142) has a woodcut on the title page [Fig.3] of a woman seemingly entertaining a group of five women to her right, a close enough reflection of the content in which there are five female characters and no men. Inside the booklet, there is also dense marginal notation

¹¹ Despite Xuárez' claims to have cleaned up the text for a Spanish audience, his translation was itself put onto the Index of Castilian books banned by Cardinal Don Gaspar de Quiroga, the Inquisitor General of Spain, in 1583, which makes the 1607 publication even more surprising. Ian Frederick Moulton speaks about Xuárez and other translations in *Before Pornography* pp.153-7, and in 'Crafty Whores: the Moralizing of Aretino's 'Dialogues'.

¹² Fernán Xuárez, *Coloquio de las Damas* ed. Donatella Gagliardi (Rome: Salerno, 2011) pp.166-7

¹³ This edition is listed in *French Books III & IV: Books Published in France before 1601 in Latin and Languages other than French*, eds. Andrew Pettegree, Malcolm Walsby, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011) as entry 53719, in a list of books sold at Frankfurt Book Fair, 82. The catalogue of Italian books, *Edit16*, which lists books in both national and regional libraries in Italy, lists the text, but with no surviving copies. The University of St Andrews' *Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC)* lists copies in Cambrai (Fr), Michigan (USA), Nürnberg (Ger), Oxford (UK), Paris (Fr), Poitiers (Fr) and Strasbourg (Fr).

for the first four pages of the 'fourth day', i.e. Nanna's initial advice to Pippa, which translate many of the words into Latin. There is also an eighteenth-century English note in the flyleaf, which notes that this 'edition [is] a very rare one, no mention is made by Mazzuchelli, the author of Aretino's life', referring to *La vita di Pietro Aretino* by Giovanni Maria Mazzuchelli in 1741. The marginalia inside appears instead to be in a sixteenth-century hand, with two or three words in every line translated into Latin, suggesting that this text was being used for language learning. There must also have been a reason why it is the fourth day discussion between Nanna and Pippa, and not the first text in the booklet, but with no explanatory marginal notes, it is difficult to work out why.

This 1540 edition appears to have been used not only by Xuárez, but could also have been used by other translators who claimed to have translated directly from the Italian rather than from the Spanish. From the title alone, there is a clear similarity between it and the titles of all of the translations listed in the appendix which all promise to 'uncover' the 'lies, robbery, and betrayal' which are used by courtesans to 'deceive' young men. Removed of the first two dialogues on the lives of nuns and wives, this reduced version of the *Sei* [now 'Quattro'] *Giornate* is now exclusively about the topic of prostitution, and is therefore rendered less controversial by attributing heterodox sexuality to the social outsider, rather than to nuns and wives as Aretino does. Aretino's prefatory letters have also been removed and no alternative has been written, as was the case for the Xuárez translation. As I shall show later, this edition is also interesting because it alters the ending of the original dialogue, and in turn this altered ending appears to have been copied by later translations. When these later translators claim to have translated directly from the Italian, it seems highly likely, given that this text has this altered ending and was possibly even printed in France, that they are referring to this pirated edition.

It is unlikely that we can recover all the translations of this Aretino text, as even in translation his work was still affected by censorship in Catholic countries. In the appendix to this chapter I have tried, however, to give a more complete list of the translations than previous studies have provided.¹⁴ For example, in Luce Guillerme et al.'s collection *Le Miroir des femmes* (1984), an extract from the French translation *Histoire des amours fainies &*

¹⁴ For the French translations I found the following bibliography useful: Giovanni Dotoli, Vito Castiglione Minischetti, Paola Placella Sommella & Valeria Pompejano's *Les traductions de l'italien en français au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Schena Editore Presses de l'Universite de Paris-Sorbone, 2001)

dissimulees de Lais & Lamia (1595) is explained by Guillerm as being the first printed French translation of Aretino in France.¹⁵ This is demonstrably false, as not only had this specific dialogue been translated into French twice already in 1580, but Aretino's religious texts had also been translated into French by Jean de Vauzelles between 1539-1542. Moulton includes a longer list of translations in *Before Pornography*, yet even this references the Spanish *Coloquio*, only one of the French translations, *Le Miroir des Courtisans* printed in Lyon in 1580, the Latin edition *Pornodidascalus* printed in Frankfurt in 1623, and a loose English adaptation, *The Crafty Whore* (London, 1658).¹⁶ In the appendix to this thesis, you can see that there were at least a further four translations made into French, and two into Dutch.

The Latin and the second Dutch translation both acknowledge the Spanish *Coloquio* as their source, but all others claim to have been directly translated from Italian. In the case of the 1580 French translations, however, they have clearly derived from the Spanish text because they have also translated Xuárez' preface, while the other Dutch text from 1646 translates Xuárez' couplets on the issue of reading profane books. [see p.55] It is Xuárez' preface and its subsequent translations which would especially help to reframe Aretino's text as a warning to young men against the dangers of prostitution and therefore these translations are a major factor in the posthumous representation of Aretino to readers across Europe.

Moulton understands the mediation by Xuárez and later translators as being primarily a case of isolating the third day dialogue, and the addition of a moralising preface. While I agree with Moulton that the preface greatly alters the way in which Aretino's text is presented to the reader, he has ignored other features of these translations, such as the censorship of some of the more risqué passages, the addition of Petrarchan sonnets interleaved in the text, the text stopping abruptly two-thirds of the way into the French 1600 translation, and most of these translations being supplemented with other material from poems on prostitutes, illustrations and errata lists, to a history of the Sack of Rome and a defence of reading frivolous books. While each translation is different, what all of these translations share is a new 'argument' which precedes the text, and reframes it into a

¹⁵ Luce Guillerm, Jean-Pierre Guillerm, Laurence Hordoir, Marie-Françoise Piéjus, *Le Miroir des femmes: roman, conte, théâtre, poésie au XVI^e siècle* vol. 2 (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1984) p.200

¹⁶ Because *The Crafty Whore* has interesting connections with contemporary English 'Wandering Whore' narratives, I will also be examining it in chapter 6 of this thesis.

narrative of wandering whores. The mediation by translators and printers was therefore much greater than has previously been acknowledged.

The Xuárez translation, for example, cuts the more explicit or ridiculous sexual allusions, satirical references to the clergy, and also references to Jewish merchants who are renamed 'heralds' (pregoneros). Swearing, when it uses the Lord's name, is replaced with oaths such as 'by the bones of the sun' (huesos del sol), while sexual references considered especially indecent are removed. For example, when Nanna is pretending to a client that she is really a virgin, in the original text she exclaims 'What is this huge thing? do other men have such enormous things? So you want to split me in half with it, do you?' (Che cotal grosso è questo? Gli altri uomini hannolo così grande? Adunque mi volete sfendere nel mezzo?)¹⁷ This is completely removed from the *Coloquio*. References to Nanna servicing the clergy are also toned down, for example when Nanna explains that she was screwing 'a little monsignor [i.e. a high ranking member of the clergy] a hat on his head and all wrapped up in a cape' (un monsignoretto con un cappello inviluppato in una cappa)¹⁸ this is translated into Spanish as 'a young knight' (un caballero mancebo),¹⁹ or when Aretino says that Nanna has sold her virginity more times than a miserly priest sells the first masses sung in church (vendei più volte la mia verginità che non vende un di questi pretacci la messa novella, attaccando per ogni città polize alle chiese del suo cantarla).²⁰ This comparison is removed from the *Coloquio* which instead simply states 'vendí mil veces mi virginidad' (I sold my virginity a thousand times).²¹ Such cuts change the tone of the text not only to make it less blasphemous, but also to remove the more comical comparisons and references to sex. Xuárez's translation is therefore about prostitution but not about sex, and so his and the subsequent translations would transform Aretino's text into a serious warning about the behaviour of prostitutes, from the light-hearted trickster narrative which the original text had once been.

Reframing the narrative: wandering whores and STDs

¹⁷ Rosenthal, p.110, Aquilecchia, p.97

¹⁸ Rosenthal p.122, Aquilecchia 108

¹⁹ Xuárez, p.45

²⁰ Rosenthal p.114; Aquilecchia p.101

²¹ Xuárez, p.32

There were also practical reasons why these translations needed to frame the Aretino text differently. It simply didn't make as much sense in isolation. When it appeared as the third day of Nanna's discussion with Antonia, Aretino framed each dialogue with a short narrative which placed Antonia and Nanna in the bucolic setting of Nanna's vineyard, shaded by a fig tree. This not only provided the setting for Nanna's mock-Socratic dialogues with her 'pupil', Antonia, but also allowed for Antonia to consider what she had learned the previous day, and for Nanna to connect this to the next day's discussion. Having settled down under the fig tree on the third day, Antonia says to Nanna:

As I dressed this morning I thought how splendid it would be if someone were to write down all your stories and tell the life of priests, monks, and laymen so that these women you mention could hear and laugh at them, in the same way these men laugh at us who, just to appear wise, provide them with so many criticisms of ourselves. I swear that I can hear the stories right now— I don't know who's writing them down, but my ears are buzzing, so it must be true.

*lo pensava, mentre che mi vestiva, che sarebbe una bella cosa che qualcuno scrivesse i tuoi ragionamenti, e che ci fusse chi raccontasse la vita dei preti e dei frati e dei secolari; acciò che, udendola le mentoate da te, si ridessero di loro come eglino si rideranno di noi che, per parere di esser savie, diamo contra a noi medesime; e parmi già udire che non so chi lo faccia: le orecchie mi trombano, ei sarà vero.*²²

This then leads into the dialogue, in which Nanna agrees with Antonia but suggests that they now return to her story, of how her mother brought her to Rome. As well as setting up the conceit that Aretino is an amanuensis of this overheard conversation, here Antonia reminds us that the men who appear in Nanna's stories are equally as ridiculous and badly behaved as the women. The third day ends with Nanna unable to speak due to a sneezing fit, and Antonia advising her that Pippa should become a prostitute because nuns and wives betray their vows, while 'the whore violates neither her monastery nor her husband; indeed she acts like the soldier who is paid to do evil' (ma la puttana non la attacca

²² Rosenthal, pp.105-6; Aquilecchia p.93

né al monistero né al marito: anzi fa come un soldato che è pagato per far male). Antonia continues with a swipe at the Papal Court: 'What counts is to satisfy every whim and caprice...because Rome always was and always will be—I won't go so far as to say the whore's plaything, so as not to have to say it again to my confessor' (e importa il cavars ogni vogliuzza potendo favorire ciascuno: perché Roma sempre fu e sempre sarà, non vo' dir deller puttane per non me ne avere a confessare).²³ The third day is concluded with Aretino's framing narrative in which Nanna and Antonia head back to Nanna's home, where Nanna offers her friend dinner and a place to stay that night, as we are told that Antonia is 'irked by poverty,' (venutale a noia per la sua povertà) and 'barely managed to survive' (trampellava la vita) through her profession.²⁴ Antonia's poverty and the description of the Roman Papal Court as a hotbed of sexual iniquity shows that Aretino's satire is not solely directed at women, but at the society in which they live.

The framing device and the story's ending is replaced in various ways in the subsequent 1540 pirated edition and in the translations, clearly because Antonia's opening comments about the lives of men being written down and her final advice for Pippa not to be a nun or wife refer to the rest of the *Sei Giornate*. Antonia's paradox that the whore is more honest than the nun or wife is as a consequence excised from the new translated texts. A new premise has to be sought, and so the text is preceded by an 'argument' which sets the scene.

This argument appears for the first time in Xuárez' 1547 translation, and is reprinted with every subsequent translation thereafter, excluding *The Crafty Whore*. To paraphrase: Nanna (in various translations renamed either Thais, Lais or Lucretia) is a young lady from Bologna who fell in love with a courtier of Emperor Charles V, thereby setting the scene for the foreign reader into a wider European historical context. She leaves with the imperial court to Hungary and Austria, then, abandoned by the courtier, she travels to Rome with her mother and sets herself up as a courtesan. One day she is in the port town of Ancona, and happens to see her old friend Antonia (often renamed as Lamia or, confusingly, Lucretia) who looks as prematurely aged as Nanna. Antonia has also been on various 'peregrinations' and has been severely weakened (the implication being that she has caught the pox), but they settle down to talk about their adventures (i.e. the original material written by Aretino.)

²³ Rosenthal, p.158; Aquilecchia, pp.139-40

²⁴ Rosenthal, p.159; Aquilecchia, p.140

What I'd like to highlight here is the fact that in this argument Xuárez has introduced two new themes to Aretino's text: the theme of the wandering whore, and an allusion to the venereal diseases that have weakened these two women. This new narrative reflects Xuárez' prefatory letter to the reader, in which he justifies his decision not only to translate the text, but to have it printed for a public audience. Rather than arguing that the text is written primarily for entertainment as Aretino had himself argued in his prefaces, Xuárez reinterprets the text as a warning, and Aretino as the 'scourge' and 'truth-teller', 'exposing the falsehoods, dealings, deceptions and sorcery' (descubren las falsedades, tratos, engaños y hechicerías) of courtesans on the title page of his translation. Aretino may well have been a scourge, but of princes and patrons, not those who fell outside the social order. When he exposed the sins of women, he attacked those of men too, unlike other contemporary satires which were directed solely at prostitutes.

The evil that is enabled by prostitutes is a combination, says Xuárez, of venereal disease and the wasting of hard earned money. Xuárez writes that he feels it is necessary now more than ever to uncover the sins of prostitution, because Spain and Europe more generally have been struck with the evil of 'the French disease', a name given to the combination of various sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea. 'Now all flesh has corrupted its path as a result of which God has once again brought a flood upon the earth, not of water...but the pest and disease not known by the ancients or written of by doctors, and which each nation ascribes to foreigners' (Agora toda la carne a corrompido su camino, y assi otra vez a trayo nuestro dios sobre la tierra otro diluio, no de agua...sino la plaga y dolencia no sabida delos antiguos, ni escrita por los medicose la qual cada nacion la echa also estraños).²⁵

Venereal disease was first mentioned in writing in Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Propriatibus Rerum* (1495), though at first, no one was completely sure about how it was spread. Initially, it had been seen as a punishment from God, an astrological misalignment of the heavens, or a pestilence spread through 'bad air'. Xuárez' introduction indicates that he believes that the spread of venereal disease is a punishment by God for the immorality of

²⁵ Xuárez, p.5

men, when he writes that 'this cruel disease and flood of divine justice has been universal to all' (*esta cruel enfermedad y diluvio dela divina justicia ha sido universalmente en todos*).²⁶

By the time that Xuárez is writing, however, it had become clear that the French disease was sexually transmitted, and women, especially prostitutes, were blamed for spreading it (though noticeably the men with whom they were sleeping were not). This did not stop confusion around how one contracted the disease, and so there were also rumours that it could be spread simply by sharing a drink with a foreigner or using their toilets. In addition to prostitutes and foreigners, other social outcasts such as Jews, lepers and vagabonds were also suspected of passing on the disease. As 'courtesans of Rome' Nanna and Antonia were for later translators both foreigners, women and social outcasts. Xuárez emphasises their connection to the French disease in his prefatory letter, the argument to the translated text, and in a new moralising ending that he attaches to the original text, which I will return to later.

Xuárez' prefatory letter focusses on the fear of a disease, both physical and moral, being spread through the free movement of women. This is conveyed through the biblical passages which he uses to justify his translation of a profane text, as a way of educating young men to avoid the bad deeds of others. His biblical source is Solomon, well known as a repentant adulterer. Xuárez paraphrases Proverb 5, which is directed to a young man, telling him to stay away from adulteresses or, in some translations, 'forbidden women'. Xuárez writes of his choice of Aretino as his material:

This way to instruct the youth is not new and has no small authority, as the Divine Scripture uses and takes advantage of it. And so says Solomon: "For the lips of a shameless woman are like honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil; but in the end it is more bitter than aloes, and her tongue as sharp as a two edged sword..." See how the Divine Scripture warns those who deceive and neglect the youth.

Esta manera di auisar ala juuentud no es nueua, ni tiene pequena autoridad, pues la diuina escritura la vna y se aprouecha della. E assi dize

²⁶ See Kevin P. Siena, 'Pollution, Promiscuity, and the Pox: English venereology and the early modern medical discourse on social and sexual danger', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 8.4. (April, 1998) pp.553-574, esp. pp. 556-7

*Salomon; Panal de miel trae en los labios la mujer desuergonçada: y su garganta mas blanda que el azeite: pero lo con que acaba es mas amargo que el azibar, y su lengua corta mas que cuchillo de dos filos...ved como auisa la diuina escritura a los que engañan y descuydan la juuentud*²⁷

Xuárez further quotes from Solomon, this time from Proverb 7, which again warns a young man of the temptations of a 'forbidden woman'. Xuárez paraphrases the proverb and then explains that he understands: 'that it is authorized in writing, all to divert the blind youth from such dangers' (es autorizado en la escritura: todo para desuier la ciega juuentud de semejantes peligros.²⁸ Xuárez' likens his use of Aretino to Solomon illustrating his lessons with examples from real life, but his choice of Solomon's Proverbs bring up further nuances to his translation of Aretino. Firstly the women in the biblical texts are not prostitutes but adulteresses, or in the King James Bible 'a strange woman'. Xuárez seems to be blurring the distinction between all three categories: adulteresses, prostitutes, and the already rather fluid term of 'strange' or 'bad' women. Secondly, what is considered charming or amusing in the Aretino text, i.e. Nanna's loquaciousness and her outspoken opinion, is read entirely negatively by Xuárez when he quotes Solomon's dismissal of the woman in Proverb 7 as 'parlera' (talkative) and 'desuergonçada' (shameless). Repeatedly in the original text, Nanna apologises for going off on tangential stories while both Antonia and Pippa praise her (i.e. Aretino praises himself) for her storytelling, and suggest that she should write a book. In Proverb 7, however, a woman's talkativeness is associated with restlessness, and an unacceptable desire to be seen in public, to refuse to be confined to the house, and to instead wander through the streets and squares of the town. Proverb 5 also associates the adulteress with wandering through public spaces, so that a woman's sexuality is equated with a desire to wander and appear in public. In turn Solomon warns that such aimless wandering may lead to a man's aimless squandering of his wealth on 'the house of another'.

In Xuárez's preface prostitution is seen as a danger not only to the health but also to the wealth of young men, who spend their inheritances and their energies on courtesans. Xuárez describes how young men waste the carefully earned money of their fathers on women who pretend that they are in love with them. Worse, these young men are made

²⁷ Xuárez, p.7

²⁸ Xuárez, pp.8-9

destitute and targeted by bailiffs and the pimps of these women, who kidnap, torture and force them to pay a ransom, just like those Europeans who are captured by the Algerian corsair Barbarossa.²⁹ While Aretino's *Sei Giornate* talked of the violence done to women by men, here we see Xuárez is more concerned with the violence done to young men by the criminal network surrounding the prostitutes they frequent.

As I have mentioned earlier, Xuárez's quotation of Solomon's adulteress helps to blur the distinction between prostitutes and all 'bad' women committing the tricks which are described in the Aretino text. This generalisation is carried over not only in the title of the Spanish and later Latin translations (both are 'Colloquium of *Women*'), but also in the translation choices that Xuárez makes in the main text. While Aretino uses the word 'puttana' (whore), Xuárez sometimes translates this as 'una mala mujer' (a bad or 'fallen' woman). For example, in the original text, when Antonia asks Nanna why prostitutes can be vindictive, Nanna replies: 'Because a whore would not be a real whore unless she behaved like a cheat from inner grace and outer privilege; and a whore who does not have all the traits and qualities of a whore would be like a kitchen without a cook, a meal without wine, a lamp without oil, or spaghetti without cheese (Perché a una puttana non parrebbe esser puttana se non fusse traditora con grazia e privilegio; e una puttana che non avesse tutte le qualità di puttana, saria cocina senza cuoco, mangiar senza bere, lucerna senza olio, e maccaron senza cascio).³⁰ Xuárez translates this as: 'Porque una mala mujer no parecería serlo si no fuese traidora con gracia é privilegio; y á la que esto le faltase, sería como cocina sin cocinero, ó como comer sin beber, ó lámpara sin aceite, ó macarrones sin queso.' ('Because a bad woman would not appear to be this way if she was not treacherous with grace and privilege, and if this is lacking [in her], then it is like a kitchen without a cook, or like eating without drinking, or a lamp without oil or pasta without cheese.)³¹ In Aretino, vindictiveness and cheating are traits of whores, while for Xuárez these are traits of all 'bad' women. While the implied meaning is that these women are 'bad' through sexual misconduct, the point is that rather than the clear use of the term 'puttana' or 'whore' that Aretino uses, Xuárez is intentionally using euphemism which blurs the distinction between women having sex for money, and women having sex outside of the norms of society. In his

²⁹ Xuárez, p.6

³⁰ Rosenthal, p.144; Aquilecchia, p.127

³¹ Xuárez, p.87

subtitle, after all, Xuárez refers not to prostitutes or even to fallen women, but to 'mujeres enamoradas': women in love.

Xuárez's preface, reprinted in later French and Latin translations, as well as his argument, reprinted in the majority of the translations, were a way of culturally translating Aretino's text into something acceptable for a Counter-Reformation audience. Xuárez also changed the ending of the translation, almost literally 'reframing' the original text by providing a new beginning and end which refigures Antonia and Nanna as wandering, syphilitic prostitutes. In order to justify his choice of material, Xuárez also implies that Aretino, whom he calls a 'famous and great demonstrator of vices and virtues' (famoso y gran demonstrador de vicios y virtudes) on his titlepage, meant his text to be a warning to young men, rather than an amusing tale of female tricksters.

A new ending & domesticating Aretino

The original *Ragionamento* finishes with Nanna willing but unable to continue her story, having dissolved into a sneezing fit. For a few pages she valiantly begins a new tale, only to have it punctuated with 'Achew, achew' or 'Oh help me....oh, I'm dying, There's not a chance.' (Uòh, uòh, uòh...ui muoio, non ci è ordine).³² It is at this point that she asks Antonia to speak, and tell her what 'career' Pippa should choose. The 1540 pirated edition and the majority of the translations include Nanna's pestering Antonia for an answer to her question, though they exchange Nanna's sneezing fit for a headache and remove any comedy from the new ending. What Xuárez's translation changes, however, is Antonia's final answer. In the original and the 1540 pirated edition, Antonia says that the nun inevitably breaks her vows and the wife hers, but the prostitute is always free. In Xuárez and his branch of translators, she tells Nanna that *if* she had a daughter, the daughter shouldn't become a nun because she would break the profession, and she shouldn't marry because she would destroy holy matrimony.³³ The implication is that as her mother's daughter, the now purely hypothetical Pippa is inherently bad and therefore destined to become a whore, or else be unable to behave herself as a nun or wife.

³² Rosenthal, pp.156-7; Aquilecchia, pp.138-9

³³ Xuárez, p.135

It is not Xuárez alone who makes alterations to the text, however. The 1540 edition changes the ending in order to (a) play down Aretino's mocking of the Papacy and (b) remove the bucolic framing device. Antonia's final quip in the original text (that the Papal Court always has been and always will be the home of whores) is completely removed from both this pirated edition and all subsequent translations. At this point in the original text, the dialogue ends and we are told that Antonia and Nanna head home from the vineyard to Nanna's home, where Nanna has some liquorice for her cough, invites Antonia to stay overnight and to dine with Nanna and Pippa. Here, we see Nanna as a generous friend who is inviting the poor Antonia into her home, feeding her and allowing her to rest before she must return to her life as a prostitute.

The 1540 edition simply stops before Antonia mocks Rome as the centre of whoredom, excludes the show of Nanna's generosity to Antonia, and skips to the end of the dialogue in which Nanna simply says: "you speak well Antonia," said Nanna, "and in the meantime I will do as you suggested" ("Tu parli bene, Antonia," disse la Nanna, "e tanto farò quanto me hai consigliata") at which point this edition and subsequent translations add a finishing line: 'and with this stops at the end of her dialogue' (& detto cio detteno fine al suo ragionamenti).³⁴ The Spanish translation, meanwhile, ends as it had begun, with the conceit that Nanna and Antonia are meeting after a long separation of wandering through Europe. Nanna suggests that they return to the same place, and that Antonia tell her of her adventures.³⁵ What follows are two pages in which the two courtesans discuss how they are now suffering for their sins, both because they are now old and rejected (at the grand age of 20 and 24 years) and because they are suffering from sexual diseases or 'enfermedades', which they describe as 'this black pain' (este negro dolor) and the 'meat pox' (poquillas de carnes).³⁶ Nanna is especially angry because she is now destitute (in contrast to the original Nanna, who has become rich). The women finally agree to meet tomorrow, when Antonia will tell Nanna of her own peregrinations.³⁷ This ending is also translated in the Latin translation, the Dutch *Het Net* and the French *Miroir* texts which had reprinted Xuárez' preface. *Het Net* even refers back to the Spanish context when it quotes a line in Spanish

³⁴ *Dialogo che scopre le falsita, rubarie, tradimenti, et fatuchiarie ch'usano le corteggiane, per ingannare li simplici huomini, che de loro s'innamorano. Intitolata la Nanna et Antonia* ('Pariis', 1540) sig.E4r (my translation)

³⁵ Xuárez, p.137

³⁶ Xuárez, p.138, p.139

³⁷ Xuárez, p.139

before translating it into Dutch: 'son nuestros peccados (gelyke de Spangaert seit) 't is ons sonden schult.' ('son neustros peccados', as the Spaniard says: "it is our sins' fault").³⁸

Other translations produce different endings, however. The English adaptation, *The Crafty Whore* provides a different moralising ending with Thais (The Nana figure) renouncing her past life:

As for my owne part I am heartily sorry, that I have thus spent that time which should have been employed and dedicated to divine worship, in Idlenesse, Wantonnesse, Riot, in perverting others, and in destroying my owne soule. Wherefore now I intend to spend the residue of my life in some remote Cell or Hermitage; where my heretodore bewitching haire shall be my sole napkins to wipe those teares of mine eyes with true repentance for my sins, shall extract from thence, my lustfull & deceitfull crimes will I number by my sighs and groanes, and finally, fasting shall be to me instead of my former feasting, and so farewell.³⁹

This new ending reflects an interest in the figure of Mary Magdalene, the repentant prostitute, who personified the Counter Reformation (and in Protestant countries, also the Puritanical) desire to recant the past luxuries of the Roman Church, and show that it too could be reformed. Meanwhile, the French translation, *Dialogue de l'Arétin* (1600, reprinted Paris, 1610) and the later Dutch translation *Leven en d'Arglistige Treken du Courtisanen te Romen* (1680) finish two-thirds of the way into the dialogue, at a point when Nanna complains about prostitutes saying one thing to their lovers, and then laughing at them behind their backs. The *Dialogue* ends rather abruptly: '....and on leaving the house gives him thousands of caresses of the tongue without any profit. Goodbye Lamia'/ Lais [sic]: 'Goodbye Lais, till I see you again' (& au sortir de logis dónent mille caresses de la langue sans aucun profit. Adieu Lamia./Lais: Adieu Lais iusques au reuoir).⁴⁰ *Het Leven*, though it also cuts off a third of the text, provides a new ending, returning to the theme of the wandering whore. The text follows on from where the French text finished:

³⁸ I. de. L, *Het net der wellustigheyt* (Amsterdam, 1646), reprinted with introduction by A.N.W. van der Plank, (Deventer: Sub Rosa, 1982) p.125. (my translation)

³⁹ [Richard Head?] *The Crafty Whore, or, The mistery and iniquity of bawdy houses laid open* (London, 1658) p.95

⁴⁰ Anon, *Dialogue de l'Arétin*. (Du Brueil: Paris, 1610) p. 60v. (my translation)

Lamia: It's unfortunate, friendly Lais, that you're stopping with your story. Nevertheless, I will continue your pretence, and send you a whole list of the crafty things that I have done to many darling youths, during my back-and-forths in Italy, France, and Germany.

*Lamia: 't Valt my hart, vriendelijke Laïs, dat gyvan vertellen ophoudt. Niettemin ick sal met verlangen uw presentie weer te gemout sien, en u oock eens melden een heel register van Arglistige treecken die door my aan vele Troetel-kinderen bedreven zijn, geduurende mijn her-om-swerpen in Italien, Vrankrijck, en Duytslandt.*⁴¹

The Dutch text picks up on Xuárez's theme of Nanna and Antonia's wanderings and further specifies what was once simply 'peregrinations' as Antonia's trips through Italy, France and Germany.

The courtesans' travels across countries also point to the fact that these translations both exoticize and domesticate the story of Nanna and Antonia. Setting his story in contemporary Rome with local references such as Nanna being shown to prospective customers in a window of the 'Via dei Banchi' (Bank Street) or living in a house in Via della Scrofa (Sow Street), Aretino had chosen to represent a place which he knew well, having lived there in the 1520s. For his translators, meanwhile, the Roman setting exoticizes the narrative, creating some distance from their own cities and prostitutes. The translators exoticize the story even more by choosing new names for Nanna, such as 'Lucretia', 'Thais', and 'Lais', and occasionally 'Lamia' or 'Lucretia' for Antonia.⁴² *Het Leven* highlights this idea of the exotic when it translates a list of names that prostitutes pick and choose, so that their clients never know their real name. In the original text a girl named 'Giulia' might change her

⁴¹ 'Pieter Koolaert'/Romeyne de Hooghe, *Het Leven en d'Arglistige Treken du Courtisanen te Romem* (Leiden, 1680) pp.179-180 (my translation)

⁴² Thais was a famous Ancient Greek hetaera or courtesan who accompanied Alexander the Great on his military campaigns. She is said to have instigated the burning of the palace at Persepolis after inspiring Alexander with a speech at a drinking party that night. There were two famous hetaera named Lais, one from Corinth and the other from Hyccara, who were the lovers of ancient philosophers and were often confused by ancient writers. Lucretia is the legendary daughter of a Roman prefect who was raped by an Etruscan king's son, and committed suicide from the dishonour. This was meant to have sparked the overthrow of the Roman monarchy, and usher in the Roman Republic. The legend of Lucretia would become a favourite theme of Western art and literature. Finally, Lamia is the mythical Libyan queen and lover of Zeus, who was sent mad by the jealous Hera and devoured other women's children.

name to 'Laura, Lucrezia, Cassandra, Portia, Virginia, Pantasilia, Prudenzia, Cornelia (Giulie, ora Laure, ora Lucrezie, or Cassandre, or Porzie, or Virginie, or Pantasilee, or Prudenzie e ora Cornelia).⁴³ Despite the fact that *Het Leven* is set in Rome, this exoticization is translated not as a movement from a contemporary Italian name into more literary names such as Petrarch's Laura, or ancient mythical names such as Lucrezia, but instead suddenly jolts us out of the Roman setting and tells the reader how a Dutch name such as 'Margriet'⁴⁴ is exoticized and turned into more Francophone sounding names such as 'Magdalene, Madame Pauline, Mevrouw Villemanase'.⁴⁵

While there is clearly a purpose in exoticizing these stories of courtesans and reminding the reader that they are originally written by an Italian author, there are also moments of cultural translation, for example when 'Giulia' is transformed into 'Margriet'. Peter Burke describes the process of cultural translation as 'a double process of decontextualization and recontextualization, first reaching out to appropriate something alien and then domesticating it.'⁴⁶ In this he follows the translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, who formulated this double process of 'domestication' and 'foreignization' as an ideological process in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), itself an elaboration on an argument first posited by Schleiermacher in 'The Two Methods of Translating' (1813).

This can be illustrated by the process of 'decontextualisation' in one of the translations, and 'recontextualisation' in others. After the section where Aretino writes that a whore who is not vindictive is like eating spaghetti without cheese, the original text continues to describe the songs which are sung to humiliate prostitutes. Antonia says that it must be comforting to men who have been ruined by whores to see them go past on the gallows cart:

like the woman in that poem which goes:

'O Madrema doesn't want to, O Lorenzina,
O Laura, O Cecilia, O Beatrice,
Let this miserable woman be your model!'

⁴³ Rosenthal, p.136; Aquilecchia, p.120

⁴⁴ The Dutch name 'Griet' is the equivalent to 'Meg', and 'Dulle Griet' or 'Mad Meg' is a well known Flemish folkloric figure.

⁴⁵ *Het Leven*, p.148

⁴⁶ Peter Burke, 'Introduction', *Cultural Translation*. p.10

I know it by heart, I learned it, thinking it was by Maestro Andrea; I have since discovered that its author is the man who treats great lords as badly as this foul disease treats me

come andò quella dal capitolo che dice:

O Madrema-non-vuole, o Lorenzina,
o Laura, o Cecilia, o Beatrice,
sia vostro essemplio ormai questa meschina.

*Io lo so a mente, e lo imparai credendomi che fusse di maestro Andrea, e poi intesi che lo fece quello che tratta i gran maestri come tratta me questo mal traditore*⁴⁷

This leads into Nanna finding herself in her usual crisis of muddled thinking, expressed in her distinctive use of domestic metaphors: I have more to tell you...I'm trying to think. The truth is, my brain is all awash; it is simmering on the stove; it is only fit for shucking beans, due to my habit of hopping from topic to topic. Well anyway, let me tell you...There came to Rome a rich young nobleman of 22, who bore the title of merchant...' (e so che ho da dirti più...io lo vado pensando. Infine io ho le cervella in bucato, io le ho nella stufa, io le ho date a sgranare i fagioli nel saltarti di palo in frasca. Dico che venne a Rom un giovane di XXII. anni, nobile e ricco, mercatante nel nome...)⁴⁸

The verse that Antonia quotes from names well known contemporary Roman prostitutes such as 'Madrema non vuole' (mother doesn't want to) who was famed for reciting poems by Virgil and Petrarch by heart. It is taken from the *Lamento della Cortigiana Ferrarese* (c.1525) the lamentation of a fallen courtesan, now destitute and pox-ridden. Antonia says that she had believed it was by the cantimbanchi 'Maestro Andrea', yet that the 'real author' is the man who treats great lords as badly as the 'French disease'. This suggests that Aretino is claiming authorship of the carnival song, and indeed he has been identified as the possible author by Giovanni Aquilecchia, even if Maestro Andrea was the one who

⁴⁷ Rosenthal, p.144; Aquilecchia, p.127

⁴⁸ Rosenthal, p.145; Aquilecchia pp.127-8

performed it.⁴⁹ [see p.192]. In the Spanish translation, Xuárez has decided to remove this section maybe because its references to popular Italian culture and literary gossip is too specific.

With this reference completely removed, Antonia responds to the preceding section with the words: 'Let's leave this, for the life of me, but let's turn to your particular events, I wish to hear them more than to see the comedies that are recited'(Dexemos eso, por vida mia, sino tornemos á tus hechos en particular, que huelgo más de oyrlos, que de ver recitar comedias.)⁵⁰ Xuárez appears to be alluding to Antonia's memorising of a 'comedic' song in the original text when he says that she would rather listen to Nanna's examples (which Xuárez insists are informative rather than entertaining) than to comedies. Xuárez also removes Nanna's dismay over her muddled mind, and inability to distinguish between stories, and in doing so he removes a large part of Nanna's personality and the humour of Aretino's original dialogue. Instead Nanna agrees to Antonia's request, and without the original Nanna's fuss, launches into the next story about her dealings with a young nobleman. Even here specific details have been changed. In the original text this young nobleman is a 22 year old merchant who 'came to Rome', we are not told from where. The translation makes him a younger 18 years old and from Naples, which at the time was a commercial centre under the control of Spain. Possibly this change is used to emphasise the fact that these courtesans are taking advantage of rich young boys, and to connect the young man to a Spanish-controlled area.

The other translations do more to 'domesticate' the text by changing names of people and places. *Le Miroir*, for example, chooses not to rename Nanna and Antonia after the names of ancient courtesans, but instead to give them more francophone names: Flora and Antoinette, while *Dialogue de l'Aretin* translates a section in which Nanna talks of courtesans who make up grand lineages in order to gain respectability. The French translator first 'decontextualises' by removing Aretino's reference to 'Madrema non vuol', then 'recontextualises' by adding courtesans who claim to derive from more northerly lineage 'la maison de Savoye, en Haynault' (The house of Savoy in Hainault) and 'la maison de Duc de

⁴⁹ See Giovanni Aquilecchia, 'Per l'attribuzione e il testo del *Lamento d'una cortigiana ferrarese*' in *Tra latino e volgare: per Carlo Dionisotti*, eds. Gabriella Bernardoni Trezzino, Ottavio Besomi (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1974) pp.3-25, esp. p.15

⁵⁰ Xuárez, p.107

Baviere' (the house of the Duke of Bavaria).⁵¹ The French translations also 'domesticate' the Aretino text by appending works on love and courtesans which are written by French writers. The *Dialogue* includes *Les secrettes ruses d'amour* (1581), which claims to disclose the various ruses used by women as a public service to men, and Le Sieur de la Valletrie's *Les paradoxes de l'amour* (c.1588) which provides six paradoxes of love such as 'that it is not inconsistent to be in love in several places' or 'when it is alright to be in love with your friend's woman.' Three of the other French translations, *Tromperies dont usent les mieus affectees courtisanes* (1580), *Histoire des amours faintes* (1595), and *Le cabinet des secrettes ruses d'amour* (1610) all include Joachim du Bellay's *La vieille courtisane* (the Old Courtesan). In this text, the old courtesan claims that she knows all of Aretino's moves and can put all the secrets which he uncovers into practice. The character of the old courtesan in this text appears herself to have been inspired by Aretino's Nanna, as both James Turner and Caroline Fischer have suggested.⁵² Du Bellay keeps the setting in Rome, and uses especially Italianate words in order to make his Roman courtesan more authentic. As such he is actually following more closely in the footsteps of Aretino, who had attempted to capture the natural speech of Nanna.⁵³

Some of the supplemented material gives contradictory information; *Het Net*, for example, provides both a misogynistic text on 'the angry and horrible world of evil women: taken from the Scriptures and various Authors' (de boose en grouwelicke aerd der quade Vrouwen: ghetrocken uyt de H. Schrifture, Outvaders en verscheiden Autheuren), and a collection of Love Songs (Minne-Zangen). Not all of the translations were supplemented with works on love and/or the dangers of courtesans and women, though. The Latin *Pornodidascalus*, though prefaced with a warning to the young men of Frankfurt against the dangers of women's tricks, appends a historical treatise on the Sack of Rome, *Historia Direptionis Urbis Romae*, for the further edification of its young readers as well as an errata list, in true humanist fashion.

The three final translations all use elaborately drawn frontispieces, while *Het Leven* also interpolates illustrations throughout its text. These frontispieces are all brothel scenes,

⁵¹ *Dialogue de l'Arétin*. p.59v

⁵² Du Bellay quoted in James Grantham Turner, *Schooling Sex, Libertine Literature and Education in Italy, France, and England 1534-1685* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) p.36, & Fischer, 'Un'Immagine di Pietro Aretino in Francia', p.502

⁵³ See the introduction to Joachim du Bellay, *Divers jeux rustiques*, ed. V.L. Saulnier (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1965) p.liii n.4

though *Het Net der Wellustigheyt* printed in Amsterdam is especially misogynistic in its depiction of a prostitute ensnaring a courtier with a net emanating from between her legs, her chamber-pot in the foreground next to her bed. [Fig.4] The courtier leans back, as if uncertain whether he wishes to proceed. This is a literal manifestation of the title, which translates as 'The Net of Lasciviousness', and John R. Ike suggests that 'this frontispiece alone moralizes more than the original and its Spanish successor combined.'⁵⁴ The frontispiece of *The Crafty Whore* printed a decade later in London, shows a much more certain customer, foppishly dressed with large bows on his shoes, his hands under the skirt of the courtesan. Meanwhile, her grotesque procuress triumphantly raises his purse aloft behind his back. [fig.5] In both of these backgrounds we see musicians playing and women carousing in the other parts of the brothel.

Meanwhile, the frontispiece of *Het Leven*, printed in Leiden in 1680, carries a slightly different title to that of its title page: *Het Leven en Listen der Gerieflycke Courtisanen te Romen* (The life and ruses of the comfortable courtesans of Rome) as opposed to 'The Life and insidious attractions of the courtesans of Rome'. [Fig.6] The frontispiece is engraved by Romeyn de Hooghe, who is also considered by Ike and other Dutch critics to be the true translator of the text, using the pen name 'Pieter Koolaert'. This image is less moralising than the other two, with the courtesans and their lovers depicted more equally. In the foreground a courtesan and her customer are seated to the left, while on the right two other courtesans are in the middle of a discussion, one leaning forward, her hand raised in the act of emphasising her speech, maybe representing Nanna and Antonia. In the background, another courtesan and her lover are in bed together, apparently fully clothed. Behind them is a Roman setting though the characters are wearing seventeenth-century dress, so this image is both exoticising and domesticating the text for the Dutch audience. Inside the book, de Hooghe has interpolated seven engravings, illustrating aspects of the narrative. [fig.7] Again, the settings are exoticised with Italianate statues, cupolas and Roman columns but the characters are dressed in late Seventeenth Century clothing, with the men in long justacorps, wide-brimmed hats, cravats and long curled hair. Importantly for our consideration of 'Aretine pictures' as discussed in chapter 6, none of these images are

⁵⁴ John R. Ike, p.144

overtly erotic, but instead capture humorous or dramatic scenes, giving the reader a more dynamic experience.

Translating cultures

There are changes in tone too, that do not domesticate the text in the sense of removing unusual references or inserting recognisable ones for a new vernacular audience, but instead present the text according to what the translator imagines their new audience to expect, pandering to their social norms and morals, and therefore never challenging that society's preconceptions. Many of the translations and even the Wolfe and Elsevir editions present the dialogue as a patriarchal text, ignoring Nanna's angry interjections about there being more prostitutes being ruined by violent men than young men being tricked out of money by prostitutes. As mentioned above, *Het Net* is more misogynistic than the original Aretino text, including as it does an 'Addendum, indicating the evil and abominable nature of bad women' and a frontispiece depicting a courtier caught in a prostitute's net. The caption underneath this image is taken from the 1620 poem 'Selfstryt' ('self-struggle') by Father Jacob Cats: 'Der Hoeren goet onthael, zyn also vergulde pillen,/ Die blincken wel in't oogh: maer doen het lichaem swillen' (the whore's most cordial welcomes are like gilded pills,/ that twinkle in your eyes, but do your body swell.) *Het Net* also interpolates this quotation from 'The learned Sir Cats' (Den gheleerden Heer Cats) into its translation of the Xuárez preface, when it argues that Cats, like Solomon, intends to warn the youth to avoid beastly dangers.⁵⁵

The Elsevir preface is also misogynistic in its warning that 'the author describes...the evil wickedness of women' in order to 'teac[h] you how to recognise and repudiate them' ('l'autore vi rappresenta...le cattiverie delle femine maluagie, egli vi insigna il modo diri conoscerle, & di schifarle).⁵⁶ This is true for the 'Barbagrigia' preface too, which while arguing for the right to allow individuals to decide what they read, also claims that 'Aretino never had any other aim, than to make known the wickedness of hypocrites, and the guilt of women' ('Aretino non hebbe giamai altra mira, che di dare a conoscere la malvagita degli

⁵⁵ *Het Net*, p.10

⁵⁶ *Capricciosi*, pp.5-6

ipocriti, e de le ree femmine).⁵⁷ Aretino had indeed presented himself as a castigator of the hypocrisies of nuns, but noticeably not of all women, which these later editions assume.

The Spanish translation justifies its new sheen of morality by arguing that, while Aretino's ease in describing sexual deeds was acceptable in Italy of the 1530s, it is no longer acceptable in Spain during the early years of the Counter Reformation. In his second letter to the reader, Xuárez justifies his censorship by saying that 'in certain places in this Dialogue, you find many words that were suffered to be put into print where there was liberty to speak and write, that in our Spain are not permitted in any printings, for their dishonesty.'⁵⁸ Xuárez approaches the issue of censorship head on, and argues that he had to censor the text in order for it to even be printed in Spain. [See pp.57-8]

All of these translations are also 'cultural translations', in the sense that (to varying degrees) they privilege the cultural expectations of the foreign audience over the preservation of the original cultural content. In translation studies this would be called the Skopos theory of translation which was developed by Hans Vermeer and uses the Greek word *skopós* for 'purpose, aim, goal'. In all theories of translation the importance given to the source or target text (ST & TT) has to be decided by the translator, who can balance their texts to varying degrees. The choice is between preserving the integrity of the ST and its linguistic culture, and acknowledging the TT's need to be understandable to a new culture of readers. Skopos theory, for example, places the status of the ST lower than other equivalence-based theories of translation,⁵⁹ privileging the expectations of the reader. As Paul Kussmaul puts it, factors such as the knowledge, expectations, values, and norms of target readers 'determine whether the function of the source text or passage in the source text can be preserved or have to be modified or even changed.'⁶⁰

There are of course going to be problems for the representation of writers like Aretino if the translator's preference is to meet the expectations of the reader over their responsibility to the author. A text must be understandable, but must this necessarily be at the price of the ST culture being excised from the TT just because it is not immediately understood? For example, in the translations of the Aretino dialogue, all mentions of the

⁵⁷ *La prime parte*, A3r

⁵⁸ Xuárez, p.15

⁵⁹ See Katharine Reiss & Hans Vermeer, *Grundlegung einer allgemeine Translationstheorie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984)

⁶⁰ Paul Kussmaul, *Training the Translator* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 1995) p.149

courtesan *Madrema-non-vuol* are removed, thereby excising a real historical person from a text just because she is not known to a secondary culture. The reader is not given the option to ask themselves who this person was, or simply to read her as a character in a narrative. In contrast to Vermeer, who emphasises the 'domestication' of the ST into the TT's culture, the translation theorist Lawrence Venuti argues that 'foreignisation' (i.e. the preserving of the original cultural moment in which the ST was written) is the most ethical choice for the translator to make.⁶¹ In this way, the translation maintains a certain distance from its original text, and resists cultural assimilation. While this is an issue of choice for contemporary translators, in retrospect this theory helps to distinguish between the preferences of editors such as Wolfe and Castelvetro, as shown in chapter 1, to foreignise Aretino to their readers, while the translators such as Xuárez domesticate Aretino to their own culture, both by using more recognisable proper names or place names, and in the case of Xuárez, of censoring Aretino's more bawdy and blasphemous content in order for his writing to be circulated in Spain.

It seems that the translators of this Aretino text were, through their emphasis on the TT over the ST, moving the power balance towards the secondary culture and ignoring the echoes of the 1530s Italian culture that Aretino's work represents. In comparison, the refusal to translate by the Wolfe and Elsevir presses, as well as their editing practices shows that they wished to preserve something they felt would otherwise be lost by too much intervention by censors. Burke suggests that such moments of cultural translation (or an attempt at cultural equivalence in the case of Wolfe and Elsevir) are useful in indicating the different values that are afforded to the original language (i.e. its prestige or cultural hegemony) or to the target language (for example, whether that culture is open to outside ideas). 'In other words,' Burke writes, 'the "political economy of translation", both imports and exports, makes a revealing cultural indicator.'⁶² As a historian who is examining past acts of translation rather than discussing the ethics of translation today, Burke notes the tensions between the domestication and foreignisation of texts in the early modern period. The translation theorist André Lefevere agrees with Burke, when he suggests that the study of translation should acknowledge the trajectory of translated texts, which can tell us not only

⁶¹ See Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998)

⁶² Burke, *Cultural Translation*, p.22

about the culture from which it originated and the culture in which it is received, but also about the agency of the translator as a mediator between these two poles.⁶³

Conclusion

If I am arguing that the various translations of Aretino domesticated him for a new target audience and culture, what did this do to Aretino's posthumous reputation in Europe? Clearly the choice to reprint Aretino is due to the cultural hegemony of Italian literary culture in this period, and partly because of Aretino's reputation as a 'scourge' and 'truth teller', though this has been utterly transformed into being a scourge of prostitutes rather than of princes. What is noticeable, however, is that while translators might have chosen Aretino as their source text because he was an Italian writer, the 'foreignness' of his text is downplayed by these translators who wish to exoticize Nanna into 'Thais', while simultaneously excising *Madrema-non-vuol* and Aretino/Maestro Andrea's carnival song from the text, instead domesticating it by adding local details such as new northern European names and locations. Finally, Xuárez's insistence on censoring the text because what might have been permissible in Italy was no longer printable in Counter-Reformation Spain, indicates that Aretino was soon becoming foreign not only in language but in morals. In chapter four, we will see that when Aretino's 'foreignness' is emphasised, it is done so with the intention of aligning morally 'bad' English writers such as Greene and Nashe with this Italian writer. Their morality, if nothing else, is foreign to the English, implies their opponent Gabriel Harvey.

The choice to translate is, as Venuti and Lefevere point out, often an ideological decision. Think for example of the distinction of the two Dutch translations of Aretino's *Marescalco* mentioned in chapter 1. Hooft's translation would have sounded unusual to a Dutch audience, because he had kept the prose which Aretino had originally used, 'foreignising' the text for the new audience. Prose had been used in Italian plays since Bibbiena's *Calandria*, published in 1513 with a preface from Baldassare Castiglione which defends the greater naturalism of prose. While English theatre had adopted both the use of prose and blank verse from the Italians, for a Dutch audience more used to rhymed plays,

⁶³ See André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992)

Hooft's use of prose for *Schijnheilig* would have marked the play out as foreign and experimental. When Bredero 'domesticated' the play to conform with Dutch expectations by applying a rhyme scheme, he was also turning it into a much more popular play.

The later translators of the 'life of whores' could, after 1584, have used Wolfe's Italian editions which were circulating through Europe via the Frankfurt bookfair; Hooft had used one of Wolfe's editions for his Dutch translation of Aretino. In fact, they could also have used the Elsevir editions that were reprinted four times between 1600 and 1660 in Amsterdam in Italian. Instead, they seem to have relied on either the Xuárez translation or the 1540 Italian pirated edition, both of which present themselves in their subtitles as 'advice to young men' and 'discoveries of the tricks of women/courtesans'. Xuárez' addition of an argument which frames the text as a dialogue between two wandering whores, would, as we shall see in chapter five, bolster the misattribution of *La puttana errante* to Aretino. This choice by the translators appears to be a moral one, rather than one of availability.

Xuárez's prefatory letter and new ending which gloss the main text with a moralising sheen seem, however, to have been dropped by later translators. His connection of Aretino's courtesans with 'bad women' spreading syphilis is only reprinted in two French 1580 editions, and the Latin translation of 1623. Indeed, the full title of the 1680 Dutch translation '*The Life and crafty traits of the Courtesans of Rome. Being a dialogue between Lais and Lamia, two comfortable and famous Ladies there. Written in Italian by Aretino*' (Het Leven en d'Arglistige Treken der Courtisanen Te Romem. Zijnde Een t'Samenspraeck tusschen Lais en Lamia, twee gerieffelijcke en welbekende Dames aldaer. In't Italiaens beschreven door Aretin) returns to Aretino's more generous presentation of Nanna and Antonia: while they may be 'crafty' this is potentially an admirable trait, in comparison to the words used to describe them in other subtitles: 'deceptive', 'false', or 'dissimulating'.

By the Seventeenth-Century we can see that there were two strands of Aretino's 'Dialogues' being produced in Europe. In one strand, humanist editors provided a rendering of Aretino which they believed stayed true to his authorial intention. Meanwhile the second strand, consisting largely of vernacular translations, chose to reproduce only one, highly altered, Aretino text that had gained in popularity. This variant seems to have been more successful as it was repeatedly translated across Europe. At the same time the full six days were reprinted in London from 1584-5, and 1600-1660 in Amsterdam, but these were aimed

at an elite audience to better their understanding of the literary language of Italian. In contrast, the translations isolated the least controversial section of the *Sei Giornate*.

The sexual transgressions of courtesans are thus limited to a specific roguish sphere, and are therefore less shocking than suggesting that nuns are equally promiscuous within the confines of the convent. Simultaneously, the nuance of reading the *Sei Giornate* together has also been lost: Aretino is no longer read as criticising men who had been repeatedly described as either deserving of being gulled by Nanna, or were presented as violent and dangerous in the dialogues between Nanna and Pippa. What this means for Aretino, is that he (a) is inscribed back into the 'Counter Reformation' dialogue of exposing the dangers of prostitution, as if he had never intervened in that narrative in the first place, and (b) that he is (in the same way as Niccolò Franco was by the censor Giovannini) expurgated of any criticism of the Catholic church and its hypocrisy, for example when Antonia describes the Papal Court as a hotbed of sexual iniquity. He is softened and conventionalised, while at the same time his association with prostitution is being exaggerated by the repeat translation of this one text, in contrast to his many other works on religious topics, art criticism, and political satire.

I would also suggest that the usually overlooked 1540 edition has proven to be important because it shows that the isolation and preference for this specific part of the *Sei Giornate* was not necessarily an act of 'translation' by Xuárez, but had already happened only a few years after the original text was written, still in Italian, and during Aretino's lifetime. I bring up this previously unremarked upon edition not just to show what I imagine might have been another step in the genealogy of these translations, but more to show just how confusing these multiple attributions to Aretino actually are. Like the origins of the sexual diseases that Xuárez and other writers feared to be originated by foreign prostitutes, we can think of the origins and circulation of Aretino's 'dialogue on whores' as being equally confusing, in fact, this is probably true of textual circulation in this period in general. It is not a linear genealogy of one translation begetting another, but instead a rhizomatic spreading of these texts. We'll see in the final two chapters of this thesis how Aretino and pseudo-Aretino texts were, and continue to be, constantly confused. This is not a case of the 'true' Aretino being ignored by his scrupulous imitators. Aretino allowed and maybe even encouraged his followers to disguise their writing as his. In the third stage of this thesis, I shall be turning to what Lefevere describes as 'refraction' or a theory of rewriting. Lefevere

argues that 'A writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through 'misunderstandings and misconceptions',⁶⁴ and this is indeed what occurred to Aretino, who gained notoriety through his openness to have work misattributed to him.

⁶⁴ André Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', in ed. Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000) pp.233-250, p.234

Chapter 4:
The fight over Aretino's soul

While the English writers mentioned in chapter 2 were discussing Aretino's excessive and singular style, there was, threaded into this discussion, an ever increasing amount of references to his dubious morality, both sexual and religious. This slander was not new, as texts had been written against Aretino during his life, even by two of his followers, who had later turned against him. Niccolò Franco, whose prose *Puttana Errante* circulated under Aretino's name, also wrote an obscene *Vita di Pietro Aretino* in 1538, attributing it to another of Aretino's rivals, Francesco Berni. In it he attacked Aretino as a sodomite, a cock-sucker and called his sister a whore. Another dissatisfied follower of Aretino's, Anton Francesco Doni, wrote an attack on Aretino titled *Il Terremoto* (The Earthquake) in the year of his death, 1556, the subtitle of which calls Aretino the 'Colosso bestiale Antichristo della nostra eta' (Colossus, bestial Antichrist of our age).¹ Relevantly for this chapter, he also writes of Aretino that 'You write badly, live worse, and with your Pippa and Nanna and dirty courtesans' (Tu scriuendo male: uiuendo peggio: & con le Pippe e le nanna: & soirche cortigiane).² In chapter 3 we had seen how Aretino's reputation as the writer of courtesans was changed through the use of framing devices to shift his usual defence of courtesans as fellow professional workers, into the more socially acceptable stance of their castigator writing to warn young men. This chapter will also look at Aretino's changing representation abroad, but this time as a form of return to the language of Franco and Doni, but importantly also *after* attempts by Wolfe, Castelvetro, Nashe et al. to anchor Aretino's more positive reputation. It took longer in England, therefore, for Aretino's reputation as a stylist and wit to fade, but eventually Doni's accusation that Aretino wrote 'badly' and lived 'worse', would be a refrain not only used against Aretino, but used as a way of discussing the growing concern over the morality of professional writers, writing for a public audience.

¹ For more on both of these texts, and Aretino's response, see David O Frantz, *Festum Voluptatis: A Study of Renaissance Erotica* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1989) pp.110-117. For more on these 'poligrafi' as well as Aretino's other follower, Ortensio Lando, see Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530-1560. Anton Francesco Doni, Niccolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

² Anton Francesco Doni, *Il Terremoto*, quoted in Frantz. p.114

By 1589 John Wolfe had printed the last Aretino text in England for three centuries to come. An English translation of *I sette salmi*, John Hawkins' *Paraphrase upon the seaven penitentiall psalmes* would be printed in France in 1635, but the next openly attributed English translation of Aretino would not occur till 1889, entitled *The ragionamenti or dialogues of the divine Pietro Aretino literally translated into English*. Even this was printed in Paris by Isidore Lisieux, a printer of other erotic texts.³ Hawkins' 1635 translation had been printed in Douay, near Rheims, where English Catholics moved in order to practise their faith away from suspicion in England. Hawkins' confession as a reformist Catholic matters not only in relation to his attraction to the meditative purpose of Aretino's image-rich prose, but also to his attitude towards the translation of scripture and his judgement of Aretino as an author in the Index of Forbidden Books. The Douay university censor, doctor of theology Georgius Colvenerius, had unusually licensed this as: 'Psalmorum poenitentialium, ex Italico in Anglicinum sermonem conversa, pia & catholica est, nihil habés fidei, aut bonis moribus adversum.' (Penitential Psalms, turned from Italian into English sermons, it is pious and Catholic, there is nothing against them in faith or good morality), and while Aretino's name is never mentioned, Hawkins obliquely refers to him in his dedication as 'a Florentine as well literate, as elegant' who had 'layed open' the occasionally obscure Psalms 'for the better satisfying, and enlightening' of readers. Hawkins poses as the apologetic translator, when he writes that

Too frequently doe Translators eclipse diuerslie, the genuine meanings of what [the Author] wrote. For the most part at least, they are deficient in the rendring them, with a curious manner of expression, and eake lustre. I cannot but misegive, that I much faile therein. Reallie I misdoubt, that I am too farr out, not nigh alas, the grace, & puritie of his stile soe worthie...But I will hope that in the version of this Treatise into our owne speach, I have rendred its true sense.⁴

³ See Antonio Vignali, *La Cazzaria: The Book of the Prick*, ed. Ian Moulton (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2003) p.3

⁴ John Hawkins, *Paraphrase upon the seaven penitential psalmes of the kingly prophet, translated out of Italian by I.H.*, (Douai: G. Pinchon, 1635) sig.A2r

Hawkins acknowledges his role as translator in conveying the 'lustre', 'curious manner of expression', 'grace, & puritie of [Aretino's] stile', but he also alludes to Aretino's initial attempt to make the difficult text of the Psalms understandable to a lay reader through his vernacular paraphrase. This is, as we shall see elsewhere in this thesis, not the usual Seventeenth-Century representation of Aretino as a prototype pornographer, but instead a sensitive reading of Aretino as a literary stylist. Despite this, Hawkins was still not willing openly to acknowledge this text as Aretino's. This pull between defending Aretino as a writer against accusations of immorality, is an issue which had started decades earlier, as this chapter will argue.

Wolfe did not just stop printing Aretino in 1589, but despite his specialisation in Italian texts he completely stopped printing anything Italian after 1591. There are various reasons why this might have happened; Wolfe's editor Giacomo Castelvetro was leaving for the court of James VI in Scotland, and Wolfe was at this time also taking a back seat as a publisher when his and John Windet's businesses merged in 1591.⁵ However, there is also a more sinister coincidence than pure market pressures. On 16th August 1591, Wolfe entered an anonymous pamphlet ascribed to 'G.B.A.F' into the Stationers' Register which was bitterly anti-Italian: *A Discovery of the great Subtlety and Wonderful Wisdom of the Italians*, itself a translation of the French Huguenot pamphlet, *Traité de la grande prudence et subtilité des Italiens* (1590). The text describes Italian contrivances to dominate and ruin other nations by using the Roman Catholic faith to tie countries to Rome, while simultaneously setting other countries against each other. Chapter 30 is entitled 'Begging Friars sent abroad and employed by the Romans, to set upon those that dare open their mouthes against their Domination' while the next chapter is 'Of the services of Jesuites, to blind the youth withall, to the end to make them adore the Italian inventions.'⁶

The suspicion that Wolfe's press had turned against Italian culture is strengthened by the printing of yet another xenophobic text, John Eliot's *Ortho-epia Gallica, Eliot's Fruit for the French* (1593) which parodied the conversation manuals of refugee language teachers. The most obvious of Eliot's targets is John Florio, whose *First Fruits, which yield Familiar Speech, Merry Proverbs, Witty Sentences, and Golden Sayings* (1578) is not only mirrored in

⁵ Mark B. Bland, 'John Windet and the Transformation of the Book trade, 1584-1610', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 107:2 (2013) 151-192

⁶ G.B.A.F. *A discovery of the great subtiletie and wonderful wisdom of the Italians whereby they beare sway over the most part of Christendome* (London: John Wolfe, 1591) p.45

Eliot's title, but as Frances Yates has clearly shown, entire swathes of Eliot's text are lifted verbatim from *First Fruits*, for Eliot to parody.⁷

Both *A Discovery* and *Ortho-epia* were written at a time of political unrest in England and France. The former is a translation of a Protestant tract of 1590, written towards the end of the French Wars of Religion. The visceral hatred is clear: Catherine de Medici and 'her Counsell of Italians' are 'bloodsuckers [who] sucked the bloud of the poore [French] people so dry, as if it had béene crushed out in a wine-presse.'⁸ *Ortho-epia*, meanwhile, was printed in the same year that violence against such Huguenot refugees was at its peak. London artisans and other skilled professionals were fearful that their jobs would be taken by immigrants, and had signed several petitions against 'strangers'. One placard which appeared in mid April that year railed against the refugees as hypocrites who 'counterfeit show of religion' in order to take advantage of England and the queen's benevolence.⁹ Less than a month later another placard now called 'the Dutch Church libel', claimed that the refugees were double-dealers, 'Machiavellian Marchants' bribing English nobles with 'Spanish gold'.¹⁰

It is against this background that Wolfe's press printed both an anti-Italian, anti-Catholic text by a French Huguenot and Eliot's mocking of all foreign refugees who attempted to teach French and Italian to young gentlemen. Eliot's dismissal of foreigners is not limited to recent immigrants but reaches the more established Italian community as well. In one part of this dialogue, one of the interlocutors says that 'London is ful of Italians and Frenchmen' who are 'a little too high minded, and doe not fit themselues long to the nature of vs English.' Not only do they not 'fit themselves' to English life, like Ascham he accuses foreigners of bringing poisonous foreign works into England:

There are some wicked heads...who have empoysoned by the venime of their skill, our English nation, with the bookes of Nicholas Machiavell, and Peter Aretine, replenished with all filthinesse and vilanie, who deserve for

⁷ See Yates, *John Florio*. Yates reproduces passages from both text in parallel for a detailed comparison pp.154-164

⁸ *A discovery*, p.5

⁹ Printed in John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1824) vol.4, pp.234-5

¹⁰ The Dutch Church libel was rediscovered by Arthur Freeman in the Bodleian Library in 1971, and transcribed in his article 'Marlowe, Kyd, and the Dutch Church Libel', *English Literary Renaissance*, vol.3 (1973) pp.44-52

their pains a few swings of the strapado, or some bastinadoes, and to be banished out of the kingdome of England.¹¹

Irrespective of the nationality of these foreign language teachers, they are accused of introducing Italianate texts into England. Worse, these are the books of Machiavelli and Aretino, which brim over with 'all filthines and villany'. This sentence is even more remarkable because this was printed by Wolfe, arguably one of those 'wicked heads'. He and his editor Castelvetro had after all intended to print the entire works of Machiavelli and Aretino and here we have a text published by Wolfe's press a few years later, denouncing exactly such an act as poisoning England and deserving corporal punishment, even banishment. It remains a mystery why Wolfe would publish a work which would attack people like himself for having published Machiavelli and Aretino's texts in England. This had been a project which he had presumably defended in prefatory material, writing that both writers had simply been misunderstood by a public who had only heard of, but never read, their works. [See p.38]

Wolfe not only printed these anti-Italian texts, but employed John Eliot as a translator of French news books between 1589-93.¹² This was a decided shift from specialising in literary, theological, and judicial texts printed in Italian for a specialised readership aided by two main foreign collaborators (Ubal dini and Castelvetro), to translations of stories from France for a growing audience, eager for news from the continent. This time Wolfe was collaborating not only with the Englishman John Eliot, but from August 1592 also with the writer Gabriel Harvey, who appears to have lived with Wolfe when he moved down to London.¹³ Like Wolfe, Harvey seems also to have changed his attitude towards Aretino, from having admired him as a stylist in the marginalia of his books to decrying the Italian as an immoral writer who could lead young English readers astray in the pamphlets that he printed with Wolfe.

The first time that we see Gabriel Harvey writing disapprovingly of Aretino as a representative of Italian vice is when he goes on the offensive against popular writers such

¹¹ John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica: Eliots fruits for the French* (London: John Wolfe, 1593) p.4

¹² As well as *Ortho-epia*, the ESTC lists titles translated by Eliot for Wolfe, e.g. *Newes sent to the Ladie Princesse of Orenge* (1589), *Advise given by a Catholike gentleman* (1589), *The sick-mans comfort* (1590), *Discourses of warre and single combat* (1591), *The survey of topographical description of France* (1592)

¹³ See McKerrow, vol.5, pp.80-1

as Robert Greene, John Lyly and Thomas Nashe in his *Four Letters*, printed by Wolfe in 1592. Maybe his brother, Richard Harvey, had planted the seed of doubt when he decried Aretino and Machiavelli as purveyors of the atheism that he claimed had arrived from Italy in *A theological discourse of the Lamb of God*, printed by Wolfe's soon to be partner John Windet in 1590. Whatever the reason, Harvey's discussion about Aretino had shifted from an already ambivalent attitude towards his 'singularity' and excessive rhetoric as mentioned in chapter 2, to a more overtly aggressive attitude towards Aretino's popularity amongst English writers such as Nashe.

A good man skilled in speaking?

Between 1592 and 1596 a pamphlet war raged between two notorious writers of Elizabethan London, Thomas Nashe and Gabriel Harvey. My interest in this quarrel is primarily because it is an important example of the Elizabethan reception of Aretino: his name appears time and again in these pamphlets, as an example of either a good or bad professional writer. The quarrel began after Greene had mocked Harvey and his brothers in *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592). This was followed by Harvey's letters in response, the first of which, though printed together with others in December 1592 as *Four Letters and Certain Sonnets*, had been rushed out as a four-page letter which Harvey called a 'butterfly pamphlet' because of its brevity. Harvey had heard gossip about the circumstances of Greene's death on 3rd September and in his second letter dated 5th September, is one of the first to relate the rumours that Greene had died in penury. Nashe appears to have responded to this in the preface to *Pierce Penilesse*, when he says that he will write to 'the Ghost of *Robert Greene*, telling him, what a coyle there is with pamphleting on him after his death.'¹⁴ From here on in Harvey and Nashe trade insults, with Nashe explaining that he defends Greene because he feels that he would 'doe as much for any man, especially for a deade man, that cannot speak for himselfe'.¹⁵ The fact that Greene cannot defend himself is clearly an important point for Nashe:

¹⁴ Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*, vol.1 p.153

¹⁵ Nashe, *Strange Newes*, vol.1 p.330

Had hee liv'd, *Gabriel*, and thou shouldst so unarteficially and odiously libeld against him as thou hast done, he would have made thee an example of ignominy to all ages that are to come, and driven thee to eate thy owne booke butterd, as I sawe him make an Apparriter once in a Tavern eate his Citation, waxe and all, very handsomely serv'd twixt two dishes. Out uppon thee for an arrant dog-killer, strike a man when he is dead?¹⁶

The conditional tense of this sentence was of course the problem: *had* Greene lived. The injustice that Greene's reputation should be tarnished by Harvey eventually makes Nashe lose any composure and dissolve into an angry outburst; it is no longer specifically Greene who is attacked, but any dead man. His defence of Aretino, to be discussed later in this chapter, could be understood along similar lines: Aretino was no longer around to defend himself. In this description of Greene making a court official eat his own summons, it is apparent here as indeed it is in various other places in which he praises men like Greene and Aretino for their prodigality, that Nashe admires the showmanship of these writers, just as much as Harvey dismisses it as 'railing'.

Other than Ian Moulton, the only critic to look at length into Aretino's reception by Nashe is David McPherson, who, during the process of searching for English references to Aretino, had unexpectedly found that the Harvey-Nashe quarrel was actually central to his reception: 'Harvey and Nashe mention Aretino with remarkable frequency, and their contrasting attitudes toward him illustrate clearly the differences in the rhetorical strategies they chose to adopt in the quarrel.'¹⁷ McPherson's article, unfortunately never supplemented with further research, decides that Nashe was the ultimate winner of this literary quarrel because he adapted Aretino's persona of 'a dashing, egocentric satirist' to his own writing.¹⁸ The Harvey-Nashe quarrel also brings up another major factor which would affect Aretino's posthumous reputation: can a 'bad' person like Aretino, Greene, or Nashe be a good writer?

Although stoked by Greene's death, the quarrel's central issue was a question of influence: just how much should a writer truly have? The rhetorical skills of the writer and orator were often described as a form of magical power over readers and listeners; in A

¹⁶ Nashe, *Strange Newes*, vol.1 p.271

¹⁷ McPherson, 'Aretino and the Harvey-Nashe Quarrel.' p.1551

¹⁸ McPherson, p.1556

Discourse of English poetrie (1586) William Webbe claimed that 'both Eloquence and Poetrie' could draw 'as it were by force ye hearers eares euen whether soeuever it lysteth: that *Plato* affirmeth therein to be contained *goēteia* an inchauntment, as it were to perwade them anie thing whether they would or no.' While *Plato* warned that this ability was dangerous, deeming the poet to be preying on the lower, imaginative part of a man's mind, Webbe suggests that this magical ability drew men 'from a wylde and sauage kinde of life, to civility and gentleness.'¹⁹ This positive spin meant, however, that the poet who was gifted with this enchanting power needed to lead an exemplary life and follow *Cicero's* dictum of 'vir bonum dicendi partibus' (a good man, skilled in speaking), or else be in danger of persuading his audience to bad actions.

This understanding of rhetorical power clearly had an impact on how early modern readers understood *Aretino*, or indeed any writer with a bad reputation. If a writer's lifestyle was dangerous, then it would show through his works. If the writer's persona, for example *Nashe's* satirical persona 'Pierce Penillesse' was scathing and prodigal, then it might be because as *Harvey* suggested, 'Pierce' was not that far removed from his creator. A large part of this debate over the truthfulness of fiction derived from the English understanding of an Italian literary construct: *sprezzatura*, the pose of improvised wit, which was in fact underpinned by careful study and artfulness. This concept was most associated with *Baldassare Castiglione's Cortegiano*, or *Book of the Courtier*, but it was also greatly associated with writers such as *Aretino*, who presented his writing as if it had been derived from nature rather than study. [See pp.78-9]

Initially, the issue of the truthfulness of fictional writers had been brought up by *Harvey's* posthumous savaging of *Robert Greene's* lifestyle, to which *Nashe* responded that: 'Hee inherited more vertues than vices...Why should art answer for the infirmities of manners? Hee had his faultes, and thou thy follyes. Debt and deadly sinne who is not subiect to? with any notorious crime I neuer knew him tainted.'²⁰ 'Why should art answer for the infirmities of maners?': these words could be applied to *Aretino* as much as to *Greene*. *Nashe* asked a question which still holds true today: why should we judge the literary product by what we know, or rather, think we know, of the writer's lifestyle? In his *Four*

¹⁹ William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie. Together with the Authors iudgment, touching the reformation of our English Verse* (London: John Charlewood, 1586) sig.B2v

²⁰ *Nashe, Strange Newes*, vol 1, pp.287-8

Letters, however, Harvey was certain that Greene's lifestyle was 'Aretine' and had a negative impact on his readers:

as I have heard divers affirme: His witte was nothing, but a minte of knaverie: himselfe a deviser of jugling feates: a forger of covetous practises: an Inventour of monstrous oathes: a derider of all religions: a contemner of God, and man: a desperate Lucianist: an abhominable Aretinist: an Arch-Atheist: and he arch-deserved to be well hanged seven yeares agoe... I will not condemne, or censure his workes, which I never did so much as superficially over-runne...But I pray God, they have not done more harme by corruption of manners, then good by quickening of witte'.²¹

Harvey gives the illusion that he will speak no further about Greene, yet he has just given an entire list of gossip about Greene's perceived amorality: that his wit was knavish, that he was a trickster, a forger, a blasphemer, a 'Lucianist' and an 'Aretinist' i.e. 'An Arch-Atheist.' Harvey even says that he has only ever glanced at Greene's writing and therefore actually undermines himself by suggesting that his judgement is based purely on what gossip he has heard of Greene as a personality, rather than as a writer. This is exactly the opposite of the advice given in the Wolfe preface to Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and *Il Principe*, in which he told the reader to reserve judgement on a writer until he had read his work.

Harvey was not consistent in his position that the dissolute life style of Greene, Nashe, and Aretino were affecting the readers of their writing. In *Pierces Supererogation* Harvey describes how he sought Nashe, the young man who had made such a strong impression in his pamphlets. He was looking for:

a fine-witted man, as quicke as quick-siluer, that with a nimble dexterity of liuely conceite, and exquisite secretaryship, would out-runne mee many hundred miles in the course of his dainty deuises; a delicate minion: or some terrible bombarded of tearmes, as wilde as wildfire, that at the first flash of his fury, would leaue me thunder-stricken vpon the ground, or at

²¹ Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters*, pp.25-6

the last volley of his outrage, would batter me to dust, and ashes. A redoubted aduersary.²²

He found instead 'an Oratour of the stewes...a Poet of Bedlam,' and 'a knight of the alehowse...'²³ Although Harvey is showing the discrepancy between the persona that Nashe had created for himself and this 'true' personality, he also shows that a person's life cannot be easily connected to his style. Harvey acknowledges that he was unable to discover the true personality behind the writing, despite the clarity with which Nashe appears to portray himself. It is all the more unusual, then, that Harvey goes on to write the following: 'His Life daily feedeth his Stile; & his stile notoriously bewraieith his Life.'²⁴ Harvey seems uneasy with the issue of lifestyle feeding into art, because in the next sentence he makes an about-turn and says that whatever else he does, 'Nashe lieth', then turning back once again when he suggests that Nashe is 'disposed to speake as thou liuest, & to liue like Tonosconcoleros, the famous babilonian king.'²⁵ Harvey finds himself in a double bind: he wants to indicate to the reader that Nashe's lifestyle spent in the seedier parts of London seeps into his indecorous writing-style. On the other hand, he is also trying to undermine the efficacy of Nashe's words, and therefore implying that Nashe is actually not the man that the reader may imagine him to be.

Being compared to Aretino in order to have one's morality questioned was something which would dog not only Nashe but also the seventeenth-century Dutch writer and engraver, Romeyn de Hooghe. For his part in producing two translations of Aretine-texts which were produced with accompanying prints,²⁶ de Hooghe was posthumously called 'a second Aretyn' (en tweede Aretyn) by his fellow writer and artist, Arnold Houbraken. As with all such comparisons to Aretino, these words were two-edged. Like Nashe, de Hooghe called for a 'new Aretin' in the preface to *De Dwalende Hoer* as a discoverer of vice, but this is not necessarily how others saw him. Houbraken writes that de Hooghe 'was a man excelling in great reason and invention, and I do not know that he has an equal in deftness of composition and richness of innovation in art of engraving, to which infinite number of book-titles and other prints give witness' (een man was uitstekend in groot vernuft en

²² Gabriel Harvey, *Supererogation*, p.8

²³ Gabriel Harvey, *Supererogation*, p.23

²⁴ Gabriel Harvey, *Supererogation*, p.42

²⁵ Gabriel Harvey, *Supererogation*, p.43

²⁶ These are *Het Leven* referred to in chapter 3, and *De Dwalende Hoer* in chapter 6 & the conclusion

vindingen, en die ik niet weet dat zyns gelyk in vaardigheit van ordeneeren, in rykheit van veranderingen in de Etskonst gehad heeft, waar van het oneindig getal van Boektytels en andere prenten getuygenis geven). Like Aretino, de Hooghe is innovative, and a profligate creator. Unfortunately like Aretino, de Hooghe is also described as holding dubious morals: 'but he was also, in light of his behaviour and his manner of life, a very bad fellow, and a second Aretyn' (maar hy was, in opzicht van zyn gedrag en wyze van leven een slechte knaap, en en tweede Aretyn).²⁷

The painter and writer Jacob Campo Weyerman goes even further in decrying de Hooghe when he describes him as a 'viceroy of Hell' (Viceroy van de Hel) who 'poisons the youth by his scandalous Aretine-ish prints, as can be seen in his Gomoran booklet, entitled, *De Dwalende Hoer*' (de Jeugd vergiftigde door zyne verfoeielyke Aretynsche prenten, als blykt uyt zyn Gomoras boekje, getytelt, 'de dwaalende Hoer').²⁸ Finally, another reference to Aretino and his associated immorality appears in a broadsheet from Haarlem, which was written during a period in which de Hooghe and his wife Maria Lansman were attacked in a sustained hate-campaign after they had moved from Amsterdam to Haarlem in 1689. The couple were accused of plagiarism, blasphemy, atheism and even incest. The broadsheet reads: '*since a keg releases that which it contains*, thus it is not strange that he, master of nefariousness, engraves, and has allowed to be printed the lascivious prints and positions of Aretino's 'Wandering Whore', and not only sells them himself, but also has his wife peddle [them] to young people and everyone' (dat hy *tanquam* [sic] *nequitiarum* magister de ontugtige printen en posturen van Pieter Aretijns dwalende Hoer, etst, drukken laat, en die niet alleen selfs verkoopt, maar ook door sijn vrouw aan de jeugt en een yder doet uytventen).²⁹

I will return later to de Hooghe's place in reprinting Aretino's 'postures' and 'Wandering Whore' in chapter 6, but for now it is clear that the association between him and Aretino was being used as an indication of his supposedly dissolute life-style, just as the term 'Aretine' had been used by Harvey to attack writers such as Robert Greene and Thomas Nashe in the late Sixteenth Century. Equally clear is the fact that this association with

²⁷ Arnold Houbraken, *De groote schouburgh der Nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, vol 3. (Amsterdam, 1721) ed. P.T.A Swillens (rpt Maastricht: Leiter-Nypels, 1953). p.202 (my translation)

²⁸ Jacob Campo Weyerman, *Levens-beschryvingen der Nederlandsche konst-schilders en konst-schilderessen*, vol.3 (The Hague: W.E. Boucquet, 1729) p.115 (my translation)

²⁹ Anon, quoted and translated in Ike, pp.145-6

Aretino tarnished later writers not only with sexual but also religious immorality, as I shall show in the next two sections of this chapter.

Aretino's bawdy writing

As I show in chapter 2, Nashe had identified himself positively with Aretino as another 'scourge of princes', or in Nashe's case, 'scourge of patrons'. Harvey, however, reads this association completely differently, naming Greene an 'Aretinist' and atheist, and repeatedly equates the prodigality of Nashe and Aretino: both are producers of pornography, disrespect authority, and spend their time in and out of taverns and whorehouses. In *Pierces Supererogation* (1593) Harvey initially attacks Nashe for his reputation, and on the next page connects Nashe as 'the Divels Orator' with Aretino, claiming that Nashe defames all others but Aretino. He then accuses both of blasphemy and atheism, and lists all of the writers who have written against Aretino for his morality. He finishes by mocking Nashe for being one of the only English writers to defend Aretino, likening him more to Aretino's 'wanton disciples' such as Dolce, Franco, Doni and Venier, who

in their fantasticall Letters, and Bacchanall Sonnets, extoll him monstrously, that is, absurdly: as the onely Monarch of witt, that is, the Prodigall sonne of conceit; and the mortall God of all Vertue, that is, the immortal Diuell of all Vice...But what approoued man of learning, wisdom, or iudgement, euer deigned him any honour of importance, or commendation of note: but the young darling of S. Fame, Thomas Nash, aliàs Pierce Penniles, the second Leuiathan of Prose, and another Behemoth of ryme?³⁰

Despite claiming that Aretino's 'followers' think of him as 'the only Monarch of wit', Harvey calls him 'the immortal devil of all Vice', and ridicules Nashe or 'St. Fame' for attempting to follow Aretino's example in using his celebrity to make himself into a

³⁰ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.177

monstrous 'Leviathan' or 'Behemoth' of a writer.³¹ Harvey dismisses both Nashe and Aretino for their life-styles, which he says undermine their writing.

Nashe 'must be told in brief, what the common opinion reporteth at large' of him is: that he is vain, and has a 'superabundance of selfeconceit'. Nashe's admiration for Aretino had partly been because of Aretino's refusal to kowtow to powerful men, and here Harvey says that Nashe has 'no reuerence to his patrons: no respect to his superiours: no regard to any, but in contemptuous, or censorius sort.' Harvey figuratively dissects Nashe in an anti-blazon; he has a 'rauenous throte: a gluttonous mawe: a drunken head: a blasphemous tongue'. He does refer to Nashe as a writer, but only as 'a broking, and huckstering penne: store of rascall phrases...lesse then nothing of a fine, or cleanly Artist.'³² Reduced by synecdoche to a broken pen, Harvey says that Nashe reviles all others but Aretino, and uses this association to launch into a few pages of research into Aretino, and all of the writers who have dismissed him.

Harvey is clearly taking Aretino and his association with Nashe as a serious threat. He compiles a list of references by humanists such as Joachim Perionius, Cornelius Agrippa and Jerome Cardan, and Italian writers such as Torquato Tasso and the Venetian printer Aldus Manutius, who collectively describe Aretino's 'fowle preceptes, and reprobate examples', 'his monstrous veneries, and execrable Sodomies', and 'insolent and insupportable affectation of singularitie', or describe him as 'the most-impudent Ribald, that euer tooke penne in hand' and 'the Ring leader of the corruptest bawdes, and miscreantest rakehells in Italy'.³³ While Perionius and Tasso are dismayed with the 'precepts', 'examples' and 'singularity' of his writing, the majority of these references are moral judgements. His writing is still 'foul', 'reprobate', 'insolent and insupportable', but noticeably it is his behaviour which is described as sexually deviant: he has 'monstrous' sodomitical desires, is an 'impudent Ribald' and is even the ringleader of 'the corruptest bawds' and most miscreant 'rakehells' (i.e. lascivious people) in Italy, that most lascivious of nations.

Two recurrent themes in Harvey's lengthy attack on Aretino (and therefore also Nashe for defending him) are Aretino's reputation as a voracious bisexual, and as a blasphemous atheist. In a substantial biographical section on Aretino in his picaresque *The Unfortunate*

³¹ *Leviathan* and *Behemoth*: both biblical sea animals of enormous size, in this case they are used as an expression for a large, monstrous animal

³² Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.175

³³ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.176

Traveller, Nashe defends Aretino's reputation for bawdry in much the same way that he defends Greene and himself from Harvey's accusations, by suggesting that everyone has sinned a little, and that this either does not affect the writing, or else gives a form of experience (as his own spell in debtor's prison) that can be translated into good writing. In his biography of Aretino, Nashe defends Aretino's reputation as a lascivious writer by comparing him to Ovid:

If lascivious he were, he may answere with *Ovid, Vita verecunda est, musa iocosa mea est*: My lyfe is chast though wanton be my verse. Tell mee, who is travelled in histories, what good poet is, or ever was there, who hath not hadde a lyttle spice of wantonnesse in his dayes? Even *Beza* himselve by your leave.³⁴

Nashe's arguments are firstly that one's writing need not necessarily reflect one's life ('my lyfe is chast though wanton be my verse'), and secondly questions which 'good poet' was not even slightly 'wanton' or lascivious; even the reformer Theodore Beza, one of Harvey's favourite writers, was not a complete innocent, writes Nashe. Of course, Harvey did not agree. He attacked Nashe for having written his erotic verse, the *Choice of Valentines*, which he describes as 'thy unprinted packet of bawdye, and filthy Rymes, in the nastiest kind' and a 'foulest shame, and the whole ruffianism of thy brothell Muse, if she still prostitute her obscene ballatts' [See p.91]. Harvey is clearly connecting these erotic verses with Aretino, when in the next sentence he says that Nashe would be better off being a satirist 'better the dogges-meate of Agrippa,' than the 'goates-meate of Arretine.' He continues to cement this connection:

Cannot an Italian ribald, vomit-out the infectious poyson of the world, but an Englishe horrel-lorrel must licke it up for a restorative; and attempt to putrefy gentle mindes, with the vilest impostumes of lewde corruption? Phy on impure Ganimedes, Hermaphrodits...Inuentours of newe, or reuiuers of old lecheries, and the whole brood of venereous Libertines³⁵

³⁴ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.266

³⁵ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.45

Nashe is not the only one who can write obscenely as Harvey proves here, describing Nashe sycophantically licking up the poisonous vomit of Aretino. His reference to 'Ganimedes' and 'Hermaphrodites' reminds us that he is talking about 'unnatural' sexual desires such as pederasty and homosexuality (ganymedes), bisexuality and dominant women (hermaphrodites). Meanwhile his mention of new invented lecheries and old lecheries revived is a nod at Aretino's reputation as the inventor of various sexual positions described in his 'Aretine's Postures', discussed further in chapters 5 and 6.

Harvey (or a Harvey-like persona) not only associates Aretino with bawdy writing in general, but specifically with homosexuality and pederasty in yet another text. The first edition of Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579) was accompanied by extensive notes by one 'E.K', whose identity has been much discussed, though most critics now believe that it was either Spenser himself or his close friend, Harvey, who wrote the 'glosse' which connects the poem to a wider literary heritage.³⁶ E.K is an unreliable commentator, who 'tease[s] rather than enlighten[s], forming once more apparently opaque commentary about a poem that is difficult enough on its own.'³⁷ E.K.'s pedantic moralising may be a pose by Spenser/Harvey, and therefore the following comment on the January eclogue should be taken with a pinch of salt. The lines being glossed are spoken by Colin Clout, who says: 'It is not Hobbinol wherefore I plaine/ Albee my love he seeke with dayly suit'. The gloss reads:

In thys place seemeth to be some sauour of disorderly loue, which the learned call paederastice: but it is gathered beside his meaning. For who that hath red Plato his dialogue called Alcybiades, Xenophon and Maximum Tyrius of Socrates opinions, may easily perceiue, that such loue is much to be alowed and liked of, specially so meant, as Socrates vsed it: who sayth, that in deed he loued Alcybiades extremely, yet not Alcybiades owne selfe. And so is paederastice much to be preferred before gynerastice, that is the loue which enflameth men with lust toward woman kind. But yet let no man thinke, that herein I stand with Lucian or hys deuelish disciple Vnico Aretino, in defence of execrable and horrible sinnes of forbidden and

³⁶ See the entry on 'E.K' by David R. Shore in *The Spenser Encyclopedia* ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). Other suggestions have been Edward Kirke, Edward Knight and Fulke Greville.

³⁷ Lyn Staley Johnson, *The Shepheardes Calendar: An Introduction* (Pennsylvania State University Press: Philadelphia, 2008) p.2

vnlawful fleshlinesse. Whose abominable error is fully confuted of Perionius, and others.³⁸

As Rictor Norton points out in his seminal work on early modern homosexuality *The Homosexual Literary Tradition* (1974), this note 'calls attention to the homosexual connotations in the *January* eclogue even while taking pains to discount them.'³⁹ E.K. is clearly struggling in justifying a love between two men as being preferable to loving women, so long as it is purely platonic, because in this period 'Socratic love' was commonly used as code for homosexuality. Therefore, in order to emphasise what he is *not* talking about, E.K. turns to Aretino and Lucian as illustrations of 'execrable and horrible sinnes of forbidden and vnlawful fleshlinesse', i.e. sodomy.

There are two instances here which might suggest that E.K. is indeed Gabriel Harvey. In his list of humanists who had rejected Aretino in the *Supererogation* mentioned above, Harvey refers to 'Perionius' as deciphering 'the fowle preceptes, and reprobate examples of [Aretino's] Morall Philosophy'. E.K. also names Pietro Aretino 'Unico Aretino', the name given to another poet from Arezzo, Bernardo Accoliti and a mistake that Harvey repeatedly makes. This might indicate that Harvey had written the 'E.K' gloss, but given his close friendship to Spenser, it might also simply be that the two men shared or discussed similar cultural assumptions.

In either case, the fact that this discourse of pederasty was being so heavily associated with Aretino shows that even while Harvey was making marginal notes in his copy of Erasmus' *Parabola* about it being to 'Aretine's glory' that he imitate no other writer [See p.83], he assumed that Aretino was at the same time committing 'abominable errors'. It seems that in the early 1580s Harvey was (occasionally) in agreement with Nashe that a writer's personal life could be considered separate from his writing, a view which he would change to fit his argument against Nashe and Greene a decade later. In 1586 William Webbe came to similar conclusions when he discusses this E.K. note in his *Discourse of English Poesie*. In a wider discussion of *The Shepheardes Calendar* (of which he does not know that the author is Spenser) Webbe says that there had been one controversial element of the

³⁸ 'E.K' quoted in Rictor Norton, *The Homosexual Literary Tradition: an Interpretation* (Brooklyn: Revisionist Press, 1974) p.150

³⁹ Ibid

book which had been discussed by his circle of friends, presumably while he was in Cambridge: the homosexual undertones or 'motion of some unsavoury love' in the January and June eclogues. Maybe the unknown author had learned to defend such 'loathsome beastlines' from personal associations with Italians, say Webbe's friends. Webbe practically repeats E.K.'s note when he says that interpreters 'gather beside his [i.e. Spenser's] meaning when they read this as homosexual rather than platonic love:

to thys obiection I haue often aunswered (and I thinke truely) that theyr nyce opinion ouer shooteth the Poets meaning, who though hee in that as in other thinges immitateth the auncient Poets, yet doth not meane, no more did they before hym, any disordered loue, or the filthy lust of the deuillish *Pederastice* taken in the worse sence, but rather to shewe howe the dissolute life of young men, intangled in loue of women, doo neglect the freendshyp and league with their olde freendes and familiers.⁴⁰

Webbe goes further than E.K. when he shows the objection by his fellow readers that the author 'shold gyue no occasion of suspition...howe good soeuer hys meaning were', to which Webbe answers that his friends have a 'simple conceyte...of matters which concerne learning or wytt', and suggests that it is the reader, not the writer, who is to blame for such interpretations: 'gyue Poets leaue to vse theyr vayne as they see good: it is their [reader's] foolysh construction, not hys wryting that is blameable. Wee must prescrybe to no wryters (much lesse to Poets) in what sorte they should vtter their conceyts.'⁴¹

In Webbe's summary of a group of readers responding to a controversial element of a text, he repeats one of the themes of this thesis. Aretino, as a notoriously controversial writer would continue to be discussed as a matter of writerly or readerly responsibility. Was it the responsibility of the producer, for example a translator such as Xuárez, to rewrite Aretino's words so that the reader wouldn't be misled, or was it the reader's responsibility, as 'Barbagrigia' and the Elsevir editor argue, to distinguish between moral guidance and individual artistic expression?

⁴⁰ Webbe, sig.F1r

⁴¹ Ibid

Aretino the Atheist

Another major construction of Aretino in the late Elizabethan period was as an atheist and a blasphemer. Even Nashe believed that Aretino was a non-believer when he wrote in defence of:

Lucian, Iulian, Aretine, all three admirably blest in the abundant giftes of art and nature: yet Religion which you sought to ruinate, hath ruinated your good names, and the opposing of your eyes against the bright sunne, hath causd the worlde condemne your sight in all other thinges. I protest were you ought else but abhominable Atheistes, I would obstinately defende you, onely because *Laureate Gabriell* articles against you.⁴²

Aretino, together with his ancient companions, Lucian and Julian, is described as 'an abominable Atheist' by Nashe, and yet, despite this, Nashe claims that he will defend all three in part just to be contrary to Harvey. Speaking more seriously, Nashe shows an understanding that Aretino's reputation as a gifted writer had been tainted by this one issue: because of his (perceived) atheism, 'all other things' were condemned by later readers.

Nashe's biographical section on Aretino in *The Unfortunate Traveller* may have begun with an eulogy on Aretino as one of the most quick-witted satirical writers of recent times [See p.87], but it later goes on to defend Aretino against the various accusations or misattributions that had been made against him. This is not just an isolated case, specific to Aretino. Nashe regularly comments on his readers' propensity to search for factual references in fictional accounts. In the prefatory letter to *Strange Newes* he complains that 'in these ill eide daies of ours, euery man delights with *Ixion* to beget children of clouds', and that 'rash heads, vpstart Interpreters, haue extorted & rakte that vnreuerent meaning out of my lines, which a thousand deaths cannot make mee ere grant that I dreamd off.'⁴³ Indeed, Nashe refers to something that he had read in Aretino's comedy, *La Cortigiana* (printed 1534, reprinted by Wolfe 1588) in a letter to the reader of *Strange Newes*:

⁴² Nashe, *Strange Newes*, vol.1, p.285

⁴³ Nashe, *Strange Newes*, vol.1 pp.259-60

Poore *Pierce Pennilesse*, haue they turnd to a coniuring booke, for there is not that line in it, with which they doo not seeke to raise vp a Ghost...[and] conuerted sixe parts of my booke into bitternes. *Aretine* in a Commedie of his, wittily complaineth that vpstart Commenters, with their Annotations and gloses, had extorted that sense and Morall out of *Petrarch*, which if *Petrarch* were aliue a hundred Strappadoes might not make him confesse or subscribe too; So may I complaine that rash heads, vpstart Interpreters, haue extorted & rakte that vnreuerent meaning out of my lines, which a thousand deaths cannot make mee ere grant that I dreamd off.⁴⁴

Nashe is referring to the prologue of *La Cortigiana* in which the audience is told that 'there are commentators on Petrarch's vocabulary who make him say things that Nocca da Firenze, who kept his silence even after they tortured him [with the strappado] in his hometown, wouldn't have spoken even if you were to torture him some more.' (questi commentatori di vocabuli del Petrarca gli fanno dire cose che non le faría dire al Nocca da Fiorenza otto altri tratti di corda, come ebbe già, benemerito in persona propria, da la patria sua.)⁴⁵ Interestingly, this prologue is taken from the earlier 1525 version of *La Cortigiana*, which was circulated in manuscript, before Aretino reworked the play for publication in 1534, and altered the prologue to a less acerbic tone. Nashe therefore must have had access to this earlier manuscript version, which hadn't been reprinted in either earlier Italian editions or in Wolfe's *Quattro Comedie*. Nashe, it seems, was sensitive to readers searching for fact where there was none.

Nashe tackles one misconception of Aretino as a blasphemer in his biographical section of the *Unfortunate Traveller*. There was a story that Aretino's grave had been carved with an epitaph which read: 'Qui giace l'Aretin poeta toscano, / Che disse mal d'ognun fuorchè di Cristo, / Scusandosi col dir: non lo conosco.' ('Here lies Aretino, the Tuscan poet, who spoke badly of everyone but Christ, Excusing himself by saying: I do not know Him').⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ See 'La Cortigiana', in *Renaissance Comedy: The Italian Masters* (vol.1), ed. and transl. Don Beecher (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2002) p.115; John Florio also uses this quotation in the preface to *A World of Wordes* (1598) but does not attribute it to Aretino. Instead, he writes: 'One saies of *Petrarche* for all: A thousand stappadas coulde not compell [Petrarch] to confesse, what some interpreters will make him saie he ment' p.5

⁴⁶ John Harington includes a translation of this in his verse collection *Alcilia* (1613): Heere lyes Aretine, that poysonous Toade, / Whose spightfull tongue and Pen, all Saints beshrow him, / Did raile on Prince and

epitaph has more recently been attributed to the historian Paolo Giovio, a friend of Aretino's, to whom Aretino had once expressed his fears that his religious works would be burned. Giovio must have written this epitaph as a joke before Aretino's death, having himself died in 1552. Giovio's ironic epitaph was, however, misinterpreted as being an accusation of atheism levelled at Aretino for 'not knowing Christ', even though it seems more likely to be a joke about Aretino (a) not sparing anyone, even Christ, from his satire, and (b) referring to Aretino's acquaintance with all the most important people other than Christ, whom he has never met.

In his biography of Aretino, Nashe refers to this epitaph: 'Too much gall dyd that wormwood of Gibeline⁴⁷ wittes put in his inke, who engraved that rubarbe Epitaph on this excellent poet's tombstone.'⁴⁸ Nashe believes that the epitaph was written with hatred of Aretino, using the same idea of a poisoned pen which many contemporaries of Nashe would use to describe his own acerbic writing. This belief continued into the late Seventeenth Century when, in Pierre Bayle's entry on 'L'Aretin' in his *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1695) he discusses the various versions of the mock epitaph. Despite his own doubt over it being real, he does interpret the verse as an accusation of atheism, though denies that Aretino was truly an atheist:

If we had reason to think that *Aretin* did not love God, we have none to say that he did not know him; his Works of Piety clearly demonstrate the contrary. I do not believe that we can find in his works any dogma of Atheism; but since many of his Libels violently attack the disorders of the Clergy, and described in a profane and bawdy style, an infinity of vices imputed to the life of the convent, it is no wonder that he is made to pass for an Atheist.

Si l'on avoit raison de penser que l'Aretin n'aimoit Dieu, on n'en avoit point de dire qu'il ne le connoissoit pas: ses Ouvrages de piété témoignent manifestement le contraire. Je ne croi pas que l'on trouve dans ses Escrits

Priest, and all but God,/ And said for his excuse he did not know them'. 'Epitaph of Aretine' in I.C. *Alcilia Philoparthen's loving folly. To which is added Pigmaliions image. With the love of Amos and Laura. And also epigrammes by Sir I.H. and others. Never before imprinted* (London: printed for Richard Hawkins, 1613) sig.N1v

⁴⁷ The Ghibelline were a faction that supported the Holy Roman emperor, and who fought against the Guelphs who supported the Papacy, in northern Italy between the 12th and 15th centuries.

⁴⁸ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.265

*aucun dogme d'Athéisme; mais comme plusieurs de ses Libelles attaquent violemment les defordres du Clergé, & décrivent d'un style profane & de débauche une infinité d'impuretez attribuées à la vie de Couvent, il ne faut pas s'étonner qu'on l'ait fait passer pour Athée.*⁴⁹

The accusation of atheism was especially an issue for Gabriel Harvey and his brother, the theologian, Richard Harvey. Gabriel uses Nashe's admiration for Aretino's writing to accuse both of being mockers of religion and atheists:

Aretine, and the Diuels Oratour,⁵⁰ would be ashamed to be convicted, or endighted of the least respective, or ceremonious phrase, but in mockage, or coosenage. They neither feare Goodman Sathan, nor master Beelzebub, nor Sir Reverence, nor milord Gouvernement himselfe: O wretched Atheisme, Hell but a scarecrow, and Heaven but a woonderclout⁵¹ in their doctrine: all vulgar, stale, and simple, that is not a note above Goddes-forbid.⁵²

His brother Richard had come to similar conclusions over Aretino in his *Lamb of God*, which he had written as part of the theological and political discussion caused by the Marprelate controversy. Speaking of the 'more wicked enemies of the lambe of God' who are 'too notorious and their writings are too famous,' Richard Harvey claims that Italy has bred 'infinite Atheists.' Amongst whom '*Aretine* a great courtier or rather courtisan' is described as a man of a 'viperous & hellish spirit, in all kinde of diuelishe impiety *Vnicus*'. Harvey, as well as accusing Aretino of being no better than a 'courtesan', accuses him of atheism: '*Aretine* spake ill of that heauenly God he knew not...Now God for his Christes sake keepe all students, and all Christians from any such desperate minde, from such monstrous

⁴⁹ Pierre Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, vol.1. 5th ed. (Amsterdam: P. Brunel, 1740) pp.304-6 (my translation)

⁵⁰ i.e. Nashe, who had written *Pierce Penilesse's supplication to the Devil* (1592)

⁵¹ *woonderclout*: a showy and worthless thing

⁵² Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces supererogation*, pp. 176-7. It is notable that this was written at a time of anxiety over 'atheists' in London, with the Richard Baines testimony of Marlowe's 'atheism' and the publishing of Henry Smith's *Gods Arrowe against Atheists*.

and vnprofitable singularitie: and out vpon al such Satanish bookes, that are printed I thinke in the deuils name.⁵³ Aretino is not only an atheist, but an infectious one at that.

Confirming Aretino's atheism, the Harvey brothers both attribute *De Tribus Impostoribus Mundi* to Aretino. This 'Treatise of the Three Impostors' was supposedly the most blasphemous book ever to have existed, calling the leaders of the three prophets of monotheism (Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed) impostors. In reality this book had never existed, and was instead a legend which dated back to 1239 when Pope Gregory IX accused the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II of having written such a treatise. Over the next centuries various 'free-thinkers' or 'libertines' (think of the accusations in the 'Baines Note' levelled against Christopher Marlowe, that he thought 'Moyses was but a Jugler') would be accused of holding such beliefs.⁵⁴ Richard Harvey attributes this 'horrible most damnable booke of three impostors,' together with the 'Apologie of *Paedarastice*' (another misattribution, this time of a real book, *La Cazzaria* or 'Book of the Prick', 1530, a dialogue by Antonio Vignali⁵⁵) which 'prove him.... a very incarnat deuill'. Gabriel Harvey agrees, saying that Nashe is aligning himself with a notorious blasphemer, and like his brother, claims that Aretino 'forged the abominablest booke in the world, *De tribus impostoribus mundi*.⁵⁶

The attributions by the brothers Harvey of *De Tribus* to Aretino is, also (as far as we can tell), one of the earliest mentions of there being a physical book as opposed to an ephemeral treatise or simply the blasphemous belief on the subject of religious impostors.⁵⁷ Attributions of this book to Aretino would continue to be made well into the Seventeenth Century, for example in Marin Mersenne's *L'Impiété des déistes, athées et libertins de ce temps* (The impiety of Deists, Atheists, and Libertines of this age, 1624) and Théophile Gottlieb Spitzel's *Sacrutinium atheismi historico-aetiologicum* (Historical-Aetiological Investigation of Atheism, 1663). By the turn of the Eighteenth Century, it had been alleged

⁵³ Richard Harvey, *A theologicall discourse of the Lamb of God*, pp.95-6. Harvey also mocks Aretino's moniker 'divine', and says that it is a divinity from Pluto, lord of the Underworld, or a 'Romish divinity, which may ever have a new stampe from his holines.'

⁵⁴ See Georges Minois, *The Atheist's Bible: The most dangerous book that never existed*, transl. Lys Ann Weiss (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 43-44

⁵⁵ See Moulton's in-depth introduction to his translation of Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria* (2003)

⁵⁶ Gabriel Harvey, *Pierces Supererogation*, p.177

⁵⁷ See Jan W. Wojcik, "'Behold the Fear of the Lord": The Erastianism of Stilling-fleet, Wolseley and Tillotson', in *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and Free Thought in Early Eighteenth-Century Europe, Studies on the Traité des trois imposteurs*, eds. Silvia Berti, Françoise Charles-Daubert, and Richard Popkin (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996) pp.357-74, p.361 n.12

that there was an Italian translation of the Latin tract, which was either hidden in the depths of the Wolfenbüttel library, or else about to be sent to the editor of the journal *Curieuse Bibliothec*, Wilhelm Ernst Tentzel, by an anonymous correspondent of his. Maybe because of the tradition that the text was created in Italy, both Tentzel and his friend appear to believe that this Italian translation was by Aretino.⁵⁸

In *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Nashe confutes these accusations of atheism and blasphemy when he refers to the Harveys: 'Wheras some dull braine maligners of his accuse him of that Treatise, *de tribus impostoribus Mundi*, which was never contrived without a general council of devils, I am verily persuaded it was none of his, and of my mind are a number of the most judicial Italians.'⁵⁹ Nashe does, however, still believe this work to have existed, but points out that the work was only 'published' forty years after Aretino's death. This copy, potentially a forgery from the 1590s, has never been discovered, and possibly never existed. More importantly, Nashe shows his knowledge of Aretino's biography, when he argues that because Aretino never wrote in Latin, he could not have written it.⁶⁰ Instead, Nashe accuses 'one of Machevel's followers' to be 'the author of that book, who, to avoid discredit, filched it forth under Aretine's name a great while after he had sealed up his eloquent spirit in the grave.'⁶¹ Nashe, it seems, is concerned with getting the facts straight about Aretino, though in the process accuses a 'follower' of that other notorious Italian, Machiavelli, of similar improprieties. As I suggest with the wider implications of the Harvey-Nashe quarrel, Aretino represents for Nashe someone to defend from the knee-jerk reactions of readers who do not question a writer's reputation, and instead thoughtlessly attribute any immoral text which they imagine fits the 'type'. Unfortunately, in this defence, Nashe is guilty of just such a reaction to Machiavelli.

Gabriel and Richard Harvey had both accused Aretino of atheism and of writing one of the most blasphemous books never to have existed. Gabriel Harvey in fact mentions this

⁵⁸ Miguel Benitez, 'Cet ami...a dû croire comprendre que cette traduction avait été faite de l'italien— sans doute parce que, comme Tentzel, il croyait l'original de l'Arétin,' (This friend [of Tentzel]... must have thought that this translation had been made from the Italian—no doubt because, like Tentzel, he believed the original to have been the work of Aretino) 'La diffusion du Traité des trois imposteurs au XVIIIe siècle', in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 40-41 (1993) pp.137-51, p.141.

⁵⁹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol 2, p.265

⁶⁰ According to Minois, forgeries of this text appear only to have been made in the seventeenth-century, so one wonders what it is that Nashe is referring to having been printed in the 1590s. Maybe he is referring to Jean Bodin's *Colloquium heptaplomeres* (1590) which is sceptical of any one religion amongst multiple religions being more right than another, though this circulated in manuscript.

⁶¹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.265

treatise twice: in *Pierces Supererogation*, from which I have quoted above, and in *A new letter of notable contents* printed in the same year, 1593. In this second pamphlet he contrasts the religious works against the bawdy ones that Aretino wrote, or at least, which Harvey believes Aretino wrote. He begins by declaring that he hopes Nashe will not prove to be 'an Aretine':

Though *Greene* were a *Julian*, and *Marlow* a *Lucian*: yet I would be loth, *He* should be an *Aretin*: that paraphrased the inestimable works of *Moses*, and discoursed the *Capricious Dialogues* of the rankest *Bawdry*. [He] penned one *Apology* of the divinity of *Christ*, and another of *Pederastice*, a kinde of harlatry, not to be recited: [he] published the *Life* of the *Blessed Virgin*, and the *Legende* of the *Errant Putana*: [he] recorded the history of *S. Thomas Aquin*, and forged the most detestable *Black-booke*, de *tribus impostoribus mundi*. O monster of extremityes; and o abomination of outrageous witt. It was his glory, to be a *hellhounde incarnate*. *Vbi bene, nemo melius: vbi male, nemo peius* [Where good, no one better: where bad, no one worse.]⁶²

As Rhodes says about Harvey's association of the three younger English writers with Julian, Lucian, and Aretino, Harvey makes a connection here between the these writers' reputation for 'irreligiousness and stylistic extravagance,' as if the two were in a symbiotic relationship.⁶³ This balance is repeated in the structure of the rest of this passage, and exemplifies Harvey's disbelief that Aretino could be both a writer of religious texts and of bawdy or blasphemous texts. He contrasts Aretino's biblical paraphrase, *Il Genesi* (1535) against his *Sei Giornate* (1534-6); his *Umanità di Cristo* (1535) against an 'apology for pederasty' which appears to refer to Vignali's homoerotic *La Cazzaria* (c.1530) which Richard Harvey had also misattributed to Aretino. He goes on to contrast Aretino's hagiographical texts, the '*Vitae*' of the Virgin Mary (1535) and Thomas Aquinas (1543) with two further texts which were not written by Aretino: *La puttana errante* (c.1530) and the mythical *De*

⁶² Gabriel Harvey, *A new letter of notable contents*, pp.289-90

⁶³ Rhodes, *The Power of Eloquence*, p.119

Tribus Impostoribus Mundi. As Moulton points out, 'the three most notorious texts in the list... were not his.'⁶⁴

I will be returning to *La puttana errante* and the topic of misattribution later in this thesis, but on the whole, these misattributions took place because the legendary element of Aretino as a homosexual and as an atheist had become so strong that the worst examples of these texts became associated with him because of their anonymity. Because there was no proof to the contrary that a specific (and noticeably in this period, mainly Italian) writer such as Aretino, Machiavelli, or the reformer Bernardino Ochino *didn't* write *De Tribus*, such attributions were even easier to persuade readers of.

Harvey was by no means the only person to be suspicious of the fact that the notorious Aretino also wrote religious texts. At the turn of the century John Donne, then secretary to the Lord Keeper, wrote a letter to his friend Sir Henry Goodere sending with it 'some of my [*P*]aradoxes'. These, he promised, would be supplemented with more of Donne's satires and elegies at a later date, if Goodere could promise him not to circulate copies of his poems.⁶⁵ Donne not only promised to send him his own *Paradoxes*, but also (presumably on the request of Goodere) a copy of Aretino's *Sette Salmi*, though not without Donne giving his opinion on the works and reputation of Aretino:

I am sorry you should (with any great earnestness) desire any thing of P Aretinus not that he could infect; but that it seems you are already infected with the common opinion of him: believe me he is much lesse than his fame and was too well payd by the Roman church in that coyne which he coveted most where his books were by the counsel of Trent forbidden which if they had been permitted to have beene worne by all long ere this had beene worne out: his divinity was but a sirrop to enwrap his prophane books to get them passage yet in these bookes which have devine titles there is least harme as in his letters most good his others have no other

⁶⁴ Moulton, *Before Pornography*, p.147

⁶⁵ The date and recipient of this letter have been variously argued over by Donne scholars, yet in the preparation for the forthcoming Oxford edition of Donne's letters, Dennis Flynn has persuasively shown that the letter is addressed to Goodere. The dating of this letter has been suggested as being written c.1597 by Flynn and c.1601 by Peter Redford. See Dennis Flynn, 'Familiar Letters: Donne and Pietro Aretino' *Renaissance Papers*, (2002) 27-44, and "'Only in Obedience" to Whom?— The Identity of a Donne Correspondent', *Literature Compass* 5 (2008) 424-432, and Peter Redford, 'Intercepting the Burley Letters', *Lives and letters* 2.1. summer (2010) 1-12

singularity in them but that they are forbidden. The psalms (which you aske) If I cannot shortly procure you one to poses I can and will at any tyme borrow for you.⁶⁶

We do not have the initial letter that Goodere must have sent, so we cannot know what he had said of Aretino to receive such a dismissive response from Donne. This excerpt suggests, however, that Donne is speaking as someone who has actually read some of Aretino's writing to someone who has only heard rumours of the infamous Italian writer. Unlike Harvey, Donne is dismissive of Aretino's powers as a writer or even as a tempter of readers, and instead suggests that his fame and notoriety as a corrupter of morals was exaggerated by others ('not that he could infect' balanced against 'but infected by common opinion').

Donne dismisses the hype that surrounded Aretino in Elizabethan England ('much less than his fame'), while simultaneously suggesting that this reputation was created, counter-intuitively, by the censorship of his entire works by the Council of Trent in 1559. This act, he suggests, gave Aretino a roguish glamour and helped his reputation to last longer than his works would otherwise have warranted. Donne also contrasts 'the common opinion of Aretino' with the suggestion that Aretino was 'too well paid by the Roman church', and this may imply that the public perception of Aretino saw him opposed to the Catholic church. Instead, Donne suggests that Aretino's primary concern was money ('the coin which he coveted most') and that he was in the pocket of the Roman Church, an accusation which Donne would return to later in his satire *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611). [See pp.83-4]

What Donne does not acknowledge (or perhaps, even know) was that Aretino's religious texts indicate that he was part of a Catholic evangelical movement which emphasised the need for vernacular translation of scripture for personal piety. For Aretino, an art commentator and friend of Titian, this was to be obtained through the use of vivid, image-rich language, which could stir the emotions of his readers, an example of which I discuss in chapter 2. What Donne focuses on, however, is not this aspect of Aretino's faith, but his attachment to the Papal court of Leo X at the start of his career and his sycophantic

⁶⁶ John Donne, Burley Manuscript, Leicestershire Record Office DG 7 Lit 2; fol.308v, ll.28-39, quoted in full in Flynn, 'Familiar Letters', p.27. The manuscript was compiled between 1597-1641 by William Parkhurst

courting of Julius III in his desire to procure a cardinal's position in his final years.⁶⁷ It was this negative image of Aretino, as a religious hypocrite or an atheist, which would remain with the majority of his later readers.

For both Harvey and Donne, Aretino was a hypocrite who feigned his religion. Nashe, in contrast, has no trouble with the fact that Aretino wrote both 'lascivious' works and religious texts. He too had written both *A Choice of Valentines* and *Christ's Tears Over Jerusalem*, saying in *Strange Newes* that as a writer he had 'written in all sorts of humors privately...more than any young man of my age in England.'⁶⁸ In his biography of Aretino he emphasises this range by immediately preceding his defence of Aretino's 'wanton...verse' with a detailed list of the religious texts which the contemporary English reader might not have been aware of:

Singularly hath he commented of the humanitie of Christ. Besides, as Moses set forth his Genesis, so hath hee set forth his Genesis also, including the contents of the whole Bible. A notable Treatise he compiled, called, *I sette Psalmi poententiarrii*. All the *Thomasos* have cause to love him, because hee hath dilated so magnificently of the lyfe of Saint *Thomas*. There is a good thing that hee hath set fourth, *La Vita della virgine Maria*, though it some-what smells of superstition; with a number more which here for tediousness, I suppress.⁶⁹

Nashe refers to all of Aretino's main religious texts, other than the *Vita di Santa Caterine da Siena* (Life of St Catherine, 1540) and the *Passione de Giusù* (Passion of Jesus 1534). He mixes Italian with Latin for the title of the 'sette Psalmi poententiarrii', but refers to the *Life of Mary* in its Italian title, even if this hagiographical work does 'smell of [Catholic] superstition' to him. Nashe here shows that even he, the greatest defender of Aretino, cannot vindicate him completely. Elsewhere he calls Aretino an atheist, and here he says that while not the writer of *De tribus*, he was still a 'superstitious' Catholic. Still, Nashe's point is that the lifestyle or indeed the faith of a writer does not stop him from being a good writer.

⁶⁷ On this stage of Aretino's career, see Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice*, pp.97-124

⁶⁸ Nashe, *Strange Newes*, vol.1, p.320

⁶⁹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, pp.265-6

Another commentator of Aretino not from London but from Utrecht shows how unusual Nashe's position on the flexibility of a writer's craft actually was in this period. In a letter dated May 1617, Dirck Rafaelsz Camphuysen, a Dutch poet and nonconformist minister, wrote to his friend Cornelius Geesteranus about Aretino's play, *L'Ipocrito* (1542). As I have mentioned in the introduction, this play was translated into Dutch by two of Amsterdam's best known playwrights of the Seventeenth Century, Pieter C. Hooft and Gerbrand Bredero, and Camphuysen's letter is written at the same time that they were working on their translation.

As the name of Aretino's play suggests, it is about a hypocrite, a parasitical flatterer who uses feigned piety and unctuous praise of Christian charity to deceive others.⁷⁰ In Hooft's translation the hypocrite remains a Catholic priest, rather than being culturally translated into a Protestant reverend, so that the Dutch translation simply caricatures a 'foreign' religion, rather than keeping within the spirit of Aretino's original play and commenting on the potential hypocrisies of Protestant ministers in the Dutch Republic. In any case, in the play the hypocrite is asked by his master, the old Liseo, for advice on what he should do with his overbearing wife and five daughters, whom he is unable to marry off. *L'Ipocrito* counsels him to make light of his problems and comfort himself with philosophical platitudes, because life is after all merely an illusion. Camphuysen writes:

I remember having read an Italian comedy from Petrus Aretinus at a time that I was still devoted to the world's vanities. This Aretinus was an atheist and also a very irreligious person, but still wrote certain things in the aforementioned comedy, that it is a wonder that such divine thoughts could have appeared in the brains of such a godless man.

Ik herinner mij en italiaanse komedie van Petrus Aretinus gelezen te hebben in een tijd dat ik nog geheel de wereldse ijdelheid was toegedaan. Deze Aretinus was een ateïst en wel een zeer ongodsdienstig iemand, maar schreef toch zúlke dingen in de voornoemde komedie, dat het verwonderlijk

⁷⁰ The type of the religious hypocrite that Aretino introduced in *L'Ipocrito* is a potential model for Molière's lead character in *Tartuffe* (1664). See J.N. Wright, 'The Hypocrite in Aretino and in Molière', *Forum Italicum: A Journal of Italian Studies* 6 (September, 1972) pp.393-7

*kan schijnen dat zulke goddelijke gedachten in de hersens van zo'n goddeloos man hebben kunnen opkomen.*⁷¹

He then gives a paraphrase of what happens in the comedy, which as E.K. Grootes points out, appears to be a recollection of a performance given the visual details and descriptions of the positioning of characters in this paraphrase.⁷² What follows is, however, the most interesting part of Camphuysen's recollection, as he chooses one line with which to sum up the essence of the comedy: 'Todos es nada, eccetto Iddio qui es Todos.' ([Spanish] Everything is nothing, [Italian] except God who is [Spanish] everything) Camphuysen seems to have been quoting from memory, as Aretino's line is a similarly garbled but slightly less Spanish version (*nada es todos, salvo Iddio, che è il tutto*) while earlier in this scene the character who speaks these words, Liceo, repeats the phrasing that Camphuysen uses: 'todos es nada' over and over.

Like Harvey, Camphuysen clearly finds it difficult to reconcile the idea of Aretino writing what he considers to be a spiritual line with what he knows of Aretino as an atheist:

However much I am convinced, that the author did not understand the things which he there wrote, that is to say, that he certainly wrote these things but did not feel them (after all, that he was godless, is for me sufficiently proven on the basis of what others have said of him), it must be said that he did determine to remove appropriately all apathy from the protagonist through the concluding words of the comedy: 'Eccetto Iddio, qui es Todos': except God, who is everything.

Hoewel ik ervan overtuigd ben, dat de auteur de dingen die hij daar heeft opgeschreven, niet heeft begrepen, d.w.z. die dingen wel heeft geschreven maar niet heeft gevoeld (immers dat hij een goddeloze is geweest, staat voor mij op grond van andere gegevens voldoende vast), moet gezegd worden dat hij toch bepaald op passende wijze alle apathie uit de

⁷¹ Dirck Rafaelsz Camphuysen, letter to Cornelius Geesteranus dated 29th May, 1617, Utrecht. Quoted in Grootes *Dramatische Structuur in Tweevoud* p.282 (my translation)

⁷² Grootes, p.283 Given that Camphuysen was born in 1586, this suggests that there might have been a performance of *L'Ipocrito* in the Netherlands close to the turn of the century.

*hoofdpersoon heeft verwijderd door de slotwoorden van de komedie:
Eccetto Iddio qui es Todos.*⁷³

As Grootes points out, 'How firmly the unfavourable image of Aretino was founded [in the Seventeenth Century], is shown by the fact that Camphuysen would rather believe that Aretino did not write what he thought, than revise his own negative judgement somewhat' (Hoe stevig het ongunstige beeld van Aretino was gegrondvest, blijkt uit her feit dat Camphuysen liever gelooft dat Aretino niet schreef wat hij dacht, dan dat hij zijn eigen negatieve oordeel enigszins herziet).⁷⁴ Camphuysen, just like Harvey, could not accept that Aretino's reputation for atheism was unfounded, or even that an atheist could be capable of writing religious texts, and therefore concluded that anything religious that he wrote was hypocrisy. This is an unusual point to be making for what is, after all, a piece of fiction; Camphuysen does not allow that the writer is able to think one thing, and believe another.

The problem is also that Camphuysen misreads the play, which after all has a religious hypocrite as its central villain. By emphasising this last line (all is nothing, except for God who is everything) he misrepresents what happens in the play, as his implication is that Liceo has decided that earthly things are meaningless in comparison to God. The line he quotes is not in the main body of the play, but in the epilogue with the actor playing Liceo speaking directly to the audience on behalf of Aretino, the writer. This epilogue continues the circular argument to suggest that the play itself is 'todo e nada', everything and nothing. He says that he speaks on behalf of the author, and 'knows that':

I am doing a grace in telling you that, if you liked the tale, he [the author] holds it dear, and if it didn't please you, he holds it dearer, as it happens that in your liking it, he appears not to care much, and in your not liking it, he cares even less, because 'todos es nada', all is nothing, I care of the praise as much of the critique, because 'todos es nada', all is nothing, therefore he who dies, die, he who lives, live... Because 'todo es nada': everything is nothing. But from 'nada es todos', nothing is all, aside from God, who is all. And all in all, I'm going to see the wedding craziness.

⁷³ Grootes, p.282-3 (my translation)

⁷⁴ Grootes, p.283 (my translation)

so che gli faccio una grazia rilevata a dirvi che, se la cantafavola vi è piaciuta, l'ha caro, e se non vi è piaciuta, carissimo; avenga che nel piacervi appare il suo pensarci poco, e nel non piacervi il suo curarsene meno, peroché todos es nada, ed essendo ogni cosa niente, tanto pensa a la lode, quanto al biasimo, ché certo todos es nada, e però chi more mora, e chi nasce nasca.... che todos es nada. Ma da ché nada es todos, salvo Iddio, che è il tutto, me ne vedere le pazzie nuzziali.⁷⁵

In the Dutch translation of this epilogue by Hooft, the message is even clearer that this epilogue is simply a way to get the audience to applaud, when instead of referring to the wedding ceremony that this play was originally performed at, the last line ends 'Because *todos es nada: everything is nothing*, other than God, who is all in all. And if you wish to clap, clap, or if you wish to leave it, leave it. (Want *todos es nada: al is niet*, behalven Godt die al in al is. En wilje klappen, klapt, wilje het laeten, laet het).⁷⁶

What was simply a lighthearted way of ending the play has been taken seriously by Camphuysen. I think this is because the play does not give a satisfactory moral conclusion, and so Camphuysen looks for one in this throwaway line. In the main plot, L'Ipocrito advises Liseo to ignore practical problems by throwing himself into philosophy, which results in Liseo's complete mental disintegration. By the fourth act, he 'is no longer capable of making sense. He replies to all statements with tautologous 'circular' statements',⁷⁷ and by the end of the play his entire dialogue is made up of incomplete sentences, snatches of 'todos e nada' interspersed with laughing. He has been driven mad by the philosophical, vacuous language that he has been taught by the religious hypocrite, L'Ipocrito. Cairns points out that Aretino had previously used the maxim of 'todos es nada' in his dialogues — both the *Sei Giornate* (1534-6) and *Le Carte Parlanti* (1543) — and suggests that this was taken from the Spanish translation of Erasmus adages, *Silenos de Alcibiades* (1529).⁷⁸ In any case, its similarity to the Socratic maxim 'I know that I know nothing' suggests that it was maybe just a suitably philosophical sounding platitude (especially in a foreign, Spanish tongue) used by Aretino to characterise Liseo's decline into incomprehensibility.

⁷⁵ Pietro Aretino, Italian quoted in Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice* p.193 (my translation)

⁷⁶ Pieter C. Hooft, *Warenaar en Schijnheiligh*, ed. Johannes Can Vloten, (Schiedam: H.A.M. Roelants, 1869) p.138 (my translation)

⁷⁷ Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic*, p.192

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p.194

Liseo is not, whatever Camphuysen says, 'appropriately remove[d] of all apathy', but has instead been rendered ineffective by the empty reasoning of the religious hypocrite. Aretino was writing *about* religious and philosophical hypocrisy, yet Camphuysen ignores this in the certainty that it is Aretino who is using religion as a gloss for his own machinations. This misunderstanding is why Camphuysen remains puzzled by those words as a form of redemption, rather than as the inter-lingual garble of a man driven mad with religious philosophising.

Conclusion: Misattribution in modern criticism

In fact, the main theme of Aretino's *L'Ipocrito* is about the falsification of truth, and this is a theme which was also of interest to his English admirer, Thomas Nashe. In the double prologue of Aretino's play, two ways of looking at the world are put in contrast. First appears a straight-talking piece of social criticism, which embodies what Aretino purported to believe, that a spade should be called a spade, and the evils of the world should be exposed. This is followed by a second prologue, which explains that it is easy to bend the truth and that the ignorant masses often jump to unjustified conclusions judging only by appearance. Indeed, this second prologue picks up on a theme of this thesis: the ways in which truths are easily lost and reframed to fall in with new expectations.

Misattribution seems especially likely to occur in situations when the writer is no longer associated with his text, but instead known more as a personality. This is clearly the case for Aretino; both Harvey brothers had attributed the most blasphemous book, *De tribus impostoribus mundi* to him based on his reputation alone. They, as well as 'E.K.' also attributed a book of pederasty, and like everyone else in the early modern period, *La puttana errante* (The Wandering Whore) to Aretino. We have seen how a poet and theologian like Camphuysen or a scholar like Harvey would not entertain the possibility that the supposedly atheistic Aretino could have written religious or philosophical texts sincerely, the ability of the writer to create fictions was here interpreted as pure hypocrisy.

Nashe, as we have seen, attempts to address these misconceptions about Aretino in *The Unfortunate Traveller*, and towards the end of his biography makes a veiled reference to the Harvey brothers' attack on Aretino. Addressing the brothers, Nashe writes: 'Puritans spue forth the venome of your dull inventions. A Toade swelles with thicke troubled poison,

you swell with poisonous perturbations, your mallice hath not a cleare dram of anie inspired disposition.⁷⁹ Nashe implies that the brothers' words are poisonous to Aretino's reputation, but that in contrast to Aretino, whom Nashe had earlier praised as setting his readers alight with inspiration from his quick wit, these 'Puritans' who take against Aretino for his bad reputation are 'dull' and lacking one 'dram' of inspiration.⁸⁰

Nashe had attempted to restore Aretino's reputation as a writer through giving what he considered to be a more accurate representation of the writer, and a clarification that certain works were misattributed to him. Even now it is necessary to point out the fictions of Aretino's posthumous reputation because in the only (as far as I know) recent sustained readings of the *Unfortunate Traveller* passage on Aretino, there is still a clear misattribution which has resulted from Aretino's reputation rather than knowledge of his writing. In Charles Nicholl's part biography, part murder-mystery, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (1992, reprinted and augmented 2002) Nashe's biography of Aretino is read not as a reference to the Italian writer, but as an eulogy to Nashe's recently deceased friend, Marlowe. Nicholl begins by claiming that while this section was a 'tribute to the great Italian dramatist, Pietro Aretino' it 'proves to be a sidelong epitaph for Christopher Marlowe.'⁸¹ The only problem is that there is no proof that it was a 'sidelong' reference to Marlowe at all. This does not dissuade Nicholl, though, who turns this 'sidelong epitaph' into a full tribute by Nashe for Marlowe, thereby removing all traces of Aretino:

The readers of the 1590s...would have no problem in identifying Nashe's true subject when he breaks off the narrative of *The Unfortunate Traveller* to "speak a word or two of this Aretine". It is the tribute to Marlowe they were expecting. It is a fine one, both in itself and because there is some courage in making it. The opening words came from the heart—his dead friend was "one of the wittiest knaves that ever god made": an unguarded moment of fondness...Nashe moves on to a more specific point about

⁷⁹ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.266

⁸⁰ Suspiciously, this veiled attack on the Harveys appears to have been excised from the second imprint which was rushed out soon after the first impression in 1594, and claimed to be 'Newly corrected and augmented'. The text therefore reads as if Nashe is attacking Aretino, having just praised him as one of the best writers in Italy. McKerrow suggests that this was a printer's error, rather than an intentional cut, as there are other errors in this second edition, however this one seems especially pointed. See McKerrow, vol 2, pp.189-92

⁸¹ Charles Nicholl, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe*, Revised edition (Random House: London, 2002) p.63.

Marlowe: his reckless outspokenness. Nashe the satirist, conscious of the limits and dangers of political comment, champions this: "He was no timorous servile flatterer of the commonwealth wherein he lived...Princes he spared not, that in the least point transgressed."⁸²

Clearly, by using a terms like 'Nashe's true subject', 'from the heart', 'unguarded moment of fondness' Nicholl implies that Nashe was not only glancing at Marlowe in his tribute to Aretino, but had been using Aretino as (for some reason) a less controversial figure through which obliquely to discuss Marlowe. Even when Nicholl believes he is moving onto 'a more specific point' about Marlowe, he follows this with a generalisation: 'his reckless outspokenness'. Finally, he suggests that Nashe's description of Aretino is really of Marlowe, despite the fact that it has identifying features such as 'that commonwealth wherein he lived' (i.e. Venice, not the monarchy of England) and an allusion to Aretino's famous moniker, the scourge of princes: 'Princes he spared not'.

Nicholl bases his belief that Nashe is actually referring to Marlowe on an earlier connection between Aretino and Marlowe that he believes was 'made by the disapproving Gabriel Harvey.' He points to a certain section of Harvey's *Four Letters*:

Harvey had attacked two contemporary writers for their swaggering behaviour and questionable opinions. They "domineer taverns and stationers' shops" and "scare multitudes of plain folk" with their satirical "scoffing and girding". He nicknames these two writers 'the Devil's Orator' and 'Aretine'. The 'Devil's Orator' is Nashe himself... 'Aretine' is Nashe's friend and fellow-scoffer, Marlowe. The identification trades, of course, on Aretino's twin reputation as a dramatist and an atheist. In a later work...Harvey renews the attack, and makes the connection with atheism quite plain. "Aretine and the Devil's Orator", he writes, "neither fear Goodman Satan, nor Mater Beelzebub, nor Sir Reverence, nor my Lord Government himself."⁸³

⁸² Nicholl, p.64

⁸³ Nicholl, pp.63-4

Nicholl has misread this section of Harvey's *Four Letters*. Preceding the section from which Nicholl quotes, Harvey has already mocked Nashe for his pretensions to be the next Aretino. This association is soon built on by Harvey's description of the railing of 'Aretine and the Devil's Orator', but nowhere does Harvey imply that these are men living at the same time. If anything, Harvey suggests continuity when he sarcastically writes that 'fine pleasant witt was *ever* commendable' (my emphasis), and indeed his previous mention of Nashe attempting to follow in Aretino's footsteps suggests that the connection here is a hereditary one. Nicholl has intentionally isolated this quotation of 'Aretine and the Devil's Orator', and then connected it to a later quotation in order to imply that they are nicknames of the Elizabethan writers who 'scare multitudes of plain folk'. In *Four Letters*, these 'scoffing and girding' men are not the same as 'Aretine and the Divels Orator', but instead Nashe's contemporaries: 'Some odd wittes forsooth' who wish to 'keepe the simple world in awe, or scare multitudes of plaine folke, like idiot crowes, and innocent dooves. All the Invective, and Satyricall Spirites, are their Familiars: scoffing, and girding is their daily bread.'⁸⁴ Of course, this last description could indeed include both Nashe and Marlowe, but what it does not do is connect Marlowe in any way to Aretino. Even Nashe's attempt to clear up the misattribution of *De Tribus Impostoribus Mundi* to Aretino is read as a reference to Marlowe. For one thing, Nicholl does not mention that this was a mythological text, instead calling it an 'anonymous atheistic tract'. He has by now decided that 'Aretino' is definitely a coded reference to Marlowe: 'Since "Aretine" in that passage is intended to suggest Marlowe, it seems that Harvey is glancing at the rumours of Marlowe's anti-religious writings.'⁸⁵

I realise that Nicholl is an author specialising in Elizabethan literary history and not an academic, but this shouldn't mean that his research shouldn't be examined, especially when this is the *only* critical reading of this extended passage in *The Unfortunate Traveller* that I am aware of. Other than this, I point out his inaccuracies exactly because Nicholl's books are more likely to reach a wider audience than a specialised academic text could hope to achieve, which means that these myths about Aretino are ever more likely to be taken as read. The problem is that for Nicholl, Aretino is just a type— an atheist and an outspoken satirist— not a real writer who does not deserve to be summed up with lazy inaccuracies. Instead, he uses Aretino vampirically, as a blood transfusion for his central concern,

⁸⁴ Gabriel Harvey, *Four Letters*, p.36

⁸⁵ Nicholl, p.65

Marlowe. This is why the only close reading of this section of *The Unfortunate Traveller* does not actually refer to the Italian satirist at all, but to another Elizabethan playwright.

The Harvey-Nashe quarrel, as well as the various other discussions surrounding Aretino in this chapter, indicate that the end of the Sixteenth Century was a period of transformation in Aretino's posthumous reputation. The 1580s and 90s saw a shift from Aretino being discussed as a stylist— whether positively or negatively, as discussed in chapter 2— to being discussed primarily as a personality. Once Aretino's celebrity had become more important than his writing, it would become even easier to attribute works to him that he never wrote, but which seemed to the attributer to be 'Aretine-ish.' This is a shift in grammar: Aretino has stopped being a subject, and has instead become an adjective, something detachable from the man himself. This will become clearer in the next two chapters, which discuss works that Aretino never actually created, such as the erotic images of *I Modi* and the bawdy dialogue *La puttana errante*. These ended up not only being misattributed to Aretino, but would become the primary associations made by readers to Aretino by the end of the Seventeenth Century. Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis will look at the material censorship and literary misattribution which over the century between Aretino's first steps as a professional writer and his ultimate decline into obscurity, created the notion of Aretino as a pornographer.

Chapter 5:

Aretine Postures: Voyeurism and misattribution

This chapter and chapter 6 will deal with one of the major themes of this thesis: the effects of misattribution. Across Europe in the Seventeenth Century, Aretino was primarily known as a pornographer, which literally means a 'writer of whores'.¹ In this chapter I will be looking at how this reputation grew out of the initial confusion between erotically charged material which was partly misattributed to Aretino during his lifetime, *I Modi* and *La puttana errante*. In chapter 6, I will look at the process by which the association of Aretino with pornography became ever stronger in the Seventeenth Century, to the extent that it overrode any other knowledge of the writing.

Before turning to the fractured history of the erotic images and texts which would become so heavily associated with Aretino, in this chapter I will first turn to the talking statue of Rome, Pasquino, to whom satirical verses and lampoons would be stuck once a year, and which became one of Aretino's first literary outlets in the 1520s. Aretino was so successful at writing 'pasquinades' that he took on the literary persona of 'Pasquino' at other times in his life, a decision which muddied the waters of which satires had actually been written by Aretino. This, as the rest of this chapter will show, was only the beginning of Aretino's career of misattributions.

This year Master Pasquino is Aretino

Aretino made his first foray into public writing as well as the murky waters of misattribution with an ephemeral verse-form, pasquinades. These were anonymous satires

¹ I justify using the term 'pornography' in this context because although the term is first recorded in English in 1847, the thing that it describes (explicit descriptions, whether written or visual, of sexual acts which are intended to stimulate erotic feelings) have clearly been in existence since ancient times. As Peter Burke argues for a similar use of the term 'propaganda' for works prior to the term's usage in the late Eighteenth Century, the word 'pornography' is 'culturally appropriate even if it is technically anachronistic.' Burke, *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, eds. P. Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) p.8. Were we to be technically and historically accurate, we could call Aretino a 'mimógrafo', a word that was entered in Florio's 1598 Italian dictionary *A World of Wordes* as 'a writer of wanton matters', p.226. Ian Moulton discusses the etymology of the word 'pornography' in the introduction to *Before Pornography* as literally the 'writing of whores'. While I agree with Moulton that the term 'pornography' does not necessarily work as a term for the erotic texts which he discusses in his book, I think that the complex moral attitude that the term encompasses does actually reflect the attitudes held of Aretino in this period, as does its original association with the writing or depiction of prostitutes.

which had been written since 1501 and usually targeted the Papal government of Rome. Traditionally, these anonymous satires were attributed to and stuck on an old Roman statue named 'Pasquino' which stood in the Piazza Parione in Rome, on every April 25th as part of the celebrations of St Mark's day. [Fig.8] In an article on the poet Gian Lorenzo Bernini and Pasquino, Genevieve Warwick writes that 'In particular, Pasquino spoke out in defence of the ancient privileges of the Roman *popolo* and its civic government, the *comune*... Pasquino's acerbic wit focussed on papal nepotism and excess, including the lavish costs of its urban development projects.² The pasquinades were stopped altogether in 1566, after the Council of Trent had ushered in the Counter Reformation,³ though Pasquino had by now become a symbol of satire in Italy as well as abroad.

A few of the anti-Marprelate pamphlets written in London, and which R.B. McKerrow attributed to Thomas Nashe, show how this reputation had survived outside of Italy. In *The Returne of the renowned Cavaliero Pasquill of England* (1589), a character called Marforius (a name which derives from another speaking statue of Rome— Marforio, with whom Pasquino would have staged arguments) tells Pasquill that his previous anti-Marprelate satire *A Countercuff Given to Martin Junior by...Pasquill of England* (1589) was well received, but the only problem was 'they [the people] know not what *Pasquill* is.'⁴ The author, possibly that 'true English Aretine' Thomas Nashe, therefore sets up the opportunity to introduce 'Pasquino' and the tradition of pasquinades to an English audience, a persona which also happened to be shared by Aretino. Pasquill explains that he was

once a Barbour in Rome, (as some report) and euery chayre in my shop was a tongue full of newes. Whatsoeuer was doone in England, Fraunce, Germanic, Spaine, Italie, and other Countries, was brought to me. The high and secrete matters of Lordes, Ladies, Kinges, Emperours, Princes, Popes, and Monarchs of the world, did ring euery day as shrill as a Bason about my doores.⁵

² Genevieve Warwick, 'Making Statues Speak: Bernini and Pasquino' in eds. Aura Satz & Jon Wood, *Articulate Objects, Voice, Sculpture, and Performance* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009) pp.29-46, p.33

³ For a collection of the pasquinades, see Danilo Romei, Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo & Angelo Romano eds. *Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento*, 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno, 1988); on Aretino and Pasquino, see Valerio Marucci 'L'Aretino e Pasquino' in vol 1. *Pietro Aretino nel cinquecentario della nascita* 2 vols. (Rome: Salerno, 1995) pp.67-86.

⁴ [Nashe] *A Countercuff* vol.1 p.71

⁵ [Nashe] *A Countercuff* vol.1, p.72

Pasquino is a gossiping barber, and more importantly for Aretino's reputation as the 'scourge of princes' also an exposé of the 'high and secret matters' of the powerful. Pasquill continues to explain that 'one Pope or other, mistrusting the slipprines of my touge, blest me into a stone to stoppe my mouth.' Despite this attempt to solidify Pasquino's slippery gossip into containable stone, the statue still has a voice through the *prosopopeia* of other writers attributing their satires to Pasquino.⁶ The English Pasquill continues to explain that he is now placed 'in the open streete', with new superhuman strength so that 'I neither blush when I byte any man, nor feele it when any man byteth me.' The point is that real flesh-and-blood satirists can take on this power of anonymity given to them by the Pasquino statue, so that they too can lash, scourge, or bite others with their lampoons and feel no retaliation.

Pasquill describes how he fed off 'every mans talk that passed by' and in Summer 'wore nothing but paper liueries which manie great men bestowed vppon me.'⁷ Two of the writers who would bestow 'paper liveries' upon the statue were Aretino and Antonio Lelio, both men who would take dual ownership of Pasquino, by refusing to limit their pasquinades to a singular space of protest. Rather than only writing pasquinades on the 25th April and for the statues of Pasquino or Marforio, their satire was spilling out onto the walls of Rome, as another pasquinade indicates:

But the desperate, enraged [Cardinal Fernando] Ponzetta has found the
remedy for quietening just their piercing tongues, saying that Master
Pasquino should be destroyed forthwith; that will then make wise Antonio
[Lelio] and Aretino who go about all the streets by night sticking up poems:
Pietro in the Borgo and Antonio in Parione

*ma el disperato, arrabiato Ponzetta
delle lor(o) pungent lingue sole
d'acquietarle trovata ha la ricotta,
dicendo che con fretta
si debbia ruinar maestro Pasquino,*

⁶ A rhetorical device in which the orator or writer speaks to their audience in the voice of another person or object. In the case of inanimate objects like the Pasquino statue, this means that it is given anthropomorphic qualities through this device.

⁷ [Nashe] *A Countercuff*, vol.1, p.72

*che fian poi savi Antonio e l'Aretino,
che per ogni cammino
van di note attaccando le canzone:
Pietro nel Borgo, Antonio im Parione.*⁸

Cardinal Ponzetta was one of the men to be attacked by a pasquinade entitled 'Pasquillus', which claims to uncover the homosexual acts of the cardinals.⁹ Clearly, Ponzetta wished for the pasquinades to be stopped, but destroying the statue would not limit the satires, as the pasquinade written in response points out. Instead the two notorious pasquinade writers, Lelio and Antonio, would simply continue to 'stick up poems...about the streets', Aretino claiming the Borgo neighbourhood on the west bank of the Tiber, with his rival Lelio claiming the Parione region, on the east.

There is a clear association between Aretino and a newer, looser, form of pasquinades which flows over the previous spatial and social restrictions of these satires. Much like Bakhtin's description of the carnival as a stop-gap for social unrest, here the religious authorities permitted protest on a specific day (April 25th) and a specific space (the statue) in order for this behaviour to take place in a controlled environment. Aretino and Lelio were therefore transgressing the rules of the carnival. Aretino was especially transgressive by breaking one key rule of Pasquino: that contributors were anonymised by attributing their satires to the statue. What was in fact a collective voice of multiple writers, was to be claimed by Aretino as his own because he was a writer who was unafraid to have his name associated with the biting satire of Pasquino.

This breach of anonymity was, however, a problem for one of Aretino's patrons. In Aretino's *Sei Giornate* Nanna warns her daughter of the possessiveness of noble patrons, who wish their possessions (in this case, their courtesans) to be theirs alone. A similar warning had been made to Aretino by Federico Gonzaga, the Duke of Mantua, to whom we shall be returning later in this chapter as the person for whom Giulio Romano painted the

⁸ Quoted and translated in Anne Reynolds, *Renaissance Humanism at the Court of Clement VII: Francesco Berni's Dialogue Against Poets in Context* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1997) p. 120. Italian in *Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento*, vol 1, ed. Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo, & Angelo Romano (Rome: Salerno Press, 1984) no.268, pp.258-9

⁹ Translation in James J. Wilhelm, *Gay and Lesbian Poetry: An Anthology from Sappho to Michelangelo* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995, reprinted 2013) p.317. Wilhelm identifies the author of this pasquinade as Aretino, but more recently Romei has discounted this from his list of verses definitely attributable to Aretino. For the Italian, see *Pasquinate Romane*, no.356, pp.351-2

original *I Modi* (The Modes) as decoration for Gonzaga's summer palace. In June 1525, at the same time that the *I Modi* crisis was brewing in Rome, the Duke wrote to Aretino requesting copies of his pasquinades:

Remember that your pasquinades cannot easily remain secret. And when they are made public all over Rome and almost the rest of Italy, they are not so delightful to us, not because they are not exactly the same when they are made public as they were before, but because the novelty [of having the poems before they are made public, directly from the author] commends all things and adds worth to particular things. You can see that we are charging you with not having kept to your promise. If you want to be let off, you had better send us all of your things written to Pasquino at the time of 25 April, as well as all your compositions since.

*recordative, che le cose vostre male se potrieno tener ascose; et quando sono publicate per tutta Roma, et quasi per tutta Italia, non ce delectano tanto, non perchè non siano quelle medesime quando sono publicate che prima, ma perchè la novità commenda tutte le cose, et aggiunge precio alle cose precise. Vedeti che ve acusamo di non haverne atteso la promessa; et converrà, se volete esser assolto, che ce mandiate de le cose fatte a Pasquino al tempo de la sua giornata, tutte le compositioni fatte per voi da poi.*¹⁰

The Duke is partly joking with Aretino—'if you want to be let off' then please send me your work— but underlying this is the disquieting sense that Aretino's patron is not pleased that work that he is indirectly paying for through gifts and the upkeep of Aretino is being shared around the streets of Rome 'and almost the rest of Italy.' This patron has lost his exclusivity. Ann Reynolds interprets this letter as a political reference, but she overlooks the (artificial) divide being drawn by Gonzaga between a courtly 'private' sphere and the populist 'public' sphere. The pasquinades lose their value: 'they are not so delightful to us...because the novelty commends all things and adds worth.'

¹⁰ Letter by Federico Gonzago, dated 7th June 1525, quoted & translated in Reynolds, pp.130-131

Aretino is often described as walking the professional tightrope between writing for wealthy and powerful patrons and writing for a public audience, but this is usually dated to his involvement with the publisher Francesco Marcolini and his move into the realm of print. Yet I would argue that Aretino's association with both print and its wider audience cannot be so easily ascribed to his involvement with Marcolini because he had previously known other entrepreneurs such as Raphael and his workshop who made money from making engravings of their paintings and selling them through the press, engravings which included the notorious *I Modi*. Further to this, the association between print and writing for a public audience is an exceptionalist argument which exaggerates the printing press' role as an agent of social revolution, as if writing for a public could only happen with the introduction of print, while writing in manuscript meant writing for a patron. While print certainly sped up the production of public writing, as this letter from Gonzaga shows the anxiety of a writer's work being circulated beyond an elite, controlled audience was not limited to 'the stigma of print' but was also an anxiety for a certain form of public manuscript circulation: that of publicly posted manuscript.

What is also important to note in relation to Aretino's choice of genre, is that the pasquinades were ephemeral texts, and indeed the ones that survive to this day do so primarily because the less offensive ones were collected together and published by the authorities, keen to show their preference for acceptable forms of protest. However, as Reynolds points out, this 'formal, published aspect of the [Pasquino] celebration was only part of a more complex picture.'¹¹ It would be the informal, largely unpublished, and more bitingly satirical pasquinades which would end up being associated with Aretino.

Various pasquinades make it clear that 'Aretino' and 'Pasquino' were associated in many people's minds as one and the same being. One pasquinade speaks of the problem of Aretino's popularity. It claims that the pasquinade named 'Pasquillus', exposing the homosexuality of the cardinals was written by Aretino, while in the next sentence questions whether this attribution is reliable:

Everyone says: "I am amazed that the College of Cardinals can't make Pietro Aretino be quiet, and I am so chuffed to hear Aretino preaching of all

¹¹ Reynolds, p.132

the vices of the College"...But then in Rome everyone is Aretino, everyone is taking a good bite at the College, and Aretino has the sorriest mouthful

Dice ognun: – lo stupisco che 'l coligo
non posa far tacer Pietro Aretino,
e sí rinasco a sentir l'Aretino
predicar tutti e' vizi del colegio...
E poi in Roma ognuno è l'Aretino,
ognun si magna in pastici il colegio
*e'l piú tristo bocon n'ha l'Aretino.*¹²

Aretino was becoming ever more like Pasquino, in the sense that he was now a persona to whom anonymous verses could be attributed to. In 1525, the feast of Pasquino seems to have been contracted to Aretino, with the statue decorated as the god of Fortune, as a letter sent on the 20th April from Aretino to Federico Gonzaga suggests: 'This year, master Pasquino is made over in my name, and he is made Fortune/fortunate; may God spare every good Christian from the evil tongues of poets. I, my Lord, will send you all that Pasquino thinks.' (A mio nome questo anno se fa M. Pasquino, et fassi una Fortuna; et Dio scampi ogni fedel cristiano dalle male lingue de i poeti. Io, Signore, tutto quello che Pasquino ragiona vi manderò).¹³

The datary of Pope Clement VII, Giovan Matteo Giberti had other ideas. Control over the festival was transferred to Giberti, who was keeping a close eye on the pasquinades. Another letter sent to Gonzaga on the 1st May, this time from his agent Germanello, explains: 'I am sending Your Lordship the poems attached to Master Pasquino which have been printed, although many more were written and almost half a sack of them were sent to the Datary; but the caustic poems were not published' (Mando a V.S. li versi che furno posti a Maestro Pasquino, li quali sono stati stampati, benché ne furno facti moto più, e ne fo portati quasi un mezzo sacco al Datario, ma li mordaci non sono dati fuora.)¹⁴ These less 'caustic' pasquinades that were collected by Giberti were later printed by Antonio Blado in

¹² Translated in Reynolds, p.124-5. Italian in *Pasquinate Romane* p.179, no.196

¹³ Quoted in Danilo Romei, 'Aretino e Pasquino' (published online in *Il Nuovo Rinascimento* in 1995) pp.1-23, p.21 (my translation)

¹⁴ Quoted in Romei, p.21, my translation

Carmina apposite Pasquillo anno M.D. XXV. The vicious style now associated with Aretino's pasquinades was noticeably lacking from this collection.¹⁵

By printing a selection of pasquinades, Giberti was making it official which of the otherwise ephemeral verses were acceptable, and which should be forgotten, just as the Pope referred to in *Pasquill of England* had attempted to stop the flow of Pasquino's gossip by turning him to stone. It was also Giberti who that year had ordered the imprisonment of Marcantonio Raimondi, the engraver of *I Modi*, and who was also believed to have ordered the attempted assassination of Aretino that summer.¹⁶

Aretino's use of the pasquinade form began what would be a repeated feature of his writing career and posthumous reputation. Already by 1525 Aretino had openly acknowledged his authorship of a form of writing which was traditionally anonymous, and in so doing was to have even more verses which he had never actually written being attributed to him. Although a large part of the misattribution of pasquinades was due to their anonymity, this was exacerbated by the ephemerality of the form. Even now, no one can easily prove or disprove how many pasquinades Aretino contributed because there remains so little material to examine.

The Italian critic Danilo Romei has estimated that only five surviving pasquinades can be attributed to Aretino with certainty, even though other critics such as Giuliano Innamorati in 1957 and Paul Larivaille in 1980 had attributed either the majority or up to a third of pasquinades written after Leo X's death in late 1521 to Aretino.¹⁷ Despite this, Romei suggests that it almost doesn't matter whether Aretino did or did not write one or another pasquinade:

rather, what is important is the contrary: Aretino did not invent Pasquino (which was believed for some time). Completely the opposite. In 1517, when he arrived in Rome, Aretino had found a heritage of pasquinades that was already substantial and consolidated. Aretino took advantage with

¹⁵ Romei, p.22. See also Reynolds, pp.131-2

¹⁶ Aretino's pasquinades on the Papal Court and on Giberti in particular appear to have resulted in a member of Giberti's household attacking Aretino with a knife on the night of 28th July, 1525, leaving Aretino close to death. Aretino left Rome for Mantua, and later Venice, in October 1525.

¹⁷ The five are 'Piàcevi, mona Chiesa onesta e buona' (1522), 'Dice ognun: – lo stupisco che 'l colegio' (1522), 'Savio colegio, miserere mei!' (1522), 'Patafio di maestro Adriano pecora campi (Qui iace Adrian sesto, omo divino)' (1523) and 'I miracoli al mondo forno sette' (1525), listed in Romei, p.16

extraordinary timing, and shaped these pre-existing materials, appropriating them with talent equal to shamelessness, imposing his own extroverted and intrusive presence, to the point that Pasquino would be identified with *him*, or at least the most authentic and most malignant voice of Pasquino.

*anzi importa esattamente il contrario: l'Aretino non ha inventato Pasquino (come un tempo si credeva). Tutt'altro. Nel 1517, quando è giunto a Roma, l'Aretino ha trovato un patrimonio pasquinesco già cospicuo e consolidato. L'Aretino ha sfruttato con straordinario tempismo forme e materiali che già esistevano, appropriandosene con talento pari alla spudoratezza, imponendosi con la sua presenza estroversa e invadente, fino ad essere identificato lui con Pasquino, o almeno con la voce più autentica e più maligna di Pasquino.*¹⁸

Writing in English almost a decade later than Romei, Raymond Waddington interprets this misattribution in more positive terms, as one of Aretino's 'great innovation[s]', Aretino had 'shed the cloak of anonymity in which the "post-it" verses were attributed to the statue.'¹⁹ While Aretino might have wanted to have as many pasquinades attributed to him as possible, the opposite desire of being disassociated from these satires was equally strong amongst other writers from the various academies.²⁰

Aretino showed no signs of correcting these misattributions, and indeed welcomed the association with this satirically vicious persona that he referred to himself as 'Pasquino', cultivating a process of misattribution along the way. Even after Aretino had left Rome behind, he was still associating himself with Pasquino. In an early manuscript copy of *La Cortigiana* from 1525, Aretino's prologue claims that the comedy is a work of Pasquino,²¹ while various letters sent by and to him, name him as 'Pasquino' or 'Pasquillo'.²² In the rest

¹⁸ Romei, p.10 (My translation)

¹⁹ Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr*, p.19

²⁰ Romei is more wary about these claims, as 'the anonymity of pasquinades was an open secret', pp.16-7

²¹ See Nino Borsellino 'La memoria teatrale di Pietro Aretino: i prologhi della Cortigiana' in *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, ed. Maristella de Panizza Lorch (Milan: Edizione di Comunità, 1980) pp.225-40, for a discussion of the change of authorial persona in this prologue from pasquino in 1525 to an evangelist in the revised, printed version in 1534.

²² e.g. letters to Danese Cattaneo, May 1545, Aretino names himself as 'Pasquillo' or 'Pasquino' *Lettere* 3, no.185, p.186 and June 1548, *Lettere* 4, no. 467, p.288

of this chapter, I will discuss further instances of misattribution that occurred during Aretino's lifetime because I want to argue that it is those works misattributed to Aretino such as *I Modi* (later known in Europe as 'Aretine's Postures'), *La puttana errante* (The Wandering Whore), and the heretical and non-existent *De Tribus Impostoribus Mundi* mentioned in chapter 4, rather than the censorship of his works which ultimately lead to Aretino's posthumous reputation as an atheist and a pornographer.

Aretino's sonnets and *I Modi*

As well as a writer of pasquinades, Aretino's time in Rome would be connected to another scandalous and ephemeral genre: a series of erotic images known as *I Modi*. Much like the pasquinades, the ephemerality of this form would cause problems of misattribution for later generations. These images depicted sixteen sexual positions and were circulated as printed engravings. Later, a set of woodcuts would be made, accompanied by descriptive sonnets (*Sonetti Lussuriosi*) written by Aretino, which narrated the couples in each image as they made love. Because of his later addition of sonnets, these images would become known as 'Aretine's Postures', and Aretino believed to have painted the original series of images.

Part of the problem for anyone attempting to trace the history of how these images circulated, is that they were continuously and heavily censored, right from when they were first created in the workshop of Raphael in the early 1520s, through to the Nineteenth Century. The lack of substantial material evidence also contributed to the later misattribution of these images to Aretino, as rumours grew of his role in circulating them. The man may have written a range of works, yet what Aretino was most famed for were his erotic dialogues and pornographic sonnets. In Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (1606) Lady Would-be, an Englishwoman attempting to learn the fashions of Venetian courtesans, lists alongside Petrarch and Dante her further reading material: 'But for a desperate wit, there's Aretine! Only, his pictures are a little obscene.'²³ Even in the Twentieth Century, Edward Hutton's 1922 biography of Aretino uneasily discusses the *Modi* engravings and outright dismisses Aretino's accompanying *Sonetti Lussuriosi*:

²³ Ben Jonson, 'Volpone', in *The Alchemist and Other Plays*, ed. Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p.57, 3.4.11.96-7

Let us say all that can be said in reprobation of Marcantonio's engravings, still nothing that Marcantonio ever did can have been wholly without beauty, if only a beauty of execution. No such plea can avail Aretino anything. His sonnets are not only impossible; they are doggerel; they have no merit of any kind. Even the Roman world of that day retched at them.²⁴

Hutton's discomfort over dismissing the work of the engraver Raimondi is because both he and the draftsman of the images, Giulio Romano, are both admired Renaissance artists. In the next sentence, he nonetheless commends the 'reprobation' of sixteenth-century censors, who were so thorough in their destruction of the plates and subsequent engravings that we are now left with only a handful of images, and a confused history of their circulation.

The story of *I Modi* begins like this. The artist Giulio Romano had been commissioned to design a summer palace, the Palazzo Te in Mantua, for Aretino's erstwhile patron, Federico Gonzaga in 1524. Romano shared his drawings of sixteen sexual positions that were going to be used to decorate the walls of the palace, with the engraver Marcantonio Raimondi. Raimondi, together with his assistant Baviera, made prints of these images to sell to the public, which appear to have been a great success, with Ludovico Ariosto referring to their popularity in the prologue to his *Suppositi* (printed in 1524)

in diverse acts and forms and various positions Elephantis had painted; and which then were revived in our time in Holy Rome, and printed in engravings more beautiful than decent, so that the whole world has copies of them

Non sono a quelle antique che Elefantide
 In diversi atti e forme e modi varii
 Lasciò dipinto, e che poi rinnovate si
 Sono a' di nostri in Roma santa, e fattesi
 In carte belle, più che oneste, imprimere,

²⁴ Hutton, *Pietro Aretino: Scourge of Princes*, p.66

*Acciò che tutto il mondo n'abbia copia.*²⁵

Outraged by such images being publicly available, Pope Clement VII had Raimondi imprisoned and Baviera's remaining stock of prints confiscated and the plates destroyed. Luckily for Romano, because he was still in Mantua, he was not punished together with his colleague. A second series of the engravings had meanwhile been printed, though was again suppressed by the Papal authorities. Vasari expresses the moral indignation over not only the images but also the sonnets that Aretino had written, inspired by these engravings: 'what was worse, for each plate Messer Pietro Aretino wrote a most indecent sonnet, insomuch that I know not which was the greater, the offence to the eye from the drawings of Giulio, or the outrage to the ear from the words of Aretino.'²⁶ Aretino's descriptive sonnets seem to have circulated separately from the engravings, but eventually both were printed together in an emblem book format. This new book spawned further pirated editions across Europe and eventually becoming one of the most infamous examples of pornography, known to many as 'Aretine's Postures'. Exactly when Aretino penned these sonnets is still disputed, but ranges from the summer of 1524 (simultaneous with the circulation of the engravings) to 1527.²⁷

Aretino's involvement in *I Modi* was a literary response to printed erotica, and his descriptive language is partly used to narrate the contorted, mannerist positions of the figures. Sonnet 14 [fig.9], for example, describes the unexpected image of a woman sitting on top of an acrobatic man who is bending backwards while balancing on his arms on top of a cart being pulled by a cherub: 'Don't pull the cart, dickhead of a Cupid. Hold up you

²⁵ Ludovico Ariosto, translated in Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001) p.55, and Ariosto, *I Suppositi: Comedia di M. Ludovico Ariosto, da lui medesimo riformata, e ridotta in versi*, (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e fratelli, 1551) sig.A3v

²⁶ Giorgio Vasari, 'Marc'Antonio Bolognese and other Engravers of Prints', *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, vol. 2, transl. Gaston du C. de Vere, Introduction & Notes David Ekserdjian, (London: Random House, 1996) p.86

²⁷ Talvacchia believes Aretino's story that he only wrote his sonnets after having negotiated Raimondi's release from prison and having seen the paintings at the Palazzo Te in 1527, but Waddington and Reynolds both suggest that Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi* could have been available in manuscript form simultaneous to the engravings being sold in the summer of 1524. See Reynolds, *Renaissance Humanism at the Court of Clement VII* p.125, and Waddington *Aretino's Satyr* p.178, n.1. Lynne Lawner lists three letters which suggest that the sonnets and the images would have been printed before 1527 p.22, while Aquilecchia's introduction to Aretino's poems, says that while it is not possible to take a firm stance, he dates the circulation of the *Sonetti* to between December 1524 and January 1525. Aquilecchia, 'Introduzione' to Pietro Aretino, *Poesie varie*. 1 (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1992) pp.13-15. Finally, Paul Larivaille dates the text to the very specific date of 3rd August 1525, on the basis of a letter addressed by Aretino to Giovanni de Medici. Larivaille, *L'Aretin entre Renaissance et Manièrisme 1492-1537* (Lille: Universite de Lille III, 1972) p.716

stubborn mule' (Non tirar futtutelo di Cupido/ La carriola, firmati bis mulo), the man cries out in frustration. She is equally frustrated by the awkward position that the artist has placed them in: 'it would kill a mule to stay this way for an hour, but that's how long I've been huffing and puffing with my ass' (Che ci morrebbe a starci un'hora un mulo,/ E però tanto co'l cul soffio e grido). The man then apologises to 'Beatrice' for having chosen this uncomfortable position.²⁸

Aretino adds a level of metatextual humour to most of the images which is missing when viewing the images on their own. The sonnets not only describe but actually animate the images, turning them into cartoons, even if their words are written underneath each image rather than as speech bubbles.²⁹ The relationship between Aretino's sonnets and *Modi* woodcuts can also be understood as being in a struggle for interpretative dominance, as critics of *ekphrasis* and word-and-image studies such as W.J.T. Mitchell, and James Heffernan have suggested.³⁰ In this sense, the ability of the text (although itself equally as visual as the images) to narrate movement and change allows the sonnets to animate the usual stasis of images.

However, these images were originally drawn in the Mannerist style of Giulio Romano, the contorted bodies of the lovers tense with movement. While Aretino's sonnets narrate and animate the aural elements of the scene which the images cannot, his sonnets also shut down the interpretation of the images by providing them with a singular narrative where once there was none, and the image was left open for the viewer to interpret themselves. Aretino's sonnets therefore both enliven the images and stop the potential for different interpretations. Arguably, this makes the original images even more pornographic than they initially were. The figures in the engravings are positioned in such a way that it is not usually possible to see any penetration, and therefore Aretino's sonnets fill in what we cannot see. Most of the time Aretino chooses to describe acts of anal rather than vaginal sex, so that what was indiscernible in the engravings, is now made overt in the text.

Often these sonnets have an anti-clerical edge, so that in Sonnet 7 the woman asks if her partner will 'accidentally' (per disgratia) put his penis in her behind, while he justifies his

²⁸ Ibid, p.221

²⁹ For further analysis of these sonnets, See Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, pp.91-99, and Lawner, pp. 15-48

³⁰ W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) esp. 'Ekphrasis and the other' pp.151-82; James A.W. Heffernan, *Museum of Words: The Poetic of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993)

hesitation as a desire 'to avoid seeming like Father Mariano' (il so per non parere/ Un frate Mariano). Similarly in Sonnet 10, the woman is practically forcing her partner to have anal sex: 'You'll pardon me, I want it in my rear', 'Oh lady, I don't want to commit this sin: Because this is the food of prelates, who always have had the damndest taste', 'Go on put it there', 'I won't', 'Yes, you will' (Io voglio in cul tu mi perdonerai, O donna io non vo far questo peccato: Perche quest'è un cibo da prelato; C'hanno il gusto perduto sempre mai; Deh mettil qui, non farò, si farai).³¹

The language is coarse, even by today's standards. The translations above are taken from Talvacchia partly because another recent translation by Lynne Lawner squeamishly replaces sexual words with the Italian, so that Sonnet 9 for example has lines such as: 'You hold my *cazzo* in your *potta*' and 'You may think you're going to *fottere* this way, I think it's bestial and shan't allow it.'³² This essentially works as a form of censorship, in which we can guess the word, but do not have to actually read it in the translation, an equivalent to writing 'c--k', 'c--t' or 'f--k'. Such prudishness goes completely against Aretino's thoughts on the use of blunt language, especially when describing sex acts. In his *Sei Giornate* Aretino has Antonia tell Nanna after a characteristically metaphor-ridden description by the older courtesan to 'Speak plainly and say 'fuck', 'prick', 'cunt', and 'ass' if you want anyone except the scholars at the university in Rome to understand you' (parla alla libera, e di "culo, cazzo, potta e fottere", che non sarai intesa se non dalla Sapienza Capranica).³³ The pseudo-Aretino text, *Dialogo di Giulia e di Maddalena* also known as *La puttana errante*, mimics this scene when Giulia tells Maddalena not to temper her language when describing her sexual exploits: 'I already know very well what a cock, cunt, and ass are; speak freely' (Già so bene io che cosa sia cazzo, potta e culo; parla pure libertamente).³⁴

In a letter to Battista Zatti in 1527, Aretino justifies the lewdness of his sonnets by pointing to the hypocrisies of those who had punished Raimondi for producing erotic images. Aretino writes that 'With all due respect to hypocrites, I dedicate these lustful pieces to you, heedless of fake prudishness and asinine prejudices that forbid the eyes to gaze at the things they most delight to see' (La cui lussuriosa memoria vi intitolo con pace de gli ipocriti, disperandomi del giudicio ladro e de la consuetudine porca che proibisce a gli occhi

³¹ Talvacchia, p.207

³² Lawner, p.78

³³ Aretino, Rosenthal, p.43; Aquilecchia, p.35

³⁴ *Dialogo di Giulia e di Maddalena* quoted & translated in Frantz, *Festum Voluptatis* p.93

qual che piú gli diletta).³⁵ This letter continues with Aretino defending the act of sex and declaring that an emblem of a penis, being the fount of all life, should be worn with pride round people's necks, while conversely our hands which write lies, and our mouths which tell lies, should be covered.

The letter was included in Aretino's first book of collected *Lettere* (1537), but originally it may have been intended as a puff to the later version of *I Modi* which had been printed alongside the *Sonetti*. In the letter Aretino refers to the lay-out of the pages, the images are 'displayed above the Sonnets that you may see at the bottom [of the page]' (ci sciorinai sopra i Sonetti che ci si veggano a i piedi) in the style of an emblem book.³⁶ In the sole copy of this book to have survived, known as the 'Toscanini' edition as it was once owned by Walter Toscanini (son of the conductor, Arturo Toscanini), we can see this description of the page accords. By re-printing his dedication in a collection of other letters, it is also possible that Aretino is using the opportunity to publicise his link to the scandal, as a defender of the artist's right to create erotica, and to portray himself as persuasive enough a 'scourge of princes' to have sprung Raimondi from prison. With this dedicatory letter and the reprinting of *I Modi* with his own interpretative sonnets, Aretino was marking out his territory for the interpretation of these erotic images, and thereby discouraging others from providing alternative versions.

Voyeurism: transgressing the public/private divide

At the beginning of this chapter the Marprelate text, *Pasquill of England*, highlighted the issue of the state's response to news of dignitaries and princes reaching the common people through Pasquino's barber shop. This distinction of information being appropriate for only a few people is mirrored in the censorship of *I Modi*, a set of erotic images which were originally only intended for the eyes of the aristocratic Gonzaga and his guests. The 'scourge of princes' Aretino, involved in both cases, would repeatedly present himself as being on the side of the common man, uncovering for them the secrets of princes, published in his collections of *Lettere*.

³⁵ Pietro Aretino, letter to Battista Zatti, false date of: December 11, 1537. transl. Lawner, p.14. Italian, *Lettere*, vol. 1, no.308, p.425

³⁶ Ibid.

In the case of Pasquino, the addition of small pieces of paper allowed the stone to speak of the secrets of the Papal court. For *I Modi* it was similarly the format of the emblem books which allowed the images of the rich to be circulated amongst a widening circle of viewers. These erotic images, already enclosed in books, could be easily hidden inside coat pockets or find their way into ladies' closets. Talvacchia notes that as manuscript drawings intended for circulation amongst a select few or painted onto the walls of an aristocratic house, these images 'could expect a place, in terms of potential audience, within the private iconic circuit of the elite as Ginzburg defines it, with minimal distribution and a tightly circumscribed radius.'³⁷ *I Modi* had initially been intended to decorate the walls of the Palazzo Te, and so decorum had been broken when these images were made available to a wider audience who could buy them as single sheet engravings. With the emblem book format, these images were a further transformation into yet another portable and private format.

The problem was not so much the movement of a private piece of art into the public sphere, tainted by being reproduced and sold to multiple consumers as Talvacchia maintains, but as I would argue, the democratisation of private acts of consumption. Elite consumers from the court were allowed to view erotica because they were expected to be reasonable in their response to such images and not be lead astray, a theme which I have elsewhere discussed in this thesis.

If these images were truly 'public', for example painted onto the walls of the plazas or stuck onto doorposts, they would be viewed by the public in open sight of everyone else. What was more dangerous was the fact that multiple copies of these images and Aretino's sonnets could be sold and circulated in secret, and end up being viewed and read in unknowable spaces by people who were not 'trained' in supposedly elite sensibilities. Giorgio Vasari even suggests that it was this transgression that concerned the Papal censors of *I Modi*: 'And since some of these sheets were found in places where they were least expected, not only were they prohibited, but Marcantonio was taken and thrown into prison.'³⁸ The images 'were found in places where they were least expected'. While he does not openly state it, this group of unexpected consumers of erotica could have been the young, women, or even members of the clergy. The underlying point is that these images

³⁷ Talvacchia, p.72

³⁸ Vasari, p.86

were seen to be a danger, were they to fall into the hands of innocent people, and potentially corrupt them. The problem is also one of which spaces could be designated for the consumption of erotic images. The Palazzo Te was 'socialised' for erotic purposes, while other spaces, whether public or private, were inappropriate spaces in which to view *Modi*.³⁹

Two different notes from the Venetian Inquisition illustrate the distinction I make between the two different forms of movement between private and public spaces. In August 1650 one Francesco Torelli was put on trial for having made multiple reproductions of what are referred to as 'songs and images from Aretino's works', which were produced from one single copy which had been stolen by 'A servant from Ca' Querini', from 'his master's library at night.'⁴⁰ This is the movement that Talvacchia describes: images are stolen from the private library of a master's home by his servant, and pirated into the public sphere by the printer Torelli. Another layer of movement, however, occurs in another case mentioned by Federico Barbierato in his work on the Venetian Inquisition. In 1683, a merchant called Paolo Aviati was caught selling ivory boxes containing luxury items of creams and tobacco and decorated with images taken from 'the 60 ways of coitus depicted by Aretino'. The fear of the inquisition was that these boxes gave 'visual incitement to sensual practices by seeing wicked pleasures' and moreover that they should be found in the 'public' realm, in 'almost all combmakers, botteghe, osterie and haberdashery shops.' The difference with the Torelli case, is that these images, while originally 'private' had by this date filtered into the shops of haberdashers, but from there these everyday objects are then described as moving into private houses and nunneries where 'they are used for sinful arousal.'⁴¹

Part of the fear appears to be that these erotic images are appearing in the private spaces not only of the secular world, but of spiritual spaces. Aretino's 'lives of nuns' section in the *Sei Giornate* uses this seed of suspicion for comedic purposes by suggesting that the private spaces of the nunnery are just as likely to be used for illicit sexual liaisons as brothels or the homes of frustrated wives. He describes the nunnery as a labyrinthine space, with

³⁹ See Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1974), and Edward W. Soja *Postmodern Geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory* (London; New York: Verso, 1989) on the idea that space is socially produced, and that values affect our perception of privacy, and what is appropriate or not to have in a certain space.

⁴⁰ *Archivio di stato di venezia*, 'Sant'Uffizio, b.105, quoted & translated Federico Barbierato, *The Inquisitor in the Hat Shop: Inquisition, Forbidden Books, and Unbelief in Early Modern Venice*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) p.281

⁴¹ *Archivio di stato di venezia*, Inquisito di Stato, b.522, quoted & translated in Federico Barbierato, p.288

Nanna getting lost along corridors, and finding herself ever deeper in a series of hidden, secret rooms. Aretino's text also transgresses the assumed privacy of these spaces, with Nanna spying on sexual scenes through cracks in the walls, around doors left slightly ajar, and through keyholes. Nanna therefore performs the role of the voyeur on behalf of the reader.

Voyeurism is also apparent in Aretino's narrating of the sexual positions in *I Modi* in the sonnets which accompany the images. Position 11 [fig.10] shows two lovers being watched by an old woman at the window. The image also survives as a mural for the Palazzo Te, where this old woman is depicted as a procuress checking that the couple are well. The two lovers are entwined but not yet actively having sex. [fig.11] In the emblem book, however, Aretino's words animate the woodcut in the Toscanini octavo, first by having the man describe what he sees: 'Open your thighs so that I can clearly see your beautiful behind, with your snatch in sight. An ass that leads to paradise, a pussy that makes one throb with passion' (Apri le coscie, accio ch'io veggia bene/ Il tuo bel culo, e la tua potta in viso,/ Culo da compire un pare un paradiso,/ Potta, ch'i cori stilla per le rene). Later in the sonnet we hear the sudden interjection of the old woman, as if she has just come onto the scene: 'Oh indecent woman!' she cries, 'Oh depraved man! On the ground and in bed! I see you, slut, so look out, for I will break your bones.' (Ahi ribalda, ahi ribaldo, in terra et in letto/ Io ti veggio puttana, e t'apparecchia,/ Ch'io ti rompa due costole del petto). The younger woman responds: 'Crap on you, poked old woman' (Io te n'incaco franciosata vecchia) and tells the interloper that she will continue to enjoy her partner's 'noble cock' (nobil cazzo).⁴² In Aretino's sonnet, this is no longer a procuress who is happy to see things progressing as they should, but an elderly woman in the margins who is interfering in the sex act depicted in the centre of the image. This sonnet amplifies the imagery, so that it is now a private scene that has been interrupted by the moralising voice of the outsider, a voice which is flatly rejected by those who fill up the majority of the scene.

As Talvacchia says of the circulation of *I Modi*, 'It was the myriad possibilities of private enjoyment that might worry.'⁴³ If these images were publicly being consumed, then decorum and social pressure could at least regulate how the viewer responded to the image; in private, while decorum may well still have affected behaviour as we can see from

⁴² Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, p.215

⁴³ *Ibid*, p.74

examples of erotic images being burned by their owners, their consumption was still unregulated. These images were therefore both 'public' in the sense that they reached a wider range of people but also privately enjoyed by people buying these images to take to their homes.

Censorship of Aretino's little booklets

The censorship of *I Modi* has left us with scattered examples of what the original complete set of engravings looked like. What still exists are a full engraving of position one in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and nine fragments now housed in the British Museum. [fig.12] These fragments were once owned in the Eighteenth Century by Pierre Jean Mariette (1694-1774), who described them as having already been in a fragmented state when he acquired them, reduced to 'little more than heads' which at least saved him 'red faces' when he exhibited them. Presumably a previous owner had censored them by cutting up the engraving into its most innocuous parts.⁴⁴ He lamented that his grandfather, Pierre II Mariette (1634-1716) had owned a complete series of the engravings, but had burned them.⁴⁵ A few woodcuts have also survived, one of position 11 in Vienna's Albertina museum (undated, recorded as It.I.22, fol.49), but the most complete set is the Toscanini booklet, which despite this has no titlepage and is missing positions 5 & 6, while an epilogue with dubious attribution has been added.

Various literary allusions to the 'little book' of Aretino's sonnets and the images exist which predate the Toscanini edition, however. In a collection of verses from 1541, Niccolò Franco describes Aretino's 'little booklet...Where are all the modes of screwing, And each one displays its own sonnet' (picciolo Libretto...Dove son tutti i modi del chiavare, E ciasun

⁴⁴ James Grantham Turner suggests that the British Museum fragments were from an engraving c.1530 by Agostino Veneziano, who worked in Raimondi's workshop, but like Raimondi, had started his career making copies of prints by Dürer & Giulio Campagnola between 1512-14. See Turner, 'Invention and Sexuality in the Raphael Workshop: Before the *Modi*', *Art History* 35 (2012) pp.1-28

⁴⁵ Mariette to Giovanni Bottari, 30th May 1756, in Giovanni Bottari, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura* 4 (Rome: Barbiellini, 1764). For more on this set of fragments, see Turner, 'Marcantonio's Lost *Modi* and their Copies', *Print Quarterly*, 21 (December 2004) pp.369-79

modo mostra il suo sonetto.')⁴⁶ An earlier allusion appears in a letter from Aretino sent to the Genoese nobleman, Cesare Fregoso on the 9th November 1527. He sends a 'book of sonnets and the lustful figures who you so desired', while an even earlier letter from Federico di Gonzaga, Aretino's Mantuan patron, thanks Aretino for sending him some sonnets and illustrations.⁴⁷ In a later letter from 1555 to Aretino, Medoro Nucci attacked him for writing 'sonnets of fuckers...under the figures of Raphael of Urbino' (sonettij de fotistori...sotto le figure di raphaello da orbino) which Aretino responds to, neither denying his involvement nor, interestingly, countering Nucci's claim that it was Raphael rather than Romano who made these images.⁴⁸ Finally, in 1568 the Esecutori della Bestemmia (Executors against Blasphemy) imprisoned and fined the Venetian engraver Domenico Zenoi and the bookseller Francesco Camopcio, for creating and selling a similar book of 'extremely obscene/dishonest images' (figure dishonestissime) accompanied by sonnets.⁴⁹

The Toscanini book is an important source for reconstructing these 'little books' which were presumably what the majority of readers would have been able to access, and what images they might have had in their minds when they discussed 'Aretine's Postures'. It is reproduced in Lynne Lawner's edition of *I Modi* and compared with a second set of images which date from c.1850 and come with a rather dubious history. Claiming to have made copies from an original set of *I Modi* engravings that he had discovered in a convent in Palenque, Mexico, Count Maximilien de Waldeck was known for exaggerating the truth. Neither such a convent nor the original Mexican engravings have ever been traced. Waldeck also says that he had made his engravings from eleven tracings of the original *I Modi* made by the French sculptor, François-Antoine Gérard, though as he produced twenty engravings in total (four more than the original number produced by Raimondi) he must have been working from another, later source. Giorgio Vasari claims that there were twenty postures, even though Aretino only wrote sixteen accompanying sonnets.⁵⁰ Waldeck does not reproduce position three of the Toscanini edition, however, and it might also be the case that there were two different versions of this series available by the time that Vasari mentions

⁴⁶ Niccolò Franco, 'Delle rime di M. Niccolo Franco contra Pietro Aretino, e nel fine la Priapea del medemo autore' (Turin, 1541) f.128v, quoted and transl. in Turner 'Woodcut Copies of the Modi', *Print Quarterly*, 26 (June 2009) pp.115-122. p.116

⁴⁷ Quoted in Lawner, p.22, and Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, pp.82-3

⁴⁸ Nucci quoted in Turner, p.3

⁴⁹ See Sara F. Matthews-Grieco. 'Satyrs and sausages: erotic strategies and the print market in Cinquecento Italy', *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.45-6

⁵⁰ Vasari, p.86

these twenty images when he wrote his *Vita de Marc'Antonio Bolognese* in the second edition of *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori da Cimabue insino a'tempi nostri* (Lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors, and architects from Cimabue to our time) in 1568.

Despite the Papal censorship, *I Modi* also survived as isolated figures modified for different media, such as engraved gems and drawings by Parmigianino.⁵¹ In Florence in the 1530s an enterprising maiolica decorator of pottery, Francesco Xanto, drew on more than twenty prints by Raimondi for inspiration, amongst which many images were from *I Modi*. In an article on Xanto, Talvacchia goes into greater detail over Xanto's career and his appropriation of *I Modi* than I will do here, but I want to repeat one of her main points, which is that Xanto was 'quoting' images from *I Modi* on the assumption that the owners of his maiolica pottery would recognise the original context of the figures, and feel themselves part of a *cognoscenti* who owned images which were elsewhere censored by the Papacy.⁵²

Especially useful for reconstructing position 5, which exists only as fragments of heads and limbs in the British Museum, is a plate by Xanto called 'The Punishment of Rome', inspired by the 1527 Sack of Rome. Positions 5 and 6 were, as previously mentioned, torn out of the Toscanini booklet, presumably because one or both were considered especially offensive. In Xanto's maiolica, a naked woman personifying Rome props herself up on her right arm, while towering over her is the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, sword raised. [fig.13] Xanto has a clearly moralistic interpretation of this image, inscribing the plate on its reverse as 'Lascivious Rome broken in two by the good Charles V'; Charles V is 'good', while Rome is 'lascivious', though the image counteracts this description, depicting instead a scene of sexual violence, in which the figure of Rome is opening her legs towards Charles, with her left hand indicating or resting on her genitalia, while Charles euphemistically wields his sword. From the British Museum fragments of position 5 it seems that this figure of Rome is indeed taken from position 5 of *I Modi*. Talvacchia points out, 'the female member of the duo was guiding her companion down, while unashamedly engaging his stare with her own. Such forceful behavior on the part of a woman connotes conscious and lusty female

⁵¹ See Turner, 'Woodcut Copies of the Modi' (2009) p.116; David Ekserdjian, *Parmigianino* (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) p.110 for a Parmigianino pen and ink sketch of Raimondi's position 10; and for an example of the gem engraved with Position 13, see *Mythologica et Erotica*, eds. Ornella Casazza & Riccardo Gennaili (Livorno: Sillabe, 2005) p.247, no. 124

⁵² Bette Talvacchia, 'Professional advancement and the use of the erotic in the art of Francesco Xanto', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 26.1 (1994) pp.121-153, esp. pp.134-138

pleasure,⁵³ which would explain why this image might have been considered too graphic, and therefore removed from the Toscanini booklet.

Though censored, elements from *I Modi* were still in circulation in this decontextualised form well into the Seventeenth Century. As previously mentioned, these images were used to decorate ivory boxes used for luxury items such as creams and tobacco, and the Inquisition record for these items indicates that Aretino had become known as the painter of these images ('depicted', not described, by Aretino) and had grown from 16 into 60 different images of positions which now included threesomes and even women with children. The latter sound similar to images from an eighteenth-century French edition of the series, called *L'Aretin de Augustin Carrache* (1798) [See p.208 & fig.16]. It is possible that the later French edition had some association with these '60 ways of coitus' found in Venice.

Aretino's initial contribution to these images had once simply been as a textual commentator, but as I argue above, the *prosopopeia* of his text added another emotive association to these erotic images, and helped to associate his name with them as their ultimate interpreter. It was not inevitable that these images would go on to become almost exclusively attributed to Aretino. His sonnets, after all, only appear in the Toscanini booklet and its now lost variants, while the engravings and their copies were circulated separately. However, what appears to have happened is that two main brands of these images were in simultaneous circulation, and over time became confused as 'Aretine's Postures'. One brand was the pictorial *I Modi*, possibly known by the consumer to have been the work of Romano and Raimondi, even if they were reproduced as 'quoted' images in other media such as Xanto's maiolica designs in the 1530s or the ivory boxes sold by Aciati in the 1680s.

The other brand was the emblem book format in which the images were printed together with Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi*. With the title page and introductory sonnet of the Toscanini edition removed, it is now difficult to know just how this book would have been presented to the reader, what it was titled, and who it was attributed to. Did it, for example, make any mention of Romano and Raimondi? I would guess that, if Lawner and James Turner are right about the original octavo being printed in Venice probably at Aretino's instigation, then it seems likely that the title page would have ascribed the sonnets to Aretino, whose *modus operandi* was to publicise his name and image on the frontispieces of

⁵³ Telvacchia, 'Xanto', p.147

his books. If the images were left unattributed, the only name on the title page would have been 'Aretino' and this could easily have lead readers to misattribute the entire book, images and sonnets alike, to Aretino. Francesco Torelli's copies of the emblem book format of *I Modi* were referred to by the Inquisition as 'songs and images from Aretino's works', and which were being circulated 1630-1650, by which point Aretino's name was strongly associated not only with the sonnets but with the images which he had never painted.

The fragmentary remnants of what would later become known as 'Aretine Postures' gave plenty of room for *I Modi* to be misattributed to Aretino, and for further connections to be made between his name and erotica as a genre. This association with erotic images beyond *I Modi* is illustrated by the circulation of what James Turner calls an 'album' format of the *Sonetti Lussuriosi*, of which numerous versions were printed after the death of Aretino in 1556 'with blank *versos* into which collectors could paste whatever lewd pictures they could find.'⁵⁴ Such albums were patch-work versions of the text and images, so that almost any erotic image could potentially be misattributed to Aretino, by dint of being pasted next to his descriptive sonnets. It implies that the images alone, or word and image books similar to the Toscanini editions, were more difficult to source than editions of the sonnets which circulated separately. The fact that space had been set aside for images to be pasted in as and when the reader collected them also suggests that the two elements of 'Aretine's Postures'— the images and the words— were becoming increasingly associated together in the minds of printers and readers.

Not only was the connection between *I Modi* and Aretino's name being strengthened, but ever more 'lascivious sonnets' were being added to the original sixteen. These were sonnets attributed to, but not necessarily written by, Aretino. 'By the end of the eighteenth century,' writes Lawner, various editions of the *Sonetti* based on 'corrupt manuscript copies' were being produced with false imprints, 'sometimes accompanied by illustrations attributed to Giulio Romano and always including a different number of poems: twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-six, thirty-one.'⁵⁵ Most of these eighteenth-century editions are French, some of which include not the Romano/Raimondi images, but later adaptations of these

⁵⁴ Turner, 'Woodcut Copies of the *Modi*', p.117. Turner gives two examples of these, one of which is recorded by August Beyer in Dresden in 1734, which describes a small duodecimo of 23 pages with one side printed with Aretino's sonnets, and the other left blank, Beyer presumes for the 'lascivious figures' that the title implies. Another such album now held in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna was printed in Venice in 1556.

⁵⁵ Lawner, p.23.

'positions' by Agostino Carracci, which unlike *I Modi* survive in complete sets and in greater number [See pp.205-7]. All of which is to say that erotic material attributed to Aretino built up, irrespective of whether it was actually written by Aretino or not.

Cultivating Misattributions

The Toscanini *I Modi* is in fact only one section bound together with four other texts in a miscellany of scatological and pornographic texts. The other texts are Lorenzo Venier's *La puttana errante* (The wandering whore, 1530); Venier's *Il trentuno della Zaffetta* (The thirty-one, or 'gang-bang' of Zafetta, 1531); an anonymous misogynistic poem written against women in general and Eleanor of Aragon in particular, *Il manganello* ('Poem by Manganello', 1465-1484, printed c.1531); and a mock-legal defence, probably by Teofilo Folengo, the *Processus contra ser Catium Vinculum* (the case against sir Cock-in-Your-Arse, the only copy to have survived, c.1531). Already in the 1550s, when this edition dates to, we can see the sort of texts that Aretino's name would be linked with. Indeed, *La puttana errante* was almost universally believed to have been written by him.

Even more confusingly, there are two texts which would become known as *La puttana errante*. One is a poem by Lorenzo Venier which presents the supposedly 'errant whore' riding in mock-triumph through the streets of Rome with an entourage of reprobates, her head adorned with a 'corona di cazzi' (a crown of pricks). The character of 'Pasquino' even appears as a speaker of the prefatory verses of the poem. The other is a prose narrative by Niccolò Franco, once a literary secretary to Aretino, later one of his bitterest adversaries, and like Aretino's *Sei Giornate*, it details the life story of the sexually voracious Maddalena in dialogue with her friend Giulia.

In a *capitolo* written for Federico Gonzaga in 1530, Aretino describes Venier as 'my creature' (mio creato). Together with this rhymed-letter to Gonzaga, Aretino sends him Venier's *La puttana errante*, telling him that 'since I can sniff out a trend, I send you a small work which deals with the courtly exchange in a mischievous and perfidious style. It is entitled *The Wandering Whore*, and was written by Veniero, a creature of mine, who when it comes to a vicious tongue, runs four days ahead of me' (Ma perché io sento il presente all'odore un'operetta in quel cambio galante Vi mando ora in stil ladro e traditore Intitolata La puttana errante dal Veniero composto mio creato che m'è in dir mal quattro giornate

inanti).⁵⁶ This letter shows Aretino acknowledging his own 'vicious tongue', in order to explain that Venier is even more vicious than him, a fact made clear upon reading Venier's *La puttana errante* or his *Trentuno della Zafetta* (c.1531) both of which are a vicious form of what is now called 'slut shaming'.

His admittance that Venier is his 'creature' and that his viciousness is similar to Aretino's also shows that Aretino himself acknowledges a lineage between himself and his followers or 'creations', whose work tended to be based on shaming courtesans. This acknowledgement of his patronage goes some way towards explaining why Aretino would have such works posthumously attributed to him. This misattribution appears to have begun in the same year that Venier's poem was circulated, as in the seventh stanza of *La Zafetta*, Venier says that he is writing this in order to show that it is he, and not Aretino, who wrote *La puttana errante*: 'I sing/ Of your history in such a divine style/... to prove that Aretino did not/ Write the verses of the *Errante* for me' (Poi ch'ogni besti...Ciancia che'l famosissimo Aretino/ Hammi composta La puttana errante,/ Per mentirgli dov'entra il pane e'l vino,/ Et per chairir ch'un furfante,/ Vengo cantar si come la Zaffetta).⁵⁷ That a double edition of *La puttana errante* and *La Zafetta* were printed together in 1531 also implies that Venier was wishing to emphasise his authorship of both of these texts.

It seems more likely that the prose edition by Franco is in fact the version of *La puttana errante* that the majority of foreign readers would have associated with Aretino. A manuscript copy kept in the Bibliothèque de Condé, Chantilly, dates between 1550-1572 and is the earliest remaining source for this prose text. It bears the title *Il piacevol ragionamento de l'Aretino: Dialogo di Giulia e di Maddalena* (The pleasant discourse of Aretino: Dialogue of Giulia and of Maddalena), clearly attributing the text to Aretino. This attribution has however been disputed by Aquilecchia in the modern edition of the text, and most critics tend to attribute the work to Niccolò Franco, even if, as Moulton says, this attribution is speculative.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Aretino, capitolo written for Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, 21st April 1530, quoted and translated in Margaret F. Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p.39

⁵⁷ Lorenzo Venier, *Il Trentuno della Zafetta*, quoted and translated in Daniella Rossi, 'Controlling Courtesans: Lorenzo Venier's *Trentuno della Zafetta* and Venetian Sexual Politics' in Allison Levy (ed.), *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy: Practice, Performance, Perversion, Punishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010) pp.225-40. p.228

⁵⁸ For a modern edition of the manuscript text (MS 677, Chantilly) see *Il piacevol ragionamento de l'Aretino: Dialogo di Giulia e di Maddalena*, ed. Claudio Galderisi (Rome: Salerno, 1987). The preface is written by Giovanni Aquilecchia, who questions attribution of this text to Aretino, pp.7-15. For Franco's attribution, see

The text follows the same structure as Aretino's third day in the *Sei Giornate*: Maddalena describes her introduction to sex and her subsequent career as a courtesan to her friend Giulia. Like Nanna, Maddalena is initiated into a sexual world at a young age through voyeurism, when she spies on her cousin masturbating. Unlike Nanna, this sexual awakening occurs in the home, rather than in a nunnery. Maddalena eventually begins sexual relationships with both her aunt and her cousin, and moves on to become a courtesan. Here the plot returns to something like Aretino's *Sei Giornate*, with Franco describing her threesome with a clergyman and a young man. The text ends with Madalena listing thirty-five different sexual positions, with names such as 'Making Sawdust Candles', 'Sitting Bagpipe', 'Advancing the Argument', and 'The Drum'. The inclusion of such a list of positions appears to have been popularly associated with 'Aretine' texts, as Venier's *La puttana errante* has a stanza describing how 'Some of it with legs-around-the-neck, some Gianetta-style,/ Some like a Frog, the Crane, the Pussy Reversed,/ Church-in-the-belfry, Courier-style,' while the *Zoppino* dialogue lists more ways: 'Gianetta-style [i.e. woman on top, Gianetta is literally 'the Spanish mare']], or Turkish-style, or legs up high, or tortoise-style with their skirts over their heads.'⁵⁹

This *Dialogo di Giulia e di Maddalena* was so often attributed to Aretino under the title of *La puttana errante*, that by the time that John Florio includes it in the index of texts he had consulted while writing his Italian dictionary, *A World of Wordes*, in 1598, he attributes the text as 'La P. Errante del'Aretino', while a copy owned by Thomas Barlow, the Bodleian librarian in the 1650s, is titled 'La Puttana Errante, overo Dialogo, di Madalena è Giulia di Pietro Aretino'.⁶⁰ Even the Elsevir press, who were printing a humanist edition of Aretino's *Sei Giornate* as *Capricciosi & Piacevoli ragionamenti di Pietro Aretino*, bound together *La puttana errante* with their 1660 reprint of their Aretino edition.

Gershon Legman, *The Horn Book: Studies in Erotic Folklore and Bibliography* (New York: University Books, 1962) p.91; Frantz, p.92. Moulton casts doubt over this attribution, but does not fully attribute the text to Aretino either. *Before Pornography*, p.150

⁵⁹ These are all listed in Lawner, n.13, pp.52-4

⁶⁰ The *Puttana Errante* is at the end of a collection in the Bodleian manuscript, *F.9(5) Linc.* which binds together a work on medicine and astrology, *The myroure or glass of health* (1531) by Thomas Moulton; a defence (dated 1589) of John Penry who would eventually be executed as one of the authors of the Marprelate Tracts in 1593; A religious tract by the logician William Temple, *An antiquodlibet, or, an advertisement to beware of secular priests* (1602); and another medical text, *Spirits Moderated* (1654), by William Walwyn.

The Elsevir *Capricciosi* includes yet another text attributed to Aretino, the *Ragionamento del Zoppino* (c.1539) which had also been reprinted with the earlier London edition of the *Sei Giornate* by John Wolfe's press in 1584. It is yet another dialogue about contemporary Roman courtesans, this time between an ex-pimp, Zoppino, and a young gentleman hunting for a sexual encounter. Each time the gentleman talks about a certain courtesan he admires, Zoppino exposes the hidden pasts of these women. Unlike the prose *Puttana Errante* which today is acknowledged as the work of Niccolò Franco, the *Zoppino* dialogue is still problematic. A Venetian edition from Aretino's printer Francesco Marcolini prints this text together with a new edition of *Il Dialogo nel quale la Nanna insegna a la Pippa* (i.e. the second part of the *Sei Giornate*) in 1539. Because it was printed together, this has been interpreted as Marcolini attributing the text to Aretino, though now only one edition remains in Yale University Library.⁶¹ The text has also been attributed to the Spaniard Francisco Delicado who had been living in Rome until the Sack in 1527, and then fled to Venice where he wrote an anonymous novel, *El retrato de la Loçana Andaluza* ('Portrait of Lozana: The Lusty Andalusian Woman', 1528) on the contemporary Roman underworld and the picaresque travels of Lozana, who travels from Cordoba to various cities in the Mediterranean and Middle East before eventually arriving in Rome.

The reason that it matters that the *Zoppino* dialogue seems to be a misattribution, is that the representation of prostitutes in this text is much less nuanced than Aretino's more famous courtesan character, Nanna, as I argue in Chapter 3. Duncan Salkeld, who has recently edited a translation of the *Zoppino* dialogue together with Ana Garcia Herraéz, explains that 'the Zoppino dialogue views sexuality through two conflicting extremes of desire and disgust, and so doubly contaminates its facticity with prejudice.'⁶² The text is misogynistic in its morbid fascination and disgust with a woman's body, describing them shitting in buckets, their pubic hair covered in lice, and packing sponges, ground glass and powder into their vaginas to make their insides appear tighter and drier.⁶³

⁶¹ Unfortunately the only British Library copy has recently been lost, see Duncan Salkeld, pp.75-6. The Yale University Library copy is an octavo, entitled *Ragionamento del Zoppino fatto Frate, e Lodovico, puttaniere, dove contiensi la vita e genealogia di tute le Cortigiane di Roma*, Impresso per Francesco Marcolini, nel. MDXXXIX. The Bookplate says that it is ex libris Ioseph Martini Luc. and the binder's stamp is of Trautz-Bauzonnet from Paris.

⁶² Duncan Salkeld & Ana Garcia Herraéz, 'History, Genre and Sexuality in the Sixteenth Century: The Zoppino Dialogue Attributed to Pietro Aretino,' *Mediterranean Studies*, 10 (2001) pp.49-116, p.50

⁶³ Salkeld, 'Zoppino', pp.98-99

If as Daniella Rossi says, the *Sei Giornate* shows 'the flipside of official approaches to moral questions...[by] showing the conflict inherent in the ideals of civic morality, while specifically focusing on the limited options available to women,'⁶⁴ then the *Zoppino* dialogue sits uneasily alongside this and his *Sonetti Lussuriosi* which, though obscene is not misogynistic, as the voices of the entangled women and men are equally active in their mutual desires. While this attribution is important for discussing Aretino's style or attitude towards women, I would argue, however, that for the question of Aretino's posthumous reputation, the question of whether this text was actually written by Francisco Delicado, or indeed anyone else, did not seem to matter to either Marcolini—Aretino's colleague, when he attached this dialogue to Aretino's in 1539— or indeed to John Wolfe when he was reprinting the *Zoppino* dialogue in conjunction with the *Sei Giornate* in 1584. Because of these anonymous texts being associated with him, Aretino was believed to be the author of *Zoppino* and *La puttana errante* already in his lifetime, and by the end of the century was believed to have drawn, as well as commented on, *I Modi*. Unlike Venier, who wished to make clear that his verse *La puttana errante* was acknowledged as his own in the introduction to *La Zafetta*, Aretino did not disassociate himself from texts, images, or indeed any other object which were associated with his name. If anything, he had been cultivating such misattributions since he was a young writer of pasquinades in Rome in the early 1520s, obliquely referring to himself as 'Master Pasquino' in the 1525 edition of *La Cortegiana*: 'Oh, those verses that Master Pasquino writes—they're marvellous! The barber says they should read one every day between the epistle and the gospel' (Oh, quei sonettini di Maestro Pasquino mi amazzorno e meritaiano, disse el barbierario, ch'ogni matina se ne leggesi un fra la Pístola e 'I Vangelo).⁶⁵

Conclusion

In a letter addressed to Aretino from yet another follower, Anton Francesco Doni, Aretino is told that his name has become attributed to almost everything from boatmen, to streets, to breeds of horses and types of glass: 'I am at Mantua, and here have seen a kind of

⁶⁴ Rossi, p.226

⁶⁵ *La Cortigiana*, trans. J. Douglas Campbell & Leonard G. Sbrocchi (Ottawa: Dovehouse editions, 2003), and Italian *Cortigiana* eds. Federico Della Corte & Paolo Trovato vol. 3. (Rome: Salerno, 2010) III, viii

pony...and upon asking what it was, I was told it was the Aretine. I go to Murano, and there they show me some very fine crystal vases, a new sort of glass work, and they are called Aretini' (Io son a Mantova e dalla razza d'una bellissima vostra chinea viddi alcuni cavalli, vien ricercando, la si domanda V Aretina. Va a Murano, eccoti che mi s'appresenta alcuni bellissimi vasi di cristallo e nuova foggia di vetri lavorati e si chiamano gli aretini). Women, especially sex workers, are also known as 'Aretine's':

Many beautiful women who inspire much jealousy, bear your mark: this one is your procuress, this one something else, and many of them are known simply as Aretino's sweeties.' When Doni speaks to one of Aretino's housekeepers, 'when I asked her what her name was, [she] replied "I have no other name than 'the Aretina'." I laughed then, and I'm laughing yet. I told her, "Since you're an Aretina and I'm an Aretino, we must be one and the same thing."

Molte belle femmine che si stanno sotto le gelosie, son sej'nate del vostre marchio, qual'è vostre mezza e qual tutta e parecchie di loro, si chiamano per vezzi l' aretine. Eccenèw un terzo state vostre massare et or son sig'nore. Per la fede mia che una notte venedome una alle mani; quando gli dimando del nome la mi dice, io non ho altro nome che l'Aretina, che io risi tanto che ancor rido; or su poi che tu sei l'Aretina et io son dell'Aretino, tu, et io saremo una cosa medesima.⁶⁶

His followers, both the prostitutes on the streets of Venice and the servants in his household, named themselves 'Aretines' as if they were extensions of the man himself. His literary followers produced works such as pasquinades, *La puttana errante*, or catalogues of contemporary prostitutes like *La Tariffa delle Puttane di Vinetia* (1535, and now attributed to Antonio Cavallino), which repeatedly suggest that they are following an 'Aretine' style. Indeed, in his *Zafetta*, Lorenzo Venier, despite his intention to show that he was the writer of *La puttana errante*, describes himself in terms of literary descent from Aretino: 'Those who

⁶⁶ Anton Francesco Doni to Aretino, *Lettere Scritte a Pietro Aretino*, vol.2 ed. Teodorico Landoni (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1875) number CDX, pp.395-6

wish to may call upon Aretino, a true prophet, to say that I too am a poet' (Invochi l'Aretin, vero propheta/ Chi si vol far, come son io, poeta).⁶⁷

Aretino was aware of the problems of mistaken authorship, and wrote about this in his *Ragionamento della Nanna e della Antonia* (1534), to which I refer in chapter 3, where Antonia speaks of a carnival song which she learned by heart, 'thinking it was by Maestro Andrea; I have since discovered that its author is the man who treats great lords as badly as this foul disease treats me' [see p.116]. In this passage Aretino is quoting from a song called the *Lamento della Cortigiana Ferrarese* which lists well known contemporary courtesans of Rome, and which had been performed at the 1520 Rome carnival by the *buffone* Maestro Andrea. Antonia says that she had believed that the song had been written by its performer, but that she has since found out that the 'real author' is someone who sounds remarkably like Aretino. Aretino appears to be knowingly claiming authorship for himself, but also acknowledges the confusion over the authorship of ephemeral texts such as songs and pasquinades. In fact, the attribution of this text is still confused today, as there were in fact *two* 'capitulos' printed in the March of 1520: one printed supposedly 'by' Maestro Andrea, while in the same month a different song and sonnet written by 'another author' was printed 'as a pamphlet in Siena'. Even more confusingly, Maestro Andrea performed a similar song in the 1525 carnival in which he grouped together 'paper effigies of famous courtesans', then dumps the 'bodies' in the Tiber. This was then printed as *Purgatorio delle Cortigiane*, and this too was often misattributed to Aretino.⁶⁸

Aretino joys in the messiness of attribution. Antonia's confusion, it seems, is because someone other than Andrea has 'authored' the written text which she has seen in print. Aretino is playing with the idea of which piece of creative work—the ephemeral song of one man, the text of another, the pirated text by yet another— belonged to the 'real' author.⁶⁹ What we find decades later when we turn to Aretino's reputation abroad in the late Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, are the repercussions of these various layers of cultivating and unintentional misattribution. Each layer would help to exaggerate Aretino's metonymic association with the erotic to such an extent that this misattribution even

⁶⁷ Venier, *Zafetta*, quoted in Rossi, p.228

⁶⁸ See Chriscinda Henry, "'Whorish civility" and other tricks of seduction in Venetian courtesan representations', p.113; See also Paola Ugolini, 'The Satirist's Purgatory: *Il Purgatorio Delle Cortegiane* and the Writer's Discontent', *Italian Studies*, 64. 1. (Spring, 2009), pp.1-19

⁶⁹ For more on the problems of attribution for this text, see Aquilecchia 'Per l'attribuzione e il testo del *Lamento di una cortigiana ferrarese*'.

crossed the boundaries of Aretino's usual medium of text and attaching his name to *I Modi*. Pasquino, it seems, was a fitting persona for Aretino not only during his lifetime, but also in death: both were figures re-animated by the words of others, speaking words which others could not say for themselves.

Chapter 6:

Seventeenth-Century Aretino: on things Aretino never authored

In a parallel English-Italian language primer published in 1666 by Giovanni Torriano, a traveller walks into a bookshop in Rome and says to the bookseller: 'I am seeking the works of A.' The bookseller responds: 'You may seek from one end of the Row to the other, and not find them.' 'And why?' asks the traveller,

Because they are forbidden, both the Postures and the Discourses, that embracing of men and women together in unusual manners, begets a scandal, and the Inquisition permits no such matters, it condemns all such sordid things, nay not so much, but the Amorous Adventures in Romances it condemns.¹

As this primer shows, by the 1660s Aretino was still recognisable enough to an English reader that a single letter could act as an identifier. Simultaneously, the reduction of his name to a single letter also suggests that this was a writer that needed to be neutralised. The traveller's requests for 'A's works' is, however, interpreted as referring not to Aretino's many religious tracts, nor his comedies, nor even to his six volumes of *Lettere*. The bookseller has condensed Aretino's works down to only two things: 'the Postures and the Discourses', referring to his *Sei Giornate* and *I Modi*.

Chapter 5 discussed how Aretino had partially encouraged the misattribution of pasquinades and other satires by his followers, such as *La puttana errante*. The slipperiness of attribution meant that by printing the *Sonetti Lussuriosi* alongside woodcuts of *I Modi*, Aretino's name would continue to be associated with this and later sets of erotic images, while the original painter and engraver of *I Modi*, Giulio Romano and Marcantonio Raimondi, were often forgotten. Instead, Aretino became known as the creator of the entire series, words and pictures alike. This chapter will look at the primarily seventeenth-century reception of what was to become known as 'Aretine's Postures' in England and on the continent. It will ask what, if not the original *I Modi*, these seventeenth-century readers and

¹ Giovanni Torriano, *Piazza Universale Di Proverbi Italiani: Or, A Common Place of Italian Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London: Francis & Thomas Warren, 1666), p.80.

viewers were actually imagining 'Aretine's Images' to look like, and more importantly what function they were imagined to serve.

At the same time as images and texts never drawn or written by Aretino were being attributed to him, works which Aretino had actually written were being reproduced, but anonymously. This chapter will contrast the different fortunes of Aretino's 'Postures' and Aretino as a 'whore master' (both of which traded on Aretino's reputation rather than his actual writing), against the anonymous reproduction of his religious and theatrical texts which meant that Aretino was still in circulation one hundred years after his death, not only in countries traditionally associated with his circulation such as France and Italy, but also in the Low Countries, thanks to producers such as the humanist Elsevir press and the infamous engraver Romeyn de Hooghe. Although in chapter 4 we saw how Aretino's reputation as a natural wit was being overridden by his reputation for bawdry and accusations of atheism, at least he was still acknowledged for his writing. By the mid Seventeenth Century, however, Aretino's name would become short-hand, reduced as it were to the letter 'A', for the concept of eroticism in general.

Did 'Aretino's Postures' come to England?

In the Seventeenth Century, *I Modi* and its variants were collectively known as 'Aretine's Postures,' and were spoken of more than they were actually seen, as many copies were destroyed by individual and state acts of censorship. The lack of remaining copies of *I Modi* and the *Sonetti Lussuriosi* has led some critics to question just how popular these images and accompanying sonnets truly were. There are clues within the one remaining Toscanini edition referred to in chapter 5, whose woodcuts show signs of fading and broken borders, implying that the woodblock from which it was made had been re-used enough for it to eventually crack around the edges. Although this means that by 1550 lots of imprints from this woodcut had been made, a precise number is impossible to guess and in any case, given that these unknown copies appear to have vanished, we cannot know either how long they were in circulation, or whether each copy had passed through more than one owner. As for their appearance in England, Moulton is pessimistic:

I know of no evidence that any of the various pirated editions circulated in sixteenth-Century England. While the existence of the sonnets and engravings was well known in Elizabethan London, there is little proof that any English person owned or had even seen a copy. Thus the notion that Aretino was the artist as well as author of the volume circulated widely.²

This is part of the problem when thinking about just how Aretino's reputation as a pornographer overrode any other reputation: was Aretino's fame created exactly because his work was banned? Of course, part of the problem is that pornography is an especially ephemeral medium, a commodity which was something to be used, not to be kept, and certainly not to be inherited. This is made clear in Paul Lacroix's *History of Prostitution* (1851-2). Speaking of *I Modi's* circulation in France, he writes that 'fortunately they have left no trace, since the destiny of such abominable books is not to survive the person who owns them.'³ Even in the Twentieth Century the critic Paul van Dyke wrote with evident distaste that: 'The plates have fortunately perished but descriptions are enough to tell us that in English-speaking countries printer and seller of such plates would now be sent to the penitentiary.'⁴

The self-destructive nature of pornography as a medium is apparent from both institutional and personal pressures. In a letter dated 31st January 1675 by Humphrey Prideaux (later Dean of Norwich) to his friend John Ellis (then secretary to an envoy in Nijmegen, Holland) he writes about Aretino's works being printed in Christ Church College, Oxford. 'It was not all Aretine our gentlemen were printing here,' he points out, 'but some of his more famous cuts for the private use of themselves and their friends.' Clearly this shows, *pace* Moulton, that the images were available in England and that attempts were made to reproduce them. Unfortunately for these students hoping to circulate the 'more famous' engravings 'for private use', the dean of the college, Dr John Fell (immortalised in Tom Brown's epigram of 1680, 'I do not like thee, Dr Fell') discovered their work: 'about 60 of them [the prints] had gone abroad before the businesse was discovered; but Mr. Dean hath

² Moulton, *Before Pornography*, p.123

³ Paul Lacroix, quoted in Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture*, p.58

⁴ Paul van Dyke, *Renascence Portraits* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905) p.45

made them call them in again and commit them to the fire.¹⁵ Whether Fell succeeded in having all sixty imprints destroyed, Prideaux does not say.

In an entry for January 13th 1668, the diarist Samuel Pepys writes of a similar act of censorship. He writes that he considered buying a copy of *L'Ecole des Filles* (1655) on his way back from France, assuming (or so he says) that it was an educational book for women which he could read with his wife. Imagine his surprise when he discovered that it was instead a famous pornographic French text and 'the most bawdy, lewd book that ever I saw, rather worse then *puttana errante*', the work by Franco which was however attributed to Aretino. After a month, however, Pepys returned to buy it 'in plain binding (avoiding the buying of it better bound) because I resolve, as soon as I have read it, to burn it, that it may not stand in the list of books, nor among them, to disgrace them if it should be found.' In a later entry from February 9th, 1668, Pepys describes in a garbled Esperanto how, alone in his chamber, he finally read the book, which 'doth me no wrong to read for informations sake (but it did hazer my prick para stand all the while, and una vez to decharger); and after I had done it, I burned it, that it might not be among my books to my shame.'¹⁶ The fire was clearly a common end for many erotic images, as we know from Pierre Jean Mariette, the one-time owner of the mutilated *I Modi* engravings now kept in the British Museum; his grandfather had apparently owned another complete set of the engravings, but had unfortunately burned them before his death in 1716. [See p.181]

If we look further than the usual places of England and France for examples of 'Aretine Postures' circulating abroad, there is actually an entire network of Dutch booksellers and printers who were involved in the reprinting of these images in the late Seventeenth Century. A translation of *La puttana errante*, called *De Dwalende Hoer* was originally published in December 1668 and banned in January 1669, only a month after its appearance on the bookstalls by the Hof van Holland (the high-court of Holland). Its translator, the engraver Romeyn de Hooghe, published a second edition in 1677, this time with the addition of images which sound like *I Modi*, though as no copies have survived it is not clear what these images actually depicted.

⁵ Humphrey Prideaux, *Letters of Humphrey Prideaux Sometime Dean of Norwich to John Ellis Sometime Under-Secretary of State, 1674-1722* ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (London: Nichols and Sons, 1875) p.32

⁶ Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, vol.9, 1668-9, ed. Robert Latham et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) p.59

There is, however, plenty of circumstantial evidence which describes how these images were being circulated. De Hooghe worked together with the printer Hendrik Hendriksz, whose daughters claim that in 1678 he was producing prints which 'showed the singular fornicating postures of fleshly conversations' (eenige ontugtige postuuren van vleschelijke conversatie toonden) while his apprentice, Adriaan Schonenbeek, describes how between 1676-1679 de Hooghe 'etched the Figures and Plates which showed the action and postures' (heeft ge-etst de Figuren en Plaeten verbeeldende de actien en posturen) described in the *Dwalende Hoer* and that these prints were sold by de Hooghe and Schonenbeek themselves.⁷ In March 1677 the Amsterdam judiciary decided to bring in all makers, printers, and sellers of the prints. Timotheus ten Hoorn was called in for selling certain 'filthy plates' (vuijle plaeties), and apparently an engraver had also been caught '*in flagrante delicto*' in his house 'filing the plates reported [to be] figures of prints from Pieter Aretijn's *Dwalende Hoer* which were for sale, for which he was brought into detention and punished.' (in't Huys van Timotheus ten Hoorn, in de Nes, tot Amsterdam...een Plaetsnyderin '*Flagrante delicto*' betrapt, de Plaeten van gemelde Figuyren of Printen van Pieter Aretijns *Dwalende Hoer* to koop veylende; waerover hy ook in hechtenisse is gebragt en gestraft).⁸

A few days later a bookseller, Stijntje Koops, was called in for possession of 'filthy bordello-prints' (vuylen bordeelprentjes) by 'Crispyn van de Pas' which Stijntje says that her family had been regularly selling for years, and which she, her husband and their daughter still sold.⁹ These bordello images were by the engraver Crispijn van de Passe the younger's whose *Le Miroir des plus Belles Courtisanes de ce Temps* was originally printed in 1631, but continued to be reprinted after de Passe's death in 1670. Stijntje is next asked who it is that sells 'the filthy booklets of Romeyne de Hoghe' (die de vuyle boekjes van Romeyn de Hoge verkoopt), which refers to *De Dwalende Hoer* and not just the images alone. She identifies another bookseller called Pieter Voskuyl 'whose mother sells hundreds behind the hall where he lives' (wiens moeder verkoopt hoenders achter de hal alwaer hy woont).¹⁰

⁷ Quoted in Anna de Haas, 'Feit en fictie rond de Aretijnse prenten van Romeyn de Hooghe 1645-1708', in *Mededelingen van de Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman* vol.28, (2005) pp.104-118, p.105 (my translation)

⁸ As reported by Ericus Walten, *De nyd- en twist-sucht nae 't leeven afgebeeldt* (Utrecht: Antony Schouten, 1690) p.13 (my translation)

⁹ Quoted in de Haas, p.106 (my translation)

¹⁰ Ibid

A network of families were involved in circulating these 'Aretijn' images made by the engraver de Hooghe, together with his translation of the pseudo-Aretine *Puttana Errante* and images of prostitutes by another engraver, de Passe, centred around a street in Amsterdam called 'de Nes'. Because the images are often described as depicting figures in 'the action and postures' of *De Dwalende Hoer*, it might mean that rather than reproductions of *I Modi*, these were new illustrations made by de Hooghe, as he had also illustrated his translation of Aretino's 'Life of Whores' with his own pictures inspired by the story. [See pp.119-20]

Moulton had said that there is no evidence for English ownership of 'Aretine's Postures,' yet we have an example of a late re-printing of the engravings in 1675, which although thwarted shows that there must have been an audience of Oxford students interested in obtaining these images. At the same time in Amsterdam, both books and images associated with Aretino were for sale. We have proof also that the *Postures* were being sold in Paris almost a century before, and as we can see from Pepys' diary, from here it was not impossible for pornographic material to cross the Channel. Published posthumously in 1665-6, though written c.1590, Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme's *Memoirs* recalls the owner of a Parisian book shop with connections to the Aldine press:

in less than a year he had sold more than fifty copies of the books of Aretino to married as well as to single people, and to women, among whom he named three well-known and highborn ladies (whom I will not name), and he gave to them in person finely bound copies, under oath that he would not breathe a word of it, but he told me about it all the same. And he told me further that, sometime later, another lady, having asked if he had any more like the one she had seen in the hands of one of these three ladies, he answered "Signora, si, e peggio" [Yes, Madam, and worse]; and suddenly money entered the field, and she paid their weight in gold.

moins d'un an il avoit vendu plus de cinquante paires de livres de l'Aretin à force gens mariés et non mariés, et à des femmes, dont il m'en nomma trois de par le monde, grandes, que je ne nommeray point, et les leur bailla à elles mesmes et tres-bien reliez, sous serment presté qu'il n'en sonneroit mot, mais portant il me le dist; et me dist davantage qu'une autre dame luy

*en ayant demandé, au bout de quelque temps, s'il en avoit point un pareil comme un qu'elle avoit veu entre les mains d'une de ces trois, il luy respondit: Signora, sì, e peggio; et soudain argent en campagne, les acheptant tous au poids de l'or.*¹¹

Although Brantôme refers generally to 'the books of Aretino' the implication is that these are 'Aretine's Postures', read by women as well as men, married couples as much as single people. In the next paragraph, it is even clearer that he means the images, as he declares that all such 'postures are hateful to God' (odieuses à Dieu) and continues to discuss the immorality of 'monstrous, unnatural, and strange positions' (postures monstrueuses et surnaturelles et estranges).¹²

It is also worth noting that this Parisian branch of the famous Venetian printers was selling these images and sonnets to the moneyed classes. Brantôme, probably with artistic license, describes a competitive lady paying the book's 'weight in gold' for something 'worse', i.e. even more pornographic than other books in the shop, and the 'highborn ladies' whose 'finely bound copies' suggest that this is not just pornography to be used and then destroyed (as in the case of Pepys, who asked for a plain binding for his copy) but to be kept as something valuable. Of course, the problem with this argument is that such copies do not survive today, implying that at some point in their later ownership they were destroyed, their fine binding maybe recycled for more worthy purposes.

There are also earlier examples of the sale of 'Aretino's Postures' in English literary sources, such as John Marston's reference not just to Aretino's reputation, but to his works as real, saleable, even luxury, items. In a manuscript copy of *The Newe Metamorphosis* (c.1600-15) Marston refers to 'Aretyne a booke of Bawdery writ/Wth many pictures w^{ch} belong'd to it where many severall wayes he teacheth how one may p'forme that acte, wth shame enough.¹³ He explains that these images 'belonged' with the text, and that the text 'teacheth' how to perform the acts depicted in the images, which would suggest that this book was set out in a similar manner to the Toscanini edition. The character in the poem

¹¹ Brantôme (Pierre de Bourdeille) *Les Dames galantes*, ed. Maurice Rat (Paris: Garnier Frères. 1960) p.31 translated Talvacchia, p.80

¹² Ibid. transl. Talvacchia, p.116

¹³ [John Marston], 'The Newe Metamorphosis' (c. 1600) partially transcribed in John Henry Hobart Lyon, *A study of the newe Metamorphosis written by J.M. gent 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1919) p.211

goes on to say that these books are still for sale: 'it is true the Stationers can tell/I've seen the pictures publicly to sell.'¹⁴ In his *Certain Satires* (1598), Marston also describes a man importing luxury items from Venice into London: 'And now from thence what hither dost thou bring?', listing together with cosmetics, 'surpheulings'¹⁵, new paints and poysenings... Aretines pictures, some strange Luxury?/ And new found use of Venis venery?'¹⁶ This, I would argue, shows much more than a simple awareness of Aretino as a pornographic writer. It suggests that engravings or woodcuts were being imported from Venice to be sold together with cosmetics in London as luxuries in the late Sixteenth Century.

Having just argued that copies of *I Modi* and Aretino's sonnets did reach England, I will now ask what these images were actually imagined to look like. All we know, after all, is that 'Aretine's Postures' circulated in England, but what images did this actually conjure up in the minds of English readers or theatre goers? By the Seventeenth Century, were these 'Postures' necessarily reproductions of *I Modi*, and what, if anything, did it mean for a writer to refer to 'Aretine's Postures' or 'Aretine's Pictures' in a literary text?

The majority of later references to Aretino's 'Postures' or 'Errant whore' in English verse and prose are often only brief mentions, but together they add up to a wider cultural construction of what 'Aretino' meant to seventeenth-century writers and readers. He was transformed into a synecdoche: 'Aretine' is intended to conjure up more general ideas of eroticism than the man that 'Aretino' (i.e. a resident of Arezzo) initially referred to. Below are only a few examples of the many more fleeting but meaningful references to these 'Postures' that I have found from the seventeenth century. They are inevitably associated with sex, though some refer to the 'Postures' as paintings, others as instruction manuals; the former especially associated with luxury, secrecy, and brothels, the latter with the ironic education of men and the more ambiguous function of educating and/or perverting women.

Pictures on the wall

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *surpheulings*: embellishments, from surfle (v), to embellish garments with borders or embroidery, or to paint with cosmetics

¹⁶ John Marston, 'Certain Satyres II', ll.143-6, *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961) p.76

In 1606 Henry Peacham, author of *The Compleat Gentleman*, had written of Aretino's questionable morality, not because of his satire or presumed atheism, but for his 'booke and bawdy pictures'. In a chapter in which he discusses 'the manifold abuses of painting,' Peacham instructs the would-be artist that 'he must abstaine with Christian modesty from drawing arts of filthines, & laying open those parts which Nature would haue kept secret.' To illustrate his point, Peacham continues: 'what hurt hath that abhominable Aretine done by his booke and bawdy pictures? and what lewd art is ordinarily shoven in the naked pictures of wax sould vp and downe as *libidinis fomenta*? Surely I must commend art in them, though detest their wicked makers and abhominable ends.'¹⁷ This text was republished six years later in *The Gentleman's Exercise* (1612), in a slightly altered state:

what hurt hath that beastly booke of Aretines done abroad in the world, and what lewde art is there showne in many printes and peeces that are daily brought over out of Italy, Flanders, and other places, which are oftener enquired after in the shops then any other, little use is there in most of the wax pictures of Curtizans in Rome and Venice being drawne naked, and sold upp and down as *Libidinis Fomenta*, surely I cannot but commend art in them, as many times there is excellent good, but verily do hate their wicked makers and abhominable ends.¹⁸

Various changes have been made by Peacham to emphasise the circulation of these engravings in England, and to be marginally more positive about the quality of these works. Originally, Peacham had mentioned Aretino's 'booke and bawdy pictures', referring to Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi* and *I Modi*. In the *Gentleman's Exercise*, this has been compacted into simply a 'beastly book', though Peacham extends his sentence in order to emphasise that these images are circulating in the public sphere ('abroad in the world'), and changes the attribution of 'lewd art' to Aretine and other engravings, rather than to the wax images of the original text. In the extended text he describes how 'prints and [painted] pieces' are 'daily brought' to London from Italy and Flanders 'and other places', and that

¹⁷ Henry Peacham, *The art of drawing with the pen, and limning in water colours* (London: Richard Braddock for William Jones, 1606), p.9

¹⁸ Henry Peacham, *The gentlemans exercise. Or an exquisite practise as well for drawing all manner of beasts in their true portraittures* (London: John Browne, 1612) pp.9-10

they are popular enough to be searched for more than anything else in the shops of London. This agrees with Marston's account in 1598 of Aretino's images arriving together with cosmetics from Venice; indeed, it even augments this by suggesting that people were actively searching for erotic engravings such as *I Modi* in the bookshops of London. Moulton's point that none of 'Aretine's Postures' were known to have circulated in England seems ever less likely.

What were first described as 'naked pictures in wax', are here more precisely described as 'wax pictures of courtesans in Rome and Venice being drawn naked'. These, like the erotic engravings, are 'sold up and down' London, and are used as aids to 'foment lust' (*libidinis fomenta*). Sold as aphrodisiacs, these wax pictures are associated with Aretino's 'bawdy pictures', in much the same way as Marston connects 'Aretine' pictures with Venetian cosmetics: as imported luxury items, which are desired and asked for in London's shops. Wax was an especially sensuous material to be depicting naked images of courtesans in, as wax was seen as the material that most closely resembled human flesh.¹⁹ Beeswax is also an incredibly ephemeral material, and almost none of these wax images from the period have survived today. As a material for depicting erotic art, it was therefore the perfect medium: ephemeral and sensuous.

Peacham returns to Aretino's Pictures in an elegy written in 1634 for Frances Rich, the Countess of Warwick. Peacham contrasts those who 'live in distress, in prison, in want' and therefore 'welcome death', with those who have 'No worldly care, to vex his carelesse head.' While the former is comforted by religious art, the second man prefers Aretino's art over that of Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*:

He loathes the wall that Death is painted on,
And trembles at his fleshlesse Sceleton:
Memento mori, and the Day of *Doome*,
That Master-peece of *Angelo* in *Rome*
Do damp his spirit, and offend his eyne,
He better likes the draughts of *Aretine*.²⁰

¹⁹ Roberta Panzanelli, 'Introduction', *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2008)

²⁰ Henry Peacham, 'A Funeral Elegie', *Thestylis atrata* (London: John Haviland for Francis Constable, 1634) sig.C3v

A marginal note next to 'Aretine' explains that Peacham is referring to 'Icones obscenae Aretin.' Here, Aretino is aligned with earthly pleasures; the '*Memento mori*' are 'fleshlesse', in contrast to the fleshly obscene icons of Aretino's 'draughts.' It is ironic that Peacham should choose Michelangelo's 'Day of Doome' as an example of piety, as this image was targeted by Aretino for being blasphemous, and was eventually censored when Michelangelo's disciple Daniele da Volterra was paid to paint clothes over the naked bodies of the saints.²¹

If *memento mori* are painted onto the walls of the pious, then could 'Aretine's draughts' have similarly been painted or plastered onto the walls of the sensual? There are a few examples of 'Aretine's Postures' being used as decoration in the plays of the Seventeenth Century, though in Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) and Middleton's *Game at Chess* (1624) these references are used more to characterise the speakers than to refer to actual images that might have been on stage. In *The Alchemist*, Mammon fantasises about a future in which he is surrounded by a harem of courtesans, in a room

Fill'd with such pictures, as Tiberius took
From Elephantis: and dull Aretine
But coldly imitated. Then, my glasses,
Cut in more subtill angles, to disperse,
And multiply the figures, as I walke
Naked betweene my *succubae*.²²

Meanwhile In Middleton's *A Game at Chess*, another room is decorated with Aretino's images but this time for a more sinister purpose. The Black Knight Gondomar punishes the Virgin White Queen's pawn for her chastity by threatening to lock her in 'a room fill'd all with Aretine's pictures,/ More than the twice twelve labours of luxury' so that she might succumb to lust.²³ Aretino is here used as a shorthand (together with the classical

²¹ For more on Aretino's correspondence with Michelangelo and the subsequent censorship of this painting, see Bernadine Barnes, *Michelangelo's Last Judgment: The Renaissance Response* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1998)

²² Ben Jonson, 'The Alchemist', *The Alchemist, and other plays*. (II.ii.43-8) p.239

²³ Thomas Middleton, 'A Game at Chess, (a later form) ed. Gary Taylor, in *Thomas Middleton: the Collected Works*, (gen. eds) Gary Taylor & John Lavagnino (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2007), (II.ii.255) p.1853

'pornographer', Elephantis) to refer to erotic images in general, and luxury in particular. The sheer volume of these images is emphasised to amplify the eroticism of these love nests and cells: in *The Alchemist* mirrors are to be used to reflect the images, while in *A Game of Chess* there will be multiple images of 'luxury' decorating the walls of the small cell.

These internal references might not necessarily mean that these pictures were used to decorate the stage, especially as these are descriptions of rooms of the imagination, or rooms off-stage. In the Earl of Rochester's play *Sodom* (c.1672), however, there is a stage direction for the play to open with the audience looking at 'An antechamber hung with Aretine's postures,' a suggestion that there were erotic images available to decorate the set with which were recognisably 'Aretine'.²⁴ Of course, as a closet drama, and more importantly a closet drama by Rochester, we are not talking about a drama that was performed in front of a public audience, but instead was intended for an exclusive clientele of voyeurs, and so the space in which it is acceptable to view such erotic images is, like the Palazzo Te in Mantua, kept for the social elite.

While it might seem obvious that these Aretine images were reproductions of Romano and Raimondi's *I Modi*, the confusion over what these images actually were, was not limited to Aretino's presumed authorship. After the Sack of Rome in May 1527 in which thousands of citizens were murdered by the mercenary soldiers of Charles V's armies, the workshops of Raimondi and Raphael were completely ransacked and many of their remaining prints destroyed. Despite this destruction, Raphael and Raimondi's assistant and print-seller, Baviera, managed to restart part of his business, having saved a substantial amount of plates from the workshop. Baviera later commissioned the artists Perino del Vaca and Rosso Fiorentino to make a similar series to *I Modi*, called *Gli amori degli dei* ('Loves of the Gods') around 1527, which were then turned into around twenty erotic prints by the engraver Gian Giacomo Caraglio. These in turn were used as a model for Charles Estienne's anatomical manual, the *De Dissectione Partium Corporis Humanita* (c.1545).²⁵

Yet another set of images called the 'Loves of the Gods' was made by Annibale and Agostino Carracci in the 1590s, and it is these engravings and their copies which, being the

²⁴ John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, *The Farce of Sodom or the Quintessence of Debauchery* (Minneapolis: Filiquarian Publishing LLC, 2007) (l.i) p.7

²⁵ For more on this, see Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, pp.160-187

most prevalent, were later believed to be 'Aretine's Images'.²⁶ Art critics such as Bette Talvacchia and James Turner argue that the reason that neither set of the 'Loves of the Gods' were censored as severely as *I Modi* was primarily because the lovers were mythological figures given a classical setting, as opposed to the contemporary and all too human figures which Romano and Raimondi had originally depicted. This is partly true, some of the images by Perino swathe the women with well-placed drapery, and yet there are some images which are clearly more explicit than *I Modi*. [fig.14] In the Caraglio print known as 'Mercury, Aglaurus, Herse', for example, Aglaurus lies sleeping, her genitals full frontal, while the voyeuristic Herse crouching in the foreground is about to have her head turned away from this view by Mercury.²⁷

By the Eighteenth Century, the assumption had taken root that Aretino was not only the original painter of these images, but that he had worked with the engraver Carracci, not Raimondi, to create the later prints, even though Carracci had only been born in 1557 after Aretino's death. It would have made more sense for Aretino to have been collaborating with Caraglio, as his 'Loves of the Gods' series dates from the 1520s, and the two had actually met. Caraglio even made the *all'antica* portrait of Aretino which would later be turned into a medal by Leone Leoni and recycled on Aretino's various titlepages. [fig.15]

In an essay entitled *Dialogues upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals* (1726) Joseph Addison writes that 'For not to mention several others, Caraccio is said to have assisted Aretine by designs that he took from the *Spintriae* of Tiberius.'²⁸ Addison seems to have confused the engraver of the first series, *Giacopo Caraglio*, with the engraver of the second, *Agostino Carracci*, to come up with a combination of both of their names: 'Caraccio'. In Amsterdam a decade later, Jacob Campo Weyerman would make a similar misattribution in his magazine *De naakte waarheyt* ('The naked truth', 1737) when he wrote of the engraver

²⁶ The family instituted the 'Carracci reform', in which they painted in a classical style as a corrective to what they saw as the excesses of mannerism. After their deaths, their classicist ideology became a popular art form, thanks to members from the Carracci's private Bolognese academy, the *Accademia degli Incamminati*, opened in 1582, spreading their ideology around Italy.

²⁷ See Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, pp.127-158; and James Grantham Turner, 'Caraglio's Loves of the Gods', *Print Quarterly*, 24.4 (2007) pp.359-380. Talvacchia believes that the remaining images are fairly 'scattered' in loose leaves (p.139), while Turner disputes this, and gives a table of complete sets of copies he has discovered. Talvacchia has also suggested that these more overt images were a subset in the series, possibly added or removed from collections according to the taste of the purchaser, however in a later article, James Turner suggests that Talvacchia has exaggerated the scarcity of these images, and lists complete sets which including these more overt images, seemingly as normal parts of the complete series.

²⁸ Joseph Addison, 'Dialogues upon the Usefulness of Ancient Medals', *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison*. ed. Richard Hurd, 6 vols. (London: T. Cadwell and W. Davies, 1811) 1, p.344

Romeyn de Hooghe, who had become known as the 'second Aretino' by his contemporaries [See p.136]. 'It is an established truth,' writes Weyerman 'that Aretyn supplemented the godless prints of the famous painter Hannibal Canats [i.e Carracci] with sprightly descriptions' (Het is een vastgestelde waarheyt dat Aretyn de godlooze prenten van den beroemden schilder Hannibal Canats bysprong met een dartele omschryving). He continues that de Hooghe both translated these 'descriptions...out of their original Italian' (omschrijving...uyt her ooirspronkeyk Italiaans) but also 'copied in sections, and incorporated [the images] in his scandalous tract, entitled, the Wandering Whore' (ten delen gekopieert, en ingelyft in zyn verfoeielyk Traktaat, getytelt, de dwaalende Hoer).²⁹ Weyerman at least knows that Aretino did not make the prints himself, but believes that his sonnets accompanied the 1590s 'Loves of the Gods' series by Annibale Carracci. The mistaken belief that Aretino collaborated with Carracci continued into the Nineteenth Century. In *The Voluptuarian Cabinet* magazine (1824) a brothel for women is described where 'to elivate [sic] the mind to the sublimest raptures of love, every boudoir is surrounded with the most superb paintings of Aretino's Postures after Julio Romano and Ludovico Carracci [sic], interspersed with large mirrors.'³⁰ Either Aretino is imagined as having himself copied the images by Giulio Romano and Ludovico Carracci (the wrong Carracci family member), or else the images are understood as being by Romano and Carracci, but rather than being known as 'the Modes' or 'Loves of the Gods', the term for such erotic pictures has simply become 'Aretino's Postures', as if 'Aretino' were a genre in himself.

In eighteenth-century France, the Carracci 'Loves of the Gods' prints were circulating together with Aretino's sonnets as emblem books. One anonymous edition now attributed to the writer François Félix Nogaret, is entitled *L'Aretin François, par un membre de l'Academie des Dames* ('The French Aretine, by a member of the Academy of Women', 1787) and given the false imprint of 'Londres', while in 1798 the Parisian engraver Jacques-Joseph Coigny made engravings entitled *L'Aretin d'Augustin Carrache, ou recueil de postures érotiques, d'après les gravures à l'eau-forte par cet artiste célèbre, avec le texte explicatif des sujets* (The Aretino of Augustin Carraci, or collection of erotic postures, after the engravings

²⁹ Jacob Campo Weyerman, *De Naakte Waarheyt* (8th April 1737), ed. André J. Hanou (Amsterdam: Stichting Jacob Campo Weyerman, 1997) p.20 (my translation).

³⁰ Mary Wilson, 'With Plans for Promoting the same. Addressed to the Ladies of the Metropolis and its Environs', *Voluptuarian Cabinet*, reprinted in Henry Spencer Ashbee, *Bibliography of Forbidden Books*, vol.3, 1877-1885 (New York: Cosimo Inc, 2007) p.295

by this famous artist, with the explanatory text of the subjects).³¹ The format of the Toscanini edition is repeated here with the text below the image, narrating the acts that were being depicted. About half of these images were completely new, neither copies of Carracci, Caraglio, or Raimondi, and even more risqué: the titlepage of *L'Aretin Français* has a garland of ejaculating penises surrounding a disembodied vagina, and many of the images have the women nursing their babies while engaging in sex. Meanwhile, *L'Aretin de Augustin Carrache* has some additional scenes of group sex by Coigny intermingled with copies from Carracci. [fig.16] Despite all of the layers of possible attributions, it is notable that these collected images were still known as 'Aretine's', again suggesting that the term had become applicable to a genre of images, rather than to a specific writer.

Sexualised spaces

It is possibly Carracci's images which may therefore have come to mind when an English audience heard of 'Aretine Pictures' decorating the walls of Mammon's love nest, Gondomar's cell for correcting chastity, or the court of Sodom. Middleton's mention of there being more images than the 'twelve labours of luxury' could be describing the 'Loves of the Gods' classical and mythological images as these twelve labours evidently refer to the labours of Hercules. It seems even more likely that Middleton was referring to these images as the total of the engravings had grown from Raimondi's sixteen, to between twenty to twenty-four in the two *Gli amori degli dei* series by Caraglio and Carracci.

As a result, practically any erotic imagery could be given the description 'Aretine' in the Eighteenth Century. The titles of the French books even use 'Aretino' not as a surname, but as a synonym for 'erotic art': 'The French Aretino' and 'The Aretino of Carracci'. In English drama, these 'Aretine pictures' are used figuratively to decorate luxurious love nests. In *The Alchemist* this space is to be used by Mammon and his concubines, while in *A Game of Chess* the implication is that by being surrounded with images of sexual acts, the chaste White Queen's pawn will be filled with lust and her chastity will be broken. As such, these descriptions of hidden rooms have much in common with the 'voluptuous bagnio' in the

³¹ See Talvacchia, *Taking Positions*, p.250, n. 51 and Lawner, p.23

1824 advert for a brothel where 'every boudoir is surrounded with the most superb paintings of Aretino's Postures'.

In Aretino's *Sei Giornate*, Nanna describes a similarly decorated room in the convent where she discovers her sexuality for the first time. Like the Palazzo Te, it is a space dedicated to eroticism, 'a large, airy parlour covered with paintings' (una camera terrena, ampia, fresca e tutta dipinta) depicting sacrilegious scenes such as the life of St. Nafissa, the patron saint of prostitutes, who is pictured in the middle of servicing a man in need. On the third wall 'were portrayed all the nuns who had ever belonged to the order, with their lovers beside them and their children too' (ritratte tutte le suore che fur mai di quello ordine, con i loro amanti appresso e i figliuoli nati di esse), while 'the last picture depicted all the various modes and avenues by which one can fuck and be fucked' (Nell'ultimo quadro ci erano dipinti tutti i modi e tutte le vie che si può chiavare e farsi chiavare).

In fact, continues Nanna, 'before beginning their jousts with their partners, the nuns must try to assume the same positions in life as the nuns painted in the picture. All this is done to avoid being clumsy in bed' (e sono obligate le moniche, prima che le si mettino in campo con gli amici loro, di provare di stare negli atti vivi che stanno le dipinte: e questo si fa per non rimanere poi goffe nel letto).³² This section of the 'Lives of Nuns' brings up two main themes that would later be associated with 'Aretino's Postures'. Firstly, the portraits of the nuns are presented in the same way that the portraits of prostitutes were displayed on the walls of brothels. Secondly, the images of the 'various modes [i modi] and avenues by which one can fuck and be fucked' is a clear reference to *I Modi* by Aretino, and a reference which also shows his awareness that such images were being used for sexual instruction, not just decoration.

If 'Aretine's pictures' were also pictures of prostitutes, literally 'pornography', then theatre goers or readers might also have been thinking of the images which hung in brothels or taverns of these women. The frontispiece engraved by Crispin van de Passe for his trilingual *Le Miroir des plus Belles Courtisanes de ce Temps* [fig.17] shows how these images would have been displayed. In it, a gentleman customer sits in the foreground. He is being shown a picture of a woman, one of the courtesans of the title, by the brothel madam. In the background, behind the door of this waiting room, we see two women in conversation

³² Aretino, transl. Rosenthal, pp.22,24; Italian Aquilecchia, pp.14,16

as they wait to be chosen. In the midground, another gentleman is pointing to a set of portraits which hang at the top of the wall. He is pointing at one portrait, while the bawd that he is speaking to points to another. These portraits act as a menu for the clients of the brothel. They also happen to be miniatures of the portraits which are included inside de Passe's book. These depict forty courtesans who have come to the Low Countries from across Europe, accompanied with trilingual verses in German, Dutch, and French which are written in the voice of the courtesan or bawd, describing themselves and how they ended up in their profession.

Lynne Lawner dismisses de Passe's book as 'essentially a series of what today are called "fashion-plates". The true concern of the artist was to illustrate the lavish and quite varied garb of these "stars" from different countries.³³ This is indeed what de Passe says is the intention of his book in his epistle to the gentlemen readers, writing that the purpose of the book is 'to show the change of clothing and habits, as well as the hair braids and other manners particularly used by women, and also commonly practiced by the courtesans' (tot veranderinghe van Klederen often habytten, als oock met haer vlechten ende andersins, insonderheydt by de Vrouw Persoonen, ende alsoo by de Courtesanen ghemeynlijck ghepractiseert wort.)³⁴ De Passe ends this prefatory letter with a familiar pose: acknowledging the eroticism of his work, while arguing that it is the reader's responsibility to avoid 'levity'.

This is a rhetorical pose used to justify printing material deemed to be immoral, and so it seems unusual that Lawner should take de Passe at his word. For one thing, the frontispiece clearly shows the images functioning in a different way, not as 'fashion plates', but as pictures for men to choose from in the waiting room of a brothel. Some of the images are clearly eroticised, one courtesan from Savoy named 'La belle zauonnare Cour' has her breasts displayed. [fig.18] Many of the other women, while not depicted bare breasted, are portrayed with low neck lines and their hair let down, such as one Margery of Richmonde.

If these were indeed merely fashion plates, then why not simply circulate them in the same way as Cesare Vecellio's *De gli habiti et moderni di diversi parti del mondo* ('Of ancient and modern dress of diverse parts of the world', 1590), which provides a few descriptive

³³ Lawner, p.33

³⁴ Crispin de Passe the younger, *Le Miroir des plus Belles Courtisanes de ce Temps. Spieghel der alderschoonste cortisanen deses tyts. Spieghel der Allerschönsten Courtisannen diser Zeyt*, 2nd ed. (Utrecht: printed for Crispin de Passe, 1635) sig.A1v. (my translation)

sentences in the third person underneath each image? In this booklet, each recto page contains two oval portraits, above which their names are written. Under the engravings are couplets in Dutch spoken in the first person. Opposite, the verso page consists of six verses, at the top in French and in italic type, in the middle and in a larger roman type, Dutch, and at the bottom, again in italic, German, so that there is a French, a Dutch, and German verse for each portrait. These are not all translations of one verse, as one might expect, but each language contains different content in a dialogue between the two characters opposite, so that it seems to capture them in an extended conversation with one another. Often the twin portraits are of the courtesan and her procuress who also appear to be interacting between the frames of their separate portraits, such as 'La belle Dans' and 'Margo la Macrelle', in which the courtesan does her hair, while opposite her mother and pimp Margo 'the madam' holds a mirror up, in which her daughter is reflected.

The images are gathered together and interspersed with text in much the same way as the Toscanini booklet described in chapter 5. The text animates the portraits by giving the women depicted a voice and agency, in contrast to their objectification as part of a menu for men to pick from on the frontispiece. Rather than the combative 'paragonal' relationship between text and imagery that Mitchell and Heffernan describe in their work on *ekphrasis*, here the images and texts exist in a more symbiotic relationship [See p.175]. Most tell stories of their abandonment, some are even set to music. One, 'la belle Anglaise' (the pretty Englishwoman) says that she had travelled through France with a 'franschen graeff' (French earl), but that when he died, she had to live 'in schandt' (in shame).³⁵ Others have their virginitities taken from them, usually by aristocrats, by men who promise to marry them. Not all the women are victims, however. 'Schoon barbetjen' (beautiful Barbara) ends her sonnet by saying that though she is a woman, it is she who earns the money: 'Dan ben ick als de Vrouw, verdien oock selfs het gelt' (Then it is I as the woman, still earning money for myself).³⁶ As a book, de Passe's engravings accompanied by verses function differently to the pictures alone, just as Aretino's sonnets added new levels of interpretation to the images of *I Modi*. In both cases, women are given a voice to discuss their sexuality and their relationships with men. De Passe's *Miroir* is therefore much more in keeping with the spirit of Aretino than Lawner allows for.

³⁵ de Passe, sig.A6v

³⁶ Ibid

Almost thirty years later, an English text *Strange & true Newes from Jack-a-Newberies Six Windmills* (1660) attributed to 'Peter Aretine', imagines a similar scene to de Passe's frontispiece. The text is a mock set of rules for a contemporary brothel, one rule being that: 'the principal beauties of our said Chuck-Office, have their Pictures drawn forth by our Limner (as well as their Faces) and hanged in order one after another, according to their Merits.'³⁷ This description of the prostitutes' portraits 'hanged in order one after another' sounds identical to the frontispiece of de Passe, though the suggestion that their faces be portrayed 'as well' as their 'pictures', might also suggest that these 'pictures' depict them in sexual positions, in which their faces are not the main attraction. Indeed, in the two first pamphlets in John Garfield's *The Wandring Whore* (1660-1), one brothel belonging to 'Mrs Crewswel at the upper end of Moorfields in a back Ally' is decorated with 'Pictures you keep in readiness for your best Customers to chuse on, and trade with,' while Magdalena, the convener of the meeting, describes how 'in our private rooms, we have the pictures of the Italian padlock, *Peter Aretines* postures curiously painted, with several beautiful pictures stark-naked'³⁸ in order to give lovers suggestions for sexual positions, as Aretino claimed was the purpose of these images in the 'large, airy parlour' of the Italian convent.

The de Passe frontispiece might show framed portraits, but there is another painting which shows that printed images such as the woodcuts in the Toscanini edition could have been recycled as decoration for rooms, and not just kept within the pages of a book for private reading. A painting by the Brunswick Monogrammist from 1537 shows a fight in a brothel. [fig.19] The walls are covered with writing and symbols, but there is also a scroll of paper stuck to the top of the wall in the same position as the portraits in the de Passe frontispiece. It depicts armed male figures standing in different postures, with what look like small descriptions written alongside them. The images are there to contrast the ideal practice of sword fighting being depicted against the disorganised brawl occurring below; the poster itself peeling off the walls, pulled off in the fight or maybe just never put up with much care. The image reminds us of the ephemerality of such posters, and the potential for low quality images such as the Toscanini woodcuts of *I Modi* to have been used for

³⁷ *Strange & true Newes from Jack-a-Newberies Six Windmills: or the Crafty, impudent, Common-Whore (turnrd Bawd) Anatomised, And discovered, in the unparralleld Practices of Mrs Fotheringham...by Peter Aretine, Cardinall of Rome* (Venus [i.e. London]: 'Rodericus e Castro', 1660) p.5

³⁸ John Garfield, *The Wandring whore* (London: 1660) Facsimile reproduced as *The Wandring Whore numbers 1-5, 1660-1661*, (Exeter: The Rota at University of Exeter, 1997) part 1, p.10. part 2, p.13.

recyclable decorations. This was the case for pious printed imagery, as Tessa Watt discusses in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (1991). Not only were walls decorated with broadside ballads but wall paintings were also traced from copies of emblem books.³⁹

To return to the initial issue about the ephemerality of *I Modi* and the lack of surviving material in England that concerned Moulton. Maybe it was not just censorship by the state or by the owner that led to these images perishing, but also their reuse as wall decorations: easily tattered, easily replaced. Rather than being texts which move from a 'private' sphere into the 'public' as Talvacchia suggests in *Taking Positions*, here I am arguing that these images and texts were firstly easily reproducible, and secondly easily transferable, and could be moved between multiple different spaces, back and forth, until finally wearing out. If this is the case, and if the printed and ephemeral images of *I Modi* were being used in this manner, then because of the multiplication of images known as 'Aretine's Postures', multiple spaces could be made 'Aretine', be made luxurious and eroticised through an act of association, a form of socialising the space for a specific purpose. [See pp.178-9]

Aretino as a classic pornographic text

References to 'Aretino's Postures' were not, however, confined to imagery alone, but were also understood as a form of sex manual from which to learn sexual positions, though as we have seen the two often overlapped when these images were put on bedroom walls for instruction. In both cases, Aretino's images are used as a yardstick to measure just how pornographic another text or image is believed to be. For example, in *The great Assises holden in Parnassus by Apolo and his assessours* (1645), George Wither describes a hack writer being judged by Apollo and other writers of the day for his writing. The hack asks not to be judged by the poet Thomas Carew, who he describes as: 'more loose' than 'Aretine In obscæne portraitures'.⁴⁰ Carew's 'loose verse' is worse than Aretino's 'obscæne portraitures', so that Aretino is here being used as a measurement of obscenity.

At other times, Aretino's position as a prototype of pornography is rightly questioned, and instead the reader is told that his erotic work is derivative of the ancient Greek poet and

³⁹ Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) esp. pp.178-253

⁴⁰ George Wither, *The great asises holden in Parnassus by Apollo and his assesours* (London: Richard Cotes & Edward Husbands, 1646) p.25

physician, Elephantis, who was renowned for having written a notorious sex manual. None of her work survives, but multiple references are made to her by other classical writers. Because of this, like Aretino is it likely that various writers wrote under her name in order to publish pseudonymous works on sex. When Mammon is describing his love nest in *The Alchemist*, he writes how 'dull Aretine' coldly imitated Elephantis, and that her pictures were taken 'by Tiberius'. In contrast, Aretino is not inventive but 'dull' and 'cold.'⁴¹ Jonson refers to a story told by Suetonius that when the Emperor Tiberius retired to the island of Capri in 26AD, he had the rooms of his palace decorated with lascivious pictures and statues as well as with the books of Elephantis, left scattered around as sex manuals for the various young men and women that Tiberius paid to have sex. Mammon seems to be modelling himself after Tiberius, but using contemporary images and instructions from Aretino rather than from Elephantis. There is a slippage here between two different formats, whether these 'Postures' are meant to be separate images, or are contained in sex manuals.

That Aretino's Postures were a sex manual seems to be understood by the soldier and writer the Seigneur de Brantôme. In his memoirs, he often gossips of the promiscuity of the aristocrats that he meets in his travels around European courts during the second half of the Sixteenth Century. At one point, Brantôme writes that:

these husbands teach their wives, in their own beds, a thousand lubricities, a thousand depravities, thousands of moves, configurations, novel fashions, and they put into practice those terrible positions of Aretino...You can read about the great courtesan and learned madam from ancient Rome, called Elephantis, who posed in and composed such postures as those of Aretino, even worse, the great ladies and princesses, playing the part of whores, studied it as a most beautiful book.

Ces marys, qui, pis est, apprennent à leurs femmes, dans leur lict propre, milli lubricitez, mille paillardises, mille tours, contours, façons nouvelles, et leur pratiquent ces figures enormes de l'Aretin...Il se lit d'une grande courtisane et maquerelle insigne du temps de l'ancienne Rome, qui s'appelloit Elefantina, qui fit et composa de telles figures de l'Aretin,

⁴¹ Donne makes a similar judgement only a year later in *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611)

*encores pires, auxquelles les dames grandes et princesses faisant estat de putanisme estudioyent comme un tres-beau livre.*⁴²

Here, Aretino's Postures and Elephantis are both associated with sex manuals being used by men and women, rather than imagery alone. Aretino's positions are 'terrible', and end up spawning 'a thousand depravities...configurations, novel fashions' amongst the French aristocrats of the late Sixteenth Century. What is unusual though, is that Brantôme's syntax suggests that Elephantis (now deemed to be from Rome rather than Greece, a courtesan, rather than a poet and physician) is following the postures of Aretino: 'posed in and composed such postures as those of Aretino'. Even if he did not mean it to be chronologically later, Brantôme appears to be placing Aretino's reputation for depicting sexual positions above that of Elephantis, or else as mentioned earlier, the word 'Aretine' or 'Aretino' has simply become a generic term for 'sexual positions'.

Aretino's association with Elephantis and Brantôme's declaration that 'great ladies and princesses...studied [Aretine's Postures] as a most beautiful book', reveals another way that the 'Postures' were understood in the Seventeenth Century: as the illustrations of a sex-manual for women. Lady Would-Be in Jonson's *Volpone* is certainly implied as studying Aretino in this way: 'there's Aretine! Only, his pictures are a little obscene.'⁴³ She is an English character who has become engrossed in Italian culture, but here she is also a fictionalised version of Brantôme's 'great ladies...playing the part of whores', as she has come to Venice to learn the fashions of courtesans. She monopolises the conversation with Volpone when he tells her that Plato once said that the best grace for women to have is that of silence. She counteracts by arguing that not all poets say that, and includes a list of other poets such as Petrarch, Tasso, and Aretino. Although a display of female learning in response to a man who would have women be quiet, Jonson is mocking Lady Would-be for her presumption, and for thinking that Aretino and Cieco di Hadria to be equal to Plato, Dante and Petrarch.⁴⁴

Even women who one would least expect to be readers of Aretino are discovered by male authors, who imagine them secretly compiling a library of erotica in their closets for

⁴² Brantôme, translated in Talvacchia, pp.54-5. In French, transl. Rat, pp.26-7

⁴³ Ben Jonson, 'Volpone', in *The Alchemist and Other Plays* (III.iv.11.96-7) p.57

⁴⁴ Jonson, 'Volpone' (III:iv, ll.77-81) p.56

personal study. In Samuel Sheppard's epigram *Modest, Martha* (1651) he describes the wife of his friend who feigns innocence, but privately reads 'the filthy works of Aretino':

When to thy Husband I resort,
 Wee sometimes jest, and talk in sport,
 And if that any word obsceane,
 Do passe, thou askt's us, what me meane,
 With lookes demure thou silently
 Dost sit, as one lov'd Pietie,
 Yet I one day unwares came in
 Ere thou had'st time to shrowd thy sin,
 And found in those faire hands of thine
 The filthy workes of Aretine.⁴⁵

While some authors are amused by the idea of women secretly reading 'filthy works', others associate Aretino not only with the private self-education of women, but the idea of the female collective, educating themselves in sexual matters. In an edition of the London newsletter *Mercurious Fumigosus* from 23rd August, 1654, its writer John Crouch says that the pie-women of Bartholomew Fair were in fact prostitutes, and 'have long since commenc'd at the University of Middlebrough read Aretine both in Print & Picture, and been Lecturers to Lewdness for many years together.'⁴⁶ Little was Crouch to know there would one day actually *be* an university in Middlesbrough, but here it is used as a mocking reference to women's 'middles', the satisfaction of which is why they have studied sex manuals and erotic images to the extent that they could be 'Lecturers to Lewdness' at a female university.

James Turner's comparative study of Italian, French, and English libertine texts in the early modern period, *Schooling Sex* (2003) focuses on various such instances in which books were presented as a form of sexual education, such as *L'Escoles des Filles* (1655) and *The School of Venus* (1680). He describes Aretino and his *Sei Giornate* as an early example of the erotic dialogue form, in which the author imagines a scene of sexual instruction between

⁴⁵ Samuel Sheppard, 'Modest, Martha' in *Epigrams theological, philosophical, and romantick* (London: Thomas Bucknell, 1951) p.149

⁴⁶ John Crouch, *Mercurious Fumigosus, or, The smoking nocturnall*, vol.13, 23rd August 1654 (London, sn. 1654-55) p.120

women.⁴⁷ The pseudo-Aretino text, Niccolò Franco's *Puttana Errante* and its translations such as de Hooghe's *Dwalende Hoer* could also be considered part of this genre of erotic dialogue, in which one woman educates another about her sexual experiences, ending with a list of the thirty-five different sexual positions that she knows.

While Franco's text and its translations were still thematically connected to Aretino's *Sei Giornate*, the title and its attribution to Aretino would eventually become isolated from its actual content, and was easily transferrable to texts which had decreasing degrees of similarity to anything Aretino had written about prostitutes. I will first be looking at the various 'Wandering Whore' texts which circulated in London around the time of the Restoration and which follow the same pattern as the *Zoppino* dialogue or the *Tariffa delle Puttane di Vinegia*, both of which were once attributed to Aretino, and which list contemporary Italian prostitutes. Later, I will examine *The Crafty Whore* which was printed at the same as these 'Wandering Whore' lists of London prostitutes, but which was itself a loose adaptation of Aretino's 'third day' of his *Sei Giornate*. All of these texts anglicise and domesticate Aretino more than any other adaptation of his work, so that Aretino was culturally 'translated' into an English culture.

Peter Aretine's Wandering Whores

In 1660, a spate of pamphlets appeared which were pseudonymously attributed to 'Peter Aretine' and which, instead of being presented under the guise of educational texts, were framed as the specific naming-and-shaming of prostitutes and bawds, specifically one 'Mrs Fotherinham' and her accomplices. In the same year, *A Strange and True Conference Between Two Notorious Bawds Damarose Page & Pris. Fotheringham* (1660) and *Strange & true Newes from Jack-a-Newberies Six Windmills: or the Crafty, impudent, Common-Whore (turnd Bawd) Anatomised* (1660), as well as John Garfield's first instalment of the *Wandering Whore* (1660) mention Mrs Fotheringham's 'chuck office', a name given to her brothel thanks to her 'chuck-farthing' party trick, described in these three texts.

⁴⁷ Turner, *Schooling Sex* esp. pp.27-45. For another recent critical work on early modern pornography, including some of the 'Aretine' texts, see Sarah Toulalan, *Imagining Sex: Pornography and Bodies in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2007)

The *Strange & true Newes from Jack-a-Newberies* is pseudonymously written 'By PETER ARETINE Cardinall of Rome' and printed in 'Venus' [i.e. London] for 'Rodericus de Castro.' Roderico de Castro was one of the pioneers of gynaecology, and known for his *De universa mulierum morborum medicina* (1603).⁴⁸ His inclusion as the 'printer' of this text is therefore due to his association with the secret knowledge of the female body. Clearly, Aretino is important as a pseudo-author of this text, as the anglicised version of his name is capitalised and the same size as the title on the titlepage. The text itself is a mock set of regulations for the 'Chuck House' of Mrs Fotheringham, though it does also share an 'educational' veneer when it describes Aretino as the prostitutes' 'only beloved Patron and singular Tutor *Peter Aretine*', Mrs Fotheringham's 'fellow Collegiates' from Newgate prison, and her prostitutes as 'educated in her School of bad manners.'⁴⁹ Rather than the 'discoverer' of sexual misdemeanours as he is represented in the titles of the translations mentioned in chapter 3, here Aretino is once again very much on the side of the prostitutes: he is their 'patron' and 'tutor', and seemingly an amanuensis of Mrs Fotheringham's secret meeting as the work is presented as a 'found text' of the rules of her brothel.

One of these rules is that 'no one of this Society refuse to do the deed of nature either backwards or any other of *Peter Aretines* postures so long as shee's pay'd for't.'⁵⁰ 'Aretine's postures' here has become a catch-all term for any sexual position other than the missionary position. The theme of the secret erotic library kept by women is brought up once again, when another rule states:

that two Books entituled, *The night Search*, and *The Crafty Whore*, be brought into this Office, and examined, to know what may be useful therein to train up the younger sort, and be taken notice of so as to make the older sort more exquisite, all others to be voted destructive to our Principles, if vertuous and prohibited the use thereof.

⁴⁸ The *Encyclopaedia of Erotic Literature* eds. Gaëtan Brulotte, John Phillips (New York & London: Routledge, 2006) p.65, claims that 'Roderico a Castro' [sic] was a 'Spanish convert Judaism, and pioneer in gynaecology.'. He was in fact Portuguese, and a '*converso*', i.e. a convert *from* Judaism to Catholicism at a time when Iberian Jews had been obliged to convert or else be expelled from their country. At his death in Hamburg in 1627, he was however acknowledged as part of the Portuguese Jewish community that resided there. See Jon Arrizabalaga, 'Medical Ideals in the Sephardic Diaspora: Rodrigo de Castro's Portrait of the Perfect Physician in early Seventeenth-Century Hamburg', in *Medical History Supplement*, 29 (2009) pp.107-124

⁴⁹ *Strange & true Newes*, p.5, p.2

⁵⁰ *Strange & true Newes*, p.3

This is very similar to the 'rules' of a later text, *The Parliament of Women* (1684), which decrees 'that *Aloysia Sigea*, *L'Eschole de fils*, and *Peter Aretines* discourses be translated, and fairly Printed for the Particular good of the Female Common-weal: and for the general Instruction of Youth.' This means that female collectives are imagined by men as having libraries of only two or three pseudo-Aretine texts: Humphrey Mill's *The Night Search* (1640 & second part in 1646), Richard Head's *The Crafty Whore* (1658) Nicholas Chortier's *Aloysia Sigea* (c.1660), most likely printed in Grenoble; Michel Millot or Jean L'Ange's *L'Eschole des Filles* (1655) printed in Paris; and Aretino's *Ragionamenti* (1534-6), Venice. The joke is that despite their pretensions to learning, these women decree that all other books are to be burned, and the universities suppressed, so that men can no longer 'Crow over Women' with their 'Book knowledge'.⁵¹

The main concern of the pseudo-Aretine texts is to name and shame a list of sex workers active in Restoration London. The long title of *Strange & true Newes* names Mrs Fortheringham as '*the Crafty, impudent, Common-Whore (turnd Bawd)*', and promises to '*Anatomise*' her, together with '*her whores, Hectors, and Rumpers*' listed on the title page as '*Mrs Croswell, Betty Lawrence, Mrs Curtis, Mrs Smith, Mrs Bagley, Mrs Russel, Mrs Diamond, Kate Hare, Jane Stamford, Pegg Williams, Mrs Frances: Betty Garret.*' This list of twelve names, though displayed prominently on the titlepage of *Strange and True Newes*, is nothing next to the ever increasing catalogue of names attached to the series of six pamphlets by John Garfield, collectively known as *The Wandring Whore*, the first five of which were published between December 1660 and January 1661. The list of prostitutes that Garfield identifies grows from one page, to three pages, to four, to five, eventually reaching a list of six pages in the fifth edition. Even in the main body of the text the meeting's convener, Magdalena, identifies brothels where prostitutes could ply their trade, street by street: 'let your rendezvous be sometime at Mrs Adams, in Long-Alley, sometime at the Rose in Moorfield, at Mrs Jones's,...and if you are in the road towards Fleet-street, Mrs. Simpson in

⁵¹ *The parliament of women, or, A compleat history of the proceedings and debates, of a particular Junto, of ladies and gentlewomen, with a design to alter the government of the world* (London: John Holford, 1684) p.137, p.136

Ram-Alley, will furnish you with fit rooms to do the business in.⁵² Garfield intends to leave no prostitute off his list, and no brothel left unvisited in London.

Like the *Zoppino* dialogue or the *Tariffa* which list contemporary courtesans, these texts present their naming of prostitutes and their tricks as a duty of exposing erotic corruption, though in the act of listing names, places and tricks, they instead demonstrate a prurient enjoyment in the seamier side of London. The threat is not only directed at the prostitutes and bawds, but at the reader as a potential client of these women. The *Strange and true newes* long title continues that it is '*Published by way of admonition to all persons to beware of that House of darkness, and Caution to some, how they frequent it for future, lest their names be rendred in Capitalls, of whom there is a large Catalogue.*' They too will be named and shamed 'in capitalls' on the titlepages of future pamphlets.

Garfield's *Wandering Whore* series relies on the *Puttana Errante* not only for its title, but also for the names of its primary characters, Maddalena and Giuletta. In this sense, the series uses the satirical tradition of speaking of London in the guise of a foreign city, and through the voices of foreign citizens, which distances the crimes described inside its pages as something 'foreign'. It simultaneously winks at the discerning customer, who would recognise both the title and the names of the characters as a reference to Aretino, and maybe then read this as a coded announcement of its erotic subject matter.

The last part, printed in 1663 after John Garfield had spent some time in Newgate prison for debt, makes the connection to Aretino even more explicit. In a change from its usual theme, its titlepage proclaims that it is 'A History of the Noble Conversations and various Couplings of the Wanton Curtezans of ROME and VENICE', and that it is 'Written by PETER ARETINE', again, his name is capitalised as a form of advertising feature. It also introduces the character of Eubulus, hitherto a silent Artinesque recorder, as one who has translated 'Peter Aretines *Postures* into English for the benefit and instruction of all stou[t] Pye-men and Py-women' (this presumably the '*Puttana Errante*' to which the title refers, as it lists various 'postures' at the end), and who appears to stand in for Garfield himself, when he begins the text explaining his absence in Newgate to a non-payment of debt.⁵³ The text moves quickly from a discussion of prostitutes in Covent Garden and Westminster onto the

⁵² Garfield, *The Wandering whore* (part 1), p.10

⁵³ Garfield, *Sixth part of the Wandering-whore revived in a Dialogue...With A History of the Noble Conversation and various Couplings of the Wanton Curtezans of ROME and VENICE.* / Written by PETER ARETINE (London: Printed for John Johnson, 1663) pp.3-4

courtesans of Rome and Venice, who Magdalena and Julia remember from their previous lives in Italy, and ends with the promise to discuss the courtesan Lucretia in the 'seventh part' of the *Wandering Whore* series, though this appears never to have materialised.

Aretino and the 'Wandering whore' were by now closely related concepts, and like the 'Postures' became inseparable from his reputation in this period. At the same time as these texts were circulating, however, there was still one other English text which more closely reproduced Aretino's actual content than the majority of other 'Aretine' references, though it completely removed all references to Aretino. In 1568, the translator 'R.H.' now assumed to be Richard Head,⁵⁴ produced *The Crafty Whore the mistery and iniquity of bawdy houses laid open, in a dialogue between two subtle bawds wherein, as in a mirrour, our city-courtesans may see their soul-destroying art, and crafty devices, whereby they insnare and beguile youth*. This clearly derives from a mixture of other continental translations of Aretino's 'Life of Whores': *The Crafty Whore's* characters 'Antonia' and 'Thais' are the same names used in the French translations, while the title itself bears many similarities with those of the continental translations. One is *Le miroir des Courtisans* ('as in a mirrour', 'our city courtesans'), and most use some form of subtitle which involves the 'discovery of the falsities, betrayals, and treasons' of courtesans in a dialogue between an older and younger prostitute. The long title's description of courtesans 'ensnaring' youth is also similar to the frontispiece and title of *Het Net der Wellustigheyt* (The Net of Lecherousness) which was the edition printed closest to *The Crafty Whore* in 1646. In the preface there are echoes of *Het Net* too, when Head claims that 'I have herein done as your Physicians do with their bitter pills, that is gild them, to invite their patients to swallow them.'⁵⁵ While this is a common metaphor, this imagery is reminiscent of *Het Net's* title page, on which a caption taken from the 1620 text *Selfstryt* (lit. Self struggle, self harm) by Jacob Cats, which translates as 'the whore's most gracious welcomes are like gilded pills, that sparkle in your eyes, but do your body swell' (Der Hoeren goet onthael, zijn also vergulde pillen,/ Die blincken wel in't oog: maer doon her lichaem swillen).

⁵⁴ The *Crafty Whore* was advertised in the 1661 edition of Thomas Flatman's *Don Juan Lamberto*, in 'Books Printed and Sold by H. Marsh', under the subsection 'small octavo', as having been 'Published for the good of Young Men, by R.H. Esq.' *Don Juan Lamberto: or, a comical history of the late times* (London: Henry Marsh, 1661) sig.G4r. 'R.H.' seems to be Richard Head, who had published a now lost poem called *Venus' Cabinet Unlock'd* around the same time, and had his risqué *English Rogue* printed by Henry Marsh in 1665.

⁵⁵ *The Crafty Whore*, sig.A2v

Despite Moulton's saying that *The Crafty Whore* did not sell well because there remains only one copy,⁵⁶ I would argue that lack of survival does not necessarily indicate a lack of popularity, especially as this was an erotic and 'Aretine' text, which was often censored. An advertisement for *The Crafty Whore* in *Don Juan Lamberto*, another text printed by Henry Marsh, shows that the book was still being advertised in 1661. It was also listed in two of the 'Mrs Fotheringham' texts as essential reading material for a prostitute: in *Strange and True Newes*, it is listed together with *The Night Search*, while in *A Strange and True Conference Between Two Notorious Bawds Damarose Page & Pris. Fotheringham* (1660), *The Crafty Whore* is listed together with Head's other erotic text, *Venus' Cabinet Unlock'd*, as books to furnish the brothel library.

The Crafty Whore does not acknowledge that it is an adaptation of Aretino's 'Life of Whores'. Instead the title creates the illusion, much like the 'found text' of *Strange and True Newes*, that this is an overheard dialogue between two bawds working in London in the dying days of the Interregnum, and that it is wholly the invention of Richard Head, who presents himself as a repentant prodigal, '*one of their late, (but now penitent) captives*'. The paratextual material mirrors that of Xuárez' Spanish translation, as it instructs the reader how they should read what follows, and justifies that licentious literature can be useful so long as it is read by well-intentioned readers, and not by those intending to put it to lascivious ends. Head writes that:

I here forewarn all those that are resolv'd to follow their Lusts and debauchments, not to read it, least they pervert the sense, and so turne that which otherwise might be good, in it self, into Poison. I do ingeniously confesse, that some expressions may be somewhat dissolute and wanton (and therefore it is, that I forbid dissolute person to read them) because they are the representatives of such persons, words and actions, and therefore I hope the easier to be excused.⁵⁷

Head makes two similar points to the Elsevir and Xuárez' prefaces, which I discuss in chapter one; first, that if the result of this text is further debauchery, then it is the reader

⁵⁶ Moulton, 'Crafty Whores: the Moralizing of Aretino's "Dialogues"', p.88

⁵⁷ *The Crafty Whore*, sigs. A2v-A3r

who misreads, rather than the writer who had written it 'as a warning'. Second, that the use of 'wanton expressions' is justifiable in the representation of the natural speech of such women, 'the representatives of such persons.' On the second point, Garfield's *Wandering whore* also has an apology from the printer that explains to the reader that 'the Publisher hereof hath not intended these Dialogues, for the encouragement of Voice and Profaneness, although some dishrellishing passages do occur, according to their language, which cannot be omitted.'⁵⁸ This uses the same rhetoric of reproducing profane texts to expose sin and warn readers, and like the *Capricciosi*, adds the argument that the blunt language of the prostitutes is reproduced for decorum's sake: the language of prostitutes 'cannot be omitted'.

Like all the other translations, and notably unlike Aretino's original purpose, the *Crafty Whore* presents itself as a warning to young men, though the claim to write from personal experience as a repentant prodigal is closer to Xuárez' justification that Solomon also wrote of his misdemeanours in order to educate others. Head similarly uses examples from the classical and biblical past to justify writing 'his' text on prostitutes: 'since the holy Prophets wrote thereof, as also Solomon described their gestures, fawning, allurements.'⁵⁹ He also picks up on Xuárez' main concern with the financial depletion of wealthy families through prostitution. Head writes that he would like to prevent 'the ruine of many rich and antient families' and that courtesans are '*Locusts*, who still imploy their time in destroying the young plants of this land.'⁶⁰

The *Crafty Whore* and Garfield's *Wandering Whore* place their courtesans in Italian settings, with 'Rome' a thinly veiled version of London. Like the *Wandering Whore* and the various translations discussed in chapter 3, Head uses a dual process of making the text speak of ostensibly foreign events, while also 'domesticating' that which was indeed something written by a foreign author and in the process removing Aretino's agency from the text.

Most of this happens in the preface which is addressed by Head 'to his Countri-men', and begins: 'Were there in this our native and noble Country *England*, no such creatures, (alias Divells incarnate) as Bawds and Whores....it would have been a vain thing in me, to

⁵⁸ Garfield, (part 1) sig.A1v

⁵⁹ Garfield, (part 1) sig.A4v

⁶⁰ Garfield, (part 1) sigs.A1v, A2r

have wrote of this *lascivium et dolorum pecus* [lascivious and herd-like suffering] and therein to have admonish'd you to shun them...But since even strangers take notice....of the levity of our nation, and that we have too, too Apishly imitated the *French*⁶¹ he has 'resolved' to expose the tricks of courtesans. This is an example of the dual cultural translation occurring in this text; at one point Head is saying that the problems of prostitution are not simply foreign matters, but are apparent here in England too, yet in the next sentence he says that this English levity is due to having 'too, too Apishly imitated the *French*'. The 'disease' of prostitution is therefore imagined as having been contracted abroad, and then brought over here to thrive. It both is and is not a native problem. Aretino, here mined as a source-text while in the case of the 'Mrs Fotheringham/wandering whore' pamphlets used as a pseudonym, is equally transformed into a simultaneously exotic and domesticated representative of prostitution.

Conclusion: Anonymous Aretino

Whether transformed into 'L'Aretin François' in France, or 'Peter Aretine' in England, by the Seventeenth Century, Aretino had become thoroughly translated into the cultures which used him as short-hand for erotic pictures and drawings. One might assume that by this time, nothing remained of Aretino other than his name, yet many of his texts were still in circulation if, like *The Crafty Whore*, thoroughly anonymised and presented as the work of another author.

This practice of reprinting Aretino's works without attribution was recurrent in the Seventeenth Century. In 1604, Aretino's religious text, *L'Umanità di Cristo* was translated with some major modifications by the dramatist Pierre de Larivey, and released under his own name as *L'Humanité de notre saveur Jesus Christ*. This, says his modern editor John Macgilivray, was 'simply a touching up of a previous translation...by Jean de Vauzelles,⁶² i.e. Vauzelles' 1539 edition of *Trois livres de l'humanite de Jesuchrist: divinement descrite, et au vif représentée par Pierre Aretin Italien*. Yet, a crucial difference between the translations of de Vauzelles and de Larivey's is that while the earlier translator openly attributed the text to Aretino, and indeed used his moniker 'divine' as an advertising feature, by 1604 Larivey

⁶¹ *The Crafty Whore*, sigs.A1r, A1v

⁶² John Macgilivray, *Life and Works of Pierre Larivey* (Leipzig: Franckenstein and Wagner, 1889) p.9

masked Aretino, presumably because his name was still on the Index of Prohibited Books. In her edition of the French *L'Humanité* (2009) Bruna Conconi's comparison of the two translations suggests that while de Vauzelles' was an almost word-for-word translation with a propensity for Italianate neologisms, Larivey's translation used simplified language to reduce the affected, highly-wrought language of the original. Conconi believes that, if indeed Larivey did refer to de Vauzelles' text, he rarely used it. In any case, Larivey certainly domesticated the original text for a new audience, by cleaning up Aretino's originally gory text, removing all mentions of nudity and blood, and insisted (contrary to the initial purpose of the text) on the divinity rather than the humanity of Christ.⁶³

In seventeenth-century Italy, meanwhile, the fervour of the Counter Reformation had died down enough for Aretino's texts to be reprinted in Venice, though not to the extent that they could be openly attributed to him. Instead, three of his plays, *Il Marescalco*, *L'Ipocrito* and *Il Filosofo* were reissued as *Il Cavallarizzo* (1601, 1606 twice, 1608) *Il Finto* (1601, 1610) and *Il Sofista* (1601, 1610) by Giorgio Greco, and attributed not to Aretino but to the poet Luigi Tansillo who had died in 1568. These texts were expunged of religious or political matters deemed sensitive, for example, *Il Finto* no longer has the central character of the hypocrite as a Catholic priest, but simply as a sycophantic follower.⁶⁴ Two more plays, *La Cortigiana* and *La Talanta* would be renamed *Sciocco* (1604, 1628) and *La Ninetta* (1604/4) printed by Francesco Bonafede and attributed to yet another recently deceased poet and statesman Cesare Caporali.⁶⁵ This way of printing Aretino continued with Marco Ginammi's reprinting of Aretino's religious works, attributed now to 'Partenio Etiro': 'Pietro Aretino' transposed. These new editions were the *Vita di S. Caterina* (1630, 1636), *Vita di San Tomaso d'Aquino* (1628, 1630) *Vita di Maria Vergine* (1628, 1630) *Dell' humanità del Figliuolo di Dio* (1628, twice, 1633, 1645) and *Parafrasi sopra i Sette Salmi della Penitenza di David*, (1627, twice).⁶⁶

⁶³ See Bruna Conconi, ed. *Les trois livres de l'humanité de Jésus-Christ traduits par Pierre de Larivey* (Paris: Champion, 2009)

⁶⁴ Grootes, *Dramatische Struktur*, p.45

⁶⁵ See Richard Andrews, *Scripts and Scenarios: The Performance of Comedy in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) fn. 45. p.264

⁶⁶ Ginammi does refer to the transposed name of 'Partenio Etiro' in the *Vita di S. Caterina*, he refers to Aretino as an 'author so worthy, as any other, that ever wrote in the Tuscan tongue' (autore così degno, quanto alcun altro, che scrivesse giamai nella Toscana favella). Preface to *Vita di santa Caterina, vergine e martire...di Partenio Etiro* (Venice: Marco Ginammi, 1630) sig.A3r.

There were, however, instances when Aretino was still being acknowledged as the author of his works. Although Wolfe never got round to printing Aretino's collected letters after registering them with the Stationers' Company in 1588, in 1608-9 Matteo il Maestro printed the six volumes of Aretino's letters in Paris. Despite Aretino's place on the Index, this Parisian printer was able to openly attribute this book to Aretino, to include the 'flagellum principum' portrait of him by Caraglio, and to print it 'con privilegio' with a license from the king. In Amsterdam, the poet Pieter C. Hooft had translated Aretino's play, *L'Hipocrito* as 'Schijnheiligh' and had acknowledged Aretino's authorship. When his fellow member of the Rederijkers' literary society, Gerbrand Bredero, transformed Hooft's translation into verse before his death in 1618, however, this translation would be printed under Bredero's name in a collected edition of his plays in 1624, erasing Aretino's involvement once again. By the end of the century de Hooghe's translation of Aretino's 'life of prostitutes', *Het Leven en d'Arglistige Treken der Courtisanen* (1680) did, however, fully attribute the text to Aretino: 'In't Italiaens beschreven door ARETIN' (Written in Italian by ARETIN). At the same time, the Elsevir press had reprinted the full *Sei Giornate* four times in the Seventeenth Century by 1660, with each edition openly attributed to Aretino.

Despite these outliers which occurred mainly in the Low Countries, the predominant association of the name 'Aretino' by the end of the Seventeenth Century was as an adjective, 'Aretine', used as short hand for 'erotic writing' or 'erotic images'. This has in turn affected criticism on Aretino's reception in the Seventeenth Century, which replicates these simplified references. Take for example Sarah Toulalan's *Imagining Sex* (2007). In a note explaining the use of the word 'Aretine', Toulalan writes: 'A reference to "Aretine" in a text generally serves as shorthand to suggest sexually explicit material and would signify the sexual nature of a text to the reader. Texts that were pseudonymously attributed to "Aretine" or "Aretin" would again alert the reader to the likely nature of its contents.'⁶⁷ The same point is made in James Turner's *Schooling Sex* which begins by discussing how Aretino was one of the first writers to write about sex in this form of educational dialogue, thereby lending his name to an entire genre of 'Aretine' erotic dialogues.

Both Toulalan and Turner say that 'Aretine' was a form of short hand, but they go no further in explaining why this had happened to Aretino specifically. As far as they are

⁶⁷ Toulalan, *Imagining Sex*. n.87, p.186

concerned the case is clear: Aretino wrote pornographic texts, and therefore became associated with pornography. This is an understandable conclusion; their focus is on the Seventeenth Century and as this chapter shows by this period Aretino was primarily known for two misattributed, pornographic works. They are, however, looking at the result, rather than the process by which Aretino became so heavily associated with pornography. I hope to have shown over the course of this thesis that this was not the only way Aretino could have been interpreted. What occurred was a process of simplification and misattribution. In the words of Paul Larivaille, one of Aretino's biographers, his was 'una fama usuparta', an usurped fame.⁶⁸ In the conclusion, I will attempt to show what this process of forgetting about Aretino tells us about the wider concerns tackled throughout this thesis.

⁶⁸ See Larivaille, *L'Aretin entre Renaissance et Maniérisme*. pp.49-53

Conclusion

Aretino mediated: an issue of control?

This thesis has followed the various acts of mediation which transformed Aretino's posthumous reputation abroad, out of which two main themes have surfaced, which I will define in the following conclusion. These are the fact that the mediation of Aretino's texts were often covered over or 'vanished' away due to an asymmetric relationship between the form and content of Aretino's posthumous existence, and secondly that the mechanical reproduction of his work unexpectedly aided the process of simplifying his posthumous reputation. Before turning to these themes, I first want to explain why this thesis differs from other approaches to Aretino's posthumous reputation.

Partly, this is because I focus on the collaborative production of a posthumous reputation, rather than looking at authorial 'self-fashioning'. Writing on authorship, Mikhail Bakhtin suggested that an individual appears to be complete and unchanging only when contemplated from an external perspective, because the outsider is unable to access the internal flux of the person he examines. The identity of others therefore appears to be finite. What I find useful when considering Aretino's posthumous reputation is Bakhtin's ultimate conclusion that 'This personality will not exist if another does not create it', suggesting that one cannot author oneself, and must therefore rely on others to 'aesthetically complete' you. Aretino as a phenomenon would not have existed had others not mediated him. Although Bakhtin writes that 'we could say that death is the form of the aesthetic consummation of an individual', elsewhere he writes that this completion is really the 'aesthetic consummation' *by* an individual, so that by dying one is handing oneself completely over to another freely to shape your personality. It is only posthumously that an author can give himself over for a new plot and form to be developed.¹

The problem with the idea of reaching 'aesthetic consummation' in the case of Aretino is that critics writing about him associate the dual death of Aretino and his works in 1556 and in 1559 as if this ended any future potential for Aretino and his texts to change their meaning. The format of the majority of criticism on Aretino's posthumous reception is, as

¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* eds. Michael Holquist & Vadim Liapunov, transl. Vadim Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) p.36, p.131

mentioned in the introduction, to use one Aretino text and then compare it to a later text by another writer, looking for shared themes in order to highlight the latter's 'reception' of Aretino. Although read as interacting with each other, both texts are considered to be aesthetically complete and self-contained. No further mediation is usually considered, other than the primary example of one literary writer using the work of the dead other. Gavin Alexander, also briefly mentioned in the introduction, prefers the word 'response' to describe the interaction between the posthumous writer (Sidney) and his living mediators (Greville, the Countess of Pembroke etc), as this implies a dialogue between the two and therefore flattens out the power-balance between the agencies of the dead author and his later collaborator. I would argue, however, that this also gives the impression that not much has changed to the posthumous writer between the time when they wrote whichever specific text, and the time in which their later collaborator is 'responding' to it. It suggests that that person has been preserved in the instance that they were aesthetically completed by their deaths, or by the completion of their text. The first theme that I am going to discuss, that of vanishing mediation, creates this illusion. By uncovering these processes of vanished mediation which created the impression of Aretino's 'aesthetic consummation', this thesis differs from previous criticism which understands Aretino's posthumous reputation as a finished product.

Vanished mediation

What I hope to have shown in this thesis is that Aretino's reputation was remoulded multiple times, and for various purposes and audiences across different European cultures. The mediation of others resulted in the retrospective appearance that Aretino had indeed 'always been' one of his various simplified reputations: had always been a pornographer, had always been a discoverer of courtesans, had always been an atheist, and so on. The involvement of others after his death would also be an attempt to control the word 'Aretine' so that it would be capable of signifying only one thing.

This process could be interpreted using the concept of the 'vanishing mediator', as developed first by Fredric Jameson and later by Slavoj Žižek. Vanished mediation is a dual process which negotiates a transformation between two opposing concepts. Importantly, after this transformation has been achieved and the secondary meaning is successful in

replacing the former, the act of mediation then disappears, leaving no trace of intervention behind so that the secondary concept appears to have existed from the very beginning. Take for example the case of the *Dialogue de l'Aretin*, a French translation of the 'Life of whores' segment of Aretino's *Sei Giornate*. While the anonymous translator acknowledges on the titlepage some element of mediation— 'Traduict d'Italien en François' (Translated from Italian into French)— all other mediation is disappeared. As chapter 3 showed, by the time that the *Dialogue* was published in 1600, Aretino's original dialogue had been mediated by various other European translators, who reframed and in part rewrote his text to conform with moral expectations. The *Dialogue* presents itself as simply a transparent translation of Aretino into French, the reader unaware that the original text was not in fact simply directed at exposing the tricks of prostitutes, but had also commented on the violence and possessiveness of their clients. The danger of covering over this mediation is the resulting appearance that Aretino was directly communicating with a new French reader in 1600, and that therefore this new message was being spoken in his voice.

Jameson's famous example in *The Vanishing Mediator: Narrative Structure in Max Weber* (1973) was to show how Protestantism had become a 'vanishing mediator' between feudalism and capitalism, so that it was ultimately to be transformed into a theological justification for capitalism, an institution seemingly the opposite of Christianity. Žižek later applied a dialectic interpretation to Jameson's example, and suggested that the reason that the vanishing mediator occurs is when there is an asymmetry between the content and the form of the two concepts. Referring to Jameson, Žižek writes:

The passage from feudalism to Protestantism is not of the same nature as the passage from Protestantism to bourgeois everyday life with its privatized religion. The first passage concerns "content" (under the guise of preserving the religious form or even its strengthening, the crucial shift—the assertion of the ascetic acquisitive stance in economic activity as the domain of manifestation of Grace— takes place), whereas the second passage is a purely formal act, a change of form (as soon as Protestantism is realized as the ascetic acquisitive stance, it can fall off as form).²

² Slavoj Žižek. *For they know not what they do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002) p.185

Žižek identifies two instances of change: first the negation of content within the 'old' form. The second movement is what Hegel had identified as the 'negation of the negation', where the new content no longer needs the outer form, which is cast off as obsolete. Protestantism had negated the need for feudalism by emphasising individual contemplation over a universalised Christianity, and therefore gave a religious justification for the movement between feudalism and capitalism. Protestantism was then negated itself when capitalism no longer needed a religious justification for its existence. Žižek then shows how this theory of vanished mediation can be applied beyond the Weberian interpretation of Marxism.

Like Bakhtin's point that the individual only appears finite from an external position, Žižek says that history is a form of narrating the past into a set of understandable rules and uses the example of the October Revolution to explain this process as a form of vanishing mediation. After the revolution had been won and new power had been consolidated, the 'presuppositions' of the revolution were 'posited', to use Hegelian terminology. The openness of on-the-spot decisions that had to be made during the revolution by people such as Lenin and Trotsky when none of its outcomes were self-evident, 'was again lost' because with hindsight 'it was again possible to assume the position of an "objective observer" and narrate the linear progression of events, ascertaining how Soviet power broke the imperialist chain at its weakest link and thus started a new epoch of World History, and so on.'³ As well as chiming with Hayden White's point that historians transform past events into a coherent narrative, Žižek says these are also acts of 'vanishing mediation'. If for Jameson a philosophy such as Protestantism could be the 'vanishing mediator', then here it is another act of interpretation which must paradoxically 'vanish' as soon as it has become no longer one among many possible interpretations, but is instead understood as the cause of historical events. As such, an interpretation succeeds if it is accepted as the most likely version of events, but it also loses its own definition as an 'interpretation' by having transformed into what is now considered to be 'the past'. What was open, confusing and messy has been organised and justified, and through the process of organising it is forgotten and vanishes.

Sometimes it is not purely the process of organising information into a simpler format that allows the act of mediation to vanish. In other instances, such as Jameson had

³ Žižek, pp.190-1

highlighted by the transformation of Protestantism into the religious wing of capitalism, the process of making mediation disappear can seem more deliberate. Marx suggested that capitalism works by effacing the traces of production once the product has passed into the sphere of consumption. For example, while we may not want to think of how our Nike trainers got onto our feet, or how a beef burger got onto our plate, by ignoring the process because it makes us uncomfortable we are in danger of reifying the end product or consumer item itself. This, I argue, is what has happened to Aretino, whose reputation as a pornographer (i.e. Aretino as 'end product') was used to either demonise him by those claiming moral superiority, or more recently to reify him as an emblem of progressive sexual politics by critics of early modern sexuality. What has been overlooked is the process by which Aretino's posthumous reputation was manufactured by others. Think for example of the Wolfe press' insistence that their new editions are restoring the text to what Aretino would have intended, and the fact that their titlepages are devoid of publishing information, which even if conducted so as to smuggle the books into Italy, removed signs of mediation. Even though Xuárez acknowledges his mediation in his letter to the reader, unless the reader was able to compare his translation with the Italian edition, in practice many acts of mediation such as the inclusion of the argument, removal of anti-clerical content and a rewritten ending are not signalled. Think most of all of *I Modi* in which Aretino's own mediation as an interpreter of these images was vanished, to the extent that his name became the primary form in which these erotic images were packaged.

To return to Žižek's point, it is when there is asymmetry between the form and the content of Aretino that we see these instances of mediation. The translators of chapter 3, for example, preserved the form of Aretino, but altered the content by reframing it. Others such as Giorgio Greco, Francesco Bonafede and Marco Ginammi reprinted Aretino's plays and religious texts under pseudonyms, maintaining the content, but this time changing the form. A combination of these two alterations are, however, necessary to act as full 'invisible mediation', and this does indeed happen, for example in the cases of Pierre de Larivey's French translation of Aretino's *L'Umanità di Cristo* as *L'Humanité de notre saviour Jesus Christ* and Richard Head's adaptation of Aretino's 'life of whores' as *The Crafty Whore*. Larivey first altered the content, by removing all mentions of nudity and gore from the original, and more importantly downplaying the humanity of Christ (as overtly referred to in the title) and instead emphasised his divinity. He then altered the form by removing the by then

unfashionable label 'Aretino' from the titlepage, and claiming the text as his own. The same happens with Head's *The Crafty Whore*, in which first the content had been repeatedly altered since the c.1540 pirated edition of the 'life of whores', but which was still attributed to Aretino by most of the translators. Head not only altered the content once again, but also altered the form by claiming that the text was based on his own observations of English prostitutes.

The unevenness of the relationship between the form and content of Aretino is also a useful way of thinking about the three main phases in the changing attitudes towards Aretino's work and morality delineated in this thesis. Chapters 3 and 4 are grouped together to show the changing reception of Aretino, working as a hinge between Aretino as a stylist in chapters 1 and 2, and Aretino as a pornographer in chapters 5 & 6. In reality, these central chapters show two different forms of change occurring to Aretino's posthumous reputation. In chapter 3, translators are questioning the content of Aretino's writing, as even as early as 1547 Xuárez suggests that what was acceptable only a decade earlier in Venice is no longer suitable for Spanish tastes. Despite this, the name or form of Aretino still holds power, and so the content is altered within its parameters. Aretino's anti-clericism, hatred of hypocrisy in the social elite, and open enjoyment of voyeurism is transformed into a safer form of Aretino as a satirist warning young men of the dangers of women.

In chapter 4 what is being argued over is a combination of the form and content of Aretino, but primarily the form of Aretino. Gabriel Harvey has no qualms with dismissing Aretino altogether as a bad influence. There is no asymmetry between the content and form for Harvey, unlike for the translators who reproduced an altered text in order to preserve the Aretino name. For Thomas Nashe, meanwhile, this is an issue of form. He approves (or at least does not *disapprove*) of the content, but suggests that it is simply the reputation of Aretino as well as contemporary writers such as Greene which are unfairly being judged by the likes of Harvey. Nashe defends both writers against attempts to reframe them in entirely negative terms, and writes for both a form of epitaph, in a bid to separate the truth (at least, as he imagines it to be) from the fiction.

A similar imbalance is apparent in chapter 1 between the Wolfe & Elsevir press and expurgators of Italian vernacular fiction. Like Harvey, the presses see no asymmetry between form and content in Aretino, but unlike Harvey are more positive about his potential influence over others. They set themselves in contrast to the expurgators who 'Barbagrigia'

claims had 'lascrated' Aretino's writing. These expurgators altered the content of controversial writers, in order to preserve their reputation or form as writers.

In chapter 6 meanwhile we can see in the 'wandering whore' texts of 1660, ascribed to an anglicised 'Peter Aretine', that the name or form of Aretino has regained some power, and is newly meaningful, but only by utterly replacing the old content with something new. These are not texts which are attempting to pass themselves as being truly penned by Aretino, instead it is understood that his utility is as a name only, that the form has truly become stronger than the content.

An example of the vacillation of meaning that 'Aretino' once contained can be seen in the changing use of his moniker 'the Scourge of Princes'. Initially used to describe Aretino's reputation as the man who could persuade the powerful to follow his wishes, the meaning of the word 'dei' or 'of' changed back and forth in later uses of this moniker, so that Aretino went from someone who scourged princes, to a scourge acting on behalf of princes. The first meaning was still being used by Nashe when he refers to the need for an English Aretine to 'repair his whip' and ride 'golden asses...to death with railing', yet in other instances the identity of Aretino as a 'scourge' had become separated from his reputation as a blackmailer of princes. Sometimes this would be only slight, for example when Edward Guilpin describing Aretino as a 'whip of fooles' living 'to scourge these hypocrites', in which the term is widened to portray Aretino as a satirist and scourge of a generalised group of fools and hypocrites.

Where Aretino's identity as a 'scourge of princes' is made to hold an opposing concept, is in the various instances in which he is transformed from scourging powerful men into scourging immoral women. Many of the subtitles of the vernacular translations keep the identity of Aretino as a form of 'scourge', but interpret him as a castigator of courtesans. He is the 'great demonstrator' of the 'falsehoods' of 'women in love' in Xuárez' translation and in the Latin *Pornodidascalus*, or the 'discoverer of fallacies' in *Histoire des Amours faintes*, and 'uncovers the lies, robbery, betrayal, and sorcery used by courtesans' in the c.1540 pirated Italian edition. Even the Wolfe press and Thomas Nashe, who both referred to Aretino as the scourge of princes and patrons, elsewhere refer to him as a castigator of prostitutes. In the 'Barbagrigia' preface, Aretino is described as revealing to the world the 'wickedness of evil women, and filthiness of hypocrites', while in the Elsevir preface he is similarly described as exposing 'the evil wickedness of women' in order to 'teach you how to

recognise and repudiate them'. Both of these would suggest that the Wolfe and Elsevir editions share more with the moralising of the translations than their claims to accurate reprinting would otherwise suggest. In Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, meanwhile, his protagonist Jack Wilton is rescued from the clutches of a vindictive Roman courtesan by Aretino, who Nashe names 'searcher and chiefe Inquisiter to the colledge of curtizans' who makes certain that 'the curtizan might bee more narrowly sifted and examined' for her crime.⁴

The clearest example, however, of how the 'scourge of princes' moniker completely changed over time appears in the full title of *De Dwalende Hoer* which ascribes the text to 'Mr Pieter Aretin, the SCOURGE of PRINCES, showing the REVENGE of GOD' (Mr Pieter Aretin, by-ghenoemt de GEESEL der VORSTEN, ende de WRAECKE GODTS). Nothing is mentioned of the sins of princes or the powerful inside the text, and so the title seems to be representing Aretino as a vassal of princes, who enacts God's revenge by scourging the wicked. In the preface the translator explains that he has set the dialogue in Rome, but wishes to remind the reader that 'the same is happening now in our Fatherland, and [because] it too has become fertile soil [for vice]' (de zelfde nu in ons Vaderlandt zelf zoo vruchtbaar gheworden sien).⁵ For this reason, the writer 'can no longer remain silent' (niet langher versweegen kan blyven) and presents the need for another Aretino in the Low Countries, just as Nashe had done in 1592 in England:

Yes, one must acknowledge with sadness, that we should have a need here for a new Aretin, to describe ever more new cursed findings...You now have here in our language his *Wandering WHORE*, in which he introduces two of the filthiest, nastiest and most miserable Creatures.

jaa men moet zelfs met droefheydt bekennen, dat hier wel een nieuwen Aretin zoude van nooden weesen, om ons meerder en nieuwer vervloecte vonden te beschrijven...Gy hebt dan nu hier in onse taal sijn Dwaelende

⁴ Nashe, *Unfortunate Traveller*, vol.2, p.264

⁵ [Romeyn de Hooghe?] *De Dwaelende Hoer, of t'saemen-spraek tusschen Magdaleen en Willemyn, van Mr. Pieter Aretin, by-ghenoemt de GEESEL der VORSTEN, ende de WRAECKE GODTS* (s/n. c.1668, edition now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München, Rem.IV 404) p.2 (my translation)

*HOER. Waar in hy ont twee vande vuilste, verachtste ende ellendigste Schepselen in voert.*⁶

Unlike Nashe, who had wished for an English Aretine 'that might strip these golden asses' (i.e. patrons), the Dutch translator's wish for a 'new Aretin' is in order to discover the 'cursed findings' of 'the filthiest, nastiest and most miserable Creatures' (i.e. prostitutes). With this and other changing uses of the term 'scourge of princes', Aretino's reputation was being altered from within and reinterpreted as condemning the acts of courtesans rather than detailing their tricks to entertain his readers. Aretino began to speak on behalf of princes, rather than shaming them for their hypocrisies.

By covering over these multiple acts of mediation, readers are led to think that later rewritings in fact predated the act of mediation. What continued to exist of Aretino was the outside form while the content was transformed within its parameters, like a parasite which feeds on the body of its host and leaves only the husk behind. Initially the content of Aretino was transformed for reasons of morality and new literary tastes, but eventually buzzwords such as 'wandering whores' and 'Aretine's postures' completely negated any original content, having needed the form or name of 'Aretino' purely to publicise associated erotic material. The second theme that I will turn to now is connected to this issue by looking at how the repetition of mechanical reproduction allowed for such invisible mediation to occur, and helped to give it the film of authenticity.

Misattribution and reproducible material

The choices that an editor such as Wolfe or a translator such as Xuárez, must make are material choices which also affect the discursive field of Aretino. Like Nashe, the Wolfe and Elsevir presses were aware of the misrepresentation of Aretino. To counteract the expurgated texts they claimed were circulated by contemporary Florentine presses, the Wolfe press was, as argued in chapter 1, actively attempting to create more material 'proof' in order to preserve what they imagined to be Aretino's authorial intentions. In reality, these acts were in themselves a form of rewriting the past, looking for legitimacy in a sense of origin. Both, after all, included a dubiously attributed *Zoppino* dialogue in their collections,

⁶ *De Dwaelende Hoer* pp.2-3

and by doing so attributed another misogynistic text to Aretino. Whatever their choices, they ultimately provide more material 'proof' through the reproduction of one version over another. Despite the Wolfe and Elsevir presses' intentions, the majority of material strengthened a simplified version of events: Aretino the writer was to become 'Aretine' the brand.

In chapters 5 and 6 I covered the issue of images and texts which had been so strongly associated with Aretino that they became his lasting legacy, but which were in fact the products of other writers and artists. In spending a certain amount of time on these attributed works I was not intending to sift out truth from fiction in order to attribute the good to Aretino and the bad to another writer, but rather to focus on the background noise that built up around this figure. I concluded that by the mid-seventeenth-century onward, Aretino had been transformed into the adjective 'Aretine', compact enough to give an additional layer of meaning to anything pornographic. As André Lefevere put it in his essay on 'refractions' of translation, literary criticism, historiography, and so on:

A writer's work gains exposure and achieves influence mainly through misunderstandings and misconceptions or, to use a more neutral term, refractions. Writers and their work are always understood and conceived against a certain background or, if you will, are refracted through a certain spectrum, just as their work itself can refract previous work through a certain spectrum.⁷

That interpretation, whether a reader response, translation, or literary criticism, is nearly always a form of misunderstanding or 'refraction'. This explains the impetus that allows a posthumous reputation like Aretino's to mutate into different forms, but it is also the ease of reproducibility that allows some versions to spread and grow into hardened truths. The reproducibility of print and its effect on how we perceive 'truth' is a concern not only for early modern historians, but also for critics of contemporary media such as Hanna Kuusela, who in one article mapped out the 'reading formations' of a popular contemporary Finnish novel, *Layla* (2011), by Jari Tervo.

⁷ André Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) pp.233-249, p.234

The book deals with Kurdish and German immigrants living in Finland and their involvement in human trafficking, but most interesting for this thesis, Kuusela shows how a certain fragment from this book (the first line which reads: 'I was engaged in the cradle, for fifteen years I prepared myself for my husband and he prepared himself for me') was reproduced over and over again by various mediators. These included the book's publishers and advertising campaign; print, televisual and digital media; and finally blogs and online reader-reviews. This evocative sentence was interpreted as playing on the concern of Finnish readers with the customs of the Kurdish immigrant community in their country.⁸ While it is understandable that publishers, retailers and journalists may jump on such a line for advertising purposes, what interests Kuusela is the response of individual readers reviewing the book in online blogs. Supposing that their response should be relatively independent of the will of the publishers, Kuusela discovered that actually these readers reproduced the same fragment and the accompanying interpretation that was being publicised in the commercial media.

Just as print's reproducibility created a textual overload for early modern readers,⁹ Kuusela's argument for the 'new materiality' of online communication means that we are suffering a similar textual overload through the ease in which digital code can be fragmented, 'copied and pasted'. However, rather than this multiplication of sources giving readers the ability to compare and contrast different versions of events as Frances Dolan and Elizabeth Spiller have argued was the case in seventeenth-century print culture,¹⁰ Kuusela points out the lack of heterodox analysis, *despite* the potential proliferation of interpretations that could be made available through digital communication in the twenty-first century. It is maybe anachronistic to bring this up when discussing early modern mediation of Aretino, but I do so because she describes a process that I imagine was similar to that which occurred to Aretino. Increased material did not always allow for multiple interpretations to proliferate, but instead repetition strengthened the association of Aretino with certain concepts such as pornography or atheism. In the contemporary case of the

⁸ Hanna Kuusela, 'On the Materiality of Contemporary Reading Formations: the case of Jari Tervo's *Layla*', *New Formations*, 78.3 (2013), pp.65-82.

⁹ See Ann Blair, 'Reading strategies for coping with information overload, ca. 1550-1700', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64, no. 1 (2003) pp.11-23

¹⁰ See Frances Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2013), and Elizabeth Spiller, *Science, Reading, and Renaissance Literature: the art of making knowledge, 1580-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

blogosphere, you would expect the proliferation of different ideas both because blogs are not as regulated as traditional media and because we are repeatedly reminded by that mainstream media that the internet is a space where eccentric, dangerous and pornographic ideas proliferate. Despite this, what Kuusela noticed was the homogeneity of the response by bloggers to *Layla*:

different autonomous but interdependent actors cited the same paragraphs and reproduced the same metonymic phrase in relation to the same description of the wedding night [i.e. 'I was engage in the cradle'], and the communication technologies which they used facilitated and positively encouraged this unanimity...[This technology] encourages users to recycle and link to already existing texts, rather than to produce or invent novel ways of expressing their own reading experience.¹¹

The blog writers were, probably unwittingly, helping to consolidate the dominant reading of *Layla* by repeating this metonymic, evocative phrase and the discourse which surrounded it, namely the intersection of the culture of Kurdish immigrants with that of the native Finns. Different to the sphere in which Aretino's works were circulating, Kuusela clearly points out that this is a response specific to modern communication technology, which allows for the exact replication of code. Similarly, this modern audience experienced a media bombardment through billboards, television interviews, and the blurb on the back cover of their books, which repeated and analysed that first line, and as such they were not coming to this book afresh, but reading it in the context of this campaign. Their expectations were therefore based on how far the book accorded with the cultural interpretation they had encountered.

Thinking, however, about similarities between Kuusela's example and the reception of Aretino, this would explain why the majority of his later readers would reproduce this metonymic code of information about Aretino as the writer of 'the Wandering Whore' or 'Aretine's Pictures', even if not literally reproducible in quite such an automatic response as the bloggers cutting and pasting. It is reminiscent of Michel Foucault's point in *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la Prison* (Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, 1975) that

¹¹ Kuusela, pp.78-9

power can be internalised and turned into a form of self-surveillance, as was apparent from Pepys' destruction of *L'Ecoles des Filles* after having used it to masturbate. This would mean that those in a position of cultural power would not even need to censor or overtly control interpretation. This is what we see in the last section of this thesis in the repeated use of the same slogans and buzzwords, in contrast to more critically engaged arguments between Harvey and Nashe in chapters 2 and 4, in which both drew on various sources to argue over the truthfulness of how Aretino was represented.

Kuusela's findings, read against those of Frances Dolan and Elizabeth Spiller, do, however, conclude two different things. Firstly, that in some cases, the technology to reproduce texts can allow a reader access to a variety of interpretations, and suggest to them that there is therefore not one single version of an event (for example, Nashe's suggestion that Aretino's supposed epitaph is not accurate). Secondly, in other cases the technology to reproduce texts can accelerate one interpretation of events, and create more 'proof' to direct a reader's expectations in one direction (for example, the proliferation of 'Wandering Whore' narratives and the misattribution of various erotic images to Aretino). The ability to reproduce texts or code quickly and 'without deformation' as Kuusela showed can bolster a certain version of the truth, yet the fact that multiple texts or codes are potentially producible can also highlight the variety of differences between different versions of events, and thereby challenge the certainty of a singular truth, as Dolan suggests. The problem lies in whether this textual reproduction is static (a single narrative is built up) or transformative (multiple narratives are contrasted). This distinction between singular and multiple narratives is equally important in the production of criticism, which is why I have attempted to draw from various networks which mediated Aretino's posthumous reputation.

We can see, especially from the example of the English text, *The Crafty Whore*, that the circulation of Aretino and pseudo-Aretino text is not traceable along a uni-directional genealogy, in which one version begets another. It is much messier, not a chain of translations that Moulton portrays in his writing on the subject, or even a more complex arborescent structure as Moretti would suggest of literary genres more generally. Instead, it is a rhizomatic structure, not only with sections breaking off from one text and living their own lives, but also anastomosing like blood vessels reconnecting to other parts of the system. In this way, cultural codes from a variety of sources can resurface in a text such as

The Crafty Whore, so that the various elements evolve not in a linear process, but as a network. This lack of clear narrative made it ever more difficult for editors such as Wolfe and Castelvetro to argue for textual accuracy, as evidenced by their inclusion of the *Zoppino* dialogue, and also for current critics like Salkeld and Romei to distinguish between what is and isn't written by Pietro Aretino.

The multiplication of varying degrees of attributable work to Aretino may weaken what we might consider to be the 'intention' of the author over his writing. In the place of this unobtainable authorial intent, Aretino's mediators attempted to wrest control over how Aretino was posthumously represented. The Wolfe and Elsevir presses claimed to be preserving Aretino as a humanist writer, yet like Xuárez and later Richard Head who framed their translations with 'health-warnings' about the potential moral danger incurred by the bad reader of this text, the Wolfe and Elsevir press also wished to control the reader's expectations of Aretino by justifying their printing of his writing for educational purposes.

Both approaches could be considered as misrepresenting Aretino, which is why you could have such differing opinions on what was the 'right' thing to do to banned literature as that of an editor like Castelvetro and an expurgator like Giovannini. One believes that it is the 'right' thing to reproduce the author's content with minimal interference, even to the extent of preserving oddities of expression by the original author; the other believes it is the 'right' thing to reproduce the author's content excised of elements which were later considered to be immoral. Both these opinions destabilise the concept of 'Aretino', as they pull between a desire to domesticate him into a new culturally acceptable norm, while the other wishes to foreignize his writing to readers, and thereby preserve the original culture, which does, however, make it less accessible to the new audience. Both mediations of Aretino give the appearance of a transparent reproduction of the text, yet in fact each remoulds it into a different, more palatable form for their specific audience.

What both acknowledge is the need to rewrite and rebuild reputations. In the case of the Wolfe press this is also due to the perceived need to combat the censorship of Aretino's remaining works, by producing more 'corrected' proof as a counter-weight. The example of the 1525 festival of Pasquino mentioned in chapter 5 suggests similar attempt to use the materiality of the text to strengthen a certain argument. The papal datary, Giovan Giberti, had a selection of the usually ephemeral pasquinades published that year by Antonio Blado, none of which included the more caustic satires of Aretino, to whom that year's festival had

initially been dedicated. Giberti did not need to rewrite or reframe Aretino's writing in order to control meaning, but instead allowed his and other pasquinades to fade through their own ephemerality, and to preserve those he had chosen to represent the festival by putting them into print.

Over the course of this thesis, I hope to have shown that Aretino was much more than simply a 'filthy old man', and to have broadened the potential ways in which we can read his posthumous reputation abroad, which so far has been sparse. In turn, this will hopefully act as an argument for considering the network of mediating processes which built up that reputation, rather than thinking of his reception in a purely dialogic relationship between one writer and his reader, or one culture and another. In *Have with you to Saffron Waldon*, Thomas Nashe explained to his readers why he had to respond to Harvey's most recent attack on him, even though it had taken him three years to do so. I take it as advice applicable to anyone who has taken time to write about an obscured writer such as Aretino:

to be a villaine in print...is an attainder that will sticke by thee for ever. A blot of ignomie it is, which though this age, or, at the utmost, such in this age as have converst or are aquainted with thee, hold light and ridiculous...yet there is an age to come, which, knowing neither thee [Nashe] nor him [Harvey], but by your severall workes judging either, will authorise all hee hath belched forth in thy reproach for sound Gospell...thou holding thy peace, and not confuting him, seemes to confesse and confirme all whereof hee hath accused thee, and the innocent, unheard, doo perish as guilty.¹²

¹² Nashe, *Have with you*, vol.3, p.27

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF TRANSLATIONS, ARETINO'S 'LIFE OF WHORES'

- (1) Fernan Xuárez. Ginammi, Marco. Coloquio de las Dames. Del famoso y gran demostrador de vicios y virtudes Pedro Aretino. En el cual se descubren las falsedades, tratos, engaños y hechicerías de que usan las mujeres enamoradas para engañar á los simples y aun á los mas avisados hombres que de ellas se enamoran. Agora nuevamente traducido de la lengua toscana en castellano por el beneficiado Fernan Xuarez (Sevilla, Juan de León, 1547; Sevilla, Dominico de Robertis, 1548; Zaragoza, Diego Hernández, 1548; Medina del Campo, Pedro de Castro, 1549; Seville, 1607)
- (2) Le miroir des Courtisans, ou sont introduites deux courtisanes, par l'une desquelles se descouvent plusieurs tours, frauds & trahison que journallement se commettent. Seruant d'exemple a la ieunesse mal aduisee Fait en dialogue par Pierre Aretin. (Lyon, Claude d'Urbain, 1580)
- (3) Tromperies dont usent les mieus affectees courtisanes a l'endroit d'un chacun, principalement des jouvenceaux desbauchez qu'elles attirent en leurs filets, laisans que sous propos emmielez perdent honneur et cheeut [sic] en pauvrele. Ouvre parti en dialogue, orne de saluts enseignemeus, conseils et avis a la jeunesse, pour eviter les deceptions, tromperies et traverses de telles femmes. Trad. D'ital en franc, Plus la Courtisane de Joachim du Bellay. (Paris, P.Chevillot, 1580)
- (4) Histoire des amours faintes & dissimules de Lais & Lamia, recite par ells mesmes mise en forme de Dialogue par P. Aretin, ou sont descouvertes les falaces & communes tromperies dont usent les mieux affectees courtisanes de ce temps a l'endroit de leurs amis. Traduit de l'Italian en Francois & augmente de la vieille Courtisane de J. Du Bellay. (Paris, Anthoine du Brueil 1595, reprinted 1601)
- (5) Le Cabinet des secrettes ruses d'amour: où est monstré le vray moyen de faire les approches et entrer aux plus fortes places de son empire....par le S.D.M.A.P [le sieur Du Mas, & AP for Aretino Pietro?]- Paris: Thomas Estoc, 1610. (du Bellay's *la Vielle Courtisane* is reprinted under the title 'La Maquerelle ou Vielle Courtisane de Rome', anonymously. Reprinted in 1610, Rouen. Reprinted in 1618, s/n)
- (6) Dialogue de l'Aretin: ou les vies, et faits de Lais et Lamia, courtisanes de Rome sont deduites, Traduict d'Italien en Francois, (s/n, 1610; reprinted Paris, Anthoine du

Brueil, 1611, with 'Les secrettes ruses d'amour' and 'Les paradoxes de l'amour, par Le Sieur de la Valletrie)

- (7) Caspar von Barth. Pornodidascalus seu Colloquium Muliebre. Petri Aretini. Ingeniosissimi & fere incomparabilis virtutum & vitiorum demonstratoris: De astu nefario horrendisque dolis, quibus, impudicae mulieres juventuti incautae infidiantur, Dialogus ex Italico in Histanicum sermonem versus a Ferdinando Xuaresio Serviliensi. De Hispanico in Latinum traducebat, ut Juventus Germana Pestes illas diabolicas apud exteros, utinam non & intra limites, obvias cavere posit cautious Caspar Barthius. Addita expugnatio urbus roma a i exercitu Caroli Quinti historia paucis nota, & in Dialogo memorata, eodem ex Italico interprete. (Frankfurt: Aubry & Schleich, 1623)
- (8) 'I. de L'. Het Net der Wellustigheyt Ontdeckende de valsche practijken en lose listigheden der hedendaegse Courtesanen, of ligtveerdige Hof-poppen, en andere snoode Hoeren; waer in sy vanghen veele treffelicke Hoffjonkers en andere kloeke Stantspersonen. (Amsterdam: 1646)
- (9) [Richard Head?] The Crafty Whore: or, the mistery and iniquity of bawdy houses laid open, in a dialogue between two subtle bawds, wherein, as in a mirrour, our city-curtesans may see their soul-destroying art, and crafty devices, whereby they insnare and beguile youth, pourtraied to the life, by the pensell of one of their late (but now penitent) captives, for the benefit of all, but especially the younger sort. Whereunto is added dehortations from lust drawn from the sad and lamentable consequences it produceth. (London: Henry Marsh, 1658)
- (10) ['Pieter Koolaert' pseud. Romeyn de Hooghe?] Het Leven en d'Arglistige Treken der Courtisanen Te Romen. Zijnde Een t'Samenspraeck tusschen Lais en Lamia, twee gerieffelijcke en welbekende Dames aldaer. In't Italiaens beschreven door Aretin. (Leiden: 'Pieter Koolaert'/Romeyn de Hooghe, 1680)

APPENDIX: Images

Fig.1. 'Net of Life': the Darwinian 'Tree of Life' overlaid with network to show gene transfer. From Manuel Lima, *Visual Complexity: Mapping Patterns of Information* (2011) p.68

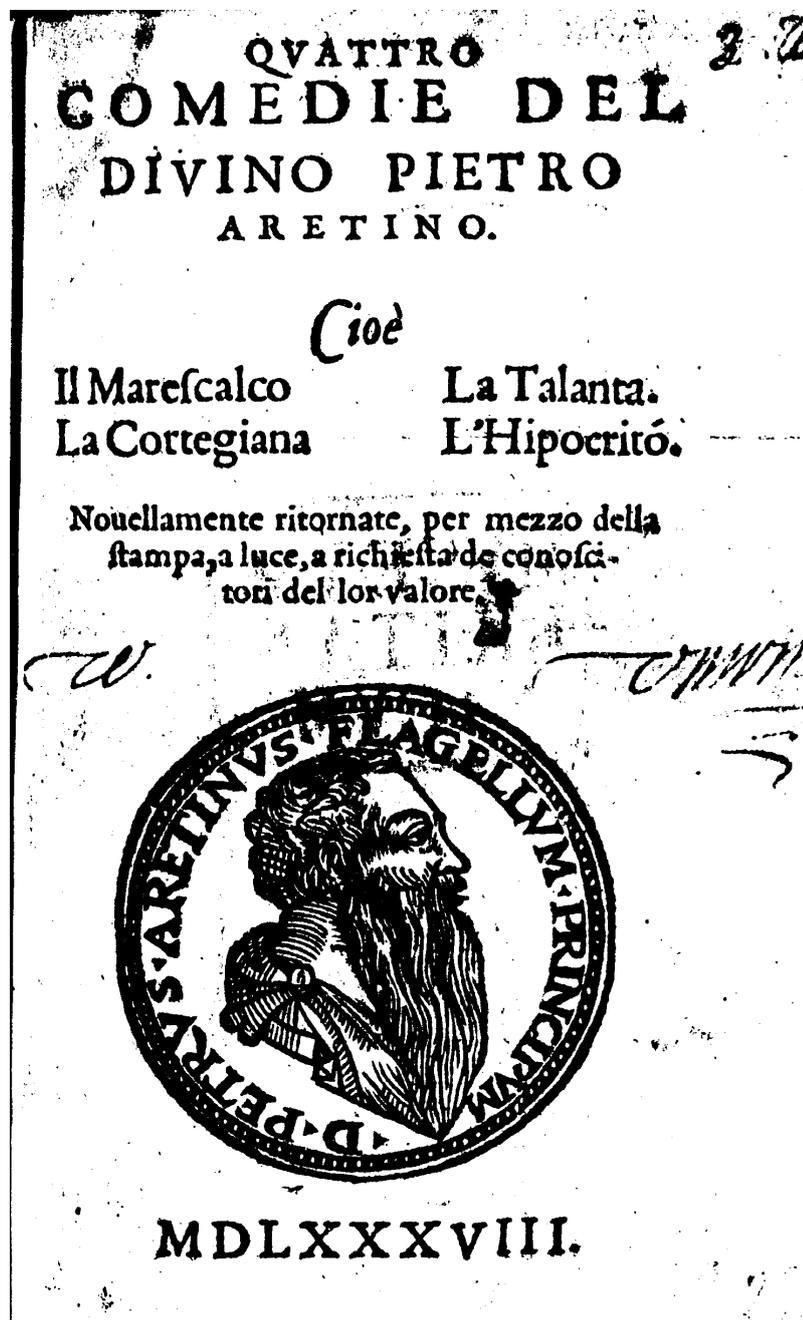


Fig.2. The titlepage of John Wolfe's *Quattro Comedie* (1588) with a copy of a medal made by Leone Leoni, itself a copy of an engraving by Giacomo Caraglio, see fig.15.

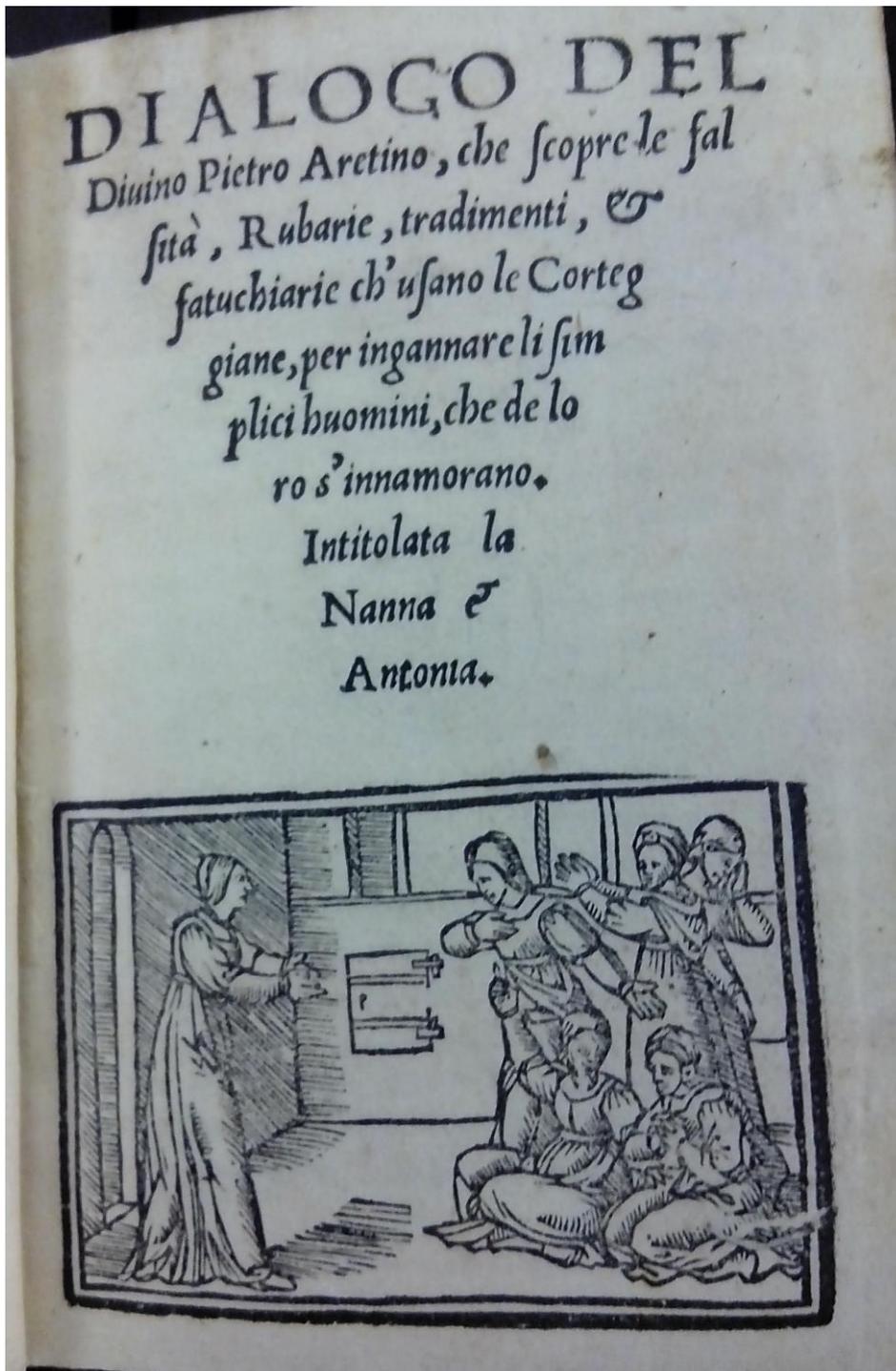


Fig.3. The titlepage to the Bodleian copy Bod (Holk.f.142) of the c.1540 pirated edition of Aretino's *Sei Giornate*.

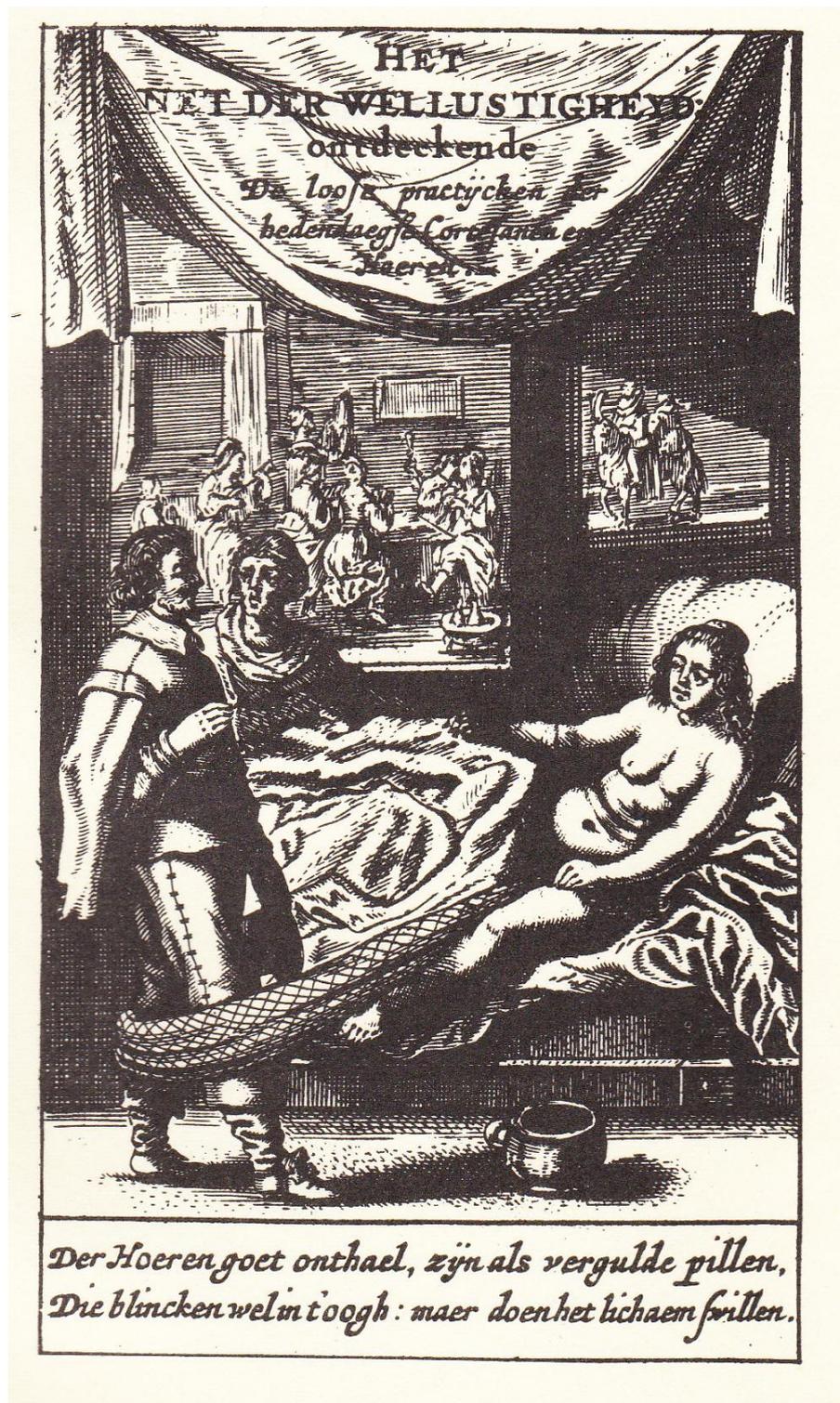


Fig.4. Frontispiece of *Het Net der Welustigheyd* (1646), underneath a couplet from 'Self-stryt' (1620) Father Jacob Cats



*Sould by Henry Marsh, at the Princes Armes
at the Lower end of Chancery Lane, nere
the Inner Temple Gate in Fleetstreet;*

R. Garwood fecit.

Fig.5. Frontispiece of *The Crafty Whore* (1658)



Fig.6. Frontispiece of *Het Leven en Treken der Courtisanen Te Romem* (1680) Engraving by Romeyn de Hooghe.



Fig.7. One of the illustrations from *Het Leven* (1680) by Romeyn de Hooghe, illustrating Nanna's maid finding her mistress's chest being broken into by an ex-lover.

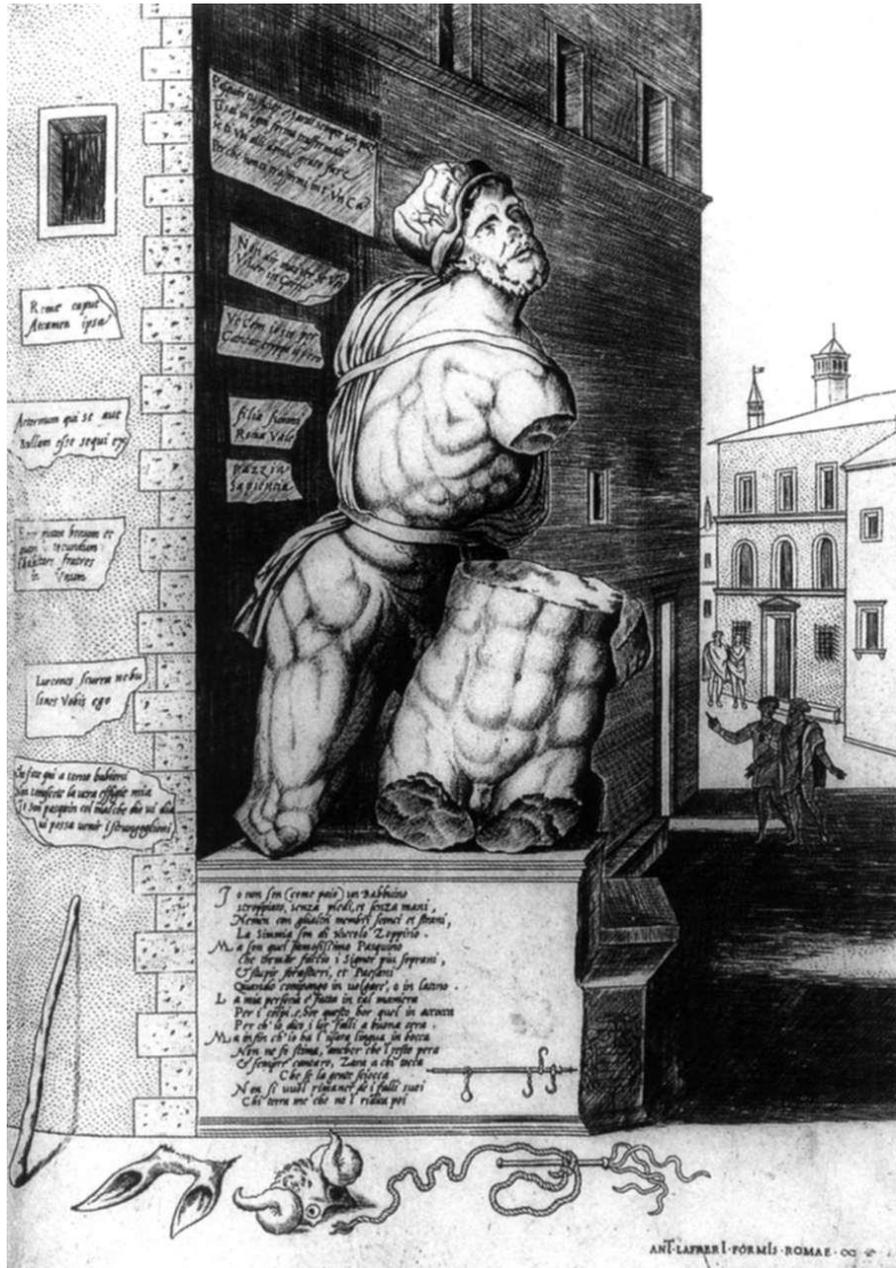
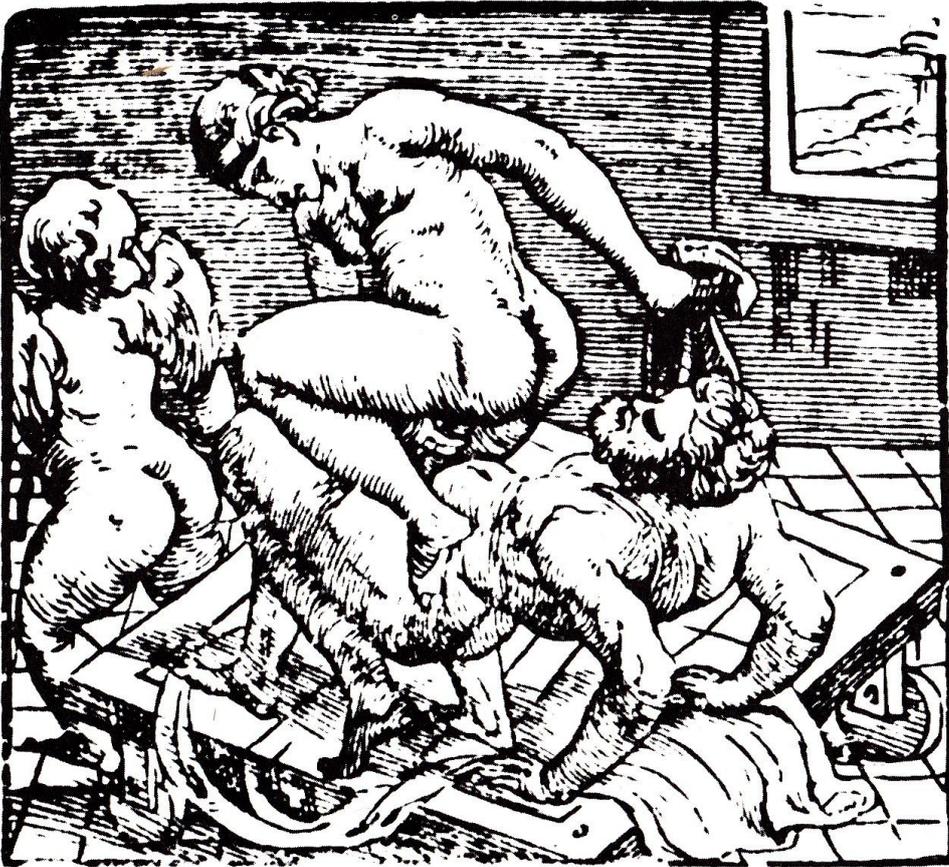


Fig.8. the statue of Pasquino engraved by Nicholas Beatrizet c.1550. Notice the pasquinades stuck around the statue, and the symbols of satyr (a whip, satyr's ears, and the horns of a cuckold) on the floor.



Non tirar futtutelo di Cupido
 La carriola, firmati bismul o
 Ch'io uó fotter in potta, e non in culo
 Costei, che mi to'l cazzo, e me ne rido;
 E ne le braccia, e ne le gambe mi fido,
 E st' disconcio sto, e non t' adulo,
 Che ci morrebbe a starci un' hora un mulo,
 E però tanto co'l cul soffio e vrido:

Fig.9. Woodcut for position 14, *I modi*, from the Toscanini edition c.1550, printed together with Aretino's *Sonetti Lussuriosi*.

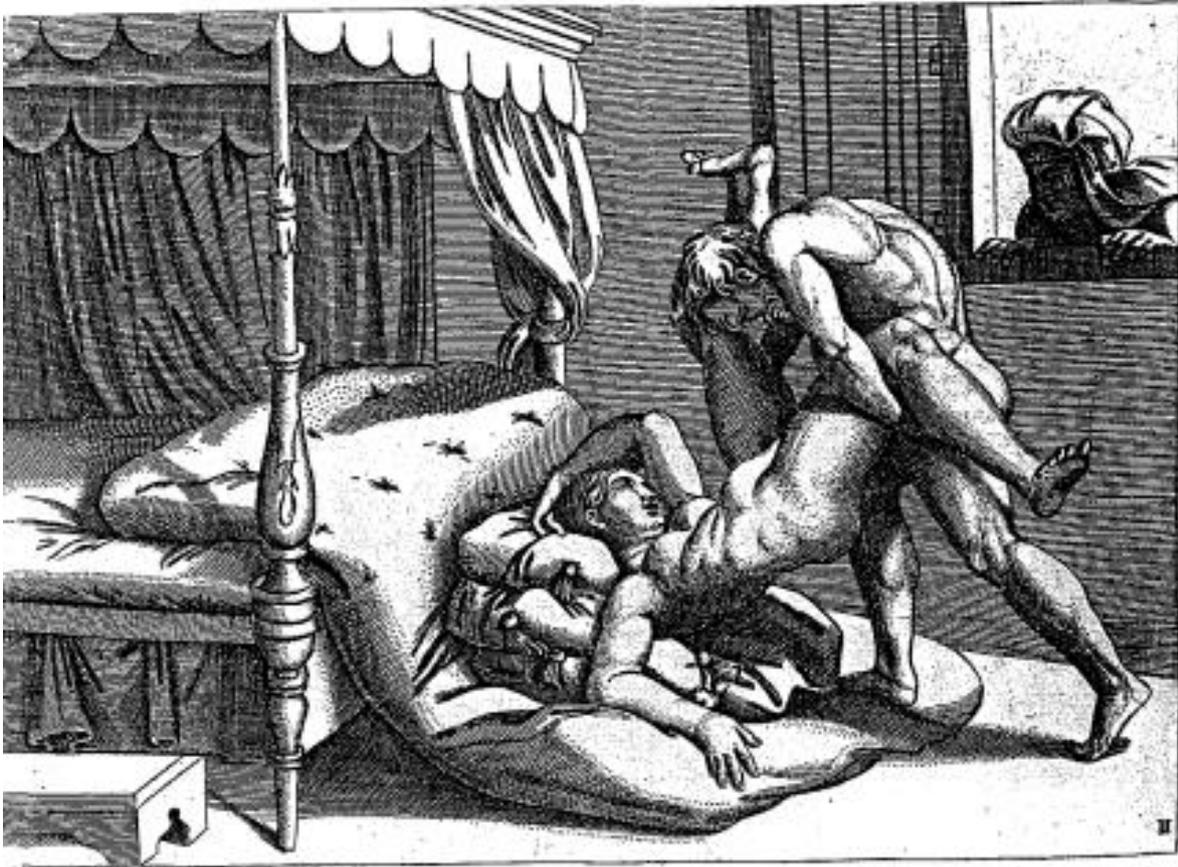


Fig.10. Position 11 of *I Modi*, anonymous engraving from the Albertina in Vienna (It.I.22, fol.49) undated.



Fig.11. 'Two Lovers' c.1525. A wall painting from the Palazzo Te, Mantua, by Giulio Romano.



Fig.12. Fragments from an original copy of Raimondi's *I Modi* engravings c.1524, British Museum.



Fig.13. A maiolica plate depicting the 'Chastisement of Rome by Charles V' by Francesco Xanto Avelli, c.1530, Moscow State Hermitage Collection. The female figure in the foreground is taken from position 5 of *I Modi*.



Fig.14. Mercury, Aglaurus, Herse by Giacopo Caraglio, position 14 from *Gli Amori Degli Dei* c.1527. This image was circulated with new verses, in the 'Boyvin-Milan' copy c.1550, see James Turner 'Copies after Caraglio' (2010)



Fig.15. Undated engraving of Pietro Aretino by Jacopo Caraglio, in *all'antica* style, Metropolitan Museum. This image was used by Leone Leoni for his medal of Aretino, which was later used by Wolfe for the titlepage of his English editions, see fig.2.



Fig.16. Engraving from *L'Arétin de Augustin Carrache* (1798) by J.J. Coigny.



Fig.17. Frontispiece of Crispin van de Passe's *Miroir des plus belles courtisanes* (1631)



Fig.18. two plates from de Passe's *Miroir* of a courtesan 'La belle zauonnare Cour' and her procuress, who offers her a letter, presumably from a lover. Through the page, you can see the verses for the next set of portraits, set out at the top in French, in the centre in Dutch, and underneath in German.



Fig.19. Brothel scene by the Brunswick Monogrammist, 1537

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before every psalme, very pleasaunt & profettable to the godly reader.

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