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THOMAS CARTELLI

Edward II

As Marlowe has emerged in recent years as early modern England's most modern playwright, *Edward II* has emerged as his most modern play, not merely because it treats the life and loves, and stages the brutal debasement, of a recognizably (if not exclusively) homosexual monarch, but also because it presents a decidedly direct and demystified portrayal of power politics at work, showing political positions to be little more than transparent extensions of the personal desires and ambitions that motivate them. The passions on display in *Edward II*, whether they be Edward's all-consuming love for his favourite, Gaveston, or Mortimer Junior's unrestrained hostility to Edward and Gaveston alike, shape and dominate both the private and political behaviour of the play's two primary antagonists, and contribute mightily to the disordered relations in family and state that obtain throughout the play. As such, they paradoxically present themselves as fit objects of audience censure and disapprobation, and as the primary expressive channels of character formation and audience engagement alike.

Much recent scholarship on the early modern period has been devoted to a reconsideration of the viability of applying traditional theories of the relationship between the four vital bodily elements (blood, yellow bile, phlegm, and black bile) and the four "humours" (sanguine or cheerful, choleric, phlegmatic or stolid, and melancholy) to an understanding of what we late moderns tend to construe as psychological states. An excess of one or other of these elements in an individual's body (say, of yellow or black bile) was thought to produce a humoural imbalance that would make one's temperament chronically aggressive, on the one hand, chronically melancholy on the other. This renewed attention to the physiological sources of externally manifested moods, character-traits, and emotions has brought with it a collateral focus on efforts to moderate such imbalances in the interest of achieving 'the humoural ideal of physiological self-control'.[1] As Michael Schoenfeldt writes with respect to this ideal, 'The Renaissance seems to have imagined selves who differentiate not by their desires, which all more

or less share, but by their capacity to control these desires' (p. 17). This 'early modern fetish of control . . . does not demand the unequivocal banishment of emotion'; rather, 'it is unfettered emotion that is most to be feared', the category of passions that is put on display in virtually every scene of *Edward II* (Schoenfeldt, pp. 18, 17). Yet, as Jonathan Gil Harris notes, even the best recent studies tend to 'shy away from sustained analysis of the far more alien and ornery physiology of the passions, whose murky materiality arguably presents a greater stumbling block to moderns' (p. 257). According to Harris, 'The book on the early modern passions is yet to be written', and 'once it is', he imagines, 'the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries will figure prominently in its purview' (p. 258). While this is hardly the place to proclaim such a study (which has already been initiated by abler minds), I would, at least, like to situate the present chapter in the context of ongoing efforts to analyse the early modern passions, and to start by claiming that in *Edward II* the passions embodied in the acts and lines of specific characters operate within a very narrow, yet volatile, field of reference, one whose 'murky materiality' manifests fewer ties to humoural theory or physiology than to 'affective economies' of anger and desire that refuse to accommodate themselves to a moral economy of restraint or control.[2] These 'economies' draw their force from a competing ethic that 'brooks' (a much favoured word in this play) no check or curb on expressions of individualist self-assertion or self-esteem.

In *Edward II*, the drama takes place 'inside' in more ways than one and presents its audience with something in the way of a closed set. Although the play derives its plot from Marlowe's dramatic compression of his source-materials in the chronicles of Holinshed and Stow, it often seems to derive its shape and momentum from within, from the abrupt and seemingly unpatterned conflicts of rival passions and personalities. Marlowe cultivates this illusion of plot-autonomy by allowing the intensity of personal interests and unbridled emotion to determine the structure and momentum of his play. We can illustrate this tendency by tracking the movement of an early sequence that proceeds from a moment of calm and apparent reconciliation, but culminates in the most emphatic moment of crisis witnessed in the first movement of the drama. The sequence begins with an uncharacteristic exchange of amicable sentiments between the king and his peers that directly follows (and is the product of) their decision to have the recently banished Gaveston recalled from Ireland:

Edward: Courageous Lancaster, embrace thy king,
And as gross vapours perish by the sun,
Even so let hatred with thy sovereign's smile:
Live thou with me as my companion.

Lancaster: This salutation overjoys my heart.
Edward: Warwick shall be my chiefest counsellor:
These silver hairs will more adorn my court
Than gaudy silks or rich embroidery.
Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.
Warwick: Slay me, my Lord, when I offend your grace.
(*EII* 1.4.339–48)[3]

Edward's analogy between 'gross vapours' and Lancaster's hatred gestures directly at the model of physiological self-control outlined by Schoenfeldt, and Edward's smile suggests his own effort to restore in Lancaster the humoural balance that freedom from hatred should bring. We know, however, from the preceding sequence that Edward is so 'frantic' for his Gaveston (1.4.314) that he will promise anything to have his favourite returned and that the peers' apparently gracious decision to recall Gaveston is informed by the treacherous designs Mortimer Junior has already concocted with the queen: 'But were he here, detested as he is, / How easily might some base slave be suborned / To greet his lordship with a poniard' (1.4.264–6). We see, therefore, thinly disguised behind the decorous exchange of compliment and platitude, the continuing development of a tension that may be suspended for the moment, but must express itself sooner or later. While Edward and Lancaster alike gesture at a restored humoural ideal, the fact that their aims could not be more different reduces that ideal to the residual status of a mannerly figure of speech.

This carefully cultivated reconcilement is soon sundered by the peers' inability to suppress for longer than the interval of a single scene their hatred of Gaveston and by Edward's inability to repress in the sight of the peers his 'passionate' regard for 'his minion':

Edward: The wind is good; I wonder why he stays.
I fear me he is wracked upon the sea.
Isabella: Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is,
And still his mind runs on his minion.
Lancaster: My lord –
Edward: How now, what news? Is Gaveston arrived?
Mortimer Junior: Nothing but Gaveston! What means your grace?
You have matters of more weight to think upon;
The King of France sets foot in Normandy.
Edward: A trifle! We'll expel him when we please.
But tell me, Mortimer, what's thy device
Against the stately triumph we decreed?
(*EII* 2.2.1–12)

Mortimer describes a device in which Gaveston is figured as a canker climbing its way to the 'top branches' of 'a lofty cedar tree fair flourishing' where 'kingly eagles perch', thereby expressing his undisguised contempt for Gaveston. Lancaster immediately follows suit and the exhibition of devices is, in turn, succeeded by the series of mocking salutations with which the peers greet Gaveston in person. When Edward 'warrants' the now indignant Gaveston to 'return' these insults 'to their throats', Gaveston does so in a manner that graphically delineates the social and behavioural divide that separates them:

> Base leaden earls that glory in your birth,
> Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef,
> And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,
> Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low
> As to bestow a look on such as you.
>
> (*EII* 2.2.74–8)

Apparently outraged by Gaveston's taunt, the peers draw their swords and Mortimer (oblivious to his resolve to delegate such actions to a suitably 'base slave') stabs Gaveston, leading the queen to exclaim, 'Ah, furious Mortimer, what hast thou done?' and leading Edward to say to Mortimer and Lancaster alike, 'Dear shall you both aby [pay for] this riotous deed' (2.2.85, 88), thereby framing their actions in the same discourse of misrule the peers deploy against his relations with Gaveston. As the unchecked fury of Mortimer meets the unchecked passion of Edward head on, the underlying tensions of the play's first movement break out in force with a seemingly autonomous energy of their own.

There is, of course, nothing autonomous about the plot of a play that Marlowe has constructed to elicit just such effects. What his construction of this movement of the play tells us is that he is interested in staging at least two competing forms of disorder in *Edward II*, one focused on Edward's passionate obsession with Gaveston and the other on the arrogance, impatience, and downright fury of Edward's aristocratic opponents, chiefly, though not exclusively, Mortimer. Although Marlowe initially works in concert with his chronicle sources in casting Gaveston in the role of lord of misrule and having him and Edward preside over a carnivalized court in which established hierarchies are literally turned upside-down, within the first hundred lines of the play the peers have already begun to make large contributions of their own to the disordered relations that obtain in Edward's court. Before Edward even has the opportunity to greet Gaveston and endow him with a series of outsized offices and distinctions, the peers make unconditional demands

on him whose tenor seldom departs from Mortimer Senior's peremptory 'If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston' (1.1.79). When, some forty lines later, Mortimer Junior is bid, 'Bridle thy anger', by his fellow peer, Warwick, his response, 'I cannot nor I will not', designation of the king as 'brainsick', and threat to 'henceforth parley with our naked swords', all seem radically incommensurate with his own subject position. The king – who is himself incapable of bridling his own desires – will, of course, soon give Mortimer and the other peers ample cause for such concern. But it seems sufficiently plain that in the first scene of his play, Marlowe is intent on demonstrating that both sides to the controversy are equally unyielding, equally unmindful of anything that one would call the good of the kingdom, much less a humoural ideal founded on temperance.

In this, Marlowe conspicuously departs from the disposition of blame assigned in Holinshed, his primary source, which finds Edward sorely culpable for the wrongs committed through his indulgence by Gaveston and the Despensers alike, and among the peers generally only holds Mortimer Junior accountable for crimes committed in concert with the queen in the last years of Edward's reign.[4] Indeed, by failing to dramatize to any great extent the social and economic crimes committed by Edward's favourites and by making them appear entirely loyal and loving to Edward, Marlowe often makes the peers' objections to them seem excessive, and directed more at their 'base' status as social upstarts than at any crimes more specific than raiding the treasury that they may have committed. Marlowe also – as my preceding commentary on 2.2 should indicate – allows Gaveston in particular to become the channel or mouthpiece for the expression of sentiments that appear specifically designed to make the play's audience sceptical of the peers' avowedly high-minded intentions and high-handed behaviour.

Dramatically positioned as the play's Presenter, Gaveston lays first claim to audience attention as he enters the stage reading a letter from the king and immediately establishes both the amorously negligent nature of his relationship with the king and the embattled terms of his relationship with the peers:

> The sight of London to my exiled eyes
> Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;
> Not that I love the city or the men,
> But that it harbours him I hold so dear—
> The king, upon whose bosom let me die,
> And with the world be still at enmity.
> . . .
> Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers;
> My knee shall bow to none but to the king.
> (*EII* 1.1.10–15, 18–19)

After negotiating his ironically dismissive interview with the three poor men who petition him for service, Gaveston paints a powerfully seductive picture of what the court will look like when he becomes master of the king's revels:

> Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
> With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
> Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,
> And in his sportful hands an olive tree
> To hide those parts that men delight to see,
> Shall bathe him in a spring; and there, hard by,
> One like Actaeon, peeping through the grove,
> Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
> And, running in the likeness of an hart,
> By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die.
> Such things as these best please his majesty,
> My Lord. (*EII* 1.1.60–71)

As the play-proper begins and Gaveston withdraws to the margins of the stage, it is at least conceivable that his cultivated fantasy of an eroticized court life could maintain more of an appeal than that commanded by the fierce but decidedly stiff aggression of the peers, who now seek to assert their claim to the kingdom and the stage alike.[5] In rendering the lords their due in a series of pointed asides, Gaveston deflates their moral self-righteousness and makes the patriotic positions they assume seem what Marlowe shows them to be in the course of the play, namely, defences of their own prerogatives. Wryly commenting '*Mort Dieu*!' in response to Mortimer Junior's thunderous claim that he would sooner put his sword to sleep and 'hang his armour up' than break the oath he made to Edward's father to prevent Gaveston's return, Gaveston plays on the privileged access to the audience he has arguably already achieved in order to demonstrate the claim's dramatic status as self-regarding bluster and bravado. Of course, as the peers leave the stage and Gaveston enters into the embrace of the king who summarily 'creates' him 'Lord High Chamberlain, / Chief Secretary to the state and me, / Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man' (1.1.153–5), it may well be objected that Marlowe also cultivates here the possibility of an opposing point of view. That he does so is clearly signalled both by Kent's comment, 'Brother, the least of these may well suffice / For one of greater birth than Gaveston' (1.1.157–8), and by Gaveston's and Edward's subsequent manhandling, arrest, and dispossession of the Bishop of Coventry: acts that are surely as 'furious' and 'riotous' as those soon to be committed against Gaveston by Mortimer and his fellow peers. And when Gaveston soon thereafter appears seated

beside Edward on the throne in the effectual position of England's queen, it may well seem that a form of sodomitical misrule has pre-empted right rule in the court.

Although 'The Elizabethan chroniclers are eloquent, even vehement, about the evil influence Gaveston had over the king, leading him into extravagance and dissolute pleasures, even persuading him to commit adultery . . . none of this produces a charge of sodomy – the charge is Marlowe's': a 'charge' which, according to Stephen Orgel, Marlowe presents in the very 'terms in which the culture formally conceived it – as antisocial, seditious, [and] ultimately disastrous'.[6] Jonathan Goldberg approaches this 'charge' somewhat differently, claiming that '[among] the categorical confusions of the confused category "sodomy" is categorical confusion itself'. This confusion involves 'a denial of those socially constructed hierarchies' (like the primacy of heterosexual love, the sanctity of marriage, or the established structure of parental authority) that are taken to be normal, normative, or '"natural"'. Within such hierarchies, kings exist 'to maintain social order, yet Edward, from the first line of Marlowe's play, inviting Gaveston to share the kingdom, instigates a sodomitical order', which both opposes and destabilizes established social and political arrangements. Goldberg concludes that '[in] the extended sense of the term, as not only the ruination of the maintenance of male/male hierarchies through friendship, but also as the explosion of the marital tie, *sodomy* is the name for all behavior in the play'.[7]

Goldberg, however, also goes on to claim that 'Marlowe envisions the possibility of sexuality and sexual difference as a separate category', that William Empson 'was closer to the point, when he argued that Marlowe believed that "the unmentionable sin for which the punishment was death was *the proper thing to do*"', and concludes that 'Marlowe is defending sodomy, not an idealized friendship or some spiritual relationship or some self-integrative principle of identity' (p. 124). In this, Goldberg would appear to be hedging somewhat on his claim that 'sodomy is the name for all behavior in the play', including the adulterous relationship of Mortimer and Isabella, by making it appear more as the self-defining ground of homosexual practice and subjectivity. Noting, for instance, that when Edward 'loses Gaveston (indeed, even before he loses him) he replaces him with another man, not with his queen' and that for Edward 'The substitution of man for woman is irreversible', he concludes that 'Marlowe's play negotiates difference – in gender and sexuality – differently' and that 'Modern heterosexist assumptions are not in place' (p. 125). Indeed, when Edward famously answers Mortimer's question, 'Why should you love him whom the world hates so?' by stating 'Because he loves me more than all the world'

(1.4.76–7), Marlowe evocatively frames their relationship in terms of a mutually held affection that is at one and the same time unmistakably sexual and passionately sustained. Although some scholars consider it 'anachronistic and ruinously misleading' to identify 'an individual in [the early modern] period as being or not being "a homosexual"', others maintain that in his construction of both Edward and Gavestion 'Marlowe introduces us to the possibility of a homosexual subjectivity'.[8] While this relationship can also be framed by a humoural calculus of physiological self-control that accounts Edward little more than 'passion's slave' and love itself 'merely a lust of the blood and a permission of the will' (these words, of course, belong to Shakespeare's villainous Iago), for Marlowe same-sex desire may be said to operate outside the prescribed economy where the mind keeps the body in check, in an affective economy marked by excess where the proscribed passions preside.

By the same token, Marlowe stages Edward's passionate devotion to Gaveston as so all-consuming that it repeatedly draws attention to itself as a behavioural phenomenon of pathological proportions and (in Orgel's terms) as a social phenomenon of potentially disastrous consequences. Marlowe, in fact, frequently has a range of other characters on stage call attention to the 'frantic' nature of Edward's passions, which Edward himself puts on display in an entirely self-absorbed and obsessive fashion, as if he were soliloquizing in public:

> *Edward*: He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.
> Did never sorrow go so near my heart
> As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;
> And could my crown's revenue bring him back,
> I would freely give it to his enemies
> And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.
> *Isabella*: Hark how he harps upon his minion.
> *Edward*: My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
> Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,
> And with the noise turns up my giddy brain
> And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.
> Ah, had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,
> And with my kingly sceptre struck me dead
> When I was forced to leave my Gaveston!
> *Lancaster*: *Diablo*! What passions call you these?
> (*EII* 1.4.304–18)

Lancaster's exclamation and question seem, in this context, entirely understandable. What he witnesses here exceeds both precedent and definition,

although they are given both in a closely contemporaneous text, *The Passions of the Mind in General* (1604), where Thomas Wright contends that

> experience teacheth us that men for the most part are not very good judges in their own causes, especially for the Passion of Love, which blindeth their judgement . . . And indeed the Passions not unfitly may be compared to green spectacles, which make all things resemble the colour of green; even so he that loveth, hateth, or by any other passion is vehemently possessed judgeth all things that occur in favour of that passion to be good and agreeable with reason.[9]

The specific 'passions' that Edward is enacting here could no doubt be called any number of other names, but they arguably represent what Wright would term 'disquietness of the Mind' whose source, 'inordinate affections', are said to 'trouble the peaceable state of this petty commonweal of our soul' (p. 141).

While Marlowe is less interested than Wright might be in answering Lancaster's question, the fact that it is even asked indicates his effort to stage something decidedly extreme or excessive in Edward's display of the 'inordinate affections' he has focused on Gaveston: something that variously equals and exceeds in intensity the passions felt or expressed by the figures named in the inventory of legendary homoerotic relationships Mortimer Senior provides in the speech that moves this scene towards conclusion (see 1.4.385–400). Mortimer Senior notably begins this speech to his son, Mortimer Junior, by indicating how this 'fourth effect of Passions' (Wright, p. 141) might be avoided:

> Leave now to oppose thyself against the king;
> Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,
> And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,
> Let him without controlment have his will.
> (*EII* 1.4.386–9)

Of particular interest here is the speaker's observation that when left unopposed, or, in Wright's terms, 'uncontradicted', Edward's 'nature' is 'mild and calm', a reading of Edward's character that suggests that his passions might well be more subdued were he permitted 'without controlment' to 'have his will'. While Wright concentrates his understanding of the passions on states of internal rebellion or sedition, Mortimer Senior contextualizes Edward's passions as the product of the frustration of his will by the peers, effectively dislocating rebellion and sedition from the 'petty commonweal' of Edward's soul and resituating it in the physical confines of the court. In so doing, the elder Mortimer inadvertently indicates that although 'passionate' is a term of disparagement employed by the peers to characterize Edward's

arguably 'disastrous' lack of self-control, it is also a condition that the peers themselves help to produce (by inhibiting the free expression of Edward's sexuality) as well as a term that can be employed to describe the impatience, fury, and violence of the peers themselves.

In this respect, it may be said that Edward's 'wanton humour' not only grieves Mortimer Junior more than he admits but more than may be dramatically warranted. Indeed, Marlowe often has Mortimer make the kinds of comments about Edward and Gaveston that are this play's adjuncts to the negative representations of masculine love found in the roughly contemporaneous retellings of Edward's and Gaveston's story by 'E. F.' (presumably Elizabeth Cary), Michael Drayton, and Francis Hubert, representing them as mockeries and deformations of an idealized court that is clothed in the garb of his own stereotypically heterosexist assumptions.[10] Later in the play, when the captive Gaveston is about to be murdered, Mortimer notably refuses even to raise his sword against this 'Corrupter of thy king', considering it 'Shame and dishonour to a soldier's name' to allow Gaveston to fall 'upon my weapon's point' and 'welter in thy gore', as if the act were too suggestive of sodomitic contamination to venture (2.5.9–14). Mortimer sustains this strain of sexual innuendo to the very end of his second-act dialogue with Gaveston as he contemptuously responds to Gaveston's objection to being called a 'thief': 'Away, base groom, robber of kings' renown. / Question with thy companions and thy mates' (2.5.70–1), a phrase that consigns Gaveston to a base sub-culture of homosexual fellow travellers. Such comments when viewed in the context of Mortimer's micro-management of Edward's own torture and murder may even be said to underwrite the provocative contention that 'the notorious legend of Edward's death from an act of anal penetration implicates neither Edward nor Gaveston in "sodomy", but those responsible for that regicidal act', in short, that 'the sodomite is not Gaveston but Mortimer'.[11] It is, in any event, to Marlowe's construction of aristocratic disorder as focused on the rising and falling fortunes of Mortimer, and to the variations he works on his construction of passionate expression, that it is now time to turn.

In the fourth act of *Edward II*, as the party of Mortimer and Queen Isabella gather on stage to consolidate their imminent triumph, the queen attempts to make a sustained public pronouncement that will assign primary responsibility to Edward for the 'civil broils' that have made 'kin and countrymen / Slaughter themselves in others'. In answer to her own rhetorical question 'But what's the help?', she avers that

> Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack;
> And Edward, thou art one among them all,

> Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil
> And made the channels overflow with blood.
> Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,
> But thou – (*EII* 4.4.7–13)

Before she can conclude her anatomy of Edward's abuse of royal authority, she is interrupted by Mortimer, who begins his more pragmatic 'publication' of his party's mission with the statement, 'Nay, madam, if you be a warrior, / Ye must not grow so passionate in speeches' (4.4.14–15). This moment marks both a break and a divergence in the way in which passions are expressed and represented in the play. Whereas the 'furious' Mortimer has heretofore been as much the embodiment as the anatomizer of the compulsive hold that passions can have on character, at this point he attempts to represent himself as both their master and mediator, suppressing their direct expression in the interest of the new public roles he and Isabella have assumed as political actors and agents alike. While the passion of desire or ambition may continue to inform his single-minded drive to power, it will no longer colour his public pronouncements and deeds, being channelled instead into the format of asides, 'unpointed' letters, and close-knit conspiracies as he begins to assume the player's part. Passion is not, in any event, something he wishes to associate with their cause, but prefers to constitute it in terms of what they are waging war against.

In his own ensuing address, Mortimer substitutes for Isabella's 'passionate' rehearsal of Edward's abuses a more concise defence of their enterprise that is premised less on Edward's misgovernance than on the young 'prince's right' to whom Mortimer swears 'All homage, fealty, and forwardness'. While 'the open wrongs and injuries / Edward hath done to us, his queen, and land' are assuredly scored, and a promise made to avenge them 'with the sword' as well as to 'remove these flatterers from the king, / That havocs England's wealth and treasury', Mortimer cleverly publishes their invasion as a restorative act that will allow 'England's queen' to 'repossess / Her dignities and honours' and England's prince his 'right' (4.416–26). What gets elided (at least temporarily) in the process is the queen's effort to make Edward's 'looseness' the basis for his overthrow as well as an answering 'looseness' in the queen's relationship to Mortimer which, as Goldberg has taught us, itself falls under the broader definition of sodomy.

This relationship is scored during another brief, but revealing, bout of passionate expression on the part of Leicester, who has been sent to take possession of Edward and to arrest Spencer and Baldock. Bid by Mortimer's henchman, Rice ap Howell, to 'be short' since 'A fair commission warrants

what we do', Leicester dwells on that charge in what our text's editor construes as an aside inflected 'with irony':

> The queen's commission, urged by Mortimer!
> What cannot gallant Mortimer with the queen?
> Alas, see where [Edward] sits and hopes unseen
> T'escape their hands that seek to reave his life.
> Too true it is: *quem dies vidit veniens superbum*,
> *Hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem*.
> But Leicester, leave to grow so passionate.
> (*EII* 4.7.49–5)[12]

Apparent here is a second discernible change in the way passion is discursively constructed and deployed. Whereas it has heretofore charged and informed both the erotic interactions of Edward and Gaveston and the answering fury and violence of the peers, passion now seems to be understood as a version of *com*passion, as a fullness of feeling that seeks to probe the moral basis of behaviour and, as such, is judged to be out of bounds or keeping with present arrangements. Leicester's passion will, in fact, soon become cause for his replacement by Berkeley who, in turn, will be judged to be 'so pitiful / As Leicester that had charge of him before' (5.2.54–5) and summarily 'discharged' (5.2.40) in favour of Matrevis and Gurney, characters whose primary passion is cruelty and whom Marlowe pointedly downgrades to the status of 'hired thugs' from the gentlemanly status they enjoyed in Holinshed (Forker, p. 285n38). By contrast, the fury with which Mortimer formerly hounded Gaveston to ground has now become subdued to the cooler, controlling vein we see in the next passage where Isabel and Mortimer are considerably more candid about expressing their aims and motivations:

> Fair Isabel, now have we our desire.
> The proud corrupters of the light-brained king
> Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,
> And he himself lies in captivity.
> Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm.
> (*EII* 5.2.1–5)

However, as if anticipating Goldberg's contention that 'sodomy is the name for all behavior in the play', Marlowe brings the scene to conclusion with a sudden resurfacing of the fury that has heretofore possessed Mortimer as he responds to the Prince's resistance to his guardianship by stifling the boy and forcibly carrying him away: 'Why youngling, 'sdainst thou so of Mortimer? / Then I will carry thee by force away' (5.2.110–11), behaving for all rights

and purposes more like a thug and a bully than as the temporary master of Fortune's wheel.

As the scene switches to the space of Edward's confinement at Killingworth castle, Marlowe works yet another revealing variation on how the passions are constructed in his play. Waxing pathetic at the relentless mistreatment he is receiving at the hands of Mortimer's henchmen, Edward asks to be relieved of his life and is told by Gurney: 'Your passions make your dolours to increase', to which he responds, 'This usage makes my misery increase' (5.3.15–16), effectively becoming the temporary master of a discourse that confines him. With this one astute remark, Edward directly registers the extent to which his passions – which Gurney represents as a form of 'acting out' that exacerbates the feeling or emotion that is acted on – have been materially produced by the brutal practices that have been deployed against him and can no longer be considered the self-generated cause of his abjection. As if to mark this site as the staging-ground of a reversal of authority that has decided implications for his representation of the consequences of aristocratic disorder, Marlowe presents the following exchange between Edward's would-be liberator, Kent, and Matrevis and Gurney:

> *Gurney*: Bind him, and so convey him to the court.
> *Kent*: Where is the court but here? Here is the king,
> And I will visit him. Why stay you me?
> *Matrevis*: The court is where Lord Mortimer remains.
> Thither shall your honour go; and so farewell.
> *Kent*: O, miserable is that commonweal, where lords
> Keep courts and kings are locked in prison!
> (*EII* 5.3.58–64)

As the play's shifting centre of moral gravity, Kent may well lack the authority to make such pronouncements. More crucial, however, than Kent's passionately expressed platitude is Matrevis's bald assertion, 'The court is where Lord Mortimer remains', which incisively departs from the preferred rhetorical constructions of Mortimer and Isabella that it is the queen's commission that warrants Edward's imprisonment and the prince's right that their protectorship advances.

While it may be said that a passion for dominance does for Mortimer what Thomas Wright's 'green spectacles' do with respect to the passions in general, Marlowe also explores here the socially and morally corrosive effects of *dis*passion, the standing on guard against, or at a distance from, the kind of emotional engagement that so propulsively drives Gaveston and Edward into each other's arms and, more constructively, evokes Leicester's and Berkeley's compassion for the king's plight. By the fifth act of the play, Marlowe has

begun to demonstrate what becomes of character when it empties itself out of affect and becomes nothing more than a fixed attitude dominated (as most authorities on the passions prescribe) by reason. Parrying Isabella's report that 'the king my son hath news / His father's dead, and we have murdered him' with the cold assurance of 'What if he have? The king is yet a child' (5.6.15–17), Mortimer discounts his own precedent of what the passions can do when power is wedded to resolve. As Isabella responds to Mortimer's dismissive remark, she paints a picture of a young man as 'frantic' as his father was over the loss of Gaveston but more capable than his father was of redressing his sorrows and fears:

> Ay, ay, but he tears his hair and wrings his hands,
> And vows to be revenged upon us both.
> Into the council chamber he is gone
> To crave the aid and succour of his peers.
> Ay me, see where he comes, and they with him.
> Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.
>
> (*EII* 5.6.18–23)

As Isabella anticipates, the new king does more than wax performatively passionate over his father's death. Empowered by 'the aid and succour of his peers', he finds a way to make his passions speak to productive effect. Bid, 'Weep not, sweet son', by his mother, the king privileges the propriety of the open expression of grief, 'Forbid not me to weep; he was my father', and interprets her own 'patience' or coolness in the face of Edward's death as the impropriety it is: 'And had you loved him half so well as I, / You could not bear his death thus patiently. / But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer' (5.6.31–6). The young king reads in the queen's lack of affect the unmistakable sign of her disaffection, and finds it so inconsistent with the part she should be playing that he consigns her to another role entirely, that of Mortimer's helpmate and co-conspirator.

In a suggestive variation on this theme, after Mortimer is led off stage to his execution, the young king witnesses a resurgence of the queen's passions as she pleads 'As thou received'st thy life from me, / Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer', into which he reads even more damning evidence of her collaboration with Mortimer: 'This argues that you spilt my father's blood, / Else would you not entreat for Mortimer' (5.6.67–70). While he claims he does not yet 'think her so unnatural' (a word that would effectively couple the act of regicide to adultery and confirm their association with sodomy), he also orders her immediate arrest on suspicion of the charge, in part because 'Her words enforce tears, / And I shall pity her if she speak again' (5.6.84–5). With these words, Marlowe brings an effectual closure

to his collateral construction of passion and disorder. Recognizing, as his father and mother could not, that the passions must be accommodated to the moral and legal structures of civil society, the king does not so much renounce pity or compassion as direct it away from the demands of social and legal accountability. A king who can both think and feel, but subdue his feelings to the lordship of his reason, as opposed to his will, Edward III may well supply the missing link both to right rule and the humoural ideal in this play. That he may also supply something less is, however, evinced by the last image with which the play leaves us, as the 'tears, distilling from [his] eyes' are said to be 'witness' of a 'grief and innocency' that is somewhat qualified by the 'wicked traitor's head' he holds in his hands (5.6.99–101).

NOTES

1. Jonathan Gil Harris, Review of Michael Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), in *ShakS* 19 (2001), 253.
2. I draw the phrase 'affective economies' from the Introduction to Theodore B. Leinwand's estimable recent book, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). For a more philosophical approach to the subject of the passions, see Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1997).
3. In this chapter all quotations from the play are taken from the Revels edition of *Edward II*, Charles Forker (ed.) (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994).
4. In the Introduction to his edition of *Edward II*, Forker makes a good case for Marlowe's general reliance on the second edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles* (London, 1587) as amended by Abraham Fleming. See Forker, pp. 41–4.
5. See Thomas Cartelli, *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), pp. 123–31. The attractiveness of Gaveston to contemporary audiences and readers alike is plausibly evinced by the addition of the following lines to the title pages of editions of the play published in 1598, 1612, and 1622: 'And also the life and death of *Piers Gaveston, / the great Earle of* Cornwall, and *mighty* / fauorite of king *Edward* the second'. The first quarto edition of *Edward II* was published in 1594.
6. Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 47, 46.
7. Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford University Press), pp. 122–3.
8. The former position is taken by Alan Bray in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982), pp. 16–17, the latter by Bruce Smith in *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 223. Cf. Lawrence Normand, in '"What Passions Call You These?": *Edward II* and James VI', in Darryll Grantley and Peter Roberts (eds.), *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 1996), pp. 172–197.
9. Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Mind in General*, 2nd edn. (London, 1604), in William Webster Newbold (ed.) (New York: Garland Press, 1986), pp. 126–7.

10. See *The History of the Life, Reign and Death of Edward II, King of England, and Lord of Ireland. With the Rise & Fall of his great favourites, Gaveston & the Spencers*. Written by E. F. in the year 1627. And Printed verbatim from the Original (London, 1680); Michael Drayton, 'Piers Gaveston' (orig. 1593–4) in *The Works of Michael Drayton*, J. William Hebel (ed.) (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), vol. 1; and Francis Hubert, *The History of Edward II* (London, 1629). I discuss these three texts in '*Queer* Edward II: Postmodern Sexualities and the Early Modern Subject', in Paul Whitfield White (ed.), *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe* (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 216–18. Also see Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 48–77.
11. Mario Di Gangi, 'Marlowe, Queer Studies, and Renaissance Homoeroticism', in White (ed.), *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, p. 208.
12. Forker's translation of these lines from Seneca's *Thyestes* reads: 'Whom the rising sun has seen high in pride, him the setting sun has seen laid low' (p. 264).

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