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## Chapter Five

### Playgoing, Apprenticeship and Profit:

#### Francis Quicksilver, Goldsmith, and Richard Meighen, Stationer<sup>1</sup>

Lucy Munro

George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston's city comedy *Eastward Ho!*, first performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels in 1605, offers sharp parodies of the 'good' and 'bad' apprentice. Francis Quicksilver and Golding – whose first name is never revealed – are both the sons of gentlemen who have been apprenticed to a successful London goldsmith, Touchstone. Their courses, however, are very different. The dutiful Golding models himself on his master, marries his master's daughter, and rises with exaggerated swiftness to the office of Alderman's deputy and member of Common Council. The rebellious Quicksilver gets drunk, spends his master's money on clothes and sex, encourages other young men to get into debt, plans to use the skills that he has learned during his apprenticeship for illicit financial gain, and is eventually arrested for the felonious offence of selling his master's goods. He is also an inveterate consumer of plays.

In autumn 1613, *Eastward Ho!* was revived by Lady Elizabeth's Men at the Swan playhouse on the Bankside.<sup>2</sup> Around this time the behaviour of another apprentice, Richard Meighen, was also held up for scrutiny, albeit in the 'theatre' of the law rather than the playhouse. His apprenticeship to the stationer Thomas Pavier

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<sup>1</sup>I am very grateful to Kirk Melnikoff, Simon Smith and Emma Whipday for their comments on a draft of this essay, to the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, for a Francis Bacon Foundation Fellowship in 2016 that supported some of my research for it, and to staff at The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), for their help with accessing materials.

<sup>2</sup> See Martin Wiggins with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012-), vol. V, 217-18.

became the subject of a dispute centring on a bond of £100 sealed by his father, John, to guarantee his son's good conduct. Pavier dismissed Richard from his service and claimed that the bond was forfeit; following an ultimately unsuccessful series of attempts at arbitration around 1612-13, he sued John at the common law, at which point John asked Chancery to intervene and block Pavier's suit.<sup>3</sup> The Chancery suit progressed as far as the interrogation of witnesses, and three depositions gathered to support Pavier's case have survived. The deponents claim that Richard came home drunk at night, purloined and wasted Pavier's goods, went to taverns and bowling alleys when he was supposed to be working, possessed and wielded a pistol, kitted himself out with 'gentlemanlike' clothes and accoutrements, and consorted with a 'lewd' woman. Like Quicksilver, he is also presented as a fan of the theatre, not only attending plays but also 'frequent[ing] Alehouses and Tavernes and would have there in his Companye <stage> players and there wives'.<sup>4</sup> Like *Eastward Ho!*, the depositions offer a vivid and complex picture of the 'bad' apprentice; Hulda Berggren Wallace, whose unpublished research notes enabled me to trace, read and present them here, aptly describes them as 'gossipy'.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the various forms of 'play' in which Richard is said to have engaged speak to the mixed entertainment economy detailed by Tiffany Stern in Chapter Nine of this volume.

It is not unlikely that Richard Meighen saw *Eastward Ho!* in autumn 1613, and the young actors of Lady Elizabeth's Men may have been among those whom he entertained. But the connections that I wish to draw between the play and the Chancery suit have less to do with biography and more to do with the ways in which apprentices' playgoing was understood in the Jacobean period. This is not a neglected area: apprentices have featured prominently in recent studies of early modern theatrical spectatorship. In a series of publications, Charles Whitney has valuably examined the attitudes of London's livery companies towards playgoing, the autobiographical writing of Richard Norwood – a contemporary of Meighen's who

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<sup>3</sup> These events are detailed in a court order of 22 October 1613, TNA, C 33/126, ff. 52v-53r.

<sup>4</sup> Depositions in Meighen v. Pavier, April 1614, TNA, C 24/401, no. 98. All references are taken from this source. Transcriptions retain crossings out and corrections; insertions are enclosed with pointed brackets (<>).

<sup>5</sup> Hulda was the research associate and wife of the theatre historian Charles William Wallace; her notes on the Meighen suit appear in the Charles W. Wallace Papers at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, Box 16.

attended the Fortune playhouse in 1612 – and the broader contexts in which apprentices and young people attended theatre.<sup>6</sup> Bernard Capp and Duncan Salkeld have set out evidence of apprentices’ playgoing from the records of the Bridewell prison, while Amanda Bailey has looked at the broader social valence of playgoing among young men.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have also offered various perspectives on the representation of apprenticeship in *Eastward Ho!* Notable recent examples include Ronda Arab’s study of the apprenticeship of younger sons of the gentry and Charles Cathcart’s account of the playwright Marston’s family connections with a gentlemanly goldsmith’s apprentice, William Marston.<sup>8</sup> More broadly, early modern youth culture and its links with broader forms of popular culture have been examined by both historians and literary scholars.<sup>9</sup>

Building on these foundations, this essay focuses on two key factors in the stories of Quicksilver and Meighen – vice and repentance – looking in detail at the tropes and narratives that gather around the playgoing apprentice. *Eastward Ho!* and the depositions in the Meighen case present a point of intersection between the lives of (fictional and real) individuals and what Amy J. Rodgers has recently termed ‘the early modern discursive spectator – a figure generated largely through early modern

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<sup>6</sup> Charles Whitney, ‘Out of Service and in the Playhouse: Richard Norwood, Youth in Transition, and Early Response to *Dr. Faustus*’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 12 (1999), 166-89; “‘Usually in the Working Daies’”: Playgoing Journeymen, Apprentices, and Servants in the Guild Records, 1582-92’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 50 (1999), 433-58; *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), esp. 185-96.

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Capp, ‘Playgoers, Players and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern London: The Bridewell Evidence’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 18 (2003), 159-71; Duncan Salkeld, ‘New Allusions to London “Shrewes” and Playhouses, 1575-1605’, *Early Theatre*, 8 (2005), 101-8; Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), esp. 32-8.

<sup>8</sup> Ronda Arab, ‘Transforming the Younger Son: The Disruptive Affect of the Gentleman-Apprentice in *Eastward Ho!*’, in *Historical Affects and the Early Modern Theater*, ed. Ronda Arab, Michelle M. Dowd and Adam Zucker (New York: Routledge, 2015), 198-210; Charles Cathcart, ‘Edward Greene, Goldsmith; William Marston, Apprentice; and *Eastward Ho!*’, *Early Theatre*, 19 (2016), 81-100. On apprenticeship in early modern popular literature see Mark Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1997), 14-53.

<sup>9</sup> For an overview, see Edel Lamb, ‘Youth Culture’, in *The Ashgate Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Abigail Shinn, Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (ADD), ADD.

cultural anxieties and fantasies about spectators'.<sup>10</sup> Although their origins, purposes and modes differ, *Eastward Ho!* and the depositions represent playgoing through a similar set of conventions, assumptions and clichés. Functioning like a cultural script, such conventions enable playwrights and deponents alike to articulate shared assumptions about apprenticeship and its relationship with playgoing. Simultaneously, however, they also reveal some of the fault-lines within those tropes, not least because each presents an oddly self-reflexive version of the playgoing apprentice.

*Eastward Ho!* establishes a meta-dramatic network of associations around Quicksilver, as spectators watch him recite scraps from popular plays and, finally, at the end of Act 5, reshape himself in an extravagantly theatrical act of repentance. Meighen was also steeped in theatrical culture. His master, Pavier, was an important play publisher; intriguingly, a set of plays dealing with male prodigality – *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (1605), *The Fair Maid of Bristow* (1605), Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (1605 and 1610) and Thomas Middleton's *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608) – would have been passing through his shop at the time of Meighen's apprenticeship. Meighen himself went on to collaborate in the publication of the first and second folio editions of the *Works* of Ben Jonson (1616 and 1640) and the second folio edition of Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies* (1632); he issued a series of plays in quarto, including some that he might have seen during his apprenticeship.<sup>11</sup> He also published three editions of *A Recantation of an Ill-Led Life*, written by a highwayman turned poet and playwright, John Clavell, in 1628 and 1634. In neither case, therefore, is it easy to position playgoing as a misdemeanour that must be cast off in order for the apprentice to repent and be re-assimilated into the structures of civic trade and profit. Quite the contrary: Quicksilver and Richard

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<sup>10</sup> Amy J. Rodgers, *A Monster with a Thousand Hands: The Discursive Spectator in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 4.

<sup>11</sup> These include 1629 and 1643 editions of John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, first performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels c. 1607-8, and 1630 editions of Thomas Middleton's *The Phoenix*, first performed by the Children of Paul's c. 1603, and *Michaelmas Term*, performed by the same company c. 1604, Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which was revived in 1604-5, and Edward Sharpham's *Cupid's Whirligig*, first performed by the Children of the King's Revels c. 1607-8. For full lists of Pavier and Meighen's play publications, see *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (2007), <http://deep.sas.upenn.edu>. Accessed 1 May 2020.

Meighen present examples of apprentices who actively profit from their interest in theatre.

### Vice

Baptised on 7 February 1591, Richard Meighen was in his mid-to-late teens during his apprenticeship to Thomas Pavier. The testimony of the witnesses in the Chancery suit suggests that he entered Pavier's service in late 1607, leaving three years later in late November or December 1610. This may not, however, have been Meighen's first apprenticeship: one witness, the haberdasher John Dagger, claims that he 'dwelt' with 'one *Master* Bill a stacioner' – that is, John Bill, the king's printer – before 'he came to be servaunt' to Pavier. The sequence of events is not clear because neither Bill nor Pavier entered Meighen's apprenticeship at Stationers' Hall, as they were supposed to do, nor do any of the witnesses say why Meighen left Bill's service. Dagger claims that Bill testified before William Haynes, one of the arbiters who examined the dispute between John Meighen and Pavier, that 'Richard Meighen was not given to those vices wherewith he was accused, <for ought he could ever perceave before he came to dwell with the *defendant* Pavyer>'. We know that John Meighen paid Pavier a premium of 20 nobles (£16) and signed a bond of £100 to guarantee his son's 'true apprenticeship', but neither of these sums were extraordinary.<sup>12</sup>

By December 1610, however, the relationship between Pavier and Richard Meighen had broken down completely. Whatever the truth of the situation, the depositions, taken in April 1614, demonstrate that Pavier's legal team sought to portray Meighen as a stereotypically 'bad' apprentice and playgoing as one of his defining sins.<sup>13</sup> In doing so, they drew on a tradition of civic censure. In 1592, for instance, the Lord Mayor of London wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury claiming that 'the youth' were 'greatly corrupted & their manners infected w<sup>th</sup> many evill & ungodly qualities' by plays, and that through them 'the prentizes & servants [are]

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<sup>12</sup> Order of 22 October 1613, TNA, C 33/126, f. 52v. On the premiums and bonds associated with apprenticeship see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 87-8, 112-14.

<sup>13</sup> On the range of bad behaviours in which apprentices were accused of indulging, see Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), esp. 112-75 and 290-350.

w<sup>th</sup>drawen from their woorks'.<sup>14</sup> Simultaneously, livery companies sought to prevent their apprentices from 'haunting and frequentinge taverns alehouses and plaies and such like places of evill rule and disorder' on the sabbath and holidays, and to control the behaviour of those who 'usually in the werking Daies resort to play howses and other such like places where being in evill Company they spend awaye their Maisters money'.<sup>15</sup>

Official disapproval of playgoing is also reflected in the treatment of other individual apprentices at those moments at which they enter the historical record. The despairing master of an apprentice carpenter petitioned the company in 1600, complaining that 'moste nightes it is 12 a clocke at night erie [i.e. ere] that he comes home & then beinge in drincke he fales out with my wife & beates her & besydes that he will worke nuver [i.e. never] but ly drinkinge at the ale house & romes to playes all the day longe'.<sup>16</sup> In the records of the Bridewell prison, playgoing is similarly coupled with other vices. On 18 November 1604, Edward Nightingale, an apprentice of Master Ballard, the hemp-master of the prison, was whipped because he 'absented him self from his said *Masters service* all one after noone beinge a working day and went to a play and att night came home drunck'. When Ballard attempted the next morning to give him 'correcsion for his Lewdnes' by beating him with 'a smale wande', Nightingale compounded his offence by producing a 'hitchell tooth' – a tool with sharp teeth used to comb out hemp – with which he 'stabde at his Master & stabde him into the brest'.<sup>17</sup> Jacob Mogett similarly appeared at Bridewell in July 1605 'for that he misspends his *Masters goodes* in goinge to playes', followed in November 1619 by Robert Wilson, 'a *vagrant lewde Boye* that haunteth playhouses &

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<sup>14</sup> City of London Remembrancia, Vol. 1 (1579-92), London Metropolitan Archives, COL/RMD/PA/01/001, fol. 635; quoted from *Malone Society Collections* 1.1: 68.

<sup>15</sup> Plaisterers' Ordinance, 24 January 1587, Guildhall Library, CLC/L/PG/A/004/MS06132, no. 61, renewed 1596 (no. 4); Bakers' Court Minutes, 17 January 1592, Guildhall Library, CLC/L/BA/001/MS5177/002, fol. 278v). Both quoted from Whitney, 'Usually in the Werking Daies', Appendix 1 (455, 456).

<sup>16</sup> Carpenters' Court Papers, 1600-1, CLC/L/CC/B/004/MS07784/001, quoted from Whitney, *Early Responses*, 189.

<sup>17</sup> Minute Book of the Court of Governors, Bridewell Prison, 1604-1610, BCB 5, f. 3v. See Salkeld, 'Playhouses', 163; Capp, 'Playgoers', 163.

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neglecteth his work’ and in March 1623 by John Gore, ‘a notorious runneaway from his dame, an honest woman & frequenting playes and ydlenes & will not bee ruled’.<sup>18</sup>

The research of social historians such as Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos suggests that these young men may be more typical of the average apprentice than Quicksilver or Meighen, the sons of gentlemen whose fathers signed bonds for their good behaviour.<sup>19</sup> However, their misdemeanours follow similar patterns. According to his fellow apprentice, William Holmes, Meighen did not ‘behave and demeane him selfe in so good sort as he ought to have done’, frequenting taverns, alehouses, plays and bowling-alleys, coming home drunk late at night, and ‘for the mayntenance of his expences did ymbeasill purloyne and wast much of his *said* masters goodes and estate to the value of xx<sup>s</sup> by the weake at the least’. Touchstone recites a similar list of Quicksilver’s transgressions:

when he had two year to serve [he] kept his whore and his hunting nag; would play his hundred pound at gresco or primero as familiarly (and all o’ my purse) as any bright piece of crimson on ’em all; had his changeable trunks of apparel standing at livery, with his mare, his chest of perfumed linen, and his bathing tubs [...] he hath had the gift of gathering up some small parcels of mine, to the value of five hundred pound, dispersed among my customers

(4.2.186-90, 91-3)

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<sup>18</sup> BCB 5, f. 42r, Minute Book, 1617-27, BCB 6, f. 155v, 332v, 350v, 352v. See Capp, ‘Playgoers’, 163. Mogett was baptised at St Mary, Whitechapel, on 27 August 1590 and buried there on 26 November 1607, meaning that he was nearly 15 when he appeared at Bridewell. Wilson is probably the boy who told the authorities that ‘he dwelles in hounslich with his mother’ when he was punished in May 1619 for vagrancy (BCB 6, f. 119).

<sup>19</sup> See *Adolescence and Youth*, 86-93. Touchstone tells Quicksilver, ‘your father’s bond lies for you’, and Quicksilver declares, ‘though I am a prentice I can give arms’ (1.1.48, 80-1). Meighen’s family, based in Shrewsbury, had been recently elevated to gentle status. His grandfather, also called Richard, was described as a ‘clothworker’ in his 1613 will, but his father, John, was headmaster of the grammar school at Shrewsbury and described himself as ‘gentleman’ in a Star Chamber suit of 1615. See TNA, PROB 11/121; John Meighen v. Richard Hughes, Henry ap Richard, et al., Court of Star Chamber, 1615, TNA, STAC 8/212/27.



Within this broader picture, certain misdemeanours of the errant apprentice offer focal points for criticism in play and depositions alike: conspicuous consumption and wearing rich clothing; associating with women of dubious reputation; neglecting their work; stealing their masters' goods; and abusing the knowledge or privilege gained through their service.

The City of London sought to control the dress and possessions of apprentices.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, questions about what Meighen wore as an apprentice, the goods that he flaunted, and whether he had 'any chist or Trunck standing abroad without his Masters knowledge', feature repeatedly in the depositions. Holmes declares that 'whilst [Meighen] served the *said defendant* [he] had [...] furnished himself with fine holland shirtes Cambrick b[an]des worstead stockins and silke garters'. Another deponent, the scrivener Richard West, concedes that Meighen 'went very neatly & gentlemanlike', but he claims not to know whether he had done so during his apprenticeship. Holmes and West both assert that Meighen had a pistol, which Holmes says he 'would commonly use to shoote of when he went abroad into the feildes', but West is unsure when he acquired it. The deponents agree, however, that Meighen had an ostentatiously expensive watch, 'the Compasse of which was devided, and all pointes of the wind graven which showed the daye of the moneth and the age of the moone and had in yt other mocions', and that they saw it in his possession when he was an apprentice.

Quicksilver's transgression is similarly displayed through clothing and objects. He enters the play wearing '*hat, pumps* [i.e. dancing shoes], *short sword and dagger, and a [tennis] racket trussed up under his cloak*' (1.1.0SD), his barely concealed gallantry clashing with his initial attempt to play the good apprentice when he replies to Touchstone's questions – 'Where's the supper? Where's the rendezvous?' – with a bland 'Indeed, and in very good sober truth, sir –' (1.1.2-4). In the first scene of Act 2 he enters '*unlaced, a towel about his neck, in his flat cap, drunk*' (2.1.69SD). Spouting lines from plays such as Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, the lost play 'Irene the Fair Greek' and Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, he finally goads Touchstone into dismissing him from his service. He then appears at the house of Security the usurer '*in his prentice's coat and cap [and] his gallant breeches and*

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<sup>20</sup> See Steven R. Smith, 'The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents', *Past and Present*, 61 (1973), 149-61 (150-1).

*stockings*' (2.2.7SD) before Sindefy brings his '*doublet, cloak, rapier, and dagger*' (2.2.20SD), telling him 'Here, sir, put off the other half of your prenticeship' (2.2.21). The transformation is complete in the next scene, when Gertrude does not recognise him in his 'bravery' (2.3.83). Quicksilver secretly wears rich clothing while he is still an apprentice, but his discharge from Touchstone's service enables him to inhabit fully the persona of a gentleman.

Both the play and the depositions associate the erring apprentice with women whose sexual probity is called into question. Quicksilver describes Sindefy as his 'punk' (2.3.77), while Holmes and Dagger both describe at length Meighen's visits to the house of Susan Moody, called a 'victualler' by Holmes and 'a lewd woma[n]' by Dagger. According to Dagger, Moody sent for a constable 'for some abuses and wronges <then> done by the *said* Richard Meighen'; Holmes claims that the dispute went as far as a suit and countersuit at the Quarter Sessions. Meighen is also said to have drunkenly displayed in Moody's house a 'great store of gould', variously valued by the witnesses at £10, £30 or £40 pounds. Crucially, the gold was said to belong not to Meighen but to Pavier, although Dagger claimed that Meighen told him

that he had gould about him at the *said* tyme, ~~but it~~ which was but Tenne poundes, and the same as he said was none of his masters but ~~yt~~ was the gould of one Vyncent <Master> ~~my~~ Pyes Clarke of the Temple, but [(]quoth he) the *said* Suzan Moodye hath Cheated me at tymes of 30. or 40<sup>li</sup>. [...] the *said* Richard Meighen then adding further that his *master* (meaning the *defendant*) might recover of the *said* Suzan an hundred poundes for abuses done by her, for that <among divers other abuses> the *said* Suzan had entised him the *said* Richard Meighen to come from his *said* master and to bring as much mony with him as he could and to marry with her

In such moments, the depositions present scenes that would not be out of place in a Jacobean city comedy. Indeed, *Eastward Ho!* presents its own versions of this narrative in heightened forms. Touchstone states that Quicksilver owes him '[s]even score pound' (1.1.36), declaring, 'I will not be gallanted out of my moneys' (1.1.37). Meighen allegedly claimed that Susan Moody was keen to marry him, while Sindefy in *Eastward Ho!* tells Gertrude that she was 'stolen from my friends [...] by a prentice

in the habit and disguise of a gentleman, and here brought up to London and promised marriage' (4.2.8-10). Yet the patterns of comedy are not those of real life. Quicksilver is betrothed to Sindefy at the end of the play, but Meighen did not marry until 1623, and his bride was not Susan Moody, but Mercy Buckfield, who eventually inherited his publishing business and ran it in partnership with two of her daughters' husbands.

Both play and depositions present the idea that the 'bad' apprentice will neglect his professional duties and turn the skills that he has learned to illicit ends. *Eastward Ho!* opens with Touchstone accusing Quicksilver of roistering in taverns when he is supposed to be working, a charge that the apprentice does not deny, claiming that 'tis for your worship and for your commodity that I keep company' (1.1.23-4). Later in the play, Quicksilver formulates a plan to misuse his skills, telling Sir Petronel, 'I have not lived amongst goldsmiths and goldmakers all this while but I have learned something worthy of my time with 'em' (4.1.163-5). He will 'blanch' copper to make it look like silver, and extract some of the precious metal from gold coins by 'washing' them in acid.<sup>21</sup>

We never see Quicksilver working with metals in this fashion, perhaps because it would be both difficult to stage and dramatically uninteresting. In contrast, the depositions offer a luridly detailed picture of Meighen's professional misdemeanours. Holmes states that on Sundays Pavier required his apprentices to 'take and write noates from the pre<a>cher', but that Meighen was in the habit of hiring 'one Thomas Brewer' to take his notes for him,

and in the meane tyme the *said* Richard Meighen would sometymes goe to the Taverne and some tymes he would take boat at the black friers stayers and goe over to the Bankes side to the Bowling alley and such places there, where he was acquainted, but [...] the *said* Richard would so handle the matter that he would be back againe at the Blackfriars church by that tyme that the sermon was ended, the same being the place wherevnto for the most part the *said defendant* [i.e. Pavier] sent his servauntes to the sermon, And there [...] the *said* Richard would take the *said* noates of the *said* Thomas Brewer and

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<sup>21</sup> See 4.1.168-81 and notes.

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carie them home and read them to his *said master*, as if they had bene the said Richardes owne dooing

Although Holmes here attempts to distance himself from Meighen, Dagger's testimony demonstrates that he was also among the truants. Dagger specifies that the apprentices paid Brewer sums of two shillings or eighteen pence for his notes, and he claims that during arbitration Holmes confessed that

many tymes at morning service they would take a Boat and would goe from the Black ffriars to *Saint Katherins* and some tymes over to the Bankes side to places where they had good cheare provided against their *Comming* to breakfast, And at afternoone service [...] they Commonly went to the Taverne, where they played at shovell Board and had Potato pies of viij<sup>s</sup> or vj<sup>s</sup> xiiij<sup>d</sup> prece [i.e. price] and such like Junckettes or else they tooke a Boate and went over the water to a Bowling Alley on the Bankeside neare the beare garden

The unruly mobility of the apprentice around the city and beyond its bounds is thus coupled with illicit leisure-time and expenditure, as Meighen's travels take him between two important sites of theatrical activity: the Blackfriars and the Bankside.

Another form of Jacobean popular culture linked closely both with plays and with apprentices as consumers, the ballad, is yet more prominent in the depositions.<sup>22</sup> Holmes claims that Meighen 'did cause divers lewde filthy and idle songes and Ballades to be printed in his *masters* name to be sould at his shoppe'; when Pavier found out, he continues, 'he cutt some of them in peeces and made wast paper of other some of them'. It is not clear whether this version of events is true. On 5 November 1610, shortly before Meighen left his service, Pavier was fined ten shillings by the court of the Stationers' Company 'for printing a ballad *without licence* wherein William White was his printer' and White was fined 2s. 6d. 'for printing the sayd

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<sup>22</sup> On plays and ballads, see Tiffany Stern, 'Shakespeare the Balladmonger?', in *Rethinking Theatrical Documents in Shakespeare's England*, ed. Tiffany Stern (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2020), 216-38; on apprentices consuming ballads, see Lamb, 'Youth Culture', 39; Burnett, *Masters and Servants*, 21.

ballad for *Master Pavyer*. Pavier was ‘ordered to bringe into the hall the rest of the *said* ballads that are not sold/. And thereupon he brought certayne *whiche* were burnte’.<sup>23</sup> It is thus possible that Pavier was held responsible for the ballads that Meighen had commissioned and sold, or that Holmes misremembered the incident and blamed Meighen for Pavier’s own transgression of the Stationers’ rules.

Holmes and Dagger both claim that Meighen sold his master’s books for his own profit. Holmes says that Meighen ‘did deliver out of his *said* masters Shoppe divers bookes without the privitie of his *said* master’, naming the stationers Henry Lee, James Pigeon and Thomas Kempton alongside ‘one Thomas Jones who was then apprentice to one *Master Baely* a Stacioner and kept a shopp for his *said* master at Bedlam gate’.<sup>24</sup> He claims that because ‘the *said* bookes <were> so many that were delivered and the tymes so often when they were delivered’ he ‘cannot remember the value or worth of them’. Dagger presents a more vivid scene, saying that he, Pavier and Pavier’s brother, Roger, went to Jones’s shop where they

did there finde lyeing upon the *said* Jones his stall certaine bookes which the *defendant* did knowe came from his owne shoppe, whereupon the *defendant* questioning with the *said* Jones concerning the *said* Bookes and demaunding of him how he came by them, the *said* Jones did there acknowledg that he bought the *said* Bookes of the *said* Richard Meighen and divers others <books> besides for the which he paid unto the *said* Richard Meighen xxx<sup>s</sup> in hand and was to give him x<sup>s</sup> more, upon which speches the *defendant* desired the *said* Jones to ~~write~~ sett downe in writing what bookes in *particular* <they were which he so bought> with their severall prises what he paid for them, which the *said* Jones <did> in the presence of the *said* Master Roger Pavyer and this deponent, by which *said* note in writing it appeared that the *said* bookes so by the *said* Jones bought of the *said* Richard Meighen, did amount unto the value of liij<sup>s</sup> j<sup>d</sup> or thereabouts as the *said* Meighen had sould <them, and yett had and was to have but

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<sup>23</sup> Stationers’ Company Archives (hereafter SCA), Book of Entrance of Fines, 1605-1640, TSC/1/D/10/01, f. 5r. The slash appears in the original.

<sup>24</sup> The third letter in ‘Baely’ has been corrected and is unclear.

40<sup>s</sup> for them> which was not so much mony as the *said* Bookes were worth and as they were usually ~~worth~~ <sould for> unto Chapmen ~~in the~~ ~~countray~~ whoe ~~sould~~ <doe sell> them againe, by xx<sup>s</sup> at the least

This extended quotation demonstrates in detail some of the techniques that Dagger uses to make his testimony credible, positioning himself as an eyewitness and incorporating into his account the reported oral and written testimony of others. Where *Eastward Ho!* dramatizes the ‘bad’ apprentice through dialogue, staging and gesture, the depositions conjure him through anecdote, dialogue, local detail and the use of the loaded vocabulary of rebellion, corruption and infection familiar from the attempts of city authorities and livery companies to control the behaviour of young people.

### **Redemption**

If the representation of vice provided one cultural script for the representation of the playgoing apprentice, the representation of repentance provided another. In the autobiography of another Jacobean apprentice, Richard Norwood, later a surveyor and colonizer in the West Indies, playgoing and repentance are closely entwined. In 1612, when he was 22 years old, Norwood had left his apprenticeship to a ship’s master’s mate and ‘frequented’ the Fortune playhouse. Writing decades later, following periods of intense spiritual crisis and breakdown, he describes playgoing as ‘a great means to withdraw and take off my mind from any thing that was serious, true, or good, and to set it upon frivolous, false and feigned things’. Recounting how he ‘fell out with the players [...] about a seat which they would not admit me to have’ and stopped going to the Fortune, he presents these events as the workings of divine intervention: ‘It was God’s mercy to give me this rub that I had not run myself over head and ears in these vanities’.<sup>25</sup> Norwood thus reads his own actions retrospectively, presenting playgoing

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<sup>25</sup> *The Journal of Richard Norwood, Surveyor of Bermuda*, ed. W.F. Craven and W.B. Hayward (Ann Arbor, MI: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1945), 42.

as both a dangerous distraction from Protestant self-scrutiny and a sign of his potentially reprobate status.<sup>26</sup>

Elsewhere, however, the links between playgoing and repentance are less clear cut. Edward Nightingale was back before the Bridewell authorities in June 1606 when he was ‘accused by a queane to be ffather of a Child’.<sup>27</sup> John Gore was punished again in May 1623 ‘for a *vagrant* yt will not bee ruled but runne away and filtch from his mother’ and twice in November 1623 for ‘a *vagrant* & unruly fellowe and an olde guest’ and ‘a notorious *vagrant* and common guest’.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, both *Eastward Ho!* and the depositions in the Chancery suit present repentance in equivocal terms, and its relationship with playgoing is not as neat it appears to be for Norwood.

Act 5 of *Eastward Ho!* presents an inflated and thoroughly enjoyable picture of Quicksilver’s repentance, one that both exploits and satirizes what Peter Lake has called ‘the conventional norms and forms of conversion and repentance’ that circulated in pamphlets and other media.<sup>29</sup> The narrative and stage action – in particular the appearances of Quicksilver himself – are carefully managed. The act begins with reports of Quicksilver’s off-stage actions at the Wood Street Counter, where he has been consigned with Sir Petronel and Security. The keeper of the prison, Master Wolf, tells Touchstone and Golding, ‘I never saw prisoners more penitent or more devout. They will sit you up all night singing of psalms and edifying the whole prison’ (5.2.33-5). The story then shifts to the prison itself, where we get a brief glimpse of Quicksilver admonishing Security for being ‘still so profane’ (5.3.29). An exchange between two prisoners and a visiting friend then presents his repentance in more detail. ‘[H]ow miserably he is changed!’ exclaims the friend, to which the First Prisoner replies, ‘Oh, that’s voluntary in him; he gave away all his rich clothes as soon as ever he came in here, among the prisoners, and will eat o’ the basket for humility’ (5.3.43-6). Quicksilver performs his repentance by rejecting luxury, abasing

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<sup>26</sup> On this point, see Whitney, ‘Out of Service’; Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 81-4.

<sup>27</sup> BCB 5, f. 114r.

<sup>28</sup> BCB 6, f. 329v.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Lake, ‘Theatrical Appropriations: The First Time as Tragedy, the Second Time as Farce’, in Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The Antichrist’s Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 377-424 (405).

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himself by giving away his fine clothes and refusing to eat anything except the scraps of food donated for the alms basket. The First Prisoner also reports that he has ‘penned the best thing, that he calls his “Repentance” or his “Last Farewell”, that ever you heard’ (5.3.50-1). A further brief appearance by Quicksilver, in which he gives away the money that Golding has sent him to the other prisoners, reinforces the picture of newly decorous penitence that is being constructed around the erring apprentice.

Quicksilver’s final and most sustained appearance in the Act centres on the ‘Repentance’ or ‘Last Farewell’: a ballad that is referred to in an offhand manner by the First Prisoner, but becomes the centrepiece of the play’s grand finale. Seemingly unaware that Touchstone is secretly observing him, Quicksilver readily agrees to sing the ballad, and it encapsulates the pleurably ambivalent quality of his repentance. Whereas Meighen is said to have secretly published and sold illicit ballads, Quicksilver seeks to make a different kind of profit from the form. As he sings, he details his rejection of Touchstone’s advice and authority in extravagant detail, presenting his misdemeanours again through clothing – ‘I cast my coat and cap away; / I went in silks and satins gay’ – disrespect, drunkenness and financial and sexual excess: ‘I scorned my master, being drunk; / I kept my gelding and my punk’ (5.3.53-4, 57-8). Quicksilver’s misuse of his vocation appears in metaphorical terms when he declares, ‘False metal of good manners I / Did daily coin unlawfully’ (5.5.53-6), and his repentance is presented in terms of a desire to reconnect with both his master and his trade: ‘Now cry I, “Touchstone, touch me still, / And make me current by thy skill”’ (73-4). The performance of the ballad enthral and wins over his master. Touchstone rushes forward to be reconciled with Quicksilver, and he delivers the moral that concludes the play proper:

Behold the careful father, thrifty son;  
The solemn deeds, which each of us have done;  
The usurer punished, and from fall so steep  
The prodigal child reclaimed, and the lost sheep.

(5.5.183-6)



A combination of techniques thus gradually reveal Quicksilver's repentance: report, tantalizingly brief appearances and, finally, the enjoyably overblown ballad and Touchstone's tearful response to it.

*Eastward Ho!* presents a conventional arc of the apprentice's bad behaviour and eventual reformation; however, comparing the play with the Meighen depositions demonstrates some of the pressures within that narrative. Like *Eastward Ho!*, the depositions are heavily invested in the idea that reformation follows indulgence, but the focus of this investment is not Meighen but his fellow apprentice, William Holmes. The son of John Holmes of Melling in Lancashire, Holmes was apprenticed to Pavier for seven years on 25 March 1607.<sup>30</sup> Like Meighen, Holmes seems to have been an unruly apprentice, and the Stationers' records suggest that tensions between Holmes and Pavier came to a head in early 1611, not long after Meighen's departure. On 18 February, 'William Holme apprentice to Thomas Pavyer by Indenture inrolled' was 'nowe with thassent of his sayd master & by consent of a Courte hold on this day, putt over to John Wrighte to serue the residue of the terme of his apprenticeship with him'.<sup>31</sup> Yet just over a year later, on 5 August 1612, 'William Holme prentice to Master Pavyer who was formerly putt over to John Wrighte' was 'nowe retourned & putt over againe to Master Pavyer for the residue of the terme of his prestishippe'.<sup>32</sup> Holmes was eventually made free of the Stationers on 4 April 1614.<sup>33</sup>

The depositions make sense of this series of events. Holmes describes his transfer from Pavier to Wright, and relates that while in Wright's service he fell sick, 'and being so sick that he had small hope of life, he [...] beganne to have some trouble in his conscience for his evell demeanour towards the defendant his former master'. In January 1612 he met with Pavier and confessed his misdemeanours, which were also detailed in a piece of writing 'testifieing thereby the truth of the matter' that Holmes and Wright both signed. Holmes's conversation with Pavier and the written testimony have the same narrative function as Quicksilver's repentance ballad: articulating his former misdemeanours allows the apprentice to be reconciled with his master on professional and personal levels. '[T]hou hast eat into my breast,

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<sup>30</sup> SCA, Apprentice Register Volume 1, TSC/1/C/05/01/01, f. 7r.

<sup>31</sup> SCA, TSC/1/C/05/01/01, f. 28r.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 36r.

<sup>33</sup> SCA, Apprentices Bound, Turned Over, Free and Clothed, TSC/1/C/05/04/01, f. 39r.

Quicksilver, with the drops of thy sorrow', Touchstone cries after hearing the ballad, 'and killed the desperate opinion I had of thy reclaim' (5.5.119-21). Pavier appears to have been more suspicious about his apprentice's apparent reformation: he wrote to Holmes when he had recovered, advising him 'well to consider what he had spoken, least the same had proceeded from some weakenes of the brayne, distemperature of the bodye or other occasions'. Pavier eventually decided, however, that he could use Holmes in his dispute with the Meighens and that he might profit from the repentance of at least one of his apprentices.

If Meighen was also sorry for his treatment of Pavier, his repentance did not have the same impact. According to Dagger, the final arbiter, William Haynes, told him that Meighen 'had neglected his dutye too much, but not so much as he was Chardged with', commenting 'I find him verye penitent for his *said* doeing'. Yet this penitence seems never to have developed into a full-blown reconciliation with Pavier. When Meighen was made free of the Stationers on 6 July 1614, three months after Holmes, it was by redemption, for which he paid 20 shillings, rather than by serving out the term of his apprenticeship.<sup>34</sup>

Commentators have disputed the extent to which Quicksilver's penitence is genuine, but a new perspective is offered when *Eastward Ho!* is juxtaposed with the depositions.<sup>35</sup> Both Quicksilver and Meighen's claims to repentance are qualified by their continued engagement with theatrical commerce, and their refusal to abandon the 'bad' apprentice's identity as a playgoer. Although Touchstone's moralistic statements conclude the play proper, the epilogue to *Eastward Ho!* offers a different perspective.<sup>36</sup> Crucially, it is spoken by Quicksilver, who interrupts and upstages his master by saying 'Stay, sir, I perceive the multitude are gathered together to view our coming out at the Counter. [*He gestures at the theatre.*] See if the streets and the fronts of the houses be not stuck with people, and the windows filled with ladies as on the solemn day of the pageant!' (Epilogue, 1-4). Quicksilver plans to leave the Wood Street Counter in his prison clothes, 'as a spectacle, or rather an example, to the

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<sup>34</sup> SCA, TSC/1/D/10/01, f. 9v.

<sup>35</sup> For a recent reassessment and overview, see W. David Kay, 'Parodic Wit and Social Satire in Chapman, Jonson, and Marston's *Eastward Ho!*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 42 (2012), 391-424.

<sup>36</sup> On this point I diverge from Brian Walsh's assessment that Quicksilver's 'voice blends seamlessly with his master's, and there is no obvious dissonance or undercutting gesture' (*Unsettled Tolerant: Religious Difference on the Shakespearean Stage* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016], 83).

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children of Cheapside' (5.5.180). As Sarah Dustagheer comments, he apparently 'accepts and even encourages the punitive authority of the City'.<sup>37</sup> The epilogue continues this project of theatricalising repentance when Quicksilver addresses the audience directly:

Oh, may you find in this our pageant here  
The same contentment which you came to seek;  
And as that show but draws you once a year,  
May this attract you, hither, once a week.  
(5.5.5-8)

Quicksilver does not reject theatre in order to repent; rather, he engages in a heightened, theatrical act, taking over the function of the epilogue and substituting for his former exploitation of his gallant friends in the gaming-house a new financial imperative in the playhouse.

Given the way in which the ending of *Eastward Ho!* fuses apprentice and actor, it is pleasing to recall that Meighen's misdemeanours allegedly included not only attending plays but also being in company with '<stage> players and there wives'. The plays sold by Pavier during the term of Meighen's apprenticeship offer a variety of models of prodigal sin and prodigal repentance, but Meighen's repentance – genuine or not – and his reabsorption into civil structures most resemble that of Quicksilver because he also profited from theatre. One of his first publications after he took his freedom, issued in collaboration with Thomas Jones in 1615, was a Cambridge University dialogue, *Work for Cutlers*. In the following year he acted as wholesaler for the first folio edition of *The Works of Benjamin Jonson*, and between 1620 and his death in January 1642 he regularly published plays and masques, the last being the second edition of Jonson's *Works* in 1640.<sup>38</sup> His taste for drama seems also

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<sup>37</sup> Sarah Dustagheer, *Shakespeare's Two Playhouses: Repertory and Theatre Space at the Globe and the Blackfriars, 1599-1613* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 74.

<sup>38</sup> 'Master Richard Meighen' was buried at St Dunstan in the West on 12 January 1642 (Parish Register, London Metropolitan Archives, P69/DUN2/A/004/MS010345).

to have been shared by his family: his widow, Mercy, published a series of plays in the late 1640s and 1650s.<sup>39</sup>

Fittingly enough, the closest engagement with discourses of repentance to appear in Meighen's published output is also connected with the stage. In 1628 Meighen published two editions of *A Recantation of an Ill-Led Life* by the highway robber John Clavell. Like Meighen, Clavell was fond of plays. 'You must not look from me to have the straine / Of your *Black-friars* Poets', he writes in the opening lines of his 'Recantation', but by the time that Meighen published a third edition of the *Recantation* in 1634 Clavell's play *The Soddered Citizen* had been performed by the King's Men and he had become one of those same '*Black-friars* Poets'.<sup>40</sup> For Clavell and Meighen, plays are a product of reformed behaviour, not a barrier to it.

The third edition of the *Recantation* features a new epistle headed 'THE STATIONER to the Buyer, wisheth all happinesse' and signed 'RICHARD MEIGHEN'.<sup>41</sup> Meighen rarely added his own commentary to the books that he published, suggesting that Clavell's reformation spoke powerfully to him. However, a closer look at the text of the epistle suggests that his concern is as much with commerce as morality. Meighen refers to his 'quick sale of the two first Impressions'; he claims that he was asked by Clavell to 'forbeare a third' in order that 'the memory of the Author's fault (as hee alledged) might grow cold', and that he agreed '[t]o this nicitie of his, against my profit'. Now, six years later, he has instead convinced himself that 'there cannot be an apter foyle, to [Clavell's] stayder actions, than the memory of that his youthfull folly', and he is also keen to counter 'late and generall false report' that has told of Clavell's 'Relapse, and untoward death'. Meighen therefore publishes a third edition 'to let you know, hee not onely lives, but hath also made good all these his Promises, and strict Resolutions'. As a result, he claims, 'it is become very disputable amongst Wise men, whether they should more admire his

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<sup>39</sup> Mercy Meighen and her partners, Gabriel Bedell and Thomas Collins, published William Peaps's *Love in its Ecstasy* (1649), Cosmo Manuche's *The Bastard* (1652) and *The Just General* (1652), Robert Mead's Oxford play *The Combat of Love and Friendship* (1654) and a collected edition of three plays by Thomas Goffe formerly published by Richard (1656).

<sup>40</sup> *A Recantation of an Ill Led Life* (1628), B3r. On Clavell as playgoer and playwright, see Matteo Pangallo, *Playwriting Playgoers in Shakespeare's Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 116-28.

<sup>41</sup> *A Recantation of an Ill Led Life* (1634), A2r-v.

former ill ways, or his now most singular Reformation'. As Meighen was perhaps more aware than most, repentance could be a source of profit.

In neither *Eastward Ho!* nor the extant materials relating to the Chancery suit does the playgoing apprentice tell his own story. Created by a group of dramatists, Quicksilver is a theatrical construct, calculated to appeal to young male spectators while also reassuring their elders that youthful excess brings with it punishment and at least some measure of repentance. The Richard Meighen of the lawsuit is equally a textual creation, shaped by the conventions of the deposition as a form and the requirements of Pavier's legal team. In contrast with the play, the depositions do not require Meighen to repent; they instead present the erring apprentice as the fit subject of his master's ire in order to justify the forfeiture of the £100 bond. Meighen's output as a stationer – in which he published playbooks alongside sermons and other religious works, and also fulfilled his family and filial duty by publishing works relating to Shrewsbury and its school – suggests that at no point did he experience a religious or moral crisis of the kind experienced by Holmes or Norwood.<sup>42</sup> Instead, he and Quicksilver appear to share a remarkably clear-sighted awareness of the ways in which repentance might be made profitable, not least through the medium of theatre itself.

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<sup>42</sup> Meighen's early publications include Edward Thornes' *Encomium Salopiae* (1615), John Fotherby's *The Covenant Betweene God and Man* (1616) and Sampson Price's *The Beauty of Holiness [...] A Sermon Preached in the Chappell at the Free Schoole in Shrewsbury* (1618).