The Lasting Legacy of Richard Tarlton:

On English Popular Entertainment in the Late 1590s and the Early 1600s

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I. Introduction

Around 1600 Richard Tarlton, an old familiar comedian who had been dead for twelve years, rose out of his tomb. He turned up on the stage of an anonymous play, *The Cuck-Queanes and Cuckolds Errants*, and made an opening remark: 'Spectators, For as much deedes do so clearely flash mee into your eyes, I neede not (Superstitiously) recapitulate, into your eares now, either my name or my Person [...]'.[1] Katherine Duncan-Jones is quite right when she states that 'Tarlton was if possible even more celebrated in death than in life'.[2] On 3 September 1588, he suddenly died, presumably due to the Plague, which left (as Duncan-Jones aptly says) 'a yawning gap in English culture'. The news of his sudden death must have been so incredible to his friends and colleagues that they all reacted to it as if it were his bad joke. In Robert Wilson's *Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (probably produced immediately after his death), Simplicity, a water-carrier talks to his fellow, staring at Tarlton's portrait in this manner:

> Will No: what was that Tarlton? I neuer knew him.
>
> Simplicity What was he: a prentice in his youth of this honorable city, God be with him: when he was young he was leaning to the trade that my wife vseth nowe, and I haue vsed, vide lice shirt, water-bearing: I wis he hath tost a Tankard in Cornehil er nowe, if thou knewest him not I wil not cal thee ingram, but if thou knewest not him, thou knewest no body: I warrant her's two crackropes knew him.[3]

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1) *The Cuck-Queanes and Cuckolds Errants*, ed. William Nicol (London: Shakespeare Press, 1824), p. 5.

2) Katherine Duncan-Jones, 'The Life, Death and Afterlife of Richard Tarlton', *The Review of English Studies*, 65. 268 (2014), p. 21.

3) *The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London*, STC (2nd ed.)/25783, C2 verso, *Early English Books Online*.

Moreover, Tarlton's name was exploited even in the Harvey-Nashe controversy. When Thomas Nashe published his satirical prose pamphlet *Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil* in 1592, his opponent Gabriel Harvey coined the term 'Tarletonizing' for Nashe's acrobatic logic and malicious jokes. Even in the populace's daily life, 'going to Tarlton' became a fashionable phrase that meant the untimely deaths of poverty-stricken writers.[4] We may safely assume that Tarlton's name had not yet been forgotten by the turn of the century, for *Tarlton's Jests* was posthumously entered in the Stationers' Register in 1600. This book, which chronicled all kinds of rumour around him, sold so well that it was revised and reprinted in 1611 and 1638.

In this way, Tarlton became established as a legendary figure in popular imagination. The legend has it that, born in Shropshire, Tarlton wandered into London and earned his bread as a water-carrier; he was another 'upstart crow' who successfully rose from this base occupation to become a court-player; he had a funny flat face and squint eyes; he was an expert in fencing and jig; he pretended to be a Vice character, improvising all kinds of mischief. However, the most important fact is that he was characterized as a messenger from Purgatory, as we can find in *Tarlton's News from Purgatory* (1590).

This paper will attempt to investigate the following two points. Firstly, this paper aims to overhaul Tarlton's lasting influence on the stage in the late 1590s and the early 1600s. Generally in Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre studies, Tarlton's name has been repeatedly employed whenever an out-of-date theatrical style is mentioned. Andrew Gurr emphasizes that the debut of Marlowe's Tamburlaine was ground-breaking to the degree that it determined the succeeding (irreversible) development of English drama.[5] Hence, the famous lines in the Prologue of *1 Tamburlaine*—'From jygging vaines of riming mother wits, | And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay, | Weele lead you to the stately tent of War' —have been often quoted as evidence to show that Tarlton was no longer fashionable when *1 Tamburlaine* was performed around 1588. The fact was, however, quite different because Tarlton was 'even more celebrated in death than in life'. This might show how London theatres were dependent on him after his death. Secondly, we will observe the relationship between social unrest caused by over-population in London and its dramatization around the end of the century. As for this second point, it will turn out that Tarlton was a key figure who had symbolically experienced a vagrant

4) Duncan-Jones, p. 23.
5) Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge UP, 1996), p. 140.

life before gaining fame and, as his testament shows, left an orphan due to his untimely death.[6] These two are the main objectives this paper will explore, so that we can clarify what kind of legacy Richard Tarlton left for English culture around the turn of the century.

II. Where did the Seven Deadly Sins in *Doctor Faustus* come from?

Although the text is not extant, Tarlton's *Seven Deadly Sins* (c. 1585) is noteworthy in terms of its influence on the later theatres. Gabriel Harvey was one of the early witnesses to it in the late 1580s. In *Four Letters* (1592), Harvey criticized that Nashe had imitated the style of *The Seven Deadly Sins* for his *Pierce Penniless*. But interestingly, he did not oppose himself to Tarlton, for he emphasized that he was on friendly terms with Tarlton in the same pamphlet:

> A strange title [*Pierce Penniless his Supplication to the Devil*], an od wit, and a mad hooreson, I warrant him: doubtless it will proue some dainty deuise, quiently contriued by way of humble Supplication To the high, and mighty Prince of Darknesse, not Dunsically botched-vp, but right-formally conueied, according to the stile and tenour of Tarletons president, his famous play of the seauen Deadly sinnes: which most-dealy, but most liuely playe, I might haue seene in London: and was verie gently inuited thereunto at Oxford, by *Tarleton* himselfe, of whome I merrily demaunding, which of the seauen, was his owne deadlie sinne, he bluntly aunswered after this manner: By God, the sinne of other gentlemen, Lechery.[7]

Assuming that he told the truth here, it turns out that Harvey saw Tarlton's 'famous play of *The Seven Deadly Sins*' twice in London and Oxford. This is quite plausible if we take two circumstantial facts into account. Firstly, there is a university archive that shows he stayed at Oxford for an application of a doctor's degree in July 1585, and secondly, Tarlton's company, the Queen's Men, was recorded to sojourn at Oxford for a while in the

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6) See Duncan-Jones, pp. 18–32 and the Introduction of *Tarlton's Jests, and News Out of Purgatory*, ed. J. O. Halliwell (New York: AMS, 1973).

7) *Four letters, and certaine sonnets*, STC (2nd ed.)/12900.5, pp. 28–29, *Early English Books Online*.

summer of the same year.[8] Besides, Harvey payed considerable respect to Tarlton's style and wordings in a rather flattering manner ('most-dealy, but most liuely'), while restraining his usual bitter tongue. At least we might safely assume that *The Seven Deadly Sins* was a good cultural resource that his contemporary writers resorted to.

Admitted that the theme of the Seven Deadly Sins was significant in the theatres in the 1580s, it is not easy, due to the lack of evidence, to know how it was represented there, when Tarlton began to produce the performances. A play within *Doctor Faustus* gives a clue to this matter; its representation of the Seven Deadly Sins was presumably characteristic of popular taste. There is, however, no definite source identified for the scene (there is no counterpart in *English Faust-Book*, widely admitted to be the primary source of *Doctor Faustus*). Lisa Hopkins' suggestion concerning this problem is worth noting, as she posits that the non-extant *Miracle Book* Samuel Harsnett referred to in *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) could be a feasible source.[9] She points at an interesting description of the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in *Declaration*. It was described in the confession of one Richard Mainy, a townsman of Denham, who admitted that he had once performed a one-man play of the very pageant under demonic possession. As for the source of this confession, Harsnett himself revealed in the Preface that:

> About some three, or foure yeeres since, there was found in the hands of one Ma. *Barnes* a Popish Recusant, an English Treatise in a written hand, fronted with this Latine sentence, taken out of the Psalmes, *Venite, et narrabo, quanta fecit Dominus animae meae*, come and I wil shew you, what great things the Lord hath done for my soule.[10]

As it happened, it was just around the same year (c. 1585) that Denham was recorded to be a hotbed of illegal exorcism that the Church of England banned as Popish.

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8) Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth Maclean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), p. 93. See also Richard G. Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard, *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture: The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins* (York: York Medieval Press, 2012), p. 176.

9) Lisa Hopkins, 'A Possible Source for Marlowe's Pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins,' *Notes and Queries* (December 1994), pp. 451–52.

10) Samuel Harsnett, *The Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, STC (2nd ed.)/12880, Chapter 1, p. 1, *Early English Books Online*

According to Harsnett, *The Miracle Book* registered quite a few instances of exorcism conducted in Denham in the period from the fall of 1585 to the summer of 1586. Hopkins focuses on one of the instances where Mainy in demonic possession personified the Seven Deadly Sins, one after another while being hypnotized by a Catholic exorcist named Edmonds. Presumably, Mainy's confession was a perfect piece of evidence for Harsnett, whose purpose was to emphatically remind readers that Catholic exorcism was an utter deception as there was no devilish possession involved. This is because Mainy himself admitted in his avowed confession (dated 6 June, 1602) that he had been just 'induced to doe' that performance of the Seven Deadly Sins while himself not possessed at all.

> I pray God forgive them for all their bad dealings with me. My chiefe comfort is that as I said in the beginning, I am fully perswaded that I was never possessed, and that all I did or spake, I did it and spake it my selfe, being sometimes enforced, and sometimes induced so to doe, as before I have mentioned.[11)]

None the less, in spite of Harsnett's (possibly behind him Bishop Bancroft's) intention to reveal Popish deception, Mainy's confession is the most intriguing episode among others in *Declaration*. Mainy begins his performance by affirming that the spirit invoked in the shape of himself is Pride. This 'Pride' is followed by 'Covetousness' who would not lend money for any rare mortgage, and thereafter 'Luxury', 'Envy', 'Wrath', 'Gluttony' and 'Sloth' successively turn up in the shape of Mainy.[12)] Each one was such a humorous embodiment of the Sins that readers must have been amused by it.

As Hopkins suggests, it is quite likely that Tarlton produced his *Seven Deadly Sins* based on the event in Denham in 1585. Around the same period, there appeared a similar performance that employed the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, that is, a play within *Doctor Faustus*. We may assume that Marlowe wished to incorporate the sensational incident at Denham into his play while deliberately avoiding any Church doctrinal controversy. If that were the case, Marlowe might be more directly indebted to Tarlton than to *Declaration*, for Marlowe's pageant of sins ends with 'Lechery' (not with Sloth as in Mainy's confession) which coincides with Tarlton's *Seven Deadly Sins,* as Harvey refers

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11) F. W. Brownlow, *Shakespeare, Harsnett, and the Devils of Denham* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 1993), p. 412.
12) Brownlow, pp. 410–11.

to them.

Like the assumed readers of Mainy's confession, the audience of *Doctor Faustus* must have been entertained by the pageant seen through the eyes of Faustus. It is worth analysing Act Two Scene Three with this point in mind. When Lucifer finds Faustus' mind not yet fixed in faith on Hell, he attempts to distract him by showing the pageant of the Sins. 'Pride' first enters the stage, asserting that 'I am Pride', then suddenly loses his temper, bragging that 'But fie, what a scent is here! I'll not speak another word, except the ground were perfumed and covered with cloth of arras' (*Doctor Faustus A-text*, II. 3. 115–17).[13)]

It is possible that these were not Marlowe's original phrases but some kind of cliché that the audience expected from the mouth of 'Pride', for another 'Pride' Mainy personified employed lines similar in meaning to Marlowe's 'Pride'.

> *Then Ma:* Mainy *by the instigation of the first of the seaven began to set his hands unto his side, curled his haire, and used such gestures as Ma:* Edmunds *presently affirmed that that spirit was* Pride. *Heere-with he began to curse and banne, saying,* What a poxe doe I heere? I wil stay no longer amongst a company of rascall Priests, but goe to the Court, and brave it amongst my fellowes, the noble men there assembled.[14)]

Both of them claimed that they were abusively summoned to appear by lowly rascals while they should have been in the noble men's company. This could be possibly a set-phrase that entertained the common readers and audience in late sixteenth century London. Distracted by the pageant of the Sins, Faustus completely forgot the wages of his fatal contract with Lucifer. Hence, he exclaimed with joy: 'O, this feeds my soul!' (*Doctor Faustus A-text*, II. 3. 166).[15)] It seems reasonable that the audience of *Doctor Faustus* was, sitting safely in the auditorium, amused by the same pageant together with Faustus, whereas the latter was condemned to Hell through his devilish indulgence including this show.

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13) David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen (ed.), *Doctor Faustus A- and B-Texts (1604, 1616)*, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993), p. 156.
14) Brownlow, p. 410.
15) *Doctor Faustus A- and B-Texts (1604, 1616)*, p. 159.

III. The Seven Deadly Sins depicted in literature from the 1560s to the 1590s

Unlike the Seven Deadly Sins in *The Castle of Perseverance* (c.1425), any representation of sins in the late sixteenth century is secularized to the degree that each sin is portrayed as part of the world of the Elizabethan underground lowlife. In this section, we will overview this aspect of the literary convention of the Seven Deadly Sins. Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566) is an interesting pamphlet for this purpose. Undoubtedly this pamphlet accuses those engaged in the underground world of being immoral, but it regards even 'Tinker' and 'Peddler' as working in the grey zone. What is noteworthy is that the author overlaps their half-illegal businesses with the sins of the Seven Deadly Sins. For example, 'Drunken Tinker' is characterized in this manner:

> For besides money he looketh for meat and drink for doing his dame pleasure. For if she have three or four holes in a pan, he will make as many more for speedy gain. And if he see any old kettle, chafer, or pewter dish abroad in the yard where he worketh, he quickly snappeth the same up, and into the budget it goeth round. Thus they live with deceit.[16)]

It is none but Gluttony that urges the drunken tinker to make as many more holes in a pan while advising him to snap any old kettle and whatever he spots. In other words, they literally work from hand to mouth. Besides, in the same tone, the author warns readers to be watchful for 'a swadder or pedlar' because they are in most cases likely to be covetous, though their business was 'not all evil'.[17)]

There was another best-seller story in the early 1590s: Thomas Nashe's *Pierce Penniless* (1592). In the description of the Seven Deadly Sins in this 'Tarltonized' story, the narrator, in advance, portrays a devil as if he were a swindler in the underground lowlife. He is a 'blind retailer' who 'would let one for a need have a thousand pounds upon a statute merchant of his soul', and would give special favours to traitors and beggars.[18)] On the other hand, the narrator complains that only hypocrites and scrooges keep God to themselves in the current rotten society. Therefore, he advises readers to write a letter of

16) A. V. Judges (ed.), *Key Writings on Subcultures 1535–1727: Classics from the Underworld*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 92–93.
17) A. G. Judge (ed.), p. 93.
18) Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, ed. J. B. Steane (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 56.

supplication for help to the devil rather than to God. In the same tone of criticism of society, Nashe describes each of the seven sins in the shape of a life-like evil-doer in society. For example, Sloth is described in the following manner.

> If I were to paint Sloth (as I am not seen in the sweetening) by Saint John the Evangelist I swear I would draw it like a stationer that I know, with his thumb under his girdle, who, if a man come to his stall and ask him for a book, never stirs his head or looks upon him, but stands stone still and speaks not a word; only with his little finger points backwards to his boy, who must be his interpreter, and so all the day, gaping like a dumb image, he sits without motion, except at such times as he goes to dinner or supper; for then he is as quick as other three, eating six times every day.[19)]

Here the narrator portrays Sloth as a stationer who does nothing but sits 'without motion', except when going to dinner. Then, in the following chapter, the narrator never forgets to suggest a remedy for sloth: that is, theatre-going. Advocating theatres for various reasons, he concludes this chapter with this assertion: 'Tarlton, Ned Allen, Knell, Bently, shall be made known to France, Spain, and Italy; and not a part that they surmounted in, more than other, but I will there note and set down, with the manner of their habits and attire'.[20)] This is Nashe's peculiar way of self-promotion, when he makes the utmost use of information he must have gained from Tarlton's *Seven Deadly Sins*.

Similarly, a play within *Doctor Faustus* stages Pride a quick-tempered man, and Gluttony who is particular about dishes served at a tavern, and et al. Although each of them has its own particular nature according to their respective sins, all of them belong to the same stratum of society. Close comparison of the four characters — 'Pride', 'Wrath', 'Gluttony' and 'Sloth' — reveals an interesting fact.

> I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea. I can creep into every corner of a wench: sometimes, like a periwig, I sit upon her brow[...].
> I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother. I leaped out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce half an hour old, and ever since I have run up and down the world with this case of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal. I was born

19) *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, p. 109.
20) *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works*, p. 116.

in hell, and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.

I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a day and ten bevers — a small trifle to suffice nature. O, I come of a royal parentage! My grandfather was a gammon of bacon, my grandmother a hogshead of claret wine; my godfathers were these: Peter Pickle-herring and Martin Martlemas-beef. O, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman and well-beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer.

I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain ever since, and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence. Let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.[21] (*Doctor Faustus A-text*, II. 3. 111–59) (emphasis mine)

Note the underlined parts above. Presumably, it is not a coincidence that all of them are born orphans. 'Pride' declares that he 'disdains to have any parents', whereas 'Wrath' threatens the audience that some of them 'shall be his father' while confessing that he is an orphan. 'Gluttony' is another orphan who has grown up in the care of his grandparents and godparents, that is, heavy meals of bacon, claret, pickle-herring, beef and beer. In the case of 'Sloth', he gives an impression that he was abandoned 'on a sunny bank' immediately after his birth. It is worth noting that there is a straightforward association between the Seven Deadly Sins and orphans here in *Doctor Faustus*. It is not hard to interpret this combination if it is considered in the context of social unrest in the years from the late 1590s to the early 1600s, as we will see below.

As for the *Tamburlaine* plays, it is necessary to ask if they were really ground-breaking in English theatrical history, and if so, in what respects. For they were not perfectly freed from the convention of the Seven Deadly Sins. If Marlowe was ingenious in describing something vulgar as if it were sublime, this was only brought about by secularized characterization of the Seven Deadly Sins. As pointed above, 'Wrath in *Doctor Faustus* brags that he would 'run up and down the world with this case of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal'. Tamburlaine is the very embodiment of this 'Wrath' when he admonishes his children not to fear blood-shedding in a battlefield.

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21) *Doctor Faustus A- and B-Texts (1604, 1616)*, pp. 156–59.

And wilt thou shun the field for feare of woundes?
View me thy father that hath conquered kings,
And with his hoste marcht round about the earth,
Quite voide of skars, and cleare from any wound,
That by the warres lost not a dram of blood,
And see him lance his flesh to teach you all *He cuts his arme.*
A wound is nothing be it nere so deepe:
Blood is the God of Wars rich livery. (*2 Tamburlaine*, III. 2. 109–16)[22]

Here is 'Marlowe's mighty line' that sublimates Wrath's mere bombast into heroic magnanimity, and it is accompanied with a pseudo-sacramental image with 'Blood is the God of Wars rich livery' as the apex of his oration. Undoubtedly this is one of the best examples Algernon Swinburne once called 'the Sublime', but it is still noteworthy that the conventional Seven Deadly Sins underlie Marlowe's sublime feat.[23]

Moreover, several foils for Tamburlaine, the sublime protagonist, partake of the Seven Deadly Sins. In the subsequent scene that follows the above episode, one of Tamburlaine's sons, Calyphas, indulges himself in a game of cards with his waiting-maids without going to war. As soon as Tamburlaine spots his son in the scene of Sloth, he stabs him to death without any hesitation, declaring:

But wher's this coward, villaine, not my sonne,
But traitor to my name and majesty. *He goes in and brings him out.*
Image of sloth, and picture of a slave,
The obloquie and skorne of my renowne,
How may my hart, thus fired with mine eies,
Wounded with shame, and kill'd with discontent,
Shrowd any thought may holde my striving hands
From martiall justice on thy wretched soule? (*2 Tamburlaine*, IV. 1. 91–98)[24] (emphasis mine)

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22) *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 5 vols, ed. David Fuller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 5, p. 112.
23) *Christopher Marlowe: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Millar MacLure (London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 177–84.
24) *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*, 5, p. 128.

Unlike Abraham who nearly killed his good son, Isaac, in sacrifice, Tamburlaine regards himself as scourge of 'the image of Sloth'. Thus, Marlowe transposes the themes of the Sublime and heroic sacrifice into a familial farce in a bathetic manner. In other words, Marlovian style of 'Sublime' and 'Bathos' is, we can propose, a clever adaptation of the allegories of Wrath and Sloth, where the incarnation of Wrath wounds his own flesh, i.e. his son when he finds 'nobody to fight withal'.

IV. Social unrest by in-flowing vagrants in the 1590s and the entertainment of the Seven Sins

It is quite obvious that the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins had been an effective device on the stage in the 1580s and the early 1590s, but it is not clear yet how it was inherited in English culture of the later periods. In this section we will explore this in the context of social unrest at the turn of the century. The proclamation of the Relief of the Poor in 1597 declared its purpose explicitly:

> [...] and they [the overseers], or the greater part of them, shall take order from time to time, by and with the consent of two or more such justices of peace, for setting to work of the children of all such whose parents shall not by the said persons be thought able to keep and maintain their children, and also all such persons married or unmarried as, having no means to maintain them, use no ordinary and daily trade of life to get their living by.[25)]

According to A. L. Beier's research on vagrants in sixteenth century London, there was a long-lasting baby-boom from 1500 to 1650. Therefore, Beier assumes that society was overpopulated with orphans or abandoned children whose parents were not 'able to keep and maintain their children' and that this phenomenon stirred up serious social unrest.[26)] This explains why the proclamations concerning the poor and vagrants were issued no less than twelve times, beginning with Vagabonds Acts in 1531 up to the Poor Law in 1601. In the late sixteenth century, more and more young vagrants flooded into London for jobs, and it became a serious threat to society. Statistically, those under sixteen years of age accounted for 54.1 percent and those under twenty-one amounted to 97.3 percent

25) *Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1963), 4, 896 f.: 39 Elizabeth I, c. 3.
26) A. L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560–1640* (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 19–22.

out of all immigrants arrested in London in 1602.[27] Under this critical condition, the Relief of the Poor was proclaimed in 1597, so that the State could control the whole problem of population by commanding each parish not only to keep its inhabitants under surveillance but also to secure resources for the relief of poor parishioners.

After his death, Tarlton became a legendary figure who had perhaps sneaked into London as a vagrant before rising up to become the Queen's favourite. Presumably, there was none more suitable for the presenter of the Seven Deadly Sins than past Tarlton. To the degree that 'going to Tarlton' became a fashionable phrase that meant untimely death of a poverty-stricken writer, his death must have caused a great sensation in society. According to *Tarlton's Jests, and News Out of Purgatory*, rumour had it that Tarlton died penniless, alone in a brothel at Shoreditch a landlady called Emma Ball ran. However, this was a mere story Robert Adams, a notorious executor, made up on purpose to misappropriate his legacy. In spite of Adams' testimony, the fact is that Tarlton had left his last will and testament to his six-year-old son Philip, in which Philip was supposed to inherit £700. (In order to discredit Adams' testimony, some relatives of Tarlton filed a lawsuit against him.) In his actual will and testament (3 September, 1588), Tarlton himself begged a favour of readers, stating:

> To all Christian people to whom this present writinge shall comme, Richard Tarleton, one of the Gromes of the Quenes Majesties chamber, greetinge in our Lord everlastinge, knowe yee that I, the saide Richard, for the naturall love and fatherly affection that I doe beare unto my naturall and wel beloved sonne, Phillip Tarlton; and to the intent that he maye be the better mainteyned and brought upp in the feare of God and good letters[...].[28]

Reportedly, Tarlton on his deathbed wrote to Francis Walsingham, asking him to be a guardian of Philip, but there was no record that showed how he would live the rest of his life. After all, what is clear is a bare historical fact that Tarlton, 'one of the Gromes of the Quenes Majesties chamber' handed down to his contemporaries an unwelcomed 'legacy':

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27) Beier, p. 217.

28) *Playhouse Wills 1558–1642: An Edition of Wills by Shakespeare and his Contemporaries in the London Theatre*, ed. E. A. J. Honigmann and Susan Brock (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993), p. 57.

an orphan, one of the most unmanageable problems in Elizabethan society.

Thanks to the Henslowe-Alleyn digitisation project, the Dulwich archive is available online, in which some materials concerning *2 Seven Deadly Sins* (anonymous) are included.[29] What is the most important for our purpose is a memorandum titled *The Platt of 2 Seven Deadly Sins*. Although *The Platt* has long been regarded as part of Tarlton's original text written in the late 1580s, David Kathman recently revealed that it belonged to Lord Chamberlain's Men's repertoire around 1597.[30] There is a definite reason for Kathman's assertion. *The Platt* lists almost all the cast for *2 Seven Deadly Sins* in abbreviated spellings of the actors' names, who were all active for Lord Chamberlain's Men in the late 1590s. Except for the two parts of *Henry IV* and *The Merchant of Venice*, the Lord Chamberlain's Men troop was also well known to Londoners for its repertoire of family tragedy based on their contemporary scandals. *A Warning for Fair Women* was a typical example that staged the most scandalous murder of a famous London merchant by his wife and her lover. As Madeleine Doran points out, this genre of family tragedy was nothing but an offshoot from the early-modern Moralities, and in fact, the personalised character named 'Lust' played an important role in entrapping the main characters into a fatal situation.[31] Suppose that there was no linear progress from Mankind to Marlowe in history, it would be no surprise that performances of the Seven Deadly Sins were as perennially popular as ever in the late 1590s. As with the repertoire of Lord Chamberlain's Men, Lord Admiral's Men of the late 1590s must have been still dependent on popularity of the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins in *Doctor Faustus*. This is shown by the fact that *Doctor Faustus* was staged fifteen times in the years between 1595 and 1597.[32]

It is worth looking into *The Platt* more closely. The pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins seems to have been staged as if they appeared in the dream of imprisoned Henry VI. Therefore, the actor of Henry VI presumably remained on the stage just as Faustus did as a spectator of the pageant. Within this frame of dream, the Seven Sins seem to fight competition with one another for predominance, and in the end, 'Envy', 'Sloth' and

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29) See https://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk

30) David Kathman, 'Reconsidering *The Seven Deadly Sins*', *Early Theatre*, 7.1 (2004), pp. 13–44. The transcript of *The Platt* is added in its appendix (pp. 35–38).

31) Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1954), p. 143.

32) See Hoger Schott Syme, 'The Meaning of Success: Stories of 1594 and Its Aftermath', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61.4 (Winter 2010), pp. 490–525.

'Lechery' remain on the stage as winners. Consequently, each one of them is entitled to stage his respective story; 'Envy' produces the fratricide of Gorboduc's sons, which is followed by King Sardanapalus and the fall of his Assyrian realm ('Sloth') and the rape of Philomel ('Lechery'). When these plays within Henry VI's dream-frame are over, Henry is awakened and rescued by Warwick. This is all the information we can gain from the sketchy *Platt*. However, it is worth considering the order of entrance in the pageant of the Sins; 'Sloth' appears on the stage last but one, and 'Lechery' concludes the show. If we take it into account that the Sins of *Doctor Faustus* appear on the stage almost in the same order, we may suppose that there remained a convention about the entry-order of the pageant.

More importantly, the scene of King Sardanapalus (as the allegory of Sloth) bears some similarity with that of Calyphas ('the image of Sloth') in *2 Tamburlaine*. *The Platt* reads:

> Enter Arabactus pursuing Saranapalus
> and The Ladies fly After Enter Sarda*napalus*
> w*i*th as many Iewels robes and Gold as he ca<n>
> cary. A Larum[33)]

George Whetstone's *English Mirror* (1584) gives us some more information to make up for the limited information inscribed above. In the corresponding description of Sardanapalus in *English Mirror*, he was portrayed as an 'effeminate' and prodigal prince, and once besieged by his enemy, 'fired his pallace, and in the same burned himselfe and his concubines'.[34)] This figure might well remind us of Calyphas, Tamburlaine's 'effeminate' son, because he was executed for his sloth by his father's hand while playing a game of cards with his waiting-maids. Almost ten years would have passed since *Tamburlaine* was first staged in the popular theatre, but curiously enough, 'the image of Sloth' remained largely intact.

As we saw above, Samuel Harsnett avowedly in 1602 brought about a confession from Richard Mainy that the latter had pretended to be possessed by a certain demon in the rite of exorcism in 1585, and that *The Miracle Book* was a complete fiction he had cooperated to make up together with Popish agents. That a person in demonic possession

33) Kathman, 38.
34) George Whetstone, *English Mirror* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1973), p. 211.

directs or performs the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins was perhaps one of the scenarios familiar to the audience in the 1580s and 90s. Among those in possession, such as Mainy, Faustus and Pierce, Launcelot Gobbo cuts a similar figure in *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1598). I would argue that Launcelot was the perfect character to give voice to the anxiety about the Proclamation of the Poor. He is a servant of Shylock's, begotten of a country man, just up from the countryside, always starving because poorly fed by his stingy master. This is shown in a prank Launcelot plays (using a fake identity) on his blind father when the latter comes up to Venice to see his son—Old Gobbo may perhaps be counted as a parent who 'shall not [...] be thought able to keep and maintain their children' in the Proclamation. Subsequently in Act Two Scene Two, Launcelot strives to make up his mind whether he should run away from this Jewish master or not. His struggle of conscience is made manifest in the following soliloquy.

> My conscience says "No; take heed honest Launcelot, take heed honest Gobbo," or as aforesaid "honest Launcelot Gobbo, do not run, scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack, "Fia!" says the fiend, "away!" says the fiend, "for the heavens rouse up a brave mind" says the fiend, "and run" [...]. "Conscience" say I, "you counsel well, — "Fiend" say I, "you counsel well," — to be rul'd by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who (God bless the mark) is a kind of devil; and to run away from the Jew I should be ruled by the fiend, who (saving your reverence) is the devil himself: certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation, and in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew; the fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run fiend, my heels are at your commandment, I will run.[35] (*The Merchant of Venice*, II. ii. 6–30)

His soliloquy reminds us not only of Faustus in hesitation, when he is advised by both Good and Bad Angels at the same time but also of Mainy in demonic possession, when he performs seven characters by himself. But more conspicuously in these lines, Launcelot is literally 'possessed' and ruled by Shylock, 'a kind of devil'. However, we should not fail to notice that it is not his Conscience but the fiend that urges Launcelot to run away from the Jew here in his soliloquy. It turns out that he would be relieved from the devil

35) *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice*, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 35–37.

(Shylock) thanks to the fiend's advice. This was, we may argue, a uniquely satiric twist that Shakespeare added to the convention of a man in demonic possession. In this way Shakespeare made *The Merchant of Venice* more problematic because Launcelot later teased mercilessly about Jessica's Jewishness after he had run away from Shylock her father.

V. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the legend of Tarlton and his 'Tarltonizing' style exerted a strong influence in English culture at the turn of the century, but this could be only possible in a particular social context. Hence, this paper aims to emphasize that the exhibition of exorcism, solo performance of men in demonic possession, and visualisation of the Seven Deadly Sins remained for decades a source of popular entertainment while being derided at the same time as Popish deceptions. Otherwise, it seems to be quite difficult to explain why these kinds of show were always on the stage—some newly produced, and some staged as revivals—for quite a long period from the late 1590s up to the 1610s.

Moreover, in the same period, there was no longer need to be so vigilant against the Catholic infiltration at home and abroad at the turn of the century. (Soon after, James I was to adopt appeasement policies to Catholic powers.) In fact, when Harsnett published *Declaration*, Bishop Bancroft's target was elsewhere; it was not several non-conformists such as radical Puritans and Calvinists but unmanageable groups and communities that still clung to the old habits and practices within the realm. (As a matter of principle and doctrine, it was not easy for Church of England Orthodoxy to negate all the popular beliefs concerning exorcism, since it at least believed in demons or devils.) Rather, I would suggest that the regime mobilised all its cultural institutions (e.g. the print media and theatres) to transform the old conventions into something new, so that they could fit better to the Post-Reformation administration.

In the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, the influx of illegal immigrants into London became a serious threat to society. Therefore, late Tarlton was a key figure who had symbolically experienced a vagrant life before gaining fame and left the London theatres a legacy of *The Seven Deadly Sins*. With his legends in print at the turn of the century, his characters of the Seven Deadly Sins came to have various faces of orphan-immigrants and vagrants on the stage. In this manner the current political issue concerning vagrants and orphans was displaced to the theatrical world. From an

administrative point of view, it was nothing but control of social unrest. However, none the less for this regime's intention, the evil behaviours and the underground business could be, at least on the stage, the resource of laughter when they overlapped with the perennial representation of the Seven Deadly Sins. Not only did these shows of the Seven Deadly Sins survive the Reformation but also became a residual mould from which new characters could be created in the Post-Reformation theatres.

Synopsis

The Lasting Legacy of Richard Tarlton: On English Popular Entertainment in the Late 1590s and the Early 1600s

Yuzo YAMADA

The legend of Richard Tarlton and his *Seven Deadly Sins* exerted a strong influence in English culture at the turn of the century, but this could be only possible in a particular social context. Hence, this paper aims to emphasize that the exhibition of exorcism, solo performance of men in demonic possession, and visualisation of the Seven Deadly Sins remained for decades a source of popular entertainment while being derided at the same time as Popish deceptions. Otherwise, it seems to be quite difficult to explain why these kinds of show were always on the stage—some newly produced, and some staged as revivals—for quite a long period from the late 1590s up to the 1610s. In fact, the evil behaviours and the underground business could be, at least on the stage, the resource of laughter when they overlapped with the perennial representation of the Seven Deadly Sins. Not only did these shows of the Seven Deadly Sins survive the Reformation but also became a residual mould from which new characters could be created in the Post-Reformation theatres.