

‘Nonsense is Rebellion’:  
John Taylor’s *Nonsense upon Sence, or Sence,  
upon Nonsense* (1651–1654) and the English  
Civil War



Emily Cock  
University of Adelaide

*Abstract: This article examines the political content of John Taylor’s Nonsense upon Sence, or Sence, upon Nonsense: Chuse you either, or neither (1651–1654), challenging the customary dismissal of this poem as light-hearted nonsense verse. Taylor was a staunch Royalist who had openly criticised the divisions of the English Civil War and the proliferation of religious separatists. I argue that Nonsense continues this project under a mask of playful ambiguity. The literary disorder created in this text, which Taylor calls ‘nonsense’, is made to mirror the social, religious and political fragmentation of post-war London, as sentences and words are broken down and rearranged in unfamiliar and disturbing ways. The article serves not only as a stylistic assessment of Taylor’s political satire, but also to historicise his engagement with nonsense and place within that literary tradition.*

England's transition from monarchy to short-lived commonwealth was never likely to be smooth.<sup>1</sup> The Civil War fed on religious and political divisions and left ongoing fractures in the body politic well into the Restoration period. John Taylor (1578–1653) was one of the most prolific Royalist pens to contribute to the explosion of print that occurred in this period, in which writers on both sides battled to 'out-word' each other as fiercely as did the soldiers in armed combat.<sup>2</sup> This article highlights Taylor's stylistic techniques in one of his last and longest poems, in which he uses a poetic sense of disorder, which he calls 'nonsense', to critique the fragmentation and disorder of Civil War England. *Nonsense upon Sence, or Sence, upon Nonsense: Chuse you either, or neither* was printed in three parts by an unknown London publisher in 1651 (parts one and two, in quarto) and posthumously in 1654 (part three, in octavo).<sup>3</sup> Taylor was one of the earliest English authors of nonsense verse, which was a style he first utilised in *Sir Gregory Nonsense His Newes from no place* (1622). Noel Malcolm argues that Taylor was 'the acknowledged master' of nonsense 'in his own time if not in ours'.<sup>4</sup> Holdfast's often-cited reference to Taylor's 'nonsense' in Henry Glapthorne's *Wit in a Constable* (1639) indicates that Taylor's works of nonsense verse were well known to his contemporaries.<sup>5</sup> This article historicises and interrogates the classification of Taylor's self-professed 'nonsense' as nonsense verse by foregrounding its political and religious allusions, including Taylor's use of nonsense to parody religious separatists. The nonsense of *Nonsense* mirrors the social, religious and political fragmentation of post-war London, as sentences and words are broken down and rearranged in unfamiliar and disturbing ways. I will first outline the meanings carried by 'nonsense' in the seventeenth century before considering more specifically Taylor's engagement with it in *Nonsense*, along with his satirical social, political and religious allusions and his politicised use of humour.

Throughout his career, Taylor wholeheartedly engaged with current affairs, published broadly, and was successful enough to indicate that his views were shared by many seventeenth-century Londoners. Accordingly, historians have long recognised the value of his *œuvre*, though his name was usually relegated — as Tim FitzHigham for the British television show *Time Team* put it — to ‘the footnote of a very dusty history book in a very dusty corner of a library’.<sup>6</sup> But Taylor’s work has enjoyed renewed attention, especially following Bernard Capp’s cornerstone biography, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet 1578–1653*.<sup>7</sup> As Capp highlighted, Taylor was a remarkable historical character, fashioning his own celebrity as ‘the Water Poet’ by writing highly autobiographically, trumpeting his unlearned style and origins as a Thames boatman, and chronicling his own fabulous journeys and stunts, such as rowing a paper boat from London to Queenborough. Nevertheless, his writing has been largely dismissed as a ‘knockabout brand of journalism’, with little attention paid to his literary techniques and value.<sup>8</sup>

For those familiar with Taylor it is not so very surprising that *Nonsense* includes political content. Both Warren Wooden and P. N. Hartle have noted that the three parts present political and religious satire barely concealed beneath — in Wooden’s terms — a ‘veneer of nonsense’.<sup>9</sup> Their concern is not, however, to consider in detail the ways in which Taylor layers political critique into his verse, which renders the annotated extract in Malcolm’s *The Origins of English Nonsense* the only close reading of the poem. Malcolm expressly rejects political interpretations of *Nonsense* and omits a passage from the Third Part on the ‘lamentable Death and Buriall of a Scottish Gallaway Nagge’ on the grounds that the lines are ‘not [...] nonsense’ (they form a polemic on religious sectarianism, the blatancy of which might have been enabled by the section’s posthumous publication).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, James Mardock argues that Taylor ‘stopped [writing] his propaganda and his religious polemics’ after the king’s execution in January 1649, instead moving

toward the 'safer genre of nonsense verse'.<sup>11</sup> Taylor's intricate and particular selection of social, cultural and political references elevates *Nonsense* above a purely journalistic style of only historical interest. His writing style, and especially his use of stylistic features now classed as typical of nonsense verse (*impossibilia, coniunctio oppositorum*, puns, paradox, etc.), form part of his political project. This also removes the poem from the canon of pure nonsense verse that we associate with Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll, which Taylor did come close to with *Sir Gregory*. The tone throughout that poem is light and humorous, and there is no significant political content. At the end of the dedication, Taylor refers the reader to 'the Midsommer nights dreame', and quotes part of Quince's prologue to the Mechanicals' play, *Pyramus and Thisbe*: 'If we offend, it is with our good will, we come with no intent, but to offend, and shew our simple skill' (sig. A4<sup>v</sup>).<sup>12</sup> Taylor thus directs the reader to consider *Sir Gregory* a successor to the humorous malapropisms and bathos of Quince, Nick Bottom, et al. As Wooden argues, placing *Sir Gregory* in the category of 'children's literature', Taylor's purpose in that text 'is fun rather than correction', amusement instead of satire.<sup>13</sup>

'Nonsense' was a novel term in the seventeenth century, and its meaning was still flexible. The first recorded use of the word is from Anthony Stafford in 1612, where he invokes it as '*nonsense*' or '*non Sense*' — a meaning that is stressed typographically. Hence he berates the ungenerous 'ass' reader, who

Though they can pick out good sense, yet they will not; contrarie to the equity of a Reader; who, in a place doubtful, should strive to understand, before he cry out *Nonsense*. They little knowe, that hee, who writes in every thing properly, shall never write anie thing pleasingly.<sup>14</sup>

The bad reader will not be able or willing to supply these logical steps himself and will therefore be left with nonsense, while the good reader will fill in any gaps in order to follow Stafford's argument. Similarly, the *Oxford English Dictionary's* second cited usage is from Francis Quarles (1629), who berates authors who 'have ventured

(trusting to the *Œdipean* conceit of their ingenious Reader) to write *non-sense*, and feloniously father the created expositions of other men' — their own poor writing's failure of logical development has left their readers like *Œdipus* facing the riddles of the sphinx.<sup>15</sup> Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* (first performed 1614) also describes a 'game of *vapours*' as '*non sense*. Every man to oppose the last man that spake: whethe [sic] it concern'd him, or no'.<sup>16</sup> The scene depicts a game of 'systematic contradiction', which as Paul A. Cantor argues is likely to represent Jonson's wary mockery of the political and religious dissensions with which London was already rife.<sup>17</sup> 'Nonsense' at this time could thus indicate a flawed or deliberately perverted progression or presentation of logic that ruins an author's argument, or renders it contrary to sense, more than simple absurdity. Though absent from the *OED*, *Sir Gregory Nonsence* may represent the earliest usage of 'nonsense' for deliberate, playful absurdity. In titling his 1650s texts *Nonsence upon Sence*, Taylor could rely on this multiplicity of meanings to be brought to bear on the work by his reader, including as a gathering of sense fragments that lose their face meaning in illogical arrangements.

Where Taylor himself lays charges of nonsense, it is against those who deliberately obscure their faulty logics through linguistic flexibility, sophistry and misrepresentation. In *A Bawd* (1624) he castigates such sophistic logicians for their

subtill and circumventing speeches, doubtfull and ambiguous Apothegmes, double significations, intricate, witty, and cunning equivocations, (like a skilfull Fencer that casts his eye upon a mans foot, and hits him a knocke on the pate).

In *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (1639), '*Logick's* a Speech, that seemes by disagreeing / To make things be, or not be in their being; / To whet mens wits, to try and tosse conclusions'.<sup>18</sup> In *Nonsence* he states simply that 'Logick hath Art to make an Ape a man' (sig. A5<sup>r</sup>). Taylor's concerns feed into ongoing debates over the exactness and capabilities of language, as expounded by writers such as John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Francis Bacon.<sup>19</sup> In *Wit in a Constable*, the servant

Tristram responds to his master, Holdfast's, call for '*John Taylor, get me his nonsense*' (meaning *Sir Gregory Nonsense*, the only nonsense text at this date) with 'You mean all his workes sir'.<sup>20</sup> In addition to insulting Taylor's writing, Tristram here mocks Holdfast's pretence to wit. Just returned from Cambridge, Holdfast exemplifies the 'angels on a pinhead' school of understanding, which the play presents as secondary to the real knowledge gleaned from 'not bookes, but men which are true living volums' (sig. B2<sup>r</sup>). Taylor's inclusion among a far more illustrious reading list demonstrates Holdfast's lack of discrimination — he will believe the words and arguments of 'the learned waterman' as easily as those of Thomas Aquinas or Francisco Suárez (sig. B1<sup>v</sup>). Yet Tristram's and subsequently Thorowgood's dismissal of Holdfast's book-learning is also intended to collapse these more illustrious authors down to the same level of 'nonsense' as Taylor's *Sir Gregory*. They are proponents of clever but pointless exercises of logic, impressive only to

such youths as only

Know how to frame a syllogisme in *Darij*,

And make the ignorant believe by Logicke

The Moones made of a Holland Cheese: and the man in't.

A swagbellied Dutch Burger. (sig. B2<sup>r</sup>)

The capacity of sense to be scattered and bent by seemingly logical arguments, which were actually as illogical as the *impossibilia* of *Sir Gregory Nonsense*, exposes ignorant readers like Holdfast to abuse by more worldly individuals.

Taylor noted that, given the power of such representations, Parliamentary and Royalist writers were locked in a battle for public opinion. Taylor attacked Parliamentary newspapers in pamphlets like *Mercurius Nonsencicus* (1648) — a riff on the Parliamentary title, *Mercurius Britanicus* — for a style that 'is easie stuffe to be read; but it will trouble a deepe understanding to pick out the meaning'.<sup>21</sup> In *Nonsense* he charges,

Speake truth (like a Diurnall) let thy pen  
Camelion like, rouse Lyons from their Den,  
Turne frantick Woolpacks into melting Rocks,  
And put Olympus in a Tinder box. (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

Taylor suggests that it would be as (im)possible for a 'Diurnall' (newspaper) to 'speake truth', as for Mount Olympus to be confined to the 'Tinder box', or a 'Camelion' (a 'camelopard' or giraffe, which he elsewhere depicts as creatures as insubstantial as 'Aire, Smoake, Vapours, words and winde'), to frighten lions.<sup>22</sup> He abuses Parliamentary news editors for 'as very Villaines as could be spew'd from the bottomlesse Pit' and, like other Royalist writers, regularly attacked 'our *London Diurnals*' for 'often stumbl[ing] into most grosse errorrs'.<sup>23</sup> His direction in *Nonsense* that 'Blind men may see, and deafe men all shall heare, / How dumb men talk because Cow hides are deare' (sig. A3<sup>r</sup>) is not only an absurd joke but also evokes his remarks in *Mercurius Nonsencicus* about the sources on which Parliamentary news hacks relied. In this he presents the mock revelation of 'A Plot, a Plot, a most horrible, terrible, execrable, detestable, abhominable, and damnable Plot' against Parliament (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>). When giving his sources he announces that

a blind Woman was the first that saw it, and she presently told it to a deafe Woman, the deafe Woman related it to a lame Woman, the lame Woman told it to a dumb, and she came post upon a lame Horse, and discovered the whole business to me. (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

Taylor thus reduces most political reporting to the worst level of (specifically womanish) gossip and hearsay.

Taylor announces that it is through such 'brabbling businesse: twit, twat, tush, puffe, mew [...] words to fill up a sheet in print' that writers have deluded a 'Brave tag rag multitude of Omnium Gatherum' into supporting a rebellion that they do not understand.<sup>24</sup> He was particularly hostile toward 'mislead Beasts' within the Parliamentary army: 'Aske Rebels what's the reason they rebell, / And aske Dogges

why they berke, They cannot tell'.<sup>25</sup> Rather than a streamlined opposition with a coherent political program, Taylor's Roundhead enemies are a gallimaufry of political and religious radicals building unstable ideological sandcastles in the Thames mud. Laurie Ellinghausen notes that despite his self-fashioning as a humble boatman poet, Taylor frequently expresses distrust for the general populace as 'both easily misled and potentially menacing'.<sup>26</sup> His criticism of this anonymous mass also allowed Taylor to strategically attack matters of national importance without laying blame on powerful leaders or any specific political party.<sup>27</sup> In *Nonsense*, Taylor parallels the heterogeneous London rabble with people involved in the 1647 Neapolitan rebellion, in which the crowd of 'pickled Sausedges' (literally: full of mischief, mince-for-brains) enabled a fisherman called Masaniello to become king for a day:

I tooke a Cammell, and to Naples went I,  
Of pickled Sausedges I found great plenty;  
The Gudgeon catcher there, o're top'd the Nobles,  
And put the Viceroy in a peck of troubles:  
[...] But now and then was squeez'd a rich Delinquent,  
By which good means away the precious chinke went. (sig. A5<sup>r</sup>)

While obviously a ship of the desert would be useless for crossing the real sea, Taylor describes visiting Naples in order to parallel this situation with that of the Parliamentary mob, whom he considered to be swindling 'Delinquents' (Royalists), depriving them of their 'chinke' (money), in their pursuit of illegitimate power.

One Parliamentary writer whom Taylor singled out for particular opprobrium was George Wither (1588–1667). Taylor had formerly praised both Wither's person and writing, in some works emulating his style, but the two fell by the ears after choosing opposing sides in the Civil War. In *Aqua-Musæ* (1645), Taylor



denounces Wither's *Campo-Musæ* (1643) as 'fragment[ed]', 'patch'd up' nonsense, written 'By insinuation to intrude / Into th'affections of the Multitude':

Was ever such vile fragment Riming Raggs  
Patch'd up together with abusive Braggs;  
[...] His Honest Writings but a Paradox:  
His Verities are false, his Errors true,  
Such Riffe Raffe hotch Potch, his sweet *Muse doth Brew*.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor attacks Wither for his opposing political opinions, but even more so with the accusation that they are not his *true* opinions: that is, examination of the 'words and Sense' of his earlier works with *Campo-Musæ* reveal it to be nothing but a convoluted, 'Incongruent' work of 'wavering Lies and Lines (*Black upon White*) / [That] Shewes rayling Hypocrite, *Hermaphrodite*, / Nor Male or Female, neither both or neither' (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>; original emphasis). For Taylor, Wither's deceptive, deliberate obscuring of a non-existent argument through linguistic dexterity renders his writing 'most Ridiculous, and poor Nonsense': 'For Nonsense is Rebellion, and thy writing, / Is nothing but Rebellious Warres inciting' (sig. B4<sup>r</sup>). Moreover, Taylor points out that he can imitate this quite successfully for his own political agenda: 'I can Rand words, and Rime as well as thou: / Speak and write Nonsense, even by thy Example' (sig. B4<sup>r</sup>). He then proceeds to imitate Wither's 'nonsense' through a long passage of *impossibilia* and *coniunctio oppositorum* of the manner that he would later use in *Nonsense*: Wither's argument is like 'the wagging of the Dog-starres Taile, / Or like the Frost and Snow that falls in *June*, / Or like sweet Musique, that was ne're in Tune', etc. (sig. B4<sup>r</sup>). His final lines of 'Lofty Verse' end with 'words [...] purposely cloven or split, for the understanding of the Learned, Illiterate, Grave, Ridiculous Reader' (sig. B4<sup>v</sup>) — sense broken down to impossible nonsense.

Taylor also likens Wither to 'Tub-Preaching Tinkers, Pedlars, Pulpiteeres, / Whose best Religion, is most irreligious' (sig. B1<sup>v</sup>). Taylor was a firm proponent of

the Established Church, attacking 'irreligious' separatists throughout his career, and this is an important feature of *Nonsense*. 'Tub preachers' were non-conformist lay men (or occasionally women) who delivered and published sermons and other religious addresses alongside or in addition to their normal trades. In *Nonsense*, he writes that 'The Dunsmore Cowes milke shall make Sillibubs, / And our Religion shall be brought in Tubs' (sig. A2<sup>v</sup>). A sillabub was a sweetened milk dessert traditionally consumed at Christmas, here produced from the legendarily inexhaustible milk supply of the Dun Cow. Figuratively, however, the term was also applied to 'something unsubstantial and frothy, esp. floridly vapid discourse or writing', and it is for this sense in particular that Taylor links it with the religion of 'Tubs'.<sup>29</sup> The title page of Taylor's *A Swarme of Sectaries, and Schismatiques: Wherein is discovered the strange preaching (or prating) of such as are by their trades Cobblers, Tinkers, Pedlers, Weavers, Sow-gelders, and Chymney-Sweepers* (1641) contains an illustration that derisively literalises the phrase: it depicts the cobbler-preacher, Samuel How, sermonising from inside a washing tub.<sup>30</sup> As Taylor saw it, fracturing of the Protestant faithful into dissenting factions posed as great a threat to the Established Church as any Papists. London was 'scatter'd full of [religious] Sects' — Brownists, Baptists, Anabaptists, Familists, Adamites and more. Taylor bemoaned that,

Amongst all Trades (some thousands zealous Widgeons)  
Were hardly more in number then Religions.  
In Preachers Roomes were Preach'd, for which I woe am,  
The basest people Priests like Jeroboam.<sup>31</sup>

Taylor attacked these lay preachers not only for their 'base[ness]', but also for their pedantic and incomprehensible Biblical interpretations — their nonsense appropriations of the Word. In *Mad Verse*, Taylor describes separatists as 'Nose-wise Scripture Picklers': they are conceited buffoons who 'pick' minutely over the scriptures (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>). Like Stafford's asinine hypothetical readers, such readers lose

the wood for the trees, the sense for the sound. Nigel Smith notes that different Puritan groups did favour distinctive reading and discursive practices, and experimented with the ways that language could become 'to some extent continuous with the personal experience of the spirit'. 'Undoubtedly,' he says, 'the language of radical religion was founded upon irrationality in theory and in practice as the difference between the internal and the external, the literal and the figurative, disappeared.'<sup>32</sup> Diane Watt and Esther S. Cope, writing on female-authored prophetic texts of this period, have also noted how the prophets' 'fragmented syntax and idiosyncratic punctuation can be understood as an attempt to create an authentic and esoteric prophetic voice'.<sup>33</sup> Such inscrutability, Cope argues, 'demonstrated graphically how the unbeliever could not understand the wisdom of the prophet'.<sup>34</sup>

Taylor, however, would have none of this presumption. The Brownists, who were established in 1581 by followers of Robert Browne, and who Smith notes were 'extreme literalists' when it came to Biblical interpretation, were some of Taylor's favourite targets.<sup>35</sup> With a certain irony he decried how,

These Amsterdamian Zelots can breath five hours in a Text, and they delight not only in Battologies [needless repetitions], but also in tautologies, which makes them become so infamous and ridiculous to the World, that they are ludibrious spectacles of derision.<sup>36</sup>

They were as bad as the Papists, who 'in an unknowne tongue [their] Prayers scatter', thus rendering them mere snippets of sound and fury.<sup>37</sup> Taylor produced spoof radical religious pamphlets, such as *A Tale In a Tub*, which uses flawed or circumlocutionary logic, fallacious etymologies and other wordplay to parse less than a single Biblical phrase.<sup>38</sup> He thus parodied the overblown rhetoric of such tub lectures, displaying, William P. Holden remarks, his 'happy knack of giving the impression of interminable length and infinite nonsense all within six pages'.<sup>39</sup>

Taylor ties the convoluted styling of *Nonsense* to this corpus of religious parody through several references to the Brownists and other sects within the text, but most importantly in the title page description of the book as 'Written upon *white Paper*, in a *Browne Study*, be-twixt *Lammas Day* and *Cambridge*, in the Yeare aforesaid' (sig. A1<sup>r</sup>). Taylor's juxtaposition of the temporal 'Lammas Day' and spatial 'Cambridge', and his reference to a non-existent 'year aforesaid', typify wordplay employed throughout the text, but also alert the reader to the multiplicity of meanings in the phrase 'Browne Study'. Literally a brown-coloured home office, the phrase also denotes 'a state of mental abstraction or musing', with its association with the Brownists adding further connotations of religious madness.<sup>40</sup> Further in the text, Taylor speaks of,

A long Dev'ls broath, be sure you bring a spoon,  
Our mornings shall begin at afternoone;  
And Minos, Eacus, nor Rhadamantus  
May roare and rant, but never shall out rant us. (sig. A5<sup>v</sup>)

In addition to echoing King Lear and the Fool's plans to 'go to supper i' th' morning. / And [...] go to bed at noon', Taylor here reworks the familiar expression, 'he must have a long spoon that will eat with the Devil' in connection with the loosely grouped antinomian and pantheistic association of 'Ranters'.<sup>41</sup> Taylor also drew on the proverbial phrase 'the devil dances in an empty pocket' to align separatists and the devil when announcing that 'A man may think his purse is turn'd a Round-head, / When all the crosses in it are confounded' (sig. A5<sup>v</sup>).<sup>42</sup> 'Crosses' was a common term for coins, after the figure of a cross stamped on one side, and Taylor here ridicules Puritan disapproval of making the sign of the cross, and also their removal of crosses from public places, such as Cheapside Cross in 1643. As with his positioning of his *impossibilia*, etc., as imitation of the political nonsense of writers such as Wither, Taylor ties his 'mad verse' to the mad ranting of religious radicals.

Taylor's nonsense, as T.S. Eliot said of King Lear's, 'is not vacuity of sense: it is a parody of sense, and that is the sense of it'.<sup>43</sup> A deliberate vacuity of sense is demonstrated by Taylor's earlier mock-heroic eulogies on Thomas Coryat (1577–1617) ostensibly in the 'Bermuda' and 'Utopian tongue[s]', which, as Emma Renaud highlights, entirely privilege 'sound' over 'intelligibility'.<sup>44</sup> The Bermudan text, for example, which he insists 'must be pronounced with the accent of the grunting of a hog', closes with, 'Isracominnogh Jaghogh Iamerogh mogh Carnogh pelepsogh / Animogh trogh deradzogh maramogh, hogh Flonzagh salepsogh'.<sup>45</sup> The poems serve to satirise Coryat's claim to fame as a traveller and make no attempt to present a discernible meaning outside of the entirely fantastical translation, which itself thus represents a fracturing of linguistic sense.

The section of *Nonsense upon Sense* that comes closest to pure nonsense is a macaronic verse in praise of the author. Like the Bermudan poem, it is followed by a so-called translation that includes *impossibilia* and bathos, but whose mistranslation renders it a multi-lingual non sequitur (sig. A8<sup>v</sup>). The macaronic poem incorporates Latin, Italian, French, German and nonce-words in a passage that makes no overall sense. Educated poets composed serious macaronic poetry in virtuoso displays of their linguistic skills. In *The Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), for instance, Abraham Fraunce combined English, Latin, Greek, Italian and Spanish when dedicating his book to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, and John Donne's dedicatory contribution to *Coryats Crudities* (1611) included Latin, English, French and Spanish.<sup>46</sup> Taylor refers in the poem to the Spanish city of Salamanca, which at this time was most famous for its university. He thus jibes those university-educated poets who had sneered at him (in both reality and his own imagination) throughout his career, by aligning their multi-lingual poems — which were 'so mysticall, sophisticall', that it is 'no marvell others understand them not' — with his openly incomprehensible macaronic.<sup>47</sup> But this was not the first time that Taylor had published the poem. As Hartle notes, Taylor

regularly appropriated text from his earlier works in order to invoke their more polemical themes and moods.<sup>48</sup> The macaronic poem was therefore drawn from the dedicatory material of *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (1639).<sup>49</sup> This 'most wholesome [...] Black-mouth'd biting Satire' offered forthright attacks on diverse areas such as pride, hypocrisy, greed, quackery and alchemy (sig. A3<sup>r</sup>), and Taylor's incorporation of it into *Nonsense* serves to enhance that text's political content.

Taylor continues this fragmentation of linguistic sense elsewhere in *Nonsense*. His dedication — which, in an inversion of literary convention, is attached to the end of the first part — parodies typical eulogistic dedications with a fustian blend of complex sentences, tautologies, neologisms, ink-horn terms and sesquipedalian words. Most importantly, the passage includes a significant amount of mock-Latin, constructed through the addition of hyperbolic Latinate suffixes to nevertheless recognisable English or Latin stems. Taylor praises an ironic target who has himself been 'quartered into foure Offices, viz. a Scavenger, a Beadle, a Cobler, and halfe a Constable'. This man is heralded as the 'Potentissimo, Excellentissimo' (cod Latin for 'most powerful, most excellent'), and the 'Cleanser, clearer, and avoyder of the most Turpitudinous, Merdurinous, excrementall offals, Muck and Garbadge' ('Turpitudinous' being a neologism from 'turpitude' — shameful, foul — that predates the *OED*'s earliest citation by 300 years, and 'Merdurinous' combining 'merd', or faeces, and 'urine').<sup>50</sup> Sense here is not absent, but relies on breaking up individual words into their stems, prefixes and suffixes, just as elsewhere Taylor's oxymorons and *impossibilia* depend on the staging of fragmented sense for their meaning.

Yet for all its political tension, *Nonsense* is fun to read, and often funny. This is part of Taylor's project. Taylor packs his poem with references to festivals, holidays and other folk customs of 'Merry England' banned under the Puritan government, which was a form of critique shared by other Royalist authors such as Robert

Herrick.<sup>51</sup> These pastimes' affiliation with Royalist sentiment had been solidified by Archbishop William Laud and Charles I's reissue of the *Book of Sports* in 1633; by 1643, copies were burned by the common hangman by order of Parliament.<sup>52</sup> In 1647 Parliament had formally abolished Christmas, Easter, Whitsun and all other former Church feasts, thereby consolidating its 1641 ban on Sunday dancing and sports and subsequent bans on folk customs such as the maypole.<sup>53</sup> Evidently Taylor was an adherent of James I's opinion that socially diverse people's attendance at festivities and sporting events produced 'a common amitie among themselves'.<sup>54</sup> To Taylor, the enforced loss of such recreations under Parliament signalled ongoing social division. Taylor frequently refers to Shakespeare's and other authors' plays in his interregnum texts, when to invoke the theatres following their closure in 1642 was for many authors a political move.<sup>55</sup> In *Nonsense*, Taylor writes that,

Strange things are done by art and humane power:

Quinborough Castle landed neare the Tower.

Much like a prodigy old time playd Rex:

A Kentish Castle came to Middlesex. (sig. A6<sup>r</sup>)

Edward II's castle in Queenborough had served as a Royalist stronghold during the Civil War until it was seized and demolished by the Parliamentarians in 1650.<sup>56</sup> Taylor's description of the castle 'land[ing]' in Middlesex (which it may have done after demolition as building materials or in seconded fittings) is phrased to echo Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, whose titular hero had been led to believe he would not be vanquished 'until / Great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane Hill / Shall come against him'.<sup>57</sup> Taylor's allusion thus not only functions as a reminder of the theatre and realised *impossibilia*, but also links the fates of Shakespeare's and his own defeated kings.

Similarly, *Nonsense* features frequent references to Christmas. In 1631, 1642 and 1652, Taylor had produced extended critiques of the neglect and subsequent banning of Christmas celebrations.<sup>58</sup> At one point in *Nonsense*, Taylor declares that,

'Tis not the Persian Gulph, or Epshams Well,  
Nor Westminster's sweet Plum broth (made in Hell)  
Can change my resolution; I have vow'd,  
To speake with silence, and to write aloud. (sig. A2<sup>v</sup>)

Here, Taylor ironically describes as 'sweet' the Hellish 'broath' served by the Parliament in Westminster (plum broth being a traditional Christmas soup of beef, prunes, raisins, white bread, spices and wine). As early as 1643, many members of Parliament had continued to transact business on Christmas Day.<sup>59</sup> To imagine them indulging in a festive plum broth would therefore be, to Taylor, one of the most ludicrous images of his entire poem (and yet still not enough to 'silence' him).

Even Taylor's decision to write in verse (he alternated between verse and prose throughout his career) might be understood as political, given his belief that Puritans gave 'Their hate to Verse, [and] love to tedious Prose'.<sup>60</sup> His rhyme and metre are almost tediously regular, giving the poem a sense of order despite the fragmentation of its sense. Jokes, both new and recycled from his earlier poems and the work of others, are as important as references to his polemically political texts for evoking this aspect of his project. These references stretch back to his earliest published work, *The sculler* (1612). *Nonsense's* re-imagining of a 'dale with Milk and Creame that flowes' echoes *The sculler*, while evoking the image as a utopian *impossibilium* (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>). Taylor explicitly refers to this scene as a 'Utopian Kingdome', leaning on utopia's meaning of 'no place' (a link made explicitly in *Sir Gregory's* title), to both distance it from and remind his readers of the unpleasant realities of their interregnum surroundings (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>). As in G. K. Chesterton's distinction between the spirit of pure nonsense and that of satire, Taylor's poem is



not completely removed from reality but instead displays 'a kind of exuberant capering round a discovered truth'.<sup>61</sup> For all its humour, the political cracks show through.

Taylor's works are marked by a nostalgia that is necessarily political in its desire for an England unmarked by Civil War divisions; disenchanted Royalist writers in the 1640s and 1650s often depicted England as a topsy-turvy world.<sup>62</sup> Unlike the 'good old days' wherein disorder was limited to festive occasions, it now runs riot through the streets (and verse) of 'This age wherin no man knowes whether he lives or not lives, whether he wakes, or dreames; when he can hardly trust his eares with what he heares, believe his owne eyes, wherewith he sees, or give credit to his owne heart'.<sup>63</sup> The consistency with which normality is inverted in *Nonsense* fashions a new version of the everyday in which the tumultuous political, religious and social changes surrounding Taylor have grown so familiar as to assume a level of normalcy akin to 'Etna and Vessuvius, in cold blood / [...] both drown[ing] in the Adriatick flood', or 'Great Agamemnon [...] combin[ing] with Hector, / To preach at Amsterdam an Irish [i.e. Catholic] Lector' (sigs. A2<sup>r</sup>, A4<sup>r-v</sup>). He had previously used the same or similar *impossibilia* in describing the likelihood of a Parliamentary victory; now, of course, the impossible had come true. His 1642 pamphlet *Mad Fashions, Od Fashions, All out of Fashions, Or, The Emblems of these Distracted Times* features a striking woodcut of a world turned topsy turvy: fish fly, a horse drives and whips his cart, the classic cat/mouse and dog/hare chases are inverted, and a man is pushed by his wheelbarrow.<sup>64</sup> Dominating the image is a central figure that embodies the fragmented body politic: a quartered man rearranged to stand on his hands, with his head protruding from his backside. Within the text, Taylor describes these features, explaining that 'This Monstrous Picture plainly doth declare / This Land (quite out of order) out of square' (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>). The country has become unrecognisable from 'what it was but seventy yeeres agoe' (which was of course the

glory days of Elizabeth I, and Taylor's childhood), undergoing 'a Metamorphosis, / [...] most preposterous, as the Picture is, / The world's turn'd upside downe, from bad to worse' (sigs. A3<sup>r-v</sup>). He berates attacks on religious ceremonies and festivals, the proliferation of religious sects, rise of lay preachers, and the ongoing discord between King and Parliament. These are all topics familiar from *Nonsense*, but *Mad Fashions* is nowhere near nonsense verse; instead, Taylor bluntly catalogues the *impossibilia* that have supposedly become possible in 'these distracted Times'. Passages from another text from this period, *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse* (1644), in which Taylor was openly critical about the 'maddest mad Rebellion' that was sweeping the nation, also reappear more cautiously in *Nonsense*.<sup>65</sup> Though Taylor removes the direct references to England, and in some cases restructures foreign examples to make them seem more haphazard, his earlier, overt critiques echo through.

When compared against Taylor's earlier, openly polemical works, the political agenda of *Nonsense upon Sence* can seem intermittent and oblique. He was by now elderly, firmly on the wrong side of power with a history of political arrests, and determined not to suffer the fate of other writers judged seditious — that is, 'to keep [his] eares upon [his] head'.<sup>66</sup> The presentation of his work as 'nonsense' allowed him a level of ambiguity that might protect him. Writing nonsense worthy of university study was a challenge Taylor had set himself in *Mercurius Nonsencicus*: 'let thy [writing] be nonsencicall in heroick, duncicall, and naturall, artificiall Verses, beyond the understanding of all the Colledges, or Universities or either Kent or Christendome' (sig. A4<sup>r</sup>). Such writing would not only be 'beyond understanding' of university wits, but also of the censors who would otherwise prosecute him for his political views. His 'mighty stock of Nonsense' could prove 'the universall Magazine / For Universities to worke upon' — not only a body of work for the university men to busy themselves with, but also a storehouse of ammunition to be used against his

enemies.<sup>67</sup> Taylor's devastation at the transition of authority from King to Parliament and the ongoing social divisions within the body politic shows through the fractured sense of *Nonsense*, despite his humorous guise of the absurd. He himself asserted that anyone 'Who [set] his wits, my Sence to undermine' — that is, mine or dig through to find — was 'A cunning man at Nonsense'.<sup>68</sup> 'Cunning' in this period carries both the positive associations of knowledgeability and skill, and its prevailing modern sense of bad artfulness.<sup>69</sup> A 'cunning man' could also suggest a wizard or conjurer, here using superhuman powers to decipher Taylor's nonsense.<sup>70</sup> The reader is thus returned to the book's subtitle, in which s/he is directed to 'chuse' if it contains 'either or neither' sense or nonsense — anything s/he finds is his or her own responsibility. Such movements enable Taylor to create a far richer, politicised satire than has been acknowledged, and justify further examination of the works of this lively Water Poet.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I have benefited greatly from K. K. Ruthven's supervisorial advice, Heather Kerr's feedback on an earlier version of this essay, and from the feedback received from the *Ceræ* reviewers. Research for this paper was completed within the Bill Cowan Fellowship in the Barr Smith Library, the University of Adelaide.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> John Taylor, *Nonsense upon Sence: or Sence, upon Nonsense: Chuse you either, or neither. Written upon white Paper, in a Browne Study, betwixt Lammas Day and Cambridge, in the Yeare aforesaid* (London: [n. pub.], 1651). Unless noted, all quotations are from this first edition.

<sup>4</sup> Noel Malcolm, *The Origins of English Nonsense* (London: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Glapthorne, *Wit in a Constable* (London: John Okes, 1640), sig. B1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Matt Reynolds and Steve Platt, 'Time Team Series 13, Queensborough, Kent. Castle in the Round', <[http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/T/timeteam/2006\\_queen\\_t.html](http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/T/timeteam/2006_queen_t.html)> [accessed 7 October 2007].

<sup>7</sup> Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water-Poet 1578–1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Wilcher, p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> Warren W. Wooden, *Children's Literature of the English Renaissance*, ed. by Jeannie Watson (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1986), p. 172; P. N. Hartle, "'All His Workes Sir": John Taylor's Nonsense', *Neophilologus*, 86 (2002), 155–169 (p. 164).

<sup>10</sup> Malcolm, pp. 24, 210; Taylor, *The Third Part*, sig. A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> James Mardock, 'The Spirit and the Muse: The Anxiety of Religious Positioning in John Taylor's Prewar Polemics', *The Seventeenth Century*, 14 (1999), 1–14 (p. 12).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V. 1. 108–110.

<sup>13</sup> Wooden, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Stafford, *Meditations, and Resolutions, Moral, Divine, Politicall* (London: H. L., 1612), sig. A8<sup>r</sup>. The *OED*'s citation of Stafford as the first user is based on the other instance in the book: 'Some, by the extraordinary application of a thing common, will bring the Reader both into admiration and delight. Others againe, by an unwittie application, make *non* Sense; and infuse lothing into the nice stomach of the Reader[.]' (sigs. F2<sup>v</sup>–F3<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>15</sup> Francis Quarles, *Argalus and Parthenia* (London: John Marriott, 1629), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fayre: A Comedie, Acted in the Yeare, 1614 By the Lady Elizabeths Servants* (London: Robert Allott, 1631), sig. I2<sup>r</sup>. Editors in all modern editions that I have found have quietly emended this to one word.

<sup>17</sup> Joad Raymond, 'Perfect Speech: The Public Sphere and Communication in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Spheres of Influence: Intellectual and Cultural Publics from Shakespeare to Habermas*, ed. by Alex Benchimol and Willy Maley (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 43–70 (p. 56); Paul A. Cantor, 'In Defense of the Marketplace: Spontaneous Order in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*' in *Literature and the Economics of Liberty: Spontaneous Order in Culture*, ed. by Paul A. Cantor and Stephen Cox (Auburn:

Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2009), pp. 167–224 (p. 183).

<sup>18</sup> John Taylor, 'A Bawd. A vertuous Bawd, a modest Bawd: As Shee Deserves, reprove, or else applaud', in *All the Workes of John Taylor the Water Poet* (London: James Boler, 1630), sigs. Hh5<sup>r</sup>–Ii6<sup>v</sup> (sig. Ii2<sup>r</sup>); John Taylor, *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre* (London: [n. pub.], 1639), sig. B5<sup>v</sup> (original emphasis).

<sup>19</sup> On this debate see Robert E. Stillman, *The New Philosophy and Universal Languages in Seventeenth-Century England: Bacon, Hobbes, and Wilkins* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995). Locke, for example, sounds similar to Taylor when he despairs that 'all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement; and so indeed are perfect cheats' (quoted in Stillman, 34).

<sup>20</sup> Glapthorne, sig. B1<sup>v</sup> (original emphasis).

<sup>21</sup> John Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsencicus, written for the use of the simple understander* ([n.p.]: [n. pub.], 1648), sig. A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsencicus*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Capp, p. 153.

<sup>24</sup> *Mercurius Nonsencicus*, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>; *Nonsense*, sig. A5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> John Taylor, *The Noble Cavalier Characterised, and a Rebellious Caviller Cauterised* (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1643), sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567–1667* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> Mardock, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> John Taylor, *Aqua-Musæ: or, Cacafoغو, cacadæmon, Captain George Wither wrung in the withers* (Oxford: [n. pub.], 1645), sigs. B3<sup>r</sup>, A4<sup>r</sup> (original emphasis).

<sup>29</sup> 'sillabub | syllabub, n.', in *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/179747>> [accessed June 2013].

<sup>30</sup> Samuel How was an apt target for Taylor. His most famous sermon, on 'The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching, Without Human Learning', vehemently praised the very lay preachers Taylor habitually denounced: Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 82.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor, *The Third Part*, sig. B4<sup>r</sup>. The passage is appropriated from *Mad Verse, Sad Verse, Glad Verse and Bad Verse* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1644), sig. A1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>32</sup> Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed: Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), pp. 15, 18. On the 'aggressive and artificial' use of language by the Ranters more specifically, see Byron Nelson, 'The Ranters and the Limits of Language', in *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. by James Holstun (London: Frank Cass, 1992), pp. 60–75.

<sup>33</sup> Diane Watt, *Secretaries of God: Women Prophets in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), p. 122.

<sup>34</sup> Cope quoted in Watt, p. 122.

<sup>35</sup> F. L. Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997),

p. 243; Smith, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> John Taylor, *The Diseases of the Times or, The Distempers of the Common-wealth* (London: R.T., 1642), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> John Taylor, *Mad fashions, od fashions, all out of fashions, or, The emblems of these distracted times* (London: Thomas Banks, 1642), sig. A4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> 'Now the Babylonians had an Idoll they called Bell, and there were spent upon him every day, 12 gross measures of fine flower, and 40 sheep, and 6 vessels of wine': *A Tale in a Tub or, a Tub Lecture* (London: [n. pub.], 1642), sig. A2<sup>r</sup>. The writer gets as far in his gloss as 'Now the Babylonians had an Idoll they called Bell'.

<sup>39</sup> William P. Holden, *Anti-Puritan Satire 1572–1642* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 73.

<sup>40</sup> 'brown study, n.', in *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/23875>> [accessed June 2013].

<sup>41</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, ed. by Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1966), III. 6. 86–87; Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), S771; Cross, p. 1365.

<sup>42</sup> Tilley, D233.

<sup>43</sup> Quoted in *OED Online*, s.v. 'nonsense, n. and adj.', <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/128094>> [accessed June 2013].

<sup>44</sup> Emma Renaud, 'A Precursor of Nonsense: John Taylor, The Water Poet', *Cahiers Elisabethains*, 48 (1995), 37–43 (pp. 41–41).

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Renaud, p. 42. See further Joanne E. Gates, 'Travel and Pseudo-Translation in the Self-Promotional Writings of John Taylor, Water-Poet', in *Travel and Translation in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Carmine G. DiBase (Kenilworth: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 267–280.

<sup>46</sup> Abraham Fraunce, *The Arcadian Rhetorike*, ed. by Ethel Seaton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1950), p. 2; John Donne, 'In eundum Macaronicon', in Thomas Coryat, *Coryat's Crudities* (London: Scolar Press, 1978), sig. D4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> John Taylor, *The Nipping or Snipping of Abuses: or, The Wooll-gathering of Wit in Workes*, sigs. Bbb4<sup>v</sup>–Ddd4<sup>v</sup> (London: James Boler, 1630), sig. Ddd2<sup>r</sup>. Taylor's idol, Ben Jonson, referred to him as 'the water-rhymer', because 'a rhymer / And a poet, are two things' (Capp, p. 75).

<sup>48</sup> Hartle, p. 164.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor, *A Most Horrible, Terrible, Tollerable, Termagant Satyre*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Taylor, *Nonsense*, sig. A7<sup>r</sup>; 'turpitudinous, adj.', in *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/243081>> [accessed June 2013]; 'merd, n.', in *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116716>> [accessed June 2013].

<sup>51</sup> Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640–1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 102–111; see also Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

<sup>52</sup> Alistair Dougall, *The Devil's Book: Charles I, The Book of Sports and Puritanism in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), p. 158.

<sup>53</sup> Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1994), pp. 201, 212.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Marcus, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Louis B. Wright, 'The Reading of Plays during the Puritan Revolution', *Huntington Library Bulletin*, 6 (1934), pp. 73–108.

<sup>56</sup> Reynolds and Platt.

<sup>57</sup> William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. by Sylvan Barnet (New York: Signet, 1963), IV. 1. 92–94.

<sup>58</sup> John Taylor, *The Complaint of Christmas. And the Teares of Twelfetyde* (London: James Boler and H. Gosson, 1631); John Taylor, *The Complaint of Christmas, Written after Twelfetide, and Printed before Candlemas* (Oxford: H. Hall, 1642); John Taylor, *Christmas In & Out: Or, Our Lord & Saviour Christs Birth-Day* (London: Francis Coles, 1652). Despite their similar titles, the texts of the *Complaints* differ substantially.

<sup>59</sup> Hutton, p. 207.

<sup>60</sup> Taylor, *Most Horrible*, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> G. K. Chesterton, 'A Defence of Nonsense', in *A Defence of Nonsense and Other Essays* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1911), pp. 1–11 (p. 3).

<sup>62</sup> Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 92–96; Marcus, p. 241; Smith, p. 13.

<sup>63</sup> Taylor, *Mercurius Nonsensicus*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> This was reprinted with minor revisions as *The World turn'd upside down: or, A briefe description of the ridiculous Fashions of these distracted Times* (London: John Smith, 1647). Taylor's changing acknowledgement of authorship of this openly critical text reflects the shifting political climate of 1640s London. While he was happy to put his full name to the 1642 edition, by 1647 the title page diplomatically described the book as 'By T. J. a well-wisher to King, Parliament and Kingdom' (sig. A1<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>65</sup> Sig. A5<sup>r</sup> draws heavily from *Mad Verse* sigs. A1<sup>r</sup>, A2<sup>r</sup>, A3<sup>v</sup>, and *The Third Part* sig. B4<sup>r</sup> quotes almost verbatim from *Mad Verse*, sigs. A1<sup>v</sup>–A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> John Taylor, *Bull, beare, and horse, cut, curtaile, and longtaile* (London: Henry Gosson, 1638), sig. E2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Taylor, *Nonsense*, sig. A6<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Taylor, *The Second Part*, sig. B4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> 'cunning, adj.', in *OED Online*, <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45866>> [accessed June 2013].

<sup>70</sup> I thank Bernard Capp for this observation.

