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HAUNTED PURGATORY:
BOCCACCIO'S *DECAMERON* 3.8
AS AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AFTERPIECE

Filip Krajník

Abstract

The present article addresses the issue of intertextuality of the English theatre of the long Restoration period (1660–1737), using Benjamin Griffin's farce *The Humours of Purgatory* (1716) as a case study. Although *The Humours of Purgatory* clearly employs a then popular tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the study argues that, especially during the play's production, a number of other factors (some of which were beyond the realm of the text) entered the referential framework of the piece, making it virtually impossible to talk about a single source and its straightforward adaptation or a clear-cut genealogy of the work. Employing Marvin Carlson's concept of ghosting (or "haunting"), the study shows how elements of various works from both literary and theatre cultures of the time participated in complex and shifting intertextual networks, with multiple links and relations between their individual members. From the analysis it also transpires that the early eighteenth-century farce was an integral and valuable part of English theatre culture of the time, one that – along with other "lesser" or "popular" theatre forms that helped to shape the performance tradition of the period – deserves more systematic academic attention.

Keywords

Boccaccio, *Decameron*, intertextuality, Restoration theatre, English theatre of the eighteenth century, Benjamin Griffin, *The Humours of Purgatory*, farce

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VIEWED frequently as a "quasi-dramatic work" itself, Boccaccio's *Decameron* was a rich treasury of material for both Continental and English early-modern theatre cultures (Smarr 2019, 75). Louise George Clubb maintains that "[h]aving plot features from the Decameron tradition was virtually requisite to the genre *commedia* from its formative time" (Clubb 1998, 180); Melissa Emerson Walter has recently demonstrated how central the Italian novella was for the (chiefly female) characters and situations of Shakespeare's early comedies, additionally providing

an appendix with a tentative list of roughly three dozen non-Shakespearian plays of the English Renaissance that clearly employ tales from Boccaccio's collection (Walter 2019).[1] Although less discussed than the Renaissance, the indebtedness of the English theatre of the long Restoration period to Boccaccio has also been acknowledged: his tales and individual episodes are traceable, among others, in Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, in several comedies by Thomas D'Urfey (including *The Injured Princess, or the Fatal Wager*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, which itself is partly based on Boccaccio; D'Urfey's name will be mentioned again later on), in the anonymous *The Lover's Stratagem, or Virtue Rewarded*, in Susanna Centlivre's *The Cruel Gift* and *The Busy Body*, and a number of other dramatic pieces (Wright 1957, 244–60, 318–30). Directly or through an intermediate, Boccaccio's tales provided English playwrights with a wide array of plots, tones and situations that proved to be extremely effective on the stage – some of them to such an extent that, over time, they enjoyed multiple employments, reshapings and revivals.[2]

The present article will address the employment of one tale from Boccaccio in a 1716 afterpiece by Lincoln's Inn Fields actor and minor dramatist Benjamin Griffin (1680?–1740), entitled *The Humours of Purgatory*. Having enjoyed moderate success, several revivals and two benefit nights,[3] *The Humours of Purgatory* is in many respects a prototypical early eighteenth-century English farce: it is based on a simple and well-known story, at the centre of which is a trick played on the aging, extravagant protagonist (originally played by Griffin himself); the piece includes feigned identities, an assemblage of high and low-class characters, who are largely stereotypical, straightforward, often physical humour, a dancing set-piece with music, and a happy resolution, with a moral lesson learned. Rather than focusing on the details of the farce's plot and its similarities to – or diversions from – Boccaccio's model, we might well take *The Humours of Purgatory* as a case study of how the novella, along with its various elements and iterations pre-existing in some

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[1] The most prolific author in this respect seems to have been John Fletcher, with at least seven Boccaccian inspirations (Walter 2019, 153–58). Smarr notes that, when writing alone, Fletcher tended to turn to Boccaccio for plot elements more often than when working collaboratively (Smarr 2019, 87).

[2] For a dated and incomplete, yet useful catalogue of the influence of the *Decameron* on European literary and theatre cultures, see Jones 1910.

[3] The afterpiece was staged at Lincoln's Inn Field on 3, 4 and 6 April 1716 (*The London Stage*, 2:395, 396); then on 28 April 1718, which was Griffin's shared benefit night (2:492), 28 April 1719, also Griffin's shared benefit night (2:537), 9 and 21 January, and 8 and 19 February 1720 (2:562, 565, 567, 569) as *The Hypochondriac*; then revived under its original title at Goodman's Fields for 18, 19, 20 and 25 November 1745 (3:1194, 1195, 1196); and, finally, at Haymarket Theatre for 25 April 1748, announced as "written by the late celebrated Mr Griffin" (4:49).

form in the audiences' cultural memory, helped to create a complex intertextual network in which Griffin's afterpiece partook and which was created in collaboration between the playwright and the theatregoing audiences who attended the piece's production. Indeed, to use Marvin Carlson's terminology, when *The Humours of Purgatory* premiered at Lincoln's Inn Fields on 3 April 1716, the performance was haunted by a number ghosts: of Boccaccio and his original story; of the story's afterlife in English early-modern literary culture; of its long tradition of more than a hundred years on English stages; of the Lincoln's Inn Fields' repertory at the time; of the conventions of the then rapidly rising genre of farce; of the production's cast and their previous rôles; and of visual aspects of the production, such as props and costumes. Carlson describes the phenomenon of "ghosting" of a new work by its predecessors in the audiences' minds as a "process of using the memory of previous encounters to understand and interpret encounters with new and somewhat different but apparently similar phenomena," arguing that, of all forms of arts, it has always played an especially important rôle in the theatre (Carlson 2001, 6). Although the aforementioned list of "ghosts" haunting Griffin's piece is by no means complete, it is hopefully illustrative enough to allow us to argue that the straightforward relationship between a "source" and an "adaptation," to which literary history in particular still tends to resort, is not sufficient to describe the complex genealogy of a dramatic work and its reception within an existing cultural tradition. At the same time, it demonstrates how deeply embedded the farce – a commercial genre scorned at the end of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries by authors such as John Dryden, James Miller and Samuel Derrick (Holland 2000, 107–108; Howe 2011, 25) – came to be in the English theatre culture of the early eighteenth century.

As mentioned above, the plot of *The Humours of Purgatory* is simple and easy to follow, perfectly satisfying the needs of the genre of the short afterpiece: Don Lopez, a notorious hypochondriac, is certain about his imminent death and writes his last will, disinheriting his only daughter, Constantia, if she marries, and bequeathing all his estate to the church. Dressed as a friar, Don Silvio, Constantia's lover, gives Don Lopez the last confession, during which the latter admits to a number of sins, including fornication and defalcation. Neither Don Silvio nor an also summoned physician, however, are able to talk Don Lopez out of his delusion. In order to cure him of "that Sort of Folly we call Hypocondriack, or Melancholy" (Griffin 1716, B5ᵛ), Don Silvio suggests indulging Don Lopez's fantasy, performing a mock funeral (during which Don Lopez comically argues from the coffin with the onlookers who talk ill of him) with an aim to "perswade him that he's

in Purgatory, and that he must eat and drink there" (Griffin 1716, C3ʳ). In a dark room in Don Lopez's house, Don Silvio and a couple of servants, dressed as ghosts, subsequently explain to Don Lopez that he has indeed died, offer him food and wine from "*Acheron*'s fertile Banks" (Griffin 1716, D5ᵛ) and give him a comical account of the inhabitants of Purgatory – in a vein not dissimilar from the anonymous Renaissance anti-Catholic jestbook *Tarltons Newes out of Purgatorie* (1590), whose title and association with the early English comedian celebrity Richard Tarlton (d. 1588) might have provided a source of inspiration for Griffin.[4] Finally, Don Lopez falls asleep and, upon his awakening, is made to believe by his family and servants that everything was just a preposterous dream. He ultimately admits to his folly, agrees to Constantia's marriage with Don Silvio and promises his wife, Julia, "to be a more reasonable Husband for the future" (Griffin 1716, E4ʳ).

The basic trajectory of Griffin's plot is lifted from two popular Renaissance stories: (1) the hypochondriac element, along with the mock funeral and the argument during the procession, were inspired by tale no. 58 from the early sixteenth-century jestbook *Tales, and Quicke Answers*, entitled "Of the foole that thought him selfe deed, wha̲n he was a lyve" (F2ᵛ– F3ᵛ, contraction expanded);[5] (2) the ultimate source of the purgatorial portion is the eighth novella of the third day of the *Decameron*, whose rubric, according to the then most recent 1702 translation (attributed to John Savage),[6] runs,

> Ferondo takes a Powder, which made him sleep so long, that they thought he was dead, and so buried him. An Abbot, who was his Wifes Gallant, takes him out of the Grave, and puts him in Prison, making him believe that he was in Purgatory. Afterwards he pretends to raise him from the Dead, and makes him own a Bastard, that he had by his Wife during the time. (Boccaccio 1702, 1: 151)

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[4] Interestingly enough, the background stories of those in purgatory in *Tarltons Newes* are mostly also drawn from the *Decameron* (*The Cobler*, 10). For more on the English collection in the context of late sixteenth-century English religious controversies, see Stelling 2018.

[5] This Italianate tale is a translation of the anecdote "Mortuus loquens" from Poggio Bracciolini's fifteenth-century Latin collection *Facetiae*; a derivation of the same story later appeared as the *novella seconda* of the *seconda cena* of Antonio Francesco Grazzini's *Le Cene* (after 1549). Roger Clegg and Lucie Skeaping point out that no. 51 of *Tales, and Quicke Answers*, "Of the inholders wyfe
and her ii louers" (E3ᵛ– E4ʳ), might have been the direct basis for the popular Renaissance jig *Singing Simpkin*, suggesting a deeper affiliation of this jestbook with the early-modern English theatre culture (Clegg and Skeaping 2014, 100–101).

[6] Although a number of Boccaccio's tales had been known to English readers through collections such as William Painter's *The Palace of Pleasure* (1566), the first complete translation of the *Decameron* in English (attributed to John Florio) appeared as late as 1620 (printed by Isaac Jaggard, the printer of Shakespeare's First Folio three years later), enjoying its fifth edition by 1684 (see Armstrong 2007).

While the first of the novellas was associated with literary rather than performance culture in England,[7] Boccaccio's tale would have been employed in at least four or five English dramatic pieces by the time that *The Humours of Purgatory* was first staged, essentially constituting Louise George Clubb's "theatergram," or a stock situation that migrated among plays, regardless of the immediate dramatic context in which its individual iterations appeared.[8] The most immediate of the previous employments of the tale, Thomas Southerne's tragicomedy *The Fatal Marriage* (1694), would be an obvious candidate for direct inspiration.[9] The play's subplot[10] revolves around the family of Fernando, "a Coxcombly old Fellow" (1.1.38), who is jealous of his beautiful wife, Julia, has disinherited his son, Fabian, and opposes the marriage of his daughter, Victoria, to her lover, Frederick. To get his revenge, Fabian (who pretends to have turned religious, wearing a friar's habit) drugs his father at a wedding feast and has him buried in a monastery, where the latter is "beaten . . . like a Dog" (4.1.3). When supposedly raised from the dead again, Frederick believes that he "was alive in Purgatory; and stood in't a good while" while facing the Devil himself (4.1.56–57). Ultimately, he renounces his former suspicions, settles half of his estate upon Fabian and bequeaths the other half to him when he dies, and gives blessing to Victoria and Frederick. A playful moment of subversion of the Italian novella is Fabian's companion Carlos's failure to seduce Julia while her husband was presumably dead: in accordance with late seventeenth-century comedic decorum, Julia proclaims that "there are Women, who won't be provoked to injure their Husbands" (4.1.23–24).[11]

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[7] Tanya Howe has also linked the funeral scene in Griffin's farce with the growing availability of funeral practices to the English middle class at the end of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, mentioning several other plays of the period containing funeral humour, including Edward Ravenscroft's *The Anatomist; or, The Sham Doctor* (1696), Richard Steele's *The Funeral; or, Grief a la Mode* (1701) and Susanna Centlivre's *A Bickerstaff's Burying; or, Work for the Upholders* (1710) (Howe 2013). It is very possible that *The Humours of Purgatory* was in early eighteenth-century audiences' minds ghosted by both the then current socio-economic context and the aforementioned plays.

[8] In print, a version of the Boccaccio story first appeared in English as "The Somners [Summoner's] Tale" in the 1590 Chauceresque anthology *The Cobler of Caunterburie* (K2^r–K4^v). Though otherwise following the plot of the Italian model fairly closely, the Summoner's tale is set in Wickham, Hampshire (*The Cobler*, 95).

[9] Indeed, William J. Burling lists *The Humours of Purgatory* as "based on the subplot of Thomas Southerne's *The Fatal Marriage*" (Burling 1993, 62).

[10] The main tragic plot of *The Fatal Marriage* is based on Aphra Behn's novella *The History of the Nun; or, The Fair Vow-Breaker* (printed 1689), which itself is a version of the eighth tale of day four of the *Decameron*. When David Garrick adapted Southerne's piece in 1757 as *Isabella, or, the Fatal Marriage*, he jettisoned the "purgatorial" comical subplot.

[11] This statement almost anticipates *The Provoked Wife* by John Vanbrugh, written in 1697. In Vanbrugh's comedy, the titular wife, Lady Brute, is also being provoked into taking revenge on her abusive husband and having a lover (which she, like Julia, ultimately does not do).

While Griffin obviously took a number of details from Southerne's version of the story (such as the name of the wife, who remains anonymous in Boccaccio, the existence of the daughter and her lover who want to get married, and the husband's initial wish to bequeath his estate to the church rather than his child), the physical depiction of Purgatory on the stage arguably had different inspirations, as *The Fatal Marriage* does not visualise Frederick's punishment. The brief masque of ghosts in Griffin's farce could have been influenced by the final scene of the first part of Thomas D'Urfey's *The Comical History of Don Quixote* (1694), in which Vincent the innkeeper, in order to cure Don Quixote of his follies, stages an elaborate masque for the latter with music and a dance of furies, at the end of which Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are both locked in a cage and brought from the stage, supposedly "to th' Place the Fates have ordered" (D'Urfey 1694, I2^r). While this version of the plot diverges from Boccaccio's archetype in some key aspects, the overall situation still shows enough affinity with the Italian novella to create an intertextual link with both the *Decameron* tradition and Southerne's piece.[12] An older iteration of the same situation, which probably also inspired D'Urfey and which Griffin might also have known, is in John Fletcher's *The Night Walker: or, The Little Thief* (c. 1611, rev. by James Shirley by 1633), where Tom Lurcher and his companions drug the old miserly justice Algripe and take him to a dark vault, where they, dressed as furies, tell him that they "have commission from the Prince of darkenesse, / To fetch thy [Algripe's] blacke soule to him" (4.5.12–13). Ultimately, the justice promises "To become honest, and renounce all villany" (4.5.53), annulling his forced marriage to Maria and returning her dowry to let her marry her lover, Frank Heartlove. In addition to these two dramatic works, which arguably had some direct or indirect influence on Griffin, we also cannot rule out the possible inspiration from the early Jacobean comedy by Edward Sharpham *The Fleire* (c. 1607).[13] Towards the end of that play, the eponymous Fleire ("Fleer"

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[12] In this context, it is not without relevance to note that, on the opening night of 3 April 1716, *The Humours of Purgatory* followed a production of the second part of *Don Quixote* (*The London Stage* 2:395), in which the scene in question from the first part is repeatedly alluded to. While Lincoln's Inn Fields did not stage the first part until 1720, it was regularly given before 1716 at Drury Lane, Queen's Theatre and Norwich (see Vol. 2 of *The London Stage*). It might be assumed that the second part of *Don Quixote* was largely attended by the audience who knew and liked the first instalment of the D'Urfey's trilogy.

[13] Although there is no record of a post-1660 production of *The Fleire* in London theatres, the play enjoyed some popularity in print in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, reaching its fifth edition by 1631. As a playwright, Griffin was well acquainted with the pre-Interregnum theatre tradition: his first play, *The Injured Virtue* (1714), was based on Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker's 1620 tragedy *The Virgin Martyr* (see Mikyšková 2019); his second (and last) mainpiece, *Whig and Tory* (1720), is a more radical adaptation of John Fletcher and William Rowley's 1623 comedy *The Maid in the Mill*, newly set in Griffin's native Norfolk (see Krajník 2019).

or "Fleerer," in fact Seignior Antifront, the deposed Duke of Florence in disguise), dressed as an apothecary, sells a sleeping potion instead of poison to his daughters, who plan to murder two English gallants, Spark and Ruffle, for refusing their romantic overtures. Upon their awakening in prison, the men confide their dream of hell to Antifront, giving a comical account of its inhabitants, similar to the one given to Don Lopez by Don Silvio as a purgatorial ghost. Spark's remark in particular that "the diuels are excellent companions, theile drink your Dutch captains, or Court Ladies spunges" (Sharpham 1607, H1ᵛ) seems almost to prefigure Griffin's vision of Purgatory as a place of merry drinking. Another detail that might have been lifted from *The Fleire* is the aforementioned apothecary, who appears as one of the disguises of Antifront in the Jacobean play (crucial for the Boccaccian element of the plot) and as a full character in Griffin's farce. Although Southerne's piece still seems to be closest to Griffin's in certain details and the basic contours of the plot, we can see that a number of other "ghosts" could have both left their mark on the farce's textual shape and readily created associations in the original audiences' minds.[14]

An even more important aspect of theatrical intertextuality than the "textual ghosts" mentioned above, however, are the "visual ghosts" of the production that are directly linked with the audiences' reception and memory. By nature, these ghosts might be less dependent on the playwright's intention (although, as we shall see, a deliberate intertextual play with physical elements of several productions is easily possible) and more shaped by theatregoing audiences and their previous experience and current expectations. In the case of afterpieces, that were by nature meant to be received within a larger theatrical context (the most immediate part of which was the performance of the mainpiece which the afterpiece usually followed), the idea of visual or physical intertextuality is perhaps even more apposite than in some other theatrical genres.

Indeed, as Leo Hughes has pointed out, the text or story of a farce tended not to be the most crucial components of the piece's ultimate production or even its success (although it is the only one to which we nowadays have direct access):

> As we range through the texts of farces printed in the period under survey we are vaguely conscious of missing something. Where there is so much repetition of the same device, so little variation from a conventionalized

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[14] Of course, Griffin's afterpiece is also a representative of a much broader genre of "news from hell," which, as Benjamin Boyce has demonstrated, was still thriving in eighteenth-century English culture, including the theatre (for instance, in Henry Fielding's *The Author's Farce* [1730] or his *Eurydice* [1737]; see Boyce 1943).

> pattern of intrigue, it is sometimes hard to see how one farce caught on while a half dozen others, not strikingly different in the reading, failed. What was the secret ingredient which enabled the one to outdistance and outlast the others? Most often the answer is, I believe, the action or the actor. What is dead and repetitious on the printed page may well have been very much alive in the capable hands of a trained farceur. (Hughes 1956, 153)

Peter Holland, likewise, points out that "the theatre of farce is also actors' theatre, a dramatic form that depends on and relishes the actors' skills" (Holland 2000, 109). Tony Howe furthermore refers to "the centrality of the body as a locus for meaning-making" in the farce (Howe 2011, 30), arguing that this genre is "replete with characters whose bodies fully inhabit the space of farce, with actors whose bodies and roles give dimension to that space" (Howe 2011, 42). While we have no witnesses to the physical or visual aspects of *The Humours of Purgatory* from the time it was originally staged, it is crucial that these elements be taken into consideration when addressing the theatregoing audiences' horizon of expectations and the possible extratextual influences on the piece. Even from the sketchy information that we have, it is, indeed, possible to argue that the actor and his body did dominate the production of the farce and presented the strongest point of referentiality between the action on the stage and the performance tradition which it entered.

"Short and slight of build," Griffin established himself as a low comedian of Christopher Rich's new Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre soon after its opening in 1714, his forte being "testy old men and skirt parts" ("Griffin, Benjamin," 365). Soon after Griffin's death, Thomas Betterton called the actor a "useful comedian, of the humorous Class," but dismissed his own dramatic attempts as "trifling Performances" that were met with "deserved Contempt" (Betterton 1741, 151). In 1733, Theophilus Cibber noted that Griffin was "a very popular attraction" of his theatre (although he was referring then to the actor's later engagement at Drury Lane rather than Lincoln's Inn Fields – "Griffin, Benjamin," 367). What is most important for us is the fact that among Griffin's numerous comical rôles was Fernando in Southerne's *The Fatal Marriage* when the play was revived at Drury Lane in January 1716 – just three months before the opening night of *The Humours of Purgatory*.[15] Additionally, among the original cast of Griffin's afterpiece, we find Henrietta Moore (fl. 1698–1730), who had played Victoria in *The Fatal Marriage* at Drury Lane in 1708 (*The London Stage*, 2:177), now returning eight years later

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[15] The earlier surviving cast list of the *Fatal Marriage* is from 9 November 1716 (*The London Stage*, 2:420) and is largely identical to the one from 26 October 1717, both featuring Griffin in the rôle (2:466).

to play Julia in *The Humours of Purgatory* (Griffin's counterpart to Southerne's same-named mother to Victoria). While the engagement of Moore could have been a coincidence or simply a case of typecasting, Griffin's reprising of the central rôle must have been evocative for the audience, especially if both Griffin's and Southerne's plays were performed concurrently on the same stage throughout 1716. We can only speculate to what extent the two characterizations shared the same voice, movements or facial gestures. It is very well possible that, in subsequent performances, Griffin elaborated on his Don Lopez, usurping even more space for his character (which the renaming of the farce for the 1717–1718, 1718–1719 and 1719–1720 seasons as *The Hypochondriac* might suggest). In that case, it cannot be ruled out that the original relationship of the model and the copy (however tentative such a relationship could be, of course) was reversed, and the rôle of Fernando in later performances of *The Fatal Marriage* could very well have been ghosted by the more dominant (and possibly more theatrically appealing and memorable) Don Lopez from Griffin's newer afterpiece.

The textual and personnel link between the plays also invites speculation that both the productions at least partly shared their visual material, such as props and costumes. If so, this could, again, have been an act of production pragmatism as much as an artistic decision, as we can assume that a cheap short afterpiece would have mined the theatre's inventory in the same manner as it did the existing textual tradition. In our case, the most obvious act of possibly conscious recycling would have been the disguises of Southerne's Fabian and Griffin's Don Silvio, which are both supposed to fool Fernando and Don Lopez respectively, each in its own way.[16] Besides the common purpose of the single visual object in the two dramatic plots and the similar circumstance, it is interesting to note that, while Fabian's costume is designated as "a Fryar's Habit" (stage direction after 2.1.52 and the opening SD of 3.1; upon seeing Fabian in the habit for the first time, Frederick remarks, "How! *Fabian* turn'd Fryar!" – 2.1.53), in *The Humours of Purgatory*, Don Silvio gets the habit from Julia, who calls it "an old Fryar's Gown in the Wardrobe" (Griffin 1716, A6ᵛ). What is significant in Griffin's rendition of the situation – besides the virtually identical verbal description of the object – is Julia's emphasis on the fact that the gown has been pre-owned and that she takes it out of the family's inventory, giving it an *ad hoc* purpose for the occasion. Could this be a playful reference to the costume's previous employment in Southerne's play, or even all the other

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[16] Additionally, the costume also links the plays to the central character of the lustful abbot from Boccaccio, who is otherwise absorbed by other rôles in the dramatic iterations of the story.

plays in the theatre's repertory that had previously made use of it? It is plausible that, given the special purpose of the costume in the plot, the audience would have paid more attention to it than to other possible visual "doublings" of this kind and that the gown would have raised further associations between Griffin's and Southerne's pieces, perhaps even in a parodic mode.

As we have seen, a number of factors potentially entered into the reception of Griffin's farce in 1716, making the piece part of a complex intertextual network that included texts, themes, dramatic patterns, actors and visual elements of the productions. What is also worthy of consideration, however, is the way in which *The Humours of Purgatory* itself potentially partook in other similar networks and helped to create the horizon of expectations for newer works, just as elements of works by Boccaccio, Southerne, D'Urfey and others had previously served Griffin's farce – in other words, how a haunted text and a haunted production could haunt other texts and other productions. A possible connection could be found, again, in the physical presence of an actor – or, in this case, an actress – on the stage. On the cast list from the opening night of *The Humours of Purgatory*, we find that the rôle of Constantia was played by a Mrs Robertson (*The London Stage*, 2:395). Nothing is known about this actress, apart from the rôles assigned to her at Lincoln's Inn Fields between 1716 and 1720, Constantia being her debut ("Robertson, Mrs," 15). Judging from the list of other characters that she played, Robertson specialised in young female lovers. In her final year with the theatre, she played Maria in Griffin's *Whig and Tory* – a comedy which he based on a plot by Fletcher, while placing the story in the then current context of the political rivalries in England of the early years of the Whig Supremacy (*The London Stage*, 2:565). Similarly to Constantia, Maria is in love with the young Ned Indolent, and the two lovers cannot marry because of Ned's eccentric testy father Sir John, played by none other than Griffin himself. Indeed, at several points, Sir John is strikingly similar to Don Lopez, well beyond the general character type. The former's frenzied rant against physicians, whom he would like to drown "all for a Parcel of Puppies" (Griffin 1720, B3$^\mathrm{v}$), clearly echoes Don Lopez's contempt for the profession, which he calls "a Cheat" and all who practice it "Knaves" (Griffin 1716, B4$^{\mathrm{r–v}}$); and so does Sir John's first appearance on the stage in a nightgown, which Don Lopez presumably (although the published text does not directly indicate it) wore for the whole of *The Humours of Purgatory*. With only a slight change (from the father to the father-in-law to be), Robertson's and Griffin's characters from the older farce, including their relationship and circumstance, were written

again into *Whig and Tory*, possibly inspiring a ghosting effect similar to the one that Southerne's character of Fernando did in *The Humours of Purgatory* not that much earlier.[17] One may easily say that, by creating this blend of character and narrative recycling (which was not uncommon at the time), both Griffin the author and Griffin the actor became their own ghosts, drawing the audiences' attention to further possible links (conscious or not) between the two plays.

The Humours of Purgatory may not have been one of the most popular or most original early eighteenth-century English farces, yet it can be well used as a representative example of the inherently imitative, while remarkably creative character of the English theatre of the period. Although somewhere at the beginning there was a popular Italian novella, whose theatrical potential was recognised by a number of playwrights before Griffin, the relationships between Griffin's afterpiece and the older iterations of the story cannot be easily established – especially if we take into consideration the issue of the cultural memory of the theatregoing audience, who could make their own, highly unstable, associations. It is probable that some of these links in the minds of the spectators were consciously invited by the author himself, who counted on the pre-existent knowledge of certain texts, dramatic patterns and conventions on the part of habitual theatregoers; however, given that *The Humours of Purgatory* was written at a time of strong competition between London theatres, when there was an extreme hunger for new material, some of the intertextuality could also occur simply due to a lack of time and resources or pure pragmatism. The aim of the present case study was to show that, when addressing adaptive efforts in early-modern theatre (or any theatre, for that matter), it is necessary to abandon the idea of a single, easily recognisable source or a clear genealogy of a dramatic work, and to go beyond the purely textual level of the piece. At the same time, we have seen how "higher" and "lower" genres of English post-Restoration theatre interacted with each other and how plots, characters and situations migrated across dramatic forms. The multi-genre character of the late seventeenth and eighteenth-century English theatre is thus another area deserving more systematic academic attention.

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[17] *Whig and Tory* premiered on 26 January 1720 (*The London Stage*, 3: 565), just five days after a production of *The Humours of Purgatory* (as *The Hypochondriac*) and less than two weeks before another (see fn. 3).

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