

Seneca, what Seneca? The Chorus in *The Spanish Tragedy*

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ABSTRACT

The question of Senecan influence on Elizabethan tragedy has been fiercely debated since J.W. Cunliffe published his seminal study in 1893. In the last half-century massive critical attention to this problem has been renewed. Recent interpretations of Senecan influence vary enormously, but there continues to be a tacit convergence on the view established by Cunliffe, namely that influence must be understood as a matter of local motif borrowing. This view is underpinned by the assumption that Senecan drama is made up of loosely related rhetorical exercises and that it thus lacks any coherent tragic vision. Building on recent work that challenges this bias against the plays as plays, this article re-examines the function of the Chorus in Seneca in order to transcend its interpretation as a static appendage of Stoic commonplaces. Rather than interrupting the flow of the action, the Senecan Chorus is carefully designed to evolve with the former so that it generates an overwhelming tragic climax. This climax is that of the avenger's *furor*, understood as tragic solipsism. It is this evolving Chorus and its vengeful madness that Kyd assimilated into his pioneering play of the 1580s.

KEYWORDS: Senecan drama, Senecan influence, Elizabethan revenge tragedy, Kyd, chorus

1. The question of Senecan influence

The early Elizabethan public stage betrays unmistakable signs of Senecan activity. We have, of course, the external evidence provided by Thomas Nashe's famous attack on a popular playwright, whose methods he decries as characteristic of the popular trade, that is, of those who

busy themselves with the endeavours of art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck-verse if they should have need; yet English Seneca read by candle-light yields many good sentences, as *Blood is a beggar* and so forth; and if you entreat him fair in a frosty morning he will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls, of tragical

speeches. But O grief! *Tempus edax rerum*. What's that will last always? The sea exhaled by drops will in continuance be dry, and Seneca, let blood line by line and page by page, at length must needs die to our stage; which makes his famished followers [...] to intermeddle with Italian translations. Wherein how poorly they have plodded [...] let all indifferent gentlemen that have travelled in that tongue discern by their twopenny pamphlets. (1958: 315-316)¹

But, in addition, we also have an abundance of literal quotations from the Latin originals, and of derivative and parodical *sententiae* from these, together with the reproduction of specific motifs and scenic designs to suggest that a vogue for Seneca attended the rise of Elizabethan public tragedy in the 1580s. Arguing that the fact "that the professional dramatists (and their audiences too) were as well acquainted with Seneca in Latin as in translation is shown by their fondness for quotation from the original" (Watling 1966: 29), a recent translator of the Senecan plays illustrates the point with a sequence that is typical of the vogue in question. In Seneca's *Agamemnon* we read, "*per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*," which Watling translates as "the safe way through crime is by [further] crimes." Studley turned it into as "the safest path to mischief is by mischief open still." Thomas Hughes in his Inns-of-court play *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) rendered it as "the safest passage is from bad to worse"; Marston's *The Malcontent* (1604) into "Black deed only through black deed safely flies" (to which the reply is made: "Pooh! *Per scelera semper sceleribus tutum est iter*"); Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) as "Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill"; Jonson's *Catiline* (1611) as "The ills that I have done cannot be safe/ But by attempting greater"; Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) as "Small mischiefs are by greater made secure"; and Massinger's *The Duke of Milan* (1620) as "One deadly sin, then, help to cure another" (1966, 29-31). These Senecan tags may have been intended to give a "Senecan flavouring" to Elizabethan plays (Watling 1966: 30); but the Senecan material assimilated into these plays would by no means be exhausted by any comprehensive list of surviving *sententiae*. This is confirmed by the two major studies of Senecan influence on the public drama to appear in the recent years: Robert S. Miola's 1992 *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy*, and A. J. Boyle's 1997 *Tragic Seneca*.

¹ Nashe's famous quip is understood as "at least a fair indication that Elizabethan playwrights were familiar with contemporary translations of the plays" (Brower 1971: 148). But alternative sceptical interpretations exist. See, for example, Hunter (1978: 193-194).

Both of these exhaustive studies demonstrate the astonishing range of Senecan material absorbed by the Elizabethan playwrights. After Miola and Boyle we are in a better position to recognize how well-known Seneca was to the public playwrights of the 1580s and '90s. If Senecan influence were just a matter of *sententiae*, one could argue – indeed some, like Hunter, have done so – that the Senecan tags were transmitted by the anthological compilations of which the age was so fond. That this is not the case, however, can be illustrated by the borrowings Miola identifies in *Titus Andronicus*, a play closely modelled on *The Spanish Tragedy*. In *Titus*, “sometimes considered the most Senecan of Shakespeare’s plays” (1992: 13), two slightly altered Latin quotations from Senecan drama stand out: Demetrius’s “*Per Stygia, per manes vehor*” (II.i.135) and Titus’s “*Magni Dominator poli, / Tam lentus audis scelera? Tam lentus vides?*” (IV.i.81-2), which derive respectively from II. 1180 and 671-2 of *Phaedra*. Now, these lines do not seem to feature in any of the more popular anthologies and *florilegia* of the period, whence Miola concludes that they “provide evidence of direct contact with Seneca” (1992: 13). Furthermore, Senecan material is by no means confined to these Latin quotations, nor is it extracted from a single play. Thus, *Phaedra* also contributes to “Shakespeare’s sense of locality” by providing a precedent in its extraordinary opening hunting scene in Act II of *Titus*. Moreover, *Titus*’s more general resemblances with aspects of *Troades* and *Thyestes* argue for influence of a different order of abstractness. Shakespeare’s play, for example, exhibits “similar configurations of action, character, and design” to *Troades*, which are quite central to the design of the plays: “both plays feature a vanquished mother who struggles in vain to preserve the life of a son; both depict human sacrifice in honour of the valiant dead; and both make use of the tomb as a potent symbolic setting” (Miola 1992: 19). With *Thyestes* the link becomes harder to locate both in source and in recipient – “a deep source of its energy and aesthetics of violence” (Miola 1992: 23) – and yet it seems more fundamental to the imaginative experience of the play, becoming a creative and intellectual engagement. In the face of this range of evidence – and Miola provides similar analyses of *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and even some comedies, such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and which Boyle extends even further – it is difficult to maintain that the Elizabethan public playwrights had at best a negligible acquaintance with Seneca’s plays.

By and large, scholarship now accepts that Seneca was a shaping factor in the emergence of public drama.² However, to identify the presence of Senecan material in the Elizabethan plays and to interpret it are not quite the same. In its century-long history, the debate has narrowed down to specific motifs in disregard of the general tragic vision in which they originate. In other words, the evidence of an Elizabethan engagement with Seneca has been taken as the meaning of this engagement. Thus, the question of the availability of Seneca to public playwrights has covertly become the question of what we mean by Seneca. The result can be illustrated by any random description of the history of Elizabethan drama. George Steiner, for instance, in his book on the tragic genre makes a passing remark on Elizabethan Seneca:

The playhouse of Shakespeare and his contemporaries was *el gran teatro del mundo*. No variety, no element from the crucible of experience, was alien to his purpose. The Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists ransacked Seneca. They took from him his rhetoric, his ghosts, his sententious morality, his flair for horror and blood-vengeance; but not the austere, artificial practices of the neo-classic stage. (1961: 20-21)

Here Steiner is (for once) not being controversial; he is simply echoing the conclusions of Elizabethan criticism: the Senecan legacy is seen as a treasure trove of rhetorical and sensational pearls used by Elizabethan authors to adorn their plays, the spoils of war gained in their expeditions into classical drama – that is to say, a fragmentary Seneca subservient to moralizing revenge melodrama.

Classical scholarship is largely responsible for this fragmented notion of the Senecan plays, but in the case of its influence on Elizabethan drama, it was established in 1893 by J.W. Cunliffe's *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*, and it has governed the use of Senecan criticism to this day. The premise on which Cunliffe proceeded was that "the influence of Seneca (or, to speak more correctly, of the tragedies ascribed to him) upon the Elizabethan

² It has become customary for critics to state their view on the question, as a critical *prise de position*: e.g. Brower: "if we should yield to the agreeable temptation to pass over Seneca and his example, we should find a considerable loss in our ability to define the nature of Shakespearian heroic tragedy. There are simply too many instructive analogies and contrasts to leave Seneca out" (1971: 149); or Emrys Jones: "it seems to me likely that Shakespeare (to confine the discussion to him) would have had a knowledge not merely of phrases from anthologies or of discrete passages but of at least some entire plays" (1977: 268).

drama is so plainly marked that no competent historian of our literature could fail to notice it" (1965: 1). In order to establish this, Cunliffe compiled an extensive inventory of Senecan borrowings in Elizabethan drama. The inventory is organized in sections dealing with the features of Senecan tragedy that were allegedly incorporated into the Elizabethan plays. A mention of the title of some of these sections shows how extraordinarily influential Cunliffe's study has been. Seneca is "Instrospective" (section 3), "Sensational" (section 4), "Rhetorical" (section 5); and the substantiation of Cunliffe's claim that "the most obvious way in which Seneca affected the modern drama was in external form" has been equally influential, as the following topics show: "Aphorisms" (p.23), "Fatalism" (p.25), "Stoicism" (p.28), "the Chorus" (p.32), "the Messenger" (p.43), "the Ghost" (p.44), "Use of the Supernatural" (p.44), etc. The examples he provided to exemplify each section and each formal feature were taken from academic and public plays alike, no qualitative distinction between them being introduced or local effects acknowledged.

Subsequent criticism has challenged Cunliffe's identification of parallel passages, both in its conclusions about particular cases of borrowing and its over-generous inclusiveness. Nonetheless, the main assumption behind his study – that Seneca provided sensational dramatic material – has been largely accepted.³ As a result, a fragmented Seneca has discredited *ab initio* the possibility of an integrated Senecan tragic vision to which Kyd and Shakespeare could have responded in their drama. Even today, scholars continue to take for granted that Seneca must mean Cunliffe's "Seneca" when discussing its influence on Elizabethan plays. It is no surprise, then, to find the same motley collection of features identified as a tradition even in the most recent work on early Elizabethan public tragedy:

Kyd writes out of the Senecan tradition, where the plays are characterized by a plot pivoting around revenge, with a supernatural presence of some kind or another, usually in the form of a ghost, a tragic protagonist and a great deal of blood and violence. The antiquity of the medium, in Renaissance writings, is signalled by a markedly formal style and the interspersing of classical quotations. (Piesse 2003: 206)

³ For a discussion of Senecan influence criticism see "A Critique of Scholarly Trends," in Motto and Clark (1988: 21-42), and Kiefer (1985).

That there exists a unified Senecan tragic vision and that this had a formative impact on early Elizabethan revenge tragedy is an alternative assumption that has been rendered more than conceivable by the publication of Gordon Braden's 1985 *Renaissance Tragedy and the Senecan Tradition: Anger's Privilege*. In his groundbreaking study, which has not yet been fully recognized as such, Braden shows that Roman tragedy offers a consistent and powerful tragic vision that encompasses but transcends the Stoic doctrine expounded in Seneca's prose works. The first step towards the establishment of a unified Senecan vision is the establishment of an affective, or psychological, Seneca. And the first step towards the establishment of the affective Seneca is the recognition that madness is what defines the experience of the tragic revenge. This is why Braden proposes to reclaim the centrality of *furor* to Seneca's tragic vision. In Braden's reading, *furor* is not just the most conspicuous aspect of the plays, it is also the key to their meaning.

Admittedly, *furor* is not a theme exclusive of Senecan tragedy: it characterizes much of the Latin non-lyrical production of the first century, as the work of Lucan, almost dominated by "titanic figures of insatiable appetite for conquest and destruction" shows (1985: 28). But this does not mean that it can be simply dismissed as a period feature. Its centrality has to be explained if this drama is to be accorded a meaning more profound than sheer sensationalism. To take *furor* seriously means not to take its meaning for granted as outrageous passion at the service of melodrama. It is not a coincidence that those who, like Hunter, reject the idea of Senecan influence on Elizabethan drama tend to regard *furor* in this light, as a generalized expression of unreason, devoid of any psychological content. Hunter never discovers a Seneca *tragicus* other than that of conventional Stoic doctrine. Hence the plays are seen as conflicts of two abstract, impersonal forces:

When Seneca's slaves of passion are taken over by inhuman or anti-human emotions they are released from human responsibility [...] they become the vessels or instruments of the *furor* which is personified by the *Furiae* we meet in the infernal prologues [...] It is impossible to know just how subjective or how objective Seneca intended *Erynis* or *Megaera* to be, but clearly we are not dealing with a fluctuation of inner mood. A more objective description of human processes seems to be involved: reason has struggled with *furor* and lost, and thereafter the inner resource of the individual is empty and the infernal passions take its place. (1978: 185)

By de-personalizing *furor* as an abstract passion, indeed as Passion itself, Hunter reduces tragic experience to moral certitude. This reduction is typical of conventional instincts to supplant the subjective origins of *furor*, rooted in the character's conflict, with an objective aetiology, rooted in the philosophical tradition. Instead of an affective crisis Hunter perceives a Manichean allegory. This is the consequence of taking *furor* for granted when analysing the plays.

To counter this reductive medievalization of Senecan tragedy, Braden proposes an investigation into the content of *furor* that achieves an understanding of the devastation it unleashes:

Even the recent revival of scholarly respect for the plays has tended to take the inexplicability of *furor* for granted: the opposite for *ratio*, it is a primal force of unreason that cannot be managed or diverted, only suppressed or resisted. That is the usual result of applying Seneca's philosophy directly to the plays, which then become cautionary fables about the destructive intractability of irrational *pathé*. (1985: 130)

Rejecting the fragmentation of the plays into incoherent rhetorical exercises, Braden aims at an integrated reading in which *furor* is seen as a drive for self-sufficiency that achieves the latter only at the price of madness. This interpretation reveals a Seneca totally different from the conventional one. From an examination of the principal revenge plays, *Medea* and *Thyestes*, in relation to Greek tragedy, and of the extant fragments of other Roman tragedies, he concludes that Senecan drama is characterized by the absence of any social and familial web that could contain and hence relativize the hero's *furor*. To a large extent, Senecan tragedy is the product of a crazed obliteration of this web. When, for example, *Medea* is confronted by the loss of her "interpersonal bearings" (her familial, social and national position), she produces "a gesture of mythic self-possession, establishing personal identity as a force that transcends its origin and context." As a result, the killing of *Medea*'s children appears as "part of a programmatic destruction of ties to the human race" (1985: 34). For this reason, the typical plot of a Senecan play takes the form of an "inner passion which burst upon and desolates an unexpected and largely uncomprehending world" that is, of an enactment "of the mind's disruptive power over external reality" (1985: 39). Thus, at the heart of Senecan drama Braden discovers a tragic dialectic of self and non-self, which manifests itself in the insanity of "an expansive and seemingly illimitable selfhood" (1985:42). What Braden reveals is that *furor* is a form of madness that aims at the

realization of an illusion of individual autonomy beyond almost any limit. At its most fundamental, Braden's analysis reveals a consistent tragic vision to which a crisis of identity, and the despairing megalomania it provokes, is the central issue.

After Braden, the question of what may be termed the public Seneca – that is, of a specifically tragic Seneca assimilated into the plays of the Elizabethan public stage – presents itself with renewed urgency. Critical tags like "Senecan revenge," mechanically applied to any crime scene in Renaissance drama, demand a re-examination. In the light of the new content assigned to *furor*, it is arguable, for example, that Kyd's representation of madness in *Hieronimo*, which set a vogue for revenge lasting well into the seventeenth century, is modelled on it. In this perspective, Senecan influence ceases to be regarded as a matter of local borrowing and becomes an intellectual engagement that proved fundamental to the emergence of public drama in the late 1580s and early '90s. Needless to say, it is well beyond the scope of this article to make a full case for this thesis. In what follows I shall concentrate on the play that set the vogue for revenge drama on the Elizabethan public stage, namely, Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, specifically on its reception of the chorus, generally agreed to be of Senecan derivation. In doing so, I intend to show that an integrative perspective on Senecan drama that restores its cohesiveness both to the individual plays and to the tragic corpus as a whole is not only possible but necessary in order to appreciate the creative debt that English Renaissance drama owes to it.

2. The chorus in Senecan tragedy

No analysis of Senecan drama can be complete which omits to consider the role of the Chorus. Its presence in the plays is spectacular and its function central to the meaning of the tragic experience. Nonetheless, no other major element in Senecan drama is more misrepresented. This failure is a product of the critical bias against the dramatic quality of the plays as plays, the Choruses being regarded as their least dramatic expression. However, there are clear signs in the criticism that the interaction between the Chorus and the plot has been far from well understood. Differing critical perceptions of the Chorus's function have generated an unresolved polarity. Howard Baker, for example, feels that what characterizes the Senecan Chorus is its intimate involvement with the tragic events:

Seneca's choruses are composed of people fairly intimately allied with the protagonists [...] rather than being strictly interpretative agents, [they] are strictly choral adjuncts to the action; they are extensive enough to share acts with the protagonists [...] they participate with messengers and other characters. (1939: 143)

In puzzling contrast, what Braden – to take another example – regards as typical of the Senecan plays is the detachment of the choruses from the action:

[In Senecan drama] the Chorus has become almost completely disengaged from the action. It takes virtually no part in the dialogue and is rarely referred to at all by the characters; its odes, now clearly set as formal dividers in a five-act structure, seldom have more than the most general links to the surrounding action. (1985: 35)

These contradictory perceptions are by critics too well acquainted with the plays to come up with a totally distorted picture. It would seem, then, that one has to accept that the Chorus is at times deeply engaged with the tragic action, and at other times quite distanced from it. This would seem to offer an interesting ambiguity, yet its significance is never considered. Instead, one finds a consensus on the Chorus's static, utterly undramatic nature, together with the assignment of a moralizing purpose to it. For example, Norman Pratt, discussing the Chorus of *Medea*, reaches this conclusion:

The Argo odes are typical of many of the Senecan choruses. The function of the Corinthians is not fully dramatic. They have no organic part in the action and no clear individuality, only general characteristics and attitudes, such as antagonism towards Medea, which attach them to this play. On the other hand, these odes serve the purpose of the kinds of drama Seneca is writing, educative exhortatory drama demonstrating the destructive forces in human nature. The Argo theme is developed to show the absolute nature of the evil portrayed in Medea. Seneca is using the Chorus for philosophical commentary on the significance of the action, communicating directly to the audience the lesson of the drama. (1983: 87)

Pratt's assertion that the Chorus "stands above the dramatic events, not deriving insights from events, but giving insights to them" (1983:

79) is entirely representative of Senecan criticism.⁴ As usual, the *coup de grace* is performed, with much relish, by G. K. Hunter, who concludes that the Senecan Chorus is nothing more than “a dead letter” (1978: 167).

Generally speaking, the Chorus in Seneca is understood to represent the middle stage in the history of its abolition in drama. In Greek tragedy, the story goes, the Chorus is naturally integrated into the dramatic whole of which it forms an indispensable element. By contrast, in Seneca the Chorus constitutes a qualitatively different entity from the rest of the play; its presence is felt as an interruption of rather than a contribution to the dramatic flow. As C.W. Mendell puts it in his book-long comparison of Greek and Roman tragedy (a comparison that, needless to say, is always unfavourable to Roman tragedy): “It is a further step in the decline of the chorus as an essential part of the play and therefore another factor contributing to its ultimate elimination. [...] Already it *makes* the breaks between acts instead of *filling* breaks created by the natural dramatic progress of the play” (1968: 135). Cunliffe fully subscribes to this view: “[the Senecan] choruses,” he concludes, “could be cut out without any injury to the plot, and in some cases might even be transferred from one tragedy to another without loss of appropriateness” (1965: 33). Hence this interpretation has proved particularly influential with Elizabethan scholars, who see the Chorus in Kyd and Shakespeare as the product of the academic adaptation of Seneca in the 1560s and ‘80s. In their view, the process of choric dissolution started by Seneca and accelerated by the Elizabethan academic playwrights and translators finds its culmination in the public plays of the 1580s and ‘90s. Charlton, for example, observes that the Elizabethan translations of Seneca tend to be freer in dealing with the Chorus, which they invariably shorten. The assumption that underpins this view is that the Chorus is intrinsically undramatic:

those [alterations] affecting the Chorus are greatest: thus at the outset the translators are instinctively preparing Seneca for the theatre by coping with the most obvious impediment to his appearance on the

⁴ Nussbaum’s well-known analysis is no exception: “unlike the Euripidean Chorus, Seneca’s is not sympathetic to Medea. Throughout it is the sober voice of Stoic morality, counseling the extirpation of passion, the containment of daring – a life that stays at home with its own virtue, never overstepping the limits of nature” (1994: 240). In the course of her discussion Nussbaum qualifies this assertion, but the function of the Chorus, as she conceives it, remains purely doctrinal.

modern stage. Neville frequently shortens Seneca's choruses, and the mere shortening is a dramatic gain in the direction of ultimate exclusion.⁵ (1946: 161)

Furthermore, whether or not one assumes that the academics derived this treatment from Seneca, what is clear is that both in the academic and the public drama the Chorus has a moralizing function. Thus Baker regards the moral function of the Choruses in *Gorboduc* as a precedent for the public Choruses of Kyd and the early Shakespeare:

It is singly and alone as an interpreter of what has gone before (especially the symbolic material presented in the dumb shows) and what is to come afterwards that the Chorus in *Gorboduc* functions. So, too, in general, functions the Chorus, in so far as it persists, in the later tragedy. (1939 :143)

It seems to me that Baker's description of the Chorus in *Gorboduc* is quite accurate. In effect, the play introduces every Act by means of a musical dumb show in which a symbolic representation is enacted. At the end of the Act the Chorus spells out the moral truth signified by the dumb show, which now appears as a warning against the misfortunes enacted in the intervening Act. Thus, the Chorus makes of each of the five Acts a self-contained unit at the expense of the momentum of the play; the meaning of the play is established in a cumulative way (as an aggregation of moral episodes) rather than in a culminative way (as an overall design tending towards a final revelation). But this is not the dramatic scheme we find in either Seneca, or Kyd, or Shakespeare; and I would argue further that the role of the Chorus contributes to this. Contrary to the established view, my contention is that a) an attentive examination of the Senecan Chorus reveals that it is far from static, and not irrelevant to the tragic representation; and b) it is the dynamic Chorus of Seneca, rather than the static Chorus of academic drama, that Kyd assimilated into his seminal play, among whose much-celebrated innovative features is the upper-stage presence of Revenge.

⁵ Charlton cites as supporting evidence Heywood's remark that "such alteracyon [of the Chorus] may be borne with all, seeing that the Chorus is no part of the substance of the matter" (1946: 159). For Charlton, only the Elizabethan public playwrights solved the problem by virtue of the fact that "the philosophical atmosphere which is the excuse for the dull sermons of the Chorus was to be more cogently supplied by closer attention to the portrayal of character" (1946: 170).

In general terms, the Senecan Chorus – often in conjunction with an infernal Prologue – casts a shadow of fatality over the unwitting characters, whose actions thus appear to obey a supra-human as well as a human logic. This creates a double perspective on events: on one level the tragic conflict is perceived to be generated by the psychic crises of deeply socialized characters (fathers, mothers, lovers, etc); on a parallel level it is seen to be governed by a supra-human, abstract dictate – a curse, generational in *Thyestes* (the curse of the house of Pelops), and mythical in *Medea* (the curse of the Argonauts). From the start, then, we know that the human conflict obeys a larger design that escapes the control of its protagonists. But the gap never ceases to be perceived as such: what we feel all along to be more vivid, urgent and, in the final analysis, real is the interpersonal tragic conflict. Thus, we experience the two levels of causation as much in terms of discontinuity between the supernatural and the natural as in terms of continuity. This discontinuity we shall re-encounter in *The Spanish Tragedy*, where while Hieronimo's revenge is seen to be dictated from the upper-stage by Revenge, its realization below is felt to surpass anything Revenge could have anticipated. But the connection between the Kydian and the Senecan Chorus is not exhausted by this theatrical effect, which enhances the human (and therefore the psychological) dimension of revenge. The Chorus not only embodies the supernatural forces that shape the avenger's madness: it evolves in the play, and this evolution serves to mark the avenger's progression towards the crazed achievement of mental omnipotence Braden identified as the climax of *furor*. In order to appreciate these effects, however, it is necessary to realize that what the Elizabethan public dramatist found in Seneca were plays in which all elements are enactments, and not the static truths applauded by academics.

My contention is that the Chorus neither represents a Stoic stance towards the action of the play, nor contributes little to the development of the tragedy. On the contrary, it is an essential tragic device characterized by an evolving relationship with the action. This can be most interestingly illustrated in relation to *Thyestes*, the choral function of which has proved to be the most intractable to interpretation in Senecan criticism. Following Act I, in which Atreus lists his grievances against his brother and vows to wreak revenge on him, the Chorus enters rejoicing in the fact that "at last our noble house, the race of ancient Inachus, hath allayed the strife of brothers" (336-338); and for another seventy lines it exults at the

reconciliation.⁶ Plainly, the chronological disarray exposes Seneca to a charge of dramatic incompetence that has not passed unremarked in criticism. Indeed, various explanations have been offered to account for this most exceptional thing – “a deluded Chorus”, in Boyle’s phrase (1983: 50). For example, E.F. Watling observes in his well-known Penguin translation:

That the Chorus, here and again at 546, appear to be ignorant of Atreus’s treacherous intentions, is a considerable strain on the dramatic convention. Some suppose that the Chorus is absent from the stage between the acts. But no realistic solution need be looked for; the Chorus may participate as much, or as little, in the action as convenient; here they are assumed to be aware only of the ‘overt’ situation – the apparent reconciliation of the brothers. (1966: 60)

Having recommended that no “realistic” solution be sought, Watling offers a casually unconvincing one himself. Yet the Chorus does seem to vary in its degree of involvement in the action. Indeed, comparative readings reveal these variations to follow an identifiable pattern, which consists of a movement from an almost complete detachment from the tragic events to a total identification with them. The initial detachment usually comprises a vision of an idyllic, or at least non-tragic, reality, characterized by communal and religious harmony, and located in an organic world of vast open spaces. And so with the first Chorus:

If any god loves Achaian Argos and Pisa’s homes renowned for chariots; if any loves Corinthian Isthmus’ realm, its twin harbours, its dissevered sea; if any, the far-seen snows of Mount Taygetus, snows which, when in winter-time the Sarmantian blasts have laid them on the heights, the summer with its sail-filling Etesian breezes melts away; if any is moved by the cool, clear stream of Alpheus, famed for its Olympic course – let him his kindly godhead hither turn, let him forbid the recurrent waves of crime to come again, forbid that on his grandsire follow a worse grandson, and greater crime please lesser men. (122-135)

This initial anti-tragic vision, I would argue, does not constitute a “break in the dramatic recital” but represents an *alternative* stance to that which brings about the catastrophe. Far from a product of dramatic incompetence, the detached Chorus serves to intensify the tragic effect by defining the harmonious world out of which the

⁶ All citations of Seneca are to Miller (1953).

enacted play tears us. It allows us to perceive how the solipsistic disposition of the avenger will progressively swallow up any vision of normality. In this view, the Chorus fulfils a representational rather than chronological function. Thus, contrary to the received view, Senecan tragedy does not use the Chorus to moralize the action, but to anticipate by contrast the avenger's tragic conflation of self and universe, making us feel what it means to be possessed by self-assertive avenging *furor*. In sum, the Chorus serves a dramatic rather than doctrinal purpose. That its initial stance is the counterpart of the hero's stance is confirmed by the similar procedure that opens *Medea*, which sets Medea's opening curse on the marrying couple against their blessing by Chorus I. Indeed, there is little Stocism in the first Chorus's encouragement of the Corinthians to indulge in revelry and merrymaking.

The Senecan Chorus, however, is by no means confined to offering the audience or even the hero the alternative space of normality. From its initial "objective" stance it is sucked into its increasing concern with the tragic figure and its fate. Eventually it joins the action and takes part in the dialogue. That in most of the plays this happens only in Act IV is no accident. Generally a Senecan play – certainly the revenge plays – concludes with the engulfing of the luminous reality that the Chorus proclaimed by the infernal darkness of the avenger's mind. Once the Chorus has been sucked into the tragic nightmare, the everyday world ceases to withstand the tragic momentum. This descent from detachment to surrender is represented by the second and the third Choruses. Normally in Seneca the second Chorus can still be seen to counterbalance avenger's rage, as the "ignoring" Chorus in *Thyestes* shows. The third Chorus, however, invariably begins to mark the transition from commentary, even commentary addressed to the protagonist, to involvement. The sense of a universe ruled by impersonal, fixed laws has not yet been lost, but it is now affected by the impending horrors. Chorus III in *Medea* no longer rejoices in the communal festivities, but fears Medea's intentions and prays for the safety of Jason; while its counterpart in *Thyestes* fearfully admonishes Atreus to check his inordinate pride. This Choric evolution makes us feel how external reality is relentlessly made to yield to the growing force of the tragedy.

The final Chorus following Act IV offers something even more drastic: the collapse of the objective world. *Furor* has succeeded in engulfing the public world. Thus, in *Thyestes*, the fourth Chorus appears in dialogue with the Messenger, who is asked to describe

the horrors at which he is shuddering (639-640). The dialogue is followed by the Chorus's lament, which takes up and amplifies the drift of the Messenger's narrative, thus dissolving the final differences between enacted events and choric commentary, but thereby also removing the alternative reality to horrors. Vision has yielded to terror, description to feeling. In *Thyestes*, the Sun withdraws in revulsion at Atreus's crime, and the Chorus is overwhelmed by a nightmare of universal chaos:

Whatever this may be, would that night were here! Trembling, trembling are our hearts, sore smit with fear [the Latin enacts the very voice of eschatological despair: "*trepidant, trepidant pectora magno/ percussa metu*"], lest all things fall shattered in fatal ruin and once more gods and men be o'erwhelmed by formless chaos; lest the lands, the encircling sea, and the stars that wander in the spangled sky, nature blot out once more. (827-35)

The Chorus' final utterance is a cry against cosmic injustice; indeed of the disappearance of justice itself:

Have we of all mankind been deemed deserving that heaven, its poles upturn, should overwhelm us? In our time has the last day come? Alas for us, by bitter fate begotten, to misery doomed, whether we have lost the sun or banished it! Away with lamentations, begone, O fear! Greedy indeed for life is he who would not die when the world is perishing in his company. (875-884)

Incapable of distinguishing between desert and misfortunes, between victimization and responsibility, it concludes by repudiating life itself. Whatever our identification with this view, however, we are left with something slightly different. Atreus's subjective dissolution of the cosmos leaves us, unlike the Chorus whose relationship with Atreus as a fellow *dramatis persona* is different from ours, with a vision of the horror of solipsism. Seneca's representation of mental omnipotence shows us that to attain it is to achieve solipsistic madness. This overwhelming climax could not have been achieved without the participation of an evolving Chorus.

As the previous analysis suggests, this striking use of the chorus depends on an *affective* Seneca that is utterly unlike the received Stoic platitudes of academic drama, or, indeed, Cunliffe's piecemeal Seneca. Despite the massive differences between the age of Nero and that of Elizabeth, what Elizabethan public dramatists responded to in their Roman ancestor was his overpowering

representation of vindictive madness, and they did not omit to notice the effective role the chorus plays in it.

3. The Elizabethan reception of the chorus: *The Spanish Tragedy*

Just how central the irrational element is to Hieronimo's revenge is confirmed by the appearance of Andrea with which the play concludes. Immediately after Hieronimo has massacred the entire court, Andrea comes forward to declare that the Destiny of Revenge has been accomplished. The ghost congratulates himself on the fulfilment of his expectations, taking stock of the destruction that he has wreaked among his fellow beings. His satisfaction is now complete. And this satisfaction does not appear to be qualified in the least by the fact his victims include his friends. On the contrary, Andrea numbers them amongst those whose deaths bring joy to him, and he exults at the blood that has engulfed the entire court. The greater the devastation, the greater his fulfilment. This seems indeed to be the Spirit of Revenge:

Ay, now my hopes have end in their effects,
When blood and sorrow finish my desires:
Horatio murdered in his father's bower,
Vile Serberine by Pedringano slain,
False Pedringano hanged by quaint device,
Fair Isabella by herself misdome,
Prince Balthazar by Bel-imperia stabbed,
The Duke of Castile and his wicked son
Both done to death by old Hieronimo,
My Bel-imperia fallen as Dido fell,
And good Hieronimo slain by himself:
Ay, these were spectacles to please my soul. (IV.v.1-12)⁷

To be sure, Andrea entreats Proserpine to permit that "I may consort my friends in pleasing sort,/ And on my foes work just and sharp revenge" (IV.iv.15-16). This may or may not be interpreted as an act of justice on his part – the punished "foes" include innocent Castile, for example – but the fact remains that this intention affects only the afterlife of the courtiers. As far as their enacted life is concerned, the outcome over which Andrea rejoices cannot be called "just" in any sense of the word. Indeed, this outcome seems to bring him joy because of, rather than in spite of, its random distribution of

⁷ All quotations from *The Spanish Tragedy* are taken from Mulryne (1989).

misfortune. Clearly, the “spectacles” that please Andrea’s soul are spectacles that satisfy an irrational desire for universal devastation, and thus include the deaths of Bel-imperia and Hieronimo as well as those of their villainous enemies. In so far as the upper-stage embodies the Spirit of Vengeance, this spirit seems to have little to do with punitive fairness.

That Andrea’s destructive desire is connected with Hieronimo’s is suggested by the fact that his “passion” appears to evolve in parallel with Hieronimo’s. Andrea’s bloody desire intensifies with the passage of time, keeping pace with the increasing grip of Revenge on Hieronimo. As Hallett and Hallett observe,

the desire [for vengeance] is simple but not static. It is worth noting that the Ghost’s passion is much like that of the revenger; it intensifies as the frustrations to its fulfilment increase. Initially, Andrea’s desire is almost unstated [...] at last he is imploring all the inhabitants of Hades to come and enforce his right [...] and though at first he viewed the methods of Revenge with dismay, at the end we find him delighting in the carnage. (1980: 142)

This evolving nature of the Chorus – “Here sit we down to see the mystery/And serve for Chorus in this tragedy” are Revenge’s directions at I.ii.90-91 – confirms its Senecan derivation. As shown above, the Senecan Chorus evolves with the action, so that the “objective” reality which it represents becomes, in the course of the action, swallowed up by the mental hell of *furor* the avenger inhabits. In *The Spanish Tragedy* the procedure is reversed, but to similar effect: the Chorus stands for the Spirit of Revenge; as such, it is counterpoised against the chivalric, anti-tragic court of Spain, which it eventually plunges into a bloodbath. That the Chorus is of Senecan derivation has long been recognized, but not until Barber has it emerged that its meaning is constructed *in contrast* to that of the civic world of the court.⁸

As opposed to the “valid social order in Spain” (1988:134), the upper-stage represents the irrational logic of violence: “the ghost of Andrea and Revenge are the representatives of a Senecan underworld from which they have come to watch its logic of vengeance assert itself in the upper world” (1988: 144). This Senecan

⁸ Until quite recently, the established view was that the chorus in *The Spanish Tragedy* served no purpose at all. Bowers, for example, in his famous study of revenge tragedy concluded that “Kyd was gradually led away from the Senecan construction so that his supernatural chorus became superfluous and even intrusive” (1959: 74).

violence breaks out through Hieronimo, whose heart responds more and more to the hell of Revenge, until it explodes into his bloody "show". Hence the connection that has been observed between Hieronimo's inner self and the upper-stage: "Kyd seems to share with his more orthodox contemporaries a conviction that the otherworld has an especially intimate relationship to the personal interior" (Maus 1995: 65). Kyd's certainly shares this conviction with his Christian contemporaries, but the form that expresses it in his play is classical in origin: in further proof of Senecan influence, the connection between inner self and upper-stage is emphasized by a Prologue. In Seneca, the Prologue embodies the psychic forces that overcome the hero in his vengeful madness. In *Thyestes*, for example, the Fury drags the ghost of Tantalus from the underworld in order to madden the house of Pelops, to which the ghost belongs – "Onward, damned shade, and goad thy sinful house to madness" (II.1-2). Accordingly, when Atreus becomes possessed by the madness of revenge, this is signalled by the infernalization of the *penetrable* in which he finds himself at that moment: the world of Tantalus, with its madness of revenge, becomes his own. Likewise, in the Prologue of *Hercules Furens*, Juno, enraged by unconquerable Hercules, promises to work his self-destruction through madness. In order to madden Hercules, however, she insists she must first madden herself, as if *she* were the insanity that will overcome her enemy: "That Alcides may be driven on, robbed of all sense, by mighty fury smitten, mine must be the fury first – Juno, why rav'st thou not?" This is the very world of supernatural essences we find in the upper-stage of *The Spanish Tragedy*. But in Kyd the temporal arrangement is rather more linear, as befits the providential universe of Christianity he inhabits. Kyd's Prologue establishes the connection between physic essence (Revenge) and the individual realization of it (Hieronimo) through the story of Andrea, of whom Horatio appears as the living counterpart. When Horatio is killed for his love of Bel-imperia, as Andrea was before him, Revenge takes over by taking possession of Hieronimo. This connection is visually reinforced by the memento of the handkerchief, which passes from Andrea to Horatio, and from Horatio to Hieronimo – like a transmitter of revenge energy.⁹

The fact that this connection is often remarked upon has not prevented the Chorus from being misconstrued as an emblematic

⁹ For an interesting analysis of the motive of the handkerchief and the relation between revenge and memory, see Kerrigan (1996).

device, and the play as an allegory in the native tradition. This is the result of downplaying Kyd's creative assimilation of Seneca. With his pioneering play, Kyd was making a deliberate attempt to expand the possibilities of Elizabethan dramaturgy. In the Senecan plays, he found a very effective device to generate the sense of an overwhelming tragic climax. In plays like *Medea* or *Thyestes*, he not only discovered the dramatic possibilities of *furor*, but also a powerful way of conveying its devastating triumph. This device was of course incorporated into a play and a culture that were far more complex than Seneca's. One would look in vain in the Roman plays for the brilliant ironies generated by the foreknowledge the Kydian Chorus affords to the audience. But in contrast to the alternative emblematic conception of the chorus, the affinity between Kyd and Seneca stands revealed.

It is not accidental that the author mostly responsible for this view of the play, G.K.Hunter, is such a fervent anti-Senecanist. In what is perhaps the most influential article on the play – "Ironies of Justice in *The Spanish Tragedy*" Hunter argues that it constitutes "an allegory of perfect justice." What Andrea demands and obtains from Revenge is "a parable of perfect recompense" (1978: 222). In other words, the play constitutes an expression of providential orthodoxy. In this view, the Chorus becomes a retributive mechanism guaranteeing the eventual triumph of justice. That the play ends with a human wreckage does not affect Hunter's verdict. For him, it is only our human finitude that impedes the acceptance of utter injustice as perfect justice. Providence may devour its own children, but Hunter would have us believe that it does so for the sake of justice. Whatever "justice" means here, it has ceased to have a human meaning. By severing the link between the Chorus and the interiority of the avenger Hunter is effectively depriving revenge of its subjective energy. For this reason, in his grim universe, the avenger "becomes the perfected instrument of Revenge only by becoming inhuman" (1978: 226). And the rest of the characters marionette-like figures – in *The Spanish Tragedy* "continuously we have had actors watching actors but being watched themselves still by other actors (watched by the audience) [...]" and at each point in this chain what seems free will to the individual seems only a predetermined act to the onlookers" (1979: 227). There is no doubt that one of the most striking effects of the Chorus lies in the ironies it generates out of human limitation. But the effects of these ironies is not to annul the possibility of individual freedom. It is highly implausible that this should be the central vision to a Renaissance

play that won such acclaim for its innovativeness, that is to say, for looking to the future rather than to the medieval past. When Hunter claims that “[if the play] is seen not so much as the harbinger of *Hamlet* [...] but as the inheritor of a complex and rich tradition of moralizing dramaturgy, the actual structure of the play begins to make more sense” (1978: 216), he is being entirely consistent.

Contrary to Hunter’s Grand Guignol thesis, it seems to me that the Chorus is designed to create the opposite perception, to wit, that of distinctive individual agency. To be sure, with the presence of Andrea and Revenge Kyd achieves a multiple-perspective effect that puts the audience ahead of the characters, casting their actions in an ironic light. But the effect of the Chorus is more complex than that. The Chorus’s fierce vindictiveness co-exists with a playful, and even comic tone that cannot anticipate the ferocity of Hieronimo’s revenge. Barber, for example, refers to “these choruses, playful in a delightful way” (1988: 145). This playful tone is set by the Prologue, in which the underworld court of Pluto and Proserpine appears as frivolous as any earthly court can be –

Here finding Pluto with his Proserpine
I showed my passport, humbled on my knee,
Whereat fair Proserpine began to smile
And begged that only she might give my doom.
Pluto was pleased, and sealed it with a kiss. (l.i.76-80) –.

and continues right through to the end of Act III, where Revenge falls asleep and Andrea is at pains to wake her up. Though Hunter’s conclusions seem to ignore this aspect of the Chorus, the fact remains that Kyd exploits our foreknowledge in order to make Hieronimo’s enactment of revenge even more shocking. The Chorus anticipates such an enactment, but its comic tone in no way prepares us for the carnage we witness. As a result, the sublunary plane of the humans gains rather than loses in prominence in relation to the plane of the eternal Substances. Contrary to the providential ethos of medieval derivation, the parallelism between the upper-stage and the main stage serves to highlight the self-consistency of the human world, which is perceived as the more intense and real world of the two. The importance of this deliberate mismatch for the meaning of the play is increasingly recognized. In the most updated survey of Kydian scholarship to appear, Lukas Erne, for example, quotes Joel B. Altman to the effect that “Kyd did create a frame that points in one direction and an action that points in another,” and concludes that “it is in this tension between frame and action that the play’s

fascination resides" (2001: 100). What has not been sufficiently emphasized is the Senecan derivation of such a crucial effect, which shows that Kyd read Roman drama in a much subtler and interesting way than most academics, past and present.

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Re-crafting the heroic, constructing a female hero: Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn¹

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ABSTRACT

The development of women's writing in English throughout the seventeenth century is quite extraordinary. In the field of drama, women participated not only as spectators or readers, but more and more as patronesses, as playwrights, and later on as actresses and even as managers. Yet some dramatic forms proved more resilient than others to women's coming to voice. Comedies were more flexible, as their conventions allowed for female characters – heroines – as mates and nearly equals to the young male hero. But tragedies required high-born, authoritative and powerful characters, and such defining traits seemed to be the prerogative of the male. The question, then, for these women playwrights, was to what extent one could bend dramatic conventions to accommodate women's heroic behaviour. How can one construct a female hero and yet not masculinize her in the attempt? Is it possible to rethink the traits of the heroic to include, rather than exclude, women? This paper engages with the ensuing problems and conflicts by looking into the work of two women dramatists of the period: Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn.

KEYWORDS: women playwrights, dramatic genres, heroic characters, Margaret Cavendish, Aphra Behn

In her celebrated essay *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf observed the discrepancy between the material lives that women of former times had led and the female role models that dramatists had put forth in their works:

One might [...] say that women have burnt like beacons in all the works of all the poets from the beginning of time – Clytemnestra, Antigone, Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Phèdre, Cressida, Rosalind,

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Desdemona, the Duchess of Malfi, among the dramatists [...] the names flock to mind, nor do they recall women 'lacking in personality and character.' Indeed, if woman had no existence save in the fiction written by men, one would imagine her a person of the utmost importance; very various; heroic and mean; splendid and sordid; infinitely beautiful and hideous in the extreme; as great as a man, some think even greater. But this is a woman of fiction. In fact, as Professor Trevelyan points out, she was locked up, beaten and flung about the room. (Woolf 1929: 39-40)

The question then arises, as early modern women came to voice, as to how women authors may have attempted to bridge this gap between the 'woman of fiction' and the real lives they led themselves or were otherwise acquainted with. Previous criticism on Renaissance women's writing seems to have largely bypassed this issue, and instead has mostly addressed the subject of the difficulties involved in entering the public arena and challenging cultural proscriptions of women's writing and speech.² As Margaret Ferguson (1996: 145) pointed out,

In some discursive contexts, particularly those that participate in the lively Renaissance debates about 'proper' modes of masculine and feminine behaviour [...] the idea of the 'woman writer' is a veritable paradox or oxymoron, one eliciting attitudes of outrage and/or scorn. If women were prescriptively defined as 'chaste, silent and obedient,' according to a well-known ideal in Renaissance conduct books, and if both writing and printing are defined, for any number of reasons, as 'masculine' activities and also in opposition to 'silence', then the phrase 'woman writer' will be seen as a contradiction in terms.

The purpose of this essay is to find out how seventeenth-century female dramatists broached the dramatic conventions they inherited and put them to work for their own purposes. One can start with the premise that this task was more easily achievable in the case of comedy, for this was a genre that allowed for female characters – heroines – as mates and nearly equals to the young male hero. But tragedies required high-born, authoritative and powerful characters, and such defining traits seemed to be the prerogative of

² Representative of this approach are book-length works such as Beilin (1987), Pearson (1988), Williamson (1990), Lewalski (1993) and Wall (1993). Later feminist criticism appears to be shifting its interest towards the stageability of women's plays, like Findlay et al. (2000).

the male.³ According to Elaine Beilin (1987: 152), "towards the end of the sixteenth and in the early seventeenth century, a small but important group of women writers appear to find the heroic woman an increasingly significant focus of their interrelated attempts to redeem Eve and to establish their own literary presence." The question, then, for these women playwrights, was to what extent one could bend the dramatic conventions to accommodate women's heroic behaviour. This entailed the related problem of constructing a 'female hero' to replace a 'heroine' and yet not masculinizing her in the attempt, and whether it was possible to rethink the traits of the heroic to include, rather than exclude, women. Such troublesome issues were first faced by Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, who has the honour of being the earliest known woman author of an original play.

Published in 1613 but surely composed a few years earlier, *The Tragedy of Mariam* tackles the relationship between the Queen of the Jews, Mariam, and her husband Herod, who has risen to this position solely through his marriage. Such biblical subject matter is hardly to be wondered at, both considering Lady Falkland's religious inclination and because, as Wendy Wall (1993: 310) reminds us, "women were generally given more cultural license [...] to study religious works [...] Because of their guilty lineage from Eve, women were frequently exhorted to meditate, pray, and study the Bible." In its form, however, the play is clearly indebted to Senecan tragedy as developed in France and circulated in the Sidney coterie, to which Cary belonged. Barbara Lewalski (1993: 191) has traced the features that Cary adapted from Senecan drama: "the primacy of speech over action; long rhetorical monologues; the prominence of women as heroines and villains; and a chorus which speaks from a limited rather than an authorized vantage point." But in the last twenty years many feminist critics have discussed Cary's play from a variety of perspectives, although many have been inspired by Catherine Belsey's original comments in *The Subject of Tragedy*.⁴

Although it was certainly puzzling to a playwright such as Cary, living in the stability of the Jacobean period, the subject of the

³ Mary Beth Rose (1988: 95), among others, has remarked that English Renaissance tragedy focuses on "a heroism of public action, emphasizing the protagonist's will to power" and thus generally excluding women to the periphery of the plot. In Jacobean tragedy there is a shift towards the domestic that makes women more visible.

⁴ See, among others, Belsey (1985), Beilin (1987), Raber (1995), Luis Martínez (1996), Miller (1997), Bennett (2000a), Green (2003), Gruber (2003) and Heller (2005).

heroic and its redefinition must have become even more pressing as the Caroline period ushered in increasingly unsolvable conflicts between the monarchy and the English Parliament; the aristocracy and the rising middle classes; the Anglican establishment sympathetic to Catholics and radicalized Protestant groups. Therefore, this paper addresses the gendered construction of the hero in the works of two female playwrights of the second half of the seventeenth century: Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn. For reasons of space, only two plays will be discussed here, Cavendish's *Bell in Campo* (1662) and Aphra Behn's posthumous *The Widdow Ranter* (1689). Although the former was written during the Interregnum and the latter at the end of the Restoration period, both are viable case studies due to their clearly heroic topic, conveying two different approaches to the creation of a female hero that concurrently address the interrelated categories of gender and genre.

1. Amazons and Cavaliers: Margaret Cavendish's *Bell in Campo*

Margaret Cavendish, née Lucas, was an extraordinary young woman that followed the royal family into exile in Paris, where she met and married in 1645 the widowed William Cavendish, later Duke of Newcastle. The couple settled in Antwerp, and there during the 1650s Margaret composed several plays that would be published in London on their eventual return in 1662 in the first of two collections of dramatic works, *Plays Written by the Thrice Noble, Illustrious, and Excellent Princess, the Marchioness of Newcastle*. Among them, I would like to briefly consider *Bell in Campo*, a play that explores warrior heroism as a viable form for women. Technically speaking, *Bell in Campo* is not a tragedy, nor is it identified as such in its original printing. Like other pieces by this author, the play defies conventional categories. Recent editors and critics have variously labelled it a heroic romance (Shaver 1999: 7), a dramatic utopia (Bonin 2000), and a tragicomedy (Raber 2000). More often than not they wholly bypass the question of genre (Bennett 2002), in implicit acceptance of the playwright's eccentricity. Writing some fifty years after her predecessor Elizabeth Cary, and like many other women of her generation, Cavendish was empowered by the turmoil of the English Civil War. Women of all paths of life were thrown into the most unlikely situations and had to perform roles other than those institutionally approved. Royalist women in particular were occasionally forced to defend their households and properties in the

absence of their husbands.⁵ Alexandra Bennett reminds us that “Cavendish’s own stepdaughters Jane and Elizabeth also attempted (albeit unsuccessfully) to hold the family properties of Bolsover Castle and Welbeck Abbey against the Roundheads” and she further remarks that “the actions of real female warriors amid the male armies during the English Civil War could provide plentiful raw material for a dramatist’s pen” (2000: 267-268).

Tomlinson (1992: 148) has pointed out that there was already in place an iconography that Cavendish could and did draw from. It started in France in the 1640s around the figure of Anne of Austria, Queen Regent from 1643 to 1652, and of women like her niece Anne Marie d’Orléans, the ‘Grand Mademoiselle’, who participated in the French civil wars known as ‘la Fronde.’ Their counterpart in England was Queen Henrietta Maria:

Decorous figures of female valour began to appear in Caroline masques and drama from the mid-1630s and with the onset of civil war Henrietta Maria embraced the chance to act out her role as a ‘martial lady’. In her letters to Charles she draws amused attention to this role, dubbing herself ‘her she-majesty, generalissima.’ (1992: 148)⁶

Besides the actual events of the Civil Wars in France and England, the most obvious inspiration for Cavendish’s warrior women is the classical myth of the Amazons, which had been kept alive in other literary works of the period and would survive in the Restoration work of poets like Anne Killigrew. Cavendish must have felt the appeal of an all-women army as a separate society in which women would be allowed to pursue their skills and talents truly uninhibited, a subject that recurs in her works, just as it would occupy the thoughts of later feminist thinkers like Mary Astell. In the play, the Kingdom of Faction and the Kingdom of Reformation are at war. Lady Victoria convinces her husband the Lord General of the Kingdom of Reformation to allow her to accompany him to the front,

⁵ Raber (2000) offers some particular instances of such women warriors and discusses the subject at some length; see also Bennett (2000b) for a detailed analysis of the parallelisms between fact and fiction.

⁶ See Chalmers (2004: 40-55) for a critique of Tomlinson’s views. Even though the latter author has written about *Bell in Campo* once more in *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (2005) and I have included this reference in the Reference section, I am quoting here from Tomlinson’s earlier work, since in my opinion, her arguments have not varied substantially to date.

and many other wives follow her example. But once there the women are sent to live in a garrison town and thus kept out of the way and far from danger, a situation which they come to resent. Under Lady Victoria's leadership, several thousand women agree to take over the garrison town and arm themselves in order to help the male war efforts against the Kingdom of Faction, which are not going as well as could be expected. As they are training, the news arrives of a battle with grave casualties on their side, and the army of 'heroickesses', as Lady Victoria terms them, advances towards the enemy and wins the day. Even though the men are grateful for this providential help, they refuse to let the Female Army into their plans, and so they continue to fight on their own, successfully completing the siege of a town that proves to be the key to the final victory of the Kingdom of Reformation. The king acknowledges the women's prominent participation by granting special favours on all women in general, and on Lady Victoria most of all.

Tomlinson finds this happy ending wanting insofar as the privileges and rights granted by the king fail to perform a complete revision of the prevailing gender system, and consist only of minor changes in the domestic rather than the public domain; but I agree with Chalmers (2004: 45) that the play achieves its purposes in valorizing female heroism, and I would add, not only for an isolated individual but for women as a group. Lady Victoria's initial impulse to raise an army springs from men's patronizing behaviour, as she argues in her address to the women:

LADY VICTORIA

Then thus, we have a body of about five or six thousand women, which came along with some thirty thousand men, but since we came, we are not only thought unusefull, but troublesome, which is the reason we were sent away, for the Masculine Sex is of an opinion that we are only fit to breed and bring forth Children, but otherwise a trouble in a Commonwealth, for though we encrease the Commonwealth by our breed, we encumber it by our weakness, as they think, as by our incapacities, as having no ingenuity for Inventions, nor subtile wit for Politicians; nor prudence for direction, nor industry for execution; nor patience for opportunity, nor judgment for Counsellors, nor secrecy for trust; nor method to keep peace, nor courage to make War, nor strength to defend our selves or Country, or to assault an Enemy; also that we have not the wisdom to govern

a Commonwealth, and that we are too partial to sit in the Seat of Justice, and too pittifull to execute rigorous Authority when it is needful. (1999: 119)

Therefore, Lady Victoria's agenda is no other than to prove men wrong, and to show them that women are indeed multifaceted beings deserving full citizenship. At the end of the play, the king's proclamation together with the men's admiring comments highlight this extraordinary achievement, no matter what relative terms it is couched in.

In order to bring this project to a successful end, Lady Victoria displays all the talents of a true born hero. She shows courage and initiative, she is resourceful and determined, and she fights against the odds. Moreover, the Female Army's success in the battlefield is not presented as sheer luck or a one-off, but as the commonsensical result of a careful, well-contrived plan, both in training the troops and in designing the war strategy. One whole scene of the play is given to a rather tedious explication of the rules given by Lady Victoria for the organization and training of the Female Army, in order to bring home the message of the lady's accomplishments and thus to prepare the readers for the later news of her victories.

Yet Sue Wiseman, who has paid attention to the dynamics of gender and class in Margaret Cavendish, has faulted this kind of female heroism. She contends that it is based on a discourse of class privilege that contradicts the text's claims to gender equality: "The right to power, for women in Cavendish's writing, is a privilege attendant upon birth and status; her plays dramatize the differences between noble women warfarers and other women, especially citizen women" (1992: 175). This is true only in part. Although one should acknowledge the many fractures in the discourses of gender and class in Cavendish's works as a whole, this play is remarkably consistent in the construction of a hero that works towards the common good of all women, regardless of their social rank. Obviously Cavendish's Royalist partisanship prevents her from envisioning a woman that can be a leader *and* a commoner, and it is her understanding that true merit is much more likely to be found among the high-born. But such nobility of mind and character is precisely what allows Lady Victoria to look beyond her own self-interest. This fact becomes more evident if one considers the play's subplot. There Cavendish provides two other women characters that, though living through similar circumstances, markedly contrast

with Lady Victoria. Both Madam Passionate and Madam Jantil accept their respective husbands' departure for the front, and both are devastated when they are killed in battle. However, old Madam Passionate's grief does not last long, and she is soon married again, this time to a young, handsome but penniless gentleman, who swiftly takes control of her assets and her household, leaving her quite literally out in the cold:

MADAM PASSIONATE

[F]or this idle young fellow which I have married first seized on all my goods [...] and now he [...] sells all my Lands of Inheritance, which I foolishly and fondly delivered by deed of gift, the first day I married, devesting myself of all power, which power had I kept in my own hands I might have been used better, whereas now when he comes home drunk, he swears and storms, and kiks me out of my warm Bed, and makes me sit shivering and shaking in the Cold, whilst my Maid takes my place; but I find I cannot live long, for age and disorders bring weakness and sickness, and weakness and sickness bring Death, wherefore my marriage Bed is like to prove my grave, whilst my Husband's Curses are my passing Bell, hay ho. (1999: 162)

Madam Passionate's behaviour stands as a cautionary tale for women of all social rank, rich or otherwise. Again, Cavendish emphasizes this point by making Madam Passionate's maid, Doll Pacify, follow her mistress' lead, and like her mistress, be duped by her young Master, who robs her of all. Madam Passionate rejected the chance to enter the public domain and preferred to stay home. But 'home' in this play is not necessarily a safe haven for women, and this subplot stresses the need for women's wise management and power-taking in order to survive.

Madam Jantil's story differs completely. She is unable to overcome the grief over her husband's passing away, and so determines to devote the rest of her life to his memory. She uses her wealth to build a monumental shrine, where she retires from the outside world and leads an austere life of prayers and philosophical contemplation. On her untimely death she wills most of her money to ensure the survival of her husband's memory, while her own is most likely to be erased from public record. Only her maid Nell Careless will fondly remember her mistress, for she has received a pension on condition that she remains single:

NELL CARELESS

Truly I have seen so much sorrow in my Lady, and so much folly in your Lady [Madam Passionate] concerning Husbands, that had not my Lady injoyed me to live a single life, I would never have married; wherefore my Ladies generosity did not only provide for my bodily life, and for my plentiful living, but provided for the tranquillity of my mind, for which I am trebly obliged to reverence her memory. (1999: 169)

Even though Madam Jantil's plight is full of pathos, and evidently very far from the ridiculous story of Madam Passionate, her example is ultimately every bit as unprofitable and barren for women as a group. In Nell's speech, they stand for sorrow and folly. Beyond their differences, these women are similar in that they are victims, passive creatures instead of agents, and in retreating from the public sphere, their path seems to lead only to death. The last scene of the play further contrasts their deaths with Lady Victoria's happiness and triumph, both in the public and in the domestic fronts, with the Lord General's pride in his wife's heroism.

At this point it might be useful to stop and ponder whether Lady Victoria is indeed a "female hero," and to what extent she has become 'masculinized' in her search for heroism. In taking up arms, Lady Victoria would seem to have become a virago, an unnatural woman, an honorary man. However, Cavendish did not aim at reversing the spheres, i.e., she never actually suggests that men should stay at home and women abroad. Instead, she appears to be proposing a theory of mutuality, or collaboration between the sexes beyond strict gender roles, that can be profitable for the nation as a whole. Lady Victoria does not encourage gender antagonism in any of her military addresses to the Female Army. Her actions are rather reactions to the unfolding events. She lets the Male Army go into battle first while she observes from a distance, ordering her own Army in only when the defeat of their side becomes evident. She offers the Male Army the opportunity to work together in the design of the military strategy to follow, but is rejected. Only when the men's continued gender prejudice endangers the royalist enterprise does she act on her own, and only in order to prove that women can also play their part in the protection of their world.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Lady Victoria affords only a provisional role model for women's heroism, one that may work out in times of war, but not in times of peace. At the end of the day,

Cavendish must return women home, which is what causes the disappointment of many feminist critics. But, as Alexandra Bennett has the commonsense to ask: "does Cavendish have a choice but to return to extant discourses in showing Lady Victoria's social recognition and triumph?" (2000b: 273).

2. Female heroes in breeches: Aphra Behn's *The Widdow Ranter* (1689)

Aphra Behn might have had this kind of questions in mind throughout her long and fairly successful professional career, which the next generations of women authors would try to emulate. It has been a matter of some perplexity for her critics and editors that in a theatrical career spanning two decades, Aphra Behn should write only one tragedy, *Abdelazer* (1676), the rest being all comedies and tragicomedies. *Abdelazer*, set in medieval Spain, rehearses much of the dichotomy passive heroine/active villain concerning women's characterization that one can find in plays like Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* at the start of the century. Queen Isabella's transgressive behaviour casts her in the role of the villain, while the young Lady Florella and Princess Leonora are passive heroines to the point of death or near rape. This pattern regularly recurs in the tragedies written by women in the late Stuart period, but it is one that Aphra Behn seems to have found singularly unsatisfactory.⁷ Rachel Carnell (1999) has convincingly argued that the key lies in the conflict between Behn's royalist and feminist politics. Restoration tragedy as practiced, for example, by John Dryden, conflated both discourses, so that a loyalist message of male obedience to the crown would entail female domestic submissiveness. Carnell further contends that Behn continued to pursue the tragic mode in a new genre, the novel, which provided more latitude to the woman writer than dramatic tragedy. In spite of such turn to fiction, Behn continued to write for the stage; but she never tried her hand at a tragedy again, preferring to remain within the more flexible rules of comedy. Behn wrote tragicomedies too in her earlier years as a playwright. According to Janet Todd and Derek Hughes, the reason for this preference was that "this was the prevailing mode in the 1660s, when she must for the first time have watched plays on the public English stage" (2004: 83). The reason for such fashion was given by Nancy Klein Maguire in her classic *Regicide and Restoration*,

⁷ For more on this subject, see Cuder-Domínguez (2003, 2005).

where she pointed out that “the very nature of tragicomedy (that is, in simple terms, drama which turns tragedy into comedy) made the genre suitable for marketing a restored king with a decapitated father” (1992: 13). However, Behn turned once more to tragicomedy in her last play, *The Widdow Ranter*, perhaps because such a mixed genre gave a more mature author the scope to balance tragic and comic messages. Of Behn’s tragicomedies, I would like to examine this one, because it may allow us an insight into Behn’s ideas on women’s heroism towards the end of her career.

The Widdow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia (1689) was performed posthumously, and must have been composed roughly around the same time Behn was penning her most famous novel, *Oroonoko* (1688), closely related to her youth experiences in Surinam. Both works are related in both the setting – the English colonies in the New World – and in subject matter, for both feature male tragic heroes, Bacon and Oroonoko. The historical source of the tragic plot in *The Widdow Ranter* is the 1676 rebellion of Nathaniel Bacon in Virginia, which offered Behn the raw materials of the good man who fights for good reasons but ultimately does wrong. Bacon had armed himself in order to protect his possessions from the attacks of the natives, but in doing so he usurped royal authority and brought on more chaos and disorder.⁸ Apparently, Bacon abducted the wives of the Virginian aristocrats in his struggle against the Governor, and he was so successful that he even took possession of Jamestown, but on his sudden death the rebellion ended. The confusing situation in Virginia, with three parties at war, Bacon’s rebels, the Virginia loyalists, and the Indians, was conducive to Behn’s usual interrogation of royalist and sexual politics. Of these two, I am more interested here in the latter, and specifically in her creation of tragic and comic female characters in their respective plots.

In the tragic plot, the Indian Queen Semernia suffers in silence her love for her enemy Nathaniel Bacon, whom she first saw at the tender age of twelve, before being forced to marry the Indian King Cavernio, in what is perhaps an echo of the Pocahontas myth (Hutner 2001: 99). The play is sympathetic to the Indians’ side of the colonial venture, letting the Indian King voice his complaints over

⁸ For more information on Behn’s use of historical sources see Ward (1976), Figueroa (1999), Hutner (2001), Velissariou (2002) and Pulsipher (2004), among others. The focus of their essays is Bacon’s rebellion, and the women characters are mentioned only in Hutner’s analysis.

the English occupation of their land, arguing that “we were Monarchs once of all this spacious World, till you, an unknown People, landing here, distress’d and ruin’d by destructive Storms, abusing all our charitable Hospitality, usurp’d our Right, and made your Friends your Slaves” (1996: 230), and even accepting through an English colonist, Friendly, the responsibility of the English in mismanaging the situation (1996: 214). However, the colonists also defend their ancestral right to the land, as Bacon replies to the Indian King: “I will not justify the Ingratitude of my Forefathers, but finding here my Inheritance, I am resolv’d still to maintain it so” (1996: 230). The elements of tragedy are here served, in the irreconcilable conflict between both men over the land, but also over the Indian Queen’s body and heart, for she symbolically stands for the colony. Their jealous rivalry is played out in open combat during the battle, with Bacon killing the King and capturing the Queen, who had stayed behind, praying in the Temple and full of strange foreboding. But some Indians manage to infiltrate Bacon’s camp and rescue the Queen, whom they dress in men’s clothes and take away. Bacon pursues them and falls on them in a murderous rage, accidentally dealing the blow that kills the (to him unrecognizable) Queen. While Bacon grieves over the body of the dying Queen, the Royalists attack and, fearing he has been defeated and is most likely to suffer a traitor’s death, Bacon prefers to commit suicide.

In the figure of the Indian Queen, then, we find the staple elements of the tragic heroine, who welcomes death because it rescues her from the conflicting emotion of love towards her enemy and because it safeguards her honour. Her female body stands as a trophy to be fought over by men of both races, like the land. The racial script that stipulates that the English must take over the land is superimposed on the gender script. Interestingly, however, class supersedes race in the same way as race supersedes gender when all these categories come into play. As Rubik has observed: “the Indian royal couple have completely internalized the European code of civility” (2000: 36). Like Dryden’s, Behn’s representation of the higher classes remains constant regardless of the race of the subject.

In the passive configuration of the tragic heroine, cross-dressing as a male is for Semernia just one more ill-starred accident, which instead of providing her with agency and autonomy, hastens the way to her tragic death. The “moral paralysis” of this character has received a different reading from Ross:

Semernia's moral paralysis when forced to choose between "the King" and "The General" is, on the one hand, an obvious nod at the choice England faced when Cromwell usurped the power of Charles I. At the same time, she embodies the post-revolutionary subject, the being caught between the two camps of the old "fictions of authority" but is herself a "foreigner" within the old system. On the outskirts of the *status quo*, she is both a part of it and excluded from it, essentially incapable of acting within it. (2000: 85)

Whether or not one wants to follow this close parallelism with the affairs of the Interregnum, what matters for our purposes here is that Behn balances this exemplar of female passivity with an alternative role model in the comic plot. The title of the play refers to Ranter, who came to the colonies as a servant, married her older master, and after his death wants to marry again a man of her own choice. He happens to be one of Bacon's brave commanders, Dareing, but unfortunately for Ranter he is passionately in love with a more conventional heroine, a young maid. Ranter is indeed rather unconventional, for like the male colonials she loves to smoke, and also drinks and swears, an indication of her lower social extraction. For other characters, Ranter may appear "primitive," a description that according to Ross (2000: 86) establishes a connection between her and Semernia, if one more connection were indeed necessary at this point. Such vulgar, 'masculine' behaviour is quite unsuitable for a rich young widow, but she takes it one step further when, in the middle of the confusion, she dons man's clothes and joins the campaign. In that sense, as Ross perceptively comments, "[w]hile Semernia remains trapped within the standard love versus honor debate of Restoration tragedy, Ranter settles issues of love with action" (2000: 86). Dareing is convinced by the widow's actions to give up the young maid and to accept this partner, someone who will "fit his humour" better and who comes with a sizeable fortune too.

DAREING

Give me thy hand Widow, I am thine – and so intirely, I will never –
be drunk out of thy Company: – [Parson] Dunce is in my Tent, –
prithee let's in and bind the bargain.

RANTER

Nay, faith, let's see the Wars at an end first.

DAREING

Nay, prithee, take me in the humour, while thy Breeches are on – for I never lik'd thee half so well in Petticoats.

RANTER

Lead on, General, you give me good encouragement to wear them.
(1996: 340)

Soon, however, the enemy's attack separates the lovers, and Ranter is taken prisoner. When she is eventually reunited with Dareing, she complains:

RANTER

Faith, General, you left me but scurvily in Battel.

DAREING

That was to see how well you cou'd shift for your self; now I find you can bear the brunt of a Campaign you are a fit Wife for a Soldier.
(1996: 350)

In the comic plot, as seen here, Ranter is endowed with masculine qualities that may not be apparent at first sight. In breaking away from the ideal of modesty (swearing, drinking, smoking), Ranter would seem to be too masculine, and therefore unmarriedable. What is more, she dares enter the public sphere in donning men's clothes and joining the campaign. Beyond the erotic appeal that cross-dressing had on the Restoration stage, here it also suggests that Ranter has qualities beyond those considered 'natural' or desirable for her gender. Like Lady Victoria in Cavendish's play, she is resourceful and determined, and she does not respect pre-established borders. She is as daring as the man she loves, and the turmoil of war empowers her. Thus Behn hints that certain features cannot be statically assigned to one gender, and that they can be and should be renegotiated in each particular instance. According to Bridges, this is a significant departure:

Her identity, far from being fixed and written as Bacon's is, is dynamic and growing [...] [S]he refuses to be constrained by what others believe her, or women in general, to be. Ranter takes as her model neither Restoration London nor an ancient past. Rather she prefers to write herself into the moment and the future. (2000: 79)

By showing a brave woman that is not afraid to decide her own destiny, Behn states that such a course of action is not only

possible, but desirable. Behn's deployment of the New World as a setting is probably relevant as well, since she envisions a place where white women of the middle class can experience gender empowerment as well as upward social mobility.⁹ Yet, the comic tone of this plot undermines the feminist message. Although her transgressive actions are acceptable, Ranter is a one-off, an eccentric, the exception to the rule, as Hutner has perceptively remarked:

With Ranter, Behn brings together servant women [...] religious dissenters, and upper-class women. In effect, through the linking of disparate socioeconomic, political, racial, and gendered identities in Ranter's body, Behn attempts to resolve, or at least unify, the intense social and political oppositions at war in the late seventeenth century in England and Virginia. It is not surprising, however, that Ranter can only be figured as a joke, or a mockery. [...] Ranter's hybridity, her blurring of distinctions, calls attention to the crisis of categories – for she is a blatant dramatic invention in an historically 'real' context. (2001: 105)¹⁰

3. Conclusions

In 1989, Dymphna Callaghan's masterful essay *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy* warned feminist critics that there was no need to search for female heroes in the genre. She encouraged us to look instead for the idea of transgression, which often decentres the male hero of tragedy. Callaghan's work valorized the role of the often absent, mute, or dead women characters. In the same year, Ania Loomba argued against over-simplified readings of tragedy, and contended that:

To read these plays either as straightforward documents of women's liberation or elaborate patriarchal devices for containment is to erase the conflicts and complexities of the Renaissance politics, discourses on women, the position of the popular theatre and that of playwrights. (1989: 95)

Yet, both critics confined their analysis to the study of a male-authored corpus, consisting of Shakespeare, Middleton, and Webster. One may only wonder whether their conclusions would

⁹ Needless to say, such is not the case for Native women, as Semernia's death illustrates.

¹⁰ On this subject, see also Bridges (2000) and Cuder-Domínguez (2002).

differ, had they included women-authored texts, and how our current views of early modern English tragedy might be complicated, if we put together male- and female-authored plays. I have tried here to broach this topic from the perspective of women playwrights as they newly arrived at this received genre and faced their rules. Cavendish and Behn attempted to re-craft tragedy and to explore new generic forms that could adequately convey the heroic *topos*. Their case-studies have afforded us an insight into alternative configurations of female heroism. Cavendish's hero leads the life of a royalist warrior while Behn for the first time envisioned a low-class would-be female hero, the bourgeois woman of the next century. Neither completely succeeded. There is indeed, as Callaghan pointed out, no female hero, perhaps because the genre, as Behn seems to have intuited, was impervious to women's heroism. The clash of ideological positions remained unbridgeable and unnegotiated. No female behaviour can be truly heroic for a society that believes that all women are interchangeable, all sinners by their flawed nature, Eve's daughters after all. At best, these women authors succeeded in suggesting ways in which the official paradigm of femininity fell into incoherence, and in destabilizing essentialized notions of the masculine heroic. Tragedy would remain contested ground for women writers of the late Stuart period, even while they, like Behn, would continue to break new ground and to formulate new paradigms of femininity in other literary genres.

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A new kind of dictionary for Shakespeare's plays: an immodest proposal

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ABSTRACT

The language of Shakespeare's plays has received substantial treatment in various 'dictionaries', 'glossaries', 'lexica' and 'concordances'. However, the classic works are written in the philological tradition that characterised the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This paper explores how modern principles and techniques developed in Corpus Linguistics can be deployed in the creation of a radically new kind of dictionary. In particular, this involves a focus on usage and frequency. A further innovation is that the proposed dictionary will be comparative, making both internal comparisons (e.g. female characters compared with male) and external comparisons (e.g. Shakespeare's usage compared with that of contemporary plays and other genres). The bulk of this paper is made up of case studies, involving discussion of the words 'horrid', 'good', 'ah' and 'and', multiword units, and linguistic profiles for characters and plays. Through these, the aim is to demonstrate the characteristics of the dictionary and raise pertinent issues, including, for example, how many and what kind of words to include in the dictionary, whether the dictionary should include only words (and how they should be defined), how word-senses should be distinguished, how stylistic and social meanings should be captured, and what approach to grammar should be taken.

KEYWORDS: corpus linguistics, dictionary, Shakespeare, stylistics, words

1. Introduction

The best-known classic Shakespearean 'dictionary' is probably Charles T. Onions's *Glossary* ([1911] 1986), written in the philological tradition that characterised the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), and providing pithy definitions and illustrative quotations.¹ The proposed dictionary of the language of Shakespeare's plays is

¹ Onions was in fact one of the editorial team of the OED.

analogous to more recent developments in dictionaries of general English, and, more specifically, the departure from the philological tradition brought about by the *Collins Cobuild Dictionary of the English Language* (Sinclair 1987). The *Collins Cobuild* is a corpus-based dictionary. This implies both a particular methodology for revealing meanings and a particular theoretical approach to meaning, as we shall see in this paper. In particular, there is a strong empirical emphasis. There is less reliance on the vagaries and biases of editors, and a greater focus on the evidence of *usage*. The question of ‘what does X mean?’ is pursued through another question: ‘how is X used?’. To answer the ‘how’ question, corpus approaches deploy the whole gamut of computational techniques, in order to reveal patterns of usage in context. This inevitably involves matters of *frequency*. Frequency is not in fact as alien as it might seem to the literary critical ear. Any textual analysis that identifies a pattern implicitly involves frequency, as a pattern is the (full or partial) repetition of elements. In fact, the proposed dictionary goes beyond what one might find in the *Collins Cobuild* in a number of ways. Crucially, an additional feature proposed for the dictionary that makes it like no other is that it aims to be *comparative*.² Saying that X word occurs Y times in Shakespeare’s plays and that it has W and Z senses is less informative than contrasting those facts with those of his contemporaries (and not just writers of literary texts but writers of various text-types, including records of spoken interaction). In this way, we can reveal not just the denotative or conceptual meanings of words but also their stylistic, discursal and pragmatic values in the general language of the period. Similarly, the plan for the dictionary is that it should also conduct internal comparisons, taking account of the distribution of items over internal genres (e.g. comedy, tragedy, history, particular characters, particular plays) and social categories (e.g. gender, role). Of course, what is revealed through these internal comparisons can be further pursued through external comparisons. For example, having identified that X is typical of women in Shakespeare, one could examine whether X is typical of women in plays by other contemporary playwrights, in ‘real life’ trial proceedings, and so on.

In this paper, I will deploy a number of case studies to show how techniques developed in corpus linguistics can be used to

² This kind of approach is akin to the corpus-based grammar produced by Biber et al. (1999).

produce the new kind of dictionary based on usage and frequency that I wish to propose. The case studies below are chosen to illustrate particular issues relating to the dictionary; each case study is not complete in itself.

2. Labels and contents of current general Shakespearean 'dictionaries'

I refer to *general* Shakespearean 'dictionaries' in order to exclude 'dictionaries' focusing on specific registers, such as legal, military or informal language (see the *Athlone Shakespeare Dictionary Series*). However, even with this exclusion, identifying what might count as a general Shakespearean dictionary is far from easy. We find various labels for books with contents characteristic – at least to some degree – of dictionaries, notably, 'dictionary', 'glossary', 'lexicon' and 'word-book'. To these one might wish to add 'concordances', in recognition of the fact that such works contain a complete word list and (statistical) information about those words – aspects that might characterise a dictionary. Moreover, what these works contain varies greatly. It is possible to identify three groups. One is strongly *linguistic* in content, typically containing information about the existence of a word-form, as well as its meaning (conveyed with a brief definition and illustrative quotation(s)) and part-of-speech (e.g. Foster 1908, Schmidt [1902] 1971, Onions 1986, Crystal and Crystal 2002). Another group is strongly *non-linguistic* in content, typically containing play summaries (largely plot focussed), character descriptions, cultural information and biographical information (e.g. Boyce 1996, Wells 1998). Note that, although non-linguistic, both of the examples cited are entitled 'Dictionary of Shakespeare'. The final group is strongly focused on (*frequency of*) *occurrence* information, typically containing an index of all words (plus textual location) and the frequency of word-forms (absolute and relative) (e.g. Spevack 1968-80, Howard-Hill 1969-72). There is a little slippage between these groups – for example, Schmidt (1971) contains a complete index of words and Crystal and Crystal (2002) was constructed with frequency information in mind – but in the main they are separate. My proposal involves bringing together the three areas in a more comprehensive and systematic fashion.³

³ This will clearly involve a broad scope. Consequently, the label 'Dictionary of Shakespeare' may not be the best. An alternative might be 'Encyclopaedia of Shakespeare's Language' (I am grateful to Anthony Warner for this suggestion).

3. General Shakespearean 'dictionaries' and present-day English Language dictionaries compared

The majority of present-day dictionaries of English contain pronunciation information (typically, a broad phonetic transcription with an indication of syllable stress). Doing the same for Shakespeare would require a significant research programme, and there would be thorny issues, such as whose accent to represent. Consequently, this is not currently part of the dictionary proposal. Many present-day dictionaries contain spelling variants, and the OED, of course, excels in this respect. Shakespearean dictionaries do not note more than the occasional spelling variant. Perhaps spelling variants are assumed not to be part of the 'real' Shakespeare, given that they are produced by compositors and printers. Nevertheless, spellings are the prism through which we receive Shakespeare, and Shakespearean texts represent a source of information about spelling in the early modern period. Moreover, quantifying spelling variation would be relatively easy to do with the computational methodology supporting the proposed dictionary (see section 12). Other differences in content include the fact that corpus-based dictionaries of present-day English, notably, the Collins Cobuild dictionary, include definitions that are more contextualised and information about multi-word units, as I will illustrate in sections 4 and 9.

Perhaps even more significant than differences in the kinds of information that might be included are differences in policies for including or excluding words and for prioritising meanings. Shakespearean 'dictionaries', notably, Foster (1908) and Onions (1986), but even more recent corpus-informed dictionaries such as Crystal and Crystal (2002), tend to include only those words considered difficult or 'hard' for readers. In contrast, corpus-based dictionaries typically include all the words in the corpus (though that may not, in fact, be the best thing to do for a Shakespearean dictionary; see section 5). Furthermore, present-day dictionaries, particularly corpus-based dictionaries, take a different approach to the way meanings are prioritised within particular entries. Dictionaries in the philological tradition exemplified by the OED (e.g. Foster 1908 and Onions 1986) take etymology as a guiding principle. This is most obviously reflected in the way that (1) word definitions gravitate towards etymological meanings, and (2) the organisation of the senses of polysemous words is based on etymological priority (i.e. the earliest sense is listed first). In contrast, corpus-based dictionaries capture meanings based on usage in

context, and organise those meanings according to frequency (usually the most frequent is placed first).

4. Towards a contextualised definition: the case of 'horrid'

The OED gives three senses for the word 'horrid': (1) "bristling, shaggy, rough," (2) "causing horror or aversion; revolting to sight, hearing, or contemplation; terrible, dreadful, frightful; abominable, detestable," and (3) "*colloq.* in weakened sense. Offensive, disagreeable, detested; very bad or objectionable. Noted in *N.E.D.* as especially frequent as a feminine term of strong aversion" (here, and in all quotations from dictionaries in this paper, accompanying quotations are generally excluded for brevity). The first sense corresponds with that of the Latin term 'horridus' from which the English word is derived, and, judging from the illustrative quotations, was still current in Shakespeare's period. The second sense, and one that is contemporary with Shakespeare, is a metonymic development of the first, and the final sense is apparently a 'weakened' development of the second. The fact that the first quotation given to illustrate the second sense is from Shakespeare should alert us to a major problem in using the OED to interpret Shakespeare – the problem of circularity, given that Shakespeare plays such a large role in determining the entries in the OED for the period in question. The third sense developed after Shakespeare. Note that the OED does at least supply a modicum of stylistic information, noting that the third sense is colloquial, and very occasionally some social information, here noting that the third sense is "especially frequent as a feminine term."⁴

Turning to three Shakespearean dictionaries, we find the following definitions:

Foster (1908): (1) Awful, hideous, horrible. (2) Terrific.⁵ (3) Horrified, affrighted.

Onions (1986): No entry.

Crystal and Crystal (2002): Horrifying, frightful, terrifying.

Foster's (1908) first definition seems to shade into the third sense given in the OED. This is odd because the first citation date for that

⁴ Although the evidence is thin, explorations in the present-day *British National Corpus* suggest that women do tend to use the term 'horrid' more than men.

⁵ In the period Foster was writing, this could have the earlier sense of 'causing terror.'

sense given in the OED is 1666. The single illustrative quotation given by Foster is from Macbeth: 'If good, why do I yield to that suggestion / Whose *horrid* image doth unfix my hair.' This quotation includes a classic reaction to fear – the unfixing of hair. This does not support the sense given by Foster, which need not involve fear, just as in the third sense given in the OED. In fact, the usage here falls within the scope of the OED's second sense, as indeed do Foster's second and third definitions.

Note that the strongly overlapping array of synonyms given in the definitions do little to pin down the sense of 'horrid' in Shakespeare. What is being described as horrid? Who is using this word? In what circumstances are they using it? Is Shakespeare using it in a way that his contemporaries would not? And so on. We can look at a computer concordance (a list of the occurrences of the word along with their local co-text) and the distribution of a word, in order to answer such questions. Here is the entire concordance of 'horrid' (the head noun to which it refers is underlined):⁶

Appear in forms more **horrid**, – yet my duty, As doth a Rock
Up Sword; and know thou a more **horrid** hent: When he is drunk asleep⁷
And cleave the general ear with **horrid** speech, Make mad the guilty
heard and seen, Recounts most **horrid** sights seen by the watch
shall break his wind With fear and **horrid** flight. 1.Sen. Noble
I will meditate the while upon some **horrid** message for a Challenge.
Macd. Not in the legions of **horrid** hell, can come a devil more damned
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend So **horrid** as in woman.
And what a beard of the general's cut and a **horrid** suit of the camp
Presented then unto the gazing moon So many **horrid** ghosts.
Crammed with distressful bread; Never sees **horrid** night, the child of hell
all the sparks of nature, To quit this **horrid** act. Reg. Out treacherous
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of **horrid** thunder, Such groans of
couriers of the air, Shall blow the **horrid** deed in every eye,
Of thy dear husband, than that **horrid** act Of the divorce he'd make
I yield to that suggestion, Whose **horrid** image doth unfix my hair

It can be seen that 'horrid' is used to describe acts, sights and sounds, but not just any such things – most have a strong

⁶ A concordance of a word will vary in terms of how many instances it contains according to the edition of Shakespeare used (and occasionally according to how good the search software is). The particular Shakespeare edition used in this paper is outlined in footnote 8.

⁷ 'Hent' means 'clasp'.

supernatural connection. This seems to have been overlooked in all dictionary definitions, despite the fact that it is quite obvious in the concordance. We can deepen our understanding of the word by considering its distribution both within Shakespeare and without. Putting the results together, a dictionary entry might be as follows (All = All Shakspeare's plays, T = tragedies, C = comedies, H = histories, M = male speakers, F = female speakers, Pla = other EModE plays, Fic = EModE prose fiction, Tr = EModE trial proceedings, Ha = EModE handbooks in dialogue form, Sc = EModE scholarly works; the figures in brackets are normalised per 100,000 words):

HORRID. Something that is **horrid** causes fear; typically, it refers to supernatural or unnatural acts, sights and sounds. Distribution: All = 16 (1.8); T = 10 (3.9), C = 2 (0.6), H = 4 (1.5); M = 14 (1.9), F = 2 (1.4). Comparisons: Pla = 187 (0.17), Fic = 0, Tr = 0, Ha = 0, Sc = 1 (0.14). EG 'Whose **horrid** Image doth vnfixe my Heire', 'I wil meditate the while vpon some **horrid** message for a Challenge'.⁸

The above is no more than an indication as to the direction a dictionary entry might take. Note that the first sentence offers a contextualised definition of the type used in the *Collins Cobuild*, rather than a handful of synonyms. However, going beyond the *Collins Cobuild*, the figures following offer a broader discursal contextualisation. They give some indication as to the social and stylistic meanings the word might have acquired on account of being to some degree 'contextually bound' (Leech 1981: 14-15; see also

⁸ The Shakespeare frequencies given in this paper are based on *The Nameless Shakespeare* (2003), a joint project of the Perseus Project at Tufts University, The Northwestern University Library, and Northwestern University Academic Technologies. It is derived from The Globe Shakespeare, the one-volume version of the Cambridge Shakespeare, edited by William George Clark, John Glover and William Aldis Wright (1891-3). There is no claim here that this constitutes the ideal edition of Shakespeare. It is searchable via 'WordHoard' (the concordance in section 4 was derived by this). The comparative 'Pla' corpus is the 'Korpus of Early Modern Playtexts in English' (KEMPE), initially compiled by Lene B. Petersen and Marcus X. Dahl, University of Bristol, 2001-2003. It is searchable via 'Corpuseye'. Note: a particular problem with the Corpuseye search engine is that it only searches the whole corpus and that corpus includes Shakespeare. Nevertheless, given the great size of the corpus – 10.7 million words – the results will still mean something. The samples for early modern prose fiction, trial proceedings and handbooks are sourced from the *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*, and the scholarly works comprise half history writing and half science writing, sourced from the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*.

Enkvist 1964: 29-35). Focusing on the more meaningful normalised figures, one might note, for example, that the word 'horrid' appears much more densely in tragedies than either histories or comedies, is used slightly more frequently by male characters compared with female; and that Shakespeare uses it considerably more than his contemporary playwrights did, and also that it is most characteristic of Early Modern plays and, surprisingly, scholarly literature.

However, this particular example is severely hampered by frequency limitations: the strongest finding revealed by the figures simply being that 'horrid' is rare. I will focus on frequency limitations in the next section. Here, I will briefly indicate four ways in which the above entry could be improved:

- The definition was derived from collocational information and some of this information could have been included in the entry (see section 6).
- Sociolinguistic information could be enriched by the inclusion of other sociological variables (e.g. status, age) and also comparative data (e.g. addressing questions such as: is X word associated with male or high status speakers in Shakespeare specifically or is this a more general feature of Early Modern English?).
- A statistical measure could be employed in order to indicate whether differences in distribution are significant.
- The presentation of information could be improved (e.g. the use of graphs, or a verbal description instead of figures).

5. Frequency limitations

A corpus-based dictionary typically includes all words in the corpus. However, this presents two problems: (1) how to treat rare or infrequent words, and, from the more practical point of view of publication, (2) how to fit all the words into one volume.⁹ As is clear from the sample entry of 'horrid' above, low frequency words lead one to the mere conclusion that they are low frequency, as the more robust and informative distribution patterns fail to materialise.¹⁰ The corpus-based methodology is not best suited to investigating low frequency words (cf. Biber et al. 1998: 30, Meyer 2002: 15), instead we

⁹ Schmidt's (1971) complete treatment of Shakespeare's lexicon stretches over two volumes of small print and thin paper, yet only contains the briefest of definitions.

¹⁰ There are also difficulties in applying statistical significance tests to differences in distribution that involve low frequencies.

need to look towards alternative methodologies, such as the philological approach that already underpins most current Shakespearean dictionaries. A partial solution to these problems is simply to adopt a frequency cut-off point such that words below a certain frequency are not considered for inclusion in the dictionary. But what would be the implications of such a cut-off point for the coverage of Shakespeare's vocabulary?

Onions (1986) supposedly covers some 3,000 words, according to Crystal and Crystal (2002: Introduction), who also claim to include 21,263 entries under 13,626 headwords in their own volume. Table 1 displays the consequences of various cut-off points for the number of different word-forms (types) and for the total number of word-forms (tokens) that appear in Shakespeare.

	Types	Tokens
Word-types with more than 100 instances	998	706,974
Word-types with more than 50 instances	1,564	761,472
Word-types with more than 16 instances	4,652	835,925
Word-types with less than 10 instances	7,753	37,260
All instances of all word-types	24, 842	899,092

Table 1. Word-form types, tokens and cut-off points in Shakespeare's plays

As the bottom row shows, there is a total of 899,092 word-tokens in Shakespeare and 24,842 different word-types (in other words, a smaller number of different words are repeated a number of times to make up the total vocabulary of Shakespeare's plays). 'Horrid' occurred 16 times. If we only consider for the proposed dictionary word-types that occur more than 16 times, then, potentially, we would only need to have 4,652 different entries in our dictionary, and yet we would still cover most of the language of Shakespeare's plays (835,925 word-tokens). However, I pointed out above that 16 occurrences is too few for our purposes. If a cut-off point of, say, 50 word-tokens for any entry were imposed, resulting in a potential and certainly more manageable 1,564 word-form entries, then that still would account for the vast bulk of the words in Shakespeare (761,472 out of 899,092 word-tokens). Note that 7,753 word-types occur less than 10 times, accounting for a mere 37,260 word-tokens. Yet it is precisely here that the current Shakespearean dictionaries tend to focus, as these rare items tend to be considered 'hard'. However, in my view, there is no justification for excluding more frequently occurring vocabulary items. From a linguistic perspective,

we know that all words change meaning: even the most frequent of items have incurred shifts of meaning which present-day readers must take on board. From a literary perspective, we should beware of letting more unusual vocabulary distract our attention from the more usual. As John F. Burrows (1987: 1) eloquently puts it: 'It is a truth not generally acknowledged that, in most discussions of works of English fiction, we proceed as if a third, two-fifths, a half of our material were not really there.'

6. Polysemy and collocates: the case of 'good'

Current Shakespearean dictionaries give definitions for the word 'good' (as an adjective) such as these (illustrative quotations are excluded):

Foster (1908): (1) Not bad, worthy of praise; (2) Fit, adapted; (3) Trustworthy, genuine; (4) Kind, benevolent; (5) Proper, right; (6) Substantial, safe, solvent, able to fulfil engagements, (7) Real, serious; (8) Favourable, propitious, (9) Abundant, rich, (10) Skilful, clever, (11) Adequate. Notes phrases and compounds.

Onions (1986): (1) Conventional epithet to titles of high rank, (2) comely, (3) Financially sound; (hence) wealthy, substantial. Notes quasi-adverbial usage, e.g. 'good easy man', and phrases and compounds

Crystal and Crystal (2002): (1) [intensifying use] real, genuine ('love no man in good earnest'). (2) kind, benevolent, generous. (3) kind, friendly, sympathetic. (4) amenable, tractable, manageable. (5) honest, virtuous, honourable. (6) seasonable, appropriate, proper. (7) just, right, commendable. (8) intended, right, proper. (9) high-ranking, highborn, distinguished. (10) rich, wealthy, substantial. Notes phrases and compounds

Lists of synonyms – in some cases overlapping – do not always provide the reader with assistance in discriminating the various senses. For example, in *Foster's* (1908) definitions, how does 'genuine' in sense 3 differ from 'real' in sense 7? Similarly, 'fit' in sense 2 can uncomfortably overlap with 'proper, right' of sense 5. *Onions's* (1986) definitions are fairly discrete, whilst in contrast *Crystal and Crystal* (2002) seem to have gone for a deliberate policy of overlap (note that 'kind', 'proper' and 'right' appear in more than one definition), perhaps indicating that indeed senses do overlap. We might also note that each dictionary orders the senses in a different way, and that some, rather worryingly, contain senses that others do not (note, for example, *Onion's* first sense).

A simple technique in corpus linguistics for investigating the meaning of a word is to examine a concordance and note the words with which the word in question co-occurs, something which we have already demonstrated with the word 'horrid'. It is the collocates of a word – "the company it keeps" (cf. J.R. Firth 1957) – that may help distinguish different senses (see, for example, Partington 1998: 33-46). Frequent collocating words to the right of 'good' include: '(my) *good* friend(s)/sir/Lord/master/man/Lady/Madam/etc.,' '*good* old man/friend/etc.,' '*good* morrow/night/even,' '(in) *good* faith,' '*good* will/wish(es),' '*good* god(s),' '*good* luck / hap,' '*good* news/report/words,' '*good* now,' and '(in) *good* time.' Even without further elaboration, seeing such collocations helps make accessible distinct senses, and so they should be included within a dictionary entry. Also, the frequency of such collocations can feed into the ordering of senses within the entry. However, with a dizzying 2711 instances constituting a concordance of 'good', the human can only identify some collocational patterns, and cannot accurately assess the strength of those patterns and thus come to a principled decision about which to include in the dictionary. One possible solution is to calculate the statistical likelihood with which particular words and 'good' co-occur to form a collocation. Using z-scores, a statistical measure, the top 10 ranked-ordered collocates five words to the left and right of 'good' are: *morrow*, *Lord*, *my*, *do*, *sir*, *good*, *your*, *have*, *be*, and *you*.¹¹

Collocate (+5/-5)	Frequency	Z-score
<i>Morrow</i>	6	18.0
<i>Lord</i>	11	4.8
<i>My</i>	21	2.8
<i>Do</i>	8	2.5
<i>Sir</i>	6	2.1
<i>Good</i>	6	2.1
<i>Your</i>	11	2.0
<i>Have</i>	9	1.5
<i>Be</i>	9	1.1
<i>You</i>	15	0.7

Table 2. The top 10 ranked-ordered collocates of 'good' within a five-word span

¹¹ It is a matter of debate as to which statistical measure to use. Mutual information scores are frequently used, some use t-scores and some argue for the Fisher exact test. These results were produced using the software *Xiara*.

These collocational patterns point to sentences like the following (constructed) example: 'Good morrow, my good lord, you have [...].' This evidence clearly underpins Onions' (1986) first sense, a sense that is not clearly represented in the other dictionaries, and underscores the role of 'good' as a politeness marker. Such an investigation could be extended in three ways: (1) collocational patterns (and ones not limited to single word collocates) can be identified with other statistical procedures (including the methodology in section 8), (2) collocational patterns in Shakespeare can be compared with collocational patterns in other Early Modern texts (e.g. is Shakespeare peculiar in his usage of 'good' as a politeness marker?), and (3) grammatical relations can be explored via collocations (e.g. as is transparent for the concordance of 'horrid' the items immediately to the right are nouns – something that confirms the status of 'horrid' as a typical adjective).

7. The inclusion of pragmatic/discoursal words: the case of 'ah'

Interjections, onomatopoeic sounds, hesitation phenomena, discourse markers, and so on have received scant attention in Shakespearean dictionaries (of course, this is not true of specialist dictionaries, notably Blake 2004). For example, there is no entry for 'ah' in Foster (1908), Onions (1986) or Crystal and Crystal (2002). The issue is whether such items are considered words, and that depends on your definition of the word. Corpus linguistics favours an orthographic definition, such as 'a string of uninterrupted non-punctuation characters with white space or punctuation at each end' (Leech et al. 2001: 13-14). In which case, 'ah' is clearly a word. Does 'ah' have meaning? That depends on your definition of meaning. If meaning is associated with ideational meaning, to use Halliday's (e.g. 1978) terminology, and not textual or interpersonal meanings, then words like 'ah' do not have meaning. One of the reasons such words are not generally included in Shakespearean dictionaries is that words that reflect some aspect of the world are privileged above words that help organise other words or words that help organise people. In my view, this approach is entirely *inappropriate* for a dictionary of Shakespeare's plays because those plays are made up of *dialogue*. What lies at the heart of dialogue are those pragmatic and discoursal words that structure and mediate the interaction between characters.

Let us consider the pragmatic and discoursal meanings of 'ah', and also its social and stylistic meanings. If a concordance of 'ah' is scrutinised, one can discern the three key pragmatic meanings following (an illustrative example is provided of each):

- (1) *Speaker attitude/state communicated = sorrow, emotional distress*
Des. To whom my Lord? With whom? How am I false?
Oth. **Ah** Desdemona, away, away, away.
Des. Alas the heavy day: why do you weep? Am I the motive of these tears my Lord? *Othello*
- (2) *Speaker attitude/state communicated = pity*
Glou. Canst thou blame him? His daughters seek his death: **Ah**, that good Kent, He said it would be thus: poor banish'd man: Thou sayest the King grows mad, I'll tell thee friend I am almost mad my self.
King Lear
- (3) *Speaker attitude/state communicated = surprise, realisation*
 [Enter Adriana and Luciana.]
Adr. **Ah** Luciana, did he tempt thee so? *Comedy of Errors*

And one can discern the two key discoursal meanings following:

- (1) *Discourse marker: preface to the correction / rejection of the previous speaker's proposition(s), emotions or actions*
Men. These three world-sharers, these competitors are in thy vessel. Let me cut the cable, And when we are put off, fall to their throates: All there is thine.
Pom. **Ah**, this thou shouldst have done, And not have spoke on't. In me 'tis villany, In thee, 't had bin good service: [...] *Antony and Cleopatra*
- (2) *Discourse marker: reinforces elicitation*
Leon. All thy tediousnesse on me, **ah**?
Const.Dog. Yea, and 'twere a thousand times more than tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your Worship as of any man in the City, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it. *Much Ado about Nothing*

Turning to stylistic and social meanings, consider the distribution of 'ah':

Distribution: All = 179 (19.9); T = 54 (21.3), C = 32 (8.9), H = 93 (35.4); M = 121 (16.1), F = 59 (41.9). Comparisons: Pla = 1573 (14.4), Fic = 9 (10.9), Tr = 1 (2.9), Ha = 11 (11.2), Sc = 0.

Within Shakespeare, 'ah' is characteristic of the histories, to some extent the tragedies, but to a much lesser extent of comedies. This distribution may reflect the frequent functions of 'ah' in signalling emotional distress and pity. Interestingly, the distribution across genders is far from even: it is more than twice as dense in female dialogue. Compared with other playwrights of the period, Shakespeare can be said to be fairly fond of this item. Also, we can see that it is more characteristic of plays than other contemporary genres. Moreover, there is evidence that 'ah' is a strong colloquial marker. It does not appear at all in scholarly works, the genre that is far removed from colloquial genres; it hardly appears in trial proceedings, a genre that – influenced by the formal setting, legal routines and need to create an official document – tends to be remote from colloquial language; whilst on the other hand, it appears in fictional prose (the choice of prose for this dataset being specifically geared towards more colloquial prose) and handbooks in dialogue form. Interestingly, and remarkably, the density of 'ah' in a sample of five present-day plays is 94.27 (contrasting with Shakespeare's 19.9), something which presumably reflects the drift of genres, including plays, towards more colloquial language (see, for example, Biber and Finegan 1992).

8. The inclusion of grammatical words: the case of 'and'

The most frequent words in any body of texts are closed-class. Yet Shakespearean dictionaries do not, or do not adequately, treat such grammatical items, despite – or may be because of – their high frequency of occurrence. For example, the entries for the second most frequent word in Shakespeare, the word 'and', in general Shakespearean dictionaries are as follows:

Foster (1908): Cross-references Abbot's Shakespearean grammar.

Onions (1986): (1) Coordinating conjunction (nouns, adjectives and phrases);

(2) Subordinating conjunction: if, even if, though, as if, whether.

Crystal and Crystal (2002): [also spelling variant 'an'] (1) if, even if; (2) as if; (3) if, whether.

As can be seen, it is not treated at all in *Foster* (1908), whilst *Crystal and Crystal* (2002) only mention *conditional* 'and' (used as a subordinate conjunction introducing a conditional clause with the sense 'if'). Conditional 'and' is likely to be the focus of attention in Shakespearean dictionaries, because of editorial policies to select

items with which the modern reader is assumed to be unfamiliar and thus likely to experience difficulty. Examples of conditional ‘and’ include the following:

What would you have me be, **and** I be not a woman? *Pericles*

Noting this penury, to my self I said, **An** if a man did need a poison now, Whose sale is present death in Mantua, Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him. *Romeo and Juliet*

Only Onions (1986) acknowledges the fact that words such as ‘and’ play an important grammatical role. It is the coordinating function of ‘and’ that accounts for the overwhelming majority of instances in Shakespeare. ‘And’ makes a significant contribution to textual meaning in Shakespeare in the way it conjoins nouns, adjectives, (nominal or adjectival) phrases and clauses, and it is also used as a pragmatic connective.

Compare the following two extracts in which instances coordinating clauses are underlined and instances coordinating words/phrases are emboldened:

Duke She should this Angelo have married : was affianced to her oath, and the nuptial appointed: between which time of the contract, **and** limit of the solemnity, her brother Frederick was wrecked at Sea, having in that perished vessel, the dowry of his sister: but mark how heavily this befell to the poor Gentlewoman, there she lost a noble **and** renowned brother, in his love toward her, ever most kind **and** natural: with him the portion **and** sinew of her fortune, her marriage dowry: with both, her combinate-husband, this well-seeming Angelo. *Measure for Measure*

Citizen2 [...] Who's that that bears the Sceptre?

Citizen1 Marquess Dorset, And that the Earl of Surrey, with the Rod.

Citizen2 A bold brave Gentleman. That should be The Duke of Suffolk.

Citizen1 'Tis the same: high Steward.

Citizen2 And that my Lord of Norfolk?

Citizen1 Yes. *King Henry VIII*

The density of lexical/phrasal coordination in the first extract contrasts with the density of clausal coordination in the second. This grammatical difference reflects differences in style and communicative purpose. Lexical/phrasal coordination in the Dukes

speech helps create a high rhetorical style, underscoring the seriousness of what he is saying. More specifically, the conjoins of coordinated pairs tend to be closely related in meaning. Thus, 'noble' and 'renowned' overlap in meaning (reflecting the rhetorical figure of 'pleonasm'), and 'kind' and 'natural' could be viewed as being in a hierarchical relationship such that one is subordinate to the other (reflecting the rhetorical figure of 'hendiadys', i.e. amounting to: 'naturally kind'). In contrast, the clausal coordination of the second extract creates a low rhetorical style, underscoring the casual conversation, a style which is, of course, reinforced by the ellipsis. In fact, in this particular case, 'and' is not merely coordinating clauses but also acting as a pragmatic connective. Specifically, it is used to create a series of questions, or, as Schiffrrin puts it, to "link questions in a question agenda" (1994: 146). As a consequence of their rather different functions, lexical/phrasal coordination tends to correlate with rather different genres compared to clausal coordination. I cannot prove this claim with regard to Shakespeare, as the computational analysis of Shakespeare's grammar is not yet sufficiently accurate or sophisticated; indeed, one of the aims of my dictionary project is to solve this (see Culpeper and Kytö 2002, which provides supporting evidence for four Early Modern genres). In sum, my argument is that such grammatical items should be included in a dictionary of Shakespeare, and that dictionary should focus widely on the contribution of those items to meaning.

9. Multiword units

John Sinclair (e.g. 1991), amongst other linguists, has argued that words may belong to semi-fixed phrases that constitute single lexical choices (e.g. 'of course', where the individual words cannot be assumed to produce the sense of the phrase). Current Shakespearean dictionaries pay scant attention to these. An empirical way of retrieving lexical items that tend to bunch together is to run an n-gram analysis. Essentially, the computer works through the text, recording the co-occurrence of every word with its neighbours, and then calculates which groups of words most frequently co-occur. Multiword units, thus defined, may be considered a kind of extended collocational unit, and are frequently referred to as lexical bundles or clusters. The results for Shakespeare, retrieved by *WordSmith Tools* (Scott 1999), are included in Table 3, along with the results for three other datasets for comparison (the underlining, italics and boldening show that a particular lexical bundle is used

in another data set; no lexical bundle is used in more than two data sets).

Shakespeare	EModE Plays	EModE Trials	Present-day Plays
I pray you	<u>it is a</u>	do you know	I don't know
<u>I will not</u>	<i>what do you</i>	I did not	<i>what do you</i>
<u>I know not</u>	<u>and I will</u>	did you see	I don't want
I am a	it is not	I do not	do you think
I am not	I have a	he told me	do you want
my good lord	<u>I will not</u>	at that time	I don't think
there is no	in the world	out of the	to do with
I would not	I tell you	I told him	do you know
<u>it is a</u>	<u>I know not</u>	he did not	going to be
<u>and I will</u>	I warrant you	there was a	don't want to

Table 3. The top ranked-ordered 3-word lexical bundles in Shakespeare and other genres

It has been noted in the literature that lexical bundles are good discriminators of different styles (e.g. Stubbs and Barth 2003). The bulk of the items in Table 3 are unique to the specific data sets. Lexical bundles in Early Modern trials reflect the fact that that discourse is made up of question-answer routines (e.g. 'do you know', 'did you see' versus 'I did not,' 'I do not') and crime-narrative report (e.g. 'he told me,' 'at that time,' 'out of the,' 'I told him'). Lexical bundles in present-day plays seem to gravitate towards questions and assertions to do with knowing, wanting and thinking – perhaps the essence of present-day drama in which plot and character development is conveyed through highly interactive character-to-character dialogue (in other words, what is said between characters is partly designed to inform the audience of character and plot). A characteristic of both Shakespeare and other Early Modern plays is that many of the bundles begin with the first person pronoun 'I', perhaps reflecting the essence of Early Modern drama with its more direct presentation of characters and plot to the audience (the epitome of this being the use of soliloquies and asides). Shakespeare's lexical bundles are distinguished by the fact that his top five most frequent bundles begin with the first person pronoun. Also, it is interesting to note that the most frequent three-word unit in Shakespeare's plays, 'I pray you', is something that is not characteristic of other Early Modern plays, other genres or, of course, of present-day plays.

The kind of distributional stylistic information I have been discussing here could, of course, be recorded along with the entry for the most frequent lexical bundles in Shakespeare in the dictionary. Perhaps even more importantly, such n-gram analysis can feed into the grammatical description contained in the dictionary. I will attend to this issue in the following section.

10. A note on grammatical description

Linguists like Sinclair (e.g. 1991, 2004) emphasise that grammar is in the lexicon and not in some *a priori* set of abstract categories (e.g. parts of speech) imposed on the language. A way into describing the lexico-grammar of Shakespeare would be to describe the grammatical frames or patterns, revealed through collocational analyses (as discussed in section 6) and multiword analyses (as discussed in section 9) (see Hunston and Francis 2000, for this approach). I have already hinted that collocational analyses could be deployed in the exploration of grammatical relations, noting the case of 'horrid' (and 'good' is similar).¹² In fact, my discussion of 'and' was very much geared towards the grammatical relations of co-occurring units. Regarding multiword units, 'I pray you,' for example, is a grammatical pattern consisting of a first person pronoun (i.e. either 'we' or 'I'), a verb in the present tense and a second person pronoun (i.e. either 'you' or 'thee'). Whilst the items that can occur as pronouns are relatively restricted, a much wider range of verbs can occur in this particular pattern. However, not any verb can occur: the set is restricted. One subset of those verbs is comprised of speech act verbs such as 'advise', 'arrest', 'assure', 'beseech', 'charge', 'tell', 'thank' and 'warrant'. Such verbs occur when the grammatical pattern is used in isolation or parenthetically to a matrix clause. Making the step from an n-gram analysis to the description of grammatical patterns or frames is not necessarily straightforward. N-gram analysis results in units which are not necessarily complete idioms or grammatical structures. Nevertheless, such analysis offers a way into it identifying

¹² As I have already indicated in this paper, a highly accurate part-of-speech tagged corpus of Shakespeare does not exist. Also, there are issues to do with the compatibility of tags and software, as well devising software to assess adequately grammatical relations. One possibility to be explored is *SketchEngine* (see Kilgariff et al. 2004), used for lexicography by Oxford University Press, for example.

grammatical frames, and the results can be complemented by collocational analyses.

I would not argue for quite as radical an approach to grammar (i.e. ditch all abstract grammatical categories) as Sinclair, for four reasons. First, my analysis of 'and' already demonstrated that grammatical categories can be useful. Knowing the grammatical status of the conjoins (i.e. lexical/phrasal versus clausal) helps us account for textual meanings. Second, grammatical categories can provide a useful way of tracking variation and change in the language; specifically in the case of the dictionary, it can help provide a way of understanding how language varied in Shakespeare's time (e.g. from register to register, from person-to-person) and how language has changed since Shakespeare. For example, the proposed dictionary could quantify parts of speech, particularly in cases where an item can function has more than one part of the speech, and thereby reveal differences in distribution (e.g. the distribution of verbal vs. nominal usages of the lexeme 'love' used to be weighted in favour of nominal but is now approximately even). Third, supplying such information about words would enable researchers to compare and contrast with extant research. Fourth, supplying such information can simply be one additional means by which a dictionary can help users understand words.

11. Character and play profiles

Some Shakespearean dictionaries contain non-linguistic descriptions of characters and plot summaries. I propose providing a description of the idiolect of each major character. This can be done by conducting a statistical comparison between the vocabulary of one character and that of the other characters in the same play, in order to reveal words that are statistically characteristic of particular characters. Those words are 'keywords'. As an illustration, consider some of the results relating to characters in *Romeo and Juliet* (see Culpeper 2002, for a more detailed discussion). Table 4 contains the keywords of Romeo and Juliet (rank-ordered in terms of the statistical 'keyness') produced by the program *WordSmith Tools*:

<i>Romeo</i>	<i>Juliet</i>
Beauty (10), Love (46), Blessed (5), Eyes (14), More (26), Mine (14), Dear (13), Rich (7), Me (73), Yonder (5), Farewell (11), Sick (6), Lips (9), Stars (5), Fair (15), Hand (11), Thine (7), Banished (9), Goose (5), That (84)	If (31), Be (59), Or (25), I (138), Sweet (16), My (92), News (9), Thou (71), Night (27), Would (20), Yet (18), That (82), Nurse (20), Name (11), Words (5), Tybalt's (6), Send (7), Husband (7), Swear (5), Where (16), Again (10)

Table 4. Rank-ordered keywords for Romeo and Juliet (raw frequencies in brackets)

This reveals, for example, the predictable result that Romeo's two most unusually frequent words (or 'keywords') are 'beauty' and 'love', but the less predictable – and thus possibly more interesting – result that Juliet's two most unusually frequent words are 'if' and 'be'. Although the results for Juliet are less predictable, they can readily be explained by a qualitative analysis of the text (i.e. they are motivated). Furthermore, and following the line of argument articulated above, although many of Juliet's keywords are grammatical in nature, they are no less meaningful. Upon closer inspection of Juliet's keywords, one can see that keywords such as 'if', 'be' (often subjunctive), 'or', 'would' and 'yet' reflect Juliet anxieties and worries about Romeo's intentions and welfare, as the following examples illustrate:

If he **be** married, / Our grave is like to **be our** wedding-bed (I.v.)
 If they do see thee, they will murder thee (II.ii.)
 But **if** thou meanest not well (II.ii.)
 Is thy news good, **or** bad? answer to that; Say either, and I'll stay the
 circumstance: Let me **be** satisfied, is 't good **or** bad? (II.ii)
 Tis almost morning; I **would** have thee gone; And **yet** no further than
 a wanton's bird [...] (II.ii.)

The key point about such analysis is that, although a reading of the play would obviously have resulted in an understanding of Juliet's anxieties and worries, such a reading would not necessarily have led to the identification of the linguistic source of that very understanding. Indeed, no 'manual' critical analysis to date, literary or linguistic, has accounted for the source.

Regarding plays, plot summaries tend to include information about the plays' 'themes'. Such information relies on the intuitions of the editor. I propose something more empirical: providing a description of the semantic categories (or lexical fields)

characterising each play. This can be done by getting the computer automatically to assign each word in the plays to a semantic category (this assignment can, of course, be recorded in the entry for each word). The dominance of categories within plays can be statistically compared. For example, in an earlier study I conducted with Dawn Archer and Paul Rayson (Archer et al. forthcoming), we compared three 'love tragedies' (*Othello*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet*) with three 'love comedies' (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *As You Like It*). Each word was assigned to the categories in Table 5 using the USAS suite of programs (for further details, see section12).

A general and abstract terms	B the body and the individual	C arts and crafts	E emotion
F food and farming	G government and public	H architecture, housing and the home	I money and commerce in industry
K entertainment, sports and games	L life and living things	M movement, location, travel and transport	N numbers and measurement
O substances, materials, objects and equipment	P education	Q language and communication	S social actions, states and processes
T Time	W world and environment	X psychological actions, states and processes	Y science and technology
Z names and grammar			

Table 5. The semantic categories used (derived from McArthur 1981)

Then a statistical comparison was conducted in order to establish which semantic categories were characteristic of each data set (each semantic category has several subcategories). Our findings are displayed in Table 6.

<i>Most overused categories in comedies relative to tragedies</i>	<i>The most overused categories in tragedies relative to comedies</i>
S3.2 = intimate/sexual relationship	G3 = warfare, defence, & the army
L2 = living creatures	L1- = (lack of) life/living things
L3 = plants	Z2 = geographical names
S1.2.6- = (not) sensible	E3- = (not) calm/violent/angry
X3.1 = sensory: taste	M4 = movement (by sea/through water)
E2+ = liking	S9 = religion and the supernatural
T3- = old, new, young: age	S7.1- = (lack of) power/organising

Table 6. Love comedies and tragedies: characteristic semantic categories (rank-ordered)

It is love comedies that are characterised by the most obviously love-related category, 'intimate/sexual relationship'. The love tragedies, by contrast, are characterised by categories far removed from love: 'warfare, etc', 'lack of life, etc', and so on. Closer inspection of the results in the context of the plays reveals many points of interest. For reasons of space, I will just comment on a few. The appearance of 'plants' as highly characteristic of comedies may seem puzzling. In fact, there is a connection with love, as the following extract illustrates (Silvius explains why he loves Phoebe despite the fact that she is a prostitute) (words assigned to the 'plants' semantic category are emboldened):

Silvius So holy and so perfect is my love, And I in such a poverty of grace, That I shall think it a most plenteous **crop** To glean the broken **ears** after the man That the main **harvest reaps** : loose now and then A scattered smile, and that I'll live upon. *As You like It*

More precisely, the connection is a metaphorical one. As Oncins-Martinez (2006) has pointed out, the underlying cognitive metaphor here is SEX IS AGRICULTURE and its sub-mappings include A WOMAN'S BODY IS AGRICULTURAL LAND. Similarly, metaphor accounts for the presence of the semantic category 'sensory: taste', as illustrated in the following example:

Julia Nay, would I were so angered with the same! O hateful hands, to tear such loving words! Injurious wasps, to feed on such **sweet** honey And kill the bees that yield it with your stings! *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

The underlying cognitive metaphor here is LOVE IS FOOD (see Barcelona 1995: 672-673; see also Oncins-Martinez 2006).

12. Conclusions

The main features of my proposed dictionary can be summarised as follows:

- All 'words' will be treated equally (e.g. not just 'hard' words or 'content' words).
- Meanings will not be restricted to semantic or ideational meaning.
- Meanings will be based on usage in context (e.g. not etymology).
- Context will include linguistic co-text (e.g. collocations) and non-linguistic context (e.g. social properties of the speaker).
- Linguistic description will be relative, i.e. it will compare Shakespeare's usage with that of contemporary texts.
- The dictionary will include linguistic profiles of characters and plays.

Perhaps the most important question to raise at this stage is: to what extent is this agenda feasible? In fact, the reason why am from proposing this kind of dictionary now is that until recently it would have been impossible. With developments in both corpora and computational techniques, we are now at a point when it can be realised. To conclude this article, I will briefly list some methodological problems and indicate the extent to which they have been solved:

- There used to be a lack of comparative textual data in electronic form. However, this has been partially solved by, for example, the *Helsinki Corpus of English Texts*, *Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760*, and so on.¹³
- Early Modern spelling variation has been perhaps the major stumbling block for historical corpus linguistics, and hitherto the major stumbling block for the proposed dictionary, for the reason that one cannot search on a particular word-spelling and assume

¹³ Regarding Shakespeare's texts themselves, the electronic revolution arrived sometime ago. The best example is probably the Shakespeare Database Project (see <http://www.shkspr.uni-muenster.de/index.php>), although these materials are not publicly available.

that all the relevant words will be retrieved. However, this problem has largely been solved by the Variant Detector (VARD), primarily devised by Dawn Archer (University of Central Lancashire) and Paul Rayson (Lancaster University) (see, for example, Archer et al. 2003, Archer and Rayson 2004).

- Studying abstract grammatical patterns in a corpus requires grammatical annotation. The Lancaster-developed CLAWS part-of-Speech annotation system works fairly well for present-day English (for descriptions of how CLAWS works, see Leech et al. 1994 or Garside 1987). It has been recently adapted at Lancaster for Early Modern English. However, it is not sufficiently accurate for the dictionary and manual correction is required (once this is done, of course, a powerful resource will be created).
- Semantic annotation has received attention from generations of researchers at Lancaster University, including Geoffrey Leech, Jenny Thomas, Roger Garside, Andrew Wilson, Paul Rayson and Dawn Archer. The USAS semantic annotation system has been adapted for Early Modern English, and demonstrated to have value (see, for example, Archer et al. 2003). However, it is not sufficiently accurate for the dictionary, and would require a further round of development. There is also the thorny problem of what 'world view' the system should adopt.
- Social annotation, information about, for example, gender, status, age, has not yet been comprehensively and systematically applied to Shakespeare, but the methodology has been developed and applied to Early Modern English texts (see Archer and Culpeper 2003), and so it would be fairly straightforward to extend this to Shakespeare.
- A final problematic area to note, and one that is philological and not computational, is that the dictionary will need to be based on one particular edition of Shakespeare, and this will involve an evaluation of available editions to arrive at a final choice.¹⁴

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¹⁴ In principle, the dictionary could accommodate multiple editions. However, this would multiply the complexity of the project and be extremely space consuming for the paper dictionary.

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Mary Roper Clarke Bassett and Meredith Hanmer's *Honorable Ladie of the Lande*

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ABSTRACT

In his 1577 English translation of Eusebius' *History of the Church*, Meredith Hanmer makes reference to "an honorable Ladie of the lande," whose identity still remains unknown. My design here is to gather the scarce and scattered available evidence, so as to propose a name that is rather reasonable. In order to contextualize the conclusions, reference will also be made to such issues as women's literacy and religious controversies in Elizabethan England.

KEYWORDS: Mary Roper Clarke Bassett, Meredith Hanmer, translation, Greek, Eusebius

Mary Roper,¹ Sir Thomas More's granddaughter by his beloved Margaret, is especially known for an English translation of her grandfather's Latin book about Christ's Passion, written while prisoner in the Tower of London.² This work was included in William Rastell's edition of More's *English Works* (1557), pp. 1350-1404, and it was the only text by a woman to appear in print during the reign of Mary Tudor (Demers 2001: 5). The editor was enthusiastic about the chance he had to include Mary's translation, for it seemed to be no translation at all: "so that it myghte seme to have been by hys [Thomas More's] own pen indyted first, and not at all translated: suche a gyft hath she to followe her grandfathers vayne in writing" (Rastell 1557: 1350). But it is Mary's partial translation of Eusebius' *History of the Church* that I will bring forth into the readers' consideration, both for it and for the light it might

¹ The date of Mary's birth is not known. She was the daughter of Margaret More Roper and William Roper. She first married Stephen Clarke and then James Bassett. Mary died on March 20, 1572.

² *An Exposition of a Part of the Passion of ... Iesus Christe, Made in Latine by Syr Thomas More ... in the Tower ... and Translated into Englyshe by Maystress Mary Basset*. Edited by Philip E. Hallet.

cast on the identity of an anonymous lady mentioned by Meredith Hanmer in the first complete English rendering of such text.

1. Mary Roper Clark Bassett, Meredith Hanmer and their translations of Eusebius

Ro. Ba., author of *The Lyfe of Syr Thomas More*, completed in 1599, mentions Mary Roper. Before referring to her English translation of Sir Thomas' book about the Lord's Passion, the anonymous biographer writes:

This gentlewoman verie handsomelie translated the Ecclesiasticall historie of Eusebius out of Greeke into Latyn, and after into English yet extant, to the shame of the hereticall [translation] of Meridith Hanmer – which, for that Christophersons, Byshopp of Lincolne, his translation was then famous and extant, hers came not to print. The English may here after. She translated the Historie of Socrates, Theodoretus, Sozomenus and Euagrius. Theis of her modestie [she] caused to be suppressed. (Ro. Ba. 1950: 149/8-18)³

This translation was never published. What remains of it – or, most probably, all that Mary Roper translated – is preserved in the Harleian MS. 1860, kept in the British Museum. This MS contains a translation of the first book of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* from Greek to Latin, and the first five books into English; both works were attributed to *Maria Clarcke*, as explicitly stated in the MS.⁴ A hint that Mary's translation was known among English Catholics after her death in 1572 is given in the above quoted words by the anonymous author of *The Lyfe of Syr Thomas More*: he writes that Mary's work was "yet extant, to the shame of the hereticall [translation] of Meridith Hanmer" (Ro. Ba. 1950: 149/11-12). Hanmer (1543-1604) was the author of the first complete English translation of Eusebius, Socrates and Euagrius: *The Auncient Ecclesiasticall Histories of the First*

³ John Christopherson (d. 1558) was not Bishop of Lincoln, but of Chichester.

⁴ Url: <http://www.adam-matthew-publications.co.uk/digital_guides/medieval-and-early-modern-women-part-1/Detailed-Listing.aspx>, accessed 10 February 2006. The MS is available in silver halide positive microfilm: *Medieval and Early Modern Women. Part 1: Manuscripts from the British Library*. London: Adam Matthew Publications. Reel 12. No edition of the translation has been published to date.

Six Hundred Yeares after Christ,... (London, 1577).⁵ In 1563, just five years after Elizabeth ascended to the throne, John Foxe had published the first edition of his *Acts and Monuments* (*The Book of Martyrs*). To some extent, Hanmer's book was an interesting offshoot of Foxe's project.⁶ Because Protestants of the sixteenth century were quite interested in patristic sources, there began to be a market for English translations of the Fathers. Foxe's famous book was based, at least in part, on Eusebius, and so it is no surprise that an English translation of his Church history was not long in coming. However, the possibility exists that Hanmer also knew about Mary Clarke's partial rendering of this text.

In the prologue to his translation, "The Translator unto the Christian reader," Hanmer mentions a curious detail:

The occasion that moued me to take so great as enterprise in hand was, that I read them in Greeke vnto an honorable Ladie of the lande, and hauing some leasure besides the lecture and other exercises agreeable unto my calling, I thought good to turne the private commoditie unto publique profite (Hanmer 1577: iiiii v)

The identity of this honourable *Ladie of the Land* has not been clarified to my knowledge. At first glance, readers could infer that she was no other than Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln (1528-1589),⁷ the wife of Edward, 1st Earl of Lincoln (1512-1585).⁸ Hanmer dedicated his translation to her (September 1, 1576).⁹ And yet, in the *dedicatorie*, as flattering as it was supposed to be, it is nowhere stated that she knew any Greek at all to have been able to enjoy not only Hanmer's reading, but also *the other exercises agreeable* that followed. Elizabeth

⁵ The dedicatory epistle was finished on September 1, 1576. The book was printed at London: "By Thomas Vautroullier dwelling in the Blackefriers by Ludgate." This work also contains Dorotheus' *Lives of the Prophets, Apostles, and Seventy Disciples*. The attribution of the biographies to Dorotheus is traditional but unsubstantiated.

⁶ In an unpublished lecture given at the Woodrow Wilson International Center (1993), Patrick Collinson speculated that Foxe himself probably inspired and encouraged Meredith Hanmer's translation of Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History*.

⁷ Elizabeth Fitzgerald – the "Fair Geraldine" of Henry, Earl of Surrey – had been Anthony Browne's wife. Her marriage with the Earl of Lincoln took place on October 1, 1552.

⁸ Edward Clinton Fiennes.

⁹ "To the right honorable, the godly wise and virtuous Ladie Elizabeth, Covntesse of Lyncolne, wife to the right and noble Edward Earle of Lincoln, Lorde highe Admirall of England one of the Queenes Maiesties priuie counsaill and Knight of the most honourable order of the Garter" (Hanmer 1577: ii v).

is praised for her virtues and true zeal, and she is also said to enjoy "no vayne bookes" (Hanmer 1577: ii r & iiiv). Had she known Greek, it would surely have been emphasised.

Taking these issues as a starting point, I would like to present the main argument of this paper. I consider that it is by no means a remote possibility that the *Ladie* Hanmer mentioned at the beginning of his address to readers was no other than Mary Roper Clarke Bassett. This I will try to demonstrate, first, by providing the names of several ladies which might also be taken into consideration.

2. Greek and the ladies

Women's learning during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is an issue still open to debate nowadays. Betty Travitsky claims that "from approximately 1500 to 1640, English women composed or translated over one hundred works" (Travitsky 1981: 5),¹⁰ and yet it has not been until quite recently that scholars have paid attention to these texts.¹¹ Even when they have, some critics argue, the conclusions have been far fetched and, in a way, a veil to cover women scholars real position during the Early Modern period. As M.P. Hannay concludes, as learned as they were, "Tudor women rarely violated the boundaries set for them [...] patronage, translation, dedications of translations, epitaphs, letters, and private devotional meditations" (Hannay 1985: 14).

¹⁰ There is a vast bibliography about this topic. See Warnicke (1983), Hannay (1985), Krontiris (1992) [*Oppositional Voices. Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance*. Routledge: London], Kate Aughterson (1995) [*Renaissance Woman. Constructions of Femininity in England*. London: Routledge], Kate Aughterson (1998) [*The English Renaissance. An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. London: Routledge, esp. Chapter 4 "Education"], Virginia W. Beauchamp, Elizabeth H. Hageman and Margaret. Mikesell eds. (2002) [*Juan Luis Vives. The Instruction of a Christian Woman*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, "Introduction"]. For less Feminist approaches, see Hogrefe (1975), Elaine V. Beilin (1987) [*Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance*. Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press] or Katharina M. Wilson (1987).

¹¹ Travitsky mentions two early critical works, both unpublished: Rugh W. Hughey (1932) "Cultural Interests of Women in England, from 1524-1640, Indicated in the Writings of the Women," PhD, Cornell University; and Charlotte Kohler (1936) "Elizabethan Woman of Letters, The Extent of Her Literary Activity," PhD, University of Virginia (1981: 239, nn. 1 & 2 to "Introduction"). Although Travitsky elsewhere in her work makes reference to Foster Watson's (1912) *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*. (London: Longmans, Green and Co.), she does not include Watson as a pioneer text on this field, probably because her disagreement with this author's non-feminist stances.

Thomas More's role in the promotion of women's education remains unchallenged. According to P.S. Hogrefe it was "the theory and practice of Sir Thomas in educating his daughters" that especially contributed to the increase in the number of women who participated in the educational and literary life of the sixteenth century (Hogrefe 1975: 98). More critical voices have come to the same conclusion, though emphasizing how "More's approach was essentially a utilitarian one in which the educational goals were the preparing of [...] women for maternal and wifely service" (Warnicke 1983: 23). Despite ideological differences with More, his alleged antifeminism or his supposed inner contradictions, these voices conclude that he promoted women's education: "[More] argued that while they [women] were inferior beings, women could excel in scholarship, thereby achieving intellectual equality or near equality with men" (Warnicke 1983: 91-113).

Therefore, it would seem reasonable to argue that, despite the practical consequences that learning might have for Tudor women's real position in life and the limits imposed on their education, a good number of them received a solid education. Some of these women were members of the aristocracy, but there were also a few from the upper middle-class (Warnicke 1983: 91-113). As Elaine Beilin has pointed out, "these women were not so much wonders as signs" (Beilin 1987: xvi). According to a sixteenth century English source,¹² those ladies who were in the court spent their time

in continuall reading either of the holie Scriptures, or histories of our owne or forren nations about us [...] And to saie how many gentlewomen and ladies there are, that beside sound knowledge of the Greke and Latine tongs, are thereto no lesse skilfull in the Spanish, Italian, and French, or in som one of them, it resteth not in me.

According to Warnicke (1983: 132), Harrison was overstating the skills of these ladies, a view that is consistent with the denunciation of the so-called Myth of Tudor Woman, a dominant trend in Feminist criticism especially after the publication of Joan

¹² *Description of England* by William Harrison (1534-1593), first published in 1577 as part of Holinshed's *Chronicle*. This work enumerated England's geographic, economic, social, religious and political features and represents an important source for historians interested in life in Elizabethan England. The quoted excerpt is taken from Hannay (1985: 8).

Kelly-Gadol's revisionist paper "Did Women have a Renaissance?"¹³ This forces us to adopt a certain scepticism when considering the real number of women with an intellectual formation, especially if we talk about their knowledge of the Classical languages and, more specifically, Greek.¹⁴ Obviously I do not mean that Mary Bassett was the only lady in London who knew this language. Even among the upper class, however, such a skill was pretty uncommon. It is interesting to notice that in his *dedicatorie*, Hanmer praises the glory of Elizabeth's court – as opposed to the ruin of her antecessor's – stressing there were "so many learned Clerkes, so many Godly persons, so many graue Matrons, so many vertuous Ladies, so many honorable personages" (Hanmer 1577: ii r). But no learned ladies? Queen Elizabeth's name immediately comes to mind for she was well acquainted with Greek.¹⁵ Roger Ascham tutored her and was direct witness of her improvements. In his *The Scholemaster*, this educationist gives abundant details about her methods and diligence in learning.¹⁶ Queen Katherine Parr (1512-1548), Henry VIII's last wife, was involved in Elizabeth's tuition as a young girl. The former had retired from court upon Edward VI's accession, though she remained close to London. Her dower manor, Chelsea, was in the suburbs and there she took with her the 13 year old Princess Elizabeth. Katharine Parr was justly celebrated for her warm and open nature. Apart from this, she was herself a rather literate woman: she published or edited several religious works in English and she could "read Latin easily and had some knowledge of Greek".¹⁷ Later studies have nonetheless denied her proficiency in

¹³ In *Becoming Visible*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (1977). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 139-164.

¹⁴ For a general description of the introduction of Greek in the English Academic curriculum, see Arthur Tilley (1938) "Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century (I)." *The English Historical Review* 53: 221-239; and (1938) "Greek Studies in England in the Early Sixteenth Century (II)." *The English Historical Review* 53: 438-456.

¹⁵ For Elizabeth I's learning, see Hogrefe (1977: 209-233), Warnicke (1983: 96-97) or Teague (1987: 522-547).

¹⁶ In his "Preface to the Reader," for example, Ascham narrates how one night, after dinner, he went up to the Queen's private chamber to read with her in Greek a "noble Oration by Demosthenes" (1571: ii v).

¹⁷ William P. Haugaard quoted in Hogrefe (1977: 194). For a detailed analysis of Katherine as a woman of letters, see Hoffman (1959-1960). An interesting study of Katherine's works is Janel Mueller (1945). "Devotion as Difference: Intertextuality in Queen Katherine's Parr's 'Prayer or Meditations.'" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 53.3: 171-197.

Greek, if only because her religious zeal made her reject pagan authors who wrote in this language. According to Warnicke, Katherine's involvement in the selection of tutors for Elizabeth Tudor was rather a hindrance:

In 1548 with the death of William Grindal, Elizabeth asked Katherine, who was then Queen Dowager, to replace her deceased tutor with Ascham who was, himself, a former pupil of Checke. Perhaps because he usually assigned pagan authors to his students, Katherine only reluctantly agreed to Elizabeth's request for his appointment [...] (Warnicke 1983: 94-95)¹⁸

A few weeks after Katharine and Elizabeth settled at Chelsea, another girl entered the household. Lady Jane Gray (1537-1554)¹⁹ was just 9 years old when she was sent to live as the ward of the Queen Dowager. She would remain with her until 1550, when Katherine died shortly after the birth of her only child. It was only because Lady Jane had a real opportunity to become Queen (both by succession and by marriage to Edward VI), that Jane's parents propitiated her solid instruction in Greek, among other languages. And Queen she was, though just for nine days in July 1553; right after she was imprisoned and executed by Mary Tudor at the age of 17 (Warnicke 1983: 98-99). Three years before, Roger Ascham had visited Lady Jane at her parents' home in Bradgate Hall (Leicester). While the whole family was away hunting, as Ascham reported, 14 year old Jane was reading Plato's *Phaedon* in Greek, "and that with as much delite, as some gentleman would read a mery tale in Bocace." John Elmer, the future Bishop of London, was her kind and gentle tutor (Ascham 1571: 11r - 12 v).

None of the three names of learned women that I have proposed in this section seem to me a fitting candidate for the unknown lady mentioned by Hanmer, and this for the following reasons:

1. Katherine Parr's knowledge of Greek, despite what early enthusiasts might claim, is not to be taken for granted. Hoffman has stated that she "knew little latin and no greek" (Hoffman 1959-60:

¹⁸ Katherine's role in the education of Edward VI was essential (Weinstein 1976: 791-792).

¹⁹ Great-granddaughter of Henry VII of England, reigned as uncrowned queen regnant of the Kingdom of England for nine days in July 1553.

349),²⁰ whereas Weinstein assumes that she “knew Greek a little” (Weinstein 1976: 789). In any case, she might not be able to enjoy the lecture of Hanmer’s manuscripts and even less the other exercises that he proposed. But above all, what is most conclusive to discard her as the woman behind Hanmer’s words is the fact that had she been the lady he was thinking of, there is no reason to explain why Hanmer would have refrained from calling her by name or as the very Queen of England. This would, no doubt, present his book under the most favourable auspices.

2. Very much the same could be said about Elizabeth I, Queen of England at the time Hanmer published her translation and a woman endowed with a solid, albeit rare, knowledge of Greek. Her name does appear elsewhere in the “Dedicatorie” of the translation.

3. Lady Jane Gray also presents a similar case. Her knowledge of Greek is undisputed and she was also (though briefly) Queen of England; Meredith Hanmer might very well have mentioned her name as such. Besides, had she been the lady Hanmer had met, her presence in his translation would have served another purpose: that of favourably contrasting Elizabeth I’s reign against that of her predecessor, Mary Tudor, under which Lady Jane Gray had been executed. In any case, the dates of both Hanmer’s translation (1577) and her death (1554) render the possibility of a “scholarly” interview between the two almost impossible: Hanmer was 11 years old when Lady Jane was executed.

3. Was Mary Basset the *Honorable Ladie of the Lande*?

In this final section I will develop three main lines of argumentation in order to support my claim: Mary Bassett’s knowledge of Greek; the date of Hanmer’s text; his reasons to hide the lady’s identity; and some other considerations.

3.1. *Mary Bassett’s training in Greek*

Mary Roper received all her instruction at home, since her mother tried to educate all her children with the same care and devotion Sir Thomas had shown to his family. Just as Margaret had been the most gifted student in More’s domestic academy, Mary was the best pupil in her mother’s school (Olivares 2007: 67-71). A passage from

²⁰ Hoffman (1959-60: 350-351) adds: “The education that Catherine received as a child quite evidently fell far short of humanist ideals. It included little, if any, Latin and no Greek.”

Nicholas S. Harpsfield's *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More* (1557) well illustrates the importance that the education of her family had for Margaret, even in difficult situations:

To her children she [Margaret] was a double mother, [as] one not content to bring them forth onely into the world, but instructing them also her selfe in vertue and learning. At what time her husbände was vpon a certaine displeasure taken against him in king Henries dayes sent to the towre, certaine sent from the king to searche her house, vpon a sodaine running vpon her, founde her, not puling and lamenting, but full busily teaching her children: whom they, finding nothing astonied with their message, and finding also, beside this her constancie, such grauitie and wisdom in her talke as they litle looked for, were themselues much astonied, and were in great admiration, neyther could afterward speake [too] muche good of her, as partly my selfe haue heard at the mouth of one of them. (Harpsfield 1935: 78/25-79/12)

For the task of educating her children, Margaret also relied on the help of tutors, exactly as her father had done in the happy days of his *schola*. A letter addressed to Mary Roper Clarke by Roger Ascham (15 January 1554), the famous education theorist, shows how Margaret did her best to persuade him to become her children's tutor; she did not succeed, however (Grant 1576: 134v-134r).²¹ The purpose of Ascham's letter was to offer his services to Mary. Free from his obligations to the University, Ascham was at Mary Tudor's²² court and seemed willing to help Mrs Clarke, if only in the absence of the tutors who were already frequenting her house and whose names he gives:

²¹ "It was I who was invited some years ago from the University of Cambridge by your mother, Margaret Roper – a lady worthy of her great father, and of you her daughter – to the house of your kinsman, Lord Giles Alington, to teach you and her other children the Greek and Latin tongues; but at that time no offers could induce me to leave the University. It is sweet to me to bear in mind this request of your mother's," (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12515/12515.txt>). Ascham's Latin letters were collected and published by his friend, Edward Grant, master of Westminster School.

²² Ascham was Latin Secretary to Queen Mary in 1553, a position he was permitted to retain in his profession of Protestantism. It is somewhat extraordinary that though Queen Mary and her ministers were Catholics, Ascham remained in his office and his pension was increased to £20.

Libe[n]ter nu[n]c apud te reuoco, & eiusdem si non perfectione[m], conatum meum tamen aliquem iam in Aula tibi offerrem, nisi ipsam sic & praestares per te doctrina, et abundares etiam opera, cum opus est, duorum doctissimorum virorum, Coli, et Christoforsoni, ut mea opera non indigeas. Sin his perpetuo praesentibus vti non poteris, me aliquando voles, & quoties voles abuteris. (Grant 1576: 134r)²³

In his *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1772), George Ballard (1706-1755)²⁴ claims that, after Ascham's refusal, Margaret managed to find other tutors for her children: a certain Doctor Cole – maybe Henry Cole (ca. 1500-1580), who became Dean of St. Paul's (1556)–;²⁵ John Christopherson (d. 1558), later Master of Trinity College, Cambridge (1553-1558) and Bishop of Chichester (1557-1558), to whom we will shortly return;²⁶ and finally, Mr. John

²³ “and I now not only remind you thereof, but would offer you, now that I am at court, if not to fulfil her wishes, yet to do my best to fulfil them, were it not that you have so much learning in yourself, and also the aid of those two learned men, Cole and Christopherson, so that you need no help from me, unless in their absence you make use of my assistance, and if you like, abuse it” (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12515/12515.txt>). Ascham's mention of the possible absence of the tutors might be a reference to Christopherson's stay in Louvain in the year before; as Hermans reports: “When, writing from Louvain in 1553, Christopherson dedicates his Latin translation of four short works by Philo Judaeus to Trinity College, Cambridge.”

²⁴ George Ballard was a writer, antiquarian, and historian. Early in life he developed a reputation for learning. He had a sister with literary interests, and this may have influenced the composition of his best-known work, the *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752), which contains biographies of 64 learned and literary women from the Middle Ages to his own day. His work is considered a major source of information about educated women of the past, and has been extensively used by biographers and anthologists since the 18th century. For a modern edition of this text, see Ruth Perry ed. (1985) *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

²⁵ Henry Cole was educated at Winchester and New College, Oxford. At first he conformed to the Protestant religion but afterwards returned to the Catholic Faith about 1547, and eventually resigned all his preferments. In Mary's reign he became Archdeacon of Ely, a canon of Westminster (1554), vicar-general of Cardinal Pole (1557), and a judge of the archiepiscopal Court of Audience. During Elizabeth's reign he remained true to the Catholic Faith and took part in the discussions begun at Westminster in 1559. He was committed to the Tower (20 May, 1560), and finally removed to the Fleet (10 June), where he remained for nearly twenty years, until his death.

²⁶ John Christopherson (d. 1558), later Master of Trinity College, Cambridge (1553-1558) and Bishop of Chichester (1557-1558), was also Mary's chaplain and confessor. Christopherson died less than a month after Elizabeth I's coronation in 1558, and spent his last days under house-arrest for his outspoken Catholicism. His reputation both as a scholar and a staunch Catholic in the days of Mary Tudor outlived him.

Morwen (fl. 1533 - 1560).²⁷ Since she had no children from her first marriage, the reputed English educationist was therefore offering himself as tutor for Mary, a way to fulfil in a certain way Margaret Roper's invitation: "Libe[n]ter nu[n]c apud te reuoco, & eiusdem si non perfectione[m], conatum meum tamen aliquem iam in Aula tibi offerrem."²⁸ Contrasting Ascham's letter with Ballard's testimony we have to assume also that Christopherson and Cole had been Mary's childhood tutors and still were so in 1554. John Morwen (or Morren),²⁹ the third name in Ballard's account, was also Mary's tutor as a child, but Ascham does not mention him, probably because he was not with her any more. A prominent Oxford scholar, of Corpus Christi College, Morwen was Reader in Greek. According to James K. McConica (1963: 49), he taught John Jewel, the eminent Elizabethan divine, and Mary, daughter of the Ropers. Ballard adds a relevant detail: so pleased was Morwen with Mary's Greek and Latin compositions, that he translated some of them into English (Hogrefe 1959: 207).

To some extent, it is possible to figure out the main lines along which Mary was taught the art of translation, especially from Greek. Among the three names mentioned in the previous paragraph, John Christopherson stands out as one of the most prominent Greek scholars at the time.³⁰ Therefore it does not take a great stretch of the imagination to assume that Mary Bassett received a good and solid training in Greek and, therefore, would be more than able to enjoy Hanmer's "lecture and other exercises agreeable" (Hanmer 1577: iii v).

²⁷ Quoted from Hogrefe (1959: 207). Though Hogrefe follows Ballard in stating that Cole and Christopherson were Mary's childhood tutors, she adds that it "seems impossible, within the limits of this [Ballard's] work, to vouch for all his details" (1959: 207, n. 7).

²⁸ "and I now not only remind you thereof, but would offer you, now that I am at court, if not to fulfil her wishes, yet to do my best to fulfil them" (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12515/12515.txt>).

²⁹ John Morwen was Prebend of Weldland (St Paul's) (1558-1560). He held a number of livings in the diocese of London. He was deprived of them in 1560 and ended his career imprisoned by Elizabeth for preaching in favour of the Mass.

³⁰ The number of pages he wrote is enormous. Leaving aside the only original Greek academic play written in the Early Modern period, *Jephthah*, Christopherson translated into Latin Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *De vita Constantini*, as well as other Church histories also written in Greek. He had also translated four books by the Greek-speaking Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus (15-10 b.C. - 45-50 A.D.).

3.2. *The genesis and time setting of Hanmer's translation*

At this point, I would like to make one brief initial consideration about the time setting of Hanmer's translation. On the one hand, I would tentatively take the date of Mary's death (March 20, 1572) and, therefore her last years, as the *terminus ab quo* in the gestation of the translation; on the other, the date when Hanmer signed his *dedicatorie* (September 1, 1576) as its *terminus ad quem*. We do not know when he began his translation, but certainly it would take him a few years to complete "so great as enterprise in hand" (Hanmer 1577: iii v), one to be achieved only with "tedious study and infinite toyle and labour" (Hanmer 1577: iii v). Thus, if the occasion for his decision to set upon such a time-absorbing task was Hanmer's interviews with a certain lady, these meetings (one has to assume) would not have taken place in the recent past. This supposition is further confirmed by the use of the verbs in the simple past tense (*moued, read, thought*), and not in the present perfect tense, which he consistently uses at the end of his *dedicatorie* to Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln. In light of all this, the date of Mary Bassett's death seems to fit with the early genesis of Hanmer's translation.

Another detail leads us to assume a many-year-long process before the completion of the work. Though printed in one single volume, Hanmer's massive translation contained: 10 books by Eusebius; 7 by Socrates Scholasticus; 6 by Euagrius Scholasticus; Dorotheus Bishop of Tyrus' account of the lives of the prophets, the apostles and 70 disciples; a chronology by Hanmer; and, finally, "a copious index of the principall matters" (1577: i v).

3.3. *The reasons for a veiled identity*

Another argument that supports my claim is, precisely, that the name of the lady is nowhere revealed. Hanmer considered that to disclose her identity would place him in an embarrassing situation, especially if the referred woman was not viewed under a favourable light in the new court, neither by Queen Elizabeth nor by the addressee of his *dedicatorie*. Retha M. Warnicke provides relevant information about the censorship that Elizabeth and her court imposed on the first (or Pre-Reformation) generation (Warnicke 1983: 31-46) of women humanists:

The divorce of Catherine of Aragon, which was soon followed by the execution of Sir Thomas More and the persecution of his family, brought public disrepute to the women humanists of the first

generation. It became unfashionable at court, or indeed elsewhere, to praise the accomplishments of Margaret Roper and her sisters, of Margaret Clement, or even of the Princess [sic] Mary, whose royal title was transferred to her half-sister, Elizabeth. (Warnicke 1983: 91)

What I am suggesting is that Hanmer did not give Mary's name for she was known to be not only a Catholic, but also the granddaughter of Thomas More, executed for treason by Queen Elizabeth I's father. After the death of Mary I, the tide was again low for the Mores and, certainly, it might not be appropriate to mention her name in a *dedicatorie* addressed to a woman so well connected to the Royal court: Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln, was intimate friend of Queen Elizabeth, as well as the wife of a member of the Queen's Privy Council. Besides, it is startling to check how both Mary Bassett and Elizabeth, Countess of Lincoln, held to some extent similar positions within their royal courts. In 1599 Ro. Ba. stated that "shee [Mary Bassett] her selfe was one of the maides of honour" (Ro. Ba. 1950: 149/8-9). Even more, in 1557 (still during Mary Basset's life time) Nicholas S. Harpsfield's *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas More* (1557) referred that James Bassett was at the service of the Queen, as one of the "Soueraines Queene Maries priuie chamber" (Harpsfield 1935: 83/8-9). In a sense, to put it in an odd way, Mary might be said to be Elizabeth's *alter ego* in Mary I's court.

Still another detail might support my claim. In "The Translator unto the Christian reader" that follows the dedicatory, Hanmer shows that he was well aware of all the translations of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* prior to his, for he mentions all of them but Mary Clarke's.³¹ This omission is quite meaningful, for I think that Hanmer surely knew (of) this work. Mary's translation, although never published, was not a private or domestic document. It is preserved nowadays since, as stated in the first section of MS. Harleian 1860, it was addressed to *the Lady Maryes Grace*, that is, the Princess Mary Tudor, who was crowned in 1553. Accordingly, in the "Historical Notes" to Harpsfield's text, R.W. Chambers writes that the translation was finished under Edward VI (1537-1553) and dedicated to "the Lady Mary"; he further argues that it was "apparently the presentation copy actually given to the Princess

³¹ Hanmer was very well informed. Reference is made to Rufinus, including Beatus Rhenanus' opinion; Epiphanius Scholasticus and Joachimus Camerarius' judgement; Wolfgang Musculus, followed by Edward Godsalfus' censure and Iacobus Grynaeus' corrections; finally, reference is made to John Christopherson's (1577: iiii).

Mary.”³² Hallett also states that the translation was presented to the future Queen (1941: xii-xiii). It must be inferred from this that the work was finished before 1553, the year of Edward’s death, while Mary Tudor was not yet Queen of England. However, Reed writes that the MS preserved in the British Library is the presentation copy given to Queen Mary (in Ro. Ba. 1950: 327-328, 149/9-10). This might be a slight confusion,³³ but not necessarily. In fact, both views might not be contradictory: Mary Clarke probably finished her dedicated translation before 1553 and presented it to Mary, only when she was Queen of England. Be that as it may, are we to believe that this document passed unnoticed to Hanmer?

3.4. Other considerations

At this point, readers might wonder why Hanmer, a supporter of the new Anglican Church might make reference to the granddaughter of a well known *papist*, and a *papist* herself. E.E. Reynolds, the Morean scholar, conveniently warned us against “too great a simplification of the problems people had to face at that time. We tend to see a straightforward conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism. Those who lived through the religious turmoil of that period must have been often more bewildered than enlightened” (Reynolds 1960: 117). This he writes when reporting that, some time after Thomas More’s death, her daughter Margaret – Mary’s mother – tried to persuade Roger Ascham to tutor her children. He was a supporter of reformers and never concealed his sympathies (Reynolds 1960: 116-117), and yet, Margaret thought of him as the best teacher for her children.

It is nonetheless true that things had gone worse between Catholics and Protestants after Edward’s and *Bloody* Mary’s reigns, but some details do confirm that religious differences, as long as they were not tainted by political interests, personal vengeance or treason plots, were not in themselves motifs of hatred. Ascham himself was Latin Secretary to Queen Mary in 1553, a position he was permitted to retain in his profession of Protestantism. Hanmer’s words about John Christopherson also illustrate my point. The latter’s reputation as staunch Catholic and learned scholar is behind Hanmer dispassionate and balanced comment on the worth of his

³² Chambers in Harpsfield (1935: 332, 83/12-17). See also McCutcheon (1987: 451).

³³ This seems to be the case for he refers to Harpsfield and Hallett as his sources (Reed in Ro. Ba. 1950: 327-328, 149/9-10).

work, without entering into any value judgement or criticism either on Christopherson or his beliefs: "(as for his religion I refere it to God and to himselfe, who by this time knoweth vwhether he did well or no) a great Clarke, also a learned interpretour, he hathe translated passing well" (Hanmer 1577: iiiii r).

Mary Bassett, it seems, could not finish her translation of Eusebius and the other Greek Church historians. I do think Meredith Hanmer, once more, was thinking of her when he wrote:

As I am given to translate (good Christian reader) there have bene divers which attempted to translate these auncient Ecclesiastical histories, yet have geven over their purpose, partly being discouraged with the diversitie and corruption of Greeke copies, and partly being dismayed with the crookedness of Eusebius stile, which is by reason of his unperfect allegations, and last of all, beinge whollie overcome with the tedious study and infinite toyle and labour. (Hanmer 1577: iiiii v)

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- Bishop of Caesarea in Palaestina VVrote 10 Bookes. Socrates Scholasticus of Constantinople VVrote 7 Bookes. Euagrius Scholasticus of Antioch VVrote 6 Bookes. VVhereunto is Annexed Dorotheus Bishop of Tyrus, of the Liues of the Prophetes, Apostles and 70 Disciples. All Which Authors are Faithfully Translated out of the Greeke Tongue by Meredith Hanmer, Maister of Arte and Student in Diuinitie. Last of All Herein is Contayned a Profitable Chronographie Collected by the Sayd Translator, the Title Whereof is to Be Seene in the Ende of this Volume, with a Copious Index of the Principall Matters throughout all the Histories. By Thomas Vautroullier dwelling in the Blackefriers by Ludgate. London.*
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Spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's first editions: evidence from the Second Quarto and First Folio versions of *Romeo and Juliet*

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study on spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's first editions. Though certainly not central in literature, in which the orthography of Shakespeare's texts has been considered mainly as an authorial and chronological test or as a tool for textual or phonological reconstruction, this issue deserves attention. An appraisal of the degree of spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's first editions, which we know incomplete, may (i) contribute to a description of the standardisation of the English spelling system, generally allocated to the Early Modern period but still presenting important lacunae; (ii) provide a better knowledge of the spelling habits and variation patterns in Shakespeare's first editions, thereby lessening the difficulties involved in the use of digital versions of those texts; (iii) supply a background against which to appraise the alleged manipulation of spelling for stylistic purposes in the Renaissance period, namely the use of visual rhymes and of spelling variants.

Assuming standardisation as a trend towards uniformity, this analysis concentrates on two different Renaissance editions of *Romeo and Juliet* and identifies a significant degree of orthographic regularity in the corpus considered, thus contradicting expectations raised by most references so far.

KEYWORDS: spelling, standardisation, Shakespeare, linguistic variation, Early Modern English

1. Introduction

Though not central in either historical linguistics or Shakespearean studies, which tend to assume orthography merely as a means to register speech, spelling and its standardisation are certainly not new to these research areas.

In fact, as evidence required for language reconstruction, past spelling practices have been treated in literature since the advent of English philology; furthermore, as Gómez Soliño stresses (1985a: 81), the rising of Standard English is a classic issue in the history of the language, and so far the approach to this question has privileged writing and, in particular, spelling (Rissanen 1999: 134, Wright 2000: 2).

Within Shakespearean studies, spelling has been considered not only for purposes of textual reconstruction (e.g.: Hinman 1963), as an authorial and chronological test (as suggested and mentioned by Pollard 1923), and as a tool for phonological reconstruction (e.g.: Cercignani 1981), but also, though less frequently, described for its own sake (e.g.: Partridge 1954, 1964; Blake 2002); and such allusions make it very clear that the spelling of Shakespeare's first editions was far from uniform. As is well known, even the First Folio, which is the product of a fairly careful enterprise by Heming and Condell, was found to be set in print by at least five compositors imposing on the text different spelling systems (Blake 2002: 7). Charlton Hinman has shown, for instance, that what he identifies as compositor A preferred the spellings *doe*, *goe*, *here*, *griefe*, *traytor*, *young*, *Ulysses* or *Troian*, while the so-called compositor B preferred the forms *do*, *go*, *heere*, *greefe*, *traitor*, *yong*, *Ulysses* and *Troyan*.

In spite of this background, spelling standardisation and its status in Shakespeare's first editions seem to deserve further investigation. In the first place, because descriptions of both the history of English spelling and of the standardisation of the language, of which orthographic regularisation is part and symptom, still present important lacunae.

In fact, despite diffuse treatment of orthography in traditional literature, references on the history of some graphemes (e.g.: Grosse 1937), various and important work on the spelling of particular words (e.g.: *The Oxford English Dictionary*; Hinman 1948), authors (e.g.: Byrne 1923, Partridge 1964, Samuels 1988 [1983], Diemer 1998), printers (e.g.: Fisher 1996 [1984], Aronoff 1989, Gómez Soliño 1985b, Salmon 1989), texts (e.g.: Partridge 1954; McLaughlin 1963, Blake 1965, Rutkowska 2000) and dialects (e.g.: Fisher 1996 [1977], 1979; McIntosh, Samuels and Benskin eds. 1986), and even three books especially dedicated to the history of English spelling (Vallins 1954, Scragg 1974, Bourcier 1978), approaches to the subject have been too circumscribed and/or flawed by the urge to justify the eccentric relationship between writing and speech in English (e.g.: Craigie

1927, Vallins 1954), the instrumental value of spelling for phonological reconstruction (e.g.: Jespersen 1909) and the reigning lack of interest in writing since Saussurean times (e.g.: Scragg 1974). The need for a new history of English orthography has even been explicitly stated by Bliss (1975: 511) and, more recently, Görlach (1995: 5).¹

The same can be said of the standardisation of English. Despite strong renewed interest on the subject (cf. for instance Gómez Soliño 1984 and Wright ed. 2000), recent research has not yet been able to compensate for the traditional focus on the sources of Standard English, a still ongoing debate, and, in particular, for the apparent acceptance of the emergence of that variety as a linear process taking place in the Early Modern (henceforward EMod) period.²

As a consequence of the lacunae identified in previous paragraphs, the description of the standardisation of English orthography is still very incomplete. In fact, the exact characteristics of the system that turned standard are not known for sure and tend to be confused with the present ones; different opinions on those responsible for its emergence as a model – i.e. printers or linguistic authorities – still remain; the standard spelling's diffusion along geographical, sociolinguistic and stylistic continua is largely to map; and last but not least, a contradictory chronology is attributed to that phenomenon. In fact, a search for this apparently simple piece of information in literature reveals that, though generally situated in Early Modern English (henceforward EModE), different references situate the standardisation of English orthography at different moments of that period; and some authors even give different dates for its occurrence in the very same text. That is the conclusion we can draw from the table below, which summarizes information collected from various sources.³

¹ In fact, Scragg (1974), still the most comprehensive reference on the history of English spelling, concentrates on the external history of its subject, which has given rise to severe criticism in literature, namely by Bliss (1975) and Salmon (1976). For a thorough appraisal of the histories of English spelling see Kniezsa (1992).

² Cf. Wright, 1996 and 2000, for a discussion of the issues involved in the description of the standardisation of English and their unsatisfactory treatment in literature.

³ Italics mark references presenting contradictory information on the chronology of spelling standardisation.

15th century	16th century	17th century			18th century
		early	middle	late	
Orcutt (1929: 39) Bühler (1960: 5) Pei (1967: 50)			Potter (1950: 71) Partridge (1964: 2)		Vallins (1954: 7, 16)
		<i>Scragg (1974: 55)</i>	<i>Scragg (1974: 68)</i> Bregelman (1980: 334)	<i>Scragg (1974: 80)</i>	Strang (1970: 107) Bourcier (1978: 129) Leith (1983: 34) Freeborn (1992: 196)
	Fernández (1993: 87)		<i>Görlach (1991: 48)</i> <i>Knowles (1997: 102)</i>	<i>Görlach (1991: 46)</i> Blake (1996: 11) <i>Knowles (1997: 124)</i> Salmon (1999: 32)	

Table 1. Chronology of spelling standardisation

As evidenced by the table, the time-span referred to is long. And though the inclusion of the fifteenth century is no longer a valid suggestion but a mere service to exhaustiveness, we are left with three centuries as possible moments for the standardisation of English spelling. This is surely a symptom of the need for further research, which is particularly true as far as descriptions of the spelling praxis are concerned, both in manuscript texts, for more obvious reasons, and in printed ones.⁴

That is probably why we can find recent research on or connected to the subject, namely by Gómez Soliño (in particular 1981, 1984, 1986), Sönmez (1993), Rodríguez (1999), Hernández-Campoy and Conde Silvestre (1999), Conde Silvestre, Hernández-Campoy and Pérez Salazar (2000) and Taavitsainen (2000). Gómez Soliño analyses the vertical diffusion of the emerging standard in printed and manuscript texts produced from 1470 to 1540; Sönmez assesses spelling standardisation in late seventeenth century as shown in manuscript and printed texts by the same author; Rodríguez observes the extension of written practices of the Chancery to private correspondence written in the late fifteenth century (part of the Paston Letters); Hernández-Campoy, Conde Silvestre and Pérez Salazar develop similar work on some of the Cely, Paston and Stonor Letters, dated from 1424 to 1490, and try to

⁴ In her recent chapter on EModE spelling and punctuation included in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, Salmon sustains that “there is (...) no (...) detailed account of the gradual introduction of standard spelling in printed books” (1999: 55).

map the social diffusion of written variants typical of Chancery English; and finally Taavitsainen observes the extension of Chancery and Central Midland spelling practices to medical texts written from 1375 to 1550.

Despite their undeniable importance for the study of spelling standardisation, the references just mentioned are not enough. Most of them limit themselves to only a few variables;⁵ and all of them concentrate on either the beginning or the end of the EMod period and never consider its central decades, which may have played a crucial role in the standardisation of English spelling. This is one of the reasons to consider Shakespeare's first editions in the particular perspective of spelling standardisation – those texts are certainly an important sample of the printed production of those times.

But lacunae in the description of the history of English orthography and standardisation are not the single motives to engage in a study on spelling regularisation. A second and no less central reason is the importance acquired by past spelling practices with the advent of electronic textual reproduction and analysis. In fact, access to original spelling editions, which are certainly to prefer, has become widespread; but so have automatic searches on such corpora, which are, almost fatally, based on graphic forms. Historical orthography has therefore ceased to be the interest of the specialist alone and turned into a tool required by all those who no longer dispense with electronic aids for their analysis of textual material: they have to be aware of the patterns and variation tendencies they can encounter. An appraisal of the degree of spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's first editions will therefore lessen the difficulties involved in the use of the "more original" versions of such fundamental texts.

Last but not least, such a study may supply a background against which to assess the alleged manipulation of spelling for stylistic purposes in the Renaissance period. This is a tendency mentioned in some references, namely the use of visual rhymes (Wrenn 1943: 34ff) and the resource to spelling variants as a means

⁵ Gómez Soliño, Conde Silvestre *et al.* and Taavitsainen consider the graphic representation(s) of a limited set of words (ca. twenty), chosen because of their use in the LALME (*Language Atlas of Late Medieval English*); Rodríguez considers a similar sample of functional and lexical words, to which she adds some morphemes and grapheme clusters; the most detailed analysis is Sönmez's, which contemplates bound morphemes, graphemes and some other graphical devices (i.e. apostrophe, hyphen, capitalization, macron, paragraph, blank space, abbreviation, etc.).

to enact the metamorphic style then in vogue (Adamson 1999: 555). But both claims seem at least problematic: the concept of visual rhymes appears to involve that of a fixed orthography, which is far from certain in EModE; and the deliberate resource to graphic variants for stylistic reasons implies the existence of standard spelling patterns, which are still to identify.

Since they were devoted to stating the motives to consider spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's texts, previous paragraphs were not clear as to what is meant by *standardisation*. In this article, it is understood as the process resulting in the implementation of a linguistic standard, conceived as a "written variety varying minimally in form and maximally in function, whose norms are codified in grammars and dictionaries" (Kytö and Romaine 2000: 189).

In the particular plan of spelling, and since there were already prescriptive instruments in EModE – not only spelling books but also a major reference like Mulcaster's *Elementarie* (1582) –, the study of spelling standardisation in Shakespeare's texts seems to require the contemplation of the following aspects of their orthography:

- (i) its degree of uniformity and/or variation;
- (ii) its conformity to potential coeval models;
- (iii) its similarity to the present spelling of English; and finally
- (iv) the possible inclusion of future regionalisms that still permeate some sixteenth century texts.⁶

Considering all these issues at once would be too demanding. Points (i) and (iii) seem most urgent, as their results can be of service to the use of digital versions of Shakespeare's first editions. So, and given the existence of spread information and a concise description of the most important differences between the present spelling and that of Shakespeare's time by Blake (2002: 30-33), this article focuses on the degree of spelling uniformity and/or variation in those texts.

This aim will be approached via an electronically supported quantitative study. Its precise goal is to determine the relative weight of words with variant and invariant spelling in Shakespeare's first editions. Though a simple way of assessing spelling standardisation, it is also an expectedly effective one (Görlach 1999: 4).

⁶ This tendency was empirically attested by Gómez Soliño in research mentioned above (e.g. 1981).

2. Corpus

The corpus considered in this study is a sample of Shakespeare's first editions, since it would be impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to attend to all of them. It is composed of two Renaissance editions of *Romeo and Juliet*, namely (i) a copy of the Second Quarto, dated 1599, and (ii) a copy of the First Folio, published in 1623. Both these texts were collected in digital format from the site of the *Internet Shakespeare Editions*, prepared and maintained by the University of Victoria, Canada. They were transferred into word processor documents by means of a simple copy and paste procedure. Since the *Internet Shakespeare Editions* present each scene of each version separately, such sections were selected one by one in the original files, and then pasted into two documents, one per version. The final documents were saved as simple text files, the format required by the analytical software adopted, namely Mike Scott's *Wordsmith Tools*.

The choice of this sample from the extensive list of Shakespeare's writings was not random. It seemed advisable to avoid a poem, since spelling may be too constrained by stylistic factors in poetry;⁷ and within plays, *Romeo and Juliet* seems to present some advantages. In fact, it includes various styles – rhymed verse, blank verse and prose; it presents a medium length (990 lines); it is available, in the source mentioned, in various EMod editions, thereby providing evidence also on the chronological progress of spelling standardisation; and, finally, it was printed in both one (Second Quarto) and two (First Folio) columns, thus allowing for a control of the alleged increase of spelling variation in double column

⁷ This possibility is explicitly mentioned by Puttenham in *The Arte of English Poesie* (Bk. III, Ch. 1, *apud* Blake 1996: 230-232):

A Word as he lieth in course of language is many wayes figured and thereby not a little altered in sound, which consequently alters the tune and harmonie of a meeter as to the eare. And this alteration is sometimes by *adding* sometimes by *rabbating* of a sillable or letter to or from a word either in the beginning, middle and ending ioyning or vnioyning of sillables and letters suppressing or confounding their seuerall soundes, or by misplacing of a letter, or by cleare exchaunge of one letter for another, or by wrong ranging of the accent. [...] These many wayes may our maker alter his wordes, and sometimes it is done for pleasure to give a better sound, sometimes vpon necessitie, and to make vp the rime. But our maker must take heed that he be not to bold specially in exchange of one letter for another, for vnlesse vsuall speach and custome allow it, it is a fault and no figure.

texts due to an also double need of line-justification (Pollard 1923: 5-6).

The two texts considered amount to a total of 50,270 words – 25,234 from the Second Quarto and 25,036 from the First Folio.

3. Methodology

This study intends to assess spelling standardisation in Renaissance editions of Shakespeare's works by determining the relative weight of graphic words with variant and invariant spelling in a sample of those texts.

But the choice of the graphic word as the basic unit for analysis is not self-evident: English is known to use a mixed spelling system, in which graphic units represent either phonemes, morphemes or words. For instance, the letter <a> regularly stands for the diphthong [ei] (e.g. *lady*) or the vowel [æ] (e.g. *lad*); but the sequence <ed> at the end of verbal forms represents the preterite morpheme, variously pronounced as [d] as in *mowed*, [t] as in *packed* or [ɪd] as in *started*, and *knight* is a graphic form not obviously divisible into shorter units and that should be considered as a whole representing a lexical item. In Aronoff's words (1989: 96),

A competent modern English speller must be aware of individual sounds, individual words (inasmuch as a majority of common words have peculiar spellings), individual morphemes (the spelling of most affixes is morphologically determined), classes of sounds (mostly in the use of silent *e* and consonant doubling to mark differences in vowel length and stress) and classes of words (especially those which are related by morphophonological rules).

This type of writing system was, according to the same author, already in existence by the time of Wynkyn de Worde, the famous second generation printer who died ca. 1534. A study of EModE spelling contemplating simply words is therefore incomplete from the start.

However, alternative choices would be unwise: considering phonemes would imply phonological reconstructions requiring decisions that would largely surpass the scope of this research; and taking into account morphemes would involve the segmentation of complex lexical items, which would be unnecessarily time-consuming. The graphic word seemed therefore to be the best

variable to attend to and so it is the object of the study described below.⁸

The analysis of the two versions considered, which were always treated as autonomous texts, proceeded along the five following steps:

(i) Generation of a list of all the graphic forms in each text. This was produced automatically, namely by the *WordList* program included in *Wordsmith Tools*.

(ii) Edition of the word list mentioned above, from which had to be excluded several items initially identified by *Wordsmith Tools*. Such exclusions are composed of the following items:

(a) Forms appearing only once in the text and with no identified variant, since they were invalid evidence for a study on spelling uniformity – e.g. *accident*.

(b) Proper names, which were excluded because of their well-known spelling variability in EModE, as seems to have happened with Shakespeare's name itself – e.g. *Romeo*.

(c) Abbreviations. These correspond in most cases to characters' names, but include other sporadic elements – e.g. *lul*, for Juliet; *coz*, for cousin.

(d) Interjections, given their onomatopaeic roots – e.g. *ah*, *o*.

(e) A few foreign words used in the text – e.g. *passado*.

(f) Obvious misprints, i.e. graphic forms pointing to a pronunciation which we know for sure did not exist at that time – e.g. *couragi*.

(g) Items graphically represented as one word in the corpus but corresponding to separate Present English (henceforward PresE) words. The major reason for their exclusion is that it was impossible to control the use of multiword variants of the same element. Possible examples are *yfaith* and *almaner*.

(h) Incomplete words appearing in different lines but assembled by a hyphen in the original. The reason for this exclusion was the fact that *Wordsmith Tools* interpret them as separate words – e.g.: *daugh* and *ters* from *daugh-ters*.

(i) Problematic graphic forms known to represent different PresE words according to respectable references. The forms in

⁸ It should be stressed that the choice of the word as the basic unit for an analysis of English orthography is supported by past research – not only by random studies on historical orthography (e.g. Aronoff 1989, Gómez Soliño 1997, Diemer 1998, Rodríguez 1999, Conde Silvestre *et al.* 2000), but also by one of the most important descriptions of the PresE writing system, i.e. Carney (1994).

question are: *I*, because it could represent either the personal pronoun or *yes*; *a*, which represented both the indefinite article and the weak form of the personal pronoun *he*; and finally *to* and *too* and *of* and *off*, still undistinguished.

This long list of categories of excluded graphic forms obviously led to an important reduction of the material considered. The impact of such a reduction can be appreciated in the following table, which presents the number of words and graphic forms originally contained by each text and those that were kept for analysis.

Edition	Words		Graphic Forms	
	Original	Kept	Original	Kept
Second Quarto	25,234	20,481	4,082	1,916
First Folio	25,036	19,222	3,973	1,845

Table 2. Number of words and graphic forms identified and kept for analysis

(iii) Preparation of a database, in *Microsoft Excel*, including the graphic forms from originals kept for research, their absolute frequency and their PresE equivalent. The PresE equivalent was added because it could be used as a tool to automatically assemble and count the different graphic forms of the same word by means of Excel *Sort* and *Subtotals* functions. Supplying such an equivalent was however not always an easy task, since some words were difficult to interpret. Whenever in doubt, the Oxford edition of the play was consulted.

(iv) Identification of the number of graphic variants per word with the help of Excel *Sort* and *Subtotals* functions.

(v) Retrieval of quantitative information from the database by means of Excel's *Automatic Filters*.

4. Conclusions

Information resulting from the analytical steps described above is summarized in Table 3 below. It presents the distribution of words in the two editions of *Romeo and Juliet* considered in the study per number of spelling variants:

Number of spelling variants	Second Quarto (1599)			First Folio (1623)		
	fi ⁹	fri (%) ¹⁰	e.g.	fi	fri (%)	e.g.
1	1237	79,1	<i>aboord</i>	1300	83,2	<i>abbey</i>
2	306	19,6	<i>chäber, chamber</i>	243	15,6	<i>aduan'ced, aduan'st</i>
3	18	1,2	<i>musick, musicke, musique</i>	17	1,1	<i>deule, deu'le, diuell</i> (PresE <i>devil</i>)
4	2	0,1	<i>apothacarie, apothecarie, apothecary, pothecarie</i>	2	0,1	<i>daew, deaw, dew, dewe</i>
5	1	0,1	<i>cosen, cousin, couzen, cozen, cozin</i>	---	---	---
Total	1564	100		1562	100	

Table 3. Distribution of words per number of spelling variants

These data allow for some comments and conclusions.

In the first place, results on the Quarto (1599) and Folio (1623) editions are extremely similar. Despite a lexical item with a total of 5 spelling variants only in the 1599 edition, numbers are quite alike in all cells. This implies that:

(i) The first quarter of the seventeenth century has played only a minor role in spelling standardisation.

(ii) Unlike suggestions made in literature, two column pages, as those of the First Folio, are not a necessary cause for spelling variation within the same text, despite their stronger demand for line-justification. This does not mean that text layout is without consequences for spelling - the two column First Folio makes a much more frequent use of the apostrophe than the Second Quarto version, printed in a single column; but the degree of spelling variation within the same text does not seem to be affected by that feature of text lay-out.¹¹

A second note to make is that the number of spelling variants identified for the same word is quite modest. It reaches 5 in the Second Quarto and 4 in the First Folio; but the number of words with such graphic variability is almost negligible. These data can therefore appease researchers who fear to ignore too many graphic

⁹ Absolute frequency.

¹⁰ Relative frequency.

¹¹ Statistics produced by *Wordsmith Tools* identify 377 apostrophes in the First Folio against only 34 in the Second Quarto.

representations of a lexical item when searching a digital and original spelling edition of Shakespeare's plays.

Last but not least, the numbers presented above show that the percentage of lexical items with an invariant spelling in the corpus considered amount to ca. 80% - 79,1% in the Second Quarto and 83,2% in the First Folio. Even though a full appreciation of this number would require a comparison with parallel studies on previous and later texts of the same type, it is a significant conclusion. In fact, expectations raised in literature are quite different – to state just a few examples, Partridge considers the existence, in Renaissance times, of “perhaps, a *sensus communis* or common denominator of correct usage [i.e. writing] (...) but very small and obvious” (1954: 36); and Brengelman (1980: 345) sustains that at the end of the sixteenth century most English words admitted at least two graphic variants. The empirical data just discussed denounce, on the contrary, that spelling standardisation was already significant by the end of the sixteenth century.

This conclusion is not only an important advancement as far as the history of spelling standardisation is concerned, but also a reference for analysts of digital editions of Shakespeare's texts and an empirical confirmation that English spelling already supported, at this moment of its history, the stylistic manipulation mentioned before.

The high percentage of words with invariant spelling is also a characteristic that *Romeo and Juliet's* editions share with the almost contemporary Authorised Version of the Bible, which was considered in another study developed along similar lines (Queiroz de Barros 2003). It is therefore a proof that such degree of spelling standardisation in the early seventeenth century is not confined to a special text as the Bible and, in particular, its Authorised Version.

It should finally be stressed that the data collected allow and indeed require further investigation, namely on the interference of style over spelling variation and especially on the nature of the spelling patterns permeating the corpus considered.

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Thou'rt a strange Fillee: a possible source for 'y-tensing' in seventeenth-century Lancashire dialect?

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I discuss and illustrate a possible source for word-final [i] in seventeenth-century Lancashire *fillee* – PdE *fellow* – drawing from the orthographical representation of dialectal speech made by Thomas Shadwell in *The Lancashire Witches and Tegue O Divelly the Irish Priest: a Comedy* (1682). Although this sample of study does not exactly fit into Wells' (1982) 'y-tensing' categories, it seems to evidence a tense pronunciation of unstressed /ɪ/. I will examine, therefore, the phonological reasons that attest [i] in this particular example, as well as the deviant spelling that apparently points at such a regionalism. Also, a general survey of the use of dialect in Early Modern English literature and its potential for linguistic research is made.

KEYWORDS: 'y-tensing,' Early Modern English dialectology, Lancashire, literary dialect, Thomas Shadwell

1. Introduction

It is generally accepted that 'y-tensing' is a widespread phonetic feature among many native speakers of English nowadays. The concept of 'happY-tensing' appeared in Wells (1982) for the first time as a means to categorize a set of words containing word-final /ɪ/. He suggested that words such as *coffee* or *happy* revealed an ongoing tendency by means of which final /ɪ/ and /i:/ were identified in certain phonetic contexts.¹ This phonetic interchange of the vowel

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quality has effectively been a current aspect in contemporary Standard English for years, but restricting it to Present-day English (PdE) would be, at least, erroneous since a tense pronunciation of weak /ɪ/ seems to have been present in provincial speech for centuries (Wells 1982: 258).² A great deal of synchronic linguistic research has been devoted to the study and recognition of this feature.³ However, the literature of RP has not paid much attention to the historical phonological grounds which gave way to the emergence of this regional variant. Actually, it is an arduous task to pin them down and even more so as the phonetic character of this vowel is of varying degrees in the different English dialects.

2. Literary dialect and Early Modern English dialectology

The neglect which has traditionally accompanied the study of provincial speech in Early Modern England has posed serious troubles for linguists (Görlach 1988). Any attempt to sketch an insight into the dialectal phonology, morphology, lexis or syntax of the period encounters risky perils which must be seriously considered (García-Bermejo 1999b: 252). Shorrocks (2000) describes in thorough detail some of the most prominent problems surrounding Early Modern English dialectology sources. Gill's (1619) remarks about the six markedly different dialect areas in England, for example, only provide general ideas about northern speech which cannot obviously be regarded as comprehensive in any case. Also, prescriptive comments – Puttenham (1589), Verstegan (1605), etc. – that warned speakers against linguistic corruption and uneducated forms of language disapproved of certain provincialisms

¹ For further information about this phonetic variation in modern Received Pronunciation – RP hereinafter –, see Fabricius (2002); for exceptions to word-final tense [i], see Fabricius (2002: n3). According to Wells (1982ff.) and Roach (2000), the closer or intermediate phonetic quality of the weak high front vowel /ɪ/ is represented by [i]. This phonetic notation will be followed when referring to 'y-tensing.'

² See also Beal (2005) who finds evidence from eighteenth-century sources.

³ Remarkable comments, apart from Wells (1982: 165-166, 257-258; 1997), are those provided by Gimson (1962: §7.10), Hughes & Trudgill (1979: 30-31), Windsor Lewis (1990: 159-167), Ramsaran (1990: 178-190), Fabricius (2002) and Durand (2005), among others. Likewise, Ellis (1969 [1869-1889]: 344) gathers some instances suggestive of [i] in different northern areas. On the other hand, it is surprising that Wright's *English Dialect Grammar* (1905) – *EDG* or *EDG-Index* from now on – does neither include any specific comment on this common regionalism nor on its possible origin and development in English dialects.

that should not be taken as valuable records because they are usually too general and stereotype-oriented. Recent research has proved literary dialects worthy tools in obtaining reliable linguistic data.⁴

It is well known that the ascendancy of a written standard, together with the social consciousness that London English was more refined than other linguistic varieties, namely regional, favoured their use in Renaissance literature. They were primarily conceived as a means of creating stereotypical characters distinguished by rude and vulgar speech. The first recorded instance of a literary portrayal of dialect dates back to the end of the fourteenth century in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Reeve's Tale* and in *The Second Shepherds Play* (c.1430) by The Master of Wakefield. They were soon imitated by poets like Skelton, Spenser or Lydgate. Non-standard language – slang, cant and colloquialisms – became also a frequent object of representation in sixteenth and seventeenth-century prose, in jest-books, broadside ballads, chapbooks and in the fiction of Thomas Deloney. Obviously, dialectalisms were not absent from them. However, it was within the realm of drama that regional speech was optimally exploited not only in literary terms, but also from a linguistic point of view.

South-western archaetypal dialect traits were seldom represented in drama and poetry probably because they were easily recognizable by London audiences.⁵ Northern English and Scots were also present in literary works; nevertheless, they were not usually imbued with hilarious connotations. On the contrary, they furnished dialect passages with local colour and truthfulness owing

⁴ Blank (1989), De la Cruz (1999), García-Bermejo (1997, 1999a, 2002) and Shorrocks (2003, 2004), among others, lend support to the valuable information supplied by the use of dialect in literary texts.

⁵ Eckhardt (1910: §17-§18) comments that "Warum überhaupt die südlichen Dialekte im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert in London als plebejisch galten, ist leicht begreiflich. Im Frühme. hatte die Londoner Mundart einen wesentlich südlichen Charakter. (...) Gegen Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts hatte das Mittelländischen in der Londoner Mundart schon völlig das Uebergewicht erlangt. (...) Ungebildete Personen werden als solche im englischen Drama nicht nur durch ihre südwestliche Mundart, sondern oft auch durch Wortverdrehungen gekennzeichnet." Among the most salient features of south-western speech, playwrights would resort to the voicing of voiceless initial fricatives – /v/ and /z/ instead of /f/ and /s/: *vlinch* or *zhinke* in *Bartholomew Fayre* (1614), for example –, the use of *ich* instead of *I* and the proclitic forms *cham*, *chad*, *chill*, *chould* and *chall*, or the reflex of the OE past participle prefix *ge-* as *i-*. See Eckhardt (1910: §6-§174), Blake (1981: 70-92) and Blank (1996: 69-99) for further information about the plays which include representations of south-western regionalisms.

to their linguistic purity and the close relationship they kept with earlier stages of the English language.⁶

The second half of the seventeenth century was, as regards drama, characterized by a considerably smaller amount of literary examples where dialect traits are attested. The change in the dramatic parametres of Restoration comedy entailed a new object of mockery which no longer needed to be necessarily distinguished by provincial language. Thus, fops, for example, were usually presented with idiolects representative of London fashionable speech.⁷ Nonetheless, there are a few noteworthy examples which have always been tackled in passing, if ever considered. Blake (1981:104-107) only mentions Howard's *The Committee* (1665), together with Thomas Shadwell's *The Lancashire Witches* and Tegue O Divelly the *Irish Priest: a Comedy* (1682), and Vanbrugh's *A Journey to London*, later completed by Cibber under the title *The Provok'd Husband* (1728), as the unique literary instances relying on dialectalisms for specific literary aims. To my knowledge, no linguistic mention has ever been made of important dialect portrayals such as the south-western speech in Thomas Randolph's *Hey for honesty, down with knavery* (1651), or the northern / Scottish traits in John Tatham's *The Scots Figgaries* (1652) and *The Rump* (1660), in Thomas Otway's *The Cheats of Scapin* (1677) or in John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot, or the Taming of the Shrew* (1698).⁸ They contain interesting representations of dialectalisms, especially Tatham's and Lacy's.

With regard to poetry in the latter part of the seventeenth century, broadside ballads represent the most outstanding specimens of literary dialect where regionalisms may be retrieved.

Needless to say, literary dialect can never aspire to absolute accuracy and linguistic transparency. The suggestion of regional pronunciations by means of deviant spellings, for instance, does very

⁶ Just to name a few, in *Cupid's Revenge* (1615) Leucippus comments on Urania's linguistic background: "She was brought up/ I'th' Countrey, as her tongue will let you know" (IV, I: 27). Vxor, in *Fever Pestilence* (1564), answers to Mendicus' information about his Northumberland provenance that "Me thinke thou art a Scot by thy tonge" (6). And in *The Northern Lasse* (1632), Mistress Fitchow lets us know that "shee [Constance] is Northern, and speaks so: for/ she has ever liv'd in the Countrey, till this last weeke, her/ Uncle sent for her up to make her his child, cut of the Bishoprick of *Durham*" (II, I: 15).

⁷ Blake (1981: 100-101) refers to Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) and Vanbrugh's *The Relapse* (1696).

⁸ These ignored specimens of linguistic analysis have been included in the corpus of my doctoral thesis.

often rely on phonetic conventions commonly associated with southern or northern English. As a matter of fact, Blank (1996: 70) mentions that “Literary authors of the period provide a simpler and more schematic map of the regional “difference of English,” recreating dialects that are broadly southern or broadly northern in character.” In spite of this, a thorough analysis of these anomalous spellings so as to gain access to the phonetic realization of such an anomaly lends aid to the reconstruction of the main differences between northern and southern Early Modern English. Furthermore, as it has already been proved, a linguistic comparison between dialect spellings and the accepted orthography of the time does actually give us relevant information about the phonological regional traits intended.⁹

Although it is very seldom assumed that literary dialect belongs to an artistic convention, this imitated or stage dialect provides us with real provincialisms in current use at the time they were represented. Hence, the domain of Early Modern dialectology should undoubtedly benefit from the wealthy corpus of literary works containing such “imitations” in order to give shape to the linguistic reality of the different English counties during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁰

3. Thomas Shadwell and *The Lancashire Witches and Tegue O Divelly the Irish Priest: a Comedy* (1682)¹¹

Born around 1642 at either Broomhill or Stanton Hall, Norfolk, Thomas Shadwell received his early education at home and at the King Edward VI Grammar School, Bury St. Edmunds.¹² He entered Caius College, Cambridge, later became a member of the Middle Temple and studied law. He seems to have travelled on the Continent; he spent some months in Ireland, where his father was

⁹ See García-Bermejo (1999b: 252). Also, consult Blake (1989) about the important role played by editors and printers in the several reprints of Renaissance literary works and the possible emendations made of dialect spellings.

¹⁰ See Kytö & Walker (2003) about the linguistic damage caused by bad data in the study of Early Modern English. Apart from the literary representations of provincial speech, the information contained in glossaries, diaries and private letters is also extremely valuable for evaluating and studying dialects at this time.

¹¹ *LWTD* hereinafter.

¹² Both places were county seats of his father; however, there has been no consensus as to his exact birthplace. John Shadwell, his son, informed that he was born in Stanton Hall, Norfolk.

Recorder of Galway and Attorney General for Connaught between 1665 and 1670.

Not much is known about his early life or family relationships so as to assess with certainty his reasons to use northern dialect forms in two of his comedies or how he learnt about them. A detailed linguistic analysis of his dialect representation in both *LWTD* and *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688) supports the assumption that the playwright had a sound knowledge of northern varieties. Blake (1981: 105) suggests a possible familiarity with the Lancashire dialect since the author presumably kept strong links with the south-eastern city of Chadderton, in the present-day new Metropolitan Borough of Oldham. It is understandable, therefore, that Shadwell managed both northern and north-west Midland traits in these plays with linguistic accuracy. For example, common Midland features as the rounding of OE /a/ due to the phonetic influence exerted by a nasal sound is present in *LWTD* in words like *bonk*, *con*, *conno*, *condle*, *hont*, *Loncashire*, *mon*, *on*, *onny*. The characteristic [i:] sound for words containing PdE RP /aɪ/ is shown by the development of ME /i+çt/ and ME /ɛ:/ in *flee*, *freeghtend*, *leeghts*, *meeghty*, *neegh*, *neeght*, *reeght*, *theegh*. Thirdly, the /-vocalisation process is revealed by *aw*, *awd*, *aw's*, *becaw'd*, *cawd*, *caw'n*, *haud*, *hawd*, *ow* suggestive of an [ɔ:] sound. Typical from Lancashire are also regionalisms like *whoame* and *yead* representative of the /w/- and /j/-formations. Equally typifying northerisms are *warck*, *warks* which point at an [a], etc.

In spite of this, Shadwell seems to be sometimes led by his own linguistic impressions and the symbolization of regionalisms far away from Lancashire are present too. The most outstanding instances of this linguistic detachment in *LWTD* are the phonetic development represented by an [i:] in *feel* – PdE *fell* – which more probably seems to have been common in some areas of Yks. and n. Cum. (EDG: §196, §425). Likewise, the [i:] indicated by *dee'l* – PdE *devil* – is apparently a feature characteristic of Sc., se. and s.Nhb., n.Dur., Cum., Wm. and some areas of n.Der. (EDG: §196), whereas Lancashire's more attested pronunciations are [ɛ], [ɪ] (Orton *et al.* 1963: VIII.8.3) and [ju:] (Brunner 1925: 166). Similarly, the [u] Scottish pronunciation suggested by *ludging* – PdE *lodging*.

Dialect is used for both comic and characterization purposes in the play. Clod, Thomas O George and Thomas Shacklehead reveal their low social status and provenance by means of a series of linguistic features which belong either specifically to Lancashire or to other northern counties. In addition, it moves up the social scale

and dialect is also included in certain passages as a means of stressing Young Hartford's frequent inebriation and clownish behaviour, and in the speech of two minor characters: Mal Spenser and a Clown. Nevertheless, we should bear in mind that Shadwell widens the scope of dialect usage in literature. He uses it also as part of his social criticism. Not only are regionalisms portrayed in an attempt to mock provincial language, but also to emphasize the naivety of dialect characters and Lancashire religious spirit as a whole.¹³

Even though it is widely accepted that *LWTD* was first printed in London in 1682, it was probably written a year earlier (Nicoll 1967: 431). Two extant editions have come down to us from 1682. The second contains a brief mention by Shadwell himself to some errata in the first.¹⁴ The play was later reprinted for Robert Clavell, Jonathan Robinson, Awnsham and John Churchill in London in 1691 under the same title. However, it was changed in a second reprint into *The Lancashire Witches, and Tegue O Divelly the Irish Priest. A Comedy Part the first. The Amorous Bigot, with the Second Part of Tegue O Divelly a Comedy* (1691). In 1736 the original manuscript was republished under the supervision of J. & P. Knapton. In the nineteenth century, Halliwell-Phillipps included it in his 1853 edition of *The Poetry of Witchcraft illustrated by copies of the plays on The Lancashire Witches by Heywood and Shadwell*, of which only eight copies were made and distributed.¹⁵

4. *Fillee* as a source for [i] in seventeenth-century Lancashire?

Any attempt at explaining the historical reasons which prove the emergence of weak-final [i] is undoubtedly a matter of linguistic controversy which cannot stay aloof from criticism. Even though

¹³ Hirschfeld (2000: 351) points out that "Lancashire had long had a place in the popular imagination as a remote, unsophisticated, and superstitious area as well as an undisciplined Catholic breeding ground." About Shadwell's ideology, see Marsden (1995), Rigaud (1985) and Slagle (1992), among others.

¹⁴ This is the edition used for this article.

¹⁵ Due to the linguistic importance that original manuscripts have for studies of this kind, and the impossibility of accessing the first version of *LWTD*, a comparison of all deviant spellings in the second 1682 edition has been made with the orthographical alterations in the other two seventeenth-century available copies. In so doing, I have checked that *fillee* underwent no printing emendation and is, thus, a reliable specimen for linguistic analysis.

diachronic dialectology has always trusted textual evidence as conclusive proof for its many assertions, the analysis of this tense pronunciation cannot rely on written records only. It is of relevance to our topic to notice that the acoustic perspective cannot be obviated in the study of this regionalism. So much so that the historical phonological review of [i] should also contain an auditory report in order to characterize it with full phonetic precision.¹⁶ However, the absence of oral records or tapescripts from the end of the seventeenth century restricts the accuracy which might be expected in a study of this kind.

4.1. Phonological analysis

PdE *fellow* originated as the Old Norse compound *félagi* which was introduced in OE as *fēolaga*. During the ME period, the unstressed syllable *-we* underwent different phonetic changes. Dobson (1967:§295) accounts for either the development of a back glide-vowel /o/ before the *w*, or a process through which /w/ was vocalized to /u/ after final /e/ became silent in late ME. With regard to the former, /w/ was also vocalized to /u/ and joined the glide-vowel forming the diphthong /-ou/ < /-ow/. As far as the latter is concerned, /-u/ < /-w/ was identified with original ME /u/; thus, /-we/ > /-wə/ > /-u/. Both forms coexisted in ME. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) gathers *felaw(e)*, *felow(e)* from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, and *fala*, *fela* from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. Similarly, *The Linguistic Atlas of late Mediaeval English* (LALME hereinafter) records this coexistence in ME texts from the county of Lancashire. On the one hand, *felaw* (III: 200), *fellaw* (III: 201), *felow* (III: 203); on the other, *felo*, *fela* (III: 210). The final <a>-spellings reveal that ME /-u/ was later reduced to /-ə/ as a result of its unstressed position.¹⁷

These alternative pronunciations were recorded by some grammarians and orthoepists in the Early Modern period. For instance, Gill's (1619) remarks about the northern dialectal pronunciation of the verb *to follow* showed how a /-ə/ sound

¹⁶ As regards PdE, Fabricius (2002) and Durand (2005: 92, n4) provide excellent acoustic studies of 'y-tensing.' About a clear definition of vowel tension and an analysis of Tyneside and Bolton accents, see Prescott (2003).

¹⁷ Some scholars, like Gerson (1967: §19.6.1), deny the alternation between /-ou/ and /-u/ in words such as *elbow*, *fellow* and *window* because they are originally compounds. However, the evidence provided by certain ME forms like the above strongly indicates that this coexistence did in fact exist.

prevailed over the London educated /-ou/ form: “fulla *pro* follou” (IV: 15). Indeed, the phonetic reduction was apparently common in renderings of vulgar and regional speech.¹⁸

Already in the seventeenth century, this alternation was further modified since an [ɪ] pronunciation arose alongside the /-ə/ and /-ou/ sounds. Word-pairs such as *hollow* and *holly*, *gallows* and *galleys* in the *Homophone Lists* compiled by Wharton (1654), Fox and Hookes (1670) and Young (1675) highlight not only a phonetic identification, but also the emergence of a high-front vowel. Dobson (1967:§295n2) explains that “the phonetic process might be [ʊ] > [y] > [ɪ], or [ʊ] > [ə] > [ɪ]. (...) the latter process, though at first sight the less direct, is the more likely.” It seems reasonable, therefore, that such pairings were made on contrasts between socially accepted and vulgar or regional speech. As a matter of fact, the *EDG-Index* records an [ɪ] for *gallows* in s.Som. Similarly, the *EDG* (§229) gathers a final [ɪ] pronunciation in words such as *arrow* (in Edb.), *barrow* (in Bch., Abd., Lth., Edb.), *borrow* (in Bch., Abd., Lth. Edb., Dor., s.Som), *follow* (in Lth., Edb, s.Ir., Wxf.), *harrow* (in Lth., Edb.), *swallow* (in Lth., Edb., n.Ir., s.Nhb., n.Dur., Cum., w.Yks., War., Glo., Brks., Sus., I.W., Dor.), *window* (in ne.Sc., W.Frf., Per., Lth., Edb. Brks., Wil.).¹⁹

In the light of some spellings compiled in *LALME*, it is truly probable that this regional pronunciation was present in some areas of Lancashire by the end of the ME period. For instance, *fellichip* (III: 214), *feliship* (III: 215) and *fellishippe* (III: 219). As we can see, there is no recorded evidence of <-i> in Lancashire *fellow* but in some compounds, which is highly indicative of [ɪ]. *LALME* records *feli* in Yks. (IV: 167), and NWYks. (IV: 167); *fely* appears in Yks. (IV: 167).

At this stage, it is possible that also *fellow* had a weak-final [ɪ] sound in seventeenth-century Lancashire speech. Unfortunately, the significance of this cannot be evaluated fully because of the limitations of the lexical pool we count on. Still, the information supplied by nineteenth and twentieth-century studies reasserts our assumptions. Ellis’ (1969 [1869-1889]: 344) specimens reveal an [ɪ] pronunciation for the standard *fellow* in Bolton and Wigan (D 22, V ii). Likewise, *EDG-Index* collects “[feli]” in m. & em. Lan., sm., se. &

¹⁸ See Dobson (1967:§302) for further evidence about the vulgar nature of /-ə/ < ME /-u/.

¹⁹ Wright also includes within this group a series of words – *bellows*, *meadow*, *narrow*, etc. – with final [ɪ]; however, they are not of relevance for our analysis since they etymologically differ from our sample.

ms. Lan., and s. Lan. Also, it is a widespread pronunciation in some areas of Scotland and northern England (*EDG*: §229).²⁰

As mentioned above, the lack of audio recordings from the seventeenth century which could give us access to the exact phonetic realization of weak-final [ɪ] in *fillee* renders it difficult to explain with accuracy what triggered the ascendancy of [i]. Contemporary research, Durand (2005) and Prescott (2003), has suggested vowel tension in English dependent on phonetic quality and on advanced or retracted tongue-root [ATR/RTR] features. Tense vowels are usually categorized as long [ATR] or [RTR], whereas lax vowels are those without a tongue-root specification. That is, the phonemic opposition between PdE RP lax and tense vowels may be illustrated, for example, by contrasting the KIT set with both the FLEECE and NEAR sets: "[i] ≈ [ij], [ii]" (Prescott 2003: 5-6). As a matter of fact, the literature on 'y-tensing' has always trusted vowel quality so as to exemplify the phonetic nature of word-final [i], although recent theories also take into account some vowel-consonantal processes related to the loss of /r/ or those favouring 'intrusive' or 'linking-r'.²¹

It seems quite probable that in the seventeenth century the phonemic contrast between weak-final [ɪ] and [i:] was blurred in some varieties of English. Such a phonemic identity could apparently have emerged as a result of vowel lengthening in unstressed syllables.²² The evidence supplied by poetry reveals that this process was presumably common in the sixteenth century. Spenser, for instance, pairs *chevalree* with *see* and *bee*, *destinee* with *necessitee* and *mee*, or *maiestee* with *knee* and *see* in *The Faerie Queen* (1590). We cannot know for certain whether he introduced them for the sake of rhyming or if word-final [i:] in these words was frequent in non-standard speech by the time he wrote the poem. Orthoepists' works would support, on the other hand, this vowel lengthening in

²⁰ Although this paper is strictly centred around the [i] pronunciation in the county of Lancashire, it is evident that weak-final vowel tension in PdE *fellow* is also common to other areas in the north of England and Scotland. In fact, Thomas Shadwell also represented such phonetic feature in *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688) with the aim of characterizing Lolpoop's northern speech: "Ods-flesh, what shou'd I do in Company with Gentlewoman; 'Tis not for such *Fellee's* as I" [italics mine] (III, I: 37).

²¹ Windsor Lewis (1990: 159-167) gives a full account of the varying quality degrees of the "-y vowel" in different groups of speakers and different contexts. See also Durand (2005: 15) and Prescott (2003) about these vowel-consonantal processes.

²² See Dobson (1967: §350) about lengthening due to reimposition of secondary accent in unstressed syllables.

post-tonic syllables. Coote (1596) mentions *unitee* as a linguistic corruption, Hunt (1661) labels *pietee* as dialectal, Cheke spells *city* and *country* with <ee>, etc. (Dobson 1968: §350).

However, acoustic research on the current phonetic status of [i] has demonstrated its actual intermediate quality between RP /ɪ/ and /i:/. It is debatable, therefore, that a closer form of /ɪ/ arose as a consequence of vowel lengthening in unstressed syllables. In fact, it is hardly acceptable that a change in vowel length could have affected weak-final vowels historically, despite their spelling representation. As a result, it seems much more accurate that the reimposition of some degree of secondary accent entailed a modification of the vowel quality leading to the emergence of a vowel similar but not identical to /i:/. Indeed, the contemporary phonetic notation was modified in the second half of the twentieth century, thus neglecting previous assumptions related to a possible [i:].

It should be taken into account that by this time English spelling was not fully normalized yet. As discussed in the ensuing section, by the end of the seventeenth century the digraph <ee> was still used for representing [i:]-sounds regardless of their historical origin. We could assume that both poets like Spenser and orthoepists used <ee> as the best and most specific means of depicting a sound neither as open as [ɪ] nor as close as [i:], albeit nearer to the latter.

Although rhymes and orthoepists' comments do not include any single instance etymologically similar to *fillee*, the vulgar and dialectal [ɪ]-sounds which descended from /-ə/ were also apparently affected on analogy by this process of vowel-quality modification. Hence, it would seem reasonable to presume that it was actually a quite possible origin of vowel tension in words developed from ME /-u/ > /-ə/ – *fellow* – in Lancashire.

4.2. Spelling analysis

As far as diachronic dialectology is concerned, unconventional spellings are reliable indicators of linguistic variety and change in the past. It is well known that the use of dialect in literature does irreversibly entail a series of interesting linguistic manipulations on the part of the artist. Obviously, their appearance is not a matter of chance but the result of an absolutely conscious decision. The imaginative world of any literary work is inhabited by a diversity of characters with clearly different idiolects and linguistic attitudes. The literary creator may try to show visually how a character speaks

or, more exactly, “how a character is meant to sound” (Chapman 1982: 71). Oddities in spelling suggestive of non-standard pronunciations are the most direct means of alerting readers and audiences to dialect phonetic features. Needless to say, such anomalies are never intended to attain the linguistic status of accepted orthography. On the contrary, they are usually conceived as mere visual mediators that help readers have access to a close realization of dialectal speech. In fact, deviant spellings are very often based on accepted and easily recognizable standard sequences which, after continuous usage, also gain in importance over other combinations.²³

The methods of orthographical representation managed by Shadwell in dialect passages of *LWTD* are far from incomprehensible or irregular. The comedy displays a remarkable spelling consistency which is questionable only if we consider the written symbolization of [i:]-sounds by means of <ee> and <ei>.²⁴ However, Shadwell’s use of one or the other relies on either the representation of a dialectal phonetic development – *dee’l, feel, fillee, flee, freeghtend, leeghts, meeghty, neegh, neeght, reeght, theegh* – or simply an instance of eye-dialect – *beleive, leive, peices, thieves, yeild* –. As we can observe, the playwright resorts to intelligible spelling sequences clearly indicative of the sound intended.

At this point, it should be remembered that the full standardization of English orthography was not completed by the time *LWTD* was written. As for /i:/, it has been well proved that the phonetic reflexes of ME /e:/ and ME /ɛ:/ were not kept strictly

²³ Sánchez (1999: 270-271) explains:

The process followed for the devising of the graphical representation of dialects is similar to the one in the formation of the written standard language. It is the continuous and generalised use of a certain sequence which will eventually make it attain a permanent status over other occasional spellings. It can be observed in dialectal orthography how some spelling varieties become traditional in the written representation of dialects, (...) These spelling variants are free, but not whimsical. (...) dialectal spellings have to keep an obvious relation to the standard spelling system of the English language.

See Salmon (1999: 13) about the logographic relationship between the spoken and written word.

²⁴ <ie> is also used for representing an [i:]-sound in *strieight*. Nevertheless, it seems a printing mistake or carelessness on the part of Shadwell rather than a dialect spelling, since the word was modified in subsequent seventeenth-century reprints to the accepted form *streight*.

apart in spelling until well into the Early Modern period.²⁵ As a matter of fact, many textual instances from the time reveal that <ea>, <ee> and <ie> were seldom used alike. Similarly, Shadwell introduces a standard sequence – <ee> – in an attempt to depict a sound which could be recognized without a close knowledge of the variety represented. Thus, readers and spectators could easily identify the regional pronunciation suggested by *neeght*, *feel* or *fillee*.

Curiously, apart from Shadwell, only Thomas Otway's *The Cheats of Scapin* (1677) resorts to a <-ee>-spelling in order to represent Lancashire's pronunciation of standard *fellow*.²⁶ The *OED* collects a couple of instances possibly indicative of [i] in vulgar or regional speech: nineteenth-century *fally* and *felly*; no citations are presented, though. As it may be deduced, the introduction of <-ee> for the symbolization of a sound not as close as [i:] stands for the literary convention characteristic of the use of dialect in a work of art. It goes without saying that the playwright decided to use this particular digraph as the most suitable means of enabling both readers and audience to identify a sound he might well have known. However, the use of <-ee> in written portrayals of the dialectal development of *fellow* was but occasional, being recorded only four times so far. In the light of modern evidence, it may be concluded that the rarity of this spelling caused it to be eventually superseded by others which could not be somehow misleading: <-ey>, <-y>, for example.²⁷

²⁵ See Scragg (1974: 49) and Ekwall (1980: §51), among others.

²⁶ In parallel with Shadwell, Thomas Otway introduces this deviant sequence so as to characterize the imitation that Scapin makes of a Lancashire rascal speech: "*Yaw Fellee, wi'th Sack there, done yaw knaw whear th'aud Rascatt Graip is? (...) he'll be a pratty swatley Fellee, bawt Lugs and Naes*" [sic.] (III, I: 57). This particular example came into my attention after my presentation at the 17th SEDERI Conference.

²⁷ As a matter of fact, nineteenth and twentieth-century literary symbolizations of Lancashire speech such as John Ackworth's novels rely on the digraph <-ey> as a way of representing this regional phonetic variant. For instance, in *Clog Shop Chronicles* (1896) we find "*Yo' felleys is so feart if owt ails yo'*" [italics mine] (330). Also, in *Beckside Lights* (1897), where Ackworth himself explains that the dialect depicted corresponds to the area of Bolton, Rhoda says "*Th' wik effther th' stooan were put up, a felleycum fro' Duxbury*" [italics mine] (235). *The Mangle House* (1902) includes a few examples where this spelling may be attested too: "*Yung felleey...yo're a stranger abaat here*" [italics mine] (190).

5. Conclusions

It will be evident from the above said that the orthographical representation made by Thomas Shadwell of seventeenth-century Lancashire dialect substantiates Well's contention that [i] was already present in regional speech centuries ago. Even though literary symbolizations of provincial language are far from exact, Shadwell's dialect portrayal of standard *fellow* provides an extraordinary source of information about a phonetic feature whose possible origins had not been exemplified so far. Furthermore, his knowledge of the East Lancashire variety together with the consistent representation he makes allows us to conclude that he was quite accurate when Thomas Shacklehead compared his fellow Clod with a filly : "Thou'rt a strange Fillee (Horse I should say)" (IV: 56). The pun he makes between the pronunciation of *fillee* and that of *filly* supports our assumptions since the latter seemed to have a varying pronunciation between [ɪ] and [i:] in the seventeenth century according to the evidence supplied by *OED*.²⁸

The data contained in literary works contribute, thus, to a better knowledge of regional speech in Early Modern England. However, it remains a question for future research as to whether other instances of similar phonetic context show weak-final tense pronunciations both in PdE and in non-standard varieties of the past.

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²⁸ Coming from Icel. **fylja*, *filly* is merely the feminine form of *foal* formed by adding the historical suffix **-jōn*. *OED* collects sixteenth-century *fely*, *felee*, *felly*, and *fillie* between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century.

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Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* and the Canary Islands

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to examine different hypotheses about the sea-voyage of Thomas Lodge to the Canaries and Azores, during which he wrote *Rosalynde*, the main source text of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. In order to date the voyage, biographers of Lodge have always traced the activities of Captain Clarke, whose name is mentioned in the dedicatory epistle; whereas they have completely ignored its destination, as well as a dubious farming practice of the inhabitants of Tenerife. This paper will revise the three main theories proposed on this matter by taking into account the studies in the history of the Canary Islands, such as the pirate attacks and the proceedings of the Court of the Inquisition. It will also be suggested that the Forest of Arden was largely inspired by the vegetation of woods and fields of the Atlantic archipelagos. The landscape, and arguably the myth, of the Fortunate Islands offered Lodge an incomparable Arcadia to construct his Arden, which Shakespeare kept intact when he translated Arden to the English soil for the comedy that culminates with the representation of the ideal order of the world by means of the four weddings at the end of the play.

KEYWORDS: Thomas Lodge, *Rosalynde*, Tenerife, William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

The pastoral romance *Rosalynde, or Euphues' Golden Legacy* – the main source text of Shakespeare's *As You Like It* – was written by Thomas Lodge during a voyage to the Canaries and Azores ('Terceras'). In the dedicatory letter to Henry Carey (first Lord Hunsdon) he claimed that: "Having with Captain Clarke made a voyage to the island of Terceras and the Canaries, to beguile the time with labour I writ this book" (Lodge 1907: xxvii).¹ This expedition, by any reckon, must have taken place between 1585 and 1588, but the exact date of this voyage is still uncertain. Since the identity of Captain Clarke

¹ *Rosalynde* was first published in 1590 and reedited several times in that decade. All quotations are taken from W.W. Greg's edition, *Lodge's "Rosalynde" Being the Original of Shakespeare's "As You Like It"* (New York 1907).

seems the sole known fact, many hypotheses have been suggested – often in relation to whether Lodge wrote his two plays before, or after, Marlowe's *Tambourline* was first performed in 1587. For example, F. Fleay linked Clarke's expedition with Drake's attack to Cadiz in 1587, although there is no evidence that any captain with that name participated in this raid (Paradise 1970: 36). K. Wilson also wrote in passing that he embarked in 1587, but she offered no further detail (2000: 7). W.W. Greg suggested a later date, 1588, considering his literary evolution (1907: xvii). Sidney Lee followed Greg for his entry of Lodge in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

N. Burton Paradise, Edward Tenney and Elaine Cuvelier offered an in-depth discussion of this matter in their biographies of Thomas Lodge. Their respective versions of the voyage are exclusively based upon Captain Clarke's activities; whereas the Atlantic itinerary and a textual reference to Tenerife have never been considered. In this essay I shall attempt a revision of the three main versions about this voyage in connection with the history of the Canary Islands. I would also like to suggest that the landscape of the Atlantic islands influenced Lodge's construction of the Forest of Arden, and therefore it could also influence Shakespeare's re-elaboration of pastoral Arden.

Lodge's straightforward introduction of Captain Clarke to the dedicatee of *Rosalynde* indicates that he was no stranger to Lord Hunsdon, either for his commercial dealings or for his naval merits. Nevertheless his name is hardly mentioned in the documents of the age. As far as it has been investigated, no Clarke ever took part as a captain in any of the voyages to the Canaries led by Cumberland, Raleigh or Drake; but we do know that Lord Hunsdon's eldest son, George Carey – as well as Raleigh – supported privateering expeditions to challenge the ban on trading with Protestant countries set by Philip II in 1585.

In Richard Hakluyt's collection, Captain Clarke is only mentioned in the narration of R. Grenville's expedition to Virginia in 1585 (Paradise 1937: 37), as commander of the *Roebuck*. In their way to America, the five boat fleet was dispersed by a storm off Portugal, and Captain Clarke is believed to have reached the shores of the Canaries to repair some damages. In 1931, N. Burton Paradise identified this episode with Lodge's arrival in the islands. He argued that Lodge did not continue to Virginia, but returned to England on another ship before September 1585, because in that month he "is described in the documents of a lawsuit" (1937: 37). However,

according to the history of the Canaries, the ship was probably amended at the desert little isle of Lobos, between Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. Lobos offered an ideal shelter for the English privateers in case of an emergency. It was also there where they used to leave messages for other English sailors inside canes that they stuck on top of the volcanic hill (Torriani 1978: 65). Following Rumeu de Armas, no vessel of Grenville's fleet is known to have stopped at any inhabited port of the islands. In any case, they simply sailed through the archipelago towards the Caribbean Sea (Rumeu de Armas 1991: 35; see also Morales Lezcano 1967: 342-343).

In 1984 E. Cuvelier, too, suggested that Lodge embarked to the Atlantic islands in 1585, though not with Grenville to Virginia, but in a less ambitious mission supported by George Carey. She argued that its appointed destination would not have been the Canaries, but the Azores, a favourite area for the English pirates to intercept the Spanish convoys loaded with wealth and precious goods from America. Thus, retired in the middle of the Atlantic, Thomas Lodge would have found a more pastoral landscape to write *Rosalynde* than on the rough sea – as he claimed in the note to the readers – “when every line was wet with a surge, and every humorous passion counterchecked with a storm” (Lodge 1907: xxix). Cuvelier identified this expedition with the one when the French pirate J. Challice collaborated with Captain Clarke. This collaboration is known because the lawful French owners of the goods taken by the pirates complained at the High Court of Admiralty and the subsequent legal process went on throughout the year 1586. Cuvelier took this information from Quinn's *The Roanoke Voyages* (Cuvelier 1984: 101-102), but the Atlantic islands are never mentioned in the long quotation she delivered. If this shorter voyage took place before the departure of Grenville's expedition to Virginia in April 1585 (Cuvelier 1984: 101; see also Andrews 1964: 96), it seems unlikely that Captain Clarke reached the Canaries and Azores, and returned to be ready for America. It would be much more credible that he sailed along the Western French coast as far as St. Jean de Luz at most (see Cooper 1921-22: 975).

From a literary perspective, it has been objected to both these theories that *Rosalynde* took quite a long time to be published, considering that in the meantime Lodge wrote two plays (one with Robert Greene) and his *Scillae Metamorphosis* appeared in 1589 (Rae 1967: 40). Elaine Cuvelier – by insisting that her hypothesis underlines the fact that Captain Clarke's voyage was made under

the auspices of George Carey – implicitly rejected the version proposed by Edward Tenney in 1935, though she declared it quite convincing, save for his idea that the voyage was supported by the London merchants John Bird and John Newton.

E. Tenney's reconstruction (1935: 97) was based on documentary evidence from the proceedings of the High Court of Admiralty. Tenney says that the "only known voyage" commanded by Clarke departed from England on 1 November, 1586. The expedition consisted of a 250-ton warship vessel named *Gold Noble* with more than 110 soldiers and sailors on board. Apparently their objective was "to take whatever prize the sea afforded." Though they achieved their target, the voyage was a kind of Odyssey. The sea was rough in Biscay. Further south, they captured several boats loaded with commodities, which they sent to England intact. They were attacked by Spaniards and pursued up to the coast of Barbary. They suffered a shortage of provisions and many became sick. Fresh food was purchased at a high price in "Sancta Cruce," a port identified by Tenney with Agadir. From this place, and since no further relation was given, Tenney completed the second half of the journey with the information provided by Lodge himself in the dedicatory epistle of *Rosalynde*. Thus, they would have sailed to the Azores via the Canary Islands, and would return to England by the summer of 1587. In the next year, following Tenney, "the *Gold Noble* helped battle the Armada."

In this context, "Sancta Cruce" or "Santa Cruz" is an ambiguous name, because the capital city and port of Tenerife (the biggest island in the Canaries) is also called by that name, "Santa Cruz"; and, besides, Tenerife is mentioned within the text of *Rosalynde* in a simile uttered by Aliena during a conversation with her beloved Saladyne:

Men in their fancy resemble the wasp, which scorns that flower from which she hath fetched her wax; playing like the inhabitants of the island Tenerifa, who, when they have gathered the sweet spices, use the trees for fuel; so men, when they have glutted themselves with the fair of women's faces, hold them for necessary evils, [...] (1907: 130)

This simile is as central as the name of Captain Clarke to shed some more light on Lodge's voyage. It demonstrates that the writer was actually in Tenerife and that the event reported in his

passing statement really happened there and in no other place he might have visited; otherwise he could have mentioned that other place, since none of the Canaries had a literary tradition in English. As a matter of fact, this very text is the earliest instance where Tenerife is ever mentioned in a relevant piece of the English literature. Furthermore, it is surprising that this place-name of the modern world, the only one in *Rosalynde*, comes up so naturally in the mediaeval cultural milieu of the Forest of Arden and in the renaissance pastoral language of the romance, with numerous references to the Classical world.

By mentioning this agricultural practice of Tenerife, Lodge implies that the voyage had not exclusively military purposes, but also commercial, despite his insistence on having become a soldier. The presence of soldiers aboard is justified on the grounds of the Spanish ban on trade with the English and Dutch, whose vessels were treated and fought as enemies. Despite this ban, merchant relations with the “Lutherans” were never wholly interrupted in the Canary Islands. The English kept on trading either under false identity or as a clandestine activity.² This explains why, despite the low number of English boats that officially arrived in the islands, there was plenty supply of Canary wine in London (Lobo Cabrera 1995: 48-49). In fact, even though in 1587 Drake’s shadow hovered menacingly over the islands as a nightmare (Rumeu de Armas 1991: 38), governors knew and permitted this clandestine commerce, especially at Garachico (on the Northwest coast of Tenerife), trying to keep a difficult balance between the defence against pirate attacks and the protection of the existing economic order.

The unusual farming practice, which Lodge witnessed, offers a significant clue about the particular place they arrived at. Unbelievably, though, Lodge was not fantasising when he claimed that farmers destroyed the trees once their fruits had been collected in order to use them as fuel. It is certain that the words “sweet spices” and “trees” may refer to such a variety of both literal and figural meanings that it is impossible to determine whether he was describing activities related with the sugar cane, or with the vineyards, the only two products from Tenerife that were well-

² For instance, after Drake’s attack to Cadiz in 1587, five vessels approached the Western island of El Hierro and wanted to trade with the native inhabitants pretending to be Catholics and Irish (Viera y Clavijo 1982: 49). Sometimes they claimed to be French or Flemish merchants, or more simply a Portuguese played the role of Captain (Fajardo 1998: 110).

known amongst the Elizabethan readership. With respect to the sugar cane, in some regions the fire to cook the syrup was fuelled with the same canes once the sweet juice had been extracted; but not in the Canaries, where forest wood was normally burnt for the sugar production. However, they could have been used occasionally for that purpose when, for instance, in the decade of the 1580s sugar cane plantations were giving way to vineyards (Alberti 1912: xvii). But what is really astonishing is that the simile could also be referred to the vineyards, which I strongly believe it does.

In his book about the Canary wine trade, Lobo Cabrera pointed out that, “en torno a noviembre se arrancaban aquellas cepas viejas o que no eran productivas” and he added a piece of information which demonstrates that the farming activity referred to by Lodge was also recorded in historical documents “en 1589 y 1591 son arrancadas las cepas de dos parrales de Telde, hasta la cantidad de cien cargas, de modo que la tierra quedara dispuesta para volver a ararla de nuevo, y llevadas al ingenio de Telde” (1993: 33).³ Although this episode occurred in the island of Gran Canaria, this agricultural technique must have also been put into practice in November, by the sloppy vineyards near the busy port of Garachico, where two sugar mills still existed,⁴ in the Northwest corner of Tenerife.

During the time span from 1585 to 1588, the proceedings of the Inquisition Court in the Canaries gave notice of two English expeditions which arrived near Garachico. Of course, there is no ground to assert that Lodge participated in any of them, but it would have happened in a very similar way. In November 1586, a letter by English pirates was intercepted. It was addressed to Jofre (Geoffrey) Lopes, a well-known English agent resident in Tenerife. Apparently the pirates had contacts in La Rochelle and gave Lopes news of some relatives. They asked him to negotiate the rescue of a low ton vessel

³ My translation: “By November farmers used to pull up the old or unproductive vines. In 1589 and 1591 two vineyards in Telde were pulled up, totalling a hundred loads – so that the earth would be ready to be ploughed again – and taken to the sugar mill in Telde.”

⁴ During the years that Lodge could have arrived in Tenerife, there were two sugar mills in Daute, one on the West and other on the East side of the port of Garachico. The latter was built by the Ponte family just in the 1580s. The biggest sugar mill in Tenerife was in Adeje, on the South of the island. It was plundered by English pirates in 1586 and completely destroyed by a storm three years later. The sugar mill of La Orotava near another active port on the Northern coast had considerably reduced its production by then.

and a barque loaded with wine that had been captured on the Western coast. They also bid to sell some wheat and barley they carried on a caravel. The other event took place possibly in March 1588. Two English ships and a French one arrived in Tenerife. The foreigners exchanged products with the fishermen and inquired for the English agent Jofre Lopes as well. They must have stayed long enough to make friends with the local fishermen, as these took off their hats to greet them and had fun playing with their swords. But on this time, the Court of the Inquisition, to its major disappointment, was not informed of the furtive visitors (Fajardo 1998: 108-109). There are many coincidences between these accounts, such as the arrival of a little fleet, the French connection, and an ambiguous military/commercial purpose. Nevertheless, the first story has more affinities with Tenney's version of Captain Clarke's voyage, for example the tuns of "sack" they took from "a French barque of 'Olonia'"; or the 80 ton Spanish boat they captured off Cape Blanco loaded with fish, that they managed to send it back to England intact (1935: 97); or, curiously enough, their simultaneity, November 1586, though many English merchants usually came to Tenerife in this month to load the new wine (Steckley 1981: 26).

Tenney's explanation tallies with the historical records of the Canaries, and it offers a much more convincing account than Paradise's and Cuvelier's versions. At the same time, if Lodge's decision to take up arms in the autumn of 1586 is considered, Tenney's proposal also makes sense. It is normally believed that Lodge set on board to overcome his mean financial resources; however, after the Babington plot and the onset of the process against Queen Mary of Scotland in October 1586, London was no longer a safe place for those under suspicion of being a Catholic, like Lodge himself, who had already been in prison in 1582 presumably for a charge connected with his religious beliefs (Paradise 1931: 19). Under this light, the theme of exile in *Rosalynde* gets much more prominence.

Apart from the simile of the farming practice, Lodge's romance variously shows the influence of the Canaries and Azores. The most obvious one is the name of the shepherd Montanus, who dwelt in the Forest of Arden and used to write his passions on the trees. Undoubtedly, Lodge must have been deeply impressed by the mounts in the islands of Tenerife and Pico, where the highest summits of Spain and Portugal respectively are located. Although it was an Italian name, Lodge called his character Montanus in order to

identify him with the existential/social/literary realm he represented in the novel. On adapting the romance for the stage, Shakespeare changed the name of all male characters, and Montanus became Silvius, that is, a name literally identified with the surrounding environment, wholly Edenic, of Arden. Shakespeare's renaming the male characters underlines the Humanist up-dating or modernization of Lodge's story that still imbibed Mediaevalism. Silvius, like Montanus, symbolises the natural inhabitant of the Forest of Arden and, as such, he shares its goodness and purity, as well as its pristine passion and ingenuousness. Silvius, thus, stands in the cardinal point diametrically opposed to Touchstone, who has no corresponding character in *Rosalynde* for the sake of decorum.

The less conspicuous influence, but the one which Shakespeare translated with greater accuracy, is the configuration of Arden itself. Stuart Daley demonstrated that the forest in *Rosalynde* and in *As You Like It* share a common name and an equal disinterest in depicting the French authentic vegetation of the Ardennes or Perigord. With respect to *Rosalynde*, Daley stated that the woods "composed of beech, myrtle, pine, cypress, and olive, among others, belong to a long tradition more answerable to rhetoric than to botany" (1985: 24). On the contrary, Shakespeare transplanted the vegetation described by Lodge into the English soil, because, on the one hand, it was primarily inspired by the forests in Warwickshire, and on the other each species could be symbolically interpreted by the Elizabethan audience. Nevertheless, I would like to suggest that Lodge's trees and landscape owe more to the fertile groves and exuberant forests of the Atlantic Islands, than to any other in England or in France. Obviously, wood vegetation is termed with familiar English names. It is certain, though, that pines also form part of the islands forests, and there are local species similar to myrtle trees and willows. However, what is really astonishing is that the fruit trees, such as pomegranates, grapevines, lemons or citrons, mentioned in *Rosalynde* are characteristic of the Atlantic islands fields, largely cultivated in that age by Portuguese farmers. The episode when Rosader met Gerismond and his loyal men "sitting all at a long table under the shadow of lemon trees" (Lodge 1907: 60) might be reminiscent of Lodge's own experience with his mates, perhaps in the Azores. Besides, olive trees – now rare in the Canaries despite recent plantations by governmental projects – abounded at the end of the sixteenth century, when they were being sown everywhere, as Torriani said in his description (1978: 142).

It is evident that both Lodge and Shakespeare provided their respective forests with greater significance by turning the place of exile into an arena of love. For Roberts, Arden is the forest of reconciliation, a return to innocence (1977: 121). Indeed, Lodge's Arden was conceived as a realm of exile, though not one of deprivation. It is rather a space preserved from tyranny, and thus a realm isolated, protector, Edenic – like Azores or the Canaries, or the Fortunate Islands, as they were called from Antiquity. In *As You Like It*, at the beginning of Act II, the Duke declares: "And this our life, exempt from public haunt,/ Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,/ Sermons in stones, and good in everything" (1968: 70). In Lodge's pastoral romance, the Edenic Forest of Arden is above all a space where sonnets, eclogues, madrigals, and songs spring up almost spontaneously; but what Lodge draws, Shakespeare emphasises by turning the forest into a dramatic space, where the ideal cosmic order of Nature finds a perfect balance as represented by the four weddings at the conclusion of the comedy.

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Sell, Jonathan P.A. 2006
*Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing,
1560-1613*
Aldershot: Ashgate

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The first English travelers who ventured across the Ocean and returned home full of marvelous stories to tell their countrymen found themselves in a position difficult to negotiate. How could they express, by means of written representations, the *newness* they had encountered in their travels? Could all these *marvels* be effectively conveyed to people who had never admired, and never would admire, them? Most prefatory material accompanying these narratives was devoted to convince readers that what they were about to read was *true*, wonderful as it might have seemed to them upon first perusal. In this enlightening study, Jonathan Sell approaches this question from what he purports to be a *new* angle. For him, rhetoric is the key element by means of which these writers, trained from school in its tenets, manage to give the wonderful, the marvelous, a necessary aura of truth. As he states in the introduction, his goal is to analyze the extent to which rhetoric was an effective ally of wonder when it came to represent new worlds in the early modern period. Rhetoric, as he sees it, brings together the intellectual and the emotional, successfully providing these traveler-writers with an effective means to organize, represent, and convey their experiences in the new worlds they had been privy to. His emphasis is on the aesthetic side of rhetoric, the interplay between the intellectual and the emotional, and he tries to escape traditional approaches in which ideological issues seemed to be always at the core of this kind of travel narratives. As he soon establishes in his introduction, his will be the first book dealing with this corpus of literature from an exclusively rhetoric perspective, and thus he tries to distance his work from that of his better known predecessors. His stance purports to be diametrically opposed to that of Stephen Greenblatt in *Marvelous Possessions* (Chicago, 1991), Mary Fuller's in *Voyages in Print* (Cambridge, 1995), or Mary Campbell's in *The*

Witness and the Other World (Cornell, 1988), clearly trying to place himself outside the fashionable circle of American new historicists or British cultural materialists. Furthermore, and as a fundamental aspect of his contribution to our present understanding of these writings, Sell claims that his analysis will also shed light on the process of “getting to know” and of knowledge itself.

One of the key elements of Sell’s study is his definition of what he calls “consensual truth.” According to him, the main mistake made by his predecessors in the analysis of these writings lies on their having measured them against the wrong kind of *truth*. The truth represented in these works is not the absolute or irrefutable truth we all seem to recognize easily, but rather a truth resulting from the *consensus* among the different members of the community in which these writings are produced. For Sell, intelligibility is necessarily linked to being culturally meaningful, and this meaningfulness is never absolute, but relative to a very specific conceptual scheme. As he convincingly states, “new and original representations can be constructed from the linguistic and rhetorical resources that pre-exist in the discourse system through which the consensus found expression” (30). This requires, he argues, an intellectual process of implication: the reader must be cued in to the *right* interpretation of the significance implied by the traveler-writer. And, for him, the central emotion of interpretation in these writings (and of cognition, in general) is *wonder*. In these writings, the affective power of rhetoric is exploited so as to move readers from the intellectual to the emotional, using wonder as both a metaphor and a cognitive framework that will constitute a first step towards achieving consensual truth.

To illustrate his thesis, Sell makes use of some of the most characteristic examples of this literary genre. As he argues, Thomas Hariot (*A Briefe and True Report*), Edward Webbe (*The rare and most wonderful things*), and Walter Raleigh (*The Discoverie of ... Guiana*), rhetorically frame their writings as *wonderful* as a means to attain credibility. On the other hand, Edward Hayes (*A report of the voyage ... attempted ... by sir Humfrey Gilbert*) dismisses the marvellous and gives expression to a new episteme in which objective reality, rather than metaphor and wonder, is preferred as the guarantee of truth. In his detailed analysis of these works, Sell tries to identify the particular rhetorical strategy each writer uses depending on his specific goal. However, while Sell truly displays a remarkable knowledge of classical rhetoric in that he manages to name each and

every one of the tropes employed by these writers, this section occasionally undermines the validity of some of his larger claims. The classification of each writing according to the predominant rhetorical strategy used by the author comes across as rather “straitjacketed,” rather *ad hoc*, even. Sometimes, Sell seems to be at pains to make everything fit his theoretical mould, almost as if trying to tell these writers how they should have used rhetoric in order to make their arguments more efficiently. Some questions immediately come to mind: if what these writers really wanted was to obtain something very specific in return (material gain, royal favor, public recognition), why would they be interested in framing their work as *wonderful*? Also: if they were so successful in the use of these rhetorical strategies as Sell seems to defend, why were there so many “slanderers” accusing them of being liars? Were these “slanderers” against whom most of this prefatory material was written outside the “consensual truth” Sell takes as the basis for his theory?

In the last two chapters of the book, Sell expands on what he had already pointed at in previous sections: how the representational episteme changes from the metaphorical to the kinetic, turning the body of the traveler, marked by the “travails” of the voyage, into a securer referent for truth. Far from the wonder implied in most of these writings as a means to convey an experience beyond the realm of knowable truth, Hayes’s text exemplifies the move away from wonder and towards denotative representation using the traveler as an object of wonder itself: “It is the traveller’s body that becomes evidence of wonder, a token of truth inscribed with the scars of encounters with new worlds beyond the consensually known and knowable” (146). For Sell, this use of the marked body of the traveler as evidence of experienced wonder and as testimony to the truth of what is written constitutes nothing less than the demise of the metaphorical episteme. But the move is also generic: Hayes’s text represents the transition from narrative to drama. The traveler-narrator exemplified in Hariot, Raleigh, Sherley, or Barlowe gives way to the “traveler-turned-thaumaturge,” the traveler-dramatist epitomized in Hayes. Sell ends up his discussion framing this epistemological transition within the larger picture in which words acted on stage superseded words written in books during the period under scrutiny: “Drama can pull off the illusion of absolute truth; words in a book cannot, because in the act of reading, the mind is constantly engaged in fleshing out, in finding bodies to match with words – in supplying the very absences implied by

linguistic signs" (174). Sell closes his book with a discussion of a dramatic piece which, for him, epitomizes the collision of the two epistemes he sees at work in the travel texts under analysis. As he convincingly argues, William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, a favourite with some of those critics whose emphasis solely on "ideology" Sell had previously censured, is rhetorically shaped by the discourse of contrived wonder. Shakespeare articulates both art and power around the concept of wonder, representing wonder as a practical tool on which both art and power rely to guarantee their ideological or aesthetic foundations. Sell sees the characters of Miranda and Caliban as emblematic of the two colliding epistemes in the rhetoric of wonder. For him, Miranda is "an intellectual significance whose only substance can be rhetorical figures used to express her"; on the other hand, Caliban is "the body as 'lively' evidence, the immediately signified with its own unique signifier, the exaltation of the mimetic power of the body to unleash illusions of truth" (187). But Caliban's body is crudely fleshed out in the play, made into an object of wonder, only to be controlled and rejected afterwards. In line with his previous arguments dismissing an exclusively ideological reading of these texts, Sell concludes his study relocating *The Tempest* within the literary panorama of the period: "More than an intervention in the discourse of colonial power, *The Tempest* is a meditation on the way power invents a discourse of wonder to prevent consensually indecorous bodies [like Caliban's] from jeopardizing or claiming a stake in that power" (188). Caliban, in our own world, is used by Sell as a cautionary tale illustrative of the possible ill effects of generating wonder to satisfy power's circumstantial needs, only to eventually fall victim to the power that wonder sometimes generates in and of itself.

Enlightening, fresh, rigorous, and definitely well written, Sell's book is both a welcome and important contribution to our understanding of travel literature in early modern England. Even though he sometimes falls prey to the ideological traps he condemns in others (his escape from the ideological and towards the aesthetic is not consistently successful), there is no question that his work manages to state the predominant role of rhetoric in the composition and subsequent analysis of this corpus of writings.

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The performance of Shakespeare's works in Spain covers a very extensive range within the national theatrical landscape, in which Teatre Lliure's adaptation of *Richard III* stood out during the 2005/2006 season. Based on the translation of the Catalan poet and translator Salvador Oliva, and directed by Alex Rigola, the show was premiered in Almagro (Ciudad Real, Spain), on 2-6 July 2005 and for several months toured Spain and several European cities, including Rome, Faro and Toulouse.

Surrounded by the spectacular *mise-en-scene* proposed by Rigola, this production received favourable critical and public responses during its performances at Seville's Teatro Central, in December 2005. As a matter of fact, the staging appears as the most outstanding feature of Teatre Lliure's approach to *Richard III*. Rigola proposes a modernization of the Shakespearean text (written 1592-1593) by means of setting it in a twentieth-century context, as he had previously done with *Titus Andronicus* (2001), and *Julius Caesar* (2002).

The spatio-temporal adaptation of the play moves to a 1970's psychedelic road bar called 'Pub Occidental,' where the intrigues and plots of the Machiavellian villain *par excellence* interact with the court's corruption and the protagonist's obsessive and growing need for power. The Texan hat Richard wears, the audiovisual input regarding America's overwhelming military power, and the references to the Columbine's High School massacre in the play's programme lead the audience to link the performance's setting to the US.

The production proposes a fragmented multiplicity, both regarding the character's movements and the stage's different levels. This effect is mainly achieved through the use of audiovisual resources which project the action into parallel spaces beyond what is physically performed on stage. A simulacrum of the Tower of London (physically placed at the top level and visible through a

small window) is projected on a screen hung at the left side of the main acting area. Through this device based on visual disjunction, Rigola presents his postmodern proposal to represent the location where the vast majority of Richard's enemies were slain under the monarch's orders. This projection alternates with an ambiguous retirement (parodying a Caribbean beach: the prototypical holiday resort for the western bourgeoisie) where the mournful characters retract due to spiritual pain.

The use of microphones (for Margaret's ghostly voice) and the musical resources (electric guitars, drums, keyboard, stereo sound) throughout the performance show the integration of the audiovisual dimension not only within the performance itself (which is quite standard in contemporary adaptations) but also within the physical stage and contextual development of the play (Richard and Buckingham sing and play the instruments). By means of these technological devices the audience witnesses a live rock session in the public introduction of Richard as the new king, once Clarence, King Edward and the two princes have been slain. The accurate choice of Rolling Stones' "Pleased to meet you" and the live music turns the stage into a Postmodern orgy (for a while a literal one) characterised by the hackneyed paradigms of contemporary human degradation such as drugs, sex, libertinism, the overpowering rule of money, and Rock 'n' Roll.

The histrionic staging delirium proposed by Rigola is supported by the visual bombing of projected clips among which the audience can recognise George Bush Jr. and Colin Powell with the US army in Iraq, Saddam Hussein, Kofi Annan, Pearl Harbour being attacked, intertwined with some fragments of *Battleship Potemkin* (1925). Accordingly, we may infer that this visual input is built around the usual threat of human violence and massacre that comes with war, so that Rigola equates Richard's obsession for power and our contemporary thirst for political control as timeless sources for human degradation and corruption. This vision can be regarded as the main core idea around which the show spins: it promotes the audience's self-awareness concerning the similarities between Richard's and our own reality and provides a global judgement of the relationship between mankind and power as unconditionally bound to destruction, horror and genocide.

However, the continuous lack of adequacy between this postmodern audiovisual stage design and the text emerges as one of the greatest points of dramatic stridency, as the necessary textual

adjustments for the adaptation of the Bard's text into a contemporary frame are absolutely non-existent. This becomes exemplified in the absurd depiction of the princes – as silly annoying creatures –, and the mismatch between the way to kill the enemies – a gun shot – and its textual verbalization (beheading with swords).

This type of adjustments had accurately been developed in former major Hollywood adaptations of Shakespeare to film, such as Baz Luhrman's William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), in which the term "sword" is transposed to the brand of the guns used by Capulets and Montagues, or in *Hamlet* (2000) by Michael Almereyda, who places the Danish court within the executive hierarchy of a New York mass capitalist corporation. Rigola follows these proposals in the opening section of the performance, by placing Richard's first monologue in the bathroom, paralleling Ian McKellen in Richard Loncraine's *Richard III* (1995). However, this intertextual reference to one of the most widely awarded postmodern adaptations of *Richard III* gradually dilutes throughout the performance, as the bathroom is later confused with a sanctuary or even with the Tower of London itself. This divergence between text and performance leads the production to become exceedingly complex and unintelligible at certain points, especially for those members of the audience who do not have an extensive acquaintance with Shakespeare's original work.

Framed within this adaptation's deviances, the audience may also be baffled by some passages and sentences directly recited in English, generating the easy laugh from the viewers, who interpret that as a comic device, as they are not familiarized with the text in the English language. Thus, even though the adaptation follows the Spanish translation by Salvador Oliva, there are some occasions when it departs from it, precluding any sort of intended meaning, as the aforementioned English sentences show, and the unnecessary amount of swearwords and expletives uttered by Catsby when killing Buckingham and the princes.

In the handbill for the performance, Rigola mentions a well-known event of contemporary America: the Columbine massacre in 1999, where two teenage students carried out a shooting rampage at Columbine High School (Colorado), killing 12 fellow students and a teacher, as well as wounding 24 others, before committing suicide. Taking this fatal event as the epitome of teenage violence in the US, the handbill shoots some questions, such as "Is Europe gradually looking more like USA?, Haven't we grown up in a violent era such

as the one Richard saw in his childhood?, What do we want for our society? More Richards?" This initial approach, together with the projection on a wall of a quotation from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant about education ("Education is the only means through which a man can become a man. A man is only what education makes out of him") makes the audience reflect about the intention of the performance as centred on the fundamental role of education for the human being. However, as the play develops, we become aware of the complete mismatch between the expectations created in the handbill (and in the first seconds of staging) and the unconnected performance that follows.

The audience may thus be bound to think that the performance tries to present the perspective through which Rigola has approached *Richard III*, but this intention is gradually weakened as it is not reinforced in the actual representation. Therefore, this complete lack of cohesive markers in the staging of the play leads to an imbalance between the initial approach presented in the handbill together with the opening scene, and the development of the performance, with a teleological intention visible but not reinforced by any kind of dramatic input.

The Postmodern scenography also interplays with the notion of origin and authority including a picture of Shakespeare hung on the wall. Curiously enough, Shakespeare's portrait remains at the same level of a poster of the exuberant British model Katie Price, also known as 'Jordan' – stereotype of contemporary beauty through plastic surgery and frivolity –, and next to a "Red Bull" neon icon. The progressive entrance of actors wandering around the stage under the Bard's disguise – parodying the famous Droeshout portrait of Shakespeare – reinforce the physical staging of the aforementioned intertext concerning authority/authorship intended by Rigola. The dramatic effect of these clones of the Bard can be subject to a wide range of interpretations, although we may propose some possibilities: they make physical the formalist presence of the author in his representation – something which is not coherent with the postmodern approach of the *mise-en-scene* –; they might constitute a humorous allusion to the legendary Shakespeare and his popular folklore; they impersonate a figure – Shakespeare – who openly reads and copies from his fellow rival playwright Christopher Marlowe; or they could even be the personification of the ghosts that harass and torture Richard in act 5.

The staging of the final act constitutes an incongruent delirium without any apparent teleological coherence, apart from Richard's obvious decadence after reaching power and his well-known death at the battle of Bosworth. The ghosts that torture Richard and support Richmond are co-modified through their projection on the screen, with a gesture of affection, which is not clearly determined to whom it is addressed. This device builds up a highly hectic condensation of the final denouement of the play, as the ghosts visit neither Richard nor Richmond, and the famous sentential utterance "Despair and die" is simply ignored (5.3).

Besides, this is not the only editing displacement that is proposed, as Richmond does not appear as a physical presence, but as an ethereal entity, without the resulting emphasis regarding the opening of a new age with the crowning of Richmond (something present in Shakespeare and recovered with enormous mastery by Laurence Olivier's *Richard III*), probably suggesting a timeless and pessimistic approach within this interpretation of the play. Thus, Richard dies alone, killed by nobody, (there is not a physical Richmond) in an inexistent battleground (they are still in the 'Pub Occidental'), a character drown in an inexplicable rage or in an epileptic spasm (suggested previously when Catsby gives him a tablet).

The Shakespearean critical corpus agrees that in *Richard III* the Bard masterfully blends the development of the archetypical Machiavellian villain, the main character's psychic complexity as a being "determined to be a villain" by nature or nurture, the historical events that occurred in England during the late fifteenth century, and human cruelty as the major consequence of our constant desire for power. However, the show proposed by Teatre Lliure, though initially imaginative and disturbing, gradually loses weight and evolves into a sumptuous audiovisual display that promotes a pleasant entertainment, which is unfortunately equally disappointing under a critical light.

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Reconceiving the Renaissance: A Critical Reader

Oxford: Oxford University Press

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In their introduction to *Reconceiving the Renaissance*, Ewan Fernie and Ramona Wray argue that “the choice to engage with theory and to interpret Renaissance literature and culture through theory, has, in effect, been made” (p.1), to point out that every other school of criticism has applied its proposals to the academically fruitful period of English Renaissance. Shakespeare, the Renaissance’s canonized totem, attracts such a vast amount of scholarly research that critics have explored every theoretical avenue in order to dissect his plays and poems. Conversely, these plays and poems have certainly spurred literary criticism to find accurate ways to describe phenomena which lead outside the text. This demand for fresh reconceptualization concerning the relationship between context of production and later contexts is the unifying principle of the works included in this ‘critical reader.’ Obviously, it would be extremely reductive to limit English Renaissance to Shakespeare and, consequently, *Reconceiving the Renaissance* makes an explicit effort to cover a diverse range of materials. After reading the selection of texts and the introductions of each chapter, the book gives the impression of being slightly tilted towards the playwright; nevertheless, the anthology’s theoretical commitment and the authors’ contextualization facilitate the application of the content to different topics.

In any case, this volume is a useful starting point to apprehend some of the main theoretical proposals that have characterized the field of Renaissance Studies through applied examples. As opposed to specialized texts which focus on a specific theoretical area, the strongest quality of *Reconceiving the Renaissance* lies in its ambitious aim towards global and transversal interaction between literary theories, induced by each chapter’s preliminary contextualisation. By offering textual articulation of theory around six generic themes or units, the anthology avoids the kind of self-

containment that leaves the researcher isolated in her/his little corner of the theoretical universe, a frequent drawback associated with literary theory.

The book is divided into six sections, preceded by a general introduction which frames the content of the anthology to the last 25 years of critical theory. The introduction characterizes these last decades as origin and witness to the problematization that has provoked a radical re-evaluation of the English Renaissance, away from idyllic reconstructions. The rest of the six categories which constitute the bulk of materials provided in the anthology consist of a brief introduction that contextualizes each theoretical area, explains its phases of development, its most important contributors, their influence over later production, and the objections made from opposing discourses, together with more than 15 original texts from some of the most significant authors on the subject.

The first batch of texts revolves around the question of textuality. It covers the newly acquired relevance of bibliography and editing in the field of literary analysis, the implications of stressing 'the book' as material object, both in relation to the edition of 'primary texts' and to the recent reinvigoration of marginalia, binding and illustration. This section continues with examples of critical texts that resist the idea of the literary work as an individualized effort, underlining examples of collective writing and ultimately extending the notion of 'authorship' to the interaction and collaboration of different agents administering the text: actors, directors, censors, printers, etc. Texts provided in this section also tackle the ideological contexts behind any edition of Shakespeare's works and the "connections between textuality and gender, and queer theory and textual studies" (p.15), to finally move on to new editorial strategies, 'open text' approaches and the incorporation of technology to editing. Some of the critical texts provided in this section belong to Peter W. M. Blayney, Lukas Erne, Jeffrey Masten, Jonathan Goldberg, Andrew Murphy, Gary Taylor, Ann Thompson and David Scott Kastan, amongst others.

The second section, *Histories*, is dedicated to New Historicism and Cultural Materialism through the "return of the literary work to the social, economic and cultural environment from whence it came" (p.85). Focusing on the field of production, this section covers the early stages of New Historicism, initially dominated by the use of the anecdote as a starting point for articulation, to then address the intervention of post-colonial, queer and feminist approaches into

these disciplines, which resulted in a “more densely sophisticated sense” (p.87) of the histories of gender, class or race. The last works in this section mirror a third stage in the area which shifts its interest to local concerns, the problematization of ‘Britain’ and British identity, and the study of ‘marginal’ texts such as travel narratives, corporation accounts or popular ballads which conform some of the latest contributions to the study of history and the Renaissance. The last essays in this section call for a sharper materialist focalization of the discipline that reflects recent complaints against both New Historicism and Cultural Materialism. Works selected for this section include texts by Louis Montrose, Stephen Greenblatt, Catherine Gallagher, Jean Howard, Dymphna Callaghan, Mary Fuller, Adam Fox and Juliet Fleming, amongst others.

The selection of texts continues with the question of *appropriation*, addressing the afterlife and resonances of Renaissance or, rather, Shakespearean texts and confronting the translation of literature into other cultural products such as film, television, music, visual arts or the internet. The next group of texts is concerned with the mass consumption of the Renaissance, addressing materialist criticism, culture as capital, and Shakespeare as commodity through the analysis of cultural practices, marketing, advertising, the educational system or the tourist industry. This section moves on to contributions that describe the ideological discourses behind appropriation and Shakespeare’s internationalization, as well as sexual politics, reflections of class, gender, sexuality, marginality and ‘otherness’. It closes with texts on the perception of Shakespeare as stereotypical figure and the problems of his transformation into a reduced and vague “symbolic *essence*” (p.147). Texts provided include excerpts from Samuel Schoenbaum, Michael Anderegg, Courtney Lehmann, Michael Dobson, Lawrence Normand, Sarah Werner, Ania Loomba and Francesca T. Royster, amongst others.

The fourth section, *Identities*, describes the theoretical foundations of concepts such as the constructed subject, self, identity or subjectivity in relation to the English Renaissance. The complexity of identity is explored, in the first series of texts, through the importance of language in the definition of the self, the unreliable identity of the author, or the constructed identity of literary characters. The second section of this unit is entirely devoted to applications of Foucault’s concept of ‘the other’ through Renaissance texts and the circulation and negotiation of power around the different layers of society. The next group of essays addresses the

relationships between different types of selves, the notion of 'centre' and 'margin', and the Gramsci/Spivak concept of 'the subaltern', defined as the "voicelessness of those whose experiences are not recorded" (p. 213). The chapter closes with a body of works that explore death as the limit of 'the human' the relationship of death and subjectivity, and the problematization of the human/non-human duality, which are all part of the still ongoing debate about identity and the self. Some of the texts provided in this section include the work of Alan Sinfield, Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Dollimore, Ania Loomba, Valerie Traub, Lorna Hutson, Margo Hendricks and David Scott Kastan.

After this, *Reconceiving the Renaissance* explores the material conditions of the text and the centrality of the human body in the physiological conception of the subject where, for the first group of texts, critics have underlined "the organic unity of mind, body and soul during the Renaissance" (p.279). The second set of contributions project the body as a politicised text, based on Foucault's suggestion on the influence of historical power over subjectivity. This view is counterbalanced by a second set of texts which conceive the body, following the Lacanian articulation, as resistant to theory, ideological discourse and construction. A third group of texts offers a description of the body as "the site of identity formation" (p.280) in terms of sexuality and desire, refusing biological determinism to later move on to its symbolic potential and the institutionalization of the body. This section closes with a group of texts that address Marxist materialism and the 'reification' of the subject in relation to Renaissance studies, the cultural circulation of objects, and current debates over materiality which have witnessed a renewed interest in the spiritual. Original texts are provided by Francis Barker, Nancy Vickers, Patricia Parker, Gail Kern Paster, Louis Montrose, Jonathan Dollimore and Valerie Traub, amongst others.

The last section of this 'critical reader' is dedicated to the deconstruction of literature and literary value through critical contributions that dissent from traditional and essentialist notions of judgement, underlining the mutability of conventions and the historicity of taste in close relation to 'canonical texts.' A second group of texts address *engagé* criticism, and explicitly questions the impossibility of avoiding political issues when assessing literary texts. The section provides a selection of texts that fall into the newly created label of *New Aestheticism*, which tries to conciliate "the value and the distinctiveness of art" (p.354) with postmodern approaches

that favour historicism and diversity. The book closes with a selection of texts that exemplify recent problematizations of historicist approaches, ethical and political values through the claims of commodification, conservatism, and commercialization of academia. This section includes works by Kim Hall, Stephen Greenblatt, Derek Attridge, Catherine Belsey, Patricia Parker, Alan Sinfield, Jonathan Bate, John J. Joughin, Don E. Wayne, Jacques Derrida and Jonathan Dollimore, amongst others.

Each of these six broad theoretical areas is supplemented by a bibliography for further reading of ten basic references. It is worth noticing that both the main critical works provided and the basic bibliography suggested are firmly up-to-date, the earlier text dating from the 80s, the latest from 2004. The bibliography for the introductions to each unit also constitutes a useful resource to find material about a specific area ranging from ten (*Materiality*) to a hundred references (*Values*). The final alphabetical index, disposition of content and reader-friendly organization makes *Reconceiving the Renaissance* a particularly useful volume to keep close at hand.

Especially if trying to cover such a vast field, the selection of texts in a critical anthology is always a difficult task. In *Materiality*, both the introduction and the texts seem a little disjointed and lack the solid unity of the other chapters. Further, the anthology is slightly restricted to the field of production and even the section on *Appropriation* fails to acknowledge the areas of performance, audience or reception, which constitute a significant body of theory.¹ One last aspect to consider is the limited reference to the initial theoretical works that triggered subsequent critical interventions, leaving at times the deceptive impression that Renaissance Studies is the source of these theoretical articulations. Although some introductions successfully refer to pre-existing theoretical foundations and the authors admittedly rely on examples within Renaissance studies, a wider reference to genetic sources would have provided greater rigour and facilitated further research.

On the whole, this anthology is a useful initial text to those seeking an update on theoretical interventions in the Renaissance, those who are planning on switching to a different area of study, those who want to make sure they do not miss a few indispensable contributions, or those who want to review key elements in the quest

¹ See *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance*, ed. by James Bulman (London: Routledge, 1996) or the *Shakespeare in Production* series by Cambridge University Press.

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