

# SEDERI VIII

Edited by JUAN ANTONIO PRIETO PABLOS  
MANUEL GÓMEZ LARA & MARÍA JOSÉ MORA SENA

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## SEDERI

*SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA DE ESTUDIOS RENACENTISTAS INGLESES*

The specific aim of the Spanish Society for English Renaissance Studies is to promote, stimulate and give impulse in Spain to the study and research of 16th and 17th century English language, literature and history, and their relationship with their Spanish counterparts, in all aspects: linguistic, literary and cultural.

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## SEDERI VIII

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA: CONSEJERÍA DE EDUCACIÓN

# SEDERI VIII

Edited by Juan Antonio Prieto Pablos  
Manuel José Gómez Lara & María José Mora Sena

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# Some Northern Dialect Features in Deloney's *Thomas of Reading*

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

It seems to be generally accepted that Thomas Deloney (1543?-1600) was the first English fiction writer to introduce non-standard features in his prose writings.<sup>1</sup> The beginnings of a tradition for their use in English literature had started about two centuries earlier with Chaucer and the Wakefield Master as is well known. In the 16th and 17th centuries, apart from cant and slang, the southwestern variety was most often represented in drama and poetry, probably because it was the one audiences were most familiar with, but Northern, Scottish, Irish and Welsh traits also appeared in poems and plays. Even if very often we must admit that this “imitated dialect” is just a literary convention, a stage dialect, in some cases it also provides us with information about real dialect features currently used at the time and thus it is a valuable source for historical dialectologists. As Wakelin (1972: 36) points out, the comments about dialect forms that 16th and 17th c. scholars made “should be read in conjunction with the imitated dialect of literature of the same period”.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse from a linguistic point of view some of the northern dialect<sup>2</sup> features which appear in Deloney's *Thomas of Reading* (c 1600) in an attempt to gather more information about the linguistic situation at the end of the sixteenth century and also assess this aspect of Deloney's production.

### 1.2.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES ON DELONEY'S NON STANDARD LANGUAGE: TORSTEN DAHL'S *INQUIRY INTO ASPECTS OF THE LANGUAGE OF THOMAS DELONEY* (1959)

Scholarly studies about Deloney did not really begin till 1912 with the publication of Mann's edition of his works and became more numerous once again after Lawlis<sup>3</sup> produced a new edition of his novels in 1961. Between these two events scholars worked mostly on the literary aspects of his

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<sup>1</sup> This is what Baker (1934-39.II: 175) tells us and is repeated by later scholars working on Deloney's style and language: “Deloney is probably the first English writer to spice his conversations with dialect and also the first to make play with malaprop.”

<sup>2</sup> As indeed the southern traits in *Jack of Newbury* and “A pleasant Dialogue between plaine Truth, and blind Ignorance” (Mann1912: 351-55) correspond to the archaetypal representation of the southwestern dialect: He resorts to suggesting the voicing of initial fricatives and to using *che, chill, cham, chud, ich*, etc. Wakelin1982: 5 and10, *Id.* 1986a: 15-16 and *Id.* 1988: 135-36 summarily deals with the dialect passages.

<sup>3</sup> In Lawlis 1961: 345 ff. we find detailed bibliographical information about the earliest extant editions of Deloney's novels. All references will be to his edition unless otherwise stated. *Thomas of Reading* (hereinafter *T.R.*) was probably published c 1600 although the first reference we have is to the second edition, printed in 1602. There are two copies of the first extant edition of 1612. Lawlis uses the Huntington Library one collated with that in the British Library and those of 1623, 1632 and 1636. Mann uses the 1623 one. Reuter (1939: 23-27) described in a very thorough way the papers and books published in the first thirty years after Mann's edition.

prose fiction and ballads. Since then, research has continued on this part of Deloney's production<sup>4</sup>, together with its socio-historical contents<sup>5</sup>, a few studies have treated his sources<sup>6</sup> or his influence on later writers<sup>7</sup>, but just a handful have been devoted to his style<sup>8</sup> and language<sup>9</sup>.

As regards Deloney's use of non standard forms scholars have for the most part restricted themselves to general remarks about the realistic qualities of his dialogue. At most, mention has been made of the existence of passages in which southern and northern traits are represented. The presence of Italian and French characters whose foreign origin is shown by means of deviant spellings has also been remarked upon. In some cases these comments have not even included all the non standard varieties used by Deloney.

Only Dahl (1959: 41-43) has treated the non standard features in Deloney's novels with a bit more detail. He tried to develop Mann's early allegation (1912: 511) that "the dialect [of Jack of Newbury's prospective father in law] is of course only the conventional corruption of speech used by Elizabethan writers to represent dialects, e.g. by Shakespeare in *Lear*. But in *Thomas of Reading* Deloney makes a real attempt at northern English".

Dahl did not proceed beyond some general statements about a few of the dialect traits. Basically he just enumerated some of the deviant spellings and classified them as indicative of a southern or northern pronunciation. We have to take into account that at the time he wrote this paper he really did not have the means to carry out a more detailed analysis.

Some of his comments can be argued against. For instance, he asserted that: "we should note that Cuthbert of Kendal, who refers to 'my country man Hodgekins' ..., speaks ordinary English. Nor is Hodgekins's opponent, Wallis, according to Mann "none other than the hero of Scottish history" ..., characterized through linguistic peculiarities" (Dahl 1951: 42). This is not completely true:

- 1.- Wallis's origins are suggested by means of some lexical traits. For instance, he is the only character to use the Scottish expression "the valewof a plack or a bawby" (VIII 309).
- 2.- We find phonological and lexical peculiarities in the speeches of Cuthbert of Kendal that point to his northern origin:
  - (a) He uses northern *sale* (V 290) for *soul* <sup>10</sup>.
  - (b) He (II 278) shares with Hodgekins (IV 286) and Wallis (VIII 310), and apparently also with the Smith (VIII 308), the expression *foul evil* <sup>11</sup>, associated with the north.
  - (c) His speeches are very colloquial, more so than those of the other clothiers, apart from Hodgekins's. He is the only one to use expressions such as *young giglote* (II

<sup>4</sup> Interesting literary studies are those by Pratt 1951 and 1983, Howarth 1953, Smith 1968, Dorsinville 1973, Loretelli 1978, Wasserman 1980, Jordan, 1981, Domnarsky 1982, Simons 1983 and Devine 1986.

<sup>5</sup> See about this aspect of Deloney's production, for instance, Mackerness 1951-52 (who treats Deloney's anti-Catholic attitude), Lawlis 1960, Schlauch 1963, Schall 1972, Margolies 1985, Mustazza 1989, Halasz 1991, Linton 1992 (who addresses feminist issues in his prose fiction), Shaw 1992 and also other general works like those of Baker 1934-39, Reuter 1961 and 1982, Shaw 1986 or Wright 1981.

<sup>6</sup> About Deloney's sources see Mann 1912, Rollins 1935 and 1936, Roberts 1957, Schall 1972, Schlauch 1963, Mattern 1966, Patzold 1971 and 1972, Reuter 1961 and 1986 a & b.

<sup>7</sup> Bache 1955, Donow 1966, Stewart 1987, Booth 1992 have traced other writers' indebtedness to him.

<sup>8</sup> See Rollins 1935 and 1936, Reuter 1961 (both about euphuistic traits in his prose) and Wada 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Among them Dahl 1951, Reuter 1939 and 1986, Gómez Soliño 1981 and 1982, Wada 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Lawlis (1961: 383) initially thought that "Hodgekins ... apparently is the speaker" but a few years later (*Id* 1967: 576 n.30) he indicated that the word could be Cuthbert's although "Hodgekins or Martin[of Byram] could be speaking up for him". A reading of the paragraph in question and the linguistic evidence I am presenting convince me that Cuthbert is the speaker.

<sup>11</sup> The Smith uses *foul ill* where *ill* may be a variant of *evil*. The Oxford English Dictionary hereinafter OED) shows as its earliest and only citation for *foul evil* one in E. Topsell, *The history of foure-footed beastes* (1607). *Evil* as *illness, complaint*, appears in other compounds such as *yelow euyll*, i.e. *jaundice*, or as *fallyng evel levyll* i.e. *erysipelas*. Mann (1912: 552) mentions a citation from Dekker's *Worke for the Armourers* (1609) which suggests there was some kind of relationship between *foul evil* and the north: "Diseases now as common and as hurtful to them as the Foul Euil to a Northern Man, or the Pox to a French man"

277), *puling* [*baggage*] (II 279), *lobcocke* (V 288), *draggletail* (V 291, OED's first citation is from a 1705 text) or *tallow face*. (V291) apparently more widespread at the time but today associated with the north and East Anglia. The words *bonny Lasse* and *lassy* (OED's first citation for *lassy* is from an 1802 text and for the spelling *lassie* from a 1724 one) he sings in one of his "country Ligges" (V 289) are in common use in the north and the Midlands nowadays but not in the south.

## 2. DELONEY'S LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND.

So very little is known about Deloney's life that really we can only guess at what his reasons to use dialect forms were or as to how he learnt about them. A silk-weaver by trade, of French descent, he seems to have received a good education, as indicated by his translations from Latin and French. He also appears to have been a keen reader of contemporary literature and very interested in drama. Due to his profession he travelled through the country and learnt about customs and traditions<sup>12</sup> that he would later include in his writings. This may also have been the way in which he gained a first hand knowledge of regional varieties spoken at the time. His descriptions of London, Newbury, Reading or Westminster, as well as other places in southern England and East Anglia, show that he must have known them very well.

Scholars have traced his indebtedness in writing his ballads and novels to books on the history of England, geography and natural history, to Shakespeare, to euphuistic works like Fortescue's *The Forest*, to ballads and pamphlets and to contemporary drama and jest books. These last two sources are the most important as regards his dialect passages:

- (a) Collections of jests and jest-biographies such as *A Hundred Merry Tales*, *Westward for Smelts*, *The Life of Long Meg of West Minster*, *Wits, Fits and Fancies* and *Mery Tales*, *Wittie Questions and Quicke Answeres* contain stories Deloney made use of in his novels<sup>13</sup>. Deloney adapts them to suit his narrative purposes using drama techniques but in such a way that as Lawlis (1961: XVII) points out: "...the dialogue is far superior to that of the jestbooks: it rivals the dialogue in the better comedies of the London stage".

Dialect is basically used for comic purposes in jest books. However, in Deloney it also individualizes and makes stand out minor characters. Indeed the south-western variety of Jack of Newbury's father in law has a comic intentionality, but the northern traits in *T. R.* are sometimes just a means of characterization. The story of Hodgekins of Halifax would become just another episode in the novel if some of the characters involved in it did not have linguistic peculiarities.

- (b) As Baker (1934: 191) points out, Deloney "made an intelligent study of the methods employed on the contemporary stage". So much so that some chapters in his novels could easily be turned into plays and this is what happened at a later date when other writers, like Dekker, used them as sources for their own works. Therefore it does not seem farfetched to think that Deloney would also imitate its use of dialect. Northern traits were first used in drama around this time. Nathaniel Woodes introduced them in his morality *The Conflict of Conscience*, printed in 1581. A few years later we find them in Munday's et al. *Sir John Old Castle* and in Robert Greene's *The Scottish History of James IV*.

## 3.1. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

<sup>12</sup>Roberts 1957 treats this aspect in detail.

<sup>13</sup>Deloney may have actually read these collections or made use of orally transmitted material. There is no doubt that he was well acquainted with the jestbooks of his time. See about this subject especially Pätzold 1972. We must not forget the fact that he himself translated Des Périers' collection from the French as *The Mirrour of Mirth and Pleasant Conceits*. See about this Hassell 1955 and Reuter 1982.

Deloney tried to suggest the northern origins of four characters in *T. R.*: two clothiers, Hodgekins of Halifax (west Yorkshire) and Cuthbert of Kendal (south Westmoreland, present day Cumbria), a smith from the Halifax area and a thief, Wallis (who, as we have seen, may have been a Scots). Basically he does so by means of deviant spellings which imply a pronunciation different from that of the other characters. In a few occasions he recurs to well known forms which at the time must have already become traditionally associated with the north and therefore easily understood by his readers. *Giff* <if>, *cragge*, *sall* <shall>, *wald* <would>, *sick*<sup>14</sup> <such> (Hodgekins (IV 286, VIII 311) and the Smith (VIII 308)) had been repeatedly used in the literary representation of northern speech since Chaucer. Deloney chose to ignore dialect syntax and morphology and kept dialect lexis to a minimum.

### 3.2 PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS.

I will attempt to show that the pronunciations underlying Deloney's variant spellings were currently used in the north in the late sixteenth c. When possible, it will be indicated whether contemporary scholars considered such traits as northern. Information as regards the traces of these pronunciations and spellings in the north of England in our days has been included in footnotes. Information has been gathered about the previous existence of the deviant spellings in Middle English texts, where their presence was not a literary convention, and, when possible, in *The Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English* (McIntosh et al. 1986; hereinafter LALME). Most of them, now traditionally considered Scottish, are in fact attested in northern, midland and even southern texts in the Middle English and late Middle English periods.

#### 3.2.1 EARLY MODERN ENGLISH /'i/ - NORTHERN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH /ai/ < ME iþ MAI (HODGEKINS (IV 286 ELSEWHERE MY).

*Mai* probably represents a pronunciation with /ai/. The process of diphthongization of ME iþ# had been fully achieved in northern English in Deloney's days, whereas in southern English it was still at the /ōi/ stage<sup>15</sup>. Both Alexander Gill (1619) and Simon Daines (1640) equate Northern ME iþ# and Southern ME ai. OED gives a citation of *mai* from the northern *Cursor Mundi* (c 1340). Woodes used a similar variant, *may*, in *Conflict of Conscience* (1581).

#### 3.2.2 EARLY MODERN ENGLISH /Uu/ - NORTHERN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH /au/ < ME U# FAULE (HODGEKINS (IV 286; ELSEWHERE FOULE).

In Deloney's days <au> could stand for /au, Au/ and also maybe for /Åu, Å: /, frequent from the very beginning of the 17th c. (Dobson 1968: §235 ff). OED does not record any such spelling for *foul*.<sup>16</sup> Given the context in which it appears, "the faule eule", a confusion with a dialect form of *fall* is possible. ME u# had undergone a series of changes since 1400, to /Uu/ in the 1500s, to /UU/ in the 16th and 17th centuries, not culminating in /au/ till the 18th c.<sup>17</sup> For Gill in 1619 /au/ for /u: / was a typical northern feature (Danielsson I: 15 & II: 102). The diphthongization took place in the north much earlier than in the south, as attested by the orthoepists, although not "north of a line running

<sup>14</sup> It could just be the adjective *sick* i.e. *Mentally affected or weak* and not the northern form of *such*. The Smith says: "Are you sick fules? what the deell doo you meane to breake your crags?" (VIII 308)

<sup>15</sup> About the development of ME iþ# see among others Dobson1968: §§137,140, Brook1975: §4.226, Ekwall 1975: §§69,70, Wyld1925: 223ff, Barber1976: 316, Wakelin: 1977: 38, 108. EDD records "[mai]" in parts of Sc. and in Nhb., Dur +ma#, m Cu., w. Cum. +mei, Wm., nm Yks. +ma#, nnwe & sw Yks, n. Lan. +mái, nw Lan, s. La. +ma#, sw Lan. +mái, n. Der., Lin., e. Suf., Ess., w. Som., w. Cor. SED IX.11.3 records a few cases of *my* which is [mç] generally in the north and [mæç] in I.Ma.

<sup>16</sup> OED considers *faule* a frequent form of *fall* and EDD of *fold* (i.e. *farm yard*) also. An indicator of the confusion existing about the word underlying this spelling is the fact that OED records Robert Anderson's *Cumberland Ballads* (1802) *faul yeat*, as a variant of *fall gate* whereas EDD recording the very same citation considers it stands for *fold gate*.

<sup>17</sup> About the diphthongization of ME u# see among others Jespersen1909: §8.27, Wyld1925: 230 ff, Ekwall1975: §102, Dobson1968: §160ff, Barber1976: 290-92, Gimson1989: §7.26. About the present day variants of ME u# see among others Wells1982: §§2.2.18, 3.1.1, 4.4.5, Wakelin1977: 88 & 90, Orton1978: Introd., Kolb1966: 254-66, Anderson1987: §3.3, etc.

from southern Cumbria to the Humber estuary" (Wells1982: §3.1.1) which leaves Hodgekins of Halifax and Deloney on the safe side.

3.2.3 OEA#: *SALE* (CUTHBERT, V 290), *SAUL* (HODGEKINS (IV 286) ELSEWHERE IN THE TEXT *SOULE*) *SEA*, *GAE*. (HODGEKINS (IV 286; ELSEWHERE *SO* AND *GO*).

OE **a#** remained as such in the north, and joined ME **a#** of other origins, but became ME **o#4** in the south. In Deloney's days it had become /æ: /, **E**: /, and in the north also /e: /, **E'** /<sup>18</sup>. The identity of ME**a#** and ME **e#4** is recorded by the 1600s in northern speech and northern orthoepists also attest before the 17th c. that of ME **e#4** and ME **e#j** =/i: /. Gill (1619) indicates (Danielsson1972: I.15 & II.102; Dobson1968: I.146)that /Eð/ was current in the north in words with OE **a#** .

*Sea* <sup>19</sup> was common in the north and Scotland in the 16th c. There is just one citation for it in OED, in the Scottish *Legend of the Bishop of St. Androis* (1583). *Gae* is found as early as the 10th c. in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (950) and it has come to be a traditional form in the representation of Scottish and northern English<sup>20</sup>. OED gives us a few 16th c. citations, all from Scottish texts.

It may well be that Deloney was following a literary tradition when using the spelling *sale* for *soul* and was indeed trying to represent the current northern pronunciation of the word with *saul*. A variant with /au/ or /ʌu/ was common in the north at the time (Dobson 1968: §172). It resulted from ME **o#4** being raised through the influence of a following *w* which was then absorbed and the resulting late ME **u#** experienced the same developments we have discussed earlier<sup>21</sup>. OED indicates that *sale* existed in the 15th and 16th centuries but offers only one citation from *Cursor Mundi* (c 1340). We know of its presence in *A Hundred Merry Tales* (1526, among Deloney's sources; Blake1981: 56) as a northern form. LALME (II.256) records a few instances of this spelling in northern and north Midland texts. OED mentions the existence of *saule* since the 14th c. and considers it Scottish and northern since the 16th. It also records forms such as *sawl* since the 14th c. or *sawle* between the 13th and the 16th. In the ME period it is located in East Midland, West Midland, South West Midland, South Eastern, South Western and northern texts, as well as in Chaucer's *The Reeve's Tale*, in the speech of one of the northern students. LALME (IV 257) records it frequently in the north, north Midlands and East Anglia. From the 16th c. onwards the only OED citations are from Scottish texts.

3.2.4 OE A + NG: NORTHERN *LANG* (IV 286; ELSEWHERE *LONG*)

*Lang* represents a variant descended from OE a lengthened before the group *-ng* which remained as **a#** in the north, and was shortened again in ME<sup>22</sup>. The citations in OED correspond mostly to Scottish texts, but there are also some from northern, south West Midlands, south East Midlands and

<sup>18</sup>In Dobson's opinion (1968: §§98 ff). Among others see also Kniezsa 1983 for a full discussion of the development of ME**a#** in the north and Kolb1966: 208ff. The diphthongs and monophthongs resulting from what Wells (1982: § 3.1.5) calls the Long Mid Mergers seem to have displaced in this case "the traditional-dialect vowel, which (in words deriving from northern Middle English /a: /) is a front diphthong [æ̃ ð̃ ~ æ̃ ã ~ eã]" (*Ibid.*: § 4.4.4).

<sup>19</sup>In Mann's edition *sae*. We also have *mae* for Lawlis's *may* in this same paragraph, a possible "regularization" on the part of the printer. In Mann's edition there is also *meere* for *more* twice in the same sentence where Cuthbert of Kendal's uses *sale* (V 290). About the important role played by printers and editors as regards literary dialects see Blake 1989. EDG-Ind. records as variants descended from the form with OE **a#**: "[seð]" in ne Yks. +**se#**, sið, nw Yks., snw Yks +sia, sið, e. Yks +sið, m Yks., nm Yks +sið, sm Yks +sið; "[siA]" in e. Cum. +sið, w.Cum +sið, n. &e. Wm. +sið, s.Wm., n. Yks +sið, nw, nnw & snw Yks, nw Lan.; and "[s#]" in me. & s. Nhb., n.s. Dur. Rydland (1982: §§5.6, 9.10, etc.) confirms the existence of such pronunciations nowadays in South East Cumbria, SED (IX.10.7) only recorded a variant pronunciation of *so* in the north, [suð] in Yks.

<sup>20</sup>EDG-Ind. records "[ga#]" in e & m. Cum., Wm. but w. Wm. + ga, snw. Yks., n. Lan., +**ge#**, guð, nw Lan., "[geð]" in m. Yks., "[gi#]" in se. Nhb., and "[gið]" in s. Sc. Nowadays such pronunciations seem to have disappeared, SED (VIII.7.9, VIII.6.2 (a)) records others descended from the southern form and only some with /a: / in La., We., Cu., and [A:] in Yks. Rydland (1982: §3.9, 7.10a) confirms the existence of variants with /a: /.

<sup>21</sup>Unfortunately SED did not record *soul* in the north and whereas we find confirmation of the pronunciation suggested by *saule* in EDD such is not the case for *sale*. In EDG-Ind. "[saul]" appears in parts of Sc. and in sw. Nhb, Wm., nnw, snw & sw Yks +soul, em. Lan., +sol, se Lan., s. Lan +soul, Glo. +sðul, se. Ken., [sʌul] in parts of Sc. and in nw. Der. and w. Wil; "[sa#]" appears in parts of Sc.

<sup>22</sup>See about this northern trait among others Wakelin 1977: 90-91, Brook 1975: §§2.85, 4.72, *Id* 1978: 64, Trudgill 1990: 19ff. Dobson1968: §71 notes that the orthoepists only record *o* in *long*.

southern ones up to the 17th c. when we find it as a northern literary dialect feature in R. Brathwait's *A Strappado for the devil* (1615). Chaucer had been the first one to use it as a northern trait in *The Reeve's Tale* spelt *lange*. From the 18th c. onwards it has become a traditional form to represent the speech of Scottish or northern characters<sup>23</sup>.

3.2.5 ME o5# - EARLY MODERN NORTHERN ENGLISH /y: /: *GUD*, *GUDE* (THE SMITH (VIII 308) AND HODGEKINS (IV 286); ELSEWHERE *GOOD.*), *FULE* (THE SMITH, VIII 308; ELSEWHERE *FOOLE.*)

In Deloney's days *good* could be pronounced with /u: /, the normal development of ME o5#, and with /U/ by early shortening of ME o5# to identity with ME u& or by later shortening of /u: / < ME o5#<sup>24</sup>. In the North words with ME o5#<sup>25</sup> were also pronounced with /y: / and /iu/. It seems likely that /y: /, /iu/ were respectively the sounds underlying these spellings, although for a reader not familiar with the northern dialect *gud* could stand for a common southern pronunciation.

OED shows citations for *gud* and *gude* mostly from Scottish texts but also from others written in southern, midland and northern dialects. The earliest examples of *gud* appear in *King Alisaunder* (13..) and in Hampole's Northumbrian poem *Prick of Conscience* (1340), which also has *gude*. As shown in LALME (II: 279-84 and IV: 187) *gud* and *gude* are attested in Scotland and northern England and there is the odd case here and there in the Midlands and East Anglia. The situation seems to change in the 16th c., both spellings apparently becoming a convention to indicate a northern or Scottish pronunciation. We find *gud* in W. Bullein's *Dialogue Against the Pestilence* (1564-78) where it marks the speech of "a beggar from Redesdale (Northumberland)" and it also indicates a northern or Scottish pronunciation in William Warner's *Albions England* (1589); Giles Du Wes in *An Introductione for to lerne to rede, to pronounce and to speke French trewly* (c 1532) says "Ye shall pronounce ... v after the Skottes, as in this worde *gud*". This seems to imply that such a spelling was generally identified with a variant /gy: d/. Holinshed (1577-86) uses *gude* in a sentence by a Scottish character and Nathaniel Woodes tries to show a Scottish or northern pronunciation with it in *Conflict of Conscience* (1581) (Blake 1981: 74-75). Both spellings also appear in texts where they are not a literary convention. *Gud* is present in T. Starkey's *England in the Reign of Henry the Eighth* (1538) and in G. Harvey's *Letterbook* (1573) (alternating with *good*) and we find *gude* in the *Acts of Chapter of the Collegiate Church of SS. Peter and Wilfrid, Ripon (Yorkshire)* (1504). *Fule*<sup>26</sup> is traditionally considered a Scottish form. OED provides us with two citations from northern texts, one in *Cursor Mundi* (a 1300) and another in *Alphabet of Tales* (c 1400).

As the centuries have gone by *gud*, *gude* and *fule* have become part of the traditional literary dialect spellings to indicate a northern or Scottish pronunciation.

3.2.6 LOSS OF INTERVOCALIC /v/: *DULE*, *EULE* (HODGEKINS (IV 286; ELSEWHERE *EUILS*, *EUILL.*), *DEEL* (THE SMITH (VIII 308; ELSEWHERE *DIUEL*, *DIUELL.*).

These spellings seem to point to variants in which /v/, especially in the north, was early vocalized or lost. There are no citations for *eule* in OED or EDD, nor does LALME (IV: 162-63) record any similar spellings. We could consider it as representing *evle*, showing a form with vocalic /l̥j/ and /e/ as its stressed vowel. However in *T.R.* *u* for *v* is consistently found only in intervocalic position. It appears to be an analogous spelling to those in the previous section and to *dule*. Kökeritz (1953: 188-89), discussing Shakespeare's spellings *deale* for *devil* and *eale* for *evil*, mentions the presence of

<sup>23</sup>EDD locates it in texts from Sc., N.Cy., Nhb., Dur., Lakel., Cum., Wm., Yks., Lan., nw Der. and Wor. In EDG a pronunciation "[laE]" is recorded in parts of Sc. and in Nhb., Dur., Cum. Wm., Yks. and Lan. Upton (1994: 248-49) gives [laE] for Cu., Yks., We., Nhb., Du., La. and Nf.

<sup>24</sup>See Dobson 1968: §§ 36-38 and Ekwall 1975: §§15, 16.

<sup>25</sup>See Gerson 1967 §5.4 for a full discussion of the development of ME o#j in the northern dialects. See also among others Dobson 1968: 159, and §154, n4, Wakelin 1972: 75 & 71, *Id.* 1977: 88, Gimson §7.78 and Wyld 1925: 235. In SED VI.13.1 (a & b), VII.8.7 and V.8.4, VI.5.18, VIII.3.2 we find variants of this word which can be traced back to these forms. Wakelin 1977: 88 and Wells: II, §4.4.4, as well as Orton 1978: Introd. ME and Anderson: §§3.32, 3.33, 3.35 indicate that the influence of RP is causing these variants to disappear.

<sup>26</sup>SED VIII.93 only records one variant of *fool* in the north, [fiVl] in Nb.

rule for *revel* in *Midsummer's Night Dream* and in *King Edward the First* (1593) by George Peele. Given the confusion existing between *evil* and *ill*, this variant could represent *ill* and not *evil*<sup>27</sup>.

In Deloney's days *devil* could be pronounced with /i, e, i:/<sup>28</sup>. Although OED specifically indicates that *dule* is characteristic of Lan. and says that it was common in the 15th and 16th centuries it only records one citation in the northern *Destruction of Troy* (c 1400). It has become common in the traditional representation of northern dialects<sup>29</sup>. /di:l/ would be the form suggested by *deel* which survived till the 19th c. in Scotland and the north country (see EDD).

### 3.2.7 NORTHERN /HW/ -SOUTHERN /KW/: *WHIAT* (HODGEKINS (IV 286; ELSEWHERE *QUIET*))

*Whiat* represents a pronunciation with initial /hw/ for /kw/ common in the north since ME times at least<sup>30</sup>. The loss of the initial aspirate of /hw/ started as early as the 12th c. in the south and south-east Midlands and was accepted in the standard language towards the end of the 18th c. It has been retained to this day in the far northeast<sup>31</sup>

OED only records a similar variant, *whiet*, but offers no citations. Robert Greene had used *whayet* in *Scottish History of James IV* (1598) (Blake 1981: 76). Earlier on Woodes had suggested this same trait with the spelling *hwick* for *quick* in *Conflict of Conscience* (1581).

## 3.3 LEXICAL ANALYSIS

### 3.3.1 *FAUSE LIZAR LOWNES* (HODGEKINS, IV 286)

The combination *fause lownes*, that is, *false loons*, worthless persons, rogues, is considered "Chiefly Scottish and North. dial." by OED which presents citations of *lown*, *lowne* from Scottish and English texts since 1508<sup>32</sup>. OED records just one citation of *lizar*, with an unclear meaning, "We'll to the harning drive, when in fresh lizar they get spleet and rive" (1730, W. Starrat in a collection of Scottish poems edited by A. Ramsay). Mann (1912: 553) thinks it stands for *lazar* but we have found no confirmation of the existence of such a variant for this word. Lawlis (1967: 572) says it may represent *leasow*, i.e. *pasture*, *meadow*, a word for which EDD gives variants such as *lisor*, *lezzar*, *lezzar*, *lezzur* in Midland and Scottish texts. Deloney tried to make clear the meaning of Hodgekins's dialect by preceding and following it by paragraphs in which the narrator or another character paraphrased what he said. Related to *fause lizar lownes* we read: "by the reason of **false** borderers and other **euill minded** persons ..." (IV 285), "... by **theeves** your clothes are so often stolne from you, ... I thinke it not amisse to ordaine this death for such **malefactors** ..." (IV: 286). (Boldface not in the original). Thus, we could also consider the possibility that *lizar* might be related to *lease*, i.e. *to tell lies*, to *leeser*, i.e. *a destroyer*, *a loser*, to an adjectival use of *leisure*, or even, in

<sup>27</sup>OED indicates that "Although *ill* is not etymologically related to *evil*, the two words have from the 12th c. on been synonymous, and *ill* has often been viewed as a mere variant or reduced form of *evil*. This esp. in Sc., where *v* between two vowels early disappeared, and *devil* ... became *deil* ... so that *evil* might have become *eil*, hence, in 15th -16th c. Sc., *euil*, *evyl* is often found written where *ill* was the word pronounced". Probably for this reason in Sc. and the north *ill* appears in "popular names of diseases or distempers" such as *Falling-ill*. OED gives us several citations for this use, *foule ill* in P. Holland, *Plutarch's Philosophie* (1603), *falling ill* from a 1652 poem in J. Watson's *A Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems* (1711) and from a 1893 Northumberland glossary, *milk ill*. As a matter of fact in *T.R.* together with *faule eule* and *foul evil* we also have *foule ill*, used by the Smith (VIII 308). The closest pronunciation mentioned in EDD is "[ee'ul]" in w. Som., spelt *ill*. Unfortunately SED did not record any forms of *evil* and only one of *ill* in the north, [Ç:] in La.

<sup>28</sup>About contemporary forms of *evil* and *devil* see Dobson §§9 & n2, 10, 11, 75, 326, 334, 400.

<sup>29</sup>EDD locates it in 19th c texts of n.Cy., Cum., Wm., w. Yks and Lan. where apparently it implied [diul] or [diɔl]. Such forms seem to have disappeared nowadays. See SED VIII.8.3 and VIII.1.20 which record [divl, dEvl, d:ivl, dÇvɔl, d<sup>ç</sup>i:vl, dEvl]. No instances of variant forms of *evil* appear.

<sup>30</sup>Wakelin 1982: 15 says that this pronunciation existed "even as early as late Northumbrian". See also OED's statements under "Q" and Wells 1982: §4.4.9.

<sup>31</sup>EDD records "[hwaiɔt]" in Sh.I. and Wm. and "[waiɔt]" in s. Dur., n.e.m.&w. Cum, nnw &snw. Yks. and n. Lan. SED did not record any forms of this word in the north. However in words like *quarrel*, *queen*, *quey* or *quick* (SED: IV.4.6, III.13.9, III.1.5, IV.8.6, VI.7.11,12, etc.) we find initial /w/ in Cu., Du., We., La. Yks. and Db. and /hw/ in Du. See also Orton 1978: Ph212, 222, 223 and Anderson 1987: Map 112. Rydland (1982: 9.16.1a) records /wai-ɔv/ in Cumbria.

<sup>32</sup>In EDD *lown* appears in texts from Scotland, N.Cy., Nhb., Nhp, and Shr. transcribed as [lu#n].

sense, to a combination of *lazy*, in the north *bad*, *wicked* and *lither*, in Scotland, the north and the West Midlands, *idle*, *lazy*, *slothful*.

### 3.3.2 BOARING THEIR EYNE (HODGEKINS (IV 286))

A possible meaning of this expression, not recorded in OED, could be *straining their eyes*. *Eyne* is a common form for *eyes* in the North and west Midlands descended from the weak OE plural. In EDD we find under *Bore* vb. the expression heard in Stf. *To bore one's eyes out*: i.e. *To tire the eyes*. OED records under *Glower* a citation from the Scottish W. Guthrie's *Sermons* (a 1665) which implies a similar meaning, "Their the poor men stood gazing and glowering out their eyne, to behold the place where he ascended".

## 4. CONCLUSION.

Deloney gives us a truthful representation of northern speech forms at the very end of the sixteenth century. Some of them have come to be considered more representative of Scotland but back in Deloney's days they were also in use in the north of England. Even taking into account the always conjectural nature of orthographical interpretation, it seems that he is accurate enough in his representation of northern pronunciations. He adds to our knowledge of contemporary dialect lexis. Thomas Deloney gave us meaningful clues about northern English at the turn of the 16th c. Wakelin (1986b: 741) stated that the dialectology of the Early Modern English period "has been largely neglected in our day, since the 'evidence' available is regarded as difficult or impossible to evaluate". A thorough and wide ranging study of the data contained in the drama, poetry and prose of this period is possible. It would contribute to a better knowledge of the Early Modern English non standard varieties.

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# “The Sweet Smoke of Rhetoric”: Some Observations on Shakespeare’s Theory of Language

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In *The Arte of Rhetorique*, primarily conceived as an attempt to show the capabilities of the vernacular for eloquence, Thomas Wilson denounces “affected rhetoric” and calls for “one manner of language for all” (qtd in Gorlach, 1992, p. 221). Like his fellow humanists, Sir John Cheke and Roger Ascham, Wilson’s opposition to rampant borrowing was founded on the principles of classical rhetoric. These precepts can be summarized as the use of *propria verba*, *usitata verba* and *perspicuitas*. *Propria verba* essentially meant using words in their literal meaning, not in the strict sense of a closely referential language but rather, the use of words appropriate to the matter. *Usitata verba* signals the conservative nature of the theory: Quintilian requires words to be stamped in the mint of customary usage. Strict adherence to these principles resulted in *perspicuitas*, that is, clarity and transparency. Classical rhetoric, therefore, places the communicative function at the core of language and Wilson is untiring in underlining the importance of common speech and customary usage. Failure to adhere to these principles results in “affected rhetoric” which undermines the very nature of language. Wilson identifies three sources of abuse, namely, the court, the academic establishment and the half-learned.

*LLL*,<sup>1</sup> written in 1595, is an examination of the confusion, deception and insincerity which result, either willingly or through a blind following of fashion, from the improper use of words. In the play, “affected rhetoric” impedes, not only interpersonal communication but also weakens the social bond between citizens. This “Curtazin-like painted affectation” as Philip Sidney (1975, p.49) called it, is epitomized in the king and his advisors, the first group identified by Wilson. There is little that is novel in identifying the Court as a wasp’s nest of “outrageous usage”, ridiculous dress and moral decay. Roger Ascham (1570) for example, repeatedly condemns the flattery and superficiality of court language and behaviour.

Those of the academic world whom Wilson accuses of “dark meanings” and “obscurity”, those “more careful to speak curiously then to speak truly” (qtd. in Gorlach 1992, p. 306) are represented in the play by Holofernes the schoolmaster and Nathaniel the cleric. They are “The misticall wise menne, and Poeticall Clerkes, [who] will speak nothyng but quaint proverbes and blind allegories, delyting muche in their owne darkness, especially when none can tell what thei doe saie” (qtd in Gorlach, 1992, p 220.) Their over-indulgence in borrowed words, especially from Classical sources infringes the principles of both *propria verba* and *usitata verba*.

Wilson’s third typology, the half-learned, appears in the figure of Armando who has no more than a nodding acquaintance with learning and Court practices. Wilson calls them the “foolish fantastical”, “suche fellowes as have seen learned fellows in their days”. In *LLL* Armando is described as a phantasm, “...our court, you know, is haunted / With a refined traveller of Spain” (I: i, 154) and as a foreigner, is a caricature of the accumulated ills of both Court and schoolroom.

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<sup>1</sup> All references to the play are from the Bretislav Hodek’s (n.d.) *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, London: Spring Books

Shakespeare adds two more groups who heighten comic effect and place the discussion of language in a wider context than that contemplated by Wilson. While the latter was chiefly concerned with the use of English for literary expression, the former investigates language as a social phenomenon. These groups are the peasants, who become lost in a maze of false cues and distorted words and secondly, the entourage from the French Court, especially the women who provide the voice of commonsense and plain speech. The exchanges between the groups dramatise the impossibility of expressing meaning whilst entangled in the conventions dictated by fashion on the one hand and rooted in antiquity on the other.

The unmasking of rhetoric occurs, paradoxically through the presentation of a masque in V: ii, where all the contending parties are brought together in a dizzying kaleidoscope of disguise, dissimulation and pretence. The four suitors, the King, Biron, Dumaine and Longaville, disguised as Muscovites<sup>2</sup> present themselves before the princess and her ladies-in-waiting: Rosaline, Katherine, and Maria, all of whom appear veiled, having previously exchanged the gifts their suitors had bestowed on them. Their assumption of anonymity, their literal facelessness, is a deliberate attempt to display the falsehood in which the men are engaged, to reveal their juggling with words for what it is, a mere enactment of wit divorced from heart.<sup>3</sup> Their performance portrays the qualities of an intelligence out of control, an abnegation of the sense of responsibility which Sir Thomas Elyot defined as one of the qualities central to the ruler and his courtiers.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, it represents a theory of language where the relation between names and things has broken down.

Language, dance and courtly poetry in this scene form three highly conventionalized forms of behaviour. In the Elizabethan court, it was expected that Courtiers should write sonnets and lyrics to the objects of their desire. George Puttenham writes explicitly for "idle courtiers desirous to become skillfull in their own mother tungue, and for the private recreation to make now & then ditties of pleasure" (1936, p. 158).<sup>5</sup> The capacity of courtly poetry as a vehicle for real sentiment is revealed in *L L L* to be null and void. The various declarations of undying love are exercises in verbal acrobatics and represent what Philip Sidney condemned as "using Art to show Art, and not to hide art" (1975, p. 50).

The suitors, unaware of the real identity of the ladies, recite their amorous ditties, composed in high rhetorical style - each to the wrong girl. The lack of individuality of the girls highlights the interchangeability of the speeches. The point being made here is that speech must be moulded to suit the audience to which it is addressed. Ascham states quite categorically that "they [words] are to be chosen according to the persons we make speake, or the things we speake of". (1967, p. 621). Elyot, in the same manner defines 'majesty' in the ruler as being, among other things, "language and gesture apt to his dignitie, and accommodated to time, place and company" (qtd in Caspari, 1954, pp 107-8). Not to do so annuls its expressive function and moreover, raises serious doubts about the moral quality of the speaker.

This scene demonstrates to great comic effect that "affected rhetoric" is a hermetic system whose "feelers" have lost their sensitivity to reality. It actually contradicts this reality and proceeds oblivious. The princess and her ladies-in-waiting deliberately set out to demolish their pretentious suitors' "three - pil'd hyberboles" (V: ii, 439) by intentionally interpreting their figures of speech literally. They apply a narrow interpretation of Cicero's *propria verba*, that is, words representing the

<sup>2</sup> The parallel between exotic dress and the abuse of language especially in reference to borrowing was a favourite of the humanists. Ascham, Cheke, Wilson and Ben Jonson milked this image to express their condemnation of borrowing and outrageous usage of language in Court.

<sup>3</sup> In the Quarto version of the play the ladies in act II have no names at all, being simply L1, L2, L3 or even Lad.

<sup>4</sup> The king and his courtiers have more the air of shallow formality and playful elegance of Castiglione's courtier than the high seriousness of Elyot's *The Book Named the Governor* (1531). Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528) had been translated by Thomas Hoby in 1561 and was extremely popular. It is most likely that Shakespeare had read it.

<sup>5</sup> As Loades, in *The Tudor Court* (1986) points out, this led to the establishment of a flourishing market in sonneteers who came to the aid of those whose passion outweighed their literary skills. Skelton and Lydgate were known to have penned sonnets to order.

things with which they are born. The men are led through a labyrinth full of blind alleys and become embroiled in infructuous, babbling attempts to give direct answers to direct questions. The source of comedy is the confrontation of two extremes, that of an absolutely functional language with a high rhetorical style. To the King's salutation "All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day" (V: ii, 369), the princess, working on logical deduction reduces the greeting to a series of incompatibilities. In the same vein, Berowne's comparison of Rosaline's face to the sun is an unfortunate choice of metaphor as she is black. However, he has no compunction in changing the image to that of the moon. The affected rhetoric of the King and his company is unable to encompass individual differences, to adapt itself to reality. This is obvious when in fact there is a mix-up over the letters which are given to Costard by both Armando and Biron to be delivered to Jaquenetta and Rosaline respectively. Costard, entangled in the web of words woven about him by the two men, delivers the letters to the wrong girl.

The presence of the herald as a representative of the lower social orders offers a further perspective on rhetoric. Mote, who interprets words literally, plays havoc with the men's purposes. He has rehearsed an introductory speech but the force of memory proves less strong than his natural tendency to let language reflect and comment on reality. He is the embodiment of those whom Wilson describes as "the simple [who] can not but wonder at their talke and think surely they speak by some revelation" (qtd in Potter, 1968, p.48). What Mote sees happening before his eyes sabotages his prepared speech. When he should say "that ever turn'd their eyes on mortal vows," the fact that the girls have turned their backs to him prompts "that ever turned their - backs - to mortal vows" (V: ii, 169) "Once to behold" sommersaults to its contrary "not to behold" (V: ii, 174) when he is ignored by the ladies.

The girls have from the beginning, been sceptical of flowery language: the "taffeta phrases, silken terms precise" (V: ii, 438). They, like most of Shakespeare's female characters are vehicles of common sense and shrewd judgement. They adhere to the classical principles of rhetoric; to use a language fit for and adapted to the situation and in this way, highlight the rhetoric of deception. They are in touch with their emotions and express them clearly when necessary but they recognise a time for banter and a time for speaking seriously. What they demand of the men is "the apt declining of a mannes mind" (qtd in Gorchach, 1992, p. 221). Like Mariana in *Measure for Measure*, for them, the meaning of words and the strength of vows are integrated into a vast scheme of things that has moral significance. The men's speeches were strings of figures with no sound matter or consciousness of reality. In fact, Rosaline asks for the speech to be translated by "some plain man" (V: ii, 184).

The punishment meted out in V.ii. has the death of the Princess' father as its pretext but is clearly symbolic. It implements Wilson's advice that "we must of necessitie banishe al suche affected rhetoric" (qtd in Gorchach, 1992, p. 221). The men are to spend a year and a day in a hermitage where they are to go naked and lead a frugal life in order to purge the disease that has them in their grip. Just as they will be stripped of their finery, they will also reform their language, aiming at Sir John Cheke's ideal of a language "cleane and pure, unmixt and unmangeled" (qtd in More, 1910, 94). The Ladies are not exempt either and must make amends for their own excesses. It is expected that the curbing of linguistic folly will have a morally cleansing effect but it is not made clear which will come first, the moral or the linguistic rebirth. It is significant that it is only after the shadow of death is cast on the play that "Honest plain words" (V: ii. 795) are used.

Thus, in the final scene, there is a direct correlation between linguistic impropriety in the king's personal relations, his moral qualities and the consequences that this carries for the state. Shakespeare was no doubt in agreement with the humanists who believed that the qualities of the ruler and the art of governing are virtually identical: no level of the ruler's acts are exempt from the moral responsibility contingent upon his position. As Fritz Caspari (1954) observes, "Love and friendship are never merely private affairs but are intimately connected with the well-being of the community and therefore are of great political importance and consequence" (p.165). Shakespeare also follows Ascham's line of thinking in seeing a close parallel between language and virtue. He deplored those "not onlie mared for speaking, but also corrupted in judgement" (1967, p.7).

Elyot had identified as fundamental to the good ruler, the quality of intelligence accompanied by a concomitant sense of responsibility. The king here clearly lacks the second quality. He is driven

by whim and caprice. The breaking of the vows made in Act 1 brings his ethical integrity into question. The men had pledged themselves to a life of fasting, abstinence and frugality in the pursuit of learning. The arrival of the princess and her retinue was disconcerting initially but posed no insurmountable problems. The King openly and candidly revokes his vow. Biron best typifies the philosophy that any verbal commitment can be metamorphosed to suit the will of the user and words can mean as much or as little as is convenient. "... having sworn too-hard-a-keeping oath, / Study to break it and not break my troth" and "then I swear in jest" (I: i, 64). Having so lightly broken the first oath, the value of the king's subsequent pledges must be seriously questioned. The logical conclusion is clearly stated by the princess: "Your oath I will not trust" (V ii, 840). His words are no more than "Vaine soundes to please the eare" (Ascham, 1967, p.87).

Language is a moral barometer. The abuses perpetrated on the linguistic level are merely symptomatic of a stain that has seeped through all levels of human activity; from the strictly emotional to the highest levels of diplomacy. Speech, for Renaissance man was not the mutable voice and transcendental significance existing in a hierarchy. It represented the integration of human nature; physical and rational: heart, tongue and mind. When language declines, when words are severed from their meanings and prostituted for popularity there can be no moral rectitude. Therefore the king's abuse of language has a correlative in his actions as ruler. This more sinister element is present from the start. Throughout the play the King is guilty of 'uncivil' behaviour. The princess' mission is to reclaim a sum of money owed to her father but which the King maintains has been paid. His treatment of the Princess and her retinue, keeping them outside the bounds of the castle walls: "like one that comes here to besiege his court" (II: i, 85) infringes the norms of diplomacy and is clearly unbecoming of a sovereign. The princess's refusal to dance with the King and his courtiers is highly symbolic given that dancing was much more than a pleasant recreational pastime and was an integral part of diplomacy and international relations. Her refusal amounts to the breaking off of diplomatic relations and dramatises how closely the personal and the public were associated in the humanist concept of man and state.

The themes dealt with in *LLL* reflect Shakespeare's acute awareness of the language debate of the preceding half century. He feeds on the conventional imagery that colours the writings of Wilson, Ascham and Cheke and identifies with their philosophy of language. He treads the middle ground between the Court and the academic world, between the airy nothingness of rhetoric and the morass of leaden pedantry. He vouches for a language in tune with the sentiments, a vehicle for communication at all levels and for all social classes; precisely what Wilson prescribed when speaking of "one manner of language for all". He sides with the "russet yeas and kersey noes" (V: ii, 445) and endorses the linguistic ideal expressed by King James VI, a language "Plaine, honest, cumlie, clene, short and sententious" (qtd in Gorlach, 1993. p. 324) or that of his contemporary Sidney "but for uttering sweetly, and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech" (1975, p. 307). In short, language which communicates real feelings and emotions, which is expressive, which unites social conventions and individual feelings, which is flexible enough to encompass all situations and be used in different registers. Shakespeare was to reiterate this philosophy in Hamlet (III: ii,17) "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with the special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature".

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# *Othere places delitables* in two sixteenth-century Scottish texts

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In late ME, in high-style literary texts and those written under French influence, adjectives of Romance origin may take *-s* as the plural inflection. In most of these cases, the adjective is postpositive, that is, it occurs after the noun it modifies:

- in other places *delitables*;
- of many wronges *subtiles* and also open oppressions.

Occasionally the adjective with *-s* occurs in attributive or in predicative position:

- *sufficiauntȝ* borwes;
- romances that been *roiales*;
- [the Romeins] Til thei become so *vileins*.

This construction is especially frequent in scientific, ecclesiastical and legal registers, as the following examples illustrate: *bestes crepands*, *medicyns mollificatyves*, *clergis seculers*, *mynystris provyncials*, *godes temporeles*, *Þinges spirituels*, *heires males*, etc. It becomes quite common in the 15th and in the 16th centuries<sup>1</sup>, and finally disappears in the course of eModE, although Kisbye (1971: 172) points out that *by these presents* is still current in legal parlance.

Apart from this construction, which is considered a French calque, Mustanoja (1960: 277) mentions the Middle Scots practice of inflecting native adjectives in the plural when used in attributive position (*þe saidis lordis*). Aitken (1971: 177) points out that this practice, together with the preference for hypotaxis and for passive and impersonal constructions, the free use of borrowings of Romance origin, the sporadic use of anglicisms etc., is characteristic of literary prose, the principal records and most other official writings. Only the adjectives and past participles (*fore)said*, *vther*, (*vel*)*be*)*lovit* and the relative adjective and pronoun (*the*) *quhilk* commonly take *-is* in the plural.

Of these, the *OED* only mentions (*fore)said*, *loved* and *quhilk*. According to this dictionary, *foresaid* occurs with plural ending in Scottish writings of the 16th century and in legal formulae until the 18th; *saidis* continues until the 17th century, and *loved* often has a plural ending in royal and feudal documents, where it occurs prefixed to personal names or designations, being equivalent to the 'trusty and well-beloved' of the English charters.

The information provided by *DOST* is more complete. In the case of *foresaid*, the following examples illustrate the earliest occurrences of the inflected and uninflected form with plural nouns:

- (1384) Twychand the forsayde materis;
- (1387) The forsaidys Jonne, Jonne, and Jonne, al as ane.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, for example, has: 'and yet my letters *patents* give me leave', 'Lords *appealants*, your differences shall all rest under gage'.

Both the inflected and uninflected past participle are especially frequent in legal registers (charters, burgh records), and both may occur in attributive or postpositive position. In postposition, however, the inflected form is earlier than the uninflected one:

- (1409) The day, yhere ande place foresaidez;
- (1456) The thre kingis foresaid. <sup>2</sup>

*Lovit*, apart from the general use, is, according to *DOST*, “very common in formal epistolary or, chiefly, official or legal style, especially in non-notarial deeds and royal gifts, mandates, warrants, etc.”. In these registers it regularly takes the plural inflection when referring to more than one person, as the following examples illustrate<sup>3</sup>:

- (1447) Til oure luvidis cosingis;
- (1545) To our louittis cousingis, bailteis, counsale and communitie of Abirdene;
- (1677) To my loveitis Johne Lowrimer ... and ilk ane of yow conjunctlie and severallie.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to *other*, the earliest example *DOST* gives of the uninflected adjective with a plural noun is a midfourteenth-century gloss (‘In communi pastura dicte terre vsufructu [gl. gres watir and other profitis] pro suis animalibus’), whereas the inflected adjective first occurs at the beginning of the 15th century: (1408) ‘Of al otheris condicyons’<sup>5</sup>. The use of the plural inflection with the pronoun is earlier:

- (c.1375) With oþteris also in þe se Rouande;<sup>6</sup>
- (c.1390) To red the dame as oþiris that ar thirlit;
- (1405) And mony vtheris.<sup>7</sup>

This inflected form could later on have been extended to the adjective. Sheppard (1936: 461) points out that this may have been the result of a confusion between the pronominal and adjectival function of *other*:

In many cases the plural pronoun *other*, *others* stands in apposition to a following noun. This construction may, with a slight change in sense, be taken as equivalent to an adjective *other* + qualifying substantive; and in many cases the shade of difference in meaning is so slight, that it is difficult to decide whether the pronoun or the adjective is intended,

and she quotes examples such as:

- þe capitanis of þe tribis and vþeris þe wourthiest personis for þat tyme;

<sup>2</sup> *Foresaidis* is also a noun in Scots meaning ‘the persons, matters or things previously mentioned’. The first example in *DOST* of this use, which tends to occur in legal registers, belongs to the beginning of the sixteenth century: (1506) ‘I or any of my forsaidis’.

<sup>3</sup> According to *DOST*, *lovit* also takes the plural inflection occasionally when referring to a single person, but it does not offer any example of this use. *DOST* has no instance either of the uninflected past participle with a plural noun.

<sup>4</sup> *Lovitis* may also be a noun in the same kind of registers in Scots. The earliest example of this use in *DOST* occurs in 1459: ‘Til our lovidis the alderman [etc.]’.

<sup>5</sup> In early ME *other* could also be inflected with plural nouns, but in those cases it took *-e* as in OE, not *-s*: ‘the othere disciplis camen bi boot’ (1388).

<sup>6</sup> This example occurs in *Legends of the Saints in the Scottish Dialect of the fourteenth century*. *OED* dates this text c.1375, and *DOST* a.1400.

<sup>7</sup> In ME the pronoun could take *-e* or be left uninflected in the plural, as in: - (1250) Oþtere of þat kin; - (1460) Lordes, knyghtes, and sqviers, and oþter; - (1581) Other there were of a contrary opinion. The earliest examples of *others* in this function, according to the *OED*, belong to the end of the fourteenth century. The first one occurs in a Scottish text (*Legends of the Saints*), and the second in a Northern author: (c.1380, Wyclif) ‘To oþirs is þroun ... discrecioun’. The next examples of *others* quoted by *OED* belong to the 16th century. In Scots, however, this pronoun is frequent in the plural also in the 15th, as the following quotations from *DOST* illustrate: - (1446) To red the dame as oþiris that ar thirlit; - (1488) To stand in awfald kyndnes .. and help to uthers. *Others* therefore seems to be another instance of a structure or usage which occurred first in Scots and the Northern dialect and extended later on to the Midlands to become part of the future standard.

- The king ... send sindry of þame in þe Ilis with *vþeris his seruandis*;
- For abone *mony vther his wailþeand dedis* he brynt þe subbarbillis of Carlile.

The case of the relative is similar, since (*the*) *quhilk* may also function as adjective or as pronoun. The use of the plural inflection with the pronoun is earlier and may have been extended to the adjective as in the case of *other*<sup>8</sup>. The following examples illustrate the earliest occurrences of the inflected forms in both functions:

- (c1379) The landys before sayde the qvylkys the forsayde Alayne bocht fra the forsayde Thomas;
- (1391) Of the qwhilkcs erledom and lordshipe ... the said Schir Malcoms wyf is verry ... ayre.

According to Caldwell (1974: 36), who studies the relative in the period c.1375 - c.1500,

plural antecedents are not invariably followed by inflected forms of the relative; the non-inflected forms remain the more common, though inflected forms are by no means infrequent. Rarely, one finds that an inflected form has been applied to a singular antecedent by analogy with the plural usage.

She does not offer percentages, however, nor does she distinguish between the adjective and the pronoun.<sup>9</sup>

Adjectives of Romance origin are also inflected in the plural in Middle Scots. This construction, which is explained by Aitken, does not seem to differ from English usage:

Gilbert Hay and John Bellenden and some others writing under the immediate influence of French or Latin originals also occasionally inflect some other adjectives, apparently only of Latin origin, often with the (French or Latin) inverted word-order for the noun-adjective phrases, as *instrumentis subordinatis* (Hay I, 76/30), *all vther thingis necessaris* (Bellenden, *Boece* (M) I, 25). The habit, never invariable in any text, is absent from most verse and some literary prose texts (for example, James VI's *Basilicon Doron*), and from many texts of the 'substandard' type ... No doubt it was indeed an 'artificial, literary' feature. (Aitken 1971: 204)

With regard to the practice followed by Scottish writers, Glenn (1987), commenting on the *Buke of the Ordre of Knychthede* (1456) by Gilbert Haye (one of the authors mentioned by Aitken), points out that of the commonly inflected adjectives, (*fore*)*said* never takes *-is* in that text, *other* only once, as against 47 occurrences of the uninflected plural, and *lovit* does not occur as an adjective in Haye. The relative *quhilk* appears in the plural with *-is* seven times, and without inflection only three times. With respect to the adjectives of Romance origin, Glenn (1987: 95) points out that

the 'immediate influence' of the French original on Haye was in most cases a general one and that Haye is consistent neither in his use of the inflection nor in his employment of the inverted noun-adjective word order usual with this inflection,

and he mentions the following examples, in which the adjective is postpositive in a), in attributive position in b), and in predicative position in c):

- a) influences celestiales; proprietis corporales and personalis as spiritualis; perilis ... bathe corporalis and spiritualis; all Goddis werkis visiblis and inuisiblis; condicions and proprietis personalis of the knycht himself;

<sup>8</sup> *Quhilk* may also be inflected in the plural when it functions as interrogative pronoun ((1549) 'Quhilkis be tha just causis?'), but not when it is an adjective.

<sup>9</sup> The *SND* has examples of the relative pronoun inflected in the plural in the 18th century. The plural forms *foresaidis* and *saidis* survived in legal and official usage till that century as well: - (1711) ... the airs male of his body whilks failzieing to the said Margaret ...; - (1701) Item from the forsaidis places at the Shoar to the head of the Gallowgat; - (1736) The said lord provost, magistrats, and council, with the saids deacons of crafts.

- b) commouns glotouns (cf. *commoun tauernouris*); vnworthy cowartis knychtis;<sup>10</sup>  
 c) to gouerne and kepe passibles the labouraris.

With regard to Bellenden, Sheppard (1936: 268) points out that adjectives inflected for plural, both native and of Romance origin, are common in his *Boece* (1530), that they are used only attributively and tend to precede the noun. The examples she gives confirm this tendency since, besides seven examples of *vtheris* and three of *saidis* in this position, she also cites:

- (e) *Romanis* provinces; the two strang cunpanyis of *Romanis* soldiouris; the *Carmellit*is freris; *wlgaris* fabillis; mony *nobillis* erlis and baronis of Scotland.

By contrast, she offers only two instances of an adjective inflected for plural and postpositive:

- with ... all vther thingis *necessairis* for the samyn; thai ... slew all nobillis *Romanis*.

## 2. INFLECTED ADJECTIVES IN THE COMPLAYNT OF SCOTLAND AND ANE RESONYNG OF ANE SCOTTIS AND INGLIS MERCHAND BETWIX ROWAND AND LIONIS

*The Complaynt of Scotland* (1549)<sup>11</sup> and *Ane Resonyng of ane Scottis and Inglis Merchand betwix Rowand and Lionis* (1549), by William Lamb, are two instances of Scottish argumentative prose written in response to the propaganda campaign undertaken by England to support their war against Scotland (1542-49).<sup>12</sup> *The Complaynt* (61,250 words) is a literary work modelled on a French text, Chartier's *Quadrilog Invectif*, and containing abundant references to the Bible and to classical sources. *Ane Resonyng* (16,700 words) is a functional text of little literary value, since its message is more important than the way in which it is conveyed. It is written in dialogue form and uses the language and the style typical of a legal debate. These texts have been chosen because of Aitken's claim that adjectives inflected for plural tend to occur in literary prose and official or legal registers.

### 2.1. THE COMPLAYNT OF SCOTLAND

With regard to the native adjectives that are commonly inflected for plural, *(vel)be)lovit* occurs only three times in *The Complaynt* and always with singular nouns. There are twenty instances of *(foir)said* in attributive position with plural nouns; of these, only one (5%) takes *-is* in the plural: 'of the saidis tounis' (p. 132). The following are some examples of the invariable form: 'the said ruisant volfis' (p. 2); 'thir foirsaid fife trong ladeis' (p. 9); 'the contenu of thir for said cheptours' (p. 24).<sup>13</sup>

In the case of *vthir*, there are four examples of this adjective inflected for plural:

- for euere nations reputis vthers nations (p. 83);
- and vtheris grit captans baitht romans and grecians (p. 85);
- past til vtheris diuerse tounis of nauern (p. 87);
- there is diuerse vthirs exemplis (p. 96).

The number of occurrences of this adjective with plural nouns is, however, quite high in *The Complaynt* (71 instances<sup>14</sup>), the percentage of *vthirs* therefore being similar to that of *(foir)saidis* (5.6%). The following examples of the invariable form are particularly revealing:

- ve haue diuerse uthir exemplis (p. 24);
- be vthir nations (p. 24).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Glenn (1987: 96) points out that *cowartis* "is probably an attributive noun here, not a true adjective".

<sup>11</sup> The four extant copies of the printed edition of this text lack the page with the title and the author's name. Stewart, in the latest edition of this work (1979), attributes it to Robert Wedderburn.

<sup>12</sup> Henceforth *The Complaynt* and *Ane Resonyng* respectively.

<sup>13</sup> On one occasion the noun is not inflected for plural either: 'the foir said sex thousand tpreir'.

<sup>14</sup> In four of these examples, the noun is not inflected for plural.

The relative is the only native term which consistently takes *-is* in the plural in *The Complaynt* when it refers to a plural antecedent.<sup>16</sup> Thus, of the 79 instances of this structure,<sup>17</sup> 64 (81%) select the relative (*the*) *quhilkis* and 15 (18.9%) the form (*the*) *quhilk*. If a distinction is made between the pronoun and the adjective, there are 64 instances of the former with a plural antecedent. Of these, 58 (90%) select the inflected form<sup>18</sup> and only 6 (9%) the uninflected one:<sup>19</sup>

- a) desolat affligit pepil, quhilkis ar al mast disparit (p. 1); his actis vald be prolix to reherse, quhilkis hes been laityly exsecutit (p. 4); the messengeiris of the rede aurora, quhilkis throucht the mychtis of titan (p. 30); Aries and Libra quhilkis ar tua singnis equinoctialis (p. 39); thir scheiphyris quhilkis ar callit to name (p. 51), etc.
- b) smythis, & forgearis of yrn ande steil, the quhilkis culd mak ane instrament (p. 8); mony vordis of antiquite, that i hef rehersit in this tracteit, the quhilkis culd nocht be translait (p. 13); tua kyrnellis of nutis & tua feggis and ane lytil quantite of salt, the quhilkis he mixt al to gididyr (p. 63); philaris, dionysisus, nero callugala or domician, the quhilkis maid ane mischeuous ende (p. 64), etc.
- c) tua sternis quhilk ar callit the tua polis (p. 38); in the begynnyng of Cancer and capricorn quhilk ar tua solstice singnis (p. 39); ptholome auerois aristotel galien ypocrites or Cicero quhilk var expert practicians (p. 49); sergestes and engestes quhilk var tua saxons (p. 67).
- d) mony vthir lycht dancis the quhilk ar ouer prolix to be rehersit (p. 52); thir presoners the quhilk i hef conquest (p. 91).<sup>20</sup>

The remaining 15 examples are instances of the relative adjective with a plural antecedent; 6 of these (40%) select the plural form, and 9 (60%) the uninflected one:

- a) the quhilkis tua riche kyngis (p. 4); the quhilkz volffis (p. 2); the quhilkis humours nocht beand degeistit (p. 7); the quhilkis prophane prophetis and vaticinaris (p. 65); Augustus Cesar and Anthonius, quhilkis tua contendit for the empire (p. 143); the quhilkis cheptours sais (p. 144);
- b) through the quhilk thre plagis (p. 1); the occasions of the mutabiliteis: quhilk occasions ar ay vigilant (p. 16); the quhilk sex thousand ðeir (p. 28); the quhilk sextene scoir (p. 73); to the quhilk vordis the romans ... (p. 77); the quhilk presoneirs he had (p. 91); the quhilk foliful affectionis (p. 99); considir thir vordis befor rehersit? quhilk vordis suld be (p. 122); the quhilk gracis and propreteis (p. 125).

With regard to the adjectives of Romance origin, these, as Aitken observed, tend to be postpositive when they are inflected for plural. The only exception is *diuerse*, which precedes the noun it modifies in the only instance in which it takes *-is* in plural: 'diuersis passis' (p. 71). In the remaining 71 examples, however, the uninflected form is used, the percentage of the plural adjective being therefore 1.4%<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The four instances of *vthir* inflected for plural occur in chapters 13 and 14. There are no examples in those chapters of the singular form of this adjective or of *said* with plural nouns.

<sup>16</sup> In one case the inflected form of the relative, *quhilkis*, is used with a singular antecedent: 'the remanent of his gryt armye past til athenes quhilkis var reddy to be randrit til xerxes' (pp. 61-2). The relative may have been attracted by the *-s* of *athenes*; this noun may be considered, moreover, a collective one, with a plural meaning.

<sup>17</sup> In two of these examples the noun, although plural in meaning, does not take the plural inflection: 'the quhilk sex thousand ðeir' (p. 28) and 'the quhilk sextene scoir' (p. 73).

<sup>18</sup> Twelve of these are preceded by the definite article.

<sup>19</sup> Two of these are preceded by the definite article.

<sup>20</sup> As can be seen from the examples, both the inflected and the uninflected forms occur in restrictive and non-restrictive clauses.

<sup>21</sup> *DOST* only has one example of this adjective inflected for plural: (1598) 'Efter lang ressoning vpoun the qualyficioun of dyuersis and sindrie merchandis'. *Diuerse* may also be a pronoun both in English and Scots, but all the examples in *OED* and *DOST* are of the uninflected form. The four instances of the pronoun in *The Complaynt* are not inflected: 'diuerse of the thre estaitis' (p. 1); 'diuerse of the membrs' (p. 9), etc.

The remaining adjectives which take - (*is*) in the plural tend to occur in postposition when inflected. Most of them occur in the astronomy dissertation of chapter six and in the description of the different kinds of wars in chapter twenty, that is, in scientific contexts:

the lynis *parallelis* (p. 37); demonstrations *mathematikis* (p. 37); tua singnis *equinoctialis* (p. 39); the parteis *aduersaris* (p. 68); and vtheris grit captans baitht *romans* and *grecians* (p. 85); the fyfteen inuectyuis *philipiques* (p. 109),<sup>22</sup> sciens *liberalis* (p. 125); battellis *finityuis* (p. 131); battellis *socialis* ..., battellis *ciuilis* ..., battellis *intestynis* ..., battellis *asephales* (p. 132).

The practice of inflecting adjectives when they modify plural nouns is not, however, consistent in *The Complaynt*, and it is possible to find even in the same sentence adjectives which take - (*is*) and others which remain uninflected:

- and it sal declair the mouyng eleuatione, and declinatione of the sone mune, and of the sternis fixt and sternis *erratic*. and it sal declair the eleuatione of the polis, and the lynis *parallelis*, and the *meridian* circlis, and diurse vthir documentis and demonstrations *mathematikis* (p. 37);
- ... Aries and Libra quhilkis ar tua singnis *equinoctialis* the tothir circle passis in the begynnyng of Cancer and capricorn quhilk ar tua *solstice* singnis (p. 39)<sup>23</sup>.

An especially revealing example is ‘ciuil and intestine veyris’ (p. 137), as against ‘battellis ciuilis’ and ‘battellis intestynis’ (p. 132) previously mentioned. With *veyr*, a native noun, the adjective follows the native usage and thus remains uninflected and in attributive position; with *battel*, however, a noun of Romance origin, the whole structure is borrowed: the adjective takes -*is* in the plural and is placed after the noun it modifies in imitation of Romance usage.

On one occasion the inflected adjective occurs in predicative position: ‘i and al vthir of my faculte sal be clene and *innocentis* of that foule cryme’ (p. 102).

## 2.2. ANE RESOYNG

Of the native adjectives mentioned by Aitken as taking -*is* when modifying plural nouns, (*vel*)*be*)*lovit* is not used in *Ane Resonyng* and *vthir* is never inflected in this text<sup>24</sup>. (*Foir*)*said* occurs with plural nouns in twenty instances; four of these (20%) take -*is* and the remaining sixteen (80%) are uninflected<sup>25</sup>. The following examples, which illustrate both sets of forms, are particularly revealing, since the past participle is inflected and uninflected with the same nouns:

- a) in πe saidis twa buikis (p. 9); for to reput all πe forsaidis causis of weir (p. 55); the induring of πe forsaidis homagis (p. 119); πe forme and tennour of πe forsaidis compeditouris compromit (p. 143);
- b) without ony of πir forsaid caussis (p. 51); all πir forsaid homagis and fealteis (p. 131); πe discussioun of πe forsaid compeditouris titill (p. 143).

With regard to the relative, there are 14 instances of (*the*) *quhilk* (*is*) in *Ane Resonyng* with a plural antecedent, three of which (21.4%) take -*is* in the plural<sup>26</sup>. The results are different, however, if

<sup>22</sup> This adjective does not seem to be acclimatized in the language, since it also takes -*s* when it modifies a singular noun: ‘in his inuectyue philipiques’ (p. 146).

<sup>23</sup> Although, as these examples show, the uninflected adjectives tend to occur in attributive position, there are also instances in which they are postpositive: ther is iiij callit vyndis *cardinal* and the tothir iiij, ar callit vyndis *collateral* (p. 48); gart al my spreitis *vital* ande *animal* (p. 53); diurse sciensis *diuine* ande *humain* (p. 54); faders *conscript* (p. 90).

<sup>24</sup> *Vther* is only inflected in the plural in *Ane Resonyng* when it is a pronoun: ‘bot also to vthiris of his awin bluid’ (p. 157).

<sup>25</sup> The adjective occurs in attributive position in eighteen of these instances, and is postpositive in only two examples: ‘be his wordis of Latine forsaid’ (p. 73) and ‘groundis and occasionis forsaid’ (p. 151).

<sup>26</sup> In one case the inflected form of the relative, *quhilkis*, is used with a singular antecedent, and on another occasion it refers to a whole clause: - πe just ground of πe Balliolis allegit homage, πe quhilkis nedis na impugnation because it is sa honest (p. 115); - suld a kyng treat and conclud greit materis without his Estatis, quhilkis behuvt bene done gife πe meting at πork had haldin’ (p. 39). None of these instances has been taken into account.

a distinction is made between the pronoun and the adjective. There are five instances of the former with a plural antecedent; two of these (40%) select the inflected form and the remaining three (60%) the uninflected one:

- a) jugis of his testament, quhilkis we call executouris (p. 25); ꝑe auld philosophouris opinionis, quhilkis makis me soir addred (p. 171),<sup>27</sup>
- b) instrumentis, quhilk neuertꝑeles wes eftir recouerit (p. 133); be recordis and registreis, quhilk we haue so formale, so autentical, so seiouslie handillit (p. 139); mony valid improbationis quhilk [I] and my cumpanionis ... can nor will decern (p. 169).

The relative is an adjective in the remaining nine examples; only one of them (11%) selects the inflected form, as against eight (88%) which take uninflected (*the*) *quhilk*:

- a) quhilkis landis was restorit (p. 87);
- b) in ꝑe quhilk twa buikis (pp. 5-7); the quhilk causis maid ws to obtene the Greit Seill (p. 7); quhilk twa thingis (p. 103); quhilk [particulare] spacis (p. 109); ꝑe quhilk procedingis (p. 111); quhilk spacis of homagis collectit (p. 119); of ꝑe quhilk jc xxij. ꝑeir is (p. 153); quhilk xij. ꝑeir is ar past (p. 153).

The remaining adjectives which take *-is* in the plural are of Romance origin and, except *fugitiuis*, occur in attributive position when inflected:

- ane certain Inglis rebellis, *fugitiuis* in Scotland (p. 7); defend continewalie xv. ꝑeir is nobillis *fugitivis* of Scotland (p. 31); ꝑe mantenyng of ꝑe Scottis nobillis *fugitiveis* (p. 33),<sup>28</sup>
- be twenty *excusatorijs* writtingis (p. 25);<sup>29</sup> I traist ꝑat Vallia is vnit to ꝑe Inglis crown as ꝑe vthir *Saxonis* realmes was (p. 59); ꝑe Brittanis childring begouth to leir literatoure and *Romanis* ciuilliteis (p. 63).<sup>30</sup>

Most adjectives of Romance origin, however, are not inflected for plural in this work, as the following examples show:

- sex *iust* causis (p. 7); ꝑe *principall* parteis (p. 19); ꝑe *riale* branchis (p. 35); v. or sax auld *mendicant* freris (p. 45); *particulare* homagis (p. 67), etc.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has studied the Middle Scots practice of inflecting both adjectives of Romance origin and the native adjectives and past participles (*foir*)*said*, (*vel*)*be*)*lovit*, *vthir* and *quhilk*. The first two native forms have been shown to be especially frequent in legal or official documents; the construction, therefore, may have been borrowed from Latin<sup>31</sup>. *Vthir* and *quhilk*, on the other hand, were commonly inflected for plural as pronouns, and the inflection seems to have then extended to the corresponding adjectives, probably because of confusion between their pronominal and adjectival function.

Of these, (*vel*)*be*)*lovit* is the least usual term (it does not occur in any of the texts analysed), and seems to be restricted to legal registers. At the other end of the scale stands the relative, which often

<sup>27</sup> The interrogative pronoun is also inflected in the plural in *Ane Resonyng*: 'Quhilkis be tha just causis?' (p. 7); 'I will nocht your lordis and ladyis reherss, quhilkis for ꝑe trewth wes miserable mureit' (p. 35).

<sup>28</sup> The *OED* points out that this adjective occurs sometimes with inflected plural, especially in legal phrases after Anglo-French, and gives the following example: (1527) 'That none should receiue the others subjects fugitiues'.

<sup>29</sup> The *OED* does not give any example of this adjective inflected for plural.

<sup>30</sup> The double *-s* of the adjectives in '*diuerss* opinionis' (p. 47) and 'as it apperis in *choiss* recordis' (p. 141) does not seem to represent the plural inflection, since it also occurs with singular nouns, such as *adwyiss*, *causs*, *deceiss*. It seems to be, therefore, a mere orthographic convention in *Ane Resonyng* for words ending in <se> or <ce>.

<sup>31</sup> Latin was the official language in Scotland until 1398, when the Scottish Parliament began to enact its statutes in the vernacular.

# The use of periphrastic *do* in Early Modern English negative declaratives: evidence from the Helsinki Corpus

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to offer a preliminary account of the emergence and development of negative sentences with auxiliary *do* throughout the Early Modern English period. In particular what will be examined is the general process of syntactic change that made periphrastic *do* obligatory when no other auxiliary verb was present in negative statements. The Early Modern sections of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts<sup>1</sup> (1500-1710) will serve as a basis for the description and explanation of some of the relevant linguistic, textual and chronological factors affecting the choice of *do+not+V* vs. *V+not*. The results will be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The general history of the development of negation in English has been described by several authors (Jespersen 1940: 426–467; Traugott 1972: 146–148; Denison 1993: 447–452). Negation in OE was carried out by the unstressed negative particle *ne* preceding the verb. In eME, unstressed *ne* was reinforced by an emphatic form which had developed from an OE intensifying periphrasis, *nawiht/noht* ‘not at all’. This new form, *not/nat*, immediately followed the tensed verb in the clause, and after some time, with the dropping of the weak form *ne*, *not/nat* became the standard mark of negation. Thus, in clauses containing the emerging set of auxiliary verbs, the ME structure has been maintained in Modern English. But from the 15th century onwards a new form with auxiliary *do* developed as a morphological marker of person and tense in negative, interrogative and imperative sentences where no other auxiliary tensed verb was present. So, basically, throughout the eModE period there was a choice between negating with *do* followed by the particle *not* preceding the main verb (as in modern English in *I do not say*) and negating with the adverbial form *not* following the verb (as in *I say not*). In addition, a third hybrid pattern with *not* preceding the base form of the verb and without the aid of periphrastic *do* appeared as a sort of transition between the two stages mentioned above (Jespersen 1940: 428; Ukaji 1992: 454 ff). The general overview of the different systems of negation in the history of the English language can be seen in Table 1:

TABLE 1. THE EVOLUTION OF THE SYSTEM OF NEGATION FOR NONAUXILIARY VERBS IN ENGLISH

OE	ME	eModE	ModE
ne+V	ne+V	V+not	Do+not+V
	ne+V+not	not+V	
		Do+not+V	

*IC NE SECGE > I NE SEYE (NOT) > I SAY NOT > (I NOT SAY) > I DO NOT SAY > I DON'T SAY*

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<sup>1</sup> For a thorough discussion of the text samples and chronology of *The Helsinki Corpus of English Texts: Diachronic and Dialectal* see Kytö and Rissanen (1992; 1993), Kytö and Rissanen (1992), Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1993). For a general introduction to the Early Modern English section of the corpus see the discussion in Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (1989).

The different researchers have found that the category of yes-no questions (affirmative or negative yes-no questions) led and possibly influenced the course of the spread and regulation of auxiliary *do* in other sentence types such as wh-questions, negatives and affirmatives (Ellegård 1953: 162; Visser 1969-1973: 1529-1553; Kroch et al. 1982: 285). As Tieken suggests:

That *do* is first widely used in questions seems only natural in view of all this [syntactic fixation of the new word order], for a question transformation disrupts the word order of a sentence more radically than negation does. (Tieken 1988: 19)

Kroch (1994: 191-2) offers statistical data to claim that the rate at which *do* rises is the same in all sentence types. What he calls the “constant rate effect” is explained by the fact that Middle English and Modern English are distinguished by a single syntactic parameter stating that auxiliary verbs (such as *do*) were established to avoid V-to-I movement, which was typical of lexical verbs. Hudson (1997: 80ff) looks for other functional and cognitive explanations for the “constant rate effect” reported by Kroch. According to Hudson, from OE onwards the class of auxiliary verbs not only grew up in numbers (*do* is a case in point) but became a well-developed prototype, distinguished by a large number of features which gradually came to be assumed by all its members. This long-term evolution is not seen in terms of the loss of verb-raising but in terms of the development of a distinctive auxiliary group motivated by cognitive principles:

Once a change has become associated with members of one or the other of these classes, we should expect it to spread at the same rate because it has the same route to follow: first through the same range of verbs, and second, through the same range of speakers. We can imagine it starting as an idiosyncratic characteristic of a handful of verbs, which eventually generalizes to whichever class these verbs belong to. (Hudson 1997: 93)

Auxiliary verbs acquired a special connection with negatives and interrogatives due to multiple reasons, but as Hudson points out, once a change was associated with members of the class of auxiliaries, the change was spread at the same rate to other verbs of the same class such as *do*. Furthermore, because of the type of feedback mechanism mentioned above, “any tendency in one person’s speech may influence other people’s speech, thereby reinforcing the initial tendency” (Hudson 1997: 93).

The spread and regulation of *do* must be placed in the context of a wide range of contemporaneous changes in the system. Thus, the gradual rise in the use of *do* was triggered by different factors. As different researchers on syntactic change have shown (Rydén 1979: 11; Kroch 1989a: 137), very often a modification in the condition of one structural element in the language triggers an alteration of other components throughout the whole system. Thus, the emergence of a new pattern of auxiliary verbs, the growing analytical tendency present in the language since Middle English and the change in the basic word order (from SOV to SVO) triggered a number of further syntactic processes such as the regulation of *do* support in negative, declarative and interrogative sentences. The emergence of the new variant was then fostered by external pressures working at the same time. Thus, in different types of texts the innovation appeared at different rates and this variation is also related to style, medium, subject matter, etc.

Linguistic pressures on the system of negation were also abundant. First of all, the structure *do+not+V* was similar to that of *Aux+not+V*. As a consequence, *do* and the sentence negator *not* were placed before the base form of the verb by analogy with the structure containing auxiliaries (Kroch 1989b: 217; Frank 1985: 10-11; Görlach 1993: 120). Moreover, as several diachronists have tentatively shown (Baghdikian 1982: 157; Denison 1985: 467) it has always been typical of English to have a high proportion of negative sentences with an auxiliary operator as their tensed verb. In fact, in eModE, as pointed out by Frank in his corpus-based study, what he calls “complex VPs” (VPs containing an auxiliary form) were always the majority, and their syntactic pattern (Aux+finite verb) was influential in exerting pressure on simple VPs in which *not* followed the verb to become assimilated to the new pattern (Frank 1985: 14). This meant that structures such as *He will not study*

or *He may not study* were much more common than older forms such as *He studies not*. In fact, *do* was never used when there was another auxiliary verb present<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, the use of *do* was favoured on the grounds that, especially in interrogatives, it maintained the rigidity of the sequence SVO, the new word order pattern emerging in ME (Tieken 1988: 19; Traugott 1972: 176; Ukaji 1992: 456). Moreover, as Görlach points out, another advantage of *do*-support was that “it unambiguously indicated sentence negation (rather than object negation)” (Görlach 1993: 120). An example of object negation with *not* taken from the Helsinki corpus can be seen below:

- (1) But she spoke *not of a lover only, but of a prince dear to him to whom she spoke*:  
and of the praises of a man who, till now, fill'd the old man's soul with joy at every recital of his bravery, or even his name (E3, CEFICT3B, FICTION, SAMPLE 1).

The emergence of *do*-support was also due to the new placement of adverbs of indefinite time and modality (never, ever, always ...), which had occupied a postverbal position before the 15th and were now placed pre-verbally (Kroch 1989a: 142). However, as Kroch explains, *not* had an enclitic status and so there was less pressure to insert periphrastic *do* and place *not* before the main lexical verb.

Syntactic change proceeds gradually from the lexicon and thus it is not surprising that some verbs resisted the *do* construction more than others. Verbs such as *know*, *doubt*, *care*, *mistake*, *speak* continued to adopt forms such as *If I mistake not* until as late as the 19th century (Barber 1976: 267; Tieken 1985: 135).

Some of these and other phonotactic, stylistic and syntactic factors<sup>3</sup> have been found to correlate with the rise of *do* support in affirmatives and interrogatives. However, few studies have focused on the more specific determining factors affecting negative constructions during the period, or they tend to analyse the fictionalised language of one or more individual writers. Salmon (1966), for example, focuses on a synchronic analysis of Shakespeare's spoken language (drama). Baghdikian (1982, 1985) deals with negatives in different writers' literary productions and discusses some stylistic and social factors, but disregards syntactic ones. Frank (1985) offers statistical data taken from prose and dramatic works throughout the period but does not discuss the relevant figures for negatives. Below we shall offer some preliminary data which might be relevant for an explanation of the emergence of the new form with auxiliary *do* in negatives.

## 2. CHRONOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION

There are diverging views in the literature about the exact dates when *do* became categorial in negatives. Ellegård's (1953) was the first serious study using empirical data and a variationist approach in investigating a large number of texts in Early Modern English. For his diachronic analysis of the structure in question he used a series of linguistic factors such as word order, the position of adverbs and the availability of the Aux+Verb structure. The chronological divisions in his corpus are small enough to draw finer distinctions among the different periods of Early Modern English, but he pays little attention to the spoken language and thus underestimates the importance of this genre in the consolidation of the new pattern. For him the rise in the use of *do* in all sentence types was gradual and took place at different rates. It rose more rapidly in interrogative sentences (affirmatives and negatives) and much more slowly in negative and affirmative declaratives. In the

<sup>2</sup> As Hudson (1997: 94) points out *do*-support was not required by auxiliaries on several grounds. Firstly, auxiliary verbs are typically intransitive, so language processing pressures on transitive verbs do not apply here; secondly, auxiliaries were already linked to negation through both morphology (by analogy with OE cliticized forms such as *nis* instead of *ne is* and ME *not* cliticized after some forms of the verb), syntax (the statistical link noticed by Denison (1993: 467) between auxiliary verbs and *not*) and semantics.

<sup>3</sup> See among others Kroch et al. (1982), Kroch (1989a, 1989b), Rissanen (1985, 1986, 1991, 1994), Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1985, 1987), Curry (1992), Nevalainen (1991).

last decades of the 16th century, however, the frequency of *do* in negative declaratives declines for a time before rising again, and periphrastic *do* practically disappears in affirmatives.

For negatives, we have adapted Ellegård's results, which can be seen in Table 2, in order to conform to the three subperiods represented in the *Helsinki Corpus*, so that they can be compared to our own results for the eModE period. Moreover, for comparability reasons, we have not included in our analysis texts taken from the Bible, because they are represented in the first two subperiods of the Early Modern English sample, but not in the third.

TABLE 2. THE FREQUENCY OF DO-SUPPORT VS. V+NOT FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN ELLEGÅRD'S (1953: 166) CORPUS-BASED STUDY

Period	1500-1575	1575-1650	1650-1700
<i>Do</i> -support	20.1%	30.7%	46%

From these figures we can see that for Ellegård and for other authors after him (Traugott 1972: 199; Rydén 1979: 31) *do*-support was not obligatory yet at the end of the eModE period. Table 3 below plots the course of this change in the Helsinki corpus.

TABLE 3. THE FREQUENCY OF DO-SUPPORT VS. THE V+NOT CONSTRUCTION FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE THREE SUBPERIODS OF THE HELSINKI CORPUS (1500-1710).

Period	EmodE1 (1500-1570)	EModE2 (1570-1640)	EmodE3 (1640-1710)
Vb+not	197 (81.4%)	219 (77.4%)	141 (44.8%)
<i>Do</i> -support	45 (18.6%)	67 (22.6%)	174 (55.2%)
Total	242	283	315

Both the data found in the Helsinki Corpus and the data supplied by Ellegård coincide in the fundamental fact that *do*-support for negative declaratives apparently rises more or less steadily, especially from the third subperiod onwards. Ellegård's work has the advantage that the relevant parts of his corpus are smaller (Table 2 shows a conflation of his results in three subperiods like those of the Helsinki corpus). This allows him to conclude that the use of *do* in negative statements drops during the period 1575-1600 only to rise sharply after the second part of the 17th century<sup>4</sup>. The picture is, for this reason, more complex than the figures of the Helsinki corpus, with its coarser chronological periodization, appear to show.

Our results and Ellegård's do, however, coincide in the fact that it is only by the end of the Early Modern English period that the periphrasis started to be the unmarked form, at least, as can be seen in Table 4, for trials. But there is one important difference between our results and Ellegård's; it is possible that because of the slightly more colloquial nature of the Helsinki corpus, auxiliary *do* is already predominant in the third subperiod: by 1700 55.2% of all negative clauses not containing another auxiliary verb show *do*-support. The last decades of the 17th century and two textual categories in special, scripts taken from trials and drama, must have been decisive for the regularization of *do*. It would be a matter of further study to follow its evolution across the same text types in a similar corpus during the 18th and the 19th centuries.

### 3. TEXTUAL DISTRIBUTION

Rissanen (1985: 225; 1986: 103) was the first author to stress the importance of spoken language in the regularization of the new construction. Although Ellegård (1953: 164-69) had advanced that this pattern was a feature of literary language and formal styles, at least in affirmative declaratives, other diachronists have suggested that there were two different continua for the spoken and written language during the period under study. For Tieken-Boon van Ostade (1985: 145) Lady Mary's

<sup>4</sup> The stabilization of *do* during this period (from the second part of the 16th century to the beginning of the 17th century) might be explained by the emergence of the transitional pattern *not+V*, which can be found, for instance, in Shakespeare. For a discussion see Ukaji (1992).

eighteenth century writings show that the use of *do* for affirmatives was more regularized both in the more literate styles and in the speech of the lower classes in the writer's plays.

Baghdikian, while recognizing that the *do*-periphrasis in negatives was "first a spoken form before becoming the standard norm of the written language" (1985: 244-45), also demonstrates that in negatives the new periphrastic structure was widely used by both the "old-fashioned upper class" as well as by "the lower class people", at least in dialogue passages taken from different authors (Baghdikian 1985: 246).

Rissanen's (1991) corpus-based study focuses on the distribution of *do* in affirmative sentences in the Helsinki Corpus; his findings are that in the first subperiod of the corpus the pattern is more common in trials and in both scientific and educational treatises. On the other hand, in other speech-based genres such as the literary representation of dialogue (plays, fiction ...) "do-periphrasis is not remarkably more common than in other types of writing" (Rissanen 1991: 322). This is in tune with the results we have found for negatives in the corpus. Table 4 gives an overview of the frequency of the periphrasis as compared to the use of *V+not* in different types of texts. As can be inferred from the data, the use of *do* is always high for trials, which are the prototype of texts recording actual speech in the corpus.

TABLE 4. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE HELSINKI CORPUS ACCORDING TO TEXT TYPE.

Period	EModE1 (1500-1570)		EModE2 (1570-1640)		EModE3 (1640-1710)	
	V+not	<i>Do</i> -support	V+not	<i>Do</i> -support	V+not	<i>Do</i> -support
Law	14	0	0	2	0	7
Handbooks	19	5	19	11	12	1
Science	7	2	7	3	14	10
Education	13	4	3	2	14	5
Philosophy	13	5	15	1	17	12
Sermons	11	4	28	12	12	13
Trials	25	15	36	10	7	48
History	7	0	1	0	13	15
Travelogue	3	0	10	0	6	0
Diaries	0	0	14	0	5	10
Biography	9	4	7	3	8	11
Fiction	18	0	23	2	14	8
Drama	29	4	27	5	7	19
Private Letters	22	2	18	10	20	15
Official Letters	6	0	10	3	2	0

As confirmed by Rissanen (1991) for affirmatives, the percentages for negatives are high in trials, a speech-based, highly interactive genre. For other text types which have traditionally been considered to represent "informal" or "colloquial" styles, such as fiction or drama, the percentages are low. Fiction and drama are two genres in which speech is imitated, but they are not actual realizations of speech. As can be seen for fiction for the whole period and for drama dialogues until the third subperiod, it is possible that *do* was not yet felt to be an innovation which might give a flavour of informality to literary texts. On the other hand, the low percentages of *do* found for private letters in the first subperiod might be attributed to their non-interactive nature and to the idiosyncratic type of language used by their authors, often coming from different social classes and addressing different sorts of people.

On the other hand, there is a relatively high number of constructions showing *do*-support in formal non-imaginative textual categories such as handbooks, philosophic and educational treatises in eModE1, but especially in eModE2, when *do* had not been firmly established yet. There must exist, then, other textual and stylistic factors behind the scene which still need to be accounted for.

## 4. LINGUISTIC CONDITIONING FACTORS

## 4.1. THE STRENGTH OF COLLOCATIONS

Table 5 shows that the new variant form was hardly ever used with a restricted set of verbs (*have, need, doubt, know, wit, care, dare, mean*). The high frequency of these verbs and the strength of the collocational links established between the verb and *not* explain their being retained in Early Modern English and as late as the 20th century in some dialects (Curry 1992: 708). In fact, the hypothesis might be put forward that some of these verbs acted more or less like auxiliary operators. Verbs such as *know* or *think* not only tend to resist co-occurrence with *do* but also with other auxiliaries. Their status as fixed expressions prevented them from adopting the new type of negation:

- (2) I *know not* whether stale Newes may offend his eares being so long a drawing towards him. (E2,CEPRIV2,LET PRIV,SAMPLE 7)
- (3) (^Miss.^) What care I who's come; I *care not* a Fig who comes, nor who goes, as long as I must be lock'd up like the Ale-Cellar (E3,CEPLAY3A, DRAMA COMEDY, SAMPLE 2)

The change from V-not to do-negatives in the Early Modern period has affected different types of verbs, i.e. there has been lexical diffusion. As can be seen from Table 5, the percentage of the *V+not* structure accompanying this reduced group of verbs is still high in the third subperiod, which is a clear symptom of the lexicalisation of these collocations:

TABLE 5. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE *HELSINKI* CORPUS IN THE SET OF THE FOLLOWING VERBS: *HAVE, NEED, DOUBT, KNOW,WIT, CARE, DARE, MEAN, THINK*:

Period	V+not	Do-support
EModE1 (1500-1570)	66/197 (33.5%)	1/45 (2.2%)
EModE2 (1570-1640)	113/219 (51.6%)	11/64 (17.2%)
EModE3 (1640-1710)	64/141 (45.3%)	44/174 (25.2%)

## 4.2. THE FIXATION OF A NEW WORD ORDER (SVO)

Another strong agent in the process was the fixation of the word order SVO. This brought forward a number of other minor changes. The hypothesis states that intervening elements between the verb and its complements were becoming more and more disallowed in Early Modern English. However, as stated above, because *not* was a clitic form not usually accented there was less pressure to insert it before the base form of the verb. Table 6 shows, nevertheless, some significant results according to the type of verb complementation being used:

TABLE 6. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE *HELSINKI* CORPUS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF VERB COMPLEMENT:

V complementation	V+not	Do-support
NP+ (Other)	180 (32.3%)	79 (27.9%)
Personal Pronoun	57 (10.2%)	43 (15.2%)
Other pronouns+ (Other)	27 (4.8%)	17 (6%)
Sentence Complement+ (Other)	193 (34.5%)	67 (23.7%)
Adjunct+ (Other)	28 (5%)	14 (4.9%)
Intransitive Verb+Other	38 (6.8%)	33 (11.7%)
Clause-Final Intransitive Verb	34 (6.1%)	7 (2.5%)
Ellipted complement+ (Other)	2 (0.3%)	23 (8.1%)
Total	557	283

First of all, when the verb was followed by an accumulation of clitic forms (the particle *not* and other unstressed object pronouns) recourse to *do*-support was comparatively preferred (57 cases out of 557 for *V-not* vs. 42 cases out of 283 for *do*-support). In patterns such as “I know it not” there was an awkward piling up of unaccented syllables, despite the fact that the verb has been kept adjacent to its object through a change in the word order. Thus, even in such cases as these, a structure such as “I do not know it” became with time more and more common than “I know it not” (10.2% vs. 15.2%):

- (4) (^Diccon^) No by my fathers skin, my hand downe I lay it? Loke as I haue promised, I wil not deny it, But Hodge take good heede now, thou *do not beshite me*. (E1, CEPLAY1B, DRAMA COMEDY, SAMPLE 2)

Secondly, intransitive (especially clause-final) verbs made more and more use of the *V+not* pattern due to stylistic reasons (6.1% vs. 2.5%); this is in accordance with Kroch’s (1989a: 143) results for interrogatives in the same period, perhaps because in this syntactic context the pressure of the new word order to keep the verb and its complements together was not felt at all.

Thirdly, the *V+not* pattern was also preferred when the verb was followed by a long syntactic constituent, as was the case with sentential complements. The unstressed negative particle *not* was no doubt a less salient intervening element in cases such as these, where the principle of end-weight was in operation:

- (5) Thus I **speake not that I would haue it so**, but to your shame. (E1, CESERM1B, SERMON, SAMPLE 1)

Finally, *do*-support in negatives (as in affirmatives and interrogatives) acted as a pro-form by analogy with other auxiliaries. The main verb and all its complements were substituted by *do*, which also carried the morphological features of the verb (tense, person). The contexts which favoured the recourse to the new operator were the quick question and answer exchanges in trials, as can be seen especially in the third subperiod:

- (6) (^L. C. J.^) Did you make (^Dunne^) drink?  
Mr. (^Carpenter.^) No, I *did not*. (E3, CETRI3B, PROC TRIAL, SAMPLE 2)

#### 4.3. THE PLACEMENT OF ADVERBIAL MODIFIERS

The last hypothesis to be checked on the corpus data was one advanced by Ellegård (1953: 181) and corroborated by other researchers (Rissanen 1986: 104-5; Kroch 1994). According to these studies, the presence of an adverbial modifier before the main verb tended to favour *do*-support in negatives and in other sentence types:

- (7) And men **do not usually arrive** to this degree of wickedness at first, but they come to it by several steps. (E3, CESERM3A, SERMON, SAMPLE 1)  
(8) I **do not yet hear** of anny other thing mentioned, but I suppose this was not all. (E3, CEPRIV3, LET PRIV, SAMPLE 4)

This was indeed connected with the strengthening prohibition on the intervention of any element between the verb and its complements due to the growing tendency to place adverbs of time and mood (always, ever, never, probably ...) before the verb. The results for the Helsinki corpus appear in Table 7.

TABLE 7. THE FREQUENCY OF *DO*-SUPPORT VS. *V+NOT* FOR NEGATIVE DECLARATIVES IN THE HELSINKI CORPUS WHEN AN ADVERBIAL MODIFIER PRECEDES THE VERB.

Period	V+not	<i>Do</i> -support
Early Modern English	1	26

#### 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, while *do*-support coexisted with the simple *V+not* pattern in negative declaratives, it was becoming increasingly obligatory by the end of the 17th century. Each functional or external pressure on the system could have reinforced the emerging new pattern. Certain lexicalised phrases

such as “I think not” or “he doubted not what he said” helped in the process of fossilizing the older usage, especially in the written language. This regularization was, however, slower than in the case of interrogatives, because of the lesser pressure on the older pattern to conform to the new word order sequence. More attention in future research should be paid to genres reflecting speech, because the growing cliticization of *do/does/did+not* in speech (noticed by Rissanen 1994: 345-346) might have acted as a sort of catalyst for the rapid rise of the periphrastic form from around 1640 onwards. Moreover, a more thorough analysis of a wide range of IME and eighteenth and nineteenth century texts might throw more light on the constraints on the use of *do*-support. Finally, researchers should also pay closer attention to other stylistic (euphony, balanced structures ...), semantic and pragmatic factors that might account for the slow process of regularization in negative declaratives per se, and not only in affirmative declaratives.

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# Rhetorical tradition and the argument of separation: Milton's *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*

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The study of the positivist realm of literary history is based upon textual transmissions and the consideration of sources, influences, periods, and what a cognitivist might call the reproduction of schemata. Whenever we read a text, a whole context is needed in order to understand its actual discourse, the flow of cognitive and communicative factors making it relevant to our understanding.

The study of a tradition is precisely the recognition of a certain type of discourse, of a type of social behaviour commonly shared<sup>1</sup>. The consideration of a particular type of tradition has to be analysed in terms of the elements making up that discourse, that context, and the constructs which have made its textual transmission possible.

When John Milton wrote his tract *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* he had in mind a personal situation but his situation also formed part of a larger social and historical framework. He was 32 when he married Mary Powell, a 16 year old girl:

It was Milton's precipitate marriage, probably in the spring of 1642, that helped to move him toward a more independent position in ecclesiastical as in other matters (Daiches 1957: 112).

The tract appeared four times, the first in 1643, with no name or initials; the second edition appeared in 1644 bearing Milton's initials. There were two further editions in 1645<sup>2</sup>. The tract shows three main characteristics of Milton's writing. Firstly, his wide-ranging knowledge is remarkable, covering Biblical scholarship together with legal expertise. Secondly, one should mention his 'literary' capacity to argue on specialized topics related to the idea of progress. As Rorty states:

To sum up, poetic, artistic, philosophical, scientific or political *progress* results from the accidental coincidence of a private obsession with a public need (Rorty 1989: 37, my italics).

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<sup>1</sup> Discourse is social. The statement made, the words used and the meanings of the words used, depends on where and against what the statement is made [...] Different social classes use the same words in different senses and disagree in their interpretations of events and situations. (Macdonnell 1986: 2).

<sup>2</sup> The third is a fairly close reproduction of the second, done apparently by the same printer from a new setting-up of type. The fourth, differing noticeably in typography as well as spelling and punctuation, is unchanged from the second and third in content. None of these editions was licensed or registered. (Preface to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* by Lowell W. Coolidge in *Complete prose Works of John Milton. Volume II 1643-1648*, New Haven: Yale University Press: MCMLIX, edited by Ernest Sirluck, p. 217). I follow this edition and I will be referring to the tract as DDD. The first page of the 1643 edition contains the following heading *The Doctrine and discipline of divorce: Restored to the good of both sexes, from the bondage of canon law and other mistakes, to Christian charity. Wherein also many places of Scripture, have recover'd their long-lost meaning, seasonable to be now thought on in the Reformation intended.* The 1645 edition is slightly different: *The Doctrine & Discipline of Divorce restored to the good of both sexes, from the bondage of canon law, and other mistakes, to the true meaning of Scripture in the Law and Gospel compar'd. Wherein also are set down the bad consequences of abolishing or condemning of sin, that which the law of God allows, and Christ abolisht not. Now the second time revis'd and much augmented, in two books: To the Parliament of England with the Assembly.*

And, finally, the notable existence of a discursive coherence of beliefs and opinions that stand Milton in good stead in situations of difficulty and need.

DDD is a long document full of Biblical references, legal quotations and reasoning supporting the approval of a divorce that allows remarriage. The tract is addressed to the Parliament of England and the Assembly, the meeting of religious authorities. The whole DDD is an argumentative text, since it is based on a thesis - the necessity of divorce - and this thesis has to be demonstrated, and, what is more difficult, has to convince the addressee (s). Milton starts in a hypothetical fashion:

If it were seriously asked, and it would be no untimely question, Renowned Parliament, select Assembly, who of all Teachers and Masters that have ever taught, hath drawn the most Disciples after him, both in Religion, and in manners, it might be not untruly answered, Custom (DDD 222).

The hypothesis is finished with the double negation of litotes, an obvious rhetorical figure which amplifies the effect of the statement in its positive meaning. Later, he passes on to associate 'Custom' with 'Error' (DDD 223), which leads him to condemn the Law of Marriage:

He who marries, intends as little to conspire his own ruin, as he that swears Allegiance: and as a whole people is in proportion to an ill Government, so is one man to an ill marriage (DDD 229).

His argument establishes a parallelism between good will and perverse circumstances, whether it be married life or constitutional order. Whenever this good will is betrayed the evil must be amended. This is consciously carried out by Milton who is aware of his argumentative task:

I seek not to seduce the simple and illiterate; my errand is to find out the choicest and the learnedest, who have this gift of wisdom to answer solidly, or to be convinced (DDD 233).

This awareness supports the double foundation of rhetorical argumentation: on one hand, the recognition of an audience, as members of a community of discourse; on the other hand the need to convince completely. It is not a matter of persuading but of showing a high degree of conviction and making the audience partake of that conviction. This sounds highly reasonable: a private obsession, a public need, an audience, and an argument. Apparently, these are the right ingredients for argumentative rhetoric but not everybody holds the same view of the situation. McCready, for instance, argues that Milton's tract "*is the result of "revelation" and relegates reason to a subordinate position*"; the tract is based upon casuistry, though Milton rejects the method:

He must not associate what he does with casuistry, yet, I contend, he interprets texts, primarily the Bible, using a casuistical method (McCready 1992: 393).

It is the interpretive level that marks Milton's DDD as a deep piece of scholarship; the interpretations, however, provide the tract with a dimension of casuistry that undermines its sound reasoning level of argumentation. Besides, the interpretive level also signals Milton's rhetorical awareness to the extent of helping to create an iconism:

What thing more instituted to the solace and delight of man then (sic) marriage, and yet the mis-interpreting of some Scripture directed mainly against the abusers of the Law for divorce given <them> by *Moses*, hath changed the blessing of matrimony not seldom into a familiar and co-inhabiting mischief; at least into a drooping and disconsolate household captivity, without refuge or redemption (DDD 235).

The reference to Moses is that given in the Gospel by St. Matthew:

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery (KJB, Matthew: 19.7-9).

This is the beginning of the whole textual controversy and the textual support used by Milton in DDD to prove his argument: the law of Moses has been misinterpreted and he wants to put it right. The abuses of the law have made it negative and it cannot be rightly applied. Stanley Fish points out that interpretation contains meaning disengaged from language in the intentions of the members of a community of discourse<sup>3</sup>. Fish goes on to say that Milton interprets the stricture of the rule in terms of supposed intentions: Jesus addresses the words quoted to the Pharisees and the actual fact is that “*the freedom of men who are not Pharisees cannot be properly abrogated by invoking a prohibition that was not addressed to them*” (Fish 1989: 9). There is an implicature in Milton’s argument, in Fish’s understanding and in my own words: the rule is applied to the addressees of the rule, but the members of the audience are not the addressees. This requires a lengthy explanation. In principle, argumentation needs an audience as a recognizable fact of rhetorical understanding<sup>4</sup>. This audience is not monolithic, as is clearly shown in the intricate textuality of Milton’s DDD. The Gospel by St. Matthew tells the story of how Jesus is asked by the Pharisees why Moses ordained that divorce should be set down in writing and the wife put away (Matthew 19: 7). When we read that passage, or the passage is read out to us, we do not participate in the story: it is the Pharisees that are the addressees of Jesus’ hard words, whereas we are just listeners, or mere hearers, or casual eavesdroppers. When Milton introduces the reference in DDD and paraphrases it by commenting upon several Biblical passages (DDD: 242-245), he relies upon the understanding of his own assumption on the part of the audience, the Parliament and the Assembly: the words are addressed to the Pharisees but they are not meant for *us*. The words quoted in Matthew 19: 6-9 have to be understood by any member of the community of discourse as a translocutionary act. A translocutionary act is the linguistic event that sends out a type of force which has to be decoded in terms of the operative levels established between addresser and addressee within a specific context (a play, a sermon, a harangue). In that specific context the ‘audience’ acts as secondary addressee. Thus, the message is understood, comprehended and received, but is not meant to be executed since its illocutionary force remains in the textual addressee. This is my explanation, in a nutshell. Only I wish Milton’s intentions had been better understood by his actual addressees. This translocutionary act establishes an implicature: this is not meant for us; this is meant for those who deserve it. This is precisely Milton’s plight. Milton explains his whole argument in this respect from Chapter XVII on of DDD (p. 329 et seq.).

Besides, Milton’s interpretation shows a close connection with the spirit of the Reformation, as McCready points out:

This interpretation casts the first divorce tract as evidence of a further development in the Reformation’s shift of authority from institutions to individuals. It does not, however, imply that individuals were thought to be disengaged from society, for they were bound with society through conscience and its duties (McCready 1992: 394).

This view of authority rests upon a close reading of the Bible, and a solid argumentation of textual realities. Milton’s argument is based upon the opposition established between the material and the spiritual: ‘carnall performance’, ‘fleshly appetite’ (DDD: 248), ‘irrationall heat’, ‘concupiscence’, ‘nuptiall torch’ (DDD: 249), vs. ‘wisdom and charity’ (DDD: 248), ‘peace and love’ (DDD: 249). Such a dichotomy implies an opposition of values and standards which are soiled by misinterpreting the law, according to Milton and should be seen in the light of Milton’s religious beliefs, of deep Protestant roots. He attacks the observance of Canon Law, which linked the Church of England to the Church of Rome. Besides, this view of the problem entails a further consideration: the acceptance of marriage as a contract, and not as a sacrament (*‘the papists Sacrament’*). Milton opposes the fact of

<sup>3</sup> [A]ny meaning a sentence might be seen to have would be the product of a moment of situated interpretive labor and that labor, would both be constrained by any meanings the words themselves (now nonsense phrase) contain. It is at this point that we see the full implications of the shift by which meaning is disengaged from language and relocated in the (interpreted) intentions of speakers: there are no longer any constraints on interpretation that are not themselves interpretive (Fish 1989: 8).

<sup>4</sup> Lo que conservamos de la retórica tradicional es la idea de *auditorio*, que es evocada inmediatamente en cuanto se piensa en un discurso. Todo discurso se dirige a un auditorio y demasiado frecuentemente, se olvida que esto mismo sucede con cualquier escrito (Perelmann y Olbrechts-Tyteca 1959: 417).

'*carnall coition*' to the idea of '*human society*' present in marriage (DDD: 275). The idea of the contract, however, is also misinterpreted since the contract disappears if there is a material reason; this is Milton's point of contention:

[F]or if it happen that nature hath stopt or extinguisht the veins of sensuality, that marriage is annull'd. But though all the faculties of the understanding and conversing part after trial appeare to be so ill and so aversly met through natures unalterable working, as that neither peace, nor any sociable contentment can follow, tis as nothing, the contract shall stand as firm as ever, betide what will (DDD: 249).

The problem raised by the application of Canon Law in connection with the ideas contained in Matthew 19: 6-9 is double: on the one hand, the annulment of marriage only takes place on the material grounds of 'fornication'; on the other hand, this implies a sacramental view, preventing the parts from further marriages, or legal unions<sup>5</sup>. It is this difficulty that Milton wants to stress. If there is no understanding of the contractual nature of marriage, in legal terms, and there is no consideration of the moral side of the human conflict, the problem of divorce will be neglected and Christians will continue to suffer the absence of a proper understanding of the whole situation. In this particular case, it is Milton's own predicament that is at stake. As Stephen Toulmin noted:

Milton actually shifts marriage into a position quite similar to law, since a marriage that can be broken by the parties involved [is] akin to a civil contract (quoted in McCready 1992: 409).

A secondary element in his point of contention lies in the Christian idea of Charity. It is charity that is neglected, according to Milton, when divorce is not granted:

But never could that be charity to allow a people what they could not use with a pure heart, but with conscience and faith both deceiv'd, or els despis'd (DDD: 288).

This reflection upon charity and 'pure heart' is a clear reference to the principle of individual salvation and individual interpretation, in opposition to a sacramental view based upon Canon Law, which Milton would not accept. According to Daiches, Milton could have applied for an annulment of his marriage under Canon Law (Daiches 1957: 114). But Milton's idea went further: he was not looking for a personal solution at the individual level. What Milton had in mind was the creation of a new system enabling the individual to obtain a divorce without going through the restrictions of Canon Law. This entailed a new consideration of the Scriptures. The problem of divorce has an interpretation of origin, especially in the case of Milton and 17th century England, which is reflected in the interpretation of texts:

In both Catholic and Protestant casuistical texts, prefaces note the ultimate authority for the texts - the pope as "true and legitimate interpreter" for Catholics and Christ as "mediatour" for Protestants - followed by a series of classified cases (McCready 1992: 402).

This Protestant principle of Christ as "mediatour" is translated by Milton in terms of the actual understanding of the Bible he proposes. He goes on to say that divorce is not a mere solution for wives, as some scholars held:

Who can be ignorant that woman was created for man, and not man for woman; and that a husband may be injur'd as insufferably in marriage as a wife (DDD: 324).

Leaving aside problems of current affairs and fashionable views, Milton's idea has a clear 'egalitarian' quality, at least at the level of suffering. The argument is that of negative properties: when there is no divorce life in common ceases to exist:

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<sup>5</sup>As usual, the problem has a linguistic origin. KJB uses the term 'fornication', in the sense of unlawful carnal knowledge, which in Scripture is extended to 'adultery'. This is apparently clear, but the term is translated from the original Greek text using '*me epi porneia*', which means 'prostitution, fornication (cf. 'pornography')' (*Sagrada Escritura* 1961: 236). The Latin edition, the Vulgate, which had been the canonical text throughout the ages renders the version '*nisi ob fornicationem*'.

And infers thus much over, that the fit union of their souls be such as may even incorporate them to love and amity; but that can never be where no correspondence is of the minde; nay instead of beeing one flesh, they will be rather two carkasses chain'd unnaturally together (DDD: 326).

The presence of negative properties is enhanced by means of the cognitive field of the metaphor used in this passage; this cognitive field is that of the opposition 'life/death' and the passage precipitates the meaning of the corruption produced: 'carkasses' do not have soul, love, amity, mind, or even flesh. The mention of 'carkasses' triggers the image of death, the absence of life, the corruption of the flesh, and all this erases the previous concepts. This cognitive field is an image metaphor referring to an image-schema<sup>6</sup>. The cognitive metaphor here included is part of Milton's main argument: the opposition between spiritual union, happiness, love and peace, and mere 'carnall coition', which is the cause of the corruption of the flesh - two souls vs. 'two carkasses'.

The establishment of argument through opposition is not restricted to cognitive metaphors, as has been mentioned above. Milton argues by raising different conceptual controversies:

Thus farre by others is already well stept, to inform us that divorce is not a matter of Law but of Charity (DDD: 345).

The opposition between Law [forbidding divorce] and Charity is linked to the distance between the legitimate authority of the pope for Catholics, which is the 'imposition' of Canon Law, and the actual sense of the idea of love instilled in human conscience by the 'mediatour'. The argumentation, a clear case within the English tradition of Common law, is also based upon precedent. Milton resorts to historical cases: King Henry VIII and his divorce from Queen Anne of Cleves (DDD: 347) and his previous divorce from Queen Catherine (ibid.). Milton's conclusion is another interpretation, though in this particular case the interpretive effort is not merely textual but wholly discursal:

Yet it pleas'd God to make him [Henry VIII] see al the tyranny of *Rome*, by discovering this which they exercis'd over divorce; and to make him the beginner of a reformation to this whole Kingdom by first asserting into his *familiar* power to the right of just divorce (DDD: 348).

Milton's interpretive endeavour goes beyond the textual levels to gain access to a historical perspective, a discursal interpretation. Milton looks back in order to find historical evidence supporting his own predicament. The case of King Henry VIII was, of all cases, indeed quite remarkable for Milton's purposes. Again, there is a parallelism which shows the search for a solution stemming "*from the accidental coincidence of a private obsession with a public need*".

Rhetorical argumentation, then, is not a single linear evolution but a complex set of intricate elements: textual references, historical precedents, binary oppositions, metaphors<sup>7</sup>. This is clearly seen in DDD by considering the complexities contained therein. Argumentation in DDD is mainly textual, which does not prevent any other levels from being present. This textual level follows a complex pattern, too. Just as the core of the argument is Moses and St. Matthew, the end of the tract, which marks a solid stress upon the argumentation, concentrates upon the other 'end': Charity (St. Paul). Canon Law and strict views have been rejected and, at least in Milton's interpretation, have been proved wrong. It is charity that remains as the definite element required to defend his case. Milton writes the following words as conclusion:

That God the son hath put all other things under his own feet; but his Commandments he hath left all under the feet of Charity (DDD: 356).

<sup>6</sup> This is the explanation given by Mark Turner when writing about images, which are dominated by schemas: An image metaphor maps a source image onto a target image. In doing so, it may map some of the very rich imagistic detail of the image (Turner 1991: 171).

<sup>7</sup> La argumentación retórica no sigue un sistema único y reconocido, como la argumentación lógica. La argumentación retórica se basa en oposiciones (Dobrosielski 1959: 429).

This final remark contains the metaphor of the body as position, as physical relation ('feet'): "*PROPOSITIONS ARE LOCATIONS and ASSERTING A PROPOSITION IS STANDING IN ITS LOCATION*" (Turner 1989: 79). This metaphor contains the basic distinction 'God the Son's feet/Charity's feet'. This distinction continues the line of argumentation in terms of opposition. Milton's DDD contains an argument because there is stasis, and this is the result of understanding the oppositions deployed throughout the tract and the presence of conflict, since there is no argument without conflict<sup>8</sup>. The conflict is summed up at the end of the tract by means of another reference to St. Matthew (9. 13): "*I will have mercy and not sacrifice*" (DDD: 355). Again, there is an opposition which bears out the level of argumentation depending upon that very conflict. The idea of 'mercy' is associated with the granting of a law of divorce, whereas the idea of 'sacrifice' is related to suffering ("*two carcasses*").

The tract starts with a reference to custom and ends with the metaphor of the commandments left at the feet of charity. Custom proved to be unfair and negative, as Canon Law continued to be applied and there was no actual law of divorce. Milton's appeal to charity implies the recognition of love and peace as the right interpreters of the commandments. The whole exposition of facts and principles, and the argumentation relating phenomena and concepts and judging, lead up to this final statement which embodies a classical discourse of petition<sup>9</sup>.

Thus far the ideas of conflict and argumentation, and the principle of opposition as applied through different patterns of interpretation. There is, however, another point worth mentioning in the rhetorical study of DDD. This is the influence exerted by Pierre de la Ramée, Petrus Ramus, in England and the hypothetical connection that may be found in Milton's DDD. In principle, there is controversy over the influence of Ramist ideas on John Milton<sup>10</sup>. The core of Ramist patterns does not seem to affect the controversial and forensic prose of DDD, quite the contrary.

The influence of Pierre de la Ramée was remarkable in England, especially due to the translation of his *Dialectica* into English<sup>11</sup>. Ramus separated the processes known as *inventio* and *dispositio* from *elocutio*, *memoria* and *pronuntiatio*, the former being assigned to logic and the latter to rhetoric (Vickers 1988: 282-283). Ramus, then, concentrated upon logic, dialectics, in terms of the consideration of the phases known as invention and disposition in order to study "*l'art de bien disputer et raisonner de quelque chose que ce soit*" (La Ramée 1555: 18). He elaborates a complex system of application of terms and concepts: from efficient cause to the study of several methods.

<sup>8</sup> The principle of stasis is mentioned by Turner 1989: 101, and taken from Dieter "Stasis", 1950. As to conflict, Turner writes: The core component of our concept of argument is that an argument is constituted by a conflict of claims. No just any two claims conflict, and given two conflicting claims it is not clear just where the argument lies (Turner 1989: 101).

<sup>9</sup> The rhetorical principles of exposition and argumentation are applied to the classification of text types in text grammar: *Exposition* is the type of textual communication which the encoder chooses for presenting either constituent elements which can be synthesized into a composite concept (manifested in a 'term') or a mental construct (manifested in a 'text'), or those constituent elements into which concepts or mental constructs of phenomena can be analysed. [...] This is the text type related to the cognitive process of *comprehension* (Werlich 1976: 39-40). *Argumentation* is the text type of textual communication in which the encoder proposes relations between concepts of phenomena. The encoder makes his propositions in explicit or implicit opposition to deviant or alternative propositions. Argumentation is the text type related to the cognitive process of *judging* in answer to a problem (Werlich 1976: 40).

<sup>10</sup> In connection with Ramus's ideas and English poetry Abbot explains some of the ideas contained in Sloane's *Donne, Milton, and the end of humanist rhetoric* (1985) in the following terms: That is, Donne was a humanist rhetorician because of his affinity for *controversia* and the methods of forensic oratory. On the other hand, Milton, as a Ramist, avoided the judicial genre in favor of a one sided *elocutio*. The poetry of Milton, therefore, marks the end of humanist rhetoric with its close association with forensic and controversial methods. This intriguing thesis is itself controversial. Sloane's identification of humanism with the judicial oratory is at odds with many scholars who argue for epideictic as the typical Renaissance *genus*. Sloane's argument that Milton, as a Ramist, broke with sixteenth century humanism is equally suggestive, but inconsistent with those who view Milton as both a humanist and a controversialist (Abbot 1990: 97-98).

<sup>11</sup> The edition used by the English translator was the Latin translation by the author himself. Pierre de la Ramée published his *Dialectique* in 1555 and translated it in 1572, the year of his death. It was posthumously published in 1577. This work exerted a great influence in Protestant England. That is why La Ramée is known as Ramus: Only two years after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, Roland MacIlmaine (or M'Kilwein) brought out the first English edition of the *Dialectica*, entitled *The Logike of the Most Excellent Philosopher P. Ramus Martyr* (London, 1574) (Goeglein 1996: 75).

What is remarkable in DDD is the application of *dispositio* and *inventio*, which might suppose the continuity of Ramus's *Dialectica*, though it is difficult to prove. Milton's forensic style is present in DDD. His controversial discourse is obvious. Besides, Milton had had a classical rhetorical Renaissance training (Vickers 1988: 260-261, 283). It was inevitable that this should be reflected in his tract of forensic rhetoric. Milton follows the Renaissance pattern of using *movere* as the most common rhetorical goal<sup>12</sup>. At the same time, the Ramist idea of disputing and reasoning is present in DDD. If there is anything remarkable in this tract it is its combination of reason as 'rational passion': the development and complexity of argumentation.

Ramus had tried to separate every art by stating divisions, definitions, and many particles; this did not imply that though all the arts were separate they were mingled in use (Ong 1958: 30-31, 225-269). Besides, Ramus, according to Ong, encouraged 'logocentrism', or 'corpuscular epistemology', which took the printed text "*as the point of departure and model for thought*" (Ong 1982: 168). Can some of this logocentrism be found in Milton's DDD? Is all that intertextuality (Moses, St. Matthew, St. Paul, Hugo Grotius, Canon Law, Plato, and many others) a projection of 'corpuscular epistemology' within a rational effort to textualize a private obsession or an intimate (lack of) passion?

These questions are difficult to answer. In fact, they are mere metalinguistic interrogations meant to stress the presence of a doubt, the gravity of a solution. Our reflections upon DDD must finish with a further consideration related to Milton's interest in rhetoric, i.e. his own understanding of rhetorics, or rhetorology. Milton can be considered the last English Ramist; he wrote *Artis Logicae Plenior Institutio ad Petri Rami Methodum Concinnata* (London 1672) and he took into account the use of poetry "*from a semiotic approach while preserving the integrity of Ramist Protestant metaphysics*" (Goeglein 1996: 97). The belief in Protestant metaphysics is clearly present in his DDD: the separation of Church and State in terms of Canon Law and the necessity of a Law of Divorce, the separation of carnal knowledge from a spiritual union. Continuing with the separation of parts, there is a further separation of the belief in the Eucharist and its actual (re)presentation, in opposition to Roman Catholicism (which can be the metaphor found in Roman Catholic Consubstantiation vs Lutheran Transubstantiation)<sup>13</sup>.

The use of metaphors by Milton in DDD can be better understood after considering the following remark:

Milton articulates the workings of judgment which, from a semiotic perspective, likewise articulates how Ramist disposition generally operates on metonymies (created in invention) to create metaphors of judgment. Judgment is metaphorical apprehension, metaphorical not in an aesthetic sense alone but in a semiotic sense more generally (Goeglein 1996: 97).

This explanation of the logic and poetics of Ramist origin as articulated by Milton may have a certain realization in DDD, appearing in the 'corpuscular epistemology' of the intertextual construct elaborated by Milton. The understanding of DDD means the consideration of a textual construct and the comprehension of its discourse. This implies the recognition of rhetorical trends, forensic practices, political circumstances and the multifarious ways of social and historical conditions present in that textual reality. The argument deployed by Milton starts an argumentation of an oppositional and metaphorical kind relying upon an intertextual support. The rhetoric of argumentation provides the text with a separation of ideas, concepts, and means which may stand as the metonymy, or the

<sup>12</sup>The increasing stress on the role of the passions in persuasion led, between 1544 and 1640, to an important readjustment of emphasis within rhetoric. Of the three goals of rhetoric, *movere*, *docere* and *delectare*, *movere* became the most sought-after; of the five parts of the compositional process, *elocutio* received the greatest attention (Vickers 1988: 282).

<sup>13</sup>In his article "Liturgical language in a sociolinguistic perspective" David Crystal compares the Roman Catholic order of mass and the Anglican order of Holy Eucharist and remarks: Whether the act of Consecration should be given the status of performative or historical utterance raises, in a novel guise, the classical issue of transubstantiation (Crystal 1990: 145). This may illustrate the view of Milton and his contemporaries carrying out a holistic project of separation.

metaphor, of judgment desired by Milton himself: a solution to his private predicament, a rhetorical argumentation of separation in order to achieve a new state of union, through a law of divorce.

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## ‘The Rest is Silence’: Absent Voices in John Donne’s *Songs and Sonnets*

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In a speech made by Harold Pinter at the National Student Drama Festival in Bristol in 1962, the well-known contemporary English playwright affirmed:

There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed ... The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don’t hear. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness (1976: 14-15).

John Donne’s poetry can be said to be a constant stratagem to cover the implicit -and sometimes also explicit- nakedness that he paradoxically and visually admires and enjoys in his literary mistresses. These women, and in general terms the addressees Donne invokes in most of his compositions, seem to be an absent presence -the oxymoron should be forgiven-, they belong to the domain of silence, to the alienated sphere of the non-verbal. The speech we hear/read is an indication of that which we don’t hear/read. Our main aim here is to attempt an interpretation of Donne’s poetry from that other side, from the mute perspective of the unsaid, of the absent voices populating the poet’s rhetorically overloaded lines. To illustrate our points of reflection, attention will be paid to examples taken from *Songs and Sonnets*, a more than elusive and misleading title, for in the collection few songs, and even less sonnets, appear.

Elaine Hobby (1993: 47) is right when making us aware of the fact that the audience of Donne’s poetry, the person who was expected to be overwhelmed by it, was not the conventional lady, but other men, and then deconstructs Dryden’s assertion that Donne “affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with the nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love” (quoted in Hobby, 47).

A male community of sometimes solidarious, sometimes divergent readers is always underlying Donne’s meditations, a device which is not too far from English Petrarchan imitators if one thinks about instances like Wyatt’s “Whoso List to Hunt”. “The Curse” follows this pattern: “Whoever guesses, thinks, or dreams he knows/Who is my mistress ...” The poem is a diatribe against courtly gossiping and the male critics of his love. But, as the conclusion of the poem underlines, if women, not men, are the ones criticizing his love, “Nature beforehand hath out-cursed me”. This ending originally transforms classical antecedents where poets reproached their enemies.

Thus the audience of men entail the first level of absent voices thinly disguising themselves behind Donne’s lines. Another good example of this is, of course, the implicit echoes of verbalization which can be deduced from “The Canonization”, where the poet begs from an absent male not to put barriers between himself and his mistress: “For God’s sake, hold your tongue and let me love”. He will later ask this man to “call us”, and “invoke us”, using his voice to praise and contribute to the lovers’ canonization.

Secrecy is the contradictory emphasis of “The Undertaking”, where the poet addresses other men saying that he has done a brave thing: to keep his love hidden from the others. But attentive readers like Purificación Ribes (1996: 274) stress the paradox that, by establishing he has kept the secret of his undertaking, he is just doing the opposite. Donne utilizes this paradoxical vein to surprise his readers, the male audience always latent in his lines. All his meditative poems are outloud reflections

for them to hear and learn. There are examples where the audience actually *say* things, arguments which are commonly refuted:

Some that have deeper digg'd love's mine than I,  
*Say*, where his centric happiness doth lie:  
 I have lov'd, and got, and told,  
 But should I love, get, tell, till I were old,  
 I should not find that hidden mystery;  
 O, 'tis imposture all ... ("Love's Alchemy"; our emphasis).

Another good illustration is "The Paradox", in which the lover alluded is clearly representative of the male sex:

No lover saith: "I love", nor any other  
 Can judge a perfect lover;  
 He thinks that else none can, nor will agree  
 That any loves but *he*:  
 I cannot say I lov'd, for who can say  
*He* was killed yesterday? (our emphasis).

Sometimes the speaker emphatically confines himself within the same gender category as his male readers, identifying with them in opposition to women: "Ah, cannot *we*,/ As well as cocks and lions, jocund be/ After such pleasures?" ("Farewell to Love"; our emphasis).

On the other hand, there is a second perspective in order to approach Donne's range of implied addressees, and then the main focus is on women. There can be little doubt about the fact that, as Elaine Hobby states,

It is the silencing of the nightingale [Philomela], or of the abused woman that she can be seen to represent, that forms the final focus of this essay. One of the most marked features of male love poetry is the silence within it of the women it is supposedly addressed to: the woman is usually present as an object of desire, but not as a speaking subject (1993: 47).

Donne is no exception to the rule: women's voices are unheard, absent in most of his poetry. There floats a significant paradox: even though the male poetic "I" becomes a global "we" in many compositions, only *his* voice is perceived. Women are enclosed within the realm of Pinter's first definition of silence, when no word is spoken. But, as the playwright says some paragraphs above, "So often, below the word spoken, is the thing known and unspoken". Donne's readers have a clear conscience of the implicit presence of his mistresses, for the poet gives us clues to understand how they behave. It is true that there are some glimpses of female speech, as in "Confined Love", "Break of day" and "Self Love". However, these are somewhat conventional poems, following on the whole Ovid's influence as expressed by the *Amores* and the *Ars Amandi*, although with some original characteristics not devoid of sexual boldness ("Self Love").

But the interesting thing to notice is the performative role of the lady, who is a dynamic entity *doing* different tasks. In some occasions she is verbally and pragmatically compelled by the usually self-confident male speaker to carry out those "duties". This is the case of "A Valediction: Of the Book", where the poet, exerting his priorly assumed superiority and power, tells his mistress to read their letters and then to write their authoritative records of mutual love. The relationship is apparently an epitome of sexual inequality, with the patriarchal man telling the submissive woman to fulfil his desires. Nevertheless, the act of writing itself and the celebration of amorous unity between the lovers create the expectation of equivalence. His mistress can be silent, but she has access to the written word, and that makes the difference in the context of sexual connections in the Renaissance.

In the end, women in Donne's poetry are not wholly submissive or attentive to male intellectual and physical superiority. More usual than not, the lady is rebellious and assertive, even from a sexual point of view. As Achsah Guibory puts it,

The speaker displays control, elegance, and power through verbal wit and argument, though the poem attributes an interesting independence and intelligence to the mistress who repeatedly frustrates his desire for conquest (1993: 127).

In a universe where everything is subject to mutability and change, in the Heraclitean fashion of *pánta rei*, women are often inconstant and unfaithful, threatening man's comfortability and *status quo*. The extended use of imperatives and the conative function of language from the part of the speaker brings about very little success in his permanent search for power and control in his love bonds with women. The continuous presence of rhetorical questions (that is to say, interrogations which *are not* to be answered by an explicit voice) underlines in many occasions the doubts and constant hesitation haunting the speaker's mind. And much of his concern has to do with women he cannot fully understand. His revenge, as in "The Indifferent", is poor relief, in spite of the tone of utter detachment and apparent coldness. The mask of verbal pyrotechnics and ingeniously colloquial eloquence -Pinter's "torrent of words"- has frequently the counterpart of metaphorical nakedness and dissatisfaction. There is a dichotomous tension impregnating Donne's lines, a dual balance between desire and reality, between plenitude and perplexity.

Donne's most performative poem is "The Flea". In it the reader can appreciate the witty, but illusory sexual expectations from the part of the speaker, *a prioristically* happy prospects which, were it not for the open ending leaving the reader *in medias res*, one could be tempted to think them never to be fulfilled, leading to physical and psychological frustration. Of course, this is the general impression after reading a *carpe diem* piece of literature: no matter how ingeniously and beautifully the speaker gives rein to his overflowing word, the final result almost always points out to disappointment. This can be one of the reasons why male poets are reluctant to tell us the end of the affair in their literary exercises. Donne's speaker in "The Flea" can be audacious and even disgusting, but the lady admits little possibility of being outwitted by this subtle wooer.

The three dramatic moments vertebrating the composition -coinciding with its three stanzas- convey a tenacious *tour de force* in which the male speaker wants to convince his mistress into making love with him. The referent linguistically located between the "I" and the "you" is the nasty flea, the object of attention of an obviously despairing lover, fed up with his lady's disdain and unwillingness. The first stanza is expository, and contains the speaker's conative attempt at persuading the lady into having physical intercourse with him through his amazing argument.

But there is a perceptible change in the context surrounding the second stanza: his mistress is shown to have tried and put an ending to the uncomfortable situation by killing the insect. However, the speaker stops her with another clever outburst of rhetoric. The lady does not express her feelings through language, but the reader can "see" her different reactions. The third stanza commences with the evidence of female power, and the supremacy of action over words: she has finally "murdered" the flea, thinking that with this act she is leaving his persistent suitor without further contention. She has "triumphed", as the male lover says, asserting her predominance by means of the repulsive deed (the speaker's voice deliberately stresses the fact that she has "purpled [her] nail, in blood of innocence"). There is a rapid and ingenious counterattack from the part of the addresser, but when more solid "reasoning" -although based on false premises- has not convinced the lady, it is difficult to believe that he is going to persuade her with this last peculiar effort (I am conscious that this may be just a personal impression, though).

In short, this interrupted dialogue dealing with the *carpe diem* convention in a totally original way leaves open -together with many other literary examples of the same period all over Europe- the uneasiness and mixed feelings with which Renaissance man coped with women. Donne's poetry lives on paradox, but it seems to be clear that it manifests great preoccupation with subjects -like sexual relationships- which he and other poets perceived as extremely contradictory. Patriarchy may have possession of the written word, but this unstable balance is broken whenever an assertive lady exerts her performative powers at best, either through her promiscuity and inconstancy or through her resistance to surrender to the imperative orders and rules imposed by men. The traditional bearer of the written and spoken word not always wins in the usually deaf struggle to seize permanent control.

It is otherwise little surprise that, in the few examples in which Donne collects female voices in his poetry, the poet subliminally expresses his fantasies of desire in the Ovidian vein, introducing a

glamorous woman who insists in her right to maintain sexual intercourse with any man she likes. "Self Love" goes even further with its climatic conclusion, where masturbation is suggested:

Is there then no kind of men  
Whom I may freely prove?  
I will vent that humour then  
In mine own self love.

But women writings of the Renaissance period are commonly devoid of this Ovidian explicitness in sexual terms.

Apart from the implied male audience and the female presence, mostly as an object of desire, there are some other less semantically rich silenced voices in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*. The speaker sometimes addresses Love (always written with the capital letter) as a kind of classical deity which has disillusioned him. It is a conventional use of the device to be traced back in all the poetic fashions from Latin poets onwards. Although some Roman writers -prototypically Ovid- had described the dialogue between the speaker and Love, Donne never mentions Love's answer, creating thus the impression of interrupted debate that is so frequent in his poems. Love, which epitomizes deception and fraud, is not given the possibility of defending himself. It is an indignity for the speaker that a masculine force becomes the perfect ally for the "enemy", women. One of the best examples of the poetic voice's invocation to Love is "The Will":

Before I sigh my last gasp, let me breathe,  
Great Love, some legacies: Here I bequeath  
Mine eyes to Argus, if mine eyes can see,  
If they be blind, then, Love, I give them thee;  
My tongue to Fame; to ambassadors mine ears;  
To women or the sea, my tears:  
Thou, Love, hast taught me heretofore  
By making me serve her who had twenty more,  
That I should give to none but such as had too much /before.

There are other miscellaneous addressees in Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*. An interesting illustration is the one provided by the motif of the jet ring, a frequent token of love between the suitor and his mistress ("A Jet Ring Sent"). The constant referent in this poem is the fickle lady, and the speaker invests himself with the mask of the melancholy lover ("Thou art not so black as my heart,/ Nor half so brittle as her heart, thou art"). The curious feature is that the abandoned addresser reconstructs the metaphorical speech of the object, which epitomizes the disastrous link between the male voice and his beloved: "I'm cheap, and naught but fashion, fling me away".

More conventional are those compositions where the speaker invokes the emblematic connotations of flowers ("The Blossom", "The Primrose").

On the other hand, one of the best poems ever composed by John Donne is "The Sun Rising", where the poet begins by imitating both Ovid's well-known lines in *Amores*, 1, 1, xiii (*Quo properas, Aurora ... Quo propera, ingrata viris, ingrata puellis*) and the French Medieval *aube* songs, soon to acquire highly original and provocative nuances. The tone used by Donne is extremely powerful ("Busy old fool, unruly Sun,/ Why dost thou thus,/ Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?"), and the inexorable star attends to the speaker's severe rebukes with impotent attitude, without making his voice explicit. The context of the poem centres itself upon the "torrent of words" from the part of the male lover, and the quiet presence of his mistress in bed, alien to the rhetorical outburst of her beloved. The situation is reversed in "Break of Day", where the reader can follow the lady's meditations, expressing her reflections upon the incompatibility between love and a much too busy man.

Before reaching the conclusion, some brief words should be devoted to the extension of our arguments to other exponents of Donne's poetic production. The "Holy Sonnets" will serve the purpose of exemplifying how the narcissistic features of the speaker conceal other voices, even

though the faculty of speech which is blurred is that of God himself. The speaker gives rein to his religious doubts using in many occasions the same poetic conventions and rhetorical devices as the reader can find in Donne's secular poems. God is always an absent presence which is thinly manifested throughout the questions, syllogisms, hesitations, and dialogic inferences veiling divine reactions. It goes without saying that God's silence is often the source of inner tensions within the speaker's soul. This dramatic struggle could be the point of departure of further contention from the perspective of the role played by silence, which would deserve more critical prominence than we can provide here.

I began this paper by quoting Harold Pinter's ideas, and it would not be incongruous to put an end to it by citing the great playwright again:

... I think that we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is a continual evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone else's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility (1976: 15).

These last thoughts could also be applied to Donne's speaker (using that other form of silence which is the rhetorical "torrent of words") and his addressees (representatives of absent voices) in the *Songs and Sonnets*, for they all evince the essential loneliness of human beings. And the rest is silence.

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## Sir Robert Sidney's *Poems* Revisited: the Alternative Sequence

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For the last five or six years, and for some different occasions, I have had the opportunity, and the pleasure, of dedicating myself to the study of Sir Robert Sidney's poetic work. This "revisitation" is primarily motivated by the fact that, as far as I know, *The Poems* keep being neglected by the potential readers but also because the text keeps offering varied possibilities of analysis, further paths to be explored.

After the rediscovery of the *corpus* in 1973 and its publication in 1984, Mr P. J. Croft's own excellent critical edition,<sup>1</sup> and some articles (all of them enthusiastic, I must say) by a few scholars,<sup>2</sup> constitute the only approaches to the work. I strongly believe that this new voice from the Elizabethan golden age, that has brought new and important elements to our perspective of the time, should not be forgotten. Therefore, I cannot understand or accept the criteria adopted by the editors of a very recent anthology of poetry, who selected a wide range of works written by Elizabethan and Jacobean authors, even by some anonymous ones, and did not publish a single composition of Robert Sidney.

Besides the interest of the poems, his sequence discloses relevant peculiarities: it is the longest autograph manuscript from the period discovered until now, contained in a bound notebook which survived complete and admirably preserved for four centuries, exhibiting the unity, revisions, corrections and organisation outlined by the poet himself. The two major problems that usually afflict all those who study ancient documents do not exist then, i.e. the precariousness of the conservation and the authenticity regarding the origin and authorship.

The formal pattern is the result of a scheme carefully conceived. 35 sonnets, including an unfinished crown, are consecutively numbered and, among them, other poems in diversified forms appear intermixed: 18 songs, 5 pastorals, 1 elegy, with an internal and continuous numbering (Song 1, Pastoral 2, Song 3, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

But the autograph manuscript also exhibits another detail: in the upper margins of some pages, an alternative numbering gives origin to a new set composed by 13 of the first 15 poems. Here, in this alternative sequence, Robert Sidney did not establish a division between sonnets and diversified compositions, the unfinished Crown constitutes a single piece (Poem 7), and Sonnets 7 and 8 were omitted.

What was, we may ask, the purpose of the poet when he conceived this new shorter *corpus*?

I will try to put into evidence the major aspects of the longer sequence and only then focus on the alternative one, precisely because it is alternative and constituted by selected pieces of something previously designed.

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<sup>1</sup> Croft, P. J. ed. 1984: *The Poems of Robert Sidney*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine Duncan-Jones, Gary Waller, Deborah Wright and Hilton Kelliher.

<sup>3</sup> Seven other poems appear in the notebook but everything indicates that they are extrinsic to the sequence (s): they were not numbered by the author, two of them are translations, and they present diversified metrical forms, that prevent their inclusion either in the set sonnets-songs-pastorals, or in a new one.

The main sequence starts in and with splendour. A correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm is established from the very beginning, when the lyric 'I' compares "The fair maid's eyes" to "stars" (Sonnet 1 - line 4) and when he uses the powerful metaphor "O eyes, O light's divine" (Song 1 - line 1). During five poems, the lover rejoices in the contemplation of Beauty, in the presence of the beloved.

Abruptly and immediately afterwards, however, absolute oppositions are introduced, disclosing the first and decisive transformation. In Song 3, all the light and splendour vanish and are replaced by shadows and sadness. From now on, the strong antithesis Past *versus* Present or Light *versus* Darkness will be expanded in innumerable isotopies — to Light belong Beauty, Happiness, Plenitude, Purity, Love, Devotion, a strong Presence; to Darkness, the variations of Grief, Suffering, Want, Abandonment, Emptiness, Absence.

The main sequence is extremely dynamic. The great variety of metrical forms seems to be supporting another sort of diversity: we find intermixed moments of contemplation (Sonnets 1-4; Song 1), of courtly bondage (Sonnets 9-10; Crown; Song 4), of meditation (Songs 17-19), of disruption or laceration (Song 3; Sonnets 5-7),<sup>4</sup> and, together with them, all the bucolic spaces that sometimes involve the peaceful moments of appeasement, sometimes the distressful moments of grief. Within this diversity, Neoplatonic contemplation and courtly love appear to be fundamental instants of the lyric speech, one stronger than the other, as we are going to see.

The poet uses many  *clichés*  of courtly tradition: the lady is simultaneously beautiful and cruel, distant and superior, but never physically described, according to the convention — what we perceive is an undefined image, portrayed by gradations of light and brightness; the lover is totally dedicated to her, emphasises the importance of  *look*  and  *see*  in her presence, suffers because of her distance, cruelty and absence — but there is not love at first sight and he does not rejoice while suffering because he expands through words the various sentiments of extreme rebelliousness, cynicism and irony (Songs 10, 11 and 12, for example).

In fact, the first five compositions, Sonnets 4 and 9 with the rejection of desire, and Song 20, among many other lines, reinforce explicitly the Neoplatonic conjunction Love—Beauty—Knowledge free from courtly tradition. The feminine entity, always addressed as 'you' (we find no emblematic Cinthia, or Diana, or Stella, or Cælica) shares the macrocosmic superior essence and is the vehicle to knowledge. It is the idea and an ideal of universal Beauty that is contemplated through the lady as mediatory entity. The absence of this fountain of plenitude leads the lyric 'I' to a position of shade, therefore of grief.

His speech is developed in a kind of labyrinth — the varied  *loci*  are always surprising as they are being discovered — and based upon the complicated web of antithetical and dissimilar experiences, opposite to something linear or pre-outlined. I believe that it is precisely according to this point of view that Robert Sidney's poetic text diverts from certain conventional characteristics.

Having these aspects in mind, let us now approach the alternative sequence and observe its development and its possible deep meaning or meanings.

The 1st. Poem (Sonnet 4) introduces the sense of predestination that, without any other antecedents, implies acceptance. The lyric 'I' departs from an assumption ("These purest flames .../ [...] In whom I live ..." -lines 1 and 3), utters his dependency ("Which are what I am, and I what they are" - line 4), his devotion and fidelity ("I worship her that shineth in these fires" - line 11) and rejects desire ("... with a mind free from false desires, / Untouched of other loves, of vows untrue" - lines 9 and 10).

The 2nd Poem (Sonnet 9) is a direct continuation of the first one. The lover emphasises the importance of the look, the image that penetrates him, occupying his inner self ("When you, or in

<sup>4</sup> These are just a few examples that may exemplify the various moments of the lyric speech.

*your shape an Angel dressed*" - line 7), and then reiterates the rejection of desire ("... *desire, as an unworthy guest / ... I did remove*" - lines 3 and 4).

Therefore, in Poem 3 (Sonnet 3), which constitutes the beginning of the high moments in the alternative sequence, the lyric 'I' describes his inwardness full of the beloved's radiant image ("*Beauties born of the heavens, my soul's delight, / The only cause for which I care to see*" - lines 1 and 2).

The high moments proceed in Poems 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Sonnet 1, Song 4, Sonnet 10 and Crown), fusing the idea of extreme beauty, supremacy and distance of the lady with the notion of service and permanent devotion from the lover.

In Poem 8 (Sonnet 6), light disappears ("Cares which in darkness shine, finding her sighs / Eclipsed ..." - lines 4 and 5), the distance between 'you' and 'I' becomes deeper ("That face, those eyes, that voice, those hands, that breast" - line 2) and, according to the convention, the lady's unjust and cruel attitude generates grief (lines 9-14).

In Poem 9 (Sonnet 2), the lover accepts his suffering and rejoices in it ("*The pains which I incessantly sustain, / [...] / Are joys, not griefs*" - lines 1 and 3). He specifies all the degrees of devotion co-inhabiting with non-reciprocity that will be developed in Poem 10 (Pastoral 2).

Poem 11 (Song 1) explores the duality that rules the alternative sequence: total devotion from the lover / permanent distance from the beloved. In this poem, the lyric 'I' combines "love" and "griefs" with the primacy of the look: "*O eyes, O lights divine / [...] You are my dearest lights, / My suns, my clearest day, / The spheres which move my joys, and life's delights / ... see and know the griefs, which in me be.*" (lines 1, 7-9 and 12). Here, he anticipates everything that is going to be delineated in Poem 12 (Song 3).

After the radical transformation within the Song ("*I now poor, sad, alone, / Did once possess a treasure, / But lose did wealth and pleasure / By unjust change of one.*" - lines 57-60), the lyric 'I' finally immerses into negativity — Poem 13 (Sonnet 5) — and will stay there because this is the last poem in the sequence. Consequently, nothing else will happen from now on.

We may conclude that the alternative *corpus* also runs from light to darkness, establishing a new way towards negativity, and that it seems to be based primarily upon the tradition of courtly love, due to the strongest features present in the diction. However, even now, and if we read Poem 13 carefully, I believe that there is, again, a detour from convention. The choice of this sonnet as the final piece in a set of 13 poems,<sup>5</sup> introduces a notion of movement that shakes the inertia of the 12 previous compositions, as well as the sense of acceptance from someone who does not react. Although the lyric 'I' suffers and through his speech tries to express the negativity of his condition, using meaningful images ("days in sorrows spent", "easeless nights", "love's wounds", "deep scars", "my ruins", "my miseries", "new hurts", "benumbed sprites" -- stanzas 1 and 2), he considers that "love's blows are no so pleasant game" - line 8. Although the poem and the sequence end with a sense of hopelessness ("Heavy with grief, Till I mine eyes do heave / Unto her face, whence all joys I receive, / And think all nothing that for her I prove. - lines 12-14), even now, he rebels against unfavourableness and repulse ("Then full of pain, my too fond will I curse, / And cry at her as than a tiger worse, / And do forswear all bondage more to love;" - lines 9-11).

Does (or can) the alternative sequence destroy the unity of the main one? I do not think so. In my opinion, this original device corresponds, as we have seen, to a selection and re-ordering of some poems, and constitutes a parallel text. "*With the vigour of his own invention,*<sup>6</sup> the poet wrote a new lyric speech with already known lines, giving origin to another set of verbal equivalents to express

<sup>5</sup> The selection of 13 poems is certainly relevant to the final meaning of the alternative sequence, if we consider the sense of unluckiness inherent to this number. The insistence on it occurs in other moments of the poetic text: each stanza of Song 13 has 13 lines; for the unfinished Crown Robert Sidney had in mind 13 Sonnets ("*The rest of the 13 sonnets doth want.*", he wrote at the end of the Crown).

<sup>6</sup> Sidney, Sir Philip, 1984: *An Apology for Poetry*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, p. 100.

his states of mind and feeling. Much more static and conventional, though, the alternative lyric speech also ends with echoes of the unrest, cynicism and rebelliousness that may be perceived along the main *corpus* because, after all, and surprisingly, “love’s blows are no so pleasant game”.

## POEMS

## ALTERNATIVE SEQUENCE

## MAIN SEQUENCE

1	=	SONNET 4
2	=	SONNET 9
3	=	SONNET 3
4	=	SONNET 1
5	=	SONG 4
6	=	SONNET 10
7	=	CROWN (Sonnets 11-14)
8	=	SONNET 6
9	=	SONNET 2
0	=	PASTORAL 2
1	=	SONG 1
2	=	SONG 3
3	=	SONNET 5

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## John Donne and the New Universe. Retaking the issue

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No, no dejéis cerradas

las puertas de la noche

Pedro Salinas

In her *Introduction* to the Spanish edition of John Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*, Purificación Ribes touches briefly on the subject of scientific development during the Renaissance:

Numerosos críticos han llamado la atención sobre la actualidad de sus imágenes, a menudo vinculadas a los ámbitos de la Astronomía, la Física, la Medicina, la Geografía, la Botánica e incluso la Alquimia. En sus poemas son constantes las alusiones a las esferas, los mapas, los músculos, el cerebro, las raíces, o el elixir de la Alquimia, y lo son en una proporción más elevada que en cualquier otro poeta coetáneo. Pero esta frecuencia de uso, que pone de relieve un interés por todo cuanto le rodea, no debe llevarnos a erróneas hipótesis que lo califiquen de innovador. Donne en éste, como en otros aspectos, participa plenamente de los postulados de su época. Y en la Inglaterra de finales del siglo XVI se suscribían de manera generalizada las doctrinas de Ptolomeo, Plinio, Aristóteles o Galeno. (1996: 15-16)

Purificación Ribes has done a highly valuable job of philological elucidation. Her edition is full of perceptive comments and helpful notes. Nevertheless, I have the feeling that in her brief discussion about Donne's handling of Renaissance scientific ideas, Ribes has entirely misconstrued the issue. Her opinion springs, after all, from an age-old tradition of criticism that refuses to acknowledge Donne's commitment to some of the most hazardous and far-reaching aspects of the Copernican world-view. This tradition grew with and is largely influenced by English literary provincialism, cultural insularity, and a dogged resolve to turn Donne into a partisan of religious orthodoxy. The critical strategy underlying this tradition is to remove the most strident, heterodox, and daring aspects of Donne's world-view by reducing them to mere figurative waste or rhetorical extravagance. Rosemund Tuve was the critic who most insisted on the rhetorical nature of some of Donne's most hazardous images. A systematic application of her central view would force us to understand the identification between the two lovers and a world or between the idealized woman and a world in poems like *The Good Morrow*, *The Sun Rising* and *The First Anniversarie*, as being mere instances of the trope of *amplificatio* or *hyperbole*. This kind of understanding accounts for the proliferation of marginal and shallow paraphrase, in the form of rhapsodic footnotes, referring to the new cosmological ideas that are so pervasive in the editions of Donne's love and religious poetry. Any cosmological expression that hints at the existence of a sun-centered planetary system, of an infinite or eccentric universe, or of a plurality of worlds, is readily accounted for by means of an *ad hoc* footnote reference to Donne's intellectual curiosity and to his occasional and playful manipulation of ideas coming from the new science. Despite this intermittent presence of extravagant ideas, Donne's

poetry is regarded by these critics as an orthodox body of writing framed within an orthodox body of cosmological, theological, and political theory. His cosmological extravagance is seen as the result of a calculated and controlled rhetorical *mise en scène*, rather than as the effect of an inescapable verbal errancy originating in epistemological puzzle. The new universe that his poems ostensibly formulate is regarded as a sort of figurative surplus stemming from the rhetorical investment of the figure of *hyperbole*. I quote from Tuve's study:

Hence it seems to me illegitimate to fit out Donne's poems with overtones which diverge ambiguously from his apparent meaning and which are only to be traced in the connotations of his image-terms. (1947: 213)

Donne becomes here the *surer artist*, in full possession of his verse and in complete command of his tropes. The latter are regarded as capricious turns and whimsical acrobacies deliberately veiling the expression of certitudes and ideas fostered by the *clearer and more mature thinker* (Tuve 1947: 213). Needless to say, *mature* stands in this context for *traditional*, i.e., *orthodox*. And yet, the hypothesis of an intellectually *mature* and *clear* Donne necessarily overlooked the charge of skepticism so frequently levelled against the English poet. To remove this charge became another way of playing down the extent and depth of Donne's commitment to the new universe. T.S.Eliot, the most influential of critics, said in 1931 in an essay entitled "Donne in his Time": "Donne was, I insist, no sceptic" (Spencer 1932: 11-12). If we go back to his earlier approach to Donne, especially to the *Clark Lectures* delivered at Trinity College (Cambridge) in 1926, the picture that he draws is still basically the same, although there is a strenuous and rather obsessive insistence on the formally aberrant nature of his belief. The English poet is not seen as a sceptic, but as a potential believer lacking the gift of consistent feeling and clear thought. Donne is described as:

(a) mind of the trecento in disorder; capable of experiencing and setting down many super-sensuous feelings, only these feelings are of a mind in chaos, not of a mind in order. The immediate experience passes into thought; and this thought, far from attaining belief, is thought "insincere", because it does not reach belief; but his feeling of the thought is perfectly sincere. (1993: 133)

One can hardly avoid thinking on the bewilderment that a paragraph like this could produce on a tough-minded linguist and philosopher as Searle, should he ever come across it in one of his off-the-job vagaries. I am not simply surmising. The irony, I think, runs much deeper. In his thoughtful analysis of the nature of intentional states, Searle declared that in order to understand a belief as a representation we had to consider both a *propositional content* and a *psychological mode* that determined its *direction of fit* (1983: 12). We need only to apply this terminology to Eliot's judgement to realize that he acknowledges the presence of a propositional content or thought in Donne's verse while rejecting the existence of a true *direction of fit*. The perplexed manner of Eliot's argument finds therefore an unexpected echo in Searle's own words:

What shall we say about those Intentional states that do not have a direction of fit?  
Are they representations too? And, if so, what are their conditions of satisfaction?  
And what about fantasy and imagination? And what do they represent? (1983: 13-14)

These are exactly the questions that should concern us in our attempt to understand Eliot's remarks. "Las ideas se tienen. En las creencias se está": Ortega's famous *dictum* comes promptly to mind to help us in our task, for we are trying to understand the nature of a poetic representation - a thought - which apparently refuses to turn into belief. The traditional idea is that Donne could aptly think and cogently represent an infinite and chaotic universe in which he never believed. In my opinion, the entire issue is made to rest upon a fanciful psychological mystification, i.e., the "direction of fit" which is almost without exception eradicated from Donne's alleged pre-poetic mental states. Donne thought, he represented his thought, but did not believe in it. This baffles me. The perplexity deepens when I see Eliot change the nature of his accusations. His original picture of a poet incapable of belief becomes the picture of a poet incapable of thought. The American poet had used Dante as an example of a poet capable of reconciling a metaphysical system and a poetical world. Unlike Dante,

Donne had no philosophy at all ( ...) I judge him (apart from the large proportion of his reading which is not medieval at all) by the way in which he read, and judge

him to be exactly of his own moment of time. What is clear is that Donne read a great deal without order or valuation, and that he thought in a spasmodic and fragmentary way when he thought at all. (1993: 83)

The paragraph by Purificación Ribes that I quoted at the beginning of this essay should be read in the light of this concrete prejudice. According to Eliot, Donne read broadly, but his readings followed no order, accorded to no plan. Donne thought scarcely, and when he did his thoughts were fragmentary and nourished no possible belief: “it is never quite certain that he believes anything” (1983: 132). This assumption survives among those critics who, like Ribes, see in Donne’s references to the new universe a mere evidence of his anarchic and updated erudition. Let’s consider first one of the unspoken premises of this assumption. It seems quite clear that Eliot’s judgement is dominated by a powerful underlying belief: good or strong poets (Lucretius, Dante, Goethe) inscribe their verse within a solid philosophical system. Such assumption had been validated by George Santayana, the Spanish-born American philosopher that taught at Harvard at the beginning of the century and whose course on religion, belief and poetry T.S.Eliot attended in June of 1910 (some of the ideas that Santayana was using in this course entered into his book *Three Philosophical Poets*, 1910). According to Santayana, poetry is an expression of the idea and not an ornament to the idea (“Poetry cannot be spread upon things like butter”, Santayana 1936: 331). But this theory can be no longer hold. Bloom has sufficiently proved that strong poets do not introduce their verse in a preexisting system, but rather create their own philosophical systems through their verse. Poetry is cognition. Rather than using ideas, strong poets generate ideas in the linguistic and rhetorical medium of their verse. And these ideas are always fragmentary forms of a fragmentary and changing belief.

In spite of striking differences of thought and temperament, Tuve and Eliot meet in their ability to overlook a major problem: “what does a poem mean?”. This question can hardly be separated from the central and implicit puzzle of traditional poetics: “How does a poem mean?” Tuve seems to maintain that the meaning of a poem is somehow independent of its rhetorical or figurative dimension, that is to say, that the tropological stance serves only to give a certain twist to a meaning which is already there. Her view springs from the old prejudice that conceives rhetorical figures as clothes that cover thoughts. “Die Sprache verkleidet die Gedanken” said Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus* (1985: 68). The post-kantian supporters of the ornamental conception of rhetorics would transform this sentence into the following: “Die (rhetorische) Sprache verkleidet die Gedanken”. The idea is already present in Dante, who in his *Vita Nuova* declared: “Grande vergogna sarebbe a colui che rimasse cose sotto veste di figura o di colore retorico, e poscia, domandato, non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotale vesta” (1994: 196). It is not an accident that Paul de Man should speak, in a polemical essay, of the “perennial problem” and “recognized source of embarrassment” that metaphors, tropes, and figural language in general traditionally meant for philosophical discourse and literary analysis (1978: 16). Eliot, in turn, seems to assume that a poem means insofar as it can be properly placed within a larger metaphysical frame. How are we then to understand the following metaphors:

She is all States, and all Princes, I.  
Nothing else is. (*The Sun Rising*)

Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,  
Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne,  
Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one. (*The Good Morrow*)

Are these metaphors to be inserted within a larger Neoplatonic theory capable of accomodating the plural outrage of an infinitely expanded soul, or of the lovers turned into a single world? Are these metaphors to be read, then, as sincere manifestations of a Neoplatonic belief, or are they to be understood as mere exaggerations, extravagant hyperboles of a burning and restless imagination? These questions conceal a deeper issue: is it legitimate to distinguish between what is said and what is meant inside a poem? Under which conditions are we allowed to surmise that rhetorical or figurative language means something? How are we to decide the exact extent of Donne’s commitment to the semantic strength of his imagery? Is this imagery ornamental, marginal,

incidental, accessory and meaningless, or is it, on the contrary, essential, central, necessary and meaningful? In other words: are these images *metaphors* at all? I think that we should always consider the possibility that Donne's Copernican and Neoplatonic imagery is not just a persuasive or ornamental device - a *performative* trope or *masquerader* - but rather, and to remain in De Man's use of Austin's terminology, that such imagery is loaded with a precise *cognitive* or *constative* force (De Man 1979: 119-131). This inevitably entails the acceptance of one of the most disturbing lessons that the Belgian critic was ever to derive from Nietzsche:

Tropes are not understood aesthetically, as ornament, nor are they understood semantically as a figurative meaning that derives from literal, proper denomination. Rather, the reverse is the case. The trope is not a derived, marginal, or aberrant form of language but the linguistic paradigm par excellence. The figurative structure is not one linguistic mode among others but it characterizes language as such. (1979: 105)

This resource to De Man's understanding of language implies a number of risks. First of all, his idea of literature was too drastically confined to things written after Rousseau. Second, he never quite managed to explain the nature of what he called the "cognitive dimension" of language. In any event, what seems indisputable is that his restless exploration on the sources of rhetorical meaning helped to unveil many misconceptions about the nature of authorial intention. It is no longer possible, I think, to speak of language, emotion, thought, belief and reality as if they were separate things that a writer can handle at will, in an objective fashion. And that is exactly what Ribes is doing when she speaks of the "frequency of use" (*frecuencia de uso*) of certain scientific images in Donne's poetry as the consequence of a contemporary interest, shared by many writers of his time, in the spectacular advancement of their many learnings.

This problem echoes the countless perplexities that arise when we inspect the way in which critics discuss Shakespeare's cosmological imagery. The traditional position, largely invented by Tillyard (1990: 17-25), is to insist on his orthodox and conservative acceptance of the old, medieval, Ptolemaic world, and to disclaim his adventures into the world of infinity, chaos, disproportion (so abundant in his tragedies and Roman plays) as mere rhetorical devices intended to enhance the dramatic atmosphere of the plays. Moreover, this assumption found unexpected support on previous readings by Spurgeon and Clemen, a body of rhetorical interpretation which doubtless helped to systematize the verbal manifestations of chaos in Shakespeare's writing. From a contemporary point of view, this assumption seems to leave too many questions unanswered. To begin with, it impairs literary analysis with the burden of a catastrophic conception of historiography. The entire discussion becomes undesirably Hegelian: the critic noses about the texts with the only interest of finding out whether the author's spirit was active before or after a certain break, i.e., to ascertain the author's insertion within the all-embracing dialectic sway of the Absolute spirit: is Donne a medieval or a Renaissance thinker? Where is his verse located, before or after the break? Hegelian is still, after all, the dominating conception of cultural history that speaks about *world-views*, *world-pictures*, *Weltanschauungen*, *paradigms* and a large etcetera of related notions. We could also include two presumably anti-Hegelian ideas, Foucault's *épistémè* or *catégorie de pensée* (1966: 45-48) and Althusser's *coupure épistémologique*. This last notion seems particularly helpful, for it aptly describes the mechanism of change that presumably gave birth to new renaissance science. The history of this notion is particularly fascinating. The Marxist philosopher first used this term in 1965 in his book *Pour Marx*. The English edition, *For Marx*, offered a discussion of this metaphor in the "Glossary" (1969: 249). In "A letter to the translator" (1969: 257-258) Althusser explained his indebtedness to Bachelard's *La formation de l'esprit scientifique*, even though the term was not to be found in his work. Moreover, Althusser declared that his use of the metaphor was removed from Canguilhem's non-systematic application of it in his *Études d'Histoire et de Philosophie des Sciences*. In *Lire le Capital*, the French philosopher employed a number of related metaphors, like "mutation épistémologique" (1969 I: 11), "décalage théorique" (I: 17), "changement du terrain", "changement d'horizon" (I: 24), "crise dialectique" (I: 28), "rupture épistémologique" (II: 11) all of which seemed to announce the firmly established trope of "coupure épistémologique" (II: 16). Some of these alternative metaphors, especially *change of horizon* and *change of terrain*, seem particularly appropriate to the nature of the progressive change that took place in the epistemological foundations of renaissance cosmology. Moreover, they refer to such change in terms of a temporal sequence,

unlike the metaphor *coupure*, which entails a drastic, sudden and mechanical transformation. Althusser's terminological hesitation was an evidence of his problematic understanding of the idea of epistemological change. He was aware that such change could only take place in discourse, that any epistemological transformation was after all the result of precise textual *events*, to use an idea explored by Deleuze (1969: 15-30). It is in this context of linguistic awareness that we should insert our discussion of Donne's commitment to the epistemology of the new science, for it is in this very context that rhetorical events could become invested of an extraordinary cognitive significance. The uncritical assumption that distinguishes between central poetic meanings, inserted in larger ideological or theoretical frames, and marginal or surrounding rhetorical trifle should be, therefore, severely corrected. Rhetorical language is the only language. It accounts for innovation in the epistemological grounds of science and philosophy. And it also accounts, as Hayden White has skillfully argued, for the strategies of emplotment that characterize the narrative forms of history (1989: 25-26). If there is a cognitive change, we can only know of it through metaphor. For metaphor means, after all, *translation*: movement, change, *décalage*. Moreover, it is quite pointless to ask whether we plan our metaphors or whether we believe in them or not. In this sense, I would like to quote from Jameson's penetrating essay on the nature of postmodern theory. He summarizes a new historicist axiom embodied in the Michael-Knapp program essay "Against theory":

That is not, however, what the essay "meant" by "theory", something that can be recapitulated with all the concision of its authors, namely, "the tendency to generate theoretical problems by splitting apart terms that are in fact inseparable" (AT 12). This tendency is then identified and localized in two kinds of privileged error: the separation of "authorial intention and the meaning of texts" (AT 12), and a larger, or more "epistemological" pathology, in which "knowledge" is separated from "beliefs", generating the notion that we can somehow "stand outside our beliefs" (AT 27). (1991: 182)

Now we see that both Tuve and Eliot were under a theoretical spell, a sort of pathology that manifests itself in the form of compulsive split or separation: Tuve separated the authorial intention from the meaning of the text, and Eliot separates knowledge from belief. What Jameson has just outlined is more a hermeneutic manner than a tradition. A manner of looking at Donne, a reading habit which we could describe as conservative and ingenuous. Fortunately, this manner was revised early-on. This revision began as an acknowledgement that Donne's familiarity with the new cosmological theories was something more than a caprice. In the *Introduction* to his famous edition of the *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, Grierson mentions "the new science of Copernicus and Galileo" (1995: 2) and "the new learning of Copernicus and Paracelsus" (1995: 7). These were just scattered and fragmentary references. The first serious steps were taken by Marjorie Nicolson in her essays of the thirties devoted to the impact of the new astronomy in the English literary imagination. But it was Coffin who was to write in 1937 the first large study on the subject, *John Donne and the New Philosophy*. And it is within this tradition of criticism, prone to listen to outlandish voices within Donne's writing, that Empson began, in the late forties, to write his essays on so polemic a subject. These essays have been recently published on a single volume under the title *John Donne and the New Philosophy* by Cambridge University Press. Paradoxically enough, this publication coincided with the edition of Eliot's *Clark Lectures* entitled *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*. None of these books are mentioned by Purificación Ribes in the bibliography of her 1996 Spanish edition of the *Songs and Sonnets*. She might have submitted her manuscript to the editors before these books were published in England. This wouldn't explain, however, the omission of Coffin's study, published - I repeat - in 1937. In any case, and leaving aside the reasons for these regrettable exclusions, I would like to emphasize the importance of these books, and especially of Empson's study, for it throws new light on the open-ended discussion about Donne's *philosophy*. And yet, I find it necessary to anticipate a serious warning. Despite the immense effort Empson made to prove Donne's knowledge of the cosmological theories of the new philosophy, his hypothesis seems rather impractical for it is devastated by terminological inaccuracy. Too many and too different things fall into the all-embracing category of *new philosophy*, and this ambiguity is something that Empson inherited from his predecessors in this line of research. I will just single out the most relevant epistemological frames traditionally associated with the idea of new philosophy:

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- Italian Neoplatonism of the XVth century, with its version of a metaphysical *Pampsychism*, and theories of the Universal Mind.
- The so-called Copernican theory (*De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium*, 1543) which is the result of a mathematical hypothesis.
- Kepler's mathematical research and his pseudo-scientific visions of space-travel in *Somnium* (available to Donne in 1610).
- Galileo's empirical investigations with the telescope in Venice. (*Sidereus Nuncius*, 1610)

These frames are very different and sometimes openly opposed. Their epistemological statuses are extremely distant: metaphysical, mathematical, empirical ... Moreover, the books in which these frames appear obey to altogether different textual rules. References to the Copernican sun-centered planetary system are frequent in Donne's writings, both in his poetry and in his prose. Copernicus himself became a character in Donne's modest *Inferno*, his *Ignatius his Conclave* (1610) where he was portrayed in a sympathetic fashion. Kepler and Galileo were also present in this work, although not in personal robes, like Copernicus, but through references to the new stars (1969: 7) that echo both Kepler's discoveries of two *stellae novae* (1602 and 1604) and Galileo's description of new stars with the help of the *cannocchiale* or telescope (Galilei 1993: 86). But these discoveries are empirical discoveries and have nothing to do with the mathematical research carried out by Copernicus, let alone the Neo-platonic pantheism of Cusa (Cassirer 1976: 53-102) or the Atomism (Kargon 1983: 15-29; Jesi 1972: 151-184) which was quickly spreading through England sometimes disguised as Occultism or Alchemy. These two traditions met in the Northumberland Circle, a sort of esoteric brotherhood of intellectuals, scientists and writers, led by the Earl of Northumberland. John Donne didn't hide his sympathy towards some members of this group, (John Dee, Thomas Harriot, Nicholas Hill, Thomas Digges); he owned some of their books, like Hill's *Philosophia Epicurea* (1601), and he had met personally the Wizard Earl. This connection, which is beginning to be thoughtfully explored in recent years (Haffenden 1993: 37-42), will throw decisive light on the problem of Donne's ideology or world-view. Moreover, this recent line of research, somehow fostered by Francis Yates seminal studies on the *Art of Memory*, has helped to bring to sharp focus the figure of Giordano Bruno, probably the most important philosopher of the period, a thinker who spent two decisive years in England (1583-1585), where he published his most relevant philosophical dialogues, *La cena de le ceneri*, *De l'infinito universo e i mondi*, *De la causa, principio et uno*, *Spaccio de la Bestia trionfante*, *Cabala del cavallo pegaseo* and *Eroici furori*. Bruno's world-view was an adaptation of Precocratic ideas about the infinity of the world and Neoplatonic (Plotinian) ideas about a Universal Soul/Mind to the Copernican cosmological system (Jiménez Heffernan 1997: 223-302). What Bruno did was to follow with unknown consistency and feverish determination one of Copernicus' explicit suggestions. The Polish astronomer could not accept the hypothesis of an infinite universe within his mathematical construction, for this acceptance meant doing away with the scientific rigour of his research. However, he openly invited philosophers to consider such possibility: "sive igitur finitus sit mundus, sive infinitus, disputationi physiologorum dimittamus" (1975: 72), that is, "we leave it to the philosophers to decide whether the world is finite or infinite". In his English translation of some decisive books of Copernicus' *De revoutionibus*, Thomas Digges introduced the same idea of an infinite expansion of the last sphere (Digges 1934). And yet, Digges' infinity remained basically a religious heaven, although there is still strong evidence supporting the thesis that he might have had empirical access to a telescope (Johnson 1968: 173-175). Bruno's infinity stems, on the contrary, from a complex metaphysical hypothesis, its most immediate and dangerous consequence being the unflinching identificacion between transcendence and immanence (Gentile 1991: 109-120). Bruno's universe becomes an ontological realm of pure immanence and infinite possibility (Ciliberto 1996: 70-78). The dominating assumption of a *mens insita omnibus*, of a universal mind pervading the entire universe was paradoxically reconciled with the picture of an indeterminate, aberrant, eccentric, and chaotic world. According to Blumenberg "Bruno's universe is without coherence and structure" (1987: 367). The Italian thinker did away with the Aristotelian idea of place. Nothing, in Bruno's universe, occupies a fixed place, a determinate location (Jiménez Heffernan 1996: 439-451). All things - stars, planets, seas, stones, animals, human beings, elements -

occupy a transitory place in a world made of a single and ever-changing substance; a world which is placeless place, or, like Wallace Stevens' *place of the solitaires*, a place in *perpetual undulation*:

Ecco la raggion de la mutazion vicissitudinale del tutto, per cui cosa non è di male da cui non s'escia, cosa non è di buono a cui non s'incorra, mentre per l'infinito campo, per la perpetua mutazione, tutta la sustanza persevera medesima ed una. (Bruno 1958: 359)

I am obviously summarizing the basic characteristics of Bruno's universe. I think, however, that this brief picture is enough to allow me to suggest the nature of Bruno's influence of Donne:

1. One is the feeling of *permanent dislocation of place* that we find in Donne's verse and also in his *Sermons* and *Devotions*. We perceive it in the line "She is all States, and all Princes, I" that seems written inside the furious grammar of cosmological desire which is typically Brunian (Nelson 1958)
2. The second is the feeling of *existencial urge* (in the forms of erotic compulsion or eschatological anxiety) that dominates his verse and that he shares with other metaphysical poets, like Herbert or Marvell. This urge can be better understood if set against the background of Bruno's infinite, restless, and ever-changing universe.

In relation to the first of the characteristics mentioned, the dislocation of place, I would like to make reference to a specific rhetorical strategy, the imagery of flight, that we find in *Ignatius his Conclave* and that is taken directly from Bruno's *Cena de le ceneri*:

I was in an Extasie, and *My little wandring sportful Soule, / Ghest, and Companion of my body*, had liberty to wander through all places, and to survey and reckon all the roomes, and all the volumes of the heavens, and to comprehend the situation, the dimensions, the nature, the people, and the policy, both of the swimming Islands, the Planets, and of all those which are fixed in the firmament. (Donne 1969: 6-7)

Or ecco quello, ch'ha varcato l'aria, penetrato il cielo, discorse le stelle, traspassati gli margini del mondo, fatte svanir le fantastiche muraglia de le prime, ottave, none, decime ed altre, che vi s'avesser potuto aggiongere ... (Bruno 1958: 33)

There is something inescapably Marlovian about this spatial frenzy, about this irrefrenable vocation to break through cosmological limits. The immediate effect of such cognitive urge was wisely described by Greenblatt as an *absence of scenery*: "That man is homeless, that all places are alike, is linked to man's inner state, to the uncircumscribed hell he carries within" (Greenblatt 1980: 197). In Bruno, this uncircumscribed hell took the form of an limitless heaven. Identically, Donne could terminate his inspection of hell - "I saw all the roomes of Hell open to my sight" (1969: 7) - but he could never bring his exploration of heaven to a proper end, nor exhaust his strength when looking into the *lovers infinitenesse*. Donne's world looks very much like Bruno's: both are unbounded, placeless, unrestrained, ontologically productive and fearfully erotic.

Before I finish, I would like to tease out some implications from one of the adjectives I have just used: *placeless*. Louis Martz wrote in the fifties a famous study in which he managed to prove that Donne's poetry was strongly influenced by St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercices*, and that many of his poems were actually written using the structure of the Ignatian meditation. According to the Spanish saint, the first step in a meditative exercise was the *composition of place*, that is, the imaginative visualization of a concrete place where the drama of the devotional dialogue between a man and the Lord was going to occur. Martz applied this meditative model to many metaphysical poems. Oddly enough, Martz used Donne's *First Anniversarie*. If we look closely at this poem, we realize that instead of a composition of place, the poet has chosen to bring forth a *decomposition of place*. Donne opposes two worlds, a separate world of harmony where the little girl's soul is going to escape to and an immanent world of utter disproportion and chaos. It is my contention that this last world is probably a poetical reformulation of Bruno's chaotic and aberrant infinite universe. Many lines of

this poem create an exact reverse or inversion of Ulyses' famous speech of order in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (I,iii,75-137). Chaos, destruction, endless production and eternal transformation are the Brunian notions that support the imaginative construction of this amazing poem:

Which, from the carcasse of the old world, free,  
Creates a new world; and new creatures be  
Produced (75-77)

We are borne ruinous: poor mothers crie,  
That children come not right, nor orderly,  
Except they headlong come, and fall upon  
An ominous precipitation. (95-99)

Then, as mankinde, so is the worlds whole frame  
Quite out of joynt, almost created lame. (191-192)

Wronging each joynt of th'universall frame (198)

So did the world from the first hour decay,  
The evening was beginning of the day (200-201)

The Sun is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit  
Can well direct him, where to looke for it. (207-208)

Tis all in pieces, all cohaerence gone. (213)

To go to heaven, we make heaven como to us. (282)

The worlds proportion disfigured is. (303)

Utter immanence, sheer relativism, relentless eccentricity. These three are constant figurative features of the Brunian universe. But where does the figure end? Which are the limits of the trope, the limits of the game? Where does Donne stop using an idea and begins to beleive in it? Where does the rhetorical *mise en scène* cancel out making room for knowledge? To the knowledge - now we truly realize it - that all scenes are impossible, that the *absence of scene* is something more than a figurative atmosphere, a rhetorical ornament, or a frenzied dance of tropes. The meaning of this poem is still an arresting puzzle for many critics. The problem is that most readers have confined their attention to the religious symbolism of the girl's cosmological redemption. What if we look instead at the aberrant world, the *ominous precipitation* that the girl is leaving behind? What if we look at the *deserts of vast eternity* or at the merciless hurry of Time in Marvell's *To his Coy Mistress*? What if we look at the bottomless chaos over which Milton's characters play their heroic games of salvation? We might begin to realize that certain *metaphors*, certain *amplifications* and certain *hyperboles* are the real meaning of poems, and that the rest is just an organized escape from this central and unbearable chaos. It is through words that we change horizons. It is through words that we move from one terrain to another. It is through words too that we loose horizons, loose terrain. And that is a strange form of cognition that we can hardly express and that we sometimes call *infinite* life, sometimes *infinite* love: "No, no dejéis cerradas / las puertas de la noche."

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## New England Puritans: “the Lord’s FREE People”

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The relationship between Puritanism and the concept of liberty has been controversial since the very origin of this religious sect in the XVIth. century. The Puritan defence of the dignity of the individual contributed to the dissolution of the feudal system in Great Britain and constituted one of the basic pillars in the development of capitalistic and parliamentary systems: during the 17th. century the growing middle-class saw the basis for a new social and political order in this doctrine that proposed the “integral sanctification of ordinary life” (Taylor 221) and labour as the only means to serve God and obey his calling.

But the Puritan sect was not homogeneous: the main branch within this religious group was constituted by Presbyterian Puritans, who defended the model of a “comprehensive, national but Calvinistic church tightly disciplined from the centre” (Brogan 44), with membership enforced by the state and ruled by “a hierarchy of governing bodies, from the national assembly down through the regional classis to the presbytery of the parish church, consisting of the minister and elders” (Miller 2). The existence of clear disagreements concerning church organization among Puritans became evident in the 17th. century: some followers of the Puritan ideal proposed a congregational<sup>1</sup> model based on a free covenant with God. According to their model each church was particular and each congregation had the power to choose -more or less democratically- their ministers and elders. Membership was voluntary: only those willing to enter into the covenant with God could become members of the congregation. This congregational model of a covenanted church was to become prominent in New England.

Although the religious approach of the first Puritans who settled in New England had its origin in the Old World, the development of Puritanism in the New Continent was different from the development of the English movement. Concepts such as order, liberty or authority achieved special relevance for these people, who had to confront the hardships of the wilderness in order to build a new community in a new continent.

As it has been traditionally considered the main reason for their migration was the religious purpose of establishing a community of God’s will where they could recover the purity and innocence of the first Christian communities. But in their early texts this religious purpose is usually translated in terms of liberty: their great religious mission required the achievement of freedom, so the development of their mission had to be parallel to a specific process of liberation.

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<sup>1</sup> Some groups went even further than Congregationalism in their rejection of a national church and decided to separate themselves from the Church of England: they were known as Separatists and became the famous Pilgrims.

Both William Bradford in his account of the Puritan Pilgrimage to New England in 1620, and Edward Johnson in his narration of the Great Migration that arrived there in 1630 resort to the concept of liberty in order to explain and justify their religious migration.

Although Bradford and Johnson belonged to two different Puritan sects<sup>4</sup> in their texts both point to the propagation of the Word of God and the achievement of freedom as two interrelated reasons for their migration. In fact, liberty was for them a direct consequence of their understanding of the Bible: Puritans were the “Lord’s free people” (Bradford 5)<sup>5</sup> precisely because they had been endowed with the capacity to discern what they considered to be the “liberty of the Gospel”, which consisted mainly in the liberation from the “antichristian bondage” represented by the prelacy. Only the Word of God could bring the light of the truth, and only the knowledge of this truth could liberate human beings from the yoke of church hierarchy. Since Puritans rejected everything for which they could find no evidence in the Bible, the Word of God was understood as the force that freed human beings from any kind of bondage to anything external to the Holy Scripture-f.i., the prelacy-: the Gospel is presented in these texts not as the rule dictated by God in order to restrict human freedom, but as the main expression of the human liberation from non-biblical impositions. According to Johnson, their mission required both their liberation from servitude to the prelacy and their acceptance of God’s service: only the “servants of Christ” and His Word could enjoy the kind of pure liberty taught by the Gospel, and if they wanted to be “servants of Christ” they had to cease being servants of the prelates. Although the Word of God meant liberty only as long as human beings remained within the limits determined by the Scripture, these texts resort to the Gospel as a liberating force rather than as a repressing rule. In spite of the fact that the liberty of the Word of God did not imply any kind of freedom to choose -it simply meant a paradoxical imposition of Christ’s freedom- the Gospel is in these texts an expression of liberty rather than an instrument of control.

Although both Bradford and Johnson resort to the concept of liberty as one of the reasons for their migration, there is a subtle difference in their treatment of this theme. Bradford’s Pilgrims are “the Lord’s free people” (Bradford 5), whilst Johnson’s Puritans are the “servants” of Christ; the two terms do not exclude each other but can help us clarify the distance existing between the Pilgrim and

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2 Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

3 Johnson, Edward. *Wonder-Working Providence of Sion’s Saviour*.

4 The Puritans that arrived in New England in 1620 on board the *Mayflower* were Separatists: they represented an extreme expression of the defense of the covenant model which meant free membership and the democratic election of ministers. Their utter rejection of a national church was considered a kind of treason in England and so they were rejected by every other religious -even Puritan- sect. The second -and probably more representative- Puritan group arrived in New England ten years later, and although they defended and adopted the congregational model they were not Separatists: they were an economically strong and well-organized group armed with a royal charter that established the basis of their social and political organization.

5 The quotations from W. Bradford’s *Of Plymouth Plantation*, E. Johnson’s *Wonder-Working Providence in Sion’s Saviour*, T. Shepard’s *A Defense of the Answer*, J. Winthrop’s *Journal* and *Speech to the General Court*, N. Ward’s *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawan*, J. Cotton’s *Limitation of Government* and J. Wise’s *Vindication of the Government of New England Churches* are taken from Perry Miller’s anthology: *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (see BIBLIOGRAPHY).

the Puritan need of liberty. Bradford's Pilgrims constituted a Separatist branch of the Puritan sect and had suffered persecution and imprisonment in England before moving to the Low Countries and then to New England. As a member of this community Bradford knew the importance of freedom. His text is the story of a search for liberty for the sake of religion: his description of their pilgrimage in Europe reproduces the feeling of unsufferable imprisonment of a group of people rejected and persecuted at home, and at the same time not allowed to go away. Persecution and the precarious economic situation of these people define Bradford's emphasis on practical matters: liberty is for him not only a religious right but also a fundamental practical need. He justifies the Pilgrimage as the result of a combination of four religious and practical reasons: among them liberty is the first one and it underlies the other three. In contrast, "the propagating and advancing of the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of the world" is the last -" (and which not least)" (Bradford 12)-reason mentioned. The prominence of the search for freedom is confirmed by the *compact* which the Pilgrims signed on board the *Mayflower* in order to protect their freedom and organize their community without violating their liberty: the *Mayflower Compact*, which contains the very rudiments of a democratic order, is a firm reaffirmation of their right to "use their own liberty, for none had the power to command them" (Bradford 18).

Johnson's Puritans were living under very different conditions in England: although they had been affected by the English trade depression, they were not suffering serious economic pressures, and although the threat of the English prisons was real, it was not so imminent for them as it had been for Bradford's Pilgrims. They were not Separatists and had not suffered the violent rejection and repression that the Pilgrims had experienced. Accordingly Johnson's account describes the motives for their migration almost exclusively in religious terms: they had a specific divine commission, and the performance of this commission required the liberation from the prelacy. Liberty was a consequence of their mission rather than the practical, immediate cause of their escape. In fact the subordination of liberty to the Gospel was the only acceptable way to justify their escape from England ... The understanding of their search for freedom in practical, lay terms would have marked their migration with the stain of cowardice.

The accusations of cowardice and treason made by the English Puritans during the English Civil War obliged the New England Puritans to justify their escape in unequivocal religious terms: Thomas Shepard organizes his answer to these accusations around the concept of liberty. According to him their escape from England, where the truth of the Word was being "smothered up in closed prisons", and their consequent search for freedom were just their answer to God's calling, their service to the Lord: New England Puritans had served God by means of escaping through the door of liberty as others had served Him by means of suffering imprisonment and war. The gifts that they had received from God had determined their service as searchers for liberty and preachers of "the blessed ministry of the word" (Shepard 27). Their escape was not an act of treason or cowardice but an act of obedience: the liberty of the Gospel was not only a privilege but also a duty, and their search for freedom to preach the Word of God had been precisely their divine duty.

Johnson's understanding of liberty exclusively in religious terms finds expression in the first reactions of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans: when they arrived in New England they adopted the congregational model proposed by the first Pilgrims, but they substituted their Royal Charter for the Pilgrims' Compact<sup>6</sup> and soon began to impose restrictions on their liberties for the sake of ORDER.

The concept of liberty had been useful and productive in order to justify their migration, but as soon as they settled they realized that the organization and control of the new plantations required the

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6 The Mayflower Compact "established a civil government under which the colonists would create congregations and profess loyalty to the Crown. The Majority would rule under their agreement" (Silverman 20). The Royal Charter determined that only *freemen* -stockholders of the *Massachusetts Bay Company* and members of the church- could participate in the government of the plantation.

strict limitation of liberty. Accordingly they substituted the emphasis on order for the wish of liberty, and the democratic basis of the covenant model was dissolved into the aristocratic fundaments of theocracy. In the hands of the Massachusetts Bay rulers the notion of the covenant lost its essence as a free compact and became a new instrument of repression.

Discipline and authority were keywords in the defence of social order. In his *Journal* Winthrop records how in his confrontation with Governor Dudley the strict discipline defended by the latter was considered by the ministers more adequate for the organization of the new communities than his own proposal of lenity.

..., and that hereby factions began to grow among the people, some adhering more to the old governor, Mr. Winthrop, and others to the late governor, Mr. Dudley-the former carrying matters with more lenity, and the latter with more severity- ...

Then the ministers were desired to consider the question by the next morning, and to set down a rule in the case. The next morning, they delivered their several reasons, which all assorted to this conclusion, that strict discipline, both in criminal offenses and in martial affairs, was more needful in plantations than in a settled state, as tending to the honor and safety of the Gospel (Winthrop 39-40).

In order to solve the conflict between liberty and authority Winthrop suggests in his *Speech to the General Court* his well-known distinction between *natural* liberty and *civil* or *moral* liberty. *Natural* liberty was similar to that enjoyed by animals whilst *moral* liberty was ruled -and in the hands of the Massachusetts Bay rulers restricted- by the covenant that defined the relationship between men and between men and God. The fundamental difference between these two concepts depended on their approach to authority: natural liberty was wild and consequently it was not subjected to any kind of civil or moral authority, whilst *moral* liberty was the liberty given by God to do what was "good, just and honest" (Winthrop 92). Since only the authorities could interpret God's Word and determine what was "good, just and honest", moral liberty represented a form of complete submission to authority. In Winthrop's *Speech* the emphasis is no longer on the liberating power of the Gospel but rather on the *limitation* of liberty suggested by the Scripture. God had given the gift of liberty to the human beings, but He had also established its limits: human beings could act freely but only in accordance with God's will, and God's will was determined by the authorities.

Nathaniel Ward in *The Simple Cobler of Aggawan* describes the relationship between men and authority in similar terms:

Authority must have power to make and keep people honest; people, honesty to obey authority (Ward 107)

Authority had to make people honest because honesty meant obedience and order: the system was a vicious circle, where everything had its beginning and its end in authority. Authority governed and people simply had to let themselves be governed.

The establishment of order and control seemed to require even the sacrifice of individual freedom. According to Winthrop the liberty to "do what is good in your own eyes" was too close to the "natural corrupt liberties" of the individual, the kind of liberties that show no respect for authority.

If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties and *will do what is good in your own eyes*, you will not endure the last weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke (Winthrop 93)

Authority was then completely necessary in order to determine the limitations of liberty and so keep the devil away. Whilst in the historical accounts of the first settlements the devil was associated with the "unchristian bondage" of the prelacy that deprived human beings of the liberty dictated by the Gospel, in the texts dealing with the organization of the first plantations Satan and his power are rather associated with the violation of the obedience to the authority and the consequent practice of non-christian liberties. Nathaniel Ward -f.i.- considered that the religious liberty imposed by Oliver Cromwell and his followers in England in the 1640's had transformed this country into "the devil's dancing school" (Ward 101): by means of the toleration of other sects the English were opening the

door of non-Christian freedom to let Satan in. Ward resorts to Saint Augustine's words in order to justify his identification of liberty with the threat of evil:

Augustine's tongue had not owed his mouth one pennyrent though it had never spake word more in it but this: "*Nullum malum pejus libertate errandi*" ["No evil is worse than liberty for the erring"] (Ward 100)

The "erring" were of course those who dared to oppose the truth of the Word of God as determined by the authorities. According to Ward true religion "strictly binds every conscience to contend earnestly for the truth" (Ward 97), so "liberty for the erring" meant the violation of this commitment to the truth -as determined by the authorities-, and even an unconscious alliance with Satan.

The threat of Satanic damnation was the main weapon used by the Puritan rulers in order to justify their condemnation of those forms of liberty which could threaten their authority: liberty was dangerous because it contained the seed of damnation. John Cotton resorts to a similar argument in his *Limitation of Government* in order to explain his rejection of what he considers to be more than "full liberty": since according to him unlimited liberty was just an invitation to the devil's corruption, the limitation of liberty was the best way to fight the devil's seduction. According to John Cotton even the liberty of the magistrates had to be restricted. Nevertheless he draws a curious comparison between the liberty of the sea and the liberty of the magistrates in order to explain the violent consequences that an excessive restriction of their power could imply:

If you pinch the sea of its liberty, though it be walls of stone or brass, it will beat them down. So with the magistrates: stint them where God hath not stinted them, and if they were walls of brass, they would beat them down, and it is meet they should; but give them the liberty God allows, and if it be but a wall of sand it will keep them (Cotton 87)

Only God could set the limits of liberty, and only the Puritan rulers had the power to interpret God's will and so define these limits.

Since the great Puritan mission was the propagation of the Word of God, and the Gospel was their basic rule, language, speech and words were basic ingredients in their understanding of liberty. They had run away from England because there they could not preach the Word of God freely, and they had moved to New England to persecute all those who dared to speak freely against their own understanding of the Word-t.i., against their authority. They found a justification for their condemnation of the liberty to speak in the Genesis: the human fall in paradise had been the ultimate expression of the devil's capacity to seduce human beings thanks to his liberty to speak; the devil's free use of words in order to seduce Eve had caused the human disobedience of the Word of God. The devil's language had submerged human beings in a linguistic chaos: his use of language had originated a divergence between what was said and what was done, and had so *liberated* words from deeds. Linguistic liberty in this sense was understood as a sign of Satan's power to misguide human beings with his false words: any word freely pronounced against the Word of God -t.i., against the ministers' interpretation of the Word of God- was considered false and understood as a sign of devilish liberty. The liberty to speak was an instrument of the devil that had to be condemned and persecuted.

In only a few years Puritans had ceased being the persecuted and had become the persecutors; they had forgotten their search for freedom and had become the ultimate expression of the defence of authority and order even at the expense of freedom. Liberty was no longer a desirable dream but the threat of anarchy and social disorder.

But not all the first generation Puritans agreed with the rules imposed by their rulers. Among the dissenting voices Roger Williams's occupies a prominent position: nobody spoke about matters concerning liberty or the rejection of "persecution for cause of conscience" (Williams 59) more clearly than he did. His firm defence of individual freedom as a natural right that should be warranted by every civil government was understood as a serious threat by the Puritan powers of Salem, and he was expelled from the Massachusetts Bay territory. His doctrine concerning liberty is close to the proposals made by John Wise at the beginning of the 18th century. In his *Vindication of the Government of New England Churches* John Wise defends the natural rights of the individual and

suggests the democratic idea that the civil power should simply mean the free and voluntary sacrifice of man's natural liberty for the sake of the public good.

Williams was not the only dissenting voice: the conflict between liberty and authority lies at the very heart of the famous Antinomian crisis. Although the Antinomian crisis had a theological basis the reaction of the Puritan rulers was to a certain extent dictated by their fear to lose their authority - which they considered basic for the well-being of the community. This crisis could be understood as the fundamental expression of the general shift from the emphasis on liberty to the preeminence of order and authority: it is the best example of how authority and order had become the ruling concepts in the Massachusetts Bay plantations.

The Puritan order was based on a *covenant of grace*, which meant that salvation could only be achieved through God's grace and not by means of good works. In spite of this fact they considered that even the *visible Saints* -those who had received God's grace and had been so chosen for salvation- had to live a *christian life*, which constituted the process of *sanctification*. The Antinomians identified *sanctification* with the *covenant of works*, which defined the relationship between men and God in the Catholic church; they rejected *sanctification* as a treason of what they called the *covenant of free grace*. According to the Antinomians the process of salvation required only what was known as the *justification* of the individual, whilst according to the Massachusetts Bay rulers *justification* was only the step previous to *sanctification* in the process of salvation. *Justification* consisted in the "legal ascribing of Christ's virtue to an individual's account" (Miller 48); by means of this process the *justified* person was endowed with God's grace and could be so considered a *visible saint* -i.e., chosen for salvation. According to the Antinomians since the Holy Ghost dwelt in every *justified* saint, each *saint* should obey simply his own *holy* impulse from within, without being subjected to the rules of *sanctification* and the works proper to a christian life.

Although the Antinomian crisis found its seed in Master Cotton's defence of the "indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in a believer" and the possibility of maintaining "a personal union with the Holy Ghost" (Winthrop 50-51) the Antinomians were soon forced to accept what Ward called "free liberty to keep away from us" (Ward 97): in other words, they were repressed and expelled from Massachusetts. In spite of the theological reasons given in order to justify the persecution of the Antinomians, it is easy to discern the existence of more practical reasons for their repression: the Puritan rulers saw their authority threatened by the Antinomian doctrine that proposed the complete submission of one's will DIRECTLY to the Holy Ghost, and only to the Holy Ghost, not to God's ministers and their rule. The authority of the Puritan rulers was based on their power to interpret God's will and their capacity to decide what was "good, just and honest" in a Christian life; the Antinomian defence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in EVERY believer and the consequent personal individual union with God, as well as their rejection of *sanctification* meant the liberation of the *justified* person from the obligation of living a Christian life guided by the rules imposed by magistrates and ministers. The Antinomian proposals were considered by the Puritan rulers as an utter defense of ethical anarchy.

Roger Williams, the Antinomians and to a certain extent Thomas Hooker in Connecticut<sup>7</sup> serve as evidence of the disconformity of some sectors of the Puritan population who saw how the original promise of liberty was being more and more repressed under the rule and authority of ministers, magistrates, governors ... The original democratic ideal of the covenant model and the defence of fundamental liberty were rescued by the 18th century thinkers and were to constitute the basic principles in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence.

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Hooker represented a liberal trend among the New England ministers: he and his followers moved from Massachusetts to the Connecticut Valley, where they founded a new plantation. The basis of the organization of this plantation was a social compact: Hooker "wanted a government chosen by all for the welfare of all" (Silverman 24)

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## Social Function of the Renaissance Concept of Honour: An Introduction

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In his *Histoire de la philosophie*<sup>1</sup>, Emile Bréhier points out and analyses the moralists' generalized feeling of mistrust in the spontaneous forces of nature in the xviii century (639-41). Consequently, where a God-inspired natural course of events fails, activities leading to substitute an unifying voice for this partially decaying ideal arise, both in countries where the Reformation had succeeded and in those fighting it back. One of the most impressive attempts to produce this unifying voice is, undoubtedly, Hugo Grotius's *De jure belli et pacis* (1625)<sup>2</sup>, a text in which natural law is introduced as the ultimate authoritative expression, intended to make all different discourses eventually cohere. In Grotius's exposition, natural law combines powerful intellectual elements such as human reason (one and immutable along human history) and the nature of the rational being, in order to sanction certain practices considered essential for the welfare of the community. The suprahuman essence of such a concept is stressed by means of its relation to the highest notions: this norm is not subordinated to any other rule, not even to divine ones, since it is based on natural facts established by God itself. But Grotius's main achievement lies in his linking of this unquestionable natural order to positive law, definitely a human creation but elevated thus to a privileged empowered position: positive religion is established again directly by God, and positive civil law by the absolute monarch; besides, positive law mustn't interfere with natural law, and as long as this is so, natural law compels us to obey positive legislative dispositions. Thus, the system elaborated by Grotius leads Renaissance man to respect the constituted powers, and prevents him from questioning many of the prevailing social relations: private property, punishment, taxation, church<sup>3</sup> etc ...

Francis Bacon's division of sciences in his *Instauratio magna*<sup>4</sup> can be read as an attempt to achieve one kind of unity, and it is there that Bacon rejects previous individualistic theories (product of the Renaissance *structure of feeling*)<sup>5</sup>. This rejection is not only based on scientific premises, but

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<sup>1</sup> Bréhier, E. 1938: *Histoire de la philosophie*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (1988: *Historia de la filosofía*. Madrid, Tecnos).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Bréhier, 639-52.

<sup>3</sup> This process is reflected in the most interesting religious controversies of the age in Europe: religious tolerance (that leads either to natural religion, a comprehensive concept that tries to overcome particular religious differences, or to free Biblical interpretation, that will eventually lead to a sort of unauthoritative catholicism) or state religion (both in Catholic countries or in those where the Reformation triumphed). Interestingly enough, both positions run after the same thing: some sort of unity - based on rational or authoritative grounds- strong enough to contain any attempt to subvert the established system (Bréhier, 639-71).

<sup>4</sup> The general plan of this ambitious and unfinished work appeared for the first time in Bacon's preface to *Novum organum* (1620); he prepared some of the parts (in an order different to the one advanced) such as *De dignitatis et augmenti scientiarum libri IX* (1623) (latin version of *Of proficience and advancement of learning* -1605); the *Novum organum sive indicia vera de interpretatione naturae* (1620); and the *Parasceve ad historiam naturalem et experimentalem* (1622). See F. Bacon. 1960: *The New Organon and Related Writings*. New York, F. H. Anderson.

<sup>5</sup> I borrow this concept from the British philosopher Raymond Williams; for its overall significations see Williams, R. 1977: *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford, OUP (esp. ch. 9). Related concepts are those of *social characters* and *dominant social*

on the philosophical belief in the beneficial role played by order in opposition to the chaos created by the innate actions of the individual, assimilating, Bacon -roughly speaking-, the forces which maintain order to power. In fact, what is being argued here is common to many societies in Europe in this century: the idea of man's necessary subjection to some laws, not only bigger than the individual but as important as kingly authority, although this doesn't guarantee the ultimate government of citizens. But these conceptualizations, when they are based on some kind of essentialism, are far from being unanswerable; Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*<sup>6</sup> (1650) highlights the conventionality of concepts as central to the new communities as justice and injustice, in a difficult but balanced compromise between the social contract and the necessity to empower absolutism. And it is here that we have an interesting reference to honour and related concepts, introduced in a more general theory of the modes of practice of the social order in English society: Hobbes envisages, in the first place, a new image of law that is not based on a reference to a God-given social order which it has to preserve. In fact, this rejection of such a construction (in vogue at the beginning of the xviii century) arises from Hobbes's reflection on a community ruled by the existence of a single belief-system, unquestioned by particular "knowledges" and imposed (more or less fluidly) by a certain exercise of power. As a matter of fact, he finds that the most important threat to the laws of a community comes not from the nature of social relationships but from one aspect of the nature of man that Hobbes identifies as pride:

Hitherto I have set forth the nature of Man (whose Pride and other Passions have compelled him to submit himselfe to Government); (*Leviathan*, 362)

Considering that Hobbes attaches the greatest relevance to wisdom as the collective road to that wished-for single belief-system, the existence of some "Passions" that may alter this faculty is strongly feared. Hobbes identifies the source of this pride as vain-glory, and he even distinguishes two fundamental aspects of it: that arising from wealth or friends, and that which is a consequence of man's false conception of his own worth (341). Jon Stratton carefully separated these two concepts in "Law and the Ideology of Order: The Problem of Knowledge in Th. Hobbes's *Leviathan*", but he has not gone a step further to explain the actual relevance of that differentiation: Hobbes is handling two familiar concepts for the Renaissance reader, namely those of reputation, or fame, and *megalopsychia* that leads to honour as virtue.<sup>7</sup>

However, if for some authors Hobbes's arguments may seem totalitarian and individualistic<sup>8</sup>, it is important to stress his anti-essentialist and, again, demystifying approach to politics, morality and divine prescription, which he differentiated. Both Hobbes and Bacon (together with Montaigne, More or Machiavelli) underline the ways in which social institutions form human nature, denying essentialist claims, decentering Man and pre-figuring the philosophy of praxis<sup>9</sup>. But, strange as it may seem, honour is successful, unlike other similarly constructed concepts and along all this historical period, to hide its ideological and ultimately conventional nature to become one of the most largely unchallenged ideas of the xviii century. Only a valuable function can justify such an immunity to the anti-essentialist claims, more or less overt, of Hobbes or Bacon. An analysis of the ideological elements contained within the symbolic orders is needed to discover the real structure of

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*characters*, also used by Williams in his elaboration of cultural materialism; see Williams, R. 1961: *The Long Revolution*. London, Chatto & Windus.

<sup>6</sup> *Leviathan*, Hardmonsworth: Penguin, 1968. See also: Jon Stratton. 1981: "Law and the Ideology of Order: The Problem of Knowledge in Th. Hobbes' *Leviathan*". F. Barker ed. 1981: *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century*. University of Essex: 258-73.

<sup>7</sup> It is outside the scope of this paper to explore the ways in which these two concepts emerged from Classical Antiquity (basically Aristotle and Cicero) to appear in the Renaissance (basically through Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, two essential handbooks for the Renaissance scholar). On these and other related topics see C.B. Watson's *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honour*, Princeton: U.P., 1960. See also my PhD Dissertation *Estudio comparado del concepto del honor en Othello de W. Shakespeare y los dramas de honor de P. Calderón de la Barca*, Microfilm ed., Universidad de Jaén, 1997: c.1, and c. 2, esp. pp. 139-154.

<sup>8</sup> Not for Jon Stratton, who suggests that Hobbes "wished to see the withering away of the state" (272).

<sup>9</sup> On this, see Jonathan Dollimore. 1989: *Radical Tragedy*. London, Harvester; pp. 18 *et ff.* & c.16.

this social code of conduct, or, in other words, to “examine how structures of signification are mobilised to legitimate the sectional interests of hegemonic groups”, as A. Giddens has put it<sup>10</sup>. A similar proposal is offered by the Spanish historian of the xviiith century J.A. Maravall, who, in *Poder, honor y élites en el siglo xvii* explains the process of legitimation maintaining semi- absolutist monarchies:

La voluntad divina funda en la naturaleza un orden social objetivo, del cual derivan deberes y virtudes, derechos y valores, que asume el rey y, como fuente que no cesa, comunica, en su propia condición, a la nobleza.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, and as Maravall points out, there is a covert attempt at hiding the unstable nature of all those structures that maintain a certain power equilibrium, privileging certain positions of power. This essentialism needs, for its existence, to support a transhistorical account of human constructions, creating the illusion of an autonomous subjectivity and avoiding the problematizing of basic situations in a given community, so as to maintain certain hierarchies and privileges. This is very obvious (not only for cultural materialist or new historicist approaches) in the case of the function of laws and religion in the xviiith century, to the point that many essayists of the period tried to make it explicit: Machiavelly, Hobbes or Montaigne wrote with astonishing insight on this matter; for Montaigne:

Lawes are ...maintained in credit, not because they are essentially just, but because they are lawes. It is the mysticall foundation of their authority; they have no other, which avails them much: they are often made by fooles; more often by men, who in hatred of equality, have want of equity ( ...) There is nothing so grossly and largely offending, nor so ordinarily wronging, as the Lawes. (*Essays*, III, 331)<sup>12</sup>

The strong opposition to the questioning of any of these concepts (Calvin made something similar with established Church) has to do with the interconnections existing among them, to the extent that the deconstruction of any of them would bring about the questioning of the rest. Of course, this is Miguel Servet or Galileo’s crime: his inversion of the Universe cannot be allowed because it would imply the possibility of other subversions of more serious consequences: conventionalities mustn’t be exposed. Fear of generalized subversion is explicitly stated by many essayists of the period; thus, Lodowicke Bryskett, although accepting “pittie” as a Christian virtue, states that “yet, must not this pittie extend so farre for any particular compassion, as thereby to confound the universall order of things”<sup>13</sup>. And a very similar notion, although now directly related to honour, is presented by Robert Ashley in his very influential work *Of Honour* (1600); Ashley sees very clearly the positive implications of this concept for the maintenance of order in a community: “by honour are cities kept, famelies preserved, the societie of men quietly and peaceably continued, the common wealth defended”<sup>14</sup>. And, consequently, the disappearance of this notion leads to the most catastrophic situation, which, for a xviiith century moralist, is disorder:

Magnanimitie will perish, fortitude, moderacion, and decencie will decay, the observaunce of lawes and lawes themselves wilbe neglected, offyces of honour despised, magistrates contemned, discordes arise amongst Cittizens, and every one dare to do each foule and wicked deed. (30)

Ashley calls “beasts” those who dare question honour as a natural and essential concept, pointing at its conventional origins; paradoxically, it is his account of those evils produced by the expansion of *contumelia* what more clearly indicates what structures are interested in the maintenance of this fiction. It is, of course, Ashley’s interest in evading this aspect what I find of interest here, especially since other essayists were not so skilful: Gervaise Markham explicitly associates honour not with

<sup>10</sup>10 *Central Problems in Social Theory*, London: MacMillan, 1979; p. 187.

<sup>11</sup>11 Maravall, J. A. 1979: *Poder, honor y élites en el siglo xvii*, Madrid, Siglo XXI; p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>12 Montaigne M. 1965: *Essays*. London, Dent (trans. J. Florio).

<sup>13</sup>13 Bryskett L. 1970: *A Discourse of Civill Life*. (T. E. Wright ed.) San Fernando, Ca, San fernando Valley State College; p. 28.

<sup>14</sup>14 Ashley, R. 1947: *Of Honour*. (V. Heltzel ed.) San Marino, Ca, The Huntington Library; p. 30.

Christian virtue (one of the excuses of the age), moral behaviour or braveness, but with the unconscious subordination to those in power<sup>15</sup>. Ashley, on the contrary, opens his essay with an unambiguous adscription to divine nature: “I fetch the beginning of Honour from God” (27), and continues:

I am of this opinion, that not only the desire of honour ys geven vs of nature, but that the same nature hath not bestowed any better or more necessary thing vpon vs. (31-2)

It is a social and political content that best explains its success at escaping every attempt at deconstruction by anti-essentialist writers of the age; in Maravall’s words:

El honor es el principio del orden, porque es la sublimación de ese principio, en virtud del cual cada cosa, cada individuo, está en su lugar. Por eso, podemos añadir, es un eje central de la sociedad jerárquica, y si no puede dejar de debilitarse cuando ésta se transforma en una estructura diferente, mientras aquélla permanezca se estimará como su más sólido sostén. Con ello la organización establecida para su conservación tendrá que ser una materia fundamental en la vida de la sociedad. (137)

A subject acquires and keeps honour by means of his obedience to the king; this fundamental subordination is placed far above any other obligation a given individual may have, and thus a son’s duty to his father gives way to his duty to the king; it is, obviously, not a blunt at the right of inheritance of property but a reinforcement of it since the king governs the kingdom in the same way than a father rules his family. James Cleland, in *The Institution of a Young Nobleman* (1621)<sup>16</sup>, narrates, in laudatory terms, how the king of Aragon paid homage to his own son, Fernando king of Castile, in a clear proof of the superiority of kingly over fatherly authority; otherwise, writes Cleland, the situation would have resulted in dishonour leading to “confusio, & disorder” (182).

Ashley’s honour is a compound of many of Aristotle and Cicero’s notions, elaborated in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Officiis*, respectively. Ashley includes both all those references relating honour to virtue, that is, those that consider honour as an intimate condition, depending solely on us, and those that refer to the outside “opinion”; his examples of the former (“testemonie of vertue”, “reward of vertue” “spurr vnto vertue”), and of the latter (“glorie”, “reputacion”, “dignitie”) show how he is able to maintain the balance between a quality that supposedly stems from our own behaviour exclusively, and yet depends on the will of others to bestow it on us. Honour is, then, a question of “Iudges”, and these imply power and hierarchies in the highest degree (honour is always about precedence), as well as socio-cultural constraints<sup>17</sup>. From Bryskett, Cleland and others, it seems reasonably clear that honour is actually a reward, but not “of vertue”, as they pretended, but of a certain behaviour that our community esteems useful for the maintenance of its main structures of power. As Maravall states in relation to the xviii century, “el honor es una compensación que la sociedad concede a aquellos que asumen la carga principal en la conservación de su orden” (61). In fact, by means of honour, individuals are accepted into the group, or, if they fail to accomodate their actions to the strict code of conduct demanded by honour, they are alienated from it.

The ambivalence already mentioned earlier is the last reference of interest in this introductory study. Honour has to be controlled by those who bestow it; its excess leads to vain glory, excessive pride being the cause of many paradigmatic falls of great princes, as moralists tell us with examples from classical antiquity. And the analysis of this excess proves to be of the highest significance; the unifying voice anxiously strived after in the period demands that the potentially subversive individual disappears, being its place occupied by the group. Absolutism is not a question of an individual governing a community but rather a social function, an exercise of power unanimously assented by

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Barber, C.L. 1957: *The Idea of Honour in the English Drama 1591-1700*. Goteborg, Gothenburg Studies in English; p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> Cleland, J. 1948: *The Institution of a Young Nobleman*. New York, Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints.

<sup>17</sup> In this sense, for J. G. Peristiany, honour is “the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals” (Peristiany J. G. ed. 1967: *Honour and Shame*. London, The Trinity Press; p. 9.).

the ruling élites. In this context, it is interesting to go back to Hobbes and his account of how social relations must be controlled by the imposition of power; as we saw, he identified pride as the cause of this subversive threat, but differentiated two elements, which I characterized as reputation (Hobbes's pride from wealth or friends, that is, external things) and honour-virtue (pride from wisdom). I consider that an ideologically monological community works by means of the acceptance of an unifying voice, and so it is not the action of an individual carried away by the praises of his equals what this community fears; after all, honour is left in the hands of the community, who freely bestows honours, fame or military glory, as a means to control particular behaviours. If honour is especially useful as an intellectual weapon against transgression, it is not in the classical version of the Aristotelian *megalopsychòs* or magnanimous man -a figure so close to Nietzsche's super-man in his self-sufficiency, defiant attitude and independence- but in the domesticated image of the individual tyrannized by others' opinion.<sup>18</sup> Thus, Hobbes is right when he fears pride as a subversive element, but his comments are especially relevant and significant when he points at the most dangerous kind of excessive honour: as a consequence of his distinction between what I have called reputation and honour-virtue, he separates two different kinds of consequences and identifies where the main danger comes from. Thus, if the consequence of the actions of a man driven by his confidence on an enormous reputation is the potential violation of the laws, the consequence of the actions of the *megalopsychòs* is of a different nature, and poses a real threat to the maintenance of the social order. The former arises from a new type of unified social organization, and although it causes a momentary disorder, this violation actually implies an acceptance of the new situation, and by its very nature can be controlled, or contained, by the community; the hypertrophied honour that causes the latter is quite a different matter: it comes from the past, as a remnant of a different kind of community, defies the laws of consensus and questions the system. As Hobbes knows, these individuals do not break the laws, but rather refuse to recognize them, since these "men with a great soul",

have a great and false opinion of their own Wisdome, take upon them to reprehend the actions, and call in question the Authority of them that govern, and so to unsettle the lawes with their publique discourse, as that nothing shall be a Crime, but what their own designes require should be so. (341)

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<sup>18</sup> As Spanish heroes from the so-called *dramas de honor* know too well ("las leyes tiranas del mundo"). I have elaborated on this point in much more detail in my PhD thesis *Estudio comparado del concepto del honor en Othello de W. Shakespeare y los dramas de honor de P. Calderón de la Barca*. [Microfilm ed.] Universidad de Jaén, 1997.

# A Sense of Continuity: lyric sequences, dramatic cycles and narrative pilgrimages in late medieval and early modern Literature

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The current assertion that lyric poetry lacks action and a coherent plot is widely accepted within the scope of literary criticism. The same assertion is also frequently used to discriminate between the lyric mode, on the one hand, and the narrative and dramatic modes, on the other. The common reading experience of lyric poetry does not seem to contradict the statements I have just mentioned. In fact, most people believe they make sense.

It is my purpose to give the matter a second thought, and bear evidence of how wrong these confident assertions may eventually prove.

Though many lyric poems are meant to be read in isolation, that is, without being linked to any other piece of writing, in order to create a poetic chain, Western Literature has increasingly developed a remarkable, intricate genre known as lyric sequence, whereas Japanese Literature, for instance, has unfolded an elaborate kind of linked poetry, which has little to do with Western literary practice. In any case, Western lyric sequences and Japanese linked poetry convey a sense of continuity leading to a complex whole where the parts, when taken separately, seem to be endowed with autonomous meaning. This autonomy is, however, merely apparent. The truth is that the meaning changes whenever a new unity is added to the previous ones. The full meaning is provided by the reading of the entire collection.

When we consider Shakespeare's lyric sequence, his *Sonnets*, we soon realise that the text expands into a strong strip of action, and frames several characters. Since there is no doubt we are in the presence of lyric poetry, we must come to the conclusion that the lyric mode, similarly to the narrative and dramatic ones, is a powerful transmitter of action, as far as a coherent plot is concerned.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the outstanding example I have conjured up, definitely throws light on the subject. We should, however, bear in mind that even a short, isolated lyric poem usually displays action, even if the action is minimal.

Let us pay attention, for instance, to the following poem by Emily Dickinson:

Presentiment ... is that long Shadow ... on the Lawn ...

Indicative that Suns go down ...

The Notice to the startled Grass

That Darkness ... is about to pass ...<sup>1</sup>

The lyric voice releases a sort of metaphoric definition expanding into descriptive images. It is mainly a description, it is true, but an action is announced: the sun goes down and the darkness is about to cover the grass, as it casts a long shadow on the lawn. The description implies the movement

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<sup>1</sup> Vide Johnson, Thomas H. ed. 1958: *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, 2nd. Vol.. Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: 581.

from light to darkness. The startled grass emerges as a character disturbed by unexpected change. Let us not forget that the human feeling conferred to the grass by the adjective “startled” is reinforced by the first term of the comparison where the noun belongs —Presentiment. Human beings experience presentiments and get startled.

Many people will hardly acknowledge an action as thin as the one I have just identified. It is not their fault, after all. Western literary traditions and conventions are grounded on Aristotle’s notion of action as a coherent plot. Such a notion originates in Greek drama and epic, since Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, didn’t take lyric poetry into consideration. It also has something to do with the emphasis bestowed by the philosopher on energy and human society, as well as on logic and matters of coherence. Western civilization tends to admit action in literature only when it takes the shape of a coherent plot after the fashion described by Aristotle. Accordingly, plenty of narratives and dramas flourishing in far-Eastern literatures are labelled as lacking in action. The truth is that this is not exact. Such texts display another kind of action, very distant from our own habits and conventions. And so does lyric.

Therefore, Western civilization is so powerfully addicted to the Aristotelian notion of a coherent plot, that it has compelled lyric poetry to take that shape. The effort met with success, though it had to overcome the limited scope offered by a single lyric poem. Moreover, the task required a series of lyric pieces of writing in order to favour a development of action in the framing of a plot. In other words, a sense of continuity had to be put forth.

Continuity is naturally embodied by narrative and drama. It is not difficult to take advantage of that inherent quality and adapt it to the unfolding of a coherent plot. Narrative tenders a constant *continuum*. Drama sets up a series of related scenes. Lyric sequences set up a collection of related poems in a given order, but with a difference: if one takes a piece of a narrative or a scene in a drama, they look like fragments and lack meaning, whereas a poem in a lyric sequence seems to be complete in itself. It promotes a sort of discontinuous continuity.

The plot or strip of action running through the entire sequence is capable of being perceived but harder to find out, as our reading experience easily tells us. The apparent wholeness displayed by each poem is conveyed by a heap of details covering a very thin line of action. The clearness one is used to in either narrative or drama vanishes. The full meaning of the collection becomes rather elusive. The reader would welcome some help, if only he or she could know how to get it.

At this point I think I can promise some help at hand. The history of the genre fortunately provides for it.

It is well known that the original pattern of the lyric sequence was set by Petrarch in his *Canzoniere* or *Rime Sparse* written in the fourteenth century. Petrarch himself had taken Dante’s *Vita Nuova* as a model, although Dante’s work consisted of a narrative frame where related lyric poems had been inserted. Nevertheless, the invention of a fully lyric sequence belongs to Petrarch, and he must be credited with the achievement of disclosing a plot by means of a collection of related lyric poems set up in a given order.

Was the meaning of the whole harder to grasp than the plot of a narrative or of a dramatic piece of writing? In fact it was, but the late medieval and early modern reader could count on some help that later on would no longer be available.

Petrarch’s lyric sequence was wrapped up in a shared world picture and a familiar spiritual belief. They shaped both the collection and the horizon of expectation of its audience. The pattern of Christian salvation, always present in medieval, theocentric thought, conveyed such a clear meaning to the chain of poems that every reader would easily discern it. Even an early modern, humanistic audience would have been able to notice it almost at first sight, for, according to the zeal of an age of Reformation, a rising anthropocentrism had not completely displaced the overall importance of God and the eternal soul.

So, the pattern of salvation was indeed a preexisting, coherent plot presiding over the particular plot exhibited in the lyric sequence. The implied pattern secured the continuity required by a story. It

also afforded a fixed scheme and a steady outcome. Such a stability was able to give strong support to a wavering structure where each new unity not only contributed to further a general meaning but also to throw it out of balance. The vigour of the pattern would firmly hold beyond all contradiction. The soul's struggle for salvation through love, in spite of earthly frailty, advanced the main action. It shed light on all kinds of details. The hymn to the Blessed Virgin, which closed Petrarch's sequence, acted as a conclusion. Human love could, after all, lead to God and to blessedness.

There is no doubt this frame of belief enhanced the meaning of lyric poetry. It also outlined the remaining literary modes and genres.

Dramatic cycles flourished in the late Middle Ages and early modern period. Their ultimate intent derived from the pattern of salvation through Christ, following a chain of biblical episodes. In this case, each play was set up in a given series, and very much after the fashion of a lyric sequence, each one seemed to be complete in itself. The meaning of the whole, however, far exceeded the meaning of the parts. The preexisting pattern of salvation furthered comprehension, and the illiterate, common people in the audience managed to understand a sometimes rather complex production.

Research gives evidence that the yearly presentation of the cycles did not include all the plays that were part of it. Some of them could be omitted; some would be replaced by other biblical episodes. A few, however, were irreplaceable, such as *The Creation*, *The Fall*, *The Nativity*, *The Crucifixion*, *The Resurrection*. These irreplaceable episodes sustained the framing pattern and guaranteed the backbone of the whole cycle.

Moralities and Interludes did not take the shape of dramatic cycles. Their rather thin plots made their way through allegory according to the Christian pattern of salvation, which greatly helped the audience to understand such an abstract text. But the great cycles produced a sense of continuity far more favourable to the development of a coherent plot.

The late Middle Ages also witnessed the appearance of series of framed narratives following the original model set by Boccaccio's *Decameron*. In this particular case, however, the meaning of the general framing was quite wordy. The conjunction of the different tales did not point to the pattern of salvation, nor indeed to any preexisting plot. There was a movement towards continuity but no obvious intent seemed to be pursued. The realistic impulse of the *novella* tended to overlap everything else and drive the audience away, even when some pious tales tried to improve the moral standard of the collection.

I am sure that you still remember that in the title of this paper I mentioned lyric sequences, dramatic cycles and, let me stress it, narrative pilgrimages. In *The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer clearly follows the model of Boccaccio's *Decameron* but he shapes his narrative frame in order to meet the Christian pattern of salvation. The pilgrimage provides for a theocentric axis able to further a general plot shedding new light on each one of the separate tales. The pilgrimage becomes much more than a frame. It turns out to be a framing plot enclosing the whole project, a full warrant of continuity. *The Tales* do not convey the same sort of meaning flowing in lyric sequences and dramatic cycles. Their realistic impulse, their ironic ambiguity, and their astounding variety far exceed the requirements of a coherent plot. But, at the same time, the framing pilgrimage enforces a general meaning the reader cannot afford to neglect.

Coming back to lyric poetry, let me remind you that Renaissance lyric sequences follow the Petrarchan model not only in the use of literary conventions but also because they recall the pattern of salvation, so necessary to the understanding of the whole series. When the fashion declines, the abuse of convention gives way to worn-out pieces of writing. A new world picture is on the verge of making its appearance. The pattern of Christian salvation is no longer in the horizon of the audience's expectation, and the original model can no longer be recognized. Authors and their audiences grow distant from the once shared, and literally omnipresent belief in redemption. The indispensable intertextual relationship with Petrarch is fading away, and the sense of continuity cannot survive the loss of its sustaining pattern. Still, such an agony will not lead to death but rather to transformation. This is an issue I intend to develop as soon as the opportunity comes my way.

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# The Expression of Fear: William Cecil's *The Execution of Justice*

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The walls of Marshalsea prison in Southwark echoed in 1591 the cries of one Eustace White, a Catholic priest, produced by the unbearable sessions of torture he had to undergo, and which he managed to describe to a friend and thus to posterity:

I was hanged at the wall from the ground, my manacles fast locked into a staple as high as I could reach the stool. The stool taken away, there I hanged from a little after 8 o'clock in the morning till after 4 in the afternoon, without any ease or comfort, saving that Topcliffe came in unto me, and told me that the Spaniards were come into Southwark by our means: For, lo, do you not hear the drums? For then the drums played in honour of my Lord Mayor.<sup>1</sup>

White's case and its outcome, execution at Tyburn (December 10, 1591), were by no means unique on an English stage then surrounded by powerful enemies labouring to destroy a given order of things. And neither was, for that matter, the sarcasm of the torturer, heard in all ages, but then attributed to one of Elizabeth's most cruel creatures, the sadist Richard Topcliffe, a man specialised in what in his terms he described as scraping the conscience of prisoners, and who maintained a shockingly close relationship with the Queen, to whom he is said to have reported directly more than once:

He did not care for the Council, for that he had his authority from Her Majesty ... and when he pleaseth, he may take her away from any company<sup>2</sup>

Prisoners on given occasions had thus to suffer not only the physical pain inflicted but also the strangely overheated mood of Elizabeth's finest expert at the rack. Thomas Pormont, another Catholic priest and one of his victims in 1592, reported to the Council, though to no avail, the following:

that he was so great and familiar with Her Majesty that he many times putteth his hands between her breasts and paps, and in her neck; that he hath not only seen her legs and knees, but feeleth them with his hands above her knees; that he hath felt her belly, and said unto Her Majesty that she hath the softest belly of any womankind. (A copy of Certain Notes written by Mr Portmont. Nicholl, 1992: 112)

Whatever the degree of truth in his words, a disturbing fact inevitably crops up: the close connection between crown, standing as the supreme symbol of a threatened political system, and pain, a powerful means in the machinery of state security. In between, the intermediary presence of torturer and victim, embodying the struggle of superior structures, in the sordid arena of a dungeon; face to face they personally represent two masters who can thus fight from a distance, a fact that transforms them into two merely convenient tools and which in its turn depersonalises their unequal confrontation. A depersonalisation, furthermore, which lies at the bottom of one crucial element in

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<sup>1</sup> Eustace White to Henry Garnet, November 23, 1591. In Caraman, P., 1984: *The Other Face: Catholic Life under Elizabeth I*, London, pp.235-6.

<sup>2</sup> Fr Henry Garnet to Richard Verstegan, July 26, 1592. In Nicholl, Ch., 1992: *The Reckoning*, London, p. 111.

the picture: legitimacy as applied to the means employed; for both, Torture and Suffering, have to be sufficiently and conveniently explained if they are to be made palatable, and presented as exemplary and legitimate modes of political conduct. The execution of one human being thus becomes, not an isolated episode in which one creature slays another, but a political event of national importance in which the State reaffirms its rules and right to existence against the very same enemy who seeks its destruction. A show, undeniably, worth watching; for to its dubious aesthetic values, which part of the audience seems to have regularly appreciated, it adds an educational dimension which emerges as essential for a system that finds in survival and self-preservation the reasons for being. Conceiving itself as a wholesome body, the latter finds in the extirpation of cancered members the most convenient remedy against the progress of an infectious and most dangerous disease, treason. A hand severed from a body and shown to the audience proves it, for the diseased member is thrown to the fire but the body is left intact; and only time may prove the physician right, for his cut has a double aim: stopping contagion and giving the remaining part a chance of recovery. That hand thus symbolises the price to pay for past mistakes, the admittance of guilt, but it also proves before the audience the mercy of a power that refuses to destroy the life of a subject who helplessly lies at its disposal.

We do not know whether John Stubbs considered that price high, but his words on November 3, 1579, before knife and mallet were applied to his guilty member, seem to stress the view that the degree of punishment could on many occasions depend on the capacity for regeneration power attached to the accused party:

If I am to suffer, grant me this grace, that the loss of my hand do not withdraw any part of my duty and affection toward Her Majesty<sup>3</sup>

The lost hand had been responsible that same year of a crime against the crown when on August 18 a pamphlet of its making was published, in total coincidence with Alenons arrival at the English court, entitled *The Discovery of a Gaping Gulf Whereinto England is like to be swallowed by Another French Marriage*<sup>4</sup>. Decision making, a prerogative of power, had been threatened, and it mattered little whether the opinions contained in the work coincided with the ones held by very prominent courtiers like Leicester or eminent intellectuals. What indeed really mattered was the subversion such a deed implied, a fact illustrated by the Queens refusal to soften the penalty, despite the popular mood against the Frenchman, the Crowns apparent policy of amity with France, and a sentence immediately denounced as un-English. An order, divinely appointed and in which each creature rightfully occupied a given position, could not be attacked with impunity:

Almighty God hath created and appoynted all things in heauen, earth and waters, in a most excellent and perfect order. In Heauen, hee hath appoynted distinct and severall orders and states of Archangels and Angels. In earth hee hath assigned and appointed kings, princes, with other gouernours under them, an all good and necessary order<sup>5</sup>

Stubbs, however, remained alive and with one single hand, sufficient, as time would show, to prove the duty and affection he on the scaffold had claimed to possess towards his Majesty. By 1583, this long process of regeneration was complete: a new work saw the light, this time signed by Lord Burghley, one of the Privy Councillors to have voted in favour of Stubbs savage punishment in 1579, but in which Stubbs left hand could be felt:

When the governments practice of imprisoning and executing Jesuit agents was challenged, Burghley replied in an elaborate defense, *The Execution of Justice*, a work drafted for him by Francis Walsinghams man, the attorney John Stubbs. (Berleth, 1978: 31)

<sup>3</sup> Berleth, R., 1978: *The Twilight Lords*, London, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> William Page, editor of the work, was also sentenced to the same punishment.

<sup>5</sup> An Exhortation concerning good order, and obedience to Rulers and Magistrates, *Certaine Sermons or Homilies appoynted to be read in Churches, in the time of the late Queene Elizabeth of famous memory*, (1633) London.

The once hunted hunt in turn for masters like Walsingham, whose motto at the head of the Intelligence service was that information is never too expensive, or Burghley, converted into the greatest guarantor of a system that feels threatened from many angles, but especially from an inside in which the real aggressors cannot be identified so easily. Information, therefore, becomes essential; and not only for a Power that desperately tries to defend itself by identifying the enemy, but also for men, like Topcliffe, who turn persecuting and torturing into a stable and profitable job. The fear that some feel becomes thus a vital element for the survival of others; men who if the right information is not available, will have no qualms in fabricating it. Anything, in fact, to maintain a tension which is as vital for them as it is for an enemy who is very conscious of the damage a fifth column can cause. The Duke of Alba undoubtedly knew it when as early as February 24, 1570, the day before the promulgation of the papal bull *Regnans in Excelsis*<sup>6</sup>, he advised his monarch not to join France in order to attack England, but rather to use those English or Scottish subjects who like willing moles would dig a hole inside the country.<sup>7</sup> *The Execution of Justice* aims in this light at becoming a tool which a given power claims to use legitimately against aggressors who will obviously deny the charges it contains, but who will see themselves exposed before a world that rather sooner than later will have to admit that what some call cruelty England has reasons to define as self-defence. It claims in this sense to contain the same degree of truth of other works with similar characteristics:

There is in this short discourse delivered unto thee (gentle reader) a *true* report of the treasons and practises of Francis Throckmorton, and his complices against the Queenes Majestie and the Realme: which comming to my handes by chance from a gentleman, to whom it was sent into the Countrey, I have presumed to commit the same to the print, to the ende that such as in opinion and conceit are not satisfied, touching the matters proved against him, and the course of proceeding helde with him, might by the sight thereof (if *trueth* and *reason* may perswade them) bee resolved of all such doubttes and scruple as have risen by the variable reportes made of the qualitie of his offences, and the manner of dealing towards him.<sup>8</sup>

Truth and Reason conceived not only as values with which to fight such opposites as Falsehood and Wrong, but as attributes which define the legitimacy of a power. By the same token, Treason can only be the work of somebody who deliberately wanders along a mistaken track:

It hath been in all ages and in all countries a common usage of all offenders for the most part, both great and small, to make defense of their lewd and unlawful facts by *untruths* and by coloring and covering their deeds (were they never so vile) with pretenses of some other causes of contrary operations or effects, to the intent not only to avoid punishment or shame but to continue, uphold, and prosecute their wicked attempts to the full satisfaction of their disordered and malicious appetites.<sup>9</sup>

The aggressor is thus stigmatised from the very beginning as a being who lacks fundamental human qualities and who, as a consequence, is governed by a purely animal instinct. Only a beast would revolt against a generally accepted and reasonably instituted peace and order of things. Thus the enemy, but especially the enemy within, creeps, a verb William Cecil seems to have carefully chosen and which he attaches to the Jesuits caught in England: so warily they crept into the land as none brought the marks of their priesthood with them (Cecil, 1583: 6). An animalisation which in the case of Thomas Stukeley, a fugitive into Spain in 1570, and who occupies a privileged position in his

<sup>6</sup> The Bull was promulgated by Pious V and declared Elizabeth I to be a heretic and an abettor of heretics, Wright, L. B. & Lamar, V. A., (eds), 1962: *Life and Letters in Tudor and Stuart England*, New York, p. 268.

<sup>7</sup> Habiendo en Escocia o Inglaterra algunos sujetos a quien poder fomentar debajo de mano, y que estos abriesen camino y con ellos hacer tal agujero como V.M. con su gran prudencia lo apunta. Quoted by Marichalar, A., 1952: *Julin Romero*, Madrid, p. 213.

<sup>8</sup> *A discoverie of the treasons practised and attempted against the Queenes Majestie and the Realme, by Francis Throckmorton*, in Kinney, A., 1975: *Elizabethan Backgrounds*, Hamden, Connecticut. My own shadowing.

<sup>9</sup> Cecil, W., 1583: *The Execution of Justice in England for maintenance of public and Christian peace, against certain stirrers of sedition, and adherents to the traitors and enemies of the realm, without any persecution of them for questions of religion, as is falsely reported and published by the fautors and fosterers of their treasons*, Kingdon, R.M., (ed.), 1965: New York, p. 3.

criticism despite the fact that he had already been dead for more than five years when the work was published, is taken to the limit:

And out of Ireland ran away one Thomas Stukely, a defamed person almost through all Christendom and a faithless beast rather than a man, fleeing first out of England for notable piracies and out of Ireland for treacheries not pardonable. (Cecil, 1583: 5)

Cecil's arguments are therefore those of somebody who fights not only in favour of Reason but also against the evil practices of the serpent. God can only be on his side, for it is there where the wisdom of true reason lies. His is a quest in which religious tolerance is not at stake, but righteousness:

But Gods goodness, by whom kings do rule and by Whose blast traitors are commonly wasted and confounded, hath otherwise given to Her Majesty, as to His handmaid and dear servant ruling under Him, the spirit of wisdom and power, whereby she hath caused some of these seditious seedmen and sowers of rebellion to be discovered, for all their secrets lurkings, and to be taken and charged with these former points of high treason, not being dealt withal upon questions of religion, but justly [by order of laws openly] condemned as traitors. (Cecil, 1583: 7)

The struggle is therefore presented as an opposition between the forces of order against those of evil and chaos, the latter being represented precisely by figures notoriously inclined towards anarchy, debauchery and vagrancy. Charles Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, one of the leaders of the so-called Rising of the North<sup>10</sup>, thus becomes a person utterly wasted by looseness of life; a presentation which runs parallel with that employed to describe the whole bunch of those who have fled to Rome or Spain:

Whereas diveers of them before their rebellion lived so notoriously the most part of their lives out of all good rule, either for honest manners or for any sense in religion, as they might have been rather familiar with Catiline (or favorers to Sardanapalus (than accounted good subjects under any Christian princes. (Cecil, 1583: 4)

The argument is not new in 1583. In fact, Cecil beats a track already opened in 1571 by the very Queen, who had then sent Henry Cobham as ambassador to Spain to present a complaint before Philip II touching the welcome given to the above mentioned Thomas Stukeley. In the words of Elizabeth I the latter was but a fugitive, a rebel, a dissolute man, a rake and a spendthrift;<sup>11</sup> or, as she would also write to Walsingham, a man of no value, given to bestiality.<sup>12</sup> Somebody, in fact, who would surely be rendered useless by any king; an opinion which was obviously not shared by a monarch like Philip II who agreed with ambassadors ready to sustain the view that the real remedy is that with which Roberto Ridolfi is charged.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, in what was taken as an open declaration of enmity, Stukeley was knighted by Philip II on January 21, 1571; a piece of news that the same Henry Cobham would let Burghley know on April 18: On the 21st of January, Thomas Stukeley was created knight by the King, but now his prodigality has somewhat lessened the credit that he had at first. (*Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series*: 432).

Burghley's justice and its execution become in his reasoning a Christian practice to be used against evil tools, like the Jesuits or the characters above mentioned, who embody all the wickedness and unchristian features the masters who have sent them against England possess. The Pope, or Philip II, are but mere Machiavellian tyrants ready to use any means at their disposal in order to reach a known end, the dethronement of Elizabeth, even if this implies using creatures who would have a well gained place in a gallery of monsters. Torture, in consequence, cannot and should not be

<sup>10</sup> Charles Neville (1543-1601) took refuge in the Spanish Netherlands after the collapse in 1569 of the attempted revolt. Catiline: A Roman who conspired against his country in 63 B.C., a prototype of a conspirator. Sardanapalus: A Greek form of Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, a prototype of luxurious effeminacy.

<sup>11</sup> Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Legajo 823. My own translation.

<sup>12</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth I*, p.404.

<sup>13</sup> Guerau de Spes to Philip II, March 1571, *Calendar of Letters and State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 302.

understood as a cruel device, but as a fair punishment which the victim fully deserves, and which is applied with Gods benediction: yet by Gods power given unto Her Majesty they were so speedily vanquished as some few of them suffered by order of law according to their desserts (Cecil, 1583: 4). An argument, furthermore, which allows him to conclude in a satisfactory manner:

And therefore, all these things well considered, there is no doubt but all good subjects within the realm do manifestly see, and all wavering persons (not being led clean out of the way by the seditious) will hereafter perceive, how they have been abused to go astray. And all strangers, but specially all Christian potentates, as emperors, kings, princes, and suchlike, having their sovereign estates either in succession hereditary or by consent of their people, being acquainted with the very truth of these Her Majestys late just and necessary actions, only for defense of herself, her crown, and people, against open invaders and for eschewing of civil wars stirred up by rebellion, will allow in their own like cases for a truth and rule that it belongeth not to a Bishop of Rome .....to depose any sovereign mistress. (Cecil, 1583: 21)

And yet, there is a loophole in his apparently unobjectionable reasoning, for it takes the form of an *excusatio non petita*. His counterattack betrays him in the same way that Henry Cobhams mission to Spain betrayed his queen: an ambassador who complains about rabble before a foreign prince ultimately elevates in stature, as it indeed happened, his object of censure. Equally so, Burghleys work, conceived as a counterblast against practices deemed unchristian and wicked, and against deeds carried out by low creatures with the profile of animals, makes those same practices and creatures shine as if they were arranged on a stage for the purpose. By extension, the open and desperate claim to truth betrays the latent fear in the liar to being found out. The agent of power may publicly defend his view while secluding from the public eye the most sinister aspects of the mechanism, but he cannot silence the cries of pain. The torturer thus outwardly clears his conscience, though he is intimately aware that his weakness is proportionate to the degree of pain inflicted. Paradoxically, the enemy grows in pain.

He defends a unity which nobody, including himself, believes to be set on firm ground. Quite the contrary, if the aggressors pose a threat this is none other than the rupture of order a dethronement would involve. Queen Elizabeth is thus converted into a symbol upon which survival fully depends. The person, once again, does not count; a fact that in turn explains the so-called Bond of Association which her advisers devise a year after the publication of Burghleys work: It was a notable piece of political symbolism and propaganda, drafted just before the opening of the new parliament in November.<sup>14</sup> The nation needs to be told that it really exists as a cohesive entity, for the message can work that ardently wished achievement. The message, and, of course, Walsinghams supply of information, which carefully and mechanically turns any private Catholic activity into a public betrayal against the State. Scraping the conscience of prisoners, Topcliffes very personal definition of Torture, thus becomes not only an accusation against a torturer, but the embodiment of a political assault against the realm of privacy: a citizen is privately guilty until his innocence can be publicly admitted. When the moment comes, however, it is as a rule too late, for the hangman waits. Public executioning, therefore, takes a new dimension: a confession of fear and internal weakness; undeniably, an advantage that Catholic powers on the Continent wished to exploit to the limit.

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<sup>14</sup> Haynes, A., 1992: *Invisible Power. The Elizabethan Secret Services, 1570-1603*, Bath, p. 35.

“Who Speaks for Justice?”:  
Renaissance Legal Development  
and the Literary Voices of Women.<sup>1</sup>

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When Stephen Greenblatt redescribed the professional, critical reading of early modern texts as motivated by a desire to hear the voices of the past, to ‘speak with the dead’, he also acknowledged the force of a paradox in his contention that the voices of the dead are more audible to us from the texts of fiction than from ‘any other textual traces’. The legacy of this statement for feminist criticism is distinctly double-edged. The full impact of the paradox in Greenblatt’s formulation only reveals itself with his admission of just how selective he was prepared to be in his choice of suitable interlocutors. What qualifies the textual traces of the past for dialogue with the present, he went on to explain, is ‘life’ and ‘intensity’. And, ‘conventional in my tastes’, he concluded, ‘I found the most satisfying intensity of all in Shakespeare’.<sup>2</sup>

Shakespeare’s once-celebrated ‘universality’ here translates easily into a guarantor of historical authenticity, the vitality of the Shakespearean text offering a way into the understanding of a vanished culture. The most pressing question raised by the Shakespearean artefact thus became, according to Greenblatt, ‘how did so much life get into the textual traces?’<sup>3</sup> But to equate the question of the source of vitality in Shakespeare’s text with the project of entering into dialogue with a vanished culture is to ignore the most obvious fact about the selection of Shakespeare as a representative creator of ‘voices’: the fact that the voices of Shakespeare’s *dramatis personae* have remained more accessible to us than those of contemporary dramatists precisely to the extent that they give the impression of coming from timeless individual beings, from *characters*, rather from social or moral types which require us (as do the *dramatic personae* of so many ‘minor’ playwrights) to engage in historical reconstructions of early modern social codes. The question of how we translate what we perceive as ‘intensity’ into a quality of verisimilitude, of likeness to *life*, can’t even get off the ground until we start looking at what it is that enables us to read ‘intensity’ as contributing to the representation of coherent, continuous ‘individuals’, that is, speaking subjects whose voices seem to proceed not from what we know of the culture at large, but from autonomous, individuated being. Greenblatt’s equation of ‘intensity’ with ‘life’ in relation to Shakespeare assumes, I think, the givenness of the relationship that needs most questioning. If one were to substitute for Shakespeare, say, his brilliant contemporary, Thomas Nashe, there is no doubt that the equation could not be made. Nashe is capable of local effects of great intensity, but the limitations of his art are, precisely, that the

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<sup>1</sup> My title echoes Jacqueline Rose’s question in a brilliant essay entitled ‘Just, Lasting, Comprehensive’ in *States of Fantasy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 81. I would like to thank Jacqueline Rose for her encouragement and criticism of this essay, and the members of SEDERI, especially Juan Prieto-Pablos, Manuel Gómez Lara and Pilar Cuder Domínguez, for their kindness, hospitality and criticism of the spoken version of this paper, delivered at the University of Seville.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

immediacy and vitality of the illusion of 'voice' that he produces is not matched by any sense of that voice's emanation from a continuous, individualised consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that we unthinkingly equate literary intensity with the capacity to produce the illusion of authentic, individual being - the dramatic 'character' that we identify as the hallmark of 'Shakespearean' drama<sup>5</sup> - poses particular problems for feminist criticism. As Elizabeth Harvey has pointed out, feminist criticism has found practically irresistible the tendency to conflate the voice of the female author with the voices of brilliantly achieved characters of women composed by men.<sup>6</sup> The common-sense response to this problem is one which simply acknowledges that men have long been better equipped by education and culture to compose strong characterological voices (that is, voices which sound as if they are emanating from individuated beings, rather than from a set of social codes or stereotypes) than have women. Yet such an acknowledgement, holding in place as does the assumption that revelation of 'character' is the supreme achievement of first person poetic speech, does nothing to enable us to distinguish what women who wrote in the early modern period might have brought to the established literary forms of female utterance, how they might have understood them differently from men. Another way of considering the problem, therefore, might be by offering a challenge to our assumption of the inherent superiority or even the necessary presence of characterological effects in first person poetic speech. The pressing question for a feminist criticism which wants to investigate the relationship between male and female fictions of femininity would then shift from the usual, 'What does it mean to write like a woman?' or 'What is it that constitutes the authentic voice of female experience?' to 'How can we prevent ourselves from assuming that certain conditions of first-person speech which we associate with women must be identified as expressive of the experience, and therefore of the moral qualities of an individual woman?'

I want, then, to question the extent to which it is appropriate to approach fictive first-person speech in women's poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as if it were primarily concerned with the revelation of character. The poetry with which I shall be concerned belongs to a highly specific genre - the epistle of the abandoned woman to her lover, modelled on Ovid's *Heroides* - whence it has infused the more complex genres of dramatic and prose fiction, and conditioned our expectations of female character. Not that feminist studies of the influence of Ovid's *Heroides* on later literature have a simplistic approach to the question of character. Indeed, the most recent work has tended (having recourse to Howard Jacobson's rich and detailed study of the sources of Ovid's first fifteen letters) to emphasise the extent to which Ovid's reworking of Virgilian and Homeric ideals of womanhood (Dido, Penelope) anticipates a similar process of subversion in certain kinds of writing by women. Linda Kauffman, for example, writes, alluding to Howard Jacobson's commentary on the Ovidian Dido:

in his portrait of Dido, Ovid is not striving to represent the central core of woman's self, or 'woman's essence', for he is sceptical about the very idea of a center, a self, an essence, and about language's representation of such concepts. Instead, Ovid's portrait is a critique of a previous representation of Dido: Virgil's.<sup>7</sup>

As Ovid's Dido comes to stand, in Kauffman's analysis, for 'a conscious critique of Augustan Rome, of Virgilian values, and of epic itself', so Ovidian epistolatory fiction anticipates the 'quiet, stealthy work of undermining' by means of which women's writing will, in later periods, seek to "'deflower myths" of woman by undermining mimesis'.<sup>8</sup> The danger, however, of this Bakhtinian reading of Ovid as dialogically or novelistically engaging with the value systems of epic, is that it is so easily

<sup>4</sup> Neil Rhodes, for example, remarks that Nashe's mind 'is similar to Shakespeare's', but that 'Where Nashe failed completely was in accommodating his material to strong and abiding dramatic structures', *Elizabethan Grotesque* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) 156.

<sup>5</sup> On the importance of the illusion 'character' in Shakespearean drama, and of the failure of post-structuralism to account for its effects, see Alan Sinfield, *Faultlines* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 52-79.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Harvey, *Ventriloquised Voices* (London: Routledge, 1992) 15-6.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986) 20. Kauffman refers to Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974) 90.

<sup>8</sup> Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire*, 23.

assimilated to a notion of character realism. If Ovid's subversion of epic values is achieved by imagining a Dido and a Penelope who insist on speaking up for 'the private life, the life of the feelings'<sup>9</sup>, then this subversion offers a hardly novel precedent for identifying women with the process of revealing emotions from a scene of privacy and marginality, as if Heroidean poetry were nineteenth century dramatic monologue. What tends to happen, in fact, is that Ovid's unidealised women are read as the precursors of a new verisimilitude in first-person speech, the very dialogism of which becomes identified with psychological realism. Howard Jacobson, on whose source study so much of the best recent criticism depends, himself tends to use the vocabulary of psychological realism. He observes, for example, of the letter of Phyllis to Demophoon (a poem which renders a story of great popularity in antiquity, although earlier treatments appear to have been lost<sup>10</sup>) that 'the poem revolves around the co-existence of apparently incompatible and (logically) mutually exclusive emotions: sincere love/genuine anger; hope/despair'.<sup>11</sup> This apparent incoherence is, however, resolved by an appeal to the distinction between conscious and unconscious emotion; Phyllis has decided that Demophoon is never coming back, but like any lover, she can't quite give up hope. So Jacobson writes, 'The despondency of 11-26 is at two points brilliantly contradicted by unconscious flashes of hope ... we detect, beneath the surface of her professed despair, a faint persistence of hope in Demophoon's good faith.'<sup>12</sup> Here, then, is a tension between the conscious rhetorical *presentation* of the self, and the inadvertent *self-revelation* that results. Our job in reading consequently becomes the discovery of how the women's speech is belied by the revelation of unconscious motives and feelings. Thus Florence Verducci, who particularly admires Howard Jacobson's analysis of Ovid's subversion of the Homeric Penelope, writes,

Perhaps the greatest, and surely the most original, achievement of Ovid's letters is the impression they create of psychological authenticity, of convincing fidelity to the private perspective of a speaker caught in a double process of intentional persuasion and unintentionally revealing self-expression.<sup>13</sup>

The supreme accomplishment of the poetry - psychological verisimilitude - is thus identified with the very ways in which Ovidian heroines puncture their own idealisation in other genres. Ovid's epistolary fictions move us, some critics say, because they enable us to witness, behind the explicit protestations of the heroine, the revelation of less exalted feelings of which 'she' is barely conscious. Thus, W.S. Anderson, challenging the view that Ovid's Dido is inferior to Virgil's, argues that our sense of the rhetorical contrivance with which Ovid's Dido speaks does not prevent us from imagining her to be *real*: 'as we start to respond with the pity she demands, we are stopped by our awareness that she is exploiting that pity, and we end up, I think, being charmed by the tension this one woman produces in us.' This tension then bespeaks a certain kind of female character, a character which seems the more accessible for being unidealised: 'Ovid seems intent on showing us a familiar feminine personality, warm, articulate, *self-conscious and self-deceiving at the same time*' (my italics).<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Bate, also alluding to Howard Jacobson's analysis of Ovid's Dido as a reworking of Virgil's, finds in her a convincing model for Shakespeare's characterisation of Cleopatra: 'This Dido has a Cleopatra-like ability to blaze with love one moment and be manipulative the next.'<sup>15</sup>

My interest lies in the facility with which discontinuities and incoherences within the first-person speech of these fictive epistles are assimilated to a governing notion of the conscious or unconscious duplicity - what we might call the 'double voice' - of the female speaker. This tendency extends, I think, to criticism of Renaissance imitations of the *Heroides*. John Kerrigan's anthology of the genre, *Motives of Woe*, makes some of the same moves. Kerrigan observes that the genre has legal affinities;

<sup>9</sup> Kauffman, quoting Richard Lanham on Dido in *Discourse s of Desire*, 49.

<sup>10</sup> Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974) 58n.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>12</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>13</sup> Florence Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart: Epistulae Heroidum* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1985) 15.

<sup>14</sup> W. S. Anderson, 'The Heroides', in J.W. Binns ed. *Ovid* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973) 55.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 212.

'plainants', he writes, 'are "plaintiffs" ... presenting quasi-legal "causes"'.<sup>16</sup> What he concludes from this, however, is that the poems are trials of female morality, in which we are invited to act as judges. "'Causation" of this kind', he argues, 'makes it difficult but appropriate for the reader to judge how far plaintful speakers were responsible for their downfall.'<sup>17</sup> Yet Kerrigan is aware that the lack of credibility allocated to female speech is in part an effect of social construction, and hesitates to translate this lack into a judgement of female character. The phrase 'doble voyce', which introduces the speech of the abandoned woman in the first verse of Shakespeare's 'A Louers Complaint' consequently indicates, Kerrigan suggests, a knowing allusion to the tendency of male listeners to dismiss or 'hysterice' the voice of the woman even before it is heard. The poem begins thus:

From off a hill whose concaue womb reworted  
A plaintfull story from a sistring vale  
My spirits t'attend this doble voyce accorded ...<sup>18</sup>

Subsequently, however, Kerrigan's reading of the same phrase seems to creep back into the realm of character criticism. He makes a brilliantly suggestive connection between the woman's 'doble voyce', echoing off the hill, and the 'double ... Voice and Echo' of Rumour in Shakespeare's 2 *Henry IV*. Yet he leaves the connection in the form of a question, hanging in the air, returning after all to the previously eschewed issue of the female speaker's trustworthiness:

When Warwick assures Henry IV that the number of the rebels is exaggerated, he quibblingly says: 'Rumor doth double, like the Voice, and Echo, / The numbers of the feared.' Where does this leave the 'doble voyce' heard in Shakespeare's printed 'quire of echoes', the quarto of 1609? ... it is important to recognise the subtlety of the possible falsehood ... Even if the 'fickle maid' reports truth, she might not report 'the whole truth' (whatever that means), or the circumstances which make it so. We should resist the promptings of 'doble' either wholly to credit what she says, or to judge her account mendacious.<sup>19</sup>

I want to follow Kerrigan's lead in taking seriously the legal affinities of the 'complaint' poem, but, at the same time, to reverse the approach that would place the burden of intention upon the moral character of the woman speaking - 'what does her rhetoric intend?'; 'what do her words inadvertently reveal about her deeper intentions?' - suggesting, rather, that as far as early modern readers were concerned, more pressing ethical questions of intention and liability were raised in relation to the interlocutor who remained absent. I'm proposing, then, that sixteenth century readers of Ovid's *Heroides* were more inclined that we are to read them in relation to the problem that Isabella Whitney sets out in her Heroidean *Copy of a Letter* (1567), when she challenges her 'vnconstant Louer': If you 'take me to your wife', she says, '*So shall the promises be kept,* / That you so firmly made' (my italics).<sup>20</sup> The allegation of breach of promise at the heart of so many of the epistles of the heroines makes it possible that sixteenth century readers of the poems perceived their affinity with *specific* developments in legal thought and practice which were at that time transforming attitudes to intention and liability in relation to verbal promises. These developments were part of the larger contribution of a theory of equity to the sixteenth century English common law, a contribution which Luke Wilson has characterised in terms of a general 'increase in the sophistication of legal conceptions of intention'.<sup>21</sup> Equity succeeded, as J.H.Baker explains, in enabling a medieval legal system which was largely hampered by 'the persistence of archaic methods of proof designed to settle general issues' but incapable of allocating guilt or liability in relation to specific cases which did not

<sup>16</sup> John Kerrigan, *Motives for Woe: Shakespeare and 'Female Complaint'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>18</sup> Kerrigan, *Motives for Woe*, 209.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-4.

<sup>20</sup> Isabella Whitney, *The Copy of a Letter, lately written in meeter* (London: Richard Jones, 1567) sig. A2v.

<sup>21</sup> Luke Wilson, *Hamlet, Hales v. Petit and the Hysterisis of Action*, *ELH* 60 (1993) 17-55, 31.

conform to an existing common law action.<sup>22</sup> If we accept Luke Wilson's proposition that 'intention is that aspect of action traditionally understood as internal and subjective'<sup>23</sup>, then it is not hard to concede that a legal system that begins to pay increasing amounts of attention to the question of the relation of intention to criminal or civil liability in court is one which will have an impact on the way in which the 'internal and subjective' aspects of action are represented in other kinds of discourse. And it is thanks to the introduction of an Aristotelian theory of equity that something like this kind of attention was beginning to be paid to questions of intention in the Courts of the King's Bench and of the Common Pleas in sixteenth century London.<sup>24</sup>

Aristotelian equity, or *epieikeia* was, in essence, the means whereby the inevitable discrepancy between the letter of the positive law and the exceptional circumstances of a particular case might be adjusted by forging a relationship between the two in the form of a hypothesis of the legislator's intention in making the law, and of the intentions of individual parties to the case in 'transgressing' it. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle explains that the need for equity arises from the *hamartia* or error inevitable in applying the law to cases for which the generality of its expression has made no provision. In these cases, writes Aristotle, 'When ... the law lays down a general rule, and thereafter a case arises which is an exception to that rule' the judge should, 'rectify the defect by deciding as the lawgiver would himself decide if he were present on that occasion and would have enacted if he had been cognisant of the case in question.'<sup>25</sup> In the *Rhetoric* he adds to this quest for legislative intention the imperative to investigate the intentions lying behind the transgressor's action. *Epieikeia*, he writes, looks, 'not to the letter of the law (*pros ten nomon*) but to the intention of the legislator (*pros ten dianonian tou nomothetou*); not to the act (*pros ten praxin*) but to the intention of the agent (*pros ten proharesin*).' <sup>26</sup> So when Christopher St.German introduced the concept of equity into the English common law in 1530, his definition turned on this Aristotelian quest for intention:

Equitye is a ryghtwisenes that consideryth all the perticuler cyrcumstances of the dede / the whiche is also temperyd with the swetnes of mercye ... And for the playner declaracyon what equitye is thou shalt vnderstande that syth the dedes and actes of men / for which lawes ben ordayned happen in dyvers maners infynytely. It is not possyble to make any general rewle of the lawe / but that it shall fayle in some case ... And therefore to folow the wordes of the lawe / were in some cases both agaynste Iustice and the commonwelth: wherfore in some cases it is *good and even* necessary to leue the wordes of the lawe ... so it apperyth that equitye rather foloweth the intent of the lawe / then the wordes of the lawe.<sup>27</sup>

Recent articles by Renaissance literary critics such as Luke Wilson and Katherine Eisaman Maus follows up the implications of earlier work on the relation of equity to the representation of intention in Greek and Renaissance drama with analyses that suggest a relationship between what Wilson calls the 'modularisation of intention' in sixteenth century legal discourse, and our sense that Renaissance tragedies such as *Hamlet* or *Othello* touch upon fundamental questions about the nature of the relation of the 'inner self' to outward action, gesture and show.<sup>28</sup> According to Wilson, one of the

<sup>22</sup> J.H.Baker, *The Reports of Sir John Spelman* 2 vols (London: Selden Society, 1978) II.32.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, 'Hysteresis of Action', 22.

<sup>24</sup> I've argued this more fully in 'Not the King's Two Bodies: Plowden, Shakespeare and Political Consciousness'.

<sup>25</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* tr. H.Rackham (London: Heinemann, 1932) V.x.5-6, 314-6.

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, 'Art' of *Rhetoric* tr. J.H.Freese (London: Heinemann, 1932); see also Kathy Eden's excellent study, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 45 and *passim*.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher St. German, *Doctor and Student* ed. T.F.T.Plucknett and J.L.Barton (London: Selden Society, 1974) 95-9. See also John Guy, 'Law, Equity and Conscience in Henrician Jurist Thought' in John Guy and Alistair Fox, *Reassessing the Henrician Age: Humanism, Politics and Reform 1500-1550* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 178-98 and Zofia Rieger, 'Gerson's Concept of Equity and Christopher St.German' *History of Political Thought* 3 (1982) 1-30.

<sup>28</sup> See Wilson, 'Hysteresis of Action'; Wilson, 'Hamlet: Equity, Intention, Performance', *Studies in the Literary Imagination* (1991); Katherine Eisaman Maus, 'Proof and Consequences: *Othello* and the Crime of Intention' in *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995) 104-127; Kathy Eden, *Poetic and Legal Fiction in the Aristotelian Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 7 and *passim*. See also Marvin T.Herrick, *Comic Theory in*

implications of the taking into account of intention in criminal trials is the recognition that intention is, necessarily, a hypothetical fiction - a way of accounting for action after the fact. This recognition must have been congenial to sixteenth century neoclassical drama, which is rhetorically conceived as a series of hypotheses or conjectures upon uncertain proofs. I have tried to show elsewhere how Renaissance humanist mediations and imitations of the comedies of Terence and Plautus are particularly interested in situations in which the *dramatis personae* display uncertainty about one another's intentions, and are hence obliged to hypothesise or invent plausible 'characters' for one another.<sup>29</sup> Wilson's argument, however, proposes further that a dramatic interest in the uncertainty of the relation of intention to action can have the effect, in tragic drama, of creating a sense of 'interiority', of the dramatic effect of 'character' for which Shakespeare is famous. If, as legal equity declares, intention is only knowable at the level of hypothesis, then its temporal relation to action is always retrospective, even for the intending agent. The creation, in *Hamlet*, of a kind of virtual temporality, in which the protagonist expresses a prospective intention in relation to an action already committed corresponds, according to Wilson, to the necessarily retrospective nature of intention itself, and so to the sense of provisionality which characterises the way we experience our own intentions, our 'subjectivity'.

What, however, were the implications of the newly emergent focus on intention in the common law courts for the artistic representation of female subjectivity or an individualised female 'voice' ? 'In order for intentions to enter into circulation as tokens of a general symbolic economy of liability', writes Wilson, 'they must be conceptualised as detachable or modular'<sup>30</sup> The area of the English common law in which such a 'modularisation of intention' was most in need of development was that of promissory liability. It was impossible, in sixteenth century common law, to bring an action on a debt that rested on a mere promise to pay; the only available approximation to such an action was that known as the 'wager of law' which simply obliged the accused debtor to defend himself by finding eleven men ready to swear that he owed nothing. Gradually, however, an equitable alternative to the wager of law emerged in the form of an action on the case known as 'assumpsit'.<sup>31</sup> This led in a more or less direct line to the modern law of contract, according to which mutual promises are held to be binding, and actionable in law.<sup>32</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the disappearance of the spiritual courts' hold over the action of promises between 1500 and 1550, together with the perception of the inadequacy of the common law action of debt, focused legally-minded attention on questions of promissory liability in the 1560s and 70s in ways which are discernible in the poetry and plays written in that period.<sup>33</sup> Ovid's *Heroides* - concerned as they are with women protesting the faithlessness of lovers who apparently promised to marry them - would seem to invite reading in the context of this sort of legal development, not least because (as Renaissance readers of Ovid, such as Jonson, were aware) Ovid's poetry deploys a precise legal vocabulary, deriving from his experience in the centumviral court.<sup>34</sup> The *Heroides* are particularly rich in this technical language; the pair of letters between Acontius and Cydippe, for example, explicitly turn on the question of whether a promise or an oath made unintentionally is valid in law. Here Ovid exploits the well-known legal

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*the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950); Joel Altman, *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Terence Cave, *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988);

<sup>29</sup> See my *The Usurer's Daughter* (London: Routledge, 1994) 165-223.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, 'Hysteresis of Action', 31.

<sup>31</sup> J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to Legal History* (London: Butterworth, 1979) 267-87; Baker, 'English Law and the Renaissance' in *The Legal Profession and the English Common Law* (London: Hambledon, 1986) 463; Baker, *Reports of Sir John Spelman*, II:37-43; R.E.Helmholz, 'Assumpsit and Fidei Laesio', *Law Quarterly Review* 91 (1975) 406-32.

<sup>32</sup> T. F. T. Plucknett, *A Concise History of the Common Law* 5th ed. (London: Butterworth, 1956) 643-4; A.W.B.Simpson, *History of the Common Law of Contract: the Rise of Assumpsit* (1975); see also Luke Wilson, 'Ben Jonson and the Law of Contract', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 5, 2 (1993) 281-306.

<sup>33</sup> Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, 140-2.

<sup>34</sup> E. J. Kenney, 'Ovid and the Law', *Yale Classical Studies* 21 (1969) 243-63, 254. For Jonson's knowledge of the centumviral court and Ovid, see Jonson, *Poetaster* ed. Tom Cain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) III.iv.51n, 142.

topic of the conflict between the spirit and the letter of the law, in other words, the conflict between the strict law, and its equitable intention.<sup>35</sup>

In sixteenth century England, literary culture overlapped to a very great extent with legal culture. George Puttenham, for example, famous to literary critics as the author of *The Arte of English Poesie*, is so identified at least partly through the occurrence in that work of innovative legal terms used elsewhere by him; two of these terms are 'equitable' and 'equitably'.<sup>36</sup> One of the paradigmatic fictional situations employed by such literary-minded lawyers, and other intellectuals concerned with the question of equity, was that of the uncertain matrimonial promise, which rendered the distinction between unlawful and unlawful sex in terms of a question of masculine intention. The story of Epitia in Giambattista Giraldi's *De Gli Hecatommiti* is a particularly interesting example of the use of this situation, as *De Gli Hecatommiti* was evidently read by a number of English writers concerned with equity (George Whetstone used it for his play and novel, *Promos and Cassandra*; Lodowick Bryskett translated part of Cinthio's 'Dialogue of Civil Life', Shakespeare used both Cinthio and Whetstone for the plot of *Measure for Measure* <sup>37</sup>). The story begins with Juriste, a magistrate appointed by the Emperor Maximian to administer justice in the town of Innsbruck, where he condemns to death a young man called Vico for violating a virgin. Vico's sister, Epitia, has studied moral philosophy, and visits Juriste to plead on behalf of her brother, arguing that the severity of his penalty is inappropriate, given that her brother was moved by love, and intended to marry the girl. Juriste conceives a desire for Epitia, and exacts sexual consent from her on the condition that he both release her brother and marry her. He violates both promises, and she, distraught with grief, seeks an audience with the Emperor. The Emperor listens to her, and satisfying himself as to Juriste's guilt, orders the magistrate to wed Epitia before being beheaded. Epitia, who had previously been demanding justice as fast as Juriste begged for mercy, now, of her 'natural benignity' decides that desiring Juriste's death savours more of revenge than justice, and pleads once more with the Emperor that he let his legislative 'good intent find its proper end' in the preservation of her honour as the wife, rather than widow, of Juriste.

The final tableau of this story is clearly an allegory of the overruling of strict justice by an equity 'that considereth all the pertyculer cyrcumstances of the dede' and 'is also temperyd with the swetenes of mercy'. The arguments upon which Epitia bases her pleading both for Vico and for Juriste exhibit a characteristically Aristotelian preoccupation with *intention*, both that of the law and of the party alleged to have violated that law. She counters Juriste's sentence against her brother with the argument that he was driven not by malicious intentions, but by love ('*non per ingiuria, ma spinto d'ardente amore*') and that she believed that the law had been intended as a terror, rather than to be enacted ('*ch' ella credea, che tale fosse stata costituita la legge più per porre terrore, che perche ella fosse servata*').<sup>38</sup>

It is worth pointing out that Cinthio's story - and indeed the whole of *De Gli Hecatommiti* - invites the rather abstract, ethical/political interpretation I'm offering here. In the dedication of his collection to the Duke of Savoy, Cinthio explains that he wrote the stories in the flower of his youth ('*nel fiorire degli anni miei*') but only revised them for publication thirty years later, part of which time he spent as secretary to successive Dukes of the D'Este family, and part in '*gravi studi di*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 261-2.

<sup>36</sup> George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* eds. Gladys Doidge Wilcock and Alice Walker (Cambridge: the University Press, 1936) xxxvii.

<sup>37</sup> Cinthio's story is the source of George Whetstone's play, *Promos and Cassandra* (1578) which is centrally concerned with contemporary questions of common law equity, and which was dedicated to the Recorder of London, William Fleetwood, the composer of an index to the current legal best-seller on equity, the *Reports* of Edmund Plowden. See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol.II (London: Routledge: 1968) 442-513. Lodowick Bryskett translated part of Cinthio into English; see below, n45. Shakespeare derived the plot of *Measure for Measure* from Whetstone, and possibly direct knowledge of Cinthio; see Bullough, II.399-417. For equity in Shakespeare and Whetstone, see John W. Dickinson, 'Renaissance Equity and *Measure for Measure*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 13 (1962).

<sup>38</sup> *De Gli Hecatommiti di M.Giovannibattista Giraldi Cinthio, Nobile Ferrarese*, 2 pts (Venice: Girolamo Scotto, 1566) pt 2, p258.

*filosofia*', lecturing on '*l'opere di Aristotile*' at the University of Mondavi.<sup>39</sup> Cinthio insists, in the dedication, on the relationship of the stories to his labours in the study of moral philosophy, which he calls 'the fount and origin of praiseworthy customs, and of all honest disciplines' ('*fonte ed origine de' lodeuoli costumi e di tutte le oneste discipline*').<sup>40</sup> His stories were recognised by contemporary readers as forming part of a civilising programme, and a 'coherent, erudite debate' on contemporary ethical and political life.<sup>41</sup> The second part of the collection was prefaced by a philosophical dialogue '*dell'allevare et ammaestrare i figliuoli nella vita civile*' ('how to bring up and train young men in the virtues of civil life'), which deals with the cardinal virtues of justice, temperance, courage and prudence, and relates these to the well being of the political state. Cinthio's friend, the scholar Bartolommeo Cavalcanti, compared the collection to Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, christening it '*Andropedia*' for its promotion of '*quello che appartiene alla virtuosa educazione*' (all that belongs to a virtuous education), and the dialogue on civil life was rendered into English as part of a more comprehensive work on ethics and politics by Lodowick Bryskett, which he himself compared to Edmund Spenser's 'civilising' project in *The Faerie Queene*.<sup>42</sup> The story of Epitia, in particular, relates to the third part of the dialogue on civil life in which the speakers discuss the nature of commutative and distributive justice, and the necessity of equity, without which, '*non solo era cosa lontana dalla humanità, ma crudele l'essere troppo giusto.*' ('it was not just far from humane, but actually cruel, to be too just').<sup>43</sup>

The first dilemma of Cinthio's story is presented as a situation which seems to have been something a paradigm for fictional treatments by Reformation and Counter-Reformation authors of the problems posed by incorporating equity into the secular law.<sup>44</sup> All over Europe, the medieval Roman canon law had actively opposed the aristocratic consolidation of lands through dynastic marriages by recognising as a legitimate marriage the sexual consummation of privately exchanged words of betrothal.<sup>45</sup> In the course of the sixteenth century humanist intellectuals and politicians, both Protestant and Counter-Reformation Catholic, perceived the extent to which such retrospectively recognised 'clandestine marriages' (as they were known) damaged and undermined aspirations to achieve a well-ordered political state, or 'commonweal'.

Cinthio's Epitia defends her brother with a distinction between rape and marriage which turns on the question of his intentions and which, as such, marks out a dilemma which was shared by both Reformation and Counter-Reformation thinkers. For one objective of incorporating equity into the secular law was that of enabling the state to take over the conscionable jurisdiction of property transactions, so that the Church, formerly the only court of conscience capable of judging cases involving the examination of intention (such as cases of contract, or promise-breach) would cease to have such power in this vital aspect of the 'commonweal'.<sup>46</sup> But if, in this fictional case, equity were to rule over justice, and Epitia's distinction between lovemaking with intention to marry and mere sexual promiscuity were to hold good, then the equitable extension of the secular law would seem to sanction the old disorder of clandestine marriage, and the commonweal's subsequent ruin.

<sup>39</sup> Cinthio, 'Al Serenissimo et Invitissimo Signore Il.S.Emmanuelle Philiberto Duca di Savoia', *Hecatommithi*, pt 1, 2; I quote from the version in Susanna Villari, *Per L'Edizione Critica degli Ecatommithi* (Messina: 1988) 39-48. See also P.R.Horne, *The Tragedies of Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

<sup>40</sup> Cinthio, 'Al Serenissimo', *Hecatommithi*, pt 1, 2; Villari, *Per L'Edizione Critica degli Ecatommithi*, 40.

<sup>41</sup> Villari, *Per L'Edizione Critica degli Ecatommithi*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Bartolomeo Cavalcanti to Giraldi Cinthio, 3rd May, 1560, in Villari, *Per L'Edizione Critica degli Ecatommithi*, 135. Lodowick Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civil Life* (1606) (Amsterdam: Da Capo Press, 1971) sigs. E1v-E2v.

<sup>43</sup> Cinthio, 'Della Vita Civile', *Hecatommithi*, pt 2, p114.

<sup>44</sup> For the Counter-Reformation in Cinthio's Ferrara, see P.R.Horne, 'Reformation and Counter-Reformation at Ferrara: Antonio Musa Brasavola and Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi' *Italian Studies* 13 (1958) 62-82.

<sup>45</sup> See George Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth Century France* tr. Elborg Foster (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Beatrice Gottlieb, 'The meaning of clandestine marriage' in Robert Wheaton and Tamara Hareven eds. *Family and Sexuality in French History* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1980); James Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987) 551-75; Hutson, *Usurer's Daughter*, 82-3; 178-87.

<sup>46</sup> See John Guy, *Christopher St. German on Chancery and Statute* (London: Selden Society, 1985) 19.

The acute, even irresolvable nature of the justice/equity debate requires the sacrifice of the heroine's plausibility as a fully interiorised 'character'. We are asked to believe not only that Epitia could *want* to take Juriste for her husband after what he has done, but that she could have entered into her sexual bargain with him on the basis of a contract which involved not only his promise to release her brother, but - and this is crucial - *his promise to marry her*. The dubiousness of this promise is all too apparent to a reader:

My brother's life is very dear to me, but my honour is dearer, and rather would I seek to save him by losing my life than by losing my honour ... There's no other way for you, said Juriste, than the one I have told you, which shouldn't appear to you such a terrible thing, because it might easily happen that our first joining together was such that you became my wife (*'perche potrebbe ageuolmenne auenire, che tali sariano i nostri primi congiungimenti, che mia moglie diuerresti'*). I don't want, said Epitia, to put my honour in danger. Why in danger? said Juriste, it may be that you will be what you can't imagine now, these things can happen. (*'perche in pericolo? disse Juriste, forse che tal sei tu che non ti puoi pensare, che cosi debba essere?'*). Think it over, and I'll wait till tomorrow for your reply. I can give you my reply right now, said Epitia. If you don't take me for your wife, if you really mean that my brother's release depends on that, you are throwing your words to the wind. (*'La risposta ui do io infino ad hora, disse ella, che non mi pigliando voi per moglie, quando pur vogliate, che la liberation di mio Fratello da ciò dependa: gittate al vento le parole'*).<sup>47</sup>

Geoffrey Bullough translates Juriste's evasive prediction - '*forse che tal sei tu, che non ti puoi pensare*' as 'You may well become my wife now though you cannot think it would ever be'<sup>48</sup>, but this version masks the crucial ambiguity of the phrase, which, literally rendered, is something like: 'perhaps you will be such as you cannot think'. Behind such an evasive prediction, of course, whispers the word 'whore'. It is the fact that this *double entendre* must not be registered by Epitia in order to facilitate the subsequent fiction that her sexual consent had been conditional upon a promise of marriage that makes her seem to lack what we might call 'interiority', unless we imagine it self-defeatingly as duplicity or disingenuousness. Yet it is clear that Cinthio requires that there remain some ambiguity around the question of there having been a real promise of marriage; the heroine's consent to have sex with the magistrate can't simply be excused on the grounds of his promise to release her brother.

Here, then, the female figure has to bear the burden (at the level of 'disingenuousness' or 'lack of interiority') of the reader's awareness of the possible injustices of equity. Epitia's retrospective hypothesis of Vico's honourable intentions of marriage looks less respectable in view of our scepticism about Juriste. It seems obvious that he had no intention of fulfilling any promise to marry Epitia, yet the fiction that he did, or at least that she understood him to have such an intention, is necessary to preserve her honour as a woman whose admission of sexual consent is part of her evidence against him. If the story harbours a doubt about the justice of equity - that is, about the consequences of extending the power of secular judgement to questions of contractual *intention* - then that doubt is surely registered as our uncertainty about Epitia herself, our sense of her 'duplicity', or lack of reality as a character. (Indeed, it may be because of his dissatisfaction with this perceivable discontinuity of feeling in the character of Epitia, that Shakespeare chose, in *Measure for Measure*, to split this heroine into two figures, that of Isabella and Mariana. Isabella pleads for Angelo, as Epitia does, but she does so on behalf of the woman whom he had promised to marry: Mariana. Mariana's affinities with the abandoned women of the *Heroides* were recognised by Tennyson, when he wrote the haunting Heroidean lament, *Mariana in the Moated Grange*.)

If Epitia seems duplicitous or incoherent as a fictional character, then, this is partly because she embodies the temporal distortion of the legal taking of intention into account, a distortion whereby it

<sup>47</sup> Giraldi, *Degli Hecatommithi*, pt.2, 259.

<sup>48</sup> Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* vol. II (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) 424.

becomes possible to re-open past events, to change the way in which they tell the story that will affect a future which still hangs in the balance. This sense of distortion is, I suggest, precisely what characterises the peculiar temporal space opened by Ovid's *Heriodes*. As we've seen, critics are inclined to read the poems as ineffectual acts of persuasion, which inadvertently reveal unconscious truths, and thereby invite us to judge the culpability of the speakers. But we might, rather than seeing self-revelation as the accidental effect of incompetence in persuasion, consider the possibility that the poems offer simultaneous but incompatible motives for utterance by a woman who, at the moment of composition, knows that the circulation of her account will compound the dishonour consequent upon her loss. One motive is, indeed, persuasive; if she acts fast, she might still be able to get him to change his mind and come back, restoring love and honour. Thus Oenone's letter to Paris ends with the plea that he return, and transform her future: *tua sum tecumque fui puerilibus annis / et tua, quod superest temporis, esse precor !* ('I am yours, and I was with you in childhood years, and yours through all time to come I pray to be!').<sup>49</sup> At the same time, however, another motive, which doesn't cancel out the first, is that of despair; there is no longer any point - whether or not any hope of his return remains - in preserving silence on the question of the dishonour that his failure to return constitutes for her. So Dido's complaint begins by disavowing any persuasive motive: 'Not because I hope you may be moved by prayer of mine do I address you ... but because, after wretched losing of desert, of reputation, of purity of body and soul (*merita et famam corpusque animumque pudicium*), the losing of words is a matter slight indeed.'<sup>50</sup> These incompatible motives are harmonised in relation to the present moment of composition by the writer's uncertainty about the absent lover's intentions, but they also necessarily offer, in the course of a single poem, competing fictions of those intentions. Thus, for example, while the poem *Phyllis to Demophoon* begins like a legal action against the violation of a contract: 'I, Phyllis, who welcomed you to Rhodope complain ('*queror* ') that the promised day is past, and you not here', it continues, after alledging evidence of violated oaths and broken contracts, with a readiness to believe in the very same vows, handfastings and pledges as reasons to plead the provisionality of the wrong, its recuperability under the sign of thwarted intentions: 'return only, though late, to her who loves you, and prove your promise false only for the time you delay!'<sup>51</sup> George Turberville's much-reprinted translation of 1567 stresses the suggestion of legal redress for damages. Turberville begins:

I, that thine hostesse, Phyllis, was  
 a Rhodopeian mayde:  
 Mislike that thou my guest, beyond  
 thy fixed time hath stayde.  
 Thy plighted promise was with shippe  
 here to arryue againe  
 Before or neere about the time  
 The waxed Moone should waine ...

And yet I can but long to see  
 thy comming, though be long:  
 Though fixed day be past, reuert  
 and quite some part of wrong.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ovid, *Heroides and Amores* tr. Grant Showerman, revised by G.P.Goold (London: Heinemann, 1986) V.157-8; 68-9.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.5; 82-3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, II.1-2; 101-2. For other examples of broken faith urged both as accusation and in evidence of good intention, see Hypsipyle to Jason, VI.41-44, 72-3; Dido to Aeneas, VII, 7-8, 82-3.

<sup>52</sup> George Turberville, *The Heroicall Epistles of the Learned Poet Publius Ovidius Naso in English Verse* (London: Henry Denham, 1567) fol.5v-9r.

Affectless as Turberville's translation might seem to us, it inflects the original in ways to which contemporaries could respond. A sixteenth century reader of the 1567 edition in the Bodleian tends to underline phrases associated with the problems of crediting promises; 'Thy many smooth and filed woordes /did purchase credits place', 'O where is plighted fayth?', 'When salted teares berainde/ Thy falsed face', for example.<sup>53</sup> In this version of *Phyllis to Demophoon*, Turberville's use of the term 'fixed day' evokes contemporary debates about usury, and about the difficulties of establishing a common law remedy for 'nonfeasance', or failure to act by a certain time in fulfilment of a promise or a contract.<sup>54</sup>

In the account I'm trying to develop, then, what Howard Jacobson called the 'apparently incompatible' and 'mutually exclusive' emotional positions occupied by the speaker of *Phyllis to Demophoon* cease to be readable in terms of a contrast between surface and depth (the 'deeper' unconscious emotion breaking out to contradict the contrived emotion of the rhetorical surface). They become, rather, both effects of the speaker's obligation to render intelligible the uncertainty that surrounds the intention of the absent lover in the past moment when he promised to return, and in the present moment of writing, when the promise appears to be void. The imperative to render this uncertainty intelligible in terms of one or other fiction of intention (the fiction that matrimonial intentions informed the original vows, which in turn implies the fiction that lover still intends to return and make all good) is, of course, identical to the speaker's obligation to preserve her own good name. As Cinthio's Epitia was obliged to seem both to have understood Juriste's words as a promise of matrimony, and to have expressed scepticism about such a promise ('if you don't take me for your wife ... you are throwing your words to the wind!' she exclaims, echoing many an Ovidian heroine), so Phyllis both condemns Demophoon for promising without having any intention to fulfil his promise ('Demophoon to the windes ingagde/ his promise with his sail'<sup>55</sup>), and continues to believe in the potential of his intention to prove her judgement against him wrong.

It is crucial for us, I think, to try and recapture the way in which the voice of the abandoned woman was, in this period, associated with the new possibilities that equity was opening up in legal practice. As equity seeks to establish guilt or liability by hypothesising a probable intention to make sense of a series of actions, so it requires a lack, an absence of certain knowledge with which to work. An unfulfilled promise creates just such a lack, and is the precondition for female speech in the *Heroïdes*, and its imitations. Thus, in the printed text of the 'casket sonnets' attributed to Mary Queen of Scots, the Heroïdean sequence concludes with a coda in which the speaker gives, as the origin of her writing, an absence resulting from an unfulfilled promise:

Ne vous voyons selon qu'avez promis  
 L'ay mis la main au papier pour escrire  
 D'vn different que ie voulu transcrire.  
 Je ne scay pas quel sera vostre aduis  
 Mais te scay bien qui mieux aymer scaura.  
 Vous diriez bien que plus y gaignera.

(Not seing you as you had promisit,  
 I put my hand to the paper to write,  
 Of ane differens that I haue willit copye.  
 I can not tell what shalbe your iugement,  
 But I knawe well qhuo can best loue.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, fol.7v; 35v.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, William Harrys, *The Market or Fayre of Usurers* (London: Steven Mierdman, 1550) sigs. F7v-G8v; J. H. Baker, 'The establishment of assumpsit for nonfeasance' in *The Reports of Sir John Spelman*, II.258-272.

<sup>55</sup> Turberville, *Heroïcall Epistles*, fol.6v.

You may tell who shall winne maist.)<sup>56</sup>

The incriminatory quality of these poems as they are presented to the reader in George Buchanan's *Detection of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes* is, of course, their function, identifiable as it is with the self-incriminatory tendency of a genre which necessarily confesses the loss of 'merita et famam corpusque animumque pudicium.' What is new, however, is the inclusion of such poetry as part of a probable discourse ostensibly made possible by the 'equitie' of the English Queen, who, according to Buchanan, requires that the evidence against her kinswoman be 'by necessarie argumentis playnly prouit', rather than remaining the subject of wild rumours.<sup>57</sup>

In Buchanan's text of the poems the femininity of the speaker's voice is at once associated with self-incrimination, and with the capacity of the equitable judge to ascertain motive and intention from uncertain evidence. One reason why we find it difficult to recapture the ambivalence of the Heroidean position - the position of writing in response to an unfulfilled promise - as a precondition for female speech is, I think, because we live in the wake of what P.S. Atiyah has called 'the rise and fall of freedom of contract'. Freedom of contract, the corner-stone of nineteenth century legal thinking in the west, rests on the principle that promises *per se* are morally binding.<sup>58</sup> This principle, as Atiyah writes, tends to be thought of as universal, but was in fact a consequence of the transformation of English legal attitudes to the actionability of promises between 1600 and 1800. One of the effects of its conceptual universalisation in the nineteenth century has been the evolution of a philosophy of ethics which starts from the assumption that a promise is always liable because it effects the promisor's intention; that is, that an intention to be bound is by definition anterior to any promise. Our own harbouring of similar assumptions, however latently or unconsciously, must affect our reading of Heroidean poetry. Because we don't consider the predication of female speech upon this condition of uncertainty about masculine intention, we tend to *characterise* the women who speak under such conditions as either credulous or deceptive in their attempts to establish masculine promissory liability. I'm suggesting, that is, that we read the *Heroides* in the way that J.R. Searle reads the famous case of *Bardell v. Pickwick* when he cites it as evidence for the philosophical proposition that promissory liability cannot exist where there was no intention to make a promise. Searle writes, in the *Philosophy of Language*:

The essential feature of a promise is that it is an undertaking of an obligation to perform a certain act ... having this intention is the necessary condition of making a promise; for if a speaker did not have this intention in a given utterance, he can prove that the utterance was not a promise. We know, for example, that Mr. Pickwick did not promise to marry the woman because he did not have the appropriate intention.<sup>59</sup>

Here, of course, Searle alludes to the unfortunate Mr Pickwick's finding himself sued by his landlady for breach of promise after inadvertently raising her matrimonial expectations in an ambiguous dialogue not unreasonably construed by her as a delicate courtship and proposal:

'You'll think it very strange now', said the amiable Mr. Pickwick with a good humoured glance at his companion, 'that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning, eh?'

Mrs. Bardell could only reply by a look. She had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance ...

'It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, Sir,' replied Mrs. Bardell, '... but it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.'

<sup>56</sup> George Buchanan, *Ane Detectioun of the duinges of Marie Quene of Scottes* (London: 1571) sig. O2v.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. A2r, sig. F4v.

<sup>58</sup> P. S. Atiyah, *Morals, Promises and Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981) 4; see also P. S. Atiyah, *The Rise and Fall of Freedom of Contract* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

<sup>59</sup> J. R. Searle, 'What is a Speech Act?' in *The Philosophy of Language* ed. J. R. Searle (Oxford University Press, 1971) 50.

'Ah to be sure,' said Mr.Pickwick, 'I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have someone to sit with you. To be sure, so you will.'<sup>60</sup>

Atiyah, who gives Searle's reading of Dickens as an example of the effects of the 'triumph of contract' on the philosophy of promise-keeping, points out that Searle here ignores the difference between novels and life. '[S]ince, in everyday life, there is no benevolent author to tell us what other people's intentions are', Atiyah remarks, 'we are, in fact, entitled to assume that their intentions are what they appear to be. The jury's verdict in *Bardell v. Pickwick* ... was thus sound in law.'<sup>61</sup> Mrs. Bardell, then, had a case; but Dickens's comic point, of course, depends on the extent to which our knowledge of Mr.Pickwick's innocence of any intention of marrying his landlady coincides with our sense of the capacity of her desire - *the desire of the unmarried woman* - to transform ambiguity into liability; that is, to make of the man's ambiguous words a plausible fiction of his 'honourable intentions' towards her.

The modern common sense assumption of the dependence of promissory liability upon the intention of the promisor was not quite so securely in place during the sixteenth century, as the common law groped, via the concept of equity, towards the establishment of a remedy for the non-fulfilment of verbal contracts. Until the sixteenth century, the ecclesiastical courts had overseen the jurisdiction of the violation of sworn promises, while in the common law an archaic action of debt permitted the defendant accused of defaulting on a payment to 'wage his law' which in practice meant employing eleven other men (possibly professional compurgators) to swear he was innocent.<sup>62</sup> The introduction, therefore, of the common law action known as 'assumpsit', in which the action was brought on the promise to pay or to fulfil rather than on the debt itself, was of immense historical significance, leading in a more or less direct line to the nineteenth century triumph of the principle of freedom of contract in the United States and Britain.<sup>63</sup> The establishment of assumpsit has been described as 'a reorientation of human interiority in terms of intentional action'<sup>64</sup>, a reorientation which inevitably raised questions about the common law's capacity to know intention. In Christopher St.German's immensely popular legal textbook, *Doctor and Student*, the Doctor argues for the canon law *status quo*, maintaining intention creates obligation, even when there is no outward sign of that intention.<sup>65</sup> The student, however, replies that,

no accion can lye ... vpon suche promyses / for yt ys secrete in hys owne consyence whether he entenyd for to be bound or naye. And of the entent inward in the herte: mannes lawe can not Juge / ... and yf an accyon sholde lye in that case in the law Canon: than sholde the law Canon Juge vpon the inwarde intente of the herte / whyche can not be as me semeth.<sup>66</sup>

In the common law, as the student informed sixteenth century lawyers, an action for a verbal promise could only lie if there was some kind of 'consideration', some evidence for the hypothetical reconstruction of an intention to fulfil the promise:

As if .A. promyse to give .B. .xx.li. bycause he hathe made hym suche a house or hath lent hym suche a thyng or suche other lyke / I thynke hym bounde to kepe hys promyse. But yf hys promyse be so naked that there is no maner of consyderacyon why yt sholde be made / than I thynke hym not bounde to perfourme it / for it is to suppose that there was som error in the making of the promyse.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* ed. James Kinsley (Oxford University Press, 1988) 138-9.

<sup>61</sup> Atiyah, *Morals, Promises and Law*, 147.

<sup>62</sup> See above, note 26, and R. H. Helmholz, 'Assumpsit and Fidei Laesio', *Law Quarterly Review* 91 (1975) 406-32.

<sup>63</sup> See above, note 27, and Martin Horowitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Atiyah, *Freedom of Contract*.

<sup>64</sup> Luke Wilson, 'Ben Jonson and the Law of Contract', *Cardozo Studies in Law and Literature* 5 (1993) 283.

<sup>65</sup> St.German, *Doctor and Student*, 229.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

As St. German expresses it, intention cannot be known, but only 'supposed' by equitable judge, on the evidence of some 'consideration', without which evidence 'it is to suppose there was some error in the making of the promise.' It is precisely this condition of *having to suppose* the man's intentions, both when he swore to her, and in the present moment of his failure to return, that permits the female voice to speak in the *Heroides*, and related poems ('Not seeing you as you had promised / I put my hand to the paper to write ...'). Modern criticism registers this as the emotional incoherence of the female speaker, or as Ovid's failure of characterisation; in the case of Dido, for example, the female first person's integrity is called into question by the sheer virtuosity of her persuasive rhetoric: '[a]rguments of all sorts gush in a never ending casacade'.<sup>68</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, I suggest, the idea of Heroic speech as an opportunity created by masculine elusiveness for the generation of feminine arguments was associated with the trend towards a form of legal action that sought - however crazily - to establish proof of intention as the basis of liability for verbal promises. If *2 Henry IV*, a play founded on a legal anecdote<sup>69</sup>, proceeds towards the establishment of good relations between the monarch and the judiciary through Falstaff's being hounded by the Lord Chief Justice, it is surely significant that the action for debt pursued against Falstaff by Mistress Quickly in Act II, scene 1, is transformed, at the point at which Falstaff inquires into the extent of his debt, into an equitable action of assumpsit, turning on the question of his having promised to marry her. 'What is the gross sum that I owe thee?', Falstaff asks, and Mistress Quickly replies, with a Dido-like unstopability:

Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself and thy money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Wheeson weeke, when the Prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor -- thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me thy lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech the butchers wife come in then and call me gossip Quickly? -- coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar, telling us she had a good dish of prawns, whereby thou didst desire to eat some, whereby I tolde thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs, desire me, to be no more so familiarly with such poor people, saying that ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me, and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book oath, deny it if thou canst.<sup>70</sup>

Here Mistress Quickly's evidence of 'good consideration' for Falstaff's having meant to make the promise - the kiss and the request for thirty shillings - tend rather to cast doubt on her status as a credible plaintiff than to persuade us of Falstaff's intention to create her Lady Falstaff. There's a broad resemblance here, then, to the way in which the humour of *Bardell v. Pickwick* works. In both cases, the joke depends on our understanding the unmarried but unvirginal female (always a 'hostess' - as indeed Phyllis and Dido were) as having a tendency to produce fictions of matrimonial intention from areas of complete uncertainty. Dickens, like Shakespeare, enjoyed the notion of there being a resemblance between the law's ability to generate proofs from circumstantial evidence, and the unmarried woman's creative capacity to generate plausible fictions of marital intention where no such intention was likely to exist.<sup>71</sup>

If we return, at this point, to Kerrigan's reading of the words 'doble voyce' in the first quatrain of Shakespeare's *A Lover's Complaint*, we may recall how his reading tended to construct a duplicitous female character as the origin of the voice's 'doubleness', while acknowledging this move to be

<sup>68</sup> Howard Jacobson, *Ovid's Heroides* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974) 84.

<sup>69</sup> See Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* vol. IV, 288, 299-343; see also my 'Not the King's Two Bodies: Plowden, Shakespeare and Political Consciousness'.

<sup>70</sup> Shakespeare, *Henry IV part 2* ed. A. R. Humphreys (London: Routledge, 1966) II.i.83-101, 43-4.

<sup>71</sup> Sometimes the 'doctrine of consideration' was employed in rather eccentric ways in equitable cases of assumpsit. Baker observes that Plowden managed, in 1566, to argue successfully that desire for the continuance of male heirs was 'good consideration' for there having been contractual intention in the case of *Sharrington v. Strotton*. See Baker's 'Origins of the "Doctrine" of Consideration 1535-1585', *Legal Profession and the Common Law*, 396-92.

unsatisfactory: 'Even if the 'fickle maid' reports truth', wrote Kerrigan of Shakespeare's female narrator, 'she might not report 'the whole truth' (whatever that means), or the circumstances which make it so. We should resist the promptings of 'doble' either wholly to credit what she says, or to judge her account mendacious.'<sup>72</sup> We may also recall, however, that Kerrigan linked the use of the epithet 'double' to Shakespeare's characterisation and deployment of the figure of Rumour in 2 *Henry IV*: 'When Warwick assures Henry IV that the number of the rebels is exaggerated, he quibblingly says: "Rumor doth double, like the Voice, and Eccho, / The numbers of the feared." Where,' asked Kerrigan in conclusion, 'does this leave the 'doble voyce' heard in Shakespeare's printed 'quire of echoes', the quarto of 1609?'<sup>73</sup> It's a good question, and one worth pursuing. What are the poetic antecedents of Shakespeare's figure of Rumour, who introduces to us the play of 2 *Henry IV*? One indisputable antecedent is Virgil's description of Fame in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*. Shakespeare's Rumour, '*painted full of tongues*' recognisably derives from the titan described by Virgil (I given Ben Jonson's free translation of the passage in *Poetaster*):

Look, how many plumes are placed  
On her huge corpse, so many waking eyes  
Stick underneath; and (which may stranger rise  
In the report) as many tongues she bears,  
As many mouths, as many listening ears.<sup>74</sup>

The occasion of this monster's appearance, however, is none other than that of one the fictions of matrimonial intention that we've been concerned with. Dido willingly makes love to Aeneas in the cave:

For now, nor rumour's sound  
Nor nice respect of state moves Dido aught.  
Her love no longer now by stealth is sought:  
She calls this wedlock, and with that fair name  
Covers her fault. Forthwith the bruit and fame  
Through all the greatest Lybian towns is gone.  
Fame, a fleet evil, than which swifter none.<sup>75</sup>

The 'doble voyce' of Rumour in Shakespeare is already, then, plotted within the narrative of femininity's obligation to generate fictions of honourable male intentions - intentions to marry, intentions to return after all - which rebound back on the voice of the woman by casting doubt upon her integrity, emotional, moral and sexual. Dido 'calls this wedlock', but such a name in itself presumes to speak for Aeneas's intentions, and as such is belied by Fame, who speedily proclaims the woman's fault abroad, while we, as readers, are to understand that her fault is compounded by this act of deception, this 'fair naming'.

In view of this it actually seems not 'appropriate' as Kerrigan suggests, but quite inappropriate for us to read sixteenth and seventeenth century poems modelled on Ovid's *Heroides* as exercises in judging 'how far plaintful speakers are responsible for their downfall.'<sup>76</sup> More appropriate, I think, would be a kind of reading which took account of the asymmetry of the allocation of blame for sexual misdemeanour, understanding thereby that a woman's voice may well be 'doubled' by the imperative

<sup>72</sup> Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe*, 43-4.

<sup>73</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>74</sup> Ben Jonson, *Poetaster* ed. Tom Cain (Manchester, 1995) V.iii.85-9, 223.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, V.iii.69-75, 222. See also Virgil, *Aeneid*, tr. Robert Fitzgerald (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 101; Shakespeare, *The Second Part of Henry the Fourth, A New Variorum Edition* ed. Matthias a. Shaaber (London and Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1940).

<sup>76</sup> Kerrigan, *Motive of Woe*, 29.

to construct a fiction of masculine matrimonial intention in order to justify, and perhaps even bring about, the marriage that would retrospectively turn her 'fault' into her 'good name'.

Did sixteenth and seventeenth century women show an awareness of the legal affinities of the *Heroides*? I think they did. As Laura Gowing has pointed out, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were years of unprecedented increase in numbers of women suing in the church courts against having been sexually defamed by other women - the equivalent of Virgil's 'monstrum horrendum', the rumours spread about Dido. Yet, as Gowing observes of this phenomenon, its status as a linguistic opportunity for women was distinctly ambiguous:

In many ways ... the language of slander offered particular linguistic powers to women, through which they asserted their verbal, physical and legal agency to judge and condemn other women. But such sexually explicit speech had its risks for women. Using sexual insult to prove other women dishonest left slanderers themselves open to charges of impropriety, and the dangers of women's speech about sex were particularly apparent when women alleged seduction, assault or rape.<sup>77</sup>

Isabella Whitney's verse anthology, *A Swete Nosgay* (1573) is throughout obliquely preoccupied with the dangers of allowing oneself to be spoken about. Whitney warns her sisters, serving in London, to guard against gossip, 'Yf to rehearsall oft you come, ' she says, 'it wyl your quiet wound.' Yet she herself cannot exactly name the reason why: 'I cannot speake, or wryte to much', she explains, 'because I loue you well.' The reason seems to lie in the power of defamatory words: 'For words they are but winde. / yet wordes may hurt you so: / As you shall neuer brook the same / yf that ye haue a foe.'<sup>78</sup> That women should urge each other to behave in such guarded ways corresponds with the conclusion of a poem in Tottel's Miscellany, entitled, 'Of the choise of a wife'. In this poem, the author's principle criterion in selection of a wife is that she should remain quite unknown to the eye and ear of fame: 'Let fame not make her knowen whom I shall know ... Sufficeth me that vertue in her grow, / Whose simple life her fathers walles do hide.'<sup>79</sup>

It may be that Whitney spoke from bitter experience in warning her sisters against 'all such, / as would be word or Byll./ Procure your shame'.<sup>80</sup> Having written her own spirited version of a Heriodean epistle in the *Copy of a Letter*, published in 1567, she went on the *Swete Nosgay* to arrogate to herself the position of the most desolate of Ovid's heroines, reprimanding Dido for presuming to make such a claim. 'Good DIDO stint thy teares', she begins, 'and sorrowes all resigne / To mee: that born was to augment misfortunes lucklesse line.' The Carthaginian Queen, she argues, might have lived 'a happye Woman styll' in spite of Aeneas's absence. Indeed, it seems that Aeneas's absence was just what was required to restore her happiness:

For as the man by whom,  
thy deadly dolours bred:  
Without regard of plighted troth,  
from CARTHAGE Citie fled.  
So might thy cares in tyme,  
be banisht out of thought:  
His absence might well salue the sore,  
that earst his presence wrought.  
For fyre no lenger burnes,  
then Faggots feed the flame:  
The want of things that breede annoy,

<sup>77</sup> Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon press, 1996) 109-110.

<sup>78</sup> Isabella Whitney, *A Swete Nosgay, or Pleasant Posy* (London: 1573) sig. C8r.

<sup>79</sup> *Songs and Sonettes written by the ryght honorable Lorde Henry Hawarde* (London: the Scholar Press Ltd., 1970) sig. Bb2r.

<sup>80</sup> Whitney, *Swete Nosgay*, sig. C8r.

may soone redresse the same.<sup>81</sup>

Whitney here draws our attention to what is wrong with trying to account for the despair of the abandoned women of Ovid's *Heroides* simply in terms of the emotional oscillations arising from abandonment in love, without any attention to the legal questions of matrimonial intention and honour, on which the material prospects of the woman's future are contingent. The delicate Virgilian and Ovidian associations of Dido with an inextinguishable, smouldering love<sup>82</sup> are crudely rewritten as the brisk common-sense observation that 'fyre no lenger burnes / Then Faggots feede the flame', which, along with the irreverent opening says in effect: 'Dido, forget the bastard; you are, after all, still queen of Carthage'. Whitney's point, in the context of her own narrative (which emerges through the collection of poems that make up the *Nosgay*) is that the position from which the 'abandoned woman' speaks must be understood in terms of the deprivation of agency, which makes it at least partly a socio-economic position. If we assume that the voice of inconsolable grief over abandonment in love must be female, then we make gender an effect of the extent to which the loss of love also represents the irremediable material and social loss consequent upon the loss of good name. Whitney boldly denies the assumption that loss of love is the real cause why the Ovidian heroine weeps. In the references she elsewhere makes to the defamatory 'euell words' which were spoken about her by her 'enemies tong'<sup>83</sup>, She echoes Dido's own admission of having lost '*faman corpusque animum pudicum*' ('the reputation of a chaste mind and body'). Whitney's claim, therefore, that her own grief and loss exceeds that of the Carthaginian Queen is a measure of the extent to which the loss of good fame is seen to a more irreparable loss than that of the lover. For Whitney the injustice she has suffered in having 'euell words' spoken about her appears to have led directly to 'the losse ... of seruice' for which she now 'languish[es]'<sup>84</sup> in poverty. Dido's emotional loss, by comparison, can easily, as Whitney says (using the vocabulary of justice), be 'redress[ed]' by itself.

In the third book of Lady Mary Wroth's *Urania*, an ingenious Heroidean poem is similarly framed by a story of the loss of good name consequent upon a sexual liaison. The poem hovers between suicide note and attempt at persuasion; as its author says

when I saw no merit, no love, no remembrance, nor any thing could worke against  
a newe choice which he had made, I framd these lines as my last peece, resolving if  
they prevailed not to let all goe ...<sup>85</sup>

Wroth first introduces the author of the poem to us in such a way as to suggest that we should, indeed, read it in the fashion of modern *Heroides* criticism, as the revelation of a self torn by conflicting emotions. An assembly of lovers, walking up and down in a grove, saw as they passed

a handsome, and well-clothed woman, neither walking, running or staying, but as  
she had made a motion of them all, and imployed them to her vanity; shee one while  
cryed, another chafed, smil'd, scratch'd her head, stamp'd, rail'd and all at Love ...  
No greater diversity is there in womens dispositions, (who are richer in vanity then  
men) then she had in her selfe, so as good women might hope all the superfluous  
vanity of that sexe had been collected, and settled by uncertainty in her.<sup>86</sup>

Yet as this woman - whose name is Dorolina - tells her tale, it becomes less and less easy to think of reading the oscillation between different kinds of subject position in her poem as symptomatic of this feminine 'diversity in disposition', or the 'double voice' of unconscious self-deception. She refuses

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. D3v.

<sup>82</sup> Virgil's allusions to Dido's 'flames' are frequent; see Virgil, *Eclagues, Georgics and Aeneid 1-6*, with tr. by H. R. Fairclough (London: Heinemann, 1935) IV.54, 66, 68-9, 400-1.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. D7r.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. C6v.

<sup>85</sup> Lady Mary Wroth, *The Countess of Montgomeries Urania* ed. Josephine Roberts (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995) 492.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 490-91.

to give her name, on the grounds that she herself is so defamed that the very sound of it breeds dishonour:

‘I am, said shee, a Gentlewoman, though ungently used by Love, my name not worthy of Knowledge, my estate overthrowne by misfortune, my friends not to be named as being unfit to consanguinate with miserie ...’<sup>87</sup>

She tells how she loved a man, ‘the brother to the Dutches I serv’d’. When, after her yielding to him, he departed, she wrote and asked for what she thought was her due as ‘both giver, and bringer’ of love, but without success. ‘I ... recover’d not so much as dammages’, she complains.<sup>88</sup> In the poem itself, Dorolina exploits the contradictory positions I’ve identified as typical of the genre - sustaining competing fictions of the probable intentions the addressee, her lover - by comparing her own lot to that of one Ovidian heroine after another. She thus moves through a series of Ovidian exempla towards a position of maximum rhetorical effectiveness, both likening herself to the Heroic victim and then denying the ill-fatedness implied by the likeness. Dorolina first likens herself to Ariadne (‘I Ariadne am alike oppress’d, alike deserving..’) and then to Phyllis, the injustice of whose sufferings as a result of the broken faith of Demophoon is in no doubt. ‘Shee’, Dorolina says of Ariadne, saved the life of Theseus, while, ‘he her honor lost / Leaving her desolate, alone to prove / His love ... but given for neede.’ The death of Phyllis is explicitly linked to a similar loss of honour:

... *Phyllis* selfe, her lovely selfe did kill,  
Making a Tree her Throne, a Cord the end  
Of her affections, which his shame did send.<sup>89</sup>

The grammar makes her self-inflicted end the object of a shame which is ‘his’ in origin, but which he ‘did send’ to kill her. Having thus identified herself with heroines who, in Ovid, express extreme grief in relation to the yielding of their chastity to the departed lover (Phyllis wishes she had died the night before they made love, while Ariadne wonders whether a woman so disgraced as she can be said to continue to live), Dorolina transposes the identification, via an acknowledgement of Medea’s power to enchant Jason, on to the figure of the ‘other woman’, thereby enabling herself to take up instead the position of the ‘good woman’ in the Ovidian Penelope, whose known end as the wife to whom Ulysses eventually returned implicitly denies the spectre of shame and ‘honor lost’ aroused by the evocation a likeness to Ariadne or Phyllis. The epistle thus changes from complaint to an empowered assurance of forgiveness:

Come you now backe, I thus invite you home,  
And love you, as if you did never roame:  
Come, I say, come againe, and with *Ulysses*  
Enjoy the blessings of your best blisses;  
Happy the comfort of a chaste loves bed,  
Blessed the pillow that upholds the head  
Of loyall loving, shame’s the others due ...<sup>90</sup>

Shame is disowned as the end Dorolina herself is bound to face should the addressee of the letter fail to return; it becomes the penalty of the ‘other’, the woman who, if Dorolina’s plea is fulfilled, must become the victim of the ‘evil words’ that otherwise define the author herself as unchaste. If the female voice of the lover’s complaint is, then, always a ‘double voice’, then its doubleness must be the effect of sustaining competing hypotheses of the intentions of the absent lover, while attempting to anticipate and deflect the ‘voice and eccho’ of sexual slander. These strategies inevitably produce

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 491.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 492.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 493.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 495.

the effect of an inherent duplicity or capacity for self-deception in the moral character of the female narrator. We cannot begin to 'judge' the fallen woman until she herself establishes for us the hypothesis that she has not 'fallen', a hypothesis which must remain ambiguous and unprovable, since it depends on a retrospective re-opening of the already closed-off possibility that her absent lover will, in fact, return after all.

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# “If it be naught”: Margaret Cavendish and the Performance of Transcendence

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I had rather die in the adventure of noble achievements than live in obscure and sluggish security, since by the one I may live in a glorious fame and by the other I am buried in oblivion. *Blazing World*, p. 96

In the second half of the seventeenth century Margaret Cavendish offers one of the most fascinating constructions of identity articulated by an unstable and problematic discourse of the self. Such a discourse has both been inscribed by critics as an aesthetics of ambitious retreat and isolation which renders the speaking subject an autonomous and assertive being, and as the expression of a submissive voice that cries for recognition and praise. This interpretive burden imposed by Cavendish's writings is one of the starting points of the bulk of criticism on her, which insists on noting the ambivalence and irreconciliation of these two polar drives. Irreconcilable though these leanings may be they become the best expression of her singularity as an authoress, and as such, ask to be construed.

## I- “LIKE TO A FEAVERS PULSE”

Pivotal to Cavendish's concept of herself as a “Poetress” is an image of intense suffering inflicted by an all-pervasive fear that she might not succeed in the reception of her work. The usefulness of this realization lies in the light it sheds on her own conception as a woman writer and her stance in relation to the outside world embodied by the readers. Because writing with a view to publication was deemed unseemly and censored in a woman by the patriarchal tenets of seventeenth-century England, defamatory voices are feared through Cavendish's poetry dealing with literary creation. This fear is evoked by her first quivering and then mournful voice in “The Poetresses Petition” included in her book *Poems and Fancies* (1653). The poem rehearses her excruciating position between a private selfhood and a desire for public acclaim, and solves the conflict interestingly for the object of this paper. Cavendish writes:

### The *Poetresses* Petition

Like to a *Feavers pulse* my *heart* doth beat,  
For fear my *Book* some great repulse should meet.  
If it be naught, let her in silence lye,  
Disturbe her not, let her in quiet dye;  
Let not the *Bells* of your *dispraise* ring loud, 5  
But wrap her up in *silence* as a *Shrowd*;

Cause *black oblivion* on her *Hearse* to hang,  
 Instead of *Tapers*, let darke night there stand;  
 Instead of *Flowers* to the grave her strow  
 Before her *Hearse*, sleepy, dull *Poppy* throw; 10  
 Instead of *Scutcheons*, let my *Teares* be hung,  
 Which *greife* and *sorrow* from my eyes out wrung:  
 Let those that beare her *Corps*, no *Jesters* be,  
 But sad, and sober, grave *Mortality*:  
 No *Satyr* Poets to her *Funerall* come; 15  
 No *Altars* rays'd to write *Inscriptions* on:  
 Let dust of all *forgetfulness* be cast  
 Upon her *Corps*, there let them lye and waste:  
 Nor let her rise againe: unlesse some know,  
 At *Judgements* some good *Merits* shee can shew; 20  
 Then shee shall live in *Heavens* of high *praise*:  
 And for her glory, *Garlands* of fresh *Bayes*.<sup>1</sup>

Within the brief space of twenty-two lines Margaret Cavendish enacts the process whereby the pathos of the *Poetress* at the thought that her poetry might be regarded worthless is finally rewarded with triumph. The poem opens to show her frantic crisis -expressed as a feverish state of poignant agitation- caused by her apprehension that her book of poems might find repulse. The ensuing lines account for the title as Cavendish entreats the reader who finds her poetry good for nothing, to let it die peacefully.<sup>2</sup> At this point she stages the death of the very poetry that we are reading in a requiem-like, solemn tone and a narrative sequence ranging from death knell, which Cavendish envisages as bells of dispraise, to dusty burial in oblivion. No sooner has the funeral scene ended in the conclusive note "Nor let her rise again" than a volte-face provides resurrection, through a conditional redolent of the former that led her to deadly thoughts ("If it be naught") and that again involves the reader's appreciation ("Unless some know"). The possibility then exists, Cavendish's poem seems to convey, that her suffering may be turned into victory after all, death to eternal life, to such an extent that this prospect ends up in the materialization of triumph and therefore exultantly (lines 21-22). The *iter ad gloriam* dramatized by Cavendish in this poem can be read as an epiphany of her aesthetics of creation while at the same time containing the opposite elements that render her and her work contentious, namely, self-effacement leading to solitude and confinement coexisting with outspoken, rampant ambition that will only be appeased with public recognition and praise.

## II. "IN SILENCE AS A SHROUD"

The self-referential nature of the poem under consideration confers on it a special quality that makes it disturbingly unsettling and is perhaps the key to construe Cavendish's creative process. "The Poetresses Petition" is about itself, about its own death, but this amounts to an aporia because death involves disappearance, total absence.<sup>3</sup> For a start, it is impossible for a writer to write about his/her death, because not only will he/she be present as spectator-describer, but what is more, the

<sup>1</sup>*Poems, and Fancies*, 1st ed. (London: 1653), Sig.[A8]. Subsequent quotations from Cavendish's works cited parenthetically are from *The Description of a New World, called the Blazing World* (London: 1668, appended to *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* [London: 1667]); *Orations of Divers Sorts, Accommodated to Divers Places* (London: 1668); *Philosophical and Physical Opinions, written by her Excellency the Lady Marchioness of Newcastle* (London: 1655); *Playes* (London: 1662); *Plays, Never Before Printed* (London: 1668); *Poems, and Fancies*, 1st ed. (London: 1653); *Sociable Letters* (London: 1664); *A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding and Life* (London: 1667, appended to *The Life of the First Duke of Newcastle*).

<sup>2</sup>The *OED* defines "naught" (B.1.) as "of no worth or value; good for nothing; worthless, useless, bad, poor."

<sup>3</sup>This is what Freud states about it: "It is indeed impossible to imagine our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present as spectators" (1985: 77).

living actuality of the text will always bear witness to the impossibility of death which, as noted above, implies complete absence. In this light Cavendish's text undoes or "denies [its] own content" to use Jay Stevenson's words about her writing (1996: 527): it is poetry whose "silence" (explicitly alluded to in lines 3 and 6) speaks, whose oblivion makes presence, whose death makes its living possible. Paradoxically enough it is Cavendish's living text about its death that "makes" her a poetess and itself a poem, by oximoronically denying the capacity of its verbal essence for survival. Cavendish's poem is about undoing while doing the very thing it denies.

In articulating a discourse that both describes and "does" something, Cavendish's poem is particularly interesting in the context of the performative. The poem is performative in that it is a petition and entices the reader to read on while, so to speak, taking her from death to life, from "forgetfulness" to "glory"; in that it creates the haunting sense that the "you" reading the poem is one of those "some" who can testify to her good merits at her judgement enacted by all readers through their readings. Thereby it performs the very purpose that rests at the heart of its creation. This process serves to explain the self-generative quality of her work (which creates the poetess; see Sherman 1994: 190) while admitting to the need for the outer world, that which she could not create, that which created her and turned her autonomy to subservience, but the only that could satisfy her thirst for fame.

A tension is at stake here: a discrepancy, not to speak of an abyss-like distance, between Cavendish's self creation as active and independent subject within the privacy of her mental world, and her self creation as passive, dependent object contingent on the outside world of (male) readers. This segregation may be the result of the enforcement of seventeenth-century patriarchal constraints which pulled the feminine being in two opposite directions by forcing her to accommodate opposite desires -those of creating and publishing- and proper feminine behaviour as decreed by the restrictions of the masculine code -that confined her to the private realm. Hence, as Catherine Belsey has noted (1985: 160), discontinuity becomes one of the marks of feminine discourse in this period.<sup>4</sup>

It is our contention that Margaret Cavendish expresses in this poem and elsewhere an awareness that these two worlds are mutually exclusive, and that their conciliation has to be achieved at the cost of personal loss. She seems to suggest that it is highly traumatic for her thoughts (continuous with their source) to emerge from the secure womb in the confinement of her mind, into the public realm. To such an extent is this so that to submit her poetry to public assessment may result in the killing of authoress/work through dreaded critical invective (which she avoids by rather letting "her" die), in any case in a falling down from her lofty throne of fancies where she reigns sole empress.<sup>5</sup> To abandon security for a hostile world necessarily causes deep trouble, and is not done without tragic results for the poetess/poem. Thus "The Poetresses Petition" asks for a quiet death for her poetry, though, as we shall later consider, death turns out to be rather a kind of lethargy. Unavoidably then Cavendish's public being is only born as the private dies; the death of the independent empress (and this is necessary, given her ambition to be acknowledged everywhere) is the birth of the slave. To put it in terms of the natural philosophy she so much esteemed, it is as if the metamorphosis by means of which a butterfly emerges from the worm, had been inverted in her case: herself a butterfly free to dash here and there among her corporeal thoughts and creations, her ambition compels her to leave

<sup>4</sup>The feminine plight in seventeenth-century England may account for the various contradictory voices in Cavendish's literary production: she may either take delight in her departure from tradition, current fashion, and the like (ironically without ever being able to free herself from the world she so much dislikes, from an intertextual perspective); other times she is no more than a wifely, devoted hand picking "Flowers of Fancies" in her husband's "Garden" (*Poems, and Fancies*, 214). To Mary B. Rose her "disjointed" language is a clear sign that Cavendish "cannot begin to formulate a desired identity: she simply cannot decide how she 'wishes [herself] to have been'" (1986: 254).

<sup>5</sup>Quite revealingly, in her fanciful *Blazing World* (p.96) some spirits speaking to the Duchess, Margaret Cavendish herself in her work, reflect on the perils attending her undertaking. Thus, in response to the Duchess's "can any mortal be a creator?", the spirits answer: "Yes, . . . for every human Creature can create an Immaterial World fully inhabited by Immaterial Creatures, and populous Immaterial subjects, such as we are, and all this within the compass of the head or skull; . . . And since it is in your power to create such a World, What need you to venture life, reputation and tranquility to conquer a gross material World?". Later, continuing with the same reasoning, the spirits give voice to Cavendish's thought about the dangers attending literary creation: "[...] glory, delight and pleasure lives but in other men's opinions [...]"

the mental enclosure of “sluggish security” (*Blazing World*, p.96) for another kind of confinement in the literary cocoon that metamorphoses her into a greyish, workaday worm condemned to take nourishment and enter the intertextual discursive world which her original and unruly spirit shunned.<sup>6</sup> This natural conceit sheds light on Cavendish’s view of creation, which is coupled with pain, breakaway and death. Quite revealingly she says about her book of poems:

When I did write this Booke, I took great paines,  
For I did walke, and thinke, and Breake my Braines,  
My Thoughts run out of Breath, then down would lye,  
And panting with short wind, like those that dye. (*Poems, and Fancies*, p.47)

Cavendish’s reflection bespeaks that the creative process is first reductive and fragmenting, and then life-consuming; writing for the public is lethal for her subjectivity which though strong and foremost in her world will not survive, she dreads, contact with the world that might accord her repulse and dispraise. Understandably avoidance of this situation calls for self-effacement, a kind of parenthesis or transitory obliteration that grants her existence without compromising it. This logic is fully articulated in “The Poetresses Petition” which attests to Cavendish’s realization or her inability to “possess” her contemporary readers with her fancies. In keeping with this the poem may be read as the expression of what she has it to be an authoress in her own time: it not only involves getting around obstacles, but judging by her views on the question, a contingent self who must somewhat obliterate itself during a lapse of culture until the time comes for it to rise from that contingency and be rendered the true artist her own time denied her.<sup>7</sup> As a poetess, Cavendish’s task entails the burdensome sacrifice of not having her authorial endeavours deservedly valued, and of being aware that high regard lives in after-life. Like Kent, impeded by Lear’s patriarchal constraints, Cavendish comes to the realization that “[F]reedom lives hence, and banishment is here” (I.1.180) and consistently flees towards the margins of seclusion to create her own centre. Hers is a forced solipsism that shows her as a monarch but that also bears witness to a terrible sense of loneliness and fear of failure. Seen from this angle, her closed territory ostensibly becomes a kind of cross for the martyr-like authoress, a kind of endogenic recluse that is preserved from the outside and the “other” against whom she could create a public identity. The idea of alterity is explored by Mason who holds that a “lived and recorded pattern of relationship to others [...] allowed [...] women to discover and delineate a self” (1980: 231). The same need for “relationship to others” is acknowledged in Cavendish’s poem, as the reading public becomes the *raison d’être* underlying her creative process. She is seeking “the other” who will validate her and proclaim her an authoress. As it stood, Margaret Cavendish only had iterations of her own self to whom speak and address.<sup>8</sup> But “this audience of one” (Sherman 1994: 188) did not grant Cavendish empowerment as woman writer but caused

<sup>6</sup>Here we need to make a relevant difference. The silkworm, like the spider, are much favoured images in Cavendish’s writings on the grounds that “they will work of themselves”, “out of their own bowels” (*A True Relation*, p.208) and are therefore solitary - like her- and original -which was something “imposed” on her, given her acknowledged lack of a good literary education-. For the meaning of such images of originality see Bowerbank 1984: 392-408. There is, however, another sense in which the image of the worm is used by Cavendish, and is the one chosen for our analogy, such as when she says speaking about women in her time: “we live like Batts, or Owls, labour like Beasts, and dye like Worms” (*Orations of Divers Sorts*, p.240). And again: “[...] we are become like Worms, that only Live in the Dull Earth of Ignorance, Winding our Selves sometimes out by the Help of some Refreshing Rain of good Education, which seldome is given us, [...]” (“To the Two Most Famous Universities of England,” Preface to *Philosophical and Physical Opinions*). For a study of Cavendish’s self-creation that allows for the relevance of intertextuality see Sandra Sherman’s article (1994). Sherman shows the tension between her wish to remain “impregnable”, and her ambition to receive showers of praise which can only be achieved through intertextual contamination, because as she says “[A]ll we can ever ‘know’ of Margaret Cavendish is a text” (203-4). Hence “[D]iscourse threatens the self with dissolution in intertextual noise, and preserves the self as it becomes part of that noise in the memory of culture” (203).

<sup>7</sup>In this she is quite different from her male counterparts who also wrote about the monumentalizing power of their writing (see for example Shakespeare’s sonnet 55). The difference lies in the fact that, besides wishing and foreseeing future praise, they enjoyed public recognition while still alive. Margaret Cavendish could only wish and wait, all the while venturing “life, reputation and tranquility” (*Blazing World*, p. 96).

<sup>8</sup>See her *Sociable Letters* (1664) where Cavendish says: “This Lady only to her self she Writes,/ And all her Letters to her self Indites;” (page unnumbered).

frustration instead and thus, seeking acknowledgment, she fearfully surrenders her writing for appraisal.

### III. "LET HER IN QUIET DYE"

We have come full circle in this process and are now in a better position to appreciate her poem. Whether used intentionally as a strategy or not, the intense emotional feminine appeal contained in these lines, as elsewhere, seems to give voice to Cavendish's sense of how much is at stake in appearing in public.<sup>9</sup> Over and over again painful emotions and deep suffering lead the reader into pitying the authoress who portrays herself as a weak and helpless being. "The Poetresses Petition" shows her as the dead being to be cried over and resurrected by the sensitive reader. As noted above, her private selfhood is displaced and seriously undermined by the public nature of the poem; against this setting it can be speculated that the opening sense of sickness soon gives way to death, in any case a fall down from the preeminent position that the speaker loses just on pursuing publication. Such a loss forces the poetess to relinquish autonomy and accept dependence which is envisaged as death; but whose death?. This consideration leads us to questions of gender difference where pronominal references become crucial: in the poem the bizarre substitution of the indefinite "it" in "if it be naught", to refer to her book, for the feminine "her" in "let her in silence lye", has a disquieting effect and confirms the precarious self obtaining in Cavendish's writing. Dolores Paloma holds that "she personifies most concepts as feminine" out of personal affinity as a woman writer (1980: 58), and notes an acceptance of tradition of gender ascriptions in her work. But Paloma also traces an enlightening change in her poetry from masculine anthropomorphism to feminine whenever the object of personification undergoes ruin, destruction, fall, depredation, or such a transformation as comes from male abuse and results in open female victimization (58-9). In the present case, it may be argued that repulse of her book is coterminous with a change towards the feminine, perhaps suggesting the nature of the process at work here: as a product worthlessly dismissed by the reader, Cavendish's poem takes on the hue of other feminine personifications in her poetry such as the feminine castle ravaged by war embodied by a knight, or of the feminine wood as the material from the oak cut down by man, both explained by Paloma in her study (58-9). Thus starts the poem's descent into the recessive rooms of oblivion on earth as represented by death -suggested by the ordered sequence "Shroud" (6), "Hearse" (7), "Tapers" (8), "Scutcheons" (11), "dust of all forgetfulness" (17)-, that so much resembles the nesting boxes within her mind which in Sherman's view correspond "to the regress of thoughts bounding a universe in the poet's mind" (190). In fact both images amount to the same thing: they threaten with disappearance of identity while offering a world of security, evidencing that this idea, as many others in Cavendish's works, may be double-valenced. They also show confinement as the context of creation causing unavoidable contradiction between private expression and the need for public praise. The poem, however, in its very essence, contains a potential for survival that contradicts its deadly message (most certainly Cavendish is aware of this fact), apart from enclosing a final explicit statement that she will be outlived by her work or rather that she will outlive her time into transcendence. This brings us back to Cavendish's use of feminine pronouns and to the sense of uncertainty as to whose death and eventual rise are being enacted in the poem: her book's, her poem's or hers?. The answer seems to be: ultimately all three are risen because they are one and the same; the former two are inescapably bound up with their creatrix eschewing the possibility of a life without hers. In this regard Cavendish succeeds, in that she swings open the doors of her enclosed creative space to interact with the reader, thereby undertaking what she considers a masculine venture. In *Bell in Campo (Playes)* Lady Victoria asks: "Shall only men live by Fame, and women dy in Oblivion?" (p. 609). The question shows that Cavendish was against pairing Fame with man and life, and Oblivion with woman and death, and has deep

<sup>9</sup>For Cavendish's deployment of strategies that would grant her security as a woman writer in her time, see, for example, Fitzmaurice's article in which he argues that her eccentricity and solitary character are to be understood as public postures (1990: 198-209). Similarly, but speaking about the women warriors of her plays, Elaine Hobby shows how by offering different feminine characterizations without endorsing any, Cavendish eschews risks (1988: 110-111).

consequences for our reading of her poem: at the end Cavendish is admitted to male territory which implies assuming authority. But this in turn cannot be done without previous sanction.

As there is a change from “it” to “her” in line 3 (“If it be naught, let her in silence lye”), that evinces the beginning of descent, there is correspondingly a change from feminine object to subject within the same line almost at the end (19-20: “Nor let her rise againe: unlesse some know, / At Judgements some good Merits shee can shew;”), which is revealing of the rise and new status that Cavendish envisages for her glorious self. Through this sudden twist, Cavendish seems to convey how arbitrary and volatile questions of reception may be, wholly dependent upon men’s opinions. Notwithstanding we cannot overlook that it continues to be “she”, that is, feminine and dependent upon those “some” who “know / At Judgements some good Merits shee can shew”, which, following Paloma’s contention, would be similar to saying either that her virtues have elevated her to that position or that Cavendish continues to acknowledge the power of male readership as a path to sanctioned authorship, and her poetry as the reading material. Although we could go on to argue negatively from this, it goes without saying that male legitimation to write and publish coupled with glory was the greatest victory she and any woman of her time could ever dream of.<sup>10</sup> And if this is still an endorsement of the code that made seventeenth-century woman decentred, it must also be acknowledged that it is a shift necessary for revolution.

#### IV. “UNLESSE SOME KNOW”

Cavendish’s poem enacts a fall and a rise that renegotiate her position, that are her own making and that have effects on us. Her descent into nothingness has a dramatic quality that is only lessened by our awareness that it is after all a “voluntary” act, if forced by circumstances that escape her -and that she wishes she could control-. The sudden rise that follows is conceived as the reward of the suffering wait. All the way through, however, the poem/poetess is constructed as we read. Two processes of creation are at work here: Cavendish’s and our re-creation; of the two the latter is foremost to her but obviously enough, their interdependence subsumes both into one. In this light “The Poetresses Petition” becomes the integrating ground for the feminine fragmentary identity; but it also becomes the social site that provides for the encounter of a lonely agonizing being with the life-giving public sphere.

We might therefore speculate on Cavendish’s use of her poem as a means of interaction that, she fears, will not take place straightway as it may be found worthless and hence non-existent, dead. But, as noted elsewhere, for obvious reasons related to the essence of writing, the death of her poetry cannot be taken at face value; what is more, from another subtle level intrinsic to the text, this poem suggests only partial obliteration through the image of the “sleepy, dull Poppy” (10). Since Cavendish is aware that her poems will only receive due response in a yet-to-come time, when readers become attuned to the aesthetics of her discourse, fairy-like she charms her poetry slept only to be woken up by princely reading. This analogy may well serve to further unravel the issues raised by the poem; “Jesters” (13) and “Satyr Poets” (15), like evil familiars, appear to be the worst threat as they are shown directly involved in this “death” which the poem itself proves to be a dream. The reader is an agent in this process and is raised to a stature of authority. Finally, in pursuing this image it must be noted that the poem’s exalted and euphoric end is reminiscent of fairytale conclusions: interestingly for our analysis the end announces the conciliatory moment when the subjective, ideal, and closed world will merge into that beyond the battlements of her fortress, achieving consistency of being and transcendence, her “heroic ideal”, honour and fame (see Blaydes 1981).

The poem is informed by a quasi-mystical relation whose setting is writing; from such a stance Cavendish’s poetry emerges as the site of socialization between two worlds, and of their enabling union. This mystical union between creatrix/creation and reader is further enhanced by a discursive practice that articulates a religion of her own by deploying a sequence of topoi traceable to religion,

<sup>10</sup>Sophie Tomlinson speaking about Cavendish’s “fantasies of women’s public speaking” provides an interesting observation concerning this issue. She notes that in Cavendish’s *Youths Glory and Deaths Banquet (Plays)* the protagonist, Lady Sanspareille, speaks to an audience that is “wholly male” (145).

such as those of pathos, death, “Judgements” (20), resurrection or “Heavens” (21). This again shapes the way to self-glorification, transcendence of the temporal, through coalescence with a quasi-divine reader who delivers a verdict. As Stevenson suggests, Cavendish acknowledges the human need for spiritual ideas (1996: 539); as an authoress the spiritual idea of a future resurrection is comforting and brings relief, helping her to overcome failure and neglect. This discloses a double bias, one pragmatic, close to dusty death, that recognizes her precarious situation as woman writer in the period, and one idealistic, reaching up as high as Heaven, that looks forward to future glory. Meanwhile her project is made feasible in the architecture of her poem and her emotional appeals which no merciful, equally mortal reader can resist. It should not be overlooked, however, that Cavendish is at the same time suspicious of the marriage of author and reader. When inhibiting, this marriage is set out in terms of death, which again shows Cavendish’s mistrust of interpersonal relationships and need for independence to protect her self from harm.<sup>11</sup> But this is left behind when Cavendish considers the enthralling vision of triumphant victory.

V. “AND FOR HER GLORY, *GARLANDS OF FRESH BAYES*”

“The Poetresses Petition” invites a reading as a trope that accurately illustrates Cavendish’s identity as authoress. It provides for an even ground of creation and centred identity by showing how to get it while performing it. As a decentred being, her quest for the stable and fixed centre that will grant her personal satisfaction and fame only takes her to extreme forms of solitude and withdrawal thus every time becoming more marginal: either enclosed in her world of fanciful creations where she counts for nothing, or in death, if she ventures into publication since it will most probably kill her through “dispraise”.

The final apotheosis shows Cavendish and her work at the centre of a pedestal of “noble achievements” -which is no other but that built by the very body of the poem- whose foundations are made of suffering, humiliation, risk of “life, reputation and tranquility” (*Blazing World*, p. 96); in this she is sister to other women. And yet unabashed ambition singles her out as a fighter against self-extinction through her profuse writing, becoming disarmingly powerful. And here it is without effort now. I hereby ask you to behold glorious Margaret Cavendish crowned with *Garlands of fresh Bayes*.

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<sup>11</sup>In the play cited above, Lady Sanspareille decides to remain single to avoid the problems of married life; it is the same with Lady Happy in another play, *The Convent of Pleasure (Plays, Never Before Printed)*. As Dolores Paloma argues in her article “[M]arriage is several times presented as a symbol of infertility or death and the single life becomes a symbol of fruitfulness” (64).

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‘Pretty Contradictions’:  
the Virgin Prostitutes of Aphra Behn’s  
*The Feigned Courtesans* (1679)

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Critics have repeatedly noted Aphra Behn’s concern with the politics of marriage. To Diamond, for instance,

... the commodification of women in the marriage market is Aphra Behn’s first and most persistent theme. Beginning appropriately enough with *The Forced Marriage; or The Jealous Bridegroom* (1670), all of Behn’s seventeen known plays deal to some extent with women backed by dowries or portions who are forced by their fathers into marriage in exchange for jointure, an agreed-upon income to be settled on the wife should she be widowed. (524)

*The Feigned Courtesans* is a good example of this concern. It was first staged at the Duke’s Theatre in 1679, two years after the success of *The Rover, Part I*, a play to which it bears a remarkable similarity (Shell 92). Unlike *The Rover*, which is an adaptation of Thomas Killigrew’s *Thomaso*, there is no known source for this latter play. However, it is easy to perceive the many links between both plays as regards their plots, to the extent that the latter has been considered an imitation of the former (Hughes 215). In *The Rover* two sisters, Florinda and Helena, want to evade the arrangements their father has made for them: Florinda is to marry the rich but old Don Vincentio while Helena is to go to a convent, thus saving her father another dowry. Both women will deploy disguises and intrigue in order to marry the men they love: Florinda the very noble but penniless Belvile, and Helena the also penniless but not quite so noble Willmore. The cast of characters in *The Feigned Courtesans* displays the same roles and features under different names. Here, too, we find two sisters, Marcella and Cornelia, with the same prospects (marriage to her uncle’s choice, Octavio, and becoming a nun, respectively) who, at the beginning of the play, have fled their guardian’s home. Like the previous pair of sisters, these ones will use their wits in order to land the husbands they themselves would have: Fillamour and Galliard.

In both plays there is as well a comic subplot which pokes fun at a distinctive social type: in *The Rover* Blunt is a country fool who thinks the world of himself and hence is easily deceived by a prostitute to whom he loses all he has; in *The Feigned Courtesans* the conceited squire Sir Signal Buffoon and his Puritan tutor Tickletext are also cheated of their money.

Finally, in *The Rover* as in *The Feigned Courtesans* the figure of the prostitute is strikingly prominent. In the earlier play, the courtesan Angellica Bianca competes with Helena for the love of Willmore; in the latter, the women choose to pose as courtesans in order to live unchaperoned for a time without risking discovery. This fact has been interpreted variously. Some critics have symbolically identified the figure of the prostitute with the author herself, since in her case “the status of the professional writer indicated immodesty: the author, like her texts, became a commodity” (Diamond 520; cf. Ballaster 268). Even more obvious is the connection between the actress and the prostitute in the Restoration stage:

For Pepys and other Restoration commentators, the actress's sexuality tended to disavow her labor. Rather than produce a performance, she is a spectacle unto herself, a painted representation to lure the male spectator. In her professional duplicity, in her desirability, in her often public status of kept mistress, she is frequently equated with prostitutes or "vizard-masks" who worked the pit and galleries of Restoration theatres during and after performances. (Diamond 523; cf. also Spencer 98)

A third reading has been offered by Alison Shell in her recent study of the religious plot in *The Feigned Courtesans*. She argues that in England the Catholic Church was often described as a scarlet woman, a harlot, whose outside appeal contrasted with her inner corruption. Thus, according to Shell, "Behn's transcendence of gender stereotype ... combines with her sympathy to Catholicism to bring about a realization that neither print nor popery need imply a loss of female chastity" (39). Though it is certainly true that both prostitutes and Catholics were marginal groups in late-seventeenth-century England, Shell's theory does seem a bit far-fetched, while at the same time it has the virtue of highlighting the elusiveness of the sign "prostitute".

If Shell's reading appears to be off-focus, it is probably because it lacks the economic dimension that the figure of the prostitute immediately calls to mind, and that Behn's plays consistently bring to the foreground. In fact, Behn uses the prostitute in order to remind us that all women are in some measure reified and commodified. However, there is a substantial difference in the treatment of this figure in both plays, which would convey a change in Behn's position. Thus, in *The Rover* the prostitute, embodied in Angellica Bianca, can be safely kept at a distance, and ultimately contained, whereas in *The Feigned Courtesans*, as we will see, there is no such safety to fall back onto, the honest woman and the harlot are one and the same person, and in the final analysis the only difference between them is one of degree.

In order to ascertain the evolution of Behn's thoughts concerning this issue, we should start by briefly considering *The Rover*, a play that so far has received much more critical attention than the lesser known *The Feigned Courtesans*.

*The Rover* shows women as a currency that is circulated amongst men. This currency is given a value that derives from the woman's possession of "honour" (the dowry) or her lack of it (the prostitute's fees). These identities then, are mutually exclusive; they are built on their mutual difference, and so they remain as fixed, opposite poles throughout the play, a fact that is hinted at in the rivalry between Helena and Angellica Bianca. Likewise, though the women of quality will use several disguises, they never pose as prostitutes: that is one disguise they never wear, for in so doing they would risk crossing over the gulf that separates one from the other. A woman cannot be at the same time honest and a prostitute, and hence Willmore must, at the end, choose either one or the other.

Or can she? The opposition is not as stable as it may at first appear to be. Franceschina has pointed out that there is a remarkable ambivalence of signs in this comedy:

Despite his honest intentions, Belvile is taken for a villain and murderer when he happens upon a wounded Antonio. Out of doors, "undress'd," Florinda is taken for a whore by Willmore who responds to her protests with an offer of money. Willmore's attempt to purchase Florinda is significant, as it reinforces the mercenary-erotic praxis of the play in which money not only purchases (and maintains) the image of the female but supports the male image of self-worth. (33-34; see also Hughes 208-12 for a similar reading)

This is, nevertheless, only one of several strategies Behn deploys in order to de-construct this either/or dichotomy. Backscheider, for instance, has noted how the playwright often gives "familiar lines to unexpected characters in order to foreground women's common lot" (86). Helena's praise of inconstancy in the play is a case in point, but even more startling for an audience is to hear Angellica Bianca denounce the mercenary attitudes of men concerning marriage:

When a lady is proposed to you for a wife, you never ask how fair, discreet, or virtuous she is; but what's her fortune; which if but small, you cry "she shall not do my business," and basely leave her, though she languish for you. (2.2.90-93)

Behn further explores this analogy between the prostitute and the honest woman two years later in *The Feigned Courtesans*. What in the earlier comedy remained safely at a distance, only occasionally and transitorily close to the point of mistaking one identity for another, is shown in this later play as too close for comfort: all the female characters are simultaneously honest women and prostitutes.

Allegedly the vizard mask that the sisters adopt is meant to hide them from their guardian. As such, it is simply one more disguise, which offers them “a relative freedom of speech and action that the modest woman, who proves her virtue by silence and seclusion, cannot easily claim in her own person” (Spencer 95). However, the line between honesty and whoredom is, from the beginning of the play, rather blurred. When Marcella and Cornelia first enter the stage, they complain about their lack of money; since they cannot possibly live off thin air, this period of independence must soon draw to an end:

CORNELIA: [O]ur money’s all gone, and without a miracle can hold out no longer honestly.

MARCELLA: Then we must sell our jewels!

CORNELIA: When they are gone, what jewel will you part with next?

MARCELLA: Then we must—

CORNELIA: What, go home to Viterbo, ask the old gentleman pardon, and be received to grace again; you to the embraces of the amiable Octavio, and I to St. Teresa’s, to whistle through a grate like a bird in a cage? For I shall have little heart to sing. (2.1.107-15)

Faced with the choice of either confinement or marginality, these women will attempt to renegotiate the terms of their situation. Needless to say, this is not without risk, for they must walk a very narrow and slippery path between seeming and being. Actually, on their entering the stage they have passed by the very men they are trying to avoid, their uncle Morosini and Marcella’s fiancé Octavio, neither man having recognised them:

MOROSINI: Stay, stay, what women are these?

OCTAVIO: Whores, sir, and so ‘tis ten to one are all the kind; only these differ from the rest in this, they generously own their trade of sin, which others deal by stealth in: they are courtesans. (2.1.25-28)

Although Octavio’s is a misogynist remark, I believe it is a crucial statement in the play, as Behn’s purpose seems to be to show that there is some truth in it even as she undermines its misogynist intent: insofar as patriarchy makes of all women, one way or the other, commodities for sale, it is true. The difference between honest women and prostitutes results from the different methods patriarchy deploys in marketing the “goods”, i. e. the women. This is why the play recurrently engages the notions of marriage and prostitution in terms of economic modes.

Two such modes are contrasted in the love dialogues between the women posing as courtesans and their gallants. One is a residual mode, a pseudo-feudal, aristocratic notion that bestows the highest value on land-ownership. As applied to the issues of love and women, this is the language of possession and exclusivity, whose mouthpiece is Fillamour. He defends from the beginning that “the lawful enjoyment of [a pretty, witty and young] woman, and honest too, would be a blessing” (1.1.55-56). In the alternative economic mode, possessing land is not the basis of wealth; rather, wealth results from the circulation and distribution of goods. This bourgeois, capitalist mode clearly identifies Galliard, who believes in using and consuming, not in possessing or reserving, as Fillamour does:

GALLIARD: Pox on’t, my knight’s [Fillamour’s] bound for Viterbo, and there’s no persuading him into safe harbour again. He has given me but two hours to dispatch matters here; and then I’m to embark with him upon this new discovery

of honourable love, as he calls it, whose adventurers are fools, and the returning cargo, that dead commodity called a wife! (4.2.311-16)

To Galliard, men in love are like trading vessels, but the risks Fillamour takes do not bring him profit; instead, his only reward in seeking “honourable love” will be a “dead commodity,” a wife, dead because it does not circulate, and hence it fails to bring in more gain, thus ultimately losing all value altogether.

These two approaches are dialogically contrasted in the play, not only in the conversations between the promiscuous Galliard and the more conventional Fillamour, but even more pointedly in Fillamour’s dealings with Marcella posing as the prostitute Euphemia:

FILLAMOUR: Oh, I could talk eternity away,  
In nothing else but love, couldst thou be honest.  
MARCELLA: Honest! Was it for that you sent two thousand crowns,  
Or did believe that trifling sum sufficient  
To buy me to the slavery of honesty?  
(...)  
FILLAMOUR: No, I would sacrifice a nobler fortune  
To buy thy virtue home.  
MARCELLA: What should it idling there?  
FILLAMOUR: Why, make thee constant to some happy man,  
That would adore thee for’t.  
MARCELLA: Unconscionable! Constant at my years?  
Oh, ’twere to cheat a thousand,  
Who, between this and my dull age of constancy,  
Expect the distribution of my beauty.  
GALLIARD (*aside*): ’Tis a brave wench.  
FILLAMOUR: (...) This wealth together would enrich one man,  
Which dealt to all would scarce be charity.  
MARCELLA: Together? ’Tis a mass would ransom kings!  
Was all this beauty given for one poor petty conquest?  
I might have made a hundred hearts my slaves,  
In this lost time of bringing one to reason.  
Farewell, thou dull philosopher in love;  
When age has made me wise, I’ll send for you again. (4.1.78-112)

Although both codes commodify women, the more conventional discourse voiced by Fillamour dangerously borders on the misogynist speech of confinement and imprisonment whose most extreme representations in the play are Morosini and Octavio. On the contrary, Galliard’s libertine ethics can empower women, as shown in his repartee with Cornelia in 2.1, in which both speakers commodify themselves and try to strike a bargain, each of them being at the same time the buyer and the seller of “goods”, i.e. simultaneously subject and object of the transaction:

GALLIARD: And have you no kind message to send to my heart? Cannot this good example [Euphemia’s] instruct you how to make me happy?  
CORNELIA: Faith, stranger, I must consider first; she’s skilful in the merchandise of hearts, and has dealt in love with so good success hitherto, she may lose one venture, and never miss it in her stock, but this is my first, and should it prove to be a bad bargain, I were undone for ever.  
GALLIARD: I dare secure the goods sound—

CORNELIA: And I believe will not lie long upon my hands.

GALLIARD: Faith, that's according as you'll dispose on't, madam: for let me tell you, gad, a good handsome proper fellow is as staple a commodity as any's in the nation; but I would be reserved for your own use! Faith, take a sample tonight, and as you like it, the whole piece, and that's fair and honest dealing I think, or the devil's in't.

CORNELIA: Ah, stranger, you have been so over-liberal of those same samples of yours, that I doubt they have spoiled the sale of the rest. Could you not afford, think ye, to throw in a little love and constancy, to inch out that want of honesty of yours? (3.1.183-201)

The empowerment that the libertine code can bring to women is, as Cornelia remarks, necessarily thwarted by the realisation that virginity and "honour" are their only assets in the system of patriarchal exchange, and that, without that, they are "undone for ever." That is why, once cornered, Cornelia will have to retreat and protect her virginity from Galliard by confessing that she is no prostitute, but "a maid of quality" (4.2.155). Even while denouncing the double standard applying to men and women, the playwright must accept it and can only return her characters to the safe but confined sphere of marriage, though they are rewarded with husbands of their own choice.

Thus, their temporary sojourn as feigned courtesans is a provisional identity they must eventually rid themselves of. It is a device used by Behn in order to point towards the fact of the position of all women as exchangeable property among men, the more recognisable because unlike the corporeal reality of Angellica Bianca in *The Rover*, all women and no woman in this other play are Silvanetta, the object of all the men's desire. In addition, in *The Feigned Courtesans* it is as well the means for women to negotiate a more equal, less constricted relationship with men, which must needs stop short of challenging the very core of patriarchy.

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## Female Relationships in Mary Pix's *The Beau Defeated*

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In 1700 *The Beau Defeated* was first performed. It was one of the last years of William III's reign, a period characterized by a strict morality that almost made drama disappear. The bourgeoisie was getting an increasing power both in Court and in the political and economic fields. Mobility upwards was sometimes accomplished through marriages with the aristocracy. This new middle-class also became the moral and social judge which determined the social modes of behaviour for women and confined them to the family and domesticity. As far as women are concerned, and according to Keeble's, there concurred two opposing ideas: on the one hand, women were considered as the mirror of all vices, on the other, the paragon of virtue. However, for the first time, women were granted "access to the stage, as managers, actresses, and playwrights" although it meant nothing else regarding "equality for the sexes" (Lyons and Morgan vii). In addition, Lyons and Morgan maintain that the ideal of the one-breadwinner family had not yet become dominant. Though the sexes were far from equal in legal standing, labour relations were not by then so heavily differentiated across gender lines as they would become in the eighteenth-century. (ix)

If we admit this, then, it would have meant that women could gain access to the stage as playwrights, and it would explain as well how their plays, even though women-authored, could be and were successful. According to Paula R. Backscheider, the female playwrights also benefited from the great competition of the two existing companies (Backscheider 71-72). On the other hand, these women suffered the criticism of their male counterparts advocating female inferiority as Howe explains. Mary Pix's problems with her literary circle makes this point graphically. Maybe this is why her work can be perceived as an attempt to improve the current female situation, in a literary context, as well as to destruct traditional female stereotypes which defined women as inferior to men in body, mind and soul and as recipient of all the vices, as Keeble points out in a recent study of the cultural tradition of seventeenth-century woman (Keeble 73). Perhaps her work tried to highlight those characteristics that helped women achieve strategical positions.

*The Beau Defeated* tells how Mrs Rich, a rich widow of the bourgeoisie, wants to marry an upper class mate to get "quality and a great name". Mr Rich, her brother-in-law, plots, together with Betty, Lady Landsworth and Mrs Clerimont, how to marry her to an appropriate mate. Meanwhile, Mrs Rich has time enough to make friends with a group of gamblers and to fall in love with a such Sir John Roverhead, a man who also courts Mrs Rich's niece, Lucinda. Lucinda, influenced by her aunt's acts, tries to elope with Lord Fourbind, Sir John in disguise. In the end, when both disasters have been settled, Mrs Clerimont and Lady Landsworth finally help Mrs Rich to marry Elder Clerimont, a simple squire looking for a wife, yet an appropriate upper-class mate. Besides, they also get married with their chosen mates.

My objective is, thus, to define to what extent Mary Pix tries to portray the improvement of cross-gender relationships through female solidarity, that is, through the idea of women helping each other in a society that is against them. In McLaren's words: "In *The Beau Defeated* ( ...) she (Mary Pix) describes women who learn from other women how best to arrange their lives and their prospects of marriage" (Messenger 96). In short, Mary Pix's main idea seems to be that women's situation can be improved in marriage if they accept other women's solidarity. The play is, therefore, didactic. Its primary objective is to teach that, even though social exogamy is appropriate and economically

positive, a bourgeois woman should not set her expectations too high, i. e., marriages between the upper aristocracy and the upper middle-class are not desirable, since the difference in their respective social status and background is much too large. Secondly, it teaches that young women need an education which will teach them the end and means of marriage, since, as it will be shown, there are patterns of behavior that threaten the social structure because they disclose unacceptable views concerning the meaning of marriage. And lastly, it seeks to demonstrate that women can, and have to, educate other women to achieve their social roles successfully, an idea widely expressed in the character of Mrs Rich and the women that surround her. However, the last one to speak in the play is a man. Taking into account that the last speech of a play conveys the moral, this suggests that the purpose of the play is not so radical a demonstration of women's willpower as it seemed at first.

To analyse if Mary Pix actually teaches in her play that female relationships of mutual help can help advance women's place in society and also men's judgement, I will study several aspects, namely the inversion of female and male stereotypes, the topic of the education for marriage, the social relationships between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy and the moral of the play.

McLaren maintains that female characters in Mary Pix differ from the traditional stereotypes. It is true that those characters intended to be the models for the audience do not conform to this pattern. Lady Landsworth, Mrs Clerimont and Betty try on every occasion to help Mrs Rich to achieve her objectives of a higher rank marriage within the social limits. So, the traditional assumptions of women fighting against women to obtain privileges do not operate here. However, there are exceptions. Therefore, I would reinterpret McLaren's point saying that the parameters of gender and class are different from other traditional models. There is a difference of social status among these women, which contributes to women's solidarity. The distinction is relevant for it shows female solidarity across social boundaries and regards women as a constituency in need of cooperation. Another implication of this is that solidarity can come from anywhere, even from the most unlikely of sources, i. e., even from these women occupying subaltern positions who are not usually given the chance to speak their minds.

This applies to Betty, Mrs Rich's maid. Betty is a symbol of the loyalty of the lower classes. Yet this loyalty can be threatened by Mrs Rich's attitude. For Betty, in the first moments of the play, cannot feel but disapproval and scorn towards her mistress. The attitude is provoked by Mr Rich's lack of vision and her intention of improving her social status whatever the means, and the costs. In one of their first conversations, concerning an episode where Mrs Rich has been humiliated in public, Betty makes clear her feelings towards her mistress:

BETTY: Well, well, madam, you have no great reason to complain; and though you are not as yet a woman of quality, you are at least very rich; and *you know, that with money you may buy quality, but birth very often brings no estate.*

MRS RICH: That's nothing; there is something very charming in quality, and a great name.

BETTY: Yet sure you'd think yourself in a worse condition, madam, were you, as many great ladies in the world are, who want everything; and, in spite of their great name, are known, but by the great number of creditors, that are bawling at their doors from morning till night. (164, my italics)

Betty hereby proves to be more intelligent than her mistress and by doing so, she also points out her contempt concerning her mistress's doings. Mrs Rich's only concern with quality "and a great name" prevents her perception of the unscrupulous people she has invited to be her guides towards quality. Betty is aware of the social transgression Mrs Rich intends to commit in order to marry a higher aristocratic male, actually out of her reach. Consequently, she turns her loyalty to the true woman of quality living beside her, that is, Lady Landsworth. This lady, as it has already been pointed out, best represents the appropriate lower upper class woman. But, in addition, Betty also seeks for the appropriate male to become her patron, and the one chosen is no other than Mrs Rich's brother-in-law, the man whose views on the behavior of women dominates in the end. However, Betty will accept her mistress as an appropriate superior at the end of the play, once that her mistress is deceived

into carrying out her duty, that is, once she has married to a social superior that is within her reach, a simple squire with no money but a title.

On the next social level, we find two ladies that are concerned with the protagonist's welfare and well-doing although they despise her: Lady Landsworth and Mrs Clerimont. Both ladies' function is to help Mrs Rich to achieve her objectives within the social norms. Even though both ladies dislike Mrs Rich's greediness, they want to help her if necessary. On the one hand, we have Lady Landsworth, a young widow looking for a second husband, who is the recipient of Betty's loyalty. Her feelings about her host are a mixture of scorn and pity, as it is pictured throughout the play:

LADY LANDSWORTH: ... Where's thy impertinent mistress?

BETTY: Gone to learn *ombre*, with a hundred guineas in her pocket.

LADY LANDSWORTH: Ha, ha, ha, her pride, ill-nature, and self-opinion, makes her follies unpitied. I'd fain be rid of the nauseous conversation this house abounds with. (167)

Lady Landsworth is the play's counterpart to Mrs Rich. And, in this role, she is seen as the exemplary widow: the woman that looks for a convenient partner within her social sphere, who pays attention to the nature and disposition of the man chosen and who does not think of marriage in terms of money and position. This is why, after the logical plot delay, she is awarded the perfect husband and the necessary freedom to get her purposes.

On the other hand, there is Mrs Clerimont, yet another widow in search of a husband, the example of another woman whose devices and plots are conceived as necessary stratagems to fulfil her objectives and her purpose in life. To Mrs Clerimont, Mrs Rich just seems at first another middle-class woman trying to climb up the social ladder without modesty. In a visit to our protagonist she tells her: "charms and perfections lose their signification, when applied to any, where Mrs Rich is by" (212). The irony implicit in the comment leaves no doubt of her feelings toward her. However, she will accept her duty in leading Mrs Rich along the right path to social climbing. Thus, from the very first moment, these three women are understood as the exemplary characters the audience should feel identified with. Insofar as this is true, it also implies that these three women subvert the traditional female stereotypes of the moment. Mary Pix has therefore broken the traditional female stereotype in favour of the idea of female social and gender improvement.

Paradoxical though it may seem, there are two women that certainly fulfil the traditional female stereotypes: Lady Basset and Mrs Trickwell. It is Betty who defines these characters for the audience:

BETTY: Indeed my City Lady turning courtier has a hopeful flock of teachers: mistresses grown old and then forsaken, who, in the tatters of her prosperity pass upon her for decayed quality, female gamesters, and fools in abundance. (168)

These two women function as the antithesis of the exemplary characters presented above. Besides, they are used as the prototypes of false quality and deceit, since their deceit is meant to benefit only themselves and not others. Furthermore, we learn at the end that their pretended social quality and upbringing is another invention to come nearer Mrs Rich and her money. Their real danger resides in the fact that as pretended prototypes of quality Mrs Rich is not aware of the deceit. In fact, Mrs Rich cannot perceive the difference in quality of any other character, which makes the notion of quality very elusive in the play. In addition, she sets these two women as the guardians of her social life and even her niece's.

This is evidence that Mrs Rich is in need of education for marriage, which is the second topic under discussion here. Mrs Rich's influence is dangerous not only for herself but for other women who can learn from her bad example,

MRS RICH: (...)

My niece, and I, will the example lead,

Teach city-dames the way to mend their breed,

choose for ourselves; let our dull parents pray;  
 Devoutly cheat; each other's lives betray:  
 And whilst they drudge, we'll briskly throw away. (201)

Taking into account that this topic of education for marriage is the link to the idea of female solidarity, education for marriage aims at the didactic purpose of the play. This education consists of a set of female patterns of social behavior which are explicit here such as: obedience, thriftiness or modesty. There are two examples of education for marriage: Mrs Rich and her niece Lucinda. Since Mrs Rich's education is the result of a plot against her, the obvious conclusion is that she is too old to be educated. Young Lucinda, on the other hand, has acquired her aunt's ideas and has decided to follow her aunt's steps

To marry as soon as 'tis possible, if you please aunt, the gentleman you love, that it may countenance my marriage with him I love; that when my father would chide me, I may answer him, I have not done worse than my aunt. (200)

A process which culminates in her trying to elope with Lord Fourbind. Consequently, Lucinda must be educated if she is to achieve those features that will make her a woman of quality, and an exemplary wife and mother in the bargain. From the moment her father agrees to give her the education she needs, the author demonstrates that education is indeed necessary to prevent a social disaster such as the one Mrs Rich is to bring about. Lucinda is young enough, and most of all, pliable enough to assimilate and submit to all the precepts she has intended to break. But it is also interesting that this only happens after the disaster has been stopped and after her aunt has been married. This should lead us to draw two conclusions, on the one hand, Lucinda is going to receive an education. Mr Rich has come to realize how much she needs it, and her aunt's new life and connections promise an opportunity for her that she (...) has never had. (Messenger 99).

On the other hand, the education has to be considered as a life-lasting process. Lucinda has learnt her lessons, yet her aunt has shown that this process is also necessary after marriage for deviation can occur anytime, even during marriage or widowhood. Thus, women have to be kept in check, guided and counselled all their lives in case deviation appears. Lucinda was looking for freedom in marriage, not money nor love/position. This erroneous assumption is what initially led her to disobey her father's precepts and to follow her aunt's. She tells Sir John

Do you see I am not furiously in love; as my aunt says, I run away only for more pleasure, more liberty, etc. I will go every day to the play, or else to to the park; and every time I go to the park, to the lodge, to Chelsey: in fine, where I please, or as I run away with you, I'll run away from you, sue for my own fortune again, and live as I please: what I have heard how ladies with fortunes do. (223)

And just a moment later she says, "that you must expect ... for had I loved obedience I had still obeyed my father: and she that begins with her father generally makes an end with her husband ..." (223). Hence, the process of education must prevent this type of acts that endanger both female and male relationships and social modes of behavior. And there is no best way to achieve the right patterns of behavior than to make women accomplices of their own subordination to male rules

MR RICH: Now, sister, and daughter, to you I chiefly speak, let this day's adventure make ye forever cautious of your conversarion; you see how near these pretenders to quality had brought you to ruin: the truly great of a quite different character. (234)

Furthermore, for Mrs Rich the only possible solution is to be deceived by those friends of her she has got. To be deceived in order to achieve a marriage above her social rank, as she wishes, but not too high as to become a shame. And, in a machiavellic *mise-en-scene*, the author confirms that even Mrs Rich needs a type of education that seemed only apt for the girl. Besides, Mrs Rich's marriage achieves two objectives at the same time. On the one hand, it shows the need of the aristocracy, at least of the lower aristocracy, to celebrate this kind of marriages for money. On the other, it justifies the needs of the bourgeoisie to enter, socially speaking, in a closed social class--as it is the aristocracy--in which she has already entered economically. These kind of unions are no other thing

that a business to get both money and name, something that the author makes clear from the very beginning of the play.

One of the most striking features of the play is the portrait of the increasing power the bourgeoisie which is exemplified by Mr Rich and his influence in the domestic sphere. His influence is distinctly marked by his sister-in-law's rebellion and in his daughter's obedience. Mr Rich is a clear exponent of the social changes regarding women taking place at the turn of the century. He is besides, and unexpectedly, the character who closes the play with a moral about appearances and women's greediness

Now, sister, and daughter, to you chiefly speak, let this day's adventure make ye  
forever cautious of your conversation; you see how near these pretenders to quality  
had brought you to ruin: the truly great of a quite different character.

The glory of the world our British nobles are,  
The ladies too renowned, and chaste and fair:  
But to our City, Augusta's sons,  
The conquering wealth of both the Indians runs;  
Though less in name, of greater power by far,  
Honours alone, but empty 'scrutcheons are;  
Mixed with their coin, the title sweetly sounds,  
Not such allay as twenty thousand pounds. 233-34

To grasp the author's intentions, it is crucial to discuss the role of Mr Rich. He represents Mrs Rich's class-consciousness, Lucinda's virtue, the bourgeois moral sense and thriftiness, in short, he judges female patterns of behavior throughout the play. This leads us to think that, after all, Mary Pix is encouraging women to submit themselves to male predominance. Mr Rich is the traditional "paterfamilias" of earlier plays, that is, the superior male intellect able to see through social appearances the characters' intentions. Consequently, the author sets women's solidarity under men's power destroying, thus, any possibility for women to become autonomous. McLaren maintains, rather naively, that Mr Rich is the only sympathetic middle-class character in the plays of the period since he favours female autonomy, but from the very beginning what he does is to constrict Mrs Rich's actions for unchecked widowhood is a danger to the economic goals of the bourgeoisie.

A number of key issues arise from this analysis. As far as women's solidarity is concerned there appears to be an important restriction, that is, even though the play asserts the benefits that can be gained from female solidarity, women should not forget that they are ultimately subordinated to men. Consequently, Mary Pix offers no other solution than to conform to male patterns of behavior. As for the analysis of traditional female stereotypes one may observe that there is an obvious intention on the part of the writer to reformulate them on more realistic grounds. Similarly, there is an intention to display both positive and negative female prototypes. A single, but striking example is the deceit Mrs Rich suffers firstly by Mrs Trickwell and Lady Basset, lastly by Lady Landsworth, Mrs Clerimont and Betty. Therefore, it would be naive to suppose that the play lacks a didactic purpose only because it is written in a humorous tone, as McLaren claims. Its didacticism ranges from women's ultimate subordination to men, their education to conform with social male-oriented patterns of behavior, to men's counselling, guiding female acts. In actual fact, Mary Pix's characters anticipate the bourgeois "angel in the house" of later plays. As regards marriage, the play manifests the inevitable cross-class marriages between the upper middle-class and the lower aristocracy under the appropriate conditions of social background and upbringing.

All these factors are not mutually exclusive and reformulate the consideration of a feminist authorship. Surely, the lesson to be learned is not "radical ideas about the nature of women and their relation between men and women" (Messenger 78) but women's required patterns of behavior to comply with society's needs. To sum up, I maintain that since all the directions given always lead to a predominant male figure, *The Beau Defeated* should not be considered a proto-feministic play.

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## Transgression and After: Fathers and Daughters in Susanna Centlivre's *The Busybody*

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By the end of the 17th century, the number of women who become professional writers begins to increase notably. These middle-class women stress in their writings the relevance of topics directly related to female domestic experience, like the conventions of courtship, the politics of marriage, and the family relations. According to Paula Backscheider in *Spectacular Politics*, these feminine versions constitute a “renegotiation” of women’s position in patriarchal society, which brings about a revision of their roles, and therefore, a re-ordering of male ones (Backscheider 83). This is precisely the case of Susanna Centlivre, a prolific playwright whose numerous works stand as points of reference to establish the connection between the theatrical tradition of the Restoration and a new concept of comedy—the “New Comedy”—, which will grow into the 18th century. Centlivre’s plays—nineteen in all, dated between 1700 and 1722—are listed as belonging to a transitional period, during which she would recuperate Renaissance and Restoration topics and adapt them to the changing times. In her works, Centlivre always turns to the theme of marriage, and the unfavourable circumstances it involves for women, regarding how it is usually enforced on them, how the situation is seen from the perspective of the implicated subjects, that is, the marriageable daughters themselves, who become commodities in the marriage market; and finally, how marital life is experienced by women living in a state of incarceration and banishment from the world (Frushell 17).

In *The Busybody* (1709), Centlivre’s most successful play, she focuses on the story of two young women, Miranda and Isabinda, who have to resort to cunning in order to avoid a marriage of convenience, and marry the suitors they have chosen for themselves, Sir George and Charles, respectively. To achieve their purpose, they will have to deceive Sir Francis, Miranda’s guardian, who plans to keep her and her large fortune for himself; and Sir Jealous, Isabinda’s father, who wants to marry her to a Spanish gentleman to whom she was betrothed at birth. The play exposes in a comic mood the daughters’ tricks to evade their fathers’ vigilance, the lovers’ furtive meetings, and the constant interference of a meddling character, Marplot or “the busybody”, who is about to spoil the happy end on each occasion.

In *The Busybody* Centlivre’s female characters go against their fathers’ will and marry their chosen suitors, without being chastised or censured by their transgression. In the play, however, the established order is not altered substantially—daughters get married in the end, and continue playing the roles assigned to them under the supervision of a male figure. Yet, in spite of the traditional end, Centlivre has managed to destabilize the foundations of patriarchy, by portraying a group of women who make mockery of the system. In this light, this paper aims at illustrating how their transgression entails the progressive modification of the male construction of femininity and of some of their assumptions about women, and how these changes will clear the way for the creation of a new female identity.

Due to the identification of the Christian divinity with male values, society has been usually structured according to a hierarchical principle by which power was exerted by figures associated with the image of the father, namely, God, the king, the priest, and finally, the father of a family. For those subject to their authority, obedience was seen as a duty, and the breaking of this equilibrium was considered as both a social disruption and a contravention of the divine plan. Therefore, by

“divine right”, fathers enjoyed an absolute authority over their descendants, after the image of absolute monarchies in the political structure. However, from the time of the Glorious Revolution onwards, in opposition to this doctrine, new philosophical and political ideas will set up the bases for the revolutionary changes which will take place later on in the century. The philosopher John Locke will promote in England the concept of Liberal State, according to which the body politic would not originate “by nature”, but by the will of individuals, whose patrimony the State must protect but never remove. Simultaneously, these political innovations are adopted by women writers and defenders of the female sex like Mary Astell, who applies them to the domestic scene, and particularly, to the frame of power relations between fathers and the female members of the family:

Again, if absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State, how comes it to be so in a Family? Or if in a Family why not in a State; since no Reason can be alledged for the one that will not hold more strongly for the other? If the Authority of the Husband, so far as it extends, is sacred and inalienable, why not that of the Prince? The Domestick Soverign is without Dispute elected; and the Stipulations and Contract are mutual; is it not then partial in Men to the last Degree, to contend for, and practise that Arbitrary Dominion in their Families, which they abhor and exclaim against the State? For if Arbitrary Power is evil in it self, and an improper Method of Governing Rational and Free Agents, it ought not to be practis'd anywhere; nor is it less, but rather more mischievous in Families than in Kingdoms, by how much 100,000 Tyrants are worse than one ( ...). *If Men are born Free, how is it that all Women are born Slaves?* (Ferguson 192-93)

In *The Busybody*, Sir Francis and Sir Jealous make use of their “divine right” over their daughters, by administering their fortunes, as Sir Francis does with Miranda’s inheritance, or by controlling all their movements, as Sir Jealous fails to do with Isabinda. The maximum expression of their power is their intention to marry their daughters to the suitors they have chosen for them, Sir Francis himself in Miranda’s case, and Don Diego Babinetto, a Spanish gentleman for Isabinda. Sir Francis’ motives answer two unnatural desires: to possess a nice young woman like Miranda, but above all, to seize her fortune, an illegitimate act strongly condemned in the play. He also exerts his control over his only son, Charles, hindering his progress towards economic independence. Yet, whereas Charles rejects his father’s suggestion of a marriage of convenience, Miranda and Isabinda are denied that opportunity. On the other hand, Sir Jealous plans to hand over Isabinda’s control to a more strict male figure, by marrying her to a Spaniard, whose rigid customs regarding women Sir Jealous has tried to import into England. Nevertheless, both women state on different occasions, and demonstrate at the end, that no absolute power can be exercised without a woman’s consent. According to Miranda, a tyrant’s efforts to impose his will on women will be in vain if they endeavour to prevent it (Centlivre 301). Isabinda also revolts against her father’s oppressive vigilance by voicing a defence of women’s right to be allowed to protect their own good name, and by warning Sir Jealous about the dangers of excessive fatherly cares:

ISABINDA: Sir, ‘tis not the restraint, but the innate principles, secures the reputation and honour of our sex.- Let me tell you, sir, confinement sharpens the invention, as want of sight strengthens the other senses, and is often more pernicious than the recreation innocent liberty allows. (318)

This act of self-determination will define the daughters’ stance in the play: both are provoked to offer resistance against the arbitrary rule their fathers try to impose on them (Chernaik 124). They will embody the emergence of the individual, and will define themselves in opposition to the authority figures of patriarchal society, reacting against commodification and passive acceptance of their fathers’ will.

Both Sir Francis and Sir Jealous are regarded as “blocking fathers”, who obstruct the progress of sons and daughters, and delay their emancipation, or in other words, postpone their development as individuals. In both cases, money is the weapon they choose to retain children, either by preventing them from having their inheritance at their disposal, or by forcing them back to a state of greater subjection. Miranda’s unnatural union to Sir Francis, a representative of the previous generation, would entail a step backwards in her struggle for independence, whereas Isabinda’s marriage to Don

Diego would confine her to a life of seclusion for good. Finally, the two heroines manage to marry the suitors they have chosen by outwitting their fathers.

Wit and invention become, then, the ideal virtues of the resourceful men and women of the new period, and female characters in *The Busybody* are especially gifted with them. As both Miranda and Isabinda affirm, they will have to use their intellect to escape from male control, but more significantly to have access to *their* money. Thus, from her first intervention onwards, Miranda appears as a woman in disguise, either literally, as in her walks through the park to meet Sir George, when she avoids being recognized; or in a figurative way, as when she feigns affection for Sir Francis with the purpose of getting her inheritance back. Similarly, the only way out for Isabinda consists in pretending: by playing the role of the dutiful daughter, she tries to counteract every of her father's accusations. Yet, even Sir Jealous' zeal will not prevent her daughter from having her own way and marrying Charles, as it will also happen to Sir Francis. When their authority is challenged and their plans frustrated, these father figures react to it differently. Sir Francis, moved by his unlawful desire for Miranda, and driven by an excess of avarice which thwarts the aspirations of the youth, cannot accept the unexpected turn of events, and refuses to take part in the wedding celebrations. In opposition to him, Sir Jealous learns from experience, and though outwitted, he approves of "the right of children to disobey their parents in matters of love" (Frushell 34). At the end, Sir Jealous blesses the newlyweds, representing, thus, the redeemable patriarchal figure:

SIR JEALOUS: Now let us in and refresh ourselves with a cheerful glass, in which we will bury all animosities, and:

By my example let all parents move,

And never strive to cross their children's love;

But still submit that care to Providence above. (Centlivre 363)

Yet, in Centlivre's play women's challenge of patriarchal authority goes further than mere disobedience. The success of the daughters' initiatives is built upon the first signs of a proto-feminist discourse, as the result of the creation of relational bonds among women, on the one hand, and of the dismantling of the male construction of the feminine, on the other. In the first case, female interaction arises from women's mutual recognition of belonging to the category of "the Other", and thus, from a need to share common experiences, both pleasant and toilsome. From the play's onset, Miranda and Isabinda are presented as two female figures in despair, who share a situation of oppression under the rule of authoritarian fathers. Out of female solidarity, however, Miranda sends her maid servant, Patch, to Sir Jealous' house, in order to defend Isabinda's interests and help her evade her father's vigilance. Patch allies herself with the daughter's cause, and will try to ruin Sir Jealous' designs for Isabinda. Instead of playing the part of the severe Spanish duenna Sir Jealous wants her to perform, she will use her authority to assist a woman in trouble. This fact is significant for the transgression it entails. In the play, power is bestowed on female hands as long as it serves the purpose of controlling other women, and Patch will risk her position of privilege to beguile male confidence instead.

Miranda and Isabinda will struggle for dismantling some of the traditionally accepted assumptions about women, as female natural promiscuity or the incompatibility of beauty and intelligence, and in this sense they destroy the male construction of the feminine subject, and as a result, male expectations about women are shattered. In the first scene, Sir George talks to Charles about his falling in love with two different women: a mysterious quick-witted woman, "Incognita", whose face he does not know, and a beautiful one, whom he presupposes a fool. Sir George will treat them differently, being arrogant and rude with "Incognita", and gentleman-like with Miranda. He expresses this distinction by means of food imagery: while Incognita is compared to a "dish of chocolate", Miranda deserves a full "set-meal" (Centlivre 304). His partiality also responds to the social status he assigns to each of them. According to manners, the good name of a woman like "Incognita" is threatened by the very act of speaking she performs: her witticisms are regarded as incompatible with innocence and feminine virtue (Gill 17). Besides, for Sir George, Incognita represents a woman of suspicious reputation, bold enough to frequent solitary places like the park, unchaperoned and disguised, with the purpose of seducing men. For him, then, she amounts to no more than a prostitute, and speaks to her in consequence. Miranda, however, embodies the respectable young woman, closely watched by a masculine authority, and who significantly has not

spoken so far, from what Sir George concludes that either she is too modest, or that she is a fool; and in spite of that, he prefers “sensual pleasure” (Centlivre 296). To his simplistic views, Miranda-Incognita answers with a warning, which will be premonitory of Sir George’s change in the future:

MIRANDA: They [women] are the worst things you can deal in, and damage the soonest; your very breath destroys ‘em, and I fear you’ll never see your return, Sir George, ha, ha. (304)

Miranda will finally thwart Sir George’s prospects when she reveals as both and the same woman: Incognita and Miranda herself. From that moment on, she will behave as the practical and judicious woman she really is, and will analyze the pros and cons of marriage and the alternatives left to her, cutting Sir George’s romantic flights short. On the other hand, Isabinda also states the principles upon which women should be judged. She declares the uselessness of parental vigilance to protect female honour, which can only be secured by women themselves (Centlivre 318).

The ultimate manifestation of the fathers’ obstinate control may appear in the cases of marriages of convenience, in which women become commodities that can be exchanged in the marriage market, as in Miranda’s example: “SIR GEORGE: But what does he [Sir Francis] intend to do with Miranda? Is she to be sold in private? Or will he put her up by way of auction, at who bids most?” (297). And this image would verily reflect Sir Francis’ purpose, hadn’t he already thought of himself as the best suitor for her, and of the £30,000 of her inheritance. For Miranda, as for the rest of women, marriage continues being the only choice. This contract is enforced on them, among other reasons, on the grounds of ethics and medicine: marriage is seen as the only “natural” state for both human beings and animals (Maclean 57). Yet, in spite of these arguments, female characters in *The Busybody* are reluctant to embark upon this hazardous and always uncertain adventure, and even more so in arranged marriages which lack love and mutual respect, and which usually end up in adultery (Centlivre 304). Miranda and Isabinda’s ambitions, then, will concentrate on changing the politics of the institution of marriage, turning it into a safer harbour for women.

In this light, both young women will carry out a process of re-education of their future husbands, with the purpose of preparing them for life in common. Sir George, for example, will have to accept the guidance of Scentwell, Miranda’s servant, through “many a dark passage” (343), admitting his need for redemption before arriving at Paradise and deserving Miranda’s affection. Sir George’s humiliation reaches its climax when, to avoid being discovered by Sir Francis, he hides himself behind the chimney-board, and passes off as a wild monkey Miranda has designed for her entertainment, and that will be tamed and chained very soon, implying their future marriage (346). In Charles’ case, Patch will be in charge of instructing him about the need to neglect male heroics on behalf of female cunning, a more reasonable and effective means of achieving the purpose of marrying Isabinda than brute force. In this way, the plan of impersonating the Spanish suitor before Sir Jealous, proves to be more successful than Charles’ first intention to kill Don Diego (342). Centlivre demonstrates that male instruction according to female principles, turns out to be an essential requisite for the play’s purpose, because only through male re-education changes will take place on a larger scale, and the initiatives for the improvement of women’s status will prosper in the future.

These female aspirations apply primarily to the institution of marriage. Daughters in *The Busybody* contemplate two aims—mutual respect and economic independence—, none of which suffices alone. Miranda and Isabinda resign themselves to the inexorability of marriage, yet they will try to approach it cautiously, and not without deep reflection:

MIRANDA: Well, let me reason a little with my mad self. Now don’t I transgress all rules to venture upon a man without the advice of the grave and wise? But then a rigid knavish guardian, who would have married me! To whom? Even to his nauseous self, or nobody. Sir George is what I have tried in conversation, enquired into his character, and satisfied in both. (343)

In spite of good intentions and ideals, Miranda cannot help seeing marriage as an imperfect state for both men and women, and as especially constraining for the latter:

MIRANDA: Well, Patch, I have done a strange bold thing; my fate is determined, and expectation is no more. Now to avoid the impertinence and roguery of an old man, I have thrown myself into the extravagance of a young one; if he should despise, slight, or use me ill, there's no remedy from a husband but the grave; and that's a terrible sanctuary to one of my age and constitution. (350)

Miranda and Isabinda are aware of the impossibility for women of escaping from marriage, but at least they will try to provide for difficulties with money of their own. Both of them display an astonishing practicality when love and money are concerned, and will not get finally engaged until they get their inheritances back, for as Isabinda declares "when ... a thousand requisites for life are wanting, love, who rarely dwells with poverty, would also fail us" (323).

It only remains for the characters and for the audience to know if their efforts have been worthwhile or in vain. Speculations can be made about the plausibility of their success, of which they are never completely sure, yet it can be argued that small changes have been taking place, and that they have sown seeds which will only ripen in the future. They have carried out a bloodless revolution, which actually threatens the status of the "petty tyrants" (Chernaik 123) of the domestic scene, and neutralizes their authority to a great extent. On the other hand, although marriage is inevitable, Centlivre defends woman's right to choose a husband, and to found a "companionate marriage", as Puritanism stressed, based on conjugal love and common respect, with the Centlivrean addition of financial security. Finally, daughters as well as their maid-servants experience a process of "mobilization" (Laclau, in Backscheider 72), by which they go from utter passivity to self-determination and action. Regarding this, dramatic characters reflect the same expectations of the new professional women writers of the period: "movement, free movement, freedom of movement, control of their bodies, control of the story" (Backscheider 146).

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# Shakespeare, Virgil and the Politics of Violence

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For I shall sing of Battels, Blood and Rage,  
Which haughty Princes, and their People did engage;  
Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, VII, 60

Blood hath been shed ere now, i' th' olden time,  
Ere humane statute purg'd the gentle weal;  
*Macbeth*, III.iv.74-5

For a play designed to compliment a self-proclaimed pacifist, *Macbeth* has something decidedly odd about it. While apparently celebrating such eirenic 'king-becoming graces' as 'Justice, Verity, Temperance, Stableness, Bounty, Perseverance, Mercy, Lowliness, Devotion, Patience, Courage, Fortitude' (IV.iii.91-4),<sup>1</sup> the play shows you men defending those virtues, not with reluctant resort to force, but with vengeance, rage, and savage violence. The former values are traditionally associated with the New Testament, the latter with heroic, pagan culture. Symptomatic of this confusion of values is the appeal - repeated throughout the play - to manhood. For Malcolm, as for Lady Macbeth, true manliness is synonymous with heroic *virtu*; for Macduff the warrior's valour must be tempered by the more 'civilised' virtues of feeling and compassion. I shall argue that this studied ambivalence on the question of manhood points to a larger ethical and political problem in *Macbeth*, namely, the use of violence in the pursuit of peaceful ends. This is not a problem that is confined to the world of bourgeois-capitalist individualism that Cultural-Materialist criticism of the play sees adumbrated in James I's 'absolutist' regime; it is one that has always concerned intellectuals at times of international upheaval or violent political change. It may be one reason why Virgil's *Aeneid* - another fictionalised poetic history involving manhood and warfare - seems to have spoken so directly to the early 17th century.

## BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Once Duncan has been assassinated, those who oppose Macbeth's tyrannical rule themselves become rebels against an anointed ruler. As if in confirmation of the anomaly, both groups justify their actions in terms of an heroic conception of manhood. Just as Lady Macbeth had appealed to her husband's masculinity in her attempt to persuade him to depose Duncan ('When you durst do it, then you were a man; / And to be more than what you were, you would / Be so much more the man, I.vii, 49-51), so the new rebels, in seeking to oust their barbaric ruler, also evoke ideas of heroic manhood. The man destined to kill Scotland's warrior-tyrant is Macduff. What provides Macduff with the personal motive for tyrannicide is the murder of his wife and children. But without Malcolm's incitement to vengeance it is doubtful whether this gentle and unwarlike noble would have had the

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<sup>1</sup> Quotations from Shakespeare are from *The Complete Works*, edited by Peter Alexander (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1951).

resolution to kill his country's enemy. When he learns of the slaughter of his family Macduff is at first too stunned to speak, so Malcolm urges him to give voice to his feelings:

Merciful Heaven! -

What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:  
Give sorrow words; the grief, that does not speak,  
Whispers the o'er fraught heart, and bids it break. (IV.iii.207-10)

But Macduff can only whisper feebly, 'My children too? ... My wife kill'd too?'. When it is clear that there is no hope, Macduff is once more silent. So again Malcolm tries to stir him into action, urging him to turn grief to vengeance:

Be comforted:

Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,  
To cure this deadly grief. (231-5)

Roused by Malcolm's words, Macduff curses the tyrant who has wiped out his family, but even as he does so his thoughts turn tearfully to his 'pretty chickens, and their dam' (218) all slaughtered by Macbeth's hired murderers. When Malcolm tells him to confront his grief 'like a man', Macduff replies that he must also 'feel it as a man'; with these words he sinks into maudlin self-pity, blaming himself for the deaths of his wife and children:

Sinful Macduff!

They were all struck for thee. Naught that I am,  
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,  
Fell slaughter on their souls: Heaven rest them now! (220-27)

Earlier in the scene Malcolm, mistrustful by now of all Scottish noblemen, had tested Macduff's integrity with an elaborate pretence of villainy, denying in effect all that he holds most dear: so great is the wickedness he feigns that he claims that in the pursuit of self interest he would not hesitate to turn universal peace into uproar and confound all unity on earth (99-100). Macduff is a natural appeaser, admitting that tyranny thrives on the desire for self-preservation ('Great tyranny ... goodness dare not check thee!', 32-3), but when he refuses to follow so egregious a tyrant, Malcolm confesses himself the modest and dutiful servant of his country (125ff.). But now, as he urges Macduff once more to avenge the murder of his family, the pacific virtues he had tacitly endorsed through his charade of denial are apparently forgotten: 'let grief / Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it', he tells Macduff. (228-9). Shamed by Malcolm's words, Macduff at last resolves to seek out the murderer of his family and engage him in personal combat:

Cut short all intermission; front to front,  
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland, and myself;  
Within my sword's length set him ... (232-4)

These are the kind of heroic words that Malcolm had wanted to hear: 'This tune goes manly', he tells Macduff (235).

Driven by Malcolm's violent words, Macduff seeks out Macbeth on the battlefield, like Aeneas searching for Turnus. In his final battle Macbeth fights with the same 'valiant fury' that had won him honour in his defeat of the rebel Macdonwald. But the enraged Macduff is his equal. Having defeated the usurper in personal combat, he presents Malcolm with the tyrant's severed head, crying 'the time is free' (V.ix.21). Malcolm answers him with a valedictory speech in which he speaks of the 'love', 'grace' and 'measure' that will be the keynotes of the new dispensation (27, 39-40). The contrast between the severed head, symbol of heroic violence, and Malcolm's pacific words echoes a similar contrast in the play's second scene. Duncan's response to the Captain's story of how Macbeth had sliced open Macdonwald's body 'from the nave to th' chops' and fixed his head on the castle

battlements is to praise him, not as the epitome of heroic valour, but as a 'worthy *gentleman!*' (I.ii.24). The conventional honorific, invisible in normal use, is thrown into startling prominence by its incongruity. Like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* offers us a riddling confusion of mutually incompatible value systems.

#### SIMPLIFYING SHAKESPEARE'S AMBIVALENCE

Modern criticism has long been aware of Shakespeare's radically ambivalent treatment of ethical and political problems. Rejecting E.M.W. Tillyard's view of Shakespeare as the patriotic upholder of supposedly orthodox political opinion, a long line of critics from A.P. Rossiter in the 1950s through Norman Rabkin, Bernard McElroy, Robert Grudin and Emrys Jones in the 1960s and '70s to Graham Bradshaw (1987 and 1993) have recognised the fundamentally dialectical structure of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1971, W.R. Elton described this structure as 'a dialectic of ironies and ambivalences, avoiding in its complex movement and multi-voiced dialogue the simplifications of direct statement and reductive resolution'.<sup>3</sup> As Rabkin argues, a recognition of the fundamentally dialectical nature of Shakespeare's vision puts the plays 'out of the reach of the narrow moralist, the special pleader for a particular ideology, the intellectual historian looking for a Shakespearean version of a Renaissance orthodoxy'.<sup>4</sup> However, the 1980s saw a return to a less complex way of seeing the plays: do they 'reinforce the dominant order, or do they resist it to the point of subversion?' - this is the question that Jonathan Dollimore suggests criticism should be asking about Shakespeare.<sup>5</sup> When Dollimore's question is applied to *Macbeth* the answers are perhaps predictable. Ignoring the whole body of critical work from Rabkin to Bradshaw, post-structuralist Marxism accuses 'traditional' criticism of naively assuming that the play is a straightforward endorsement of James I's character and policies; it then reverses the equation, reading the play instead as an implicit condemnation of that same character and those same policies.<sup>6</sup> For Terry Eagleton *Macbeth* exposes 'a reverence for hierarchical order for what it is, as the pious self-deception of a society based on routine oppression and incessant warfare';<sup>7</sup> for Kiernan Ryan it is 'an unrivalled arraignment of one of the mainsprings of modern Western society: the ideology and practice of individualism';<sup>8</sup> for Alan Sinfield it is about the way the state legitimised violence at a time of transition from feudalism to the absolutist state.<sup>9</sup>

2. A. P. Rossiter, 'Angel with Horns: Fifteen Lectures on Shakespeare', edited by Graham Storey 1961; repr. with an introduction by Peter Holland (London and New York: Longman, 1989); Norman Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding* (1967; repr. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Bernard McElroy, *Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973); Robert Grudin, *Mighty Opposites: Shakespeare and Renaissance Contrariety* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1979); Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Graham Bradshaw, *Shakespeare's Scepticism* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987); Bradshaw, *Misrepresentations: Shakespeare and the Materialists* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

3. W.R. Elton, 'Shakespeare and the Thought of his Age' in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Stanley Wells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.32.

4. Rabkin, *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding*, p.12.

5. Jonathan Dollimore, 'Critical Development: Cultural Materialism, Feminism and Gender Critique, and New Historicism' in *Shakespeare: a Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Stanley Wells (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p.414. The assumption that writers must be either attacking or supporting the government is anachronistic. In describing the fashion in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England for Tacitean satire attacking political treachery and moral corruption, Malcolm Smuts argues that the real intellectual debates of the period were not between the court and its opponents, but between rival factions within the court, and that the source of disaffection was political life itself, rather than any particular system of government (Malcolm Smuts, 'Court-Centred Politics and the Uses of Roman Historians c.1590-1630' in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1994), pp.21-43).

6. Alan Sinfield, 'Macbeth: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals' in *Faultlines: Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.99.

7. Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.2.

8. Kiernan Ryan, *Shakespeare* (New York and London: Harvester, 1989), p.59.

9. 'Macbeth: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals', p.95.

Because there are, according to Sinfield, certain ‘structural difficulties’ inherent in the absolutist state (which he defines as ‘the monarch versus the rest’),<sup>10</sup> tyrants must inevitably resort to force in order to suppress honest dissidents. Though Shakespeare’s play sets up a series of natural antinomies that serve to identify the legitimate monarch with nature, peace and goodness, and the tyrant with the unnatural eruption of evil in a harmonious world, in reality, says Sinfield, there is little to choose between the tyrant and an absolute monarch like James. Just as Macbeth employs ruthless measures to maintain himself in power, so James could only survive by executing those who dared resist his rule: ‘Macbeth is a murderer and oppressive ruler, but he is one version of [James] the absolutist ruler, not the polar opposite’.<sup>11</sup>

#### JAMES I AND VI: TYRANT OR PEACEMAKER?

In his brief discussion of James’s advice to his son in *Basilikon Doron* on the treatment of rebels, Sinfield remarks, ‘with any case so strenuously overstated and manipulative ... we should ask what alternative position it is trying to put down’.<sup>12</sup> In Sinfield’s own case the answer is clear enough: his essay on *Macbeth* is frankly and openly provocative; by reading ‘against the grain’ of Shakespeare’s text and by ignoring altogether what is arguably the most significant and representative body of mid-century Shakespeare criticism, it aims to shock liberal intellectuals out of their complacent acceptance of state violence. However, in practice his essay is less likely to shock the literary-critical establishment than professional historians, who may be surprised (or perhaps amused) to learn that, for all his pretensions as an international peacemaker, and despite his deeply rooted personal horror of violence (not to mention the fact that he didn’t murder his way to the throne), James was in truth no better than a medieval barbarian. In building up his picture of James the Macbeth-like tyrant, Sinfield represents the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 as the final act of desperation by patient dissidents who had suffered years of violent state oppression, the failed blow for freedom being followed by the kind of savage reprisals that are the stock-in-trade of absolutist regimes. What Sinfield omits in this ‘oppositional’ reading of contemporary events is any discussion of the evolution of James’ own political views, or his wrangles with Parliament over the treatment of Catholics (at a time when Catholics had for half a century been oppressed, dispossessed and disfranchised, James was, as Jenny Wormald notes, ‘unusually humane’).<sup>13</sup> Also omitted from his account of the period is any discussion of the rejection by revisionist historians of an outdated conflict model of early Jacobean politics.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to Sinfield’s picture of a society locked in struggle with an intransigent autocrat (‘the king versus the rest’), is the emphasis placed by early 17th-century constitutional theorists on consensus. Alan Smith writes, ‘in Jacobean England ... the dominant constitutional theory, accepted by king, Parliament and common lawyers alike, was of a balanced constitution which was founded on certain inalienable rights possessed by both Crown and subjects and safeguarded by the common law’.<sup>15</sup> James may have written like an absolute monarch, but he did not behave like one. This is not to say that he had no battles with Parliament. Indeed some of the most bitter disputes were occasioned by his pacifist inclinations; in 1624 the Commons did all it could to push him into a war with Spain that he had spent his whole reign trying to avoid.<sup>16</sup> Sinfield, like possibly a majority of modern UK citizens, does not care for monarchies. But 400 years ago even radicals like George Buchanan

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>13</sup> Jenny Wormald, ‘Gunpowder, Treason, and Scots’, *Journal of British Studies*, 24 (1985), pp.141-68.

<sup>14</sup> J. P. Sommerville, ‘James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory’, in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 55-70. See also R.Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987); Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>15</sup> Alan G. R. Smith, ‘Constitutional Ideas and Parliamentary Developments in England 1603-1625’ in *The Reign of James VI and I*, ed. Alan G.R. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), p.164.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 165.

believed that monarchy was in a real sense part of natural law. In the *De Jure Regni* Buchanan writes, 'The government of kings is in accord with nature, that of tyrants contrary to it; a king rules willing subjects, the tyrant unwilling'.<sup>17</sup> At a time when the English had recently had cause for extreme anxiety over the problem of uncertain succession, James's direct descent from Banquo, unrivalled in length by any English dynasty, represented a hope of political stability

That James should have had a horror of violence is not surprising. Few public figures can have had such a terrible childhood. With his father murdered before he was a year old, probably with the connivance of his adulterous mother, James was effectively an orphan from the age of two. During a regency in which Scotland was at times close to anarchy, James was the subject of repeated kidnappings and plots against his life. These were not popular uprisings, but sectarian feuds between violent nobles. Little wonder that, despite the watering down of James's original plan for a perfect union of the two kingdoms,<sup>18</sup> the mood of the English Parliament was opposed to formal ties with what was perceived as a barbaric nation,<sup>19</sup> and that full union did not take place until 1707. Nor is it surprising that James was so deeply shocked when, in circumstances eerily similar to those in which his own father had died, yet another Catholic plot against his life was discovered in 1605. Having narrowly escaped so many plots both in childhood and maturity, it is understandable that he should have feared a repetition of his father's fate. In an age when typology was still a key to the understanding of history, it is perhaps inevitable that the parallels between his father's death and his own apparently providential escape from a similar fate should have convinced him that the powers of darkness were in league against him, and more importantly, that heaven was protecting him.

According to the official interpretation promoted by James and his advisors, the Gunpowder Plot was the work of Antichrist aimed at destroying the Reformation in England and averting a predestined union of kingdoms that had been foretold by ancient prophecy.<sup>20</sup> Like Elizabeth, James was assiduous in cultivating the British myth;<sup>21</sup> only when the ancient British line was restored would the country be united and Arthur's empire live again.<sup>22</sup> When James visited Oxford in 1605 Matthew Gwynne flattered the king's interest in his own genealogy with some Latin verses which reminded him of the legend that fate had foretold that Banquo's descendants would be the inheritors of an 'endless empire' (*imperium sine fine*).<sup>23</sup> Though Gwynne does not mention Macbeth, his reign was of particular interest to historians because it represented a turning point in Scottish history when the old anarchic tanistry system of elective succession gave way to a stable hereditary monarchy. By attempting to avert destiny Macbeth himself was ironically instrumental in ensuring that Merlin's prophecy of a united kingdom would be realised. In *Poly-Olbion* Drayton explains how, by murdering Banquo and causing Fleance (Fleance) to flee to Wales, where he married the daughter of

17. Quoted by Roger A. Mason, 'Rex Stoicus: George Buchanan, James VI and the Scottish Polity', *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland*, edited by John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason and Alexander Murdoch (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982), p.21. Mason argues that, to interpret Buchanan's resistance theory in modern constitutional terms is to do violence to his thought. For Buchanan it is not the mass of the people, but the 'nobility, either in a council, an assembly, a public convention or a parliament, to whom the tyrant must account for his crimes' (p. 25).

18. See Brian P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland, and the Union 1603-1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 8.

19. On the constitutional debate over the question of union see Levack, *The Formation of the British State*, pp. 31-4; Jenny Wormald, 'One king, two kingdoms' in *Uniting the Kingdom: the Making of British History*, edited by Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 123-32.

20. Garry Wills, *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 15-16; Lilian Winstanley, 'Macbeth', 'King Lear' and *Contemporary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 31.

21. See Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), pp. 1-39.

22. Winstanley quotes the Venetian State Papers for April 17 1603 on the subject of James's promulgation of the British myth: 'It is said that he is disposed to abandon the titles of England and Scotland, and to call himself King of Great Britain, and like that famous and ancient King Arthur to embrace under one name the whole circuit of one thousand seven hundred mile which includes the United Kingdom now possessed by His Majesty in that island' ('Macbeth', 'King Lear' and *Contemporary History*, p. 42).

23. Quoted by Henry N. Paul, *The Royal Play of 'Macbeth'* (1948; repr. New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 163.

the Llewellyn, Prince of Wales, Macbeth was indirectly responsible for bringing about a marriage that would unite the houses of Plantagenet and Tudor, for it was Fleanch's descendant, Henry VII who married Elizabethan of York, and their eldest daughter, Margaret, who married James IV.<sup>24</sup> James could thus claim both to unite the houses of York and Lancaster, and also to restore the ancient British line. In his 1603 panegyric on 'The Majesty of King James' Drayton praises England's new king as the fulfilment of Merlin's prophecy of a re-united Britain.

An ancient Prophet long agoe fore-told,  
 (Though fooles their sawes for vanities doe hold)  
 A King of Scotland, ages comming on,  
 Where it was found, be crown'd upon that stone,  
 Two famous Kingdoms seperate thus long,  
 Within one Iland, and that speake one tongue,  
 Since Brute first raign'd, (if men of Brute allow)  
 Never before united untill now.<sup>25</sup>

By revealing the Gunpowder Plot and thwarting the Antichrist, providence had clearly signalled its protection of a prince predestined to bring peace to a warring world.<sup>26</sup>

#### AUGUSTUS REDIVIVUS

In representing himself in his coronation entry as a prince of peace,<sup>27</sup> and making the advantages of peace the subject of his first speech to Parliament, James was consciously rejecting the traditional image of the heroic prince promoted by the Elizabethan war party. In contrast to Essex, who in his *Apologie* of 1598 had evoked the warlike spirit of Henry V, comparing the unheroic present with 'those former gallant ages' when England did not hesitate to 'atchieve great conquests in Fraunce',<sup>28</sup> James reminds Parliament in his first speech in March 1604 how 'at my comming here ... I found the State embarqued in a great and tedious warre, and onely by mine arrival here, and by the Peace in my Person, is now amitie kept, where warre was before'.<sup>29</sup> Though there was wide support for the 1604 settlement with Spain, the chivalric ideals espoused by Essex were by no means dead.<sup>30</sup> To win over opponents of his pacifist policies James drew, as Elizabeth's poets had done in support of hers, on the resources of myth and historical analogy. But where Spenser had celebrated England's imperial aspirations in the figure of a fully armed warrior-maiden, James turned not to medieval chivalry, but to the classical world for his image of the ideal prince.

The unifying theme of James's coronation entry was peace, symbolised by the goddess Eirene, with Mars at her feet, 'his armour scattered upon him in severall pieces, and sundrie sorts of weapons broken about him'.<sup>31</sup> But the historical figure with whom the new king himself was identified in the coronation pageantry was Augustus, or rather Augustus as portrayed by James's favourite poet, Virgil. In his collection of sonnets of 1584 James had immodestly compared himself with the author

24. *The Works of Michael Drayton*, 5 vols, edited by J. William Hebel (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931-41), vol 4 (1933), p. 167.

25. 'To the Majesty of King James', 133-40, *The Works*, vol 1 (1931), p. 474.

26. Wills, *Witches and Jesuits: Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'*, p. 16.

27. Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd*, p. 4.

28. Robert Devereux Earl of Essex., *An Apologie of the Earl of Essex* (London: , 1603), Sig. D3v.

29. *The Political Works of James I*, with an introduction by Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), p. 270.

30. Malcolm Smuts, 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I' in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 110. See also Norman Council, 'Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry', *Journal of English Literary History*, 47 (1980), pp. 259-75.

31. 'Part of the Kings entertainment, in passing to his Coronation', *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols, edited by C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52), vol 7 (1941), p. 97.

of the *Aeneid*; favour me with your blessing, he tells the Muses in the well worn epideictic formula, and my verse will record your praise: 'I shall your names from all oblivion bring. / I lofty *Virgill* shall to life restore'.<sup>32</sup> Now, in a coronation entry featuring mock-Roman triumphal arches, prophetic motifs from Virgil were a key element in the day's pageantry.<sup>33</sup> Writing during the peace that followed the civil wars that had plagued the last years of the Republic, Virgil represents his patron as a descendant of the gods, destined to pacify a warring world. In the great visionary speech in Book VI Anchises interprets for his son the significance of the long line of descendants passing before him, explaining, in an allusion to the famous prophetic lines of the fourth Eclogue, that the final figure in the procession is

*Caesar* himself, exalted in his Line;  
*Augustus*, promis'd oft, and long foretold,  
Sent to the realm that *Saturn* rul'd of old;  
Born to restore a better Age of Gold (VI.1078-81).<sup>34</sup>

Spenser had already firmly re-established the myth of Britain's Trojan origins in the national mind; what better way for James to confirm his own credentials as a peacemaker than to suggest typological parallels with Augustus, most illustrious descendant of the Trojan remnant that had also colonised Albion? In his notes for the coronation pageant, Jonson quotes the talismanic phrase, 'redeunt Saturnia regna', adding, 'out of *Virgil*, to shew that now those golden times were returned againe'.<sup>35</sup> Taking their cue from these public hints, court poets dutifully confirmed the parallel between Augustus and their own prince of peace. 'Renowned Prince,' writes Drayton in his panegyric to James,

when all these tumults cease,  
Even in the calme, and Musick of thy peace,  
If in thy grace thou deigne to favour us,  
And to the Muses be propitious,  
Caesar himselfe, Roomes glorious wits among,  
Was not so highly, nor divinely sung.<sup>36</sup>

Some years later, in *Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610), Jonson again evokes Virgilian parallels in his celebration of James's destiny:

Here are kingdoms mixed  
And nations joined, a strength of empire fixed  
Coterminate with heaven; the golden vein  
Of Saturn's age is here broke out again.  
Henry but joined the roses ensigned  
Particular families, but this hath joined  
The rose and thistle, and in them combined  
A union that shall never be declined.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup>. 'The Essayes of a Prentice' (1584), *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, edited by James Craigie (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1955), p. 14.

<sup>33</sup>. See Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>. Quotations from Virgil are from Dryden's translation of 1697, *The Works of John Dryden*, 20 vols, edited by Edward Niles Hooker, Alan Roper and H.T. Swedenborg, Jr. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1956-89), 5-6 (edited by William Frost, 1987).

<sup>35</sup>. 'Part of the Kings entertainment', p. 100.

<sup>36</sup>. 'To the Majesty of King James', 159-60, p. 475.

The endlessly-repeated public message was clear: just as the god-like Augustus was the subject of ancient prophecy, destined by providence to bring Rome's internal wars to an end and restore the golden age, so James fulfils the ancient British prophecy of a king who would reconcile international conflicts and usher in an age of universal peace. The grand historical plan that began with Troy was about to be completed; 'redeunt Saturnia regna'.

#### VIRGIL'S AMBIVALENCE

It is easy to see why the *Aeneid* should have appealed so strongly to James. Here was a poem about his favourite themes: prophecy, empire, the predestined peacemaker, the return of a golden age. But though Rome's imperial destiny may be Virgil's grand theme, the *Aeneid* is a deeply ambivalent poem. At its centre is a conundrum. The *pax romana* - ultimate justification for the wars that took place so many centuries ago in Latium - is bought at a terrible cost. For Roman imperialists the justification of war is peace.<sup>38</sup> In the *De Officiis* Cicero argues that wars are to be undertaken for one reason alone, namely, 'that we may live in peace unharmed'.<sup>39</sup> Like Cicero, Virgil justifies war in terms of its results: from the conquest of Latium there will follow in the distant future a time when

dire Debate, and and impious War shall cease,  
And the stern Age be softned into Peace:  
Then banish'd Faith shall once again return,  
And Vestal Fires in hallow'd Temples burn; (I.396)

Virgil portrays Aeneas, not as a latter-day Homeric hero glorying in his martial skills, but as a reluctant warrior, disinclined to engage in battle, and piously accepting his role as the instrument of destiny. In complete contrast is Turnus, the very type of unreflecting *superbia* full of 'Revenge, and jealous Rage, and secret Spight' (XII.110).

However, one of the great ironies of the *Aeneid* is that, as his final encounter with Turnus draws near, Aeneas seems increasingly to take on the characteristics of his aggressive adversary. When, in violation of the league established with Latinus, fighting breaks out once more between Trojans and Rutulians, Aeneas appeals to his compatriots to 'cease / From impious arms, nor violate the Peace' (XII.473-4). This is the 'pious Aeneas' of medieval and Renaissance iconography, the epitome of wise and responsible leadership. But even while Aeneas is addressing his troops, he is hit by an arrow. The fragile truce is broken, and Turnus, like some terrible god of war, wreaks havoc on the battlefield. As Aeneas, his wound healed by Venus, seeks out his rival, there is now apparently little to choose between the two men: 'With like impetuous Rage the Prince appears ... nor less Destruction bears' (XII.671-2). But more atrocities are to be committed before they finally meet in battle. Incensed by what he sees as the treachery of the Rutulians, Aeneas resolves to raze their 'perjur'd City' (XII.837). While the battle continues to rage, the unprotected city is an easy target. 'Gaping, gazing Citizens' (XII.844) are killed in cold blood, and their houses set on fire. The destruction complete, Aeneas then appeals to the gods in an act of bizarre self-justification:

Advancing to the Front, the Heroe stands,  
And stretching out to Heav'n his Pious Hands;  
Attests the Gods, asserts his Innocence,  
Upbraids with breach of Faith th' Ausonian Prince:  
Declares the Royal Honour doubly stain'd,

<sup>37</sup>. Ben Jonson, *The Complete Masques*, edited by Stephen Orgel (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 155.

<sup>38</sup>. R. O. A. M. Lyne, 'Vergil and the Politics of War' in *Oxford Readings in Vergil's 'Aeneid'*, ed. S. J. Harrison (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 316-8. See also Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p.314.

<sup>39</sup>. *De Officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London and New York: Heinemann (London) and Macmillan (New York), 1913), lxi, p. 37.

And twice the Rites of holy Peace profan'd. (XII.849-54).

As with *Henry V*, the contrast between the the reality of war and the pious sentiments that are used to justify it are too sharply and too shockingly juxtaposed to be ignored. Virgil does not comment on the irony, but sustains it unresolved to the very end of the poem.

The outcome of the contest with Turnus is decided by fate: Jupiter and Juno agree that, if Aeneas is allowed to win, the Latins will be permitted to keep their name, their customs and their language. For a time it looks as if our final view of Aeneas will be that of the humane military leader reasserting civilised values as the conflict is at last concluded. As he stands over his defeated enemy, he hesitates, torn between vengeance and mercy:

In deep Suspence the Trojan seem'd to stand;  
 And just prepar'd to strike repress'd his Hand.  
 He rowl'd his Eyes, and ev'ry Moment felt  
 His manly Soul with more Compassion melt: (XII.1360-3)

But in the very act of sparing his rival in love and war, he happens, by another trick of fate, to catch sight of the belt that Turnus had earlier torn from Aeneas's dead friend Pallas on the battlefield. In a moment of blind rage Aeneas plunges his sword deep into Turnus's heart. The poem that had set out to celebrate Rome's imperial destiny and to honour the man who epitomised the superiority of eirenic values, thus ends with a vision, not of universal peace, but of primal savagery.

The *Aeneid* was of course left unfinished, and that brutal final scene is probably not how Virgil planned to end the poem. Nevertheless, the image of 'pious Aeneas' plunging his sword into the heart of a disarmed and helpless enemy is a fitting emblem for the whole poem. The *Aeneid* is not simply a celebration of 'the long Glories of Majestick Rome'; it is also about 'Arms, and the Man'. Cicero argues that true valour will never allow itself to be contaminated by frenzy, 'for there is no bravery that is devoid of reason'.<sup>40</sup> In an ideal world no doubt this is true. But for all the idealistic sentiments of the *Aeneid*'s most celebrated passages about Rome's imperial destiny, the military world that Virgil portrays is far from ideal. As he represents it, 'Arms' is inevitably a savage business, and the 'Man' who becomes involved in it, however unwillingly, is ineluctably contaminated by its brutality. Where imperial apologists like Cicero justify war in terms of its results, Virgil shows that you cannot employ violence in defence of peace without somehow compromising the values you are defending.

#### MACBETH AS ROYAL COMPLIMENT

How far James was aware of these anomalous elements in the *Aeneid* we cannot tell. We do know, however, that he was both a genuine pacifist whose dearest ambition was to see a Europe at peace, and also a realist who knew that a militaristic aristocracy must be controlled. Contrary to the impression that Sinfield, following a long line of Marxist critics, gives of a tyrant determined at whatever cost to hang on to power in the face of popular unrest, James actually enjoyed considerable popularity in the early part of his reign.<sup>41</sup> After the deep disaffection that characterised the final years of Elizabeth's reign with the inbred factionalism of the court and the aggressively militant nationalism fostered by the war party,<sup>42</sup> James's manifest desire to promote 'pietie, peace and learning'<sup>43</sup> was widely welcomed. In *Basilikon Doron* he characterises the wise ruler as one who

<sup>40</sup> *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J.E. King (London and New York: Heinemann (London) and Putnam (New York), 1927), IV.xxii, p. 383.

<sup>41</sup> See Rowland Wymer, 'Jacobean Pageant or Elizabethan Fin de Siècle? The Political Context of Early Seventeenth-Century Tragedy', in *Jacobean Drama as Social Criticism*, ed. James Hogg (Lewiston, NY; Salzbürg, Austria: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp. 45-58.

<sup>42</sup> See Joel Hurstfield, 'The Succession Struggle in late Elizabethan England' in *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), pp. 104-34

<sup>43</sup> *Basilikon Doron, The Political Works of James I*, with an introduction by Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), p. 24.

tempers justice with mercy, and who respects Parliament as ‘the honourablest and highest judgment in the land’.<sup>44</sup> At the same time he emphasises the importance of limiting the power of anarchic elements in the state. Having been a victim himself of the ‘rough wooing’ of Scotland during the Reformation, it is not surprising that he has little time for ‘the fierie spirited men in the ministrie [who] got such a guiding of the people at that time of confusion’.<sup>45</sup> But James is equally contemptuous of the nobility who justified violence as a legitimate way of defending personal and family honour. He writes:

The naturall sicknesse that I have perceived this estate subject to in my time, hath beene, a fectlesse arrogant conceit of their greatnesse and power; drinking in with their very nourish-milke, that their honor stood in committing three points of iniquitie: to thrall by oppression, the meaner sort that dwelleth neere them ... to maintaine their servants and dependers in any wrong ... and ... to bang it out bravely, hee and all his kinne, against him and all his [kin] ...<sup>46</sup>

Applied to questions of foreign policy, it was this same honour code that led Essex to propose the opening up of a potentially disastrous land war with Spain.<sup>47</sup> In *Basilikon Doron* James comes across as a pragmatic realist, naturally favouring peace, but recognising the need to curb the violence of aggressive aristocrats eager for war. It is these problems that Shakespeare turns into dialectical drama.

In presenting James with an ‘imperial theme’ featuring a history of his own ancestors, Shakespeare, like Virgil, makes use of prophecy and fate. Despite the allusion to Virgil in act I scene 3,<sup>48</sup> the *Aeneid* is not a source for *Macbeth* in the way that it clearly is for *Titus Andronicus*.<sup>49</sup> However, James was keenly interested in the poem’s epideictic possibilities, and Shakespeare puts them to use in his own dramatic compliment to a new monarch. As Virgil recreates the world of heroic epic from the perspective of a latter-day urban civilisation, so *Macbeth* looks back from the modern world to the founding moment of the present dynasty in a barbarous, heroic age. And as Virgil compliments Augustus by showing him a prophetic vision of himself, ‘promis’d oft, and long foretold’, so Shakespeare alludes to the Virgilian idea of a time of ‘universal peace’ (IV.iii.99), offering James oblique compliment in the form of a parade of kings that culminates in a vision of his own coronation. By causing Banquo’s son to escape into exile where, like Aeneas, he would marry a foreign princess, Macbeth is the unwitting agent of that destiny.

Recent historicist criticism of *Macbeth* has focused on the early-modern political debate on obedience and tyrannicide. David Norbrook and Alan Sinfield both read the play in the context of Buchanan’s resistance theory.<sup>50</sup> The debate on resistance is certainly central to Shakespeare’s only Scottish play, but unlike *Richard II* and *Henry IV*, where the problem is dramatised in such a way as

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-5.

<sup>47</sup> *An Apologie*, passim.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Strange images of death’ (I.iii.97) echoes Virgil’s ‘plurima mortis imago’ (*Aeneid*, II.369).

<sup>49</sup> See Heather James, ‘Cultural disintegration in *Titus Andronicus*: mutilating Titus, Vergil and Rome’, *Themes in Drama*, 13 (Violence in Drama), (1991), pp. 123-40. For discussion of Shakespeare’s use of the *Aeneid* in *The Tempest*, see Donna B. Hamilton, *Virgil and ‘The Tempest’: the Politics of Imitation* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990). See also J. M. Nosworthy, ‘The Narrative Sources for *The Tempest*’, *Review of English Studies*, 24 (1948), pp. 281-94; Jan Kott, ‘The *Aeneid* and *The Tempest*’, *Arion*, ns 3, 4 (1976), pp. 424-51; idem, ‘*The Tempest*, or Repetition’, *Shakespeare Today, Mosaic*, 10 (1977), ed. Ralph Berry, pp. 9-36; Gary S. Schmidgall, *Shakespeare and the Courtly Aesthetic* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1981); John Pitcher, ‘A Theatre of the Future: The *Aeneid* and *The Tempest*’, *Essays in Criticism*, 34 (1984), pp. 193-215; Barbara Bono, *Literary Transvaluations: from Vergilian Epic to Shakespearean Tragedy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 220-4; Robert Miola, ‘Vergil in Shakespeare: from Allusion to Imitation’, *Vergil at 2000*, ed. John D. Bernard (New York: AMS Press, 1986), pp. 254-56; Robert Wiltenburg, ‘The *Aeneid* in *The Tempest*’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 39 (1987), pp. 159-68.

<sup>50</sup> David Norbrook, ‘Macbeth and the Politics of Historiography’ in *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England*, edited by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 78-116; Sinfield, ‘Macbeth: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals’.

to admit of no easy solution, *Macbeth* presents it in more polarised form. For a playwright wanting to offer a defence of the right to resist tyranny, the Macbeth story that Shakespeare knew from Holinshed would be suitable material, but not ideal: a strong and successful ruler deposes an ineffectual one and is himself deposed when, many years after the usurpation, he becomes tyrannical. Shakespeare modifies his principal source in two important ways: first, he telescopes the usurper's reign, omitting altogether Holinshed's account of the way Macbeth restores justice and law to the country,<sup>51</sup> turning him instead into a stage villain - albeit a subtle and psychologically realistic one - linked with witches and all the gothic paraphernalia associated with them (in Holinshed they are described merely as 'three women ... resembling creatures of elder world');<sup>52</sup> second, he transforms Duncan from a weak and ineffectual ruler who showed 'overmuch slacknesse in punishing offenders',<sup>53</sup> into a saintly martyr. The effect of this rewriting of the story is both to intensify the horror of regicide, and also to show that a usurping tyrant must be removed. The first part of the play's political message is clearly in line with James's own ideas on kingship and obedience, the second a contradiction of them. In this respect *Macbeth* is like *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*, both of which pay compliment to James while at the same time offering oblique, but pointed criticism.<sup>54</sup> The problematic aspect of *Macbeth* is not, as in the historical plays, its treatment of constitutional questions, but what it has to say about 'Arms, and the Man'.

## SHAKESPEAREAN

One of the many unanswered questions in *Macbeth* is the reason why Macduff fled to England without first telling his wife. 'You know not, / Whether it was his his wisdom, or his fear' Rosse tells Lady Macduff. She is incredulous: 'Wisdom!' she cries, 'to leave his wife, to leave his babes, / His mansion and his titles, in a place / From whence he himself does fly?' (IV.ii.4-8). She then appeals to nature. In act I scene vi Banquo had used the tranquil image of swifts nesting in the eaves of Macbeth's castle to evoke a sense of natural harmony. But now Lady Macduff uses the image of nesting birds to suggest that fighting too is natural:

He loves us not:  
He wants the natural touch; for the poor wren,  
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,  
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.  
All is the fear, and nothing is the love;  
So little is the wisdom, where the flight  
So runs against the reason. (8-14)

After some banter between Lady Macduff and her son about the prevalence of evil-doers in the world - grotesque in its seeming flippancy - a messenger brings news that her life is also at risk. 'Whither should I fly?' she asks herself,

I have done no harm. But I remember now  
I am in this earthly world, where, to do harm  
Is often laudable; to do good, sometime  
Accounted dangerous folly. (72-6)

<sup>51</sup> *Holinshed's Chronicles*, revised edn. (1587) edited by John Vowell, 6 vols (London, 1807-8), 5 (1808), p. 266.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>54</sup> See Peggy Muñoz Simonds, *Myth, Emblem, and Music in Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline': An Iconographic Reconstruction* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1992); Robin Headlam Wells, *Elizabethan Mythologies: Studies in Poetry, Drama and Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapter 3.

Lady Macduff has apparently been betrayed by a pusillanimous husband and now she and her son are about to be murdered by Macbeth's hired assassins. Her ironic words express a sense of the bleak futility of a world in which all values have been, as Nietzsche would say, transvalued. But there is a larger sense in which what she says is potentially true, not just of Macbeth's tyrannical rule, but of any society. When, after testing Macduff's allegiance, Malcolm assures him of his own integrity, he tells him that the Earl of Northumberland, with 'ten thousand warlike men', is already on his way to give England's support to the rebel cause: 'Now we'll together,' says Malcolm, 'and the chance of goodness / Be like our warranted quarrel' (IV.iii.134-7). For Lady Macduff the wren's right to fight the owl is indubitable; it is part of nature's law. But for Malcolm there are no certainties, only risks to be weighed in the balance: out of a bloody battle between thousands of 'warlike men' there is a chance that good will come; out of a 'warranted quarrel' with a tyrant - a warrant passionately denied by James - a better order may emerge. Not surprisingly, Macduff's response is puzzlement: 'Such welcome and unwelcome things at once, / 'Tis hard to reconcile' 138-9).

It is hard to reconcile because in the world of the play there are no certainties. There may be absolutes - 'Justice, Verity, Temperance, Stableness, Bounty, Perseverance, Mercy, Lowliness, Devotion, Patience' on the one side, and Macbeth's violence on the other - but these binary opposites are not as mutually exclusive as the play's apocalyptic imagery would seem to suggest. *Macbeth* may appear to offer a stark contrast between 'Good things of Day' and 'Night's black agents' (III.iii.52-3), but at a deeper level these antinomies each embody rival virtues and vices that are incommensurable. The result is a world in which 'to do harm / Is often laudable; to do good, sometime / Accounted dangerous folly'. This ambivalence concerning fundamental values can be seen most clearly in the way characters conceive of manhood.

Although Shakespeare's Duncan, unlike the 'feeble and slouthfull' king described by Holinshed,<sup>55</sup> is a saintly figure renowned for his piety, the play reminds us that this is an heroic age when Scotland was still at the mercy of warring nobles and Norse invaders. When they are under pressure, it is not Malcolm's 'king-becoming graces', but heroic manhood that is of paramount concern to the actors in this drama of usurpation and rebellion; for heroes and villains alike, manhood is a way of defining virtue and integrity. And to be a man means to be 'bloody, bold and resolute' (IV.i.79). Among the soldiers killed in the play's final battle is young Siward, the Earl of Northumberland's son. Informing Siward's father, Rosse consoles the general with the thought that his son died a hero's death:

Your son, my Lord, has paid a soldier's debt;  
He only liv'd till he was a man;  
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd,  
In the unshrinking station where he fought,  
But like a man he died (V.ix.5-9).

But Old Siward is not satisfied and, like a Roman father, asks Rosse how his son died: 'Had he his hurts before?' Rosse confirms that they were indeed 'on the front' (12-13). Content that his son's death was that of a true hero, Old Siward's mind is now at rest:

Why then, God's soldier be he!  
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,  
I would not wish them to a fairer death (12-14)

In the heroic world of *Macbeth* manhood is a kind of touchstone by which an individual's true worth can be measured. What defines and characterises this quality is above all prowess in battle; to die a hero's death is confirmation of manhood. Yet each time the term is used it generates more anomalies. On hearing of Macbeth's heroic exploits on a Golgotha-like battlefield, the saint-like

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<sup>55</sup>. *Holinshed's Chronicles*, p. 269.

Duncan praises him for his gentlemanly honour; yet Golgotha, the place of the skull, is renowned solely for the death of a famous pacifist. When Macbeth tests the resolve of his hired murderers, asking them if they are so patient, and so steeped in the Gospels, that they are afraid of violence, they boast, 'We are men' (III.i.90); yet Malcolm too urges Macduff not to shrink from violence. Lady Macbeth and Lady Macduff both appeal to an heroic conception of manhood; yet one is urging the ultimate act of treachery, the other regretting her husband's failure to defend wife and children as nature commands.

*Macbeth* offers two mutually opposed conceptions of manhood. One is based on heroic epic, the other on the Gospels. But the play is not simply claiming the superiority of one set of values over the other; the closer you look, the less easy it is to separate them. It is not just that Duncan's piety would be helpless without Macbeth's ferocity, and Macbeth's *virtus* mere barbarism without Duncan's *civilitas*. Civilised values must be defended; but the use of barbaric means to do so seems inevitably to result in contamination of the very ideals that are being upheld. In this respect *Macbeth* is like the *Aeneid*. The contrast that Virgil makes between the heroic values of Homeric epic and the civilised values of the Roman world eventually breaks down, so that in his conduct on the battlefield Aeneas is virtually indistinguishable from Turnus. Shakespeare's heroes and villains are also sometimes hard to tell apart; at least, like Aeneas and Turnus, they fight according to the same rules. Theirs is a world in which 'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'.

#### CULTURAL PLURALISM

Virgil's *Aeneid* provided a model for countless Renaissance poets who wanted to compliment a royal patron. But it was its agonistic vision, rather than its form, that seems to have spoken to Shakespeare's imagination. It is a vision perhaps best characterised by John Gray's term 'cultural pluralism'. In contrast to the Cultural Materialist, who posits a Manichaean world of 'true and false discourses' where writers must be judged according to whether they are for or against authority, the cultural pluralist believes that political and ethical problems are rarely reducible to a simple formula. In his book on Isaiah Berlin, Gray explains that cultural pluralism is not to be confused with moral relativism. The relativist holds that, however internally consistent particular value systems may be, they are always the product of a specific society and cannot be the object of rational adjudication.<sup>56</sup> However, Berlin insists that human value systems are, by their very nature, inherently conflictual. It is obvious that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the opposing views of humanity that you find in Homeric epic and the Sermon on the Mount. But Berlin argues, not just that it would be futile to attempt to adjudicate between them, but that *within* each of these value systems there will always be irresolvable conflict. 'The cornerstone of [Berlin's] thought,' writes Gray, 'is his rejection of monism in ethics - his insistence that fundamental human values are many, that they are often in conflict and rarely, if ever, necessarily harmonious, and that some, at least of these conflicts are among incommensurables - conflicts among values for which there is no single, common standard or arbitration.'<sup>57</sup> One of the most painful examples in recent history of the inherently conflictual nature of our most fundamental values is the war in the former Yugoslavia. Among the many letters in the national press on the subject of the UN's role in Eastern Europe was one from an English doctor who was treating victims of the Serb shelling of civilian food queues in 1995. 'Of course the use of arms is to be avoided as long as possible,' he wrote, 'I suspect, however, that had some of your correspondents worked in the hospitals of Sarajevo, as I have, they would have realised that the intense suffering of its citizens demanded urgent and effective action.'<sup>58</sup> These atrocities did not divide Western European politicians on party lines; within each major political party in Britain there were both pacifists arguing that UN moral authority would be compromised if it used the machinery of war to try to solve a political problem, and also those who, like the doctor in Sarajevo, urged the use of military force on humanitarian grounds. Sinfield writes bravely of a radical alternative to our

<sup>56</sup> John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), p. 44.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> Letter to the *Guardian*, 2 September 1995, p. 28.

present system of state-authorised violence,<sup>59</sup> though what form this alternative society would take, or how it would solve problems like Sarajevo he does not say. Unlike the Cultural Materialist, the cultural pluralist knows that there can be no absolute certainties in ethical and political questions, no overarching truth, no universal panacea.

It might be argued that a sense of human values as inherently conflictual is one of the characteristics of most great literature. What is distinctive about both Virgil and Shakespeare is the way this value pluralism becomes the most fundamental ordering principle of their writing. It is this aspect of the plays that Cultural Materialism has seized on and turned into its opposite. Shakespeare must now be made into the spokesman for an anti-humanist ideology so counter-intuitive and so isolated from any modern work on human nature in the biological and psychological sciences<sup>60</sup> that it can find reception only in academic presses. But here it reigns supreme, at least in some journals and text-book series. A recent correspondent in PMLA alleges there is currently a proven tendency among editors of America's most prestigious academic journal to judge articles, not in terms of their contribution to knowledge, or their ability to challenge conventional ways of thinking, but according to whether or not they conform to current notions of what is correct discourse.<sup>61</sup> Cultural Materialism's re-writing of history in the interest of social change may not be worth losing any sleep over, since no professional historian is likely to take it seriously. But the suppression of debate in the interests of correct discourse is a graver matter; it is ironically the first step towards the very absolutism that Cultural Materialism claims to deplore.

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<sup>59</sup>. 'Macbeth: History, Ideology, and Intellectuals', p. 108.

<sup>60</sup>. See Jerome H. Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby eds., *The Adapted Mind: Evolutionary Psychology and the Generation of Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>61</sup>. Thomas F. Bertonneau, letter to PMLA, vol 112, January 1997, pp. 124-5.

# A Clockwork Brick in the Wall: Shakespeare and Communist Aesthetics

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## I.

Immediately after the political changes in Bulgaria at the end of 1989 a new production of *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in Sofia<sup>1</sup> - a near pantomime in an absurdist setting of falling plaster columns and dummies, assembled and dismembered on the spot, among which the young actors, dressed in black body-costumes, performed at breath-taking speed. A few months later a production of *Hamlet* had also done away with the better part of the text.<sup>2</sup> In the manner of Stoppard's *Rozenkrants and Guildenstern are Dead* *The Mousetrap* had taken over the play of the Danish Prince and imposed on it a bizarre, neurotic pall of dark humour. Some deaths had been added to brighten up the atmosphere: Hamlet dispatched the prattling gravediggers. Perhaps, even the director was not aware of the symbolism of this act as the death of an old aesthetics.

The productions were jarringly iconoclast and arrogantly youthful, so much in tune with the hectic world which was falling apart outside the walls of the theatre that I, sitting elated in the audience, cared little about what had been done to Shakespeare (and much had). It was the spirit, not the letter that mattered. An elderly couple sitting in front of me at *Romeo and Juliet* were discussing the performance and saying that the translator, whose name appeared on the poster, for a few garbled scraps of the text had remained, should sue the director for misusing his name. These people cared about the letter and were lucky to be able to separate their theatrical from their political experience. Or were they? As for myself, I could relish these new productions but also shared some of the concerns of the elderly couple. History had caught up with me in mid-life.

Nor, thinking of politics, was it very clear then what it was that these two productions meant in political terms. They consisted of gaps like the hole in the Rumanian flag at that time, like the world in the streets where events moved with dazzling speed, their logic often totally uncertain, where language was acquiring new surprising significations.

However, these productions and many others, which followed, can be seen in the light of dissent from an old aesthetics. They brought to the fore the post-modern and unruly as a diametrical opposite to the forcefully imposed aesthetic norms of the communist period. These young people had put him out for sale like the army uniforms, flags and all the other paraphernalia of the old regime which irreverently and flagrantly hung in the jumble sales in the streets of east European cities. Yet, they were also in a hurry to make him part of *their* artistic biographies, to relate their names to his as his brave new co-authors. Older audiences and directors as well as *their* Shakespeare were quickly turning into an item of the past. The generation gap yawned wider than usual.

## II.

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<sup>1</sup> Directed by Stefan Moskov at the Mladezhki Teatur (Youth Theatre) Sofia, opening night in March 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Directed by Alexander Morfov at the First Private Theatre, opening night 2 February, 1993.

In an important essay Vladislav Todorov makes the seminal point that communism is primarily engaged with matters aesthetic by means of which the power structure seeks to perpetuate itself. In comparison with other totalitarian regimes communism has the unique quality of suppressing economic logic. It fashions itself as a state of fulfilled myth, as the achieved harmony of heaven on earth.

Communism creates ultimately effective aesthetic structures and ultimately defective economic ones. That is what empowers its strong presence and durability in the world. That is what fortifies it ... The result is a deficit of goods but an overproduction of symbolic meanings ... The realities of communism are aesthetically worked out. Society is a poetic work, which reproduces metaphors, not capital ... The fundamental academic field of communism lies in its political aesthetics. The political economy is a simulative one. It generates an initial appearance of an economically motivated society. Actually, it produces the symptoms of such a society, not the causes of it. The working out of metaphors and figures of speech is that which generates life forms. The true symptoms of communism are the overproduction of words and symbols. The political economy of communism hides genuine symptoms - the politically aesthetic ones, and creates others, simulative ones.<sup>3</sup>

This definition of the period pithily sums up the dominant position of ideology, the ultimate merging of the aesthetic and political and the turning of the aesthetic into an instrument of coercion like the labour camps and the chronic lack of means of sustenance. Together with fear and hunger, brainwashing is one of the triple pillars of the system. The Word in it literally has power to kill for the Word is spoken by an almighty person who crowns a strict paternalistic hierarchy. He is the holder of Ultimate Meanings, the Party Leader. This close-knit system is basically irrational for all the seeming rationality on which it rests, an aspect which has rarely been considered in depth as its prominent feature. Professor Assen Ignatov has shown how motives for behaviour in a machiavellian totalitarian system are entirely non rational, i.e. they may be useful to the ruling person but detrimental to the system and, therefore, 'irrational in relation to it'<sup>4</sup>. Paternalism is irrational for it curbs human activity and in this way prevents change and progress. Modernity in all its forms, whether economic or literary, is a mortal danger, a sign of independence of the established order. To strengthen further its position paternalism requires total emotional involvement. It is not enough to be loyal to the Party and its leader, you must love them - the political and emotional are grafted on each other. Hence the drastic, black-and-white value statements concerning political systems, literary works or persons crucified on dichotomies like 'most progressive/ retrograde', 'assertive of true values/ decadent', 'loyal to the death/ treasonous'<sup>5</sup>.

The complex consequences of a value system blending the political aesthetic and the emotional is a key to understanding the strained use of language, forced to oscillate between the poles of the imperative and superlative, the resilience of communist myths and the uses of Shakespeare as one of the historical bricks which the new politico-literary aesthetics claimed as a building block in the protective wall it erected around the system. For he held glorious pride of place in the canon.

<sup>3</sup> Vladislav Todorov, 'Introduction to the Political Aesthetics of Communism', *Textual Practice*, Vol.5, Number 3, 1991, pp. 363-382. The article is part of Todorov's book *Adamov complex* (in Bulgarian), Ivan Vazov, Sofia, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Assen Ignatov, 'Philosophy and Law. Rationality and Irrationality in Communist Behaviour', *Crossroads*, Jerusalem, Winter-Spring 1982, pp. 155-185.

<sup>5</sup> The poem *Most* by the Bulgarian poetess Blaga Dimitrova is a bitter comment on this mode of expression. Its translation into English is by Nedyalka Chakalova in *Britain and Europe*, British Studies Conference, Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria, March 1993, edited by Ludmila Kostova, Margaret Dobing, Nick Wadham-Smith and John-Allan Payne, Petkov Publishers, 1994, p. 17. <I lived in the most golden of ages, / I lived in the fairest system / under the wisest doctrine, / with the highest morality, / amid the most eternal friendship, / in the happiest society, / towards a most wonderful future. // I skipped the comparative MORE, / and found myself straight into MOST. / It was compulsory for a smile / to be most blissfully radiant, / a moment - the most historic, / a feast - the most festive, / progress - the most progressive. // I believed with the most genuine belief, / I glowed with the most glowing glow, / and I always rose on tip-toe // to oversretch at the high jump: most, most. / It's just that I don't know why / my poems became so sad / sadder towards the end.

Any literary canon is essentially political, however, the product of the communist system is *consciously* so to a degree unknown until then in history. Enforced through the totality of an education without alternatives, it is a monological product of a setup which brooks no cultural debate. The analysis of the Shakespearean appropriations has shown how Shakespeare has been placed either 'above politics' or 'contemporary politics has been presented in the light of Shakespeare's plays'.<sup>6</sup> Thomas Healy has noted that one result of this trend is 'to reinforce the perception that Shakespeare is capable of intervening in all politics, so that, curiously, it can appear *specific* politics are authorised by Shakespeare'<sup>7</sup>, which is precisely how communist ideologues have used the Bard and the other authoritative figures subsumed under the heading 'Great Progressive Writers'.

These were endowed with essential characteristics devised for the needs of the politicised canon, such as criticism of imperfect (non-communist) society, sensitivity to the voice and problems of 'the people'. The 'hero' is either tragically doomed to failure in his attempt to reform society (Hamlet), or, in the literature of 'socialist realism', conscious of class and party, is victorious often through his death (Gorky). The worth of the character and of literature in general, is measured by their social usefulness. With disarming simplicity a Bulgarian critic, writing in 1950, makes the point in a textbook meant for university students:

First and foremost I would like to present the most typical and progressive among Western European writers ...I have therefore allotted the largest place to those literary movements which have helped the struggle for the peoples' liberation from the yoke of feudalism, the oppression of the Catholic Church and the obscurantist ideology of monopolistic capitalism in the modern age, the age of imperialism ...The literary history of the Renaissance is similarly presented through the works of the most prominent critics of feudal society, such as Boccaccio, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Cervantes.<sup>8</sup>

Needless to say such a matrix leaves out an enormous body of literature, including many of the works of the 'Great Writers' themselves. The typical explanation condescendingly suggesting that these authors could not but have shared some of the 'weaknesses' of their historical periods (e.g. Shakespeare's romances), and, as a result, these texts have been silenced through rare publication or by not being taught. Thus, 'good' literature is defined as one which offers a series of 'struggles, great clashes, grandiose conflicts'<sup>9</sup> and is popular in character. One of the last Soviet encyclopaedias of literary terms published as late as 1987 defines 'popular' as

a polyvalent notion which characterises: 1) the relationship between individual and collective art, the level of imbibement and adoption by professional literature and art of motives and images from folklore; 2) the level of adequateness and depth achieved in recreating the nature and outlook of the people; 3) the level of social accessibility of art to the people.<sup>10</sup>

The amorphous all-inclusiveness of this definition illustrates the fake historicist claims of the new aesthetic approach, for it can be applied equally successfully to texts from antiquity (Homer), the Renaissance (Shakespeare), Romanticism (Walter Scott), 19th century realism (Tolstoy), 'socialist realism' (Gorky). The processes of refashioning are given further impetus as authors' biographies are

<sup>6</sup> Michael Dobson, 'Accents Yet Unknown: Canonisation and the Claiming of *Julius Caesar*', in *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*, edited by Jean I. Marsden, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Healy, 'Past and Present Shakespeares: Shakespearean Appropriations in Europe', *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. John J. Joughin, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1997, pp. 206-232. The manuscript of the paper was generously offered by the author for reference.

<sup>8</sup> D. B. Mitov, *History of West European Literature. Early Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (in Bulgarian), Sofia, Nauka i Izkoustvo, 1950, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> A. Peshev, *Lectures on the History of West European Literature. Early Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (in Bulgarian), Sofia, Nauka i Izkoustvo, 1951, p. 230.

<sup>10</sup> *Literaturnii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar*, Moskva, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya. 1987, p. 235.

touched up to suggest as humble origins as possible. Shakespeare was consistently presented as the little educated son of a poor craftsman; as for Byron with his aristocratic lineage, it was stressed that he came of an impoverished old family, or, more often, that he had 'denied his class' to join the ranks of the 'Progressive Intelligentsia'. The latter was integrated into the Trinity which the new ideology supposedly worshipped: workers, peasants, *progressive intelligentsia*.<sup>11</sup>

Evaluating across the centuries creates a semblance of a continuity of developments, presented as the causes effecting socialist realism. The latter is placed at the top of a hierarchical construct as the ultimate achievement from whose height one can look back at the 'Great Progressive Writers' to discover the inevitability of the course of history towards a socialist revolution, as well as comment on the pardonable ideological lapses of the Great ones, due to their luckless life in previous social formations. Large periods of human history are labelled either progressive or reactionary. The Middle Ages are uniformly conceived as feudal, obscurantist, grunting under the yoke of the Catholic Church. The Renaissance, on the other hand is 'a most progressive overturn', 'a period which needed titans and gave birth to titans who were anything but narrow-minded bourgeois', a phrase borrowed from Friedrich Engels. The new political aesthetics created a whole fully-fledged theory around the relatively few pronouncements by Marx and Engels on literary matters. This phrase, together with other scattered statements, is the kernel of the later ideologised adulation of the Renaissance as a period of titanic personalities applying their tremendous potential to the fight against 'feudal' values as the analogue of fights against any antiquated historical order. From this perspective Shakespeare had superlative credentials as a man of the Renaissance. He also had the honours which the Romantics had bequeathed on him and Romantic credentials were an asset because the Russian literary intelligentsia of the 19th century had been under a strong Romantic influence. Since the Bolsheviks, under whose rule the new aesthetics became normative, presented themselves as heirs to these 'precursors of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917' the adulation of Shakespeare was received as part of the revolutionary legacy. The Soviet Union became the true homeland where his ideals had finally come to fruition. 'Shakespearisation' became one of the current terms denoting literary perfection. (Another underhand derivative from a remark made by Karl Marx in a private letter to Ferdinand Lassalle, discussing the relative merits of Shakespeare vis-a-vis Schiller.) Writing 'like Shakespeare' was proposed as a totally a-historical aesthetic norm which implied mostly being understood by the people. This idea was so grafted on popular consciousness that at one of the Congresses of the Soviet Writers a woman farmer explained to the writers to try to write like the Bard, if they really wanted to be admired.

Together with attempts to create a new geography by designing to change the course of the major northern rivers (one of the great designs favoured by Stalin) the political aesthetics of communism, developed in the Soviet Union, prescribed the qualities of the New hu-Man being. Since the very essence of this construct is aesthetic, and literature is considered a *bona fide* historical document, we can glean the features of this new form of life from a dictionary of *literary* terms. 'The Great Hero' of the literature of socialist realism is a proponent of 'revolutionary, active, socialist humanist values', he is a 'harmonious human being' acting in accordance 'with the requirements of the historical moment, 'optimistic' and 'committed to the communist ideal and the Party.' Needless to say he comes from the very depths of the people.<sup>12</sup> Though Shakespeare is claimed to have lived in a specific historical period and to have been concerned with its problems, the millennium perspective imposed by communism 'produced an aberration of this historical pattern by replacing the familiar

<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that this three-ply structure of ideal communist society, where the peaceful co-existence among classes eliminates class struggle, also has a hierarchical structure. First among equals is the working class which is the leader of peasants and inspirer of the progressive intelligentsia. The very need to define the latter as 'progressive' reveals the lingering unease over its subversive social function and, consequently, the need for its control by the workers and peasants. Of the two other groups the peasants are the one which also takes a qualification. Often the class of the peasants is referred to as 'collectivised' as opposed to those who clung to their 'petty-bourgeois' ideal of private property. The working class is the only intrinsically reliable partner in the scheme as signalled by the lack of adjectival definition. The working class, like God, possesses an essential superiority and is spoken of only in the superlative degree.

<sup>12</sup> See the entry *Narodnost literaturi i iskusstva* (about the popular, ie from the depth of the people, origins and nature of the Great Hero) in *Literaturnii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar*, Moskva, Sovetskaya Entsiklopedia, 1987, pp. 235-237.

timelessness (associated with bourgeois criticism) by a humanist dream of an ideal future'.<sup>13</sup> His heroes, like the line of Kings seen by Banquo, portend the arrival of the new order in the forward march of history.

As time went on and the aesthetics of communism became an ideology spreading beyond the Soviet Union and into eastern Europe, the idea that Shakespeare is 'one of us', to use Mrs. Thatcher's phrase,<sup>14</sup> turned into a slightly hysterical fantasy. In an article called '*Shakespeare and We*' a critic writing already in 1964 upon the occasion of the quadricentenary of Shakespeare's birth gave vent to his political emotions by declaring:

What bridges the gap between us and Shakespeare are the great playwright's humanism and the ideals of our social order. For communism has turned into reality the boldest dreams of Shakespeare's free-speakers. Altruism, doing one's social duty, faith in Man's powers, the cult of the future - are these not the noblest of features of the builder of communist society? That is why we feel the depth of Shakespeare. An amazing harmony binds us in one.<sup>15</sup>

It is easy to notice the changed new meaning of words where 'humanism' stands for the love of/by the people, a trans-historical quality binding the progressives of all ages and countries. In the thus suggested chain of commonness Shakespeare is the nexus binding us (communists) to the rest of progressive history. Things can be hardly taken any further.

The canon which embedded Shakespeare into the politicised aesthetic structure transformed him into a 'Great Precursor' of communism, a creator of Great Fighting Characters, a Popular writer, loving and loved by the people. However, as we know, life cunningly tends to subvert norms human beings try to impose forcefully on it and so does the stage, which Shakespeare wrote for. If we are to believe him, the theatre is 'the very age and body of the time his form and pressure' (*Hamlet*, III.ii. 23-4). Its ever-changing, protean, short-lived shapes that vary with each performance, proved the medium, which, in spite of close monitoring and censorship, turned the brick in the communist wall into a mine. And, as time went on, one could hear it tick. Shakespeare was slowly turning into 'our contemporary' but a contemporary very different from the icon devised by the new aesthetics.

### III.

About the time when the Bulgarian critic writing the canonical history of western European literature was reproducing the received Soviet model one of the first post-war productions of Shakespeare was being prepared for the stage. Director Stefan Suchadjiev's *Romeo and Juliet* opened in the National Theatre in Sofia in 1954. The production was an immediate success with the audience. Just as quickly though, it fell prey to the budding young critics of the new school. The Communist party daily organ *Rabotnichesko Delo* featured a major half-a-page diatribe, analysing Shakespeare's intentions, and, consequently, the director's ideological lapses:

The main theme of Shakespeare's tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* is love. Yet, the pathos of the play does not proceed from the theme itself but from its humanistic reading in the spirit of the Renaissance. To the Medieval conception of marriage as a political or economic transaction the progressive people of the Renaissance opposed the idea of free choice in love. What is more, they conceived love as one of the moral tools by means of which human beings could be reformed ...Such is Romeo's and Juliet's love ...but in the society which they live in there is no room for it. Romeo and Juliet perish. In spite of it, the tragedy is optimistic ...

<sup>13</sup> A. Shurbanov and B. Sokolova, 'Shakespeare in the Bulgarian School', *Research in Drama Education*, Vol.1, Number 1, 1996, p. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Hugo Young draws attention to this use in *One of Us*, Pan Books, London, Sydney and Auckland, 1993, p. ix.

<sup>15</sup> V. Karakashev, 'Sheksir i nie' ('Shakespeare and We'), *Narodna Kultura*, 17, 25 April, 1964.

The director has impoverished the idea of love by concentrating only on it. Love has existed in all human societies. So it is important to reveal the concrete content of this emotion and the forms in which it realises itself, its objective, social content. Suchadjiev's production of *Romeo and Juliet* is a play of the 'banal' idea of eternal love for which, according to the director, the best setting are the warm Italian nights, the serenades, the pranks of the lovers, the lavish costume, pompous decor, organ music, etc. As a consequence the audience is not shaken by the cruelty of feudal attitudes which cause the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>16</sup>

This early review is a good sample of the brand of pseudo-historical criticism which, while declaring that love is historically specific, also prescribes the form of specificity. To the critic the play is about love but love as a vehicle of revealing a clash between two worlds, which, though bearing the titles of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance have nothing of historical relatedness to them. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance are simply two drastically opposed periods, which are in a state of war, merciless and total in the style of class war as conceived by communist ideology. One of them, the Renaissance, is 'progressive'. It tries to reform morally the Middle Ages which are retrograde. The very idea that human beings must be reformed is a function of the political aesthetics of communism which sets about to re-mould the world in its totality. It tried to re-model nature, eradicate 'bad' upbringing in human beings by forcing them into slave labour, or re-educate them through the politically juggled example of Great Literature. Socialist realist Shakespeare writes optimistic tragedies and is a partner in the struggle for a New Humanity.

In this framework all characters have their clear-cut place and meaning. Tybalt, Prince Paris, the old Montagues and Capulets stand for the 'dark powers of feudalism'. Friar Laurence, on the other hand, is postulated to be 'a representative of the life-assertive materialist philosophy of the Renaissance, which Medieval scholasticism could not destroy either on the pyre or through the Inquisition'. Mercutio, is 'Shakespeare's favourite character, one 'who gives an objective meaning to the personal struggle lead by *Romeo and Juliet*.' Strangely, the Nurse is not mentioned. The critic also complains that the production fails to instil in the audience hatred against reactionary ideologies, nor does 'one feel the raging of the spirit of feudalism in Verona.' As a result *Romeo and Juliet* have not been shown as prefigurating the New hu-Man, for their emotion does not awaken an awareness of social oppression which would have turned them into class-conscious rebels.<sup>17</sup>

The production was saved from being banned partly because even 'wrong readings' of Shakespeare, cannot be entirely damaging, partly because of the brilliance of artistic performance which gathered audiences in the theatre for five successive seasons.<sup>18</sup>

Together with thinking of dramatic conflict in terms of class-struggle, the new mould demanded a reshuffling of accents which would bring to the fore 'the role of the people in history.' Alexander Shurbanov has written about the use of minor personages in Shakespeare, characteristic of communist readings of his plays.<sup>19</sup> Usually referred to by critics as 'clowns' or 'fools', these characters belong to a lower stratum of society and are endowed with a kind of earthly common-

<sup>16</sup> Svoboda Buchvarova, 'Romeo i Zhulieta na Stsenata na Narodnia Teatur Krustyu Sarafov' ('*Romeo and Juliet* on the Stage of the Krustyu Sarafov National Theatre'), *Rabotnichesko Delo*, 290, 17 October, 1954.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> From the point of view of the more dynamically developing theatre in western Europe this manner of presentation became old-fashioned already at the end of the 1950ies. However, in many east European countries there was a tendency to preserve this essentially pre-war style because of the new conservatism which set itself at many places. It seems that it sometimes also served as a sign of a lost but not forgotten past, associated with a different political system. In an interesting article entitled 'Hamlet in postwar Czech theatre' published in *Foreign Shakespeare*, (ed. Dennis Kennedy, Cambridge University Press, 1993, pp.195-210.) Jarka Burian comments on the first set of reasons and concludes that '... Czech productions have been notable for their relatively conservative, traditional (some might say outdatedly conventional) orientation ...The fact that they have shown relatively more fidelity to their source than have other postwar productions in Europe may owe something to the after-effects of Socialist Realism, to a long affinity with a Stanislavskian acting tradition, and to a cultural tradition that values reason and moderation above impulse, passion, subjectivity' (pp. 208-209).

<sup>19</sup> A. Shurbanov, 'Hamlet's Gravediggers ... of Capitalism: Marxist Overinterpretation of Minor Personages in Shakespeare', in *Britain and Europe*, eds. Ludmila Kostova, Margaret Dobing, Nick Wadham-Smith, John-Allen Payne, pp. 117-121.

sense or wisdom. The aesthetics of the communist period has regularly sentimentalised and presented them as full-blooded motheads of popular sentiment.

The gravediggers in *Hamlet* who acquired jocular notoriety among students as 'the gravediggers of capitalism' were seriously discussed by critics as such, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, the Porter in *Macbeth*, the Fool in *King Lear* were often interpreted as paragons of virtue, the people at its most progressive.<sup>20</sup> Mercutio, Friar Laurence and other marginal characters, though not exactly part of the people, belong to the phalanx of Progressive Intellectuals who have denied their class. There came a moment though, when the lavish presence of 'the people' had its fatal effects on the Great Heroic Concept of Shakespearean drama. The people struck back.

Three directors have had a formative effect on the Shakespeare productions in Bulgaria from the 1950s onwards: Vili Tsankov, Leon Daniel and Luben Grois.

Tsankov's productions include, *Richard II* (1964), *Romeo and Juliet* (1953,1966), *Titus Andronicus* (1975), *Richard III* (1979), *Hamlet* (1956, 1983), to mention only a few. Except for his debut in 1953 with *Romeo and Juliet* which was praised as a realistic 'hymn to the dying traditions of feudalism'<sup>21</sup> one can map out a consistent line of the development of a style very different from what the review implies. Tsankov, always elegant and precise, decentered the hero, reduced him in stature, mathematically stylised gesture, posture, scene sequence, speech, detached his characters from the beauties of 'high poetry'. The choice of plays, some of which had been little or never performed until he staged them (like *Richard II* and *Titus Andronicus*), clearly spell out his interest in the nature and workings of power. Yet, he refuses to turn his tyrants into out-and-out feudal villains. The abundance of characters on the stage, the repetition of scenes, the detachment, bring about a new dimension to 'the role of the people' in his productions. The latter disturbingly begins to appear as an accomplice to the crimes of the tyrant. More and more often critics speak of the productions as 'sounding very modern in the way they divulge the roots of evil and the abuse of power'.<sup>22</sup> In the cool rituals of Tsankov's Shakespeares the audiences recognised the Asiatic ritualism of their own world meant to hide the widening gap between the people and those who ruled it as well as the complicity of silence.

Luben Grois, whose early death brought to an early end a brilliant artistic career, created a Shakespeare with emotional finesse and depth. Whether in tragedy, (*Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*) or comedy (*The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*), or the romances (*The Winter's Tale*), he probed into the the isolation of characters in the world surrounding them. His own professional life was blighted by political censorship which kept him as little known as possible by allowing very few reviews of his productions to be published and by keeping him away from the capital. He concentrated his attention on the life of the character with 'a mark on his forehead' (in Bulgarian this means being singled out as the black sheep, ostracised) and the way social pressure destroys nobility and love. His *Othello* was not a Moor but a man with just one a black spot on the forehead, and so was Shylock. Both characters were only temporarily integrated into society, used as far as they were needed, and then discarded. Grois definitely preferred the comic world, with its rich texture of characters and with the greater versatility of situations to which it lends itself. The labelled character (some mark on the face or costume) was a way of suggesting a complexity of readings. 'Are characters what their labels suggest they are? How far is the label consistent with the character? Is it at all true to it?' While Tsankov's productions tended to analyse power in texts where it is the main theme, Grois showed it infiltrating the fibres of the social organism down to the most personal and intimate, the joke, the gesture, the friendly prank. His Shakespeare had an emotionally rich language, and the dynamics of his productions prompted discrepancies creeping into the social harmonies. In the midst of joy and merriment lurked the shadow of the character with a mark on his forehead, the one pushed to the margins because of his difference.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-118.

<sup>21</sup> N. Bozduganov, 'Romeo i Zhulieta na stsenata na Rusenskiya Narodni teatur' ('*Romeo and Juliet* on the stage of the Rousse Popular Theatre'), *Dunavska Pravda*, 30, 5 February, 1954.

<sup>22</sup> A. Stoyanov, 'Nova postanovka na klasicheska tvorba' ('A new production of a classical work'), *Rabotnichesko Delo*, 26 February, 1979.

Leon Daniel's Shakespeareana is particularly impressive, with about twenty productions and a landmark *Hamlet* in 1965.<sup>23</sup> Some critics believe that this production changed the course of Shakespeare stage history in Bulgaria. The set consisted of a shabby circus-like tent with a mixture of costumes and property which looked as if collected at the very last moment. The great tragedy spoke directly to the audience in the frank, familiar voice of the street, about a tyranny easily recognisable as Stalin's regime of the previous decades. Most of the prersonages were driven to a state of submissive apathy, entirely motivated by fear and self-interest. Hamlet, the only human being of some conscience, verbally aggressive and totally disorientated in his violence, moved in a spiritual void. He was even deprived of the final act of revenge, for Claudius took his own life leaving the hero morally and physically helpless in the face of evil. This pattern, like Tsankov's and Grois's, also completely disregarded critical impositions. Instead of the 'Hero' of socialist realism a pathetic ineffectual intellectual, wading a sea of depravity which smothered him, walked the stage. Hamlet stepped down from his heights to become 'one of us', not the elect few 'us' of the critic who had claimed oneness with Shakespeare only a year before that, but 'us' sitting in the audience as desperate and guilty as the Prince himself.

In *Romeo and Juliet* (1971) Daniel drastically transformed Friar Laurence from the expected 'Renaissance humanist and materialist' into the villain of the play who had enmeshed the lovers in intrigue and double-dealing. History less and less looked like an orderly cause-and-effect, class-struggle-motivated text-book affair. It was filled with the personal interests of those who had power and who acted under the disguise of decent motives.

The general politicised scheme began to crumble as more voices and styles were imbibed by the theatre. And though no one in Bulgaria could imagine in the 1980s that the Berlin Wall might fall or the Soviet Union disintegrate, the theatre had found a voice and power capable of challenging monistic control in spite of the ever-shifting degrees of censorship. A new critical generation had also appeared which was no more united under one banner. Modernity was stirring the spirits of Bulgaria until finally it burst out in 1989. For a while the sound of the explosion overcame the very memories of communist aesthetics. The new generation of directors and actors regaled in their newly gained freedom which sometimes brinked on absurdity<sup>24</sup> Today, eight years later, in the depths of economic depression, Bulgaria has had time to regain the memories of the past and start coping with the legacy of communism. Under the rubble of the 'dreams factory' new Shakespearean shapes come to life. Their faces are many, some distorted like the materially shrunk and disorientated world around them, others sophisticated and philosophical. In the eruption of post-1989 heteroglossia Shakespeare's plays are again in the centre of the quest of aesthetic, ethical, social and personal positions. Yet, in the spate of interpretaions and styles it is impossible to discern a discourse which a large group of the Bulgarian audience can identify with. The theatre has lost its subversiveness and many of its old directors which made it a proponent of a shared cause. It is again, happily, a place of entertainment, so much so that one wonders if we are already living in Arcadia or are simply badly concussed by the undeclared war (which might be the other name for the transition from communism in some parts of eastern Europe). Political aesthetics is dead and the resultant swing to the flagrantly apolitical is one of the reflexes of 'the shape and body of the time'. Shakespeare, once again, walks in the guise of a contemporary. Or might this be a disguise?

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<sup>23</sup> I wish to thank Alexander Shurbanov for letting me use the manuscript of his unpublished paper presented at the 6th World Shakespeare Congress, Los Angeles, 1996. Here I closely follow his discussion of Daniel's *Hamlet*.

<sup>24</sup> In the elation of the new freedom many Bulgarian theatres rushed to make up for past prohibitions. The 1990 and 1991 seasons were marked by a surprising number of productions of absurdist plays, a short-lived excitement which came to an absurd climax when one could choose among four Ionesco or Beckett plays on the same night in Sofia, two neighbouring theatres showing sometimes the same play, as happened with Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* running parallel at the Army Theatre and the Sulza i Smyah which are a hundred meters from each other.

## At the Damsel's feet: Translation and Decorum in a nineteenth-century *Hamlet*

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Any assessment of a translation of a text culturally so central as *Hamlet* will almost inevitably rest on an awareness of the expectations generated by one of the broadest, weightiest and more diversified critical receptions ever. And, if the critical consequence of *Hamlet* is overwhelming, its more strictly literary consequence is no less so, as proved by the many texts from different genres, traditions and periods which display intertextual links with *Hamlet*. Such intertexts, in their number and variety, fully confirm *Hamlet's* status as 'a classic', in the sense in which Gianfranco Contini proposed it years ago - as a text whose authority and vitality derive from its eminent 'citability' and 'memorability'<sup>1</sup>.

*Hamlet* thus comes to us inevitably refracted<sup>2</sup> through a multiplicity of other texts, of other readings - to an important extent, of other translations, if we endorse the notion of a basic coextension of the acts of reading and translating. As is well known, this is a point on which several authors have insisted - that, since all acts of communication are instances of translation, 'reading is already translation', whilst translation proper is 'translation for the second time'<sup>3</sup>. Such a notion is, of course, akin to an understanding of reading as producing rather than uncovering meaning, and of translation as the form of reading which manifests that understanding at its most characteristic<sup>4</sup>

This also reminds us that the plethora of other readings which will intertextually inform my 'production of meaning' for a late 19th-century version of *Hamlet* will include, in the foreground, other Portuguese translations of the play - almost all of them more recent than the one in question. The refraction effected by those other translations may entail for the present-day reader of the 19th-century version a sense of strangeness or foreignness, deceived as he will be in his expectations of 'sameness'. What is meant by this is that, *Hamlet* being the Shakespearean tragedy which was more often translated into Portuguese, its 'citability' and 'memorability' will strongly depend on the tradition instituted by such translations. In other words, the reader will expect to find, for some passages at least, versions which will have become emblematic of this play in his/her cultural memory, and consequently be led to judge other versions (other readings) as deviant or inadequate - a scrutiny of the translator's options which, as André Lefevere pointed out some years ago, is particularly strict for culturally central texts<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Contini, Gianfranco 1979: Dante e a Memória Poética. *Intertextualidades - Poétique* 27, trad. Clara Crabbé Rocha. Coimbra, Alameda: (77-107) 80.

<sup>2</sup> On the notion of 'refraction' in translation studies, see Lefevere, André 1985: Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with Interpretation, and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm. Hermans, Theo ed. 1985: *The Manipulation of Literature*. London, Croom Helm.

<sup>3</sup> Gadamer, Hans Georg: To What Extent Does Language Prescribe Thinking?, cited by Biguenet, John and Schulte, Rainer eds. 1989: *The Craft of Translation*. Chicago, The Univ. of Chicago Press: ix. See also Barnstone, Willis 1993: *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*. New Haven and London, Yale U.P.: 7, 19, 22.

<sup>4</sup> See Biguenet and Schulte eds. 1989: x; also Barnstone 1993: 7, *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Lefevere, André ed. 1992: *Translation / History / Culture: A Sourcebook*. London, Routledge: 70.

We should thus be on the alert lest the late-20th century reader's PRIVILEGE of retrospection when considering a century-old translation, intertextually mediated by a dozen other translations and by a weighty literary-critical consequence, turn into the ABUSE of an a-historical and anachronistic view. It will not be a purpose of this paper to exploit, as humourous 'curiosities', the consequences of historical distance as seen in the use of the lexicon or in the socio-linguistic register of many passages. My aim will be rather to reinforce an awareness of how ineluctably historical any reading is, of how elusive an attempt to produce the 'definitive' or 'neutral' translation would be.

The version of *Hamlet* in question has the peculiarity of having been written by a monarch - King Luiz I of Portugal, who first published this translation in 1877 (I will, however, be referring to the 1880 second edition). It should be added that this was not an isolated venture, since Dom Luiz was also a translator of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello* and *Richard III*. These translations have been regularly reprinted, with modernised spelling, and not always in such a way as to make the non-specialised reader aware, from the outset, of their rather remote dates of first publication. However, many features of the text should gradually make that obvious, in particular semantic shifts which have had a catachretic effect - involving words which in nineteenth-century usage had a markedly different meaning from that which they came to have. An instance of this occurs in Act I, Scene III, which might surprise the present-day reader with a seemingly not-so-innocent Ophelia rather aptly comparing Laertes's departing advice, and its effect on her, to a contraceptive -

LAERTES

Be wary then; best safety lies in fear;  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else  
near.

OPHELIA

I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep  
As watchman to my heart.

LAERTES

Sê, pois, circumspecta, a melhor  
protecção é o receio do perigo; a  
juventude é para is mesma um perigo,  
se não trava luta com outros maiores.

OPHELIA

Em meu coração encerrarei, como um  
preservativo, a tua salutar lição.

(*HAMLET I-3: 43-6*)<sup>6</sup>

- the translator's choice, for the original 'watchman', of the word 'preservativo' (literally, 'that which preserves') having been rendered unacceptable by the fact that it has become, in twentieth-century usage, the Portuguese word for the commonest of contraceptives.

This is, however, no more than an instance of several incidental occurrences which highlight the historical distance of King Luiz's version, but do not, in their proper context, detract from the translator's competence: time, not the translator, has made them catachretic, or in any other way inadequate. It should be added that, in general terms, the translation comes across as a careful and scrupulous one, guided by coherently followed strategies. Patterns of discourse, in particular those which represent specific social relationships, are usually transposed to the target language in ways which we could broadly describe under Eugene Nida's famous notion of 'dynamic equivalence' (i.e., the production in the target language of a relationship between utterance and reader which will be identical to a similar relationship in the source language)<sup>7</sup>. This strategy does, of course, strongly date this translation when (for instance) amounts of money, or other historically changeable quantitative references are at stake.

More significant, however, are the ways in which the same strategy will put in evidence the inevitable role played by the translator's values in determining the meanings in Shakespeare's text - or, in even more precise terms, the ways in which (intentionally or otherwise) the translator's ethical

<sup>6</sup> Hibbard, G. R. ed. 1994: *William Shakespeare: Hamlet*. Oxford, O.U.P.; Bragança, D.Luiz trad. 1880: *William Shakespeare, Hamlet - drama em cinco actos*. Segunda edição. Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional. Henceforth cited only by Act, Scene and line/page numbers.

<sup>7</sup> See Bassnett, Susan 1991: *Translation Studies*. revised edition. London, Routledge: 26.

and political standpoint elides (or eludes) meanings it cannot accommodate. This is in the least surprising when a king translates a tragedy which (amongst many other things) rather prominently concerns power and revenge - and, as a consequence of their intersection, enacts circumstances such as regicide, usurpation, treason, political murder, and a set of decisions and attitudes rather uncertainly placed between political prudence and timidity, diplomacy and intrigue.

To do justice to King Luiz, such circumstances often survive in his version in most of their crudeness. But this acknowledgment will only render even more conspicuous and surprising the cases when they do not. An instance of a rather blatant, and hardly accidental, evasion occurs when Hamlet, soon after killing Polonius, is visited by his 'friends' Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, sent on an errand to try and find out where he has hidden the corpse. At the height of his 'antic disposition', Hamlet answers their questions with some cryptic statements which include the words: 'The king is a thing' - to which, faced with their bafflement, he will add: 'Of nothing' (IV-2: 26-8). As any annotated edition of the play promptly explains, this passage contains an allusion to Psalm 144: 4, 'Man is like a thing of nought, his time passeth away like a shadow' - an allusion justified by Polonius's unforeseen death (which could have been the king's, had he been the eavesdropper in Gertrude's closet), as an instance of 'uncreation' and of the triumph of the inert over the living. Prior to summoning this biblical intertext, however, Hamlet's words cast an obvious slur on the king's status and dignity. Dom Luiz translates 'The king is a thing' as 'O rei é uma creatura' (IV-2, p.100; literally, 'the king is a creature') - a choice which neutralises the passage's pejorative import, as well as the ensuing verbal and conceptual play. It is true that the demeaning intention will be preserved immediately below, when the passage 'Of nothing' is rendered as 'Uma creatura que nada vale' ('a creature worth nothing'). However, it cannot but be suspected that the substitution of the 'creature' for the 'thing' may have corresponded to a perception that the limits of a political decorum would have been crossed with a description of a royal figure as 'a thing' - no matter how little there is to be admired in such a king as Claudius.

Another instance of this potentially difficult relationship of the royal translator to the political implications of *Hamlet* comes in one of the most quoted passages in the play - precisely when, towards the end of Act I, Scene IV, and faced with the ghost of old Hamlet, Marcellus remarks that 'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark' (I-4: 65). King Luiz chooses to translate this as 'Algum vício ha na constituição da Dinamarca' (I-4, p.30; literally, 'Something is wrong in the constitution of Denmark'), a rendering which most Portuguese readers today would probably find far-fetched. The reasons for that lie, first of all, in the fact that this famous passage comes to the reader refracted by better-known, and more recent versions of *Hamlet* which almost invariably maintain the image of rottenness and - even more important in determining the reader's probable surprise - render 'the state' as 'o reino' (literally, the kingdom, or the realm). Since there is nothing culture-specific about the metaphor of organic decay when applied to the ills of the body politic one has to infer that it was the translator's sense of decorum - political or merely socio-linguistic - that led him to evade a more literal rendering of the first three words. We cannot, in this case, suspect the translator of wanting to censor an association of rottenness with kingship, since (as pointed out above) the Portuguese reader's assumption of that association originates in other translations, rather than in Shakespeare's text. But we can and must remark that Dom Luiz's choice of the 'constituição' as the site for whatever is wrong is evidence of a perspective on power which prefers to lay the blame for the faults of power on an abstract and diffuse entity, and that even his choice of the word 'vício' (for fault or flaw) can give the sentence legalistic overtones. It is true that this constitutional monarch is not using the word 'constituição' in the sense of the fundamental law, a written statute embodying the basic political principles of the state - the sense in which it would more often be taken in Portuguese - but it is no less true that he means by it the structuring aspects of power, those that are constitutive rather than conjunctural or incidental. On the contrary, 'state' is employed in this passage of Shakespeare's text to name a use or a consequence of power in a specific time and set of circumstances - those which follow the death of the protagonist's father. The appearance of his ghost, which prompts Marcellus's remark, signifies an incapacity to enjoy 'eternal rest' which, in itself, is a symptom of dis-order, of un-rule, and fosters the doubts felt by Hamlet and his friends as to the legitimacy of the new ruler.

As to the translator King, it is not only within the scope of a political decorum that he is haunted by circumstances which are potentially transgressive of his values. Although it does not seem to be a systematic practice, instances of bowdlerisation may occur in Luiz de Bragança's translation of scatological imagery (III-4: 114), of laughter-inducing language directed at matters of great ethical gravity - such as the clowns' discussion of the moral implications of suicide, at the beginning of Act V - or, maybe even more characteristically, of sexual imagery and innuendo.

In this respect, the verbal representation of Hamlet's disgust with the marriage of his recently-widowed mother to his uncle will be subject to some decorous rephrasing, as when Hamlet urges his mother: 'go not to my uncle's bed' (III-4: 155) - a passage which King Luiz abridges to 'evite meu tio' (III-4, p.93; literally, 'avoid my uncle'). Hamlet's dialogues with Ophelia also seem to involve difficulties, both social and sexual. To begin with, the translator hesitates as to the adequate forms of address to be employed between the prince and the damsel, daughter to one of the king's advisers - such forms being always couched in the Portuguese third person singular (as a courteous form of address), but varying in register from the more formal 'Vossa Alteza' ('Your Highness') to slightly more familiar alternatives. Occasionally, such variations prove instrumental in characterising changes in emotional register between the two characters, as in their longest presence on stage together as spectators to the play-within-the-play.

It is precisely in this scene that we find the passage which best reveals King Luiz's unease as a translator of the Hamlet/Ophelia exchanges:

HAMLET Lady, shall I lie in your lap?	HAMLET Ser-me-ha permitido estar a vossos pés, senhora?
OPHELIA No, my lord.	OPHELIA Não, meu senhor.
HAMLET I mean, my head upon your lap.	HAMLET Quero dizer, recostar a cabeça sobre vossos joelhos.
OPHELIA Ay, my lord.	OPHELIA Sim, meu senhor.
HAMLET Do you think I meant country matters?	HAMLET Pensaveis talvez que tivesse outra idéa?
OPHELIA I think nothing, my lord.	OPHELIA Nada pensava.
HAMLET That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.	HAMLET É um pensamento este digno de um coração de donzella.
OPHELIA What is, my lord?	OPHELIA O que, senhor?
HAMLET No-thing.	HAMLET Nada.
OPHELIA You are merry, my lord.	OPHELIA Vejo-o hoje alegre, senhor.

(HAMLET III-2: 104-13 / p.73)

Hamlet is making himself comfortable to watch the performance when he asks the question which opens this exchange. The innuendo is obvious, Ophelia's 'lap' being a synecdoche for her body as an object of desire. King Luiz renders that question as (literally) 'Shall I be allowed to lie at your feet, madam?': from this point onwards the dialogue will hardly make sense in this Portuguese version. In the original, after Ophelia's curt (presumably offended) negative Hamlet will counter: 'I mean, my head upon your lap' - a clarification which, by removing or (at least) making the sexual innuendo less obvious, will obtain Ophelia's consent. As to king Luiz's version, it will go on avoiding the maid's 'lap' - but will get closer to it by a few inches: 'Quero dizer, recostar a cabeça sobre vossos joelhos (literally, 'I mean, to lay my head upon your knees'). Which means that what in Shakespeare's text was a movement of retreat after the initial lewd suggestion, in this translation actually becomes an advance .... But how can the reader understand that the damsel who prudishly said 'no' to her prince's wish to lie at her feet should now say 'yes' to his offer to lay his head on her knees? Hamlet's ensuing question will make even less sense: 'Pensaveis talvez que tivesse outra idéa?' (literally, 'Maybe you thought I had something else in mind?'): what indecent proposal could Ophelia

suspect to be lurking behind the initial question? But the major instance of decorous rephrasing is yet to come. In the original, on hearing Ophelia declare that she ‘thinks nothing’, Hamlet remarks: ‘That’s a fair thought to lie between a maid’s legs’ - a once more deliberately ambiguous utterance, set halfway between the notion that the beauty of the thought would lie in taking the position so graphically described, and the suggestion that ‘no-thing’ is what one would expect to find there. And how does our royal translator deal with this?: ‘É um pensamento este digno de um coração de donzella (literally, ‘That’s a thought worthy of a damsel’s heart’). In brief, by wanting to evade the dangerous synecdoche of the ‘lap’, Luiz de Bragança generates (albeit inadvertently) an insinuating movement from Ophelia’s feet to her knees - but promptly circumvents the implications of that anatomically rising motion and proceeds straight to the heart, a chaste translation as the site of feeling of what was very explicitly, in Shakespeare’s text, the site of sexuality.

In such a passage King Luiz would seem to agree with Antoine Houdar de la Motte, the French translator of the *Iliad* who, by the early 18th century, was claiming in the preface to his translation to have ‘taken the liberty of changing whatever [he] thought disagreeable’ in Homer’s text; or even with Nicolas Perrot d’Ablancourt when, also in the preface to his translation of a classic, he proudly admitted to having ‘left out what was too filthy and softened what was too free’<sup>8</sup>. He proceeded with remarks on how he meant to adapt the author’s words to the taste of his time - much in the same way as (again in d’Ablancourt’s words) ‘ambassadors usually dress in the fashion of the country they are sent to, for fear of appearing ridiculous in the eyes of the people they try to please’<sup>9</sup>. As the ‘embassy’ simile makes clear, these remarks, to the extent that they are rooted in a sense of decorum, are evidently akin to some of the most transparent concerns in King Luiz’s version. At the same time they correspond to a clear option for one of the strategies which Friedrich Schleiermacher would propose in an 1813 essay which would prove extremely influential, and has in recent years been much re-valued within translation studies<sup>10</sup>. According to Schleiermacher, the translator, in his effort to bring reader and author together, could opt for one of two methods: either he took the reader over to the author, by producing a translation which preserved the ‘foreign’ marks of the text, as a way of not depriving the reader of an awareness of its unfamiliarity; or he brought the author to the reader, by delivering a text which might originally have been written in the target language.

It is clearly the latter - and much commoner - method that King Luiz I adopts for his *Hamlet*, but he does it in such a way as to bring to mind what Lawrence Venuti called, a few years ago, ‘the violence of translation’:

The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political.

11

Explicitly citing Schleiermacher’s distinction, Venuti emphasises that a domesticating strategy results in a concealment of precisely those social and cultural features which it would be a prime function of translation to make evident - thus producing sameness where there should be difference.

In the utterly disinterested spirit in which he decided to translate some of Shakespeare’s best-known plays, one can hardly suspect Dom Luiz de Bragança of consciously producing a normalised and thus impoverished version of Shakespeare’s text. But, in some passages of his *Hamlet*, he allowed himself as a translator to annul or inflect utterances which deviated from his own ethical, political and social norms - deviations which, as his ‘corrections’ also suggest, he felt would detract from the dignity of characters to be preserved as admirable. By thus imposing his identity on the text of *Hamlet*, he manages to give his version a fair degree of coherence - as it becomes, undisguisably,

<sup>8</sup> Lefevre 1992: 28-9, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Lefevre 1992: 36-7.

<sup>10</sup> Schleiermacher, Friedrich 1813: Ueber die verschiedenen Methoden des Uebersetzens. Störig, Hans Joachim herausg. 1973: *Das Problem des Übersetzens*. Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: 38-70.

<sup>11</sup> Venuti, Lawrence 1995: *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London, Routledge: 18.

the work of a royal figure in late nineteenth-century Portugal; but, in this very datedness, it also becomes a case in point for the relevance of an ever-renewable commitment to deliver new readings (new translations).

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## Rosalind in Jeans: Christine Edzard's Film Version of *As You Like It*

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Nowadays, when Shakespearean film adaptations are enjoying a moment of immense popularity at the box office, students of Shakespeare on screen may compare three very different productions of *As You Like It* available on the video market.<sup>1</sup> The first version, directed by Paul Czinner in 1936, stars a very young Laurence Olivier in the role of Orlando and is set in an elaborate stage forest with real animals. Described by one critic as “the model of what any school production might hope to achieve” (McKernan and Terris 1994: 38), the film suffers from a heavy dependence on late Victorian styles of stage performance which are incompatible with the requirements of the film medium. The second version, one of the first-season plays in the BBC Television Shakespeare series, was shot in Glamis Castle in 1978 and presents the characters struggling their way through in a real wood and brushing away flies while they speak. Television’s demand for realism is clearly at odds with the spirit of the play and the harsh tone of most of its reviews indicates that the critics’ initial hopes concerning the BBC project were shattered from the very start (Jorgens 1979; Kimbrough 1979; Bulman 1988). The third screen version, which will be the subject of the present paper, was directed by British film director Christine Edzard in 1992 and, unlike other recent Shakespearean adaptations such as Zeffirelli’s *Hamlet* (1990) or Branagh’s *Much Ado about Nothing* (1993), had a very restricted distribution and, apart from a few Shakespeare festivals, has not been commercially released in the United States.

Quickly dismissed by an infuriated reviewer as “the *ugliest* production of the play imaginable” (Errigo 1992: 38; her emphasis), Edzard’s film does not locate Arden in an intemporal landscape; instead, her version is deliberately set in contemporary London, which allows her to elaborate a parable on the condition of *post-Thatcherite Britain*. The court scenes have been shot in the foyer of a government building or, rather, a financial corporation in the heart of the City. Its bare walls and long corridors reflect luxury, sophistication and corruption, whereas impressive classical-style columns become emblems of the connection among cultural prestige, ruthless moneymaking and power. Orlando will lean on one of these columns while he is telling his misfortunes to Adam and, later, in the confrontation with Oliver, his brother will do the same when imposing his authority on him. The echoes of distant footsteps and mobile phones are the only sounds which we are allowed to hear in this empty world. Likewise, a lavish cocktail party constitutes the background to the initial scenes at court and also serves as a poignant counterpoint to the frugal, scanty meal shared by those living in the forest.

Arden, the metaphor for what Northrop Frye called “the green world” (182-183), is here transferred to an urban wasteland in Rotherhithe, a district on the south bank of the river Thames close to Docklands, one of the poorest London areas in the past and now a fashionable place for the yuppies of the eighties. The Arden we see in the film is a portion of muddy and barren land enclosed by the river and the walls of dilapidated warehouses, soon to be engulfed by menacing-looking construction cranes looming in the horizon. Birds have flown away and the sounds that we associate with this place are not idyllic: incessant traffic, electric drills and the noise of planes, the latter a familiar experience to those who have watched a performance in the recent Globe Playhouse, not

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Culture (DGICYT, PS94-0106) for funding the research carried out for the writing of this paper.

very far from the actual location of the film. Instead of the mirth that we sense in Shakespeare's play, its inhabitants are deprived people and social dropouts such as the ones we come across every night when, after enjoying a comfortable seat at the National Theatre, we rush towards a parking place or Waterloo Underground Station. All references to Robin Hood and the idea of a *Merrie Olde England* are omitted in Edzard's adaptation; indeed, as John Carey has remarked, "setting it amidst modern dereliction, [the director] is faithful to [Touchstone's] disillusionment" (12). Critics such as H. R. Coursen have strongly objected to the identification of Arden with a building site in London (31) but we must bear in mind that Edzard's social metaphor develops C. L. Barber's assertion that Arden "is a region defined by an attitude of liberty from ordinary limitations" (223). In fact, one of the strengths of her film is the contrast between Shakespeare's language and the reality it depicts. Thus, for instance, when Duke Senior utters the line "Come, shall we go and kill us venison?" (II.1.21),<sup>2</sup> the camera shows us a tramp cutting slices of ham wrapped up in a polyethylene preservation bag, a recurrent motif in the film. The banquet prepared for Duke Senior and his exiled court in II.7 is set out on a plank and cardboard boxes, and we can clearly see that it merely consists of Kellogg's Cornflakes and Rice Krispies. In the same scene, the sword that Orlando hides (II.7.119) turns out to be a pocketknife. The enraged critic certainly missed the point when she complained that the film slipped "into pure Monty Python territory when a vagrant is required to drag along a lone ewe on a lead so that he can be safely addressed as 'Shepherd'" (Errigo 1992: 38); instead, the uprooted trees and the surrounding desolation imply that the other sheep have either escaped or died because of the bulldozers. Christine Edzard has previously directed television adaptations of *Little Dorrit* (1987) and *The Fool* (1990), based on Henry Mayhew's works, and her nightmarish modern version of Arden has strong reminiscences of the Victorian debate on the Two Nations.

*As You Like It* is a play concerned with themes of theatricality, performance and role-playing. The opening sequence of the film shows Edward Fox in the character of Jaques delivering the famous speech on the Seven Ages of Man (II.7.139-166) in a great hall profusely decorated with mirrors. Initially he appears through a window, captured by the camera in a medium shot that expresses his isolation and detachment "from the society he both shuns and seeks" (Crowl 1993: 41). The fact that Rosalind will be first presented in a similar shot on the edge of a window establishes a close connection between these two characters that will be explored throughout the film. As he moves around, his figure is reflected on the mirrors, window panes and shiny surfaces of the hall, while we also catch occasional glimpses of his shadow, thus creating different perspectives that underline the theme of relativity. Moreover, all court characters seem to be imprisoned in a golden cage and the multiplicity of their images on the mirrors reminds us of the well-known sequence in Orson Welles' *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947).

Wolfgang Iser has coherently argued that the prevailing perception of *As You Like It* is the double and that speech acts symbolize the conflicts of doubles foretelling the failure of usurpation in the political sphere through the domination of the implied and unspoken over the articulated. Apart from the mirrors, the dialectic court/country, old/young, male/female, evil/good and reality/fantasy is greatly enhanced by the use of doubling in Edzard's film: Andrew Tiernan, well-known for his performance of Gaveston in Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (1991), plays Orlando and Oliver (in fact, when the latter arrives in Arden, his dirty clothes and dishevelled hair make him hardly distinguishable from his brother); Don Henderson the two Dukes; Roger Hammond is both sophisticated Le Beau and simple Corin, and the scene where the affected courtier winks at the astonished shepherd constitutes one of the very few visual jokes in this otherwise serious version of the play. When we reach II.7 in the film Jaques will repeat the Seven Ages speech again; the presence of the homeless members of the exiled court and the entrance of Adam, not at the end of the passage, but as Jaques is about to describe the last stage of life, increase the poignancy of their plight and justify Edzard's decision to cut Duke Senior's lines on the golden past (II.7.120-123).

The use of disguise is also connected with this process of doubling in the film. Not only do Rosalind's new clothes —jeans, a hooded sweatshirt jacket and a black stocking cap, so typical of many adolescents, both male and female, nowadays— help her to develop her personality, but also

<sup>2</sup> All references are to the Arden edition of the play, edited by Agnes Latham.

her attire closely resembles Orlando's. One critic has pointed out that, "in order to suggest the androgynous dimension of the characterization of Rosalind, Shakespeare provides within the play three special audiences for her playing: Celia, Orlando, and Phebe" (Kimbrough 1982: 23). Edzard's Rosalind, however, is given a further androgynous dimension by repeatedly having the camera frame her from behind in long shots, which makes it rather difficult for the spectator to differentiate them until we hear their voices. Besides, the director cuts much of the dialogue in situations involving several characters and prefers to concentrate on the moments when Rosalind addresses only one person, that is, Orlando, Celia, Jaques and Phebe, the camera excluding Silvius from the frame while Rosalind/Ganymede speaks to her.

The sense of friendship and intimacy between Rosalind and Celia is also emphasized in the film. This is not really a new element, since recent performances have tended to stress that point, especially in the 1985 Royal Shakespeare Company production in modern dress, directed by Adrian Noble and starring Juliet Stevenson as Rosalind and Fiona Shaw as Celia. Nevertheless, a very physical closeness is elaborated by Edzard in the scene when both friends decide to escape to Arden: the camera shows them lying together on a sofa and slowly approaches until we see one of the very rare closeups of the film (the others are mostly associated with Rosalind and Orlando). Likewise, the scenes involving Rosalind and Celia on their own are usually filmed inside a hut in medium shots, whereas other characters in Arden are always framed in full or even very long shots that reinforce their sense of isolation, like figures stranded in a sea of concrete. Those moments of personal intimacy between Celia and Rosalind also allow the latter to get out of her disguise occasionally in a manner that is strongly reminiscent of Vanessa Redgrave's famous performance in that role back in 1961<sup>3</sup> and, at the same time, the spectators are reminded of the notions of role-playing and theatricality in the play.

As we have previously considered, one important aspect of Edzard's adaptation is her decision to set the action of the play, not in a vaguely historical period, but in contemporary society. Modern dress productions are now widely accepted in stage performance but, in the case of Shakespeare on screen, they are rather exceptional. Apart from a few Shakespearean derivatives or "offshoots" (i.e., *Joe Macbeth*, Paul Mazursky's *Tempest* or *My Own Private Idaho*), the prevailing approach to filmed Shakespeare is what Jack Jorgens has termed "the realistic mode" (1991: 8-9), based on historical recreations and usually associated with Zeffirelli's films or Branagh's *Much Ado about Nothing*. Together with the very recent version of *Romeo and Juliet* (1996), Christine Edzard's adaptation of *As You Like It* certainly constitutes one case in point since it presents the usual disadvantages of this mode of filming. One of the possible problems is that the social parable as well as the setting in a very specific location greatly diminish the poetry and our sense of illusion. As Russell Jackson has rightly remarked, "[p]aradoxically, this film uses more of the text of its play and captures less of its spirit than other more radically adapted versions of the comedies" (1994: 102), which may validate the conviction that the most successful experiments in translating Shakespeare onto images on a screen are those which have taken extreme liberties with the original script. There are several moments of wordiness in the film that may distract the spectator from what is actually happening (Touchstone's long speeches in Act V are a good example). Instead of the wrestling match, Edzard prefers to focus on the reaction of the members of the court, but the brevity of that shot cannot justify Orlando's heavy panting. Perhaps the weakest scene in the whole film is the moment when Oliver arrives in Arden and tells Rosalind and Celia that Orlando has been wounded by a lioness (IV.3.98-156). Not only do we hear that long passage in its entirety but we are also shown a redundant flashback narrating that same story and, even worse, the snake and the lioness are miraculously converted into two petty thieves.

There are also some funny innovations, but they are somewhat disconnected. First of all, we may rest assured that Rosalind, Celia and Touchstone will not remain in Arden for long when we see the huge suitcases they carry as well as a few plastic bags containing articles bought at Laura Ashley and

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the words of praise from one contemporary review: "But when the sun shines, it shines full —most of all in those fleeting moments when Miss Redgrave escapes from her boy's disguise, snatches off her cap so that her hair tumbles like a flock of goldfinches into sunshine" (Lambert 1988: 238-239).

Liberty's. An instance that is particularly related in the film to contemporary popular culture is the scene when Orlando decides to write his love poems to Rosalind on the tree barks (III.2), but, since there are no trees in this modern version of Arden, he literally decorates the walls of the building site with colourful graffiti in her honour. Audrey becomes a snack van vendor and Phebe is transformed into a very present-day type of female adolescent wearing tights and specially fond of eating fish and chips. In fact, her letter to Ganymede is written on the oily piece of paper used to wrap up that food.

The mock-marriage scene between Rosalind/Ganymede and Orlando in IV.1 introduces a new, if somewhat pedestrian, visual metaphor in the film that will be fully articulated in its last sequence. The wedding takes place inside one of the polyethylene tents where the tramps lie huddled and that material will be progressively related to the spirit of the "forest". More than a physical location, we realize that Arden is a state of mind when, in the final multiple-wedding scene, as if by magic, all the exiles find themselves back in the great hall we have previously associated with the court. However, the impressive columns and huge mirrors are now covered with the transparent plastic used in the building site to provide shelter from the rain and the cold wind. Rosalind and Celia will also wear the same material in their wedding dresses in order to show to what extent the Arden experience has changed and developed their personalities. Unfortunately, that scene provides a very flat ending for the film since we only catch an ephemeral glimpse of the marriage of Rosalind and Orlando before we see the credits. The Hymen episode is omitted as there is no place for supernatural or divine intervention in such a contemporary situation. Jaques' parting words to the newlyweds are also consequently discarded and Rosalind's epilogue, so effective in most productions, is left out, mainly because Edzard feels that present-day audiences, used to conventions of naturalistic presentation, need not be reminded that women were played by boy actors in the Elizabethan period.<sup>4</sup> However, Rosalind's resourcefulness and presence of mind never abandon her in the film, not even after her meeting with her father and her wedding ceremony. In the mock-marriage it is she, to Orlando's surprise, who kisses him, and in the real one, when she tells her future husband "To you I give myself, for I am yours" (V.4.116), she fondly knocks him on his shoulder as if to make him aware of the role she has played. In the same way, one of the most incredible events of the play according to modern taste, the Duke's sudden religious conversion, is subtly dealt with by Edzard. Following a very frequent trend in contemporary cinema, the film does not properly end when we read the credits. Instead, a few scenes are interspersed among them and the reference to his conversion is included here. By the time we hear the tale from Jaques de Boys (V.4.150-165), most spectators will have certainly left the cinema and missed that unexpected episode. Thus, Edzard is faithful to the romantic element in the play while maintaining a sense of political pragmatism more in line with everyday reality. Another dark moment, Jaques' self-imposed exclusion from the general sense of festivity as he walks alone on the river bank, is reserved for the last shot of the film.

Christine Edzard's adaptation of *As You Like It* develops some fundamental issues of the condition of post-Thatcherite Britain, certainly at the expense of the comic elements of the play. Mainly addressed to the youngest members of an urban culture who face unemployment and a very uncertain future, its quick disappearance from commercial cinemas exemplifies the implicit problems of transferring Shakespeare to a new social context without editing or altering his language. One critic observed that, "like Phebe, [the film] is perhaps not for all markets" (Crowl 1993: 41), but I am sure that, given the growing impetus of Shakespeare on screen lately, a few years will suffice to view Edzard's version of the play from a critical perspective.

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<sup>4</sup> In his edition of the play, Alan Brissenden notes that, in modern productions, the line "If I were a woman" (V.4.214-215) is often changed to "If I were among you" (228).

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## “A Speechless Dialect”: Gender and Self-Recognition in *Measure for Measure*

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In his essay of 1913 “The Theme of the Three Caskets,” Sigmund Freud discusses two Shakespearean scenes in the light of their relevance to the constitution of a male subject of desire. The scene of the three caskets in *The Merchant of Venice* (1597), and the love confessions of Goneril, Regan, and Cordelia in *King Lear* (1605), allow Freud to undertake an analysis of myths and fairy tales that ends up in the following conclusion: the three caskets and the three daughters stand for three essential aspects of man’s individual history as it is influenced by woman. Freud’s final remarks centre on *King Lear*:

We might argue that what is represented here are the three inevitable relations that a man has with a woman —the woman who bears him, the woman who is his mate and the woman who destroys him; or that they are three forms taken by the figure of the mother in the course of a man’s life —the mother herself, the beloved one who is chosen after her pattern, and lastly the Mother Earth who receives him once more. But it is in vain that an old man yearns for the love of woman as he had it first from his mother; the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms. (301)

In Freud’s analysis, the three caskets become three daughters. These daughters undergo a further symbolic transformation whereby they become three aspects of the Mother in a man’s life. With dying Lear as paradigm, Freud recounts man’s individual history as one that moves from pre-Oedipal enjoyment through the resolution of the Oedipus complex to a final, agonising mourning of the Mother. Freud’s reading of Shakespeare’s plots stage a drama of male subjects as they are affected, haunted, and shaped by different representations of maternal females.<sup>1</sup>

At first sight, *Measure for Measure* (1604) looks like a reversal of this Freudian narrative. One may think of its main plot as the story of one woman —Isabella— whose life is influenced and changed by three men —Claudio, Angelo and the Duke. Furthermore, this woman appears to have, in Janet Adelman’s phrase, “fantasies of her own” (*Suffocating Mothers* 94). In the attempt to shun these fantasies, she has resolved to seek “a more strict restraint/Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Claire” (*Measure* 1.4.4-5). Isabella’s ordeal to save Claudio from death sketches a woman’s individual history as it is affected by three males: she progresses from innocent siblinghood with Claudio to the threat of sexuality in Angelo, to end up in Vincentio, in whom, as if he were a male version of Freud’s Cordelia, three dimensions of maleness converge: in disguise as a Friar, he is a Brother —the innocent brother that Claudio the sinner has ceased to be; as the mature man that undertakes agency in order to protect Isabella from Angelo’s sexual threat, he becomes a father-figure; finally, he imposes upon her as a husband made in the image and after the likeness of a Father that does not let her choose. In fact, Isabella never responds to the Duke’s marriage proposal. He speaks—

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of this issue in various Shakespearean plays, *Measure for Measure* included, see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 76-103. See also Jacqueline Rose, “Sexuality in the Reading of Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*” (Drakakis ed. *Alternative Shakespeares*. London: Methuen, 1985).

Dear Isabel,  
 I have a motion much imports you good,  
 Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,  
 What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine.  
 So bring us to our palace, where we'll show  
 What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know. (5.1.537-42)

—and so ends the play with no expectations of an answer. This dumbness is probably not so striking if viewed as the imposition of an all-demanding Father: Isabella remains silent because she is not even allowed to consent. A silent presence on stage is almost all she remains in the play, her agency in Claudio's release being just a mirage. As a matter of fact, the play's connections with the Freudian plot of the caskets is not one of reversal but allegiance: in *Measure for Measure* three aspects of the masculine subject, split into the three characters of Claudio, Angelo and the Duke, are tested against the object woman. Hence, far from conveying an inversion of the archetypal plot, the play is but a peculiar rendering of it. In a first stage, Isabella is to Claudio a kin who is not of necessity conceived of as object of desire; later, she acquires significance as a sexual object for another man —Angelo— in behalf of her brother; and finally, she becomes someone else's wife —the Duke's. Contrary to *Lear*, whose dependence upon the maternal female dooms him to a tragic *telos*, the tragicomic life of man in *Measure for Measure* stages woman first as his kin, then as his whore, and finally as his wife. In being all these at different moments along the play, Isabella remains there, herself being the three silent caskets, only to be opened, read, and interpreted in turns by each man.

However, and unlike *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*, *Measure for Measure* resists a reading in the manner of mythical narratives or fairy tales. Claudio, Angelo and the Duke are not like Arragon, Morocco and Bassanio, who find their lots written inside, awaiting a passive recognition. The fates of Portia's suitors have abided there for long; and they, like Oedipus, must simply come across the occasion that brings their destinies to light. This is why *The Merchant of Venice* becomes a suitable play for Freud's analysis. He can proceed in the same terms as he did with *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*: by analysing the *mythos* or narrative structure, the psychoanalyst recounts the history of an individual's desire. This narrative belongs within the symbolic order, and in it the characters' fates are ordained beforehand.<sup>2</sup> The moral fable in each casket tells them who they are. As opposed to this, *Measure for Measure* compels their male characters first to invent and then to cope with their own subjectivities. Only after they have taken a course of action shall they discover their own desires and individual histories in Isabella. They learn to read their own character —*ethos*— in her. And whatever that *ethos* consists of, it comes forth as a surprise. *Anagnorisis* is not in this play the emergence of a passive truth already inscribed in a mythical narrative but an unexpected discovery of self which derives from a specific course of action. That discovery makes Claudio and Angelo *equal*. What remains of this paper intends to trace the sexual nature of Claudio's and Angelo's self-recognitions as laid open by a passive —and ignorant— Isabella.

## 1

The first in opening the casket is Claudio. He has been sentenced to death by Angelo's strict usage of the law. As his own moral fable makes clear, his sin is lechery:

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<sup>2</sup> I use the concept of *mythos* or plot as Aristotle employs it in the sixth chapter of the *Poetics*. For Aristotle, *mythos* is the major constituent of drama, as it prevails over *ethos* or character, and *opsis* or spectacle. Marc Shell has studied the relevance of plot analysis in his account of sexuality and incest in *Measure for Measure*. See *The End of Kinship: Incest, Measure for Measure and the Ideal of Universal Siblinghood* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). The relevance of the Aristotelian concepts to the psychoanalytic criticism of Shakespeare was first sketched by Lupton and Reinhard, *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). A review and an extension of their findings, as well as an application to dramatic reception and the problem of incest in Renaissance drama, are undertaken in the first two chapters of my unpublished doctoral dissertation *Deseo y parentesco: Discursos del incesto en el drama inglés del Renacimiento* (Universidad de Sevilla: 1997).



On that sweet countenance: but *in that look*,  
*There speaketh so divine a continence*  
 As cuts off all lascivious, and vain hope.

(*The Duchess of Malfi* 1.1.189-200; emphasis added)

Be it desire or be it chaste thoughts what man wants to discover in woman, the symbolic order of discourse is dissolved in a silent presence that speaks. Herod's exclamation in Elizabeth Cary's *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1602-3) comprises a similar thought: "Can humane eyes be dazed by womans wit?" (4.7.140). Wit does not construct woman as subject of discourse but as an object of the male gaze. Woman can unwittingly "move," "persuade," "raise," "cut off," or "daze" man's desire; and only man can get to know such powers. Isabella's "speechless dialect" does not belong in the symbolic order of language, since that quality in her does not construct her as a subject of discourse either. On the contrary, it prepares the male characters and spectators to perceive her as spectacle, as the object of the gaze, in the Aristotelian dimension of *opsis*.<sup>4</sup>

## 2

Isabella remains ignorant of the reasons why her brother assigns such mission to her. She is reluctant to acknowledge her qualities as they are perceived by others. "Assay the power you have," demands Lucio, to which she retorts: "My power, alas, I doubt" (1.4.76-7). With such reluctance she attends her first interview with Angelo. There she must deploy her rhetorical weapons to plead for her brother's life. The deputy is alert though, and manages to defend the rightfulness of the law against Isabella's arguments. And when she discovers that mercy and emotions are not to prevail against ordinance, she appeals to Angelo's individual history:

Go to your bosom,  
 Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know  
 That's like my brother's fault; if it confess  
 A natural guiltiness, such as is his,  
 Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue  
 Against my brother's life. (2.2.138-43)

Isabella exhorts Angelo to ask his heart about its knowledge of "natural guiltiness." And her words obtain a first triumph over the deputy. Whatever Angelo finds there that resembles Claudio's crime, it urges in him a first aside of recognition: "She speaks, and 'tis/Such sense that my sense breeds with it" (2.2.144-45). What he apparently finds is an effect of Isabella's words, and the "sense" in them. However, there are two "senses" at stake here: "such sense" is the "sense" in Isabella's words, whereas Angelo's "sense" *breeds* —produces, conceives, procreates— as an effect of its coupling with Isabella's.

For, whatever that "sense" may be, it affects and alters Angelo's. "Such sense" may refer to what Angelo finds in himself that is similar to Claudio's crime —the result of his reflection upon Isabella's request. Or it may be Isabella's powers to change Angelo's attitude — that is, her "prone and speechless dialect," which moves men but is not to be found in her discourse. Angelo's discovery of such power —and his being affected by them— identifies him with Claudio, who, as we must remember, entrusted to them the solution to his problem. In that respect, man's "natural guiltiness" is nothing but his disposition to be moved, altered and affected by woman, who appears as the ultimate source of corruption. As a result, his "sense" breeds —conceives— with Isabella's.

<sup>4</sup> In this sense, Aristotle's attempts to privilege the order of *mythos* over *opsis* would be reversed here. It is Isabella's mere presence on stage that conveys a meaningful revelation to Claudio —and consequently, to a male spectator's gaze— regardless of the inexpressibility of his response to that "speechless" presence. Therefore, *opsis* belongs in the realm of the Real as this is described in the previous footnote.

The play, however, portrays an Isabella who is incapable of knowing her own powers. After her first encounter, she thinks she has “bribed” Angelo “with such gifts that heaven shall share with” him (2.2.149). In her views, her powers arise from “prayers from preserved souls,/From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate/To nothing temporal” (2.2.155-158). Isabella is ignorant and therefore innocent, as opposed to two men that seem to know too much of her. Angelo’s new affection to Isabella is acknowledged by the deputy as the effect of such innocence:

What’s this, what’s this? is this her fault or mine?  
 The tempter or the tempted who sins most, ha?  
 Not she, nor doth she tempt, but it is I  
 That lying by the violet in the sun  
 Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,  
 Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be  
 That modesty may more betray *our sense*  
 Than woman’s lightness? (2.2.164-173)

Man’s “sense” is again at stake in Angelo’s soliloquy. “Sense” is his sensuality, but also his knowledge. After this speech, which closes their first encounter, Angelo *knows* his guilt by learning that he wants Isabella, and by realising that she remains ignorant. The position allowed to woman in this soliloquy is interesting, since it does not match received expectations: the fallen Eve is not to be identified with Isabella. She is not the temptress, because she is even deprived of a desire of her own. It is Angelo who corrupts her modesty. The male subject bears the corruption. But even though he is to blame, corruption is only understood as long as it has its source in what he has seen in a woman.

Angelo asks Isabella to return the following day so that she will be acquainted with his decision about Claudio. This second encounter (2.4) places Angelo where we left him in the previous one: he is still discoursing with himself, still trying to come to terms with his newly-discovered knowledge of himself in woman. And he is still as confused as he was. He appears as a divided man, a self split in two:

When I would *pray and think*, I think and pray  
 To several *subjects*. Heaven hath my empty words,  
 Whilst my *invention*, hearing not my tongue,  
 Anchors on *Isabel*. Heaven in *my mouth*,  
 As if I did but only chew his name,  
 And in *my heart* the strong and swelling evil  
 Of *my conception*. (2.4.1-7; emphasis added)

When Angelo desires to pray and think, he thinks and prays—the inversion being a way of showing disorder by means of mental split. Besides, he discourses to “several”—namely separate, divided—subjects. In fact there are two subjects—the subject of his thought and the subject of his prayer. He discourses not only to two separate subjects, but also severally, incoherently. That incoherence can be explained by a rhetorical split, because his “empty words” do not accord with his “invention.” “Invention” must be understood here in its rhetorical meaning, that is, as the first part of the rhetorical art, the capacity of choosing the right *loci communes* or commonplaces in a speech. “Invention” is the sense, the subject-matter. On the other hand, his “empty words” correspond to rhetorical “elocution” or the art of finding the right words to express one’s sense or invention. Angelo’s mental disorder is explained by a radical rupture of invention from elocution: Angelo’s elocution is void—his empty words on the side of heaven—, whereas the invention is “swelling,” too full of woman. So Angelo’s discovery is of a linguistic sort. Evil invention appears behind a false disguise of elocution to which even Angelo fails to give credit. Angelo maps his own self in order to conceptualise that split: there is his *mouth*, the external organ through which the elocution finds its representability; and there is his *heart*. The polysemy of this last term allows the ongoing play with words: the heart is the seat of the inmost thoughts and feelings; it is the realm of emotion and sensuality; it is also the mind, the seat of

the intellectual faculties: the understanding. This polysemy is strengthened by the next word: “conception” —which means his being conceived in the physical sense, his faculty to bear in the physical sense as well, but also his ability to conceive in the mind, his intellect. The connection of the two levels at which this discourse functions is in fact a matter of gender: Angelo has a conception of Isabella in the intellectual sense, but this conception *of* woman reminds him of his conception *in* woman —the site of his imperfection, his corruption and his evil. This is the result of man’s perception of feminine “speechless dialect,” namely, the understanding that all men are made equal —as Claudio and Angelo are— in their discovery of the source of all corruption. The “speechless dialect” arouses his sinful desire, triggers his evil thoughts, and shatters the “sense” of his discourse by reminding him of his origins: his being conceived *by* and *in* woman.

The end of Angelo’s soliloquy rounds off this complex process of self-recognition: “Blood, thou art blood./Let’s write ‘good angel’ on the devil’s horn,/’Tis not the devil’s crest” (2.4.11-16). These lines seal Angelo’s recognition by means of an inversion of the emblematic mode.<sup>5</sup> Angelo writes the inscription “good angel” —with a pun on his own name— on the devil’s horn. Since he depicts himself as a devil, the inscription “angel” only bears a paradoxical relation with the picture. The “crest” is a device placed above the shield of a coat of arms, accompanied by an emblematic motto. However, the emblematic “crest” is replaced with a grotesque “horn” here.<sup>6</sup> In Angelo’s speech, “conception” —the realm of the female and the Lacanian Real— marks the dissolution of rhetorical unity and emblematic coherence, that is, the discourses that define masculine integrity in the symbolic order. When rhetoric and emblematics can only prove Angelo’s false nature, but not his completeness of self, the symbolic order collapses. At this point, only the Real in Isabella’s “speechless dialect” remains: as the thing that makes Angelo breed, it should be understood as the origin of this collapse.

The new Angelo, who, like Claudio, has read in Isabella’s “speechless dialect” his own guilty nature, is the one that demands atonement by compelling Isabella to yield her virginity as the only means to save Claudio’s life. The identification of these two male characters explains Claudio’s desire that his sister accept the offer. It is now through Isabella’s angry rebuke to her brother that the spectator detects how equal Claudio and Angelo are:

O you beast!  
 O faithless coward, O dishonest wretch!  
 Wilt thou be made a man out of my vice?  
 Is’t not a kind of incest to take life  
 From thine own sister’s shame? (3.1.139-142).

This is not the first time that the question of “man-making” is raised in the play. “Man-making” is Claudio’s sin —he has got Julietta with child. Illegitimate man-making —that is, making bastards— is what is at stake along *Measure for Measure*, as Angelo lets Angelo Isabella know it: “Ha! Fie, this filthy vices! It were as good/To pardon him that hath from nature stolen/A man already made, as to remit/Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven’s image/In stamps that are forbid” (2.4.42-46). The bastard is a sign of falsehood, of the corrupted nature of conception.<sup>7</sup> Now, as a

<sup>5</sup> As a significant combination of *inscriptio*, *pictura*, and *scriptio*, the emblem must always aim at conceptual coherence. The expression “emblematic mode” is Peter Daly’s (*Literature in the Light of the Emblem* 3).

<sup>6</sup> The term “crest” in its emblematic sense also appears in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593): KATHERINA: If you strike me, thou are no gentleman, / And if no gentleman, why then no arms. // PETRUCCIO: A herald, Kate? O put me in thy books. // KATHERINA: What is your crest, a coxcomb? // PETRUCCIO: A combless cock, so Kate will be my hen. // KATHERINA: No cock of mine, you crow too like a craven. (2.1.220-25). The pun on “crest” finds its effect on the contrast between its heraldic sense and its identification with the cock’s “comb,” allowing a further sexual connotation as it depicts Petruchio as a gelded male. The deconstruction of the emblematic sense undertaken by the grotesque image of the castrated beast parallels Angelo’s speech, in which the beastly image of the horn turns emblematic coherence upside down.

<sup>7</sup> See, in this respect, Marc Shell’s reflections on “bastardising” as the end of fornication in the plot of *Measure for Measure*: in the play, making bastards becomes the ultimate symbol of the end of kinship, and consequently, of social organisation (*The End of Kinship* 79).

form of redress, Claudio will “be made a man” out of Isabella’s fornication: as Angelo’s “conception” had an origin in Isabella, so Claudio’s shall. They are made equal in conception, since it provides them with a knowledge of man’s corruption. And what is more, they derive the acknowledgement of corruption from the same source: Isabella’s “speechless dialect.” The knowledge of this quality in her sister led Claudio to entangle her in the plot; its discovery by Angelo makes her the object of his desire.

## 3

As a conclusion, the idea of being conceived in woman as the main source of man’s corruption becomes the symbolic appropriation that Claudio and Angelo make of their puzzled perception of Isabella’s “speechless dialect.” In order to master something they can see but cannot understand, they narrate their recognition of self as a story that ultimately blames Isabella as an evil mother—the origin of their conception. First they perceive this mysterious feminine quality as spectacle or *opsis*: it is the effect that Isabella’s presence has on them. Second, that non-symbolic quality is presented as a plot or *mythos* that undertakes a symbolic re-elaboration of the three caskets: the virgin Isabella of the first casket becomes the potential whore of the second. This narrative step is re-written as a familial plot that makes incest its main motif: the virgin sister of the first casket becomes the whorish mother of the second, the feminine place of conception, the source of all corruption. Only a further comic step will allow a resolution in the third casket: the Duke shall transform the whorish mother into an obedient daughter and a faithful wife, who again will be represented as a speechless presence. But a matter of space and time constraints will leave that third casket unopened this time, awaiting some other occasion.

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‘Silence is the perfectest herald of joy’:  
The Claudio-Hero Plot in Kenneth Branagh’s  
*Much Ado About Nothing*

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Shakespeare’s comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* has dark and problematic areas in character and mode in the story of Claudio and Hero, who are sometimes described as superficial and ordinary (Hero is the quintessence of docility and Claudio is mean-spirited and cruel to her), and whose wedding at the end of the play is seen as an inadequate romantic solution. Kenneth Branagh’s 1993 film version of the play tries to dissolve the dark strain of cruelty in the Claudio-Hero story so as to subsume it into the bright festivity that shines through the action. He cuts some of Claudio’s harsh lines, foregrounds (by the use of close-ups) both his silences and those of Hero that can best engage our sympathy for them, and uses the power of the cinematic image to diminish the troubling aspects of their story. Thus, he uses silence, understood in a wide sense as both lack of words and cinematic foregrounding, to dispel darkness and make the final happiness of the characters acceptable. We could then describe his approach to the Claudio-Hero story in his film with Claudio’s words in 2.1: “Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much”.

Most critics agree that the Claudio-Hero story is the ‘main plot’ in *Much Ado About Nothing*, “although they literally or figuratively put the term in quotation marks and are quick to point out that Beatrice and Benedick overshadow this ‘plot’, however ‘main’ it is” (Neely, 56). Branagh’s film shows Claudio and Hero together on more occasions than the text of the play suggests, in an attempt to bring them more to the center of the action. As Branagh himself has indicated, “there is room in a movie to give a different kind of space to the Claudio/Hero plot” (Branagh, vii), and in the lineup of portraits on the film poster Hero and Claudio take the central position. The text of the play introduces their romantic attachment halfway through the first scene, when all the main characters have been presented and Beatrice and Benedick have had their first verbal skirmish. Branagh chooses to call the viewers’ attention to their love in the very opening of the film. When Leonato reads the letter about the victorious army and Claudio’s name is mentioned, the close-up of Hero’s blushing face tells us that she is already interested in the young man (no such suggestion exists in the text of play). “[T]he camera’s ability to register feeling in an actor’s face” (Jackson, 117) is also put to use when Hero and Claudio meet for the first time in the film, and their brief exchange of looks is a silent conversation that the camera records for us. Later in the film, when Claudio is confessing his love to Benedick, Hero is shown lingering on a balcony as she looks down on Claudio, her attentive silence as eloquent as Claudio’s own words. Thus from the beginning the film foregrounds her presence in silence and suggests her feelings for Claudio.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the text of the play, Hero is present in the first scene but remains silent except for a sentence clarifying the meaning of Beatrice’s “Signor Mountanto” (“My cousin means Signor Benedick”). In Renaissance terms her silence would be the sign that she is a dutiful daughter and a modest maid. She never initiates a conversation and only responds when directly or indirectly asked. She is the counterpart of Beatrice, whose silence, Don Pedro indicates, “most offends” (2.1, 328).

*Much Ado About Nothing* is different in structure from Shakespeare's other so-called romantic comedies, which typically begin with the lovers in a undesirable situation that brings them apart, so that the story leads toward their coming together. In *Much Ado*, Beatrice and Benedick in a sense follow this pattern in that they overcome their own personality in order to come together; the main lovers, on the other hand, present a different pattern. The play opens in happiness and celebration, and Hero and Claudio have no obstacles to overcome. However, more than half way through the play the festive mood is broken and a dark shadow of cruelty is cast over Messina,<sup>2</sup> when Claudio is deceived into believing that Hero has betrayed him, and rejects his bride at the altar in Act 4. The problematic areas in the comic structure of the play have to do with the character of Claudio and with the resolution of their story. As critics have frequently indicated, the festive ending in the play is mainly centered on Beatrice and Benedick. Their union is satisfactory and can be considered a marriage of true minds. The union of Hero and Claudio is much less satisfactory, especially for contemporary readers of the play. As Carol Cook indicates, "the play's attempt to move toward a comic conclusion and to evade what its plot has exposed places a strain on the fifth act, producing a peculiar shiftiness of tone and mode" (198). At the end of the play the submissive Hero accepts without questioning a young man that has repudiated her in the most violent terms, and we are expected to accept a briefly repentant Claudio as her ideal husband. (We must remember he is repentant not when he learns that she has died of sorrow, but when external witnesses confirm that she has died innocent.) The happiness of this conventional romantic resolution to their plot is perceived as flawed by many recent critics.<sup>3</sup>

In Branagh's film there is no striving to elicit from the audience the contradictory responses that postmodern critical readings find in the comedies, and thus some critics have objected that "Branagh has 'thinned' his original more than was needed" (Barton, 13), and produced a simplification of the original play, so that "a vigorously pruned script reduces this dark and complex comedy to a single idea [...] the celebration of love" (Barr, 39). There is no doubt that the film "locates Shakespeare's play as a comedy firmly within the festive tradition rather than as a precursor to the problem plays that follow" (Crowl, 39). The festive mood is made clear in the rumbustious opening that shows happy people in an idyllic country atmosphere. In his film Branagh moves the location of the play from the original Messina in dry Sicily to lush Tuscany, and takes what is mainly an urban play in the original to a sunny rural setting. As Branagh indicates in the scriptbook, "the play seemed to beg to live outside, in a vivid, lush countryside" (Branagh, viii). Most of the scenes are shot outdoors, and even the chapel wedding is taken to the outside of the chapel.<sup>4</sup> The significant exceptions are the sequences with the villain Don John at the center of the action, shot in the cellar and dark rooms and corridors of what looks like the basement of the villa. (When Don John first tells Claudio and the Prince that he has something to tell them about Hero, they are also indoors.)

Branagh clearly wishes to avoid "the troublesome doubts raised by the character and behavior of Shakespeare's Claudio" because they would "complicate and qualify the sunny ending of [his] film" (Barton, 11). In the play Claudio is "a young man who behaves abominably to a loving and generous woman, causes her great suffering, and then, after a perfunctory repentance, is dismissed with her into a happiness he scarcely seems to deserve" (Barton, 11). Branagh's film version of the play tries to soften Claudio's character in several ways. He casts as Claudio a young actor that became widely known in Peter Weir's *The Dead Poets' Society*. In that film he was a sensitive adolescent who fell in

<sup>2</sup> There are recent readings that find the play's atmosphere oppressive from the beginning. Carol Cook, for instance, speaks of the rigidity of the world of Messina: "Messina, the most sophisticated and urbane society in all Shakespeare's comedies, is also the most confined. No moonlit wood or forest of Arden offers escape from Messina's social tensions, and the characters' romantic and sexual roles are not relieved by opportunities for sexual disguise" (189).

<sup>3</sup> In general this is a relevant issue for the endings of most Shakespearean comedies: "This contention between proponents of a festive view of the play and those who find irony, cynicism, darkness or some other version of problematic qualities in its resolution is not, of course, unique to discussions of *Much Ado About Nothing*. This is a common division of opinion over nearly all the comedies" (Jensen, 45).

<sup>4</sup> In the strongly negative review of the film in the American magazine *The New Yorker* we are told that "the film glances [at the play's darker threads] but turns away to greet the sun; every frame is telling American audiences to book a trip to Italy" (quoted in Coursen, 10).

love with the theater after performing Puck in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and who committed suicide when denied the opportunity to become an actor. In Branagh's film, Claudio is, in keeping with the spirit of Shakespeare's text, a young man barely past adolescence, his beardless face a reminder of his youth and inexperience. Significantly enough, at the masked ball in 2.1, while the other characters wear deformed and outrageous masks, his is a chubby baby face that looks like a curly-haired cherubin--the mask thus revealing what it hides.

Claudio only speaks freely when he is with men alone, and his silence in the presence of women as well as his tentativeness in stating his feelings for Hero can contribute to this image of a young man who is much more comfortable in war than in love. Branagh insists that he is mainly a soldier and that "the instantaneousness of Claudio's love for Hero, its intensity, is not unusual amongst men for whom death is an equal reality" (Branagh, xii). Claudio has an idealized vision of romantic love that can easily swing to its most cynical opposite due to his absolute inexperience.<sup>5</sup> In the text of the play, the audience learns what Claudio has witnessed through Borachio's words:

I have tonight wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night [...] the Prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter (3.3, 142-49).

In the film, instead of having Borachio use words to describe the scene at the window, we see it with Claudio and Don Pedro. It is an openly sexual encounter far more graphic than what is reported in the text of the play, and we see Claudio's reaction as a mixture of rage and sorrow. The screenplay says for this scene: "Claudio lets out a cry and makes to run at them but is held by Don Pedro and Don John [...] Close on Claudio's tears in angry eyes" (Branagh, 56). In the play, when Claudio is first told about Hero's unfaithfulness by Don John, before seeing it he says: "If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her, tomorrow, in the congregation where I should wed, there will I *shame* her", and Don Pedro joins in his plan: "And as I wood for thee to obtain her, I will join thee to *disgrace* her" (3.2, 117-21; emphasis mine). Branagh edits out these words which show their plan to disgrace Hero openly at the wedding ceremony the following day. In Borachio's telling of the episode to Conrad there is another reference to the meditated disgrace: "away went Claudio, enraged, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, *shame* her with what he saw o'ernight, and send her home again without a husband" (3.3, 156-61).<sup>6</sup> In the film, Borachio only says: "Away went Claudio, enraged", and the reference to Claudio's plan to shame her has again been cut. In the text of the play Claudio also sounds rather callous in 5.1, in his reaction to Benedick's challenge after the death of Hero. He takes it in jest, as if he made nothing of the reason behind it (Hero's death), and it takes some effort on Benedick's part to convince Claudio that he is in earnest, that it is no time for joking. Most of this conversation with Benedick has been cut in the film, and "Branagh's close-up of [Claudio's] face, crumbling into despair as he later learns of Hero's guiltlessness" (Moses, 39) is an attempt to mitigate his previous cruelty.

We also get in the film an impressive spectacle of his penance at the tomb of Hero after he is told the truth. This scene (5.3) is one of the few that have been often cut radically in performance due to the difficulties of staging it. As Stanley Wells indicates, 5.3 is "scenically awkward, requiring props and stage movements at odds with the rest of the play" (quoted in Zitner, 70). It seems that not all directors have seen its importance, but Branagh devotes some time to showing us the suffering in his face while reading the epitaph on Hero's tomb. The screenplay describes the sequence in the following terms:

<sup>5</sup> Some critics suggest that his easy shift is due to an undercurrent of anxiety about sexual matters in Messina: "The repeated 'cuckold' jokes in *Much Ado About Nothing* point to an underlying anxiety in the society of the play about the relations between men and women, one which is brought to the surface by the developing events in the play" (Mangan, 182).

<sup>6</sup> As Janice Hays indicates, "in a patriarchal value system that views woman and her sexuality as a man's exclusive possession, this infidelity is the ultimate betrayal, a fundamental wound to male self-esteem" (87).

Point of view from the Villa of a wide shot of a cloaked, torched procession towards HERO's tomb. Beautiful and sombre, a snake of lights against the hillside. We pull back to reveal ANTONIO and HERO in the foreground. We move closer to the procession and see DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, and a choir of mourners sing as Claudio weeps before the tomb (Branagh, 76).

One critic refers to this sequence as one of the three BMS's (Big Memorable Sequences) that Branagh includes in *Much Ado*, the other two being the opening and the closing of the film. For him, this BMS "on the eve of the final wedding ceremony, with Claudio mourning by Hero's tomb, accompanied by a choir of mourners of Mormon Tabernacle proportions" (Skovmand, 9) is less motivated than the other two. In my opinion, Branagh's motivation in this case is strong and clear: he is devoting one long memorable sequence to the contrition and repentance of Claudio obviously to make him more sympathetic to viewers that will be asked to accept his marriage to Hero as a satisfactory happy solution. Branagh is aware that "Hero's funeral is dramatically necessary as Claudio's ritual of expiation" (Cook, 198). In fact, his emphasis on Claudio's repentance tries to show us that there is "a change in Claudio sufficient to warrant his good fortune in the next scene, where Hero is restored to him" (Cook, 198).

Branagh devotes an extremely long final sequence to a dance that gives shape to Benedick's final words in the text, "Strike up, pipers".<sup>7</sup> Some critics of the film have in fact objected to its very length, suggesting that by abbreviating it "he might have found room for more of Shakespeare's text" (Barton, 12), and they have also objected to its implications that the unsolved issues at the end of the play "are swept aside in the euphoria of a celebration which at times threatens to assume the proportions of a presidential ticker-tape parade, complete with triumphant band music" (Barr, 26). This celebratory dance only leaves Don Pedro out after Benedick's injunction "Get thee a wife" (Antonio dances with Ursula and Leonato with Margaret), but otherwise brings in even Margaret, a character that the text marginalizes somewhat for her unwilling participation in the deception of Claudio.<sup>8</sup> Clearly the long whirling around of happy characters as the camera moves away to a bird's-eye view of the villa reveals Branagh's reading of the text: this all-embracing celebratory dance that involves all the characters in Messina is the film's way of suggesting all-embracing happiness, and it is therefore the final move on the director's part to dissolve any dark, unpleasant strains that may remain at the end of the story:

All the couples dance and sing merrily in front of us, and we see one joyous image of each one of them [...] We carry on from the Chapel Yard, in through the house [...] and then quickly, high into the air where we leave the people and the dancing to rise above the house, catch the late afternoon sun, the sound of happiness flouting on the air, and a breathtaking view of fairy tale countryside (Branagh, 83).

Branagh's purpose in the film has been to make "Shakespeare's comedy alive on the screen rich with romance and humor in order to appeal to a wide international audience" (Crowl, 39). The success of the film at the box office and its reviews in the popular press show that Branagh has succeeded in creating a wider audience for a Shakespearean comedy than ever before, and despite the objections of purists to its simplification of the problematic areas in the play, on the whole we can say that in his *Much Ado About Nothing* Branagh can "convert all our potential critical sounds of woe 'Into Hey nonny, nonny'" (Crowl, 40). As Anne Barton anticipated in her early review, the film was a great success and made "many people--especially the young--understand that Shakespeare can be vital, interesting, moving and fun" (13).

<sup>7</sup> Ending a comedy in a marriage dance is common in Shakespeare, although in *Much Ado* there is one "nuptial irregularity: the dancing begins even before the weddings are celebrated" (Neely, 56).

<sup>8</sup> "The ambiguity of Margaret's role in Borachio's plot has caused some consternation among critics" (Cook, 199) since Leonato's words in the final scene of the play suggest "that Margaret is made to bear Claudio's and Don Pedro's guilt" (Cook, 199). In the text of the play she shows no sign of concern about her complicity when we see her after the disrupted wedding ceremony in 5.2 having a witty exchange with Benedick. In the play this speech has been cut, and in general her problematic role "can be negotiated more deftly in the cinema (with some cutting and the placing of reaction shots) than is usual on stage" (Jackson, 117).

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## Shakespeare in Spanish Translations: Recent Findings About the *Nacente* Collection

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New fields of research do sometimes open up by mere chance. That is precisely what happened when we came across what looked like a bunch of loose leaves from one or several old, uncatalogued books from unknown provenance. In 1995, the *Centro Andaluz de Teatro* (C.A.T.) Documentary Service--a fairly new institution in Andalusia--had been presented with a series of dramatic texts for their theatre library, and as some items seemed to be somewhat difficult to classify, the staff at the Documentary Service sought our help.<sup>1</sup>

When we examined those leaves, we found that they were actually unbound pages from the two-volume *Nacente* Collection of Shakespeare's complete plays in Spanish, entitled *Los grandes dramas de Shakespeare*. The work itself looks very attractive, for it is folio-sized and it includes several plates. The name refers to Francisco Nacente, the editor or collector of this large group of Shakespeare plays in Spanish, some translated by himself. This edition appeared for the first time in Barcelona ca. 1872<sup>2</sup> and was soon reprinted--according to Serrano, in 1880 and 1884 (1983: 33)--which suggests that it was reasonably successful. It must have been popular too, for it apparently came out in instalments, a fairly common practice among 19th-century publishing firms.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Barcelona theatre-goers would already have been acquainted with the works of William Shakespeare, since, according to Sir Henry Thomas, several Italian companies had performed operas based on his plays in that city:

Their success [of those operas] in Barcelona ... induced Francisco José Orellana, editor of the *Teatro selecto antiguo y moderno, nacional y extranjero* ... to include six Shakespeare plays in the fourth volume in 1868. Two years later another Barcelona publisher, Francisco Nacente, incorporated these six plays, and added twenty-seven others, in *Los Grandes Dramas de Shakespeare* ... (15)

Shakespeare had become increasingly popular everywhere in Spain in the second half of the 19th century, but as the first Spanish translations dated back to the late 18th century, there was a real need for collections of his best-known plays. It is not surprising then to find three major editions of Shakespeare's plays in a short time-span. Apart from the aforementioned *Nacente* collection, two other editions were published: Jaime Clark's *Dramas de Shakespeare* (Madrid, 1870-76) and

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Lola Vargas and M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Bajo, members of staff at the C.A.T. Documentary Service, for their kind help. This paper also owes much to Prof. Angel Luis Pujante (University of Murcia) who generously contributed to our bibliographical sources.

<sup>2</sup> As the title page of this edition does not indicate the year of publication, scholars have usually speculated with several possible dates. Juliá Martínez had already stated the difficulties involved in dating this edition: En el catálogo de la librería Vindel, publicado en Madrid el año 1901, tomo II, núm. 2120, se conjetura la fecha 1875, y en el publicado con el título *Catálogo de libros escogidos*, publicado en 1913 (núm. 2868), dice hacia 1872. No sabemos el fundamento. (46, n.2). Later scholars limited themselves to propose either of these two dates. Thomas suggested 1870 and 1871 for the first and second volumes of this edition respectively, although he provides no evidence whatever for it (15).

<sup>3</sup> Our copy did not present any marks of its having ever been bound.

Guillermo Macpherson's *Dramas de Shakespeare* (Madrid, 1873), all of which were trying to meet public demand. Nacente's edition is by far the most ambitious of the three (although it depends heavily on previous French versions) as it includes 33 Shakespeare plays in Spanish. Nacente surely intended to present all 37 plays in this edition, but the project was finally thwarted, for the reasons Henry Thomas points out:

When the second volume [of the Nacente edition] came out in 1871, Spanish readers had all Shakespeare's plays available in prose translations, except *The First Part of King Henry VI*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Political and economic difficulties preceding the outbreak of the Second Carlist War no doubt prevented the completion, as it delayed the success, of the venture; but after the war ended in 1876, the volumes were more than once reprinted. (15)<sup>4</sup>

After inspection, we noticed that the aforementioned leaves already included *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*, a fact Angeles Serrano had overlooked in her two well-known essays *Bibliografía shakespeariana* (1983) and *Las traducciones de Shakespeare en España: el ejemplo de Othello* (1988). Owing to this mistake, she assumed that the first Spanish translation of *Two Gentlemen* had first appeared in Martínez Lafuente's *Obras completas* (Valencia, 1915):

En 1915 aparece el intento más completo de obtención de la *Obra Shakespeariana*, esta vez a cargo de Rafael Martínez Lafuente ... También habría que destacar en esta colección que en ella se incluye la primera traducción española de *Two Gentlemen of Verona* ... (1983: 87)

There is no sign, moreover, that this play might have been added to those unbound volumes by the publisher of a later edition, or by any other reader or collector of Shakespeare's works, since the first page of *Two Gentlemen--Los dos hidalgos de Verona*, in the Spanish translation--is printed right after the notes for *Hamlet*. Besides, Juliá Martínez refers to page numbers which coincide exactly with those in our copy, although he leaves out the numbers corresponding to *Two Gentlemen* and *Merchant*. We may assume then, that those two plays were simply missing in the copy used by Juliá Martínez himself, which allows us to conclude that *Two Gentlemen* was indeed first published in Spanish ca. 1872, much earlier than the date proposed by Serrano, who was probably led astray by Juliá Martínez's influential work *Shakespeare en España* (1918). There he refers to *Two Gentlemen* in the following terms:

Hasta que, con motivo del tercer Centenario de la muerte de Shakespeare, no ha empezado a publicar la colección de las obras completas de aquel autor, hecha por la Casa "Prometeo" en Valencia, y traducida por el señor R. Martínez Lafuente, faltaba en España una versión de esta comedia. (53)<sup>5</sup>

However, regardless of previous critical opinions, it was Alfonso Par--considered by Entrambasaguas as "the first Spanish Shakespearean scholar" (80)--who eventually did provide a complete list of the plays contained in Nacente's collection, in his *Contribución a la Bibliografía Española de Shakespeare* (1930). According to Par, *Two Gentlemen* does indeed appear in Nacente's edition (44), as the second play after *Hamlet*, and is followed by *Julius Caesar*, which in turn precedes *Merchant*, just as we have attested after examining our copy. Par obviously had access to a complete edition of the Nacente collection, which he could have purchased or simply consulted in a public library. At any rate, it must have been fairly easy to come by in Barcelona, where Par lived and where he was murdered in the course of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Thomas does not seem to take into account *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is not included in Nacente's edition, either.

<sup>5</sup> Likewise, another scholar, Ruppert y Ujaravi, in his *Shakespeare en España* (1920) fails to ascribe either *Two Gentlemen* or *Merchant* to the Nacente collection (32).

<sup>6</sup> Henry Thomas describes the circumstances of his death in most vivid terms: Alfonso Par ... was a predestined victim of the Red Terror when the Civil War broke out in 1936 ... On 26 August of that year some gentlemen in a car called on him, ostensibly on business, and invited him for a ride. The ride ended, as such rides usually did, at La Rabassada, a Barcelona pleasure resort ... His dead body was picked up there not long afterwards. (7)

A collation of the data obtained from the Nacente copy at the C.A.T. library, and the information provided by both Par's *Contribución*, and Juliá Martínez's *Shakespeare en España*, enable us to draw the following complete and, hopefully definitive, list of Nacente's plays. They appear in the same order as in those two volumes; the translators' names, together with page numbers are here indicated too.

## VOLUME I:

- Hamlet*, Leandro Fernández de Moratín, 5-51; notes: 52-64.<sup>7</sup>  
*Los Dos Hidalgos de Verona*, Francisco Nacente, 65-90.  
*Julio César*, Francisco Nacente, 91-118.  
*El Mercader de Venecia*, Gregorio Amado Larrosa, 119-147.  
*Comedia de los Errores*, Francisco Nacente, 149-170.  
*Otelo ó el Moro de Venecia*, Laureano Sánchez Garay, 171-208.  
*Macbet* (sic), Gregorio Amado Larrosa, 209-234.  
*Una Furia Domeñada*, Pablo Soler, 235-266.  
*Romeo y Julieta*, Manuel Hiráldez de Acosta, 267-307.<sup>8</sup>  
*Troilo y Crésida*, Pablo Soler, 309-346.  
*Pericles, Príncipe de Tiro*, Eudaldo Viver, 347-373.  
*Bien está lo que bien acaba*, Eudaldo Viver, 375-408.  
*La Tempestad*, Pablo Soler, 409-431.  
*Ricardo III*, Manuel Hiráldez de Acosta, 433-476.  
*Penas de Amor Perdidas*, Eudaldo Viver, 477-508?<sup>9</sup>  
*Antonio y Cleopatra*, Francisco Nacente, 509-546.  
*Como Queráis*, Eudaldo Viver, 547-577.<sup>10</sup>  
*El Rey Lear*, Francisco Nacente, 579-616.

## VOLUME II:

- Cimbelino*, Eudaldo Viver, 5-46.  
*Las Alegres Comadres de Windsor*, Francisco Nacente, 47-77.  
*Enrique VIII*, Francisco Nacente, 79-112.  
*La Duodécima Noche ó lo que queráis*, Eudaldo Viver, 113-141.  
*El Rey Juan*, Francisco Nacente, 143-170.  
*Medida por Medida (La Pena del Talión)*, Francisco Nacente, 171- 200.<sup>11</sup>  
*Ricardo II*, Francisco Nacente, 201-230.  
*Timón de Atenas*, Eudaldo Viver, 231-259.  
*Sueño de una Noche de Estío*, Francisco Nacente, 261-283.  
*Enrique IV (primera parte)*, Francisco Nacente, 285-317.<sup>12</sup>  
*Coriolano*, Eudaldo Viver, 319-359.  
*Enrique VI (segunda parte)*, Eudaldo Viver, 361-396.  
*Enrique VI (tercera parte)*, A.R. y F.N., 397-430.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Pages 21-28 are missing from the play, but the translator's notes are extant.

<sup>8</sup> This entire play together with the last few pages of *Una Furia domeñada* are missing in the C.A.T. copy.

<sup>9</sup> This play is not complete in the C.A.T. copy and, as Juliá Martínez does not refer to specific page numbers of this particular work, we assume that 508 is probably the last page.

<sup>10</sup> The last few pages of this play are missing.

<sup>11</sup> There is a group of missing pages which affect the end of *Medida* and the beginning of *Ricardo II*.

<sup>12</sup> Several pages at the end of this play are badly damaged.

*Enrique IV (segunda parte)*, Francisco Nacente, 431-463.

*Enrique V*, Francisco Nacente, 467-498.

All the errors concerning Nacente's collection in previous scholarly studies may be due to the fact that it has usually been dismissed as a second-rate edition, since most of its plays had been translated from French versions. Serrano (1983), for instance, regards those as "false translations" (31), but she seems to overlook their due merit, for they represent the first attempt at offering Shakespeare's complete dramas to the Spanish public. At the same time, it constitutes the first Spanish publication of the following plays: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Pericles*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *King Lear*, *Cymbeline*, *Henry VIII*, *Richard II*, *Timon of Athens*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Henry IV (Part 1)*, *Coriolanus*, *Henry VI (Part 2)*, *Henry VI (Part 3)*, *Henry IV (Part 2)* and *Henry V*.

As for the "poor" quality of the translations, a comparative analysis of Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen* (L.i.28-35) and both Francisco Nacente's and Astrana Marín's Spanish versions, yields surprising and unexpected results:

VALENTINE. No, I will not; for it boots thee not.

PROTEUS. What?

VAL. To be in love; where scorn is bought with groans;

Coy looks, with heart-sore sighs; one fading moment's mirth,

With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights;

If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain;

If lost, why then a grievous labour won;

How ever, but a folly bought with wit,

Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

Francisco Nacente translates the same passage as follows:

VAL. No es ese mi intento; por el contrario, te compadezco.

PRO. ¿Por qué?

VAL. Porque estás enamorado; amar, es comprar desprecios con lamentos, miradas desdeñosas con suspiros de dolor; es trocar por un breve instante de placer veinte noches de ansiedades y desvelos; si triunfais, funesta es vuestra victoria; si salís burlados, recogeis una herencia de crueles penas. ¿Qué resta en último resultado? una necedad comprada á fuerza de ingenio o un ingenio vencido por la necedad ó locura.

Luis Astrana Marín--usually regarded in Spain as a compulsory reference for translators of Shakespeare's works-- renders a not-too different version:

VAL. No, no lo deseo; he hecho por ti voto de compasión.

PRO. ¿Por qué?

VAL. Por estar enamorado. Amar es comprar desprecios con lamentos, miradas de desdén con suspiros de dolor; es cambiar por un instante de placer veinte noches de ansiedades y desvelos. Si se triunfa, cara cuesta la victoria. Si se nos engaña, solo conservamos desastres. ¿Qué queda, pues del amor? Una tontería conseguida a fuerza de ingenio por la tontería o la locura.

The two Spanish texts cited here are both prose and rather free versions of Shakespeare's original, but their similarities do not seem to point to a mere coincidence. A detailed analysis of all

<sup>13</sup> Neither this play nor the following two have been preserved in the C. A. T. copy, but Juliá Martínez provides the three titles and the names of their translators--or just initials, as in this case. F. N. stands most likely for Francisco Nacente; A. R. may stand for Antonio Romero Ortiz, who had already translated *Richard III* in 1853, but this is mere conjecture.

Spanish translations of *Two Gentlemen* might perhaps prove that Nacente's version is not as "false" or as "poor" as most scholars have asserted. We propose that in the future this collection be taken into consideration, for it is a real landmark in Spanish translations of Shakespeare's drama. In our view, Nacente's contribution is as relevant as those of Clark and Macpherson.

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## ‘Conflation’ in the non-conflated Shakespearian editions

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In recent years, Shakespearian scholars and readers have witnessed a radical change in presenting critical editions of plays such as *King Lear* and *Hamlet*. Thus *The Complete Works* edited by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor for Oxford University Press in 1986, and the single-volume editions by J. Halio for New Cambridge, present two separate *Lears*, one based on the 1608 quarto text, the other on the First Folio version (without the well-known “mock trial” scene), instead of the traditional edition that brought together both textual authorities in a “conflated” text. Similarly, in the Oxford *Complete Works* and in the Oxford single-volume edition by G. Hibbard (1987) we can see a “non-conflated” *Hamlet* based exclusively on the Folio with passages unique to the 1604 quarto relegated to an appendix (among them the famous soliloquy “How all occasions do inform against me” from Act IV). These shocking editorial actions reflect a debate on the nature, transmission and editing of the early Shakespearian texts that we could briefly label “to conflate or not to conflate” when editing *Hamlet* or *Lear*.

It was Michael Warren who triggered the debate when, in 1978, he raised the old idea that the two early substantive texts of *King Lear* constituted two distinct versions of the play, one of them resulting from a process of authorial revision. Then Stanley Wells (1988) coined the terms “conflationists” for those advocating the traditional conflated editions that amalgamate the originary textual witnesses, and “revisionists” for those defending non-conflated editions that respect the integrity of the discrete textual authorities.

The “conflationist” editors work on the assumption that the early texts are incomplete or imperfect representations of the play, and, even though they use either quarto or Folio witness as copy-text, they add to it those words, lines and passages that are unique to the other collateral authority. The “revisionist” editors argue that these conflated editions misrepresent the nature of the plays by producing a new text that never existed, “a text -Q+F- that is neither Shakespeare’s, nor the King’s Men’s, but a construct of modern conflating editors in the tradition of Alexander Pope and his contemporaries” (Halio, 1992: 289). In my view it is arguable that an editor should distinguish and separate elements that were originally separate, regardless of whether he or she assumes a revisionist interpretation of the textual history.

Given this situation, I have closely examined the six “non-conflated” Shakespearian editions above mentioned in their editorial procedures and treatment of the respective copy-texts, and the ensuing pages will expound the result and reflections derived from my analysis<sup>1</sup>.

I have observed that Wells & Taylor, Halio and Hibbard do separate the majority of elements that stand separate in their origin. Some particular lines and words absent in the Folio witness used as

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<sup>1</sup> This paper stems from a larger study about ratios of emendation in Shakespearian editions. The present version has profited from the comments of Br. Bernice W. Kliman, to whom I am deeply grateful. The “non-conflated” editions examined are Wells & Taylor (1986), Hibbard (1987) and Halio (1992 and 1994). Although Dr. Peter Blayney edited the 1608 quarto *Lear* in 1979, and Wells & Taylor and Halio refer to it, it is not published yet, and I have not been able to examine it. Dr. Ann Thompson is preparing non-conflated editions of *Hamlet* for The Arden Shakespeare, the Second Quarto in a first volume, and the First Folio and the First Quarto in a second volume of the edition (private communication).

copy-text are rescued from the quarto, and viceversa, on the reasonable assumption that their absence is due to a possible error of omission<sup>2</sup>. But these elements that are kept separate are only passages, fragments of from half a line to 60 lines that possess a certain coherence in themselves, that is, macro-elements that may constitute an alternative in a process of authorial revision, or that may seriously affect the structure and content of an episode, a scene or the whole play. When the analysis descends from the macro-level to the level of lines, we come across a comparatively large number of cases such as the ones exemplified below:

1) Given line TLN 1233 (II.ii.197) in *Hamlet*, the Folio authority used as copy-text presents

“I mean the matter you mean, my Lord”

whereas the quarto text is

“I mean the matter **that** you **reade** my Lord”

(with substantive variants in bold-face type). However Wells & Taylor and Hibbard select the quarto reading “read” and preserve the absence of “that”, thus combining both lines into

“I mean the matter you read, my lord”

2) In line TLN 2516 (IV.vi.73) in *Lear*, the quarto witness used as copy-text gives

“the cleerest Gods, who made their Honours”

with the Folio showing two substantive variants in

“the cleerest Gods, who **make them** Honours”

But the “non-conflationist” editor Halio edits the quarto text by selecting “make” from the collateral authority and preserving “their” in his copy-text:

“the clearest gods, who make their honours

Of men’s impossibilities”

There are relatively few examples with lines showing two substantive variants between them. The commonest case of textual variation are the following, with one substantive variant between lines.

3) *Hamlet* TLN 3081 (IV.vii.70)

Folio “And they ran well on Horsebacke “

Quarto “And they **can** well on horsebacke,”

editors using Folio as copy-text: “And they can well on horseback”

4) *Lear* TLN 1008 (II.i.70)

Folio “ (As this I would, though thou didst produce”

Quarto “as this I would, **I**, though thou didst produce”

Folio-based editions: “As this I would, ay, though thou didst produce”

5) *Lear* TLN 117 (I.i.103)

Quarto “The mistresse of *Hecat*, and the might,”

Folio “The miseries of *Heccat* and the **night**: ”

Quarto-based editions: “The mysteries of Hecate and the night” (‘mysteries’ from the Second Folio)

These examples are representative of an editorial procedure that is more or less systematic throughout the text of the editions. In examples 1 and 2 we can clearly see that editors combine collateral lines into a new mixed line. Although examples 3, 4, and 5, only possess 1 variant, we

<sup>2</sup> For instance, in the Folio-based *Hamlets* we find Second Quarto passages such as TLN 240-1 (I.ii.58-60) and TLN 2690-1 (IV.iii.26-0), or only in Hibbard’s edition, the Second Quarto line TLN 3622 (V.ii.155-6). References are keyed both to the “through line Numbering” used by Hinman (1968: xxiv) and to the traditional Act.scene reference in Evans’ edition (1974).

might also consider that the edited lines are a combination of the selected reading from the collateral witness and the rest of the line from the copy-text.

Now, if what this editorial procedure does is to bring together two lines from quarto and Folio in order to form a single composite line (by adding to one what is unique to the other, or by selecting among collateral variants), and if "to conflate" precisely means "to combine two readings into a composite one" (OED), then I may hypothesize that, on the line level, the "non-conflating" editors of *Hamlet* and *Lear* are "conflating" their texts, that there is some kind of "conflation" inasmuch as editors produce "conflated" lines like the ones exemplified above.

But let's define these words more closely, by examining what kind of conflation it is, and how much there is. First of all I will determine the proportion or degree of this linear or verbal conflation, and secondly its nature.

The degree of conflation may be expressed as the frequency with which "conflated" lines occur in the edition, a frequency worked out on the basis of both the number of variants between witnesses, that is, the text susceptible of conflation, and the number of lines in the witness used as copy-text.

In relation to the Folio-based *Hamlets*, given a choice of 974 substantive variants in the dialogue between the Second Quarto and the First Folio<sup>3</sup>, Wells & Taylor adopt 326 readings from the Second Quarto, that is, a third of the variants, and Hibbard adopts 309 readings, which amounts to 31.7% of the text susceptible to conflation. In terms of lines, these figures tell us that Wells & Taylor produce 1 "conflated" line every 11.4 lines in the whole Folio text, and that Hibbard produces 1 "conflated" line every 12.1. This is a rather high frequency if we think that when Wells & Taylor or Hibbard produce a conflated line, it is because a particular reading in their copy-text line is unsatisfactory or corrupt, and therefore they emend it by substituting the collateral variant of that particular reading. Thus, 326 substantive "conflations" in the Folio-based *Hamlet* imply 326 emendations derived from Quarto of 326 substantive errors or "corruptions" in the Folio, or what amounts to the same thing, 1 corrupted or emended line every 11.4 lines<sup>4</sup>.

There are lower ratios in *Lear*, where there is a choice of 1115 substantive variants in the dialogue between the First Quarto and the Folio witnesses. From them, the critical editions based on the First Quarto adopt 128 Folio readings (Wells & Taylor) and 147 Folio readings (Halio), that is, between 11.4% and 13.1% of the substantive variants between the witnesses. In terms of lines, these figures may be translated as 1 conflated line every 24.5 and 21.3 lines respectively.

The *Lear* editions based on the Folio text diminish the ratio still further: Wells & Taylor adopt 106 substantive readings from the quarto (9.5%, 1 conflated line every 27.9), and Halio selects 64 substantive variants from the collateral witness (5.7 %, 1 conflated line every 46.3).

Now we can weigh the real measure of this editorial conflation if we compare this situation with other Shakespearian plays in terms of textual corruption. As said before, a "conflation" in a line implies a corruption or an emendation, so that we can compare these frequencies in the "non-conflated" editions with frequencies of corruption or emendation in those Shakespearian plays that could never be conflated because they only possess one textual authority. To obtain the degree of textual corruption or emendation in these single-authority plays I have similarly counted substantive departures from copy-text, but in three contrasted editions: the Oxford Shakespeare edited by Wells

<sup>3</sup> For the term "substantive", applied either to variants or emendation in my study, I have basically followed Spevack's criteria in defining a variation as such (1980: vi-xii). However, as my interest is not lexical variation but editorial treatment of readings, I have counted variants that Spevack does not include (e.g. "he / a" variation in the 3rd person singular personal pronoun), and discarded variants the Spevack does count (for instance when a reading which is graphically ambiguous has been interpreted differently by editors: "metal / mettle", "interest / interested"). As Spevack did, I have not taken into account either the wording of neither speech directions or speech prefixes, because the fact that editors treat them more liberally than dialogue posits problems of classification between substantive emendation and simple regularization. Lines of dialogue in the textual witnesses have been counted as if both quarto and folio texts had been printed in Evans' edition (1974). This system secures uniformity of reference by avoiding cases such as the Folio *Hamlet* which, being a shorter version than the Second Quarto *Hamlet*, has some 3800 lines for 3723 lines in the Second Quarto.

<sup>4</sup> Note that here I have not taken into account modern emendations, i.e., those originated in sources other than the textual authorities of the play under study, nor have I counted emendations or modernizations of punctuation and spelling.

& Taylor (1986), the Riverside Shakespeare edited by G.B. Evans (1974) and D. Bevington's edition of *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (1980). Moreover, the Folio-based editions of *Hamlet* and *Lear* have been compared with those plays that are believed to be set by the same compositors B, E, and I of the First Folio<sup>5</sup>. This could not be applied to the quarto *Lear* because the other Shakespearean text printed by Nicholas Okes, the First Quarto of *Othello* published in 1622 (Greg, 1970: 1535-6), belongs to another multiple-authority play<sup>6</sup>. Therefore I have analysed those Shakespearean quarto-plays whose printer's copy was, according to Wells & Taylor (1987: 145-7), of a nature similar to that of the quarto *Lear*: a rough draft or "foul papers"<sup>7</sup>.

The following table shows the results of this statistical analysis.

RATIOS OF EMENDATION

(frequencies expressed in terms of 1 emended line every *x* lines)

"NON-CONFLATED" EDITIONS		SINGLE-AUTHORITY TEXTS
emendations*	ratios**	ratios according to Wells, Evans and Bevington <sup>8</sup>
F1 <i>HAMLET</i>		FOLIO PLAYS _____ average
Wells 326 (344)	<b>11.4</b> (11.6)	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i> (40.1)
Hibbard 310 (328)	<b>11.6</b> (11.5)	<i>Timon of Athens</i> (48.1)
F1 <i>LEAR</i>		<i>Cymbeline</i> (53.6)
Wells 106 (137)	<b>27.9</b> (21.6)	<i>Twelfth Night</i> (89.6)
Halio 64 (84)	<b>46.3</b> (35.3)	<i>Henry VIII</i> (95.5)
Q1 <i>LEAR</i>		QUARTO PLAYS
Halio 147 (184)	<b>21.3</b> (17.5)	<i>Love's Labour's Lost</i> (31.9)
Wells 128 (211)	<b>24.5</b> (14.8)	<i>A Midsummer Night's</i> (45.4)
		<i>Titus Andronicus</i> (56.8)
		<i>Much Ado</i> (166.1)

\* The first figure indicates the number of substantive emendations from collateral variants. Between brackets, the total number of substantive emendations in copy-text irrespective of their origin.

\*\* In bold-face type, ratios of substantive emendations from collateral witness –figures that also express the proportion of "conflated" lines. Between brackets, ratios of all emendations including

<sup>5</sup> For compositorial attribution in the First Folio, cf. Wells & Taylor (1987: 152-4): *Hamlet*, compositors B, I and E; *Lear*, B and E; *Timon of Athens*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Cymbeline*, compositors B and E; *Henry VIII (All Is True)*, B and I; *Twelfth Night*, compositor B.

<sup>6</sup> For the classification of plays according to their textual authorities, see Greg (1942, footnote on p. ix-x) and Partridge (1964: 166-7). Blayney (1982: 154-87) demonstrates that the First Quarto *Lear* was set by two compositors: Okes' B and C.

<sup>7</sup> These single-authority texts are the first quartos of *Love's Labour's Lost*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Titus Andronicus* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. I have not taken into account *Pericles*, since Wells & Taylor treat the novella *The True Painfull Adventures of Pericles*, published by George Wilkins in 1608, as "a 'substantive' text of *Pericles*" (1987: 557), and "have accordingly made much more editorial use of *P.A.* in ... Wilkins's share of the play (Sc. 1-9)" (1987: 558).

<sup>8</sup> The average ratio of each play derives from the following figures in Wells, Evans and Bevington respectively. *Antony and Cleopatra* = 35.5, 46.5, 38.2. *Timon* = 32.1, 66, 46.2. *Cymbeline* = 29.1, 73.1, 58.7. *Twelfth Night* = 90.7, 87.6, 90.7. *Henry VIII* = 67.7, 126.3, 92.6. *LLL* = 28.3, 34.3, 33.1. *Midsummer Night's* = 33.1, 56.6, 46.7. *Titus* = 47.7, 67.6, 55.3. *Ado* = 152.9, 161.9, 163.5. These discrepancies remind us, first of all, that textual criticism is a subjective discipline, and secondly, that when a text or a reading is referred to as corrupt or erroneous, it is always a critic or editor's judgment, not a fact.

those from modern editions, that is, ratios that indicate the total degree of textual corruption (according to respective editors). Thus they can be compared to ratios on the right-hand side which also reflect total degrees of corruption.

A comparison of these figures tells us that: 1) In the case of the *Hamlet* editions, where the ratio of emendations in Hibbard's and Wells & Taylor's editions is very high<sup>9</sup>, the Folio witness appears to be extremely corrupted—at least three times the frequency of *Antony*, which is the most corrupted of the Folio-single-authority texts, as agreed by Wells & Taylor (1986), Evans (1974) and Bevington (1980). 2) As for the Quarto *Lear* editions, their rates are also above ratios in Shakespearian quartos presumably printed from "foul papers", and although the difference is not as great as in *Hamlet*, these figures still convert the Quarto *Lear* into a comparatively corrupt text, as is the case with Wells & Taylor's *Lear* edition based on the Folio. And 3), the Folio *Lear* edited by Halio gives a ratio that lies within the margins of frequency of emendation of the Folio-single-authority plays.

It is perfectly reasonable that a number of "conflations" or emendations from the collateral witness are obvious or necessary, that is to say, they correct a manifest or indubitable error; and it is reasonable that other "conflations" may result from editors' choices between variants of more or less equal weight. But the pronounced differences in ratios between most of the so-called "non-conflated" editions and the single-authority texts, require some explanations. So it is time to analyse the nature of these "conflations".

In the case of the *Hamlet* "non-conflated" editions, I have observed that some 42 Folio substantive readings constitute obvious and indubitable errors. But many other readings which are replaced by quarto variants in these modern editions (273 for Hibbard, and 290 for Wells & Taylor) may perfectly stand on their own<sup>10</sup>. Their rejection by Hibbard or Wells & Taylor is due to these editors' preference or belief that the quarto variants are more authoritative. However, on semantic grounds, the Folio readings they reject are wholly acceptable. For instance, in TLN 149 (I.ii.150) "The Cocke that is the Trumpet to the day", Hibbard and Wells & Taylor adopt "morn" from Q2 and reject "day" at the end of the line. The First Quarto reads "morning", and the reading "day" appears two lines below ("Awake the God of Day") in the three substantive witnesses of *Hamlet*: two textual reasons for supporting the belief that "morn" is the more authoritative reading, apart from the idea that it is stylistically more attractive.

Hibbard (1987: 124-5) argues that the Folio printer's copy for *Hamlet* is Shakespeare's fair copy, so that the only agents of transmission intervening between the ideal text to be edited and the actual witness would be the compositors and proof-readers of the First Folio: they alone would be responsible for the errors that Hibbard emends. But as we can deduce from the comparative table, the same agents of transmission were not so deficient in printing *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon*, or *Twelfth Night*. As for Wells & Taylor, they argue that the copy behind the Folio *Hamlet* was a scribal transcript of a revised fair copy, so that some readings which they adopt from the Second Quarto (12 instances of expurgated profanity, 29 variants of the 3rd person singular pronoun "a / he", 4 cases of variance "'Tis / It's", and 4 other sophistications) are not attributable to compositors (1987: 399) and therefore were already present in the printer's copy. If we don't count these readings, the resulting ratio of emendation is 13, still far above the ratios of single-authority texts.

This leads us to think that the verbal or linear conflation that I have found in the "non-conflated" *Hamlets* of Wells & Taylor and Hibbard is not only considerable, but unnecessary. Thus, one of the explanations for that pronounced difference of ratios between the Folio *Hamlet* and the single-authority texts may be an excessive and unrequired emendation on the part of these critical editors.

<sup>9</sup> Note that ratios of emendation or corruption are expressed in inverse proportion. One corrupted or "conflated" line every 10 lines is a higher frequency or degree of corruption than 1 every 50 lines.

<sup>10</sup> These assertions are based on my own examination of Folio readings without comparison with their collateral variants, as well as on confirmation, in most cases, that a particular Folio reading has been adopted by at least a previous editor of *Hamlet*. I have consulted the apparatus of Furness's New Variorum edition (1877), and most of the widely-used critical editions in this century which, for the sake of brevity, I will not list in the bibliography.

As regards the Quarto-based *Lears*, we find similar examples of rejected substantive readings that, in my opinion, are adequate and need not be emended by their Folio variants or by modern conjectures (I have discerned 74 readings that constitute inescapable errors<sup>11</sup>). Wells & Taylor's edition gives some 79 Quarto readings corrected by Folio that could be defended, and Halio's edition, 97 readings<sup>12</sup>. These figures of unrequired "conflations" are not so high as in the Folio *Hamlet*, but they are still considerable. In conjunction with the number of modern emendations that I consider unnecessary, the whole text of the Quarto *Lear* may have a total ratio of 1 error every 42.4 lines instead of 15 or 17 lines as deduced from Wells & Taylor and Halio's edition. If we compare the former proportion with ratios in the table above, the Quarto *Lear* has a degree of corruption that is now comparable to that of other Shakespearian quartos printed from "foul papers". With a ratio of 42.4, the Quarto *Lear* is not an unproblematic play, as *Much Ado* is, but these deficiencies could result from, as the "non-conflationsit" editors explain, "difficult copy combined with inexperience" (Halio, 1994: 7). Under the assumption that the printer's copy was a rough draft, and consequently, a manuscript difficult to read, and that Nicholas Okes's compositors were setting their first playscript, the "non-conflating" editors are incorporating several readings from the Folio witness, that in my opinion are not necessary. Those assumptions may well account for a ratio of 42.2 in the Quarto *Lear*, but not for such a corrupt text as these modern editions would suggest.

As for the Folio-based *Lears*, there are some 48 Quarto substantive variants in Wells & Taylor's edition—48 linear "conflations"—that seem unrequired, since both Halio and Evans preserve the Folio lines in their integrity. Similarly there are 17 Quarto readings in Halio's edition that are not necessary emendations of Folio substantive variants (neither Wells & Taylor nor Evans have adopted them). Together with other unrequired modern emendations, this makes the Folio *Lear* a text with some 60 indubitable substantive errors, with a total ratio of 49.4. This proportion is comparable with that of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a text that also suffered from Compositor E's inexperience. Again, this leads us to think that the "conflation" and emendation that I have observed in Wells & Taylor's edition is excessive.

To conclude this analysis, in the critical editions under study I have observed different degrees of linear "conflations" that can be classified as: 1) an excessive, flagrant and thorough editorial conflationism in Folio-based editions of *Hamlet*, showing a rather high proportion of unrequired adoptions of readings from the Quarto authority into the Folio copy-text; 2) a questionable, if not so blatant, conflation in the *Lears* edited by Wells & Taylor, and the Quarto-based *Lear* edited by Halio; and 3) an acceptable conflation in Halio's edition of Folio *Lear*, resulting from the unavoidable emendation of the copy-text by readings from the collateral authority.

This linear or verbal conflationism is but the result of the editorial principle that has dominated Shakespearian editing under the influence of scholars such as W. W. Greg and F. Bowers, a principle that it is commonly known to be eclectic.

In "On editing Shakespeare", the prolegomena to his famous study *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, Walter Greg explains that, in the case of plays with two or more substantive editions of comparable authority, there are two possible courses for the editor: on the one hand, a conservative attitude in which he follows the readings of his chosen copy-text, except in cases of "errors that are obvious in the text itself without reference to any other" (1942: xxvi-xxvii); on the other hand, an eclectic approach in which the editor weighs "the claims of each variant individually", on the assumption that "now one and now another text may best represent what the author wrote" (1942: xxvii). To W. W. Greg there is no choice for the editor to accept the eclectic principle, if "what the author wrote" is the aim of a critical edition, and this has been the principle advocated by Bowers and practised by the vast majority of Shakespearian editors.

<sup>11</sup> Eighty readings if we take uncorrected copies of the First Quarto.

<sup>12</sup> As with *Hamlet*, I derive these conclusions from my examination of readings in the First Quarto *Lear* in their own terms, without systematic reference to the collateral witnesses, and from judgments or adoptions of Quarto readings in Stone (1980), Blayney (1982), Wells & Taylor (1987) and Halio (1994).

Now we can see the close relationship between editorial conflation and editorial eclecticism by simply examining their semantic content. In both terms there is the idea of "combination". Moreover "conflated" and "eclectic" have been used as near synonyms. For instance, when Fredson Bowers (1959: 113) argues against the conservatism of editors that follow McKerrow's view of restricting themselves to a copy-text, he uses the phrase "without eclectic conflation"<sup>13</sup>. Thus, if Wells & Taylor, Hibbard, and J. Halio have produced their editions following an eclectic principle on the level of lines, as can be deduced from their editorial practice, I can with assurance state that they have produced an editorial conflation, a verbal conflation, in an edition which is claimed to be non-conflated. As I have observed, these editors avoid conflating the textual witness only on a macro-level, in terms of passages that, in their opinion, constitute alternative pieces of revision, while on the level of the line they carry on conflating.

This seems contradictory: to claim a "non-conflated" edition, while its eclectic editorial procedures cannot escape conflation, seems to lapse into some inherent inconsistency. This contradictory situation might be defended on the grounds that the claimed "non-conflation" only affects passages, whereas the eclectic conflation is merely verbal, affecting single words, and that they are not comparable terms. But in my opinion it may be questionable to separate these terms in editorial practice.

The vindication of a "non-conflated" edition lies in the fact that it keeps the integrity of separate versions that were originally separate and distinct as a result of revision<sup>14</sup>. So it is reasonable to assume that this revision consisted not only in excising or adding passages but also in substituting single words. If an editor who considers himself a revisionist, and therefore "non-conflationist", produces combined or conflated lines by following an eclectic editorial principle, he may not be respecting the whole integrity of the assumed revision. As may be expected, and said before, a number of the variants are not revisions but errors of transmission, and by emending these inescapable errors with a collateral variant, the result is an unavoidable eclectic conflation. But this number of expected errors, judging by the texts of those plays with which an editor cannot be eclectic (plays with a single authority), is not as high as the ones I have observed in five of the six "non-conflated" editions (the exception is Halio's Folio-based *Lear*). Therefore, both by statistical comparison and by observing the superfluity of some emendations, I am led to the conclusion that there is an excessive number of emendations, emendations due to verbal or linear confluations that result from eclectic editing, from editing with reference to the collateral authority.

I do not wish to imply that the "non-conflationist" editors are unaware of this problem. In fact, Wells & Taylor are intent on not combining assumed revised readings from the Folio *Lear* with unrevised readings in the Quarto version<sup>15</sup>, and therefore they have "attempted, as far as possible, to emend Q -where emendation seems desirable- as though F did not exist" (1987: 510), that is, they have attempted to adopt a rather conservative stance. However, judging by my previous analysis, their editorial practice has fallen short of their own theoretical expectations. Conservative editing attends to emendations that are necessary, not "desirable", and this nuance in editorial stance may explain the difference in results.

To sum up, this paper intends to call attention to the view that the "non-conflated" editions are only so in terms of passages, that they still possess a verbal conflation on the level of lines, due to an editorial eclecticism which causes their copy-texts to appear to be much more corrupted than other

<sup>13</sup> When in the preface of their edition of *Hamlet*, Parrot & Craig state that "with one exception [Dover Wilson's edition of *Hamlet* of 1930] all modern texts are a conflation of those presented in the Second Quarto and the First Folio" (1938: vii), they use the term in the sense of an eclectic text that freely selects from both textual authorities without using one of them as copy-text. To Parrot & Craig, conflation is synonymous to eclecticism, although in its pejorative sense.

<sup>14</sup> As Wells & Taylor say in relation to *Lear*: "the entire purpose of editing Q and F separately is to preserve the separate integrity of each" (1987: 510). For contributions supporting the notion of discrete versions and their dramatic integrity, I wish to point out Taylor & Warren (1983) and Werstine (1988).

<sup>15</sup> "... to preserve the integrity of each Q and F ... is not well served by importing revised readings into an unrevised fabric" (1987: 510).

Shakespearian witnesses printed in comparable conditions. If these editors claim to respect the integrity of the early texts by not conflating them, it is reasonable to expect that they respect them at all levels, both on the level of passages and of lines. To produce a fully non-conflated edition, it would hardly be an extreme position to suggest a less free-reined eclecticism in editorial practice – perhaps one closer to McKerrow’s proposals (1939, p.2)– if not a conservative editing of copy-text without systematic reference to the collateral witness. Otherwise, they may be inherently inconsistent, for their eclecticism is still producing conflation in an edition advertised as “non-conflated”.

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## The Circle Pattern in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*

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The image of the circle is a unifying motif in Ben Jonson's works.<sup>1</sup> In his masques, it stands for harmony and perfection, realm, marriage, dance and cosmos, and its centre represents reason and the King in a propagandistic, conservative celebration of monarchy. In his poetry, the circle and sphere of perfection are also present, but the centre becomes more important as it stands for, on the one hand, Jonson's anxieties over the misrepresentation of his character and opinions by others and his fear of self-exposure, and, on the other hand, the virtues that he wished to possess and praised in others: self-assuredness, inner stability, and the Stoic detachment and isolation from the problems and trials that the outside world poses. In his plays, Jonson not only introduces the occasional circle image, he also structures them following a pattern consisting in the creation of different concentric levels of 'performance' and 'audience' within the play and reflecting the contemporary view of the universe as structured in concentric spheres or circles.

In *Volpone; or, The Fox* (1605), the circle image is not only explicit in a couple of instances, but it is also implicit in the behaviour of the characters that bear bird names, and in the above-mentioned usual Jonsonian pattern. These elements are interdependent and reinforce one another, making the circle, as I say, the unifying image of the play. Nevertheless, besides the varying degree of explicitness and clarity there is also a difference as to the importance of the function of these elements. Jonson uses the last two as general structuring principles of his satirical play while he employs rather concrete circle images to illustrate specific points of detail in the plot.

Thus, Jonson uses the actions of the 'bird' characters to show and criticize two vices: greed and folly, that is to say, he chooses these emblematic birds to indicate *what* he satirizes and the circle that they describe around their respective victims serves as the link with the other major structural image. The second image is the division of the play in different concentric levels of theatricality in correspondence with the contemporary Ptolemaic structure of the universe. This parallelism serves Jonson to write his satire; it shows *how* Jonson establishes the dramatic irony within the play and the satirical detachment of the audience.

These two general images are, of course, more important than the individual images; a quite clear reference to the world-view in *Volpone*'s address to his gold at the outset of the play and Corvino's metaphor involving the sorcerer's circle to stress his threats to Celia. For clarity's sake, I will follow this order of importance in my discussion.

In the main plot, the relationship between *Volpone* and the legacy-hunters is based on the behaviour and ingenuity that folklore ascribes to the fox in medieval bestiaries,<sup>2</sup> that is, the belief that the fox, when pressed by hunger, feigns to be dead in order to draw the attention of carrion birds

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<sup>1</sup> For the overall importance of the circle in Jonson's production, I am especially indebted to Thomas M. Greene's "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10 (1970): 325-48 and the discussion on "Epistle Answering One that Asked to Be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben" (*Underwood*, XLVII) in William E. Cain "Self and Others in Two Poems by Ben Jonson" *Studies in Philology* 80 (1983): 163-82.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the text below Figure 1.



opposite figure to Volpone- is outsmarted by the newcomer that has entered the orbit around the Venetian centre of corruption. The inversion in the subplot of *Volpone* corresponds in fact to the inversion that we also find in Jonson's epigram, for in the poem he reverses the rôles or meanings he attributes in his poetry to the centre and the surrounding circle. Usually, the circle represents the outside world from which the wise man must distance and detach in order to retire to the centre, which stands for the Stoic ideals of the assertiveness, balance, and imperviousness of the inner-self, either desired for or achieved by the poet himself or the friends for whom he writes his eulogistic poems.<sup>5</sup>

Quite clearly then, the circle image as associated to the behaviour of animals, especially birds, is the foundations upon which Jonson builds his characters' motivations and relationships both in the main plot and in the subplot. The difference between them being that the circle in the main plot is centred on greed and its eventual punishment and the one of the subplot is focused on stupidity and its scourging.

However, these are not the only circles that become seminal for the plot-building and the satirical content of the play, since concentric circles as a bidimensional representation of the Elizabethan world-view were Jonson's masterplan for the modelling of the main elements -other than the criticism of vices- that make a play a satirical piece; to wit: dramatic irony, the need for and inducing of the audience's distance and detachment from the characters, and the stress on the theatricality of society.

In contemporary representations of the Ptolemaic world-view (Figure 2) we can see that the Earth occupies its centre and it is surrounded by several concentric circles which actually stand for the crystalline spheres where each planet is inset: first the seven planets (the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, the Sun, Jupiter and Saturn), then the fixed stars and finally the Empyreum or God's abode where He lives with the angelic hierarchies and the good souls that have achieved salvation.

Jonson uses this pattern to structure most of the scenes in his plays and *Volpone* is not an exception. Jonson always places a character as the centre or focal point of the action. In most cases, that particular character performs some kind of show or behaves in a way that can be best labelled as theatrical or even as a play-within-the-play.<sup>6</sup> Then other characters watch this action and offer

<sup>5</sup> In most cases, Jonson uses the centre image when talking about himself and other male, living friends, and uses the circle and the spheres to indicate perfection when writing about defunct personages, marriages or the King.. This significative difference, apart from showing the typical disregard for women as real or potential wise individuals, is easily explained if we bear in mind that the soul or mind is the innermost part of the self and it can be said to be lodged within the body (either in the heart or in the brain) as if it were the centre within the circle; circles and spheres related to marriages and the King stand for perfection and harmony in conjugal life and government, respectively; as to the connection between circles and spheres and immortality, according to early seventeenth-century beliefs, when the soul leaves the too-too solid flesh, it sets off on a journey through the different spheres that form the universe up to the *Coelum Empyreum* (heaven) where God himself lives together with the angels and the good souls. For this contrast see, for poems with an emphasis on the centre: *Epigrams: XCVIII To Sir Thomas Roe; CVI To Sir Edward Herbert; CXXVIII To William Roe; The Forest: XII Epistle to Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland; XIV An Epistle to Master John Selden; The Underwoods: XXV An Ode to James, Earl of Desmond; XXX An Epigram on William, Lord Bur[leigh], Lor[rd] High Treasurer of England; XLV An Epistle answering to One that Asked to be Sealed of the Tribe of Ben; LII (A Poem Sent Me by Sir William Burlase); Miscellaneous Poems: I To Thomas Palmer.* For poems in which circles and spheres stand for perfection see: *The Forest: XLVIII The Dedication of the King's New Cellar. To Bacchus; LXVIII An Epigram. To the Household. 1630; LXX To the Immortal Memory and Friendship of that Noble Pair, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison; LXXV Epithalamion; LXXXI On the King's Birthday; LXXXIII An Elegy on the Lady Jane Pawlet, Marchion[ess] of Winton; LXXXIV Eupheme; Miscellaneous Poems: XV To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr William Shakespeare: And What He Hath Left Us; XVIII The Vision of Ben Jonson, on the Muses of His Friend M. Drayton; XXIV; XXIX Epitaph on Katherine, Lady Ogle; Odes: XXXI Ode Enthusiastic; XXXII Ode Allegoric; XXXIV Ode; LIX; LXXXIII; LXXXVIII; XCVII; Other Miscellaneous Poems: CVII A Song of Welcome to King Charles; CVIII A Song of the Moon; CX (A Panegyre, on the Happy Entrance of James, Our Sovereign, to His First High Session of Parliament in This Kingdom, the 19 of March, 1603; CXXIV The Reverse on the Back Side.*

<sup>6</sup> In *Mirror within a Mirror: Ben Jonson and the Play-within*, Salzburg Studies in English Literature 46 (Salzburg, Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1975) 16-18, Robert W. Witt includes the observation of some characters by others among the varieties of the play-within-the-play in Jonson's drama: "Another such situation occurs when one character or group of characters in the play observes another character or group of characters. (...) [A] play reflects life and life is a play, it follows that a play should reflect a play. This, it seems, is the effect Jonson works for in his plays, particularly the comedies.

commentaries about it to other characters in the play. Thus, the centre is surrounded, so to speak, by two concentric circles or levels that correspond to the 'presenter' or 'interpreter' of the action and its 'audience'. Some scenes show an even more complex structure as they offer supplementary circles that add intermediate levels to this relationship between 'action' and 'audience'. Moreover, in some of his plays Jonson employs inductions and choruses that constitute another commenting audience with characters alien to the play proper interposed between us, the very outer limit in this structure, and the play in order to guide our reception of the play.<sup>7</sup>

This association between the theatricality in Jonson's plays and the contemporary world-view represented as a series of concentric circles may seem somewhat far-fetched, but Jonson explicits it in the prologue to *Cynthia's Revels*, where he identifies the audience with the outer sphere surrounding the central action on stage and the spectators are asked to grant his play their understanding and respect in the form of a crown, another circular shape which becomes concentric to the audience as the play is its very centre (the italics are mine):

*If gracious silence, sweet attention,  
Quick sigh, and quicker apprehension,  
The lights of judgment's throne, shine any where,  
Our doubtful author hopes this is their sphere;*  
And therefore opens he himself to those, 5  
To other weaker beams his labours close,  
As loth to prostitute their virgin-strain,  
To every vulgar and adulterate brain.  
In this alone, his Muse her sweetness hath,  
She shuns the print of any beaten path; 10  
And proves new ways to come to learned ears:  
Pied ignorance she neither loves nor fears.  
Nor hunts she after popular applause,  
Or foamy praise, that drops from common jaws:  
The garland that she wears, their hands must twine, 15  
Who can both censure, understand, define  
What merit is: *then cast those piercing rays,  
Round as a crown, instead of honour's bays,  
About his poesy; which, he knows, affords  
Words, above action; matter, above words.*

The structure in concentric levels of action remains the same for much of Jonson's plays, however, there is a shift of characters occupying the centre as they abandon and recover their positions as the centre of the play. As this device combines with the linear progression of the different part of the play, i. e., the protasis, epitasis, catastasis and catastrophe, we also find that those elements that used to be the centre of the play occupy a more marginal position in the pattern.

In *Volpone*, the eponymous character is the centre or focal point of most of the play as he does the 'acting', Mosca is the interpreter that manipulates the legacy-hunters and the latter form the gullible audience who believes what it sees and hears. In the subplot, Sir Pol is both the centre and the self-presenter and Peregrine his audience and his critic in his asides.

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Each consists of a series of plays-within which are produced by some of the characters while other characters observe them, and this effect seems to represent Jonson's view of life - a theatre in which a play is in progress in which a play is in progress."

<sup>7</sup> *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), *The Staple of News* (1626) and *The Magnetic Lady* (1632) include both induction and chorus, while *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) has an induction. *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) has a sort of frame structure (1. 1. and 5. 4.).

Later, these starting relationships are inverted and reversed back again at a devilish pace as we see that Volpone leaves the centre for an audience position in an exterior circle, while Mosca occupies the centre briefly, just until Volpone ends the game by regaining the centre and provoking the collapse of this little microcosm of deceit by giving away himself and all the others. In the subplot, Peregrine becomes the centre as he plays his trick on Sirj Pol, but then Sir Pol becomes the centre of attention as he dons his caparison.

This manipulation of both the characters and the audience's attention can be best termed as a game with centripetal and centrifugal projection, in other words, how the play is devised to produce the audience's engagement with and detachment from the play and its characters. We, as spectators, engage in the action, we are drawn towards the centre, when we pay attention to the character that becomes the focal point of the play, and we detach and distance from this centre in a psychological centrifugal movement when the other levels of action, commentary, and audience intervene and modify our reception of the play.

This double-way projection is the basis of Jonson's elements of satire for, in this way, he is able to achieve dramatic irony. We, as spectators, are aware of the manipulative nature of some characters, therefore, we know something the gulled characters ignore; we become, if not accomplices, at least, dumb witnesses of the delinquents' activities. Dramatic irony produces our distancing and detachment from the characters as we watch the play. Jonson prevents our identification with the cheaters and certainly creates a wide gap between us, the audience, and the foolish and vicious characters.

Actually, Jonson creates what Bertolt Brecht calls *Verfremdungseffekt* or Alienation effect. His plays share aspects with Brecht's theory of alienation in drama. Jonson tries to avoid the audience's empathy with the characters, he guides our reception of the play through the commentaries of the 'audience' of the main action, he provides the dramatic distance stressing the fictional character of the play, not by means of the actors' self-conscious performance -this is a difference with Brecht- but by resorting to dramatic self-consciousness within the play. Jonson relies on a very episodic structure of plays, something Brecht also recommended and referred to as 'plays within the play' for they also reproduced the protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe sequence of a play at large, but Jonson goes beyond this as he not only uses this episodic structure but also stresses the theatricality of these scenes by providing audiences that comment on them and influence the real spectators. Jonson transforms most of his scenes into practical plays-within-the-play and some of them really fall under this category since the characters watch plays, masques, or puppet shows. This creates what I call the theatrical paradox that, on the one hand, makes the spectators of those shows more real, closer to our level of reality, and, on the other hand, stresses that we are actually seeing a work of fiction.<sup>8</sup>

So much for the two main images of the play. As regards to the specific images, apart from the odd references to Fortune and her wheel, Jonson includes two more examples of circle imagery. These correspond, as I said before, to 1. 1., the first fourteen lines of Volpone's salutation to his gold, and 2. 5. 47-56 in which Corvino refers to the conjurer's circle.

Together with Volpone's subversion of religion, the first text links with and foregrounds the general use of the Ptolemaic world-view to structure the play, for Volpone refers to himself as the Earth and he identifies gold with the Sun. That is, here we find the identification of Volpone with the centre or focal point of the microcosm of corruption and folly which Venice represents. Besides, if we take into account that the alchemichal and astrological symbols for gold and the Sun were the same, i. e., a circle with a dot in its centre: we will realize that the analogy between gold and the Sun is another way of underlining the image of the circle. On the other hand, Volpone's mistake on locating darkness in the Earth, the centre of the Universe, hence, himself, indicates both the

<sup>8</sup> See Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic*. Ed. and transl. by John Willett (London, Methuen, 1964, rptd. as a pbk. in 1990). The relevant pieces to my discussion are: "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting", 91-9; "The Street Scene", 121-9, esp. 125 and 126; "A Short Description of A New Technique of Acting. Appendix [selected notes] 17. The A-Effect as a Procedure in Everyday Life", 143-5; "A Short Organum for the Theatre", §§ 66-68, 201-2.

corruption of this world and his own personal corruption and also foretells his destiny at the end of the play.

In the second instance of explicit circle images, Corvino uses the image of the sorcerer who accidentally leaves the protection of his circle when invoking a devil to add dramatism to his menaces to Celia. It offers, again, a link with the general recurrent image, but it also makes us think that Corvino is a very devil himself that will destroy Celia if she dares venture beyond the limits of her incarceration, in other words, if she dares disrupt Corvino's orderly household world centred on her possession and control. Thus, again, we find Corvino in another outer level from which he is intent on exercising his power in order to get a hold of the centre.

So far I have centred my discussion of *Volpone* on the text of the play in connection with Jonson's contemporary culture. Now, I would like to transcend these limits and support my views focusing on a stage production for, indeed, 'the play is the thing'.

In the 1995 Royal National Theatre production of *Volpone*, directed by Matthew Warchus, the circle pattern of the play was actually emphasized and substantiated with the set and stage design. The stage of the Olivier Theatre is divided in revolving, concentric, circular sections. Every time the setting changed, the stage sections rotated. Those characters that became the focal point of each scene occupied the inner central section, while those who represent the first and successive circles in a centrifugal direction were situated in the outer areas. Perhaps this was not the purposeful result of a deep understanding of Jonson's works and their relationship to seventeenth-century culture, but a happy coincidence deriving from making use of the special characteristics of the stage. At any rate, I think this production is thoroughly useful to illustrate my point.

In Figure 4, Venetian guards chase Volpone and Mosca in an added introductory dumb-show which owes much to the Venetian Carnival and Milos Forman's *Amadeus* film. This was a fast moving scene in which the characters ran at full speed while the stage rotated thus creating a fine 'paradoxical' effect, for the actors ran across different rooms and corridors corresponding to the outer circles of the set, but at the same time they always remained in full view of the audience, on the same spot.

In Figure 5, Volpone, being the very centre of the main plot, is surrounded by his riches as well as Mosca, Nano, Castrone and Androgyno, who form a circle or outer level around him on his bed, which occupies the inner circle of the stage.

Figure 6 shows Celia and Bonario's trial at the Scrutineo. The two good-natured characters are in the abstract centre of the scene as they are the defendants. Voltore, although placed in the physical focal point of the scene and picture in fact represents an outer circle since he prosecutes the case against them. He is what I have termed as 'presenter', the intermediary between the centre of attention and the audience within the play that listens to him attentively (see Appendix). Corbaccio, bespectacled, with a white beard and wearing a helmet with a primitive hearing-aid that indicates his deafness, Corvino, in black, sitting next to Corbaccio, and Mosca, dressed like a Magnifico to Corbaccio's right, know all about Voltore's lies. We are also in the secret, therefore, we find an evident example of dramatic irony. These characters are placed, so to speak, on a different level or circle in the play. The Avocatori and the Notarios are farther away in even more distant circles if you notice the division of the stage floor in different areas which is much clearer in this photograph than in the preceding ones. Also, Volpone, disguised as a Commandatore and standing almost in complete darkness next to Mosca, occupies the outer circle of the scene.

Whether by chance or quite consciously, in my opinion, Matthew Warchus's production succeeded in offering a really entertaining spectacle coupled with an illustration of Jonson's underlying analogy.

Analogy, indeed. As I believe to have proved, the circle is the figure that Jonson uses to bind together very different elements, aspects and materials: emblematic animal behaviour, which points to sources such as classical fable and medieval bestiaries and *fabliaux*, the contemporary world-view, dramatic satire and some of its most typical constituents: dramatic irony, distance and detachment, theatricality and dramatic self-consciousness.

Actually, this union of such disparate ideas and images is not that far from the metaphysical sensibility. Jonson also shows wit in associating the general with the particular. This is as Samuel Johnson held: "a kind of *discordia concors*, a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike". In *Volpone*, as we have seen, "the most heterogenous ideas are yoked by violence together" as well.<sup>9</sup>

The conclusion is quite simple then. The circle in *Volpone* is a conceit that informs the whole play. *Volpone* can be defined as a 'metaphysical play', not because of the imagery that Jonson puts in his characters' mouths, for it is quite reasonably clear and sparse, but because the play is in fact a quite elaborate association of elements with the circle as its key. Thus, *Volpone* shares much with John Donne's poem *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning* in which the circle also provides the links in the chain of ideas and images. The difference is that while Donne's text is a poem just thirty-six lines long, Jonson's is a five-act play. The varying degree of concentration is what misleads us into considering both works as being wide apart and very dissimilar. In Donne's poem the conceit density is so high that its presence is evident and it even proves to be an overdose for some readers. However, in Jonson's play the conceits are so diluted that the play resembles one of those nice homeopathic remedies. Allegedly, the active principle is there, but actually we cannot see it or even taste it. This dilution, I am afraid, will also make you think that my views about *Volpone* are a sort of mountebank's empty perorations. Of course, I do not want you to swallow this uncritically, just read *Volpone* again and you will see for yourselves that there is more than meets the eye in this respect.

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<sup>9</sup> Samuel Johnson, "Cowley" from *The Lives of the English Poets* > *John Donne's Poetry*. Sel. and ed. by Arthur L. Clements (New York, W. W. Norton, 2nd edn., 1992) 142-5, 143.

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## APPENDIX

THE CONCENTRIC LEVELS OF 'ACTION' AND 'AUDIENCE' IN JONSON'S *VOLPONE*; OR, *THE FOX* (1605).

ACT 1. SETTING: VOLPONE'S HOUSE.

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5
Centre: focal point	Gold <sup>10</sup>	Volpone	Volpone	Volpone	Volpone
1st circle: speaker or presenter	Volpone	Nano	Mosca	Mosca	Mosca
2nd circle: spectator (s) and or 'gulled' character (s)	Mosca (spectator)	Voltore (both)	Voltore (both)	Corbaccio (both)	Corvino (both)

ACT 2. SETTINGS SCENES 1, 2 &amp; 3: THE SQUARE, BEFORE CORVINO'S SQUARE; SCENE 4: VOLPONE'S HOUSE; SCENE 5: CORVINO'S HOUSE; SCENE 6: VOLPONE'S HOUSE; SCENE 7: CORVINO'S HOUSE.

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6	Scene 7
Centre: focal point	Sir Politic	Volpone (as Scoto of Mantua)	Volpone's show is disrupted by Corvino	Volpone	Celia	Volpone (and Celia <i>in absentia</i> )	Celia
1st circle: speaker or presenter	Peregrine (asides)	Sir Politic and Peregrine (frame to Volpone's mountebank show)	-	Volpone (he tells Mosca about his infatuation with Celia)	Corvino	Mosca	Corvino
2nd circle: spectator (s) and / or 'gulled' characters	-	Celia (she does not hear Sir Politic and Peregrine's comments, though)	-	Mosca	-	Corvino	-

<sup>10</sup> However, Volpone associates himself to the Earth and gold to the son of the Sun. Volpone becomes the centre and gold the circling sun. On the other hand, in the astrological and alchemical symbolism, gold and the sun are represented with a circle with a dot in its centre: . This is another way of emphasizing the circle image in the play. Mosca is on stage while Volpone speaks, thus, he is the spectator of his monologue addressed to his gold.

ACT 3. SETTING: SCENES 1 & 2: A STREET; SCENE 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9: VOLPONE'S HOUSE.

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6	Scene 7	Scene 8	Scene 9
Centre: focal point	Mosca (monologue)	Mosca	Nano Castrone, Androgynon <sup>11</sup>	Lady Would-be	Sir Politic ( <i>in absentia</i> )	-	Volpone <sup>12</sup>	- 13	Volpone
1st circle: speaker or presenter	-	-	-	Nano, Volpone (Volpone complains about Lady Would-be)	Mosca	-	Corvino	-	Mosca <sup>14</sup>
2nd circle: spectator (s) or 'gulled' character (s)	-	Bonario	Volpone	-	Volpone (spectator) Lady Would-be (cheated by Mosca)	- (Mosca hides Bonario)	Celia (offered to Volpone) Mosca (spectator)	-	Corbaccio
3rd circle: hidden spectator	-	-	-	-	-	-	Bonario (in the gallery)	-	Voltore

ACT 4. SETTINGS: SCENES 1, 2, 3: A STREET; SCENES 4, 5 & 6: THE SCRUTINEO.

	Scene 1	Scene 2	Scene 3	Scene 4	Scene 5	Scene 6
Centre: focal point	Sir Politic (monologue)	Sir Politic	Peregrine	Voltore	Bonario and Celia	Bonario, Voltore, Celia,
1st circle: speaker or presenter	-	Lady Would-be	Mosca	Mosca	Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino	Lady Would-be, Voltore

<sup>11</sup> Nano speaks and Castrone and Androgynon listen to him. Nano is both the centre of attention and the speaker.

<sup>12</sup> When Mosca and Corvino leave, Volpone stops feigning and he becomes the focal point. He tries to woo Celia. At this point, theatrical self-consciousness is at its peak, as Volpone remembers his past as an actor and exclaims that he attracted the attention of the public (ll. 157-164). The song makes Volpone and Celia the centre of attention.

<sup>13</sup> Mosca and Volpone find themselves in trouble as Bonario has unmasked them. Bonario destroys the different levels of action and performance when he leaves the gallery.

<sup>14</sup> Mosca cheats Voltore too as he makes him interpret what he has seen in a totally different light. What he has seen becomes the centre of attention, Mosca continues to be the presenter and Voltore leaves the third level for the second one.

2nd circle: spectator (s) and / or 'gulled' character (s)	Peregrine (spectator)	Peregrine (comments the Would-be's conversation) 15	Lady Would-be (Mosca tells her about the courtesan)	Mosca, Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino.	Avoractori	Avocatori, Lady Would-be, Voltore, Corbaccio, Covino.
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<sup>15</sup> At the end of the scene, Peregrine becomes its focal point.

ACT 5. SETTING: SCENES 1, 2, 3, 5: VOLPONE'S HOUSE; SCENE 4: SIR POLITIC'S HOUSE; SCENES 6, 7, 8 & 9: A STREET; SCENEA 10 & 12: THE SCRUTINEO; SCENE 11: A STREET.

	Sc. 1	Sc. 2	Sc. 3	Sc. 4	Sc. 5	Sc. 6	Sc. 7	Sc. 8	Sc. 9	Sc. 10	Sc. 11	Sc. 12
Centre: focal point	Volpone (alone)	Volpone	Mosca	Sir Politic	-	Corbaccio, Corvino	Voltore	Mosca <i>passant</i>	Mosca	Bonario, Celia	Volpone	Bonario, Celia
1st circle: speaker or presenter	-	Mosca	Mosca Volpone (asides)	Peregrine (disguised) & three merchants <sup>16</sup>	-	Volpone (disguised)	Voltore	Volpone (disgu.)	Volpone	Voltore <sup>17</sup>	Nano, Androg.	Volto re Volp. 18
2nd circle: spectator (s) and / or 'gulled' character (s)	-	-	Voltore, Corbaccio, Corvino, L. Would-be	Sir Politic	-	Corbaccio, Corvino	Volpone (disgu.)	Corb., Corv.	Voltore (cheated by Mosca & Volpone)	Avoc., Notario, Comm.	-	Corvino, Corbaccio, Avoc. Notario, etc.

<sup>16</sup> In this scene the division is problematic. There is only the centre and a circle in fact, but they are further complicated because Peregrine is disguised, that is to say, he is offering a show. Sir Politic is both the centre of the scene and the victim of Peregrine deceit.

<sup>17</sup> Corbaccio and Corvino can be said to be a sort of intermediate level between Voltore and the Avocatori. Thus, this scene would have four levels or circles of audience, instead of three. Certainly, this is the most complex scene as regards to this aspect in the whole play.

<sup>18</sup> There is a chaotic confusion in the different levels of action and performance at the end of the play as Voltore pretends to be possessed and then Volpone reveals the truth. The attention shifts from Bonario and Celia, to Voltore and then to Volpone who eventually destroys the whole structure by confessing the truth.

Figure 1. Illustration from *Volpone* by Ben Jonson, programme for Matthew Warchus's 1995 Royal National Theatre production at the Olivier Theatre of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (N. p., National Theatre, 1995) [19]. The source of the illustration is not acknowledged, however, it is accompanied by the following quotation from T. H. White, *The Book of Beasts*, a translation of a 12th-century Latin bestiary (no page or any other information is provided in the programme); presumably, this image belongs to the same bestiary:

Vulpis the fox gets his name from the person who winds wool (Vulpis) -for he is a creature with circuitous pug marks who never runs straight but goes on his way with tortuous windings. He is a fraudulent and ingenious animal. When he is hungry and nothing turns up for him to devour he rolls himself in red mud so that he looks as if he were stained with blood. Then he throws himself on the ground and holds his breath, so that he positively does not seem to breathe. The birds, seeing that he is not breathing, and that he looks as if he were covered with blood with his tongue hanging out, think he is dead and come down to sit on him. Well, thus he grabs and gobbles them up.

Figure 2. God, Nature and Man, from Robert Fludd's *Utriusque Cosmi Historia* (1617-1619), reproduced as Figure 4 in G. Blakemore Evans, *Elizabethan-Jacobean Drama. A new Mermaid Background Book* (London, A & C Black, 1987).

Figure 3. The sorcerer's circle as depicted on the title page of the 1631 edition of Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. (From John S. Mebane's *Renaissance Magic and the Return of the Golden Age. The Occult Tradition and Marlowe, Jonson and Shakespeare*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989, rptd. 1992).

Figure 4. Introductory dumb-show to the play proper (addition, not in Jonson's original). Left to right above: Castrone (Jonathan Stone), Nano (Wayne Carter) and Androgyno (Joyce Henderson).

*Volpone*. Royal National Theatre at the Olivier Theatre (1995). Photograph: Ivan Kyncl, 53 St. Donatt's Rd., London SE 14 6NU.

Figure 5. Nano, Castrone and Androgyno's show (3. 2.). Volpone (Michael Gambon), centre; Mosca (Simon Russell Beale), far left; Castrone (Jonathan Stone), to Volpone's right; Androgyno (Joyce Henderson), behind Volpone; Nano (Wayne Cater), right.

*Volpone*. Royal National Theatre at the Olivier Theatre (1995). Photograph: Ivan Kyncl, 53 St. Donatt's Rd., London SE 14 6NU.

Figure 6. Celia and Bonario's trial at the Scrutineo (5. 12.). Left to right: Mosca (Simon Russell Beale), Corbaccio (Trevor Peacock), Corvino (Robin Soans), Voltore (Stephen Boxer), Bonario (Mark Lewis Jones), Celia (Matilda Ziegler). Above: notarios (Charles Millham and Malcolm James) and Avvocatori (Seymour Matthews, John Griffiths and Paul Benzing).

*Volpone*. Royal National Theatre at the Olivier Theatre (1995). Photograph: Ivan Kyncl, 53 St. Donatt's Rd., London SE 14 6NU.

## The Three Faces of the Goddess in Ben Jonson's Masque of Queens

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Throughout the world people have associated the moon with the eternal feminine, for the moon's monthly cycle is a reminder of the rhythms of womanhood. The moon represents the ebb and flow of birth, growth and death, a pattern of perpetual renewal that is made visible in the three phases of the Goddess as Maiden, Mother and Crone.

Adele Getty: *Goddess: Mother of Living Nature*.

The great majority of the scholars who have devoted the best part of their lives to the study of the remote eras when humanity worshipped a Mother Goddess seem to agree that, as the cult of the female deity was progressively overruled by that of a male God, the memory of its secret rites lingered on, hidden away in the, what is known as magic lore, kept alive first through oral tradition and, later on, in the texts of the many writers who thought this material worthy of their attention.<sup>1</sup>

Although Jonson, in view of the high moral standards he wished his work to be known by, never allowed himself much scope in this area (at least not in his comedies where, for corrective purposes, he depicted life with the harsh crudeness of the satirist) he, nevertheless, deigned to explore this field in his masques, the elaborate plays written for the entertainment of the court. This was a genre he excelled in to the great pleasure of James I who, for his good services, awarded him the title of King's Poet.

Among such theatrical pieces, *The Masque of Queens* deserves to be singled out because its magic lore, in spite of the scarring left on it by centuries of male-oriented religion, still bears the stamp of the primeval rites that gave it shape and form.

This recurrent underlying trait can be easily perceived in the description of the witches at the beginning of the play. Although their names - Slander, Rage, Excretion, Malice, Suspicion - link them up with the Seven Deadly Sins of the Christian Doctrine and, consequently, with the vices of the Morality and the hellish powers, some details of their physical appearance trace their origin back to the third theophany of the Great Mother Goddess as Hag, a word Jonson uses without realising its real implications, the Dispenser of Death and the Lady of the Underworld:

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<sup>1</sup> Vide Baring, Anne., Cashford, Jules 1991: *The Myth of the Goddess*. London, The Penguin Book, Arkana: 648, 655-658, 656-657; Campbell, Joseph 1959: *The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology*. vol.I. London, The Penguin Group, Arkana: 161 ff., 431 ff.; Gimbutas, Marija 1989: *The Language of the Goddess*. New York, Grand Rapids, Philadelphia, St. Louis, London, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, Harper & Row: 321.

[These Witches] all differently attir'd; some w<sup>th</sup> rattes on they<sup>r</sup> heads; some, on they<sup>r</sup> shoulders; others w<sup>th</sup> oyntment-potts at they<sup>r</sup> girdles; All w<sup>th</sup> spindells, timbrells, rattles, or other *veneficall* instruments, ...<sup>2</sup>

Though the rat is not an animal commonly associated with the divine female being, it nevertheless, cannot be denied that it is a creature of the dark which, if the need arises, feeds on carrion. As for the ointment, it probably consists of a misconception of the sacred intoxicating beverage the devotees of the Goddess drank in certain ceremonies which took place on predetermined days of the lunar month or year. But the «spindells, timbrells or rattles» have always been directly associated with the female deity, who was often depicted holding them in her divine hands. Besides, all these instruments are round, or rather, circular like the concept of the passing of time in the matriarchal communities where death, mating and birth/rebirth matched the cycles of Nature.

As with the description of the witches, so with that of their Dame, whom the poet, through the symbolism of the snake, seems to have inadvertently given the role of High Priestess of this strange cult:

At this, the *Dame* enterd to them, naked arm'd, barefooted, her frock tuck'd, her hayre knotted, and folded w<sup>th</sup> vipers; In her hand, a Torch made of a dead-Mans arme, lighted; girded w<sup>th</sup> a snake. (H & S: 286).

The symbiosis between woman and reptile, which is clearly alluded to in the text, dates back to the remote eras when the Goddess was revered. In fact, in contrast to what happened later on after Jewish and Christian teaching identified the serpent with the Tempter of the Garden of Eden, this ophidian was always the faithful companion of the female deity and even her partner in the Act of Creation, a concept that gave rise to the Pelasgian Creation Myth, one of the most beautiful that human mind has ever brought forth:

In the beginning, Eurynome, the Goddess of All Things, rose naked from Chaos, but found nothing substantial for her feet to rest upon, and therefore divided the sea from the sky, dancing lonely upon its waves. She danced towards the south, and the wind set in motion behind her seemed nothing new and apart with which to begin a work of creation. Wheeling about, she caught hold of this north wind, rubbed it between her hands, and behold ! the great serpent Ophion. (H & S 286).

But the presence of the Goddess as Cronos, or in any of her other two theophanies, is not restricted solely to the details concerning the outward appearance of the witches or hags. It also makes itself felt in the magic formulas they chant and the dialogue going on among themselves. These texts thus seem to provide all the necessary clues to fully appreciate the extensive and rich lore of this ancient cult that derived its strength and substance from its very special bond with Nature.

The 1st. «Charme» discloses all the whereabouts of the witches before they were, somehow, magically summoned to this meeting:

From the lakes, and from the fennes,  
From the rockes, and from the dennes,  
From the woods, and from the caues,  
From the Church-yards, from the graues,  
From the dungeon, from the tree,  
That they die on, here are wee. (H & S: 284).

The places alluded to do not come as a surprise to anyone who is familiar with the myth of the Goddess. In fact, they are highly symbolical and part of the whole pattern.

<sup>2</sup> Herford, C. H., Simpson, Percy and Evelyn eds. 1970: *Ben Jonson*. vol VII. Oxford, At the Clarendon Press: 283. All quotations from *The Masque of Queens* will be taken out of this volume of the Critical Edition of Ben Jonson's Works in XI volumes. So, henceforth, it will be just mentioned as H & S followed by the number of the page where the quotation in question can be found.

The lakes or fountains stand for the purifying water where the female deity used to submerge her sacred body to recover her virginity, that is to say, the potential of her fertile matrix to generate new beings.

The caves epitomize her divine reproductive organs, moist, dark, secluded, awesome in their seemingly never-ending fruitfulness.

As for the trees of the forest with their branches striving to reach the sky and their roots firmly hugging the soil, they represent the projection in this world of the famous Tree of Life which, usually depicted with two snakes coiling round its trunk, spanned all the realms under the rule of the Goddess - air, earth/fire and nether regions.

If the 1st charm deals basically with the many abodes of the female deity, the 2nd. focus primarily on an animal that civilizations based on Judaism and Christianity always equate with the devil himself - the Goat.<sup>3</sup> Originally the Ram, a sexually strong but not lecherous animal, unlike his successor, this horned beast, or some others with antlers, is a trusted companion of the divine woman and quite often an emblematic representation of her partner.

However, this living creature is not the only one to enjoy a privileged relationship with the Goddess. Many more do so, as can be inferred from the 3rd. «Charme»:

The Owle is abroad, the Bat, and the Toade,  
And so is the Cat-à-Mountaine;  
The Ant, and the Mole sit both in a hole,  
And Frog peeps out of the fountayne;  
The Dogges, they do bay, and the Timbrells play,  
The Spindle is now à turning;  
The Moone it is red, and the starres are fled,  
But all the Skye is à burning ... (H & S: 285).

Although all the animals mentioned in the text can boast of a special link with the female deity, the Owl, later on referred to as «screeching Owl», stands out among the rest. In fact it was believed that there were times when the divine being, in her capacity as Hag, would use its body to soar ominously in the night sky, as befitted the true harbinger of Death.

Also rating very high in the scale of values is the Leopard to which Jonson alludes as «Cat-à-Mountain» The importance of this feline can be assessed by its presence at a very momentous event: while the Goddess was giving birth, two of them flank the chair she is sitting on their heads providing a resting place for her divine hands.

Of all the other animals still mentioned in the 3rd. «Charme», the ant fares almost on equal terms with the big wild cat but for different reasons. In fact, what matters most in relation to this insect is the sometimes highly developed social organization of its female-oriented colonies. Since the dominant role is held by an exceedingly fertile queen, it matches that of the human matriarchal communities.

The last animal worth to be considered separately is the dog. Although, his most famous widely known forefather is Cerberus, the three-headed dog which guarded the Greek patriarchal Hades, its importance as a mythical figure dates back to the times when humanity worshipped a Goddess and not a God. Within the structure of her myth he played a very definite role: he was the hunter of her forests and as such he bayed (as it happens in Jonson's text) while hounding his victim, and howled when he finally killed it. Since in matriarchal societies hunting was the only area of activity in which men had their say, the dog sometimes stood for the emblematic representation of the human predator who was also the divine woman's companion or, occasionally, even her partner.

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<sup>3</sup> Graves, Robert 1960: *The Greek Myths: 1*. London, The Penguin Group: 27.

However, the wealth of symbols found in the 3rd charm, which can be traced back to the myth of the Goddess, does not confine itself to the boundaries of this earth. It reaches up to the sky where the female deity, like any other divine being, has her very own celestial body. And, as she is a woman, only the Moon - the Sky Woman - with her whimsical moods, her waning, her «pregnancies» and sudden unaccounted-for disappearances can impersonate her. That is why the witches, as descendants of the Goddess, allude to that planet in the 3rd «Charme», endowing it with a reddish hue that has spread to the whole darkness above. Could it be that both Moon and sky reflect the colour of the blood spilt by the dogs which are about hunting?

With slight variations, the symbols that can be dated back to the remote epoch of the Goddess are picked up throughout the play by all the witches, even when they are just describing in detail how they spent their time before meeting the Dame. However, the 4th. Hag concentrates on an issue which had not yet been raised, at least not in so many words:

And I ha' bene choosing out this scull,  
From Charnell-houses, that were full;  
From private grotts; and publique pitts;  
And frighted a Sexton out of his witts (H & S: 290).

Although the witches were supposed to collect bones for purposes of their own, the real interest of this passage lies in the word «scull». It is believed that certain ceremonies in honour of the female deity included drinking the sacred beverage out of crania, even if it is impossible to establish the origin of such skulls with absolute accuracy. In fact, they might have belonged to human beings, animals or either. That does not necessarily mean that, when Jonson wrote this Masque, the witches were still using them as before but, since they might be said to conjure up reminiscences of bygone eras, they are worth mentioning.

Far off dim memories also seem to pervade the statements of the 5th. Hag. In it, she describes how she relates to babies:

Vnder a cradle I did creepe,  
By day; and, when the Child was à-sleepe,  
At night, I suck'd the breath; and rose,  
And pluck'd the nodding nurse, by the nose. (H & S: 291).

It is impossible to determine with precision if in Jonson's age women accused of witchcraft were supposed to kill infants or not. But in aeons of old when the cult of the Goddess was prevalent, whenever there was a birth, the baby had to be carefully examined and any deviation from the «norm», whatever that might mean, implied that it should be disposed of. A similar principle seemed to justify some form of euthanasia when senility set in and people could no longer take care of themselves.

Another indication that the cult of the female deity was still alive is the emphasis on the number three, which reaches its highest peak in the invocation of the Dame:

You that haue, oft, bene conscious of these sights;  
And thou, *three-formed Starre*, that on these nights  
Art only power-full, to Whose triple Name  
Thus we incline; *Once, twice, and thrise-the-Same*: (H & S: 295).

As Jonson himself explains in his notes, this «*three-formed Starre*» is Hecate, «*tria virginis ora Diana*». However, this interpretation falls already within the parameters of a male-oriented religion. Most probably, Hecate is the three-faced Goddess of old - virgin, lover/mother and Cronos, the female trinity - who had the Moon as her visible celestial counterpart.

However, the dark face of the female deity as Cronos is not the only one that pervades the text. Her two other theophanies are also present but will only emerge when the Age of Gold is restored by

Heroique Virtue and Fame much against the innermost wish of the Dame who had shared with her Hags the hope of defeating her opponents once and for all:

*Vertue*, else, will deeme  
Our powers decreas't, and thinke vs banish'd earth,  
No lesse then heauen. All her antique birth,  
As *Iustice*, *Fayth*, she will restore: and, bold  
Vpon o<sup>r</sup> sloth, retrieve her *Age of Gold*. (H & S: 288).

But the supreme powers prove too strong for the forces of havoc and chaos: with the same indomitable spirit that, in times of old, the Goddess would rescue her son/lover from the evil clutches of the nether regions, so Heroique Virtue and Fame banish the withches from the sight of men (or should it be women?) and show the glory of their House through the undefiled characters of the Queens that are worthy of figuring in it. And in these dauntless women the Goddess is alive either as a Virgin or as a Mother/Lover, something which can be better understood not from the text of the mask itself but from the extensive explanations that Jonson gives afterwards. Two examples will suffice:

The sixth, that famous Wife of *Mithridates*, and *Queene of Pontus*, *Hypsicratea*, no lesse an example of *Vertue*, then the rest: Who so lou'ed her Husband, as she was assistant to him in all labors, and hazards of the Warre, in a Masculine habite. (H & S: 309).

The eleuenth was that braue *Bohemian Queene*, *Valasca*, Who, for her courage, had the surname of *Bold*. That, to redeeme her selfe, and her *sexe*, frō the *tyranny* of Men, w<sup>ch</sup> they liu'd in, vnder *Primislaus*, on a night, and at an hower appoynted, led on the Women to the slaughter of they<sup>r</sup> barbarous *Husbands* and *Lords* ... (H & S: 312).

So, both witches and queens who, apparently, have nothing in common partake of the divine essence of the Goddess: they have minds of their own, pursue their ideals without relenting and share of the then called and even today considered masculine attributes. Stephen Orgel affirms as much in his book *Impersonations* although the pervading influence of the Goddess could not be further from his thoughts:

So conceived, witches and queens are two sides of a single coin; the fearsome and the admirable share the same attributes of masculine vigour, strength and independence - the withches are the queens in reverse, literally, etymologically «preposterous». Indeed, in the structure of the masque, the witches, defining themselves as «faithful opposites / To fame and glory», *produce* their heroic antitheses.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Orgel, Stephen 1996: *Impersonations: The performance of gender in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 110.

Crime, Revenge and Horror: Peter Greenaway's  
*The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*  
as a Jacobean Revenge Tragedy

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On 29, May, 1985 millions of people saw live on TV a terrifying show of horror and violence from the Heysel Stadium in Brussels. What was supposed to be a spectacle to enjoy, a football match, became a scene of blood and death like the play-within-a-play of some Elizabethan revenge tragedies. This episode, which reminded viewers that barbarity is a timeless inherent feature of our human soul, inspired Michael Nyman's *Memorial*, which is the main musical theme of Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989). This connection is not accidental since precisely in this film Greenaway examines human horror as seen in the tragedy of the Heysel Stadium.

Some critics have mentioned the influence of John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* on *The Cook* and, in fact, Greenaway himself acknowledges it, but the film shows not the influence of a particular play but of the whole genre, the Elizabethan and Jacobean Revenge Tragedy, whose conventions Greenaway follows closely in order to impregnate his film with what Susan Bennett calls "a Jacobean sensibility" (104). Greenaway himself says that

You are being invited to watch the film as a play, a performance. You're not to take it seriously, but you are to engage in the ideas. Like Jacobean drama, it has a very savage content, bringing it front stage for examination." (quoted in Bergan 27-28).

In order to emphasise this link with revenge tragedies, in *The Cook* Greenaway stresses even more the usual theatricality of his films. Thus the beginning and the end of the film are marked by a curtain that rises and falls. We also find other elements with the same purpose such as the almost exaggerated frontality of the composition; the frequent lengthy long shots; the short number of sets; the absence of the fourth wall; the motionless camera, which offers a point of view hardly ever corresponding to that of any character; or the division of the film into days, like acts, which are in turn divided into a few scenes which change through sideways travellings to keep the continuity of the take.

Apart from these features that link the film to drama in general, there are other elements that connect it directly with Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies. The first of them is obviously the revenge theme. These tragedies typically begin with the murder of a kinsman or a lover of one of the main characters (Grantley 59). In *The Cook* Albert kills his wife's lover after finding out about her infidelity. This murder unleashes her revenge, as in the Jacobean play *The Fatal Dowry* (1619?) where a wife takes her revenge on her husband for his killing of her lover. In other revenge tragedies there are frequent examples of adultery leading to tragic consequences, as, for instance, in *The White Devil* (1612) or the subplot of Livia and Leantio in *Women Beware Women* (1613).

The revenge we see in *The Cook*, takes up just the last section of the film, which was common in the later examples of the genre<sup>1</sup> in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when, as Fredson Bowers points out, “the interest of the audience is less concerned with the workings of the villain’s revenge as a revenge than with depiction of lust, villainy, and horror” (158). Greenaway embodies that villainy and horror in the character of Albert, who could be described, as Sean French points out, as “a theatrical Jacobean villain, with the gang as his depraved courtiers and the curtained dining-room as the stage where he finally receives his deserts” (277).

The representation of horror is probably one of the most specific features of revenge tragedies (Griswold 79). In them we find all kinds of violent acts, sexual aberrations and, in general, all those actions that transgress culturally defended boundaries, and which Greenaway seems to have carefully incorporated to *The Cook* in order to present a complete collection of abhorrent atrocities. One of these horrors is cannibalism, which was quite common in some revenge tragedies. But cannibalism is portrayed by Greenaway even more cruelly because, unlike Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* or Piero in *Antonio’s Revenge*, Albert in *The Cook* is fully aware that what he is eating is Michael’s body. Cannibalism provokes horror in most cultures because it breaks our boundaries between the edible and inedible. This transgression is also a key element in Albert’s methods of torture, which are always related to the ingestion of inedible elements. Let’s think, for instance, of the compelled coprophagy of Roy, the book pages Michael has to swallow or the buttons eaten by Pup, who following a macabre pun is also forced to eat his own belly button, bringing to the film another common element of revenge plays: mutilation, an element which plays an important role in the action of some of the best-known tragedies such as *Titus Andronicus*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Antonio’s Revenge* or *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*. Other typical horrors of revenge tragedies that Greenaway shows or suggests, sometimes in a symbolic way, are rapes (as in *Titus Andronicus* or *The Fatal Contract*), necrophilia (as we find in *The Duke of Milan*, *The Revenger’s Tragedy* or *The Atheist’s Tragedy*), incest<sup>2</sup> (as in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* or *Women Beware Women*) and madness (let’s remember Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy*, Titus Andronicus, Hamlet or Cornelia in *The White Devil*).

Revenge tragedies typically present this hair-raising collection of horrors but, as Wendy Griswold points out, probably “the most striking revenge tragedy horror is the repeated equation of sex and death . . . . In revenge tragedy, death is a part of love, is embodied in it from the beginning” (80). This is exactly what we have in *The Cook* where the link between sex and death is repeatedly suggested, not just in the obvious fact that Michael dies because of his love affair or in the necrophilia of Georgina with his corpse, but also in other subtle details. For example, there are some hints that Georgina is a former prostitute who is married to a murderer, exactly as in *Women Beware Women*. At times the link between love and death is established in powerful visual images. For instance, when Albert rushes into the room where the lovers have just been making love, he sees, instead of them, a kitchen boy with his arms soaked in blood. In *The Cook*, Greenaway not only links death and love but also connects them with a key element in the film: food. Food was important in revenge tragedies not only in plots (cannibalism, banquets) but also in imagery to suggest the wild predatory character of human beings. As Marguerite Alexander points out, in these tragedies “natural imagery is almost unknown; more usual are the images derived from death, corruption and gluttonous feeding” (337). The association of love, food and death is repeated in the film. This is exactly what we have, for instance, in the image of rotten food covered with worms that go out through the sockets of a skull in the lorry where the lovers hide. In this image we have the three elements together.

<sup>1</sup> There is no agreement among the critics to refer to this late phase. While some authors such as Fredson Bowers, Grantley or Wendy Griswold speak of *Revenge Tragedy* in general without naming the different periods of the genre, J. A. Symonds calls this last period *Tragedy of Blood*, Marguerite Alexander uses the phrase *Jacobean Tragedy* (337) and Greenaway himself calls it “satirical English Jacobean theatre” (7).

<sup>2</sup> The references to incest in the film are very subtle. At the beginning of the film we can see the word *luna* in a neon light as an allusion to the film *La Luna* (1979) by Bernardo Bertolucci, that is about the incestuous relation between a mother and her son. Greenaway also suggests that the relation between Albert and Georgina can be considered, in a certain way, as a symbolic incest in the sense that she is a mother figure for him and he is “a big psychopathic child” (French 277) dominated by his oral and anal fixations, who confesses that she has taught him everything.

Similarly love and food are linked, for example, in the lover's sexual encounters, which take place in the kitchen; in the symbolic cross-cutting of sex and cookery scenes; and more explicitly in the words of Albert, who states that "the pleasures are related. Because the naughty bits and the dirty bits are so close together, it just goes to show you how sex and eating are related". Greenaway also suggests the connection between death and food by presenting the corpse of Michael cooked, the frequent references to poison, the use of a fork as a weapon, or the fact that the two characters who are murdered in the film, Michael and Albert, die eating.

This association between sex, food and death is, to a certain extent, ironic since, as happens in revenge tragedies, those elements that make our life possible and give us pleasure (sex and food) are the source of pain and death. Irony is one of the most typical conventions of revenge tragedies, in which things seldom are what they seem, revealing in this way a world where "perceptions are unreliable" (Grantley 201), just as we see in *The Cook*, where Albert's elegant costumes and refined manners at the table contrast with his despicable cruelty. Verbal irony is very important in revenge tragedies, in which there are frequent examples of sentences that once said take a quite different meaning. In the film this is the case of the moment when Albert discovers his wife's affair with Michael and shouts in rage "I'll kill him and I'll eat him"; this is what actually is going to happen.

Humour is a typical component of revenge tragedies closely related to irony. Humour, apart from contributing to please the "wide range of tastes" of the audience of the period (Griswold 69), was also an effective device to relieve the emotional strain of spectators after the horrifying spectacle they were witnessing. But often this humour is impregnated with the horrors of the play and, consequently, it becomes the typical black humour that we find, for instance, in the jokes about Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*. Similarly, Greenaway also introduces in his film this kind of humour<sup>3</sup>, as we see, for example, in Albert's threat to Roy, after which we do not know if we have to laugh, to feel horrified or probably both: "Pay when I ask you - otherwise next time we'll make you eat your own shit - after first squeezing it out of you through your prick - like toothpaste". On other occasions this humour, albeit equally macabre, is much more subtle. After the brutal murder of Michael, who has been forced to eat the pages of his books, we are shown Paolo Veronese's *Marriage at Cana*, whose image has been used to advertise some famous digestive pills.

Another typical convention of revenge tragedies is the final celebration, usually a banquet or a play-within-a play, where the action reaches its climax and revenge is finally achieved. In these scenes we usually find powerful visual images of some characters showing either a part of the victim as a memento of the outrage (Annabella's heart in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*) or the whole corpse, as in *The Spanish Tragedy* and also in *The Cook* when Georgina exposes Michael's body cooked in the final banquet. In this sequence Greenaway specially emphasises the theatricality of the celebration. In fact, he calls it "a private function" and, in a certain way, it could be considered a kind of play-within-a-play in the sense that, as in *Titus Andronicus*, the feast turns out to be a deadly ceremony in which the guest becomes the unexpected victim under the eyes of a silent audience composed by all the characters of the film.

All this theatricality together with other features such as the typified nature of the characters (Bennett 101) or the consciously unnatural, distant way of presenting events (Gorostiza 231), contribute to the artificiality that defines Greenaway's films and also revenge tragedies, which usually avoid the naturalistic representation of reality. Nevertheless, this artificiality and this seeming estrangement from reality contrast with the fact that, on a deeper level, revenge tragedies were intimately concerned with their historic moment and usually reflected the political and social affairs of the period. Similarly, Greenaway also uses in his film a far-fetched story to discuss contemporary issues. As some critics have remarked, *The Cook* is a strong attack against "the entirely sickening nature of Thatcherite consumer capitalism, selfishness and excess" (Denham 48) epitomised in

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<sup>3</sup> In fact, the film was billed by the distributor Miramax as a Black Comedy.

Albert, a greedy character who is obsessed with getting money and consuming; he significantly asks Michael “How can books make you happy? You cannot eat them!”<sup>4</sup>

Greenaway also reflects in his film another topic that was common in many revenge tragedies. As Laura Denham points out, our “post-modern capitalist era shares with the Jacobean era its Machiavellian materialism and fear of impending destruction of civilisation” (30). Thus, Greenaway shows us how heartless materialism brings the failure of the great ideals, represented by Michael and his interest in the French Revolution, a clear symbol of ideals beaten by unmerciful pragmatism. This concern with “the failure of ideas when they run up against the stubborn tyranny of the real world”, which is a constant feature in Greenaway’s films (French 277), is also quite common in revenge tragedies since, as Robert Watson points out, “Jacobean tragedies do reflect bitter disappointment with the results of earlier Renaissance idealism” (331-32). Accordingly, it is not strange to find in these plays idealist characters disappointed when discovering the corruption of the world. Man is a wolf for man, as the fierce dogs at the beginning of the film remind us, and there is no room for ideals, just for evil and corruption. As Vindice says in *The Revenger’s Tragedy* “. . . to be honest is not to be i’ th’ world” (I. i. 95). This vision of the world is similar to the one that Greenaway offers us. In fact, the following words used by Watson to describe revenge tragedies could have been used in a review of *The Cook* since they perfectly reflect what we see in the film, that is “the portrayal of a world in which people are nothing more than desperate little bodies consuming each other, indistinguishably in sex and murder” (333).

All these elements and conventions we have referred to in this brief study show the unquestionable conscious link between *The Cook* and the Elizabethan and Jacobean revenge tragedies. I do not mean to suggest, as I have said before, that Greenaway tries to adapt faithfully any particular play. What he does is to combine most of the typical conventions of the genre to give his film a certain “Jacobean flavour” (Denham 31). Revenge tragedies offer a reflection upon our “inhuman” human nature, which apparently has not developed much over the centuries, constituting thus a timeless topic. As Greenaway himself acknowledges, these plays provide him with a model for something that he consistently does in his movies, that is, a model for “an alternative examination . . . which basically looks at the centre of the human predicament by going to the edges, to the extremes” (quoted in Rodgers 12). This is what revenge tragedies usually do and this is what Peter Greenaway does in *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover*.

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<sup>4</sup> One of Albert’s victims is Georgina, whose name makes us think of Saint George, holy patron of England, who killed the man-eater dragon, exactly as she does in the film with Albert.

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# The Court Drama of Ben Jonson and Calderón

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Criticism has, traditionally, paid little attention to the relationship between the works of Ben Jonson and Calderón. It has -rather- tended to show the possible links of both playwrights with Shakespeare whose drama became, therefore, a touchstone for a comparative approach to their literary achievement. Seventeenth and Eighteenth century critics were very much interested in comparing Ben Jonson with Shakespeare<sup>1</sup>. They wanted to know which of them should be regarded as the greatest dramatist of all time. Leonard Digges with his "Shakespeare's plays more popular than Jonson's" (1632) started a debate which became very productive. James Shirley, John Dryden, Aphra Behn, Nicholas Rowe, Alexander Pope maintained that "the immortal Shakespeares Plays ... have better pleas'd the world than *Johnsons* works"<sup>2</sup>. Today the debate no longer seems to be polemic and Ben Jonson<sup>3</sup> is compared with other literary men of genius. Thus Harold Bloom finds similarities between him and Marlowe because "they were great poets and are nearly as famous now for their lives as for their works"<sup>4</sup>. Both "in very different ways, were great poets and sometimes remarkable dramatists"<sup>5</sup>. The relationship between Shakespeare and Calderón, the most international of the dramatists of the Golden Age<sup>6</sup>, has been the subject of studies by Kenneth Muir and Anne Mackenzie<sup>7</sup>, among others.

Ben Jonson and Calderón not only shared theatrical interests and preoccupations but also experienced great difficulties and hardships in their lives which were equally characterised by negative events and dramatic success. Both lost a parent in childhood: Ben Jonson's father died two months before he was born and Calderón's mother died when he was ten years old. Both went to war in the Netherlands and Catalonia respectively. Both were accused of murder<sup>8</sup>. And both shared the same faith for a time since Ben Jonson was converted to Catholicism while he was in prison, becoming a Protestant again later on. They were court playwrights for they enjoyed court patronage and wrote for the court which provided them with all the necessary means to stage spectacular drama which was a sort of total theatre, characterised by the inclusion of music and dancing.

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<sup>1</sup> See D. H. Craig (ed.). 1990: *Ben Jonson. The Critical Heritage 1599-1798*. London, Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Aphra Behn. 1673: "On Shakespeare and Jonson." D. H. Craig (ed.). op. cit. p. 305 ("Johnson" was an alternative spelling of the dramatist's surname).

<sup>3</sup> Ben Jonson has not had a positive reception in Spain. His complete plays have not been translated into Spanish yet. Moreover "sólo tenemos constancia de que se hayan traducido dos piezas suyas: *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*". Rafael Portillo and María José Mora. 1996: "Clásicos ingleses en español: el caso de Ben Jonson." *Teatro clásico en traducción: Texto, Representación y Recepción*. Ángel Luis Pujante and Keith Gregor (eds.). Universidad de Murcia. p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> Harold Bloom. 1995: *The Western Canon*. London, Papermac. p. 55.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>6</sup> A. Nicoll. 1954: *World Drama from Aeschylus to Anouilh*. London, G. Harrap. p. 223.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Muir. 1985: "Shakespeare and Calderón." *Shakespeare Contrasts and Controversies*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press. Ann L. Mackenzie. 1993: "Shakespeare y Calderón: dos interpretaciones dramáticas de *Henry VIII* and *La cisma de Inglaterra*." *Shakespeare en España. Crítica, traducciones y representaciones*. José Manuel González Fernández de Sevilla (ed.). Zaragoza, Pórtico. p. 63.

<sup>8</sup> Ben Jonson "was constantly on the wrong side of the law, imprisoned or interrogated on charges of murder". See Ben Jonson. 1995: *Selected Poems*. I. Donaldson (ed.). Oxford University Press. XVII.

Court drama grew out of popular drama. That is why -sometimes- it is difficult to distinguish themes and conventions between them, though the length of the court performances was far greater than that of the popular drama. Court plays meant a revolution in theatrical possibilities. They were part of an explosion of spectacular court entertainment in England, Spain and France. New theatres, places and décor were needed to perform the court plays which became a new dramatic genre combining drama with the visual and aural arts. Mythology and ancient history played an important role because the characters represented mythological heroes, demigods, princes of antiquity and the performances might also refer to legends and myths. It was a kind of "platonian theatre"<sup>9</sup> where virtues and abstract entities represented different values and ideals. The setting was sophisticated and relied heavily on profuse décor and spectacle, -the very essence of court drama. Music and songs contributed greatly to the overall effect of these performances. Thus Calderón's court plays became associated with the rise of zarzuela, and *El jardín de Falerina* (1648) is believed to be the first zarzuela to be written and produced in Spain. The *autos sacramentales* also incorporated spectacular elements similar to those of the court drama for "los desarrollos escenográficos en su fastuosidad y barroquismo son análogos ...", although "El valor simbólico y religioso sustituye en el auto al valor estético del teatro palaciego"<sup>10</sup>

Ben Jonson appears to be "a writer of power and intelligence"<sup>11</sup> in the masques. He created this particular type of drama specially to entertain the English court. There had been primitive court-entertainments before like "mummings" or "disguisings" which developed into masques later in the 16th century. Jonson in collaboration with Inigo Jones gave them a characteristic shape and style. The masque, with an elementary dramatic pattern and great theatrical elaboration, became fashionable when *Entertainment at Althorpe* won royal attention. These productions were performed at Christmas and the household participated in their staging though speaking parts were reserved for the professional players. Women took part in the masques which came to be a fashion show for "The first and most important element of the masque was the practice of dressing up and showing off."<sup>12</sup> These representations required elaborate and costly machinery.

They had a political significance because they had been devised to glorify the king, reinforcing his absolute power. They became an instrument for royal propaganda since the king was "the essential point of reference ..."<sup>13</sup>. This political potential is seen in most of the masques where the king was the central figure and the expression of absolutist rule. He personified wisdom, beauty, virtue and power, representing the principle of harmony and order. The illusory world of the masques incorporated the world of James I, who, in this way, became not only the ethical but also the physical and emblematic centre of the performance<sup>14</sup> where he was also "silent text"<sup>15</sup>. This is made clear in *The Masque of Oberon, the Fairy Prince*, when Oberon appeared in a chariot drawn by two bears at the end of the masque:

Melt earth to sea, sea flow to air  
And air fly into fire,  
Whilst we in tunes to Arthur's chair  
Bear Oberon's desire;  
Than which there can be nothing higher,

<sup>9</sup> Although G. Parry uses this term to describe the masques, we believe that can also referred to any kind of court drama representation. Graham Parry. 1989: *The Seventeenth Century. The Cultural and Intellectual Context of English Literature 1603-1660*. London, Longman. p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ignacio Arellano. 1995: *Historia del teatro español del siglo XVII*. Madrid, Cátedra. p. 98.

<sup>11</sup> T.S. Eliot. (1980): "Ben Jonson.", *Selected Essays*. London, Faber. p. 156.

<sup>12</sup> Robert M. Adams. 1979: *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques*. New York, W.W. Norton. p. 315.

<sup>13</sup> G. Parry. op. cit. p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Kiefer Lewalski. 1993: *Writing Women in Jacobean England*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press. p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> J. Goldberg in Jerzy Limon. 1986: *Dangerous Matter. English Drama and Politics 1623-1624*. Cambridge University Press. p. 26.

Save JAMES, to whom it flies:

But he the wonder is of tongues, of ears, of eyes. (190-196)

Thus “Text and monarch stood in the same relationship to the performance onstage”<sup>16</sup>. The four elements were also present to emphasize the greatness of such a king who was as necessary and substantial for his people. There was a mythic idealization and glorification of James who, seated in his chair of state, controlled the entire spectacle. However his appraisal of kingship is stronger and more explicit:

A night of homage to the British court,  
 And ceremony, due to Arthur’s chair  
 From our bright master, Oberon the fair;  
 Who, with these knights attendants, here preserved  
 In Faery land, for good they had deserved  
 Of yon high throne are come of right to pay  
 Their annual vows, and all their glories lay  
 At’s feet, and tender to this only great  
 True majesty, restoréd in this seat; (207-215)

The panegyric tone of these lines justifies the supreme power of the English monarchy since the king was appointed supreme ruler and was seated on Arthur’s chair that was expected to be taken by Henry, the Faery Prince, in the future. And all the masquers, including Oberon, Sylvans, Satyrs, and Silenus showed their respect for their king, turning their attention to his throne where he was sat in the front of the audience, playing a twofold role for he was actor and king at the same time. Moreover his acting skill was not only shown in the theatre but also in all public appearances and official events where he was expected to follow complex rules of protocol with great ceremony. Thus the monarch became a relevant figure in social life as well as in the theatre because he was the ruler not only of the real world but also of the illusionary world. The king himself was also an important part of the audience because he was spectator of what was going on on the stage. So we get, as Stephen Orgel mentions, two kinds of audiences attending a court spectacle: “the king watching the play, and the remainder of the audience watching the king ‘at a play’”<sup>17</sup>. In this way the theatrical potential of monarchy was fully achieved for the king “was both spectator and spectacle”<sup>18</sup>, so that the English and the Spanish courts became “... a sort of theatre production ...”<sup>19</sup>, which was basically intended to enhance the power of the king’s image through spectacular visualization in order to make the king the focal point of political and cultural life.

The court was a decisive element in the development of Calderon’s drama which reflects court interests and expectations at a time when Spanish drama was “... ante todo, un instrumento político y social”<sup>20</sup> and theatre was thought as “una gran compañía de propaganda social, destinada a difundir y fortalecer los intereses de la monarquía”<sup>21</sup>. The influence of the Spanish court was stronger on the plays of the second part of his dramatic career, those that were written after taking holy orders, when he was completely devoted to writing “autos sacramentales” and court drama which should be regarded within “la problemática de la coyuntura política y cortesana a la que pertenecen”. It means that they also included “las dimensiones panegíricas, celebrativas de la realeza ...”<sup>22</sup> as we can see

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Orgel. 1975: *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance*. Berkeley, University of California Press. p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> D. Fox.1986: *Kings in Calderón: A Study of Characterisation and Political Theory*. London, Tamesis books Ltd. p. 3.

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Rich Greer. 1991: *The Play of Power. Mythological Court Dramas of Calderón*. Princeton University Press. p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> José Antonio Maravall. 1980: *Teatro y Literatura en la sociedad barroca*. Barcelona, Crítica. p. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Sebastian Neumeister vindicates again “la necesidad de recontextualizar estas comedias [obras cortesanas]” to come to know their real significance and purpose. See Ignacio Arellano. op. cit. p. 507.

in the “autos sacramentales” which showed a political concern in a subtle way. It is precisely the king in *El gran teatro del mundo* who refers to imperial authority:

A mi dilatado imperio  
estrecho límites son  
cuántas contiene provincias  
esta máquina inferior.  
De cuanto circunda el mar  
y de cuanto alumbra el sol  
soy el absoluto dueño,  
soy el supremo señor.  
Los vasallos de mi imperio  
se postran por donde voy  
¿Qué he menester yo en el mundo?<sup>23</sup>

Royal power has no limits. Besides the king is seen as the giver of life and death because of his divine origin. He is God’s representative upon earth and his Godlike condition means control over all the world.

Calderón’s mythological court plays exhibit a greater political interest because, as Menéndez Pelayo points out, they were “plays of power”<sup>24</sup> in the sense that they had a propagandistic intention to celebrate kingship as the essential principle to preserve the Spanish social order. These plays, as in the Spanish *comedia*, contributed “también mediante la espectacularidad, a esta propaganda real ... “. Moreover “a la técnica repetida de enmascarar la realidad cotidiana [se sumaba], como consecuencia de la intocabilidad del rey, una difusión de la ideología”<sup>25</sup>. And mythology was frequently used in these plays to satisfy “... the humanists’ desire to revive a classical world and the rulers’ interest in legitimizing power ... “<sup>26</sup>. Yet these court performances included “if not loyal opposition, at least loyal criticism”<sup>27</sup>, as a result of the noteworthy freedom of expression which Spain enjoyed during the reign of Philip IV when monarchy was “la condición *sine qua non* de la existencia social”<sup>28</sup>. Drama, therefore, was used as a vehicle of political consciousness and reflected a keen awareness of the tensions and preoccupations which people suffered at a time of abuse of power. So we come across a provocative element in these plays since they were intended to be a dramatic protest against absolute authority and the growing degradation of monarchy. Calderón’s drama tried to be critical, voicing his concern and pessimism about the political situation, but this was done “coating the criticism with generous doses of humour and spectacular brilliance”<sup>29</sup>.

And the critical appreciation of the incongruencies of power was very much present in the mythological court plays which became a valuable instrument for royal opposition expressed through classical myths in a subtle and uncompromising manner, encapsulating new messages about the management of government. It meant the possibility of thinking about new forms of power without attacking the legitimate authority. Hercules at the opening of *Fieras afemina amor* has to fight with a lion which could be a metaphor of tyrannical power since tyrants behave like lions that terrify people. They could be like animals which try to get everything from their victims using physical force to threaten them. The topic of tyranny is also discussed in *La gran Cenobia* and *La torre de Babilonia*,

<sup>23</sup> Calderón de la Barca. 1957: “El gran teatro del mundo.” *Obras completas*. Ángel Valbuena Prat (ed.). Madrid, Aguilar. vol. III. p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> See Margaret Rich Greer. op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> José María Díez Borque. 1976: *Sociología de la comedia española del siglo XVII*. Madrid, Cátedra. p. 131.

<sup>26</sup> Margaret Rich Greer. op. cit. p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> Margaret Rich Greer. op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> José María Díez Borque. op. cit. p. 129.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Rich Greer. op. cit. p. 94.

where Aureliano and Nembrotabuse power through both imposition and terror<sup>30</sup>. However *El hijo del sol*, *Faetón* presents a more complex criticism of Spanish politics when Faetón asks Apollo to fulfil his dreams:

Pues déjame que tu carro  
 hoy rijja, para que triunfe  
 tan de todos de una vez  
 que todos de mí se alumbren.  
 Galatea, Amaltea y Tetis  
 vean (puesto que traslucen  
 las deidades, de tu alcázar  
 las más lejanas vislumbres)  
 que hijo tuyo me acredita  
 tu mismo esplendor, y suple  
 tu persona la mía.<sup>31</sup>

And this is going to be Faetón's tragic end. He ascended into heaven to be allowed to drive the chariot of the sun for a single day but, once he got permission and set off, was entirely unable to control the horses, crying in despair "y pues ardo yo, arda todo!". This could be the case of Spanish policy in the hands of the king's favourites who, like Faetón, tried to get power at any cost. However, as the text suggests, it was not their fault but the king's who allowed them to have all power and make decisions. Apollo should not have permitted Faetón to do so since driving the chariot was his entire responsibility. Thus "Calderón parece estar advirtiendo también en esta tragedia mitológica que el celeste auriga nunca debe ceder ni abandonar del todo las decisivas riendas del carro ..., y que tampoco nunca debe subir a él quién vaya pensando en deportivas carreras placenteras ..."<sup>32</sup>.

Calderón's royal criticism reaches its peak in *Céfalo y Pocris* where the figure of the king is ridiculed and satirized<sup>33</sup>. This musical comedy was presented before the king, as part of the Shrovetide entertainments which gave a festive tone to the whole performance. There is a dramatic subversion of values through the appearance of grotesque and absurd elements as a consequence of the chaotic state of the world where the character of the monarch is distorted and degraded. This is the reason why the play is "un texto insólito por su significación en la dramaturgia barroca"<sup>34</sup>. Royal language is also devalued because the king does not keep the formal register as it should be and the versification is rude and unpolished:

Vasallos, deudos y amigos,  
 cuya lealtad y virtud  
 canta el sol por fá, mi, ré,

<sup>30</sup> Calderón showed his concern with power in his early plays as we can see in *Amor, Honor y Poder* where "El choque entre el individuo y el Poder o la autoridad y su abuso" are dramatised. José Alcalá-Zamora. 1988: "Mitos y política en la España del joven Calderón." *El mito en el teatro clásico español*. Francisco Ruíz Ramón y César Oliva (eds.). Madrid, Taurus. p. 139.

<sup>31</sup> Calderón de la Barca. 1966 "El hijo del sol, Faetón." *Obras completas*. Ángel Valbuena Briones (ed.). Madrid, Aguilar. vol. 1. p. 1897.

<sup>32</sup> Alberto Navarro González. 1984: *Calderón de la Barca de lo trágico a lo grotesco*. Univ. de Salamanca. p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Calderón's theatre dramatises the negative qualities of rulers which are also characterised by their follies and passions. Henry VIII (*La cisma de Inglaterra*), Semíramis (*La hija del aire*) and David (*Los cabellos de Absalón*) show the human side of rulers. However we should bear in mind that "Whatever its tone, Calderón's dialectical drama expresses an absolute faith in the power of virtue". This is why there are unquestionably exemplary kings in his plays. *El príncipe constante* and *El Santo Rey Don Fernando* "confirm the qualities of superior rulership and provide a set of principles with which to evaluate other historical kings in Calderón." D. Fox. op. cit. pp. 116, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Juan Antonio Hormigón. 1988: "Los mitos en el espejo cóncavo: transgresiones de la norma en el personaje del rey." *El mito en el teatro clásico español*. Francisco Ruíz Ramón y César Oliva (eds.). Madrid, Taurus. p. 176.

la fama por cefaut ...  
 Pero ya que la fortuna,  
 deidad sin consejo algún,  
 ha dispuesto los acasos  
 de suerte, que ese avestruz  
 dirigió a mi hijo, quedando  
 tendido como un atún ...  
 ... Pero tente, lengua  
 que en lo infiel eres Dragut<sup>35</sup>.

Words are no longer meaningful because they are abused in order to present a rotten world where kingship has lost its verbal credit and conviction. Words are not presented for their textual significance but as a pretext for linguistic nonsense. The protocol which is expected to be followed in rituals and ceremonies is not used because formalities are ridiculed as in the king's hand-kissing scene. Moreover the king does not care much about his royal duties leaving his office unattended since he is completely devoted to the preparation of his daughters' marriages, as he manifests that "Es más de que pide el pueblo que estas dos hijas doncellas es hora que salgan deste San Juan de la penitencia, a tomar estado?". The monarch seems unfit to hold office because he wants to get rid of any public responsibility. He is quite determined not to practise virtue any more:

Pues ando rotivestido  
 andar quiero manirroto  
 con vos; y auque el ser, creed,  
 piadoso, es virtud moral,  
 hoy quiero hacerla peral ...  
 y dando al amor tributo,  
 vaya el diablo para puto  
 y casaos con una dellas<sup>36</sup>.

The devil becomes the reference for royal actions and decisions. The king's divine calling is reversed and tragically changed into a nightmare which is not dramatically consistent for explaining such strange deeds and behaviours as in the episode of the prince's death when the king is congratulated at the news of the prince's eternal departure. All this theatrical illusion is not only explained by the festive context where all liberties were allowed and everybody, the king included, could be criticized and mocked but also as an attempt to demistify royal power as such.

However this opposition to monarchy through court plays was stronger and more subversive in England than in Spain because "The Jacobean establishment had not one but three centers of power, with the courts of Queen Anne, and later Prince Henry standing in some oppositional tension vis-à-vis the King's court"<sup>37</sup>. The divided court and the succession of male favourites made the English court a focus of potential disorder and scandal as the poet John Harington reflected when he wrote "I neer did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety, as I have now done ..."<sup>38</sup>. And court drama productions also contributed to this atmosphere of opposition and subversion. Queen Anne herself was directly responsible for subversive actions in court performances since she used masques to intervene in diplomatic politics showing her support for particular interests, as could be seen in her overt pro-Spanish policy. Moreover we should bear in mind that Ben Jonson's first masques were designed to please the Queen and her household trying to threaten male power personified in the

<sup>35</sup> Pedro Calderón de la Barca. 1979: *Céfalo y Pocris*. Alberto Navarro (ed.). Salamanca, Almar. pp. 58-62.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 95.

<sup>37</sup> Barbara Kiefer Lewalski. op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>38</sup> John Harington. 1930: *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*. Norman E. McClure (ed.). Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 120.

King as in the *Masque of Blacknesse* where the Queen and her ladies represented black African beauties whose colour, wildness and exoticism could not be transformed by the whiteness of Albion (James I) in spite of their visit to England where they were supposed to change their black skins into white ones. This time the beams of the Sun-King of Britannia were unable “To blanch an Aethiope ... and salve the rude defects of every creature” (255-257). Unfortunately James’s powers were not sufficiently displayed for the Ethiops remained black at the end of the masque! Besides the Queen, who took the role of Aethiopia, recalled Queen Elizabeth as Cynthia, “reinforcing the association of these ladies with female danger and power.”<sup>39</sup>s

Similar ideas and expectations were developed in its sequel, *The Masque of Beautie*, presented on January 10, 1608. Once more the Queen appeared to control the whole action of the dramatic performance whose subtext reinforced women’s power since female beauty and sexuality meant a real threat to the norms of James’s court, characterised by misogyny and male values. One of its final songs made strong claims for female authority:

Had those, that dwell in error foule,  
And hold that women have no soule,  
But seene these move: they would have, then,  
Said, Women were the soules of men.  
So they doe move each heart, and eye  
With the world’s soule, true harmony. (368-373)

Finally all female characters, the Queen included, who, in this occasion, represented Harmonia, were invited to stay in Britain for ever because they could be agents of national transformation.

But the masques directed against particular actions showed a stronger opposition to royal policy for they had a negative effect on public matters. *Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion* (1624), a censored version by the king of the original text, dealt with the political consequences of the failure of the Spanish Match promoted by James I for he was accused of negligence for sending Prince Charles to Spain to marry the Spanish Infanta. As some thought that would have been a serious mistake which could have endangered the future of England, Ben Jonson’s masque was an attempt to free the king from all blame and to make clear that,

It was no enuious Stepdames rage;  
Or Tyrants malice of the age,  
That did emply him forth.  
But such a Wisdome, that would proue,  
By sending him, their hearts, and loue,  
That else might feare his worth. (355-360)

The text is intended to be a dramatic defence of the king’s political intention which had been very much questioned. He tried to justify his policy as a way of testing the true nature of Spaniards on the one hand, and as revealing the falsehood of Spain on the other. But his presentation as Neptune and loving father, who missed his son and tried to rescue him, was a theatrical show which confirmed royal failure in this particular matter.

Court plays were not only sophisticated spectacles. They were also intended to oppose particular forms of power which contradicted new expectations. They had a political dimension for they were concerned with the abuse of royal authority. And their criticism was radical because it was expressed in the court by playwrights who owed their literary promotion to the king. Moreover they had a metatheatrical potential since they tried to make English and Spanish audiences aware of the necessity of changes in the management and control of power at a time of crisis and doubts.

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<sup>39</sup> Barbara Kiefer Lewalski. op. cit. p. 33.

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## Marlowe, Jarman, and Edward II: Use or Abuse?

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The relationship between cinema and theatre is an old one. In fact, it can be traced back to the very origins of the film industry, when dramatic actors were required for the screen, and theatre, together with fiction, were used as sources for plots and stories to be narrated visually. The cinema has made extensive use of all the possible literary periods, but when it has turned its attention to Renaissance England, Shakespeare has always been the favourite choice. The election is not based exclusively on literary or dramatic qualities, since cinema, as any other kind of industry, tries to be a profitable enterprise and Shakespeare has demonstrated to be almost always a synonym for success. When Derek Jarman decides then to shoot a film about a historical English king such as Edward II using exclusively the dramatic text of the Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe, questions such as the commercial viability of the project or the contemporary relevance of such a play and historical moment come to mind.

Jarman's personal circumstances at the moment of conceiving the film may provide an answer to those questions. In December 1986 the British director found out that he was HIV positive, and that knowledge started informing his cinematic career. In the script he wrote right after finding out his illness, "Sod 'Em," a film never released, Jarman started making use of the Marlovian text including some excerpts and calling the protagonist couple Edward and Gaveston. That script tried to put homosexuality back into history, and because of that, the British director included not only explicit references to *Edward II*, but also historical characters reappropriated by gay culture: Marlowe himself, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Isaac Newton. Jarman has shown from the very beginnings of his career as film director an especial interest in the process of re-writing history and culture from an ex-centric--in this case queer--perspective and so, such well-known films as *Sebastiane* (1976) or *Caravaggio* (1986) can be considered a deliberate attempt to put homoerotic desire at the very centre of the historical plot.

But *Edward II*--the feature film released in 1991--goes a step beyond since, apart from being another instance of the interest Jarman has demonstrated in the continuity of gayness through history, it is also both a self-reflection on a particular moment in his life--his awareness of being HIV positive--and a personal response to the AIDS crisis and homophobia in contemporary society. In other words, Jarman, far from attempting a faithful rendering of an "old play" (his words), is abusing that old play and remodelling it on his own image.

The title given to the edited script--*Queer Edward II*--and the consciousness of being "improving" Marlowe's dramatic work point out the contemporary director's aims when approaching the Elizabethan text; as Jarman writes: "[f]ind a dusty old play and violate it" (*Queer*, n.p.). The notion of violation is useful in the present context. *Edward II*, the film, can be conceived as a continuous violation of a historical figure--king Edward II--, a classical text--Marlowe's *Edward II*--and a teleological notion of History. The first kind of aggression seems to be present in any translation from one mode of discourse into a different one, since it necessarily implies a disruption of a narrative in order to create a new one, and in fact it is present in Marlowe's literary rendering of Holinshed, Stow and Fabyan. The second and third ones, however, are not so typical and serve here a very specific task: to link a progressive dismemberment of the cultural canon with the annihilation of the physical body by AIDS. Jarman's choice of Marlowe's text is, then, not a mere fancy, since, as a

canonical text, it allows him to penetrate the cultural heart of the nation and to ransack it from within, and, as a gay product it also allows an immediate identification on the part of a contemporary gay constituency.

The narrative structure of the film clearly abuses any plan Marlowe could have conceived for his play. Instead of a linear development, the spectator at the cinema is confronted with Edward's memories at the moment of his death, and the cause-and-effect disposition of scenes is here substituted by slightly interrelated episodes in the life of Edward II, his family and his peers. These alterations of the dramatic source are not the consequence of Jarman's whimsicality; on the contrary, they are the expression of a contemporary attitude toward History and language, obviously shared by the British artist. Following Lacan's theories on psychoanalysis and language, meaning is not an aprioristic concept automatically applied to the linguistic signifier: only at the end of any linguistic delivery is meaning possible; that is, in order to understand, to provide a narrative, the subject must go back from the end of a speech to the very beginning, and only then a certain meaning is conferred to the whole text. That precisely is what Edward does: his life becomes meaningful, for the audience and for himself, only at the moment of his death, choosing those fragments which lead inexorably to that conclusion. The subject, therefore, is just a linguistic "I", a grammatical entity that provides a certain coherence to the dismembered portions of the self, to the different "I's" that constitute the illusion of a stable and unified subject. Two notions of History are here at stake: the linear, objective development which perpetuates power structures, and the subjective instability which challenges tradition and creates gaps in that discourse of power. As a gay activist, Jarman opts for this latter conception, and doing so makes Marlowe's text relevant. The textual body is then distorted in the same way as a physical body is disarranged by disease. Jarman's surgical intervention in the primary text is not dissimilar to the medical operation in the human body; the aim in both cases is to give coherence to a disordered entity. AIDS, in this interpretation, is not just a biographical fact, but a pertinent metaphor that helps explain the peculiar structure of the film.

The very beginning of the film is a good example of the kind of violence perpetrated on the Marlovian text: Edward sleeps, and Lightborn, the executor, reads a letter: "My father is deceased; come Gaveston." Lightborn is entrapped in the homoerotic relationship between Edward and Gaveston from this moment on, since his very existence is just possible as a consequence of that relationship. Furthermore, Gaveston's opening lines in Marlowe are delivered consecutively by Lightborn, Edward, who wakes, and then, Gaveston, creating thus in the film a discursive net that traps the three characters. These opening sequences justify themselves the whole narrative. The executor becomes involved in Edward's love affairs. He functions as a menace for the king, but, far from maintaining his detachment in the affairs, he creates an input of reminiscences in Edward's mind. Only later in the film, when Lightborn, in one of the two possible endings suggested by Jarman, instead of murdering Edward kisses him, the meaning of that first sequence becomes evident. Love, in all its different manifestations, is the only force that can make the human being triumph over death, disrupting thus the teleology of human life. Lightborn, the representative of the oppressive heterosexual social system, finally accepts Edward's sexuality and, through the act of acceptance, saves him from an ignominious death.

The film maintains a continuous dialogue with its dramatic source, acknowledging but, at the same time, resisting it, and through that resistance, modifying the meaning of the primary text. That post-modern strategy, the playful flirtation between Marlowe and Jarman, brings as a consequence a completely new text only understandable within a discourse very different from that other in which the Elizabethan author was immersed. The technique of collage employed by the contemporary British artist points to that direction. The process of editing puts together sequences directly taken from the Marlovian text and some new ones that highlight a particular reading of the previous text. The guest appearances of the dance company DV8 and the singer Annie Lennox seem to fulfil this purpose. The members of DV8 have publicly acknowledged their homosexuality, and queer issues inform their shows; Annie Lennox, on the other hand, has been appropriated by gay culture. Their appearance in the film, then, help emphasise the gay reading of *Edward II*. It is not coincidental that they intrude respectively in the first meeting of Gaveston and Edward--sealed with a kiss--and Gaveston's departure into exile--sealed with another one--. The sound-track and the kinetic layout of DV8's dancing sequence is full of broken rhythms, convulsive movement and sexual anxiety. Annie

Lennox's song, on the contrary, is a sad melody, a nostalgic and melancholy tune quite suitable to underline the mood of the sequence in which it is inserted. But, apart from the expansion of meaning created by those two narrative intrusions, the way Lennox's is shot also implies a disrupted--queer--reading of the whole sequence. Jarman purposefully employs a video-clip aesthetic, intermingling the lovers dancing in an exaggerated camp pose with close-ups and long shots of the singer. Sentimentality, therefore, is debunked from the sequence, inviting the audience to distance from the story and to analyse the way power structures try to absorb difference making it similar to, in this case, a melodramatic departure of heterosexual lovers. By means of the video-clip aesthetics, Jarman is defending the uniqueness of that particular relationship and resisting the great narratives of love by mocking them.

A similar purpose informs the ostension of the naked or semi-naked male body. Homoeroticism is the keyword in Jarman and that homoeroticism permeates most of the sequences in the film. The possible ambiguity of Gaveston's first speech is absolutely clarified by Jarman. The two hustlers making love in bed while Gaveston is speaking point out explicitly Gaveston and Edward's sexual orientation. Spencer's presence in the same sequence is just a redundant element that makes the audience aware of the kind of friends the king is going to be surrounded by. But the ostension of masculine muscular nudity can have other meanings. Assuming Jarman's preoccupation with AIDS, the erotization of man as object of desire can be read as an act of resistance, as a protest against the social metaphors created around AIDS that make explicit connections between the disease and the promiscuity attributed to the gay community. With this insistent insertion of eroticism Jarman is defending the right to choose one's own sexuality and to enjoy it without any kind of social stigmatisation. At the same time, the emphasis on homoeroticism and gay desire becomes an act of cultural resistance, a vindication of Marlowe and king Edward II as gay figures, putting their homosexuality in the forefront as a response to the traditional historical and literary canons which have omitted or minimised that question in their approach to those characters.

Among the many instances of the cult of the male body the sequence of the nude rugby scrum deserves a particular commentary. With it, Jarman is criticising homophobia while signalling the homoeroticism inherent in heterosexual social ceremonies. The sequence comes just after the earls and Mortimer have signed Gaveston's order of exile accusing him of corrupting the royal figure and using the religious condemnation of homosexuality as a prove of that corruption. In that context, rugby, a typically heterosexual manly game institutionally approved, is presented as a social ceremony that allows men to admire and touch each other. Jarman, in the same line as Barbara Kruger in some of her photographic series, is highlighting the necessary instability of sexual desire and the role society plays in the assumption of one's sexuality, showing the intricate and complex ceremonies necessary to express desire in public when looking for the social sanctioning of those acts.

The private and the public realms overlap in sexuality. Having sex, a private concern at first sight, becomes a public issue when society regularises the acceptable and unacceptable sexual practices. The ambivalence between what is right in private but condemnable in public is present in Marlowe, and constitutes the most relevant polarisation in the play. At the end of I.iv., Mortimer Senior justifies the king when asserting that "[t]he mightiest kings have had their minions." (390); the problem, then, is not so much the private love affair between Edward and Gaveston as the public consequences of that relationship. Mortimer Junior, answering his uncle, clarifies the whole question: "Uncle, his wanton humour grieves me not/ But this I scorn, that one so basely born/ Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert. . . ." (I.iv.401-03) The barons are angry because of Gaveston's social advancement and their consequent loss of influence in the kingdom, not because he has become the lover of another man. That conflict of interests between the medieval conception of society as a rigidly hierarchical structure and the modern concept of social mobility, between nobility of birth and nobility of merit--gained through individual acts--is of utmost importance for the Elizabethan audience who saw Marlowe's play. Jarman and his contemporary audience do not seem to share those preoccupations with the role of monarchy in society, and because of that, the film ignores Edward's political and military feebleness--there is no reference to the English army military defeats in Scotland and France--, and focuses on the public repression of homosexuality. Jarman, much more than Marlowe, proclaims the necessity of politicizing sexuality. Gaveston's death is not

just an individual defeat, but a new example of homophobia characterised by the brutal police attack on a homosexual demonstration.

The social forces in the film are unambiguously recognisable as contemporary conservative institutions: Mortimer is an army officer that turns into a military dictator; Queen Isabella gradually assumes her regal pose and becomes Margaret Thatcher herself presiding over the Cabinet, the chorus of earls, accompanied at times by their foxhounds; and the representatives of the Anglican Church back the conservative policies of army and government. These representatives of the traditional English class system, aided by the police's repressive force, are made responsible of a persistent attempt to make gays and lesbians silent again in their closet. The presence of *OUTRAGE*--the gay and lesbian collective--demonstrating just when Isabella is justifying Edward's deposition, is a deliberate strategy to establish explicit connections between the private act of homosexual love and the necessity to insert it into a social discourse that may contribute to normalise that particular sexual choice.

The Marlovian text becomes for Derek Jarman a mere pre-text to comment on history, politics and sexuality, and to display his own ex-centric reading of the literary canon; but it is also a valid intertextual tool to make the audience aware of his personal circumstances. When re-writing the Elizabethan play, Jarman is writing himself; the film is much more concerned with the director's figure than with anything else, even though the words the characters recite are Marlowe's and not Jarman's. The British artist is thus defined by a previous linguistic discourse colliding with some other discourses of resistance to contemporary hegemonic power structures. The subject disappears in the discursive net which traps him, and becomes other, a foreign presence that makes him understandable, that turns him into a communicative entity. His own longing for death as a climactic ending to a sick existence is delivered through Elizabethan lines:

But what are kings when regiment is gone,  
But perfect shadows in a sunshine day?  
I know not, but of this I am assured,  
That death ends all, and I can die but once.  
Come death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,  
Or if I live let me forget myself.

Jarman ends the film with these lines--a collage of different speeches from *V.i.*--, and doing so he perpetrates his last act of violence against Marlowe, against King Edward II, and against himself. The historical king is subsumed in the dramatic character and this one in the directorial voice over of the film. The three of them need social support--the nation, the audience, the gay community--, and in that support they go out of themselves turning into pure discourse, into social beings, into human beings.

Derek Jarman died of AIDS in 1994. Death's fingers closed his eyes, but he is still alive out of himself in king Edward II, Marlowe's play, and his own film.

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## Beyond the emblem: Alchemical Albedo in Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness*

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In 1977, A.C. Kelly completed the supposedly unfinished investigation that D.J. Gordon proposed in his 1943 study on the *Masque of Blackness*. The unresolved mysteries of the masque, its 'highly recondite' symbolism was left unexplained by the latter, who concluded that 'the scheme is thus a highly recondite one, and there is much in it which awaits fuller explanation.[GORDON: 127]

By placing emphasis on the light symbolism, Gordon encourages prospective criticism to rely on this theme 'as the key to its concerns and to its resolution.' [KELLY: 341] Water, the twin element that complements the emblem of the masque --and that has been apparently neglected in critical approaches so far--, becomes the central topic in Kelly's paper which, in order to clarify the enigmatic questions the masque elicits, demonstrates how both the water and light imagery interact[341]. She insists on the importance of water as a solution to the two main challenges to decorum raised by the performance: 1) maintaining the elevation of the court within the action and 2) translating them (masquers) to white again afterwards --in a second masque, *The Masque of Beauty*.'[KELLY: 343] Focusing on the water imagery, she shows the inherent independence of *Blackness*. In so doing, Kelly glosses over an emblem to elucidate the paradoxical meaning of the masque. Although she quotes Whitney's *A Choice of Emblems* as the source of the proverb 'It is as impossible as washing a black man white,[353]' Alciato's emblem No. LIX appears to be the more direct and accurate background for this iconological elaboration.

The interpretation of the problems presented by the masque are resolved as the King's challenge at the emblem, and his achievement to overcome any impossibility, namely, whitening Niger's daughters. The success of this interpretation, however, is not complete, since there are still many questions that demand solution or explanation. This paper aims to explain in different terms the unusually rich global imagery of *Blackness*, as well as the complex metaphorical emblem poised by it.

Since many of the masque's formal elements and symbolism --water, rivers, the Moon, the masquers' metamorphosis, colours white and black, the Sun-- resemble one of the Alchemical phases, the albedo, the intricate language of alchemy proves a useful means to unveil the meaningful obscurity of *The Masque of Blackness*.

Jonson's knowledge of alchemy is obvious from the use he made of it in at least two works, the comedy *The Alchemist* (1610), and the masque *Mercury Vindicated from the Alchemists at Court* (1615). As M. Butler indicates in his introduction to the play, the author's '...expertise was genuine, and he drew on many authorities: Arnold of Villanova, Geber, Paracelsus, Robertus Vallensis, Sendivogius and Martin del Rio, besides a German collection of treatises *De Alchemia* (1541) and English writings by George Ripley and Roger Bacon.' [BUTLER: 3]

Concerned, as Jonson explained in *Hymenaei*, with the 'soul' of the masque, the 'inward parts, and those grounded upon antiquity and solid learnings,' the author could easily indulge in his sound knowledge of this philosophical science.

## I

Alchemy, according to Fabricius, is ‘the art of transmuting base metals into silver or gold by freeing the crude materials from their “impurities”.’[7] The transformation or transmuting of the metals should be achieved after a long, difficult and enigmatic process, the so-called ‘alchemical opus.’ The opus is divided into four stages: ‘the earthy *nigredo*, or “blackening” stage, represented by a little inky man; the watery *albedo*, or “whitening” stage, represented by a white rose; the airy *citrinitas*, or “yellowing” stage, represented by an eagle winging toward the sun; (and) the fiery *rubedo*, or “reddening” stage, represented by the glowing lion.’[FABRICIUS: 14]

To achieve the philosophical stone or red elixir, the goldmakers experimented with the *prima materia*, which underwent the following processes common to all alchemical treatises:

- (a) breaking down or purification
- (b) the preparation or treatment of the resultant material thus purified or reduced, which was usually conceived of as separation then joining together, alternations between ‘body’ and ‘spirit’ or the ‘fixed’ and the ‘volatile,’ or numerous repetitions of any or all of these
- (c) the production of the white elixir which would transmute metals into silver
- (d) the production of the red elixir which would transmute metals to gold
- (e) augmentation of the potency of the red elixir
- (f) projection or transmutation, when the medicine was applied to imperfect metals instantly transforming them to gold.[ROBERTS: 57]

There was also consensus on the symbolic colours that were related to each stage, as Roberts puts it:

‘The first stage was signalled by black, and white and red obviously corresponded with the production of those elixirs. There was some agreement that all processes up to the production of the red elixir should take place in a glass vessel which would show the colour stages and which should be literally hermetically sealed and not opened until the red stage was achieved, fixed and invariable. The matter in the vessel was then put through various processes signalled by colour changes. Moderate heat, ‘an easy fire’, imitating the temperate and gradual processes of nature, was thought appropriate to reach the white stage.’[ROBERTS: 57]

## II

Two of the formal elements of the masque, i.e. the language and the iconography, serve as the main vehicles through which the alchemical opus is translated into the work. The following study will, for practical purposes, treat them separately, even if they form a unity in the performance.

The scarce speeches of the masque which, as is customary to the form, lack dialogical exchange and dramatic value, show a number of rhetorical figures familiar to the language of alchemy. A secret practice, alchemy needed a special code to deter unwelcome adepts from reaching the hidden knowledge; the alchemists consequently wrote in a deliberately obscure style that relied heavily on allegory, narratives, riddles, paradoxes and metaphors to preserve the secrecy of alchemical science.

The degree of linguistic difficulty and the problems found in the interpretation of this masque are enhanced by parts of speech that resemble, because of their lack of reference in the text, the high and symbolic discourse of alchemy. Examples of this use of language are found throughout the whole work. Oceanus’s, Niger’s and Ethiopia’s speeches, the only speaking characters in the entertainment, address the audience with a peculiar discourse close to paradox and mystery.

Oceanus’s opening intervention finishes with the verse ‘*This squarèd circle of celestial bodies.* (l. 100)’ This apparently paradoxical statement appears after the discussion of another recurrent topic in the masque, the idea of mixture, the basic principle upon which alchemical transformation depends: ‘*Mix thy fresh billow with my brackish stream.*’ (97) Here two waters are mixed, sweet and brackish. Albertus Magnus considered that salt is ‘*the key to the art, opens and closes all things and no*

*alchemical work can be completed without it* [ROBERTS: 111]. Mixing is, then, the first stage in the process, the fundamental basis of the opus, in which elements are added in a specific order. The alchemical reading of these verses, however, might be further developed when connected to the 'squaring of the circle.' This geometrical operation, common to architecture, is described by Maier as follows: 'Make a circle out of a man and woman, derive from it a square, and from the square a triangle: make a circle and you will have the philosophers' stone.' [FABRICIUS: 198; SEBASTIAN: 143] The representation of the philosopher's stone (final stage) at the beginning of the masque, when the first steps of the process are being taken, announces in an almost prophetic way the forthcoming metamorphosis. Oceanus functions as an omniscient character, an alchemist himself, familiar with the beginning and the end of alchemical opus, and uses a language suitable to his knowledge.

The second character involved in the dialogue is Niger, the river-father of the Ethiopians. Jonson's sources are always authoritative, as he shows in the introductory notes to the masque, where he uses 'Pliny, Solinus, Ptolemy, and of late Leo the African.' But these sources erroneously place the river Niger in Ethiopia; and misled by this wrong geographical assumption Jonson writes: '(they) remember unto us a river in Ethiopia famous by the name of Niger, of which the people were called Nigritae, now Negroes, and are the blackest nation of the world.' The Queen's desire to have 'blackamoors' at first, was satisfied by the author with the inclusion of Niger and his daughters in the antimasque. Jonson resolves the contemporary terminological confusion between Ethiopians, Nigritae, Negroes, Blackamoors and Moors, by simplifying it. The free use of terms depicting a black person extends to the language of alchemy as well. Both in *Splendor solis* and in an anonymous set of alchemical medals, the Albedo and Nigredo are allegorically explained using black people -- called 'moors' or 'Ethiopians'-- who are described as 'alchemical symbol (s) of uncleanness and baseness.' [FABRICIUS: 94]

The first medal shows the abluion of the black body of the Moor, or Ethiopian. He appears in his half-washed state with a miniature sun and moon burning in the candles inside his transparent body. The inscription reads: We have removed the blackness with salt, anatron and almizadir, and we have fixed the whiteness with borrezae.' Nigredinem abstulimus cum sale Anatro et Almizadir, albedinem fiximus Borrezae. [FABRICIUS: 116]

In this way, the apparently wrong determination to use Ethiopians, instead of the more general blackamoors (as the Queen commanded) in his masque, could echo Jonson's alchemical background.

Niger, as a river, fits the watery emblem of the entertainment, but, when connected with the Ethiopians, he recalls alchemy again. In another of the medals mentioned above, the inscription reads: 'Quae tibi causa fuit vitae, ipsa quoque fuit causa mortis' (That which was the cause of thy life is also the cause of thy death) [FABRICIUS: 115]. The text encircles a picture depicting how the 'son is killed and dismembered by his father, whom the alchemists compare to Saturn or the spiritus Niger.'

The cruel parricide shown in the medal fulfils the common and extravagantly allegorical aesthetics of alchemy. As symbols, the 'spiritus niger' and his dismembered son can be translated as the river Niger and his Ethiopian daughters in the masque. The father is not aware of his daughters' suffering; but he must irremediably provoke it, because he is by nature black. The daughters' desire to be white is not shared by Niger, who is convinced of black beauty: 'the Ethiops were/ As fair as other dames.' (139-40) His search is encouraged by the grieving girls only: 'now black with black despair ...fear and care possessed them whole; ...They wept such ceaseless tears into my stream.' (140-46) According to his discourse, Niger wants to remain in the Nigredo, since being black, he defends, is not pernicious for the Ethiopians. But, in its alchemical framework, blackness is just a stage that must necessarily continue, as the girls' zeal for change shows. In his doubt about the quality and beauty of blackness, Niger hurts his daughters --in a way similar to the medal--. However, upon their arrival in Britannia, Niger's attitude seems to change and the following step, Albedo, begins.

The riddle magically reflected on the surface of the river, that helps Niger and his daughters to reach England, also resembles alchemical discourse in the hidden meaning of its words and the difficulty in deciphering its instructions.

That they a land must forthwith seek,  
 Whose termination (of the Greek)  
 Sounds *-tania*; where bright Sol, that heat  
 Their bloods, doth never rise or set,  
 But in his journey passeth by,  
 And leaves that climate of the sky  
 To comfort of a greater light,  
 Who forms all beauty with his sight. [164-171]

Ethiopia, the Moon's name in the masque, is undoubtedly the most alchemically involved character. She appears and disappears, gives instructions and, even more than Oceanus, leads the ceremonies and dances, the rites which, as will be stated below, constitute actual alchemical experiments. Her speech is the most relevant in the whole work. Putting aside the usual sycophantic praises, the Moon's discourse defines the process of Albedo:

Ruled by a sun, that to this height doth grace it.  
 Whose beams shine day and night, and are of force  
 To blanch an Ethiop and revive a cor'se.  
 His light sciential is and (past mere nature)  
 Can salve the rude defects of every creature.' [224-28]

James symbolizes the sun; this star provides light, but also heat, an eternal heat that can cure and transform. Alchemical stages need heat to be successful, and that is exactly what they get from the king:

Fire is the fuel of the alchemical work and the main agent of its continuous process of transmutation. Once kindled, the alchemist's fire is maintained until the end of the Great Work.' [FABRICIUS: 14]

The recipe for the metamorphoses is given by Ethiopia again, whose final speech details the steps for the transformation. She calls them 'rites' and, recalling those dark treatises, she proceeds:

Thirteen times thrice, on thirteen nights  
 (So often as I fill my sphere  
 With glorious light, throughout the year)  
 You shall, when all things else do sleep  
 Save your chaste thoughts, with reverence steep  
 Your bodies in that purer brine  
 And wholesome dew, called rosemarine;  
 Then with that soft and gentler foam,  
 Of which the ocean yet yields some,  
 Wherof bright Venus, beauty's queen,  
 is said to have begotten been,  
 You shall your gentler limbs o'er-lave,  
 And for your pains, perfection have.  
 So that, this night, the year gone round,  
 You do again salute this ground;  
 And in the beams of yond' bright sun  
 Your faces dry, and all is done.[303-18]

Although the king must be appointed as the only promoter of the Ethiopians' whitening, the Moon's role shouldn't be discarded. In alchemical terms, the Albedo requires both stars to succeed, hence the predominant function of Ethiopia in the entertainment: 'In albedo the *virgin* and the *moon* appear as the great alchemical symbols of sublimation.' [FABRICIUS: 111] To achieve the Philosophers' stone, Sol and Luna (allegorically depicted as father and mother) are the symbols of the generation of the alchemical opus. In the masque, Jonson gives similar importance to both characters. Of course, James's power and transcendence prevails.

Ethiopia's speech shows the characteristic instructions of alchemy: repetition of the process 'thirteen times thrice..you shall o'er-lave'; the pureness and chastity of prima materia, embodied in the Ethiopians; and, finally, another essential element, dew. Perhaps because he feels compelled to adjust to the watery invention of the performance, the author uses rosemarine, or sea dew. More closely related to the occasion, he might have made use of the common 'heavenly dew' of alchemy, as he describes in Glycyte's and Malacia's fan. This substance is also called the 'eye-water of the philosophers' (collyrium philosophorum), or aqua sapientiae ('water of wisdom') [FABRICIUS: 117]. This water or dew has germination power, and is needed in whatever process of de-albation is undergone. Together with a continuous and temperate fire dew can 'turn every black thing white and every white thing red. So, as water bleaches, fire gives off light and also colour to the subtilized earth, which appears alike a ruby through the tingeing spirit she receives from the force of the fire.' [FABRICIUS: 114]

The misunderstood iconological apparatus of the masque, the second factor in this analysis, stands independently in the performance. The fans displayed by the masquers, in which their mixed names and mute hieroglyphics were inscribed, seem to be the central imagery of Blackness. Except for the first and last, the other four hieroglyphics have been described as referring to each of the four elements. Their function and meaning in the dramatization, however, remain unexplained. Gordon does not explain them successfully and Kelly simply does not consider them in her study. Jonson provides the following description:

THE NAMES *THE SYMBOLS*

Euphoris, Aglaia *A golden tree, laden with fruit*  
 Diaphane, Eucampse *The figure icosahedron of crystal*  
 Ocyte, Kathare *A pair of naked feet in a river*  
 Notis, Psychtote *The salamander simple*  
 Glycyte, Malacia *A cloud full of rain dropping*  
 Baryte, Periphere *An urn, sphered with wine*

Lindley disdains as old fashioned any attempt at studying iconology, which is why his new edition of this masque simply summarizes the names and their inherent symbols, without paying any heed to their meanings or symbolism:

The Names: the meanings of the names in order are: abundance, splendour, transparent, flexibility, swiftness, spotless, moisture, coldness, sweetness, delicacy, weight, revolving (circular). The symbols, in order, refer to fertility, a twenty-sided figure standing for water, purity, the salamander not harmed by fire, education, the globe of the earth. [LINDLEY: 218]

Gordon attempts to explain and understand the function and related symbolism of these names and hieroglyphics, but he can only show his own unresolved hypotheses. Again alchemy throws light over these problems. Gordon's interpretation of four of the pairs seems valid for our analysis. The isocaedron stands for water, the salamander for fire, the cloud for air and the feet in the river for purification. Gordon quotes Horus Apollo, and interprets the last emblem as 'the fuller' [126]. In the Spanish edition of Horus Apollo, there are several hieroglyphics the illustrations of which depict feet in water. Mixing them both we get: 1) land or earth: 'para indicar "batanero", pintan dos pies de hombre en el agua, y representan esto por la semejanza con el trabajo' [HORAPOLO: 233]; 2) and, surprisingly, the impossible again: 'Para significar "imposible que suceda" pintan unos pies de hombre paseándose por el agua.' [HORAPOLO: 231]

The most complicated interpretation, however, comes from the last pair. Gordon defends that they stand for earth, although he makes reference to the O.E.D. as well, where a different reading appears: 'The O.E.D. interprets Jonson's phrase to mean an urn filled with wine.' [GORDON: 126] Considered less convincing, this possibility is rejected. But, from an alchemical reading of the masque, the vessel full of wine refers to the rubedo, the last stage in which the prima materia becomes red: 'finally a deep red appearing in the glass vessel in which the Stone was made' [ROBERTS: 55].

The golden tree recalls the 'philosopher's tree,' which is connected with creation and generation. It is the predominant symbol in the group for several reasons: it is the first in order and was carried by the queen herself. The idea of fertility fitted the pregnant queen who in this way symbolizes the eternal fountain of monarchy.

Recondite is the adjective that best qualifies the symbolical mechanism of the masque. Alchemy supplies the key to connect the so far isolated symbols lacking contextual meaning. The four elements (depicted in each of the hieroglyphics), constituents of the base metal, are ready to be transformed with the help of the Moon and the heat of the Sun. The tree initiates the process of generation and its success is shown in the red vessel, herald of the last stage. The de-albation thus supposes an act of purification of the black, impure body of the Ethiopians. In this context Jonson presents James I as a magnificent alchemist who is able to transform the impossible with his 'alchemical' knowledge and wisdom.

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