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**The necromancer Friar Bacon
in the magic world of Greene's comedy
*Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay***

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ABSTRACT

Many important Elizabethan dramatists, from George Peele and Christopher Marlowe to William Shakespeare, addressed the controversial topic of magic in some of their plays. Due to its political and religious implications, the literary treatment of magic bore on the figure of the Renaissance prince at a time when a ruler's education and use of power was an important concern. *Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589, published in 1594) is perhaps one of the most significant examples of the treatment of magic in Elizabethan drama. This is a romantic comedy posing as a historical play, in which Greene sought to draw on parallels between the contentious political turmoil of Elizabethan England from a critical point of view. For this reason, in the play, black magic practitioner Friar Bacon serves the purpose of mirroring, albeit in a covert manner, the uncertain political reality of the reign of Elizabeth. The English dramatist's tendency in the late sixteenth century to bring magic onto the stage took advantage of the Queen's own keenness for the so called Occult Philosophy. In fact, one of Elizabeth's achievements as a monarch was to promote this cultural and philosophical movement from which she took her ability to build her own public image in a society in which magic meant more than a sheer petty concept and revealed a set of beliefs based on reliability, infallibility and fear. The topic is analysed from a hermeneutic-comparative approach.

KEYWORDS: magic, occultism, politics, power, Robert Greene

Many of the significant plays in Elizabethan drama concentrated on magic. Elements of magic appear in, for example, *Romeo and Juliet* (1595) with the potion that Juliet drinks to feign her death, or in *A Midsummer's Night Dream* (1595) with the magic forest where fairies and elves like Oberon and Titania dwell. Christopher Marlowe mentioned magic not only in *Doctor Faustus* (1594) but also in *The Jew of Malta* (1589) and it is also present in George Peele's *The Old Wives'*

Tale (1595).¹ Furthermore, Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* follows this widespread tendency. This romantic comedy poses as a historical play at a time when Catholics and Protestants were confronted with each other in what we could call a cold war characterised by uncertainty and fear.² Magic in the sixteenth century was deeply implicated in the many-sided contest of *res* and *verba*, of verbal and visual signs, of scripture and ceremony. Such a conflict could not be ignored whenever magic was put on the stage in the late Elizabethan plays (Von Rosador 1993: 37-38).

The Reformation battle placed magic and religious claims alongside the immediacy of basic human needs (Von Rosador 1993: 41). The comedy *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* concentrates on magic and emphasises Elizabeth's supremacy as a monarch. As a political weapon, it reflects public opinion.³ Theatrical entertainment at the time represented a medium through which the Queen's subjects could be encouraged to pursue a particular course of action (see also Helgerson 1976: 79-104). I will bring forth into the readers' consideration that through the fictional character of Friar Bacon, Robert Greene states publicly in the manner of a comedy what would have been the fate of all those who dared to challenge the religious and political authority of Queen Elizabeth I.

1. King Henry III and Friar Bacon versus Elizabeth I and John Dee

The plot of the comedy *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is based on the legend of a medieval scholar who was the Oxford Franciscan friar Roger Bacon and his allegedly necromantic practices.⁴ In the play, Friar Bacon assisted by Friar Bungay builds a head of brass thanks to the power of necromancy that will defend England with its unbelievable knowledge. Unfortunately, Bacon's

¹ Gorley S. Putt (1972) in his essay "An Argumentative Muse: A Background for the 'University Wits'" suggests this idea. See also Boas (1959).

² For further information, see Lewis (1968: 52-55) and Mattingly (1959).

³ See also Seltzer (1963: ix-x), Senn (1976), Holzknecht (1963), Maynard (1981) and Lake (1999: 57-84).

⁴ *The Honourable History of Frier Bacon and Frier Bungay* was written between 1589 and 1590 and it was published for the first time in 1594. It is thought that a second folio published in 1599 existed because it appears in later editions between 1630 and 1655. Between 1590 and 1594 an anonymous second part of the play ascribed to Robert Greene appeared. However, its author was probably John of Bordeaux. The title for this second part was *John of Bordeaux or The Second Part of Friar Bacon* (Dean 1981: 262-266). See also Seltzer (1964: ix, xii).

project of a talking head falls below his expectations and proves to be a failure.

Such is the layout in *Friar Bacon* of sixteenth-century England, a country under the reign of Elizabeth who held the political and religious supremacy, whereas Spain represented a Hispanic-Papal Catholic power eager to threaten English political and religious stability by assailing protestant beliefs and influencing public opinion. At that time England was trying to consolidate its position as a leading protestant country (Aylmer 1974: 209-241). There were people both inside and outside the country who were struggling to restore Catholicism and overthrow the protestant monarch, as proved by the 1588 expedition of the Spanish Armada (Lewis 1968). Nevertheless, what Greene sought in his treatment of the past was not only to make the audience aware of its historical reality but also to echo its present existence just as it was when performed on the stage.

The analogical treatment of history together with a peculiar attitude towards anachronism helps to explain the numerous chronological inaccuracies present in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*.⁵ Robert Greene recalls events and historical figures from the past to draw similarities between past and present; even to reflect and criticise certain aspects of everyday life in his time that otherwise would have been impossible to openly comment upon in a non-historical context (Senn 1976). For this reason, Greene depicts a fictional character named Friar Bacon based on the medieval intellectual Roger Bacon together with Bacon's contemporary King Henry III to maintain logical chronology.⁶

A parallel is then established: on the one hand King Henry III and his courtier Friar Bacon in thirteenth-century England⁷; and on the other hand, in the sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I and her

⁵ The idea of the attitude to anachronism among Elizabethan playwrights is taken from Galloway (1970).

⁶ Roger Bacon (c.1214-1292) developed an interest in experimental science. Ahead of his time, he suffered persecution for his ideas and Greene immortalised him in the fictional character of Friar Bacon as a necromancer or black magician to evoke the popular belief that the medieval Bacon had ever been a sorcerer (Butler 1993: 144-159).

⁷ Medieval Catholic Henry III was king of England from 1216 to 1272 (Delderfield 1966: 48-49).

favourite courtier John Dee, an advocate of occultism.⁸ That is, Catholicism and faith vs. Protestantism and magic at a time when this discipline was prone to be recognized as sorcery. In fact, the magic, fictional world of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* relates to one of the Queen's ancestors whose adviser was not merely a Franciscan friar from Oxford but, what is more, an extraordinary intellectual versed in necromancy or black magic.⁹ As a fictional character, Friar Bacon operates according to the demands typical of the social status of a friar. Yet, he does not leave out his own wishes of promotion and intellectual zest that characterised members of the clergy during the Renaissance (Kieckhefer 1992: 65).

As a consequence of the censorship exercised on theatrical entertainment, the play *Friar Bacon* becomes an instrument to covertly mirror the bewildering political reality by drawing parallels between the past and the author's own present time. However, the comedy suggests differing outlooks in a society that portrays Catholics as guilty of evil magic while justifying the Queen's paradoxical keenness on the Renaissance Neo-Platonism of John Dee's Occult Philosophy and its more practical applications when focussed on the significant act of ruling a country.

By the time the comedy was written in 1589, John Dee was carrying out a continental mission of promoting his Occult Philosophy (1558-1603), an entire philosophical movement comprising all off the intellectual knowledge at the time from

⁸ John Dee (1527 – c.1608, 1609) was a notorious English astrologer, geographer, navigator and tutor of Queen Elizabeth I whose favour he enjoyed. As a scientist, he was versed in Mathematics and Astronomy and as a Christian magician, he had knowledge of alchemy, divination, hermeticism and angeology. Dee was one of the most cultivated people of his time. He made of England one of the most important colonial powers in the whole of Europe. He toured Poland and Bohemia (1583-89) giving exhibitions of magic at the courts of various princes.

⁹ In Elizabethan England magic was a term used to refer to a whole set of practices and rituals that could be divided into two different tendencies: natural or *white magic*, dealing with forces of nature and angelic entities, and *black magic* or necromancy that dealt with the devil and death. In regards to etymology, the term comes from the Latin *niger*, *-gra*, *-grum* meaning 'treacherous dark soul, gloomy, mournful,' related to the Greek *nekroi* meaning 'death' (Daxelmüller 1997: 23).

scholars like Giordano Bruno,¹⁰ Picco della Mirandola,¹¹ Agrippa and disciplines such as alchemy,¹² Hermeticism,¹³ cabbala and magic.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the year 1589 was a time when the Hermetic-Cabalist movement started to fail as a religious reform and was thought of as the incarnation of evil judgments and behaviour and therefore, evil Catholicism. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* Catholicism is compared to black magic to praise the sort of white magic supported by John Dee as close to the concept of modern science and its experimental method.

As far as the intellectual context is concerned, magic was a subject of study in European universities and also, in Oxford and Cambridge.¹⁵ Scholars of philosophy were eager to break with the past and discover new approaches to knowledge. The Renaissance philosopher was interested in the political and moral framework, in man, life, culture, in creating new methods of search and inquiry:

It cannot be explained as medieval survival, nor can it be explained in terms of 'Italian Renaissance' [...]. It is Christian Cabalist Neoplatonism, adapted to the expression of a northern poetic reformation [...]. And how

¹⁰ Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) was an Italian philosopher, astronomer, mathematician and occultist whose theories anticipated modern science. He is chiefly remembered for the tragic death he suffered at the stake because of the tenacity with which he maintained his unorthodox ideas at a time when both the Roman Catholic and the Reformed churches were reaffirming rigid Aristotelian and Scholastic principles in their struggle for the evangelization of Europe.

¹¹ Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) was an Italian scholar and Platonist philosopher. Introduced into the Hebrew cabbala, Pico became the first Christian scholar to use cabbalistic doctrine in support of Christian theology.

¹² Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535) was a German magician interested in scientific knowledge and occultism, an astrologer and an alchemist. His masterpiece *De occulta philosophia libri tres* is a kind of *summa* of early modern occult thought. In this book he explained the world in terms of Cabalistic analysis of Hebrew letters and acclaimed magic as the best way to know God and nature. He was for some time under the service of Maximilian I, probably as a soldier in Italy, but he mainly devoted his time to the study of the occult sciences and theology. He served the Renaissance revival of skepticism. He was jailed and branded as a heretic.

¹³ A doctrine of revelations on the occult, the logical and philosophical subjects ascribed to the Egyptian god Thoth (Greek Hermes Trismegistos) who was believed to be the inventor of writing and patron of all the arts depending on writing.

¹⁴ Hebrew cabbala adapted to Christian beliefs and Arabic magic were essential for the Occult Philosophy. For further information about magic and the Occult Philosophy, see Vickers (1984) and Yates (1979). This topic has also been studied by Walker (2000), Traister (1984), Thomas (1971), Butler (1949) and Levack (1992).

¹⁵ See Schmit (1984) and Yates (1993).

was it that John Dee, the philosopher of the Elizabethan age, could base himself on Agrippa's occult angelology whilst at the same time believing himself to be the ardent supporter of a widespread Christian reform? The answer surely is that Dee believed himself to be, like Giorgi and Agrippa, a Christian cabalist (Yates 1979: 5).

Hence, what is the difference between John Dee and the fictional character of Friar Bacon? According to Yates, in the context of Occult Philosophy the mystic was acquainted with God, the magus had the ability to create or destroy and the theurgist had the gift to unveil the hidden name of God. This was to show the new relationship that had been established between knowledge and the new philosophy of beauty, love, life and not only spiritual but also intellectual enlightenment in what the redemption of the world was concerned through moral purification and rebirth (Garin 1993: 175-180). Great scholars at that time created their own fields of study with the approval and protection of kings and queens, with the court as the centre of new ideas and cultural innovation (Yates 1979).¹⁶ However, from 1582 to 1585, Greene's formative years, the type of philosophy represented by Dee was discredited and considered as superstitious which could lead to consequently discredit Elizabeth's sovereignty too.¹⁷ This is the reason why Greene freed himself from any remorse in depicting the character of Friar Bacon as a failure by involving him in awkward circumstances at the end of the play due to his dealings with evil magic and sorcery that were far-off from Dee's Cabalism.

E.M. Butler refers to the literary significance of the social phenomenon of sorcery and sorcerers:

One is often in two minds about them; and if one has the courage to laugh at them, their frightening power goes. For simple minds at least it is perfectly possible to fear and deride almost in one breath. [...] Moreover, the trickery and charlatanism which seem inseparable from magic, even when the sorcerer is convinced of his own powers, made [legends] peculiarly effective vehicles for that mixed emotion which craves for sensation and terror and yet wants to laugh such fears to scorn (Butler 1995: 63).

¹⁶ See also Burke (1993: 133-162).

¹⁷ Agrippa's intellectual approach – alchemist and magus, necromancer according to others – was associated with Dee's Cabalism (Yates 1979).

A sorcerer, apart from being a scholar, a magus and a wise man that could fabricate amulets, prepare miraculous potions and being familiar with divination techniques, was considered *divine* during the Renaissance. He was not only the mediator between the individual and its environment but he was also able to manipulate the cosmos and reach absolute power through knowledge. That is how the Renaissance intellectual developed into a scholar who was thought to be competent enough to expand civilization by surprising means and lend a hand to his fellow countrymen. We all know about the engravings that reflect the image of the alchemist lost in thought while steadfastly gazing at his crucible with the hope of transforming any kind of non-precious metal into gold. For any scholar who recognized the infallibility of white magic and alchemy, it was easy to fall into the hands of necromantic premises of evil nature (Kieckhefer 1992: 60).

From a social and intellectual point of view it is important to bear in mind the significant general concern of the ruler's education and use of power when in the hands of a monarch. However, during the Renaissance, the person of the educator was essential in the search for the perfect ruler. Agnes Heller (1980: 133-135) refers to this kind of "illuminating" tutor as a versatile courtier with socio-political knowledge whose function was to make sure that the monarch enjoyed a state of inner peace, balance, temperance and virtuous knowledge of good and evil. Such was the task of the sorcerer and magus John Dee for Elizabeth, to grant her a source of virtue understood as harmony. Reliable magic vs. black magic becomes the key concept in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* to understand the relationship between the perfect tutor and the perfect kind of ruler if we establish parallels between the character of Friar Bacon and thirteenth century England and Dee and the sixteenth century.

On the other hand, according to Renaissance philosophy, the identity of a scholar responded to a series of characteristics that determined his personality and behaviour (Culianu 1999: 80). Most of those characteristics shaped the so-called "melancholic humour," one of the four humours referring to human temperament. Melancholy or *melancholia* was a crucial element in the arrangement of the personality of an individual to which magic and learning was

concerned.¹⁸ In the study of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* it is sensible to consider this fact apart from the idea of the tutor for a better understanding of the motivations and personality of Friar Bacon – the fictional advisor of King Henry III – in contrast to John Dee – Elizabeth’s advisor in real life.

In terms of his tuition of the Queen and fondness for his countrymen, Dee came across more as an advantageous wizard rather than as a black magician.¹⁹ Above all, any Elizabethan

¹⁸ The predominance of four different fluids in the organism (yellow bile, blood, phlegm, black bile) determined the four temperaments – choleric or bilious, sanguine, phlegmatic and melancholic respectively – that corresponded to the four elements, the four cardinal points and the divisions of day and human life (Culianu 1999: 80).

¹⁹ Roughly speaking, for a sixteenth-century mind conjuring or sorcery meant:

The use of power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits. Sorcery is distinguished by some writers from witchcraft in that it may be practised by anyone with the appropriate knowledge, using charms, spells, potions, and the like; whereas witchcraft is considered to result from an inherent mystical power and to be practised by invisible means. Sorcery can be protective – for example, as a guard of property against theft. A practitioner of sorcery is called a sorcerer, or a wizard. The distinction between sorcery and witchcraft is not considered universally maintained. During the witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, courts frequently regarded witches and sorcerers alike as candidates for burning (McHenry ed. 1992: 19).

The connotations associated with the words “magic” and “magus” vary according to the evolution of the social, religious and intellectual orientation of magic. To be able to understand these two concepts it is interesting to consider the definitions made by contemporary scholars such as Richard Kieckhefer who regard magic as the point of intersection between religion and science (1992: 10). For Christoph Daxelmüller it is science and wisdom that could serve for divination or sorcery (1997: 9, 44). I.P. Culianu states that magic is the knowledge that establishes undisclosed relationships between the different parts of the universe (1999: 21-5). Magic may be related to any ritual activity able to modify events and behaviour by supernatural means associated to heresy, alchemy and witchcraft due to the similarity that these practices sometimes share (McHenry ed 1992: 671-672).

In sixteenth-century England a whole set of practices and technical knowledge were known under the name of magic, which included among others the fabrication of vegetable and animal pigments, pyrotechnics, a range of optical and medical procedures, cryptographic methods and various communication techniques. In fact, the Elizabethan Occult Philosophy stressed the idea of ritual magic to improve everyday life, that is, the practical approach of such a discipline characterised by the use of spells and charms to transform reality (Yates 1993: 111). In that sense, it was not entirely clear if they were angels or on the contrary evil spirits assisting the magus in the pursuit of more efficient means of communication and fantastic medical procedures.

intellectual felt it necessary to inquire about himself, his own destiny and in the case of Dee, about the destiny of English Imperialism. Ioan P. Culianu explains the nature of such a need. Man exiled (*exul*) from the world lives in a permanent state of sadness and lethargy (*maeror*) of obscure origin. He is constantly caught up in a utopia that turns his life into a dream (1999: 87). The situation of exile and sadness of a mysterious origin came to be associated with the idea of a necromancer for some and a sorcerer for others. In fact, a necromancer was an observant man of science who analysed contradictions in search of truth and progress. Friar Bacon is that kind of scientist eager to break into the reality of the occult and into nature and therefore he claims that he is versed in the Liberal Arts, that is, Occult Philosophy. Let us recall these words uttered by Friar Bacon in the play:

What art can work, the frolic friar knows;
 And therefore will I turn my magic books
 And strain out nigromancy to the deep.
 I have contriv'd and framed a head of brass
 (I made Belcephon hammer out the stuff),
 And by art shall read philosophy.²⁰ (I. ii. 56-61)

The astounding trust this man had in the magnificence of his intellect to move on from ignorance to wisdom and his anxiety to transcend (Heller 1980: 253- 286) was triggered by a lack of peace and harmony which was part of his own melancholic temperament. Moreover, God had created man to overcome the limitations of knowledge and human existence in a wish to bring about the divine (Garin 1993: 163-196). In the case of Queen Elizabeth it was John Dee who served the purpose of raising a perfect monarch. At this point we can assert that the difference between Friar Bacon and John Dee is that Bacon rises above limitations by means of evil magic whereas Dee was aided by the divine and God. Dee was not only an

The idea of the extraordinary and the idea of what it is not come together to show the various synonyms that are used to state that Friar Bacon is a necromancer. Necromancy is also called "art" (Seltzer 1964: I, i, 181) in the sense of ability to perform supernatural deeds such as for example the fabrication of Bacon's talking head, his main project. Once more, the relationship between knowledge and magical activity is pointed out. The word "art" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries meant "cunning", "science" as it appears in the academic degrees of B.A. o M.A. – Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts. See also Burke (1993: 133-162).

²⁰ All quotations from *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* are taken from Seltzer (1964).

enthusiastic intellectual but he was interested in using his knowledge for the advantage of his countrymen. Thus, Dee created a programme at once political and religious in keeping with the nature of Elizabethan Imperialism and its sense of destiny:

It was not only concerned with national expansion in the literal sense, but carried with it the religious associations of the imperial tradition, applying these to Elizabeth as the representative of 'imperial reform,' of a purified and reformed religion to be expressed and propagated through a reformed empire, the empire of the Tudors with their mythical 'British' associations. The glorification of the Tudor monarchy as a religious imperial institution rested on the fact that the Tudor reform had dispensed with the Pope and made the monarch supreme in both church and state. This basic political fact was draped in the mystique of 'ancient British monarchy' with its Arthurian associations, represented by the Tudors in their capacity as an ancient British line, of supposed Arthurian descent, returned to power and supporting a pure British Church, defended by a religious chivalry from evil powers (evil according to this point of view) of Hispano-papal domination (Yates 1979: 84-85).

These were the aspirations accomplished through the Neo-Platonist notion of the melancholic intellectual and philosopher as a man of genius expressed by Pico or Agrippa in his *De occulta philosophia* although not in the case of Bacon in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* with which the Elizabethan Empire and its supremacy were concerned.²¹

2. The magical nature of Diana

Christoph Daxelmüller refers to the magical nature of the Queen in her pursuit of a strong empire in Europe and in the world. For that purpose she would present herself to her countrymen by means of several identities that carried magical connotations associated with Diana or Astraea, the mythological character representing justice and linked to the moon, the frontier between the divine and the human and an important source of ideas concerning magic (1997: 237). The Queen took her ability to manipulate public opinion and build her

²¹ Renaissance melancholia became the humour shaping the qualities of great thinkers and religious visionaries for having personalities near to the divine, thanks to their prodigious memory and their astonishing analytic capacity. Hence, Saturn was the sign that conferred them with extraordinary qualities, those resulting from the practice of magic but also from *eros* understood as all that a human being might wish in a general sense that encouraged to transcend limitations (Yates 1979). See also Culiari (1999: 80-87).

own public image from the murky qualities associated with Diana. The idea of a Queen-goddess versed in magic and associated with the dark and gloom, the night, the cold, disasters and fear would have been more than striking for a sixteenth-century mind. Such was the nature of the Queen of England thanks to her adviser's tough policy. The establishment of bonds or *vinculum vinculorum* (Culianu 1999: 131-143) such as hope, fear, compassion, love, hate, wrath, happiness or any other feeling that a person in particular or a group of individuals in general were susceptible to, was a method of manipulation in itself and the basis of effective magic.

On the other hand, faith understood as trust in the efficiency and skill of the person of the magus – or anyone versed in magic – was essential in the establishment of bonds. That is how Elizabeth managed to rule, by developing people's faith in her godly magical self so as to gain respect and to make believe she would defend her people with her divine quality. In this way, the queen inspired fear and respect in her performance of her duty of defending her country. On the other hand cruelty, selfishness and cynicism exercised on people, advisers or on other rulers were just a few of the appalling descriptions related to the person of the ruler or prince during the Renaissance (Law 1993: 23:50). But above all, kings and queens were independent rulers who trusted in their own qualities and capacity to rule so that violence in gaining, maintaining or even losing power was a constant drawback. Elizabeth I used magic as a means to frighten her enemies and encourage her followers' support. At the same time, it was well known that both benefits and misfortunes derived from reliable magic.

However, neither political thought nor moral philosophy in the Renaissance justified violence for the sake of violence even though a ruler's duty was to ensure security and stability, to punish rebels and defeat enemies (Law 1993: 26-30). As such, Queen Elizabeth tended to reduce the status of Catholics by associating them with the increasingly popular evil magic. It could be assumed that Elizabeth came into contact with quite a lot of Dee's knowledge and if intellectuals were willing to recklessly break limitations, Dee could also induce the Queen to do so. Robert Greene places that kind of attitude in the person of Bacon and his Catholicism with the difference that he turns out to be a self-centered counsellor to the

advantage of John Dee and to Elizabeth. As Bacon states in *Friar Bacon*: "My life, my fame, my glory, are all past."²² (IV. i. 95)

It was frequent that a scholar and advisor like Friar Bacon would exceed his own limitations, and surrendered to the vice of excess that was an attitude akin to the Renaissance and used to be associated with evil as Agnes Heller (1980: 317) remarks. It was popularly known that sin or Satan was always getting hold of victims through human weakness, and love of wealth and power in particular. Intellectual pride went together with curiosity, an innate temptation that was supposed to ensure popularity and unlimited knowledge (Daxelmüller 1997: 11-45, 45-47, 77-99). Of all the four temperaments, melancholic people were more open to this kind of sinful and wicked attitude. They were exposed to the seductions of voluptuousness due to a great fantasy, an attitude akin to speculation and contemplation that made them emotionally unstable (Culianu 1999: 142-143).

This kind of emotional instability shapes the character of Friar Bacon and his behaviour in the play. To begin with, necromancy is suggested in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* as a means of defending England from outside potential threats. Defending England with a wall of brass thanks to the power of a brass talking head becomes the delusion of a king, Henry III, and his adviser Friar Bacon. Necromancy becomes a means of manipulation as both of them become involved in the rules of the courtly game of flattery: Bacon's duty is to please the king from who he may get some reward for helping him to defend his country. Friar Bacon is never reluctant to admit his dealings with evil souls in the pursuit of his goals assisted by the devils Belcephon and Hecat, the goddess of the underworld. Thus, he asserts in the play: "I have fram'd out a monstrous head of brass,/ That, by th'enchanting forces of the devil,/ Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms" (IV. i. 17-19).

Bacon the friar trusts more in necromantic power than in divine power and so he does not enjoy a fulfilling social life though he never grieves over his loneliness, being secluded in his cell in Oxford apart from infrequent visits to the court. He spends most of his time absorbed in his magic books. Not even Miles, his disciple, accompanies him in his study of magic. Curiosity leads Bacon to invoke infernal entities, to fall into the sin of pride. In fact, Friar Bacon's most treacherous evil is his excessive arrogance and his

²² See also Seltzer (1964).

conceited attitude drives him to failure. The very same night of the performance of his task to encompass England with a head of brass, he leaves his project on the hands of his clumsy apprentice, Miles, wasting his only chance to become the king's most faithful servant, loosing his prestige as an intellectual and a favourable public image (IV, i).

Bacon fails his country and his king because of his selfish attitude and reprehensible lack of concern to achieve his goals. Friar Bacon is not as successful as he expected and falls into pessimism and sadness. In the words of Friar Bungay, his colleague: "What means the friar that frolick'd/ it of late,/ to sit as melancholy in his cell/ As if he had neither lost nor won today?" (IV. iii. 1-4). Beyond doubt, the friar seems to have become the victim of his own melancholy.²³ His grief reveals how important it was for Elizabethans not to attempt to go against the social and cosmological order and its harmony, caused by the sin of pride and by a tendency to excess.²⁴ That is when nonconformity turns the scholar's attitude into boldness not only against his own life and nature but also against God. The monarch was supreme in both Church and State and Elizabethan Imperialism followed the pattern of the Occult Philosophy to counteract any kind of temerity.²⁵

²³ Melancholic people corresponded to the planet Saturn, the autumn as a season, and the black bile as the predominant fluid in their organism. Due to Saturn as their regent planet they were sad, pessimistic individuals, people not overly successful condemned to perform servile and despicable actions (Culianu 1999: 80-87).

²⁴ In its hierarchy, human beings were below God and above Beasts. According to the chain of being concept to depart from one's proper place in the chain was to betray one's own nature. All existing beings had their own precise place and function in the universe and by not allowing reason to rule the emotions was to descend to the level of the Beasts. On the other hand, to attempt to go above one's proper place, as Eve did when she was tempted by Satan, was to court disaster (Tillyard 1963: 37-50).

²⁵ In the Elizabethan age, a happy man was someone who did not question his place in creation because every single being occupied its rightful place in the chain of being by God's will. From there he could exercise his own particular authority and responsibility, his own duty towards the rest of the beings or links in the chain. Every link was irreplaceable, unique for the others so that it was essential to respect each other's wellbeing. Each link of the chain represented a being, creature, and an object in creation. The higher links had more intellect, more mobility, authority and capacities than those below. For instance, plants only had authority and attributes to order minerals. Animals had power over plants and minerals and humans had more attributes than animals and could govern the natural world. Spiritual entities like angels and God were superior beings to man and they could control and govern human beings and the rest of the animal and vegetable world (Tillyard 1963: 37-50).

Therefore, against the sin of pride and the lack of moderation the main source of harmony was virtue and more precisely, temperance (Heller 1980).²⁶ Bacon's failure in the play shapes the kind of monarch he argues against, a monarch who prefers self-control and restraint driven by compassion and ruthlessness. Temperance was an essential virtue during the Renaissance and it is precisely for lack of this virtue the reason why Bacon loses everything he praised and honoured. Excess tended to bring about a fear of "disorder" that was not merely a philosophical concept but also had significant political ramifications. In any social, intellectual and religious background magic was intended to crush enemies in spite of its evil implications since the practice of sorcery could easily become a source of trouble and catastrophe (Kieckhefer 1992: 190). Besides, it was thought that either prosperity or misfortune could be transmitted through magical activity.

Elizabethan England was a moment in time when diabolic propaganda became a weapon against political and religious movements some of which were thought to be potentially dangerous and to be eradicated.²⁷ In addition, the Church of England was willing to replace a deep-rooted magical explanation for a theological one in the person of the Queen, the head of both Church and State, and her alleged white magic (Rowse 1964: 153).²⁸ Judicial and anecdotal evidence pointed out that the clergy stood amongst the practitioners of magic due to their interest in a discipline called "demonomagic" or magic that focused on the *modus operandi* to catch the fancy of the spiritual world (Culianu 1999: 197). Therefore, the term *conjurer* became a synonym of *recusant priest* because the

²⁶ The four virtues described in *De Bono* by Albertus Magnus: Strength, Temperance, Justice and Prudence. Peace and Magnanimity are also virtues as opposed to the vices of Tyranny, War, Greed, Pride, Vainglory and Idolatry (Yates 1974: 116-121).

²⁷ As magic was linked to the spiritual world, the boundary between necromancy and the incipient modern science in its practical approach became unclear (Butler 1993: 111).

²⁸ Moreover, secular laws imposed various punishments for the crime of witchcraft particularly when it was harmful, more than for the actual magical practices themselves (Kieckhefer 1992: 190). The Elizabethan *Royal Injunctions* of 1559 banned the use of spells, charms, invocations, magic circles or divination techniques (Thomas 1971: 179-206) and in small communities, archives were brimming with accusations of witchcraft regardless of the age, gender, sex or social status of those found guilty:

Ever since its arrival in England, the Christian Church had accompanied against the resort of the laity to magic and magicians. The Anglo-Saxon clergy forbade soothsaying [...]. The Church did not deny that supernatural action was possible, but it stressed that it could emanate from only two possible sources: God or the Devil (Thomas 1971: 303).

Prayer Book criticised an attitude that could have been close to witchcraft because of possible harm inflicted on the Reform (Thomas 1971: 58-89). Protestant England thought that the invocation of evil spirits was a tendency followed by the Catholic Church. However, a thorough reading of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* shows that the comedy is neither an apology for Catholicism nor of the Reform but merely reproduces the widespread attitude amongst society of rejecting certain sectors of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, friars in particular and similar religious orders due to the anti-Catholic policy of Henry VIII and some of his ministers (Delderfield 1966).

The proscription against trying to rise above one's place was useful to political rulers because it helped to reinforce their authority. The implication was that civil rebellion would have direct consequences on other realms. It was a sin against God as ruler to claim to rule by "Divine Right".²⁹ Friar Bacon's behaviour in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is a challenge against the legal, political and institutional order. Bacon only has in mind the assertion that the wiser an intellectual the more powerful he was and the more successful he would be in political life.³⁰ In the play:

BACON.

Miles, thou knowest that I have dived into hell

And sought the darkest palaces of fiends;

[...]

And three-form'd Luna hid her silver looks,³¹

Trembling upon her concave continent,

When Bacon read upon his magic book. (IV. i. 7-8, 12-14).

The daring friar does not realise that true privilege does not come from enjoying flattering admiration or from having lots of formal and practical knowledge of black arts, but from the fact of enjoying a right kind of wisdom, a state of admonition and repentance. Because of Bacon's black art, Serlsby and Lambert, two students from Oxford, die (IV. iii) and Prince Edward explodes with anger and yearns to

²⁹ Civil disorders were often accompanied by dramatic disturbances in the heavens (Tillyard 1963: 37-50).

³⁰ It is important to remember that for Elizabethan occultism and magic was a discipline itself that led to formal study, as it was in the case of Mathematics, Physics or Theology.

³¹ *Luna* refers to the moon, associated to the Roman goddess Diana and so, to Queen Elizabeth.

kill his companion, the earl of Lincoln, when he discovers that he also woos his beloved Margaret, a maid from Fressingfield (III. i). Fortunately, these events develop a sense of guilt in the person of the friar so that he decides to spend his remaining life in spiritual retreat and resignation. For once, he is ready for admonition and repentance. However, Bacon's failure dignifies Elizabethan Imperialism as it proves, from the imaginary world of a comedy, to have no dealings with the devil. Instead, it is the Catholic uprising together with black magic that would certainly lead to catastrophe. In this way, the white magic or beneficial magic of the Occult Philosophy and its followers were not the ones to blame for any possible disaster.

Greene implies that the Queen is able to keep England's enemies at bay so that the Catholic threat is under control thanks to Dee's true policy when compared to that of Friar Bacon.³² In fact, any possible rumours suggesting that Elizabeth is unable to maintain the prosperity of the country are efficiently hushed up even though an underlying doubt is covertly posed.

3. The Occult Philosophy and England

That thought of an ideal ruler is found, in one way or another, in several other plays such as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (1599) and *1 Henry IV* (1590-92). In *Julius Caesar*, the protagonist grows too powerful, too arrogant and so he must be stopped. Within the context of Elizabethan politics, any conspiracy such as the one directed against him would be associated with Papist plotting. The audience of Shakespeare's play would easily relate the character of Mark Antony with a figure like John Dee as a defender of the established order (Sanders 1967).

In *Henry IV*, King Henry has seen recent civil strife take its toll on his country. He is sad that brother has fought against brother and is anxious to unite his people under a religious crusade. As a leader, King Henry IV is cautious but disciplined and does not let his people forget his obligations to him. He also wisely offers the rebels generous terms for their surrender to avoid war and he uses his cunning to confuse them. This would be the efficient approach Elizabeth followed to unite her people under a religious crusade against the Catholics while being generous with her enemies who would probably surrender. The complex character of Falstaff in

³² Chronological inaccuracy.

Henry IV is both comic and dramatic and possesses a real gift for avoiding trouble and censure, for redeeming himself by his words and actions, an attitude akin to that of Friar Bacon and his resignation (Sanderson 1969).

The concept of an ideal ruler also appears in *The Tempest* (1611), where Shakespeare emphasizes that magic is the instrument to restore political and spiritual harmony through the intellectual movement of the Occult Philosophy.³³ *The Tempest* is an apology for the Elizabethan intellectual John Dee in search for the perfect kind of advisor who is behind a perfect kind of ruler at a time when England was under political and religious threat:

the white magician Doctor Dee, is defended in Prospero, the good and learned conjuror, who had managed to transport his valuable library to the island. The presence of the Dee-like magus in the play falls naturally into place as part of the Elizabethan revival. That was the world to which Shakespeare had belonged, the world of the Spenserian fairyland, the world of John Dee (Yates 1979: 160)

Yates refers to Dee as a white magician. As far as *The Tempest* is concerned, Prospero, the legitimate Duke of Milan and the main character in the play, raises a threatening tempest with his magic causing a shipwreck close to the island where he lives in exile so that he manages to restore social order in his dukedom in opposition to his brother Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan (see Kermode 1954:

³³ James I transformed the fear of magic into such an obsession that he wrote a treatise under the title of *Daemonologie* (c. 1597). It explored two kinds of magic: natural or white magic in which power derived from God, and black magic, in which power derived from the devil and it was used for the evil purpose of witchcraft. Disciplines like demonology, necromancy and magic art in general inspired the rejection of Elizabethan occultism:

James has much more to say about "the Divil's School" which thinks to climb to knowledge of things to come "mounting from degree to degree on slippery scale of curiosity" believing that circles and conjurations tied to the words of God will raise spirits. This is clearly "practical Cabala" interpreted as black art, a fruit of that tree of forbidden knowledge of which Adam was commanded not to eat (Yates 1979: 93).

The discrimination of magic did not happen because of what was essential to it but because of ideological, socio-political calculations and intellectual and religious changes when facing a new reality that was witchcraft (Daxelmüller 1997: 72). Witchcraft originated from the Alps and spread to Northern Europe. It was brought into play during the witch-hunts at a time when it was never clear if it had been angels or the devil the one addressed during magical invocations and rituals (Daxelmüller 1997: 175-211).

I.ii.73-132). Similar to Dee and England, Prospero at the end of the play acquires an extraordinary and powerful knowledge exercised in the context of the island.³⁴ Through the character of Prospero and in a symbolic manner, Dee's wishes to restore an Imperial Reform after Queen Elizabeth's death in 1603 comes true:

Prospero, the beneficent magus, uses his good magical science for utopian ends. He is the climax of the long spiritual struggle in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries had been engaged. He vindicates the Dee science and the Dee conjuring [...] and establishes white Cabala as legitimate (Yates 1979: 160).

Through education Prospero becomes the perfect ruler who defends his countrymen's welfare, someone who knows himself, who accepts his place in society, someone who overcomes his limitations wisely. A transposition of Dee in the fictional character of Prospero is then observable. The white magician in *The Tempest* – unlike *Friar Bacon* – establishes harmony in the island by keeping the malignant monster Caliban under control in an example of temperance and compassion.³⁵ This attitude is similar to that of a monarch like Elizabeth who stands for wisdom when dealing with her countrymen to avoid stirring them into revolt. Divine power always finds its way and the usurpation of a ruler's legitimate place in society sets the divine law into motion. In this way Elizabeth managed to sustain the unstable political situation by offering her beneficial and divine support to all those who trusted their monarch. A good monarch was always led by a reliable tutor especially if that tutor stood for wisdom and protection. Without any doubt, John Dee would fulfil those expectations to their utmost. At a moment in the play *Miranda*, Prospero's daughter, asks the white magician: "How came we ashore?" (I. ii. 158). To which Prospero answers: "By Providence divine." (I. ii. 159). Despite his sorrow and distress, Prospero is taken safely to an island in the middle of the sea by the protecting power of Providence. In the same way Elizabeth tutored by Dee would bring ashore those wise attitudes claimed by the Occult Philosophy and its Arthurian associations.

³⁴ Notice the similarities between England as an island under the reign of a monarch and the island in *The Tempest* under the reign of a perfect ruler like Prospero.

³⁵ However, Prospero is a tyrant from the point of view of Caliban, who tells him: "As I told thee before, / I am subject to a tyrant, a sorcerer, / That by his cunning / Hath cheated me of the island" (Kermode 1954: III. ii.40-42).

4. Conclusions

Robert Greene in *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* opts for the same utopic reformist movement that Dee promoted from the very beginning in his role as the Queen's advisor and that Shakespeare honoured years later. Greene underlines a political and spiritual order separated from the hands of a weak and nonchalant ruler inviting his fellow citizens to accept their own limitations because it is only one person, Queen Elizabeth I, the single individual who can be efficiently responsible for the privileged duty of ruling their people while preserving their integrity. In *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, there is a final banquet in which the Queen is dignified as the "Rose of England" in an attempt to highlight the glory of England as a protestant state under the rule of an efficient monarch who is intellectually innovative, defends all arts and is good to her country. The phrase "Rose of England" highlights the supremacy of the country and its queen. This is Friar Bacon's prophecy for Albion after his repentance:

But then the stormy threats of wars shall cease.
[...]
And peace from heaven shall harbour in these leaves
That gorgeous beautifies this matchless flower.
Apollo's heliotropian then shall stoop,
And Venus'hyacinth shall veil her top;
Juno shall shut her gillyflowers up,
And Pallas'bay shall bash her brightest green;
Cere's carnation, in consort with those,
Shall stoop and wonder at Diana's rose (*Friar Bacon* V, iii, 50-62).

These words praise the mystic personality of the Queen when comparing her to the gods and also praise Albion, that is, Britain and its Arthurian tradition and foresee a country full of peace. Harmony shall prevail and any kind of political or religious uprising be crushed. The strength of the Tudor monarch lies in unlimited, indisputable, absolute power thanks to her supernatural nature. Associations in the fictional character of Bacon between Catholicism and necromancy respond to the pretensions of the Protestant reform to discredit such an institution as the Catholic Church. With this intention, countervailing its power to the advantage of the Reform becomes a main goal despite the possible irony implied in Bacon's final spiritual retirement by which he assumes that the Church of

England is the right path to follow through the repentance of a dejected arrogant friar.

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Frail patriarchy and the authority of the repressed in William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*¹

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ABSTRACT

Critical assumptions on William Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* usually centre on the relationship between sex and moral issues. However, the play also questions political control and the supervision of human behaviour. This paper offers an alternative, personal, feminist reading of *Measure for Measure* by focusing on the differences between male and female moral values in the play. After exposing a brief summary of the problems that traditional and feminist critics face concerning *Measure for Measure*, I will pay special attention to the articulation of social subversion and to the connection between sexual and political frailty in Shakespeare's work by referring to some characters and specific scenes. It is my aim to explore the complex ways in which male and female spheres reflect and influence each other in *Measure for Measure*, a dark play which questions the limits of patriarchy and the workings of unethical behaviour.

KEYWORDS: Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, gender studies, patriarchal constraints, sexual subversion

1. Introduction: a feminist defeat?

Measure for Measure occupies a special position in the Shakespearean canon. It has frequently been regarded in negative terms by critics such as Samuel Johnson, and by Romantic authors, including Samuel T. Coleridge or William Hazlitt,² so we have to wait until the

¹ I planned this paper while my mother was in hospital last summer, so I would like to dedicate it to Dr. Campuzano, Dr. Moran and Dr. Torres, the throat specialists and haematologists at Juan Canalejo Hospital (A Coruña), who, together with their excellent staff, have contributed to her prompt recovery. I would also like to thank Paul Herron, who helped me to revise minor stylistic mistakes.

² See the introduction to the Arden edition (Iv-Iviii). My analysis is more sceptical than Lever's, since I do not think that authority is upheld in the play.

twentieth century to find positive evaluations of the play.³ Besides, while *Othello* and *Anthony and Cleopatra* have become favourite sites to deal with gender issues (Hidalgo 1997: 130), *Measure for Measure* has been considered an “uncomfortable” play. It has no tradition of feminist criticism behind,⁴ and, though there are feminist vindications in the play, scholars have not emphasised them so much as some speeches in tragedies depicting suffering women (*King Lear*, *The Winter’s Tale*), or in comedies on the war of the sexes (*As You Like It*, *The Taming of the Shrew*).

One main problem is that stereotypes do not work in *Measure for Measure*, and, perhaps, this neglect is related to an attitude that privileges the study of some plays to the detriment of other ones difficult to classify in traditional feminist terms.⁵ Any analysis of women in Shakespeare resorting to a black-and-white reductionism is totally useless.⁶ Middle positions must be acknowledged since, even in tragedies, females are as susceptible to change as patriarchy itself. In this regard, the idea of women in Shakespeare as complex and flawed as men – and also as capable of passion and pain – maintained by Carolyn Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (1980: 5)⁷ may be a handicap, but also a fascinating site for interpretation. As we will see, in *Measure for Measure* a woman

³ See L. C. Knights (1942) and F.R. Leavis (1942). More recently, Pilar Hidalgo defines *Measure for Measure* as “una obra difícil e inquietante” stressing its “crítica al poder, a la hipocresía religiosa y al control político de la sexualidad” (1997: 171).

⁴ I will use ‘feminist’ as ‘feminocentric’, that is, in a broad sense including both moderate and radical tendencies within the studies concerned with woman. “Gender studies” appears more suitable for my approach. In this way, I stress the application of our particular point of view as female critics and spectators to appreciate male characters and their motivations. There are many types of feminism differently evolving in time and space, but, regarding the initial and paramount distinction female/feminist/feminine, see Elaine Showalter (1979: 137-139). Despite the impossibility to condense or summarise the different approaches to Shakespeare and women in one article, we cannot omit paramount works, such as the ones by Dusinberre (1975), Pitt (1981), French (1982), Dollimore and Sinfield (1985) or Drakakis (1985).

⁵ Ann Thompson vindicated the study of Shakespeare’s middle comedies and histories (1988: 85), which has already been accomplished by Pilar Hidalgo (1997) in Spain.

⁶ See Claire McEachern’s (1988: 287) and Marilyn French’s approaches (1982: 25).

⁷ Together with Neeley’s contribution, Thompson’s article is the best in explaining the dangers of reading Shakespeare from a feminist point of view. Thompson stresses Shakespeare’s complexity both for readers and audiences, and she considers *Measure for Measure* a work about female cooperation and “a female sub-culture separated from the male world” (1988: 77).

appears challenging male achievements and undermining a ruler's self-esteem through rhetoric. Elizabeth Brunner quotes Irene Dash's words explaining that "Shakespeare's women characters testify to his genius [...] they learn the meaning of self sovereignty for a woman in a patriarchal society" (2004: 1), and Louis Adrian Montrose points out that

With one vital exception all forms of public and domestic authority in Elizabethan England were vested in men: in fathers, husbands, masters, teachers, magistrates, lords. It was inevitable that the *rule of a woman* would generate peculiar tensions within such a 'patriarchal' society (1983: 64-5).

This paper focuses on subversion and the notion of the rule of woman. For this purpose, I will make use of Swift Lenz, Greene and Neely's point of view (1980), which can be labelled essentialist feminism and attempts to humanise female characters and to challenge stereotypes, but also to analyse patriarchal structures by exploring genre distinctions (1980: 7). Neely's idea that feminist critique must be revisionary, historicized, and that it must resist being monolithic and monological (1988: 16) will be specially taken into account to study the divergence between male and female moral values in *Measure for Measure*. I will resort to specific scenes, precisely those depicting Isabella's ethics, Angelo's lack of integrity as a ruler and the Duke's manipulation of others. As in the historic plays, women in *Measure for Measure* prove how incompetent men are, they align themselves with powerlessness and ultimately become instruments to confirm patriarchal insufficiency and weakness.

2. Female rhetoric before law

The play begins when Claudio's imprisonment triggers Isabella's participation in the events. Juliet, Claudio's lover, is pregnant, and Angelo has resurrected an old law punishing unsanctioned unions.⁸ Therefore, Isabella, who is a novice, leaves the private sphere of the convent to expose herself before the public masculine realm of the law represented by Angelo. In *Richard II*, the Duchess of York complains of John of Gaunt (1.2. 22-34) and, in *Measure for Measure*, a woman dares to plead before a powerful man and defends her

⁸ On the nature of marriages in the play, see Lever (Introduction: liii-liv and xv-lxvi), Smith (1950: 215) and Thatcher (1995: 36-37).

brother against her principles: "At war 'twixt will and will not" (2.2. 33).⁹ At this point, it is important to remark that not all critics have praised Isabella,¹⁰ who is heavily conditioned by Lucio. This character recalls Cassio in *Othello* and has already made Isabella aware of "the power [she] has" (1.4. 76). He has also noticed that "Men give like gods; but when they [maidens] weep and kneel,/All their petitions are as freely theirs/As they themselves would owe them" (1.4. 81-3), and now he is urging her to exaggerate more and more before Angelo in a scene which would certainly appeal to a late eighteenth-century audience accustomed to sentimental outpouring. The power of feigning and theatricalisation is here as remarkable as it was at the beginning of *King Lear* when Regan and Goneril play the role of devoted daughters.

Isabella's skills as portrayed by Lucio are extremely important and immediately put into practice. She exhibits at its best Shakespeare's linguistic ambiguity and rhetoric expertise emphasised by William Empson in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) (Bate 2000: 392-393, 408). Tricksterlike, Isabella dissembles authority by depicting it like a balm, as something positive, not as a whip. The statement immediately arouses Angelo's desire. Mixing sex and power, she shows that, if men are vulnerable to sin, the strong sex does not exist as such, nor any socially conferred authority. It is individual merit that matters and blurs boundaries:

No ceremony that to great ones long,
Not the king's crown nor the deputed sword,
The marshal's truncheon nor the judge's robe
Become them with one half so good a grace as mercy does.
(2.2. 59-62)¹¹

⁹ Unless otherwise specified, quotations belong to the Arden edition of *Measure for Measure*.

¹⁰ Charlotte Lennox in *Shakespeare Illustrated* considered that that torrent of abusive language, those coarse and unwomanly reflexions on the virtue of her [Isabella's] mother, her exulting cruelty to the dying youth; are the manners of an affected prude, outrageous in her seeming virtue; not of a pious, innocent and tender mind (qtd. in Smith 1950: 213).

On the other hand, J.W. Lever compares Isabella with Antigone and Dorothea Brooke (Introduction: xciv).

¹¹ We can compare these words with Hermione's ones defending her virtue before Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*:

... mistake me not: no life,
I prize it not a straw, but for mine honour
Which I would free – if I shall be condemm'd

The novice is subversively appealing to equality before a man embodying authority, and she reminds Angelo that he is a man who can also sin (“Who is it that hath died for this offence?/There’s many have committed it” [2.1. 88-89]). His punishment on Claudio is simply excessive and typical of a weak tyrant (2.2. 108-110). Furthermore, Isabella advises him: “Go to your bosom,/Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know/ That’s like my brother’s fault.” (2.2. 137-139), and she resorts to blackmail by assuring she would devote to Angelo “prayers from preserved souls,/From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicated/To nothing temporal” (2.2. 154-156).

The process of making Angelo feel proud of his newly acquired power (and frailty, as we will see) facilitates his detachment from the law (“It is the law, not I condemn your brother” [2.2.80], and “I – now the voice of the recorded law –” [2.3. 61]). From his privileged position, he soon learns that *onus est honos* and that he is not a Machiavellian prince trained to properly understand and apply the law. Angelo’s behaviour clearly does not correspond to that of a ruler, and the play exposes the problem of how to administer justice properly and how to avoid being corrupted by power.

Once that Isabella’s virtue, understood as her moral strength and courage, not her virginal looks, has aroused Angelo, he yields to emotion. In Andrew Gurr’s terms, Isabella is “paying with falsehood false exacting” (1997: 103), and Angelo is unable to discern between Isabella and Mariana in the bed-trick scene, an age-old device that Shakespeare had already employed in *All’s Well That Ends Well*.¹² Ultimately Angelo loves what he rejects: he wants Isabella to be a woman, not an ideal presence detached from earth – she is a nun though she does not appear before him as such –,¹³ but a sensual

Upon surmises, all proofs sleeping else
But what your jealousies awake, I tell you
‘Tis rigour, and not law. (3.2. 109-114)

¹² One of the aspects of *Measure for Measure* that strikes Clare Marie Walls is female solidarity, which is clearly depicted in this scene: “Throughout the play, however, Isabella’s strong sense of sisterhood is revealed, not just for the nun Francesca and the Mother Superior of her order, but more actively in her concern for Juliet, Mariana, Kate Keepdown and herself” (2007: 4).

¹³ Andrew Gurr in a perceptive article explains that “Having appeared barefaced to Lucio, with the prospect of Fransisca’s visible black veil before her, there is more than a little aptness in her appearing subsequently to Angelo in the secular equivalent, the Tudor gentlewoman’s familiar outdoor wear, a black velvet mask” (1997: 99), and the same happens in the final scene with Mariana.

creature more ordinary than she seems. Angelo desires “the treasures of [her] body” (2.4. 96) and wants her not to resist.

Despite Isabella’s efforts, act five proves how women’s version of reality is eventually devalued. Isabella and Angelo’s verbal skirmish represents male and female points of view face to face. Women’s ideas in *Measure for Measure* become frail arguments confronting sanctioned truth while men refuse to admit publicly their failures. Insults grow stronger on both sides, and Isabella begins to unveil Angelo’s authentic self as something quite different from his public image. The novice already warned against Angelo and seeming in the third act:

This outward-sainted deputy,
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips you i’t’h head, and follies doth new
As falcon doth the fowl, is yet a devil;
His filth within being cast, he would appear
A pond as deep as hell. (3.1. 88-93)

In the last act, Isabella assumes the discourse of madness represented through conventions such as parallelisms and repetitions, what Nancy K. Miller calls italicized writing (1985: 339-360) and is perfectly distinguishable from the rest. Her speech is like a witch’s curse, but also a piece of dangerous social criticism when she calls Angelo “forsworn”, “murderer”, “adulterous thief” and “an hypocrite, a virgin-violator” (5.1. 40-44). Far from being a tool to affirm herself, Isabella’s attitude will have negative consequences. It is true that her audacious words before an audience on stage demolish Angelo’s reputation as an honoured ruler, but he has previously made clear in one of their interviews that her speech will not do, and people will only respect his version, even if Isabella’s rhetoric of the socially discredited is more appealing: “you shall stifle in your own report,/ And smell of calumny” (2.4. 157-158). Therefore, speech functions as a weapon against her, and, instead of debilitating patriarchy, Isabella injures her own reputation, which confirms how men always have the last say.

While in the first act, Claudio is aware of Isabella’s “prone and speechless dialect/Such as move men” (1.2. 173-174), in the last one the novice paradoxically confesses that she cannot describe Angelo’s

evil spirit¹⁴ since it surpasses her rhetoric skills. From a new historicist position, Stephen Greenblatt has stressed the power of inaction or extreme marginality: “[it] is understood to possess meaning and therefore to imply intention [...] Agency is virtually inescapable” (1990/2: 164), which is here embodied by Mariana and Isabella. In *Measure for Measure*, female rhetoric fluency does not correspond with sexual agency (in fact, the women participating in sexual liaisons, such as Juliet, have few speeches). Mariana and Isabella represent attitudes opposing male order and are accordingly seen as madwomen or marginalised human beings before the Duke, who comes to admit her reasoning powers (5.1. 50 and 63-65) and can neither mark her as insane nor condemn her. I insist that, by having positioned herself as a woman, Isabella’s statement acquires strength, but the tension between power and frailty permeates the whole play. Every word from Isabella’s mouth becomes useless before patriarchy if we recall Michel Foucault’s idea of the power of omission: “Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it [...] In like manner, *silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions*” (1990: 101, my italics). When Isabella, a sexualized object of male gaze, enacts her simulated shame in public, slander deflowers her socially, and she gives Lucio the opportunity to laugh at the expense of a woman he revered not long ago. For Michael Friedman, only matrimony can wipe away her stain (2007: 11); the Duke restores her honour and Isabella keeps silence.

3. Man as the dark sex

Despite the efforts to single it out, *Measure for Measure* is not a rarity in the Shakespearean canon, and it has the atmosphere characterising other productions of the same period. Ernest Schanzer defined a “dark” play as that one in which a moral problem is “presented in such a manner that we are unsure, of our moral bearings, so that uncertain and divided responses to it in the minds of the audience are possible and even probable” (1963: 6).¹⁵ Masculinity is related to such darkness in *Measure for Measure*, and it is seen in a way much resembling tragedies such as *Othello*, *King Lear*

¹⁴ Though the situation is different, Isabella’s silence always reminds me of Cordelia’s inability to praise Lear, and both have an audience on stage.

¹⁵ Not only the so-called dark plays present problems of interpretation, and Ann Thompson perceptively disagrees on the label: *The Taming of the Shrew*, for example, is, according to her, a dark or problem play (1988: 77).

and *Macbeth*. All of them reveal more uncertainty than self-assurance in male characters' asides and monologues. The idea of the gentleman introduced in some men's conduct books of the period – Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528) or Stefano Guazzo's *Civil Conversatione* (1574), for example – as a compendium of justice, temperance, friendship and education, among other virtues, is completely reversed in Shakespeare, who draws no perfect heroes in a revising and rebellious attitude. This will always provide us with space for discussion and definitely constitutes one of the playwright's achievements.

Shakespeare offers, from his androcentric perspective, a realistic picture of male desire, libertinism and masculine frailty, and women stand as mirrors of men's faults. As Neely stresses, in *Othello*, "The men see the women as whores and then refuse to tolerate their own projections" (1980: 228). Passion is never sanctioned in *Measure for Measure*, and, for Angelo, women are inherently related to men and men are as corruptible as women. Isabella also states that women are frail like mirrors because of men:

Women, help heaven! Men their creation mar
In profiting by them. Nay, call us ten times frail;
For we are soft as our complexions are,
And credulous to false prints. (2.4. 126-129)¹⁶

If in *Measure for Measure* both sexes are weak (women because patriarchy renders them socially weak and men because they easily succumb to sexual desire), the play exceeds the limits of a feminist theory based on any *différance* (see 2.2. 55-66). However, Neely insists on the pervading role of history when we analyse texts and states in an article that "Denying the unitary subject, declaring the end of difference, does not do away with the difference between men and women or with the subordination of women; it merely conceals it" (1988: 13). On the other hand, the image of woman as a mirror has further implications considering Clare Marie Wall's statement: "When men try to "profit" by women, [...] then their own male likeness to God is marred, is destroyed, even as they destroy the women's God image" (2007: 5). Whereas women perfectly know that men rule and develop their own strategies to face this fact, men are

¹⁶ This resembles the quotation "Frailty, thy name is woman" in *Hamlet* (1.2. 146), which was used by the American feminist Margaret Fuller to begin her essay "Woman in the Nineteenth-Century" (1844).

persuaded that they have absolute control of those around them. The result is a play within the play, and order is never restored. Shakespeare is dealing with seeming, but also with passions and with ethics when law is seen in two ways. On the one hand, it is God-given, socially codified and respected by the community; but law must also be understood and applied, and it is in this aspect that men are tested in *Measure for Measure*. Things complicate if we add that, apparently, instincts are and should be punished. As Neely states:

In the dark comedies, the men are almost too foolish (Bassanio, Bertram) or too bestial (Shylock, Angelo) for the happy endings to be possible or satisfying. The women must work too hard, and the men are not changed enough for either sex to be entirely likeable or for their reconciliation to be occasion for rejoicing. (1980: 215)

Angelo, "the admitted success of the play," according to Knights (1942: 223), is, together with Isabella, a tragic figure of passionate feelings. He cannot realise that resurrecting "drowsy and neglected" laws (1.2. 159) is absurd, in the same way that Lear needs flattery and does not perceive who his faithful daughter is. Lacking consistent criteria is Angelo's *hamartia* or tragic flaw. Isabella and Angelo have something in common: erasing sexual dichotomies, Angelo is as feminine and feminised as Isabella, and he competes with her before the Duke. Both Isabella and Angelo feel uncomfortable in their imposed roles: he is not a Renaissance prince trained to govern, and she is neither a novice nor a lover, but a woman acting against her will and principles to defend her brother. Therefore, male and female spheres come into contact.

Angelo struggles to appear as a man of integrity and resorts to restraint and repression. He considers himself fallible, humane and sinful: "Let there be some more test made of my metal,/ Before so noble and so great a figure/ Be stamp'd upon it. (1.1. 48-50). According to Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and his World* (1968), woman constitutes a degrading and regenerating force: "She debases, brings down to earth, lends a bodily substance to things, and destroys; but, first of all, she is the principle that gives birth" (Bakhtin 1968: 240), and Angelo is, in a way, reborn thanks to Isabella. Appointed as the representative of law, he regards himself as just another participant in desire and prefers "an idle plume/ Which the air beats for vain" (2.4. 11-12) to the affairs of state.

Isabella's words have an effect on him, and Angelo becomes morally or intellectually corrupted by a woman he wanted to corrupt sexually. In a soliloquy resembling one in *Hamlet*, the Duke's deputy is conscious and ashamed of his feelings: "What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?/ Dost thou desire her foully for those things/ That make her good?" (2.2. 173-175). Unable to fight against instinct, he admits: "Thieves for their robbery have authority/ When judges steal themselves" (2.2. 176-177). A temporal representative of God on earth, Angelo paradoxically feels like a criminal with undeserved power, a position comparable to Claudio's because Angelo cannot recognise himself: "Even till now,/ When men were fond, I smil'd and wonder'd" (2.2. 186-187).

As in *Othello*, where the protagonist suffers from honour and reputation paranoia, women in *Measure for Measure* are not only controlled and manipulated by men: they also become the means to recover and/or restore male honour. Kathleen McLuskie advances that among the problems for a feminist interpretation of *Measure for Measure* we find that "the dilemmas of the narrative and the sexuality under discussion are constructed in *completely male terms* – and the women's role as the objects of exchange within that system of sexuality is not at issue" (1985: 97, my italics). Likewise, for Luce Irigaray,

The exchanges upon which patriarchal societies are based take place exclusively among men. Women, signs, commodities, and currency always pass from one man to another; if it were otherwise, we are told, the social order would fall back upon incestuous and exclusively endogamous ties that would paralyze all commerce. (1998: 574)

In this sense, there are some striking coincidences between *Measure for Measure* and the subplot in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607), a domestic tragedy by Thomas Heywood.¹⁷ Both Claudio, another version of masculine frailty, and Sir Charles Mountford in *A Woman*

¹⁷ Rebeca A. Bach thinks that in Thomas Heywood "the ideal of male kinship destroys the woman in what looks like the modern heterosexual couple in order to preserve the homosocial links that configure the early modern English domestic sphere" (1998: 515). Homosocial must be here understood as Eve Sedgwick defines it: "a word occasionally used in history and the social sciences, where it describes social bonds between persons of the same sex; it is a neologism, obviously formed by analogy with 'homosexual,' and just as obviously meant to be distinguished from 'homosexual'" (1985: 1). Up to a point, Shakespeare's play with Isabella in the Duke's hands confirms homosociability.

Killed with Kindness resort to family in order to blackmail their sisters, and Isabella, like Susan, gives more importance to her virtue than to her life: "In such a one as, you consenting to't,/ Would bark your honour from that trunk you bear,/ And leave you naked" (3.1. 70-72). As Angelo admits, "Blood, thou art blood" (2.4. 15), and Lucio, one of the most attractive characters, stresses "the vice is of a great kindred;/ it is well allied; but it is impossible to extirp it quite,/ friar, till eating and drinking be put out." (3.2. 97-99).

Main characters in *Measure for Measure* inhabit a repressed world while secondary characters, such as Pompey and Overdone, enjoy unrestrained freedom. Passion exists in the world, and it is linked to folly or pleasure in Claudio's case. He epitomises an alternative point of view to Angelo's one, and his proposal to Isabella ("Nature dispenses with the deed so far/ That it becomes a virtue" [3.1. 132-133]) only provokes her fury and insults to him (3.1. 140-146). As the victim of sexual instincts punished by law, Claudio simply does not believe in justice: "Thus can the demi-god, Authority,/ Make us pay down for our offence by weight"(1.2. 112-113).¹⁸ No matter how much they are affirmed, deviant attitudes are never rewarded: excessive restraint proves negative for Isabella and Angelo, and Claudio is aware that excessive freedom has enslaved him. He is linked to sensuality and to Isabella's celebration of earthly issues and the physical world when she says that only earthly laws count: "'Tis set down so in heaven, but not in earth" (2.4. 50).¹⁹ Of course, this statement must be related to political corruption, a major subject in Shakespeare, which is also present to the point that the Duke hears how Lucio disrespectfully defines him as "A very superficial, ignorant, unweighing fellow" (3.2. 136).

4. The law and its fictions

Measure for Measure is basically about how to channel ambition when political, moral and sexual authority are related and males are not strong creatures. Leaving aside order, individuality must also be respected. The particular, the way *we* face *one* situation, is what really matters, and, for Knights, the merit of the play is

¹⁸ One interesting and refreshing reading of *Measure for Measure* would be to see the parallelisms with *Romeo and Juliet* (the names Claudio and Juliet are not a coincidence).

¹⁹ In Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, Susan emphasises that "Gold is but earth; thou earth enough shalt have/When thou hast once took measure of thy grave" (9. 18-19).

the continued reduction of abstract “questions” to terms of particular human motives and particular human consequences, and the more and more explicit recognition of complexities and contradictions that appear as soon as one leaves the realm of the formal and the abstract. (1942: 232-233)

At the same time, we cannot forget that Greenblatt points out in his influential “Invisible bullets” that “Shakespeare’s plays are centrally and repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder” (1985: 29), and, in *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth*, “authority is subjected to open, sustained and radical questioning before it is reaffirmed” (1985: 29). The Duke will have the task to face subversion and to solve problems by reconciling individual desire with morality. As I try to emphasise, in *Measure for Measure* men hypocritically play with women and eventually with themselves, and, when both are sexually and morally tested, they fail. Manipulation exists everywhere and constitutes the central ethical dimension of the play: “judge not, that ye be not judged.” The three main characters are disguised or appear representing a role. In the Duke’s case, he willingly adopts the character of a friar, through the *deus absconditus* device.²⁰ He perfectly knows Angelo’s frailty, but, despite his efforts, he will neither win nor become more reassured than before in his power. His agency is limited, and he will simply try to restore order. In fact, for David Thatcher, there is no testing in *Measure for Measure*: “the element of testing [...] is certainly no more important than the ‘testing’ which runs through other Shakespeare plays” (1995: 33).

The Duke confesses that Angelo is making “an assay of her [Isabella’s]/ virtue to practise his judgment” (3.1. 161-162) and believes that nature does not produce great souls (1.1. 32-35). The question is then why he carries on his experiment, and critics do not agree on this point. Friedman thinks that the Duke’s proceedings are motivated by economic interest, namely the desire to avoid the care and sustenance of illegitimate children, which falls to the responsibility of the state (2007: 3). However, it seems clear that he is simply unethical and wants to alleviate himself from blame: “And yet my nature never in the fight/ To do in slander” (1.3. 42-43). Laura Lunger Knoppers, for instance, maintains that the Duke chooses Angelo to avoid seeming a tyrant, and Angelo’s final

²⁰ In *The Winter’s Tale*, Polixenes visits Bohemia disguised, and, thanks to this, he discovers his son Florizel’s feelings towards Perdita (4.4).

confession “serves less to reform Angelo than to enhance the Duke’s own power as he keeps Angelo in the society, forgiven and humiliated” (1993: 467). On the other hand, Andrew Gurr supports the existence of a learning process in the Duke and Isabella since both gradually depart from the anti-sexual rigor of the absolute law at the outset (1997: 93), and this perfect symmetry is reflected in their clothes in the play. I would like to go deeper and stress that, aware of the fact that princes are vulnerable to calumnious remarks, the Duke also tries to reassert power through Isabella and finds some benefit at the end. More than a punishment, the novice turns out to be a proper companion for the Duke. After hearing Lucio and Escalo, the Duke complains on human nature and treason (4.1. 60-65), so, instead of supervising a farce, he ultimately witnesses how his own experiment disintegrates because in Vienna interest and seeming rule, and the law is not really respected: “But faults so countenanc’d that the strong statures/ Stand like the forfeits in a barber’s shop,/ As much in mock as mark” (5.1. 318-320). Nature and reality have imposed themselves over appearances, all men in *Measure for Measure* have a past or a skeleton in the cupboard and the Duke himself is not an exception. Far from being a saint, he likes pleasure; according to Lucio: “He had some feeling of the/ sport; he knew the service; and that instructed him/ to mercy” (3.2. 115-117) and introduces Mariana, whose dowry was lost, so Angelo abandoned her (3.2. 225-230). Likewise, Lucio has also had a relationship with Kate Keepdown, who remains invisible and voiceless in the play. If Lucio suggests at the beginning that Isabella should visit Angelo, it is because he is certainly afraid of the punishment of his own crime.

Patriarchy works from above in *Measure for Measure*: Angelo manipulates Isabella and in the same way the Duke manipulates both suggesting that Mariana should pass for Isabella. Perhaps everything in the play has been orchestrated from the beginning by the Duke, who wants to marry Isabella, and Shakespeare concludes the play omitting Isabella’s answer, which could be a negative one.²¹ For Leavis, the Duke can be seen as the major victim of the

²¹ Laura Lunger Knoppers insists that shame affects all characters in *Measure for Measure* and that, in several ways, Isabella’s language pictures her like a prostitute (1993: 464-5). At the end, “Isabella’s silence blocks closure in the ending of *Measure for Measure* and exposes the play’s complicity in the (en)genderings of shame it professes to interrogate” (1993: 471). However, Michael Friedman gives evidence of “a growing romantic attachment to Isabella on the Duke’s part” (1995: 15). For him, she is attracted to the Duke and erotic charge brings them closer (1995: 16).

experiment: "He was placed in a position calculated to actualize his worst potentialities; and Shakespeare's moral certainly isn't that those potentialities are exceptional" (1942: 246). Authority is then only affirmed when it is accompanied by morality, which some characters really lack. The Duke regards laws as necessary as bridles are for horses: "The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds" (1.4. 20), and he comes to understand, and to admit, that even monarchs and virtues are limited: "What king so strong/ Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?" (3.2. 181-182).

Appearances help in *Measure for Measure*, but truth cannot be hidden. It seems as if Isabella's discourses to Angelo (see 2.2. 59-66 and 108-110 above) were universal and directly addressed to the Duke. In fact, they do have an effect on him, following Irigaray's views of woman as a mimic, "a woman playing out her culturally assigned role in order to expose the operative structures by which women are marginalized" (1985: 76). The repressed linked to the feminine has been finally somewhat affirmed because Isabella's words have revealed patriarchal appearances and the Duke applies her philosophy to himself, realising that we cannot condemn faults we can also commit (3.2. 254-261). He has found a mirror to see his own image reflected, and eventually another truth is confirmed: the fallibility and frailty of human behaviour.

5. Conclusion

In the introduction to *The Woman's Part*, Swift Lenz, Greene and Neely state that we will never know what Shakespeare's ideas on the war of the sexes were (1980: 9-10). This contribution simply represents an alternative to more ambitious, exclusive and idealistic approaches to Shakespeare, and it has analysed male and female characters' dilemmas in the play by adding different dimensions and considering previous approaches. We have seen how female figures are interesting not for their actions, continually monitored by men, but for their defiant words and the consequences they have on the representatives of authority, who are questioned all the time. Women's voices and silences reveal much, and, though females inhabit a restricted world, they manage to relate authority to mercy, functioning as prosecutors against deceitful patriarchy and the traditional separation of sexual spheres. However, nobody definitely wins, and the play is characterised by permanent instability and ideological tension. In fact, the values espoused by women are duplicitous because they originated in the distorted projections and

repression of patriarchy and are conditioned by it. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that power helps men to satisfy their lust, but they cannot repress their sexual desire. Perhaps Shakespeare's work remains most valuable for its realistic portrayal of human motivations, and, although patriarchy ultimately restores order, we cannot forget the intricate means chosen by each sex to impose their views and to expose unethical behaviour.

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“Masking players, painted sepulchers and double dealing ambidexters” on duty: anti-theatricalist tracts on audience involvement and the transformative power of plays¹

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ABSTRACT

The paper scrutinizes anti-theatrical texts from the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century England. It focuses on a specific critique of theatre, the type of corruption that is connected to the plays' ambiguous ontological status, their mixing the reality of the audience with the fiction of the play. It points out that plays were seen as having a transformative power, corrupting the reality both of actors and of audiences. This can be explained by the actions of traditional figures of audience involvement, frequently belonging to the family of the Vice, which includes stage fools as well. The two figures are shown to be mentioned frequently together in contemporary texts, as synonyms of each other and as examples of the corruptness of theatre. The paper argues that fools and Vices are singled out in the examined texts because they epitomise not only the possibility of improvising within theatre, but also a specific *double* representational logic of theatre, where figures are parts both of the play's fictional world and the festive occasion of a play, i.e. the audience's reality. In a coda to the paper an example is put forward in order to illustrate that Shakespeare critics with structuralist and post-structuralist background are condemned for a similar reason as the theatre featuring Vices and fools: for mixing reality and fiction.

KEYWORDS: Tudor theatre, anti-theatrical debate, audience involvement, vice, fool

In the present paper I propose a double argument. The primary and major part focuses on audience-involvement in theatre and the transformative power of plays from the perspective of anti-theatricalist's tracts, while the closing section, the coda highlights a related issue of contemporary Shakespeare criticism. I hope that

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these two seemingly diverse topics will gain from each other's proximity, since the question whether mixing reality and fiction can be understood as playful and creative, or rather as irresponsible and corrupt, is central to both.

The fascination with theatre in Elizabethan and Jacobean England was accompanied by opinions that were immensely enthusiastic in opposing theatre in general as an institution, as well as everything connected to it: authors, plays, actors and audiences. In their attacks, writes of anti-theatrical pamphlets were drawing on pagan and biblical sources alike, and paraded a colourful spectrum of arguments, which included such diverse items as actors being parasites of society "living of the sweat of other men's brows," spreading subversive practices; in Munday's words "discourses to counterfeit witchcraft, charmed drinks, and amorous potions, thereby to draw the affection of men, and to stir them up unto lust" (Munday in Pollard 2004: 77). Among the most prominently featuring accusations we find the ones that identify acting with hypocrisy and counterfeiting, regard plays as fictitious lies or consider them as corrupt for mixing divine and profane matter, "scurrillity with divinity" (Stubbes in Pollard 2004: 118), or interlace God's words "with unclean and whorish speeches" (Munday in Pollard 2004: 78).

But plays were considered to have a notoriously corruptive influence on their audience not only for mixing "honey and gall," or "scurrillity and divinity." In the first part of my paper I would like to address the critique of anti-theatricalist writers concerning an issue that is also connected to the blurring of strict boundaries, but it applies more strictly to issues of dramatic representation and the boundaries between the world of theatrical fiction vis-a-vis the reality of the audience. The charge of puritans against plays was founded on a vision where plays are mixing not only honey and gall, or divine and profane matter, but quite importantly, reality and fiction as well. In other words the ontological status of actions, characters, locations etc. represented in plays seemed highly questionable. A crucial problem, as we learn from various tracts, is that contrary to other corrupting and dangerous practices, plays hurt the simple gazer. This issue is vividly elaborated by Munday, who claims that "all other evils pollute the doers only, not the beholders or the hearers [...] Only the filthiness of plays and spectacles is such

that maketh both the actors and beholders guilty alike" (Munday in Pollard 2004: 66).²

Implicit in Munday's harsh critique of plays there is an understanding of theatre which has as exceptional influence on its audience, since onlookers cannot refrain themselves from being involved in the appalling crime generated by actors on stage. This corrupting force is such that it does not allow the idea of a chaste onlooker, who condemns what he sees in theatre: merely being present is enough for damnation. If it is indeed "notorious lies," lacking any reality that are presented on stage, or, as Munday has it, "feigning countries never heard of; monsters and prodigious creatures that are not" (Munday in Pollard 2004: 78), why cannot members of the audience delimit themselves from this fictitious world? And most importantly: where does the corrupting power of plays come from?

As mentioned above, the objections raised against the theatre in England at the time when the boom of institutionalised, professional theatre took off were rooted deeply in the long-established anti-theatrical tradition and were reiterations of charges that had been present in anti-theatrical texts since the time of Antiquity. Nonetheless, this moment in theatre history was peculiar enough for several reasons, and thus it is interesting to look at the context in which the objections of the opponents of theatre were raised. I suggest that the ontological status of theatre became ambiguously obscure due to the dynamic change, or development of theatrical practices in the period on the one hand, and a subsequent waning of established traditional contexts on the other. This resulted in a heightened anxiety concerning the overall effect of a theatrical play. In general, under waning traditions I think of popular festivities and moral interludes – where the ritualistic function of theatre is clearly detectable.³ Traditional figures of involvement belonging specifically to the family of a figure known from popular festivities and moral interludes, the Vice constitute my particular focus within this heritage.⁴

² Gosson, however, does give parallel examples: "The shadow of a knave hurts an honest man; the scent of the stews, a sober matron; and the show of theatres, a simple gazer" (Gosson in Pollard 2004: 23).

³ On the influence of Christian and pagan rituals on Shakespeare's theatre see Laroque (1991).

⁴ Critics usually agree that the Vice has a double function, both as a chief game maker/entertainer, as well as the corrupter in the play. One of the problems of

Returning to the question of the objections against theatre and the problem of mixing reality with fiction, the key word to the problem is the audience's *participation* in the events that are happening on stage, which anti-theatricalist writers seem to acknowledge indirectly by attaching such a notorious transformative power to plays. I call it transformative, since by involving the audience in the world of the play, the play's fictitious reality *overwrites* the reality of the audience, eats it away. Similarly, the way to dress into female clothes by male actors, "to act those womanish, whorish parts" is the same as to *metamorphose* the noble sex according to William Prynne, the author of *Histrionmastix*, the work that may be considered as the culmination of the anti-theatricalist debate. Plays, it seems, indeed were understood as having the power of invading reality. Prynne goes as far as to claim that actors thus "*uncreate*" themselves "offering a kind of violence to God's own work":

Is this a light, a despicable effeminacy, for men, for Christians, thus to adulterate, emasculate, metamorphose, and debase their noble sex? Thus purposely, yea, affectedly, to unhuman, unchristian, uncreate themselves, if I may so speak, and to make themselves, as it were, neither men nor women, but monsters (a sin as bad, nay worse than any adultery offering a kind of violence to God's own work). (Prynne in Pollard 2004: 291)

definition is caused by the fact that naming a character a "Vice" in a play became customary only in the second half of the sixteenth century, however, there are figures which carry out a similar function but are not named "Vices" in earlier drama – a well known example would be Mischief from *Mankind*, from a century earlier. There is a debate about the most important characteristics of the figure, whether his comedy is condemnable (either from a moral or an aesthetic point of view) or, quite importantly, whether he typically supports or subverts the morality pattern. The latter opinion is held by Weimann (1978), while the former by Spivack (1958) and Dessen (1986). The difference in opinions is partly but not entirely based on the elusive corpus of plays. The other problem arises from the fact that there are references to non-dramatic vices as well, e.g. by Mares (1958-59) or Welsford (1935). It is a question to what extent these should be treated together with their dramatic cousins. Regarding the fact that folk and religious rituals were crucial sources of professional theatre and considering the game-maker quality of dramatic Vices, I see a strong reason to keep in mind this connection. On the other hand allegorical characters standing for moral corruptness, playing vices opposing virtues in moral interludes (where "vice" means merely sin) cannot always be connected to clowns or fools, but some of them qualify as Vices having the necessary game-maker quality. For a valuable and helpful guide, a list of Vices (including forerunners and later developments) as well as an annotated bibliography of secondary literature on the figure see Happé (1979).

In this sense the corruption caused by plays displays itself on multiple levels: the play's fiction attacks reality, while the roles played attack the identity of the actors.⁵ Still, all this would not be so notorious, were it not for the contagious effect. It is not only actors who become sinners when "uncreating" themselves and reality while performing plays: the corruption taints mere onlookers as well. I have no knowledge of anyone having pointed out so far a fact that in this context becomes surprisingly telling and revelatory, namely, that characters belonging to the family of Vices that traditionally carried the role of audience involvement in plays are precisely the ones that are used in anti-theatricalist tracts to epitomize the profession of acting and the inherent corruptness of playing in theatre as a whole.⁶ Thus we should not be surprised to see that the terms "vice" or "fool" are used as synonyms for actors. "Playing the vice", among the lengthy examples in the following quotation from Stubbes's *Anatomy of Abuses*, refers to acting:

If you will learn falshood; if you will learn cozenage; if you will learn to deceive; if you will learn to play the hypocrite, to cog, to lie, and falsify; if you will learn to jest, laugh and fleer, to grin, to nod, and mow; if you will learn to play the vice, to swear, tear, and blaspheme both heaven and earth... [etc., etc.] and commit all kind of sin and mischief, you need to go to no other school, for all these good examples may you see painted before your eyes in interludes and plays. (Stubbes in Pollard 2004: 121-2)

⁵ Concentrating on metadramatic devices in drama, Richard Hornby also draws a similar parallel between the ways plays attack via the play-within-the-play and role-within-the-role: "Just as using a play within the play raises existential questions, so too does using a role within the role raise questions of human identity" (Hornby 1986: 68).

⁶ Tools of audience involvement include addressing the audience directly, commenting on the play's actions as if from outside the playworld, or engaging with members of the audience in other ways. Examples for this last type include moments such as the one where vices in *Mankind* collect money from the audience for the show before the devil enters the stage: "Now, ghostly to our purpose, worshipful sovereigns,/ We intend to gather money , if it please your negligence,/ For a man with a head that is of great omnipotence" (ll. 459-461); another example from the same play is when the vices invite the audience to sing a scatological song with them (ll. 326-327), or the beginning of *Like Will to Like* when Nicholl Newfangle the Vice enters the stage at the beginning of the play "laughing, and hath a knave of clubs in his hand, which as soon as he speaketh he offreth unto one of the men or boyes standing by," and his first line, accompanying this jesture, is "Ha, ha, ha, ha, now like unto like: it wil be none other" (l. 37). This is a gesture with which he identifies himself with the principal game-maker or master of the game, offering an interpretation of the play's title, and pointing to the fact that the audience is participating in his play.

Note that “to play” is added in case of stock dramatic figures, the vice and the hypocrite, with which the meaning “to act” is stressed in the list of the activities practices by players, such as jesting, laughing and fleering. “Playing the vice” for Stubbes stands as an example for sinning through acting, and most probably he has in mind the allegorical stock character of the Vice with his characteristic dramatic function on stage, who, in some respect, is similar to the hypocrite and the glutton – both of them are also “played”, according to Stubbes.

Another example might be cited from the same source where actors are identified with “ambidexters”. “Beware, therefore, you masking players, you painted sepulchres, you double dealing ambidexters” (Stubbes in Pollard 2004: 118). Ambidexter is the name of the Vice in two extant interludes: in Thomas Preston’s *Cambises* (1558-69) and in G. Gascogne’s *Glass of Government* (1575). Stubbes thus uses the word ambidexter as a synonym for players, through which vices are equated with actors, and actors are condemned for being similar to dramatic Vices. We should also note that the former Ambidexter, together with his brethren, i.e Vices from other plays, such as Heywood’s Merry Report from *The Play of the Weather* by their role in the play stand for the possibility of various social roles. As Axton and Happé state on the Vices of Heywood, “they are playmakers and go-betweeners, not fixed in any social ‘estate’, but able to mimic any” (Axton and Happé 1991: 13). Prynne is grieving in the above quoted *Histrionomastix* over the unfortunate fact that “witty, comely youths” devote themselves to the stage, “where they are trained in the School of Vice, the play-house” (Prynne in Pollard 2004: 291). Regarding the centrality of Vices as characters in plays for a long time in the second half of the sixteenth century, “Vice” here again most probably refers both to moral corruption and the character embodying it. However, not only Vices can turn out to epitomise actors but fools as well. As Enid Welsford notes, “supposed early references to fools prove to be references to ‘histriones’, ‘buffoni’, ‘joculatores’ and other vague terms for actors and entertainers” (Welsford 1935: 114). When elaborating upon the faults of actors, Stubbes says the following: “For who will call him a wise man that playeth the part of a fool and a vice?” (Stubbes in Pollard 2004: 122). The two roles – in several respects similar, frequently impossible to distinguish – that are singled out and are thus presented as particularly corrupt and thus condemnable, are again the roles of the fool and the vice, because they may stand for

the idea of play in general and encapsulate role playing better than any other role. An important addition to this understanding is the fact that in many moralities the Vice was played by the leading actor of the troupe, and the role, as Bevington points out, "receives typographical prominence" on the cast list. The figure dominated the stage with his central role – central also in the sense that it did not allow doubling, or perhaps only of minor parts (cf. Bevington 1962: 80-81). The function this figure plays in involving the audience in the play is highlighted by instances when these parts, namely the roles doubled by the actor playing the Vice were the ones of the prologue and/or the epilogue, in other words, when the actor playing the Vice was the one to introduce the play, e.g. in the case of *Three Laws* from 1538 or *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* from 1576. Frequently it is the Vice himself who gives a summary of the moral doctrine of the play (cf. Happé 1981: 28). The roles of the leader of the troupe playing the prologue, the epilogue and the Vice curiously merge with his actual function as director, when addressing the audience directly and acting as a mediator between the world of the play and the audience's reality. In this sense the man "that playeth the part of a fool and a vice" is the spirit of playing, the actor *per se*. Parenthetically we might recall the frequently quoted lines of King Lear's Fool in act 1 scene 4, when the Fool suggests that Lear was a bitter fool to give away his land. Hearing this, the king cries out of indignation, "Dost thou call me a fool, boy?" upon which the Fool answers, "All thy other titles thou hast given away, that thou/ wast born with," suggesting that being a fool is an inalienable characteristic of all humans, a "title" deeper than our changeable social positions and statuses, more fundamental than the roles we take up. In other words, being a fool is the possibility of playing in the sense of taking up a mask, a position in society.⁷

Although scattered, I find the quoted examples of anti-theatrical tracts sufficiently coherent to suggest that the puritan attack on theatre targets and finds demoralizing not just *any* type of theatre and representation, but specifically one which features these allegedly immoral figures who not only epitomize playing, but typically act as figures of involvement as well, and corrupt the

⁷ Mares discusses the etymology of the name "Vice" and suggests that it derives from "vis" meaning a mask. He also talks about "the face-blackening habits of the Vice and the folk fool, and is supported by a line in *Magnificence*. Folly, who wear's the fool's dress, twits Crafty Conveyance: '[...] thou can play the fole without a vyser'" (Mares 1958-59: 29).

onlookers by invading their reality by fantastically metamorphosing it. The techniques of involving the audience may be traced back ultimately to the ritualistic roots of the discussed figure, also known from popular festivities (cf. Mares 1958-59: 11-23). In such a setting the role and the actor playing it is not so clearly set apart: the person playing the Vice or a Fool "is" to some extent the Vice or the Fool of the community, the person who is a responsible master of ceremonies – a function parallel to the one of the leading actor and director of a professional troupe. There is an inherent duality in this function. In the dramatic context a Vice is applying something that may be called a double representational logic: by taking part in the illusory world of fiction and being one of the characters in the world of the play on the one hand, as well as participating in the theatrical reality of the audience, by being the principal game maker, the master of ceremonies and the chief perpetrator of the plot on the other.

The two sides of the mentioned double representational logic are described by Robert Weimann (1999: 425), who claims that both were characteristic of the Renaissance stage. He borrows the notions of Jean Alter to describe the inherent duality of codes, and distinguishes the two different types of sign and behaviour on stage as follows: one is a performative statement ("I am acting") and the other is a representational code ("I am not acting" – "I am another person"). Weimann explains that "as opposed to the modern proscenium stage, where a representational mode strongly predominated, the Elizabethan stage tended to project both these codes in intriguing patterns of entanglements." I suggest that it is through the parallel application of these codes – frequently via Vice-characters and fools – that a metadramatic effect is achieved, yielding the type of audience involvement that is regarded as abhorrent by the opposers of theatre. The perplexity around the representational logic of a dramatic figure of involvement, as well as the anxiety around morally dubious or condemnable characters addressing the audience is reflected on in an intriguing article on the "presenter" or prologue in sixteenth century plays by Michelle Butler (2004). She points out that the prologue in the sixteenth century combines two broad influences: a special character from medieval drama, who comments upon the actions, but is also part of the play, and the prologue from classical drama, the influence of Terence and Plautus, and specifically Donatus's fourth century description of what comedy should be (the first of the four parts to

be included is the prologue). Under the influence of medieval drama, the prologue as speech becomes the Prologue as a recognizable character delivering the speech. As we learn from the article, while “medieval presenters were conceived and spoken of as members of the troupe, their sixteenth century counterparts were ambivalently positioned as one of the actors, separate from them, or both” (Butler 2004: 99). I see that it is the complexity of the presenter’s fictional status, his double representational logic which surfaces in this ambiguity. As Butler points out, John Bale, eager to control the message and present the Protestant concerns of his plays clearly, radically minimizes the use of direct address of the audience by evil characters. In other words, Bale tries to make sure that the involvement of the audience into the play is channelled properly through Baleus Prolocutor the prologue as well as the lack of ambiguous direct address. Thus Bale is taking away that aspect of playing and acting that uncontrollably mingles reality and fiction, and corrupts the audience in a type of theatre that later becomes associated with the vice by anti-theatricalists.⁸

Another problem with the type of theatre where the corruptness of players and the institution hosting them may be exemplified with vices and fools is the fact that the action of these figures involves *extemporising*. Actors improvising in a play, even by their mere presence on stage thematize the slippery boundary between the illusion of the play and the reality of its context. Looking at the effect and implications of improvisation, the hallmark of fools and vices, it is not so difficult to see why this type of playing seemed so threatening in the eyes of anti-theatricalists. The hypocrisy attached to the fictional representation in theatre is turned inside out by improvisation: there cannot be anything hypocritical in such a presentation, since it is not repeating or duplicating anything, so it cannot falsify any original play. The anxiety around extemporising is the same anxiety that roots in the interpretation of playwrights who create false universes and place themselves “in blasphemous rivalry with [their] own maker” (Barish 1981: 93). Vices and fools may be

⁸ However, Butler does not take into consideration the fact that doubling complicates this scheme – and as a matter of fact, neither does Bale. It is true that Bale confidently personifies the corruptness of the Catholic Church through the Vices in *Three Laws*, but the problem is created with the same actor playing the prologue and playing Infidelity, the Vice. The audience would have had no problems noticing once Baleus “changed” from being the Prolocutor to being the Vice, but for reasons discussed above, the roles of the Vice and the Prologue often cannot be clearly separated.

understood as epitomes not only of players but of playwrights as well, since characters improvising on stage become creators, not representing any meaning that has been assigned and set in advance; they present something created at that moment, take the presence of the actual audience into account and play potential “blasphemous rivals” eventually to authors of the play, but from the anti-theatricalists’ point of view most significantly, to the creator himself.⁹

We can conclude that the type of theatre that is condemned by the anti-theatricalist writers quoted above (among others, for the reason of mingling fiction and reality and extemporising, and consequently corrupting the reality of the audience) is the one where actors are identified with figures of involvement. Theatre is rejected as the School of Vice not simply because theatre is evil, not simply because hypocrisy is located at the root of theatre and the chief hypocrite is the Vice (both in the sense of being an actor and in the sense that he deceives characters of the play and eventually the audience as well), but also because such figures of involvement embody a mode of representation that is impossible to pinpoint, let alone control its dramatic meaning. It is clearly this particular type of playing that is condemned by Munday when, at one point summarising his argument he says the following: “Such doubtless is mine opinion of common plays, usual jesting, and rhyming *ex tempore*, that in a Christian weal they are not sufferable” (Munday in Pollard 2004: 68). It is no accident either that Ben Jonson laments in the preface to *Volpone* over “fools and devils and those antique relics of barbarism retrieved,” and, in the face of the old one is clearly favouring an emergent new type of plays, where representation is not problematised either by extemporising, or by other metadramatic practices of these “antique relics” (Jonson in Pollard 2004: 202). The naiveté of the anti-theatricalists of seeming incapable

⁹ Curiously enough, extemporizing is condemned together with the theatre in which it appears, still, as a unique device that takes into consideration the given context, and thus is spontaneous and depends on the actual circumstances, extemporizing shows remarkable similarities with the Puritan’s idea of genuine worship. Their critique of liturgy was based exactly on the falsehood of expression in solidified rituals. Barish has an illuminating description of the Puritan understanding of worship: “To reduce it to set forms, to freeze it in ritual repetitions of word or gesture, to commit it to memory, to make it serve a variety of occasions or a diversity of worshippers, was to make the individual a mimic of sentiments not exactly, or not entirely, his own, to introduce a fatal discrepancy between the established gesture and the nuances of feelings” (Barish 1981: 95).

of distinguishing characters from actors, looks ridiculous only if we disregard the special representational logic of the contemporary stage. The curious status of the company clown is nicely illustrated in a stage direction found in the second quarto text of *Romeo and Juliet*. The direction says, "Enter Will Kemp." David Wiles explains that this line provides an example of "how Shakespeare's mind could not separate the actor from the role [...]. The scene anticipates Kemp's appearance with the musicians after the play is over, when he will return to sing and dance his jig" (Wiles 1987: 88).

In the concluding part, or rather the coda of my argument I would like to refer to Brian Vickers's *Appropriating Shakespeare* (1993), more specifically the part in which he criticises critics who read Shakespeare with structuralist and poststructuralist assumptions, relying on what he calls "the iconoclastic movement of the mid 1960s." For the present purpose I am referring to his text because he makes surprisingly similar charges against the condemned critics as the ones we find in anti-theatricalist tracts, namely for creating a confusion by mixing fiction and fact, real and imaginary. This is what he says:

Only magicians and frustrated Derrideans believe that language could 'literally deliver' an idea or state, as if it could arise from off this page and we could enter into it. Such a confusion between the actual and the represented is amusing when we find characters in films (Buster Keaton's *Spite Marriage*, or Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*) who can walk into and out of the screen. But such a confusion coming from professional philosophers and literary critics, and then being used to discredit language and literature, is absurd and debilitating. (Vickers 1993: 134)

This example is the more interesting for me since characters walking into and out of the screen in a Keaton or an Allen movie are easily identified as twentieth-century descendants of the figures of involvement on the medieval stage, as well as their Elizabethan successors, who were lingering between locus and platea, being present both in the imaginary world of the play, but also being capable of stepping off the stage, and reflecting on the reality of the performance, while at the same time tingeing the reality of the audience with the colour of fiction. At this point I have to agree with Stubbes, Prynne or Munday in the sense that the metadramatic techniques of Renaissance drama did aim at making the audience reflect on the potential parallel between what they perceived as their

real world and what they perceived as theatre, even in an “all the world is a stage” manner. This is what the puritan writers condemned as a notorious contamination of the reality of the audience’s presence in a theatre (and by extension corruption of the reality of the audience’s everyday being) by the play’s fiction. As for this last quotation, it is perhaps equally tempting as it is futile to boil down the difference between the stance of Brian Vickers and critics he agrees with on the one hand and critics he tries to discredit on the other, to the difference between puritan opponents and practitioners or supporters of theatre. While I definitely agree with him when he is suggesting (via quoting Said) that one important function of criticism is to work against dogmatic theories and the calcification of ideas (Vickers 1991: 440-441), I feel that the quotation displays a familiar urge to guard the borderline between the actual and the fictional, warding off the potentially corrupting element of play from serious territory, in which the former is understood to question the latter, “eating away” its solidity – the way theatre was eating away reality in the opinion of the Puritans.

If we accept the assumption that figures of involvement, such as the vice or a fool belong to the archetypal family of the trickster, we know that an apparent playful questioning of the basic tenets of a society is one of their main roles. With their play they reflect on and put on trial the basic assumptions of the community formed by the participants of the event, actors and audience alike. They might either reinforce or challenge them, based on the stability of these assumptions, but they certainly keep them alive in a cultural discourse.¹⁰ With such playing and engaging their audience they exhibit an important negotiation of cultural practices, similarly to the

¹⁰ On the discussion of Elizabethan drama, or more precisely tragedy and its function within a dynamic epistemological frame as a determining cultural discourse see Reiss (1980: 2). The background of the Vice’s double function as dramatic and extradramatic may serve as good background for Reiss’s distinction between two kinds of tragedy during the Renaissance: the dialectical and the analytical. The former is the one that “seeks to draw the spectator almost physically into action, to cause the condition of his life to be fused momentarily with what is carried out not so much in front of him as with his participation.” This, he says, is represented by Shakespeare, Alexander Hardy, and Lope de Vega. In their tragedies there is “a play of theatrical elements, of interference of several semiotic systems.” The other, analytical type of theatre has no such semiotic interference, and is the one where the spectator is not drawn directly into the action, the conditions of his life do not mingle with the action going on on stage, the spectator is “involved” in the action to the extent that he may identify with the dramatic situation or a character (see Reiss 1980: 4).

function of the type of theatre in which they appear. We can perhaps see that apart from their being funny, actors stepping off the screen in movies as well as characters with extradramatic licence in plays grasp something essential about our being human, which Jonas Barish in his already quoted, truly admirable book calls the “intrinsic theatricality of our being” (Barish 1981: 476).

In Victor Turner’s terminology the practices I am talking about might be called liminal, or liminoid – depending on whether they work from challenging social practices towards reintegration or not – the former is characteristic of preindustrial-revolution societies, while the latter of postindustrial ones (cf. Turner 1974b: 53-92). Turner describes the function of the liminal the following way:

Just as when tribesmen make masks, disguise themselves as monsters, heap up disparate ritual symbols, invert or parody profane reality in myths and folk-tales, so do the genres of industrial leisure, the theater, poetry, novel, ballet, film, sport, rock music, classical music, art, pop art and so on, play with the factors of culture, sometimes assembling them in random, grotesque, improbable, surprising, shocking, usually experimental combinations (Turner 1974b: 71-72)

Having seen the parallel between the critique against theatre and against criticism based on their alleged “fictionalizing” reality, it is particularly interesting to note that in Turner’s view both theatre, or art in general, as well as academia are liminoid institutions,¹¹ thus the parallel established between Keaton and Allen and their sixteenth century ancestors as artists and tricksters, may in this regard be expanded to academics as well. We may ask ourselves a question concerning the seriousness and playfulness of the theoretical attitude we pursue in our academic explorations. The question is furthered by the possibility of understanding that discussing such issues also relies on the rules of the game, and these rules, as much sever as they are, are negotiable; dominant paradigms may be questioned, or even replaced, as if one would step out of one play into another.

¹¹ “In the evolution of man’s symbolic ‘cultural’ action, we must seek those processes which correspond to open-endedness in biological evolution. I think we have found them in those liminal, or “liminoid” (postindustrial-revolution), forms of symbolic action, those genres of free-time activity, in which all previous standards and models are subjected to criticism, and fresh new ways of describing and interpreting sociocultural experience are formulated. The first of these forms are expressed in philosophy and science, the second in art and religion” (Turner 1974a: 15).

Finally, as a reminder of times when playing in theatre was far from being regarded as mere play, or in other words, when theatre was subject of serious concern, at the same time playing was not excluded from serious subjects. To illustrate this other side of the coin, let me quote Huizinga on the play-element in contemporary civilization: "modern science, so long as it adheres to the strict demands of accuracy and veracity, is far less liable to play [...] than was the case in earlier times and right up to the Renaissance, when scientific thought and method showed unmistakable play-characteristics" (Huizinga 1972: 204).

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Stefan Zweig's *Volpone, eine lieblose Komödie*: a reassessment¹

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ABSTRACT

Stefan Zweig's influential adaptation of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* has given rise to a significant number of journal articles and reviews that have highlighted its most outstanding features. The new version's improved structure and its amiable tone have been repeatedly noted as Zweig's most prominent achievements. A thorough analysis of his adaptation, however, often provides evidence to the contrary and suggests reappraisal of these previous conclusions may be advisable.

KEYWORDS: Stefan Zweig, *Volpone*, Ben Jonson, critical reassessment

1. Introduction

Stefan Zweig's (1926) dramatic version of *Volpone* in German was met with an enthusiastic reception both in Europe and in the United States. His free version was first staged in Vienna on November 6th, 1926,² followed shortly after by numerous performances both in Germany and Switzerland. Zweig's version, in short, proved so successful that it was soon translated into different languages and, during the 1920s, it was staged all over Europe and even in New York.³ In a letter⁴ addressed to Jules Romains, the French translator of his free version, Zweig drew attention to this fact. He said:

Vous avez dû rencontrer partout en Allemagne et en Autriche mon *Volpone* sur la scène. C'est devenu un très gros succès [...] On montera

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² It was premièreed at its National Theatre, der Wiener Burgtheater.

³ It was successfully premièreed at the Guild Theater on 9 April 1928.

⁴ Letter written in Salzburg on 10 January 1927. Quoted by Rony (1993:334).

ma pièce maintenant à Leningrad et en Italie et en Hollande ... on aurait en France aussi un gros succès.⁵

The fact that Stefan Zweig was a Jew led to the play's banishment from all German and Austrian cities under the Nazi régime, and it was not performed again in Germany or Austria until 1947. His theatrical version, however, succeeded in drawing the interest of translators and stage directors alike, so that a translation into Norwegian (Bronken) was made in 1965 and a Danish translation (Albrechtsen) was completed as late as 1977.

The influential nature of this version has resulted in its mention in a great number of journal articles and reviews. These have centred on the transformations Zweig made to the original and specific performances of this new version. Critics have discussed the play's structure, characters, thematic concerns and mood. They have often noted its modern qualities, and, more specifically, its quick tempo, the absence of superfluous scenes and characters. Most significantly, they address the switch in principal character from Volpone to Mosca. This, according to most of them, provides the play with a sunnier dénouement, where strict punishment gives way to generous reconciliation. A thorough review of this scholarship,⁶ however, often reveals a partial reading of the text, in which specific passages are considered in isolation although later taken as representative of the whole work. This is often the case with the ending of the play, which can lead critics to forget the true nature of Mosca. Many critics tend to draw rash conclusions about the improvement of Zweig's version on Jonson's original script, so that they often point to the more refined and amiable tone of Zweig, and, where they spot traces of condemnable roughness, they repeatedly try to justify them as an attempt on Zweig's part to provide his text with an Elizabethan atmosphere. It is the aim of this paper to qualify many of these assertions by setting both texts in due contrast.

⁵ Trans. [You must have come across my *Volpone* in a large number of German and Austrian theatres. It has become a great success [...] My play is about to be performed in Leningrad as well as Italy and Holland [...] This piece would no doubt prove as highly successful in France as it has been elsewhere.] Zweig was right in anticipating the positive reception of Romain's free version (1928), which was staged at the Atelier, Paris, on 23 November 1928 and run for over 250 nights after its première.

⁶ Cf. Richter (1927), McPherson (1973), Forsyth (1981), Daviau (1983), Macris (1983), as well as reviews by Fontana (1926), Jacobson (1926) and Wolff (1926), among others.

2. From Ben Jonson to Stefan Zweig

Stefan Zweig (1926) introduced substantial changes into Ben Jonson's text that affected not only its dramatic structure but also the portrayal of its characters and the overall atmosphere of the play. Even though he followed Jonson's general outline, he changed the dénouement of the original play and modified the attitudes, and even the names, of some characters. Finally, he cut a number of scenes that were originally found in Jonson's play (Herford and Simpson 1925-1952).

With regard to the similarities between the plots, it is worth stressing that Zweig's *Volpone*, like Jonson's, feigns approaching his own death. This is to attract covetous birds of prey who, with Mosca's help, offer him rich presents in the hope of becoming his heirs. In both works, these valuable presents include Corvino's own wife and Corbaccio's inheritance which legally belongs to his only child. Ben Jonson's innocent victims, Celia and Bonario, are transformed by Zweig into Colomba and Leone, whose symbolic names represent their main features. Colomba behaves like a tame dove, whereas Leone boastingly roars like a *miles gloriosus* and succeeds in frightening Volpone into disappearing from the stage.

The overall tone of the play is substantially modified since, although avarice maintains a privileged position in Zweig's version and presides over the actions of Corvino, Corbaccio and Voltore, it is second in importance to the portrayal of Volpone's pathological sadism, a feature that is nowhere to be found in Jonson's play. Jonson's Volpone, unlike Zweig's, is motivated by the pleasure he derives from his cunning practices:⁷

... I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Than in the glad possession; since I gain
No common way (l.i. 30-33)

Zweig's Volpone, however, is moved by the pleasure he takes in torturing others and anticipating their painful reactions. Thus, when he imagines the stunning discovery of the greedy gang finding out

⁷ Some critics, however, thought that this Jonsonian quality was characteristic of Zweig's Volpone. Stoesst, for example, said: "[Volpone] macht aus seinem Betrug zugleich sein Hauptvergnügen" (9 November 1926) [Volpone takes his greatest delight in deceiving other characters]. And, surprisingly enough, he declared that Zweig's close dependence on Jonson's original text was responsible for its dark tone.

that their names have not been put in Volpone's testament, he exclaims: "Ach, ich will euch kälbern! [...] wird rasch wieder rote Bäckchen kriegen, der kranke Volpone, wird immer gesünder werden, bis ihr selber die Kränke kriegt vor Habsucht und Galle kotzt" (1926:29)⁸. He continues to say:

Zertreten will ich das Gewürm, sie sollen sich so vor Bosheit krümmen, wie ich mich vor Lachen [...] Jetzt ist das Folterinstrument bereit, aber mach' gute Musik darauf, hörst du: nicht zu rasch, nicht zu hitzig, ich will's sehen, wie sie mit der Zunge schmatzen, wie ihre Fratzen sich allmählich auseinanderschieben, ehe ihnen der Hammer auf den Schädel fällt [...] Ich will sie erst grinsen sehen und Vergnügen glucksen über meiner Leiche, ich will sie zittern sehen und zappeln mit der Angel im Maul und ungeduldig werden nach dem Testament und dann erst, wie sie erschrecken, schauern, wüten, sich erbozen, sich erhitzen. Dann brech' ich heraus mit der Peitsche und das Herz wird dir tanzen, wie ich ihnen die Beine peitschen werde. (1926: 71)⁹

The play's sombre tone is not limited to Volpone but also affects other characters, although to a lesser extent. In fact, it is not only Corvino but also Corbaccio, Leone, the Judge, and even Canina – that courtesan who replaces Jonson's Lady Would Be –, who take pleasure exerting their revenge on others. Canina, for example, is ready to increase the suffering of innocent Leone, who is sent to the pillory in spite of the fact that he has prevented Volpone from raping

⁸ Trans. [Ah, I'll fox you [...] Poor sick Volpone will quickly regain his red cheeks, grow more and more healthy, till you yourselves get green-sick and vomit gall].

I am offering Langner's (1928) excellent translation of Zweig's version for most passages. I have only introduced the necessary changes in those few instances where she departs significantly from her source.

⁹ Trans. [I want to stamp upon the worms so that they writhe as much with malice as I do with laughter [...] Now the instrument of torture is ready but don't use it too quickly nor too rashly. I want to see them licking their chops, slowly, and slowly grinning before the hammer lands on their pates [...] I want to see them grinning first and floating round my corpse. I want to see them squirm and wriggle with the hook in their gullets and grow impatient for the will; only then must they be frightened, tremble, lash their tails, grow dangerous, and lose their heads. Then I'll burst in with my whip and your head and your heart will dance to see how I lash their legs!]

Even though Zweig's Volpone is obsessed with the idea of taking revenge on the covetous gang, it is only seldom that critics acknowledge this fact. B.'s testimony is therefore exceptional when he comments on Volpone's performance at the Burgtheater: "[Er] hat an ihrem gegenseitigen Haß sein teuflisches Vergnügen" (7 November 1926) [He took a devilish delight in the mutual hate that other characters felt for each other].

Colomba. Leone's outspokenness before the judges results in this punishment, and Canina, instead of taking pity on him, threatens to spread honey on his mouth so that wasps would come and sting him while he is tied to the pillory: "Ich lauf' hinüber, ihm Honig auf das Schandmaul schmieren, wenn er am Pranger steht, daß sich alle Wespen auf seinen Geifer setzen" (1926: 63).¹⁰

The play is pervaded with an atmosphere of oppressive torture that is particularly enhanced by the detailed description it provides of the strict enforcement of the law, which can resort to any type of cruel punishment. Volpone's awe-stricken description of a number of these inhuman practices is of first-rate importance in helping the audience to understand his pathological anxiety about the possibility that his deceitful ways may be discovered. Therefore, his address to Mosca on his dread of official Justice are most revealing of his feelings:

[*Schauernd vor Frost und Angst*] Ich gehe nicht, nein, ich gehe nicht [...] sie werden mich foltern, unter die Bleidächer legen [...] hinab in die Brunnen [...] Nein [...] ich gehe nicht zum Tribunal [...] ich weiß, wie sie inquirieren [...] die Folter [...] der Strapado [...] hab's einmal gesehen, wie sie die Winden aufgezogen, wie's da knackte und knirschste in den zerbrochenen Gelenken die Daumschrauben, die Zangen, die glühenden Zangen an den Nägeln [...] wie es pestete von verbranntem Fleisch, uh, uh [...] nein, ich gehe nicht. (1926: 51-52)¹¹

Even though Zweig no doubt drew inspiration for these grim descriptions from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, he nevertheless made a substantial contribution of his own to the detailed and graphic account of the harsh forms of punishment that could be inflicted on him, as well as to the dread with which that possibility filled Volpone. Jonson's harshness is slight compared with Zweig's, since he resorts to the use of distancing devices such as the employment of indirect speech by the shrewd lawyer who is ready to utilize any

¹⁰ [I shall run to smear honey about his dirty mouth when he's in the pillory so that all the wasps will settle on his snout].

¹¹ Trans. [*Shuddering with cold and fear* I won't go, no, I won't go [...] they'll put me on the rack, drip melted lead on me [...] lower me into a well [...] they will stretch me on the rack, they will hang me [...] No [...] I won't go to court [...] I know there'll be an inquisition [...] the rack [...] the strappado [...] I once heard the broken joints cracking and grinding as they tightened the ropes, the thumbscrews, the pincers, the red-hot pincers, pulling out the nails [...] how it stunk of burning flesah! Ugh [...] ugh! [...] no, I won't go].

means that might help him manipulate the Court. Thus, when Volpone is brought before the judges, he hurries to make a moving description of his pitiful condition, urging the judges to find out whether Volpone is feigning sickness or not by subjecting him to different types of torture. Yet, the audience is never truly shocked by the detailed description that Voltore offers them. As a matter of fact, Voltore's shrewd employment of rhetorical questions counteracts any possible disquieting effect on the audience. When he asks the Court: "Perhaps he doth dissemble?" he is in fact levelling an indirect accusation of slander against them for having doubted Volpone's truthfulness. He has just been "*brought in, as impotent,*" and Voltore has already taken advantage of his testimonial proof by using it as conclusive evidence of Volpone's innocence: The testimony comes, that will convince,/ And put to utter dumbness their bold tongues (IV.vi.20-21).

And so, when he asks the Court: "Would you ha' him tortured?" nobody in the audience doubts that he is rejecting that remote possibility by holding it in derision. Nobody feels appalled when he encourages the Court: "Best try him, then, with goads, or burning irons;/ Put him on the strappado," in the same way as his ironic remark on the healing effects of torture ("I have heard,/ The rack hath cured the gout") can only draw a smile from the audience.

Zweig's version, however, is pervaded with a grim and awesome ambience that is progressively increased as Volpone is found guilty of deceit. Even though the truth comes out when he is supposedly dead, both the Judge and Leone are ready to inflict the most gruesome kind of torture on his corpse. The Judge is ready to have him hanged while his tongue is nailed to the gallows:

Einen guten Dienst hat diesem Verbrecher der Tod erwiesen, denn lebte er noch, ich schwöre euch's, so wäre keiner gepeitscht worden wie diese levantinische Geselle, ehe er an den Galgen kam. Aber noch sein Leib muß Buße tun für sein Verbrechen: am öffentlichen Platz lasse ich den Leichnam hängen und die Zunge annageln an den Galgen, daß man zur Warnung sehe, wie Betrug und Schändung gestraft wird in Venedig. (1926:80)¹²

¹² Trans. [Death did this criminal a good service, for if he were still alive, I swear to you no one should be whipped like this Levantine cur before ever he went to the gallows. But his body will do penance for his crimes. I shall have the corpse hung in the public square and the tongue nailed to the gallows as a warning, a symbol of the manner in which deceit and profanation are punished in Venice].

Leone is desperately looking for him in order to thrust his poniard into the corpse's guts, reap it open and throw its bowels to the hounds: "Dann seine Leiche: ich muß sie zerfetzen, ich muß, ich muß! Ich will ihm die Kaldaunen ausreißen und den Hunden zu fressen geben, ich will den Kadaver auf den Schandpfahl schleppen" (1926: 83).¹³

This sickening scene, however, never occurs since Mosca asks the Judge to give him Volpone's corpse to throw into the canal. He is explicitly asked, however, to tie a heavy stone around its neck, so that the corpse may be quietly eaten away by fish:

(*Mosca*) Nur eine Bitte noch, allergnädigster Herr! Erspart dem Leichnam die Schmach [...] Erlaubt, daß ich die Leiche still versenken lasse in den Kanal.

(*Der Richter*) Seid eine gute Seele! Also meinetwegen nur einen Stein um den Hals statt den Strick um die Gurgel: mögen die Fische Venedigs an ihm mehr Lust haben als die Menschen. (1926: 83)¹⁴

The overwhelming atmosphere that all these shocking scenes create is suddenly brought to an end by an unexpected happy ending that does not succeed in offsetting the dark tone of the play. Mosca's kind words when he adopts the new role of the generous inheritor, offering to share Volpone's fortune with the greedy birds of prey, can be easily seen through since this is the only means of making sure that they declare Volpone's testament valid. Once his purpose has been achieved, his new friends are invited to a feast where he tries to persuade his audience that he is ready to make unprecedented use of Volpone's gold. He says that he is ready to indulge in all kinds of pleasure his new fortune may lead him to: "Wir wollen jetzt lustig sein, von Volponens Schüsseln schmausen, von seinen Weinen trinken" (1926: 88).¹⁵

He declares, moreover, that he is going to set Volpone's gold free from its long lasting captivity: "So tanze, tanze, Geld: ich geb' dich

¹³ Trans. [Then his corpse - I must tear it to rags. I must, I must. I'll rip out his guts and throw them to the dogs. I want to drag his body to the pillory].

¹⁴ Trans. [(*Mosca*) Just one more request, most gracious sir! Spare the corpse dishonour [...] Spare the corpse the gallows! Allow me to have it sunk quietly into the canal. (*Judge*) You are a good soul. Very well, do it, but be sure to put a stone around his neck instead of the rope; may the fishes of Venice have more pleasure out of him than its citizens].

¹⁵ Trans. [We will be merry now, feast off Volpone's dishes, drink of his wines].

frei" (1926: 88),¹⁶ thereby pretending to ignore the fact that Volpone had never assumed the role of covetous miser, but had rather led a pleasurable life. Volpone's self-indulgence had been acknowledged by Mosca himself when he answered his rhetorical question: "Lebe ich schlecht? Schmeckst du Wasser in meinem Falerner, sind meine Teppiche dünn, meine Silberschalen leicht, stinkt wo nur ein Bläschen Armut in meinem Haus?" (1926: 9)¹⁷ with the following statement: "Ich wünsche mir nie besser zu leben. Ihr seid üppig wie ein Armenier, vollüstig wie ein Häufing, habt eine Freude an allen saftigen Dingen und vergeßt nicht die Weiber" (1926: 10).¹⁸

It is also at the end of the play that the disinherited gang start approaching the new inheritor with the covert intention of sharing his gold. That is why Voltore¹⁹ fawningly flatters him by saying: "Ja, das war Volponens bester Gedanke, Euch zum Erben zu setzen" (1926: 85),²⁰ an attitude that is also shared by Corvino, who tells him: "Ihr seid ein Wackerer Junge, Mosca,"²¹ as well as by Corbaccio, who exclaims: "War't immer redlich [...] Ihr allein,"²² and, finally, by Voltore, who makes an open avowal of his sincere friendship: "Sei gewiß meiner aufrichtigen Freundschaft."²³

¹⁶ Trans. [Dance, then, my money, dance! I set you free!].

¹⁷ Trans. [Do I live badly? Do you taste water in my Falernian, are my carpets thin, my silver compotes light, is there one stinking little blister of poverty in all my house?].

¹⁸ Trans. [I hope I never live worse. You are as luxurious as an Armenian, as lustful as a stallion, take your pleasure in all luscious things, and don't forget the women].

Although it is hard to believe in Mosca's final contraposition between his own liberality and Volpone's presumed avarice, he seems to have persuaded some of the critics that attended Zweig's première. Leopold Jacobson, for example, declared that "Mosca hat nicht die Freude am Besitzt, sondern daran, das Geld in Genuß umzuziehen" (7 November 1926) [What Mosca values most is not the possession of gold but, rather, putting it into circulation], whereas, in his opinion, "Volpone ist der schleue Habgierige in Großformat, ein Levantiner [...] der die anderen Habgierigen ausplündert, und immer auf neue Mittel sinnt, um neue Schätze zu häufen" [Volpone is the sly covetous man par excellence, a Levantine [...] who robs other covetous characters of their money and is always devising new means of heaping up riches]. In the end he reached the following conclusion regarding the philosophy of the play: "Diese Weltanschauungskontrast ist die lineare Philosophie der Komödie" [The linear philosophy of this comedy lies in the contrast between both world views].

¹⁹ Although the judge says these lines in the printed version, it was Voltore who delivered them at the Burgtheater. This change fittingly underlined the fawning obsequiousness of the different characters towards the new heir.

²⁰ Trans. [Volpone's best idea was to make you his heir].

²¹ Trans. [You are a fine lad, Mosca].

²² Trans. [You were always honourable [...] you alone].

²³ Trans. [Be assured of my sincere friendship].

The play, therefore, ends in a tone of apparent happiness where Volpone's supposed covetousness is replaced with Mosca's presumed generosity. The truth, however, is that Mosca fully resembles his master in that he is as self-centered and self-indulgent as he²⁴. Like Volpone, he is fully aware of the true nature and intentions of those who join in his feast, as he unambiguously reveals: "Ich danke euch und glaub' davon, was ich glauben wird" (1926: 85).²⁵

The play's final note of happiness does not succeed in countering the play's sustained tone of anguish, fear and resentment which pervades it from its opening scenes. Furthermore, its dénouement goes against the principle of poetic justice, according to which all evil characters – and not just a few – must receive their due. In Zweig's version, however, only Volpone's greed and deceitfulness are punished, whereas Mosca's cunning practices are rewarded, in the same way that Corvino's, Corbaccio's and Voltore's revolving covetousness is left unpunished. They are even returned the presents they once offered Volpone in the hope of becoming his heirs. Their grave affronts against honour, family relationships and the law are left without the punishment that Ben Jonson bestowed them. Thus, Corvino, instead of being deprived of the wife he once tried to prostitute, is happily left in her company while neither she nor Venetian Justice make the slightest reproach concerning his past behaviour. Corbaccio is likewise left with all the possessions that he had tried to deprive his heir of, and, instead of being secluded in a Monastery where he could be cured of his avarice, he is allowed to go on with his usurious practices. Voltore's false testimony in

²⁴ The anonymous review that appeared in "Theater und Kunst Burgtheater" fittingly pointed to Mosca's self-interested and sly handling of the situation at the end of the play: "Nur der abgefeimste Betgrüger, der schmarozer Mosca, triumphiert über die von ihren Trieben genarrten und verschleudert, andere Leidenschaften frönend, das jedermann magnetisierende Gold" (7 November 1926) [It is the most consummate liar, Mosca the Parasite, who triumphs over all those whom he fools by means of this cheating devices and, while relishing the pain he inflicts on others, he tricks the ever-magnetizing gold away from them].

²⁵ Trans. [I thank you for your words and believe from them as much as I wish].

According to Ullman, Asland succeeded in expressing the essential features of Zweig's Mosca, particularly his ability to manipulate other characters: "Herr Asland spielt einen ... um die Finessen der Niedrigkeit wissenden Windteufel" (9 November 1926) [Herr Asland plays the role of the knowing devil who is well aware of man's lowest instincts].

Volpone's case doesn't seem to deserve punishment either and he is given free leave to go on transgressing Venetian laws.

Paradoxically enough, it is not evil, but good that is punished, as is the case with Leone, the only character who comes to Colomba's (Jonson's Celia) aid when Volpone is attempting to rape her. He is rewarded with the pillory, while Colomba does not utter a single word to prevent it. Instead, she shows pity for Volpone when he is brought to Court as an invalid: "Der arme Mann ... wie er mir leid tut! Ich will für ihn beten" (1926: 63).²⁶

The liberating note of the ending is therefore only superficial, since, on the one hand, true justice does not prevail and, on the other, the lack of general and harsh punishment for the guilty party does not succeed in thwarting the gloomy tone that prevails throughout the play, in the same way as Ben Jonson's severe ending did not diminish the comedy's playful tone. As a matter of fact, the epilogue that he added at the end of the play proved particularly relevant in making sure that the audience felt free to express their own amused reaction to the play:

The seasoning of the play is the applause.
Now, though the Fox be punished by the laws,
He, yet, doth hope there is no suffering due,
For any fact, which he hath done 'gainst you;
If there be, censure him: here he, doubtful, stands.
If not, fare jovially, and clap your hands. (V.xii. 1-6)

3. Critical opinions on Zweig's theatrical adaptation of *Volpone*

Critics have repeatedly dealt with the adaptation's dramatic structure, its character portrayal, subject matter and prevailing tone. As regards the first of these aspects it is worth pointing out that Zweig himself gave his own opinion on some of the changes that he had introduced into the play, especially on the suppression of all the scenes where Jonson had resorted to the use of disguise. He argued that this dramatic device was perceived as outmoded in his own day, which led him to do without it:

Läuft sie [die Komödie] leider über und aus in jene heute unmögliche Verwecklungskomödie des alten Theaters, wo ein Mann sich bloß einen

²⁶ Trans. [The poor man [...] how I pity him. I will pray for him].

anderen Hut aufsetzen und mit anderer Stimme zu sprechen braucht, um sofort damit der Welt unkenntlich zu sein. (28 September 1927)²⁷

That is no doubt the reason why Volpone was no longer able to play different roles in the comedy. Under Zweig, he could no longer dress up as a mountebank to approach Celia at her window, in the same way as he was no longer able to assume a variety of imaginary roles that might help Colomba feel attracted towards him in the seduction scene. He was likewise deprived of the possibility of mortifying the gulled gang of rapacious birds in the guise of a *commendatore*. Finally, Zweig removed Volpone's last triumphant gesture in suppressing the play's epilogue that Jonson had devised in order to draw a clear distinction between the laws of morality and those of drama. In his epilogue Volpone reminded his audience that they were allowed to show their approval for a comedy where a cunning individual had deceived a number of greedy and hypocritical characters that fully deserved their fate. Zweig, instead, had Volpone quietly disappear in the middle of the night, thus escaping Venetian Justice.

Unlike Jonson's Volpone, who daringly reveals his true identity before the judges, thereby inflicting severe punishment upon himself, Zweig's Volpone disappears fearful as ever, especially since Mosca threatens to wake Leone who is sleeping nearby and is anxious to take his revenge on him: "Ich zähle ___ ich zähle bis drei! Dann ruf' ich Leone."²⁸ He ends playfully transforming Leone's name, whom he starts to call: "Le-" into a farewell expression: "[Le-] ben sie wohl!" (1926: 87).²⁹

Zweig, in short, deprives Volpone of all those qualities that had made him attractive. In his version, Volpone no longer dares leave his home and risk being discovered, in the same way as he has no chance of contemplating Corvino's wife and feeling drawn towards her before her covetous husband takes her to Volpone's bed. He is also deprived of the opportunity of romantically wooing her, which would portray his character in a positive light. His last valiant

²⁷ Trans. [This comedy unfortunately makes use of any imaginable device that entails surprising changes in the features of characters, in a way similar to the common practice of the outmoded drama of the past. It was then usual for a character to become unrecognizable through the mere change of hat or the use of a different tone of voice].

²⁸ Trans. [I'll count – to three – to three! Then I call Leone].

²⁹ Trans. [Wish you godspeed!].

gesture is likewise removed, so that he can no longer become the brave hero that freely chooses his destiny. As a result, Zweig turns Volpone into a character that is both evil and cowardly. Therefore, it is his desire to torture Corvino, and not the attraction that he feels for Corvino's wife, Colomba, that makes him long for her: "Was brauchte ich [...] dieses Kalb Colomba, hatte nicht Lust auf sie eine Handvoll [...] nur Bosheit, nur Bosheit, nur Feuerzünden und Heißmachen und jetzt brennt es mir selbst in den Nieren" (1926: 51).³⁰

Even though Volpone makes his own feelings clear, we cannot forget that it was Mosca's devising that made him conceive the idea of seducing Corvino's wife as a means of tormenting him:

Laßt sehen [...] Corvino, wo faßt man denn? Dort, wo es am kitschigsten ist, natürlich. Geld __ nein! __die Würmer haben wir ihm schon auf der Nase gezogen, aber eifersüchtig ist er, ich sagt's ja, wie ein Doppeltürke [...] wartet [...] wie wäre es, wenn man ihn so lange narrete, bis er selbst Euch die Frau zur Hornung brachte? (1926: 23-24)³¹

Also, when Volpone expressed serious doubts about the possibility of fulfilling their wicked plans: "Seine Frau? [...] Unmöglich."³² Mosca reassures him: "Meint Ihr?" and offers to help him: "Ich krieg's Zustand."³³

The fact that Zweig chooses not to include the reason as to why Corvino was asked to take his wife to Volpone so that he might recover from his last stroke, increases the degree of his wickedness and lack of moral scruples. Zweig's Mosca does not tell Corvino that the doctors have prescribed Volpone the company of a virtuous woman as the only way of preventing his certain death but, instead, he reveals that Volpone has recovered from his last fit and is now craving the company of an attractive young woman: "Er schmatzt nur so von Wohlbehagen [...] Der alte Geilbock gibt keine Ruhe, wiehert wie ein Hengst, heute noch müsse er ein Weib haben und

³⁰ Trans. [Why did I take [...] that moon-calf Colomba? I didn't have a grain of desire for her [...] just malice [...] just malice [...] just lighting a fire under them, and now it's burning in my own bowels].

³¹ Trans. [Corvino. Where can we get him? In his sorest spot, of course. Money – no, we've robbed him thoroughly already; but you yourself say he's jealous as two Turks [...] Wait [...] how would it be if we beduffed him so well that he himself brought you his wife, so you could horn him].

³² Trans. [His wife? Impossible!].

³³ Trans. [D'you think so? I'll manage it].

schon sagt er mir, ich solle ihm eines schaffen, ein sanftes, appetitliches Weibchen" (1926: 31).³⁴

Corvino is therefore to blame for his readiness to offer Volpone his legitimate wife since he does not have the slightest doubt about Volpone's condition nor his true intentions regarding Colomba. What is more, he specifically asks her to look as beautiful as possible: "Den Mantel um, so, den Busen offen, die Ärmel aufgestreift, da noch ein paar Blumen und das rate ich dir: mach' ein freundliches Gesicht."³⁵ Then, when Colomba expresses her fears that Volpone's advances be too forward: "Aber wenn er mich nimmt?" (1926: 44),³⁶ Corvino unashamedly acknowledges this possibility: "Dann nimmt er dich eben!" (1926: 44)³⁷ and drags her to Volpone's bedroom.

Volpone, in turn, shows no greater delicacy when addressing Colomba, since he warns her that Corvino will never come to her aid, no matter how loud she may cry as he rapes her. He adds that he would sooner stuff his ears with cotton than come to her rescue: "wäre er nebenan, er stopfte sich die Ohren mit Watte. Glaubst du, er weiß nicht, wozu ich dich wollte?"³⁸ He then makes clear that Corvino has sold her out to him: "[Er] hat dich verkauft, hat dich verschachert, mein Täubchen."³⁹

Volpone's would-be heirs are no more subtle in the expression of their deepest desire, particularly of the long-awaited death of Volpone. Corvino repeatedly states his wish that death may seize him when in Colomba's sweet company. These are his words: "Apoplexia, habe ich auch gehört, befällt häufig die alten Männer gerade im schönsten Übereinander!" (1926: 31).⁴⁰

Corbaccio takes a pathological delight in death which is even greater at the idea of Volpone's imminent decease. He acknowledges his fondness for visiting those that are about to pass on and only hopes that Volpone's symptoms resemble the ones he knows so well:

³⁴ Trans. [He's licking his very chops with well-being [...] He whickered like a stallion, saying he must have a woman this very day, and he's commanded me to fetch him one. A gentle, appetizing little woman].

³⁵ Trans. [On with your cloak – so, with your breast bared, your sleeves short! There, just a few flowers now, and I advise you to look friendly].

³⁶ Trans. [But if he takes me [...] ?].

³⁷ Trans. [Then he takes you].

³⁸ Trans. [If he were in the next room he'd stuff his ears with cotton-wool. Do you think he doesn't know why I wanted you?].

³⁹ Trans. [He sold you, he bartered you, my little dove].

⁴⁰ Trans. [I've heard [...] that apoplexy often overcomes old men right in the very midst of things].

Ich [...], hehe, ich [...], hehe [...] Seh' mir gern Sterbende an. Hab' schon so viele gesehen, seh's immer lieber [...] Hehe, dann kommt's bald [...] kenn ich [...] oft gesehen [...] jetzt wird's bald lustig [...] dann keine Luft, pumpt,[...] pumpt [...] pumpt [...] kriegt's nicht mehr herauf [...] blau dann, blaß [...] hehe, jetzt kommt's bald [...] dann starr, spürt nichts mehr [...] Ohren dumpf, Lider gelb [...] hehe, kenne das [...] ist bald soweit. (1926: 19-20)⁴¹

Volpone's approaching death does not seem to fill Mosca with discomfort either, since he calmly promises Corbaccio that he will remove his ring from Volpone's corpse before it gets cold with death: "Kaum, daß er kalt ist, zieh ich ihn [den Ring] ab von der Leiche!" (1926: 21).⁴²

Later on, when Mosca proclaims Volpone dead and realizes the need of certifying his death before opening his will, Corbaccio insists on making sure that this happens. When Mosca tells him: "Ein Blick wird euch überzeugen [...] Ihr seht; ganz regloss und starr" (1926: 76),⁴³ he suggests applying a flame to his feet as an effective method of deducing whether he is alive or not: "kann täuschen [...] besser noch Kerze nehmen [...] unter Füße brennen."⁴⁴

Other suggestions quickly follow. Corvino, for example, is for thrusting a dagger into his heart, which, in his opinion, could be particularly useful, should he not be completely dead: "[*Den Dolch ziehend*] Sicher ist sicher [...] einen kleinen Herzstoß zur Probe sollte man doch probieren [...] dem Toten wär's ohne Schaden und dem Scheintoten ein guter Dienst" (1926: 76).⁴⁵

Since Zweig's version increases the characters' wickedness it is somewhat surprising that he should impute that quality to Ben Jonson's play (28 September 1927): "Dieses Boshafte ohne jedes Warum und Weshalb der Bosheit ist aus reiner Freude an der

⁴¹ Trans. [I [...] he, he [...] he, he [...] I like to look at dying men. I've seen so many and I enjoy each one more. [...] He, he it's coming soon. I know [...] seen it often [...] it will soon be jolly [...] No air, pumps [...] pumps [...] pumps [...] can't raise any more [...] blue, then pale [...] he, he [...] coming soon now [...] then stiff, no feeling [...] ears dulled, lids yellow [...] he, he [...] I know [...] 'twill soon come to that].

⁴² Trans. [The corpse will scarcely be cold when I tear it (the ring) off its finger].

⁴³ Trans. [One look will convince you [...] you see, quite cold and stiff].

⁴⁴ Trans. [Deceptive [...] better still to burn a candle at the soles of his feet].

⁴⁵ Trans. [*Drawing his dagger* Safe is safe [...] a little jab in the heart to make sure [...] it wouldn't hurt the dead man and would be a real service to one who was seemingly dead].

Bosheit."⁴⁶ Astonishingly enough, other critics share Zweig's opinion on this point. Thus, for example, J.F. Wolff when reviewing the performance of Zweig's version at the National Theatre of Dresden declared that Zweig had softened the play by removing all those expressions of human abjection that Jonson had brought to his play: "Ohne Stefan Zweig hätten in der starken und witzigen Komödie die menschliche Niedertracht und Ben Jonsons fürchterliche niedrige Meinung von der Gattung *homo sapiens* unerträgliche Orgien gefeiert" (27 November 1926).⁴⁷

A number of critics have also discovered an amiable tone in Zweig's adaptation. The reason for it probably lies in the importance that they attribute to its happy ending, which leads them to ignore the fact that the last minute change is superficial. They repeatedly focus on Mosca's transformation into an honest character who then becomes the play's hero. What they do not share is their assessment of what the outcome of his change is. Richter, for example, regrets that "Sein Mosca [...] kriegt es mit der Angst, mit der Ehrlichkeit, fällt aus der Rolle" (1927: 190)⁴⁸ because, in his view, it prevents the enactment of Justice through a deserved punishment, that in Jonson's play had fallen on Mosca. Other critics like McPherson (1973) and Forsyth (1981) express an opposite view of the matter, since, according to them, the most outstanding feature of the play's dénouement is the triumph of a generous character who sets Volpone's gold free.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Trans. [This unmotivated wickedness has no ground but the relish that characters take in evil-doing].

⁴⁷ Trans. [But for Stefan Zweig, man's lowest instincts and Ben Jonson's extremely poor opinion of human beings would have made this strong and witty comedy the realm of unbearable orgies].

⁴⁸ Trans. [His Mosca achieves it through his fear; he becomes honourable; he falls out of his role].

⁴⁹ It is somewhat surprising that even the Reichpost's perceptive theatre critic, B. should be deceived by Mosca's new adopted generosity. According to him, "Er wird dieses Gold besser zu nützen wissen als sein Herr, er wird es aus der Haft der Truhen befreien, und mit vollen Händen ausgeben. Er ist ein Philosoph, dieser nichtsnutzige Mosca, er verachtet das Gold, solange es gehäuft liegt" (7 November 1926) [He will make a better use of this gold than his master did; he will set it free from its trunk and then give it away. This unpractical Mosca is a true philosopher. He doesn't value gold unless released from its prison]. This kind of appraisal was also shared by Marcus Fontana, who was impressed by Mosca's final transformation into an open-handed heir: "Der Erbe wirft das Geld aus der Truhe, in die es eingesperrt, wieder in das Leben zurück. 'Nicht Herr dir mehr, doch auch nicht dein Vasall: ich spiel' mit dir: ich schenke dich an alle!" (7 November 1926) [Volpone's heir takes the gold out of the

Mcpherson concludes the following: "Mosca emerges as hero, no one is punished, and Volpone's hoarded gold is put back into circulation" (1973: 82), and he adds: "Tender-minded readers of *Volpone* have always been appalled by the absence of any sympathetic character. The play is largely unconventional, that is, largely because it lacks a hero. Stefan Zweig's *Volpone* [...] removes the implacable quality [...] by transforming Mosca into a hero" (1973: 82).

In his view, Zweig's Mosca is "a gay and reluctant villain." When reducing the character's features to these positive qualities he seems to forget that Mosca has been Volpone's physical and psychological torturer throughout the play by having him drink gall and by filling his heart with fear. He also seems to ignore that it was him who suggested to Volpone the idea of feigning death so as to witness and relish the suffering of his deceived suitors when they opened the will and found out Mosca's name instead of their own. As a matter of fact, Mosca reminded Volpone that coffins have no holes through which to peep outside: "Aber Messer Volpone, wie wollt Ihr's sehen: Der Sargdeckel hat keine Löcher" (1926: 70),⁵⁰ so that his cunning device would afford him no pleasure unless he were alive when they opened his will. His reasoning proved effective, as Volpone's immediate reaction shows:

Mord's, das ist wahr: das wird mich im Leichenlaken noch wurmen, daß ich meinen Meisterstreich nicht erlebe, nicht seh', wie diese Schurken sich querüber in die Haare fahren. Gottes Zorn, den schönsten Spaß hab' ich da ausgesonnen und gerade bei der Kirchweih, wo sie sich die Schädel einschlagen, soll ich fort sein: verdammt. (1926: 70)⁵¹

That is why Mosca's later rejection of Volpone's plans: "Macht es allein. Ich hab' genug' [...] Tut's allein, Euer Spaßchen [...] Ich hab's satt." (1926: 71)⁵² cannot be taken at face value.

trunk where it has been locked up and throws it back into life. 'I won't be thy master any more, nor will I be thy servant. I am to play with you: I am going to give you away'.]

⁵⁰ Trans. [But, Messer Volpone, how can you see that? A coffin has no windows].

⁵¹ Trans. ['S blood, that's true, it will gall me in my shroud that I can't live to see and experience my masterprank, those scoundrels all at each other's throats. God's wrath, here I've conceived the finest thought and just at the baptism, when they are smashing in each other's skulls, I'm to be away; damn it].

⁵² Trans. [I've had enough [...] Play your little joke alone [...] I've had too much].

But Mcpherson is not the only critic to be deceived by this shrewd character, as Forsyth's assessment of Mosca reveals. According to him, "he has his moral scruples. Lying, for example, does not come easily to him" (1981: 622). In addition, he points out that Mosca's happy transformation into an amiable and generous character is closely connected with Zweig's personal and geographical background, with "[his] benevolence and, a particular Austrian streak, his sentimental ironic tolerance of man's foibles" (1981: 624).⁵³

Forsyth seems to be unable of noticing the slightest trait of that profound and pathological wickedness that can be perceived in most of Zweig's characters. Curiously enough, he turns them into passive beings who, far from being responsible for their despicable actions, are portrayed as mere victims of money's powerful manipulation. According to him, "Zweig makes [...] a kind of grammatical inversion; whereas in Jonson man is responsible for being led astray by money, in Zweig money is responsible for leading man astray" (1981: 622). Finally, Forsyth tries to substantiate this hypothesis by means of a song from the beginning of Zweig's version which voices this viewpoint:

Das Geld, das Geld vernarrt die Welt ...
Macht's klug: das Geld ist kluger noch,
Erkenn den Trug: er narrt dich noch.⁵⁴

No matter how convincing his justification may sound, the truth is that Zweig's adaptation is full of covetous characters that far surpass those of Jonson in the unscrupulous pursuit of gold. That makes it difficult for perceptive readers to share Forsyth's conclusion on their attitude: "[Zweig] establishes the idea of money as a comic fatality, a condition of diminished responsibility for man in which

⁵³ Forsyth's reading of this version may have been influenced by Zweig's own assessment of his adaptation, which, in a letter addressed to Romain Rolland (26 September 1925) he termed "une farce amusante sur l'argent" [An amusing farce about money], an opinion that was literally rendered two years later by Macris when he defined Zweig's adaptation as "[an] amusing farce about money" (1983: 193). Moreover, Forsyth's insistence on the play's "lightness of touch" (1981: 624) was equally supported by Daviau who also highlighted the version's "lightness of spirit and comic sensibility" (1983: 195).

⁵⁴ Trans. [Oh gold makes fools of young and old [...] / Act you may, to your dismay. / Know you are a fool: gold has its will].

there is no room for even a touch of tragedy as there was in the Jacobean view" (1981: 622).

Zweig's structural changes have also given rise to a number of critical opinions that could be further qualified. The new version's economy of design has often been praised even though it involves the suppression of the secondary plot as well as a number of scenes where Volpone resorts to the use of different disguises. Zweig's adaptation also reduces the total number of characters present in the play so that neither Sir Politic nor Lady Politic, Peregrine or the members of Volpone's deformed 'family' are present.

Even though the new version undoubtedly benefits from a swifter pace, it must be noted that this entails a loss of depth in character portrayal. It is, therefore, surprising that some critics, such as Richter, suggest different consequences of this change. According to him, the play's economy reduces the commentaries that other characters make on their actions so that, in his view, the outcome is a more direct onstage presentation of the different characters. However, when Richter welcomes the fact that in Zweig's version "die Personen charakterisieren sich selbst durch ihr Tun und Reden, statt von anderen geschildert zu werden" (1927: 183-184)⁵⁵ he seems to forget that the new economy of design also affects the actions of characters, which are equally reduced. As a result, Zweig's title role, for example, gains cowardice and wickedness. In conclusion, even though we can share Richter's observations on the benefits that derive from Zweig's reduction of Jonson's five acts to three, since, according to him, "die Handlung strafft sich, gewinnt and Geschlossenheit, Tempo und Kontinuität" (1927: 183),⁵⁶ the loss that this reduction entails cannot be ignored.

Forsyth also underlines the positive effects of certain structural changes. He points out that "the omission of the grotesque Nano, Castrone and Androgyno, the lengthy subplot and the too obedient Celia" help update the play. (1981: 624) It is, however, somewhat hard to understand how some of these modifications can produce that effect, since two of them had already been introduced by George Colman as early as 1711. The fact that aesthetic and moral reasons were then alleged to justify those changes is also revealing. So,

⁵⁵ Trans. [Characters are depicted by means of their own words and actions instead of being portrayed through the description made by others].

⁵⁶ Trans. [There is an increase in the play's tension, unity of action, tempo and continuity].

whereas the subplot was then removed in order to offer a clearer line of argument, the deformed family was suppressed so as to satisfy the refined sensibility of the audience. A quick look at Zweig's version, and particularly at the character of Canina, however, reveals that Zweig was not moved by the same reasons as Colman when he removed Nano, Androgyno and Eunuch from his adaptation. Moreover, critics such as Richter have perceived Canina's behaviour as immoral, since, in his view, "Zweig schafft [...] eine wirkliche Kurtisane derbniedrigsten Stils, deren Szenen zum stärksten gehören, das auf der Bühne möglich ist!" (1927: 189).⁵⁷

Thus, even though modern audiences reject lengthy plays and, therefore, any action taken in order to shorten them may help bring them up to date, the doubt still remains as to how the changes introduced by Zweig into Celia's too obedient disposition might have helped make this play more appealing for contemporary audiences. This remarkable aim could undoubtedly have been achieved if Celia had been transformed – as it has often been the case in recent adaptations – into a more independent type of character. But Forsyth's opinion on this matter can hardly be shared if what Zweig chooses to offer as a substitute for Jonson's Celia is an unsympathetic character who is both extremely submissive to her husband and most unfair to her saviour. Unlike Colomba, we have endeavoured to be less submissive to previous scholarship on Zweig's *Volpone, eine lieblose Komödie*. Our reappraisal of his free version has, moreover, attempted to be fair both to Jonson's magnificent play and to Zweig's outstanding adaptation.

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⁵⁷ Trans. [Zweig creates a true courtesan of the lowest style whose scenes belong to the grossest and rudest that could be possibly imagined onstage].

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David Rowland's *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1586): analysis of expansions in an Elizabethan translation

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the expansions in David Rowland's translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1586). Given the fact that Elizabethan translators especially loved to embellish their texts, the target text expansions are analysed and discussed. 93.3% of these expansions are proved to follow the common practice of the time: to Anglicize the target text by providing the translator's own viewpoint. Protestant propaganda notions are commonly provided; European historical and social background prompted English translators to adapt texts to their own target language and culture. Certain expansions resemble those in a previous French translation. Indeed, foreign works were promptly translated using the French language as an intermediary. Elizabethan preference for detail and witticisms which can be identified in Rowland's translation will also be discussed.

KEYWORDS: expansions, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Elizabethan translation, French influence

1. Introduction

The number of translations into English increases considerably from 1538 to 1568. There are four times as many translations as in the fifty previous years (Barnstone 1993: 203) because of the introduction of printing technology (France 2000: 410) and the European socio-cultural context.¹ Indeed, Matthiessen assures us that: "A study of Elizabethan translation is a study of the means by which the Renaissance came to England" (1931: 3). Translation is an act of patriotism (Randall 1963: 25; Luttikhuisen 1987: 178), for translators intend to enhance England's cultural and political role in letters and in commerce (Matthiessen 1931: 3). Political and economic changes result in new social classes which, lacking knowledge of Latin and

¹ English Translation from 1600 to 1700 has been claimed "as the Golden Age of the English Translators" (Amos 1919: 135).

French, demand translations, books in their own language (Cohen 1962: 9; Vega 1994: 37).

Translators aim to improve the role played by the English language in Europe, and more specifically the cultural and political importance of their country. Much translation was deliberately intended to support commercial rivalry. Consequently, difficult terms or allusions to foreign history or culture are explained and adapted (Luttikhuisen 1987: 181); thus, 'domestication' is a common translation strategy (France 2000: 47). Following the metaphors commonly applied to Elizabethan translation theory (Hermans 1985),² "these source texts were 'transported' into England and 'put into English clothes'" (Morini 2006: 65). As Frances Luttikhuisen remarks:

translators did not pride themselves on making meticulous imitations of the original; their aim was to make foreign classics rich with English associations and, thus, by "Englishing" them (a word they employed often and that meant much more than translating into English as we will see), they could produce books that would strike into the minds of their fellow countrymen and become part of their nation's consciousness (1987: 177).

Translators love to elaborate their texts, showing a special "delight in words and sounds" for emphasis and rhythm (Luttikhuisen 1987: 178). As a result, translation is also a means of enriching the English language, primarily its lexicon (Delisle and Woodsworth 1995: 201). In addition, French texts are intermediate versions when translating from Spanish as French is the principal vehicle of recording the life of England at all levels from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century.³ Hence this paper is intended to analyse the expansions identified in David Rowland's translation (1586) of *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) with particular reference to Saugrain's French translation which Rowland used.

² For the historical and literary context of Elizabethan England see Rowse (2003) and Bueno (2005) among others.

³ There has been history of using French texts as intermediary in late Medieval England, which continued into the Renaissance. This French influence is more latent towards the middle of the seventeenth century, as France becomes the dominant political and cultural power on the continent (Gorp 1985: 138). However, knowledge of Spanish, if only as an obvious evolution out of vulgar Latin, existed and grew.

2. David Rowland's translation of *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (1586)

Rowland's text is the first translation of *El Lazarillo de Tormes* into the English language; it was published in London in 1586. The existence of a previous translation dated 1576 has been stated, although no copies have survived (Santoyo 1978: 17-20).

Rowland's translation has been considered one of the best renderings of *El Lazarillo de Tormes*; it has regularly been reprinted, its last edition being published in 2000 by Keith Whitlock. The original Spanish novel implies a new form of fictional biography which enables the reader to access the narrator's mind and constitutes the essence of the realistic novel (Whitlock 2000: 37).⁴ The shaping of English literature has been affected as a result (Santoyo 1987; Salzman 1990; Figueroa 1997: 61; France 2000: 421; Tazón 2003). Underhill assures us that: "Spanish literature performed its greatest service to the literature of Shakespeare's England in assisting the evolution of a living form through the example of the *Celestina* and *Lazarillo de Tormes*" (1899: 296).⁵ The contemporary European context of political and commercial rivalry contributes to the positive reception of the English target text. In truth, the French and English translators present *El Lazarillo de Tormes* as comic entertainment and a sophisticated jest-book. W. S. Mervin argues that: "there was an affinity of character and temper between the two nations which were emerging as rivals for world domination, and the rough and boisterous life of Elizabethan England was quite similar to the adventurous pursuit of the Spanish" (1962: 33).⁶ Moreover, the contents of the novel are a gift to Protestant propaganda attacking the Roman Church, and the powers hostile to Spain such as France and England. The relations between England and Spain had broken down in 1586 and the Spanish Armada failed in 1588, which pointed to the decline of the Spanish political and military power in Europe. The English reader liked to read of Spanish corruption in the church,

⁴ Peter France claims that this fact obscures a translation problem: "the low-life setting causes difficulties of vocabulary, and the autobiographical format creates an ambivalent tone, especially when the protagonist writes as a repentant sinner" (2000: 421).

⁵ David Hume (1964: 166) and Ulrich Wicks (1989: 233) prove that even Shakespeare read Rowland's text.

⁶ As J.G. Underhill assures: "together with the romance of chivalry, it was the only literary work of an essentially Spanish type which made a strong impression upon the Elizabethans" (1899: 207).

incompetence of military officials and chaos in industrial life (Crofts 1924: vii). Interestingly enough, reprints of Rowland's translation coincide with crisis periods in the relationship between the two countries (Whitlock 2000: 1) and the economic decline and collapse in Spain.⁷ The English translator himself, David Rowland of Anglesey (1589-1586), was a Protestant (Whitlock 2000: 12). This fact, as will be seen later, can be traced in his translation through including certain anti-Catholic comments. Many translators used to resort to any possible translation strategy in order to attack Catholicism and defend their Reformed faith: "As zealous patriots and convinced Protestants, anything harmful or negative touching their country or their faith was either only touched on lightly, varied somewhat or simply left out" (Luttikhuisen 1987: 181).

Rowland's text strays far from the Spanish source text in certain features which can be assessed by taking into consideration Elizabethan translation practice. As far as the structure of the novel is concerned, the existence of a prologue and a dedication to a famous and powerful crown representation in the Low Countries is a common marketing strategy (France 2000: 50). The English translator includes a prologue written by himself, and dedicates the novel "To the right worshipful Sir Thomas Gresham",⁸ a Protestant Royal Agent in Antwerp on behalf of Queen Elizabeth I and founder of the Royal Exchange (Whitlock 2000: 29). Rowland explains the purpose of this translation in his prologue as he states that his relating of the Spanish customs of that time will help the English to know better that country (1586: 3).

Rowland is known to have used at least two texts to elaborate his translation: the Spanish text published in Antwerp in 1554 by Martín Nuncio, and Jean Saugrain's French translation published in 1561 under the heading *L'histoire plaisante et facetieuse du Lazare de Tormes, Espagnol, en laquelle on peult recoignoistre bonne partie des mœurs, vie e*

⁷ Blanshard and Sowerby argue that Thomas Wilson's translation of Demosthenes' *Olynthiacs and Philippics* also covers an anti-Spanish propaganda and critique of Elizabethan foreign policy (2005).

⁸ "I was so bold to dedicate the fruit of my simple labour unto your worship, who both for travel, daily conference with divers nations and knowledge in all foreign matters is known to be such a one, as is well able to judge, whether these reports of little Lázaro be true or not" (Rowland 1586: 3).

conditions des Espagnolz.⁹ The influence of the French text on Rowland's translation can be clearly traced.¹⁰ I support Gareth Alban Davies' opinion (1995: 373), that a preference for the Spanish text exists, although both source texts have been used without systematic criteria:

Rowland picked his own way through a labyrinth of different readings and renderings, not only choosing those renderings of the original text which he considered most accurate, but also taking at times from the French text a turn of phrase more suited to his own interpretation of the meaning, whilst at others striking out on his own (1995: 377).

French influence in English translations is typical of this time period. Actually, in the seventeenth century only French source texts are considered in the translation process; Spanish source texts appear to be ignored in the translation process. Translations become freer as the aesthetic code of French classicism is applied; we can speak of adaptations rather than translations (Gorp 1985: 139). Moreover, Rowland's translation structure resembles that of the French text. As Saugrain does, Rowland adds an eighth *treatise* or chapter to the novel, which indeed constitutes the first chapter of the second part by Juan de Luna published in Antwerp in 1555. However, in both translations this treatise is not separated from the other seven treatises which constitute the Spanish source text.

Rowland adds thirty-four marginal notes or glosses to this translation. Twenty of them are due to the English translator's own invention, whereas fourteen are copied more or less literally from the French translation. Saugrain and Rowland usually provide a personal comment about the narration; most glosses are not required to resolve out cultural or linguistic translation problems. It cannot be ignored that explication is a common procedure in English Elizabethan translation (Boutcher 2000: 51); translators have "an extraordinary eye for detail," a concrete image is commonly preferred (Luttikhuisen 1987: 179). In addition, Keith Whitlock

⁹ Obviously, the title emphasises the comic and anti-heroic qualities of the book. A previous translation by Jean Saugrain exists; it was published in Lyon in 1560 under a different heading: *Les Faits marveilleux, ensemble la vie du gentil Lazare de Tormes, et les terribles aventures á lui aventures à lui avenues en duvers lieux*.

¹⁰ French influence has commonly been stated. Some authors claim that "the translator found himself translating the French and checking it by the Spanish" (Crofts 1924: xi), whereas others assure that: "it's not that the Welsh translator ignored the Spanish text; he simply depended more on the French" (Randall 1963: 59).

claims that even footnotes aim at contributing to Protestant and political propaganda (2000: 15). In treatise 3, for example, Rowland adds the following marginal note concerning food: "There is not such provision of meate in Spaine as there is in England" (Rowland 1586: 63). Rowland rewrites a previous French note maintaining its implicit criticism of Spain: "Lon ne vit point de provision en Espagne comme lon fait en France" (Saugrain 1561: 30). In any case, many marginal notes enclose an anti-Catholic criticism. The following four notes, for instance, resemble those previously added in the French translation. As can be concluded from the examples, Rowland's unnecessary comments enclose clear Protestant references and criticism to Spanish religion and customs from an ironic viewpoint. Rowland even changes French as he suppresses a reference to the saints, and in the last example he includes the term "heresy":

There is an order in that country that when any More doth committe any heinous offence, to strip him naked and being bound with his hands and his knees together to bast him with hote droppes of burning Larde (Rowland 1586: 13)

Lon larde les Mores en Espagne avec le degout de lard ardant (Saugrain 1561: 7)

Blind men stand there in Church porches ready to be hired for money to recite any prayer (Rowland 1586: 21)

En luy donnant un denier ilvous dira l'orai son de quel saint que vous voudrez, & telle pourra estre qui contiendra plus de doux cens vers (Saugrain 1561: 10-11)

Lazaro was a good Christian beleeving that all goodnesse came from God (Rowland 1586: 46)

Lazare estoit bon Chrestien puis qu'il estimoit le bien luy venir par la main de Dieu (Saugrain 1561: 22)

A man may scape in Spaine the hands of the officers of Iustice if they can flee into some church so it be not theft, treason or religion (Rowland 1586: 116)

Tout homme peut eschapper la main de iustice en Espagne se reitrant en quelque Eglise si ce n'est pour auoiur faict larrecin, trahison, ou pour cas d'heresie (Saugrain 1561: 55)

An exhaustive analysis of Rowland's translation shows that expansions constitute an essential feature of the English text. This rendering strategy comprises a valuable divergence in viewpoint, and as a consequence, considerable fluctuations arise between the

features of English and Spanish picaresque novels. Elizabethan translators commonly resort to expansions in order to enhance the original text, not only to ameliorate linguistic and cultural translation problems, but also because they simply love elaborating (Luttikhuisen 2001: 209). Elizabethan translators possess liberty to clear up obscurities and problems and, what is more, to simply embellish the text following their personal decisions and criteria, in an attempt to adapt the text to the target culture and language, to anglicize it. This fact also seems to be related to the “common Renaissance idea that identifies elegance with abundance” (Morini 2006: 66).

3. Analysis of expansions

The number of expansions identified in Rowland’s translation comprises 527 examples.¹¹ To begin with, expansions have been first classified as justified or non justified in an attempt to establish the translator’s norm. However, certain expansions possess such relevant features that they have been further arranged into other subgroups in order to enable easier classification and analysis. Thus, apart from justified and non justified expansions, tautologies, explanations and recreations have also been included. Tautologous expansions involve the repetition of an idea or concept; explanations are expansions which define the meaning of the source words; recreations comprise the addition of an element to enhance the text or to provide the translator’s viewpoint by means of a periphrasis. As this suggests, tautologies and recreations are frequently non justified, whereas explanations are usually justified expansions.

3.1. Justified expansions

As could be supposed, the inclusion of expansions may be justified on account of several reasons, principally linguistic and cultural. The number of justified expansions seems almost irrelevant in this analysis, 4.7%, which demonstrates that Rowland prefers the inclusion of non justified additions to provide his own viewpoint about the narrative, as examples will show.

¹¹ For the contrastive analysis I used Rowland’s translation (1586) and Francisco Rico’s edition (2000). The latter is arguably the best current Spanish edition of *El Lazarillo de Tormes*.

- (1) por ensalzar la fe, había muerto en los Gelves (Rico 2000: 21) [fol. A 6.r]¹²
in maintaining the faith of **Jesus Christ against Turkes**, died in the battle of Gelves (Rowland 1586: 14)

In example 1 the English reader is supposed not to be aware of the cultural and historical reference in the terms “fe” and “Gelves”. The expansion attempts to explain the historical situation; one of the battles between Christians and Turks in the Mediterranean was at Gelves (1510). There was political, commercial and religious rivalry in the sixteenth century, for Turkish Muslim pirates operated in the English Channel. The added prepositional phrase modifies the noun “faith”; however, the context is actually clarified only by means of the addition of the noun “battle”. The English translator also reveals his Protestant ideology as he adds a Protestant qualification. “the faith of Jesus Christ.” The incorporation of the French translation may be traced in these words: “en la bataille des gelues” (Saugrain 1561: 7) which are not in the Spanish.

3.2. Explanations

Rowland uses the strategy of explanation to clarify and define notions unfamiliar to an English reader. Explanations only comprise 1.9% of the examples analysed. However, the same strategy could have been included in other examples throughout the text illuminating significant differences between English and Spanish languages and cultures.

- (2) en esta ciudad andan muchos ladrones que siendo de noche *capean* (Rico 2000: 79) [fol. C 4.r]
ruffians and theeves doe meete men every night *to spoyle them of their cloakes and caps* in the darke (Rowland 1586: 70)

In example 2 Rowland uses an explanation to render the verb “capean” as no equivalent verb exists in the English language. The addition of a note invented by himself is hardly surprising: “the streets are narrow & darke few lanternes are hong out” (Rowland 1586: 70). Spain does not seem an attractive country to English people. Crofts remarks that: “Spain had an evil reputation with travellers of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and few

¹² As Rowland is judged to have used the Spanish edition published in Antwerp in 1554, I also include references to the pages of that edition between square brackets.

visited the country except for reasons of diplomacy and commerce" (1924: v). Once again Rowland seems to persist in his anti-Spanish propaganda.

3.3. *Non justified expansions*

Interestingly enough, the greatest number of examples belongs to this group (93.3% including tautologies and recreations, which will be discussed in the following sections). Non justified expansions (27.3%) are frequently of Rowland's own creation, for he seems to have attempted to anglicize, enhance and embellish the text.¹³

The influence of the previous French translation may also be found in some examples. Rowland copies or rewrites certain expansions included by Saugrain. As to this point, it is worth noting that French translators in the 16 and 17th centuries are said to include non justified expansions and reductions, despite the fact that when so doing source texts could be slightly modified and even distorted (Spier 1990: 3).

- (3) "¿pensaréis que este mi mozo es algún inocente? Pues oíd si el demonio ensayara otra tal hazaña" (Rico 2000: 34) [fol. A 10.r]
do not think that his childe is some innocent *and alwayes at the ende of his tale these would be his words* who unlesse it were the devil him selfe could have found out such rare pranques? (Rowland 1586: 24)

The clause added in example 3 seems to corroborate Elizabethan preference for providing as many details as possible concerning context. Moreover, Rowland does not seem comfortable with Spanish syntax or direct speech.

- (4) ella me encomendó a él, diciéndole como era hijo de buen hombre (Rico 2000: 21) [fol.A.6.r]
she *being right wel content* most earnestly prayed him to be good master unto me, because I was a honest mans sonne (Rowland 1586: 14)

¹³ Guadalupe Martínez in her edition of James Mabbe's translation of *La Celestina* clearly explains the reasons for the inclusion of these strategies in translations from Spanish books of XVI and XVII centuries. Leaving aside the cultural and linguistic reasons, this author argues that expansions were included because the translator "simply found some stimulus in a Spanish sentence or word to give free rein to this natural impulse to enlarge, or embroider a speech with copious additions and witticisms" (1965: 59).

In example 4 Rowland interprets the main character's feelings and states his own personal viewpoint. Lazaro's mother is supposed to be glad to provide her son a hopeful future as she commends him to the blind master.

- (5) señor, no lo disimules; mas luego muestra aquí el milagro (Rico 2000: 119) [fol. D 7.r]
 good Lorde, that thou will not disseemble it, *but immediately, that it may please thee* to shewe here a miracle (Rowland 1586: 108)

This expansion resembles the French words: "incontinent te plaise icy monstrer miracle" (Saugrain 1561: 52). This emphasis on the deceit being practiced could be anti-Catholic. Apart from that, Luttikhuisen argues that the common inclusion of adverbs and past participles in Elizabethan translations results in a "liveliness that carried the reader into a real imagination unsuggested by the original", in accurate concrete images (1987: 179).

3.4. Tautologies

The number of tautologies is highly relevant (49.1% of the number of expansions), which indicates that the translator elaborates his own viewpoint by emphasising specific aspects of the text. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tautologies are frequent; the source text is embellished with witticisms (Classe 2000: 819). What is more, both synonyms and binary expressions are used to render individual ideas from the original in Elizabethan translations (Matthiessen 1931: 4; Murillo 1994: 353; Luttikhuisen 1987: 179).

- (6) era el ciego para con éste un Alejandro Magno, con ser *la misma avaricia* (Rico 2000: 47) [fol. B 3.r]
 the blynde man was in comparison of his master, a great Alexander. Howbeit, hee was so *covetous and niggarde* (Rowland 1586: 39)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* records a similar example in the year 1548.¹⁴ It is worth highlighting that this gemination produces a transposition, for a noun becomes two adjectives in the target text.

- (7) gente llana y *honrada*, y tal bien proveída, que no me la depare Dios peor cuando buena sed tuviere (Rico 2000: 128) [fol. D 10.r]

¹⁴ Hall. *Chron. Ed.IV 217b*. "An extreme niggard and covetous extorcioner."

plaine people *full of honestie and gentle curteise*, and so well provided all times, that I woulde to God when I am thurst, I might alwayes meete with such men (Rowland 1586: 125)

The influence of the French translation may be clearly traced in example 7 (Saugrain 1561: 59). The number of added doublets is notable in Rowland's translation as it cannot be ignored that during the Elizabethan period nouns, adjectives and even verbs often appear in pairs (Luttikhuisen 1987: 179).

- (8) Andando así discurriendo de puerta en puerta, con harto poco remedio, porque ya la caridad se subió al cielo (Rico 2000: 72) [fol. C1.r]
But now I demanding almes from dore to dore *for Gods sake*, I found little remedy, for charitie had then ascended up to heaven (Rowland 1586: 62)

The expansion in this example is split and seems to add a sarcastic religious reference attacking an allegedly Christian country. The expansion emphasises the fact that Lázaro is begging in order to acquire food and to be able to aid his master, who is a church goer.

3.5. Recreations

Recreation is a highly frequent type of expansion in Rowland's translation (about 16.9% of the whole number of expansions); it is the clearest example of how he attempts to enhance the target text with witticisms and similar strategies. The translator rewrites the source words by providing his own personal comments.

- (9) Mas turóme poco, que *en los tragos* conocía la falta (Rico 2000: 31) [fol. A 8.r]
 but that happy time continued but *a while for I was not wont to leave so little behinde mee*, that he might soone espie the faulte *as in deede immediately hee did mistrust the whole matter wherfore hee began a newe order* (Rowland 1586: 22)

In example 9 a prepositional phrase becomes a complex clause that is split. In order to enhance the text Rowland adds two clauses in which he conveys his personal viewpoint and explains what wine means for Lázaro. The first clause states that he drinks as much wine as possible, whereas the second one points out that the blind man is conscious of the trick.

- (10) mas de que vi que su venida mejoraba el comer *fuile queriendo bien* (Rico 2000: 17) [fol. A.5.r]
 but after that I once perceiving how only by his resort our fare was so well amended *I could by no means finde in my heart to hate him, but rather beare him good will, reioyaing to see him* (Rowland 1586: 11)

The expansion in example 10 implies a transposition and a modulation, a change in the grammar structure and in the point of view, both of which contribute to focus on Lazaro’s positive love of his black stepfather. Rowland seems to enhance the source text words.

- (11) tomaba una paja, de las que aun asaz no había en casa y salía a la puerta escarbando *los que nada entre sí tenían* (Rico 2000: 94) [fol. C 10.r]
 he was wonte to take a straw in his hand, wheref also there was wante in our house, and standing out the dore, would therewith picke *those which had little neede of picking for any thing that had stucke in them with eating* (Rowland 1586: 85)

In example 11 the expansion results in an alliteration between the terms “picke” and “picking” and a pun between “wonte” and “wante”. Rowland has linked words to highlight the prevalence of famine in Spain. In addition, Rowland adds a note which does not exist in the French translation and explains the meaning of the source text: “small neede to picke his teeth for any meate he had eaten” (1586: 86).

4. Conclusions

The analysis of the data obtained in the analysis of expansions enables us to reach some conclusions as can be deduced from table 1.

Type of expansion	Number of examples	Percentage
justified expansions	25	4.7%
explanations	10	1.9%
non justified expansions	144	27.3%
tautologies	259	49.1%
recreations	89	16.9%

Table 1

To begin with, it is worth noting that few expansions (only 4.7%) are justified on the grounds of cultural and linguistic clarification. Explanations are restricted to a highly specific number of items (1.9%

of examples); their inclusion is justified to solve cultural or linguistic translation problems by means of periphrases.

By contrast, most expansions are non justified (27.3%) because their aim lay in the enhancement of the translation despite the semantic differences in meaning generated in the target text; the translator is believed to have included them following his own political and religious criteria and attempting to adapt it to the target language and culture. Rowland's Protestant ideas can be often traced in these examples.

Certain non justified expansions are specifically classified as recreations (16.9%). By means of adding certain grammatical elements the translator rewrites the source text, in an attempt to embroider the source text words as translators used to do. Some expansions are explicitations, highlighting a preference for providing an accurate and detailed description.

A notable number of tautologies (49.1%) is also observed in Rowland's translation. As can be supposed, this type of non justified expansions can even cause slight modifications in the target text, although core meaning is frequently preserved. Interestingly enough, these strategies appear to compensate for the omission of certain tautologies characterising the original Spanish anonymous author's style. Concerning tautologies the addition of geminations or binary groups constitutes another central feature of Rowland's translation. The practice could also be justified on the basis of their common occurrence in the English language of the Elizabethan period, or of Rowland's own invention.

In certain examples, mainly in non justified expansions, the influence of the French translation is noticed. Since Rowland uses it like a source text to elaborate his translation, some of its expansions, and even marginal notes, are copied literally. Most marginal notes in the target text are non justified as Rowland provides his own comments commonly paraphrasing French notes. These marginal notes often contribute to criticising Spain's religion and society. In any case, Saugrain himself exercises his own invention regarding the Spanish text. Actually, a preference for free translation starts to emerge in France in the mid-sixteenth century. In keeping, both the French and the English translations diverge from the original Spanish text.

To sum up, the great number of non justified expansions (93.3% of the analysed examples, including recreations and tautologies) implies one of the most significant features of Rowland's translation;

the translator's viewpoint is provided and enlarged in an attempt to anglicize the target text, to contribute to highlighting a Protestant propaganda, or only to embroider the text. A preference for detail, and for binary and repetitive structures is also evident. These strategies, as well as the impact of the French translation, seem to be embedded in this translation.

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North-East Yorkshire speech in the late seventeenth century: a phonological and orthographical evaluation of an anonymous printed broadside¹

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ABSTRACT

For years, it has been traditionally contended that George Meriton's *A Yorkshire Dialogue* (1683) represents the first dialectally valuable historical document for the linguistic evaluation of Yorkshire speech. Not only has it been commonly regarded as the forerunner of Yorkshire dialect poetry, but also as the foremost written record where Yorkshire regionalisms may be attested in the Early Modern period. Nevertheless, in 1673 Stephen Bulky issued at York an anonymous dialect broadside entitled "A Yorkshire Dialogue Between an Awd Wife, a Lass, and a Butcher." Linguistically ignored as it has been, this specimen is of particular interest for the domain of historical dialectology: on the one hand, it illuminates the linguistic history of the county at the time and supports the linguistic data yielded by Meriton's piece; on the other, it marks the beginnings of Yorkshire dialect literature. This paper seeks to examine selected features of north-east Yorkshire phonology as evidenced by non-standard spellings in this late seventeenth-century broadsheet. Furthermore, it endeavours to offer a diachronic framework so as to bridge the gap between Rolle's speech and Marshall's eighteenth-century provincialisms.

KEYWORDS: north-east Yorkshire speech, dialect phonology, Early Modern English dialectology, dialect literature, popular dialogues

1. Introduction

Among the six traditional northern English counties, the area of Yorkshire has received a notorious amount of linguistic attention. The foundation of its regional dialect society, the oldest in the

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country, in 1897 gave way to the compilation of abundant dialect material where linguistic traits proper to the county are exhaustively studied: glossaries rich in regional lexis or monographs on the local varieties of speech which provide valuable linguistic data from older periods.² In parallel with the vast majority of English counties, Yorkshire's records of speech and regional vocabulary date mainly from the nineteenth century. Not many specimens are available from previous stages and what little has been preserved springs, for the most part, from early glossaries as well as from stylised literary renderings of dialect traits in drama, fiction and poetry.³ Needless to say, a great many deal of such seventeenth and eighteenth-century renditions disclose features which are also proper to other northern counties and do not mirror Yorkshire linguistic nuances in particular.⁴ However, as is well-known, Yorkshire is the site of a wealthy dialect poetry tradition which reaches back to the seventeenth century. The volume and variety of its vernacular compositions largely exceed those of neighbouring areas at the time that they testify to a remarkable oral tradition which has apparently kept them from any kind of standard homogeneity.⁵ The dialect information contained in them is, undoubtedly, far more reliable than those regionalisms used for literary purposes.

The increasing archaeological and antiquarian interest in regional lexis shown by works like John Ray's *A Collection of English Words not Generally Used* (1674) went hand in hand with the emergence of dialect literature. Traditionally speaking, it has been argued that George Meriton's *A Yorkshire Dialogue* (1683) represents the first

² Just to name a few, Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* – EDD hereinafter – (1981 [1898-1905]) gathered Marshall (1796 [1788]) and Nicholson (1889) on the dialect of the East Riding; Atkinson (1868, 1876), Blakeborough (1898), Oxlee (1845) on the North Riding variety; and Addy (1888), Hutton (1781) as regards the West Riding. The appearance of these works came side by side with the growing development of dialect literature and the consolidation of vernacular-writing traditions.

³ Best (1857 [1641]) *Rural Economy in Yorkshire in 1641. Being the Farming and Account Books of Henry Best, of Elmswell, in the East Riding of the County of York* is one of the earliest sources for the study of Yorkshire dialect lexis. See García-Bermejo and Montgomery (2001: 358n2) for a summary of the earliest sources on Yorkshire dialects.

⁴ Among the literary works which contain dialect passages apparently suggestive of Yorkshire speech in the eighteenth century, we should refer to Henry Carey's ballad-opera *A Wonder, or An Honest Yorkshireman* (1736) whose song "An Honest Yorkshireman" has been reprinted in several dialect anthologies.

⁵ See Moorman (1916-1917: xix-xlii) for a brief and detailed account of the most relevant Yorkshire dialect specimens up to the turn of the twentieth century.

instance of proper dialect writing as regards Yorkshire speech and a seminal contribution to English dialect poetry. Nevertheless, Meriton's piece was preceded by a slightly earlier anonymous broadside issued at York in 1673 and reprinted by Rev. Walter W. Skeat in 1896: "A Yorkshire Dialogue between an Awd Wife, a Lass, and a Butcher".⁶ As is true of the 1683 piece, this ballad reflects a literary transcription of the linguistic details of the north-east by a supposed native to the area.⁷

2. The 1673 broadside: editions and formal characteristics

As far as is known, the anonymous "A Yorkshire Dialogue between an Awd Wife, a Lass, and a Butcher" was originally issued at York by Stephen Bulkby and preserved in a transcript by Sir Frederic Madden. Rev. Walter W. Skeat rescued it from oblivion and edited it for the first time in *Nine Specimens of English Dialects* (1896) for the English Dialect Society.⁸ Skeat added a glossary where regional words are explained and standard orthographical equivalents are provided for many of the alterations intended to suggest dialect sounds. Some errors as regards spelling and punctuation also seem to be corrected from the original.

This piece has not run into many editions. Actually, only F.W. Moorman, and W.J. Halliday & A.S. Umpleby included it in their verse anthologies: in *Yorkshire Dialect Poems (1673-1915)* and *Traditional Poems* printed for the Yorkshire Dialect Society in London (1916-1917), and in *The White Rose Garland of Yorkshire Dialect Verse*

⁶ Fox (2000: 71) comments on the existence of "Several specimens of dialect poetry [...] by an anonymous author of the late seventeenth century and never printed." He makes specific reference to 'A Lancashire Tale' and to "(a dialogue written in a Yorkshire dialect which is followed by a 'Clavis' explaining pronunciation and listing a glossary of 436 words" (Folger Library MS, V.a. 308). Wales (2006: 94-95) relates this broadside with the popular genre of the 'bucolic dialogue' which apparently stemmed from the 15th century pageant plays from the Wakefield area.

⁷ To my knowledge, no linguistic analysis or thorough evaluation has been made of this literary piece. Cowling (1915) refers to the specimen in his attempt to shed light upon the historical background of Hackness speech and draw evidence which may sustain his own theories. Craigie (1938: 84), Blake (1981: 109), Jewell (1994: 201) and Górlach (1999: 511) date the first *Yorkshire Dialogue* to 1673; no linguistic comments are made, though. McArthur (1992) localises the poem to the area of Northallerton although he calls into question the linguistic accuracy of the features depicted. Wales (2006: 95) makes a brief and rather vague comment on the phonetic distinctiveness of the vowel sounds represented: "The vowels are markedly northern: *Mack heast an' gang* ('Make haste and go')." See also Wales (2002).

⁸ This is the edition used for this paper; see Bibliography.

and Local and Folk-Lore Rhymes printed in London in 1949, respectively. Explanatory glosses to some of the words used in the poem are also appended, although they provide no further lexical or geographical information. In what follows, Skeat's edition is referred to as A, Moorman's version as B, and Halliday & Umpleby's reprint as C.

Differences among A, B and C arise mainly in terms of dialect spellings. As illustrated in the ensuing discussion, there are some orthographical modifications which very much deserve to be commented and balanced inasmuch as they evidence possible misprints or inaccurate renderings of regional pronunciations. Indeed, B tends to regularise orthography on the basis of a unified spelling system for "those writers who belong to one and the same dialect area" (Moorman 1916-1917: viii). It is, therefore, obvious that certain irregularities are emended as to the representation of the same sounds, even more so as B is not aimed at the philologist but intentionally addressed to a wider audience of native speakers of broad Yorkshire. In parallel, C admits to the possible linguistic inaccuracy of the variety represented in view of its unobservant care for phonetic transcription or absolute faithfulness to genuine sounds. Furthermore, it acknowledges B's gigantic labour of spelling normalisation to the extent that it is strictly respected all through the poem.

As is true of the literary genre of the ballad, this dialogue pictures a farming episode in an unaffected poetic style. The 'awd wife,' the lass and the butcher speak straightforwardly about an ox which has been gored by a bullock and has, consequently, broken his leg and fallen into the "Swine-trough." Their plain speech very well responds to the intimate and rustic canvas in which the seventy lines of the poem develop. In addition, the rhyming scheme of octosyllabic couplets points to a familiar and simple tone aided by the use of lexis specific to the central motif.

3. Linguistic analysis: a phonological and orthographical survey

Traditional literary attempts to render dialect speech in writing have always faced the problem of orthographical coherence. The large amount of linguistic differences between local and regional varieties makes any effort of transcription bound to contain errors. Besides, the absence of in-depth dialect treatises from the period has led linguists into notably hypothetical statements as uncertainty results

with regard to the sounds intended. Yet, it is obvious that the alteration of traditional orthography in order to portray local pronunciations is the principal source of evidence we can resort to, at least for an approximate realisation of what the linguistic panorama was centuries ago.

Spelling methods in this broadsheet are fairly coherent and not too much altered by second hands. On the whole, there is a remarkable orthographical consistency in the representation of each sound by a different symbol. This good phonetic notation is only apparently blurred by the fluctuation between the sequences <ea>, <æ>, <a> and <ay> for ME /a:/, and <u>, <eu> and <ua> for ME /o:/.⁹

In the following analysis, ME vowels and consonants will be presented in the traditional alphabetical order. Words gathered for discussion are classified according to their vowel and consonant etymology, and arranged into groups as regards their spelling and Present-day English (PdE) pronunciation according to Received Pronunciation (RP) standards. Rhymes are in some cases indicated with a view to supporting our discussion.

3.1. Short vowels

3.1.1. ME /a/, /a:/

Words spelt <e>; RP /æ/: *breckons* (x1) 'brackens'

This spelling gives a hint of the development of ME /a/ into an [e]-sound in some areas of Yks. when followed by a voiceless velar plosive.¹⁰ EDG (§24) indicates that "a in the combination a + k has gen. had the normal development, but it has become e in parts of w.

⁹ Generally accepted abbreviations for the name of English counties will be used. See Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1981[1898-1905]) (EDD). Wright's *English Dialect Grammar* (1981[1905]) will be referred to as EDG or EDG-In (Index). Likewise, references to Orton *et al.*'s *Survey of English Dialects* (1963) are made as SED. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is named OED. Conventional abbreviations for Old English, Middle English, Old Norse and Old French are also used: OE, ME, ON and OF respectively.

¹⁰ [e]-sounds are also collected in Yks. for words with similar phonetic contexts such as *make* or *take*; see EDG-In.

and sw. Yks. (...) Examples are *back*, *black*, *slack*, etc.”¹¹ Dobson (1968: §59 n2) explains this pronunciation in the light of a phonetic levelling between ME /a/ and ME /e/. OED records <e>-spellings for the standard *bracken* in Sc. and northern texts from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.

3.1.2. ME /a + l + cons./

(i) Words spelt <au>, <aw>

a. Words formerly containing ME /a + l + consonant (except /d/)/; RP /ɔː/: *bawks* (x1) (+*boakes* x1) ‘balks’, *rannel-bawke* (: *tawke*) (x1) ‘rannel-balk’, *gaults* (x1) ‘galts’, *tawke* (: *rannel-bawke*) (x1) ‘talk’

b. Words formerly containing northern ME /a + ld/, RP /əʊ/: *awd* (x6) ‘old’, *awde* (x1) ‘old’, *hauds* (x1) ‘holds’, *hawd* (x3) ‘hold’

As is well-known, these two groups of words clearly represent an ‘/l/-vocalisation’ process.¹² Spellings reveal a rounded [ɔː]-sound being apparently well widespread in the north-eastern areas of Yks. by 1673, at the time that ME /l/ was not retained after its vocalisation. Interestingly, *Gaults* might suggest that the liquid was actually kept, albeit the sound intended. Likewise, B and C transcribe *galts*. All editions may, therefore, mistakenly reproduce the sound in writing: *gautes* is documented in Best (1642) 141, and *gawts* in Meriton (1684) (EDD).¹³

(ii) Words spelt <e>; RP /ɔː/: *halterfull* (x1) ‘halterfull’

The [e]-sound suggested by <e> points to the change of ME /a/ into a mid-front vowel when followed by /l/ plus a voiceless alveolar plosive. According to EDG (§39), this strictly affects *halter* and morphological derivatives in the areas of Sc., n. sw. & s. Nhb., n. Dur., m. Cum., Lin., and sw. Yks. In fact, OED collects <e>-spellings for *halter* in the north of England during the fifteenth and sixteenth

¹¹ It seems, then, likely that ME /a/ in northern *bracken* did not undergo open-vowel lengthening. As a matter of fact, this shortened regional form was apparently perceived by southern speakers as a plural similar to *children* (OED). EDG (§23) considers the development of /a/ into [e] as characteristic also of Sc. and northern dialects in words such as *after*, *path*, *shadow*, etc.

¹² See Dobson (1968: §235), Brook (1975: §4.3) or Ekwall (1981: §42-§44), among others, about this process and the emergence of an [Oː]-sound.

¹³ B and C change <oa> in *boakes* into the regular digraph <au>. It seems, thus, a misprint for the rest of the samples affected by ‘/l/-vocalisation’ are regularly represented in A by means of <au> or <aw>.

centuries. As regards Yks. speech, it seems likely that this change was also operative in the variety represented: SED (I.3.17) records an [ɛ]-pronunciation for *halter* in almost all the Yks. localities surveyed.

3.1.3. ME /a + ŋg/

Words spelt <a>; RP /ɒ/: *lang* (: *gang*) (x1) 'long'

An ancient dialect trait stereotypical of northern English dialects as this is, the [a]-pronunciation suggested by the <a>-spelling was apparently common in ne. Yks at this time.¹⁴ EDG (§32) records [a]-sounds for *long* in ne., nnw., snw., e., nm., m. & se. Yks. Besides, the rhyming couplet between *lang* and *gang* supports our assumptions about this traditional feature. Also, Morris (1901: 18) accounts for this back unrounded vowel in east Yks.: "thus, *among*, *long*, *strong*, *wrong* are sounded *amang*, *lang*, *strang*, *wrang*."

3.1.4. Early ME /e + ŋg/ (< ON /e + ŋg/)

Words spelt <i>; RP /æ/: *hing* (x1) 'hang'

Contrary to the standard *hang* /æ/, the high-front sound represented by <i> testifies to the development of the northern variant *hing* as descendant of ON *hengja*. The original ON /e/ remained in early ME northern and north Midland dialects until a raised [ɪ] arose (Dobson 1968: §76n4). OED collects indeed <i>-spellings for *hang* in northern and north Midland texts from the thirteenth century. Surprisingly, EDG-In records no [ɪ]-pronunciation in northern speech. However, it is likely that raising did in fact take place in Yks.: in 1440 *York. Myst.* xxxvi 77 we read "ȝa, late hym hyng!" (OED).

3.1.5. ME /e+r/

Words spelt <ar>; RP /ɜ:/: *hard* (x1) 'heard', *wharnes* (: *harnes*) (x1) 'querns'

The use of <ar> in words that formerly had ME /er/ demonstrates that the levelling between ME /ar/ and ME /er/ under [aɪ] was fairly operative by the second half of the seventeenth century. These two words were possibly pronounced with [a:] although there is no clear spelling indicator as to whether [ɪ] was still retained or already lost (Dean 1961: §127). Nevertheless, EDG-In collects [ɪə] for *heard* in almost the totality of Yks., although Morris (1911: 57) comments that "The *e*-sound when followed by *r* is changed into long *a* in some

¹⁴ See Trudgill (1990: 20-22) about the northern and Scottish [a]-sound for southern *-ang*- [ɒ] - words.

words: for instance *serve*, *certainly*, *discern* are pronounced *sarve*, *sartainly*, *disarn*."

3.1.6. ME /i/

Words spelt <e>; RP /ɪ/: *smedy* (: *already*) (x1) 'smithy'

The process of vowel lowering – ME /i/ > [e] – which affects *smedy* is considered by Dobson (1968: §80) as characteristic of northern and south-western dialects. EDG (§68) refers to it as proper to Sc., n.Nhb., n.Cum., Dor. and w.Som. Although this lowered pronunciation is not recorded by EDG in any area of Yks., the rhyming couplet between *smedy* and *already* might suggest that both words had already the same vowel sound – [e] – in the variety represented by 1673.¹⁵

3.1.7. ME /o/

Words spelt <yu>; RP /ʌ/: *yune-head* (x1) 'oven-head'

This is an interesting sample of analysis which is strictly characteristic of the dialect represented in older times: "The old pronunciation of 'oven' was *yewn*; it is still occasionally heard." (Morris 1911: 63). The [jɪy-] pronunciation we assume for *yune* arose from a falling diphthong becoming rising (EDG: §248). However, this does not seem to be a direct phonetic process.¹⁶

Although the etymology of PdE *oven* goes back to OE *ofen*, it is possible that a lengthened variant *ōfen* might have existed. In fact, Kolb (1966: 76) traces the origin of this word to OE *ōfen* in his account of northern English sounds. As is well-known, ME /o:/ was fronted in northern speech to a half-close centralised rounded vowel [ø:] which developed into an [y:]-sound. By partial unrounding of the vowel, a diphthong [ɪy] arose (Dean 1961: §§84-87). A stress shift possibly gave way to the emergence of the rising diphthong

¹⁵ Wright (EDG: §45) recognises that "It seems to be a lowered form of i, which I sometimes appreciate as a kind of e sound and at other times as a kind of mixed vowel ə". As a matter of fact, Kolb (1966: 67, 69) records several instances of [ə] in Yks.: he gathers it in the north-western locality of Bedale for *brimming*; also in Bedale and Melsonby, in the North-west too, for *squirrel*. See also Morris (1901: 9) about *ready* and *steady* which become "*riddy*, and [...] *stiddy*." Furthermore, he claims that "The Yorkshire form *stiddy*, too, is interesting, for there is literary authority for it as early as from 1200-1250" (10).

¹⁶ No explanation is given by EDG or Morris (1911) about the exact phonetic reasons which triggered the emergence of a falling diphthong which became later rising. Cowling (1915) and Moorman (1916), on the contrary, account for this process. See nn 17, 18.

mentioned and the development of an initial [j] as a result: * [iɣ] > [iɣ̃] > [jiɣ̃].¹⁷ Whereas EDG-In and Morris (1911: 63) identify the archaic pronunciation of *oven* with “[jiun]” in ne.Yks, Kolb (1966: 77) recognises a lengthened variant – “[jiu:n]” – in some localities of eastern and northern Yks, as Cowling (1915: §161) and Moorman (1916: 68) do for Hackness and the North and East Ridings respectively.¹⁸ Yet, it seems likely that an [iʊ]-sound for ME /o:/ had not developed by this time. Indeed, the modern differentiation between the centring diphthongs [iə] and [iʊ] was not even established (Dean 1961: §89).

Should our hypothesis be true, the development of ME /o:/ in ne.Yks reached also a diphthongal stage – [iɣ̃] – in words which did not necessarily reveal the emergence of a rising diphthong by means of a stress shift, i.e. *blude*, *fule*, *tuke*, *luke*, *midden-pule*, *rude* or *tue* (see 3.2.4 below).

3.1.8. ME /o + r/

Words spelt <oa>; RP /ɔ:/: *moarne* (x1) ‘morn’

The digraph <oa> appears to indicate a levelling of ME /o+r/ and ME /ɔ:/ . Unfortunately, the significance of this cannot be evaluated fully because of the limited lexical pool we count on. Besides, standard spelling sequences are used for representing *horn*, i.e. *broad-*

¹⁷ Cowling (1915: §161) does also consider stress shift as a possible origin for this pronunciation. Indeed, he resorts to our particular sample in order to illustrate the ascendancy of this form. Nevertheless, his phonological hypothesis seems rather fuzzy as he does not apparently acknowledge unrounding of the [y:]-sound or even its emergence. He claims that “ME *ō* occurs as *ju*: (from *īu*, by stress-shifting in an initial diphthong) in *ju:n* [...] *oven*, where medial *v* became *u* after a back vowel [*oven* > *ōuen* > *εuən* > *iūən* > *ju:n*].”

¹⁸ Kolb’s map shows that this lengthened pronunciation is recorded in the localities of Melsonby, in the North; Skelton, Borrowby, Helmsley, Rillington and Easingwold, in the East and mid-East; in Pateley Bridge, in the mid-West; and in Nafferton, Newbald and Welwick, in the South-east. With the exception of Pateley-Bridge, the development of an [iʊ]-type diphthong is common to the East of the county. Hence, it is probable that the isogloss running between western and eastern Yks. as regards the pronunciation of *oven* could be somehow outlined by the end of the seventeenth century. Moorman (1916: 68) argues that “*jūn* (pronounced *yoön*) [...] is the commonest Yorkshire form, and is heard in many parts of the North and East Ridings, and in the West Riding as far west as the Washburn Valley”. However, he regards this, alongside other ten traditional Yks. forms, as a descendant of seventeenth-century *uvn*. Although no comment is provided about the approximate ascendancy of [j]-forms, it appears likely that Moorman dates them later in time, failing thus to recognise the written evidence supplied by our broadsheet.

horn'd, which reveals nothing about the quality or length of the vowel.¹⁹ However, Dean (1961: 117) demonstrates that [ʊə] is common in the northern area of Yks. in words descending from ME /o+rn/. His suggestion, albeit similar scanty evidence, also reveals this phonetic levelling for *moarn(e)*. Furthermore, Cowling (1915: §118) argues that this process was likely to have operated fully by 1673 in the light of the digraph used: "The change probably took place before 1673, for the Yorkshire Dialogue of that date spells 'morn' as *moarne*. This Early Modern \bar{o} has developed, like ME \bar{o} , to u•ə."

3.1.9. ME /u/

Words spelt <ou>; RP /ʌ/: *oumar* (x1) (< OF *umbre*) 'umber'

As is true of words such as *cum* or *wurrye* (see 3.6 below), the digraph <ou> might point to an [ʊ]-pronunciation suggestive of the failure of ME /u/ to unround and lower into /ʌ/. This gave way to a widespread distribution of [ʊ]-forms in northern dialects (Wells 1982: §4.4.2). The introduction of <ou> as a means to represent this sound may give a hint of the author's etymological awareness as regards this sample.²⁰ Indeed, the French sequence <ou>-spellings in renderings of dialectal speech for the standard *umber*.

3.2. Long vowels

3.2.1. ME /a:/

Although the words here under discussion do not all stem from the same etymological source, they are considered together as they share the same development in ne.Yks. A distinction as regards spellings is made.

(i) Words spelt <ea>

a. OE /a:/; RP /əʊ/: *deaugh* (x1) 'dough', *gea* (x1) (+*go* x1) 'go', *heame* (x1) 'home'

b. OF /a/ lengthened; RP /eɪ/: *heast* (x1) (+*haest* x1) 'haste'

¹⁹ B and C changed, perhaps mistakenly, *moarne* into *morn*.

²⁰ See Scragg (1974: 79-80), among others, about the origin of this spelling.

(ii) Words spelt <a>

a. OE /a:/: RP /əʊ/, /wʌn/: *na* (x1) 'no', *rape* (x1) 'rope', *sa* (x1) 'so', *yelk ane* (x1) (+ *ilk yean* x1) 'each one'

b. ON /a:/: Sc. /əʊ/, /e/ (RP /ɒ/): *fra* (x3) (+ *fre* x2) 'from'

(iii) Words spelt <ae>

OF /a/ lengthened; RP /eɪ/: *aebles* (x1) 'ables', *haest* (x1) (+ *heast* x1) 'haste'

(iv) Words spelt <ay>

OE /a/ lengthened; RP /u:/: *wayem-tow* (x1) 'womb-tow'

(v) Words spelt <y->

OE /a:/: in initial position; RP /wʌn/: *ilk yean* (x1) (+ *yelk ane* x1) 'each one'

It is clear from the above that the orthographical representation of ME /a:/: is varied and apparently misleading in this broadsheet. We observe that words with ME /a:/: stemmed from lengthening of OE /a/ and OF /a/ are transcribed according to <ae>, <ea> or <ay> – *aebles*, *heast*, *haest*, *wayem-tow* –, whereas those which descend from OE /a:/: and ON /a:/: are more regularly represented with <a> or <ea>. Indeed, there seems to be a preference for these two sequences, being <a> the most frequent. In the light of the corrections made in B and C, it might be interestingly concluded that both <a> and <ea> are the symbols which more closely represent the phonetic reflexes of ME /a:/: in ne.Yks.²¹ It is, therefore, probable that the digraphs <ae> and <ay> – *aebles*, *haest* and *wayem* – are misprints of other sequences.

Too much has been written about the northern lack of rounding – OE /a:/: > ME /a:/: – and the subsequent development of ME /a:/: in

²¹ B and C reveal, on the one hand, an orthographical normalisation by means of the digraph <ea>: *deaugh* is replaced by *deagh*; *haest* is printed as *heast*; and *wayem* is accordingly changed into *weam*. Also, *aebles* is changed for *aibles*; *fra* is substituted by *frae*/*frae* except once; and *fre* by *frae* as well. Both *ilk yean* and *yelk ane* are represented as *il Kane*, at the time that *sa* is substituted by *sae*. We observe that <ae> was not regarded as a suitable sequence for representing *ables*, that the inconsistent symbolisation of *one* is regularised by means of <a>-spellings, and also that *sae*, *frae*/*frae* must be printing mistakes for <ea>.

northern dialects.²² It is a common assumption that a centring diphthong [ɪə] arose in ne.Yks (Dean 1961: §50). In view of its orthographical representation, it is probable that <a>-spellings stand for another type of sound. Indeed, <ea>-sequences reveal that the developments of ME /a:/ and ME /ɛ:/ were levelled already by 1673 under the diphthong mentioned. Thus, words spelt with <a> “must reflect the ancestors of the non-traditional forms that are so common today,” namely [ɛə] (Dean 1961: §44). As far as *yea*n is concerned, a pronunciation [jɪən] seems to be indicated. Although not considered as traditional in Yks., the existence of [jɪ]-forms indicates that they date back at least to the second half of the seventeenth century.

3.2.2. ME /a: + r/ (< ON /a/ lengthened)

Words spelt <ay>; RP /ɔ:/: *swayr* (x1) (< ON *svara*) ‘sware’, ‘swore’²³
 The reflex of northern ME /a:/ in *swayr* seemingly indicates an intermediate stage in the emergence of the centring diphthongs [ɛə] and, less possibly, [ɪə]. The digraph <ay> probably reflects the phonetic ancestor of modern non-traditional forms too. In fact, B and C emend this sequence and *swayr* appears as *sware*. As a result, it is thus likely that ME /a:+r/ had reached an [ɛ:]<-type sound round the second half of the seventeenth century, later developing into [ɛə] through the vocalisation of /r/. It is rather difficult to determine if [ə] could have developed at this time, since <ayr> or <ar>-spellings reveal nothing about that. EDG-In records [ɛə] in e. & se. Yks. for *swore*.

²² About the development of northern ME /a:/ see EDG (§121), Wyld (1956: 194-196), Dobson (1968, vol. 2: §98-§100), Wakelin (1977: 107-108) and García-Bermejo (2008), among others. Rydland (1992) gives a detailed description of [ea]-diphthongs in northern English. For a full and thorough description of this process in Yks. speech, consult Dean (1961: §33-§60). Morris (1911: 60) supplies some hints about the reflexes of ME /a:/ in eastern Yks. words such as *who*, *so*, *two*, etc. Also, Kolb (1966: 137-151) outlines this development in words like *spade*, *gable*, *grave*, *bacon*, etc.

²³ From an etymological perspective, PdE *swore* descends from OE /o:/. However, dialect forms with <a> might hardly stem from a rounded sound in ME. The ON etymological counterpart *svara* developed into *sware* with the meaning ‘to answer.’ It is somehow possible that the spelling variants with <a> might be related with the ON stem, even more so as the meaning is not here clearly defined: “For when a hard in what a twittar/ Yar poor Owse lay, he took his Flayle,/ An’ hang’t by th’ Swypple on a nayle./ An teuk a Mell fra th’ top o’ th’ Wharnes,/ An’ *swayr* hee’ d ding yar Owse i’ th’ Harnes” (36-40) [italics mine].

3.2.4. ME /o: /

(i) Words spelt <u(e)>; RP /ʌ/, /u:/, /ʊ/: *blude* (x3) 'blood', *fule* (x2) 'fool', *tuke* (x3) (+*teuk* x1) 'took', *luke* (x3) 'look', *midden-pule* (x1) 'midden-pool', *rude* (x1) 'rood', *tue* (x1) 'too'

(ii) Words spelt <eu>; RP /ʊ/, /u:/: *teuk* (x1) (+*tuke* x3) 'took', *teuth* (x1) 'tooth'

As it was previously outlined, ME /o:/ was fronted in northern dialects to a half-close centralised rounded vowel [ø:] which developed into an [y:]-sound.²⁴ The [ɪy] diphthong which arose by partial unrounding of the vowel seems to be the sound intended by the words of these two groups. In terms of orthography, the poem resorts to two different sequences in order to render this sound. Obviously, <eu> is more clearly suggestive of a closing diphthong [ɪʊ], whereas <u> hardly points to it.²⁵ However, the latter is far more numerous and consistently used than the former. It is quite possible that the author showed a preference for the somehow archaic French spelling <u> due mainly to the similarity between the reflex of French /ū/ and that of ME /o:/ in the dialect.²⁶ Contrarily,

²⁴ See Orton (1928-1929) for an alternative theory on the path of development of ME /o:/. He claims that the immediately preceding stage in the emergence of modern diphthongs – “[ɪu], [ɪə]” – is “[ɪu]”. Cowling (1915: §159) acknowledges the complicated path of change of this ME monophthong in northern and eastern Yorkshire varieties. In fact, he provides a rather complex and debatable explanation: “I believe ME *o* in North and East Yorkshire to have been a rounded diphthong, like the sound *œ̄* [...] Starting from *o*, the development of an *u*-glide would give *ou* as in Modern English. This *ou* was fronted, and the diphthong became the mixed lax rounded *öü*, afterwards partially unrounded to *œ̄ü*.”

²⁵ Although the centring [ɪə] has been the ultimate development of ME /o:/ in ne.Yks., it seems probable that it had not emerged by the second half of the seventeenth century as indicated by our evidence. Morris (1911: 61) shows that it was already widespread by the turn of the twentieth century: “*Oo* becomes *eea*, e.g. (look) *leeak*, (crook) *creeak*, (took) *teeak*, (fool) *feéal*, (soon) *seean*.” Likewise, SED (V.8.11) records [ɪə]-pronunciations for *cool* in the East of Yks.

²⁶ Dean (1961: §70-§90) gives a full descriptive account of the development of ME /o:/, French /ū/ and ME /eu/ in northern Yks.

B and C alternate the standard <oo> with the digraph <eu>; <u> is only used for *blude*.²⁷

(iii) Words spelt <ua>; RP /u:/, /ʊ/: *dua* (x1) 'do', *fuat* (: *to it*) (x1) 'foot'

The use of <ua> for *foot* as an orthographical transcription of the development of ME /o:/ is possibly a poetic device used to respect the rhyme scheme of the ballad. In fact, <ua> hardly stands for any of the reflexes of the long monophthong in ne.Yks. The author apparently attempts to represent a south-western sound, thus rhyming *fuat* with *to it*. However, A shows a misleading and actually mistaken rendering of such pronunciation, since <ua> might point to a kind of [ʊə]-diphthong and not to an [ɔɪ]-sound. This is the reason why B and C substitute this for *foot*.

Also, the digraph <ua> for *do* seems to be a misprint. First, no pronunciation of a diphthong with an approximately close starting-point [ʊ], which might be descendant of an [ʊə]-type sound, is recorded by EDG-In.²⁸ Second, B and C change, also mistakenly, this sequence for the standard spelling *do*. *Dua* does not, therefore, really suggest a pronunciation which might have ever existed in this area.

3.2.5. ME /o: + r/

Words spelt <ee>; RP /ɔ:/: *lear-deers* (: *Steers*) (x1) 'doors'

The course of evolution of ME /o: + r/ may have been slightly different in view of the evidence collected. The spelling sequence <ee> indicates an [i:]-type sound which might also emerge from the development we have assumed for ME /o:/. It is likely that the [y:] which descended from [ø:] was totally unrounded before /r/, thus easing the development of a falling diphthong *[ɪɪ] (< [iy] < [y:] which would later become [ɪə]). Hence, the developments of ME /o: + r/ and ME /e: + r/ were apparently levelled under this sound – *steers*: *lear-deers*. Although our samples are very few, our hypothesis is backed with the data collected by EDG-In where the pronunciation

²⁷ Preference for <oo>-spellings is evident as it is used in *fool*, *pool*, *rood*, *too* and *tooth*; <eu> is used consistently for *teuk* and *leuk*. Whatever the reasons for the orthographical emendations of B and C might have been, the literary transcription of ne.Yks. speech is not faithful as regards these words with <oo>. See EDG-In.

²⁸ EDG-In gathers [fʊəɪ] in e.Dor, [fʊɪt] in sw. & ms. Yks., whereas [fiət] is recorded in ne., e., m. & se. Yks. Likewise, [dɪə] is collected in ne., e. & nnw. Yks; [dɪʊ] appears to be common in sm., sw. Yks.

[dɪə(r)] is recorded in ne., e. & m.Yks.²⁹ Also, SED (V.1.8) collects [ɪə] for *door* in the north-eastern localities of Skelton and Egton. B and C respect this spelling, which might also be indicative of the process and sound we account for.

3.3. Diphthongs

ME /ai/ (ME /ei/)

Words spelt <ae>; RP /e/: *agaen* (x1) 'again', *gaen* (x1) 'gain'

As is true of the development of ME /a:/ (< OE /a:/) in northern dialects, a great deal of attention has also received that of ME /ai/. It is commonly accepted that ME /ai/ and ME /a:/ merged in their developments and were levelled under an [ɛ:] type sound (Dobson 1968: §§225-226). However, Dean (1961: §§67-69) convincingly argues that this generalised process of levelling did not actually take place in northern Yks. dialects owing mainly to the earlier monophthongisation of ME /ai/. As a matter of fact, he claims that it is probable that by the time [ɛə] (< ME /a:/) was raised to [eə] > [ɪə], [aə] (< ME /ai/) was raised to [æə] > [ɛə]. This might be the pronunciation intended by *agaen* and *gaen*. It should be recalled that <ae>-spellings must rather be misprints of <ea>: in B and C we find *agean* and the standard form *gain*.

3.4. Consonants

As far as consonant traits are concerned, the broadsheet displays a clearly more restricted series of dialectalisms which may shed light upon the historical linguistic scene of ne.Yks. We shall mention only a few. First, the evidence provided by <wh>-spellings in words such as *wharnes* and *whyas* (x1) 'quey' suggest that ME /kw/ was superseded by [hw], [ʍ]-pronunciations (Dobson 1968, vol. 2: §414), or even [w] (Morris 1911: 61). Second, *syke* (x1) 'such' demonstrates that the area was also characteristic for unpalatalised consonants.

²⁹ The modern centring diphthong could have arisen from *[ɪɪ] as a result of the vocalisation and later loss of /r/ and not as part of the development of the vowel. It is interesting to remark that Dean (1961: §90) concludes, in the light of certain rhymes between ME /ɛ: + r/ and ME /o: + r/ in Meriton's poem – *deaur: feare*, etc. –, that an [ɪə]-pronunciation was becoming widespread at this time. Indeed, he stresses that "Meriton could not anticipate a development of the future. It may be that [ɪy] became [ɪə] before *r* in advance of its development to [ɪə] in other positions." However, the spelling <ee> hardly suggests that such centring diphthong was beginning to be heard by 1673. See also Cowling (1915: §159).

Third, samples such as *ge* (x1) 'give' reveal a process of vocalisation of /v/ through assimilation in final position, giving way to a different pronunciation (EDG: §279, EDG-In). Also, vowel-less spellings, namely *th'* (x28), for the definite article point to a process of definite article reduction which seems common to Yks. and Lan. dialects (Jones 2002).³⁰ Finally, <y>-spellings in *yune-head*, *ilk yeon*, *yelk ane* indicate that a '/j/-formation' process was also operative.³¹

3.5. Further evidence

Side by side with the linguistic information provided by the orthographical evidence and rhymes above discussed, we must also account for other rhyming couplets which do also highlight phonological traits of ne.Yks.:

- *hurn* : *burn* reveals that ME /ir/ and ME /ur/ were levelled under an [əɪ]-type sound (Dean 1961: §121-§122).
- *swine-trough*: *cameril-hough* gives an indication of a voiceless fricative [-f] for ME /-χ/ in *hough*. In fact, SED (V.6.3) records [-f] for *dough* in the eastern localities of Egton and Newbald.

3.6. Miscellaneous traits

Table 1 shows other phonological features which are also common to other northern counties or simply point to non-standard pronunciations not specifically distinctive of the variety under discussion. The sounds suggested are indicated.

³⁰ A uses *th'* (x28) beside the standard *the* (x7), whereas B and C change *th'* for *t'* (x32) and the standard *the* is used three times. Although both *th'* and *t'* are clear markers of this process of definite article reduction, the pronunciation suggested might be distinct depending on the phonetic environment in which they occur. See Jones (2002, 2007) and Page-Verhoeff (2005).

³¹ Apart from these features, we also observe other aspects which are not so much interesting and do not actually yield relevant linguistic data about Yks. On the contrary, they are rather widespread and are considered as generally regional. Among them, we may refer to the loss of initial, intermediate or final consonants: ME /b/ (*cameril-hough* x1 'cambrel-hough', *oumar*), ME /d/ (*an* x14 'and', *len* x1 'lend'), ME /v/ (*e'en* x5 'even', *ne'er* x1 'never', *o'* x9 'of'), ME /ð/ (*wi'* x1 'with'), ME /n/ (*i'* x7 'in'), ME /h/ (*'im* x1 'him'). Common to some northern and Midland dialects, we record that medial ME /ð/ became [d]: *smedy* (EDG: §315).

<i>brocken</i> (x2) [ɒ] 'broken'	<i>cum</i> (x4) [ʊ] 'come'	<i>kepp</i> (x1) [e] 'keep'
<i>mack</i> (x2) [a] 'make'	<i>nat</i> (x1) [a] 'not'	<i>nu</i> (x1) [u:] 'now'
<i>syke</i> (x1) [i] 'such'	<i>tack</i> (x3) [a] 'take'	<i>than</i> (x4) [a] 'then'
<i>tongue</i> (: <i>hung</i>) (x1) [ʊ]	<i>wurrye</i> (x1) [ʊ] 'worry'	<i>whan</i> (x1) [a] 'when'

Table 1

4. Conclusion

The discussion offered in this paper renders supporting data to our knowledge of north-eastern Yorkshire phonology in the second half of the seventeenth century. The scarce information which has been provided to date is diachronically widened at the time that other features, like some of those yielded by Meriton's piece, are strongly corroborated by this earlier dialect specimen. The broadsheet does actually furnish written evidence and historical documentations of utmost value to our understanding of north-eastern Yorkshire phonological nuances as those suggested by *yune-head*, *lear-deers*, the levelling between ME /o + r/ and ME /ɔ:/ as shown by *moarne*, or the [ɪy]-preceding stage in the emergence of modern [ɪʊ]-diphthongs for words descending from ME /o:/. In parallel, it also adds ample evidence for other traits which highlight the path of change of some ME phonemes in the area like those represented by *cameril-hough*, *gaen*, *heast*, *hing* or *smedy*. On the other hand, a comparative assessment of the non-standard spellings used in three different reprints has lent aid to decide with confidence which sequences do probably respond to misprints or which respond to alien pronunciations – i.e. *fuat* or *fooit* – merely introduced for literary purposes.

In sum, this linguistically ignored broadside displays notoriously valuable information from a period earlier than most of other records of speech hitherto evaluated. It does help us indeed outline more precisely the linguistic ascendancy of the north-eastern Yorkshire variety in order to shed light upon the blurred dialect panorama of Early Modern England.

'A Yorkshire Dialogue between an Awd Wife, a Lass, and a Butcher' (1673)

AWD WIFE. Pretha now, Lass, gang into th' hurn,

An' fetch me heame a Skeel o' burn;

Na, pretha, Barne, mack heast an' gang;

I'se marr me deaugh, thou stayes sa lang.

LASS. Wyah, Gom, I'se gea, bad, for me pains,

5

You s' ge m'a frundel o' yar grains.

AWD W. My grains, me Barne? marry, not I;

Me draugh's for th' Gilts and Gaults i' th' Sty:

Than, preetha, luke i' th' Garth, and see What Owsen in the Stand-hecks be.	10
LASS. Blukrins! they'l put, I dare not gang, Outeen ya'l len ma th' great Leap-stang.	
AWD W. Tack th' Frugan, or th' awde Maolyn-shaft. Cum tyte agaen, and be not daft.	
LASS. Gom, th' Great Bull-segg, he's brocken /lowse, And he, he's hypt your broad-horn'd Owse; An' th' Owse is faln into the Swine-trough, I think hee's brocken his Cameril-hough.	15
AWD W. Whaw, whaw, mi Lass, make haest to th'Smedy, Hee's nu ded, for he rowts already; Hee's bow'n; O, how it boakes and stangs, His Lisk e'en bumps and bobbs wi' pangs. His Weazen-pipe's as dry as dust; His Dew-lapp's sweild, he cannot host.	20
He beales; tack the Barwhams of o' th' beams, An' fetch some Breckons fra the clames; Fre th' bawks, go fetch ma a wayem-tow; My Nowt's e'en wreckend; hee'l not dow. Een wellanerin for my Nowte; For syke a Musan ne'er was wrought.	25
Put the Whyes a-mel yon Stirks an' Steers, I' th' Oumar, an' sneck the lear-deers: See if Goff <i>Hyldroth</i> be gaen hand. Thou Helterfull, how dares ta stand?	30
LASS. Hee'l come belive, or aebles tittar; For when a hard in what a twittar Yar poor Owse lay, he took his Flayle, An' hang't by th' Swypple on a nayle. An teuk a Mell fra th' top o' th' Wharnes, An' swayr hee' d ding yar Owse i' th' Harnes;	35
Hee stack his Shackfork up i' th' Esins, An' tuke his Jerkin of o' th' Gresins: Than tuke his Mittans, reacht his Bill, An' of o' th' Yune-head tuke a Swill Ta kepp th' Owse blude in: Luke is cum.	40
AWD W: Than reach Thivel or a Strum, To stur his Blude; stand nat te tawke, Hing th' Reckans up o' th' Rannel-bawke. God ya god moarne, Goff: I's e'en fain, You'll put me Owse out o' his pain.	45
BUTCH. Hough-band him, tack thur weevils hine Fra th' Rape's end; this is not a Swine We kill, where ilk yeane hauds a fuat; I'se ready now, yelk ane luke tu it. Than 'Beef', a God's name, I now cry. Stretch out his legs, and let him lye Till I cum stick 'im: where's me Swill?	50
	55

Cum hither, Lass; hawd, hawd, hawd still.	
LASS. What mun I dua with Blude? BUTCH. Thou Fule, Team't down i' th' Garth, i' th' Midden-pule.	60
Good Beef, by th' messe; and when 'tis hung, I'se roule it down with Teuth an' Tongue, An' gobbl't down e'en till I wurrye.	
An' whan nest mell wee mack a Lurrye, A peece o' this fre the Kymlin brought	65
By th' Rude, 'twill be as good as ought.	
AWD W. Mawte-hearted Fule, I e'en cud greet Ta see me Owse dead at me feet.	
I thank ya, Goff; I'se wype me Eene, An' please ya tue. BUTCH. Wyah, Gom Gree	70

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Vulgar poesy and the music of disorder in *The Tempest*

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ABSTRACT

This article suggests that the twin principles of *The Tempest*, music and storm, bring together issues of class and race in an inventive topography whose connotational synergies enable a conceptual transfer to be made from Caliban, the figure of a disorderly colonial subject in Prospero's play, to the mariners and, beyond them, the potentially disorderly English subjects located outside the frame of Prospero's illusion. Read in the light, on the one hand, of contemporary ideas about music and order and the relationship between music, class and race and, on the other hand, of accounts of storm and mutiny in contemporary voyage reports, the play leaves considerably less securely contained the pressing threat of social disorder, masquerading as it does beneath and beside the colonial issue of race, than is often supposed.

KEYWORDS: George Puttenham, music, storm, social disorder, *The Tempest*

1. Introduction

Is *The Tempest* about domestic politics or colonialism? It may be true that the terms of the question propose a "spurious dichotomy" (Hadfield 1998: 242), but nonetheless recent readings of the play usually opt for one alternative or the other. Favouring the former, Orgel (1987: 25) sees an allegory of the class struggle, Greenblatt (1985: 143-158) an essay on the exercise of martial law, Dolan (1992) an inscription of anxieties about insubordinate domestic workers, and Schneider (1995) a stoical discourse on kingship. But it is still the latter alternative which claims more adepts so that, despite Skura's (1989) serious misgivings, Fuchs (1997: 45) regards the play's colonial interest as an axiom of contemporary criticism, while Maguire (2004: 215) writes unproblematically that "*The Tempest* investigates colonialism, the politics and ethics of assuming ownership of a land that is already inhabited." But might not the play be about both domestic politics *and* colonialism? Trevor R. Griffiths (1999: 45-51) has explained how in the late nineteenth century, in the wake of the

slavery debate and Darwinian evolutionism, “the virtual interchangeability of typifications of class and race [...] makes it particularly difficult to differentiate between Caliban as native, as proletarian, and as missing link.” Following this lead, I would like to suggest that the twin principles of *The Tempest*, music and storm, bring together issues of class and race in an inventive topography whose connotational synergies enable a conceptual transfer to be made from Caliban, the figure of a disorderly colonial subject in Prospero’s play, to the mariners and, beyond them, the potentially disorderly English subjects located outside the frame of Prospero’s illusion. In other words, masquerading beneath the colonial issue of race is the more pressing political threat of social disorder. After exploring the vexed relationship between music, race and class, chiefly as it transpires in George Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poetry*, the article will review three points of disorder in the play before reconsidering the play as a whole in the light of the inventive topography composed by music, storms and disorder in contemporary voyage reports, which together constitute one of *The Tempest*’s undisputed discursive contexts (see Barker and Hume 1985).

2. Puttenham’s cannibal and the problem with “vulgar poesy”

It is conventional to observe how, far from being a mere adjunct, *The Tempest*’s music is an integral part of the action and, in the form of song, of the dialogue. But apart from helping to configure the last word in Jacobean multi-media experiences, what are we to make of it? More than forty years ago, Rose Abdelnour Zimbardo argued that *The Tempest*’s theme was “the eternal conflict between order and chaos” and that Prospero’s music, “the very symbol of order,” enables him to control the island “almost completely through order and harmony – I say almost because he cannot wholly bring Caliban, the incarnation of chaos, into his system of order” (1963: 50-51). Yet by no means is all the music in the play Prospero’s; Caliban has his music too. If, then, there is a connection between music and order, it seems clear that the play does not contrast order (Prospero) with disorder (Caliban), but two competing forms of order, each of which might predictably cast the other as disorder or chaos.

Writing of the “Elizabethan scheme of things”, J.M. Nosworthy suggested that music was “no less essential to the overall pattern than the concepts of degree, the body politic, the elements

and humours, and the like" (qtd. Dunn 1969: 391). Music was at the heart of a cosmology which, deriving from Plato and Pythagoras and syncretised by Christian philosophers, notably Boethius, found that the universe was arranged in harmonious order and proportion. In response to Stephen Gosson's billious swipe at music in his *School of Abuse*, Thomas Lodge adjured him in 1579 to "looke upon the harmonie of the heavens? hang they not by Musike?" and to mark well "this heaue[n]ly concent, w^c is ful of perfectio[n], proceeding fro[m] aboue, drawing his original fro[m] aboue, drawing his original fro[m] the motion of y^e stars, fro[m] the agrement of the planets, fro[m] the whisteling winds & fro[m] al those celestial circles, where is ether perfit agreeme[n]t or any *Sumphonia*" (2000: 8, 9-10). Here Lodge appeals to *musica mundana*, one of the three types into which Boethius differentiated speculative music. *Musica mundana*, the universal harmony manifest in the movements of the heavenly bodies, the rhythm of the seasons, the music of the spheres, and so on, was used exhaustively as a trope throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Hollander 1961). This was due, among other reasons, to the analogical frame of mind which found correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm, correspondences which were licensed by Boethius's postulation of the two other types of speculative music, *musica humana* (the relationship between the parts of the body and the faculties of the soul) and *musica instrumentalis* (music-making as aesthetic activity). Thanks to such correspondences, Sir John Davies and Robert Burton both asserted the iatric power of music to cure physiological and mental disorders, a power that surfaces time and again in Shakespeare's romances (Dunn 1969: 392-396, 402-404). Meanwhile, the explanatory force of speculative music was sufficiently strong for it to underwrite much of the research and experimentation undertaken in the scientific revolution by the likes of Robert Hooke and Isaac Newton (Gouk 1999).

An apologist for iatric medicine's efficacy in treating the ailing body private, Thomas Lodge asked "how can we measure the debilitie of the patient but by the disordered motion of the pulse? is not man worse accompted of when he is most out of tune?" (2000: 8) He might well have asked the same of the body politic for, occupying an intermediate position between microcosm and macrocosm, the state was also treated by speculative music as "a harmonious organism" which, as Prospero and Shakespeare's Ulysses knew, could, like a stringed instrument, be tuned to the taste

of its rulers or untuned by social unrest (Hollander 1961: 47). Indeed, social harmony was a political aspiration whose realisation in Jacobean society meant the preservation of class order and respect for degree. Orderly society was a static hierarchy, in which each class was bound through obligations of service to those classes above it; and it was a harmonious hierarchy, too, which is why Sir Thomas Eliot had urged educators of the ruling class to “commend the perfect understanding of music, declaring how necessary it is for the better attaining the knowledge of a public weal: which is made of an order of estates and degrees, and, by reason thereof, containeth in it a perfect harmony” (qtd. Tillyard 1971: 110). Regardless of the extent to which the cosmological premises of the ideally harmonious body politic were actually believed by those who propounded them, *musica mundana* was a convenient and powerful metaphor for the ruling classes by whom, as J.W. Lever (1971: 5) wrote of the Elizabethan World Picture *in toto*, it was exploited as a “creed of absolutism [...] to bolster up a precarious monarchy which lacked a standing army or an efficient police force.” Thus, in Elizabethan and Jacobean society it was important to distinguish between music and noise and to cultivate harmony and proportion in line with the power élite’s prescriptions.

As indexes of divinity, harmony and proportion could be cultivated by the courtly for reasons of spiritual self-betterment – “harmony is in immortal souls” (*The Merchant of Venice* 5.1.63); as guarantees of the social status quo, they could be perfected through courtly musicianship in order to hive off its practitioners from the rest – deaf to harmony in, and because of, their “muddy vesture of decay” (ibid. 5.1.64). And of course, poetry’s kinship to music made of it another art whose mastery promised the attainment of quasi-divine harmony. In equal measure rhetorician, courtly encomiast, and English Castiglione, George Puttenham (1936: 64) was diligent in exploiting this socio-political potential of speculative music and its sister art poetry, or the “skill to speake & write harmonically.” Unsurprisingly, his chapter on rhetorical decorum or “decencie” – the quality which separates “deformitie” from beauty, the “vicious” from the “pleasaunt and bewtifull,” and which is achieved through “proportion” and “simmetry” – is followed by his long chapter “Of decency in behaviour.” However, the seams of Puttenham’s courtly rhetoric are forever bursting under the pressure of the very vulgar bodies his readers might have preferred kept at arm’s length, or out of sight altogether. His ambition to differentiate the courtly from the

rest on the grounds of poetic prowess, with Elizabeth herself as the pinnacle of political power, social status and poetic achievement (1936: 63) is badly undermined by his theory of linguistic evolution.

The standard aetiology of language – or the myth of the part played by rhetoric in man's progression from isolated existence in the forest to living in society in the city – as found in Cicero's *De Inventione rhetorica* (I.1-I.4), had been given heavy socio-political spin by Thomas Wilson in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553, 1560). The "good order" to which reason framed folk once they had emerged from their pre-lingual state was a manifestly static and hierarchical society founded on mutual obligations of service.

For what man, I pray you, being better able to maintain himself by valiant courage than by living in base subjection, would not rather look to rule like a lord than to live like an underling, if by reason he were not persuaded that it behooveth every man to live in his own vocation, and not to seek any higher room than whereunto was at the first appointed? Who would dig and delve from morn till evening? Who would travail and toil with the sweat of his brows? Yea, who would for his king's pleasure adventure and hazard his life, if wit had not so won men that they thought nothing more needful in this world, nor anything where unto they were more bounden, than here to live in their duty, and to train their whole life according to their calling? (1999: 75).

To adapt Canterbury's words (*Henry V* 1.2.183-4), "Therefore doth reason divide/ The state of man in divers functions." Those with no ties of service – the rogues, vagabonds and beggars; casual labourers and criminals (up to 30,000 in London by 1602); protestant sectaries; rural cottagers and squatters; itinerant traders (Hill 1991, 39-45); in short, the "masterless men" – were literally out of order and, unimpressed by reason, had degenerated to the savage state of the "woodwose", from which Wilson's ministers of rhetoric had originally rescued them. Figuratively and, in many cases, literally once again, they had retreated to the woods.

A Wilsonian social order is what Puttenham's *Arte* should have been glorifying and serving. Certainly his own myth of linguistic and then poetic evolution starts off conventionally enough:

The profession and use of Poesie is most ancient from the beginning, and not as manie erroneously suppose, after, but before any ciuil society was among men. For it is written that Poesie was th'originall cause and occasion of their first assemblies, when before the people remained in the

woods and mountains, vagrant and dispersed like the wild beasts, lawlesse and naked, or verie ill clad [...] so as they little diffred for their maner of life, from the very brute beasts of the field. (1936: 6)

But when he complements the Ciceronian-Wilsonian account of the origin of civil society with the Horatian, things begin to go awry:

Whereupon it is fayned that *Amphion* and *Orpheus*, two Poets of the first ages, one of them, to wit *Amphion*, builded vp cities, and reared walles with the stones that came in heapes to the sound of his harpe, figuring thereby the mollifying of hard and stonie hearts by his sweete and eloquent perswasion. And *Orpheus* assembled the wilde beasts to come in heards to hearken to his musicke, and by that meanes made them tame, implying thereby, how by his discreete and wholesome lessons vttered in harmonie and with melodious instruments he brought the rude and sauage people to a more ciuill and orderly life, nothing, as it seemeth, more preuailing or fit to redresse and edifie the cruell and sturdie courage of man then it. (1936: 6)

In the context of early modern racial and colonial discourse, it is pertinent to remark that some such Orphic strategy of getting “rude and savage people” to dance to Empire’s tune was actually being implemented by England’s proto-colonialists: for instance, Raleigh’s half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, equipped his ill-fated Newfoundland expedition of 1583 with “for solace of our people, and allurement of the Savages [...] musike in good variety: not omitting the least toyes, as Morris dancers, Hobby horse, and Maylike conceits to delight the Savage people, whom we intended to win by all fair meanes possible” (Hayes 1979: 29). Of course, such a program for delighting “the rude and savage” with what Gosson would consider as the devil’s instruments (Pollard 2004: 99) presupposes a sensitivity to harmony in non-European indigenous peoples which had already surfaced in Thomas More’s (1997: 124) account of the Utopians’ excellent musicianship (the “one thing [in which] doubtless they go exceeding far beyond us,” resembling and expressing so perfectly as it does “natural affections”) and, more recently, in Montaigne’s famous essay “Of the Caniballes” which praised their Anacreontics (1999: 312).

Puttenham’s problem is compounded in his chapter “How the wilde and sauage people used a naturall Poesie in versicle and rime as our vulgar is” (I.v), where on the one hand a direct link is forged between class and race, and on the other any distinction between

court and the vulgar on the grounds of musicality comes close to erasure. After driving a wedge between the non-rhyming verse of the Greeks and Romans and the more ancient, rhyming verse of the Hebrews and Chaldees, Puttenham aligns English rhyming verse with the latter and concludes, "it appeareth, that our vulgar running [=metrical] Poesie was common to all the nations of the world besides, whom the Latines and Greekes in special called barbarous. So as it was notwithstanding, the first and most ancient Poesie, and the most vniversall" (1936: 10). It is not clear why Puttenham wants to make respectable "our vulgar running poetry" if later he is to expatiate on the virtues of the artificial courtly sort. He may wish English to outstrip Greek and Latin in terms of venerability and universality, and thereby raise its stock in comparison with the contemporary Latin-derived languages of continental Europe; or, more practically, he may realize the impossibility of disinventing the vernacular, non-courtly verse so popular at all levels of society, for example, the bardic which Sir Philip Sidney records as lasting "to this day" (Vickers 1999: 240). However that may be, the drawback of aligning vulgar verse with the Rest of the World in opposition to Greeks and Latins is its consequent contiguity with the "barbarous" (in classical terms) or the "savage" (in Elizabethan terms). Puttenham is not original in positing a universal poesy predating classical poetry; indeed, Samuel Daniel, writing around 1603, speaks of the "number, measure, and harmony" of English verse, the "melody" of which is so "natural [...] and so universal, as it seems to be generally borne with all the nations of the world as an hereditary eloquence proper to all mankind" (Vickers 1999: 443). But Puttenham is interesting because his *Arte* is riven with just the tension between conflicting poetries and orders that underpins *The Tempest*.

Puttenham continues to shoot himself in the foot when explaining how the great age and universality of "vulgar running poesy"

is proved by certificate of marchants & trauellers, who by late nauigations haue surueyed the whole world and discovered large countries and strange peoples wild and sauage, affirming that the American, the Perusine, & the very Canniball do sing, and also say, their highest and holiest matters in certain riming versicles and not in prose (1936: 10)

Bending over backwards to demonstrate the universality of "vulgar Poesie," Puttenham casts about for evidence of its existence

elsewhere and comes up with the reports of travellers attesting to the rhymed songs of the indigenous peoples of the American continent. Inevitably, his cannibal draws us to Shakespeare's Caliban: even if the latter's name is not a conscious play on "cannibal", he is certainly a figure of indigenous alterity, and his crudely rhyming freedom chant (2.2.176-181) argues his kinship with Puttenham's other racial others and Montaigne's cannibals. But additionally, by linking English vulgar poetry with the poetry of savages, Puttenham provides the conditions for a conceptual transfer between the categories of race and class. For if the primary meaning of "vulgar" is "vernacular", it also connotes something like "plebeian" or "characteristic of the common sort" as it does, for example, in Puttenham's chapter "Of Ornament Poeticall" (1936: 138-139), where the nakedness associated with the savage or the indigenous is employed as an index of vulgarity. Not only that, but given the proximity of Puttenham's retelling of the Horatian myth of language, it is tempting to recall Horace's ode "Odi profanum vulgus et arceo" (3.1) which declares his Puttenhamian intention to use poetry to rise above the common rump of citizens in general and the rest of poets in particular.

To Puttenham's mind his ethnological analogues also prove

that our maner of vulgar Poesie is more ancient then the artificiall of the Greekes and Latines, ours comming by instinct of nature, which was before Art or obseruation, and vsed with the sauage and vnciuill, who were before all science or ciuilitie, euen as the naked by prioritie of time is before the clothed, and the ignorant before the learned. The naturall Poesie therefore being aided and amended by Art, and not vtterly altered or obscured, but some signe left of it, (as the Greekes and Latines have left none), is no lesse to be allowed and commended than theirs (1936: 10).

Puttenham's ascription to "instinct of nature" of the development of "vulgar" or "naturall Poesie" on the one hand, and his association of "instinct of nature" with man's evolutionary savage state of pre-social and pre-civil existence on the other, together suggest that in its origins vulgar poesy was a natural language, whose rhyming quality approximated it more to music than to formal, syntagmatic prose, which it emphatically was not, as he had previously been at pains to stress. The danger here for Puttenham's poetic ideology is that the vulgar poesy which he identifies as still existing in England, indeed as still underlying more artificial and courtly expression, belongs to,

is proper to, and harks back to a different, pre-rhetorical social order where, in place of the harmonious hierarchy of rigorously policed social positions, masterless men roamed in disorder like woodwoses. Puttenham's admission into his *Arte* of vulgar poesy is a chink offering a glimpse of that cacophonous disorder associated with potential agents of subversion such as common players and minstrels (see Pollard 2004: 304, 321-322) and on alarmingly close display in Ireland where the "idelnnes [of the Irish] makes them love liberty a bove all thinges, and likewise naturally to delight in musick" (Moryson 2001: 92). Despite itself, Puttenham's *Arte* traces no straightforward evolution from vulgarity, incivility and ineloquence to courtliness, civility and eloquence, no triumphant progress from disharmony and disorder to harmony and order. Disharmony and disorder still lurk, pulsing in the veins of the vulgar and palpable beneath the veneers of artificial poetry, one of the cultural mechanisms for the suppression of that whose complete eradication is impossible. And since, like woodwoses and savages, the masterless have their own rhyming verses to chant and may therefore be just as in tune with God's cosmic harmonies as Elizabethan sonneteers at court or, for that matter, moon-calves and, later, children of nature and idiot boys, perhaps the distinction is not between order and disorder at all, but between competing notions of order, each of which brands its rival as disorder.

3. Points of disorder

Puttenham's account of the origins of language feeds on the same nexus of ideas that ultimately issued in nineteenth-century evolutionary theories. It also looks forward to Matthew Arnold's distinction between Celtic literature on the one hand, and Greek and Latin literature on the other, the former infused, and infusing nature, with "charm" and "magic", the latter with "lightness and brightness" (1993: 187-192). More significantly, its proposed distinction between natural and artificial poesy is an avatar of the modern distinction between the semiotic and symbolic orders. As Terry Eagleton (1983: 190) reminds us, the semiotic "is not an *alternative* to the symbolic order, a language one could speak instead of 'normal' discourse: it is rather a process *within* our conventional sign-systems, which questions and transgresses their limits." The semiotic is therefore the linguistic equivalent of the fifth columnist, or the enemy within, an oppositional force which authority may seek to repress but cannot altogether eliminate since, as "a sort of residue

of the pre-Oedipal phase [it] can still be discerned as a kind of pulsional pressure within language itself" (Eagleton 1983: 188), much as Puttenham could still detect some signs of natural poesy beneath the emendations of the artificial. The semiotic is the symbolic order's thing of darkness which, Jekyll-like, it cannot help but acknowledge as sharing the same skin even when it would wish it away. The way Shakespeare's later plays are drawn towards romance can easily be taken as a yearning for Hélène Cixous' semiotic world inhabited by a "phantasmatical mingling of men, of males, of messieurs, of monarchs, princes, orphans, flowers, mothers, breasts" (qtd. Kanneh 1992: 141). More particularly, *The Tempest's* inscription of absent mothers – from banished Sycorax to Prospero's nameless wife (whose virtue his nervous locker-room humour jibes at [1.2.56-9]), and even to Alonso's consort, who did not journey to her daughter's wedding – is entirely consonant with a reading of the play which would see Prospero as intent on shoring up or restoring the symbolic order by, in Julia Kristeva's terms, "repressing instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother" (qtd. Furman 1988: 72). Prospero's suppression of Caliban is, in many ways, a repression of the instinctual, perhaps even of his own *id*, and, more generally, of the semiotic. This is implicit in the not altogether abortive attempts to instruct Caliban in Prospero's language, more explicit in the rough treatment to which he is continually subjected. It would be mistaken to regard Caliban's recalcitrance as evidence that he is "inherently unsuited to civilization" (Fuchs 1997: 53) for the play does not suggest any watertight dichotomy between civilization and savagery. The civilization which Caliban resists is Prospero's civilization; to make of it the only possible civilization or order of life is as misguided as to confuse Prospero's play with Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (see Barker and Hulme 1985: 199-203).

It was once customary to regard *The Tempest's* dramatic narrative as demonstrating Prospero's supreme ability to contain a number of threats against the order he represents, much as the play itself contains and apparently ridicules the alternative order cribbed from Montaigne and expounded by Gonzalo. Footling incompetent by name, if not in fact, Gonzalo muses about a "Golden Age" which inverts the patriarchal, feudalistic, hierarchical order preached by Wilson, imperfectly served George Puttenham and restored by Prospero after the temporary disorder and confusion wrought by usurper Antonio's efforts to compose a different political score, "set[ting]" in the process "all hearts i'th'state/ To what tune pleased

his ear" (1.2.84-5). Crucially, Gonzalo's ideal order dissolves the service nexus which simultaneously binds together and segregates Wilson's, Puttenham's and Prospero's classes. There would be no commerce, no law, no "letters" (education); no

... riches, poverty
And use of service, none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
No use of metal, corn, or wine or oil;
No occupation, all men idle, all;
And women, too – but innocent and pure;
No sovereignty – (2.1.156-62)

For all Sebastian and Antonio's ironizing on Gonzalo's aspiration to rule in his commonwealth, the radicalism of his manifesto is plain: an undoing of that civil society which rhetoric or eloquence, artificial or symbolic language had made possible, it is a blueprint for a different order. But it is a blueprint that is safely contained by Gonzalo's characterisation, undermined by his hearers' ironies, and dwarfed by the play's virtually all-consuming attention to Prospero's order, which rests on Caliban's servile carrying and fetching and whose restoration is represented symbolically by Ferdinand's enforced entry into log-carrying labour. Once restored on the political plane and safeguarded in perpetuity through Miranda's betrothal to Ferdinand, Prospero's order is consecrated in the celebratory masque, a cultural form which "presents the triumph of an aristocratic community," is predicated on "a belief in the hierarchy," and "overcome[s] and supersede[s]" the "world of disorder or vice" presented in the antimasque" (Orgel 1975: 40). All that remains for Prospero to do is foil the plot against his life, and then his play may end happily ever after. However, much recent criticism has argued that the play leaves disorder a good deal less contained than was supposed in the days when Prospero was still viewed as a benign magus and his farewell as Shakespeare's misty-eyed adieu to the stage. This section will, in the light of the foregoing discussion, comment on three points of tension between order and disorder.

Throughout the play it is Prospero's art which, like Puttenham's artificial language, staves off disorder or brings it into line; decked out in his magician's garb, the vestments of civility, he can bend the naked savage to his wishes. In this sense Prospero, often relying on

music to do the work of preserving order, is like Puttenham's and Lodge's Orpheus, driving men from the woods and making them live aright. But Prospero is not the play's only Orpheus. Another is Gonzalo who, after the Tunis/Carthage quibble, is sneered at by Antonio and Sebastian in the following terms:

ANTONIO: His word is more than the miraculous harp.
SEBASTIAN: He hath raised the wall, and houses too. (2.1.91-3)

Thus Gonzalo is figured as a hybrid of Orpheus (the harp) and Amphion (raising walls to his lute), appropriately enough as proponent of a new order. So how ludicrous is the honest counsellor's Utopian manifesto? True, it is roundly debunked on stage and not favoured by the pantaloonish connotations of its proponent's name. It is true, too, that we were in no doubt whom to believe when a few lines earlier Antonio had countered Gonzalo's observation of "lush and lusty" grass (a reiteration of the verdant acres sown as wish-fulfilling topics in countless voyage reports) with the matter-of-fact rejoinder, "The ground, indeed, is tawny" (2.1.57-9). But between that exchange and the Golden Age speech, there is a passage which weaves together the information about the shipwrecked party's previous business in Tunis and some rather tiresome, apparently aimless, yet extended bickering over whether their garments are as fresh and glossy as when first donned for Claribel's wedding, with Gonzalo insisting on their pristine condition, "a rarity [...] almost beyond credit" in view of the tempest, shipwreck, drenching, dousing and sanding the marooned party has undergone. If we, as audience, buy into the illusion of the storm and the shipwreck, then we must buy into necessary corollaries such as drenched costumes and silt-lined pockets (2.1.70-1), even if it is our imaginations which do the drenching. In other words, to join Antonio and Sebastian in scoffing at Gonzalo's pig-headed insistence on dry, neatly pressed garments, we are swallowing Prospero's illusion, assenting to his order and investing in the political arrangements his dramatic narrative promulgates.

However, if we take this quibbling metadramatically, Gonzalo suddenly becomes a paragon of clear-sightedness for, beyond the illusion, outside Prospero's play, the actors' costumes really are as dry and intact as when the curtain rose – unless we are to believe that at some point the actors were liberally doused on the stage with buckets of water and left to shiver their way through the rest of the

performance. It is Gonzalo's vista that momentarily dispels the illusion by reminding the audience of the material reality coexisting with the theatrical illusion they have bought in to. And at the very moment the audience is jolted into re-cognition of the real world, they may just entertain the thought that Prospero's order, belonging as it does to a different ontological realm from their own, hived off and contained within a theatre, is as artificial as the play being performed before their eyes. The containment at this juncture of Prospero's order is corresponded by the equal and opposite uncontainment of Gonzalo's disorder (from Prospero's viewpoint) or counter-order (from a neutral viewpoint). Converted momentarily into the wise fool, Gonzalo is privileged with insight into the true state of things, even if he is at a loss how to account for it. His subsequent Golden Age speech therefore gains a special authority since he is the only character who can see beyond Prospero's order and its theatrical representation to the real world beyond the illusion, a real world for which, as befits another Orpheus, his Utopia now becomes a rather more serious proposal.¹

Out of tune with Prospero's harmonies Caliban is not surprisingly "as disproportioned in his manners/ As in his shape" (5.1.294-5) for "[t]he proportions of the human body were praised as a visual realisation of musical harmony" (Panofsky 1983: 121). Yet he is a further incarnation of Orpheus for, in addition to chanting in "rhyming versicles" like Puttenham's savages, he shares with Orpheus the gift to summon music from the natural world around him:

... The isle is full of noises,
 Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not.
 Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
 Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
 That if I then had waked after long sleep,
 Will make me sleep again; (3.2.138-43).

¹ In his note on 2.1.65-6, Stephen Orgel refers us to Ariel's earlier answer to Prospero's question, "But are they, Ariel, safe?" Ariel reports: "Not a hair blemished./ On their sustaining garments not a blemish,/ But fresher than before" (1.2.218-20). According to Orgel, Ariel means the garments are "fresher"; as a consequence, in 2.1 Gonzalo would be in agreement with Ariel (and right), while Antonio "is presumably being perverse." My point is that both Gonzalo and Antonio are right, the former outside the frame of Prospero's illusion, the latter inside. Another possibility is that Ariel's previous answer to his master is an exercise in self-advertising crowing.

It is difficult to be certain how to interpret these lines. Does Caliban break down the island's circumambient "noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs" into two categories, namely the "thousand twangling instruments" and the "voices"? Or does he specify three categories, namely "noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs", "twangling instruments" and "voices"? The latter seems the better option since "twangling" can hardly be taken as a delightful noise, sound or air. Accordingly, Caliban is shown as being attuned to the island's own noises and able to find in them relief from the privations and pinchings of his menial existence. Like Orpheus, that is, he is able to find harmony, measure and proportion in the natural world, an order in contrast to which Prospero's music is so much "twangling". In other words, if Caliban is "disproportioned" in Prospero's order, Prospero is "twangling" in Caliban's. Indeed, the pull of the island's immanent order, whose harmonies Caliban is sensitive to, is so strong that Prospero's order is gradually disarmed by it, as proven by the debasement of his language. Even though Caliban's language has traditionally been rated as greater in poetic quality than Prospero's (e.g. Coleridge, qtd. Vaughan and Vaughan 1999: 89; Graves 1961: 426; Hughes 1992: 497), no attempts have been made to account for that superiority. Yet if Prospero is the arch-magus, the high-priest of artifice, the standard-bearer of civilization and order in the struggle against nature, savagery and disorder, why is his poetry at times so stilted, "stripped-down" (Ann Barton, qtd. Vaughan and Vaughan 1999: 21), broken and poor in imagery (Kermode 1954: lxxix-lxxx)? Perhaps Prospero is a man struggling to keep down seething rage or at the end of his tether: underlying his disharmonies is a mental and/or emotional disorder that the verse is barely able to contain. Or perhaps his fractured, impoverished poetry is a symptom of the contamination or decomposition of his order through contact with Caliban's, of the semiotic's infiltration of the symbolic and of a linguistic levelling of master and servant. In short, it may be that Prospero's language splinters under pressure from Puttenham's "natural poesy", the original "vulgar poesy" bursting through the repressive bonds of artificial poesy, as disorder is slowly but surely uncontained and Prospero, castaway in the "contact zone" (Pratt 1992), slips into uncontrollable acts of "cultural mimesis" (Whitehead 1997: 55) and teeters on the brink of going native or turning *déclassé*.

The third point of tension between order and disorder is the abrupt termination of Prospero's masque which renders abortive his

best efforts to seal the restoration of patriarchal class-society through a performance of the aristocracy's preferred cultural means of celebrating that order. Short-lived indeed is the promise of relief the masque held out to the members of the social élite which, from the first scene's technical *tour de force* of the wreck of the ship of state to this point in the play, has enjoyed no respite from figures and enactments of disorder and treachery. Prospero's masque cannot put the lid on the anti-masque conspirators, cannot quite contain all disorder, just as the political order he represents can never exist in harmony. By means of the masque, Prospero tries to put into practice Exeter's platitudinous, Ciceronian (*De Republica*, II. xlii), officially sanctioned conceit, according to which "government, though high and low and lower,/ Put into parts, doth keep in one consent [=harmony],/ congreeing in a full and natural close,/ Like music" (*Henry V*, 1.2.180-83).² As in Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, political and social order is a concord of players arranged by rank or degree, the harmony of which depends on each player knowing his part and sticking to it: if "degree is shaken", society's "string" becomes "untuned" and "discord follows" (*Troilus and Cressida* 1.3.101-110).³ Because Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo threaten to depart from their allotted social positions, Prospero is forced to cheat the masque of its "full and natural close," thereby leaving disorder uncontained. Certainly, Prospero's masque is not the first to be girt round with disorder; indeed, anti-masques deliberately evoked disorder as is the case with the music of the witches in Jonson's *Masque of Queens* (1609), a work contemporary with *The Tempest* and whose happy conclusion is "guided and controlled by the pacific virtue of the royal scholar" (Orgel 1987: 45) – by a regal Prospero, that is.

But Prospero's masque is not an anti-masque. Even if it were, the salient point regarding anti-masques is that their internal threat of disorder is always successfully repelled in a triumphant progression from "chaos to order and from disjunction to harmony" (Limon 1990: 10; see also Magnusson 1986: 61-2). In contrast, Prospero's masque is dispelled by a threat of disorder external to it. At this point, then, it would seem that the play sides with the forces in opposition to Prospero's order, although they will, of course, soon be

² Compare Puttenham (1936: 64): "the harmonically concents of the artificial Musicke."

³ Compare Thomas Hooker's received notion of law and order: "of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world" (qtd Tillyard 1972: 22).

brought roughly back into place. Interestingly, the prosody of Exeter's closing line and a foot reproduces in small a similar conflict between hegemonic aspirations to a self-serving order and a reality which won't quite toe the line. Shakespeare's verse does not concede Exeter's pyramidal, exploitative order the end-stopped "full and natural close" the good Bishop would have chosen. Most unlike music, Exeter's idea of government falls a full four feet short of the mark. Most unlike music, too, is the "noise" which accompanies the vanishing nymphs and reapers of Prospero's masque. "Strange, hollow and confused" (S.D. at 4.1.138), it is the music of a different order, possibly of the lower orders in the taverns (Dunn 1969: 402n23); it is an order which threatens to subvert Prospero's, or bring it to chaos, for "confusion" is the early modern equivalent for anarchy, the same anarchy below decks ("*A confused noise within*," S.D. at 1.1.57) into which Gonzalo had retreated at the height of the storm and from which he emerged with an anarchist's credo on his lips.

4. Music, storm and tumult

Ultimately, Prospero's plot ends prosperously for him; shaken, but not stirred, his order has been restored, its future safeguarded. To achieve his ends, Prospero uses his magic to unleash the natural world's meteorological counterpart to social and political disorder, namely, the storm. A collateral effect of the storm, which brings the usurping Antonio, Prospero's future son-in-law, and the rest to the island, is its temporary inversion of the social hierarchy when the mariners arrogate to themselves the power to command and be obeyed. The danger latent in this apparent inversion of authority is usually explained away on the grounds that it is merely an instance of that theatre of power whereby pockets of subversion (e.g. playhouses) are tolerated on the grounds that subversion is better contained than repressed (see Greenblatt 1988: 30, 64-65, 156), and risks of subversion (e.g. treasonous plots) are artificially generated and publicised in order to justify the sort of strong-arm, autocratic government the subverters allegedly contest (Breight 1990: 2-9). Alternatively, it is pointed out that the custom of the sea permitted mariners to take charge in adverse climatological conditions (Barker and Hulme 1985: 198), thus allowing the conclusion that the play's opening inversion of order is not subversive at all. But surely the significance of sailors taking power resides not so much in the misprision that they were effectively lording it over their superiors,

but in the way such temporary and allowed mutiny figured other possible acts of insubordination and consequently made insubordination a concept for people to harbour in their minds. *The Tempest's* discursive anchorage in voyage narratives, shot through as they were with simulacra of alternative polities (Hadfield 1998: 17-68), makes all the more plausible a reading of the opening scene that regards it as introducing disorder as the keynote of the play – a disorder whose eddies are still felt even when Prospero has restored his own order.

It may be true that Caliban, the island's principal agent of disorder, is finally brought to heel and dismissed, suitably chastened, to spring-clean Prospero's cell, yet Shakespeare's eyes, if not ours, are not on potentially subversive racial others. Caliban is a decoy diverting us from the play's more subversive agenda, namely the adumbration of a possible counter-order whose explicit representations in the form of pantaloonish Gonzalo's manifesto and the drunken transgression of power's sartorial code on the part of Stephano and Trinculo are risible, but whose postulates the play's superstructure, circumambient musicality and literary-contextual genesis conspire to evoke in great earnest. An instance of a similar rhetorical strategy is Thomas Carlyle's notorious "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question" (1848), written when Europe was rife with revolution. Carlyle believed the seed of revolution might be germinating closer to home among the rebellious Irish or the industrial working-class, the former racial, the latter socio-political, but both radical Others. As Simon Gikandi (1996: 55-65) has shown, Carlyle converts the Morant Bay black into the repository for all dangerous otherness, even if recent unrest among the descendants of slaves in faraway Jamaica hardly were no real menace for Britain's domestic integrity. By rallying the nation to stir itself in the face of a rhetorically contrived threat, Carlyle intends to lick Britain back into shape in order to contend efficiently with those forces lurking within its boundaries which might disrupt its wellbeing. Just as Morant Bay blacks represented no real threat to Carlyle's Britain, so Jacobean England was hardly imperilled by exotic others despite their not inconsiderable presence in London and Elizabeth I's earlier animadversion. *The Tempest's* flirtation with racial disorder is a diversionary tactic to wrest the élite's gaze from its inscription of the potentially far greater threat of class disorder.

In discussions of the play's protocolonial discursive contexts, what is often overlooked is that the anxieties latent in many voyage

narratives are invariably fuelled as much by the rabble of masterless men, press-ganged Irishmen, petty tradesmen down on their luck, and the rest below decks and behind the palisade as by the savages outside in the wilderness. Indeed, if martial law were ever enforced on protocolonial expeditions, it was on the boats themselves and in the colonists' own settlements, and with such an iron hand that Prospero's despotism appears the benignest of dictatorships (albeit Caliban's servitude would have earned his master three months of imprisonment according to Sir Roger Williams's [1979: 275-276] draconian disciplinary recommendations, the precise aim of which was to protect the natives from the first Roanoke colonists of 1585). In this regard, Richard Crashaw extolled the salutary effect upon colonists' souls of corporal punishment and repressive government, arguing that, if "subject to some pinching miseries and to a strict form of government and severe discipline, [they] do often become new men, even as it were cast in a new mould" (qtd. Brown 1985: 64). As accustomed to pinchings – figurative and real – as any Caliban,⁴ it was the common sort, pressed into service as sailors and colonial manpower, who generated most fear among the colonising aristocrats. And, as in Shakespeare's play, when the spectre of mutiny looms on board, voyage narratives often report the presence of music in the air, admonitory of imminent storms meteorological and social.

The Tempest's uncannily authentic rendering of contemporaneous maritime and colonial practices has often been remarked and its immediate sources recognised, chief among which is Strachey's "A True Reportory." Strachey's letter about the Bermuda storm, shipwreck and stranding certainly shares the fundamental premises of the play's plot, but what has been overlooked is the degree to which it is as much, or more, concerned with mutiny and disorder than the dramatic events with which it opens and the description of the islands themselves. This is just the opportunity maritime narratives afford to inscribe disorder through a network of related topics that might have made them attractive to the author of *The Tempest*. Like many other such narratives, Strachey's letter is forced to acknowledge the discontent and danger lodging among the

⁴ Bright (1990: 21) associates "pinching" specifically with the torture of conspirators; but travellers and voyagers such as William Webbe and William Lithgow were also often pinched literally by the Inquisition) or figuratively, as is the case with Raleigh and his men (Sell 2006: 145-54).

common sort as an ever-present threat to the stability of the ships of state and her Majesty's overseas settlements; and like other such narratives, Strachey's (1999: 298-302) weaves a leitmotif of disorder from the elements of music and storm. As the primordial storm was building, the winds sang and whistled "most unusually"; so horrific and hellish was the prelude to the tempest that "sences" were "overrunne" and "overmastered", in anticipation of the later rebel's attempts to "overrunne" authority and "overmaster" their governors. The terms used to describe how storms blew "in a restlesse tumult" or were "more outrageous" than their predecessors resonate with images of disorderly human conduct and obviously invest in the same metaphorical economy which can derive "roaring boys" from waves and speak of "ruffian billows" (2 *Henry IV*, 3.1.22). During the storms, the balance of power between "the better sort" and "the common sort" remained in tact, even though the former took their turn with bucket and pump in an instant of temporary levelling (see Greenblatt 1988: 149-54) where *The Tempest* shows a temporary inversion. It is once on land that the mutinies, heralded jointly by the music and the storm, break out. After its paradisaical description of the Bermudas, Strachey's report soon metamorphoses into an endless catalogue of "discontent", "disunion", "disobedience and rebellion"; and, of course, when the expedition finally makes it to the Jamestown colony, it is to find the living expression of the calamities consequent upon the sloth and riot of the "headlesse multitude." Significantly, Strachey makes the connection between real meteorological and figurative social storms when he reflects on the irony that God's merciful deliverance of the expedition from "the calamities of the Sea" had been corresponded with "dangers and divellish disquiets" once on land.

A similar combination of music, storm and immanent mutiny is found in Edward Hayes's account of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's Newfoundland expedition, the failure of which is ascribed in equal measure to Gilbert's capricious ineptitude and an unruly crew, joint catalysts of "confusion and disorder" (Hayes 1979: 25). Music, both figurative and real, is prominent in Hayes's sketch of the evening before the disastrous sequence of storms and shipwrecks commenced:

The evening was faire and pleasant, yet not without token of storme to ensue, and most part of this Wednesday night, like the Swanne that singeth before her death, they in the Admiral, or Delight, continued in

sounding of Trumpets, with Drummes, and Fifes: also winding the Cornets, Haughtboyes: and in the end of their jolitie, left with the battell and ringing of doleful knells. (Hayes 1979: 37)

The storm is portended as much by the music-making of the sailors as the immediately subsequent sighting of schools of porpoises. In harmony with the omens of nature, the melodies and merry-making of the common sort announce the imminent disorder and chaos nature will bring to the fleet, a disorder and chaos which, as Hayes's narrative continues, becomes an allegory of the tragic end of the expedition's general, Gilbert himself. As night drew on, Hayes reports, the sailors made "frivolous" claims to have heard "strange voyces [...] which scarred some from the helme." Less frivolous is Shakespeare's Boatswain's account of the "horrible" litany of "strange and several noises/ Of roaring, shrieking, howling, jingling chains/ And more diversity of sounds" which awoke him and his companions from their captivity under the hatches (5.1.233-238). For Northrop Frye (1965: 151), the mariners have spent "the action of the play in a world of hellish music"; their emergence from under the hatches would transform them, too, into Orphic revenants, much as their real-life counterparts, after voyaging to hell and back, returned dangerously laden with knowledge of other worlds, of poetic Cannibals and of alternative social harmonics for the Montaignes and Puttenhames of this world to admire or abjure. Meanwhile, Alonso is prescient enough to hear in meteorological dissonance an imminent modulation in the body politic's harmonies, which are restored on this occasion to its original key:

O, it is monstrous, monstrous!
Methought the billows spoke and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me, and the thunder –
That deep and dreadful organpipe – pronounced
The name of Prosper. (3.3.95-99)

I am not suggesting that Hayes's *Report* is another possible source of *The Tempest*, nor that Shakespeare had read it, or even heard of

Gilbert's Newfoundland expedition.⁵ What I do think is that proto-colonial voyage reports like Strachey's and Hayes's instantiate an inventive topography in which music, storm and disorder are mutually implicit and pregnant with each other, as encapsulated in Alonso's speech. This inventive topography is exploited in *The Tempest*, indeed is foregrounded by the omnipresence of music and the opening scene of mariners, storm and shipwreck, whose figurative significance of disorder lingers on as flotsam and jetsam in the audience's mind, even as the latter is invited to contemplate Prospero's virtuoso resolution of the "difficulties, discontentments, mutinies, conspiracies, sicknesses, mortalitie, spoylings, and wracks by sea" that arise as the play progresses. The quotation in the previous sentence is Hayes's (1979: 41) inventory of the disorder that attended Gilbert's expedition, yet it would serve pretty well as a statement of the bouts of subversion Prospero has to deal with in the play; leaving aside "sicknesses", the other items are, more or less manifestly, present: Caliban allegedly attempted to "spoil" Miranda; Trinculo and Stephano appear in the "stolen apparel" (s.d. at 5.1.258); and Prospero seems to come to terms with his own eventual "mortality".

Thus *The Tempest* foregrounds, indeed is founded upon, the topical elements of music and storm whose quiet collaboration in voyage narratives composes a leitmotif of disorder. And, to repeat, if the main agent of disorder in Prospero's play is Caliban, *The Tempest's* conversion of that leitmotif into its structural and atmospheric principal is an indication that the real threat of disorder lies in mutiny among the common sort, figured as the mariners whose presence frames Prospero's play. The conceptual leap from decoy Caliban to the mariners is facilitated by their common vulgar and/or savage musicality and their shared experience of pinchings; it is compelled by the metaphorical force of the tempest itself which,

⁵ Although the London literary grapevine must have buzzed with news of the death in the same storm of Stephen Parmenius, who had penned his promotional epic *De Navigatione* to promote the voyage alongside George Chapman's *De Guiana, Carmen Epicum* (Fuller 1995: 23-25). Curiously, Hayes implies that Gilbert put his books above the business of running a ship and protecting his men, much as Prospero's reading had distracted him from the business of government. Also, Prospero's irascibility twins him with Gilbert who tetchily boxed his cabin-boy's ears. There is, moreover, an eldritch coincidence in that Gilbert is drowned with "a book in his hand" (1979: 40-41) while Prospero promises to "drown my book" (5.1.57) once he no longer requires his art to keep disorder at bay.

interpreted in the context of voyage narratives, represents rebellion and chaos. If James I thought the tranquil precincts of the Blackfriars theatre or the Banqueting House would sequester him from the idle crowd of mutiny makers who frequented the outdoor public stages, "the ordinary places for masterless men to come together" and contrive their treasons (Pollard 2004: 321-322), Shakespeare proved him wrong: Prospero's dramatic narrative of totalitarian thaumaturgy is contained by the disquieting cadences of potential agents of disorder, and in this sense *The Tempest's* superstructure mimics the very "admir'd disorder" (*Macbeth* 3.4.111) which Prospero's play is concerned to allay. Like *Macbeth*, its subject is the political disorder attendant on the usurpation of power; unlike *Macbeth* it conjures the spectre of usurpation by all levels of society (nobles, common sorts, servants and slaves) and thus expands the First Witch's tempest-tossed, Aleppo-bound Tiger (*Macbeth* 1.3.) into the aesthetic, topical and ordering principle of the theatrical experience. Thus, just when the patronage of power had smuggled the theatre away from the common sorts, whom Antonio would slander as whoresons and insolent noise-makers (*Tempest* 1.1.42-43), Shakespeare contrived to contain the royal show of dramaturgical autocracy, of absolutist order, within a framing topography that reverberates with the music of vulgar disorder sounding just off-stage. Significantly perhaps, the play's epilogue is spoken *in persona*: premonitory of an untuned universe, autocratic Prospero's petition for indulgent applause temporarily subjugates him to the will of the demos assembled around and below him. At a stroke the public theatre is disclosed as first step on the path towards universal suffrage; the whoreson and vulgar Stephanos and Trinculos milling in the pit might never don the vestments of royalty, but their aesthetic jurisdiction is pregnant with the political sovereignty which will one day be theirs.

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Historicism, presentism and time: Middleton's *The Spanish Gypsy* and *A Game at Chess*

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ABSTRACT

Middleton's last two surviving plays, *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623) and *A Game at Chess* (1624), seem to belong to different universes, aesthetically and politically, discouraging any notion of Middleton's "late style" or "late period." One was written before, one after, the failure of negotiations for a dynastic marriage that would have united Habsburg and Stuart interests. Analysis and comparison of the two plays challenges the theoretical assumptions about "the temporal constant" in the work both of New Historicist and of Presentist critics.

KEYWORDS: Middleton, time, dynastic, ideological, Cervantes

Thomas Middleton's last two surviving plays are both representations of Spain. *The Spanish Gypsy* and *A Game at Chess* both include Spanish characters, both contain scenes set in Madrid, both make use of Spanish sources. Both were, as contemporary witnesses testify, great theatrical successes in London; both attracted the attention of the Stuart court. The two plays are thus linked to one another temporally and spatially (the time of their composition, and the fictive space represented). Nevertheless, in the almost four centuries since they were written few critics have acknowledged any similarity or relationship between the two plays; scholars who have admired and studied one have almost always ignored or discounted the other. *A Game at Chess* is described as historical, political, particularist, and satiric; *The Spanish Gypsy*, by contrast, has been praised as timeless, personal, pastoral, romantic. Recent gender criticism of *Gypsy* focuses on rape and marriage (Gossett 1984); recent gender criticism of *Game* focuses on castration, sodomy, and the rejection of marriage (Taylor 2000). Middleton and *A Game at Chess* dominate three influential books about political theatre in the 1620s: Heinemann's *Puritanism and Theatre*, Limon's *Dangerous*

Matter, Bromham and Bruzzi's *The Changeling and the Years of Crisis*.¹ None of them discusses the songs, dances, and heteronormative personal relationships of *The Spanish Gypsy*. An eyewitness of one of the first performances of *Game* called it "a foule iniury to Spayn" (Taylor and Lavagnino 2007b: 868); a recent critic of *Gypsy* describes it as "pro-Spanish" (Padhi).

Two explanations for this schizophrenic critical history are possible. Possibility number one: the world itself is schizophrenic, and therefore schizophrenia is an appropriate response to the world. According to this diagnosis, the two plays have nothing significant in common; one contradicts the other, and it would be neurotic or naive for critics to assume the existence of a unified or unifying object, or subject, or author. This position is, within the postmodern academy, now usually associated with certain kinds of deconstructive literary theory, but many exemplary applications of deconstruction and literary theory do not invoke it, and in any case it belongs to a much larger philosophical tradition, often traced back to the Pre-Socratics. Let's call this the schizophrenic hypothesis. Possibility number two: the world itself is not schizophrenic, and therefore schizophrenia is not an appropriate response to the world. According to this diagnosis, the two plays do have something significant in common, and critics have hitherto failed to realize what that something is. This position is, within the modern academy, associated with New Criticism and with formalism more generally, but it too belongs to a much larger philosophical tradition, often traced back to Plato. Let's call this the unified field hypothesis.

Two plays, two theories: one binary produces another binary. Surprise, surprise. Two paths diverged in a critics' wood. Naturally, in the finest traditions of American romantic individualism, I intend to take the road less traveled: that is, I intend not to take the right-hand fork and not to take the left-hand fork either, but instead, unlike Robert Frost, I intend to move at a right angle to the fork by climbing a tree or digging a hole. What do we see if we rise above the fork, or undermine the binary? The two paths that diverge in the wood are already paths; both have already been traveled, and both lead to predetermined destinations. If we limit ourselves to those two routes, the conclusions we reach will be predictable, trivial, and arbitrary. Robert Frost's choice of one of the two diverging paths was

¹ Heinemann (1980) and Limon (1986) both use the engraved title page of *Game* as an illustration on the front of the book jacket.

predetermined by at least two preliminary unarticulated assumptions: first, that he should continue moving forward, and second, that he should remain at ground level. Likewise, both critical theories – the schizophrenic hypothesis, and the unified field hypothesis – already entail at least two shared postulates.

First, both theories share a larger assumption or claim about referentiality. The question of reference has explicitly dominated the critical history of *A Game at Chess*, but we need go no farther than the title of *The Spanish Gypsy* to encounter similar problems. To what do these titles refer? To what world do the words of these plays refer? Do both plays refer to the same world? And how can words refer to a world? What is the nature of the world and what is the relationship between the nature of the world and the nature of the language we use to refer to it? These linguistic questions are also aesthetic questions; they are the foundation not only of the various forms of historicist and political criticism that dominated Anglo-American literary scholarship in the last two decades of the twentieth century, but also of the various forms of formalist criticism that preceded the historicist wave (and seem set to follow it). The schizophrenic hypothesis and the unified field hypothesis disagree about the nature of the world (chaotic, holistic), but they both presuppose that the two plays are referring in the same way to the same world. This may be the case, but it is not self-evident, and it has not been proven.

Second, both theories share a larger assumption or claim about time. After all, both theories are attempts to account for the temporal proximity of the two plays. *The Spanish Gypsy* was licensed for performance by Sir Henry Herbert on July 9, 1623; *A Game at Chess* was licensed by Herbert eleven months later on June 12, 1624. Does that fact matter? Is time a difference-engine? Is the relative difference or similarity between texts a function of their temporal proximity? These philosophical questions are also aesthetic questions. Both theories assume that time is a rational constant; they differ only on the mathematical value of that constant. In the schizophrenic hypothesis, the value of the temporal constant is x -times-zero. According to this zero-constant, the two plays contradict each other, *sub specie aeternitatis*, because the world always contradicts itself, the word always contradicts itself, the individual subject within the world and the word is always contradicted and contradicting. In the unified field hypothesis, on the other hand, the value of the temporal constant is x -plus-one; plus one plus one plus one *ad infinitum*. Time changes the world, but it does so at a constant rate, like a

metronome. Since these two plays were written within a twelve-month period, the temporal distance between them is small, and the difference between the two plays must be correspondingly small; they belong to a single beat of the metronome, a single unified point in space-time, a single "local" culture, a single "episteme".² According to this metronomic constant, the temporal distance between Middleton and ourselves is hundreds of times greater than the temporal distance between these two plays. Looking back at the plays from such a vast distance, modern critics have simply failed to see the similarities that would have been evident to any Londoner between July 1623 and June 1624. The schizophrenic hypothesis and the unified field hypothesis disagree about the value of time (reductive zero, or additive one), but since both theories treat time as a constant they both presuppose that the two plays share the same temporal distance from the present. That distance may be nil, or it may be great, but it is the same for both plays. This may be the case, and the temporality constant may seem self-evident, but it has never been proven, it is denied by modern physics, and it is overwhelmingly contradicted by our own aesthetic experience. After all, both these plays were written thirty years after Shakespeare's *Richard III*, but *Richard III* is immeasurably closer to the cultural present than *Spanish Gypsy* or *A Game at Chess*. Cultural distance does not depend on metronomic time, but on what Joseph Roach calls "time-ports" and also on what I call "proximity-engines" (Taylor forthcoming).

By now, you may feel lost in the dark wood of philosophy, linguistic theory, mathematics and physics. Good. In order to create a new path, you have to wander away from the old paths, and get completely lost, and then find a new way out. For the moment, try to suspend your belief in either the schizophrenic hypothesis or the unified-field hypothesis, and try also to suspend your belief in the referentiality constant and the temporality constant. Try to believe, instead, for a few minutes, in Middleton. In your moment of panic, suspended over the *mise-en-abyme*, cling to the belief that the way out leads through Middleton, leads in particular through *The Spanish Gypsy* and *A Game at Chess*. Is there a path, a non-trivial path, which connects both plays?

² For a critique of the assumptions about space/time in the work of Michael Foucault, Clifford Geertz and New Historism, see Taylor (1993).

One unexpected path that connects them leads through Joseph Mead, who held the Mildmay Greek lectureship and a fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge from 1618 to his death in 1638. For those of you tired or suspicious of literary theory, I will offer two new archival discoveries, both from the letters of Mead to his friend Sir Martin Stuteville of Dalham. The second discovery concerns *A Game at Chess*. The first occurs in a letter dated 16 May 1623, in the context of other news from Madrid: "And Archie the King's foole, fell there also from an horse & is killed" (Mead, f. 328^v). The royal jester in the court of King James I was Archie Armstrong who, in the spring of 1623, was in Madrid as part of the entourage of Prince Charles. The rumor of his death was exaggerated; he survived and returned to England later that year. But this story of his accident with a horse in Madrid accounts for a hitherto unexplained passage in *The Spanish Gypsy*. Act three, scene two is explicitly located in the home of Don Fernando, Corregidor of Madrid; the speech in question is spoken by Diego to the Corregidor (3.2. 246-261).³

The jester that so late arrived at court
 (And there was welcome for his country's sake),
 By importunity of some friends, it seems,
 Had borrowed from the gentleman of your horse
 The backing of your mettled Barbary –
 On which being mounted, whilst a number gazed
 To hear what jests he could perform on horseback,
 The headstrong beast (unused to such a rider)
 Bears the press of people on before him;
 With which through the lady Clara meeting
 Fainted, and there fell down [...]
 A servant coming forth, and knowing who
 The lady was, conveyed her to a chamber.
 A surgeon, too, is sent for.

Most of the details of this narrative – a horseman, a crowd in the street, a bystander who falls down and is conveyed into a chamber in the house of the father of an aristocratic rapist, even the surgeon – all this comes from a story by Cervantes, "La Fuerza di Sangué" ("The Power of Blood"), included in his popular and influential collection

³ Quotations from *The Spanish Gypsy* and *A Game at Chess: A Later Form* cite the texts and line-numbering in Taylor and Lavagnino (2007a).

of *Exemplary Novellas* published in 1613.⁴ That story was the main source for the rape plot of *The Spanish Gypsy*. In Cervantes, as in the play, this accident is the story's turning point, leading to the discovery of the identity of the rapist. But in Cervantes the horse is ridden by an anonymous competitor in a horse race. In the play, by contrast, the rider is, very specifically, a recently-arrived foreign jester, associated with the court, and welcome because of the court's friendly attitude toward the country from which he comes. None of this is necessary for the plot. Why would any author change the details of the story in Cervantes, in order to provide so much superfluous information about the identity of the rider of the horse? *The Spanish Gypsy* was licensed less than two months after Joseph Mead passed on the story about an accident in Madrid involving a horse ridden by a foreign jester recently arrived at the Spanish court. The only plausible explanation for the play's re-writing of Cervantes at this crucial point is that the author of this passage had heard the story about Archie Armstrong, and that he expected at least some members of his audience to have heard that story too – or, at the very least, to be aware of the fact that the English jester Archie Armstrong had visited the Spanish court in Madrid in the spring of 1623.

Which is to say: one of the sources of *The Spanish Gypsy* – a source hitherto unrecognized by modern scholarship – is the historic visit of Prince Charles to Madrid in 1623. This is also a major source for Acts Four and Five of *A Game at Chess*. Since that visit happened ten years after Shakespeare's last play, it is less familiar to most Renaissance scholars than the Essex rebellion of 1601 or the Midlands riots of 1607, but it was more important – for England, Spain, and Europe – than either. For a decade diplomats shuttled between London and Madrid, discussing what came to be called the Spanish Match, a proposed marriage between Prince Charles, the heir to the British kingdoms, and the Infanta Donna Maria, the younger sister of King Felipe IV. This alliance between the Protestant Stuart dynasty and the Catholic Habsburg dynasty became particularly pressing, and complicated, with the onset in 1618 of the Thirty Years War, a war precipitated by the actions of James I's son-in-law Friedrich V, the Elector Palatine. In early 1623 Prince Charles tried to break the

⁴ For evidence that Middleton used Cervantes (1613) (or one of the early Spanish reprints) rather than the French translation (Cervantes 1620), see Taylor and Lavagnino (2007b: 437).

diplomatic deadlock by going to Madrid in person. He and the Duke of Buckingham – the White Knight and White Duke of *A Game at Chess* – disguised themselves, secretly left England, and traveled incognito, with only a couple of servants, across the Channel and then overland through France to Madrid, where they remained for six months. Modern historians continue to debate the wisdom and agenda of that visit, and why it failed.⁵ But no one disputes the extraordinary anxiety produced in the British public by the long absence of the unprotected heir to the throne. The obsession with Madrid during those months was particularly strong in London, which was the center of England's written and oral news networks, and also arguably contained its most fervently Protestant population. The French ambassador in London reported that Charles's departure "hath left a great amazement among the people who are much perplext" and the Earl of Kellie wrote to a friend in Scotland that 'you can not believe such a dead dumpe it did streaque [strike] in my most mens myndes heir" (Cogswell 1989: 36).

That is the context invoked by the play's reference to Archie Armstrong. That historical source significantly differs from the literary sources of the play. The text of *The Spanish Gypsy* does not acknowledge its debt to Cervantes, and since the *Exemplary Novellas* had not been translated into English, it is unlikely that many spectators were aware of the relationship between the English play and the Spanish book. Certainly, an audience's reaction to the play does not depend on any knowledge of its literary antecedents. By contrast, the passage about the jester goes out of its way to connect the play's fictional characters to real and recent events in Madrid. The play text does not refer to Cervantes, but it does refer to Archie Armstrong's visit to Madrid. The text here refers to the world outside the fiction, and in doing so it connects the fiction to that historical and political world. It asserts that the events of the play were happening in the same time and place as the negotiations for the Spanish Match. It encourages the audience to think simultaneously about two sets of stories – the stories in the play and the stories about what was happening in Madrid.

That kind of parallel thinking was encouraged by the very title of the play, which would have been posted on flyers all over London (Stern). The first of Cervantes's *Exemplary Novellas*, the source of

⁵ See for instance the radically different accounts by Redworth (2003) and Pursell (2002, 2003).

much of the play's Gypsy plot, is entitled "La Gitanilla." This is the feminine and diminutive form of masculine singular *gitano* ("gypsy"): hence *gitana* ("female gypsy"); hence *gitanilla* ("young or little female gypsy"). Middleton could read and write Spanish, but if he had consulted the 1620 French translation of Cervantes he would have found there the title "La Belle Egyptienne" (meaning "the beautiful female gypsy"), a deliberate oxymoron, like *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Neither the Spanish nor the French title of the story by Cervantes contains anything like the English word "Spanish". The play could have been called "The Fair Gypsy" or "The Little Gypsy Girl," but instead it advertises its Spanishness. It does so in the very months when the English people were obsessed with what was happening or might happen in Madrid. The change in the title, and its effect, can hardly be accidental. Moreover, the altered title loses the specificity of the original: there is only one "little female gypsy" or "beautiful female gypsy" in the novella, and consequently there is no ambiguity about the protagonist of the story. But which gypsy is "The Spanish Gypsy"? Preciosa? Alvarez? Don Juan? All the play's Gypsies are Spanish. And is "The Spanish Gypsy" meant as an oxymoron, or a tautology? Are we meant to realize that "Spanish" and "Gypsy" are alternative ethnic identities, or does the title deliberately and satirically mix the two? Is "Spanish Gypsy" equivalent to what the dialogue calls "Egyptian Spaniards" (3.1. 51)? At play's end we discover that all the Gypsies are really Spanish aristocrats – and that nobody has been able to tell the two categories apart. During this period, the Spanish were obsessed with the issue of blood-purity; Spain's northern European enemies routinely resorted to racist insults about the Iberian mix of European, African, and Jewish ancestry. Certainly, the Spanish ambassador in London regarded *A Game at Chess* as a racial insult; as he indignantly reported, in the 1624 play King Felipe IV was represented on stage as "el rey de los negros" and King James as the "rey de los blancos" ("the king of the blacks" and "king of the whites," respectively).⁶

But the nuances of the play's title matter less than the fact that the change of title, like the foreign jester on horseback, invited spectators to think about the political drama then unfolding in Madrid.

⁶ Taylor and Lavagnino (2007b: 866) [Howard-Hill (1993: 194, 195)]. Appendix G in Taylor and Lavagnino (2007b: 865-873) gives a transcription, in the original languages, of all known early reports; Howard-Hill gives English translations of selected reports known to him.

Moreover, *The Spanish Gypsy* is set – as the first scene immediately establishes – in Madrid. This is another departure from the story by Cervantes, in which, as we would expect, the Gypsies do not remain stationary, but wander around Spain. “La Gitanilla” begins in Madrid but it ends 400 kilometers away, in Murcia; Juana Cardochia propositions Don Juan in Murcia, he is imprisoned in Murcia, he marries Preciosa in Murcia. The play, instead, keeps all the action in Madrid. *The Spanish Gypsy* is, in fact, the first English play set in Madrid. The word “Madrid” occurs ten times in the dialogue; in no other English play performed before 1642 does it appear more than three times, and in all other English plays of the period the word is spoken altogether only ten times. That is, this single play, written while Charles was in Madrid, contains half of the dramatic references to Madrid in the entire period from 1580 to 1642.⁷

All these changes – to the equestrian accident, to the title, to the setting – encouraged or compelled the play’s first spectators to think about the political drama then unfolding in Madrid. They did so in very concentrated bursts of allusion: an eleven-line speech about an accident involving a foreign jester on horseback, a three-word title, the one word “Madrid” repeated ten times. A similar concentrated burst occurs in a short episode involving “a suitor to his Catholic Majesty” (the King of Spain). Act Three scene two – the same scene that, two hundred lines later, will refer to Archie Armstrong – begins with a public profession of reconciliation between ancient enemies. “The volume of those quarrels is too large And too wide printed in our memory. – Would it had ne’er come forth! – So wish we all!” (3.2. 15-17). A “son who is as matchless as the father” generously “casts a hill of sand on all revenge, and stifles it.” A Spanish nobleman then promises “to solicit The King for the repeal of [...] a banished man” (3.2. 23-25). A key English demand in the negotiations for the Spanish marriage was that the King of Spain intervene to insure the restoration of the Protestant Frederick V to his lands in the Palatinate, from which he had been driven by Spanish armies (the repeal of a banished man). The aristocratic young man who is “petitioning the royalty of Spain” for this repeal asks “what hope” there is that his request will be successful, and is

⁷ These statistics derive from a search of the “Literature Online” database in May 2005, when an earlier version of this essay was given at a conference in Murcia. See also Sugden (1925).

told he can depend on "The word royal" [that is, a royal promise], at which point everyone on stage declares "And that's enough" (3.2. 28-32). Defenders and opponents of the Spanish Match were divided on precisely this issue: whether the mere promises of the King of Spain were "enough". The aristocratic young man making this petition then immediately asks for a reaffirmation of "the promise you so oft have made me" that he will receive their daughter as his "wife"; her parents repeat their verbal assurances, but he complains of being teased and tormented. "The tree bows down his head Gently to have me touch it, but – when I offer To pluck the fruit – the top branch grows so high, To mock my reaching hand, up it does fly. I have the mother's smile, the daughter's frown." Prince Charles was repeatedly frustrated in just this way. In response to this complaint Luis is told "O, you must woo hard! – Woo her well; she's thine own" (3.2. 39-50). Prince Charles tried to break the diplomatic deadlock by personally wooing his proposed bride, but he had no more success than this character in the play.⁸ None of this material comes from Cervantes, or has any other known literary source; all these links between the situation of the fictional Don Luis and the historical Prince Charles in Madrid are concentrated in a mere 35 lines of dialogue.⁹ Unlike the Archie Armstrong speech, nothing in this episode forced spectators to think about Prince Charles, but the cumulative density of the interpolated similarities surely created a strong sense of *déjà vu*.

A more sustained sense of *déjà vu* is created by a character that the play calls Don John. Cervantes calls him "Don Juan." The name "John" may seem innocent enough, especially to Shakespearians, familiar with the Don John in *Much Ado about Nothing*. But when Prince Charles traveled incognito across Europe, he took the name "John Smith," and the alias John or Jack shows up repeatedly in contemporary responses to his trip. The enormously popular and influential polemicist Thomas Scott, for instance, refers to Charles

⁸ The claim that he need only "woo her hard" in order to make her his own is immediately contradicted by an aside: another character objects: "[t]hat law" – i.e., the law that hard wooing will lead to possession – "That law holds not 'mongst Gypsies. I shoot hard, And am wide off from the mark" (3.2. 51-52). In fact, Luis never gets his promised bride; by the end of the play she has been married to someone else, without his even being informed until after the wedding.

⁹ Padhi (1984) identified Guzman de Alfarache as the source of the names Luis and Roderigo, and of the marital disappointment of Luis, but none of the details at the beginning of 3.2 come from Aleman.

and Buckingham as "Jonathan and his Armour Bearer" (Cogswell 1989: 293).¹⁰ Moreover, when he becomes a Gypsy John takes the new name "Andrew", a Scots name (rather than the "Andre" the character adopts in Cervantes).¹¹ These two names, "John" and "Andrew", are the only recognizably British names in the entire play. Both are applied to a young nobleman who, in a grand romantic gesture, disguises himself and runs away from home in order to woo and marry a woman from a very different culture. King James at the time described Charles and Buckingham as "venturous knights, worthy to be put into a new romance." Endymion Porter, describing the Infanta, wrote that "there was never seen a fairer creature." Charles was "wonderfully taken" with her (Redworth 2003: 74, 84, 88). This is the language, and the genre, of the Don John plot of *The Spanish Gypsy*.¹² Don John appears among the gypsies as unexpectedly as Prince Charles appeared in Madrid. Consider, from the historical perspective of the Spanish Match, the following lines of their first exchange. Don John: "I have wooed thee; thou art coy." (2.1. 241-242). Don John: "I must, by this white hand, marry this cherry-lipped, sweet-mouthed villain." She replies: "There's a thing called *quando*". He replies: "Instantly" (2.1. 247-250). She asks: "Marry me? Can gold and lead mix together?" (2.1. 255). She tells him that the only way he can convince her to marry him is to "turn Gypsy for two years. Be one of us" (2.1. 264-265).¹³ The Spanish believed that Charles had come to Madrid to convert to Catholicism, and they repeatedly tried to convert him.

Later, a Gypsy reads the palm of Don John's father, and tells him that his "son would ride, the youth would run, The youth would sail, the youth would fly! He's tying a knot will ne'er be done. He shoots, and yet has ne'er an eye" (3.2. 191-194). This speech actually fits the historical Charles better than the fictional Don John: unlike

¹⁰ See also James I's poem on the departure "Of Jacke and Thom," which refers to "Jacke his sonne and Tom his man" (Cogswell 1989: 43-44).

¹¹ *The Spanish Gypsy* emphasizes the pseudonym as Cervantes does not: "Andrew" (4.1. 153, 158). "Your name is Andrew?" (4.1. 157); also later in 4.3 and 5.1.

¹² Padhi (1984) suggested that Preciosa was meant to suggest the Infanta, claiming that her age was changed from fifteen (in Cervantes) to thirteen (in the play) because that was the age of the Infanta. Actually, the Infanta was 17 in 1623. But the play does not actually say that Preciosa is thirteen; instead, she says only "I am in my teens" (2.1. 85). Such a claim was much less likely to attract intervention by the censor than "seventeen" would have, but it allows audiences to make the connection themselves.

¹³ He repeats this, incredulously, at the end of the scene: "Turn! for two years!" (2.1. 268).

Charles, Don John does no sailing, in the play or the novella, because, unlike Charles, he does not need to do any sailing in order to get to his beloved.

Don John next appears in a scene that stages his betrothal to his alien bride, and his corresponding adoption of her identity. He repeatedly tries to kiss his beloved, and is – as Prince Charles was – prevented from doing so. “No kissing till you’re sworn” (4.1. 12). He declares that “To be as you are, I lose father, friends, Birth, fortunes, all the world” (18-19). Singing “Kings can have but coronations,” the Gypsies “Close” – that is, enclose – “this new brother of our order” (42-45, 54-55). He solemnly swears, “I vow Your laws to keep, your laws allow” (56-57). The chief Spanish demand in the negotiations, and the chief English Protestant anxiety, was that after the marriage England would legalize the practice of Catholicism. “Kings’ diadems shall not buy thee,” Don John declares – the scene’s third reference to kings, which are irrelevant to the fictional context, and not present in Cervantes. Two scenes later, Don John is imprisoned, and his companions are ordered to “stir not one foot out of Madrid” (4.3. 171-172). In Cervantes they are all in Murcia. But on May 11, 1623, Charles had asked to return to England. Permission was refused. He and his companions had effectively become – as the English public had always feared they would – prisoners in Madrid (Redworth 2003: 111). Nevertheless, at play’s end Don John is released, and gets the bride he has wanted, in a generically happy romance ending.

Does this mean that *The Spanish Gypsy* supported, endorsed, and celebrated the Spanish Match? Not necessarily. The fervent English Protestant minister Dr. Thomas Gataker, in a sermon given and printed in 1623, thought that his parishioners had “need of cheering vp” (2) “in such a time especially, when so much cause of *sorrow*” (1), it was hard to avoid being downcast, but Gataker urged them to maintain their composure, because any sign of public dejection “heartneth Gods enemies” (the Catholics); it “giueth them occasion of triumph, when they see Gods children hang the head” (28). As historian Thomas Cogswell concludes, “the only question early in 1623 was not when [or whether] the match would be concluded but rather at what cost” (37). The jokes, songs, dances, and romantic happy ending of *The Spanish Gypsy* may have been, like Gataker’s sermon, an effort to boost the morale of dejected Protestants, in part by imagining the best possible version of an outcome that seemed inevitable. At the end of the play the wandering bridegroom Don John is welcomed home by his father, and restored to an identity that

had been only briefly disguised. By contrast, as a direct result of her love for Don John his alien bride is, in the final scene, utterly transformed, abandoning her lifelong Gypsy identity entirely. Indeed, in another striking departure from Cervantes, at the end of *The Spanish Gypsy* no Gypsies remain: in the last act they are all metamorphosed.

So far, all the connections I have described between *The Spanish Gypsy* and the Spanish Match – the title, the setting, the horseman, various details of the Don John plot – all these changes from Cervantes are politically neutral. They do not, in themselves, assume or enforce a particular attitude toward the Spanish Match. But other changes to the play's literary sources do suggest a particular ideological stance.¹⁴ In Cervantes only one man, Don Juan, runs away from home and debases his identity for the sake of a woman. In the play, two men do so: Don John travels on his own, but Sancho is always accompanied by his companion Soto.¹⁵ The play treats Don John fairly sympathetically, as Cervantes does. But by creating the inseparable Sancho-Soto duo, the play provides an alternative fictional parallel to the Spanish Match, a parallel in some ways more obvious, because the visit to Madrid inextricably paired Prince Charles and his "man" Buckingham. Moreover, we actually see the duo arrive among the Gypsies before Don John does, and before we learn their names we hear them pounding on the door, and are told "Here's gentlemen swear all the oaths in Spain They have seen you, must see you, and will see you" (2.1. 115-116). The two unnamed

¹⁴ The play begins with darkness, lust, rage, violent abduction, rape, a crucifix metonymically identified with an aristocratic Spanish rapist. That much comes from Cervantes. Of course the Black Legend of Spanish cruelty and lust often drew upon Spanish sources, preferring to condemn Spain out of the mouths of its own writers; but the English text *might* just be innocently echoing its Spanish source. However, the first few minutes of performance add to Cervantes an entirely gratuitous reference to "the Inquisition chapel" and the claim that "Many of our Spanish gallants act these merry parts [i.e. rapes and abductions] every night" (1.1. 27-28). The rapist later excuses himself by claiming that "many thousand in Madrid drink off The cup of lust (and laughing) in one month" (3.1. 20-21). Likewise, Act Two adds an account of a Spanish vendetta, and a Machiavellian plot to bring a man back from exile so that he can be assassinated. None of this suggests a particularly objective, or charitable, attitude toward Spain. On the other hand, by play's end the rapist and the vendetta-driven Machiavellian have both repented, demonstrating that the Spanish are redeemable.

¹⁵ There is a Sancho in the Cervantes novella, but he takes no companion with him, is a fugitive implicated in two murders, encounters the Gypsies accidentally, and does not stay with them long.

strangers are as aggressive and unexpected as Charles and Buckingham, arriving in Madrid and knocking on the ambassador's door, without any advance warning; before we know who they are, Soto describes his master as "more than a gentleman," and himself as a "diminutive don." The first words addressed to Sancho are "Come aloft, Jack-little-ape" (2.1. 124); his reply – "Would my jack might come aloft!" (125) – picks up the word "Jack", the nickname given to Charles after he adopted the pseudonym "John Smith." Like Prince Charles, who was a shy and awkward public speaker, Sancho lets his companion speak for him, while he walks aside and says "Hum". Like Charles, Sancho tries unsuccessfully to get his young woman "loose from [her] company." Like Charles, Sancho "transform[s] [him]self out of a gentleman into a Gypsy" for the sake of a young woman, but the play mocks their sartorial transformation: "If the devil were a tailor, he would scarce know us in these" clothes (3.1. 35-36). They are described as "an idle gentleman And a thing of his, a fool," as "[a] very fine ass and a very fine foal," and as "a couple of cocks" who, after they have "stole" away and gone "abroad", then "Doodle-doo they will cry on your dunghills again" (3.2. 130-144). But Sancho's most remarkable characteristic is his absurdly excessive and entirely futile generosity: in his first encounter with his beloved he gives her gold, and then his cloak, scarf, feather, hat, ruff, and rapier. Afterwards, his guardian asks "Does any gentleman give away his things thus?" (2.2. 132) and "Where's the money to do all this?" (2.2. 161). The Prince's visit to Madrid was appallingly expensive, especially for a British government already strapped for cash. King James, warning Charles that 5000 pounds sterling had already been sent, then proceeded to dispatch precious stones "rumoured to be worth between 80,000 and 200,000" pounds (Redworth 2003: 95-96). Many of these were, like Sancho's clothes, simply given away. Like Don John, Sancho and his companion get thrown into prison; John retains his dignity and integrity, but Sancho and Soto shit themselves with fear; at play's end they go home, without a bride or anything else, having wasted a great deal of money to no purpose whatsoever. None of this is in Cervantes; all of it provides a satiric commentary on what Pretiosa calls "The faults of great men" (and indeed – she continues – "great men Have oftentimes great faults)" (5.1. 120-121).

I could continue analyzing *The Spanish Gypsy* in this way; virtually every character and scene could have been interpreted as a precise and significant commentary on the Spanish Match. It would

have been obvious to the original audiences that the play Middleton co-wrote in 1623, like the play he wrote alone in 1624, was in part a representation of contemporary Anglo-Spanish politics. I may therefore seem to be supporting the unified-field hypothesis – and to be producing the kind of explicitly political reading of an apparently apolitical text that has dominated criticism of early modern literature for a quarter century. Such reading strategies effectively treat every play of the period as though it were *A Game at Chess*, and they therefore have the effect of ignoring or eclipsing or denying the scandalous uniqueness of *A Game at Chess*, which was obvious to all contemporaries. Such readings do not prove the unified field hypothesis; rather, they postulate the unified field hypothesis, they assume that all the texts of the period, dramatic and non-dramatic, literary and documentary, belong to the same synchronic epistemic system. Such readings are not only, by now, very tired; they also falsify the complexity and variety of our own aesthetic experience. How then can we avoid such tired reductionist readings, without simply flipping the binary switch and falling into an equally reductionist return to formalism?

We can do so by challenging what I called, at the beginning of this paper, the representation constant and the temporality constant. Are these two plays equally distant from the present? Do these two plays refer to the same world in the same way? It should already be obvious that *The Spanish Gypsy's* mode of representation, its way of referring to the world, drastically differs from the mode of reference in *A Game at Chess*. Take the issue of time. It is often said that *A Game at Chess* was such a theatrical sensation because it represented contemporary events, as though it were the theatrical equivalent of a newspaper. But the Spanish Match was in fact history by the time *A Game at Chess* was written. The play performed in August 1624 refers to events of 1620 to 1623; as one contemporary remarked, if the playwright and the actors had done the same thing a year before, they would all have been hanged for it. *A Game at Chess* refers to the past of its audience; it is, in fact, an English history play. By contrast, it is *The Spanish Gypsy* that refers to what was the unfinished and unfolding present of its first audiences. The present is, by definition, always present, and so the relationship between the fictional world of *The Spanish Gypsy* and the royal negotiations taking place in Madrid could be invoked, could be summoned into consciousness, at any moment. The play's reference to the foreign court jester on horseback is altogether typical of this mode of representation: Archie

Armstrong suddenly appears as a vivid element of the play, and just as suddenly disappears. Every one of the four young aristocrats in the play – Don John, Sancho, Luis, and Roderigo – at various moments vividly resembles Prince Charles in Madrid. This does not produce inconsistency, because the play is not trying to produce a systematic allegory in which one fictional character stands for one historical character. For us, these moments operate as flashbacks; they take us out of the aesthetic present tense of the play, and project us into the past tense of political history. But for the original audiences they were not flashbacks; they were hot flashes, moments of intensified awareness of the present, in which the performance flashed forward out of its fictional locus/setting into the performative present of the platea/platform.¹⁶

This difference in the mode of representation is demonstrated by the second archival discovery that I promised you. In a letter dated 25 May 1625, Joseph Mead wrote to Sir Martin Stuteville that “The play called the game at chesse is [also] in print but because I haue no skill in the game I vnderstand it not” (1620-26: 446). From a bibliographer’s point of view, this document is important because it establishes, with unusual precision, the date of publication of the first, undated quarto of *A Game at Chess*. But Mead’s comment on the play is, for our purposes, much more important. We are inclined to assume that the difficulty of the play for modern readers results from the fact that we are unfamiliar with the detailed political history of the 1620s, and therefore do not “get” all those topical allusions to persons and events several centuries old. But Mead’s confusion cannot be attributed to temporal distance: he inhabits the same metronomic beat as the play. Mead’s correspondence demonstrates that he assiduously followed domestic and foreign politics and gossip throughout the period represented by the play; indeed, I have often cited his letters in my historical commentary on the play. The play’s enormous, unprecedented, and scandalous theatrical success, in August 1624, demonstrates that tens of thousands of ordinary Londoners – including many people less intelligent and less informed than Mead – understood the play perfectly well. Thirty-five other contemporary responses to those performances confirm the theatrical intelligibility of the play’s references to the politicians and politics of the 1620s. How are we to

¹⁶ I allude here to Weimann’s (1978) classic distinction between locus and platea in early modern performance.

explain the contrast between Mead's response and everyone else's response? The difference is not temporal but generic. All those other witnesses saw the play, or talked to someone who had seen the play. Mead, by contrast, was the first known reader of the printed play-text. We know in fact of only one other person who, in the 1620s, read the play without having seen it: that person was the censor, Sir Henry Herbert, who read it in manuscript and licensed it for performance. Scholars have often debated why Herbert licensed so scandalous a play: some interpret the license as evidence that the play was supported and promoted by a particular political faction, others cite the license as proof that the play was not politically subversive at all. But there is a much simpler explanation, which avoids this scholarly binary: Herbert, like Mead, was reading the play, not seeing it, and it is entirely possible that Herbert, like Mead, "understood it not." After all, it was in Middleton's interest to write the text in such a way that the censor would not understand it.

Mead attributed his incomprehension to the fact that he had "no skill in the game," that is, he did not know how to play chess. This explanation cannot be sufficient: it is impossible to believe that all those thousands of spectators in August 1624 were chess masters, and none of the many extant comments on the play shows any particular interest in, or knowledge of, chess. The difference in emphasis results from reading rather than seeing. A reader of the text encounters a series of actions and speeches attributed to characters identified as WQP, WBP, BQP, WKP, BBP, etc. This system of abbreviated signs creates an almost insuperable problem of reference; in order to understand the action, a series of cryptic shifting initials first has to be translated into the sign system of chess (White Queen's Pawn, White Queen's Bishop's Pawn, etc). None of these references is individuated in a recognizable way, like "Don John" or "Sancho"; each of them consists of a combination of place-markers, and all those place markers are used in different combinations. Once a reader has mastered this complicated system of reference, and can consistently identify and recognize each of the individual characters, those references within the fiction must then be translated into references to historical persons outside the fiction. By contrast, a spectator at the play simply saw Gondomar, and saw the Archbishop of Spalato, and saw King James, Prince Henry, the Duke of Buckingham, King Felipe, saw an English Jesuit priest and an English lay Jesuitess. Twelve different contemporary witnesses identify Gondomar as the main character; indeed, the play was

sometimes called "Gondomar", as though that were its title. The Archbishop of Spalato, King Felipe, King James, Prince Charles, the Conde-Duke Olivares, and the Duke of Buckingham are all named as characters in contemporary responses to the performances. Those early witnesses also describe the plot of the play: one calls it "a representation of all our spannishe traffike"; another says it "describes Gondomar and all the Spanish proceedings very boldly and broadly"; a third says that in it "the whole Spanish business is ripped vp to the quicke".¹⁷ In performance there was no difficulty in understanding what or who the play represented.

All modern criticism of *A Game at Chess* is based upon reading, and is therefore subject to the same error committed by Mead; that is, all modern criticism of *A Game at Chess* inverts the relationship of tenor and vehicle, foreground and background. In performances of *A Game at Chess*, the literal sense was political; the chess game was a secondary trope. By contrast, in *The Spanish Gypsy* the literal sense is fictional; the Spanish Match is a secondary trope.

The relationship between these two plays thus contradicts the referentiality constant. *A Game at Chess* does not refer to the world in the same way that *The Spanish Gypsy* did. Moreover, the two plays do not refer to the same political world. In 1965 British Prime Minister Harold Wilson said "A week is a long time in politics." That may not be true in all times and all places – if it were true, that would just be another temporal constant – but what I think he meant is that a week *can*, sometimes, be a long time in politics. Think of how radically the global political landscape was transformed between September 8 and September 12, 2001. The theory of time needed to account for events like 9/11 is not the relentless gradualism of classic Darwinian theory (+1+1 repeated several million times) but what Stephen Jay Gould calls punctuated equilibrium, in which long periods of stability or of very slow change are punctuated by relatively sudden catastrophic shifts (+1+1+911+1+1 etc). Certainly, the temporality constant cannot explain or describe what happened to English politics between July

¹⁷ Taylor and Lavagnino (2007b: 865-873). The Venetian ambassador described it as "several representations under feigned names of many of the circumstances about the marriage with the Infanta." This comment interestingly distinguishes between "representations" and "names"; there is no doubt about who or what the play actually represents, but the characters have been given "*nomi finti*" (870). What spectators saw was more important than the names in the text; by contrast, for a reader only the names are present.

1623 and June 1624. The collapse of the negotiations for the Spanish Match, and in particular the massively jubilant popular response to the return of Prince Charles without a Spanish bride, punctuated the equilibrium of British governance: what a contemporary called a “blessed revolution” precipitated the complete collapse, indeed 180-degree reversal, of a foreign policy that had been sustained for twenty years, a radical reorganization of court factions, a drastic realignment of relations between court and Parliament, and between England and other European powers. That political earthquake also explains the difference between *A Game at Chess* and all the English history plays that preceded it. The contention between “the two noble houses of Lancaster and York” is entirely dynastic; hence the prominence in Shakespeare’s history plays of those long genealogical speeches that modern audiences find so boring.¹⁸ There are no policy differences between the House of Lancaster and the House of York (or, for that matter, between the Capulets and the Montagues). *A Game at Chess*, by contrast, represents politics in terms of an ideological binary, pitting Protestants against Catholics in a way that recognizably anticipates modern political parties, which emerged during the course of the seventeenth century. *A Game at Chess* anticipates the divisions that led to the English civil wars and the Glorious Revolution. *A Game at Chess* is a different kind of history play, because it represents a different model of political history, in which the clash of ideas dominates (or at least overlays) the competition between power-seeking individuals. *A Game at Chess* imagines the new forms of collective identity that Benedict Anderson calls “imagined communities”: the racial identities of black and white, the nationalist identities of English and Spanish, the ideological identities of Protestant and Catholic, Whig and Tory, conservative and liberal.¹⁹ *A Game at Chess* imagines our present. That is why it provoked such an extraordinary contemporary reaction – and that is also why modern scholars have consistently misunderstood it. It does not seem revolutionary to us because we take its terms for granted.

Those modern assumptions about the organization of political conflict also lead us to misunderstand *A Game at Chess* at a more

¹⁸ The same genealogical arguments organize the disputes between what we now unthinkingly call England and France in *Henry the Sixth Part One*, *Edward III*, *King John* and *Henry V*.

¹⁹ On the racial binary in *A Game at Chess* see Taylor (2005: 132-139).

local level. The historical identity of all the main characters is established by contemporary witnesses, but those witnesses do not comment on some of the minor parts. One of those unidentified minor characters is the White Queen. Some scholars have taken her to represent the English Church, but in contemporary reports the chess characters are persons, not abstractions or institutions, and if Middleton had wanted a character to represent the English church the White Bishop could have fulfilled that allegorical function. Most scholars therefore identify the White Queen with James I's consort, Anne of Denmark. But Queen Anne had died in 1619, four years before Charles and Buckingham went to Madrid; she was a Catholic or crypto-Catholic, and had been the first person to propose a marriage alliance between the Habsburgs and one of her children. It makes no historical sense for her to be alive during any of the action of the play. Even more significantly, the identification with Queen Anne makes nonsense of the White Queen's one big moment, Act Four scene four. It would be particularly absurd to have a long-dead woman be present when Prince Charles (the White Knight) and Buckingham (the White Duke) exit to visit Spain (the Black House), and even more absurd to have a Catholic who supported the Spanish Match be horrified by their departure and worried about its consequences. These two unsatisfactory identifications of the White Queen are based on modern nationalistic assumptions: one reads her as the Church of England, the other as the Queen of England.

But there was another White Queen alive in 1623, one who was linked to King James and Prince Charles in a way that makes sense of the White Queen's relationship to Middleton's White King and White Knight. Elizabeth Stuart was called the Queen of Bohemia, the Queen of Hearts, and the Winter Queen; she lost her crown at the battle of White Mountain. It was the fate of the Winter Queen, and that of her husband the Prince Palatine, that hung in the balance in 1623 when Charles and Buckingham went to Madrid; Elizabeth was indeed horrified by the visit, and worried that Charles would be seduced by the black house; one of the primary obstacles to the Spanish Match, the obstacle emphasized by Charles and Buckingham in their explanation for the collapse of negotiations, was the Spanish refusal to guarantee the restoration of the Palatinate to

the Winter Queen and her husband.²⁰ The White Queen is threatened and almost taken by a bishop of the Black House because both Bohemia and the Palatinate had been occupied by Spanish troops and Jesuits, who imposed on both populations a policy of systematic enforced conversions to Catholicism; the White Queen is rescued by the White Bishop because her staunchest ally in the English Privy Council was the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot; the White Queen is afterwards reassured by the White King, and rebuked for ever doubting him, because Elizabeth Stuart and the English public did in fact doubt James I's commitment to her cause; the White King's speeches in that scene defend King James from the widespread accusation that he had unnaturally abandoned his own daughter.²¹ Middleton's representation of the White Queen, and the popularity of the Winter Queen in England, is not nationalistic; instead, it embodies an allegiance and an identity that is simultaneously Stuart and Protestant, dynastic and ideological. Middleton's white and black houses are not only Protestant and Catholic; the "White House" is also the House of Stuart, the "Black House" is what we call the Habsburg dynasty, what contemporaries called the House of Austria. The combination embodied in Elizabeth Stuart and *A Game at Chess* was natural, powerful, and probably inevitable in the transition between dynastic and ideological systems of governance, but it is also an unstable and potentially confusing combination. The confusion is not only ours. Charles and Buckingham confused the popular rejoicing at their return as an endorsement of their primarily personal and dynastic view of British and European politics; the Protestant public and Parliament interpreted the rejection of the Spanish Match in primarily ideological and nationalistic terms. That brief moment of exultant unity, embodied in *A Game at Chess*, was based on opposed interpretations of an ambiguous compound; the suppression of *A Game at Chess* anticipated the resolution of that ambiguity into the divisions that dominated the reign of Charles I, led to his execution, and inaugurated the modern political world.

²⁰ Brennan (2002). Though Redworth denies that Charles and Buckingham were committed to the Palatinate, it was certainly the explanation given to the English public, and therefore the one familiar to Middleton and his audience.

²¹ For detailed evidence of the relationship between the play and these historical events see the commentary notes to *A Game at Chess: An Early Form* in Taylor and Lavagnino (2007a: 1814-1815).

The words of *A Game at Chess* referred to a different world than the words of *The Spanish Gypsy*, but the new world order of 1624 was not just political. It was also aesthetic. Between July 1623 and June 1624 Prince Charles returned from Spain, and the Shakespeare first folio was published. John Jowett cogently describes how profoundly that book transformed Shakespeare's cultural identity.²² It had an even more profound and disruptive effect on the temporality constant. Ewan Fernie, in his recent critical manifesto for "presentism", rightly points out that Shakespeare is more pervasively present in the modern world than he ever was in his own time. That pervasive global presence is due almost entirely to the first folio. Books are what I call proximity engines; they move into our presence the language of the temporally or geographically distant. Printed books do this more effectively than manuscripts, because the printing press can produce many more proximity engines, so that those material links to the past or the distant can be much more widely distributed. The Shakespeare first folio brought 36 Shakespearian or partly-Shakespearian texts into immediate physical proximity with each other, within the material confines of a single book. Our concept of the English history play, and our failure to recognize that *A Game at Chess* belongs in that category, is based entirely upon the ten plays placed in physical proximity to one another in the Shakespeare folio. Jonathan Hope and Michael Witmore can describe the linguistic profile of the history plays because of the Shakespeare first folio. Gordon Macmullan can worry the category of Shakespeare's late plays, there is a history of criticism of Shakespeare's late plays, because of the Shakespeare first folio; without the folio, we would not have texts of *The Winter's Tale*, *Cymbeline*, or *The Tempest*. There is no tradition of criticism that talks about Middleton's history plays, or Middleton's late plays. Why not? Because Middleton's plays were not collected until the 1840s, because there was not even a rudimentary Middleton chronology until the 1930s, because the Middleton first folio – that is, the first edition of all his surviving works, collected into one big volume – was not published until 2007 (Taylor and Lavagnino).

Whether or not *The Collected Works of Thomas Middleton* succeeds in demonstrating that Middleton is "our other Shakespeare," the example of Middleton, the example in particular of his last two

²² There are many accounts of the historic importance of the 1623 folio: see among recent examples Taylor (2006) and Bates and Rasmussen (2007).

plays, demonstrates that there is no referentiality constant, there is no temporality constant. There is only punctuated equilibrium, and people like Middleton, who puncture it.

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Borge, Francisco J. 2007
A New World for a New Nation.
The Promotion of America in Early Modern England
Bern & Oxford: Peter Lang

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As a result of the growth of postcolonial studies in the late 1970s, early modern literary scholarship has increasingly considered such issues as alterity and the question of the Other, racism, and proto-colonialism, besides examining the role of these issues in the creation of nation-states, including England (or 'Britain', as it was started to be known during the sixteenth century). Stephen Greenblatt's 'Invisible Bullets' (included in *Shakespearean Negotiations* [1988]), his *New World Encounters* (1993) and, above all, his *Marvellous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World* (1991) are key examples of this scholarship. With regard to the colonization of the New World, we might also add Tzvetan Todorov's *The Conquest of America* (1984), Eric Cheyfitz's *The Poetics of Imperialism* (1991), Jeffrey Knapp's *An Empire Nowhere: England, America, and Literature from Utopia to The Tempest* (1992), and Anthony Pagden's *European Encounters with the New World* (1993) and *Lords of all the World* (1995). Concerning England and Islam, we have D.R. Blanks & M. Frassetto's *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other* (1999), Daniel Vitkus' *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (2003) and *Piracy, Slavery and Redemption: Barbary Captivity Narratives from Early Modern England* (2001), Jonathan Burton's *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (2005), and Nabil Matar's *Britain and Barbary: 1589-1689* (2005), and his seminal texts *Islam in Britain. 1558-1685* (1998), and *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (1999). These works exemplify a new awareness of social and historical conflicts related to race, nation, and the Other, conflicts which are negotiated through various strategies of contention or subversion and which, inevitably, permeate early modern writing.

In *A New World for a New Nation. The Promotion of America in Early Modern England*, Francisco J. Borge, of the University of Oviedo,

brilliantly explores the rhetorical strategies deployed in a particular kind of writing that was intended to entice English rulers and their subjects to colonize the New World and thereby engage in the same race to plunder the Americas on which the Spaniards, the Portuguese, the French and even the Dutch had already embarked. Borge analyzes the discourses that English writers used to project the Americas as an appealing object of consumption, focusing on 'promotion literature,' consisting mostly of travel books, sermons and pamphlets, from the period between 1580 and 1625. The author asks,

How can an 'empire nowhere' be successfully promoted? How can one convince one's countrymen to embark on enterprises that, to that date, had ruined the lives and the careers of many others? How can one transcend the weakness posed by insularity, transforming failure and loss into strength, success, and profit? This transcendence is exactly what these promoters tried to attain, and, in many cases, they did it so successfully that they greatly contributed to England's ultimate displacement of Spain in the international arena (46).

Borge's text is divided into four sections which, after a very brief introduction, attempt to conceptualize various aspects of this promotion literature: history, style, ideology, and rhetorical strategies. The similarly brief conclusion sketches a prospective area of research that the author identifies as a "poetics of English proto-colonial discourse" (211-214). After the introduction, the book focuses on the 'American enterprise' (chapter 1: 19-67), analyzes the major forerunners of English colonization of the New World (chapter 2: 69-114), briefly addresses the formal and thematic elements of promotion literature (chapter 3: 115-136) and ends with the scientific challenge of analyzing promotion literature through the critical lens of Hayden White's theories of 'tropicality' (chapter 4: 137-210).

The genesis of this book appears to be a doctoral dissertation with the same title defended by the author at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 2002, although this is not indicated in the book. If so, then the transition from thesis to book has been successful, maintaining the depth of a good dissertation, while avoiding the excessive display of erudition that often accompanies one. However, the theoretical structure of this research may need some more elaboration, since it appears to have been to a certain extent neglected for the sake of readability, even though most readers would be able to assimilate a more profound theoretical

stance, one that the ambitious purview of this work might possibly require. Still, the book provides interesting information from well chosen primary sources, and the notion of ‘promotion literature,’ its operations, and the major features of the debate over whether to colonize the New World, are well narrated and convincingly argued.

In chapter 1, ‘The American enterprise,’ we have a concise account of English enterprise in the Americas, from Henry VII to James VI, emphasizing Elizabeth I’s reign. It is noticeable that Habsburg Spain is an inevitable presence throughout the text, and especially in this chapter. England’s colonial ambitions, Borges claims, were much shaped in response to Spain’s predominance in the international arena, and were limited by the perceived superiority of Spain’s maritime power until the 1580s. Unlike Charles V’s and Philip II’s Spain, England lacked, for most of the seventeenth century, the expertise, the royal impulse and vision and the economic interest to explore (let alone colonise) the New World. For English monarchs, aristocrats, and tradesmen, colonial ventures in the New World were of scant interest, and they were more inclined to favour and promote trade with Eastern Europe or through the Mediterranean, in spite of the efforts of advocates of the New World colonial enterprise such as Richard Hakluyt, author of *Principal Navigations* (1589) (who, the book informs us, paradoxically never travelled to the Americas himself). The chapter also introduces central figures such as Walter Raleigh, Humphrey Gilbert, or Francis Drake, exploring the function and meaning of: Tudor imperialistic propaganda of a paradoxically non-existent empire (the ‘empire nowhere’); England’s approach to the expansionist race in the pre- and post- Armada years; the first (failed) English expeditions to the New World; the justification of colonialism on spiritual and material grounds; and the eventually successful establishment of the first permanent English colony in the New World – Jamestown (1607) – and the arrival of the Pilgrims in Maryland (1620).

Chapter 2 analyzes at length the figure of Richard Hakluyt and the influence of his *Principal Navigations* (1589), together with an account of other distinguished forerunners: his disciple Samuel Purchas and his *Pilgrimes*, Thomas Hariot, Theodor de Bry’s *America*, Walter Raleigh, William Crashaw, and John Smith. Borge makes clear that the English colonialist experience of this period is characterized by utter failure, and thus the major task of these propagandists is to produce narratives that “served as replacements for the profits that English adventurers failed to find in the New World” (114). The final

stages of this process are characterized by two radical changes: “the opening of the colonial enterprise to all social classes in the country” (106), as an indirect consequence of the Puritan approach to colonialism; and the change of paradigm and model to imitate: since Spain’s model – based on the extraction of gold and silver – proved useless for a colonial enterprise that found no mineral resources to exploit, English propagandists eventually decided to follow Holland’s example and promote the use of other resources such as fish or corn.

Propagandist writing on the colonial enterprise based its success (ie, its credibility) on ‘authority’, that is, unmediated experience, and had as an implicit but very real hidden agenda that of the authors’ self-promotion. This is what chapter 3 develops, with some brief discussions on ‘verisillimitude’, the so-called “modesty topos” (121) or the complex relations established between travelling and writing.

Finally, the last chapter contains the most ambitious analysis (and probably the most relevant) of the whole book. This analysis addresses the goal outlined in the introduction: namely, “rather than attempting to explain *why* the English finally engaged in the American venture” to illuminate on “*how* and *to what extent* they did so” (12, emphasis mine). To this aim, Borge uses the work of the American critic Hayden White, focusing on his best known notions: those of the ‘tropics’ and the ‘tropicality of discourse’, as expounded in *Tropics of History* (1978) and *Metahistory* (1973). This critical apparatus seems appropriate to the kind of analysis intended (and to the kinds of texts studied) yet it seems to provide insufficient critical tools, if only because White’s approach has been enriched in the last decades by the work of (among others) Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson and Edward Said, all of whose work is particularly relevant to many of the ideas outlined by White. The movement articulated by Borge (and cleverly adapted from White) from metaphoric apprehension (and appropriation), through metonymic description, to ironic self-reflection on one’s own discourse, together with the awareness of the non-factual nature of all discourses, the constitution of meaning by discourse, the artificiality of all events narrated or the discursive constructedness of ‘reality’ does indeed help explain the rhetorical procedures employed by promotion literature, but leaves unanswered a number of relevant (and unavoidable) questions, such as the final nature of ‘reality’, the significance and relevance of the perceived inability to relate to the Other in adequate terms (which Said, Sonesson, Lotman or Todorov have more recently and

productively addressed) or the precise meaning of that (postmodern-like) final ironic twist that the text suggests, a statement which Borge may have not argued convincingly.

Some issues that are treated only superficially or not at all might have been elaborated further, and suffer from the excessive concision of the book: the status of England/Britain as a (proto) nation-state (22-23); the notion of 'identity' (something explored in some depth by that area known as 'image studies' and practiced, among others, by Ton Hoenselaars); the conflictive relations existing between piracy and trade (Fuchs); or the radical otherness of America as opposed to Catholic or Muslim nations. Some very interesting issues are certainly mentioned, but almost *in passim*: the role played by public theatre in this process of promotion of the New World (102-114), and the so-called 'battle of narratives' (p. 62, n. 61).

Evidently, the author has made choices, and it would be inappropriate to argue that these or other issues should have (*per force*) found a place in this essay, but it seems that they could have illumined many of the discussions so intelligently developed. That said, there is a glaring omission. There is practically no mention of the slave trade, the infamous activity that seems to have conditioned and permeated all colonial adventures by all early modern nations of Europe. If it was conventionally believed that this practice was limited – during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – to the Spanish and the Portuguese, scholars such as Gustav Ungerer, Folarin Shyllon, Alfonso Franco, Consuelo Varela and Juan Gil, have convincingly shown that the English were engaged in the slave trade as early as the 1480s, and that black African slaves were bought and sold in England from the early sixteenth century onwards. In this sense, it would have certainly been interesting to determine to what extent this experience did influence the directions taken by the English colonial agenda a century later, and whether (and why) promotion literature did, or did not, mention this practice as a legitimate, realistic and/or desirable objective for the New World enterprise.

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Álvarez Recio, Leticia 2006
*Rameras de Babilonia: historia cultural
del anticatolicismo en la Inglaterra Tudor*
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Rameras de Babilonia is the culmination of several years of research in which Leticia Álvarez Recio has studied the articulation of anti-Catholic sentiment in Early Modern England. In this book, in which her doctoral dissertation is distilled, she approaches the development of this topic throughout the Tudor period, when its most important features and clichés were created and used in a wide variety of discourses. One of the novelties of this study is precisely the type of texts subject to analysis: pamphlets and plays. Disparate though they are in their nature, in their rhetoric, and in the way in which they interact with their audiences, Álvarez Recio manages to demonstrate the connection between them and how they supplement and influence each other in their depiction of anti-Catholic characters.

The method used by the author in order to make evident the relation of these genres combines diverse approaches: historical, rhetorical, iconographical and doctrinal. On the one hand, the detailed historical introductions to every period covered in the study supply the context the reader needs for a better understanding of the texts; the doctrinal information also serves similar purposes. On the other hand, rhetoric and iconography are not only background knowledge, but also interpretive methods that intend to disclose the devices by which pamphleteers and playwrights changed the meaning and intention of previously used symbology – sometimes even appropriating their opponents' discourse. In the author's own words :

Se pone, así, de manifiesto que el anticatolicismo es una construcción discursiva sustentada en el amplio repertorio generado por la Iglesia Católica durante siglos para justificarse como única y verdadera frente a cualquier voz disidente. El discurso se mantiene como un fluido

constante entre las dos posiciones contrarias, que lo utilizan prácticamente con el mismo sentido y finalidad. (90)

Consequently, the features of the pro-Catholic discourse and its rhetorical strategies identified by Shell (1999) and others (Corthel *et al* 2007) are at the origin of the expressions of anti-Catholicism devised by English Protestants (Marotti 1999, 2005). The book makes a chronological survey of these traits from the beginning of the Reformation until the early years of the seventeenth century, including a quick look at the aftermath of the Elizabethan age.

The result of this examination shows the deliberate creation of an image of Catholics during the sixteenth century: from the times of Henry VIII (chapter 1), the stereotype of the Roman papist is that of a corrupted, false, hypocrite person, with a taste for ostentation and riches, idolatrous, ambitious, seductive and superstitious; this type contrasts with the portrait of Protestants, presented like victims or martyrs, mainly from the Marian period (chapter 2) – a topic that has recently deserved further scholarly attention (Monta 2005). It is precisely at this stage when Álvarez Recio detects the entrance of the Spaniards in the panorama, as a result of the Queen's marriage to Philip II: the fear of a Spanish takeover of the English government led Anglicans to identify Rome and Spain, in a combination of religious and political elements whose main implication will be to equate 'true religion' with patriotic loyalty. From this moment on, it will not be infrequent to find political criticism of the current regime underlying many anti-Catholic pamphlets and literary works of this type throughout the sixteenth century – even if their authors had the same religious beliefs as the ruler.

One of the aspects that Anglican writers exploited in their condemnation of Mary is the fact that she was a woman. Misogyny was at its best in this type of discourse: feminine weakness, sinfulness and uncontrolled appetite were immediately connected with corruption, the same corruption that was attributed to Catholics. Álvarez Recio interestingly shows that, after Elizabeth I was crowned (chapter 3), it was necessary to change this notion and justify both the return of Anglicanism and a female ruler who was also the Head of the Church. In order to do so, the Queen designed a propaganda program based on well-known iconography that would reach her subjects through portraits and royal entrances (Strong 2003, Leahy 2005): Alciato, Ripa and the Bible were the main sources for the image of a monarch identified with the apocalyptic Woman

clothed with the sun as opposed to the Whore of Babylon. This same type of symbolism will be used by Protestant pamphleteers and playwrights, in a display of rhetorical artistry.

In the second half of the Elizabethan reign, a new group was added to the objects of anti-Catholic protests: the Jesuits. These churchmen were regarded with especial suspicion not because of their religious ideas, but mainly as a result of their political attitudes, considered by some as the quintessence of hypocrisy, simulation and covetousness. As a result of this, it was possible to associate them with the stereotype of Machiavellian characters that were habitual in Elizabethan drama. While earlier in the Tudor period the theatrical expression of anti-Catholic discourse had been conveyed through adaptations of medieval allegories in which vices and virtues were opposed, in the last decades of the century the newly developed genres are used – revenge tragedies, history plays and tragedies of reformist martyrs; even the Latin comedy will be found useful in their depiction of ridiculous characters, easily adaptable to Catholic stereotypes. Classical mythology was also reinterpreted in a similar pattern, as the author demonstrates in her analysis of Lyly's *Midas*. In the fourth chapter of the book, some of the most successful plays of the period are studied in the light of the rhetorical and iconographical devices established in the last decades of the Elizabethan period. Thus, *The Spanish Tragedy* is read in terms of the instability and chaos that can derive from the wrong behaviour of those on the side of 'otherness', such as Machiavellian characters, atheists, Italians, tyrants, etc.

Álvarez Recio examines the most relevant events of the century for the creation of the anti-Catholic discourse, paying especial attention both to religious circumstances and to political milestones such as the victory over the Spanish Armada – seen by Protestant authors as an expression of God's support to the Queen. Far from simplifying and reducing the complexity of this type of texts, the book *Rameras de Babilonia* faces the complexities, inconsistencies and paradoxes of the works under study and tries to explain them as part of the intricacies of the period.

As the book is intended for a Spanish-speaking audience, all the quotations cited in the text are translated, and this is achieved in a very accurate and elegant Spanish; the original English versions are confined to notes. However, this distribution of languages is not consistent throughout the book, something that could make some passages slightly cumbersome, especially in notes where both the

Spanish and English texts are rendered together. Here, what is intended as a help for understanding might lose some of its value.

A final comment on the index and the bibliography, two tools that are essential in a literary and historical study. The former, though presented as *index nominum*, contains also notions and topics that render it highly useful for consultation; however, a selection has been made in which it might also be worthwhile to include, for instance, symbols and iconographies, so relevant for both the Catholic and anti-Catholic discourse. It is also noticeable the absence of a bibliography of primary sources: though the authors and titles of pamphlets and plays are listed in the index, this other type of resource would allow complete references to the works – including all the bibliographical details – as well as a more defined idea of the wide corpus the author has worked with.

No doubt, this book is very timely, as it provides the Spanish readership with an insight into the ideological tensions underlying many Early Modern English texts, in an approach that has recently been identified as ‘the turn to religion in Early Modern Studies’ (Jackson and Marotti 2004). This turn has meant an increasing interest in the cultural implications of the religious debate, both on the Reformist and Catholic sides; it is precisely this what has been addressed by Dr. Álvarez Recio, who has bridged what had usually been considered as a gap between pamphlets and drama.

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