Courtship eventually leads to "weddings" which are only the first step to death by "execution". The figurative threat eventually becomes literal revenge:

Ferdinand: Such weddings may more properly be said
               To be executed than celebrated.
                              (I.ii. 31-32)

The Cardinal also introduces his own threatening allusion to her likely fate, should she dare to defy their warning:

Cardinal: The marriage night is the entrance into some prison.
                              (I.ii. 33-34)

The Duchess is aware of the danger involved. She sees her projected marriage as "a dangerous venture". She is, nevertheless, firm on her resolution, defies her brothers and marries Antonio.

The image of marriage in the wooing scene is associated with the image of a circle. It is first introduced by the wedding ring as a symbol of marriage and is immediately imaged as a conjuring circle associated with witchcraft when Antonio says:

Antonio: There is a saucy and ambitious devil
               is dancing in this circle.
                              (I.ii. 116-117)

The wedding ring thus becomes the charmed circle which the necromancer first draws on the ground to conjure up the devil. The sexual connotations of "saucy" seem to be alluding the Duchess, while the "ambitious devil" is referred to what Antonio feels to be a dangerous temptation, ambition, if he marries the Duchess. Finally, the figurative "Gordian knot" of marriage not to be "untied by violence" becomes ironically by violent death the literal noose/cord of the Duchess's strangling, a deadly trap for the couple and their children.

Webster seems to be exploring new possibilities for a female character in this play. He is, nevertheless, constrained by the dramatic traditions of archetypes of women. There seems to be a gap between the enclosing male definitions of women and the Duchess's dramatic behaviour, a contrast between language and action. As Kathleen McLuskie puts it, "women characters can step out of the enclosing misogyny of other characters' view of them but are ultimately controlled by the power of the men who control the world in which they live"[15].

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15 Kathleen McLuskie, opus cit. 145.

RELATIVIZATION AND REGISTER: A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SURVEY

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The syntactic function of the relative in its clause is important in as much as it can be correlated with the stylistic complexity of the text in which it is inserted. In this sense I will be following S. Romaine (1984) and X. Dekeyser (1984 y 1988), who have already completed studies in which they tried to confirm this premise. In their analysis, they have attempted to show which syntactic functions are more easily relativizable and which less, following Keenan and Comrie's (1977) theory of the Accessibility Hierarchy. This hierarchy positions the syntactic functions performed by relative pronouns and adverbs in an implicative scale. The order of functions in this scale is as follows:

$$SU > DO > O > OBLI > GEN > OBJ. COMP$$

The adverbial function is placed, according to Dekeyser's conclusions, between oblique and genitive. From this hypothesis it emanates that a text or discourse will be the more complex the further down the use and frequency of relative constructions reach in this implicational scale of relativization. In this sense a text that contains relatives functioning as direct or indirect objects will be more complex than a text in which relativizations perform more frequently the subject function and so forth.

The choice of one or other level in this order of relativization might be a reflection of the register to which a text is ascribed. Similarly, register is important in determining the restrictive or non-restrictive nature of the relative construction, since this distinction seems to be characterised, among other variables, by the syntactic complexity of the discourse (Dekeyser 32).

The correlation between the choice and use of relativizers with the syntactic complexity and the stylistic level of the register employed in a given text or discourse has been examined so far for P.D.E. (Present-Day English) informants. X. Dekeyser and M. Ingels, S. Romaine and others have also analyzed texts from other periods to explore the possible application of this theory to stages of the English language when the uses of the relatives were not

as firmly established as in present day English.

The present study has been devised as a complement to the previous ones, since I will be trying to apply further these criteria to another stage of the English language, namely the seventeenth century. The second half of this century is the stage in which, according to several scholars, the contemporary use of the relative pronouns is established. To this respect T. Saito states:

> It is worth noting again that as far as the comparative degrees of popularity of the relatives are concerned, there has been no great shift since the end of the seventeenth century.

(76)

The Earl of Rochester will be the seventeenth century informant from whose language I will try to extrapolate the uses of the relatives in this period. The selection of John Wilmot for this purpose is not only due to the fact that he is an educated speaker of the period, but also because his production is not too extensive, and it can be classified in just two genres: poetry and epistolary prose.

Three have been then the hypotheses contemplated in this case, as has been mentioned before:

1. Relativizations introduced by **WH** are commoner in more formal styles than those introduced by **TH** and **zero**. Romaine explains it as follows:

> **WH**-forms occur more frequently in more formal styles, whether written or spoken, while **that** and 0 (absence of a relative marker) occur in the less formal styles of speaking and writing.

(104)

It is to be noted, in this sense, that **WH**-pronouns have been historically equated with the Latin forms in **QU-**, and this seems to evidence a higher stylistic formality in their use. Suzanne Romaine implements the linguistic intuitions of the speaker/reader of the language to determine the degrees of formality/informality of the texts she uses as a primary source. Other authors, like Biber (1989), propose a whole series of objective criteria to gradate the formality of a text, among which he includes the selection of relativization techniques.

2. The degree of formality of a text is reflected normally in the higher or lesser degree of syntactic complexity. In this sense, and in accordance with the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie, it is considered that the presence of relative pronouns in functions other than subject is an index of a

syntactically more elaborated text[1]. On the contrary, following Dekeyser, a passage/discourse is felt to be syntactically less complex if more than 50% of its relative constructions function as subject.

3. Non-restrictive relative sentences usually confer a higher syntactic complexity and indicate, therefore, a higher degree of formality of the text, since, as Dekeyser postulates:

> Given the fact that non-restrictive clauses only provide additional information about the antecedent NP, and that less complex language, such as spontaneous speech, tends to present this in a paratactic or non-embedded structure, we expect -R to be a mark of the more complex registers.

1. STYLISTIC FORMALITY

Up to the moment, some of the studies carried out in this field show a gradation of the different literary genres in relation to the linguistic register they exhibit. In general this gradations usually contemplate a wide range that consists of different styles. Suzanne Romaine divided them in

> theatre in verse
> vernacular verse
> epistolary prose
> narrative prose
> official prose

They are ordered in relation to the impressions of their complexity obtained from their reading from the least complex to the most complex text (official prose). These impressions frequently coincided with the register they were ascribed to attending to their use of the relatives. As might be observed, this stylistic gradation shows that poetry and verse theatre are nearer to the least complex styles, and they are followed by the epistolary prose. Narrative and official prose represent the most formal registers.

Xavier Dekeyser, using associations based on impressions as well, classifies the texts he analyzed in three groups ordered in a decreasing scale of formality:

> informative prose
> tragedy
> comedy

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1 The works by Romaine (1984) and Dekeyser (1984) and (1988) are issued in this line.

If I was to indicate which one of Rochester's books is the most complex I would choose the *Poems*, since the *Letters*, being addressed to relatives and friends, would logically represent simpler syntactic constructions. No doubt, the topics Rochester deals with in his letters are familiar enough, both when he writes to his wife as when he corresponds to his friend Henry Saville. In the letters addressed to the latter, more or less veiled references can be found, occasionally, to parties and orgies, economical and political problems, the fall in disgrace of one or the other in court or even to their sexual relations and interchange of lovers (both male and female). In consequence, it seems highly unlikely that letters in which some so very intimate matters were treated and discussed could be written in a formal style of language. Nevertheless, certain characteristics of the epistolary genre in the Restoration period should be considered.

Epistolary prose in English has always been characterised by a simple and plain language despite the trends marked by fashion and manuals for their composition. Even though the English Restoration brought about a strengthening of the taste for a language that was not too elaborate and embellished, however, the fashion in relation to the epistolary prose was approaching a more formalist tendency, which was not followed by the majority of letter writers, but which had a very strong influence in certain circles (Pepys is one of the authors mentioned by J.A. Prieto Pablos (1989: 249)). It is also necessary to keep in mind that epistolary prose was characterised by the presence of formulaic structures that, in many cases, were introduced by the **WH**-pronouns[2]. On the other hand, the linguistic tendencies of a speaker also depend, to a great extent, on his/her cultural level and background; thus, it is frequent that an educated speaker exhibits a more complex use of the relatives than an uneducated one.

The poetry selected by doctor Romaine (Scottish Vernacular Verse) displays some thematic and linguistic features that distinguish it. On the contrary, the great majority of Rochester's poems are inserted in a satirical context (this author was reputed in the seventeenth century for his spiteful lampoons), and there are, naturally, linguistic differences between Rochesterian poetry and Scottish Vernacular verse, marked by the cultural background of the author himself and his idiosyncratic use of the language. Consequently, both the verse and prose of Rochester's should be very similar in style, both formal, even though the Letters due to their theme and addressees should be assigned to a less formal register than the *Poems*.

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[2] The introduction of **who** in the relative paradigm is also related to certain formulae. See Rydén (126-34).

The table below shows which relativization techniques are used more and which less in John Wilmot's work. In this respect I have included **WH** relative adverbs in the general frequencies of this elements, following Dekeyser. **TH** represents both **that** and **zero**, whose level of implication in relation to syntactic complexity seems to be very similar (Romaine 104).

LETTERS	WH	TH	Total
	194	143	337
	57.56%	42.43%	100%
POEMS	254	128	382
	66.49%	33.50%	100%

The frequency of **WH** surpasses 50% of the examples of relativization in both books, even though in the *Poems* it exceeds substantially the yield obtained for the *Letters*. Therefore, although both works display a majority of relativizations in **WH**, they are more profuse in verse, which results the most formal register of Rochester's production.

Dekeyser includes poetry and epistolary prose in his study of the first half of the seventeenth century. His results reflect that verse and epistolary prose also show a significant frequency of relativizations introduced by **WH**.

	WH	TH	Total
EPISTOLARY P.	260	104	364
	71.42%	28.57%	100%
VERSE	236	188	424
	55.66%	44.33%	100%

As opposed to the yield in Rochester's works, in the epistolary prose studied by Dekeyser, **WH**-relatives reveal a higher percentage than in verse, which is also above 50%. The difference with Rochester's *Letters* is due to the fact that the letters analyzed by Dekeyser exhibit "a more or less official character" (Dekeyser 1984:62).

In the preceding paragraphs, the degree of stylistic formality used to study the selection of relative forms in accordance with register has been determined attending to extralinguistic considerations in an impressionistic way. To avoid the danger of argumentative circularity it is, nevertheless, essential that stylistic formality be established with an unbiased method by means of linguistic

correlations. In this sense, some researchers (Romaine or Dekeyser) have recently included Keenan and Comrie's Accessibility Hierarchy as a criterion, whose effectiveness in Rochester's production is dealt with below.

2. SYNTACTIC FUNCTION AND STYLISTIC COMPLEXITY

The insertion of relativization techniques in the different syntactic functions is, as has been mentioned before, another variable to be taken into account in the study both of the selection of relative forms and of the stylistic implications beckoned by its use. To this respect the following table offers a detailed distribution of the syntactic functions in Rochester's books.

	Subj.	D-IO	Obliq.	Adv.	Gen.
LETTERS	142	106	60	24	6
	42.01%	31.36%	17.75%	7.10%	1.77%
POEMS	195	87	22	38	39
	51.18%	22.83%	5.77%	9.97%	10.23%

As stated before, a text is considered syntactically less complex if more than a 50% of its relative constructions function as subject. In the *Poems* this function exceeds that number, in detriment of the object function, which decreases 9 points approximately in comparison with the *Letters*. The uses of the oblique function also decrease considerably, while the genitive and adverbial functions increase. This seems to grade the complexity of the *Poems* slightly above that of the *Letters*, despite the fact that the subject function yields a smaller percentage in the latter.

The table that follows shows the distribution of WH and TH in each of the works according to the different functions:

LETTERS	Subj.	D-I. O.	Obliq.	Adv.	Gen.
WH	99	30	42	18	6
	50.76%	15.38%	21.53%	9.23%	3.07%
TH	43	76	18	6	0
	29.45%	53.14%	12.58%	4.19%	0%

POEMS	Subj.	D-I. O.	Oblig.	Adv.	Gen.
WH	124	33	21	36	39
	49.01%	13.04%	8.30%	14.22%	15.41%
TH	71	54	1	2	0
	55.46%	42.18%	0.78%	1.56%	0%

It is clear that the percentages for **WH** surpass **TH** in the most complex functions. In the *Poems* the oblique function decreases for both relativization techniques. In the genitive and adverbial functions **WH** is a long way above **TH**; the margin of difference is wider in the *Poems*.

The greater stylistic complexity of the *Poems*, and the higher formality of the register implied by the use of **WH**, will be more easily observed if the percentages are examined taking the functions as the axis.

LETTERS	Subj.	Obj.	Obliq.	Gen.	Adv.
WH	69.71%	28.30%	70%	100%	75%
TH	30.28%	71.69%	30%	0%	25%
POEMS					
WH	63.58%	37.93%	95.45%	100%	94.73%
TH	36.41%	62.06%	4.54%	0%	5.25%

Thus, **WH**-pronouns outnumber **TH** forms in practically all functions and increase as they approach the most complex levels (the genitive function is exclusively **WH**). Only in the role of object does **TH** dominate, due probably to the specialization of **zero** in that function. The frequency of **TH** in the complex positions is modest, mainly in the *Poems*.

The conclusions obtained by Dekeyser and Ingels (1988) for informative prose, comedy and tragedy of the later years of the sixteenth century are:

INF. PROSE	Subj.	Obj.	Obliq.	Gen.
WH	60.9%	79.2%	91.25%	100%
TH	39.1%	20.8%	8.75%	0%
TRAGEDY				
WH	26.4%	61.4%	100%	100%
TH	73.6%	38.6%	0%	0%

COMEDY	Subj.	Obj.	Obliq.	Gen.
WH	29.4%	62.5%	88.9%	100%
TH	70.6%	37.5%	11.1%	0%

The results accomplished for Rochester's poetry are quite similar to the outcome for the informative prose of the second half of the sixteenth century. The epistolary prose of this author of the English Restoration also coincides more with the informative prose than with comedy and tragedy as regards their use of relative forms. The only divergence observed is localised in the object function, which in Rochester is more frequently performed by **TH** than by **WH**. This might be explained, as I mentioned before, by the restriction of **zero** in certain functions and its confinement to others.

As opposed to what happens in informative prose, the yield of comedy and tragedy shows a predomination of **TH** in the simplest function: subject.

Indeed, it can be thought that Rochester's work is, in general, much closer to the most formal register of the language as far as the syntactic complexity of its relative constructions is concerned.

3. ABSENCE OF RESTRICTION AND STYLISTIC LEVEL

The restrictive or non-restrictive use of the relative clauses correlates to a certain extent with the syntactic complexity of the text. A high percentage of non-restrictive clauses is frequently considered, at least by Dekeyser, as an index or sign of complex registers. Romaine (1984:120-21, note 11) also claims that non-restrictive clauses are syntactically more complex than restrictive ones:

> It could also be the case that non-restrictive clauses are in some way more syntactically complex than restrictive ones. The fact that a different ordering of syntactic positions obtains in the case of non-restrictive relative clauses and the non-restrictive system uses a predominantly **WH** strategy might be taken as evidence to support this hypothesis.

It could be therefore expected that differences emerged in the use of these variables exhibited by Rochester's works. In general, restriction is more frequent than non-restriction, although, as compared with the inmediately preceding stage of the language, the percentage of non-restrictive clauses is quite high in this author. The uses observed in Rochester's texts might be compared with those studied by Dekeyser and Ingels for the registers of the first half of the seventeenth century.

	+R	-R
Inf. Prose	55.5%	44.5%
Tragedy	62.2%	37.8%
Comedy	63.2%	36.8%
Rochester	53.2%	46.7%

It is obviously in Rochester's work where a higher percentage of non-restrictive clauses results, even higher than in the informative prose analyzed by Dekeyser, whereas the less complex genres (comedy and tragedy in this case) show a notably smaller proportion.

The restriction or non-restriction of relative clauses depending on the type of text display the following comprehensive results, without taking the category of the subordinator into account.

	+R	-R	TOTAL
LETTERS	191	146	337
	56.67%	43.32%	100%
POEMS	192	190	382
	50.26%	49.73%	100%

The highest proportion of non-restrictive clauses is found in the *Poems*, and this is even more significant if the overall number of restrictive and non-restrictive clauses (383 and 336 respectively) is taken as the axis for the percentage. If this is done, the *Poems* surpass 50% of the non-restrictive examples, as might be observed in the following table.

	+R	-R
LETTERS	49.86%	43.45%
POEMS	50.13%	56.54%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Consequently, from the three perspectives contemplated in this study, the correlation between the use of the relatives and register as it is encountered in Rochester's works concurs with the three hypotheses submitted at the beginning. The *Poems* seem to belong to a slightly more formal and complex register than the *Letters*. In relation to the technique employed to introduce relative clauses, in the *Poems* WH is above 66%, whereas in the *Letters* it stands for 58% of the occurrences, approximately. A certain incoherence is

observed in relation to function. The subject function is slightly above 50% of the total in the *Poems*. This is nevertheless restrained by the higher frequency of **WH** in the most complex functions (genitive and adverbial). In relation to the third criterion, a slightly higher complexity might be noticed as well in the *Poems*, in which non-restrictive clauses outnumber in more than 13 points the constructions of this type registered for the *Letters*.

In conclusion, it seems more adequate that in the future the distribution of relative forms should be studied paying attention to register in more detail and in such a way that the linguistic criteria for the selection of each form of this syntactic variable could be examined objectively. Even though the choice of specific items of a variable on the part of speakers/writers might be unconscious, this does not mean that they are isolated, but they are part of an ampler movement in the evolution of the language that takes place as a result of a gradual and cumulative drift. In this sense, the dimensions proposed by Biber and Finegan (1989), for example, with which they try to offer a wider perspective on the evolution of English written styles, deserve being correlated with the use of the different relatives, if less impressionistic and more reliable conclusions are to be obtained as a useful tool for the interpretation of contextual meaning, on the one hand, and for the disclosure of the possible direction of linguistic change in a more general framework.

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"I AM NOT I, PITIE THE TALE OF ME": READING AND WRITING (IN) *ASTROPHIL AND STELLA*

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Twentieth-century criticism on Sidney, and particularly on *Astrophil and Stella*, has mainly emphasized the rhetorical elements and the important debt with the Petrarchan tradition present in his poems. Seminal studies in this field published in the fifties and sixties proved the large extent to which Sidney was not merely or primarily expressing his life in this sonnet sequence. I cannot mention all of them, of course, but I wish to recall, at least, Richard B. Young's long essay "English Petrarke: A Study of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*" (1958), which insisted so much on the presence of the opposition between Art and Nature[1], and the chapter on Sidney in J.W. Lever's essential book *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet* (1956)[2], that also traced the Petrarchan heritage in the poems. In the sixties the scholarly production on this line was really impressive; we started then to talk about *persona*, plot, structure, and dramatic conflict in this sequence due to several books of excellence, such as Robert L. Montgomery Jr. in 1961 (*Symmetry and Sense*), David Kalstone in 1965 (*Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretation*) and Neil L. Rudenstein in 1967 (*Sidney's Poetic Development*)[3]. These books were accompanied by essays which broke new ground in the field: in 1960 Jack Stillinger showed how difficult and unsound it was to interpret the sonnet sequence as the biographical expression of Sir Philip Sidney[4]; and throughout the decade more studies continued the anti-biographical vein, culminating –so to speak– with three essays published in

1 Richard B. Young, "English Petrarke: A Study of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*", in *Three Studies in the Renaissance: Sidney, Jonson, Milton*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1958 (reprinted by Archon Books, 1969).

2 J.W. Lever, *The Elizabethan Love Sonnet*, Methuen, London, 1966.

3 Robert L. Montgomery, *Symmetry and Sense: The Poetry of Sir Philip Sidney*, University of Texas, Austin, 1961; David Kalstone, *Sidney's Poetry: Contexts and Interpretations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1965; and Neil L. Rudenstein, *Sidney's Poetic Development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.

4 Jack Stillinger, "The Biographical Problem of *Astrophel and Stella*, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, LIX (1960), pp. 617-639.