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LANGUE ET ALTÉRITÉ DANS LA CULTURE DE LA RENAISSANCE

Language and Otherness in Renaissance Culture

Selected and Expanded Papers
from the Second International Colloquium in the series
Early Modern Cartographies of Difference
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Edited by
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Preface

Iago: Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
Othello (5.2)

THE PAPERS SELECTED for this volume explore some of the diverse, devious, deviant, or downright dangerous ways in which language is either sensed or seen, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, strikingly to depart from the paradigm of "civil conversation" in early modern art and society. The aim is to chart singularites and strategies which may be common or relevant to very different domains.

To chart language and otherness in Renaissance culture, the authors have adopted several angles of approach:

1. language as other in utterance (slander, insult, prophecy, blasphemy, underworld cant...);

2. language confronted or associated with egregious figures of the other (the bastard, the ghost, the cadaver, the boy actor as Elizabethan stage girl...);

3. language whose destiny makes it other: via translation into foreign tongues, gesture or music.

In this effort to stake out differences between angles of approach, several of these papers deal with kindred topics using diverse conceptual frameworks. Essays by Marie-Dominique Garnier and Simon Ryle, are solely devoted to Shakespeare's *King Lear*. While Garnier returns to the role of another language, be it French or Lear's "*lingua franca*", following Philippa Berry's seminal work on *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings*, Ryle dwells on the meaning—or what he calls the "spatial implications"—of the Dover Cliff episode, basing his analysis on documented stage and film versions of the scene and on Emmanuel Levinas' concept of the Other.

Two other essays, by Viviana Comensoli and Pascale Drouet, discuss cony-catching pamphlets by Thomas Dekker, Robert Greene or Thomas Harman. While these popular works claim to embody the language of the underworld, providing the readers with (partial) translations of a highly inventive language, their authors also stake out a lucrative editorial territory. François Mallet uses works by Dekker, Greene, and a passing reference to *King Lear*, in an attempt at charting the concept of *curiositas* in Renaissance culture, using lexicography, geography and philosophy, to demonstrate how inquisitiveness and acquisitiveness were linked in Elizabethan London.

Several papers included in this volume dwell on other important literary figures, stressing the role of an imaginary or figurative Other, or interpreting figurative language. Victoria Bladen speaks of Andrew Marvell's "arboreal language", exploring links between poetry, architecture and Scripture with the Green Men motif. Sermin Lynn Meskill analyses Ben Jonson's complex relationship, or obsession, with an imaginary Other: the "envious reader" particularly prone, the poet fears, slanderously to misinterpret his *œuvre*. Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin examines the second stage of the process, when slander leads to insult, and proposes a convincing explication of an intriguing Shakespearean insult in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

Lastly, François Lecercle and Yan Brailowsky discuss the language of past, present and future by analysing utterances of ghosts, cadavers and prophets on the stage. Lecercle describes the language of ghosts ("*ombres*") in French and English seventeenth-century plays, explaining their enduring popularity on the stage. Brailowsky wonders whether prophecy in Shakespeare's plays has specific linguistic attributes: is it as

different from ordinary language as Shakespeare's prophetic characters claim it to be?

These diverse angles of approach to the question of language and otherness in Renaissance culture are taken up by Ann Lecercle in the opening essay. Lecercle argues that the Other—as in "strange", but also "alien"—serves to underline the topological, as well as dramatic, linguistic and psychoanalytic issues at stake in early modern plays such as *Hamlet*. She recalls Lacan's contention that language is an "experience of alienation"—hence this volume's topic: language *and* otherness, but also language *as* otherness.

1

Cartographies of Otherness : Placing Parameters

1 The site of the other

GIVEN THE VASTNESS of the terrain proposed for exploration, it is hardly conceivable to proceed without a preliminary charting of the domain proposed for study. This introduction therefore undertakes to survey the general outlines of its topology. (In proceeding thus, I follow in the footsteps of the latest instalment of Lacan's Seminar, entitled *D'un Autre à l'autre*,[1] "From the Other to the other", where the opening chapter is devoted to "The topology of the other".)

After his visit to an Elizabethan theatre, the Renaissance traveller Thomas Platter merely remarked that the "pleasure" he had derived resided in the learning of *strange things*.[2] In Shakespeare's contribution to the art sampled by Platter on the London stage, the playwright elevates the strategy of *immersion in the alien* to the status of a required initiation into the knowledge of self.

For the *tragic*, ontological side of this immersion, one has but to recall

[1] LACAN Jacques, *D'un Autre à l'autre*, "Le Séminaire XVI", MILLER Jacques-Alain (ed.), Paris, Seuil, 2006.

[2] Quoted in MULLANEY Steven, *The Place of the Stage*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1981, p. 76.

Lear's wanderings in the wilderness with its epiphany of the "bare forked" animal (man); or, *a contrario*, the highly idiosyncratic—and indeed, in Shakespeare, unique—enterprise of the artisans, "rude mechanicals", in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, learning by heart the *culturally* alien *Pyramus and Thisbe* in the depths of the wildwood for the comic, but equally the scriptural, implications of such immersion—I use "scriptural" in *both* the normal, compositional sense (for Quince writes) *and* in the Biblical sense; for Bottom, in his comic *anagnorisis*, proceeds to garble *Corinthians* with considerably more pertinence and profundity than Theseus' concluding platitudes.[3] In between these two, generically opposite, tableaux of self-estrangement, there comes—most pertinently of all for today's colloquium—the climactic revelation of the *histories* that, in his weird and wonderfully aberrant youth, Prince Hal is in actual fact doing no more than frequenting an early modern language school—one which, unlike today's Berlitz or Cambridge Summer School, is entirely *gratis*:

> [The Prince] but studies his companions
> *Like a strange tongue*, wherein, to gain the language,
> 'Tis needful that the most immodest word
> Be look'd upon and learnt (*2 Henry IV*, 4.4.68–71).[4]

Of the rather particular language school that was Elizabethan London's Eastcheap, the speaker, Warwick, the redoutable Kingmaker, hastens to add, however, that

> [this tongue] once attain'd
> Your Highness knows, comes to no further use
> But to be known and hated (4.4.71–3).

To no further use in court, perhaps. But if the prodigal Hal, alone in the histories, achieves something like epic status, it is also because, on the climactic eve of Agincourt, he would again, this time cloaked in darkness rather than debauchery, listen avidly to the language of the social other, haunting the ranks of the common soldiers to sound them out and thus

[3] 1 Cor 9–10 in the concluding moments of Act 4 scene 1 of the play. All references to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, HOLLAND Peter (ed.), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994.

[4] Emphasis added. All references to A. R. HUMPHREYS' Arden edition, London & N.Y., Methuen, 1987.

forge a strategy which, in spite of colossal odds, would pay off on the decisive day.

I propose to return later to this at once fictional and fantasmatic scenario of secretly sounding out *the alien voice of the other* at a climactic moment of the intrigue, when the destiny, not only of the body natural but of the body politic in general, hangs perilously in the balance. But today I want slightly to displace the focus to something rather different.

For beyond this liminary overview of works and genres, the point surely needs to be made that it is not only the drama-acted-out-on-stage that is immersed in the alien, but the Elizabethan stage itself. The Globe and its likes were not even on the main, city side of the Thames but, originally *extra muros*, they then became *ultra flumen*, in the twilight zone of the Liberties on the South Bank of the river Thames. Here the native and the alien—*every conceivable type* of alien: lunatic, whore, animal, criminal—jostled with one another with blithe alacrity. For, on "Bankside", if the Law is not absent, it *is* (for various reasons beyond my remit today) significantly less comprehensive than across the water, aporetic if not in abeyance. Nor is it a simple question of opposition but, rather, of variance, of an irregular network of jurisdictional coverage: sanctuary for criminals, desacralized monastery land, former ghettos of leperhouses, not forgetting land belonging to the diocese of Winchester, which, in Shakespeare and elsewhere, is the see—or rather, the scene—of syphilis, thanks to its brothels.[5] In turn, this portrait gallery of social interlopers gives rise to a gallimaufry of tongues—what Montaigne[6] deplored in vernacular French—and not only tongues but voices.

2 The language of the other

Shakespeare's was of course an age, when, even in geographically excentric England, Latin, from being the language of the elite and of learning, was being demoted by the vernacular. From this point of view, however, things on the English side of the Channel were idiosyncratic to the point of paradox, for in the case of the inhabitants of Albion, that vernacular, the "Mother tongue", English, was itself perceived with

[5] A "Winchester goose" is a syphilitic sore.

[6] *Essays*, Book 1, ch. XLVI, *passim*.

acute keenness, by those of its native practitioners who were literate, as the *Other* tongue of continental Europe *par excellence*: the tongue of the *barbaroi*. In the words of one of them, a language "rude, base, unpleasant, grosse and barbarouse".[7] Out west the Irish, with their "glib", their uncut hair, employed to make them other on the battlefield, were the barbarians of the early modern *English*. *Mutatis mutandis*, however, the English themselves at the western Antipodes of Europe were the aliens of continental civilisation. This was an irony of which Shakespeare was not only conscious, but of which he makes much, in the cartographic play on east, west and the Antipodes in what is, historically, the prolegomenon to all his histories, *Richard II*. Let's not forget that, after all, in the sixteenth century, for the aspiring ambassador, English came bottom on the list of linguistic talents required for upward mobility... behind Turkish, indeed—which was hardly surprizing when you read Fernand Braudel[8] on the early modern Mediterranean and realize that the splendour of the Osmanlis made the Habsburgs seem lacklustre and the Medici positively provincial. *A contrario*, the literal "extra-vagancy"[9] of such linguistic geography fostered in the English writer what has been mooted as "a capacity to stand outside one's own mother tongue, to cultivate it as one would the tongue of another".[10]

Shakespearean stage utterance, then, is informed by an ongoing principle of tension between the alien and the native, a rhythmic scansion of formation and deformation. The fact that Shakespeare's opus is the only one I personally know of where a central play-within-a-play actually throws up and indeed centres on a personage, as mysterious as he is allegedly crucial, that goes by the name of *Deformed* is, I feel, hardly a coincidence (for those of you who are wondering, the play is *Much Ado About Nothing*).

What is more, uniquely in the Renaissance, the Elizabethan theatre doubles the otherness of *language* by the immanent otherness of *voice* in the verb it utters. For if some of the Bankside theatres were called The Bullring, The Bear Garden or The Cockpit, it was *also* because

[7] Quoted in MULLANEY, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

[8] BRAUDEL Fernand, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, Armand Colin, 1966, 1990. See especially vol. II, chap. 5.

[9] I am referring to the title of Margaret TUDEAU-CLAYTON's article, "Shakespeare's extravagancy", in *Shakespeare et le jeu*, PEYRÉ Yves (ed.), Paris, 2005, pp. 165–183.

[10] MULLANEY, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

some of these edifices staged, at alternative performances, another, very material form of otherness: the fact that certain buildings, and even the court, on alternate afternoons, could house now human, now animal drama—drama where the premium was, however, less upon the gore than on the roar. For Elizabethan audiences said they went to "hear" a play, and when the actor was an animal, it was, in the first instance, to hear its voice. From this point of view the Elizabethan theatre comes in its materiality closer than most to instantiating the interface mooted by Barthes in his powerful conclusion to *Le Plaisir du texte* (The Pleasure of the Text), where he defines the acme of acting as being the moment when the voice of the actor gives us to hear what he evokes as the grain of the gullet, the materiality of the muzzle over and above the mystique of representation.[11]

Nor is this otherness confined to voice or verb; it is equally inscribed in that particular use of costume which flaunts *alterity as much as identity*, that of travesty *via* habiliments that constantly cross back and forth between the sexes with casts of characters, distinguished—again, uniquely in the Europe of the day—by stage women that were boys in drag with rouged up cheeks-and-chops (what is more, hastily daubed, no doubt, given the necessity of multiple role-playing in the usually small troupes of actors).

Indeed, from the very beginning of Shakespeare's career, the *Sonnets* are there to illustrate how his writing constantly proceeds by upsetting the apple cart of the well-worn sonneteering symmetry founded on the ideal Platonic mirror, by pointing up what Joel Fineman, in *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, calls the *lie* of specularity.[12] Which makes me think, albeit admittedly in a very different vein, of Pierre Curie's contention for the natural sciences: that it is only once one has attained the stage of the "dis-", of dissymetry—beyond asymmetry and even symmetry itself—that matter begins to exist *as life*. In its own way Shakespearean textuality works along these lines too. Paradoxically, disgrace or difformity is the operation of grace itself: this is vividly evidenced in Shakespeare's histories by the fact that, if the historically, genetically, first of the sequence, *Richard II*, demonstrates *anything*

[11] Barthes Roland, *Le Plaisir du texte*, Paris, Seuil, 1973, concluding pages.

[12] Fineman Joel, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1986, especially pp. 12–16.

amongst its multiple ambiguities, it is, I suggest, the dramatic *sterility* of *grace* and the paradoxical fecundity of dis-grace (I use "grace" here in both the physical sense of beauty *and* the metaphysical sense of sacrality). In a word, difformity or disgrace *as grace* are, in their own weird and wonderful way, paradoxically faithful to the *spirit* of the plays precisely in their flamboyant flouting of the letter.

3 From the language of the theatre to the theatre of language

It now behoves us to assess the light which this liminary charting generates in approaching the meaning of the text for which such a theatre is the showcase. To address the subject, I therefore began by asking myself if there was a scene in Shakespeare which, by general consensus down the centuries, has the audience invariably sitting on the edge of their seats, spellbound and slavering. One of the most probable candidates, I concluded, was the play scene in *Hamlet*.[13] If this has fascinated audiences down the ages, what interests me here is more particularly the way, I want to argue, in which it is informed by the contextual constellation just charted, one integral to the enjoyment procured by what was, after all, the dominant art form in Renaissance *England*—features, above all, which happen to be those that foreground, and indeed flaunt, the ongoing dialectic between identity and alterity.

From its very title, *Hamlet*'s play-within-the-play flamboyantly foregrounds the otherness generated by the radical lability of libidinal cathexis. Veritably emblazoning the imbrication of Thanatos and Eros, the title of the play-within-the-play—as you will recall—is twofold. The announced "Murder of Gonzago" is *reconfigured*, *in medias res*, as a trap for—*or* of (the syntax permits the other readings)—an animal smaller than those the theatre usually lodged within its walls, namely the mouse, which looms large in its *second* title: "The Mousetrap". This is a representation itself both homely and *unheimlich*, a common-and-garden contraption for vermin control but also the infernal flower of the female of the species, the cockpit that became Lear's "sulphurous pit".[14] This

[13] All references to the Arden edition, Jenkins Harold (ed.), London & N.Y., Methuen, 1982.

[14] "[...] there's hell, there's darkness, / There's the sulpurous pit" (4.6.129–130)—*vagina dentata* in all its splendour. All references to the Arden edition, Muir Kenneth

other face of the playlet implies a double time-scale, moving from the threshold of the play to the heat and the heart of the action. Announced is a deed of dire dastardliness perpetrated on an unsuspecting male, when the epiphanic mousetrap looms up; in this it works like a curious perspective, suddenly revealing the other in the brother and lover—the brother *as* lover.

What is more, like the animal dramas in the cockpit or bear ring, the unfolding of the performance of Hamlet's playlet is one that, notoriously, proceeds from *dumbness to a cry*: namely, from the much discussed "dumb-show" to the anguished cry of Claudius as he rises in terror. Let's not, after all, forget the eternal enigma: why is the playlet's own *internal other*, its dumb-show, there in the first place? Is it an oversight, an error? Perhaps, on the other hand, it is a *foil* for the cry of the creature once caught (Claudius). For the only thing that can be said with certainty about the dumb-show is the nature of its material reality: that it is precisely that—dumb, a dumb *pre*-face to the cry that is the *post*-face.

Moreover, in Hamlet's famous exasperation at this dumbshow, when he impatiently urges "Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge" (3.2.248), it is, of course, rather than the reviled actor, Hamlet himself, in his notorious "inky black", that is the "croaking raven bellowing for revenge". In this bizarrely hybrid, *coq-à-l'âne* soundscape, it is in fact Hamlet who is configured as the bear or bull at the mercy of the dogs (just like his comic contemporary, Malvolio). In a recent commemoration of Carmelo Bene, the theatre critic of *Le Monde* encapsulated the project behind Bene's no less than *seven* different stagings of *Hamlet* with the words, "Seven times in his life [Bene] returned to *Hamlet* always seeking to strip away the layers *for his cry to ring out*"; unfortunately she added "[the] cry in Munch's sense".[15] That may be so, but first and foremost it is the alien cry, of the creature as predatory / preyed upon animal, rather than the human one, that is convoked by Shakespeare.

For Hamlet *is*, at one and the same time, the bear bellowing for revenge *and* the dog; the bull *and* the mastiff, the early modern pitbull, whose avowed intent is precisely to "tent [Claudius] to the quick", that is, to forage in his flesh *via* a medical expression in which the surgeon's

(ed.), London, Methuen, 1961, 1968.

[15] Salino B., "Carmelo Bene, l'acteur incandescent", *Le Monde*, 12/13 September 2004, supplement "Festival d'Automne", n.p..

scalpel prefigures the animal's fangs. Yet there again, to "tent to the quick" is not only anatomical; the other is not only the animal, it is the female; for in the soliloquy at the end of the preceding act, when Hamlet conceives his "mousetrap", he compares himself less to the ratcatcher than to a whore:

> . . . a very drab
> A scullion. Fie upon't ! Foh ! (2.2.582–3)

Crafting the verse with the same craft, the same diabolic perversity which Hamlet identifies in his political *alter ego*, Claudius, Shakespeare, in this line, exploits the whole range of *linguistic* alterity. To start with, the line "A scullion. Fie upon't ! Foh !" is other than a pentameter: it has only four feet. This makes the cry "Fie" *literally* an *ejaculatio praecox*. The violence of affect curtailing the *breath* of completion and the *line* of its fifth iamb: aposiopesis or *ejaculatio praecox*, according to whether you consider the sexual affect or the textual effect, the point being that, in high Shakespearean drama, the two are faces of one and the same coin, heads and tails—or rather, in this case, a head *without* a tail.

Indeed, for this line to attain the status of even an iambic *tetra*meter, it is necessary to hear the *familiar* with an *alien* ear. The word "scullion", of no known origin (according to the *Oxford Etymological Dictionary*), had entered the language only a century earlier through Anglo-Catholic usage (and Shakespeare's early years *were* Anglo-Catholic). Hearing the alien in the familiar in this textually and sexually climactic line means reading "scullion" in its splendid isolation at the beginning of a new line, with dieresis. "Scullion" it is no doubt for Anglo-Catholic households across the land, but in the Bankside theatre, in the "Liberties", dieretically scanned, "scullion" reconfigures itself into the requisite tetrameter as "s-cul-li(e)-on", the sound /aɪ/ of "li(e)" becoming manifest in the /aɪ/ of the ejaculatory "Fie".

In "scullion", therefore, the operative element is less the site of orality, the kitchen, than the eternal Other of English sexuality *and* theatricality, the French *cul*—all the more so as "Fie" is glossed by Cotgrave as the characteristic cry of the latrine cleaner, *Maistre Fi Fi*. In this way, alien—or "all-in"—textuality in the text points to the anal eroticism covertly circulating around the Elizabethan stage, courtesy of its boy actors. In such a context, the plan conceived in Hamlet's very

next sentence of "tenting to the quick" is inevitably warped towards the usage attested, for example, in Middleton where wife and courtesan "put it home, i'faith, ev'n to the quick". For, as the always illuminating Cotgrave attests, "quick" plays on the native and the foreign: /vɪːt/, that is to say "*vie*" or life, and "*vit*", the Rabelaisian phallus. In this configuration around both the *abyme* in the text and hole in the flesh, Hamlet is the s-cul-lion *and* the tenter/tempter: *both* an arse to lie on and a lion claws at the ready, "bellowing for revenge": self and other in the same fantasmatic scenario.

In a way that exemplarily complements this syntax, the raven *itself*, the bird of ill omen on which the scene opened, is *indeed* Hamlet's Other. For, like the mulberry tree in *Pyramus and Thisbe*, whose berries, witnessing the tragedy played out beneath its boughs, changed from white to black, so the raven, likewise, from being fairest of the feathered fair, turned into its *opposite* and became the sootiest of the species:

> ... cum candidus ante fuisses,
> Corve loquax, subito nigrantis versus in alas[16]

(thus Shakespeare's bedtime book, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*). And if the raven turned black, it was because, like Claudius, he let the cat out of the bag and lived to regret it: "corve *loquax*". Identity and—or rather *as*—alterity across the whole range on which the Elizabethan theatre was predicated, marks both the inception and the conception of Hamlet's play-within-the-play.

Conclusion

Shakespeare would have had no problem at all in adhering to Lacan's contention that language learning is first and foremost an experience of alienation; but where Lacan in general and Shakespeare, for example in *Macbeth* (through the alienation of a demonism that "palter[s] with us in a double sense"), insist on the *pain of castration* this involves, what Shakespeare foregounds in the earlier histories is, *a contrario*, the *pleasure of carnival* under the aegis of a *False*-staff rather than a rod of iron.

[16] *Metamorphoses* 2.532–541.

What strikes one in the last analysis is the almost ubiquitous presence, in the cultural context concerned, of the dialectic posed as problematic of this collection. It is now time to look more closely at the different facets that compose the overall picture.

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2

« Castalian King Urinal Hector of Greece » : la « langue latrine » dans *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Thou art a castalian king urinal – Hector of Greece, my boy !

(2.3.30–31)[1]

A VOULOIR PRONONCER ce chapelet que l'Hôte de la Jarretière adresse au Docteur Caius dans *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, on se sent des accointances avec le pauvre Peter Quince de *A Midsummer Night's Dream* qui, déclamant avec application le Prologue de *Pyramus and Thisbe*, ne parvient qu'à débiter des sons, sans jamais réussir à prendre le contrôle de son texte. « A sound but not in government » (*MND*, 5.1.123) : voilà qui pourrait bien décrire la façon dont on est forcé d'articuler ce chapelet éminemment Bakhtinien, mi-élogieux, mi-injurieux[2], qui est censé mettre en confiance un Caius qui s'apprête, rappelons-

[1] Nous utilisons ici le texte *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, MELCHIORI Giorgio (dir.), Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, 2000 (appelé ensuite Arden 3).

[2] Voir BAKHTINE Mikhaïl, *L'œuvre de François Rabelais et la culture populaire au Moyen Âge et sous la Renaissance*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970, où Bakhtine parle du « double ton du mot », p. 428 et sq.

le, à affronter en duel le Gallois Evans[3]. Les divers agencements[4] et élucidations que les éditeurs proposent de ce chapelet suffisent à montrer combien ce texte instable, toujours « autre » constitue un défi à l'interprétation. Nous sommes en effet en présence ici de l'une de ces étrangetés, l'une de ces extravagances[5], qui habitent *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* véritable « cabinet de curiosités » verbales où la langue est toujours autre, éternellement étrangère, tant on y trouve d'idiolectes, de dialectes et d'accents de toutes sortes[6].

Dans cette « galimafrée[7] », ce salmigondis, ce hochepot, ce ragoût verbal que constitue la pièce, le « Castalian king urinal Hector of Greece » semble être de ces morceaux qui vous restent en travers de la gorge et résistent à l'assimilation. « No satisfactory explanation has been found for this expression » écrit Melchiori en note de l'édition Arden 3[8]. « The host becomes ever more grandiloquent, and impossible to paraphrase[9] » écrit H. J. Oliver en note de l'édition Arden ; « a phrase of doubtful meaning[10] » note T. W. Craik pour l'édition Oxford. David Crane, pour l'édition Cambridge, propose quant à lui une glose qui n'éclaire que peu ce chapelet improbable (« You are a Castiglione-like king of urine sniffers ! You are Hector of Greece, my boy ! »), avant de parler de « the host's deliberately barely intelligible speech[11] ». Notant le nœud (« crux ») que constitue ce chapelet, chaque éditeur passe en revue les

[3]Dans un combat singulier entre deux médecines, celle du corps et celle de l'esprit : « he is a curer of souls and you a curer of bodies » (2.3.34–35).

[4]L'édition Cambridge de David CRANE (1997) propose « Thou art a Castalion king-urinal ! Hector of Greece, my boy ! » (2.3.26). L'édition Oxford de T. W. CRAIK (1994) propose « Thou art a Castalion King Urinal Hector of Greece, my boy ! » (2.3.31–32) et l'édition Arden établie par H. J. OLIVER (1971) « Thou art a Castalian-king-Urinal : Hector of Greece, my boy ! » (2.3.31–32).

[5]Voir l'article de TUDEAU-CLAYTON Margaret, « Shakespeare's Extravagancy », *Shakespeare*, Vol. 1, n° 1 & 2, June & December 2005, p. 136–153.

[6]La langue de cette pièce est en effet tellement bigarrée que Giorgio Melchiori, éditeur pour la série Arden 3, parle notamment de « Quicklyism », ou d'« Evansism », pour évoquer les tics de langage de l'Hôtesse Quickly et du Gallois Evans, utilisant ainsi un suffixe (« ism ») que l'on pourrait décliner pour évoquer la langue de quasiment chaque personnage de cette pièce.

[7]Voir Pistol qui dit de Falstaff, à propos de son goût pour les femmes, « He loves the gallimaufry » (2.1.104).

[8]Arden 3, p. 197.

[9]Arden, p. 65.

[10]Oxford, p. 140.

[11]Cambridge, p. 84.

multiples interprétations, variantes et ponctuations qui ont été proposées jusqu'alors. Trois questions ressortent de ces notes d'éditeur :

1. Que signifie ce « Castalion » ? Certains y ont entendu « cardalion[12] », une référence à « Richard Cœur de Lion » qui évoquerait, ironiquement bien sûr, la bravoure du combattant Caius. D'autres y entendent « castilian[13] », une allusion à Philippe II d'Espagne, honni des Anglais. D'autres encore préfèrent y voir une allusion ironique à la mythique Fontaine de Castalie (Castalian Spring) sur le Mont Parnasse[14]. D'autres enfin y trouvent une probable référence à Castiglione[15], roi des courtisans, interprétation qui ferait, toujours ironiquement, de Caius un parfait gentleman, exemple d'érudition et d'honneur.
2. Comment expliquer ce « Hector of Greece » apparemment totalement incongru puisque Hector est troyen et non grec ? Est-ce une erreur ou une plaisanterie intentionnellement émise par un Hôte friand de noms illustres, qui a déjà appelé Falstaff « bully Hector » (1.3.11) et qui dégonfle ici l'élogieuse référence à ce héros troyen qui compte parmi les Neuf Preux, en y associant un « of Greece » déplacé ?
3. Comment découper ce chapelet ? Castalion king / urinal ; Castalion-king-urinal ; Castalion / king-urinal ? Quel est le lien entre « castalion king Urinal » et « Hector of Greece[16] » ?

Notre propos ici est d'essayer sinon d'élucider, du moins de porter un nouvel éclairage sur ce chapelet énigmatique[17], en suggérant que cet éloge burlesque qui couronne le « bas matériel[18] » est emblématique

[12]Ce sens provenant de l'édition de Hamner (1774) est décrit par Oliver dans Arden comme « unconvincing » (65). Ce sens est mentionné comme possibilité dans Arden 3.

[13]Arden. Cambridge and Oxford excluent cette lecture.

[14]Oxford, Arden. Arden 3 résume cette lecture : « 'Castallian' (Q) or 'Castalion' (F) may be the host's transmogrification of the 'casting' of urine into the Castalian spring on Mount Parnassus, sacred to Apollo and the Nine Muses ».

[15]Cambrige, Arden, Oxford, Arden 3.

[16]Pour les découpages précis, cf. note 4 *supra*.

[17]Digne du *Book of Riddles* évoqué par Slender au début de la pièce (1.1.186).

[18]Pour une étude du « bas matériel », voir Bakhtine, *op. cit.*, p. 366–432 et Laroque François, « Shakespeare's 'Battle of Carnival and Lent' : The Falstaff Scenes Reconsidered (*1&2 Henry IV*) » in *Shakespeare and Carnival After Bakhtin*, Knowles Ronald (dir.), Londres, Macmillan, 1998, p. 83–96.

d'une pièce où Shakespeare cultive une langue qui semble venir tout droit d'un texte de John Harington écrit en 1596, et donc vraisemblablement un peu avant *The Merry Wives*, *A new Discourse of a Stale Subject called The Metamorphosis of Ajax*.

Après avoir brièvement présenté le traité de Harington et montré qu'il nous donne les moyens de lire ce « Castalian king Urinal Hector of Greece » d'un œil neuf, je suggèrerai que derrière *The Merry Wives of Windsor* se cache un texte fantôme que l'on pourrait intituler « A new discourse of a stale subject called the Metamorphosis of ... Jack ... Falstaff ».

De la métamorphose d'Ajax...

« Thou art a Castalian king Urinal, Hector of Greece » (2.3.37) : alors que je butais sur ce chapelet, l'association du mot « urinal » et de l'incongru « Hector of Greece » a ravivé en moi la mémoire de la guerre de Troie, d'Ajax et de sa métamorphose et m'a incitée à aller enfin « mettre mon nez » (c'est bien l'expression qui convient) dans *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, texte que Harington appelle son « tesh », terme où certains commentateurs[19] ont récemment choisi de lire une anagramme de « shet » (« shit »). Aussi étrange et scandaleux que cela puisse paraître pour quelqu'un qui s'intéresse aux « mots de son mauvais » (*Henry V*, 3.4.48), je ne m'étais jamais jusqu'ici penchée sur ce texte écrit en 1596 par John Harington, filleul de la Reine, sous le pseudonyme de « Misacmos » (« hater of filth ») et adressé à son ami et cousin (« friend and Cosin ») Philostilpnos (« lover of cleanliness »). J'avais bien sûr repéré, notamment grâce aux éditeurs de *Troilus and Cressida* et de *As You like It*[20], le jeu de mots sur « Ajax » et « a Jakes », mais je n'étais jamais allée au delà, confirmant ainsi la réflexion qu'Elizabeth Story Donno se faisait en 1962 en préface à son édition critique du traité de

[19] Bowers R. et Smith P. S., « Wit, Humour and Elizabethan Coping », *Humour*, 17.3 (2004), p. 181–218, p. 198.

[20] Voir également Dusinberre Juliet, « As *who* liked it ? », *Shakespeare Survey* 46 (1994), p. 9–21. Peter J. Smith, suggère quant à lui, dans "M. O. A. I : 'What should that alphabetical position portend ?' An answer to the Metamorphic Malvolio", *Renaissance Quarterly* (Winter 1998), 51.4, p. 1199–1224, que les lettres MOAI dans *Twelfth Night* pourraient être les initiales du traité de Harington.

Harington : « It is a work more talked about than read[21] ».

A New Discourse of A Stale Subject Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax tel qu'il est édité par Donno, est un texte hybride constitué de trois parties : « The Metamorphosis of Ajax », publié initialement séparément et dont le titre évoque, par la voie d'un jeu de mots sur « Ajax » et « A Jakes[22] », la « matière[23] » (« matter ») dont il va être question ; « The Anatomie of Ajax », beaucoup plus court, où Harington propose un guide, illustré vraisemblablement par son serviteur, l'emblématiste Thomas Combe, véritable notice d'installation du Water Closet, toilette à chasse d'eau dont il est l'inventeur ; et enfin « An Apologie[24] », où Harington s'imagine face à une cour de justice, dans le cadre d'un procès imaginaire au cours d'une « privie session[25] », bien entendu, où il doit répondre aux accusations relatives à ce texte considéré comme criminel.

Le texte de Harington constitue un « éloge paradoxal » (« mock

[21] *Sir John Harington's A New Discourse of a Stale Subject Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax*, Donno Elizabeth Story (dir.), New York, Columbia University Press, 1962, p. ix.

[22] Dans le prologue de son ouvrage (Donno, *op. cit.*, p. 67–80), Harington reprend la métamorphose d'Ajax telle qu'elle est décrite dans le Livre XIII des *Métamorphoses* : Ajax, guerrier que l'on pourrait décrire comme « the Mars of malcontents » (*Wiv.*, 1.4.98) se métamorphose en jacinthe. Harington greffe là-dessus une histoire rabelaisienne imaginaire : un gentilhomme puise dans le carré de verdure où a fini Ajax un « torchecul ». Aussitôt il est pris de douleurs postérieures « he was stricken in his Posteriorums with Saint Anthonies fier » (pp. 69–70). Le gentilhomme fait alors un long pèlerinage et, après avoir juré de rendre hommage à celui qu'il avait offensé, il finit par guérir. De retour chez lui, il fait construire un somptueux cabinet en l'honneur d'Ajax, et appelle ce cabinet « AJAX », « though since by ill pronunciation, and by a figure called *cacophonia*, the accent is changed and it is called A Jakes » (p. 71). Harington réfute alors l'étymologie communément admise, c'est-à-dire le lien entre « A Jakes » et le prénom « Jack ».

[23] Pour l'analyse de cette « matière », voir l'ouvrage de Scott-Warren Jason, *Sir John Harington and the book as Gift*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, chap. 2, « Privy Politics », p. 56–80.

[24] « Or rather a retractation 2. Or rather a recantation. 3. Or rather a recapitulation. 4. Or rather a replication. 5. Or rather an examination. 6. Or rather an accusation. 7. Or rather an explication. 8. Or rather an exhortation. 9. Or rather a consideration. 10. Or rather a confirmation. 11. Or rather all of them. 12. Or rather none of them. » Ce titre en dit long sur la richesse et l'ambivalence du terme « apologie » mais aussi sur l'esprit de l'auteur et sur l'abondance, la « copia verborum » qui caractérise son texte.

[25] Donno, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

encomium[26] ») : *The Metamorphosis of Ajax,* c'est l'« éloge de la chasse d'eau » ou l'« éloge d'un WC ». En effet, l'auteur y décrit le moyen de sauver la ville et la cour de la puanteur et de la « corruption » qui y règnent — corruption que certains commentateurs ont bien sûr interprétée de manière métaphorique[27] — et propose aux lecteurs de transformer, de « métamorphoser » les latrines habituelles en installant chez eux un « Water Closet », un système de chasse d'eau qu'il a mis au point dans sa résidence de Kelston, située près de Bath et qui permettrait de purifier l'atmosphère et d'assainir la communauté en général. En effet, la cour, Londres et les villes réclament cet équipement (« stand in great need of such conveyances[28] »). *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, c'est l'éloge des « nécessités » de l'évacuation[29]. Philostilpnos y porte aux nues ce que Harington/Misacmos décrit comme la pièce la plus « basse » de son logis (« extoll ... the basest roome of my house », p. 58), inversant ainsi le haut et le bas. Il faut plus de cent pages à Misacmos pour justifier son entreprise et défendre le droit et le devoir qu'il a d'aborder un sujet aussi vulgaire (« homely »). Afin de prévenir les critiques que le choix d'un tel sujet (« baseness of the subject », p. 62) ne pourra

[26] Genre que Henry Knight Miller définit comme « a species of rhetorical jest or display piece which involves the praise of unworthy, unexpected, or trifling objects such as the praise of lying and envy or of the gout or of pots and pebbles. » MILLER H. K., "The Paradoxical Encomium with Special Reference to Its Vogue in England, 1600–1800", *Modern Philology*, Vol. LIII, n° 3, February 1956, p. 145–78, p. 145. Pour illustrer ce genre, H. K. Miller cite de nombreux ouvrages qui vont de *L'Eloge de la Folie* d'Erasme (*Moriae Encomium*), à « l'Hymne de la surdité » de Du Bellay en passant par le pseudo-éloge de Rabelais « Comment Panurge loue les debteurs et emprunteurs » (chap. 3 du *Tiers Livre*) ou plus tard le texte de Sir William Cornwallis (1616) *Essayes of certain paradoxes,* contenant « The Praise of the French Pockes » et « the Prayse of nothing ».

[27] Voir notamment LELAND John, « A Joyful noise : *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* as Spiritual Tract », *South Atlantic Review*, Vol. 47, n° 2 (May 1982), p. 53–62. A l'appui de cette interprétation, le couplet qui conclut *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* : « To keepe your houses sweete, cleanse privie vaults,/ To keepe your soules as sweete, mend privie faults », p. 186.

[28] « [...] if you have so easie, so cheap, & so infallible a way for avoyding such annoyances in great houses ; you may not only pleasure many great persons, but do her Majestie good service in her pallace of Greenwitch & other stately houses, that are oft annoyed with such savours, as where many mouthes be fed can hardly be avoided. Also you might be a great benefactor to the citie of London, and all other populous townes, who stand in great neede of such conveyances », p. 57.

[29] Pour le motif de l'évacuation, voir HALL Jonathan, « The Evacuation of Falstaff (*The Merry Wives of Windsor*) », in KNOWLES, *op. cit.*, p. 123–51.

manquer de provoquer et qui trouveront leur expression dans un texte incendiaire intitulé *Ulysses Upon Ajax* (1596)[30], Harington les intègre lui-même à son propos et déploie toute une argumentation destinée à démontrer que ces critiques reposent sur de mauvais « fondements ». Ce texte est une défense de lui-même : tout en prônant le droit à la « mauvaise langue », Misacmos/Harington fait tout pour rendre sa matière comestible, acceptable, en ayant recours aux périphrases, aux citations en langues étrangères et surtout latine et aux jeux de mots, autant de stratégies qui amortissent l'indécence de son propos. Après avoir longuement tourné autour du « pot », Harington finit par révéler son « truc » : « my devise is with water » (p. 164), avant de se proclamer « an admirall for the waterworkes » (p. 172).

Dès le début de l'ouvrage, il imagine que son « tesh », sa « métamorphose » pourrait bien lui valoir les railleries de la cour :

> If I should fortune to effect so good a reformation, [...] I doubt not but some pleasant witted Courtier of either sex, would grace me so much at least ; as to say, that I were worthy for my rare invention, to be made one of the Privie [...] Chamber, or if they be learned and have read *Castalios Courtier* they will say, I am a proper scholer, and well seene in *latrina lingua*. But let them mocke that list, *qui moccat moccabitur* [...][31]

Il me semble que ce passage éclaire notre « Castalion » énigmatique. Comme le note Elizabeth Story Donno, Harington fait ici allusion à un extrait du *Livre du Courtisan* où Castiglione cite une sorte de jeu de mots fondé sur l'ajout ou l'omission d'une lettre ou d'une syllabe :

> There is yet another sorte called in *Italian Bischizzi*, and that consisteth in chaungynge or encreasinge, or diminishinge of a letter or syllable. As he that saide : Thou shouldest be better learned in the latrine tunge[32] then in the greeke[33].

[30] Londres. STC (2nd ed.) 12783.

[31] Donno, *op. cit.*, p. 61–62. Les italiques sont d'origine.

[32] Donno cite l'original italien où l'on trouve l'expression « lingua latrina ».

[33] *The courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio diuided into foure bookes. Very necessary and profitable for yonge Gentilmen and Gentilwomen abiding in Court, Palaice or Place, done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby*, London, 1561, STC (2nd ed.) 4778, fol. Tiiii^{r}. Contrairement à ce qu'affirme Donno en note (p. 62, note 44) la traduction originale de Hoby ne perd pas ce jeu de mots, que ce soit dans l'édition de 1561 ou celle de 1577 (fol. Lii^{v}). Mais il est vrai que le jeu de mots est perdu (reste « Latin

On trouve ici un lien possible entre Castiglione et le terme « urinal ». Caius est proclamé maître ès langue latrine. « What says my Aesculapius, my Galen, my heart of Elder, ha ? Is he dead, bully stale, is he dead ? » (2.3.25–27) : lorsque le docteur est rebaptisé « Esculape »[34], il est tentant de privilégier la version du quarto « escuo*lapis* ». Il n'est pas fortuit que l'Hôte l'appelle également « Galien », représentant de la médecine des humeurs, humeurs dont il est partout question dans cette pièce[35]. En transformant le « heart of oak » proverbial en « heart of elder », l'Hôte dégonfle l'image d'un Caius au cœur brave (puisque le sureau est connu pour avoir le coeur « tendre[36] ») mais il mobilise également l'image d'un arbre réputé pour son odeur nauséabonde. En citant Esculape, Galien, le sureau et en appelant Caius « bully stale », Shakespeare nous prépare au titre suprême de « Castalion King Urinal ». Caius sait sans aucun doute faire parler les urines (« casting of urines[37] »). Avec ce « Castalion King Urinal », l'Hôte le place « sur le trône » et le proclame « Urinal Le Grand, roi des pots de chambre », titre qui lui revient en pleine figure lorsque Evans, son ennemi juré, menace de lui lancer ce pot de chambre sur la tête : « How melancholies I am. I will knog his urinals about his knave's costard » (3.1.13)[38].

Avec ce jeu de mots sur « latin » /« latrine » Harington pervertit la langue noble par excellence, la langue latine, et télescope la bonne et la mauvaise langue. On assiste ici par le biais d'un mot d'esprit emprunté à Castiglione à un brouillage de la bonne et de la mauvaise langue,

tongue ») dans l'édition trilingue (anglais, français, italien) publiée par John Wolfe en 1588, fol. Rii^{v}.

[34] Dieu des médecins dont le nom latin est Asclepios et qui est relié ainsi à « Asclepiades », médecin du II^{e} siècle avant J.-C. que Pline appelle « the cold water physician » (note Donno, *op. cit.*, p. 156).

[35] Voir « choler » (2.3.78), « cholers » (3.1.11), « phlegmatic » (1.4.69), « melancholy » (1.4.86, 2.1.135–7), « melancholies » (3.1.13).

[36] Voir note Arden 3, p. 196.

[37] Cet art médical qui consiste à lire dans les urines est exposé par exemple dans un traité intitulé *Here beginneth the seinge of Urynes, of all the colours that Urynes be of, with the medecines annexed to everye Urine, and every Urine his Urinal much profitable for everye manne to knowe*, traité publié onze fois entre 1525 et 1575.

[38] « I will knog your urinal about your knave's coxcomb » (3.1.76). Sur le lien entre scatologie et mélancolie, voir l'article de Smith Peter J., « Ajax by any other name would smell as sweet : Shakespeare, Harington and onomastic scatology », in *Tudor Theatre. Emotion in the theatre/L'émotion au théâtre*, Bern, Lang, 1996, p. 125–58, p. 152.

brouillage qui se manifeste tout au long de la *Métamorphose d'Ajax* et qui trouve son expression dramatique dans la leçon de latin prodiguée par Evans à William dans *The Merry Wives*. Notons que l'ouvrage de Harington contient lui aussi une leçon de latin inspirée par le manuel de William Lilly et John Collet et prodiguée par Harington à un certain... William (p. 179). Avec l'intervention de Quickly, la bonne langue se métamorphose en mauvaise langue par voie de jeu de mots[39] et il n'y a plus qu'un pas à faire pour que la langue latine se transforme en langue latrine lorsque l'on entend William prononcer le mot « lapis » (4.1.27). A la lumière du traité de Harington, ce « lapis » latin sent l'Ajax à plein nez.

Dans sa *Métamorphose d'Ajax*, Harington fait passer son sujet en humanisant son « Jack » /« jakes » qui pour avoir l'haleine fétide n'en est pas moins appelé « Monsieur Ajax » (98, 111). On retrouve cette louange-injure, ce brouillage de la bonne et mauvaise langue dans le « Monsieur Mockwater » qui intrigue tant Caius : « Monsieur Mockvater ? Vat is that ? ». « Mockwater, in our English tongue, is valour, bully » (2.3.51–3) lui répond l'Hôte. Nous assistons ici à ce renversement carnavalesque qui est le fondement même du traité de Harington qui porte le bas matériel aux nues. Dans cet éloge paradoxal « Castalian king urinal », on a comme une miniature du traité de Harington.

Dans le texte de Harington, Ajax est également appelé « a warrier of Graecia » (p. 67) et « this noble Captaine of the Greasie ones (the Grecians I should say) » (p. 71). Voilà qui éclaire, il me semble, le « Hector of Greece ». Derrière ce docteur qui est appelé « My Aesculapius, my Galen, bully stale, Monsieur Mockwater », ce docteur qui à l'acte 1, scène 4 parle sans cesse de son cabinet (« closet »), semble se cacher un « Monsieur Ajax », « this noble Captain of the greasie ones ». Le jeu de mots sur « Greece » et « Grease » paraît d'autant plus probable que le terme « greasy » se fait entendre à plusieurs reprises au cours de

[39]Pour une étude des jeux de mots dans *The Merry Wives*, voir Parker Patricia, « Interpreting through Wordplay : *The Merry Wives of Windsor* », in *Teaching with Shakespeare. Critics in the Classroom*, McIver Bruce and Stevenson Ruth (dir.), Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1994, p. 166–204 et Parker Patricia, *Shakespeare From the Margins, Language, Culture, Context*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996, chap. 4, « 'Illegitimate Construction' : Translation, adultery, and mechanical reproduction in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* », p. 116–48.

la pièce[40]. A une époque où la reine a mis Harington et son traité au banc de la cour, « Ajax » est obligé d'aller masqué et se voit forcé de se déguiser en « Hector of Greece ». Le « Hector of Greece » reprend donc, à mon sens, le « Castalian king Urinal », ce qui est dans la logique du chapelet de louange-injure qui prend souvent la forme d'une variation sur un thème donné.

Or c'est la pièce toute entière qui semble proposer des variations sur ce thème et recycler cette langue latrine cultivée par Harington. Il est un autre personnage qui est appelé « Hector » et qui est constamment associé à la Grèce/graisse : Jack Falstaff.

A la métamorphose de... Jack Falstaff

Cette pièce, où comme l'a bien montré Jonathan Hall, Falstaff est « évacué », cette pièce respire la langue latrine. Shakespeare déplace le scatologique vers le sexuel en faisant de Falstaff ce Turc (« base Phrygian Turk », 1.3.84) qui s'adonne à la luxure mais qui est à trois reprises symboliquement castré, interrompu dans son élan, faisant de la pièce une sorte de « coitus interruptus » répété. Cependant la langue latrine n'est jamais loin de la langue sexuelle. Harington écrit d'ailleurs à la décharge de son ouvrage que l'ordure n'est parfois pas là où l'on croit qu'elle est : il est de pires endroits que celui dont il parle. « That which some call the sweet sinne of letcherie [...] hath much sowre sauce to it » (84). Ce n'est pas Falstaff qui viendra le contredire. De la luxure à l'ordure, il n'y a qu'un pas à faire et de trop nombreuses traces excrémentielles se font sentir dans *The Merry Wives* pour qu'on les ignore. La langue latrine pour aller masquée, n'en est pas moins omniprésente. On la sent au détour des jeux de mots sur « waist » et « waste » (1.3.38–9), « lapis » et « la pisse » (4.1.27), au détour d'un « better » transformé en « petter[41] ». d'un « muck » que l'on peut entendre derrière « buck[42] » ou dans le « mock / muckwater » signalé plus haut, d'un « vertuous » transformé en « fartuous » (2.2.92), d'un « peace o' your tongue » (1.4.75), ou d'un « third » prononcé « turd » (3.3.220). Au-delà de ces possibles jeux de mots, c'est l'imaginaire et la structure de la pièce entière qui

[40] « Grease » (2.1.60, 3.5.105, 3.5.110), « greasy » (2.1.97, 3.5.84).
[41] 1.1.38, 1.1.55, 1.2.7.
[42] 3.3.2, 3.3.145, 3.5.80–2.

semblent respirer l'excrément et faire de Falstaff la vile matière dont parle Harington.

« My devise is with water » annonce Misacmos au moment de dévoiler son invention (164). Cette phrase pourrait parfaitement décrire le fondement de cette pièce que l'on peut, à maints égards considérer comme une « histoire d'eau ». Falstaff est plongé dans les eaux boueuses de la Tamise dans une scène souvent décrite comme un charivari et qui rappelle le sort réservé aux mégères lorsqu'elles devaient subir l'humiliation de la « ducking stool[43] ». « Carry it among the whitsters in Datchet Mead and there empty it in the muddy ditch close by the Thames side » (3.3.14) ordonne la ménagère Mistress Ford. « I had rather than a thousand pound he were out of the house » (3.3.113–14) dit-elle un peu plus loin. « Bethink you of some conveyance » renchérit Mistress Page (3.3.117) utilisant ainsi le terme « conveyance » employé par Harington pour parler de l'évacuation. Couvert de linge nauséabond (« foul linen », 3.3.320), il devient l'incarnation de l'immondice dont il faut se débarrasser. Lorsque Mistress Ford imagine l'effet que la peur a pu avoir sur ce pauvre Falstaff, le lien qu'il entretient avec l'excrément devient encore plus évident : « I am half afraid he will have a need of washing : so throwing him into the water will do him a benefit » (3.3.167–9). Falstaff ne va cesser jusqu'à la fin de ressasser le traumatisme de l'expulsion qu'il a subi : « Have I lived to be carried in a basket like a barrow of butcher's offal, and to be thrown in the Thames ? » (3.5.4–5), « And you may know by my size that I have a kind of alacrity in sinking » (3.5.10–11), « I was thrown into the ford » (3.5.34–5), « They conveyed me into a buck-basket » (3.5.80), « Rammed me in with foul shirts, and smocks, socks, foul stockings, greasy napkins » (3.5.81–3), « there was the rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril » (3.5.84–6), « In the name of foul clothes » (3.5.92), « away went I for foul clothes » (3.5.98), « To be stopped in like a strong distillation with stinking clothes that fretted in their own grease [...] A man of continual dissolution and thaw : it was a miracle to escape suffocation[44]. And in the height of this bath—when I was more than half stewed in grease to be thrown into the Thames [...] » (3.5.103–111).

[43]Voir l'article de Boose Lynda E., « Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds : Taming the Woman's Unruly Member », *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991), p. 178–213.

[44]Voir l'article de Peter J. Smith pour le lien entre suffocation, constipation et mélancolie.

Ni solide, ni liquide, Falstaff est cette matière que décrit Dominique Laporte dans son *Histoire de la merde*[45], matière qui passe par un « canal ». Ford, rebaptisé « Brook » est l'élément qui pousse Falstaff dehors dans une pièce où Mistress Page nous dit que l'heure est au grand nettoyage : « It is whiting time » (3.3.121). La matière, le déchet (« waste ») dont il faut se défaire, c'est Falstaff, appelé successivement « this greasy knight » (2.1.97), « unwholesome humidity » (3.3.35), « gross watery pumpion » (3.3.36), « the unclean Knight » (4.4.56), « of intolerable entrails » (5.5.153). Plongé dans des habits dégoulinants (« clothes that fretted in their own grease », 3.5.105), il devient cette matière nauséabonde que tout oppose aux courtisans parfumés (« smelling so sweetly », 2.2.63–4) qui font la cour à Anne Page et notamment à Fenton qui sent bon le printemps (« He smells April and May », 3.2.62). Falstaff quant à lui ne peut se résoudre à « sentir la rose » : « I cannot cog [...] and smell like Bucklersbury in simple time » (3.3.64–7). Il s'associe d'ailleurs ironiquement lui-même à cet air nauséabond lorsque, mentant de façon éhontée à Mistress Ford qui lui demande s'il aime Mistress Page, il déclare : « Thou mightst as well say I love to walk by the Counter gate, which is as hateful to me as the reek of lime-kiln. » (3.3.71–3). « Counter » renvoie en effet à une prison de Southwark située dans ce que Melchiori appelle « very unsavoury surroundings[46] ». Lorsqu'au début de la pièce Falstaff se confie à Pistol en ces termes : « Sometimes the beam of her view gilded my foot, sometimes my portly belly », Pistol lui répond « Then did the sun on dunghill shine » (1.3.58–60). A la lumière de cette métamorphose, cette réponse prend toute sa dimension. La pièce représente la littéralisation de cette image injurieuse. Falstaff est un ventre et ce ventre constamment évoqué (« thy guts », 1.3.82 ; « his guts are made of puddings », 2.1.26 ; « so many tuns of oil in his belly », 2.1.57) n'est qu'une vile matière qu'il faut expulser (« dunghill »).

A l'acte 4, scène 2, après avoir envisagé une évacuation par la cheminée[47], Falstaff est finalement contraint de se métamorphoser en une vieille bonne femme que Gail Kern Paster décrirait sans aucun doute

[45] *Histoire de la merde*, Paris, Christian Bourgeois éditeur, 1978, 2003, p. 36.

[46] Arden 3, p. 217.

[47] Dans l'ouvrage de Harington, on trouve le motif de la cheminée bouchée qui empêche les mauvaises odeurs (« ill aires », p. 163) de s'évacuer ou qui permet au vent de rabattre les odeurs dans la maison. Voir Donno, *op. cit.*, p. 152, 161, 163.

comme un « leaky vessel[48] », « the fat woman of Brentford » (4.5.24–25) : au-delà de l'effet castrateur[49] de cette deuxième métamorphose, on peut noter, comme le fait Melchiori, que derrière cette « woman of Brentford » se cache sans doute une allusion à l'ouvrage attribué à Robert Copland « Iyl of Braintfords Testament » (1567 ?)[50]. Ce que ne dit pas la note de Melchiori, c'est que ce texte est tout aussi nauséabond que celui d'Ajax car ce que cette vieille femme lègue au monde, ce sont des « pets », des « vents ». Le refrain de ce testament émis par ce qui semble être une bien « joyeuse commère » (les termes « merry » et « sport » y sont récurrents) est en effet « I bequeath a fart ». Notre lecture « Haringtonienne » pourrait se confirmer si l'on considère que Thomas Nashe condamne le texte de Harington, sans doute avec affectation, dans une lettre adressée à William Cotton : « O it is detestable and abhominable, farre worse then [...] Gillian a Braynfords [w]ill in which she bequeathed a score of farts amögst her frends[51] ». D'autre part le texte *Ulysses Upon Ajax* que nous avons cité plus haut, condamne Rabelais (« Rabble » dans le texte de Harington)[52], dont Harington s'inspire et se démarque constamment dans son traité, et le décrit comme l'auteur d'ouvrages décrits comme « as filthy as Jillian of Braindfords farts[53] ».

A la lumière de notre analyse, la dernière métamorphose de Falstaff, réécriture du mythe d'Actéon, peut elle aussi être lue dans une perspective plus bassement « matérielle » que sexuelle. L'exclamation d'un Falstaff littéralement en rut (« Who can blame me piss my tallow », 5.5.14) fait ce lien entre la langue de l'ordure et de la luxure. Au cours de cette scène Falstaff, ce ventre, devient une matière animale que la communauté de Windsor va consommer avant de l'évacuer. Comme le souligne François Laroque[54], Falstaff va être rôti comme une viande (« flesh », 5.5.87)

[48] Pour une analyse des figures de vieilles femmes qui ne savent pas se « retenir », voir Paster Gail Kern, *The Body Embarrassed : Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 23–63, p. 45.

[49] A ce sujet, voir l'article de Cotton Nancy, « Castrating (W)itches : Impotence and Magic in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* », *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 28 (1987), p. 320–26.

[50] Londres, STC (2nd ed.) 5730.

[51] *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, Mckerrow Ronald B. (dir.), 5 vols. London, 1910, vol. V, p. 195–6. Cité par Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

[52] Voir « a rabble of his companions » (3.5.71).

[53] Londres 1596, STC (2nd ed.) 12782, Fol. B4^r. Cité par Smith, p. 148.

[54] « Le corps dans *Henry IV* et dans *The Merry Wives of Windsor* : du carna-

sous les torches des petites fées. « Divide me like a bribed buck, each a haunch. I will keep my sides to myself, my shoulders for the fellow of this walk, and my horns I bequeath your husbands » (5.5.24–28). « Speak I like Herne the Hunter ? » demande-t-il à Mistress Ford : il y a là toute l'ironie d'un Falstaff qui de chasseur devient proie[55] et se met lui-même en pièces. On peut voir dans cette métamorphose une réécriture de l'ouvrage intitulé « Wyll Buck his testament[56] » où le « buck » lègue au monde les différentes parties de son corps avant de proposer les recettes mêmes qui serviront à le cuisiner. Après cette consommation symbolique qui aboutit à la sentence « corrupt, corrupt » (5.5.90), Falstaff est expulsé à nouveau par voie d'injure. Lorsque toute la communauté de Windsor se jette verbalement sur lui, il conclut « I am dejected » (5.5.160)[57]. La « langue latrine » prend alors un autre sens. Dans *The Merry Wives*, c'est à la fois la langue des latrines, la langue qui parle des « matières » mais aussi la langue dans ce que Didier Girard et Jonathan Pollock appellent « sa fonction-gargouille[58] », la langue qui évacue, qui éjecte, qui déjecte.

A l'acte 4, tel Bottom qui se rappelle sa « translation », Falstaff narre sa métamorphose, et ce qui le préoccupe, c'est l'effet que cette métamorphose pourrait avoir à la cour :

> If it should come to the ear of the court how I have been transformed and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgeled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop and liquor fisher-

valesque au grotesque », *Shakespeare et le corps à la Renaissance*, Jones-Davies Marie-Thérèse (dir.), Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1991, p. 29–52, p. 51–2.

[55] À ce sujet, voir Berry Edward, *Shakespeare and the Hunt. A cultural and social study*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, chap. 5, "The 'rascal' Falstaff in Windsor", p. 133–158.

[56] Londres, 1560, STC (2nd ed.) 15118.5. Sur le lien entre ce texte et *The Merry Wives*, voir Wilson Edward, « The testament of the Buck and the sociology of the text », *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 45, n° 178, May 1994, p. 157–84. Voir également Steadman J. M., « Falstaff as Acteon : A Dramatic Emblem », *Shakespeare Quarterly* 14 (1963), p. 231–44, Roberts J. A., « Falstaff in Windsor Forest : Villain or Victim ? », *Shakespeare Quarterly* 26 (1975), p. 8–15, Frankis P. J., « The Testament of the Deer in Shakespeare », *Neuphilologishe Mitteilungen* 59 (1958), p. 65–8.

[57] On peut voir le même effet de sens dans *Coriolan* au détour d'un pataquès qui fait émerger le terme « dejectitude » (4.5.213–14) à propos du personnage éponyme qui vient d'être expulsé, banni, évacué de Rome.

[58] *Invectives. Quand le corps reprend la parole*, Girard Didier et Pollock Jonathan (dir.), Perpignan, Presses Universitaires de Perpignan, 2006, p. 19.

> men's boots with me. I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were crestfallen as a dried pear (4.5.88–94).

Vidé de sa substance (« drop by drop ») et asséché (« dried pear »), voilà Falstaff transformé en déchet recyclable, concept qui n'est pas nouveau à l'époque puisque l'urine était notamment utilisée alors dans l'industrie de la teinture et de cette matière vile on tirait des bienfaits. Nous pourrions entrevoir, il me semble, derrière ce monologue de Falstaff, l'effet qu'une autre métamorphose, celle d'Ajax, eut à la cour. Cette « défense et illustration » de la langue latrine, valut à son auteur, John Harington, filleul de la Reine, d'être « expulsé » de la cour, comme si sa présence y était devenue aussi nauséabonde et inconvenante que l'était le sujet de son traité.

Il y aurait une certaine ironie jouissive à considérer[59] qu'au moment où la reine éjecte Harington et sa métamorphose, Shakespeare les lui resserve sous les traits de ce qui est devenu après *Henry IV* et *Henry V* un personnage recyclable, ce « man of middle earth » (5.5.80), ce « stale subject », pour reprendre le titre du traité de Harington. De même il y a quelque ironie à constater que cette pièce où l'on cherche la « bonne langue », le « King's English » (1.4.5), le « good English » (5.5.133) laisse à la mauvaise langue, à la langue latrine une place aussi importante. Cependant pouvait-on attendre autre chose d'un texte qui réduit d'emblée les mots à de l'alimentaire, lorsque Falstaff s'exclame « Good worts ? Good cabbage ! » (1.1.114).

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[59] Merci à Pierre Iselin d'avoir évoqué cette attrayante possibilité.

3

"A Kind of Music" : The Representation of Cant in Early Modern Rogue Literature

THE ROGUE LITERATURE of early modern England originated in the mid-sixteenth century and was popular with a variety of audiences. Early examples of the genre are Robert Copland's *The Highway to the Spital-house* (c. 1535–1536), ?Gilbert Walker's *A Manifest Detection of Dice-Play* (1552, 1555), ?John Awdeley's *Fraternity of Vagabonds* (?1561, 1565, 1575), and Thomas Harman's *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1561–1573). Later contributions are the cony-catching pamphlets of Robert Greene, Thomas Dekker, and numerous other writers, which were popular from the late sixteenth century until the 1620s. The genre shares early modern culture's fascination with discovery and decipherment, as manifested in the trope of bringing hidden things to light. A staple of all rogue literature is the "discovery" of London's underworld of vagrants, which the author, in the service of society, renders by means of catalogues illustrating the classes of rogues and descriptions of their habits and secret language, namely cant. The pamphleteers' claims to originality and historical veracity in the later rogue books especially, and their persistent claims to be presenting subject matter that is strictly for

the reader's instruction, function in part as an implicit challenge of the prose pamphlet's low status in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England. In the hierarchy of literary genres, pamphlet-writing came to be widely disparaged in comparison with more élite literary genres, and authors who did not seek financial subsistence from writing generally chose genres that were considered more reputable.

In the early twentieth century, the rogue books were viewed as historically accurate, albeit sensationalist, records of an actual criminal subculture and its elaborate system of subversive practices and speech.[1] Over the past two decades, however, the concept of a highly organized society of vagabonds has been challenged by historians and literary critics who have argued that the representation of vagrancy in rogue literature bears little or no relation to the lives of the suffering poor and the itinerant labourers of early modern England. Although poverty, crime, and homelessness rose from 1560 to 1625, resulting in a notable increase in the number of vagrants, most of whom were born in London, no empirical evidence points to a highly structured underworld of vagrants.[2]

Within the rogue books themselves, the literary and rhetorical conventions on which the authors draw counterbalance their claims for historical veracity. Each text, for example, includes the writer's assertion that his discovery of the vagrant underworld is not only important for the protection of society, but is also unique. In the preface to *A Manifest Detection of Diceplay*, Walker explains that "this book" has been "devised as a means to show and set forth" the "mischievous and most subtle practice" of sharpers and swindlers, such as is found "in houses of Diceplay," so that the reader will "see, as it were in a glass, the miserable ends" that may befall unsuspecting "honest" citizens.[3] Harman similarly

[1]See, for example, AYDELOTTE Frank, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds,* 1913; rpt. New York, Barnes & Noble, 1967, pp. 76–139; JUDGES A. V., "Introduction," *The Elizabethan Underworld: A Collection of Tudor and Early Stuart Tracts and Ballads*, 1930; rpt. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, pp. xiii–lxiv; and SALGĀDO Gāmini, *The Elizabethan Underworld,* London and Totowa, New Jersey, Dent, Rowman & Littlefield, 1977, *passim.*

[2]For the social-historical perspective, and for a survey of the revisionary scholarship, see FUMERTON Patricia, "Making Vagrancy (In)Visible: The Economics of Disguise in Early Modern Rogue Pamphlets," *English Literary Renaissance* 33.2 (Spring 2003), pp. 211–27.

[3]WALKER Gilbert, *A Manifest Detection of the Most Vile and Detestable Use of Diceplay, and other Practices Like the Same* (1552); KINNEY Arthur F. (ed.), *Rogues,*

asserts that he "thought it good, necessary," and his "bounden moral duty to acquaint" the reader "with the abominable, wicked, and detestable behavior" of the "vagrants and sturdy vagabonds" whom he has recently discovered inhabiting "all parts of this famous isle"; he further expresses the "hope" that the vagrants' "sin is now at the highest," and that, as a result of his discovery, all roguish inventions and practices will meet with "speedy ... redress."[4] And in the dedicatory epistle of *The Belman of London* (1608) Dekker congratulates the Bellman for having "brought to light, that broode of mischiefe" that until now has "ingendred in the wombe of darknesse."[5] In the pamphlet's sequel, *Lantern and Candle-light* (published in the same year), Dekker's narrator boasts of his discovery "of a *People* and of a *Language*, of both which ... the world till now never made mention."[6] The claim to eye-witness testimony is further complicated by the writers' replication of other standard rogue-book features, such as the catalogues of vagrants and the customary vocabularies and glossaries of canting terms.

Although an underworld of thieving vagabonds was not as pervasive as early modern historical accounts and rogue pamphlets indicate, and although the portrait of the criminal subculture as found in rogue literature is primarily fictional, the words *vagrant* and *vagrancy* were nonetheless fluid terms that gained currency, as Paul Slack observes, as signifiers of resistance to dominant ideals of order.[7] Because most vagabonds were displaced or unsettled in location, they posed a growing threat to traditional notions of social stability. In *The Description of England* (1587) William Harrison declares that although he himself

Vagabonds, & Sturdy Beggars, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1990, pp. 59–84; p. 65.

[4]HARMAN Thomas, *A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1566); KINNEY Arthur F. (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 103–54; pp. 109, 112.

[5]DEKKER Thomas, *The Belman of London* in GROSART Alexander B. (ed.), *The Non-Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, London, 1884–1886, rpt. New York, Russell & Russell, 1963, vol. 3, pp. 61–169; p. 66.

[6]DEKKER Thomas, *Lantern and Candle-light* (1608); KINNEY (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 207–60, p. 216.

[7]SLACK Paul, "Vagrants and Vagrancy in England, 1598–1664," *Economic History Review* 27 (1974), p. 377. Contemporaries also considered vagrants a threat to the family, as indicated by "the special class of migrants who were punished as vagrants" in early modern England, namely "individuals with few household or kinship ties" who "had often fled from masters, husbands, or wives" (SLACK, p. 377).

has no first-hand knowledge of rogues, he has "heard reported" the startling fact that "they are now supposed ... to amount to 10,000 persons."[8] From its inception, rogue literature played an influential role in early modern constructions of otherness. Barry Taylor, among others, has suggested that the "vagrant or sturdy vagabond" depicted by the rogue books "presents a number of interrelated challenges to the social order—real or imagined—" of the "Commonwealth, in whose name ... [the] pamphleteers write."[9] And Linda Woodbridge, arguing that the genre developed primarily as a literary fad, nevertheless points out that the connections between rogue literature and Elizabethan historiography and social practices were not inconsequential.[10] Notions of vagrancy included categories ranging from statute definitions of itinerant labourers, beggars, and paupers who lived on the margins of society, to the professional cheaters and swindlers popularized in rogue literature. The mid-century rogue pamphlets had a notable influence on early modern English statutory laws and historical accounts of vagrancy. The first legal definition of the term *rogue* appeared after the publication of Harman's *Caveat* in the 1570s, in the *Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds* (1572), which characterizes rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars as responsible for committing "great outrages," to the "high displeasure" of God and the kingdom.[11] In the early sixteenth century,

[8] HARRISON William, *The Description of England*, EDELEN Georges (ed.), [1577] 1587, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1968, pp. 183–84.

[9] TAYLOR Barry, *Vagrant Writing: Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance*, Toronto and Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, 1991, p. 1. REYNOLDS Bryan, in *Becoming Criminal, Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, contends that the rogue books expose "official culture's lack of wholeness" and English society as "fundamentally open and in flux" (p. 104). On the connections between rogue literature and social constructions of otherness, see also MANLEY Lawrence, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 83–87; DUBROW Heather, *Shakespeare and Domestic Loss: Forms of Deprivation, Mourning, and Recuperation*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 32; DROUET Pascale, *Le vagabond dans l'Angleterre de Shakespeare, ou l'art de contrefaire à la ville et à la scène*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003, pp. 15–89; and DIONNE Craig and Steve MENTZ, "Introduction," *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, DIONNE and MENTZ (eds.), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2004, pp. 1–29.

[10] WOODBRIDGE Linda, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature*, Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2001, pp. 46–61.

[11] *An Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, and for the Relief of the Poor and*

vagrants were branded with a "V" for vagabond; after the publication of Harman's and Awdeley's texts in 1561, vagrants were branded with an "R" for "rogue." E. M. Leonard has noted that "the regulations concerning vagrants" in the 1572 statute are "more severe than in any other Act except the slavery statute of 1547. For a first offence, a vagabond was to be whipped and bored through the ear"; for "a second offence, he was to be adjudged a felon," unless he found secure employment "for two years" in someone's service; and for a subsequent offence, the vagrant's punishment could be death.[12]

Both the early rogue books and the later cony-catching manuals are informed by an elaborate literary apparatus through which vagrants are represented as a dangerous threat to the social order. But at the same time as rogue literature caters to early modern anxieties about the vagrant threat, the texts do not always express unqualified attitudes or assumptions. In a society's configuration of interests and objectives, the tensions between dominant, emergent, and subversive ideologies and discourses will sometimes reveal similarities between disparate ideas and practices, and at other times profound bifurcations. Within all socio-political systems, as Medvedev and Bakhtin argue, there exist "mutually contradictory truths, not one but several diverging ideological paths."[13] Like any literary genre, then, rogue literature involves mediation between texts, and between texts and ideologies.

A case in point involves the rogue books' portrayal of cant. Like other roguish practices, canting was viewed as threatening because it encouraged dangerous behaviour, most notably idleness, the vagrant's stock-in-trade. Being identified "as a canter," writes William N. West, marked one as existing outside of the social hierarchy, guaranteeing that one would "never hold a legitimate position within it."[14] S. R. (possibly Samuel Rid), the author of the 1610 pamphlet *Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell*, notes that a common "saying" among rogues is, "If you can cant, you will never work," the reason being that "if they have been

Impotent, London, 1572, sig. [A6]^{v}–Bi.

[12] LEONARD E. M., *The Early History of English Poor Relief*, 1900, rpt. London, Frank Cass, 1965, p. 70.

[13] MEDVEDEV P. N. and M. M. BAKHTIN, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 19.

[14] WEST William N., "Talking the Talk: Cant on the Jacobean Stage," *English Literary Renaissance* 33.2 (Spring 2003), p. 229.

rogues so long that they can cant, they will never settle themselves to labour again."[15] Not all of the rogue books, however, regard canting with the same degree of disapprobation; and in many of the texts the condemnation of the aberrant speech is attended by a deliberate verbal playfulness that attests more to the writer's poetic skills than to the dangers posed by vagrant practices.

In European literature, the fascination with the lives and language of vagabonds dates back at least to the fourteenth century.[16] The English rogue books, however, depict cant as a recent native development. According to Harman, cant is among the "new inventions" that "began but within these thirty years, little above," and that, like "the number" of vagrants, "doth daily renew."[17] In *Lantern and Candle-light* Dekker follows suit in locating the origins of cant in the early 1500s: "within less than fourscore years now past, not a word of this Language was known."[18] As a recent linguistic aberration, cant was viewed as differing from other languages in that, as West observes, it was not perceived as having "decay[ed] from some original perfection."[19] The insistence on cant's recent emergence in part worked to distinguish the vagrant language from the new and still evolving English vernacular that the Tudors from Henry VIII onwards had strongly promoted. In this context, the representation of cant as a deviant and corrupt vernacular worked

[15]S. R. [Samuel RID?], *Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell* in JUDGES (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 383–422, p. 394.

[16]D. B. Thomas notes that the German text "The Constance *Ratsbuch*" (1381) contains the first "*dossiers*" of individual rogues in the manner of the later English rogue-book writers (Preface, *The Book of Vagabonds and Beggars [The Liber Vagatorum] with a Vocabulary of their Language And a Preface by Martin Luther*, THOMAS D. B. (ed.), HOTTEN J. C. (trans.), London, Penguin, 1932, p. 10). Thomas also notes that the *Chronica Novella* of the Lübeck Dominican Hermann Korner tells the "curious story of a band of murderers with a peculiar language of their own" (p. 10). On medieval and Tudor influences on rogue literature, see CLARK Sandra, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580–1640*, Rutherford, New Jersey, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983, p. 40; KOCH Marc, "The Desanctification of the Beggar in Rogue Pamphlets of the English Renaissance," in *The Work of Dissimilitude: Essays from the Sixth Citadel Conference on Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ALLEN David G. and WHITE Robert A. (eds.), Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1992, pp. 91–104; and WOODBRIDGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–51.

[17]HARMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–12.

[18]DEKKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–17.

[19]WEST, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

to legitimate "standard English," as West contends, "by serving as its still more abject counterpart."[20] Evidence of the actual practice of cant, however, is negligible, and is derived primarily from literary accounts.[21] In England, the first recorded use of cant is found not in a court deposition but in Copland's *Highway to the Spital-house*. Rogue literature thus brings to light not only a secret and largely fictive counterculture, but also a unique language that, unlike other languages, did not evolve over time, and which, outside of the vagrant culture, is known only to the rogue-book author, who sets himself the task of translating it for the reader's edification and safety.

As primarily a literary invention, cant inevitably shares certain features with all poetic utterance, including the language of the rogue books, notwithstanding the authors' insistence on the documentary status of their narratives. The similarities between cant, or "roguish poetry," as the author of *Martin Markall* characterizes it,[22] and the language of rogue literature is evident from the inception of the genre. A pervasive pattern in the authors' vituperation against rogues and vagabonds is their use of colourful imagery, extensive alliteration, and rhetorical bluster, underscoring their awareness of being engaged in a poetic exercise. In *Martin Markall*, we read that travelling has become unsafe because "loiterers laze in the street, lurk in ale-houses, and range in the highways" while "sturdy knaves," whose "sluggishness" is "bred in their bosom," pilfer throughout the "commonwealth."[23] In a frequently cited passage, Harman announces his "duty" to inform the reader of "the abominable, wicked, and detestable" habits "of all these rowsey, ragged rabblement of rakehells" whose "feign[ing] through great hypocrisy" has "deceiv[ed] and impoverish[ed] ... poor householders," at the same time as his description of "the wretched, wily, wandering vagabonds, ... deeply dissembling and long hiding and covering their deep, deceitful practices" rivals cant in verbal playfulness.[24] On the one

[20]Ibid., p. 230, n. 6.

[21]See BEIER A.L. (Lee), "Anti-language or Jargon? Canting in the English Underworld in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Languages and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language*, BURKE Peter and PORTER Roy (eds.), Cambridge, Polity Press, 1995, p. 70; and WOODBRIDGE, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

[22]S. R. [Samuel RID?], *op. cit.*, p. 411.

[23]Ibid, p. 394.

[24]HARMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 109, 112.

hand, the expressions of outrage and condemnation, bolstered by the extravagant use of alliteration, assist the writers in establishing a morally authoritative voice. The "insistent repetitions of damning phrases and confounding sounds," suggests Adam Hansen, are "a vital instrument in textually and acoustically" associating the "forces of dissonance ... with negative characteristics."[25] On the other hand, the spirited repetitions and other poetic features of the writing make for a literary tour de force whose verbal extravagance matches that of the "roguish poetry" whose exposure and condemnation is the writer's aim.

Robert Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591) includes a stylized presentation of canting terms and practices that highlights the author's own poetic dexterity. Like all rogue pamphlets, *A Notable Discovery* includes a dictionary or table of canting words, to which Greene adds eight elegant stanzas focussing on the laws of card sharpers and other tricksters. Each stanza bears the title of the law which it represents, and which it illustrates in a visually and aurally pleasing sequence of rhetorical tropes. Among a number of figures and embellishments, anaphora punctuates many of the descriptions, as in that of the first or "high law" of cony-catching:

> THE HIGH LAW
>
> The Thief is called a *High Lawyer*.
> He that setteth the Watch, a *Scripper*.
> He that standeth to watch, an *Oak*.
> He that is robbed, the *Martin*.
> When he yieldeth, *Stooping*.[26]

Only after inscribing these "words of art" in an ornate sequence does the narrator reassure the reader that the intention all along has been to reveal how rogues use the "quaint [i.e. clever, ingenious] terms" of "these base arts" by "obscuring their filthy crafts with these fair colors, [so] that the ignorant may not espie what their subtlety is."[27] No sooner has the narrator bade the rogues "adieu to the devil," however, than the focus

[25] HANSEN Adam, "Sin City and the 'Urban Condom': Rogues, Writing, and the Early Modern Urban Environment," in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, p. 226.

[26] GREENE Robert, *A Notable Discovery of* Cozenage (1591); KINNEY (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 155–86; p. 176.

[27] Ibid., pp. 195, 198, 197.

shifts to an intriguing account of the "law" and "art" of cross-biting, a shift that undermines the tidy moral lesson.[28]

In *Lantern and Candle-light* Dekker, following Greene's lead, depicts rogue culture in a way that is especially evocative in its illustration of the poetics of cant.[29] The pamphlet delineates the allure of cant through a detailed account of its "*Method*,"[30] including its origins and features, together with a dictionary and a glossary of canting terms, and selections of canting passages in verse and prose that are translated into English for the reader's benefit. The appeal of cant, however, is revealed only after the narrator's lengthy preamble recounting the story of humanity's fall into language resulting from the fall of the Tower of Babel (the word *babel* in Hebrew meaning *confusion*): "When all the *World* was but *one Kingdom*, all the *People* in that Kingdom spake but one language"; Spanish, Latin, Italian, English, and other languages "had not then a tongue"; but with the creation and fall of Babel came the separation of the world into different countries and alphabets, followed by "*Treason*, *Sedition*, and *War*."[31] The bringer of linguistic disorder was "*Confusion,*" a *"Spirit* that was ... bred in the *Chaos,*" and that "maintained" all fallen utterance "in disorder."[32] "This strange *Linguist,*" approaching "every Artificer" who was "there at work" on the tower,

> whispered in his ear, whose looks were thereupon (presently) filled with a strange distraction. And on a sudden, whilst every man was speaking to his fellow, his language altered, and no man could understand what his fellow spake. They all stared one upon another, yet none of them could tell wherefore so they stared. Their *Tongues* went, and their hands gave action to their *Tongues*,

[28]Ibid., p. 177.

[29]On the complex structures of Dekker's prose pamphlets in general, see BARBOUR Reid, *Deciphering Elizabethan Fiction*, Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1993, pp. 127–44; PUGLIATTI Paola, *Beggary and Theatre in Early Modern England*, Aldershot, UK and Burlington, Vermont, Ashgate, 2003, pp. 182–90; and WAAGE Frederick O., *Thomas Dekker's Pamphlets, 1603–1609, and Jacobean Popular Literature*, 2 vols., Salzburg, Universität Salzburg, 1977.

[30]DEKKER, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

[31]Ibid., pp. 214–15.

[32]Ibid., p. 215. On Dekker's allusion to the fall of the Tower of Babel in his allegorical prose pamphlet *The Dead Term* (1608) as a "rueful self-presentation" of the "'confusion of languages"' that resides within him, see KINNEY Arthur F., "Afterword: (Re)presenting the Early Modern Rogue," in DIONNE and MENTZ (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 375, 374.

> yet neither words nor action were understood. It was a Noise of a thousand sounds, and yet the sound of the noise was nothing ...
>
> Thus *Babel* should have been razed, and by this means *Babel fell*.[33]

To distinguish between cant and the English vernacular, cant was commonly depicted in rogue literature and other discourses as a type of babble. For Copland, cant is "babbling French"; for the author of *Martin Markall*, it is a "confused noise," the "true Englishing" of which, in the tradition of the rogue pamphlet, he sets out in a dictionary.[34] Dekker, however, relates the confusion that underwrites cant as a manifestation of the semantic instability of all fallen language. His allusion to the linguistic and social disintegration that resulted from the fall of Babel is therefore significant in that it posits the equation of all post-Babel signification with fallen language. From the time of "that *Wonder* wrought at *Babel*," explains the narrator, "a Language is nothing else than heaps of words orderly Woven and Composed together"; and within this post-Babel linguistic "heap" are found "*Canting* phrases."[35] Indeed, the only difference separating cant from the vernacular of a "very temperate" and "Noble Nation" such as England is the degree of "confusion, [which] never dwelt more amongst any *Creatures*" than it does among vagrants.[36]

In sixteenth-century Europe, explanations about why the Tower of Babel was built were numerous and competing. As Claire McEachern observes, "as the Latin Vulgate was translated into the vernaculars of many countries, and national churches broke with papal control," Protestant exegetes counterbalanced the Papist idea of Babel as prefiguring "the event of the Reformation at large," with the explanation that the principal "loss of both Babel and the Reformation" was the loss "of secure access to a divine logos and an unmediated medium of worship."[37] Because post-Babel language was viewed as having "devolved into a confused and debased medium," eloquent language became "a way to

[33]Ibid., p. 215.

[34]COPLAND Robert, *The Highway to the Spital-house [1535–1536]*; JUDGES (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 1–50; p. 24; S. R. [Samuel RID?], *op. cit.*, pp. 406–07.

[35]DEKKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 218.

[36]Ibid., p. 216.

[37]MCEACHERN Claire, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 114–15.

repair the Fall," and rhetorical embellishment the means by which a diminished tongue could be remedied.[38] For some Protestant theologians and writers, the propensity for the tropes and figures of an albeit fallen language to be used to inspire readers in the service of virtue "was God's way of alluring the reader."[39] Thus, for Philip Sidney, in his *Apology for Poetry*, the true poet makes it possible for the reader to be "wonderfully ravished" with the "beauty" of virtue by "apparel[ling]" virtue with "poetical inventions."[40] From the late fifteenth century, the Babel myth was also useful in the practical promotion of vernacular legitimacy. John Hale notes that in the context of the increasing demand "for communication wider than that of basic needs," and as contemporaries recognized that "the practical lingua franca could not be Latin," Babel "stood revealed." The interpreter, who had replaced "the humanistically educated secretary or tutor," was now in the service of governments, and could offer his linguistic skills "in marketplaces, quay-sides, in the portico of a *bourse*," and merchants could learn the language skills necessary for their participation in "foreign markets."[41] Glossaries of non-English words were becoming common in travel narratives, and polyglot dictionaries were rapidly increasing in popularity.

Alongside the claims for the recuperative effects of vernacular fluency, however, some Stuart exegetes expressed doubt, noting that the vernacular was responsible for provoking the curse of Babel in the first place.[42] A prevalent interpretation held that the underlying "sin of Babel was precisely a sin of *commonness,*" that a common language was what God had wanted to forestall when he had provoked the confusion of tongues.[43] In the 1547 "Homily on Obedience," commonality is a sin originating both in "carnal liberty" and "Babylonical confusion."[44] In this view, a

[38] Ibid., p. 115.

[39] Ibid.

[40] SIDNEY Sir Philip, *An Apology for Poetry* or *The Defence of Poesy*, SHEPHERD Geoffrey (ed.), [1965] 1973; 3rd ed. revised by MASLEN R. W., Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 99, 87.

[41] HALE John, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance*, New York, Atheneum, 1994, pp. 157–58.

[42] See MCEACHERN, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–27.

[43] MCEACHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

[44] "An Exhortation Concerning Good Order and Obedience to Rulers and Magistrates," in *The Two Books of Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches* (1547), GRIFFITHS John (ed.), Oxford, 1859, p. 105.

common vernacular was less appealing than a polyglot community also because difference was more politically viable than social and linguistic integration, an important marker of difference being that only the élite could speak and write eloquent English.[45] For George Puttenham, in *The Arte of English Poesie*, eloquent or poetic speech "is a kind of vtterance, ... withal tunable and melodious, as a kind of Musicke, and therefore may be tearmed a musicall speech or vtterance, which cannot but please the hearer very well."[46] A poet's language, moreover, must "be naturall, pure, and the most vsuall of all his countrey," and the same as "that which is spoken in the kings Court, or in the good townes and Cities within the land..."[47]

Yet, for even a staunch promoter of the king's English and of poets as the refiners of the native tongue as Puttenham, the phenomenon of ordinary or "rude" language had become so diffuse that it was granted to have influenced the method of its purer counterpart. On the one hand, Puttenham digresses from his praise of eloquent language with an "admonition" of "our English writers" for including "many words and speeches amendable," of "men of learning as preachers and schoolmasters" for importing "many inkhorne termes," and of "Secretaries and Marchaunts and trauailours" for resorting to "many straunge termes of other languages," acknowledging that "many darke wordes and not vsuall nor well sounding" are also "dayly spoken in Court."[48] On the other hand, he at least partially qualifies the claim that eloquent language must be "naturall" and "pure" by suggesting that although "figurative speech is a noueltie of language" and understandably "estranged" from "the ordinairie habite and maner of our dayly talke and writing," and that among its purposes is to provide "moderation" in expression, it also bestows "ornament" on "speaches and sentences," or "efficacie by many maner of alterations in shape, in sounde, and also in sense, sometime by way of surplusage, sometime by defect, sometime by disorder, or mutation," as well as "by putting into our speaches more pithe and

[45] See JONES Richard Foster, *The Triumph of the English Language: A Survey of Opinions Concerning the Vernacular from the Introduction of Printing to the Restoration*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, [1953] 1966, 1974, pp. 168–70.

[46] PUTTENHAM George, *The Arte of English Poesie* [1589]; WILLCOCK Gladys Doidge and WALKER Alice (eds.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1936, p. 8.

[47] Ibid., p. 144.

[48] PUTTENHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

substance, subtilitie, quicknesse, ... for disposing them to the best purpose."[49]

Dekker, like Greene before him, contests the high-brow definition of language, and invites the reader to take delight in learning a low-brow language such as cant. Although, according to the narrator of *Lantern and Candle-light*, "the Language of *Canting"* is a "strange" phenomenon that is even "more strange" than its practitioners, it is nevertheless a language that is strongly appealing in its poetic structures, which in effect render it "a kind of music."[50] The analogy contests Puttenham's assertion that only refined poetic utterance can claim to be "a kind of Musicke."[51] The association of canting with music is underscored in Dekker's account of cant's etymology:

> This word *Canting* seems to be derived from the Latin *verb Canto* which signifies in English 'to sing' or 'to make a sound with words'—that is to say, 'to speak.' And very aptly may *Canting* take his derivation *à Cantando* from 'singing,' because amongst these Beggarly consorts that can play upon no better instruments, the Language of *Canting* is a kind of music, and he that in such assemblies can *Cant* best is counted the best Musician.[52]

Echoing the early modern commonplace that, unlike the English vernacular, cant is not "grounded upon any certain rules," the narrator nevertheless finds in cant's "irregularity" "a kind of form," and "in some words... a certain salt, tasting of some wit and some learning." And although the accompanying glosses and translations of canting words and verses are provided in order to "save" the reader from the snares of vagrancy, they also reveal cant to be a language of "delightful" words and "phrases":

> Now, because... it is impossible to imprint a *Dictionary* of all the *Canting* phrases, I will at this time not make you surfeit on too much, but as if you were walking in a Garden, you shall only pluck here a flower and there another, which (as I take it) will be more delightful than if you gathered them by Handfuls.[53]

[49]Ibid., pp. 144, 159.
[50]DEKKER, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 217.
[51]PUTTENHAM, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
[52]DEKKER, *op. cit.* p. 217.
[53]DEKKER, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

At the same time as the narrator warns us of the dangers of cant, we are invited to "coin" canting words for our "pleasure" with the help of the "little mint" that has been "builded up" for our benefit.[54] The invitation to participate in a playful verbal exercise is in part an acknowledgement of cant's literary origins. The pamphlet celebrates cant for its poetic inventiveness, a point reinforced by the figurative meaning of the narrator's "little mint," namely "a source of invention or fabrication,"[55] and by the description of "*The Canter's Dictionary*" as a "dish" of new and delectable words, the purpose of which is "to feast... [the reader] with variety."[56] For discerning readers, many of whom in 1608 would have known of, or at least suspected, the rogue pamphlets' status as fictional narratives, Dekker's instruction in *Lantern and Candle-light* would have appeared to be an invitation to celebrate the varieties of poetry rather than a warning about the dangers of a vagrant language.

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[54] Ibid., p. 200.
[55] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, 2002.
[56] DEKKER, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

4

Le jargon des colporteurs : de la langue secrète à la représentation pittoresque

Que sait-on de l'argot des gueux, du parler des mauvais pauvres ? Que sait-on de cette langue secrète désignée dans l'Angleterre de la Renaissance par « cant », « canting » ou « pedlar's French », et sur laquelle les dictionnaires sont peu diserts ? Dans *l'Oxford English Dictionary*, « pedlar's French » est sommairement défini par : « the language used by vagabonds and thieves among themselves ; rogues' or thieves' cant ; hence, unintelligible jargon, gibberish[1] ». Dans cette expression, « pedlar's French », que Marie-Thérèse Jones-Davies traduit par « le français des mercelots[2] », s'entend une connotation négative double due à la mauvaise presse des colporteurs d'une part, au français d'autre part qui suggère l'équation « autres mots, autres mœurs » comme le soulignent les différents composés de « French » désignant les maladies

[1] « Pedlar », *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols., London, Book Club Associates, 1971, 1979, 2 : 2112. Première occurrence datée de 1530.

[2] Jones-Davis Marie-Thérèse, *Un Peintre de la vie londonienne. Thomas Dekker (circa 1572–1632)*, 2 vols., Paris, Didier, coll. « Etudes Anglaises », 1958, 1 : 149.

vénériennes[3] ; cette autre langue, propre à la lie de la société, propre aux vagabonds condamnés par les lois élisabéthaines de 1572 et de 1597[4], est étroitement associé à la circulation illicite, voire à la contamination. On peut donc, d'ores et déjà, supposer que ce jargon sera l'objet de discours moralisateurs plus que le centre d'un intérêt socio-linguistique, ce qui permettra peut-être de contourner le paradoxe (*a priori* incontournable) : comment comprendre une langue secrète et en analyser le fonctionnement quand on n'est pas soi-même initié et qu'on n'évolue pas dans les sphères interlopes où elle se parle ?

Ce sont principalement les auteurs de brochures populaires, typologies mendiantes ou « cony-catching pamphlets », qui se sont intéressés à cette langue verte : John Awdeley, Gilbert Walker, Thomas Harman, Robert Greene et Thomas Dekker. La particularité de Thomas Dekker, c'est d'avoir exposé cette langue à la fois dans des opuscules en prose, *The Belman of London* (1608), *Lanthern and Candlelight, or the Bellman's Second Night's Walk* (1608), *O Per Se O* (1612), et dans une pièce de théâtre, *The Roaring Girl* (1611). Le verbe « exposer », du latin « exponere », fait sens à plus d'un titre. En effet, ce dangereux jargon, il s'agit pour Thomas Dekker à la fois de le « mettre à la vue de » et le « mettre à la merci de[5] » ses lecteurs et spectateurs. On se demandera, en revanche, si le sens plus dynamique du verbe, soit « dire, présenter en expliquant[6] », est réellement présent ; autrement dit, les œuvres de Dekker précédemment citées s'inscrivent-elles dans une dialectique du comprendre et du rendre-compte, ou participent-elles plus immédiatement d'une économie de la récupération ?

[3] « French », *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, 1 : 1077 : « 6. In various names given to veneral diseases ». On peut citer parmi eux : « the French pox », « the French Marbles », « the French disease », « the French Moale », « the French measles », etc.

[4] « An Acte for the Punishement of Vagabondes, and for the Releif of the Poore and Impotent » (14 Elizabeth, c. 5) et « An Acte for the Punyshment of Rogues, Vagabondes and Sturdy Beggars » (39 Elizabeth, c. 4).

[5] « Exposer », Rey Alain, *Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française*, 3 vols., Paris, Dictionnaires le Robert, 1992, 1998, 1 : 1372. On retrouve la même distinction en anglais avec « expose » qui signifie aussi bien « exhibit » que « reveal the identity or fact of (esp. a person or thing disapproved of or guilty of a crime etc.) », « Expose », Allen R. E. (dir.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964, 1990, p. 412.

[6] *Ibid.*, 1 : 1372.

On commencera par se pencher sur les brochures en prose en tant que genre, ayant eu pour pionniers élisabéthains John Awdeley et Thomas Harman, et sur l'articulation avertir / circonscrire selon laquelle la langue secrète y est partiellement dévoilée ; on mettra en avant le prétexte citoyen, la suprématie de l'axe paradigmatique sur l'axe syntagmatique, et la question de la vraisemblance. On se concentrera ensuite sur l'œuvre de Thomas Dekker pour montrer que l'argot est habilement intégré dans une économie du divertissement, dans ses pamphlets comme dans sa pièce. Cette nouvelle articulation divertir / subvertir nous amènera à considérer les stratégies de déplacement et d'inversion, l'émergence d'un trompe-l'œil pittoresque, ainsi que la connivence de l'auteur et de son public. On en viendra alors à s'interroger sur les intérêts de Thomas Dekker et sur l'authenticité de la parole marginale dont il se dit l'interprète.

Avertir / Circonscrire

> By this little ye may wholly and fully understand their untoward talk and pelting speech, mingled without measure
>
> Thomas Harman

Pour des pamphlétaires comme Thomas Harman[7] et Thomas Dekker, la langue secrète des traîne-savates n'a pas d'intérêt en tant qu'objet d'étude propre ; s'ils veulent la percer à jour, c'est parce qu'elle constitue une menace pour les honnêtes citoyens, qu'elle entraîne, selon les termes de Barry Taylor : « a vagrancy of the signifier — or the surface appearances of social being — from its ground the signified — the 'natural' hierarchical ordering of rank and status[8] ». Autrement dit, il s'agit pour les pamphlétaires de décrypter la langue de l'autre, de celui que la société

[7] Harman Thomas, *A Caveat or Warning of Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds*, 1566, in Judges A. V. (dir.), *The Elizabethan Underworld. A collection of Tudor and early Stuart tracts and ballads telling of the lives and misdoings of vagabonds, thieves, rogues and cozeners, and giving some account of the operation of the criminal law*, Londres, Routledge and Kegan, 1930, 1965.

[8] Taylor Barry, *Vagrant Writing. Social and Semiotic Disorders in the English Renaissance*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1991, p. 2.

relègue à sa marge, pour anticiper ses mauvaises intentions, et donc pour avertir et protéger le même, c'est-à-dire celui qui est intégré au centre même de la cité. Dans *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1566), Thomas Harman adresse son épître dédicatoire, mise en garde véhémente contre les faux mendiants, à la comtesse de Shrewsbury. Dans la lignée de son prédécesseur, Thomas Dekker, dont on connaît le profond civisme[9], brandit l'étendard de la justice et du patriotisme. Dans sa préface de *The Belman of London* (1608), il déclare : « *so will I* devote *my life to the safetie of my country in defending her from these Serpents*[10] ». Quant à son second opuscule, *Lanthern and Candlelight* (1608), il porte la dédicace : « To my owne Nation[11] ».

Dans cette croisade contre les mauvais pauvres, l'approche moralisatrice suit de très près le sens civique. Pour Harman, le jargon est avant tout « [an] unlawful language[12] », « the lewd, lousy language of these loitering lusks and lazy lorels[13] », ou encore « a [*sic*] unknown tongue only but to these bold, beastly, bawdy beggars and vain vagabonds[14] ». C'est l'enveloppe de la malhonnêteté, le manteau de la dissimulation. Dans *Lanthern and Candlelight*, Dekker explique :

> Now as touching the Dialect or phrase itselfe, I sée not that it is grounded upon any certaine rules ; And no mervaile if it have none, for sithence both the *Father* of this new kind of Learning, and the *children* that study to speake it after him, have beene from the beginning and still are, the *Breeders* and *Norishers* of a base disorder, in their living and in their *Manners* : how is it possible, they should observe any *Method* in their speech, and especially in such a language, as serves but onely to utter discourses of villanies[15] ?

[9] Voir Jones-Davies Marie-Thérèse, *Victimes et rebelles : L'écrivain dans la société élisabéthaine*, Paris, Aubier Montaigne, collection historique, 1980, p. 86–87.

[10] Dekker Thomas, *The Belman of London. Bringing to light the most notorious villanies that are now practised in the Kingdome*, 1608, Londres, J.M. Dent, coll. « The Temple Classics », 1931, p. 68.

[11] Dekker Thomas, *Lanthorne and Candle-light*, 1608, Londres, J.M. Dent, coll. « The Temple Classics », 1931, p. 167.

[12] Harman, *A Caveat or Warning of Common Cursitors*, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 114.

[15] Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light*, *op. cit.*, p. 179–180.

Ce mimétisme, soi-disant explicatif, d'une langue verte qui erre grammaticalement tout autant que les vagabonds qui la parlent peut se lire comme une stratégie de camouflage de la part d'un auteur dont les connaissance à ce sujet sont, en réalité, succintes. Pour reprendre l'analyse de Francis Affergan, on pourrait dire que les « les tropes évaluatifs », allitérations martelées chez Harman, équations mots / mœurs chez Dekker, « conduisent à introduire dans les discours une dimension subjective dans la narration et à conférer à ces textes une portée énonciatrice plus que sémantique[16] ».

En effet, le contenu à proprement parler reste fragmentaire et elliptique. Le peu que Dekker révèle du jargon des colporteurs, il le tient de Harman qui lui-même en savait peu. Dans *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds*, l'origine du jargon reste obscure et dévie, à nouveau, vers un discours moralisateur à portée plus énonciatrice que sémantique : « their language — which they term pedlars' French or canting — began but within these thirty years, little above ; and [that] the first inventor thereof was hanged, all save the head ; for that is the final end of them all, or else to die of some filthy and horrible disease[17] ». De cette langue, Harman ne livre que des mots isolés — et selon Malinowski « les mots isolés sont des fictions linguistiques[18] » — s'inscrivant soit dans une typologie des vagabonds qu'il a reprise de John Awdeley, soit dans un glossaire d'environ cent-cinquante expressions argotiques, assez disparates, qui livre, selon l'inventaire de Bronislaw Geremek : « des termes appartenant à des domaines très variés : alimentation, marchandises, boissons, parties du corps, types de délits, punitions, noms géographiques[19] ». La plupart de ces expressions fonctionnent selon un mode de déplacement métaphorique ou métonymique. Les métaphores sont souvent cynégétiques, halieutiques et ornithologiques comme, par exemple, « a hedge-bird » soit « a person

[16] Affergan Francis, *Exotisme et altérité. Essai sur les fondements d'une critique anthropologique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, coll. « Sociologie d'aujourd'hui », 1987, p. 182.

[17] Harman, *A Caveat or Warning of Common Cursitors*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

[18] Cité dans Affergan, *Exotisme et altérité*, *op. cit.*, p. 187. Malinowski Bronislaw, *Les jardins de corail*, Paris, Maspero, 1974, p. 246.

[19] Geremek Bronislaw, *Les fils de Caïn. L'image des pauvres et des vagabonds dans la littérature européenne du XV^e au XVII^e siècle*, Paris, Flammarion, 1991, p. 155.

born, brought up, or accustomed to loiter under hedge[20] », ou encore « an angler », c'est-à-dire un pêcheur au sens de « voleur à la ligne » qui opère en glissant, par les fenêtres entrouvertes, un long fil terminé par un crochet. Quant aux métonymies, il n'est pas rare qu'elles se doublent de métaphores et d'hypallages : ainsi « a lime-twig » qui désigne un voleur dont les doigts sont comme couverts de glue et semblent aimanter tout ce qu'ils touchent, ainsi « a bawdie basket », terme employé pour une colporteuse qui n'hésite pas, à l'occasion, à faire aussi commerce de son corps. Cette approche partielle, figée, paradigmatique pour l'essentiel, pose la double question de la fiabilité de la source informative et des limites du jargon en tant que système linguistique à part entière.

Pour pallier l'absence d'axe syntagmatique et gagner en crédibilité, Harman ajoute un dialogue dit authentique entre deux vagabonds, intitulé « The upright-man speaketh to the rogue », dialogue en argot dont il donne simultanément la traduction. Il y est question de tavernes, de boire et de manger, de larcins à venir, de châtiments encourus. Ce contenu d'une pauvreté simplificatrice est pris dans une forme artificielle, et cela ressemble fort à un exercice convenu de mise en application des termes du glossaire. On y devine en effet « la réduction de la réalité à des séries de classifications et de combinatoires conceptuelles[21] ». Ce qui est intéressant, néanmoins, c'est la conclusion qu'en tire Harman en s'adressant à son lecteur : « By this little ye may wholly and fully understand their untoward talk and pelting speech, mingled without measure[22] ». Les adverbes « wholly » et « fully » soulignent le fantasme de circonscription et de transparence sémantiques, le fantasme de traduction littérale selon lequel le jargon de l'autre peut être facilement ramenée à la langue connue, puisque sa syntaxe est semblable et que son lexique est univoque. Des décennies plus tard, Dekker reprend dans sa pièce *The Roaring Girl* l'idée que ce jargon s'acquiert en un tour de main, pourvu qu'on puisse graisser la patte d'un initié. Il fait dire à Moll Cutpurse : « Tempt him [one of those rogues] with gold to open the large book / Of his close villainies : and you yourself shall cant / Better than poor Moll can » (5.1.308–310). Dans « Talking the Talk :

[20] « [2.] Hedge-bird », *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, 1 : 1281.
[21] Affergan, *Exotisme et altérité*, *op. cit.*, p. 178.
[22] Harman, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

Cant on the Jacobean Stage », William N. West souligne l'exactitude suspecte de cette adéquation entre la langue de l'autre et la langue du même : « any given passage of cant can be rendered *exactly* into standard English—there are no double meanings or nuances that get lost in translation, no remainder that escapes translation[23] ». Il ajoute : « the translation of cant, then, is expansionist or imperialistic[24] ».

Si ceux que Jonathon Green appelle « the pioneering glossarists[25] » disent avertir leurs lecteurs en exposant des bribes de jargon et en proposant des reconstitutions de dialogues ou de chansons, montrant par là même que le jargon des colporteurs est un parler autre certes, mais qui se laisse aisément circonscrire, ils se révèlent surtout experts en l'art de les divertir et d'assurer ainsi leur propre promotion commerciale. La langue verte, par son caractère elliptique et pittoresque, continue de générer chez Dekker diversions et digressions, et elle s'inscrit plus ouvertement dans une économie du divertissement.

Divertir / Subvertir

Teach me this pedlar's French
Thomas Dekker

Dans les deux premières brochures contre la pègre de Dekker, et dans sa pièce qui suit trois ans après, le jargon des colporteurs est mis en scène, métaphoriquement puis littéralement.

Dans *The Belman of London*, Dekker décrit la réunion secrète de la Confrérie des Gueux et le rite d'admission d'une nouvelle recrue. L'argot est au cœur du traitement burlesque que l'auteur fait de la cérémonie :

> This done, the *Grand Signior* called for a *Gage* of *Bowse*, which belike signified a quart of drinke, for presently a pot of Ale being put into his hand, hee made the *yong Squire* kneele downe, and powring the full pot on his pate, uttered these wordes, I—doe stall thée—to the *Rogue*, by vertue of this soveraigne English liquor,

[23] West William N., « Talking the Talk : Cant on the Jacobean Stage », in *English Literary Renaissance*, 33.2 (Spring 2003), p. 238. C'est lui qui met en italiques.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 240.
[25] Green Jonathon, « Language. Another cantry », in *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 44, n° 3, p. 110.

> so that henceforth it shall bee lawfull for thée to *Cant*, (that is to say) to be a *Vagabond* and *Beg*, and to speake that peddlers French, or that *Canting Language*, which is to be found among none but *Beggers* : with that, the *Stalled Gentleman* rose, all the rest in the roome hanging upon him for joy, like so many dogges about a beare, and leaping about him with showtes like so many mad-men[26].

Dans cette mise en scène digne d'un Sir John Falstaff, Dekker joue sur l'idée de disconvenance, en recourant au burlesque dégradant et au burlesque dignifiant.[27] Dans cette double parodie (baptême chrétien et adoubement du chevalier), les accessoires symboliques du rite de passage, et de sa dimension noble ou sacrée, que sont respectivement l'eau bénite et l'épée cèdent la place à « a *Gage* of *Bowse* », parler argotique, liquide métonymique d'un des lieux les plus mal famés, la taverne. Loin d'offrir une « rencontre avec le sacré », l'intronisation se déroule sur un mode prosaïque, et l'« homme nouveau[28] » dont elle prépare l'avènement n'est autre que « a *Vagabond* » ; le « mode d'être supérieur[29] » que le rite initiatique permet d'atteindre, c'est la gueuserie et sa langue verte ! Les pauses théâtrales du *Grand Signior*, avant l'ultime subversion de la formule d'argot (« I—doe stall thée—to the *Rogue* »), sont à cet égard significatives. Pour peu que l'on prenne « stall » séparément, avant la collocation propre au jargon des colporteurs, on entend à la fois le leurre (« to place in a high office or dignity ») et la réalité qui le sous-tend ironiquement (« to bring to a standstill, render unable to proceed »).[30] Le néophyte crève-la-faim qu'on fait agenouiller pour armer truand n'en est pas moins qualifié de « yong Squire » et de « Stalled Gentleman ». Dans ce rite d'adoubement, burlesque dégradant et burlesque dignifiant s'entremêlent, ridiculisant aussi bien les confrères en guenilles que les rituels des chevaliers. On pense alors à l'analyse de Gérard Genette, dans

[26] DEKKER, *The Belman of London*, *op. cit.*, p. 83. Les italiques sont de l'auteur (ou de l'éditeur).

[27] Ces termes sont définis par GENETTE Gérard dans *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, coll. « Points, » 1982, p. 184–192.

[28] MIRCEA Eliade, *Initiation, rites, sociétés secrètes. Naissances mystiques. Essais sur quelques types d'initiation*, Paris, Gallimard, coll. « Folio / Essais », 1959, 2004, p. 16–17.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[30] « Stall », II. 7 ; III. 11, *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, 2 : 3009.

Palimpsestes : « l'héroï-comique pourrait se contenter de traiter un sujet vulgaire dans un vague style noble indifférencié. Mais il n'accomplit (et apparemment d'emblée) sa *vis comica* potentielle qu'en s'en prenant à un style noble déterminé, qu'on se plaît à reconnaître et à voir brocarder[31] ». Si, dans ce premier opuscule, les lecteurs se divertissent dans une position passive (qui fait écho au propre voyeurisme du narrateur), ils se voient offerts un rôle beaucoup plus actif dans le second opuscule : on leur propose d'y manipuler des mots d'argot. Si Dekker s'est d'abord amusé tout seul en jouant avec différents styles, il va désormais jouer avec ses lecteurs, les guidant ou les égarant à sa guise dans le labyrinthe de la traduction du jargon.

Le premier chapitre de *Lanthern and Candlelight, or the Bellman's Second Night's Walk* s'intitule « Of Canting » et annonce comme programme : « How long it hath beene a language : how it comes to bee a language : how it is derived, and by whom it is spoken[32] ». Ce qui n'est pas annoncé, c'est le glissement de l'approche moralisatrice au plaisir du jeu avec le langage. Dekker revient sur le mythe de la tour de Babel et semble regretter ces temps adamiques de la langue unique où l'on pouvait se passer d'interprète (alors qu'il va justement recourir lui-même aux voix multiples, à la confusion et à l'interprétation). Il n'y avait alors pas de jargon pouvant servir de couverture aux individus mal intentionnés : « Two could not then stand gabling with strange tongues, and conspire together (to his owne face) how to cut a third mans throat, but he might understand them[33] ». C'est sans doute au « pedlar's French » qu'il fait ici allusion avant de le prendre véritablement pour cible et de le dépeindre comme jargon de camouflage et de confusion. Néanmoins (et c'est là qu'il s'éloigne de Harman), Dekker réintroduit rapidement l'idée d'une langue pourtant savoureuse que l'on aurait plaisir à déchiffrer : « And yet (even out of all that *Irregularity*, unhansomnesse, and Fountaine of *Barbarisme*) do they draw a kinde of forme : and in some wordes, (aswell simple as compounds) retaine a certaine salte, tasting of some wit

[31] Genette, *Palimpsestes*, *op. cit.*, p. 192. (Ce paragraphe sur le traitement burlesque dans *The Belman of London* est repris d'un article précédent : Drouet Pascale, « Les rites de passage dans *The Bellman of London*, ou la Confrérie des Gueux selon Thomas Dekker », in *XVII–XVIII. Revue de la Société d'Etudes Anglo-Américaines des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, n° 62, juin 2006, p. 35–49).

[32] Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

and some Learning[34] ». En donnant des exemples de composés ludiques en « chete », comme « A *Belly chete*, an Apron : A *Grunting chete*, a Pig : A *Cackling chete*, a Cocke or a Capon[35] », il sert à ses lecteurs un échantillonage amusant, prélude aux travaux pratiques qu'il va mettre en place.

Petit glossaire (incomplet) à l'appui, il leur propose de traduire une chanson en jargon rimé dont il ne donne pas la traduction : « This short Lesson I leave to be construed by him that is desirous to try his skill in the language, which he may do by the helpe of the following *Dictionary*[36] ». Or, tous les mots d'argot de la chanson ne sont pas entrés dans le glossaire ; c'est au lecteur d'inférer le sens de certains mots. Puis suit une deuxième chanson en prose qu'il traduit, mais dont il n'entre pas les termes dans son glossaire, avec pour justification : « And because you shall not have one dish twice set before you, none of those *Canting* wordes that are englished before shall here be found : for our intent is *to feast you with varietie*[37] ». Pour Dekker, il s'agit avant tout de divertir plaisamment ses lecteurs ; mais comme il faut aussi qu'ils en aient pour leur argent, il introduit une dernière chanson en argot qu'il traduit *in extenso*. Ainsi, on entend des voix diverses qui se succèdent au point qu'au terme du chapitre, on ne sait plus très bien qui dit : « We have *Canted* (I feare) too much, let us now give eare to the *Bel-man*, and heare what he speaks in english[38] ». On pourrait presque prêter à Dekker ce propos de Falstaff : « I have a school of tongues in this belly of mine[39] ».

Le foisonnement des voix, l'idée du traducteur-détective, la dynamique ludique et la connivence qu'il établit avec ses lecteurs servent aussi la propre stratégie de Dekker : dissimuler le peu de connaissances qu'il a en réalité de cette langue verte, estomper les limites de son numéro de ventriloque. Car si son glossaire est incomplet, c'est que Dekker ne souhaite pas assommer ses lecteurs et que les mots d'argot, étrangement comparés à des fleurs, doivent se cueillir un à un pour être appréciés : « I wil at this time not make you surfet on too much, but as if you

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 180.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 182.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 183. C'est nous qui soulignons la fin de la phrase.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 188.
[39] Shakespeare William, *2 Henry IV*, 4.3.18.

were walking in a Garden, you shall openly pluck here a flower, and there another, which (as I take it) will be more delightfull then [*sic*] if you gathered them by handfulls[40] ». Cette justification douteuse est à rapprocher de la conclusion que Dekker tire à la fin de son glossaire : « And thus have I builded up a little *Mint*, where you may coyne words *for your pleasure*[41] ». Le dictionnaire embryonnaire s'inscrit dans une économie du divertissement, à la fois pour les lecteurs et pour Dekker, car le terme « mint » — « A place in which the fabrication of anything is carried on ; a source of invention and fabrication[42] » — n'est-il pas l'indice que l'imagination et le plaisir des mots ont pu suppléer à la connaissance du véritable argot ? On pourrait alors voir en Dekker le double inversé du vagabond appelé « Jackman » et dont il nous dit dans *The Belman of London* : « the *Jackman* is so cunning sometimes that he can speake Latine[43] ». Dekker n'est-il pas si malin qu'il peut parfois jargonner au sens archaïque de « parler la langue des malfaiteurs[44] » ? N'est-ce pas pour cela que Laurie Ellinghausen conclut dans « Black Acts. Textual Labor and Commercial Deceit in Dekker's *Lanthern and Candlelight* » : « The challenge for the readers, then, is to regard the cony-catching author [...] as a writer whose motive makes the rogue look less like the author's shadowy other, and more like the author's shadow self[45] » ? Moll Cutpurse, dans *The Roaring Girl*, ne serait-elle pas alors, comme autre figure ambivalente de l'interprète, le porte-parole du pamphlétaire ?

Dans cette « city comedy », l'argot ne tient plus le devant de la scène : il est relégué au rang d'intermède divertissant dans la première scène du cinquième acte. La jargon des colporteurs y est exhibé, tel le monstre à cinq têtes sur les planches d'une baraque foraine, mais la curiosité pittoresque a perdu de son attrait premier. Pour reprendre la synthèse

[40] Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candle-light*, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 186. C'est nous qui soulignons la fin de la phrase.

[42] « [3.] Mint », *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, *op. cit.*, 1 : 1805.

[43] Dekker, *The Belman of London*, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

[44] « Jargon », Rey Alain, *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, *op. cit.*, 2 : 1905. Première acception chez Villon, 1460.

[45] Ellinghausen Laurie, « Black Acts. Textual Labor and Commercial Deceit in Dekker's *Lantern and Candlelight* », in Dionne Craig et Mentz Steve (dir.), *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 2004, p. 309.

sévère de Jonathan Green dans « Language : Another Cantry » : « it reads like a feasible dialogue and more like a cursorily dramatised slang glossary, bereft only of alphabetical order and explanatory definitions[46] ». Paradoxalement, la langue secrète est prise dans un phénomène de mode, comme en témoigne l'engouement de Davy Dapper. Car celui qui dit à Moll : « Zounds, I'll give a schoolmaster half a crown a week, and teach me this pedlar's French » (5.1.168–169), n'est autre qu'un gallant aux mœurs oisives. D'ailleurs, dès lors que le pittoresque devient trop discordant et n'est pas traduit simultanément, il ne suscite plus d'intérêt, même passager. Davy Dapper congédie les faux gueux : « The grating of ten new cartwheels, and the gruntling of five hundred hogs coming from Romford market, cannot make a worse noise than this canting language does in my ears ; pray, my Lord Noland, let's give these soldiers their pay » (5.1.216-220).

En fait, l'enjeu est autre pour Dekker. Il s'agit de revendiquer publiquement sa connaissance de l'argot des vagabonds, comme le souligne Jodi Mikalachki dans « Gender, Cant, and Cross-talking in *The Roaring Girl* » : « Moll's virtuoso display of canting in 5.1, her ability to pierce every roguish deceit and bring them all to light for her gentle audience, should also be understood as Dekker's self-vindication, his claim to the preeminent power to represent and interpret roguery[47] ». En 1611, sur la scène du Fortune Theatre, Dekker répondait en effet au pamphlet de 1610, intitulé *Martin Markall Beadle of Bridewell. His Defence and Answers to the Bellman of London*, et ayant Samuel Rid pour auteur présumé. Dekker, *via* le Réveilleur, y est ouvertement accusé d'avoir plagié Harman[48] ; il y est dépeint sous les traits de « an upstart pamphlet-maker[49] » et ses compétences en matière de langue verte sont battues en brèche : « I have thought good not only to show his error in some places in setting down words, used forty years ago before he was born, for words that are used in these days [...] but have enlarged his dictionary

[46] Green, « Language. Another cantry », *op. cit.*, p. 111.

[47] Mikalachki Jodi, « Gender, Cant and Cross-talking in *The Roaring Girl* », in *Renaissance Drama*, New Series XXV, 1994, p. 123.

[48] Rid Samuel, *Martin Markall Beadle of Bridewell. His Defence and Answers to the Bellman of London*, in Judges A. V. (dir.), *The Elizabethan Underworld*, *op. cit.*, p. 386–387.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

(or Master Harman's) with such words as I think he never heard of[50] ». Ce petit règlement de compte, propice à la vente de l'ouvrage, n'est pas sans rappeler celui qui opposa l'auteur anonyme de *The Defence of Cony-catching* à Robert Greene. La langue secrète des traîne-semelles est prise dans une économie non seulement du divertissement, mais aussi de la surenchère, soit une économie de la récupération à tous points de vue.

Le jargon des colporteurs, *via* restitutions de duos, de dialogues et de mises en scène, donne certes la couleur du parler de l'autre, mais ne fait jamais entendre sa voix authentique. Il fonctionne presque comme un trompe-l'oreille, au sens où le contenu qu'il laisse entendre est déjà de l'ordre de la représentation, et de la représentation réductrice et circonscrite : c'est un discours qui dit à la fois l'insouciance des gueux (ils vivent essentiellement pour assouvir des besoins physiologiques rudimentaires) et leur connaissance des peines encourues pour chapardage, errance et récidive (ils commettent leurs méfaits en connaissance de cause ; les châtiments sévères qu'ils encourent ne les empêchent pas de vivre jusqu'au jour où ils sont pendus). C'est un exercice de ventriloquie dans lequel les signes de la misère et de la révolte, d'une altérité qui souffre, ont été effacés au profit d'une sorte d'utopie pittoresque rassurante et déculpabilisante. Mais n'est-ce pas justement ce que le lecteur a envie d'entendre ? L'auteur de brochures contre la pègre pourrait, lui aussi, l'apostropher en ces termes : « — Hypocrite lecteur, — mon semblable, — mon frère[51] » !

Les « roguery pamphlets » de Dekker participent d'une économie de la récupération à plusieurs niveaux : en plagiaire averti et en habile ventriloque, il tente de faire entendre un parler marginal en s'appropriant les écrits de ses prédécesseurs Harman et Greene. Mais il n'est pas le seul à exploiter le filon lucratif de l'altérité pittoresque et de sa langue mystérieuse. Comme le souligne William N. West : « Writers like S.R., Dekker, Robert Greene, Thomas Middleton, and many others exploited a popular interest in the imaginary field of canting to develop what might be regarded as the « real » working project of cant : the unproductive labor (and production of delight) of writing and circulating cant in

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 406.

[51] Baudelaire Charles, « Au lecteur », *Les Fleurs du mal*, 1861, in *Œuvres complètes*, 2 vols., Paris, Editions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1 : 6.

the cony-catching pamphlets, in glossaries, and on stage[52] ». L'argot se retrouve au centre d'une chambre d'échos ; par le jeu des répétitions, des représentations, des retranscriptions, des traductions, des reconstitutions, il se vide peu à peu de sa substance pour ne trouver qu'un sens nouveau : commercial. Cette stratégie de survie à laquelle devaient recourir les écrivains professionnels, c'est-à-dire vivant uniquement de leur plume, Dekker ne pouvait que la mettre en pratique, lui qui « appartenait au clan des pauvres et ne fut pas à l'abri de l'intransigeance des riches[53] ». Comme les mauvais pauvres qu'il dépeint et qu'il fait parler, lui aussi use de l'intelligence de la ruse, de la « mètis » grecque, et on pourrait lui donner le mot de la fin et lui faire dire, à la Caliban : « you taught me language and my profit on it is I know how to cant ».

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[52] West, « Talking the Talk : Cant on the Jacobean Stage », *op. cit.*, p. 233.
[53] Jones-Davies, *Victimes et rebelles*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

5

"Lest My Brain Turn": Lying about Dover Cliff, and Locating the Other in *King Lear*

1 Introduction: Lying and Nothingness

In this essay I will explore spatial implications of the famous Dover Cliff scene of *King Lear*. Edgar's imaginary cliff functions within the narrative as an improvisation of an internally generated space made to protect suicidal Gloucester. I will argue, in deriving its existence in conventions of stage poetry, the cliff calls on early modern stage patterns of space representation, and thus fixes Gloucester's blindness as an avatar of the audience's suspension of disbelief. I will investigate how non-dramatic visual representations of the play return repeatedly to Edgar's non-existent cliff, and how the conversion of the cliff to the genre codes of film affects the scene's location of the other in non-space. I will suggest Edgar's technique of protecting his father by falsehood seems to anticipate the manner in which responsibility for the other precedes, in Levinas, the question of ontology.

Shakespeare assembles an incredible concentration of signifiers for the scene. A madman leads a blind man to the edge of a great precipice, the iconographic end to the kingdom of England, where he hopes to throw

himself to oblivion. A son feigns madness and protects a suicidal father by inventing an artificial cliff, situating the father in a non-place. One actor acts a role within a role, and pushes to the limits the meaning of the bare boards of the early modern stage by invoking an imaginary space that simultaneously applies and refutes the genre codes conventionally used to stage dramatic space. An old man enacts a silent pratfall, attempting to leap into a vivid lie.

In analysing the performative meanings of Edgar's lie, this essay will focus on the fluidity of early modern stage space, and the early modern practise of giving stage-space textualised meaning. However, in contextualising the scene it is worth noting how the scene's self-reflexive treatment of space is paralleled by Edgar's fluid identity and his improvisational use of language as disguise. As Edgar's Dover Cliff metadramatically calls on the processes involved in imaginatively constructing place on stage, so Edgar's role-playing cannot help but reference the artifice of play-acting.

For Lear, so recently reduced to degradation by the loss of the hierarchical structure which has defined his sense of self, Poor Tom naked in the storm comes to represent man who has fallen to the lowest point, stripped of both clothes and sanity: "Thou art the thing itself! Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal."[1] Recently made aware that social authority is not a fundamental essence of being, but a role played within the accepted contingencies of the roles played by others, Poor Tom implies for Lear the end of the artifice of role-playing, the most basic state. The irony of this, of course, is that Poor Tom's madness is a role played by Edgar. Edgar's shifting identity is noticed, when blind Gloucester comments, on the way to the imaginary Dover Cliff: "Methinks thy voice is altered, and thou speak'st/ In better phrase and matter than thou didst" (4.6.7–8). When Edgar, in perhaps his fourth adopted identity, as a country man apparently discovering Gloucester on Dover Beach, suggests that the creature who led Gloucester to the edge of the cliff "had a thousand noses" (4.6.70), he seems to refer, by conjuring the monstrous image of many faces in one face, the multiplicity of roles he has picked up and discarded.

As Poor Tom, in the clutches of "the foul fiend," Edgar's gabble

[1] SHAKESPEARE William, *King Lear*, HUNTER G. K. (ed.), London, Penguin, 1977, 3.4.103–4.

uses language not as communicative device, but as mask to identity. Entertaining Lear during the storm, he switches between "free-wheeling phantasmagorias"[2], snatches of popular songs, invocations to demons of possession (which seem to originate from Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, 1603), and occasional rationally delivered asides to remind the audience that his sanity remains. The motivation for Edgar's ever shifting stage identity changes upon meeting his blinded father, from self-preservation to the protection of the other. However, though Edgar abandons the language mask of Poor Tom, and his gabble moves back towards the language of civic convention in conjuring the cliff, the increased clarity of his speech allows the play's most visually evocative deception.

We might claim the apparent uncertainty regarding the value of truth in *King Lear* is consistent with Renaissance anxieties about the apparent collapse of the medieval worldview. Though Copernicus' 1543 publication of *Revolution of the Spheres* implicitly affirms the potential of science to establish actual truths about the physical mechanisms of the universe, in fact the refutation of church sanctioned grand narratives introduces the potential for profound scepticism at the possibility of truth in Renaissance society. Sir Walter Ralegh's poem "The Lie," applies this scepticism about the social institutions and assumptions of his day, by moving through variations on "give the world the lie,"[3] as repeated refrain. However, rather than serving as a kind of Machiavellian refusal of the value of truth, like Bacon's essay "Of Truth,"[4] Ralegh's poem seems to affirm the potential for a rationally derived truth. Ultimately, as one might expect from Shakespeare, *King Lear* does not take a final position with regard to the value of truth, and the potential of trust. On the one hand, the credulous face-value acceptance by Lear of Gonerill and Regan's cunningly tangential proclamations of love, which precipitate the spiralling tragedy of the play, seems to urge trust be exercised with caution. However, this position is reversed in the apparent affirmation of the potential of the lie to protect, in the case of Edgar's cliff.

[2] HUNTER G. K., "Introduction", *op.cit.*, p. 12.

[3] RALEGH Walter, "The Lie" in GREENBLATT Stephen and ABRAMS M. H. (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 7th ed., vol 1, New York, W.W. Norton, 2000, p. 880.

[4] BACON Francis, "Of Truth" in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1531–2.

It may be worth noting, however, that in one sense Gonerill and Regan's protestations of love resemble Edgar's depiction of the cliff: in both Shakespeare seems to parody the use of verbose language to communicate nothingness. Gonerill's assertion: "Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter/ [...] A love that makes breath unable" (1.1.55–60), though suggestive of love, in fact stresses the impossibility of communicating that which she feels. Equally, Regan's carefully constructed proclamation affirms her sister's devious non-love: "I am made of that self mettle as my sister" (1.1.69). In legalistic terms neither has lied to her father about her love, for both have carefully sought to avoid any solidity of expression. Their dishonesty comes in using unclear language to obscure the truth. In contrast, the Dover Cliff Edgar lies about is the very exemplar of clarity. Whereas they use obscure language to disguise their non-love, the nothing at the heart of the expression, he uses richness of expression to disguise the non-existence of the protective space he describes. Just as Lear fails to understand the love in Cordelia's "Nothing," the non-space of Edgar's lie is primarily an expression of love. Lying like nothingness, the play seems to suggest, can go both ways.

In the following section I will explore how the play uses the non-space of the scene to structure love. I will look at how the metadramatic element in the Dover Cliff scene, in its subversion of the early modern theatre's practice of textualised stage space, is addressed by Levinas' concept of "proximity."

2 Textualised Stage Space and "Proximity"

Unlike the lavish court masques of Inigo Jones, and the increasing complexity of props, backdrops, lighting, sound effects within the enclosed space of the proscenium arch of 18th–19th century productions, the bare boards of early modern theatres such as The Globe, which jut out into the audience as empty platforms of potential, demand the meaning of the play-space be defined by the poetry of the players. The quick scene changes of Shakespeare's later tragedies push to the limits the potential flux of the meaning of the stage space, requiring adept audience conception of the textualised genre codes used to indicate changes in the place of action. By defining the space of Dover Cliff using just the visual prompts adopted to give meaning to the space of the stage, Edgar

calls attention to this process of textualising space in the early modern theatre. Kent's encouragement of Lear to enter Poor Tom's hovel: "Here is the place, my lord" (3.4.1) functions almost exactly as Edgar's first invocation of the cliff: "Come on sir; here's the place" (4.6.11). Both refer to artificial places, but within the context of the play story the space of the hovel is intended as real, whereas the space of the cliff is false: in this way Edgar's textualization of the cliff applies the very techniques, within the imaginary world of the play, used by the play to sustain that ideated dramatic domain.

In facilitating the deception, then, Gloucester's blindness functions as parallel to the required audience suspension of disbelief. Edgar does not offer an aside to the audience, clarifying the artifice of the cliff until just before Gloucester is about to leap, after seventeen lines of vivid description. Until the aside, an audience unfamiliar with the play could very well accept the cliff as real within the reality of the textualised world of the play (perhaps assuming Edgar has prepared some other strategy to prevent the leap of his father). However, the dissonant uncertainty as to how the verbal-visual prompts of Edgar should be understood, the artifice of which is clarified by the aside, works metadramatically to subvert the conventions of the textualised space of the stage, and leads to a subsequent reformulation of the audience's relationship with the space of the play.

Firstly, I will deal with the possibility of accepting the cliff as real, which we might call the temptation to believe. A brief survey of the art history of *King Lear* shows Edgar to be a supremely convincing orator. Not only does his verbal sketch convince Gloucester to abandon the evidence of his senses ("Methinks the ground is even," 4.6.3) perhaps in a parody of the Neo-Platonic ideal, his Dover Cliff has also repeatedly been concretized by non-dramatic visual representations of the play. Particularly Pre-Raphaelite artists have sought to include the cliff as dramatic backdrop in representations of various scenes, in what I argue amounts to a face-value acceptance of the vivid lie. Unconventionally, John Runciman relocates Lear's exposure to the storm ("Blow winds, crack your cheeks," 3.2.1) from the heath to the seashore, the tempestuous waves and swirling clouds as figuration of Lear's mental cataclysms, while behind looms the rocky cliff. Equally, as well as apparently including Stonehenge, James Barry's painting, *King Lear Weeping over the Dead*

Body of Cordelia, has a cliff top setting. Ford Madox Brown's painting, *Lear and Cordelia*, also seems to provide a view of Dover Cliff, from the window of the protagonists' tent. More strangely, Hawes Craven's watercolour of Cordelia's death, purportedly a record of Henry Irving's 1892 production of the play, is dominated by the immense backdrop of Dover Cliff, clearly not a depiction of a stage setting.

Figure 5.1: "The Death of Cordelia" by Hawes Craven, from *Souvenir of Shakespeare's Tragedy King Lear Presented at the Lyceum Theatre 10th November, 1892 by Henry Irving*

The book in which the print was reproduced defines itself as a "Souvenir"[5] of the Lyceum Theatre production, yet in the vast army of soldiers gathered about the dying protagonists, and the enormous craggy cliff, the painting very loosely fulfils its self-defined purpose. Like his contemporaries, Craven has been unable to resist Edgar's powerful verbal sketch in his depiction of the play.

[5]HAWES Craven and PARTRIDGE J. B., *Souvenir of Shakespeare's Tragedy King Lear Presented at the Lyceum Theatre 10th November, 1892 by Henry Irving*, London, Black and White, 1892.

One might suggest Craven has recorded the *experience* of the play of a viewer caught up in the dramatic spectacle, disbelief suspended. In this reading his "Souvenir" of the Lyceum Theatre demonstrates the potential of the theatrical experience to generate an imaginatively structured space of the stage in the audience perception. This may go some way towards explaining why Dover Cliff recurs repeatedly as backdrop of visual representations, for it is perhaps the most vividly described setting in the play. If the audience is to use Shakespeare's poetry as a prompt to understand the physical space in which the characters purportedly interact, logically Edgar's extensively described cliff comes to dominate the meaning of the stage space. One should not forget, though, that concretization of the cliff in visual art works to re-stratify the cliff as existing on the same plane of artifice as the characters, a reading that the play denies in Gloucester's pratfall. We might say, then, in concretizing the projection of Edgar's mind, the aforementioned visual representations parallel Gloucester's attempt to leap off the imaginary cliff.

This temptation to believe, for imagination to concretize the cliff and collate it as on a fictional plane equal with the rest of the verbally generated play-space, obscures engagement with the meaning of the non-space, the protective lie in which Edgar sites his father. Gloucester's uncertain appraisal of the ontology of the space following his fall, "But have I fallen or no?" (4.6.56), a question which is never answered, might suggest the non-space, though protecting Gloucester, has greater phenomenological meaning for Edgar. Consistent with this, if Gloucester's blindness is comparable with audience belief in the cliff-space before it is refuted, once aware of the artifice of the cliff, the audience must view Gloucester's pratfall with a point-of-view roughly comparable with Edgar's. In using this specific directing of audience point-of-view to translate the scene into phenomenological terminology, Edgar becomes the self, and Gloucester the "other," and Dover Cliff is an attempt to represent the distance between self and other.

This phenomenological reading might be seen as an extension of a commonplace in criticism, that the reaching heights of the cliff imply dizzying psychological depth. Gerard Manley Hopkins calls on these implications in his poem "No Worst, There is None" (a title that recalls Edgar's thoughts on first meeting his blinded father: "The worst is not,/

So long as we can say 'This is the worst."). Hopkins writes: "O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall/ Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed."[6] This psychological reading is consistent with the use of "cliff" in *Hamlet*, where Horatio worries the ghost will tempt Hamlet to "the dreadful summit of the cliff/ [...] and draw you into madness."[7] Horatio seems to suggest the ghost as demon may tempt Hamlet from the edge of sanity, into the frothing depths of the subconscious. Though Edgar's vertigo may be read as feigned, merely part of his performance of the meaning of the imaginary space for Gloucester, like Horatio, Edgar's turning away from the imaginary cliff, "Lest my brain turn" (4.4.28), is suggestive of the danger of looking inwards. If we grant Edgar a modicum of sincerity at this point, he seems fearful of the depths he has pulled from himself.

One of the best recent formulations of this reading is offered by Richard Fly, who suggests Edgar's Dover Cliff is notable as an internal precipice, and the dangling figure of the samphire gatherer, located halfway down, presents "a striking image of the precarious betweenness of the human condition."[8] Of course, Keats explicitly calls on the implications of this figure, in assessing the role of the poet, when he refers to himself in his letters, as "one who gathers samphire."[9] In the light of this, Edgar's assessment of the size of the distant figure, "he seems no bigger than his head" (4.6.16), is explicitly suggestive of the phenomenological power of the cliff, as an internal projection, to reduce the existential meaning of things to the site of thinking.

I propose Emmanuel Levinas'idea of responsibility for the other, preceding the question of ontology, is of much use in understanding Edgar's protection of his father by falsehood, and that this rejection of ontology as of secondary importance in understanding the "proximity" of the other can be applied theoretically to rigorize the common reading of the psychological non-space of the cliff. Levinas' suggestion "It

[6]HOPKINS Gerard Manley, "No Worst, There is None," *Poems*, GARDNER W. H. and MACKENZIE N. H. (eds.), London, Oxford University Press, 1967, 4th ed., p. 67.

[7]SHAKESPEARE William, *Hamlet*, *The Complete Works*, WELLS Stanley, JOWETT John, MONTGOMERY William and TAYLOR Gary (eds.), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1988, pp. 653–690, 1.4.70–4.

[8]FLY Richard, *Shakespeare's Mediated World*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1976, p. 94.

[9]KEATS John, *Letters*, FORMAN M. B. (ed.), London, Oxford University Press, 1952, vol. 1, p. 30.

sometimes seems to me that the whole of philosophy is only a mediation of Shakespeare,"[10] goes some way towards justifying, beyond the conceptual similarity, the direct application of Levinas in reading the Dover Cliff scene. The contribution of the phenomenology of Levinas to the post-war reformulation of ethical philosophy, encapsulated in his concept of automatic responsibility as a state prior to the conception of being, is widely acknowledged. Levinas argues the creation of matter in logos is a secondary stage, which occurs after the anarchic passivity of "obsession," by which he means "a relationship with the outside which is prior to the act that would open this exterior."[11] In other words, the relationship with the world beyond the self, typified by Levinas in the relationship with the "other"—which he calls "proximity"—is a passive obsession that precedes the surrender of the outside to ontology, "that will make of the thing a narrative to which the logos belongs."[12]

Levinas' definition of space as primarily the distance between self and other, and secondarily as something that is understood for its ontological existence replicates the way the non-space of Dover Cliff functions, for Edgar at least, as a negotiation of the space between Gloucester and himself. Parallel with the way the actors define the meaning of the stage space that separates them, Edgar's lie refuses the ontology of the imaginary world of the play for the relationship with the other. By projecting a psychological space into which his father will leap, Edgar defines the stage space between Gloucester and himself as the transformation of distance to proximity. I contend, by Levinas' conception of the space between self and other, in leaping into the metadramatic lie Gloucester unknowingly surrenders to the pre-ontology of authentic human connection.

Following this, Levinas' conception of proximity as "a gaping open of an abyss" which "is distinguishable from pure and simple nothingness by the committing of the neighbour to my responsibility"[13] even further relates Edgar's abyss-like cliff to a configuration of proximity. Rather than Derrida's idea, that "friendship is founded [...] so as to protect

[10] LEVINAS Emmanuel, *Time and The Other*, *The Levinas Reader*, HAND Sean (ed.), COHEN Richard (trans.), London, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 72.

[11] LEVINAS Emmanuel, *Otherwise Than Being*, LINGIS Alphonso (trans.), Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1998, p. 110.

[12] Ibid., p.110.

[13] Ibid., p. 93.

itself from the bottom, or the abyssal depths,"[14] Levinas acknowledges the abyss as a component in all proximity, a kind of "nothingness," which is transversed in the operation of responsibility for other. Like Edgar's cliff, for Levinas proximity opens dizzying depths of the potential relationship.

Of course, finding Edgar's non-space happily to bridge the gap between the self and other rather ignores the potential contradiction in positing a language that reaches out to the other by giving structure to an internally configured space. In the following sections I will investigate this apparent aporia by reading the layered planes of analogically rendered perspective with which Edgar stacks up his strata of deception. As part of this investigation, I will apply Levinas' concept of the face to three film adaptations of the scene.

3 The Vanishing Point

The system of depth perspective used to stratify the space of the imaginary cliff calls on a technique first fully formalised, in pictorial art, about one hundred and forty years before Shakespeare writes *King Lear*, perhaps in Dirck Bouts's *Last Supper*. In assessing the fundamental achievements of perspective in art, Erwin Panofsky finds the technique "opens art to the realm of the psychological."[15] For Panofsky the historical importance of the mathematically consistent vanishing point of perspective comes in the systemised closure of the seen, where the external world becomes "an extension of the domain of the self."[16] This concept of the domain of the self, projected outwards with perspective, is helpful in understanding how, with the internally configured space of Dover Cliff, Edgar reaches out to the other. Using Panofsky's conception of depth perspective we might say Edgar co-opts the fluid meaning of the space of the stage to site his father in the extended domain of himself.

The reading of the depth-perspective employed in Edgar's verbal sketch of Dover Cliff is perhaps initiated by Marshall McLuhan, who calls it: "the first and [...] only piece of verbal three-dimensional perspective

[14] DERRIDA Jacques, *The Politics of Friendship*, COLLINS G. (trans.), London, Verso, 1997, p. 53.

[15] PANOFSKY Erwin, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, New York, Zone Books, 1991, p. 72.

[16] Ibid., p. 68.

in any literature."[17] He explains: "What Shakespeare does here is place five flat panels of two dimensions one behind the other. By giving these flat panels a diagonal twist they succeed each other, as it were, in a perspective from the 'stand still point'." McLuhan goes on to tie the sketch of Dover Cliff to techniques of depth perspective, finding in Edgar's cliff the "vanishing point" derived of an "arbitrary selection of a single static position."[18]

In an argument that may be read as extension of the logic of McLuhan's, Robert Romanyshyn finds Edgar to represent "an early depiction of spectator consciousness, of a consciousness which through distance has made the world into a matter of the eye."[19] For Romanyshyn there is a fundamental shift in the manner of looking following the development of linear perspective. He claims Shakespeare represents in Edgar recognition of this shift to the isolated viewer, "looking at the world as if through a window."[20] For both McLuhan and Romanyshyn linear perspective is an illusory technique that, in representing 3-D, serves to divide the subject from the world by privileging the eye in the understanding of physical space. It denies the tactile potential of bodily interaction with things in emphasizing, with the fixed position of the eye of perspective, the world as view.

While the application of depth perspective used to sketch Edgar's cliff that both of these studies investigate is of enormous value in suggesting Shakespeare's awareness of the implication of Renaissance perspective on the way a culture is able to look, both are essentially flawed as analyses of the scene. To begin, one might note how, in tying his interpretation of the scene to early modern proliferation of Gutenberg technology, McLuhan must define print as the principle medium of the play's circulation: "a fixed point of view is deliberately provided for *the reader*."[21] The recurring textual uncertainty of editors of *King Lear* (due to no definitive print version existing) rather suggests, however, that the play must be understood instead as primarily having been written for performance.

[17] MCLUHAN Marshall, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 15.

[18] Ibid., p. 17.

[19] ROMANYSHYN Robert, *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 66.

[20] Ibid., p. 64.

[21] MCLUHAN, *op. cit.*, p. 16 (my italics).

In addition, in applying literally Edgar's not particularly convincing and dishonest explanation of the apparent wavering of his identity to Gloucester, that "your other senses grow imperfect / By your eye's anguish" (4.6.5–6), McLuhan argues it is the blindness of Gloucester that suggests to Shakespeare the potential of the cliff: "Gloucester is ripe for illusion because he has suddenly lost his sight. His power of visualisation is now quite separate from his other senses."[22] This interpretation is at odds with the Neo-Platonic idealism that critics of the play traditionally find, in which sight is imperfect, a position Gloucester himself adopts in understanding his failure to recognise, before losing his sight, which of his sons is good: "I stumbled when I saw" (4.1.20). Of course, Gloucester is partially wrong: his blindness allows him to be deceived by Edgar regarding the existence of the cliff. By emphasizing the error of Gloucester, though, McLuhan rather misses the point of the scene, which is surely the positive in Gloucester *not* leaping to his death. A Neo-Platonic reading, put in phenomenological terms, might understand Gloucester's mistake in believing in the non-existent cliff belies a greater truth in the stage's representation of the space between the subject and the other.

Equally, Romanyshyn's interpretation of Edgar as a spectator is an incomplete one: although Edgar's description of the cliff mimics the post-perspective way of looking, and this is most valuable in establishing the validity of a phenomenological reading of the cliff, we must not forget that this cliff is not a description, but a lie conforming to early modern verbal-pictorial techniques for representing play-space. By combining mimicry of perspective technique with the non-realised space of the stage, rather than dividing Edgar from his physical surroundings, one might suggest Shakespeare plays with the possibility of these physical surroundings actually being part of Edgar's extended self.

By returning here to Panofsky, and his idea of the infinity of the vanishing point brought into the picture plane by formalised perspective, we might establish what both of these interpretations miss. Panofsky's argument is essentially an extension of the Platonic refusal of perspective, as something that anchors "the free [. . .] spiritual idea of form to a manifestation of mere seen things."[23] Panofsky, however, remains ambivalent concerning the meaning of this effect, suggesting one might

[22]Ibid., p. 16.
[23]PANOFSKY, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–2.

also understand it as "the concrete symbol for the discovery of the infinite itself."[24] Either the adoption of formalised perspective limits man's sense of form to the visual, or it brings into his visual sense the infinite. For this reason, Panofsky concludes, one might find either that perspective "reduces the divine to a mere subject matter for human consciousness," or, conversely, that "it expands human consciousness into a vessel for the divine."[25] The carrying of these implications of infinity to the imaginary space of the stage is important for understanding the fullest implications of the scene. They can be located in the cliff's metonymic collapse of things into their representations, at the furthest extremity of Edgar's sketch:

> yond tall anchoring bark,
> Diminish'd to her cock; her cock, a buoy
> Almost too small for sight. (4.6.17–19)

At the utmost brink of the possibility of seeing, the infinite is broached: things appear to be merely parts of themselves, and those parts in turn appear as even tinier parts of themselves, implying the potential for seeing, if only sight allowed, an infinite regression.

4 The Face

By pulling visual codes of pictorial art into the verbal-visual of the early modern play, Shakespeare initiates the cross-disciplinary borrowing of visual representation techniques that cinematic adaptation must also negotiate. In attempting to delineate the difference between the stage and the screen, film theorist André Bazin claims the "infinity which the theatre demands cannot be spatial [...] its area can be none other than the human soul."[26] Bazin's idea seems particularly suggestive of the non-spatial potential of the stage in Edgar's cliff that conveys, instead of literal place, the psychic domain. In adapting the genre codes of space and place of the early modern theatre to the cinema, a primarily verbal form must be adapted into a primarily pictorial one. If the verbally defined stage space conveys an infinity that comes from the human soul,

[24] Ibid., p. 37.
[25] Ibid., p. 72.
[26] BAZIN André, *What is Cinema?*, GRAY Hugh (trans.), Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967, p. 105.

Bazin's claim implies, cinematic adaptation must find a way pictorially to spatialize this effect.

The adaptation must consider the comparative qualities of the stage and screen. The stage whose spatial meaning remains fluid, defined textually, is quite different from the visually concretised place of the cinema screen. The stage presents a static relationship in its location of the drama in relation to the viewing position of the audience, where by contrast the screen offers a shifting, dynamic presentation of the story, jump-cutting from place to place, at one moment focusing on a particular detail in close up, and at another offering in wide sweep a vast panorama. Edgar's cliff frustrates this potential of the screen, for the cinema could much more effectively than the stage offer visual representation of the actual Dover Cliff—yet cannot easily accommodate the non-space of the lie.

Film-maker's have approached the essentially unfilmable non-space of the cliff in diverse ways. Tony Davenall's *King Lear* made for Thames Television, though patently filmed in a studio, uses grass, shrubbery and birdsong to solidify the imaginary space as a generic outside.[27] On the other hand, Jonathan Miller's *King Lear* for the BBC, calls on conventions of the stage in playing its outside scenes in a non-defined, abstract space.[28] Miller, though, more dynamically applies screen conventions. In Edgar's telling of the cliff, with his eyes closed, perhaps to emphasise its internal conjuration, the screen is used to frame a close-up of the two faces, particularly notable for the impulsive smiles of joy, of Norman Rodway's Gloucester, to imply his "seeing" the scene that Edgar describes (whether joy is appropriate as Gloucester considers suicide is another matter). The screen as framing device is also used in Gloucester's dramatic leap, out of the very picture, perhaps an allusion to the enigmatic final exit of Frederick B. Ward, as Lear, from Edward Thanhouser's *King Lear* (1916), the first film of the play. By applying the convention of the screen as defining the very spatial centre of the plot, Gloucester's fall from the plane of the screen partially conveys uncertainty about the existence of the cliff (a blurring of the point-of-view

[27] *King Lear*, GB, 1976, Thames TV, DAVENALL Tony, producer and director, col. 1/2" VHS, 110 min.

[28] *King Lear*, GB, 1982, BBC TV/ Time-Life Inc., SUTTON Shaun, producer, MILLER Jonathan, director, col. 1/2" VHS, 180 min.

of Edgar and Gloucester), by delaying the showing of exactly where he has fallen.

By contrast, in the tradition of Colman's 18th century production, 19th century productions from Garrick, Kemble and Kean, and Grigori Kozintsev's 1969 film adaptation, which cut the Dover Cliff scene entirely, the Davenall film does not seem particularly interested in either the scene, or the potential of the camera to actively define the fluid, shifting view offered by the screen. Nearly all the scene is shot from three-quarter distance, from straight ahead, in one continuous shot. In fact, the production does not seem to know how to deal with the metadrama of the cliff: Edgar's description is heavily cut. In addition, the strangely flippant tone of Robert Coleby as Edgar is rather incongruous with the willingness of Ronald Radd's apparently rational Gloucester to believe. Following these tonal problems, the static camera work forces Radd's Gloucester apparently to believe he has run off the cliff, while the camera records his feet very solidly standing upon artificial grass.

As has been noted by critics, Peter Brook's film of *King Lear*[29] uses a multiplicity of "devices which estrange the film's techniques from naturalism and from familiar screen conventions."[30] The Dover Cliff scene of the film, particularly, has received a large amount of attention from critics, perhaps for the efforts Brook takes to rework for cinema the metadrama of Edgar's imaginary cliff. More important than these devices, though, I argue, is the concentration of Brook's camera during the Dover Cliff scene on the face of Alan Webb, playing Gloucester, his bloody eye-sockets swollen-closed. Jorgens famously describes the long, low-angled close-up of Gloucester's face, which follows Edgar's description of the cliff, as "one of the most savagely beautiful shots of a human face put on film."[31] In the section to which Jorgens refers, from the line "O you mighty Gods / This world I do renounce" (4.6.34–5) Gloucester's face fills the screen of Brook's film for forty-five seconds (interrupted by a very brief cut to despondent Edgar), the camera pulling

[29] *King Lear*, GB, 1970, BIRKETT Michael, producer, BROOK Peter, director, b/w. 137 min.

[30] HOLDERNESS Graham, "Radical Potentiality and Institutional Closure," *Shakespeare on Film*, SHAUGHNESSY R. (ed.), Houndsmills (Hampshire), Macmillan Press, 1998, p. 74.

[31] JORGENS Jack, *Shakespeare on Film*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1977, p. 240.

back slightly to reveal his tattered rags blowing in the sea-breeze and his raised palms as he makes a final oath. Here Brook's lingering camera work seems an almost archetypal substantiation of Bazin's conception of the "specific illusion" of the cinema that makes "a face the very centre of the universe."[32]

If the domination of the plane of the screen by the face involves a re-conception of the visual significance of *King Lear* in film adaptation, I contend, in the light of this, the central importance that Levinas ascribes to the face in proximity suggest his theories can particularly aid understanding of how the adaptation of the Dover Cliff scene to the cinema affects the scene's representation of the space between the self and other. For Levinas it is the face which generates the responsibility for the other: "the face of a neighbour signifies for me an unexceptionable responsibility."[33] Following Levinas' suggestion, that "the way of a neighbour is a face,"[34] we might say Jorgens's reaction to the beauty of Brook's Gloucester is born of the automatic responsibility that Levinas claims the face inspires.

Perhaps more important is the way in which Levinas suggests the face inspires responsibility for the other by some quality of the infinite that it possesses: "The face of the other in proximity is more than representation, is an unrepresentable trace, the way of the infinite."[35] Elsewhere he writes: "the face of the neighbour obsesses me with this destitution [...] Nothing is more imperative than this abandon in the emptiness of space, this trace of infinity."[36] By attributing to the face the very qualities Panofsky's analysis of vanishing point perspective would find in Edgar's verbal sketch of the cliff, Levinas' reading radically alters the potential to understand cinematic adaptation of the scene's visual elements. If Levinas' "trace of infinity" invokes the anguish Edgar feels on first catching sight of the mutilated face of his father, we might posit that it is the infinite of the proximity of his father's face which leads to his improvisation of the infinity of the cliff.

Combining Levinas' conception of the infinite in the face with Bazin's cinematic face as the centre of the universe, we might understand the

[32] BAZIN, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
[33] LEVINAS, *Otherwise Than Being*, p. 88.
[34] Ibid., p. 88.
[35] Ibid., p. 116.
[36] Ibid., p. 93.

potential of the face to encode the vanishing point. Brook's adaptation of the face as signifier thus draws together the vanishing point of Edgar's non-cliff of "proximity" with the infinity of the face. In offering such an extended screen portrayal of Gloucester's suffering face to his viewing audience, Brook makes Gloucester "other," rather as Edgar's aside concerning the artifice of the cliff aligns the audience point-of-view with his own. Brook's film is not able to replicate the metadramatic manipulation of space that the Dover Cliff scene enacts, but remains consistent with the underlying motif of the scene by finding a visual equivalent for Edgar's vanishing point infinity in the face of Gloucester.

Here we might return to the vertigo Edgar apparently feels on turning away from the imaginary cliff. Using Levinas to read the scene, we might say the verbal-visual recreation of the cliff's vanishing point is the way Edgar represents the infinity of the face in proximity for his blind father. Following this, there is a notable conceptual similarity in the fear that causes him to break the description of the internal cliff: "Lest my brain turn," and Levinas' depiction of the exposure and vulnerability of proximity—the state of being open to the automatic responsibility to the other—as one where the self is "bending back upon itself [...] turning itself inside out."[37] Both seem to suggest the reaching internal depths of proximity, the refusal of ontological distance, endanger a twisting inside out of consciousness.

5 Conclusion: Protection and Absence

To finish, I would like briefly to transpose this discussion of the absence of the cliff to the realm of the political. We might say Edgar's non-cliff involves a reversal of the traditional iconographic status of a protective Dover Cliff, the great ramparts of the Kent coast that guard against continental Europe, by locating protection in the absence of the cliff. This reversal cannot help but contribute to our understanding of the deep political difficulty Shakespeare negotiates at the end of *King Lear*.

To eliminate the corrupt hierarchies of Gonerill and Regan's rule, and to suggest, in the best traditions of early modern tragedy, the potential for a fresh start, the ending of the play in effect demands its audience welcome the invasion of England by France. It is true the French troops

[37] Ibid., p. 49.

are under the partial command of Cordelia, rightful heir, and that Shakespeare much downplays the sense of the military action as invasion. Even so, one might understand the positive presentation of massed continental powers storming the beaches of England as an incredible audacity, considering Shakespeare's play is first staged just ten years after England's autonomy is seriously threatened by the Spanish Armarda, a period in which England is extremely sensitive to the dangers of Catholic France—so much so that the marriage of Charles I to French princess Henrietta, in 1625, in part contributes to the entire loss of confidence in him by the English barons, which precipitates his execution.

Signification of the first arrival of Cordelia's French attendants in Brook's film, in the scene following Gloucester's leap from the non-cliff, is made with a shot of Lear on Dover Beach taken through the halberds of the French, so the hooked blades of the weapons compose the foreground of the shot. This emphasis suggests a menace that the scene quickly dispels. The French, it turns out, have landed in England to serve Lear. One wonders, though, at the collocation of foreign troops landing with the absence, in the previous scene, of Dover Cliff, the iconographic English defence against invaders from continental Europe. The absence of the cliff in Edgar's lie seems to facilitate an invasion that turns out to protect England, just as the absence of the cliff earlier protected Gloucester.

Just as Levinas argues philosophy should give up on theoretical/ontological structures, in favour of an ethical responsibility for the other that transcends being, then, so too *King Lear* plays with reversal of the meaning of traditional iconography, and the potential of early modern stage-space to define a protective non-place beyond the ontological in which one might locate the other.

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6

At the "frank heart" of *King Lear*: Shakespeare's French As a Second Language

Am I in France?
King Lear (4.7.76)

Affecting Language

"WELCOME to Paris!" (*All's Well That Ends Well*, 1.2.22): the King of France's welcome to Young Bertram, Count Rossilion, is quickly fleshed out with a series of compliments addressed to a man whom "frank nature, rather curious than in haste, hath well composed" (20–21). Both terms, "frank" and "curious" are identifiable for French students as *faux-amis*, deceptive cognates, which can neither be translated as *franc* nor as *curieux*, but rather as equivalents of "generous" and "caring". The same curious term "curiosity" recurs in the opening lines of *King Lear,* in the first exchange between Kent and Gloucester:

> KENT. I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

> GLOUCESTER. It did always seem so to us. But now in the division of the kingdom it appears not which of the Dukes he values most, for qualities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

The paraphrase suggested in the New Penguin commentary pays little or no attention to the term "curiosity", by glossing as follows: "not even the most scrupulous weighing of advantages can make either prefer the share given to the other".[1] The term "curiosity" in such a context seems to involve the more negative sense of inquisitiveness, the opposite of care and cure, a sense the word retains in modern French. Regardless of the specific meaning to be attributed to isolated terms, this opening dialogue has a definitely French, foreign ring about it, which seems to go much further than the mere desire to recreate a courtly context to which French added couleur locale and historical veracity. Similarly, the term "moiety" occupies a position of semantic suspense between its obvious older meaning—a share, a portion—and the more obviate meaning, which the word retains in modern French, where *moitié* means "half". The opening lines of *King Lear* seem to import more French into the text than is required for English Kent to be able to "conceive" much.

Division, in other words, affects the language of *Lear* as well as Lear's kingdom, from the very first verb used in the play, "to affect", a verb which flaunts its semantic ambivalence and is made to sound syntactically foreign to English, in the awkwardness of "I thought the King had more affected…". Affection recurs, with an ironical twist, in Edmund's allusion to a forged letter which Edgar supposedly wrote "to feel my affection to your honour" (1.2.87). The term, later used by one of Lear's Knights who deplores the king is not entertained with the "ceremonious affection" he was wont (1.4.58), bears the hallmark of feudal attachments or bonds. Shakespeare's use of English, however, does everything to render that linguistic bond fragile, futile, or nugatory, by relocating such terms as "affection" in a versatile lexical environment, in the vicinity of body-doubles and cognates such as "infect" or "effect". Lear's court is "infected" (1.4.239) with manners Gonerill disapproves of, while Lear later invokes fog and lightning to "infect" Regan's beauty (2.4.161).

[1] SHAKESPEARE William, *King Lear*, HUNTER G. K. (ed.), London, Penguin Books, 1996, p. 186.

Janus-faced, the play's initial, founding and foundering verb, "to affect", looks in opposite directions, dividing the reader's gaze between two diverging paths—towards affect as affection and preference, or infection and disfavour. Further games of linguistic adulteration are played in the succeeding lines, in which Gloucester equivocates about his status as a father, to the effect that Kent replies "I cannot conceive you", a statement which in turn triggers off a pun on two meanings of "conception", intellectual and reproductive. The language of the first father figure in the play is immediately submitted to a process of phonetic adulteration or erosion, as Gloucester's statements are prosodically affected by chains of semantically feminized clichés ("I have so often blushed", 1.1.9) and by phonetically weak consonants alliterating on the soft labials of a chain of b-words ("breeding", "blushed", "brazed", ll. 8–10).

More false friends and deceptive terms lurk in Kent's affirmation that "the issue of it [is] so proper" (1.1.16), a statement which also says and does more than it means. Beyond the obvious sense of Kent's remark—"what a fine son you have"—a number of buried echoes peep through the surface of "issue" and "proper", terms of Latin origin with oblique, obviate meanings. An "issue" literally means what comes out, from an old French verb *issir*. In that sense it encourages an essentially patriarchal narrative, by presenting the generation of Edmund as ideally unspotted by female intermission, as if the son had been secreted out of the father's body, issued straight from a purely male discharge. Such an intuition is staged and prepared in Gloucester's statement that Edmund's breeding had been "at his charge", a phrase which negates the female economy of birth and redirects it to the advantage of the male bearer. "Issue" will return, with greater instability still, in Edmund's disquisition on his shape "as true as honest Madam's issue" (1.2.9). "Proper" in turn offers a number of bifurcations, first in the direction of what is properly made, made with propriety, but also in relation to the question of property which the word imports into the subtext of *King Lear*.

Lear, *Lieur, Ligueur*

Something is the matter with Shakespeare's English in the opening lines of *King Lear*—a name to "remember" in more than one sense, as well

as a name with a signifying otherness, which differs from its original spelling as "Leir" in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Lear the name oscillates between the solidity of old lore and the versatility of language, between the proper and the common. "Lear" can be found as an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary*[2], where it branches into four directions and spellings. As an old Scottish term, a lair is a bed, a place to lie down. A second, older Norse root reroutes the term towards another possible etymological domain where it means "mud". Lear, thirdly, is akin to lore and learning, in which sense it occurs in such compounds as a "lear-father". But more interesting perhaps than the first three etymological trails, "lear" is identified in *OED* as imported from the French *lieur*, *liure* (binding tape) originating in the Latin *ligatura.* It has two domains of lexical application, sewing and cooking, where it can mean a "binding for the edges of a fabric", or a thickened sauce—both of which Lear the character is barred, being repeatedly described as ragged and lacking nourishment. On a larger scale, Shakespeare's play reads as a "binding", tying opposite semantic and lexical ends together, as a *learing* process based on the binding forces at work in Shakespeare's poetics.

Bonds, ropes, cords, and their serial functioning in connection with Cordelia have generated much fine criticism in the field of Shakespearean studies. Cordelia's doubly knotted name, like the wavering signifiers on which *King Lear* opens, reads both ways, gesturing towards binding and unbinding, in the double syntactic possibilities of the French *corde-liée* or *cor/déliée,* bound rope and unbound corpse. Philippa Berry has very convincingly suggested that "in its indirect association of Cordelia with the knots or cords of Union, Shakespeare's play draws out this duality".[3] She concludes:

> Lear's figuration of Cordelia as the forgotten middle, or bond of British sovereignty, appears to warn of the dangers of neglecting the deeper meaning both of the political Union and of the unacknowledged relationship of sovereignty to the wasted or disinherited elements of society (...) The play suggests that Union consists above all in a recognition of the mutual bond of obligation,

[2] *OED*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 1992.

[3] BERRY Philippa, *Shakespeare's Feminine Endings*, London and New York, Routledge, 1999, p. 155. See chap. 6, "Cordelia's Bond and Britannia's Missing Middle", pp. 135–166 in particular.

as well as the human affinity, between a king and his subjects.[4]

Philippa Berry relates Cordelia's name to the French *cordelier*, commonly applied to the Franciscan monks, as well as to the *cordelière*, which "had also become a badge of French loyalty".[5]

A touch of Frenchness affects Cordelia's name, a foreignness which distinguishes it from the more Saxon-sounding sisters' names, Regan and Gonerill. Whether bound by family ties, tongue-tied, or tied by the hangman's rope, Cordelia at once runs and subverts the hidden program of her first name, to become a loose signifier, unbound to the point of becoming an 'o', an open mouth. At the end of the play's many semantic cases of lexical impurity or adulteration, a rather disquieting conclusion is reached, which displaces the character of Lear to the opposite end of a spectrum, where it assumes the figure of a usurper: "He but usurped his life" (5.3.315).

The end of the play is literally bound to the beginning by the haunting return of the same metaphors, which in the course of the play have ceased to be metaphors to appear on stage. A lexical series pertaining to the semantic field of weight, bearing, and ponderousness, for example, ties together the loose ends of the beginning and the end of the play in ways which prevent access to immediate sense. Lear's desire to crawl "unburdened" to death resurfaces in Cordelia's "my love is more ponderous than my tongue" (1.1.77–78), and in her statement that "I cannot heave my heart into my mouth" (1.1.91). As Philippa Berry comments, the figure of Lear as a beast of burden invades the last lines of the play, which observe that "the oldest hath borne most".[6]

Lear's inaugural decision or "fast intent to shake all cares" (1.1.38–39) has induced the Penguin editor G. K. Hunter to suggest a possible contradiction in his commentary of the lines: "Fast means firm, and sorts oddly with *shake* in the following line".[7] The critic then concludes that "the impression is given of the abdication as a charade rather than a necessity". But the term "charade" may be too dismissive and too uncritical to account for a textual effect closer to incongruence or nonsense. Some pressing demand seems to be directed to the reader or

[4]Ibid., p. 156.
[5]Ibid., p. 155.
[6]Ibid., p. 165.
[7]Hunter (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 187.

listener, as in *Hamlet*: "these heaves you must translate" (4.1.140).

Our Bonding Author

The muting of Cordelia has been recently and brilliantly reread by Richard Wilson in connection with the growing number of crypto-Catholic strategies he sees at work in most of Shakespeare's plays, strategies heavily revised between the Quarto and the Folio texts of *King Lear*:

> In his revision of *King Lear* Shakespeare took away from his Catholic admirers not only hope of revolt from below, with the omission of the servants who dress the sockets of Gloucester's eyes, but the last glimpse of any possible escape. For as editors notice, of the three hundred lines cut from the Folio, 157 are from the scenes involving Cordelia's invasion, where the excision of a third of the Quarto text ensures that every reference to a world beyond Dover is blanked out.[8]

The result on the Folio text is that the play "seems to present the predicament of a captive community, confined by penal laws to the desperate remedies of an inner exile".[9] If such is the case, the suppressed voice of inner exile can be overheard, it seems, in the French "turn" of a number of key signifiers and syntactic effects in *King Lear*. Lear's French, in other words, operates as a second language, a minor tongue spoken in suppressed linguistic dumb shows by a Catholic "minority". The muted conformity the revised play seems to opt for remains, it seems, full of "heaves" which, as in *Hamlet*, call for a translation.

The conclusion of Richard Wilson's *Secret Shakespeare* takes as it cue and title one of the final lines spoken by the Chorus at the end of *Henry V*, which introduces in its epilogue the faint outlines of Shakespeare, "our bending author" (*H5*, Epilogue, 2). Wilson redirects the pliant possibilities inherent in the author's willingness to "bend" in the sense of political prudence, as Shakespeare seems to deliver in his cut *King Lear* "a work about the ruins of Catholic England", which he revised because "some time after 1608 he became alert to the potential for the original text

[8] WILSON Richard, *Secret Shakespeare*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 284.

[9] Ibid., p. 283.

to be misconstrued as gesturing towards unfinished business with the 'hot-blooded France' "(2.4.207). Wilson then compares Shakespeare's gesture of prudent withdrawal to the effects of bereavement explored by Freud in *Mourning and Melancholia*:

> Shakespeare became perhaps the greatest exemplar of Freud's theory in *Mourning and Melancholia*, that the work of bereavement is only achieved when the secrets of the past are encrypted, and the ego articulates its loss in language, creating a verbal substitute for the lost object, which is thereby finally interred.[10]

King Lear articulates in the French tropisms of its language a lost Catholic object, of which the Quarto version of the play bore, according to Wilson, graphic traces, for example in its spelling of Dover, a term which, when printed as Douer, bore a close resemblance to Douai and its association with the Catholic seminar.[11]

Shakespeare the "bending author" can be reread in "bonding" terms, where bonding involves the art of poetic and linguistic "joinery"—the ability to create pliant literary alloys, compounded with linguistic impurities and mobile, foreign signifiers. When France settles for dowerless Cordelia, a new form of versatile, pliant language seems to affect the text, dislocating English syntax into such plastic arrangements as "queen of us, of ours" (1.1.257) or as "maid of me"(1.1.259). France literally "seizes upon" her as she is "thrown to his chance" and "loses here, a better where to find". The use of an adverb instead of an expected noun or substantive could be read as a symptom of how malleable France's pattern of exchange or tender offer is —an adverb to be echoed in Lear's final "Look there! Look there!", where there is obviously nothing to be seen, or more exactly where the absence of something has become priceless. Face-value, or substance, is displaced towards use-value, towards something between credibility or credit—a term which summons the possibility of interpreting Cordelia's "bond" in market-oriented terms. France strives, as Lear puts it, to be "interessed" (1.1.90) in Cordelia, an adjective which retains its uncouth force of resistance and foreignness. "Interessed", close to its French counterpart *interessés*, liberates its linguistic "being-in-the-middle", a literal *inter-esse*—a word which, somehow, travels the distance back to France.

[10] Ibid., p. 298.
[11] Ibid., p. 285.

Lingua Franca

At the empty dramatic centre of *King Lear*, a play voided at its core, in which the central absence of Cordelia leaves a wide gap or missing O, what emerges is a reference to Lear's "frank heart", Lear whose "frank heart gave all" (3.4.20). That "frank" or generous heart cannot be read simply in relation to the character of Lear: it gains a meta-textual status by appearing metatheatrically at the "frank heart" of the play, in the central scene which ties together the loose ends of plot and subplot and concludes with the "Childe Roland to the dark tower came" passage. At the "frank heart" of *King Lear*, yet another interpretive "nothing" is being staged, bits and pieces lifted by Shakespeare from Samuel Harsnett's anti-papist pamphlet, and from a now lost story from *The Song of Roland*. "Frank", in this respect, tips towards the other end of a lexical scale, where it establishes a muted connection between Lear and France, between frankness and franchise, or being frank and enfranchisement (a term also found in *King John*, in the "enfranchisement of Arthur").

A *lingua franca* or mixed language affects the semantics of *King Lear,* which retains examples of linguistic malleability in spite of the Folio cuts. *King Lear* is punctuated by moments of linguistic bastardization, when English is made to release its buried French voice, a freakish metamorphic force at the "frank heart" of English—something one could call anachronistically Frankenfrench, as in recent slang formations twisting, for example, Frankenstein into frankenfood. A form of "bastard" French affects a number of key signifiers in the play, which also reads as a disquisition against the dangers of philology. Edmund's speech on bastardy bends etymology to serve his own ends, by creating questionable bonds between bastardy and base, baseness. Edmund's speech operates according to a principle of alteration, by curbing, bending bastard into base, with which it has no ascertained etymological connection. The speech leaves open the possibility of yet another linguistic, French offshoot for the term, which Edmund associates with the "lusty stealth" of nature:

> (. . .) Why brand they us
> With 'base'? with 'baseness'? 'bastardy'? 'base'? 'base'?
> Who in the lusty stealth of nature take

More composition and fierce quality
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween asleep and wake ? (1.2.9–15)

"Lusty stealth" translates the French etymological narrative reconstructed by Littré for "bastard"[12]—a term originating in the Provençal root, *bast*, a donkeysaddle, from a radical meaning "to bear", also found in *bâtir*, *bâton*, and which means to uphold, carry, strengthen. A bastard is conceived in the time it takes to change saddles, on the road, stealthily. With a smattering of French etymology, Edmund subverts baseness into bearing, an inversion close to the Renaissance quibbles on two French words *âne* and *âme*.[13] A principle of adulteration "affects" the frank heart of the signifier, contaminating English with a "French" linguistic disease or disorder.

Zones franches: towards enfranchisement

From one end of the play to the other, a process of translation converts Cordelia's earlier series based on the repetition of "nothing" into its French form: "no cause", where the French root for thing, *cause*, *chose*, is made to resonate, as in 4.7.75. The shift from the Saxon "thing" to the French *cause* could be read from several critical angles, from gender studies (an absent female *chose* replacing the male "thing"), to psychoanalysis (and the "cause" or *cause freudienne*), and cultural studies—i.e. the history of the recusant "cause" in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, found in a muted, repressed form in the text of *Lear*. Whatever the cause, the superseding of thing by the French *cause* reconfigures Shakespeare's hand into that of a translator operating between languages, in what could be called a free linguistic zone where impure French affects "proper" English. An example of linguistic enfranchisement can be heard in Albany's final summary of events:

For this business
It touches us as France invades our land

[12] LITTRÉ Emile, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paris, Gallimard/Hachette, 1975, tome 1, p. 919. Littré adds that "in spite of apparences, one must reject this etymology [which links bastard to base]. *Bâtard* comes from *bât*."

[13] BERRY, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

> Not bolds the King, with others—whom, I fear
> Most just and heavy causes make oppose. (5.1.24–27)

—a difficult passage on which G. K. Hunter comments: "The fact that Q is our only text at this point makes corruption a real possibility."[14]

Deanne Williams' recent study *The French Fetish from Chaucer to Shakespeare* retraces the negotiations and fascinations for things French in early modern English literature. Cordelia reappears, in connection with more metamorphic possibilities in her name, which also resonates like "Coeur-de-lion", or as a restorative, a "cordial". The commentary on *King Lear*, however, remains open-ended:

> While at first France provided a fantastic Other against which English culture could define itself, *King Lear* reveals how the French, ultimately, provided less a mirror in which England could gaze at its own self-fashioning, than an endlessly fascinating object to which England fruitfully, frustratingly, and endlessly relates.[15]

Part of this "relation" is a story of linguistic grafting, in a text constantly worried by the possibility of freakish back translations into "bastard" French.

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[14] HUNTER (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 300.
[15] WILLIAMS Deanne, *The French Fetish From Chaucer to Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 235.

7

Curiositas et dynamique du désir dans le Londres élisabéthain

S'INTERROGER sur la *curiositas* à l'époque élisabéthaine, c'est se pencher sur une époque de seuil et de transition. Seuil, parce que l'usage du terme ne devient systématique que dans la seconde moitié du dix-septième et au dix-huitième siècles, accompagnant le plus souvent les titres de catalogues, de traités (comme le traité d'architecture de Palladio, publié à Londres en 1668 seulement) ou d'enquêtes — ce qu'à la même époque on nomme en France « recherches curieuses ». Transition, parce que bien sûr le terme lui-même de *curiosity* (et ses dérivés), bien qu'assez rare, remonte déjà loin, étant attesté chez Chaucer, et, sous sa forme latine, chez Plaute, et qu'il a eu le temps de se charger de connotations multiples voire contradictoires.

Indice de la rareté du mot dans la langue quotidienne orale, on peut noter d'emblée que dans tout Shakespeare, lorsque les mots *curious*, *curiosity* ou *curiously* sont employés, ils le sont toujours par un aristocrate ou un membre de la *gentry*, jamais par un personnage de classe inférieure ; c'est déjà un indice, d'une part, de la rareté et étrangeté du mot dans la langue élisabéthaine ; mais cela révèle aussi que les types de comportement ou les réalités recouverts par le terme sont encore

circonscrits à un certain milieu social.

J'emploierai parfois le terme de « curiosité » par commodité mais j'ai utilisé à la base le terme de *curiositas* pour plusieurs raisons : d'abord pour le démarquer des emplois actuels de « curiosité » ; pour conserver au terme son étrangeté, y compris dans le paysage conceptuel élisabéthain (ainsi, on trouve encore chez Shakespeare des usages liés directement à l'étymologie du mot, *cura* — le soin, le souci — : comme au début de *King Lear*[1]). Mais l'intérêt du terme latin est surtout qu'il sert de matrice protéiforme, qui ne trouvera jamais de forme définitive, mais plutôt des sens et délimitations variables liés à des contextes et des pratiques discursives spécifiques. Un très important travail lexicographique a déjà été effectué par Neil Kenny, sur des corpus de la fin du dix-septième et du dix-huitième siècles, et pour les périodes latine et médiévale, par tout un ensemble d'études déjà, notamment celle d'André Labhardt dans les années 60 et plus récemment celle d'Edward Peters, sur la *curiositas mirabilium*, la curiosité pour le merveilleux[2].

On posera simplement comme principe de base l'idée, somme toute évidente, que la *curiositas* est la manifestation d'une certaine forme de désir, et on rappellera ici que le concept, au moins jusqu'à la Renaissance, s'articule et est articulé par ses théoriciens autour d'un certain nombre d'*oppositions*. Opposition morale, d'abord, entre bon désir et mauvais désir, qui se construit dès le stoïcisme tardif et est renforcée par le passage de la patristique ; on peut noter au passage que le terme, chez Apulée au II^e^ siècle comme chez Lipsius au seizième, est le plus souvent assorti d'épithètes : *bona* ou *sana curiositas*, vs *curiositas mala* ou *insana*. Opposition entre sujet et objet : curiosité subjective *vs* curiosité objective — Neil Kenny situe le passage de l'une à l'autre vers le milieu du dix-septième siècle, après le développement de la nouvelle science — il conviendra peut-être de remettre en cause cette charnière. Opposition, enfin, entre désir d'acquisition et désir de savoir. Mais là encore, on verra

[1] Cf. *King Lear*, 1.1 : « [...] but now, in the division of our kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most, for qualities are so weighed that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety. »

[2] Kenny Neil, *Curiosity in Early Modern Europe : word histories*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1998 ; Labhardt André, *Curiositas. Notes sur l'histoire d'une mot et d'une notion*, Museum Helveticum, 1960, 17, p. 206–224 ; Peters Edward, *The Desire to Know the Secrets of the World*, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62.4, 2001, p. 593–610.

que les frontières sont très poreuses et que les délimitations sont contextuelles ; elles dépendent d'une part du type de pratique discursive dans lequel on se situe, mais aussi d'éventuelles tentatives de démonisation : personne n'a jamais revendiqué sa *mala curiositas* ; la *mala curiositas* est toujours celle des autres. Plus fondamentalement, on aperçoit ici que dans le cas de la *curiositas*, la distinction entre concept et chose est presque inopérante, toutes deux étant élaborées en fonction de certaines *situations*.

Plus concrètement, on procédera ici en deux étapes, nécessairement sélectives. On essaiera d'abord rapidement de mesurer l'impact et surtout la perception du concept de *curiositas* à l'époque élisabéthaine, au sens large, et sa continuité par rapport à l'histoire du terme, ce qu'une étude diachronique ne permet pas toujours d'établir ; par-delà les sens devenus vulgaires (par exemple : la *curiositas* comme « inquisitiveness ») on essaiera de retenir de ce survol deux pôles majeurs, d'une part une *curiositas* de nature épistémologique, peut-être la plus évidente, et d'autre part une *curiositas* liée au désir d'acquisition, et notamment au contexte socio-économique du Londres élisabéthain ; l'enjeu dès lors sera d'examiner si et comment ces deux manifestations, apparemment disparates, peuvent être articulées entre elles, voire se rejoindre dans certains modes discursifs.

Le premier enjeu est donc de mesurer les continuités et écarts de la notion de *curiositas* par rapport aux sources, principalement de l'antiquité tardive. Or on pourrait se demander légitimement s'il ne s'agit pas d'une comparaison forcée, *a posteriori*, autrement dit s'il existe une véritable conscience des sources à l'époque élisabéthaine. Evidemment, les phénomènes de transfert culturel ne sont jamais monolithiques, mais si l'on essaie de se replacer dans le contexte élisabéthain, on peut noter d'une part que oui, il y a des preuves assez convaincantes d'une conscience des origines de la question dans le discours *érudit*, et d'autre part un certain type de *dérivation* dans les écrits plus courants.

J'essaierai d'illustrer l'intérêt pour le concept à travers deux exemples d'emprunt direct, pris à des types de discours différents, d'une part le sermon, d'autre part la satire.

Le premier est emprunté à la littérature des sermons, et a donc l'avantage d'être un discours à grand public, et donc suggère une certaine

diffusion du message à des couches larges de la population, y compris par écrit, à une époque où peut-être 60% de la population masculine de Londres a accès à la lecture. Il s'agit d'un prêche de Lawrence Barker, qu'on connaît peu si ce n'est à travers ce texte, délivré à St Paul's en 1597 et 1598, et presque immédiatement imprimé. Barker prend comme point de départ un verset connu de l'évangile de Jean (21 : 22) :

> Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following ; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee ? / Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do ? / Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ? follow thou me (Jn 21 : 20–22)[3].

Barker interprète la question du Christ à Pierre, en latin *(« Quid ad te ? »)* comme une mise en cause de trois types de *curiositas* (son sermon repose souvent sur des structures ternaires). Après un développement sur la nature de l'âme, qui lui permet d'isoler l'*otium* et la *curiositas* comme « ennemis » de la connaissance, Barker en vient à distinguer trois types de *curiositas* :

> And if we looke as narrowly to his fact for the faults [...], we shall easilie descrie in him [Peter] three kinds of curiositie. [...] The first for his knowledge, the second for his care, and the third for his action. The first branch of this sinne is his inordinate desire, to knowe more then which god would reveale him ; for som things there be whereof God maketh reservation, and never discloseth them to the sonnes of men, of which it becometh not the faints to be inquisitive ; and therefore our saviour saith *If I wil that he* [John] *tarry, what is that to thee ?* The second branch is his care in things of no moment, neglecting in the mean season dewties of importance : for what were the actions or passions of S. Iohn, his going to the grave in peace or from the crosse, if it be compared with that obedience which the apostle did owe our saviour Christ Iesus ? [...] The third branch is his busines in other mens affaires, forgetting the dutie that appertaineth himself : for he inquireth not of himself, but asketh of John ; and therefore our saviour saith not, *Quid ad rem*, what is that to the purpose ? but *quid ad te ?* this is an other mans cause Peter ...[sic][4]

[3] *King James Bible*, Authorized Version, 1611.

[4] Barker Lawrence, *Christs checke to S. Peter for his curious question*, London,

On a donc ici trois aspects de la même faute, cette division particulière étant propre au discours religieux. Ce que nous révèle en outre Barker, dès le passage suivant, c'est qu'alors même que la lecture du grec est plus ou moins confinée aux milieux académiques, les trois termes grecs d'où sont issus la notion de *curiositas* sont parvenus en droite ligne, et presque sans être dénaturés, jusqu'au seizième siècle dans le discours ecclésiastique — ce qui n'empêche pas Barker ou l'imprimeur de mal orthographier deux des termes. On a donc trois notions, recouvrant, d'après l'auteur du sermon, trois aspects précédemment mentionnés, ou « branches ». La deuxième « branch », d'abord (« *caring in things of no moment, neglecting dewties of importance* »), rattachée à la notion de *periergeia*, relève du devoir envers Dieu et du problème du salut, et ne sortira jamais vraiment de son contexte religieux. Associé, lui, à la première « branch », le terme de *kenospoudaios*, littéralement le fait d'être zélé pour les choses vaines, est à peine attesté et en tout cas très peu employé, dans la littérature classique et *a fortiori* à la Renaissance ; le dernier, en revanche, a une histoire beaucoup plus longue et un futur beaucoup plus riche, et va plus ou moins porter à lui seul toutes les tensions liées à la notion de curiosité.

Cette mise en parallèle explicite nous permet de tenter un second rapprochement, et pour ainsi dire un emprunt direct à Plutarque ; on s'intéressera donc ici de plus près au troisième terme, celui de *polypragmasynè* (littéralement, la multiplication des affaires, des préoccupations). Je me base ici non pas sur les *Vies Parallèles* de Plutarque mais sur ses *Moralia*. Un des essais des *Moralia*, le *De Curiositate*, porte justement sur la *polypragmasynè*. Dans cet essai, Plutarque commence par présenter une vision assez basique du concept, en *opposant* l'agitation de l'individu, curieux du sort de son voisin, à l'idée stoïcienne de for intérieur :

> [...] Curiositie, which I take to be a desire to know the faults and imperfections in other men, is a vice or disease which seemeth not cleare of envie and maliciousnesse : And unto him that is infected therewith may well be said :
>
> *Most spightfull and envious man,*
> *why doest thou ever finde*
> *With piercing eies thy neighbours faults,*
> *and in thine owne art blinde ?*

P. Short, 1599.

> avert thine eies a little from things without, and turne thy much medling curiosity to those that be within. If thou take so great a pleasure and delight to deale in the Knowledge and Historie of evill matters, thou hast worke enough iwis at home, thou shalt finde plentie thereof within to occupie thy selfe ;
>
> *For looke what water run's along*
> *an Isthm or Isle we see,*
> *Or leaves lie spred around the Oke,*
> *which numbred cannot be.*
>
> Such a multitude shalt thou finde in thy life, of passions in thy soule, and of oversights in thy duties [sic][5].

L'influence de cet essai peut être évaluée par l'emprunt relativement clair qu'en fait Joseph Hall dans sa peinture du Busybody, dans ses *Characters* (1608) :

> His estate is too narrow for his mind, and therefore he is fain to make himself room in others' affairs ; yet ever, in pretence of love. No news can stir but by his door ; neither can he know that which he must not tell. What every man ventures in Guiana voyage, and what they gained, he knows to a hair. Whether Holland will have peace, he knows ; and on what conditions, and with what success, is familiar to him, ere it be concluded. No post can pass him without a question ; and rather than he will lose the news, he rides back with him to appose him of tidings [...][6]

On remarque ici que même en contexte satirique, Hall ne retient de la *polypragmasynè* que la définition que Barker avait retenue lui-même.

Or le concept est plus problématique, et si l'on pousse un peu plus loin la lecture de Plutarque, on voit qu'il invite ses lecteurs à se détourner des malheurs des autres pour se tourner vers l'étude de la nature, tout en conservant le terme de *polypragmasynè* dans les deux cas ; on voit au passage combien Plutarque est déjà loin des premières écoles de stoïcisme ; l'étude de la nature n'est plus vraiment une alternative radicale, mais un *transfert* de l'instabilité du désir.

Si un tel détour par Plutarque est nécessaire, c'est parce qu'il montre bien que sa notion de curiosité, traduite par la suite comme *curiositas*,

[5] Plutarque, « Of Curiositie », in *Plutarch, The Philosophie, commonlie called, the morals*, Holland Philemon (trans.), London, Arnold Hartfield, 1603, p. 134.

[6] Hall Joseph, *Characters of Vertues and Vices*, « The Busybody », 1608, *Works*, Wynter Philip (dir.), 1863, réimpr. New York, AMS Press, 1969, vol. VI, p. 108.

recouvre une pluralité d'attitudes ayant en commun un certain type de désir excessif tourné vers l'extérieur, et parce qu'elle porte en germe le rêve d'un phénomène compensatoire qui est maintes fois énoncé dans le discours religieux et plus encore thématisé : à savoir l'idée que l'on puisse assouvir la soif de « curiosité » (au singulier) par des « curiosités » (au pluriel : à savoir des objets d'observation dignes d'intérêt) ; comme on peut s'y attendre, ce fantasme de compensation sera dénoncé par certains, d'autant que l'on voit poindre au loin une éventuelle marchandisation du savoir. Barker lui-même commence son sermon par un développement sur le bon et le mauvais usage de l'œil, en opposant le savoir sain de la contemplation au désir de connaissance déréglé : « this sence maketh default when the eye is either wandring abroade, or wanton at home, longeth for things forbidden, or devoureth all shee seeth, or else prieth too narrowlie into hidden secrets » (A2r).

On évitera ici une étude diachronique, inadaptée au présent format, et qui consisterait essentiellement en redites ; on peut simplement rappeler que le concept de *curiositas*, c'est-à-dire la manière dont elle est analysée, conserve son ambivalence tout au long de son parcours, et qu'à l'intérieur même de la tradition patristique, les conceptions varient du tout au tout ; notamment, l'idée d'enquête intellectuelle basée sur le voyage et la découverte du secret, est conceptualisée et valorisée sous le nom de *curiositas mirabilium* à partir des premières croisades, mais il ne s'agit que d'un réagencement sous un nouveau titre d'aspects déjà actualisés ou latents de la *curiositas* ; on trouvait déjà la même association entre *curiositas* et voyage, sous forme de mise en garde cette fois, chez Sénèque, reprise par le néo-stoïcisme au seizième siècle.

Or justement cette importance de la *mobilité* est l'un des aspects fondamentaux de la *curiositas* autour de 1600, non plus dans les textes qui en font mention explicite, mais dans ceux qui la problématisent de manière plus diffuse, soit par effet d'*imitatio* (auquel cas le discours classique influencerait les perceptions par les élisabéthains de leur propre époque), soit inversement parce que les réalités socio-économiques du moment entraînent une revalorisation de certains paradigmes de la littérature latine classique et impériale. La réalité en question, c'est en particulier l'élan expansionniste, particulièrement dans les Indes occidentales et orientales et en Virginie, dès les années 1580, et qui

connaît son véritable essor au début de la période Stuart ; les paradigmes en question, ce sont par exemple l'usage fortement connoté des notions d'est et d'ouest, et plus largement la méfiance vis-à-vis de la mobilité maritime.

Sur ce plan, le texte de *The Wonderful Year* de Thomas Dekker, de 1603, est un exemple assez représentatif, d'une part parce qu'il tente de marquer le changement entre le règne d'Elisabeth et celui de Jacques, et d'autre part parce qu'il est un réservoir assez riche des lieux communs de l'époque. Après avoir eu l'air d'envisager l'avénement de Jacques comme une heureuse transition, Dekker nous décrit sur un ton d'enjouement ironique les signes accompagnant la venue du nouveau monarque. L'idée maîtresse ici, bien connue, est que l'arrivée de Jacques est l'occasion d'un renouveau pour le moins ambigu :

> By these Comments it appeares that by this time King Iames is proclaimed : [...] now the thriftie Citizen casts beyond the Moone, and séeing the golden age returned into the world againe, resolues to worship no Saint but money. [...] Taylors meant no more to be called Merchant-taylors, but Merchants, for their shops were all lead foorth in leases to be turned into ships, and with their sheares (in stead of a Rudder) would they haue cut the Seas (like Leuant Taffaty) and sayld to the West Indies for no worse stuffe to make hose and doublets of, than beaten gold [...][7]

Le jugement de Dekker fait écho au moins sur deux points aux sources latines sur la mobilité maritime, facilement accessibles aux élisabéthains : d'abord la méfiance répandue vis-à-vis des cités maritimes — on peut ici mettre en parallèle Dekker et le Cicéron du livre II du *De Republica* :

> [...] mêmes leurs habitants ne restent pas attachés à leur lieu de résidence, mais y sont constamment soustraits par l'espoir changeant et instable et par leurs projets ; et même quand ils y demeurent physiquement, ils s'exilent et partent errer par la pensée[8].

[7] Dekker Thomas, *The Wonderfull Yeare*, London, Thomas Creede, 1603, C2^r.

[8] Cicéron, *De Republica*, II, 7 (traduction personnelle). Texte original : « Est autem maritimis urbibus etiam quaedam corruptela ac demutatio morum ; admiscentur enim novis sermonibus ac disciplinis, et inportantur non merces solum adventiciae sed etiam mores, ut nihil possit in patriis institutis manere integrum. iam qui incolunt eas urbes, non haerent in suis sedibus, sed volucri semper spe et cogitatione rapiuntur a domo longino, atque etiam cum manent corpore, animo tamen exulant et vagantur. »

La traduction, presque littérale, vise à garder la connotation des termes latins. Cicéron parle aussi plus haut de « dénaturation et déplacement des mœurs » (« corruptela ac demutatio morum ») ; on perçoit ici des similarités avec le début du sermon de Barker, et plus exactement encore, avec la réflexion plus célèbre d'Augustin sur la *curiositas*, dans le livre III des *Confessions*, l'idée centrale étant celle de décentrement. L'autre aspect important, et davantage connu, c'est la mention de l'Age d'or et en filigrane le lien entre la fin de l'Age d'or et l'expédition des Argonautes, un topos de la littérature élisabéthaine. Cet aspect est déjà bien connu, mais il est intéressant ici de relever la dimension téléologique que prend cette aventure sur les mers, telle qu'elle est reflétée chez Dekker ; le passage cité plus haut est très proche, soit par inspiration, soit par coïncidende, des motifs de la poésie augustéenne, à commencer par celui de la IV^e^ Bucolique de Virgile, qui associe avec optimisme le retour à l'Age d'or à l'abandon des entreprises maritimes et du commerce.

> Now is the time the last age come whereof Sibyllas verse foretold
> [...]
> But yet of old deceit and guile a few marks shall remaine.
> Which may command to try the sea with ships, and compasse towns
> With walls, and cut in furrowes deepe into the ground [...]
> Then hereupon soone after that thy years and settled age
> Hath made thee be a man, the merchant he shall leave the sea,
> The ship of pine tree shall not change her merchandize[9].

Ici l'épanouissement de l'individu est inversement proportionnel au foisonnement d'activité autour de lui. Notons enfin que l'association entre décentrement et aventure maritime est affirmée, sur le mode de l'éloge, bien sûr, dans les textes de *pageants* ; je cite ici un texte un peu tardif de Thomas Middleton écrit pour les drapiers de Londres en 1626, *The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity* : « The world's a sea, and every magistrate / Takes a year's voyage when he takes this state[10] ».

Nous avons tenté ici de relier par couches successives, au niveau *collectif*, les entreprises sur mer, derrière elles, l'expansionnisme économique, et

[9] *The Bucoliks of Publius Virgilius Maro*, FLEMING Abraham (trans.), London, Thomas Woodcocke, 1589, C2^r.

[10] MIDDLETON Thomas, *The Triumphs of Health and Prosperity*, London, N. Oakes, 1626, B1^r.

derrière celui-ci, une forme de décentrement de l'individu qui relève majoritairement du désir d'acquisition mais qui conserve les caractéristiques de la *curiositas mirabilium*, avec toutes ses ambiguïtés. On peut éventuellement reconnaître ici la catégorie de l'extériorité que Hegel, dans une autre perspective téléologique, décrit plus tard comme l'issue logique de la dialectique de la société civile, qui « la pousse hors et au-delà d'elle-même », sur la base de l'élément maritime[11].

Au niveau *individuel*, l'attitude fondamentale est celle de la pulsion vers le dehors et le nouveau, qui peut tantôt se décliner sous forme de désir d'acquisition, tantôt sous forme de désir de connaissance, le plus souvent sous les deux à la fois. Les exemples de ce croisement abondent ; on peut mentionner ici un exemple particulièrement révélateur, quoiqu'assez peu connu : le récit de voyage en Asie d'un Henri de Feynes, traduit en anglais et publié à Londres en 1615 (aucune édition en français ne semble précéder). De Feynes explique comment, victime d'un revers de fortune (on ne sait trop lequel), il cherche à remplir son esprit en déplaçant ses pensées vers le dehors :

> [...] knowing nothing doth so much aggravate and nourrish up grief, as Idlenes, yea, idlenes in the same place where the griefe hath been taken, and in continual sight of the cause and subject thereof ; neither seeing at that time any worthy warre in Christendome, to applie my bodie and minde away from my wonted thoughts ; *did fully resolve to undertake some farre and hard travel, that by leaving behinde olde displeasures, and* purposely going to seeke and finde me new, *I would strive to banish the one [idleness] by meanes of the other ; or at least* trie what change (the chiefest, I thinke, comfort in misery) would worke in me[12].

On est ici aux antipodes des principes (néo-)stoïciens : en l'absence d'une noble croisade ou de guerre européenne, de Feynes cherche un remède dans le changement. On voit une nouvelle fois, au passage, combien les délimitations des concepts sont circonstancielles, puisque Barker mettait sur le même plan *idleness* et *curiosity* dans les défauts à bannir.

Pour finir, on peut illustrer l'entremêlement de la curiosité d'acqui-

[11] Cf. *Principes de la philosophie du droit*, § 246–248.

[12] Feynes Henri de, *An exact and curious survey of all the East Indies*, London, Thomas Dawson, 1615, B4^{r} (italiques rajoutés).

sition et de la curiosité épistémologique en appliquant le concept de *curiositas* à la lecture de l'*Entertainment at Britain's Burse*, de Ben Jonson, composé en 1609, et intégré seulement récemment dans le canon des œuvres de Jonson ; la version utilisée ici est celle établie par James Knowles, puisque le texte ne figure pas chez Herford & Simson. Le texte avait été commandité par Robert Cecil pour l'ouverture du New Exchange sur le Strand près de Whitehall, donc un bâtiment de commerce, et est tout à la gloire des entreprises coloniales. Le délai entre commande et utilisation pousserait à croire que le texte a été écrit dans l'urgence, et comme un certain nombre d'autres œuvres civiques, Jonson ne l'a pas inclus dans les éditions folio de ses œuvres. Et de fait, c'est le seul *court entertainment* de Jonson en prose que l'on connaisse et est basé presque entièrement sur le principe de l'accumulation. La « progression » (au sens propre) dramatique est la suivante : le cortège des invités, dont le roi et la reine, sont accueillis par le Key Keeper dans la gallerie, avec immédiatement un accent mis sur le principe du secret, de la découverte exotique :

> Your Maiestie will pardon me ? I think you scarce knowe, where you are now nor by my troth can I tell you, more then that you may seeme to be vppon some lande discouery of a *newe* region heere, to which I am your *compasse*[13].

Puis il les conduit devant des étalages et là ils sont pris en charge par l'apprenti vendeur et principalement son maître. Suit une présentation très longue d'objects (globes de crystal, porcelaine de Chine, barbes et moustaches postiches…) qui ont tous en commun d'être exotiques, et qui sont dévoilés à leur vue au fil de leur passage, présentés avec la rhétorique typique du charlatan ; on mentionnera ici un exemple parmi d'autres :

> Here's a second rariety, a conceipted saltseller : An Elephant, with a castle on his Backe, where beside the art of the artificer in the whole dimensions, the spreading of the eare, winding of the Proboscis, mounting of the tusks, and architecture of the castle, do but observe his Ingine : Why an Elephant more then any other creature ? (sic) etc…[14]

[13] JONSON Ben, *The Enternainment at Britain's Burse*, texte établi par KNOWLES James, in BUTLER Martin (dir.), *Re-Presenting Ben Jonson*, London, Macmillan, 1999, p. 132 (italiques rajoutés).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Un des aspects qu'on peut retenir de ce texte, de manière caractéristique, c'est d'abord l'accent mis sur l'expérience de l'émerveillement contrôlé et encadré, d'abord par la mise en scène, mais aussi par une abondance de termes performatifs qui encouragent le visiteur à prendre note des objects, et à les désirer *(rare, admirable)*. Le texte est dans un sens très asceptisé, il n'y est pas question de prix ni d'achat ; c'est un de ces cas justement où la curiosité du sujet est passée sous silence et transferée en curiosité *objective*, sur les objets, donc.

Britain's Burse brouille les frontières à plus d'un titre, ce qui le rend assez inclassable ; d'abord il joue sur deux codes à la fois, le code artistique du spectacle de cour (Jonson inclut une chanson en vers pour automate, interprétée par une statue d'Apollon à la fin, pour faire office de masque après l'anarchie de l'antimasque), et le code des relations marchandes, puisque le cadre est fondamentalement un lieu de vente. D'autre part, il complexifie le rapport à l'objet rare, présenté à la fois comme objet d'acquisition et objet d'observation et de savoir du collectionneur. On rencontre en effet dans le texte des références assez explicites à un rapport savant aux objets, ainsi :

> A fanne of the feathers of Iunos Birde that were once the eyes of Ielousy, and now the seruants and safeguards of Beuty ; I assure you he that would study but the Allegory of a China shop, might stand worthely to be the Rector of an Academy. Old Bartholomew of the Propriety of things ; and Pliny the English are nothing to it, nor the story of Birds and Beasts with the wodden pictures, nor the Peg, Meg, or Margaret of the philosophers[15]. (sic)

Certes, perdues dans le flot du discours, ces références ne sont guère valorisantes, et c'est probablement une manière pour Jonson de se distancer de sa propre production.

Mais surtout, *Britain's Burse* problématise le rapport de l'individu à l'objet en jouant sur le cadre émergeant des *Wunderkammer*, les collections individuelles d'objets et spécimens qui commencent à voir le jour. Je me base pour la chronologie et les exemples sur le travail d'Anthony Grafton sur les cabinets de collectionneurs[16], ou encore de

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[16] Cf. par exemple « Believe it or Not [review of the National Gallery Collector's Cabinet exhibit and L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Mature*] », *New York Review of Books*, 5 November 1998, pp. 14–18.

« curiosités », qui se répandent peu à peu dans la seconde moitié du seizième siècle (les objets choisis par Jonson sont d'ailleurs inspirés en partie de la collection de Robert Cecil lui-même) ; il cite l'exemple du cabinet de Francesco Cospi, à Bologne (milieu du seizième siècle) où le visiteur est guidé par un nain, baguette à la main, le long des rangées. Certains objets plus typiques reviennent d'une collection ou musée à l'autre, tels les oeufs d'autruche ou les têtes rétrécies, des automatons, tous présents chez Jonson, créant une sorte d'interréférentialité, de clin d'œil vers ce *topos*, au sens propre. Il s'agit avant tout de montrer les *exceptions* apparentes aux règles de la nature plutôt que de dégager des constantes (l'exception par goût de l'exception), et en cela, on est plus près de la curiosité instable que des « recherches curieuses », systématiques, elles, de la fin du dix-septième siècle — Bacon et Descartes feront usage de la *Wunderkammer* mais à des fins d'ordonnancement. Mais par le regroupement d'objets, la transformation épistémologique est déjà en cours, et la confusion troublante des modes marchand et érudit dans *Britain's Burse* reflète cet état transitoire et le statut changeant de la curiosité.

Ainsi, la richesse de l'idée de *curiositas* est à la mesure de la richesse des objets vers lesquels elle s'oriente ; elle dépend principalement des acteurs et des réalités du moment ; réfléchir ou thématiser la *curiositas* revient nécessairement à compartimenter un ensemble de signes disparates — ceux du sujet ou de l'objet — en fonction d'impératifs évolutifs. Plus concrètement, dans les discours produits dans le Londres élisabéthain autour de 1600, on retiendra d'une part la subsistance d'un cadre assez inamovible de réflexion théorique sur le concept, qui en préserve la richesse et la nature d'origine, même si la perspective n'est jamais neutre, mais aussi en parallèle, un changement dans les discours dérivés ou non théoriques. La *curiositas* épistémologique, en particulier, est déjà en voie de transformation ; on s'oriente déjà vers une approche systématique, qui n'est plus celle de la science contemplative. On pourrait enfin suggérer l'existence d'une troisième manifestation de la *curiositas*, laissée ici de côté, mais très présente dans la littérature élisabéthaine d'un certain registre, à savoir la *curiositas* « passionnelle », qui associe

le registre amoureux aux deux autres ; c'est la *curiositas* qu'on trouve dans le *Ciceronis Amor* de Robert Greene, le *Faustus* de Marlowe, ou, de manière encore plus caractéristique, dans *Cymbeline* de Shakespeare, à travers le personnage de Iachimo.

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8

Arboreal language and otherness in Andrew Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" (1651)

Introduction

Across Renaissance culture was a language of trees that fused the botanical with the metaphysical, planted the symbolic in the terrain of the observed, and articulated a green resurrection. The language originated primarily from a series of significant arboreal metaphors in biblical text, articulated in visual art and literary texts from the early Christian period, throughout the medieval and into the early modern. These metaphors, which used arboreal analogies to express spiritual concepts, provided the matrix of a green language that from the fifteenth century was also drawn on in secular contexts to articulate political or general moral concepts.

In 1651, the English poet Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) was resident at the country estate of Nun Appleton in Yorkshire, having returned from several years of traveling on the Continent.[1] He was employed as

[1] Biographical summaries and lists of biographical studies from the critical literature are provided in the editions of Marvell's poetry by Nigel Smith and Ormerod and Wortham. *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, Smith Nigel (ed.), London, Pearson

tutor in languages to Mary Fairfax, daughter of Thomas, 3rd Baron Fairfax (1612–71), the former commander of the parliamentary army in the recent English Civil War, who had resigned and retired to his country estate. "Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax" is one of three of Marvell's poems associated with this period.[2] This epic topographical poem of ninety seven stanzas is ostensibly a journey across the estate of Nun Appleton. After sixty stanzas of the poem, exploring the house, Fairfax, family history, the garden and the meadows, the speaker retreats to the sanctuary of the woods. In this forest of the mind the poet plants a series of symbolic trees with complex allusions and intertextual references.

This paper seeks to place the forest sequence of the poem in the context of the arboreal imagery and iconography of Marvell's contemporary culture and thereby to illuminate new readings. Firstly, it aims to map the arboreal metaphors and iconography; it will then focus on three episodes within the forest sequence that are informed and illuminated by the same. It argues that, read together, Marvell's arboreal tableaux can be read as a narrative of death and regeneration, intended to create a healing vision for the fractured nation and Fairfax. However Marvell's poetry draws from both Christian and pagan arboreal discourses, and his language disturbs and makes problematic any simple Christian allegorical reading. In literalizing metaphors in the forest of the country estate, the *other* becomes dangerously proximate to the orthodox. Marvell's imagery illuminates the ambiguity and otherness of Renaissance arboreal imagery, revealing its inherent duality and paradoxical nature.

Longman, 2003. *Andrew Marvell: Pastoral and Lyric Poems 1681*, ORMEROD David and WORTHAM Christopher (eds.), Perth, Western Australia, University of Western Australia Press, 2000.

[2]The usual date given for the poem is 1651: ORMEROD and WORTHAM, ibid., p. xliii; HIRST Derek and Steven ZWICKER, "High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax's Occasions," in *The Historical Journal,* 36, 1993, pp. 247–69. The other poems associated with this period are "Upon the Hill and Grove at Bilbrough" and "The Garden", both of which also draw on arboreal symbolism. However there is also an argument for "The Garden" as having a later date, possibly 1668: PRITCHARD Allan, "Marvell's "The Garden": a Restoration Poem ?", *Studies in English Literature*, 23, 1983, pp. 371–388; ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 166. SMITH accepts this argument with reservations, *op.cit.*, p. 152. Subsequent references to Marvell's poem will provide lineation in parentheses.

Biblical metaphors and the language of trees

An understanding of Marvell's imagery requires firstly a mapping of the arboreal metaphors that were familiar to the poet and his contemporaries through their knowledge of biblical text and through the extensive visual presence across Europe of arboreal iconography which literalized the metaphors.[3] Of central significance was the metaphor of Christ as the tree of life and the life-giving vine. His identification with the vine derived from Jn 15 where Christ proclaims "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (Jn 15:1).[4] This was expressed visually in a variety of forms and media. Figure 8.1 shows a thirteenth-century wrought iron vine scroll from the York Minster which, even in the absence of any representation of Christ, would have been understood to refer to Christ as the life-giving vine.[5] Its circling tendrils articulate the notion of eternal life and its clusters of grapes invoke the wine of the Eucharist, spiritual food from the sacrificial blood of Christ.[6]

Christ's role as the tree of life, often interchangeable with the vine concept, derived from typological readings of three biblical trees: the tree

[3]Michael FERBER provides a succinct summary of the symbolic associations of trees from biblical and classical sources in *A Dictionary of Literary Symbols*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 101–2, 105–6, 147–49. Maryanne Cline HOROWITZ explores traditions of trees and seeds as metaphors for learning in *Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1998. Also see SCHAMA Simon, *Landscape and Memory*, London, HarperCollins, 1995. For Jewish traditions in relation to the tree of life, see AMEISENOWA Zofja, "The Tree of Life in Jewish Iconography", *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1939, pp. 326–45. Roger COOK mapped the archetypal concept of the tree of life in visual iconography, seeking analogues between European and Asian cultures in *The Tree of Life: Image for the Cosmos*, New York and London, Avon; Thames and Hudson, 1974.

[4]All biblical quotations are taken from the King James Bible (1611) (online version produced by the University of Michigan using the Oxford Text Archive: `http://quod.lib.umich.edu/k/kjv`.

[5]See Gertrud SCHILLER on the Christian tree iconography in *Iconography of Christian Art,* London: Lund Humphries, 1971, vol. 2, pp. 133–36.

[6]Ibid., p. 134. Another medieval example of the vine metaphor is the 13th c. mosaic in St. Clements in Rome where a huge scrolling vine sprouts from the cross on which Christ is crucified. A 17th c. example is the carved choir stall at Valere cathedral Sion, Switzerland, which depicts the cross of Christ carried, with large clusters of grapes hanging down from the cross. See DUFOUR-KOWALSKA Gabrielle, *L'arbre de vie et la croix: essai sur l'imagination visionnaire*, Geneva, Ed. du Tricorne, 1985, fig. 21.

Figure 8.1: Wrought iron vine scroll, York Minster (13th c.)[a]

[a]I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of the University of Queensland Graduate School Research Travel Awards that funded travel to the Yorkshire area to document examples of arboreal imagery.

of life in the original paradise in Eden (Gn 2:8–9), the apple tree under which the Bride sits in the *Song of Songs* (Sg 2:3) and the tree of life in the future heavenly paradise (Rv 22:1–2).[7] All three were identified with Christ. The cross was also often conceived as a tree, identified with both the tree of knowledge and the tree of life, with Christ as its fruit, or as the superstructure of the world tree, an axis of the world.[8] Examples of Christ as the tree of life are numerous, and range in date from the

[7]On the interpretation of the Song of Songs, see STEWART Stanley, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeen-Century Poetry*, Madison, Milwaukee and London, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966. Stephen RENO examined the extensive drawing on arboreal metaphors in patristic writings in *The Sacred Tree as an Early Christian Literary Symbol: A Phenomenological Study*, Saarbrucken, Forschungen Zur Anthropologie Und Religionsgeschichte, 1978.

[8]Michael Swanton notes that the cross conceived as a great tree identical with both Christ and the church and embracing all creation, uniting heaven and earth is present in the pseudo-Cyprian poem *De Pascha* copied with the pseudo-Tertullian until the 9th c. Swanton also draws parallels between an image at Ravenna of a cross stetching out across a starry sky to the four corners of the earth and the works of early Christian writers such as Jerome and Augustine: SWANTON Michael (ed.), *The Dream of the Rood,* Exeter, Manchester University Press, 1987, pp. 50–1.

medieval to the seventeenth century.[9]

Jung aptly described the tree of life archetype as "two-faced".[10] In Eden the binary opposition between death and life is embodied in the two central trees: the tree of knowledge and the tree of life.[11] Once Adam and Eve have eaten from the former, leading to the Fall and mortality, they are expelled from the Garden lest they eat of the latter (Gn 3:22–24). Upon the Fall the tree of knowledge "withered" and was known as the "dry tree".[12] Paradoxically the two trees are inextricably linked and often articulated as one, with differing states of withering and regeneration, or as a composite dry-and-verdant tree.[13]

Just as the two trees constructed a demarcation between sacred and fallen terrain, there was an equally strong cultural impulse to link the two terrains. A popular folklore story recounted Adam's attempt to return to Eden, a narrative structure which essentially sought to link the

[9]Examples include: Hendrik Goltzius, *Christ on the tree of life* (1610) (SCHAMA, *op.cit.*, fig. 25); Leo Moskos, *The Tree of Christ* (early 17th c.), Athens, Musee Benaki (DUFOUR, *op.cit.*, fig. 20); and *Christ as the tree of life*, in QUARLES Francis, *Emblemes* (1635), p. 236 (STEWART, *op.cit.*, fig. 31). Quarles' image is a copy of an earlier continental model from Herman HUGO's *A Collection of Religious Emblems* (Antwerp, 1624) (STEWART, *op.cit.*, fig. 29).

[10]JUNG C. G., *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 2nd edition, R.F.C. Hull (trans.), London, Routledge, 1968, p. 35.

[11]An early example of the depiction of the juxtaposition of the two trees of death and life is *The Cross as the Tree at the Centre*, a Byzantine ivory (central panel of the Harbaville Triptych, 10th /11th c.), Louvre, Paris (COOK, *op.cit.*, p. 102, fig. 19). Two trees flank the cross: on the left, one with grapes (the tree of life), and on the right, one bearing figs (the tree of death).

[12]An early depiction of the dry tree appears on the Hereford *Mappa Mundi* (13th c.), where the dry tree appears to the right of the enclosed paradise. In Martin Schongauer's *Madonna and Child in a Yard* (c. 1480–90), the dry tree appears behind the Madonna and child.

[13]An example of a composite tree appears in a 15th c. Swiss manuscript, *The Tree of Knowledge: Church and Synagogue*, where the single tree is divided between one side bearing a skull as fruit and the other bearing Eucharist wafers. See NEUMANN Erich, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, Ralph Manheim (trans.), Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963, fig. 56. An English bible cover of 1527 depicts a tree which is dry and devoid of leaves on the left side but verdant and flourishing on the right, at the base of which is the resurrection: *The byble, translated by Thomas Matthew*, London & Antwerp, Whitchurch & Grafton, 1537, reproduced in MCKERROW R. B. and F. S. FERGUSON, *Title-page Borders used in England & Scotland 1485-1640,* London, Oxford University Press, 1932, fig. 32.

tree of life in Eden with the cross on which Christ was crucified.[14] The story related that Adam, sensing he was dying, sent his son Seth back to paradise where the archangel prevented his entry, but gave him three seeds to place in the dead Adam's mouth. The seeds grew into three trees (invoking the Trinity), which combined into one and eventually provided the wood for the cross on which Christ is crucified.[15] The story inspired various fresco cycles in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[16]

Surrounding the notion of Christ as the tree of life was a series of botanical and horticultural metaphors. Mary was the *hortus conclusus*, the enclosed garden, whose womb as sacred bounded terrain produced the tree of life.[17] The just man flourished like a palm tree (Ps 1:3–5) and those wishing to imitate Christ were to be planted in his likeness (Rm 6:5–6).[18] The kingdom of heaven was also conceived of as a tree.[19] God's power could wither the verdant and regenerate the dry (Ez 17:24).[20]

[14]One of the most significant medieval sources for the tale was Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* (1260-75). See VORAGINE Jacobus de, *The Golden Legend: readings on the saints*, William Granger Ryan (trans.), Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1993, 2 vols., vol. I, pp. 277-83.

[15]STEWART, *op.cit.*, p. 79. The story included episodes concerned with the conversion of the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity and the recapture of Jerusalem.

[16]Such cycles include Agnolo Gaddi's (c. 1345–1396) frescoes in Santa Croce, Florence (1380s), Cenni di Francesco's (1369–1415) frescoes for the church of San Francesco in Volterra (1410), Masolino da Panicale's (c. 1383–1447) *Stories of the Cross* in Sant'Agostino in Empoli (c. 1424) and Piero della Francesca's (c. 1420–1492) *Cycle of the True Cross* at the church of San Francesco, Arezzo (1452–1466).

[17]This was based on a typological reading of the *Song of Songs*. See STEWART, *op.cit.*, generally on the tradition of the enclosed garden.

[18]In the *Psalms* one who avoids sin is: "like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither" (Ps 1:3). "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: / Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Rm 6:5–6).

[19]"And he [Jesus] said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? / It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: / But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it" (Mk 4:30–32).

[20]"And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the

Believers were either grafted plants, receiving spiritual sustenance from the vine, or pruned as dead wood; sterile off-cuts cast into the wilderness (Jn 15:1–8, 16–17; Rm 11:16–24).

A motif that was taken up extensively in iconography was that of arboreal severance and regeneration. In the Bible, God's wrath and retribution for sin are often articulated as tree lopping. In *Isaiah*, the Lord

> shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. / And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one (Is 10:33–4).

Also in Ez 15 the wrath of Yahweh against the Israelites is likened to the discarding of "the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel" (15:6).

In the Old Testament passage of *Daniel* King Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of a great tree being felled, which Daniel interprets as the king, to be cut down for his pride. However a stump is left, interpreted as the kingdom with the potential to regenerate once the king has repented (Dn 4:7–24).[21] Similarly in Is 6:13 the sinful country is to be reduced like a withered oak yet with the potential to regenerate from the "holy seed" within. In the gospel of *Matthew*, John the Baptist warns "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance [...] And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Mt 3:8, 10).

The cut stump was both the axed tree of death and sin and the tree of life which would resprout anew. Pruning was paradoxical; a beneficial pre-requisite to spiritual regrowth. Ideas of immortality and redemption from sin were articulated as botanical regeneration. The passage of Job 14:7 in which man's life is compared unfavourably with that of a tree which when cut will reshoot was generally read typologically as regeneration of the tree of life. The idea of a "renaissance" was tied to this notion, ideologically and etymologically: *renasci (rinascita)* meant "regrowth" or "rebirth".[22]

dry tree to flourish" (Ez 17:24).

[21]The passage is illustrated in an image *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream* in the Bible of Rodan, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS. lat. 6(3). See Cook, *op.cit.*, p. 109, fig. 39.

[22]See Ladner Gerhart B., "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance,"

The motif of the resprouting stump became a recurrent visual motif common from the mid-fifteenth century. Leonardo da Vinci sketched the idea in one of his notebooks.[23] In Antonella da Messina's *Crucifixion* (1460–65), in the foreground at the base of the cross is a clear image of the severed trunk with a new branch emerging.[24] In Giovanni Bellini's *The Transfiguration* (1480), a cut stump appears in the landscape, together with dry and verdant trees. Michelangelo Buonarroti also drew on the motif of the severed trunk, for example at the base of the statue of *David* (Fig. 8.2). David was commonly interpreted as a type of Christ; thus the artist aligned his victory over Goliath with the axing of the tree of knowledge and the triumph over sin.[25] The motif also appears in several other works by Michelangelo.[26]

The iconography of pruning and regeneration was not confined to religious art. It was a paradigm that had been present in classical discourse. The Roman historian Titus Livius (59 BC–AD 17) wrote of the happy regrowth of Rome *(laetius feraciusque renatae urbis)* from new roots and stem *(ab secunda origine velut ab stirpibus)*, after the city's capture and destruction by the Gauls.[27] It became popular from the sixteenth century in secular emblems, impresa and heraldry.[28] In Ripa's

in *De Artibus opuscula xl: Essays in Honour of Erwin Panofsky*, MEISS Millard (ed.), New York, New York University Press, 1961, 2 vols., vol. I, pp. 303–322.

[23] *Sprouting Tree Stump and Falcon* (late 15th c.), Victoria and Albert museum, London, reproduced in LADNER, *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 97, fig. 7. It is accompanied by a note "the cut tree that reshoots—there's still hope".

[24] The visual imagery equates the crucified Christ with the composite image of the severed tree, encompassing death and resurrection. Also at the base of the cross is a skull, referring to Adam and thus linking Golgotha, the site of the crucifixion, with the location of Adam's death. This emphasises the sacrifice of Christ as reparation for the Fall.

[25] PANOFSKY Erwin, *Renaissances and Renascences in Western Art*, London, Paladin, 1970, p. 138.

[26] At the base of Michelangelo's *Pieta* (1500) at the Vatican, Rome, is the cut tree, signifying the death of Christ as the tree of life and the cutting of the tree of sin, while also embodying the optimism of the imminent resurrection. The artist also employed the motif in several of the scenes of the Sistine chapel ceiling (1508–1512); for example in *The Fall and Expulsion*, where the cut tree echoes visually the positioning of Eve, associating her with the mortality arising from the Fall.

[27] LADNER, *op.cit.,* p. 305, citing from LIVY, *Histories* 6:1:3.

[28] LADNER lists various examples used by the Italian Accademies or members of the Medici family that drew on the idea of severance and regeneration as institutional or personal mottoes.

Iconologia (Padua, 1618), the figure of Riforma is an old woman holding a scythe while behind her are juxtaposed dry and verdant trees.[29] The image suggests that reform involves pruning of the old, thus enabling regeneration.

In emblem books symbolic trees were employed for didactic purposes and imbued with a range of moral and religious meanings.[30] Arboreal symbolism was also commonly used in alchemical emblems, the tree representing the vessel that embodies the alchemical process from dissolution to purification in the search for quintessence.[31]

Figure 8.2: Michelangelo's *David* (1501–1504), Florence

[29]Reproduced in LADNER, *op.cit.*, fig. 1.

[30]Emblem books which feature arboreal symbols include: PEACHAM Henry, *Minerva Britanna*, London, 1612; HAWKINS Henry, *Partheneia Sacra*, Rouen, 1633, and HALL John, *Emblems with Elegant Figures*, London, 1658. In Hall's *Emblems*, an image entitled "The Heart of man not fixt in desires of Eternitie can neither be firm nor stable" depicts a tree denoting Stoic steadfastness that comes from a higher spiritual focus. The tree is aligned with the "desires of Eternitie", alluding to the tree of life.

[31]ABRAHAM Lyndy, *Marvell and Alchemy*, London, Scolar Press, 1990, p. 151.

Elizabeth I was greeted upon her first procession through London with a tableau of two hills with two trees, one dry and the other verdant, expressing hopes for the new reign.[32] Her arch rival Mary Queen of Scots, while a prisoner, embroidered an emblem depicting the hand of God with a pruning knife cutting away unfruitful branches from a vine; the motto reading *Virescit vulnere virtus* ("Virtue thrives by a wound").[33] The sentiment was directed at Elizabeth, although in the end it was Mary who was lopped from the family tree. Shakespeare likewise drew on the idea of pruning and regeneration in several of his plays.[34]

Marvell's Forest of the Mind

With this brief mapping of the language of trees in mind, the reader can enter Marvell's forest with some knowledge of the cultural terrain in which the poem was produced. This paper focuses on three episodes within the forest sequence which draw on the arboreal iconography known to Marvell and which together provide an illuminating insight into the poem. The three episodes are: the felling of an oak in the wood, the covering of the speaker in leaves, and the imagined performance of a crucifixion amidst the woodbine vines.

The wood is constructed as an ancient and sacred place, a "temple green" (510) that provides "sanctuary" from the chaos of the meadows (482). After describing trees and birds, the poet presents the felling of an oak:

[32]One was withered to represent a "decayed commonwele", and the other was green to represent a "flourishing commonwele", and between the two came figures of Truth and Time. See FREEMAN Rosemary, *English Emblem Book,* London, Chatto and Windus, 1966, p. 49.

[33]The bed hangings were embroidered around 1570 by Mary Stuart and Bess of Hardwick while Mary was a prisoner at Chatsworth : SWAIN Margaret, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*, New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1973, pp. 62–75 and 106–20.

[34]In *Cymbeline* (1611) the prophesy of a tree with cut branches, which are later regrafted, is interpreted as the king, while the branches are the sons, lost and later restored to him (5.5). In *Richard II* (1597) there is an extended analogy of the kingdom as a garden where the failure to prune has resulted in political disorder (3.4.34–66). In *Pericles* (1609) in a parade of emblematic shields preceding a joust, Pericles' motif is a withered branch that with green leaves at the top with the motto *In hac spe vivo* ("I live in this hope") (2.2.43).

The good [the hewel] numbers up, and hacks,
As if he marked them with the axe;
But where he, tinkling with his beak,
Does find the hollow oak to speak,
That for his building he designs,
And through the tainted side he mines,
Who could have thought the tallest oak
Should fall by such a feeble stroke (545-52).[35]

The oak was sacred to Zeus and traditionally associated with royalty at the pinnacle of hierarchical orderings of trees.[36] In 1649, King Charles I was executed, an event of enormous political and social rupture at all levels of society. This passage is commonly read by critics as a reference to the regicide with the woodpecker, the hewel, as Cromwell or the executioner.[37] Marvell may also have known the woodpecker as the bird of Mars, god of war, in Ovid's *Fasti*, where it defends one of two palm trees, one akin to the world tree, from Amulius wielding an axe, and later brings food to Romulus and Remus (3:30–8, 54).[38] This martial association of the woodpecker thus recalls the Civil War.

Supporting the reading of the oak tree as the king is the possibility of a pun in the words "hewel" and "axe". The names of the two officers responsible for procuring an executioner for the King were Colonels John Hewson and Daniel Axtel.[39] The poetic possibilities of such names would not have been lost on Marvell.

Fairfax himself had used the metaphor of a tree in relation to the

[35]Unless otherwise indicated all citations are taken from ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*

[36]FERBER, *op.cit.*, pp. 142–3. Abraham notes however that the cedar was used more often than the oak to designate royalty and that the new parliamentary seal of 1649 replaced the crosses of monarchy with oak trees, suggesting the oak as a symbol of nationalism: ABRAHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 150. Thus an alternative reading of the oak could be that it represents the fallen nation.

[37]ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 250. ALLEN Don Cameron, *Image and Meaning: Metaphoric Traditions in Renaissance Poetry,* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1960, p. 146. LARSON Charles, "Marvell and Seventeenth-century Trees", *Durham University Journal*, 1987, pp. 27–35 at p. 30.

[38]The wolf also defends one of the palm trees and suckles Romulus and Remus: OVID, *Fasti*, NAGLE Betty Rose (ed.), Bloomington, Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1995, 3:38, 53.

[39]EDWARDS Graham, *The Last Days of Charles I*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999, pp. 172–3.

king's execution. He wrote:

> My afflicted and troubled Mind for it, and my earnest Endeavour to prevent it, will, I hope, sufficiently testify my dislike and abhorrence of the Fact: And what will they not do to the shrubs, having cut down the Cedar?[40]

A contemporary image also aligns the king with a tree. In the frontispiece to *Eikon Basilike: The Pourtraicture of his Sacred Majestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings* (1649) by William Marshall, the king is cast as a Christian martyr, putting aside his worldly crown and taking up the crown of thorns, while above hangs a vision of a heavenly crown.[41] To the left of the picture are two palm trees, the larger hung on either side with weights with a Latin banner, *crescit sub pondere virtus*.[42] The image draws on emblem depictions of the palm denoting Stoic strength under trial, but also religious iconography in which the palm signified the Christian martyrs, the victory over death.[43]

Such contemporary equations of king and tree support a reading of Marvell's fallen oak as the king. The passage also resonates with the biblical passage of *Daniel* where the cut tree in the dream is interpreted as the king, whose lopping is retribution for his pride. While the regicide was an event causing political and social upheaval in the public world, in the forest there is serenity to the felling of the oak. The "oak seems to fall content" (549), part of an overall order. The rupture is calmed by sublimating the violence to part of the natural cycle of events and

[40] ABRAHAM, *op.cit.*, pp. 150–1.

[41] In "The Explanation of the Frontispice," the author describes Charles as taking up the crown of thorns and likens him to "the Palme, which heavyest weights do try, Vertue oppresst, doth grow more straight and high". See HOWARTH David, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485–1649*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997, p. 149.

[42] An earlier identification of Charles I with the palm is in Ben JONSON's *Love's Triumph through Callipolis* (1631), in which "the throne disappears; in place of which there shooteth up a palm tree with an imperial crown on the top". Cited in ABRAHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 160.

[43] As well as a classical symbol of victory, the palm was attributed with immense strength by Pliny. This was allegorized as an emblem of human stoicism in imprese and emblems. An example of the Christian palm iconography is in the Ghent alterpiece (1432) by Jan van Eyck where the martyrs carry palm branches. In the background are prominent palm trees echoing the figure of Christ in the centre as the lamb.

retains the optimism that was embodied in the Renaissance motif of beneficial pruning. It recalls the earlier imagery in the forest sequence of fallen trees resprouting where Fairfax's forebears are imagined as fallen trees:

> Of whom, though many fell in war,
> Yet more to Heaven shooting are,
> And, as they nature's cradle decked,
> Will in green age her hearse expect (493–96).

Though dead logs, they reshoot to heaven and the life cycle is contained within the natural order.

Marvell uses a fallen oak as metaphor for the death of a political leader in another poem. In "Upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector" (1658) Cromwell is:

> Not much unlike the sacred oak which shoots
> To heaven its branches and through earth its roots:
> Whose spacious boughs are hung with trophies round,
> And honoured wreaths have oft the victor crowned.
> When angry Jove darts lightning through the air,
> At mortals' sins, nor his own plant will spare;
> (It groans, and bruises all below, that stood
> So many years the shelter of the wood.)
> The tree erewhile foreshortened to our view,
> When fall'n shows taller yet than as it grew.
> So shall his praise to after times increase," (261–271).[44]

The fallen oak in "Upon Appleton House" is arguably one side of a symmetrical arboreal matrix in the forest which echoes the balance of the two trees of death and life mapped previously. While the oak is aligned with the cut tree of sin or political pride, Marvell also plants in his forest a metaphoric tree of life. In stanza 77, an arboreal tableau is created whereby the poet's speaker imagines his own verdant crucifixion in the forest:

> Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twine:
> Curl me about, ye gadding vines,
> And O so close your circles lace,
> That I may never leave this place.

[44]Citation taken from Smith, *op.cit.*, pp. 310–11.

But lest your fetters prove too weak,
Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And courteous briars nail me through (609–616).

Most critics recognize the language of crucifixion in the passage.[45] Robert Cummings claims this is an overreading and sees the passage as erotic metaphor with sinister undertones in a cultic context.[46] Charles Larson, while acknowledging the suggestion of crucifixion, suggests the imagery invokes a "joyous (if fanciful) martyrdom for the religion of nature" perhaps inspired by druidic ritual.[47]

The critical literature generally overlooks the significance of the vegetative nature of the crucifixion and traditional tree of life iconography.[48] When placed in this context the poet's language clearly parallels recurrent imagery of Christ as the tree of life in religious discourse and in contemporary visual culture. The curling circles of vine create a sense of the eternal regeneration and immortality embodied in the iconography of Christ as the vine. The directive to nature to bind and crucify the speaker creates a heightened atmosphere of drama and masochistic ecstasy. It is provocative in its *imitatio Christi*. It literalizes metaphor, following the directive of Rm 6:5–6 to be planted like Christ in death, in order to regenerate.

Marvell's knowledge of the mystic vine imagery, as well as the motif

[45] ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 258; SMITH, *op.cit.*, p. 235; and ROSTVIG Maren-Sofie, *The Happy Man: Studies in the Metamorphoses of a Classical Idea*, Oslo, Norwegian Universities Press, 1962, pp. 189-90. Rostvig perceived the invocation of the crucifixion imagery as articulating the crucifixion of carnal desire in order for the mind, the divine principle in man, to regain its ancient purity (pp. 189-190; cited with approval by ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 258). See also RICHMOND H. M., *Renaissance Landscapes: English Lyrics in a European Tradition*, The Hague, Paris, Mouton, 1973, p. 125 and EMPSON William, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, 2nd edition, London, Harmondsworth, 1966, p. 102.

[46] CUMMINGS Robert, "The Forest Sequence in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*: The Imaginative Contexts of a Poetic Episode", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1984, 47, pp. 179–210 at p. 201.

[47] LARSON, *op.cit.*, p. 33. Other approaches include John WALLACE's reading of Marvell's forest sequence as debauchery and debilitation of moral fibre in *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 249–51.

[48] The exception is ORMEROD and WORTHAM, who relate the episode to the passage in Rm 6:5-6. *Op.cit.*, p. 258.

of beneficial pruning, is similarly evident in his use of the metaphors in relation to Cromwell in "Upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector":

> So have I seen a vine, whose lasting age
> Of many a winter hath survived the rage.
> Under whose shady tent men every year
> At its rich blood's expense their sorrow cheer,
> If some dear branch where it extends its life
> Chance to be pruned by an untimely knife,
> The parent-tree unto the grief succeeds,
> And through the wound its vital humour bleeds;
> Trickling in wat'ry drops, whose flowing shape
> Weeps that it falls ere fixed into a grape.
> So the dry stock, no more that spreading vine,
> Frustrates the autumn and the hopes of wine (89–99).[49]

Cromwell is constructed as a branch from the mystic vine that is pruned, reducing the fecundity of the source to a dry stock.

The woodbine in "Upon Appleton House" may have been chosen for its pun ("bound to the wood"), as well as its connotations of peace. A seventeenth-century emblem in E. M.'s *Ashrea* (1665) employs the woodbine as a symbol of peace.[50] The choice of plant may be a dual reference to the *Pax Romana*, that supposedly followed Christ's appearance on earth, and the hope for a new peace after the turmoil of the Civil War. A reading of this imagined crucifixion as a sacrificial and redemptive act is strengthened by Marvell's equation of the Civil War with original sin and the Fall:

> Oh thou, that dear and happy Isle
> The garden of the world ere while,
> Thou Paradise of four seas [...]
> What luckless apple did we taste,
> To make us mortal, and thee waste? (321–23, 327–28).

[49] Citation taken from Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 306.

[50] In E. M.'s *Ashrea* (London, 1665), the seventh emblem is the woodbine with the epigram: "Blessed are the Peace-makers, for they shall be called the Children of God". Beneath the image of two trees intertwined with the woodbine are the lines "Thus, while two foster deadly hate / A third steps in to end debate; Hands, / Makes Peace, unites both Hearts and / How blest is he who makes such bands."

Marvell places the regicide, which could be seen as the culmination of the Civil War, in the forest in the symbol of a fallen tree. Here it echoes the biblical passages of severance and regeneration. It is the cut tree of sin, a tree that bore poor fruit and so must be lopped in order for the tree of life to regenerate. In theological ideology, the crucifixion was the antidote to the Fall and both were imagined metaphorically through arboreal metaphor. Marvell echoes this arboreal matrix of Fall and redemption, literalizing the metaphors in his poetic forest. If the fallen oak embodies the Fall of the nation, Marvell's verdant crucifixion is the answering sacrifice that he, as poet, imaginatively performs for his patron in symbolic atonement. In the biblical passage of Rv 22:1–2, the tree of life is described as a healing balm for the nations. Marvell's invocation of the motif would appear to have a similar function, intended as a balm for the fractured nation.[51]

Arboreal Otherness

Although Marvell invokes orthodox Christian symbolism, the scene of verdant crucifixion remains strange and unsettling, and seems to embody multiple elements of orthodoxy and otherness. The episode's location in a *forest* rather than a church embodies potentially blasphemous nuances. Its *context* makes an orthodox iconography *other*. The space of the forest lies somewhere between the sacred and the profane:

Dark all without it knits; within

[51] Fairfax's knowledge of the motif is evidenced by his translation of the passage of the *Song of Solomon* where the Bride sits beneath the tree of life:

I am the Rose of Sharon's fruitfull field
The Lilly wich the humble valleys yield
In midst of thornes as Lilly appear's above
So mongst the youthfull Virgins is my love
As Apple-trees 'mongst trees o'th Forrest growe
Amongst the sones of Men my love is soe
Under whose shade is my delightfull seat
And to my tast his fruit is pleasant meat

Fairfax Thomas, *The Poems of Thomas Third Lord Fairfax*, Reed Edward Bliss (ed.), New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 1909, p. 259.

Also note Fairfax's translation of Moses' Song in Ex 15 where the Israelites are likened to plants: "To Zions mount thou didst them bring / Didst plant them in its firtil soyle / The place wher thou delightst in / A sanctuary freed from toyle," *ibid.,* p. 256.

It opens passable and thin,
And in as loose an order grows,
As the Corinthian porticoes.
The arching boughs unite between
The columns of the temple green,
And underneath the winged quires
Echo about their tuned fires (505–12).

The boughs unite, creating gothic pointed arches, making the forest an arboreal cathedral. There was a natural symbiosis between cathedrals and forests, particularly with the foliate decoration that was common (as on the Holy Trinity church in Hull (Fig. 8.3), a church Marvell would have been familiar with all his life). However the wood in the poem is also a pagan temple with Corinthian columns, which repeat the motif of arboreal regeneration.[52]

In this temple green, nuances of orthodoxy and otherness oscillate. The worship and mystical construction of trees well predates biblical imagery and appears across diverse cultures and periods.[53] Marvell's language in the forest sequence plays on the forest site as one where arboreal associations have intertextual links with both Christian and pagan ritual.

In stanza 78, directly following the episode of verdant crucifixion, the language of sacrifice has more pagan nuances:

Here in the morning tie my chain,
Where the two woods have made a lane,
While, like a guard on either side,

[52]Corinthian columns, with their stylized acanthus leaves, were associated with rebirth. Vitruvius related how Callimachus the architect, who devised the Corinthian column, was visiting Corinth to fulfill a commission. He came upon the tomb of a young girl, on the top of which were cups and a tile in which an acanthus plant had seeded and grew out from. See ANDERSON William, *The Green Man: the Archetype of our Oneness with the Earth*, London and San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1990, p. 45.

[53]The tree of life was associated with the early worship of the "Great Goddess" figure: HARRIS Stephen L. and PLATZNER Gloria (eds.), *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, 4th edition, New York, The McGraw-Hill, 2004, pp. 144–6. Other gods associated with trees include Osirus, Attis and Adonis. On tree of life mythology, see JAMES O., *The Tree of Life*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1966; SCHAMA, *op.cit.*, pp. 201–226; COOK, *op.cit.*; and WALSHAM Alexandra, "The Holy Thorn of Glastonbury: The Evolution of a Legend in Post-Reformation England", *Parergon*, 21, 2004, pp. 1–25.

Figure 8.3: Foliate spire, Holy Trinity church, Hull

The trees before their lord divide.
This, like a long and equal thread,
Betwixt two labyrinths does lead;
But, where the floods did lately drown,
There at the evening stake me down (617–24).

Marvell's language presents his speaker as a human sacrifice left in the labyrinth for the Minotaur. The language is ambiguous and casts the speaker as both sacrificial prisoner and lord. The trees could be a guard of honour, or restraining guard. The speaker is both tied with a chain, yet a lord before whom they part. He is to be staked down as prey, yet in the previous passage the staking was more Christian crucifixion.

Cathedral pavements commonly depicted labyrinths, interpreted as symbols of the fallen world apt to lead souls astray.[54] Thus the episode could be read typologically with the speaker as Theseus/Christ, the Minotaur as the devil and the maze as the dangerous mortal world.[55] Cummings, on the other hand, argues for reading the pagan nuances in stanza 78 as allusions to the cult of Diana Nemorensis, the Italian goddess of woodland and wild nature. At Aricia, on the shore of Lake Nemi in the Alban hills, she was worshipped in association with Virbius, a male god of the forest (identified with the Greek Hippolytus).[56] The priesthood of the shrine was given to a fugitive slave called *rex nemorensis* after he had broken off a branch from a sacred tree in the grove ("the golden bough") and killed his predecessor. The grove at Lake Nemi was on the tourist trail for European travellers and Marvell may well have visited there.[57]

In Ovid's account in *Fasti*, the reason for the Lake Nemi rituals was that the Romans were "too ready for war" and the rituals created a constant check on the strongest whereby the citizens "shed their savagery" and "were ashamed to fight among themselves" (*Fasti*, 3:277–

[54]On the symbolism of the labyrinth see WRIGHT Craig, *The Maze and the Warrior: Symbols in Architecture, Theology and Music*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001.

[55]ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 258.

[56]OVID, *Fasti*, *op.cit.*, 3:261–84; HOWATSON M. C. (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, 2nd ed., Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 187.

[57]The celebrity of the grove drew scholarly tourists, as earlier it had drawn Petrarch. See CUMMINGS, *op.cit.*, pp. 187–8.

84). Marvell's invocation of such imagery may allude to the sanction against civil war linked to the ritual.[58]

If Marvell had the Arician rituals in mind he would have understood that the priest-king is both hunter and prey. At the same time these dual notions, of king and sacrifice, align with the Christ figure. There may be apocalyptic implications in the image of double labyrinthine woods, given the double form of the tree of life in Rv 22 which is described as being on both sides of the river in the celestial city. Marvell's language evades confinement to one controlling paradigm and suggestions of pagan ritual and myth, while potentially subsumed as types of Christ, undermine and make problematic the Christian imagery.

The Green Man

Before Marvell's poet is a sacrificial victim, he adopts the role of natural philosopher in the forest, understanding the language of birds and reading the leaves as text (stanzas 71–73). Leaves are knowledge. They conceal, but also reveal, a secret wisdom to the initiated:

> Out of these scattered sibyl's leaves
> Strange prophecies my fancy weaves [...]
> Thrice happy he who, not mistook,
> Hath read in nature's mystic book (577–8, 583–4).

Marvell invokes the idea of man as an inverted tree himself, with his roots in the divine sphere and his branches in the mortal.[59] This suggests an affinity between the reader (as tree) and the read (leaves). However finding truth in "nature's mystic book", as opposed to the Bible, was potentially heretical. The language of leaves is double-sided. Knowledge itself could be authorized or forbidden and the first knowledge taken from nature led to original sin. Thus knowledge divined from a forest runs the risk of being unorthodox.

Marvell's speaker not only reads the leaves, he becomes covered with them.

[58] The exclusion of the horsemen in stanza 76 also has an echo in Ovid's account of the rituals at Diana's grove at Aricia. No horse may enter the grove since Hippolytus (who was torn apart by horses) hides therein (OVID, *op.cit.*, 3:265–6).

[59] "Or turn me but, and you shall see / I was but an inverted tree" (567–8). An image of the inverted tree appears in Robert FLUDD's *Philosophia sacra* (1626). See COOK, *op.cit.*, fig. 38.

Figure 8.4: Green Man, York Minster (13th c.)

> And see how chance's better wit
> Could with a masque my studies hit!
> The oak leaves me embroider all,
> Between which caterpillars crawl;
> And ivy, with familiar trails,
> Me licks, and clasps, and curls, and hales.
> Under this antic cope I move
> Like some great prelate of the grove (585–92).

Marvell's language conjures up the figure of the Green Man which was a face covered with leaves (as in Fig. 8.4) or from whom vine tendrils emerge (as in Fig. 8.5).[60] The figure is extensively present in cathedrals across Europe and Marvell would have been familiar with the figure since it grins or grimaces in cathedrals throughout Yorkshire, where Marvell lived and worked.

The ivy licks in Marvell's stanza. It is faintly predatory, anticipating consumption. Many Green Man figures appear in the process of being devoured by plant (or bird) life and suffering a living death. An example appears at a ruined Cistercian Abbey in Yorkshire (Fig. 8.5) where the unfortunate figure appears awake and slightly surprised as the vines protrude from his mouth and surround him. He is joined to an angel who is carved from the same piece of stone, which would have been inside the cathedral.[61] This enacts a division of terrain between the outside mortal world where life is finite and eventually consumed, and the sacred terrain of the Church where lies the promise of eternal life.

Placement of the Green Man in Marvell's poetic forest has complex and subversive ramifications. The Green Man figure is an inherently ambiguous one. On the one hand, he is an anti-type to the orthodox figure of Christ as the tree of life and the eucharistic symbolism of

[60] For the Green Man figure, see BASFORD Katherine, *The Green Man*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1978; ANDERSON, *op.cit.*; MATTHEWS John, *The Quest for the Green Man*, Newton Abbott, Godsfield Press, 2000. The suggestion of the Green Man figure in this stanza has been noted by ANDERSON, *op.cit.*, p. 143 and RICHMOND H. M., *Renaissance Landscapes: English Lyrics in a European Tradition*, The Hague and Paris, Mouton, 1973, p. 123.

[61] The stone on which the figure is carved was inserted in the apex of the arched window to repair damage resulting from settling of the foundations. Abbot Darnton had the new stone inserted and carved on the outside with a foliate head and on the inside with a rose and angel carrying a scroll dated *Anno Domini 1483*: BASFORD, *op.cit.*, p. 8, 23 n. 7.

Figure 8.5: Green Man, Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire (1483)

the vine. Yet the vitality of his leaves and curling vines aligns him with the tree of life iconography signifying Christ. His origins were pagan and he likely derived from representations of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, and Cernunnos, the Celtic forest god.[62] Yet he had an extensive presence amidst Christian visual iconography.[63] This proximity to orthodox iconography had the potential to highlight both parallels and differences. As a figure of the forest, embedded in cathedrals he brings something of the forest into the cathedral. This is particularly striking at the Minsters at York and Beverley with their extensive Green Men and vegetative decoration. This Dionysian and gargoyle element inside the cathedral has the potential to unsettle the sacred space, suggesting nuances of a hybrid space of cathedral and forest, analogous to Marvell's poem.

The Green Man, with his Dionysian traces, has the potential to remind the viewer or reader of the pagan god of the vine that predated Christ. With his sprouting vine, he is visually close to Dionysus and Christ, and their mystic vines. Anxiety over authenticity seems embedded in the very biblical text that establishes the metaphor. The passage in Jn 15:1, "I am the *true* vine" (emphasis added) presupposes *another* vine; an alternative that authenticity is being claimed against. Before Christ, Dionysus was associated with the mystic vine. Before Christ became a verdant cross, Dionysus turned a wooden mast into a living vine.[64]

When Marvell's speaker first enters the forest, it is described as a living ark:

[62]Matthews and Anderson note points of similarity with, *inter alia*, Dionysus, Osirus, Attis, and the Celtic forest god Cernunnos in MATTHEWS, *op.cit.*, pp. 29–32 and ANDERSON, *op.cit.*, pp. 38–40. A bearded mask wreathed with vine or ivy leaves was used as a representation of Dionysus in initiation rites. The Celtic god of the forest Cernunnos, often portrayed with antlers growing from his brow, also likely has a common ancestry with Dionysus. Anderson's study includes examples of Green Men that he identifies as the horned Cernunnos, *op.cit.*, pp. 62–3.

[63]For example, in Exeter cathedral a Green Man sprouts vegetation directly beneath the Virgin and child (c. 1309; carved by William Montacute), in ANDERSON, *op.cit.*, fig. 47. In York Minster, dozens of Green Men figures are adjacent to the tree of life design shown *supra*, Fig. 8.1, p. 104.

[64]Marvell was likely familiar with the episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* where sailors on a ship on which Dionysus is traveling fail to recognize the god whereupon he causes the ship to sprout with a great vine and turns the sailors into dolphins. OVID, *Metamorphoses*, INNES Mary M. (ed.), London, Penguin, 1955, 3:634–89.

> But I, retiring from the flood,
> Take sanctuary in the wood,
> And, while it lasts, myself embark
> In this yet green, yet growing ark (481–4).

The ark was the wooden vessel of redemption in a punitive Flood. It was also a type of Christ, the wood of the vessel aligning with the wood of the cross.[65] That the ark is described as living, gives it the resprouting quality of the verdant cross. Yet this imagery is also reminiscent of the Dionysian sprouting vessel. Thus Marvell's language, in a manner similar to the juxtaposition of stanzas 77 and 78, is both orthodox, and potentially subversive.

Why was the Green Man, with his Dionysian origins, tolerated or encouraged in the vicinity of orthodox Christian iconography? It is arguable that in some contexts he became aligned with the figure of the resprouting Adam, whose corpse, according to the legend of the true cross recounted earlier, grew the seeds from the tree of life that produced the tree of the cross.[66] Conflicting iconographies can be potentially reconciled if the Green Man figure is thought of as the decomposing/rejuvenating Adam, growing the tree of the cross and resurrected through the mystic vine of Christ. This renders the figure of Adam/Christ as two-faced, like the tree of knowledge and life. In stanza 74, Marvell's combination of caterpillars and ivy in the invocation of a Green Man links associations of mortality and rebirth. The caterpillar symbolized mortal life (the chrysalis signifying death and the butterfly rebirth), while ivy traditionally represented immortality.[67] Thus, in these symbolic details is an echo of the Adam/Christ paradigm.

Abraham, in her study of the alchemical references in Marvell's poetry, makes a persuasive argument that the first letters of each of the birds and trees in the forest form two possible anagrams that equate the biblical Noah with the pagan Hermes Trismegistus (the Egyptian

[65] Ormerod and Wortham, *op.cit.*, p. 244. In a 15th c. Italian manuscript is an image of a ship with the crucified Christ as the mast: Neumann, *op.cit.*, p. 120.

[66] Marvell's knowledge of Jacobus de Voragines *Legenda Aurea*, which recounts the tale, is evidenced in "Upon Appleton House" where it is mentioned at line 122.

[67] Ormerod and Wortham, *op.cit.*, p. 256. For the links between Adam and Christ in the tree of life mythology see Schiller, *op.cit.*, pp. 130–3.

god Thoth).[68] If so, then the poem mirrors the forest in concealing and revealing knowledge. Such an allusion would have been of direct interest to Fairfax, who was translating Foix de Candale's commentary on the *Pymander* of the *Hermetica* at the time.[69] Hermetic wisdom was perceived in the period as a bridge between pagan and Christian thought and this was the main subject of the commentary Fairfax was translating.[70]

The hidden language in the text recalls the original Adamic language, the set of signs embedded in each living creature and plant that revealed its true name. These were known to Adam but lost with the Fall.[71] The progression of the speaker's roles from Adam to the Green man supports a reading that the Green Man represented a dual decomposing/rejuvenated Adam figure for Marvell. The stanzas thus replay scenes of the search for knowledge, the Fall (as the speaker falls on the leaves, 585) and the verdant resurrection.

[68] ABRAHAM notes the druidic alphabet derived from trees. She finds two potential anagrams from the first letters of the birds and trees: "ES NOAH ES THOTH" (Thou art Noah Thou art Thoth) or "NOAH SEES THOTH" (*op.cit.*, p. 171). The Egyptian god Thoth was identified with the Greek god Hermes and given the name Hermes Trismegistus ("thrice-greatest") by Neoplatonists and devotees of mysticism and alchemy. He was believed (wrongly) to be the author of the *Hermetica*, a collection of Greek and Latin religious and philosophical writings, dating probably from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD. The aim of this mystical teaching was the deification of humankind through knowledge of God. See HOWATSON, *op.cit.*, p. 273.

[69] Fairfax's incomplete translation of the Hermetica survives in a MS fragment in the British library: ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

[70] ABRAHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 173. As ORMEROD and WORTHAM note, Sir Thomas Browne in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646) records with approval the belief that Moses had been instructed in Hermetic wisdom by the Egyptian priesthood. The task of decoding hieroglyphic wisdom became associated with the search for the initial and ultimate typology. See ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 254, xxxvii. On reconciling the pagan past with Christianity, see ALLEN Don Cameron, *Mysteriously Meant: The Rediscovery of Pagan Symbolism and Allegorical Interpretation in the Renaissance*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970. On the interest in Egypt in the period, see IVERSEN Erik, *The Myth of Egypt and Its Hieroglyphs in European Tradition*, Copenhagen, Gec Gad Publishers, 1961.

ABRAHAM also notes the common identification of Moses *with* Hermes, *op.cit.*, p. 174. The linking of figures appears to have been common. ALLEN notes Moses was also commonly identified by various seventeenth-century writers with Dionysus, Osirus and Adonis, *ibid.*, pp. 75, 80.

[71] SMITH, *op.cit.*, p. 233.

In cathedral decoration the Green Man could sometimes appear like Christ himself.[72] It is this dual nature which Marvell's speaker seems to perform in the forest sequence. He is both the Green Man and Christ. Adam as Green Man becomes priest of the grove, culminating in the imaginative vegetative crucifixion. In the speaker's mind, "encamped behind trees" (602) there is an imitation of Christ and redemption of the soul. This enables the release from the forest where the river imagery invokes the redemption of baptism.

The reference to floods at the conclusion of the forest sequence (623) recalls the flooded meadows, from which the speaker sought to escape at the beginning of the sequence. The meadow sequence, with its suggestions of bloody violence, is generally read as invoking the chaos of the Civil War.[73] The floods of the meadow also invoke the biblical Flood as the retribution of God. The forest as a whole is an ark in these floods, a vessel of salvation aligned with the wood of the cross. The speaker having performed the crucifixion, associations of God's wrath now give way to the redemptive baptismal associations of the river which at the physical estate and in the poem, greet the walker emerging from the woods.

Yet again, the Christian associations of baptism are edged with the pagan in a possible reference to Osirus, the Egyptian god of vegetation, whose mythology, like that of Christ, involved arboreal regeneration and rebirth.[74] The speaker has emerged from the forest and lies at its edge, like a river god hanging in the "osier's (willow) branches" (646–7). This may well be a pun on "Osirus," particularly since the river has become

[72]An example is the 15th c. Green man at Sampford Couteney, Bow, Devon, reproduced in HARDING Mike, *A Little Book of the Green Man*, London, Aurum Press, 1998, cover image.

[73]ORMEROD and WORTHAM, *op.cit.*, p. 230; SMITH, *op.cit.*, p. 227.

[74]Osirus was trapped in a wooden coffer by his brother Set (identified with the Greek Typhon) and thrown into the Nile. The coffer landed at Byblos where an Erica tree grew, enclosing the coffer in its trunk. The king of Byblos had the tree made into a pillar for his palace. Isis later retrieved Osirus. The myth is often interpreted as representative of the struggle between the fertility of the Nile (Isis) and the sterility of the desert (Set) over the life of vegetation (Osirus). The Djed Pillar, derived originally from the image of a tree with lopped branches, became the hieroglyph for "duration and stability" and was associated with Osirus. He was associated with rebirth through his son Horus (the Sun). The Greeks identified him with Dionysus. See HOWATSON, *op.cit.*, p. 400; ANDERSON, *op.cit.*, p. 38; and COOK, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

"our little Nile" (630). At the same time, as a god hanging in a tree, he retains echoes of his earlier role as Christ.

Conclusion

In this poetic mapping of the estate of Nun Appleton, the forest is a site of otherness. It functions, like a wilderness area or labyrinth in a Renaissance garden, in juxtaposition to the areas of order and harmony at the centre, represented by Fairfax and the house. Narratives of the recent political and social turmoil are replayed within biblical and arboreal matrixes. In this alternative cathedral in the forest Marvell's speaker is Adam, Green Man and Christ. The king-tree/tree of sin is felled, fusing the Fall of the nation with humanity's spiritual history, while optimism is embodied in the sacrificial verdant crucifixion as arboreal antidote.

In the forest, events and objects undergo an arboreal metamorphosis. The speaker's identity constantly shifts and is dissolved in a series of masks, tableaux and performances. In these transformations, the poet seeks a paradigm of green hope and redemption, drawn from ideas recurrent in the body of tree of life ideology and iconography. His poetic forest, with its alignments and parallels, suggests redemption in the whole, a syncretism and interconnectedness of all things. At the end of various symbolic sacrifices in the forest episode comes the language of renewal: flood waters recede, meadows are "fresher dyed" (626), and the grass, like man, is redeemed and baptized as "green silks" (628).

Through intersecting the idea of botanical trees in the forest with symbolic signifiers, Marvell literalizes metaphors and grounds them in the landscape of Nun Appleton. This imaginative and poetic performance for his patron was both an opportunity to display his own knowledge and offer a consoling, redemptive vision for healing the fractured nation. At the same time, however, Marvell's linguistic focus on literalizing tree metaphors reveals them as inherently strange, disconcerting and potentially threatening. While the poet's forest aims for a vision of redemption, its metaphors are grounded in other histories and the material of mortal nature.

The language of the forest sequence is suffused with ambiguity—imagery and ideas move in and out of orthodox forms through permeable boundaries of arboreal symbolism. Traces of the *other* are proximate,

embedded in the poet's language, reflecting the ways in which orthodox arboreal iconography was shadowed by pagan histories, parallels and analogous arboreal imagery. Marvell's perceptive comprehension of the nature of arboreal imagery is illuminated in the presence of tension between orthodox and pagan nuances, a juxtaposition which was likely intended as a syncretistic vision whereby the pagan would be subsumed typologically by an overarching Christian vision. However in locating orthodox imagery in the forest, Marvell exposed it to its histories and the verdant Christ to leafy pagan antecedents.

In exploring his society and its language of trees, Marvell's poetry also exposes the potential ruptures that exist in the very fabric of such metaphors and their inherent vulnerability. When gods are fused with trees, the attempt to transcend nature and the mortal world becomes entangled by its own green media, and the attempt to create a vision of transcendence from mortality is permeated with the anxiety of subordination to nature's cycles. Triumphal visions of Christ as the tree of life are haunted by decomposing Green Men. The Green Man figure in arboreal iconography often articulates the fear that we may yet be mortal; the very material of the metaphors of green resurrection is apt to decay; vegetation decomposes and fruit rots. In the stuff of rejuvenation imagery is the anxiety over death; the rejuvenating Christ in vine scrolls or fruit-trees is ultimately made of the same material as the Green Man, encircled and devoured by plant life. Marvell, in aligning the Green man role, crawling with caterpillars and ivy, with that of the vine-encircled Christ, staked with brambles, illuminates the paradox in his poem and in the iconography. The language of arboreal regeneration is rooted in the compost of the *other*.

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This paper is dedicated to Dr. Sarah Hatchuel.

9

Prophetic Utterance in Elizabethan Culture

JOHN R. SEARLE tries to justify his attempt at describing "speech acts" in the opening lines of his book on this linguistic phenomenon:

> What is the difference between a meaningful string of words and a meaningless one? What is it for something to be true? or false? ... in some form or other some such questions must make sense; for we do know that people communicate, that they do say things and sometimes mean what they say, that they are, on occasion at least, understood, that they ask questions, issue orders, make promises, and give apologies, that people's utterances do relate to the world in ways we can describe by characterizing the utterances as being true or false or meaningless, stupid, exaggerated or what-not. And if these things do happen it follows that it is possible for them to happen, and if it is possible for them to happen it ought to be possible to pose and answer the questions which examine that possibility.[1]

Searle's way of talking of the possibility for "things" to "happen" is an early suggestion of what he will go on to analyze with the notion of the

[1] SEARLE John R., *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 3.

performative force of words first developed by J. L. Austin in his lectures on *How to Do Things with Words*.[2]

I would like to start off with Searle's remarks, which I propose to rephrase as follows: if things do happen does it follow that it was *necessary* for them to happen? We know that people's utterances, on occasion at least, do relate to the world in ways we can describe by characterizing the utterances as being 'prophetic'. When does a meaningful string of words acquire prophetic power in addition to its 'ordinary' meaning? What is it for a prophecy to be true? or false?

The aim of my paper is not to provide a theoretical reponse to these questions but to focus on the practical understanding of these issues in Elizabethan culture, and more particularly in Shakespearean drama. I do not wish to examine the *general* question of whether words or statements can be prophetic or not, or whether they can be used prophetically. Instead, I would like to see how words with prophetic intent or overtones were *used in Elizabethan culture*. And I believe Shakespearean drama provides us with prime examples of what I will call, for lack of a better word, "prophetic utterances". But in order to achieve this, I will first have to spend some time, perhaps most of my time, defining what a prophetic utterance is, if indeed there is such a thing, successively exploring issues dealing with intent, words, function and performance.

In an effort to analyze the notion of 'otherness', it would be reasonable to believe that prophetic utterances are an 'other' type of utterance distinct from ordinary speech. However, instead of stressing the extra-ordinary aspects of prophetic utterances, I would like to stress what is *ordinary* about them. I would like to argue that prophetic utterances pose numerous hermeneutic problems precisely because they are too common.

1 Prophetic words and prophetic intent

According to Francis Bacon, in his essay 'Of Prophecies' (1625), prophecies are often called so only *in retrospect*; in other words, an ordinary string of words can be given a new, extra-ordinary meaning at a later stage, a meaning most likely 'unforeseen' by the original speaker:

[2] AUSTIN, J. L., *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962.

> Probable Coniectures, or obscure Traditions, many times, turne themselues into *Prophecies*: While the Nature of Man, which coueteth *Divination*, thinkes it no Perill to foretell that, which indeed they doe but collect.[3]

This may be true of statements which do not clearly signal their prophetic nature. They can be reinterpreted as a prophecy *after the fact* by those who wish to believe they are prophetic. But what if statements overtly claim a prophetic status? Thus, John of Gaunt and the Bishop of Carlisle refer to themselves as prophets in *Richard II*, just as Margaret calls herself "a prophetess" in the *Henry VI* tetralogy.

In other cases, contextual data provides information as to the prophetic nature of a character's utterance, as in *Julius Caesar*:

> CAESAR. What man is that?
> BRUTUS. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.
> (1.2.19–20)[4]

Here, it is Brutus who defines the "soothsayer" as such, thereby signifying that the man's warning is prophetic. The soothsayer never refers to himself as a prophet, nor does he say that his warning is prophetic. He only repeats his warning over and over again. In this scene, Caesar dismisses the character as "a dreamer"—as it happens, "soothsayer" and "dreamer" are almost interchangeable designations in the play: dreamers correctly warn characters of their impending doom, as with Calpurnia's dream foretelling Caesar's assassination (2.2), or Brutus' vision of the vengeful Ghost of Caesar before the battle at Philippi (4.1).

What is interesting in the example above is Caesar's insistent desire to *look* at the soothsayer, as if he were not to be *listened* to. What is there to see?

> SOOTHSAYER. Caesar!
> CAESAR. Ha! Who calls?
> CASCA. Bid every noice be still: peace yet again!
> CAESAR. Who is it in the press that calls on me?
> I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,

[3] BACON Francis, *A Harmony of the Essays, etc., of Francis Bacon*, ARBER Edward (ed.), London, New York, AMS Press, 1597–1625, 1871, 1966, English reprints, v. 7 [no. 27], pp. 537–8.

[4] All references to the Arden edition (third series), DANIELL David (ed.), Walton-on-Thames, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1998.

> Cry 'Caesar.' Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear.
> SOOTHSAYER. Beware the ides of March.
> CAESAR. What man is that?
> BRUTUS. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.
> CAESAR. Set him before me; let me see his face.
> CASSIUS. Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.
> CAESAR. What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.
> SOOTHSAYER. Beware the ides of March.
> CAESAR. He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass. (1.2.12–24)

This passage provides no stylistic tell-tale sign that what the soothsayer says is a prophetic utterance. One could imagine, for instance, an incantatory speech with a trochaic rhythm as with the witches in *Macbeth*. There is no obvious stage direction that would justify Caesar's dismissive remark; there is no description of the man as looking like a hare-brained loony, though he may sound like one—but then again, a shrill tongue crying out from a throng is not necessarily that of a madman.

Caesar's refusal to listen to what Brutus repeats *verbatim* underlines the fact that there is nothing more to the soothsayer's utterance than those five words, 'beware the ides of March'—or that there is so much more to this simple string of words than meets the ear that it must be repeated thrice.

It is the context (Brutus' characterization of the fellow as a 'soothsayer'), and the subsequent turn of events (Caesar *is* assassinated on the ides of March), which ultimately lends prophetic power to the soothsayer's warning. In this sense, one could argue that it is neither the speaker's intent nor the words themselves which are prophetic, but the narrative or historical context which transforms a relatively ordinary speech act, that of a madman in a crowd yelling incoherent things to a local dignitary, into a *bona fide* prophetic warning.

This seems to prove Bacon's point: prophecies are not instrinsically prophetic, but reconstructed causal links between events and prior statements which happen to explain, before the fact, what is about to occur. This conclusion, though, rests on the assumption that a prophecy turns out to be true. Had Caesar died on April Fool's Day and not on the Ides of March, could the soothsayer's warning have been considered a prophecy? After all, he *is* a soothsayer, i.e. one whose role is to prophesy.

2 Prophetic utterances: markers and criteria

If we concentrate on the words themselves and momentarily do away with the question of intent, does it suffice to claim that one is prophesying to produce a prophetic utterance? And if there is no such overt claim, do certain stylistic or semantic signs betray the prophetic power of a given statement? Are prophecies distinguishable from other statements, as, for instance, a wish?

It could be possible to try listing linguistic "markers" of prophetic utterances, and distinguish

(A) Semantic markers: words such as *prophesy, omen, portent, premonition, dream, boding, etc.* are close but distinct from expressions of *hope, wish, want,* or terms such as *riddle, enigma, mystery, etc.* or even the syllogistic structure *if ... then* which can suggest that something is fated to happen if a given condition is met.

These semantic markers tell us that a given statement is a prophetic utterance simply by saying it is so. Note that this does not necessarily mean that the prophetic utterance is true.

(B) Syntactic markers: iteration, parataxis, isocolon, and so on.

Julius Caesar provides an example of iteration. Plays like *Macbeth* provide examples of parataxis and isocolon:

> 1 WITCH. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
> 2 WITCH. Not so happy, yet much happier.
> 3 WITCH. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
> So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
> 1 WITCH. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail. (1.3.65–9)[5]

Parallelisms introduced by repetition, parataxis or isocolon point to the repetitive nature of prophecies. A prophetic utterance repeats, in some form or other, something which will happen or has happened. The prophecy rehearses, as it were, what it is prophesying.

[5]All references to the Arden edition (second series), MUIR Kenneth (ed.), London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1984.

(C) Stylistic markers: trochaic rhythm (or any rhythm that departs from the iambic 'norm', as with the witches in *Macbeth*), use of amphibology or ambiguity, use of paradox, contradiction or antithesis, and so on.

Amphibology, which we would now call 'double syntax', is what George Puttenham terms "when we speake or write doubtfully and that the sence may be taken two wayes"[6], as in the sentence, "The duke yet lives that Henry shall depose" in *2 Henry VI* (1.4.59).[7] Either there is a duke as yet unknkown who will depose Henry, or it is Henry who shall depose a duke who is still alive. Two contradictory meanings coexist.[8]

Ambiguity, paradoxes, antitheses and the like are useful as they increase the potential applicability of a given utterance: as Puttenham suggests, the would-be prophet can have it both ways.

To these stylistic markers one could possibly add anachronistic terms or Galfridian imagery, in reference to the famous twelfth century Merlin prophecies of Geoffrey of Monmouth which speak of such beasts as

> the red and white dragon, the boar of Cornwall, a sea-wolf, a lion of justice, an eagle, the goat of the Venereal castle, serpents, the ass of wickedness, wolves, the fox of Kaerdubalem, the adder of Lincoln ...[9]

Some of these images are decoded, as when Geoffrey-Merlin says "the white dragon, [signifies] the Saxons whom [Vortigern, king of the Britons] invited over; but the red denotes the British nation",

[6] PUTTENHAM George, *The arte of English poesie*, LUMLEY John (ed.), New York, AMS Press, 1569, 1589, 1966, English reprints, v. 4 [no. 15], p. 267.

[7] All references to the Arden edition (third series), KNOWLES Ronald (ed.), London, Thomson Learning, 1999.

[8] On amphibology and prophecies, see my 'Amphibologie et parole jésuitique à la Renaissance : entre poétique et politique', in *Bulletin de la Société de Stylistique Anglaise*, 27 : 2006, pp. 11-26.

[9] GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, *The British history of Geoffrey of Monmouth in twelve books*, THOMPSON Aaron and J. A. GILES (eds.), London, J. Bohn, ca. 1138, 1842; available online: `http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/geofhkb.htm`.

but most images remain obscure.[10]

We could also add to the list of stylistic markers of a prophetic utterance the use of Biblical imagery, as if by mimicking Biblical passages, a prophetic utterance could inherit the prophetic power of Scripture.

(D) Narrative structure: analepses or prolepses can be prophetic, but not necessarily so. We could also mention here dramatic irony: though prophetic utterances can be examples of dramatic irony, the converse is not true; not all cases of dramatic irony are prophetic utterances.

This list of linguistic and structural markers of prophetic utterances is obviously incomplete. What is more, we could propose a parallel set of markers, or criteria, perhaps more in tune with Elizabethan concerns, which correspond to what they believed were *real* prophecies, as opposed to unsubstantiated predictions, visions inspired by the devil, 'false lies' and the like. Perhaps these criteria can help us define or describe more precisely what we mean by prophetic in 'prophetic' utterances.[11]

(I) Age is the first marker, or criterion, of prophetic trustworthiness put forward by Elizabethan divination specialists: the older the prophecy, the more trustworthy. This accounts for attempts at making late Renaissance prophecies sound archaic or medieval, notably through the use of Galfridian imagery. This ruse is well-known, and many prophetic pamphlets vaunt the supposed antiquity of the prophecies they contain, 'never before read nor hearde'.

Like Plutarch saying that the Oracle at Delphos had died out, or Cicero claiming that divination was a thing of the past, Eliz-

[10] See also MERLIN Ambrosius, *The whole prophecies of Scotland, England, France, Ireland and Denmarke Prophecied by marueilous Merling, Beid, Bertlington, Thomas Rymer, Waldhave, Eltraine, Banester, and Sybilla. All agreeing in one: both in Latine verse, and Scottish meeter. Containing many strange and marueilous matters, not of before read nor hearde*, Edinburgh, Imprinted by Andro Hart, 1617.

[11] Note that it is worth keeping in mind that those who describe prophetic utterances in treatises, poems or pamphlets have a vested interest in showing that these utterances are either nefarious, or divinely inspired.

abethans believed that 'new' prophets or oracles were not to be trusted. In 1584, Reginald Scot thus concludes:

> And therefore I saie that gift of prophesie, wherewith God in times past endued his people, is also ceased, and counterfeits and couseners are come in their places.[12]

(II) Clarity or lack of ambiguity also characterize prophecies. Numerous pamphlets denouncing the use of prophecies warn against the evil and traitorous meanings of prophecies which wallow in obscurity. According to the author of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, obscurity of meaning is a surefire proof that a so-called prophecy is but a lie:

> Such doubtfull riddles are no prophecies.
> For prophecies, in writing though obscure,
> Are playne in sence, the darke be very lyes:
> What god forsheweth is evident and pure.[13]

William Baldwin's recommendation notwithstanding, most prophecies, be they political or Biblical, *are* obscure.

(III) Artificiality is perhaps the last criterion put forward by Elizabethan authors. Natural omens were more trustworthy than those artificially provoked by men, which may account for Renaissance interest in chiromancy, orniscopy (the interpretation of the flight of birds), austromancy (the movement of the winds and clouds), and so on, as opposed to necromancy, haruspicy or any other divination technique artificially provoking the signs it was meant to interpret. According to Jean Céard:

> On comprend que la distinction classique de la divination naturelle et de la divination artificielle ait été volontiers reprise: la première ne requiert pas l'intervention de l'homme et lui est donnée gracieusement; la seconde, provoquée par

[12] SCOT Reginald, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, New York, Dover Publications, 1584, 1972, book VIII, chap. 2, p. 90.

[13] BALDWIN William (?), *The Mirror for Magistrates*, 1.1.190–93, quoted by DOBIN Howard, *Merlin's Disciples: Prophecy, Poetry, and Power in Renaissance England*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 65.

> l'homme, peut plus aisément prêter à l'ingérence du démon, dans la mesure où l'homme, en tentant Dieu, se met en état de péché, et cela, même s'il n'invoque pas expressément le démon. Mais, d'autre part, la divination artificielle est susceptible de deux significations, selon que l'art de l'homme consiste à interpréter des signes qui lui sont donnés, ou, au contraire, à provoquer ces signes avant de les interpréter; de là vient que, par exemple, on sépare les augures et les auspices, fondées sur la seule observation des gazouillements et des mouvements des oiseaux, et l'haruspicine qui, examinant les entrailles des victimes sacrifiées, provoque les signes qu'elle se propose d'interpréter.[14]

Divination specialists disagree, however, on this criterion as well.[15] Though natural omens are preferable, artificial omens are frequent and effective: in *Julius Caesar*, augurers read the entrails of sacrificed animals and correctly spot disturbing signs regarding Caesar's fate:

> CAESAR. What say the augurers?
> SERVANT. They would not have you to stir forth to-day.
> Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
> They could not find a heart within the beast. (2.2.37–40)

As may seem apparent, the above criteria to determine trustworthy prophecies are not necessarily more coherent than the linguistic markers I proposed earlier on. Furthermore, the abovementioned Elizabethan criteria do not necessarily correspond to prophetic utterances, as they seem to apply mainly to *written* prophecies; most prophetic utterances were primarily disseminated by word of mouth.

3 Poetry and prophecy

Attempts at defining what constitutes prophetic utterance seem to founder on actual prophetic *practice*: though prophecies are supposed to

[14] CÉARD Jean, *La nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au XVI^e siècle*, 2nd ed., Genève, Droz, 1977, 1996, p. 115.

[15] CÉARD notably discusses the position of Cornelius GEMMA, author of, among other books, *De naturae divinis characterismis* (1575). Ibid., pp. 365–73.

be ancient, understandable and natural, examples of recent, artificial and obscure prophecies abound in the Elizabethan era—some prophecies turn out to be true, some remain unfulfilled. What is striking is how repeated attempts to ban any form of divination compounds the ineffectiveness of determining what is, or is not, considered a 'prophecy', at least as far as the courts of law are concerned.[16]. The 1541–42 act *'Touching Prophecies uppon Declaracion of Names Armes Badges, &c.'*, the 1549–50 act *'against fond and fantastical prophecies'*, or the 1563 act outlawing witchcraft are examples of both ineffective law-making and persistent divinatory activity in England.[17] Each act was aimed at suppressing a particular type of divinatory practice, without describing them in detail.

Given that actual prophetic utterances undermine efforts at drafting a comprehensive taxonomy of divinatory practices, perhaps it is worthwhile analyzing prophetic utterances from another angle. Instead of wondering what a prophetic utterance 'looks' like (for example, Caesar wanting to 'look' at the soothsayer all the while refusing to listen to him), I wish to ask where a prophetic utterance 'comes' from. If there is such a thing as a prophetic utterance, as there seems to be, whence does it issue? And what is the utterer's role? Are prophetic utterances produced by an utterer, or is the utterer compelled by some other power to produce prophetic utterances, acting as a medium or a divine?

Before returning to a straightforward reply to these questions, namely, that prophetic utterances are believed to be examples of divine inspiration, I would first like to turn to Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie*, in which he offers a tentative reply to these questions by equating Poet and Prophet in an attempt at justifying the value of the former's literary production:

[16]I am conscious of the advantages and disadvantages of taking as a model what the courts define as being a prophetic utterance. The advantage is that courts tend to follow pre-existing trends, rather than impose one. The disadvantage is that what courts focus on is usually determined by socio-political issues which are sometimes far removed from the more ordinary uses of prophecy.

[17]See THOMAS Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic. Studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth and seventeenth century England*, London, Wiedenfield & Nicholson, 1971, pp. 397–8; DOBIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–2, and KORS Alan Charles and Edward PETERS, *Witchcraft in Europe, 400–1700: a documentary history*, 2nd ed., Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001, p. 318, on the anti-divination acts. See THOMAS, *op. cit.*, pp. 212 et sq. on the numerous examples of cunning men or wise women roaming the countryside, whose reputation only grew as time went by.

> Among the Romans a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a Diviner, Fore-seer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned wordes *Vaticinium* and *Vaticinari*, is manifest: so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this hart-ravishing knowledge. [...] And altogether not without ground, since both the Oracles of *Delphos* and *Sibillas* prophecies, where wholy delivered in verses. For that same exquisite observing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to have some dyuine force in it.
>
> And may not I presume a little further, to shew the reasonablenes of this worde *Vates* ? And say that the holy *Davids* Psalmes are a divine Poem? If I doo, I shall not do it without the testimonie of great learned men, both auncient and moderne: but even the name Psalmes will speake for mee, which being interpreted, is nothing but songes.[18]

According to this definition, regularity of rhythm, 'exquisite observing of number and measure in words', has 'some divine force in it', and he who masters this art is a Poet, 'or Prophet', both being synonymous terms. One might note, *en passant,* that Sidney's etymological and historical musings help us pinpoint the fundamental difference between a promise, a wish and a prophecy. Examples of the three can overlap, but only prophecies are *fated* to happen, as suggested by the paronomasia with *Vates*.

Sydney's poetic manifesto cautiously works its way between religious orthodoxy—Scripture was inspired by God; David's Psalms are divine poems—and heresy—God's prophets' divine inspiration is the same as poetic inspiration; in both cases, inspiration creates a world of harmony and 'hart-ravishing knowledge'.

But there is more, as Sidney pursues his analysis and paints a picture of the prophet-poet:

> Then that it is fully written in meeter, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly and principally, his [David's] handeling his prophecy, which is meerely poetical. For what els is the awaking his musicall instruments? The often and free changing of persons? His notable *Prosopopeias*, when he maketh you as it were, see God comming in his Maiestie.

[18] SIDNEY Philip, *An apologie for poetrie*, ARBER Edward (ed.), New York, AMS Press, 1595, 1869, 1966, English reprints, v. 1 [no. 4], pp. 23–4.

> His telling of the Beastes ioyfulnes, and hills leaping, but a heavenlie poesie: wherein almost hee sheweth himselfe a passionate lover, of that unspeakable and everlasting beautie to be seene by the eyes of the minde, onely cleered by fayth.[19]

Prophetic utterances take on a new form: they are not only divinely inspired, they are able to create moving images. This may explain Caesar's insistent desire to *look* at the soothsayer—a scopic desire that literally occludes what the French would call Caesar's *entendement*.

I would now like to return, albeit briefly, to the question of divine inspiration. Prophetic utterances can take various forms which clearly depart from a more ordinary use of language, as when a prophet begins to "speak in tongues", what linguists call glossolalia and which Christians celebrate during Pentecost:

> And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. / And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. / And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. / And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. [...] And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? [...] But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2:1–17).

It would be interesting to see whether the abovementioned division which gives to each generation a different mode of divination is found elsewhere in the New Testament.

We could list other, non-Biblical, examples of reported cases of glossolalia, the most frequently quoted being no doubt that of John Dee's favorite skryer, Edward Kelley and his Enochian language.[20] What remains in the Biblical passage quoted above is the question of

[19] Ibid.

[20] RASULA Jed and Steve MCCAFFERY (eds.), *Imagining Language: An Anthology*, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1998,offer a fascinating compendium of 'invented' or 'alien' languages.

determining what kind of language this is. For it is not simply God's language, but the language of the divers peoples of the world, 'Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia' (Acts 2:9) and so on—a post lapsarian language, though it heralds the New Covenant. Is it God's word? or is it the Apostle's wording of God's spirit or 'Holy Ghost'? This idea, that God speaks to his prophets in a language tailored to their linguistic abilities and socio-cultural background, was later developed in the opening pages of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), a renegade member of the *other* community in Europe, the Jews.

Lastly, some cases have claimed that inspired language was the result of ventriloquy, as reported by Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, with the case of '*Elizabeth Barton,* the holie maid of *Kent*'.[21] I dwell on this example only because the accused is a woman, and women posed a particular problem. Greek sybils were women. What English Renaissance culture retained from Ancient Greece was not its Sybils and Oracles, but a certain regard, or gullibility, for female prophets. As Rabelais says in *Le Tiers Livre,* a book entirely devoted to divinatory practices:

> Je (dist Panurge) me trouve fort bien du conseil des femmes, et mesmement des vieilles. [...] Et bien proprement parlent ceulx qui les appellent Sages femmes. Ma coustume et mon style est les nommer Præsages femmes [...] car divinement elles prævoyent et prædisent certainement toutes choses advenir. [...] Demandez en à Pythagoras, Socrates, Empedocles et nostre maistres Ortuinus. Ensemble je loue jusques es haulx cieulx l'antique institution des Germains, les quelz prisoient au poix du sanctuaire et cordialement reveroient le conseil des vieilles.[22]

I have discussed elsewhere the possible implications of female prophets in Shakespearean *Histories*, notably in *Richard II*, showing how female characters inherit the gift of prophecy when they are *dis*inherited or marginalized by a sudden reversal of fortune.[23] I would now like to

[21] SCOT, *op. cit.*, book VII, chap. 1, p. 72.

[22] RABELAIS François, *Le Tiers livre*, CÉARD Jean (ed.), [Paris], Librairie générale française, 1552, 1995, chap. 16, p. 716.

[23] 'Let me prophesy': Apocalypse et inspiration prophétique dans *Richard II* de Shakespeare', in *L'autre : journée d'étude sur les auteurs et sujets des concours 2006*, DANIEL Dominique and Michel NAUMANN (eds.), Tours, PUFR, 2006, pp. 81-100.

discuss the dramatic implications of a female prophetic 'voice' on the Elizabethan stage, given the fact that women were never *actually* on stage. What are the implications when it comes to performing a prophetic utterance?

4 Performing prophetic utterances

False prophets customarily begin their prophecies by claiming that they are divinely inspired. Is this false claim comparable to what boy actors on the Elizabethan stage did when they played female characters foretelling someone's doom? Given that Keith Thomas tells the story of children-prophets in the English countryside in the sixteenth century, this question takes on renewed importance.[24] Though it would be difficult to give a straighforward answer, I wish to analyze the speech act constituted by a prophetic utterance.

It would be tempting to speak of a performative power of prophetic utterances, and yet I would like to suggest that they are not quite the expected performative model. Prophetic utterances foreground the chronological distance between the utterance and the realization—there is no point in calling a statement that is immediately verified by events a prophecy; saying 'the bottle is nearly empty and we will soon run out of water' doesn't constitute a prophecy—, and the power of a prophecy lies in the fact that we must *almost forget* or, at the very least, *misunderstand* the initial statement to highlight the surprise caused by the realization or 'acknowledgment' of the prophecy.[25]

This double distanciation, both cognitive and chronological, point to the *quasi*-performative power of prophetic utterances, an approximation on which I insist, as it re-introduces the alien, the unknown, or what Freud called the *Unheimlich* or uncanny[26], in what would otherwise be a meaningful string of words, i.e. words commonly understood because they are common, but which suddenly become strange and disquieting, and whose meaning is now too full to encompass ordinary

[24] See THOMAS on 'wise children', *op. cit.*, p. 132.

[25] I use the term 'acknowledge' to refer to CAVELL Stanley, *Disowning Knowledge: In Six Plays of Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[26] See FREUD Sigmund, 'Das Unheimliche' (1919), in *L'inquiétante étrangeté et autres essais*, FÉRON Bertrand (trans.), Paris, Gallimard, 1985, Folio Essais, pp. 213–263.

human understanding. Words *do* have the power to make things happen. But do they make things happen *necessarily*? And wouldn't one become wary of words being able to make things happen necessarily? I speak of words as if they had a will of their own on purpose, not only because I have shown how words, or rather the Word, can take hold of a speaker in a prophetic utterance or other-trance, but also because words can take a life of their own while their meanings proliferate, like a venomous plant, in the human psyche.[27]

Conclusions

I would like to conclude with a few jarring quotes. The first is by Maurice Blanchot who recalls the fact that the word prophet is taken from a Greek word designating something *alien* to Greek culture. He goes on to propose an interesting comparison between Greek and Biblical prophecy:

> Chez les Grecs, [...] l'être en transes qu'atteint follement la divination inspirée, révèle, par un balbutiement qui n'est même pas une parole, le secret que les prophètes, prêtres ou poètes, poètes-prêtres, seront chargés d'interpréter, c'est-à-dire d'élever jusqu'au langage humain. Dans le monde biblique, dit Max Weber, la Pythie et l'interprète ne sont pas séparés ; le prophète d'Israël rassemble les deux en un seul être. C'est que la divination grecque n'est pas encore langage ; elle est un bruit originel que seul l'homme qui n'en est pas possédé, capable d'entente et de mesure, peut saisir en parole et en rhythme. Dans le monde biblique, celui que touche l'esprit parle aussitôt une parole déjà véritable, commençante mais accomplie, rythmiquement rigoureuse, même si elle est emportée par la violence de l'instant.[28]

What prophetic utterances did Shakespearean audiences listen to? Perhaps sermons taken from Scripture in church, and pagan Oracles on stage. How different are these forms of divination? Do they correspond to Blanchot's distinction? Given the fact that Elizabethan theater was essentially an aural experience rather than a visual spectacle, what

[27] Céard, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

[28] Blanchot Maurice, 'La parole prophétique' in *Le livre à venir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1959, p. 98.

sense could the audience make of what Blanchot calls the Sybil's 'bruit originel'?

In the middle of *The Winter's Tale*, one of Shakespeare's last plays, two characters recall what it was like to consult the "sacred Delphos, ... Apollo's Temple":

> CLEOMENES. But of all, the burst
> And the ear-deaf'ning voice o'th'Oracle,
> Kin to Jove's thunder, so surpris'd my sense,
> That I was nothing. (3.1.8–11)[29]

At the Oracle, Elizabethan audiences, like Cleomenes, heard and were 'nothing', taken by 'surprise'. But the audience could not hear the Oracle, nor could it *see* it—the scene is narrated, not enacted. Surprisingly, what comes out of the 'deaf'ning voice' is a rather straightforward reply to Leontes' questions:

> OFFICER *[reading Apollo's Oracle]*. Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten; and the king shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found. (3.2.132–6)

What is lost is not only Leontes' heir, but the mysterious process whereby Apollo's priests translated "Jove's thunder" into these 'extra-ordinary' statements, that is, statements that are *excessively ordinary*, and which tell us nothing that the audience did not already know. Are oracles meant to tell us something that is already common knowledge?

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[29] All references to the Arden edition (second series), PAFFORD John H. P. (ed.), London, New York, Routledge, 1963.

10

Signes scéniques et trouble identitaire : l'altérité de l'ombre tragique

Si l'on veut faire la cartographie de l'altérité, aux seizième et dix-septième siècles, on peut difficilement éviter de s'intéresser à la figure du revenant. Elle suppose en effet ce rapport d'intimité perturbée sans lequel il ne saurait y avoir d'altérité véritable, car n'est vraiment « autre » que ce qui est potentiellement identique. L'autre, c'est le même en tant que non reconnaissable, défiguré au point qu'on hésite à se reconnaître en lui. Sans ce mélange d'intimité et d'altération radicale, il n'y a pas d'« autres », il n'y a que des étrangers. Quand ils se manifestent aux vivants, les morts sont précisément dans ce rapport de familiarité interdite : ils ont été ce que nous sommes, ils sont ce que nous deviendrons inévitablement et c'est pourquoi leur rencontre est si perturbante.

On sait qu'à la Renaissance, il y a un lieu que les morts ont envahi : le théâtre, et en particulier la tragédie, sur laquelle s'est abattue une véritable épidémie de fantômes ou plutôt, comme on les nomme alors, d'« ombres ». Il peut pourtant sembler incongru de considérer ce tropisme nécrophile de la tragédie dans le cadre d'une enquête sur l'altérité car la tragédie est, à première vue, un assez mauvais exemple, puisque les ombres y sont moins les manifestations d'une altérité troublante que

des figures conventionnelles — surtout si on les compare aux revenants que, par la suite, la littérature a campés. Pour trouver des exemples probants de l'*otherness* du mort, c'est dans la littérature narrative du dix-neuvième siècle qu'il faut chercher, et moins dans les histoires de fantômes et les avatars du *gothic novel* que dans des récits plus troublants qui mettent en scène des états intermédiaires. Le plus frappant d'entre eux est sans doute la nouvelle d'E. A. Poe *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*, traduite par Baudelaire sous le titre de *L'étrange cas de M. Valdemar*.

Voix, corps, langue : trois modalités de l'altérité

Comme on sait, la nouvelle de Poe raconte une expérience de mesmérisation. Un mourant, endormi *in articulo mortis*, est réveillé plusieurs mois après, passant instantanément à l'état de décomposition où son corps aurait été si le processus morbide n'avait pas été artificiellement suspendu. La nouvelle s'articule autour de deux moments clefs où le narrateur est confronté à la mort en acte. Le premier moment est celui de la séance de mesmérisation, qui se termine lorsqu'on demande au mourant s'il dort et qu'il finit par répondre : « Yes ; —no ;—I *have been* sleeping—and now—now—*I am dead*[1] ». Le second moment est celui

[1] "There was no longer the faintest sign of vitality in M. Valdemar; and concluding him to be dead, we were consigning him to the charge of the nurses, when a strong vibratory motion was observable in the tongue. This continued for perhaps a minute. At the expiration of this period, there issued from the distended and motionless jaws a voice — such as it would be madness in me to attempt describing. There are, indeed, two or three epithets which might be considered as applicable to it in part; I might say, for example, that the sound was harsh, and broken and hollow; but the hideous whole is indescribable, for the simple reason that no similar sounds have ever jarred upon the ear of humanity. There were two particulars, nevertheless, which I thought then, and still think, might fairly be stated as characteristic of the intonation—as well adapted to convey some idea of its unearthly peculiarity. In the first place, the voice seemed to reach our ears—at least mine—from a vast distance, or from some deep cavern within the earth. In the second place, it impressed me (I fear, indeed, that it will be impossible to make myself comprehended) as gelatinous or glutinous matters impress the sense of touch; I have spoken both of 'sound' and of 'voice'. I mean to say that the sound was one of distinct—of even wonderfully, thrillingly distinct—syllabification. M. Valdemar spoke—obviously in reply to the question I had propounded to him a few minutes before. I had asked him, it will be remembered, if he still slept. He now said: 'Yes;—no;—I *have been* sleeping—and now—now—*I am dead*.' ", *The Complete Tales and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe*,

du réveil, plusieurs mois après : à la question sur son état, M. Valdemar fait la même réponse, « *I am dead* », aussitôt suivie de la description du corps qui se liquéfie[2].

Le récit théâtralise à l'extrême l'altérité du mort — elle se marque à la fois dans le corps, dans la voix et dans la langue, qui sont tous trois fortement altérés. Si spectaculaire qu'il soit, le dérèglement du corps est simple : il passe instantanément de l'état solide à l'état liquide. Celui de la voix est moins frappant mais plus profond, car les qualités articulatoires et sonores sont décrites par une série de prédicats parfaitement contradictoires : l'émission est à la fois hachée et « pâteuse » (*glutinous*), la voix est à la fois sans substance (elle est creuse, *hollow*) et relève du registre tactile (*gelatinous*, *glutinous*). C'est toutefois avec la langue que l'anomalie culmine, avec l'énoncé « *I am dead* » qui présente deux particularités frappantes. Tout d'abord, l'expression resémantise un stéréotype. « Je suis mort » est, en effet, un énoncé banal, normalement proféré par un individu épuisé par un effort physique, mais ici, il prend un tout autre sens, littéral, qui est rigoureusement impossible, puisque, en énonçant sa disparition, le locuteur s'abolit lui-même[3]. En outre, l'énoncé quitte le régime dénotatif pour prendre contre toute attente une

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Allen Harvey (dir.), NY, The Modern Library, 1981 [1938], p. 101.

[2] " 'M. Valdemar, can you explain to us what are your feelings or wishes now?' There was an instant return of the hectic circles on the cheeks: the tongue quivered, or rather rolled violently in the mouth (although the jaws and lips remained rigid as before), and at length the same hideous voice which I have already described, broke forth: 'For God's sake!—quick!—quick!—put me to sleep—or, quick!—waken me!—quick!—*I say to you that I am dead!*' I was thoroughly unnerved, and for an instant remained undecided what to do. At first I made an endeavour to recompose the patient; but, failing in this through total abeyance of the will, I retraced my steps and as earnestly struggled to awaken him. In this attempt I soon saw that I should be successful—or at least I soon fancied that my success would be complete—and I am sure that all in the room were prepared to see the patient awaken. For what really occurred, however, it is quite impossible that any human being could have been prepared. As I rapidly made the mesmeric passes, amid ejaculations of 'dead! dead!' absolutely *bursting* from the tongue and not from the lips of the sufferer, his whole frame at once—with the space of a single minute, or less, shrunk—crumbled—absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before that whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome—of detestable putrescence." *Ibid.*, pp. 102–103.

[3] On renverra là-dessus à l'analyse de Barthes Roland, « Analyse textuelle d'un conte d'Edgar Poe », in *Sémiotique narrative et textuelle*, Chabrol Claude (dir.), Paris, Larousse, 1973, pp. 29–54.

valeur strictement performative : l'énoncé impossible a la propriété de réaliser ce qu'il énonce, puisqu'il est la formule magique qui provoque instantanément la dissolution d'une chair en sursis.

Ces dérèglements se produisent dans un cadre particulier : un contexte fortement laïcisé qui prend à revers le rituel de la mort chrétienne : l'intérêt scientifique prend la place de l'inquiétude religieuse et le médecin prend la relève du prêtre. Pas de trace d'une survie possible, pas d'accompagnement édifiant, pas de passage dans l'au-delà où, à l'instant décisif, l'âme s'envole, laissant le corps figé en un masque mortuaire qui permet à l'entourage de prendre congé et de garder une dernière image. Au lieu de cette scène consolante où l'âme quitte un corps apaisé et comme délivré des pesanteurs de l'ici-bas, la peur revient en force sur le mode d'une horreur qui défigure tout ce qui fait l'humain, dans une débandade générale du corps, de la voix et de la langue.

L'ombre tragique : le triomphe du stéréotype

La tragédie de la Renaissance est au plus loin de cette mise en scène extrême de l'altérité du mort car, à première vue, elle refoule toute manifestation d'altérité. Les ombres y sont nombreuses, certes, mais ce sont des figures stéréotypées, engoncées dans une rhétorique propre à décourager les lecteurs modernes. Elles n'ont du reste pas peu contribué à cette défaveur dont la tragédie humaniste peine à sortir : elles nous endorment plus qu'elles ne nous troublent, comme si la tragédie refoulait cette peur des morts que la littérature ultérieure exploitera. A lire les tragédies, on peut penser que les signes que Poe exploite sont totalement muets. Sur la voix de l'ombre, elles ne donnent pratiquement aucune indication. Sur le corps, elles sont un peu plus explicites : quelques didascalies internes ou externes font référence à un maquillage blafard, parfois à un justaucorps peint en squelette, un drap en guise de suaire, une casaque blanche ou noire, la tragédie élisabéthaine ou baroque étant sensiblement moins avare de détails que la tragédie humaniste. Quelques mouvements particuliers attirent l'attention sur la singularité du comportement du mort, notamment sa disparition par une trappe ou une esquisse d'ubiquité, comme à la fin de la première scène de *Hamlet*, où la deuxième sortie du fantôme donne lieu à ce bref échange de répliques entre Barnardo, Horatio et Marcellus :

– 'Tis here.
– 'Tis here.
– 'Tis gone[4].

Ce dialogue minimal, réduit à trois exclamations, se charge de signifier que le fantôme n'est pas localisable et qu'il s'évanouit plutôt qu'il ne sort de scène, mais la didascalie se contente de dire prosaïquement « *exit ghost* ». Et comme pour mieux réduire son étrangeté, le fantôme est présenté comme un quasi-vivant : on peut l'identifier comme le roi défunt parce qu'il est l'image exacte du roi tel qu'il était de son vivant.

Loin d'être perturbée, comme chez Poe, la langue est on ne peut plus conforme : le mort pratique un discours stéréotypé qui accumule les invocations véhémentes et les références infernales. Cette rhétorique n'est pas différente de celle des divinités protatiques : le mort parle exactement comme Mégère, les furies ou les dieux outragés qui ouvrent la tragédie.

Du coup, si la figure du mort est si banale, on peut se demander à quoi rime une telle épidémie. On peut lui prêter deux raisons essentielles. La première est que l'ombre est un emblème commode de la tragédie à l'antique. Ce n'est pas simplement qu'elle prélude dignement à une histoire de sang et de fureur, dans un haut style imprécatoire, c'est qu'elle est une signature sénéquienne : l'ombre protatique permet au dramaturge de s'inscrire dans la tradition antique, en faisant référence à la tragédie la mieux connue, celle de Sénèque. Mais l'hommage au tragique latin n'explique pas tout, l'ombre est aussi le symptôme d'une résurrection : derrière le retour du mort qui réclame vengeance se profile le retour de la culture antique. En effet, la reconstitution de la tragédie antique n'est pas seulement un jeu érudit. A la différence d'autres formes poétiques reprises aux Anciens, la tragédie n'est pas une expérience livresque, elle offre — et elle est exceptionnelle en cela — un contact vivant avec la culture antique qu'elle permet de faire revivre. D'où l'importance de ces représentations à l'antique, comme l'*Œdipe Roi* monté au Teatro Olimpico de Vicence en 1585[5]. La reconstitution n'est pas seulement érudite, elle vise moins à restituer un texte qu'à faire revivre une expérience culturelle globale :

[4]Shakespeare William, *Hamlet*, Jenkins Harold (dir.), London, Routledge, « The Arden Shakespeare », 1990 [1982], 1.1.145–147, p. 175.

[5]Voir Schrade Leo, *La représentation d'Edipo tiranno au Teatro Olimpico (Vicenza, 1585)*, Paris, CNRS, 1960.

il s'agit de donner aux spectateurs modernes la sensation que pouvaient éprouver les Anciens devant l'une des formes majeures de la culture grecque et latine[6].

A côté de l'hommage sénéquien et de la tentative de résurrection culturelle, un tout autre facteur, idéologique, a influé sur la présence des revenants dans la tragédie : le rapport ambigu que la culture chrétienne a entretenu dès l'origine avec les morts. Ce rapport a été marqué, dès l'origine, par une tension entre la volonté de répondre au besoin qu'ont les fidèles de maintenir le contact avec leurs morts et la nécessité de lutter contre tout retour au paganisme, à ses rites funéraires et à sa survalorisation des cadavres, pour promouvoir le dédain chrétien d'un corps qui n'est que poussière. D'où l'hésitation qui travaille la pensée chrétienne, depuis le début : le contact est-il possible avec les morts et avec les saints ? Les Pères hésitent, au premier rang desquels St Augustin qui adopte sur la question des positions variables au point d'être contradictoires[7]. Au seizième siècle, la question est ravivée par la Réforme, qui produit un partage complexe. Globalement, les protestants récusent le contact, et ce rejet va de pair avec celui du culte des saints, du purgatoire et des cérémonies ; pour eux, toute apparition d'un mort est une ruse du démon. Les catholiques, en revanche, sont partagés. La hiérarchie romaine est favorable au contact mais elle le limite aux âmes saintes, toute apparition de damné ne pouvant être que diabolique ; mais une partie des fidèles, de peur d'encourager la superstition, récuse les apparitions. D'où, pour les chrétiens, une position difficile où les besoins du deuil entrent volontiers en contradiction avec les injonctions des églises.

Si le rapport que les fidèles entretiennent avec les morts pose problème, comment croire que la figure du revenant puisse être sur scène si conventionnelle et que le stéréotype parvienne à refouler toute manifestation

[6]Voir Millet Olivier, « Faire parler les morts. L'ombre protatique comme prosopopée dans la tragédie française de la Renaissance », in *Dramaturgies de l'ombre*, Lavocat Françoise et Lecercle François (dir.), Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, coll. Esthetica, 2005, pp. 85–100.

[7]L'un des textes de S. Augustin les plus importants sur la question est le *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, qui adopte une position prudente. Sur l'attitude envers les morts en Occident, la bibliographie est assez abondante. Sur les témoignages anciens, voir Smelik K. A. D., « The Witch of Endor. I Samuel 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D. », *Vigiliae Christianae*, 33, 1979, pp. 160–179. Sur les attitudes médiévales, voir Schmitt Jean-Claude, *Les revenants. Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994.

d'altérité, alors même que l'attitude envers les morts est si ambivalente ? En vérité, la question du rapport aux morts n'a pas impunément préoccupé la chrétienté à travers les siècles car, à y regarder de plus près, il reste bien quelques traces d'altérité radicale même chez les ombres tragiques. En effet, les trois registres que j'ai considérés — le corps, la voix et la langue — sont un peu plus problématiques qu'il n'y paraît. Pour le comprendre, il ne faut pas se contenter du texte des pièces et de didascalies qui sont, comme on sait, plutôt rares et assez pauvres jusqu'au début du dix-septième siècle. Il faut faire appel à d'autres types de documents : les quelques traités techniques sur la scénographie et la régie de scène que l'on a conservés, et qui datent du tournant des seizième et dix-septième siècles.

Les signes scéniques de l'altérité

Ces traités, qui sont exclusivement italiens, nous apprennent en particulier que le corps des fantômes a sur scène une présence plus perturbante que le texte des dramaturges ne le laisserait deviner. En effet, ils mentionnent toute une série de techniques destinées à donner aux ombres une présence scénique radicalement différente de celle des autres protagonistes, en leur conférant au moins six caractéristiques, que je passerai rapidement en revue, les ayant examinées plus en détail ailleurs[8]. La première tient au mode d'entrée et de sortie. Au début de *Hamlet*, le spectre sort, comme on l'a vu, d'une façon que les protagonistes soulignent. Mais les traités scénographiques en disent bien plus long que le dialogue de Shakespeare : ils détaillent les procédés qui assurent aux ombres une apparition et une disparition brutales. Pour faire disparaître instantanément un acteur, les troupes ont en effet l'embarras du choix :

[8] Je me permets de renvoyer à mon article « L'automate et le fauteur de troubles : des usages de l'ombre dans la tragédie de la Renaissance », in *Dramaturgies de l'ombre*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–67. Les principaux traités sont : Ingegneri A., *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (1598), Doglio Maria Luisa (dir.), Modena, Panini, 1989 ; Sommi Leone de', *Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche* (écrit ca. 1570–1590), Marotti Francesco (dir.), Milan, Il Polifilo, 1968 ; *Il Corago o vero alcune osservazioni per metter bene in scena le composizioni drammatiche* (écrit ca. 1630), Fabbri Paolo et Pompilio Arnaldo (dir.), Florence, Olschki, 1983 ; Sabbattini N., *Pratica di fabricar scene e macchine ne' teatri*, Ravenne, P. Paoli & G. B. Giovannelli, 1638, 2e éd. augm. (1re éd., en un seul livre, 1637).

elles peuvent ouvrir une trappe dans le plancher de la scène ou faire tomber des cintres des voiles qui dérobent le personnage aux regards, elles peuvent aussi manipuler les lumières, en plongeant dans l'ombre une zone et en éclairant vivement la voisine, voire en enflammant un linge imbibé d'alcool devant le fantôme qui, à la faveur de cette diversion, s'éclipsera prestement.

La deuxième caractéristique tient à la façon de se déplacer : un mort ne marche pas comme un vivant, il n'a pas une démarche articulée, il glisse — effet qui est très facile à produire puisqu'il suffit de dissimuler dans l'ample robe du fantôme une planche à roue actionnée depuis les coulisses par une corde.

Un mort se distingue également par sa taille, l'ombre dominant les autres personnages. Pour en faire un géant, les italiens usent du décor en perspective accélérée, tel qu'on le voit encore sur le théâtre de Vicence : un acteur apparaissant au fond de la scène à côté d'un élément de décor réduit prendra aisément une stature gigantesque.

Quatrième trait : la capacité de métamorphose. A la différence des simples humains, l'ombre peut changer à volonté de taille et de corpulence. Cela tient à ce que ce n'est pas toujours un acteur qui l'incarne : elle a un corps de toile actionné par des baleines qui grandit ou rétrécit, enfle ou mincit à volonté, selon qu'on ouvre ou ferme les baleines, comme celles d'un parapluie.

Ce corps métamorphique a en outre une autre particularité étrange : l'ombre n'a rien de charnel, elle a un corps sans poids, diaphane (il est de toile), voire luminescent, puisque ce corps de toile peut abriter une lanterne sourde qui lui donnera une aura. Son corps n'est pas seulement diaphane, il peut émettre cette lumière irréelle qui signale que le mort a définitivement rompu avec les pesanteurs et les servitudes de la chair.

L'ombre a, de surcroît, une sixième et dernière caractéristique : elle est douée d'ubiquité. Elle peut disparaître à un bout de la scène et, au même instant, apparaître à l'autre, un second acteur, vêtu d'un costume identique, prenant le relais du premier.

On serait tenté d'imaginer que ce corps impossible se dénonce immédiatement comme une simple poupée. Mais les scénographes ont assez d'ingéniosité pour parer à cet inconvénient en trouvant le moyen de donner une voix à ce corps de toile. Même si elle flotte dans l'air et se métamorphose, l'ombre n'en est pas moins douée de la parole : un acteur,

au sol, est caché dans ses voiles et parle dans un tuyau branché sur le masque qui sert de visage. Du coup, déformée par le tuyau, la voix n'est plus tout à fait une voix humaine et les traités insistent sur la nécessité de prêter aux fantômes une tessiture anormale — peu importe qu'elle soit stridente ou caverneuse, l'essentiel étant qu'elle se démarque de celle des humains.

Ces diverses indications sont données par des traités italiens qui sont parfois restés inédits jusqu'au vingtième siècle. On pourrait donc penser que de tels procédés n'ont pas été utilisés hors d'Italie puisque, à ma connaissance, on ne possède pas de traité équivalent dans les autres pays d'Europe. Mais ces techniques n'ont pas attendu que les ingénieurs italiens exportent leur savoir-faire dans les années 1630, elles n'avaient sans doute même pas besoin d'être couchées par écrit pour être utilisées, car ce sont des « trucs » de métier, transmis de praticien à praticien mais aussi peut-être diffusés par l'intermédiaire des spectateurs car, si ingénieux soient-ils, ces secrets ne sont pas bien difficiles à percer et ils ne demandent pas des moyens techniques très élaborés. Les troupes voyagent, les spectateurs aussi. Il est donc permis de penser que quelques-uns de ces procédés ont été diffusés. On le peut d'autant plus facilement qu'ils répondent souvent à des didascalies implicites fournies par les dialogues. En postulant une ombre insaisissable et qui s'évanouit instantanément, le « – 'Tis here ! – 'Tis here ! – 'Tis gone ! » de *Hamlet* appelle un effet que les scénographes italiens permettent de réaliser concrètement.

Ces didascalies implicites sont souvent difficiles à saisir pour un lecteur moderne. Ainsi, le *Saül le furieux* de Jean de La Taille met en scène l'épisode biblique où la pythonisse d'Endor, à la demande du roi Saül, évoque l'ombre du prophète Samuel. Quand il paraît, les témoins s'émerveillent d'une ombre « luisante de blancheur[9] ». Le lecteur, aujourd'hui, ne fait sans doute aucun cas de ce détail, mais quand on a lu les scénographes italiens, on comprend comment lui donner un relief éclatant : on peut imaginer un acteur dissimulant sous sa robe une lanterne sourde qui l'éclaire par-dessous.

[9] La Taille Jean de, *Saül le furieux*, acte III, v. 709, Forsyth E. (dir.), Paris, S.T.F.M., 1998 [1968], p. 53. Parue en 1572, la pièce a été écrite dix ans plus tôt. Je donne en appendice, p. 179 *(infra)*, le texte de l'épisode, mais amputé de ses préparatifs et des invocations réitérées de la pythonisse.

Si discrètes soient-elles, ces didascalies n'en attestent pas moins que les dramaturges souhaitent donner aux fantômes une existence scénique à part, en leur conférant une apparence et un comportement qui les singularisent et les distinguent radicalement des humains ordinaires. Des techniques existent qui, sans demander des moyens exceptionnels, permettent de réaliser ces souhaits. Reste à apprécier leurs effets. Le premier est, assurément, de favoriser le spectaculaire : il s'agit de provoquer la stupéfaction par la virtuosité de ces « effets spéciaux ». Mais l'admiration devant le tour de force illusionniste va sans doute de pair avec un trouble plus profond. L'effet spectaculaire participe sans doute de la mise en scène de l'altérité en renforçant des éléments de trouble que l'on peut déjà déceler dans le discours. J'essaierai de le montrer en prenant deux exemples, *Hamlet* (1602) et *Saül le furieux* (1572), qui ne sont pas vraiment représentatifs, puisqu'ils jouent à plein du trouble que peut produire le fantôme. Mais du moins, ils permettent de comprendre de quelles perturbations le revenant est capable sur la scène de l'époque « pré-moderne ».

L'altérité dans le discours : le trouble identitaire

Il y a assurément un abîme entre la rhétorique de l'ombre tragique et le « *I am dead* » de Poe, mais, même dans la tragédie humaniste, le discours du mort est moins aseptisé qu'on ne croirait. Chez Sénèque déjà, l'ombre a des caractéristiques troublantes qui la rendent étrangère aux catégories qui définissent le sujet humain[10]. Elle a un rapport anormal à l'espace et au temps : elle n'appartient à aucun lieu, ni à la terre, ni aux enfers, et ne trouve sa place nulle part ; elle apporte en outre la mémoire du passé et la connaissance de l'avenir comme si elle saisissait les choses en dehors du temps, dans une universalité immobile ; elle noue enfin un rapport étrangement corporalisé au lieu. Son discours est hanté de métaphores corporelles, qui la lient à des phénomènes de contamination, de pénétration et d'enfantement : elle est un miasme qui pénètre, le lieu où elle paraît devenant un corps enceint du fantôme.

A la mise en scène sénéquienne, la tragédie moderne emprunte au moins l'idée que l'ombre est fondamentalement marquée par un trouble

[10]Il y a chez Sénèque, deux ombres protatiques, celle de Thyestes, qui ouvre *Agamemnon*, et celle de Tantale qui, en dialoguant avec une furie, ouvre *Thyestes*.

identitaire. C'est un personnage sur qui plane le doute : dès qu'une ombre paraît, les témoins s'interrogent sur la possibilité de son apparition, qui est soulignée comme un scandale. On objectera peut-être que le fantôme de *Hamlet* ressemble au roi tel qu'il était de son vivant (1.1.61), mais cette ressemblance n'a rien de rassurant, au contraire : elle n'est soulignée que parce qu'elle est profondément anormale. Dans certains cas, l'interrogation se fait explicite et insistante. Le meilleur exemple est celui de *Saül le furieux* où, devant l'apparition du prophète Samuel, les témoins — un écuyer et le chœur des Lévites — ont une double réaction. La première est de douter de la possibilité même de l'événement.

> LE I. ESCUYER
> Las ! qu'est-ce que je voy ? bon Dieu quelle merveille !
> Quel fantosme est-ce là ? Song'ay-je, ou si je veille ?
> Est-ce donc Samuel que luysant en blancheur
> Ceste Sorciere améne ? ô que j'ay de frayeur !
> LES LEVITES
> Permettez vous cecy, ô Dieu, ô Ciel, ô Terre ! (acte III, v. 707–711)

L'impossibilité d'un tel manquement à l'ordre du monde voulu par Dieu (« quelle merveille ! ») fait penser au témoin que c'est son rapport à la réalité qui bascule (« song'ay-je ? »). Le scandale d'un manquement à l'ordre divin est repris par le chœur (« permettez-vous cecy »). Mais à cette incrédulité scandalisée se mêle une deuxième réaction : un doute sur l'identité. L'écuyer se demande quelle est la nature de cette apparition ? (« Quel fantôme est-ce là ? »). D'où un curieux renversement : l'ombre tient un discours parfaitement normal — le roi assassiné demande à être vengé ; Samuel annonce le châtiment divin — mais ce discours est rendu perturbant par le doute qui pèse sur l'identité du personnage. Car dans ces deux cas, le dramaturge s'ingénie à ponctuer sa pièce de signes divergents qui confèrent à l'ombre une identité contradictoire.

Dans *Hamlet*, le spectateur est écartelé entre des indications récurrentes et parfaitement contraires. D'un côté, le fantôme paternel a des caractéristiques diaboliques prononcées que la critique a longuement détaillées — par exemple, il disparaît au chant du coq, comme sont censées le faire les apparitions diaboliques[11]. Mais d'autres indices authentifient le fantôme : il dénonce effectivement un crime qui est confirmé

[11] Voir Prosser Eleanor, *Hamlet and Revenge*, Stanford / Oxford, Stanford University Press & Oxford University Press, 1967.

quand Claudius en prière avoue clairement sa culpabilité (3.3.36 sq.). Il est raisonnable d'en conclure que le spectateur se retrouve pris entre ces indications contradictoires et qu'il est ainsi amené à éprouver pour sa part quelque chose de la paralysie du héros. Comme Hamlet, torturé par l'incertitude, hésite sur la conduite à tenir, le spectateur, écartelé entre deux hypothèses, ne sait que penser de la nature de l'apparition. Cette contradiction touche encore plus le spectateur protestant, pris entre son besoin de croire au contact possible, donc au retour du père mort, et l'interdit lancé par les théologiens.

Dans *Saül le furieux*, on retrouve les mêmes indications contradictoires, mais sur un mode différent. La vérité de l'apparition est authentifiée par tous, non pas seulement la sorcière et le roi, qui soulignent à l'envi les caractéristiques saintes de l'apparition (ils la disent pleine de majesté, vénérable, honorable, etc.), mais également par les témoins horrifiés qui, pourtant, condamnent le recours aux opérations démoniaques de la magicienne. L'écuyer, on l'a vu, souligne l'aura de cette apparition « luisante de blancheur ». En dépit de cette authentification générale, le fantôme reste douteux car les mêmes témoins, avant et après l'évocation, indiquent que l'apparition ne saurait être que démoniaque, car les pratiques magiques sont qualifiées de mensongères et le chœur des Lévites, à la fin de l'acte II, dénonce toute évocation comme une ruse du démon : la curiosité des devins est maudite, car elle imite les prophètes pour tromper la folie de ceux qui les consultent[12]. Mais, à l'acte suivant, le chœur qui clôt la scène d'évocation semble changer d'avis un moment, puisqu'il reproche au roi « D'avoir contre Dieu suscité / Du mort Prophete le sommeil / Pour lui demander son conseil[13] », avant de réitérer la condamnation de la magie. La contradiction est donc mise en œuvre d'une façon encore plus retorse que chez Shakespeare : la scène d'évocation accrédite l'authenticité — ce qui étonne de la part d'un dramaturge huguenot, qui va ainsi contre la thèse protestante — mais elle est démentie par le contexte.

Ce trouble identitaire a la vertu de poser au spectateur une question qu'il aura du mal à résoudre et par là de donner au spectacle une efficacité plus durable, puisque le doute persistera la pièce achevée. Mais

[12] La Taille, *Saül*, acte II, v. 530–34, p. 45.

[13] *Ibid.*, acte III, v. 842–44, p. 60. Il est vrai que ces vers peuvent ne désigner que l'intention du roi et non pas définir l'identité de l'appartion.

ce n'est pas sa seule finalité : il sert également à donner au discours de l'ombre un retentissement inattendu. En effet, si le discours du mort est problématique, ce n'est pas parce qu'il dit des choses intrinsèquement ambiguës : c'est l'impossibilité de lui assigner une origine qui le rend ambivalent. C'est parce qu'on ne sait pas qui parle que le discours de l'ombre devient potentiellement retors. C'est parce qu'il a deux locuteurs potentiels qu'il devient ambivalent, car son sens change radicalement, selon qu'il émane du mort qu'il prétend être ou d'un faux-semblant diabolique.

A preuve, cette injonction que le *Ghost* lance, dans la scène du troisième acte où il interrompt l'entretien de Hamlet et de sa mère : « O step between her and her fighting soul[14] ». Si le fantôme est bien celui du père mort, il invite son fils à mettre fin au tourment de sa mère, à ne plus la torturer par le rappel d'une conduite répréhensible. Il fait ainsi preuve de sollicitude et de compassion. Au lieu de s'offenser qu'elle n'ait pas respecté le temps du deuil, il accorde à sa veuve son pardon. A l'inverse, s'il s'agit d'un démon, l'ordre a une fonction diamétralement opposée. Le fantôme incite Hamlet à interrompre l'examen de conscience que ses remontrances ont commencé de provoquer et, ce faisant, en empêchant la contrition de Gertrude, il travaille à sa damnation. C'est l'analyse d'E. Prosser, qui est parfaitement juste, à cette réserve près que, en voulant à toute force trancher en faveur de l'intervention démoniaque, elle dépouille le fantôme de sa caractéristique la plus forte qui est de laisser le spectateur indéfiniment suspendu, comme Hamlet, entre deux hypothèses également crédibles[15].

On peut faire le même constat pour *Saül le furieux*, où la harangue de Samuel est également susceptible de deux interprétations contradictoires. S'il s'agit bien du prophète mort, celui-ci vient confirmer au roi abandonné de Dieu ce qu'il lui avait déjà annoncé de son vivant : la juste sanction de ses transgressions avec, cette fois, l'annonce du châtiment imminent. Si, à l'inverse, il s'agit d'une illusion démoniaque, la harangue répond à une tout autre fin : elle vise à pousser le roi au désespoir et, par conséquent, à assurer encore davantage sa perte.

[14] *Hamlet*, 3.4.113, p. 326.
[15] Voir Prosser E., *op. cit.*, chap. 7, pp. 196–98.

Discours du mort et brouillage identitaire

Dans la tragédie de La Taille, la perturbation ne se borne pas là. Ce n'est pas seulement le mort dont l'identité est brouillée, le trouble identitaire devient comme contagieux et gagne les témoins. Ainsi de la pythonisse, qui connaît une complète métamorphose entre le début et la fin de l'épisode. Au départ, en effet, elle est présentée comme une « fausse sorcière », c'est-à-dire une sorcière mensongère — c'est ainsi que l'ombre la nomme à deux reprises[16]. Elle se comporte en effet comme une sorcière : elle se livre à des conjurations et invoque les diables. Dès ses premiers mots, l'ombre de Samuel la dénonce comme une sorcière de village en détaillant ses méfaits : elle tarit le lait des vaches, tue le bétail et les enfants[17]. L'effet de réel est assurément fort, puisque l'ombre lui impute les dommages pour lesquels, à l'époque, des femmes sont condamnées par centaines au bûcher. Mais à la fin de l'épisode, la pythonisse prend une allure tout opposée : en réconfortant le roi abattu et en lui demandant en grâce d'accepter quelque nourriture, elle se retrouve modèle de charité chrétienne. La métamorphose est d'autant plus spectaculaire qu'elle ne se contente pas de prodiguer des réconforts matériels, elle prêche la bonne parole chrétienne : c'est elle et non l'écuyer ou le chœur des Lévites qui détourne le roi du suicide et lui montre la seule voix légitime en l'incitant à s'en remettre à Dieu et à implorer son pardon.

Ce retournement d'identité n'est pas une invention de La Taille, puisqu'il est dans le récit biblique, même si les exégètes ne lui accordent aucune attention à l'exception de Flavius Josèphe que La Taille a certainement lu[18]. Mais dans la tragédie, ce revirement a un effet très précis : il rend encore plus troublante la dénonciation de la magie. La femme dont on a dénoncé l'art mensonger et démoniaque est la seule à remettre le roi dans le chemin de la piété, quand tous les autres témoins restent

[16] Dès ses premiers mots, l'Esprit de Samuel la qualifie de « mauditte Sorcière » et de « Faulse Sorcière » (acte III, v. 731, 733).

[17] *Ibid.*, v. 735–38. Voir le texte en appendice, p. 179 *(infra)*.

[18] Dans ses *Antiquités judaïques*, l'historien juif voit en la pythonisse un exemple de bienfaisance à imiter car elle est propre à attirer la grâce de Dieu. Voir la double traduction latine et française publiée peu avant la tragédie de La Taille par Le Frère de Laval Jean, *L'histoire de Flavius Josephe, Latin François*, Paris, C. Fremy, 1569, Livre VI, chap. 15, p. 174.

muets. Le doute est donc contagieux : au départ, on ne sait pas qui parle par la bouche du mort, puisqu'un double diabolique est susceptible de parler en lui ; à la fin, quand le mort a parlé, on ne sait plus qui parle par la bouche de la pythonisse. Tout comme on hésite à voir en Samuel soit un démon soit un saint homme, on peut se demander si la sorcière est un suppôt de Satan ou un modèle de piété.

La perturbation ne s'arrête pas là. La Taille en effet altère le récit biblique sur un point décisif. Dans le deuxième livre des Rois (II Rois 28), Saül reste prostré après la harangue de Samuel. La Taille prend avec ce passage une liberté surprenante, surtout chez un auteur protestant : il prête au roi un discours de révolte. Certes, les plaintes véhémentes qu'il met dans sa bouche brodent sur un motif parfaitement conventionnel : elles dénoncent le faux éclat de la grandeur royale (v. 793 sq.). Mais le *topos* est renouvelé d'une façon frappante, car il est poussé jusqu'au blasphème : Saül fait de Dieu un trompeur acharné à sa perte, c'est-à-dire rien de moins qu'un double du Malin. Dieu ne l'a élevé à la couronne que pour le précipiter de plus haut, se montrant aussi acharné à sa perte que le Diable à celle de l'humanité.

Ces invectives surprenantes permettent de parachever le crescendo systématique sur lequel l'épisode est construit. Celui-ci s'ouvre sur une cérémonie magique impie, que La Taille allonge à plaisir, en ne nous épargnant pas les conjurations, longues et laborieuses, de la pythonisse — il évite de justesse de nous révéler les formules qui, en faisant sortir Samuel, permettent d'abolir la frontière entre la vie et la mort. La séquence se poursuit avec une apparition qui terrifie les témoins — et sans doute le public — par son apparence même (elle est entourée d'une aura lumineuse) et par un discours qui se réfère aux aspects les plus concrets de la chasse aux sorcières. On pourrait croire, lorsque Samuel s'éclipse, que la violence va s'apaiser mais, contre toute attente, elle ne fait que croître, car on entend résonner des mots dont rien ne saurait surpasser la force sur une scène de théâtre. Le blasphème, en effet, a la particularité d'être vrai et de ne rien perdre de sa virulence, même s'il est prononcé dans un cadre fictif. Quand la pythonisse invoque les diables, au début de la scène, elle se livre à un acte fictif, car La Taille prend soin de ne pas faire entendre les formules efficaces. En revanche, quand le roi accuse Dieu, le blasphème n'est pas moindre d'être proféré par un acteur au sein d'une fiction de théâtre. Et la preuve est que, un

siècle plus tard, le nom de Dieu sera proscrit des scènes de théâtre, même dans la tragédie chrétienne, et remplacé par des périphrases.

Le blasphème, ici, n'est pas seulement un discours investi d'une puissance exceptionnelle, capable de trouer la fiction scénique pour atteindre de plein fouet la réalité, c'est aussi un discours pervers, car il met le comble à la confusion des identités. En effet, si, comme le dit indirectement Saül, Dieu n'est que le revers du diable, les deux identités du revenant se recouvrent parfaitement. Un Dieu démoniaque a pu envoyer en une seule et même personne un vrai prophète qui serait un émissaire démoniaque et qui aurait, en ses deux attributions, l'unique objectif de pousser le roi au désespoir et à sa perte. En ce moment ultime où le héros met le comble à sa folie, le trouble identitaire contamine toute la création, jusqu'au créateur même et, confondant le ciel et l'enfer, brouille toute l'axiologie chrétienne.

L'épisode de l'évocation de Samuel dans *Saül le furieux* est assurément exceptionnel, l'apparition du mort déclenchant chez le dramaturge une sorte de surenchère dans la recherche de l'effet. Avec Samuel, on est au plus loin de cette figure de revenant didactique et sentencieuse que la littérature dévote campe depuis le onzième siècle, pour répondre aux inquiétudes sur l'au-delà et enseigner les bonnes croyances. Mais même s'ils sont moins hardis que La Taille, les autres dramaturges ne méconnaissent pas les possibilités de l'ombre, et d'autant moins que les techniques existent pour donner une forme concrète aux particularités qui, depuis Sénèque, distingue l'ombre du simple mortel. Mais c'est moins par ces effets scéniques, si inventifs et surprenants qu'ils puissent nous paraître aujourd'hui, que les ombres de tragédie agissent le plus vivement. Ce qui les rend troublantes, c'est surtout leur identité problématique qui prête à des harangues dont la fureur est un peu convenue une ambivalence qui peut aller fort loin. Elles ont garde de dire « *I am dead* », il leur suffit qu'on ne sache pas exactement qui parle par leur bouche pour qu'un doute s'insinue dans l'esprit du spectateur, qui durera bien au-delà du dénouement.

Il faut donc, pour finir, ajouter une quatrième raison au succès de l'ombre tragique. Si elle a un tel succès sur les planches, ce n'est pas seulement à cause de Sénèque, de la résurrection de la culture antique ou des rapports problématiques que les églises entretiennent avec les morts,

c'est parce que le mort est le parfait symptôme d'une fragilité identitaire dont les indices sont nombreux au seizième siècle : le retentissement des usurpations d'identité[19], mais aussi la fragilité de l'identité religieuse, avec les phénomènes de conversion et de rétro-conversion, la violence des antagonismes religieux étant à la mesure de la facilité avec laquelle les identités basculent.

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[19] On connaît le cas de Martin Guerre, objet du livre où Jean de Coras commente un *Arrest mémorable du Parlement de Toloze, contenant une histoire prodigieuse de nostre temps*, Lyon, A. Vincent, 1561. Voir sur cette affaire Zemon-Davis Nathalie, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1983 (trad. fr. *Le retour de Martin Guerre*, Paris, Laffont, 1982).

11

"And if that Envie barke at thee": Slanderous Reading and the Case of Ben Jonson

In both *Richard II* and *Hamlet*, Shakespeare addresses the consequences of slander on a person's name and fame. In the very first scene of *Richard II*, Mowbray accuses Bolingbroke of being a "slanderous coward and a villain" since Bolingbroke has publicly denounced Mowbray as "a traitor and a miscreant".[1] The play underlines the pernicious effects of slander upon reputation, both in the present and in posterity. Mowbray refuses to "forget, forgive, conclude and be agreed" (156), citing the necessity to revenge himself on the injury slander has already wreaked upon his "fair name" (167): "I am disgraced, impeached and baffled here, / Pierced to the soul with Slander's venomed spear" (170–171).[2] In Act 5, when Bolingbroke, now King Henry, is presented with the proofs of King Richard's murder he tells his henchman: "Exton, I thank thee not, for thou has wrought / A deed of slander with thy fatal hand / Upon my head and all this famous land" (5.6.34–36). The

[1] *King Richard II*, Forker Charles R. (ed.), London, Arden Shakespeare, 2002, 1.1.61, p. 39. Subsequent line references to the play will be included in the text.

[2] Mowbray later tells his king that: "The purest treasure mortal times afford / Is spotless reputation, that away, / Men are but gilded loam or painted clay" (1.1.177–8).

guilt of the murder of an anointed king falls upon the head of Henry. Richard dies in the body, but Henry's name receives a blow for all time. To purge his name of the stain of this "deed of slander", Bolingbroke vows: "I'll make a voyage to the Holy land/ To wash this blood off from my guilty hand" (49–50). Slander is a mark, like the mark of Cain, that passes from one generation to the next, even to one's descendants.

At the moment of his death, Hamlet too is preoccupied with the fate of his name:

> Horatio, I am dead,
> Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright
> To the unsatisfied. [...]
> O God, Horatio, what a wounded name,
> Things standing thus unknown, I leave behind me![3]

Hamlet's dying wish is that Horatio should "tell [his] story" (328) to the "unsatisfied": those who doubt or disbelieve. Hamlet leaves behind a "wounded name" unless Horatio's good report succeeds in healing it.

This sensitivity to slander and rumour was shared by many in the early modern period. Slander was considered a type of transgressive speech: "The utterance or dissemination of false statements or reports concerning a person, or malicious misrepresentation of his actions, in order to defame or injure him; calumny, defamation."[4] M. Lindsay Kaplan, in *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*, studies how many forms of spoken and written defamation were considered potentially dangerous and duly prosecuted.[5] In its attempts to control defamatory language, early modern slander law reveals the difficulty in differentiating between legitimate and illegitimate speech. In the *Arte of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham differentiates calumny from satire: "The poets being indeed the trumpeters of all praise and also of slander (not slander, but well-deserved reproach)".[6] For Puttenham

[3] *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, EDWARDS Philip (ed.), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, 5.2.317–19, 324–5. Subsequent line references to the play will be included in the text.

[4] [1.] slander (n.), *OED*, 2nd ed., 1989.

[5] KAPLAN M. Lindsay, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

[6] PUTTENHAM George, *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), Book I, chap. XVI ("In what form of poesy the great princes and dominators of the world were honored") in *Sidney's "The Defence of Poesy" and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*,

authorial censure in epigrams and satiric characterizations in plays was not to be confused with legal defamation. The border between satiric representation and outright calumny was one poets and playwrights were constantly crossing, finding themselves in jail or before the Star Chamber for slanderous defamation when they intended (or claimed) only to write satiric verses or plays. For her own part, Patricia Meyer Spacks has touched on the tangled relationship between slander, rumour and gossip.[7] By the mid-sixteenth century, "teeth, double or polished tongues, stings, venom, swords, spears, arrows, dogs, snakes, fire, vomit, poisonous breath, deceitfully laid snares, webs or nets, theft and ambush" were all common images to depict slander.[8] In Book V of *The Fairie Queene*, for instance, Spenser's gruesome portrait of Detraction is precisely that of a monster with a "mouth distort / Foming with poyson". Her tongue is "sharpe" like an "Asp's sting" that "kills" or "wounds". She is depicted weaving "false tales" on a distaff linking her to a tradition of women gossips.[9]

The purpose of this study, however, will not be to delve into what legal historians term spoken or written "defamation", since the difference in the early modern period between slander and libel was not clear-cut.[10] Instead, I would like to focus on one aspect of slander which might

ALEXANDER Gavin (ed.), London: Penguin, 2004, p. 87. Puttenham translated the Latin "fama" both in its good sense (praise, renown) and in its bad sense (rumour, tales), but decided to add a caveat, because "slander", although a possible translation for "fama", is too strong a word (with legal implications) for what writers intended in satire.

[7]SPACKS Patricia Meyer, *Gossip*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1985.

[8]PRESCOTT Anne Lake, entry on "Schlaunder, slander", *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, HAMILTON A. C., RICHARDSON David A. and CHENEY Donald (eds.), Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990.

[9]SPENSER Edmund, *The Faerie Queene*, ROCHE Thomas (ed.), London, Penguin Books, 1978, Book V, Canto XII, l. 36 (hereafter abbreviated V.XII.36), p. 873. In V.XII.35, Spenser notes that Detraction's "dwelling / Was near to Envie, even her neighbour next". Envie was the subject of the previous lines (31–34). George WITHER similarly depicts slander, very graphically, as a "winged tongue". *A Collection of Emblemes, Ancient and Modern* (1635), FREEMAN Rosemary (introd.), Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1975, p. 42. The emblem depicts slander as a winged tongue with the motto "No heart can think, to what strange ends, / The Tongue unruely Motion tends".

[10]KAPLAN provides an overview of the legal history of slander in the first chapter of his book, *op. cit.*

be called *literary slander*, namely the misrepresentation of an author's work through misreading, a recurrent concern among early modern writers, especially Edmund Spenser and Ben Jonson. Literary slander may be seen as an extension of slanderous enunciation except that the "misrepresentation" and "false statement" which define spoken slander are made by the reader of a text. Calumnious report concerning an author and his work is disseminated and propagated by a reader among his peers, his contemporaries and posterity—through conversation, rumour and gossip or teaching, the writing of articles, notes, editions, introductions and a host of more insidious means aided by a thick network of cronyism and scholarly backbiting. Poetic reputation is thus seen as being squarely in the hands of the reader, who, at every turn, is apt to misconstrue the text, or maliciously misrepresent it for his own ends. For an author as hyper-conscious of his posterity as Jonson, this was a constant concern. For him, the literary fortunes of the writer can be seen to depend on the baleful effects of slanderous reading in which envy, or the reading *eye*, works in tandem with slander, the misrepresenting *tongue*. Envy and detraction work together in the reader to deform meaning and pervert the destiny of the author. Jonson, like Spenser, was particularly obsessed with the effect of envious misreading and slander upon his name and fame. As a consequence, his works show him deploying a host of highly self-conscious prophylactic strategies to protect himself against potentially malicious, erroneous or depraved readings. Before considering the case of Ben Jonson, it is, perhaps, useful to pause and consider Spenser's representation of the danger of slanderous misreading to the writer.

In the very last lines of *The Fairie Queene* (1596), Spenser describes the power of slander to defame the author. Like the blood on Bolingbroke's "guilty hand" or the "wound" in Hamlet's name, the "blamefull blot" of calumny and slander stains the poetic work and with it, the author's own reputation:

> Ne may this homely verse, of many meanest,
> Hope to escape his venemous despite,
> More then my former writs, all were they clearest
> From blamefull blot, and free from all that wite,
> With which some wiked tongues did it backbite,
> And bring into a mighty Peres displeasure,

That never so deserved to endite.
Therefore do you my rimes keep better measure,
And seeke to please, that now is counted wisemens treasure.
(VI.XII.41)

The "blamefull blot" is the mark of slander that resembles the damasking or cancellation of the censor. Backbiting tongues have placed Spenser in danger with a "mighty Pere". When he writes of "venemous despite" and "wiked tongues", Spenser refers to those who have maliciously slandered him by reading dangerous political meanings into his writings. As a result, no doubt, of such malicious rumours, James VI of Scotland himself accused Spenser of defaming his mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, because some had seen in the character of the hypocritical witch and temptress, Duessa, a portrait of the seductive and dangerous Scottish queen. Poets were frequently accused of such defamation of real persons and of disseminating political opinions in the "hidden" meanings of their "fictions". As a victim of these kinds of malicious readings, the author stood in real danger of being accused of having transgressed the law.

Given the potential danger the reader presented to the writer, it is no wonder that references to the harm slander and calumny could inflict on a writer's work became a *topos* of the prefaces, prologues, epilogues and other paratextual material appended to works of the time. In these the author would address the danger presented by those readers who would actively censure the text as a result of their misrepresentation of it, whether in ignorance or not, malicious or otherwise. In the prefatory material to *The Shepherd's Calendar*, Spenser anticipates such censure when he tells his book to "flee" the malicious reader and find shelter under the "wing" of its dedicatee, Sir Philip Sidney:

Go, little book! Thyself present,
As child whose parent is unkent,
To him that is the president
Of noblesse and chivalree:
And if that Envie barke at thee,
As sure it will, for succour flee
Under the shadow of his wing ... [11]

[11] "To His Book" (Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney of *The Shepherd's Calendar*) in SPENSER Edmund, *The Shepherd's Calendar and other Poems*, HENDERSON Philip (ed.), London, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1932, p. 2.

The image of "Envie barking" portrays an envious reader possessed of a slandering, or barking, tongue. Spenser will later personify Envie's bark in the figure of the Blatant Beast in *The Fairie Queene*. This monstrous dog would become, for Jonson and others, the very image of slander. The formulation "Envie barke" invites us to see the source of slander's voice in envy. While slander is primarily associated with the tongue and orality, and envy with the eye and the gaze, both were closely associated since antiquity, for envy was believed to be the motive or engine for slander. In "On Not Being Quick to Put Faith in Slander", Lucian describes, in an *ekphrasis*, a painting by the most famous ancient Greek painter Apelles in which Calumny drags her victim by the hair before a man with enormous ears who strains forward to *listen* to her calumny.[12] Yet, it is significant that Slander is "conducted" by Envy in Lucian. Leading the way, holding Slander by the hand, is the "pale, ugly man who has a *piercing eye* and looks as if he had wasted away in long illness; he may be supposed to be Envy".[13]

Often when *he* discusses slander, Jonson uses words associated with the eye and the act of looking, to represent the power of slander to wrest, deform and deprave. According to Allan H. Gilbert:

> In *Hymenaei*, Slander is "squint-eyd," and in *Queens* she is said

[12] "On the right... sits a man with very large ears, almost like those of Midas, extending his hand to Slander while she is still at some distance from him. Near him, on one side, stand two women—Ignorance, I think, and Suspicion. On the other side, Slander is coming up, a woman beautiful beyond measure, but full of passion and excitement, evincing as she does fury and wrath by carrying in her left hand a blazing torch and with the other dragging by the hair a young man who stretches out his hands to heaven and calls the gods to witness his innocence. She is conducted by a pale ugly man who has a piercing eye and looks as if he had wasted away in long illness; he may be supposed to be Envy; Besides, there are two women in attendance on Slander, egging her on, tiring her and tricking her out. According to the interpretation of them given me by the guide to the picture, one was Treachery and the other Deceit. They were followed by a woman dressed in deep mourning, with black clothes all in tatters—Repentance, I think, her name was. At all events, she was turning back with tears in her eyes and casting a stealthy glance, full of shame, at Truth, who was approaching. That is the way in which Apelles represented in the painting his own hairbreadth escape [from slander]. Come, suppose we too, if you like, following the lead of the Ephesian artist, portray the characteristics of slander..." in *Lucian*, HARMON A. M. (trans.), Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1913, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, pp. 365–66.

[13] It is noteworthy that Envy is male in Lucian. In certain medieval depictions as well, Envy is male, a monk riding upon a wolf or a dog.

> to boast "her oblique looke" (128). One expects her to be characterized also by the tongue, as in Spenser's Blatant Beast in *The Faerie Queene*, VI.XII.27, or Ripa's *Detrattione*. The references to the eye are fitting for Envy, and indicate that Jonson thought of Slander as essentially envious.[14]

Conflating the attributes of envy and slander seems, actually, to have been quite common in the period. While most of the pictorial representations of *The Calumny of Apelles* represent separate figures to represent Envy and Calumny, the figures are almost always juxtaposed and closely connected.[15] As in Lucian's *ekphrasis*, Envy is usually represented pulling Calumny behind him or her. Yet, among the numerous paintings based on Lucian, we find one version in which Calumny is invested with the particular attribute of envy, namely the irradiating eye. The description reads: *Calumnia ardentes habet oculos* ("Slander has a burning eye").[16] In another example from the mid-seventeenth century, we find the figure of Envy absent in the procession until we realize that Calumny has acquired Envy's most pictorially visible attribute: her snaky hair.[17] Envy in the early modern period was closely identified with the mythical creature of the petrifying gaze and often featured with the gorgon Medusa's serpents on her head.[18] In the seventeeth-century engraving, Envy and Calumny have thus been conflated into one destructive image. The figure of "Envie" in the Induction of Jonson's *Poetaster* is similarly a combination of Envy and Slander. She is a mixture of the attributes of the eye of envy:

[14] GILBERT Allan H., *The Symbolic Persons in the Masques of Ben Jonson*, New York, AMS Press, Inc., 1967, pp. 219–220.

[15] For a discussion of this pictorial tradition see CAST David, *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981, and MASSING Jean-Michel, *Du texte à l'image : la calomnie d'Apelle et son iconographie*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 1990.

[16] Engraving 30.A in MASSING, *op. cit.*, pp. 393–394. The artist is unidentified. Massing notes with regard to the representation of Calumny in this particular engraving: "la Calomnie est représentée avec des faisceaux de lumière sortant de ses yeux", p. 394.

[17] Engraving 51.A in Ibid, p. 431. The artist is Andrea Comodi, but the date is uncertain. Massing puts it before 1638. Massing notes that even though Calumny is represented as Invidia, she is still identifiable because she holds the torch always carried by Calumny in these depictions.

[18] CLAIR Jean, *Méduse: Contribution à une anthropologie des arts du visuel*, Paris, Gallimard, 1989, p. 104.

> [C]racke ey-strings, and your balles
> Drop to earth; let me be ever blind.
> I am prevented[19]

and the misrepresenting tongues of slander:

> Help me to damne the Authour. Spit it foorth
> Upon his lines ... that he may see you arm'd
> With triple malice, to hisse, sting, and teare
> His worke, and him; to forge, and then declame,
> Traduce, corrupt, apply, enforme, suggest ... (Ibid., l. 46–47; 51–54)

The two are completely intertwined complementing each other, performing the same function in perfect unison. The eye that sees and deforms is calumnious. "Envie" possesses a slanderous eye. She is, moreover, an image of the misreader for Jonson.

Jonson's work is filled with images of this reader who "barkes", who slanders, who eyes the text "asquint" and, in doing so, propagates his own version of the text. This reader, through malice or ignorance, is seen by the writer as having the power to deface poetic reputation and name.[20] To anticipate and parry potential misreading and subsequent slander, the misreader needed to be revealed, exposed, put on trial, defeated by emblematic figures, mocked and whipped, taken out of his lair and, like Calidore attempting to find and tie up the Blatant Beast, captured and tamed. Yet, as Shakespeare mourns in Sonnet 70, even the greatest of praise cannot "tye up envy, evermore enlarged", a pointed reference to the escaped Blatant Beast at the end of Spenser's epic.[21] Readerly liberties could never really be curtailed; only in a kind of ritual performance in which the misreader is exposed and defeated can this danger be either purged or anticipated.

[19] JONSON Ben, *Poetaster, Or His Arraignment*, HERFORD C. H. and SIMPSONS Percy and Evelyn (eds.), 11 vols., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1925–1952, vol. IV, p. 204 (l. 28–30). All subsequent references to Jonson's works will be to this edition, with volume number, page number and line numbers in parentheses when appropriate.

[20] Jonson uses the word "asquint" to describe readers who read "wry" or "awry" in his poem "In Authorem": "Look here on Breton's work, the master print: / Where, such perfections to the life do rise. / If they seem wry to such as look asquint, / The fault's not in the object, but their eyes" in *Ungathered Verse* (ii), VIII, 362 (l. 5–8).

[21] Sonnet 70 (l. 12), *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, BOOTH Stephen (ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 62–63.

In Jonson's *The Masque of Blacknesse* (1605) we find one such ritual performance. The masque text presents the reader with a strange literary representation of slanderous reading and its effects. The *conceit* of the masque hinges on the poetic negation of black skinned women throughout history. Black women have been "envied" their rightful tributes by poets for whom the Petrarchan model of feminine beauty is the standard. Poetry in praise of white women seen from the perspective of "Niger", an African, is seen as tantamount to slander against his own race:

> ... the fabulous voices of some few
> Poore brain-sicke men, stil'd *Poets*, here with you,
> Have, with such envie of their graces, sung
> The painted Beauties, other Empires sprung;
> Letting their loose, and winged fictions flie
> To infect all clymates, yea our puritie ...
> (*The Masque of Blacknesse*, VII, 174 [l. 155–160])

Niger complains to Ocean, into whose "streame" he has merged, that his own daughters have become "infected" with a (pro-white) European poetic discourse. They do not see that this poetry is insulting to them and their black beauty. Rather, they see themselves as deficient and are prepared to sail to the ends of the earth in search of a whitening solution. The masque parallels the dangerous mixing of the "fresh billow" of the African Niger river and the "brackish streame" of the Ocean to the way "loose" and "winged fictions" fly from Europe to Africa, infecting it and its purity. However, in this "new world" masque, the European disease plaguing the African continent is not the smallpox, but rather a poetic "slander" that white women are more beautiful than black. Niger's reading of neo-Petrarchan poetic praise as slander places into relief at least three elements. First, that praise necessarily brings with it the envy of those who are "left out". Second, that no text can be free of the accusation of calumny if the reader's perspective is at such odds with that of the writer's. And third, that the problem with empire and the spread of (white) culture is that while some are "infected" for the good (from the position of British authority), others, such as Niger, offer dangerous readerly resistance and "depraved" interpretations of even the most innocent texts. In its reversal of perspective, from European to African, the masque places into relief the fear of "miscegenation" through a conceit concerning reading and readers. If a black man or woman reads

a white man's text which avers that whiteness is the only true form of feminine beauty, he or she may very well see this poetry as slanderous to his own race. The masque shows to what extent poets, "trumpeters of praise" in Puttenham's words, necessarily attract envy even from the most removed corners of the world. The black nymphs in reading these poems are, as their father notes, infected and decide to search for a means of transforming themselves in emulation of the Petrarchan Lauras featured in the poems. The fact that this search is also one which involves reading ("they might decipher through the streame, / These words...")[22] only highlights the extent to which the masque conveys its larger political and imperial theme through a discourse on good and bad reading, correct as opposed to erroneous interpretation. In this respect, the masque may be said to take up the subject of Jonson's earlier *Poetaster* (1601) in which three ancient poets are confronted by various misreaders, who, like Niger, accuse Ovid, Horace and Virgil of calumny and, in one case, of treasonous slander simply because the *erring* reader saw something in the text that was certainly not intended, but which emerges through the perspective of a specific reader.

In *The Masque of Blacknesse*, the misreader, Niger, is summarily dismissed like any anti-masque grotesque, easily exiled from the stage and the scene. In *Poetaster*, on the other hand, bad readers are seen as potentially highly dangerous because, in the social world of readers, the "good" reader and the "bad" reader are in continuous contact with each other, occupying the same spaces. These envious readers, like the snaky, venomous, foaming image in the Induction, are not only ready to "traduce" and "corrupt", but also ready to "comment", "enforme", "suggest" and engage in "privie whisperings" and "spie-like suggestions".[23] These readers are *textual* informers and spies and their corrupted readings of the text are exchanged with others through rumour and gossip. The deformed image of the writer's work is passed on to others through speech and writing. The reader is not hermetically sealed off, alone with a book. The perversion of the text by one reader with a "fault" in his eye is liable to *infect* the judgment of another.[24]

Jonson describes the effects of the slanderous eye in a model of

[22] *Blacknesse*, VII, 175 (l. 186–7).

[23] *Poetaster*, IV, 204 (l. 24–25; 54).

[24] PLUTARCH says Envy was considered a kind of "disease" specifically of the eyes, "a kind of "Ophthalmia": "[...] envie is a thing indefinite, much like unto a disease of

infectious spectatorship in the Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*. Through his spokesman, the author urges the spectators to judge for themselves and not be *contaminated* by anyone sitting next to them. The Scrivener reads out:

> ARTICLES of Agreement, indented, between the *Spectators* or *Hearers*, at the *Hope* on the Bankeside, in the Country of *Surrey* on the one party; And the Author *of Bartholomew Fayre* ...[25]

The articles call for the spectators to censure the play in proportion to how much they have paid for their seats and "[I]t is also agreed, that every man heere, exercise his owne Iudgement, and not censure by *Contagion*, or upon *trust*, from anothers voice, or face, that sits by him..."[26] In *Timber, Or Discoveries*, Jonson similarly refers to slander as an infectious disease:

> The Writer must lye, and the gentle Reader rests happy, to heare the worthiest workes misinterpreted; the clearest actions obscured; the innocent'st life traduc'd; And in such a licence of lying, a field so fruitfull of slanders, how can there be matter wanting to his laughter? Hence comes the *Epidemicall* Infection. For how can they escape the contagion of the Writings, whom the virulency of the calumnies hath not stav'd off from reading?[27]

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the eies *Ophthalmia*", "On Envie and Hatred" in *The Philosophie Commonlie called, The Morals*, HOLLAND Philomen (trans.), London 1603, pp. 234–236. As we saw in *Blacknesse*, although in hyperbolical form, Jonson was engaged with the problems posed by various types of readers, an evergrowing and diverse group in the early seventeenth century, and the way they might *deprave* or misread his text. The fear of having one's work depraved, deformed, or defaced by hermeneutic clumsiness, at best, or interpretative malice, at worst, is a recurrent issue among early modern writers. Samuel Daniel describes readers who "check us with a show of what it would do in another kind, and yet do nothing but deprave..." and John Harington mourns, "...we live in such a time in which nothing can escape the envious tooth and back-biting tongue of an impure mouth, and wherein every blind corner hath a squint-eyed Zoilus that can look aright upon no man's doings..." DANIEL Samuel, *A Defence of Rhyme* (1603) and HARINGTON Sir John *A Brief Apology of Poetry* (1591) in *Sidney's "The Defence of Poesy" and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 207, 260 respectively. Daniel's use of the word "deprave" and Harington's reminder that Zoilus is "squint-eyed" and cannot look at anything "aright" give us an idea of how Jonson perceived the envious reader as capable "deforming" the text with eye and slandering it with tooth, tongue and mouth.

[25] *Bartholomew Fair*, VI, 15 (l. 64–67).

[26] Ibid., 16 (l. 97–98).

[27] *Timber, Or Discoveries*, VIII, 572 (l. 288–296).

While the uninfected reader cannot "escape the contagion" of calumnies against a writer, in *Bartholomew Fair*, Jonson tries, nevertheless, to quarantine those infected and contagious spectators. In drawing up a legal contract between author and spectator before the performance, he attempts to place a kind of cordon around slanderers. In doing so, he attempts to anticipate and ward off the worst of the inevitable contagion of the unimmunized reader by viral calumnies.

Radical difference of perspective or contagion by others' opinions were not the only problems for the author. Another was that of his work being misunderstood as a result of its being taken out of context. In his *Discoveries*, the early modern author provides an image of slanderous reading as *découpage*:

> Nor were they content, to faine things against mee, but to urge things, fain'd by the Ignorant, against my profession: which though from their hired, and mercenary impudence, I might have past by, as granted to a Nation of Barkers, that let out their tongues to lick others sores; *yet I durst not leave my selfe undefended*, having a paire of eares unskilfull to heare lyes; or have those things said of me, which I could truly prove of them. They objected, making of verse to me, when I could object to most of them, their not being able to reade them, but as worthy of scorne. Nay, they would offer to urge mine owne Writings against me; but by *pieces, (which was an excellent way of malice*) as if any mans context, might not seeme dangerous, and offensive, if that which was knit, to what went before, were *defrauded* of his beginning; or that things, by themselves utter'd, might not seeme subject to Calumnie, which read entire, would appeare most free.[28]

Calumny is the result of reading in pieces and out of context. The passage explicitly places this cutting up of an author's work into an economic realm: the writer is cheated, defrauded of his "beginning", in other words, of that part of the work that would support his reputation, that would underwrite his name. Jonson refers, similarly, to such calumnious reading when he describes how readers will read his "friend", Michael Drayton, in "broken pieces". In "A Vision of Ben Jonson, On the Muses of His Friend M. Drayton", Jonson sardonically and caustically describes

[28]Ibid., 604–605 (l. 1341–1358). "I am beholden to Calumny, that shee hath so endeavor'd, and taken pains to bely mee. It shall make mee set a surer Guard on my self, and keepe a better watch upon my actions." 569 (l. 206–209).

Drayton's long poem, *The Battle of Agincourt*, in the hands of the readers of the contemporary literary marketplace:

> An *Agincourt*! An *Agincourt*! Or dye.
> This booke! it is a *Catechisme* to fight,
> And will be bought by every Lord, and Knight,
> That can but reade; who cannot, may in prose
> Get *broken peeces*, and fight well by those.[29]

Implicitly, the illiterate and ignorant reader will happily make do with whatever "peeces" he understands and cares to refer to, never bothering to consider the whole, the all important beginning, middle and end, the argument, logic or narrative built carefully by the writer to avoid misunderstandings. The bafflement of the writer in the face of such readerly liberty to pick and choose, sever, cut, anatomize and thus deface the poetic whole is at the source of Jonson's strategies against the envy of the reader approaching his text. While he cannot "tye up envy", he can banish it in a masque, surround it or cordon it off in an Induction, and he can, as in the poem above, expose it in public and confront it with an image of itself. Finally, he can even invoke a talismanic power to "charm" it.[30] In an "Ode", Jonson considers the options for a poet who feels his work is unappreciated and unacknowledged by the readers of the age:

> Breake then thy quills, blott out
> Thy long watched verse
> And rather to the fire, then to the Rowte
> Their labour'd tunes rehearse . . . [31]

Yet, a few lines later, the poet reconsiders putting his verses into the fire. He imagines being watched and read by a reader other than the ignorant rabble:

> . . . since the bright, and wyse,
> Mynerva deignes
> Upon soe humbled earth to cast hir eyes:

[29] *Ungathered Verse* (xxx), VIII, 398 (l. 70–74).

[30] For more concerning the poet's apotropaic defense against the envious reader, see my "Exorcising the Gorgon of Terror: Jonson's *Masque of Queenes*", *ELH* 72 (2005), pp. 181–207.

[31] *Ungathered Verse* (xlviii), VIII, 420 (l. 19–22). Subsequent line references to this poem will be included in the text.

> Wee'l rip our Richest veynes
> And once more stryke the eare of tyme with those fresh straynes
> (28–32)

He seeks the protection of this reader, Pallas Athena ("holy virgin") and her *gorgoneion* on his behalf:

> Throw, holy virgin, then
> Thy crystal shield
> About this isle, and charme the round, as when
> Thou mad'st in open filed
> The rebel Gyants stoop, and Gorgon Envye yield (37–41)

In the mythical gigantomachia, the Olympian Pallas turned the Titans to stone with the aid of the *gorgoneion*, or Medusa's head that she bears on her breastplate. The poet begs her to petrify his readers or "charme the round" with her "crystal shield" as she once had against the Titans. Ignorant or envious readers are "rebel Gyants" and "Gorgon Envye", powers that would crush or overcome the undefended author. In enlisting the good reader in his defense, the poet identifies the act of reading with the power to both slander a poet's reputation, but also the power to "charm", or render it impervious to those slandering forces. This talismanic charm is perceived as turning the force of the gorgon against itself, using the power of the good reader, like another Horatio, as a prophylactic against slanderous reading.

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Appendix / *Appendice*

Jean de La Taille, *Saül le furieux* (1572), acte III

[. . .]

LES LEVITES

Mais où s'en court sans le Roy
Ceste Dame enchanteresse,
Qui de murmurer en soy
Des vers furieux ne cesse,
Et toute dechevelée,
Où va elle ainsi troublee ?

SAUL

Helas, quelle horreur j'ay ! ja tout mon poil s'herisse
Des hurlements que fait leans la Phitonisse,
Qui veut faire en secret ses conjurations !
Que t'en semble Escuyer ? qu'est-ce que nous ferons ?
En l'oyant bien d'icy je sens dans ma poictrine
Errer un avant-crainte, & le cueur me devine
Je ne sçay quel malheur. lás, ostez moy d'icy,
Foudres & tourbillons. mais venir la voicy.

LE I. ESCUYER

Sire, que songez vous ? voulez vous donc parfaire
Ce que vous sçavez bien estre à DIEU tout contraire ?

LA PHITONISSE

Tu m'as donc abusee, ô miserable Roy,

Qui soubs un faulx habit t'es peu celer à moy,
Et duquel à la fin j'ay sçeu toute la feinte.
SAUL
Je suis tel que tu dis, mais de moy n'ayes crainte.
Qu'as tu veu ?
LA PHITONISSE
Un Esprit plein de divinité.
O qu'en luy reluisoit une grand' majesté !
SAUL
Comment est-il ?
LA PHITONISSE
Il est vieil, d'un port moult venerable,
Gresle, & tout revestu d'un surplis honorable.
SAUL
Vas, fais venir celuy à qui tu as parlé,
C'est Samuel pour vray, lequel m'a decelé.
Je suis plus que la mer esmeu quand pesle-mesle
La tourmentent les vents, la tempeste & la gresle.
Mais quelle frayeur j'ay, que mes pauvres Enfans
Du Combat où ils sont ne viennent triomphans !
LE I. ESCUYER
Las ! qu'est-ce que je voy ? bon Dieu quelle merveille !
Quel fantosme est-ce là ? Song'ay-je, ou si je veille ?
Est-ce donc Samuel que luysant en blancheur
Ceste Sorciere améne ? ô que j'ay de frayeur !
LES LEVITES
Permettez vous cecy, ô Dieu, ô Ciel, ô Terre !
LA PHITONISSE
Sire, il ne reste plus que maintenant s'enquerre
De ce que lon voudra, car je vas redoubler
Mes conjurations pour le faire parler.
LES LEVITES
La voyla qui encor regroumelle à l'oreille
De ce dolent Esprit qui encor ne s'esveille
Par ses murmures vains. que n'as-tu obscurcy
Tes rayons, ô Soleil, en voyant tout cecy ?
O qu'on luy fait souffrir ! mais le Seigneur celeste
Qui tel art tout contraire à sa grandeur deteste,
Cecy ne peult permettre.
LA PHITONISSE

Or ça, vien derechef,
Et sans nous faire icy des signes de ton chef,
Dy nous d'un parler vif ce que le Roy doit faire,
Et si ses trois Enfans du combat militaire
Viendront vainqueurs, ou non.

LES LEVITES

Lás, une froide peur
Serre si fort du Roy la voix, l'ame, & le cueur,
Qu'il ne sçait or par où commencer sa requeste.
Mais, le genouil en terre, il encline sa teste
Devant la majesté de ce vieillard si sainct,
Qui secouant le chef, d'un parler tout contrainct
Va rompre son silence.

L'ESPRIT DE SAMUEL

O mauditte Sorciere,
Pourquoy me fais-tu veoir deux fois ceste lumiere ?
Faulse Sorciere, helas, qui par vers importuns
Vas tourmentant tousjours lesz esprits des defuncts,
Qui desseches tousjours par ton faulx sorcelage,
Les vaches & les bœufs de tout le voisinage,
Qui effroyes tousjours au son de quelque sort
Les meres lamentans de leurs enfans la mort,
Uses-tu donc vers moy de magique menace ?
Et toy Roy plus maudit, as-tu bien pris l'audace
De troubler le repos aux esprits ordonné,
Veu qu'encores je t'ay d'autrefois pardonné ?

SAUL

Pardonné moy encor Prophete venerable,
Si la necessité & l'estat miserable
Où je suis, me contraint de rompre ton sommeil,
A fin qu'en mon besoing j'aye de toy conseil,
Or sçaches qu'il y a cy pres une tempeste
De Philistins armez pour foudroyer ma teste,
Les Prophetes & DIEU, le Ciel, la Terre & l'Air,
Conjurants contre moy, je t'ay fait appeller.

SAMUEL

Si DIEU, la Terre, & l'Air conjurent ton dommage,
Pourquoy me cherches tu ? que veux-tu d'avantage,
Si par m'estre importun tu ne peux reculler
Aux maux qu'il pleut à Dieu par moy te reveler ?

Mais tu veux, adjoustant offense sur offense,
Que je prononce encor ta derniere sentence.
Sçaches doncques, que DIEU est ja tout resolu
De bailler ton Royaume à un meilleur Esleu,
C'est David dont tu as par ta maligne envie
Tant de fois aguetté la juste & droitte vie :
Mais tes faicts sur ton chef à ce coup recherront,
Car ton Regne & ta vie ensemble te lairront.
Tantost au bas enfers je te verray sans doubte,
Toy, & ton peuple aussi qu'Achis doit mettre en route.
Par ainsi tes enfans seront pour tes forfaicts
Tantost avec leurs gens ruinez & deffaicts.
Encor apres ta mort toute ta race entiere
Rendra compte au Seigneur de ta vie meurtriere,
Car tes Fils, tes Nepveux, & ton genre total,
Avec mille malheurs verront leur jour fatal.
Par trahison les uns recevront mort piteuse,
Et le reste mourra en une croix honteuse :
Et le tout pourautant qu'a la divine voix
Obeï tu n'as point ainsi que tu devois,
Qu'executé tu n'as sa vengeance dépite, [22v]
(Comme je t'avois dit) contre l'Amalechite.

LES LEVITES

Voyla l'esprit de Samuel
Qui, au somme perpetuel
Aiant ses yeux clos lentement,
Est disparu soudainement.

SAUL

O le piteux confort à mon mal qui rengrege !
O quel crevecueur j'ay ! retenez-moi, ie, ie, ie.

LES LEVITES

O que maintenant est le Roy
En un merveilleux desarroy,
Lequel git tout évanouy
Pour le propos qu'il a ouy.

LA PHITONISSE

Mon triste cueur tu fends d'une douleur extreme,
O Roy plus malheureux que la misere mesme !
Mais revien t'en un peu, vers chascun monstre toy
Non point femme, mais homme, & non homme, mais Roy.

» Le cry, le pleur oisif, & la complainte vaine,
» Ne font que plus en plus augmenter nostre peine.

SAUL

O grandeur malheureuse, en quel gouffre de mal
M'abismes tu helas, ô faulx degré Royal !
Mais qu'avois-je offensé quand de mon toict champestre,
Tu me tiras, ô DIEU, envieux de mon estre,
Où je vivois content sans malediction,
Sans rancueur, sans envie, & sans ambition,
Mais pour me faire choir d'un sault plus miserable,
D'entree tu me fis ton mignon favorable,
(O la belle façon d'aller ainsi chercher
Les hommes, pour apres les faire trebuscher !)
Tu m'allechas d'honneurs, tu m'eslevas en gloire,
Tu me fis triomphant, tu me donnas victoire,
Tu me fis plaire à toy, & comme tu voulus
Tu transformas mon cueur, toy-mesme tu m'esleus,
Tu me fis sur le peuple aussi hault de corsage,
Que sont ces beaux grands Pins sur tout un païsage,
Tu me fis sacrer Roy, tu me haulsas expres
A fin de m'enfondrer en mil malheurs apres !
Veux-tu donc (inconstant) piteusement destruire
Le premier Roy qu'au monde il pleut à toy d'eslire !

LA PHITONISSE

Pren espoir, ta douleur, qui à compassion
Pourroit flechir un Roc, un Tigre, ou un Lion,
Peut estre flechira Dieu qui est pitoyable.

SAUL

O que cest heure la me fut bien miserable,
Quand de mon toict j'allay chercher quelque bestail !
On m'attiltra bien lors tout ce malheur Royal,
Qui fait que mon vieil heur à present je regrette !
Mais pourquoy changeat-on ma paisible houlette
En un sceptre si faulx, si traistre, & si trompeur !

LA PHITONISSE

Hé Sire, Sire, oublie (en m'oyant) tout ce pleur,
Tu sçais que j'ay esté moy ton humble servante,
A tes commandements n'agueres obeissante :
Tu sçais que j'ay pour toy mis ma vie en hasart,
Qu'à toy ont esté prompts mon labeur & mon art.

Si donc à ta parole en tout j'ay esté preste,
Ores ne m'esconduy d'une seule requeste :
Fay moy ceste faveur d'entrer chez moy, à fin
De te renforcer mieux en y prenant ton vin,
Le Soleil te void vuide & à jeun à cest' heure.

SAUL

Que je mange pour vivre, & Dieu veut que je meure !
Ha ! je luy complairay !

LA PHITONISSE

Mais pour desplaire au sort
Mange plustost pour vivre, & puis qu'il veut ta mort.

SAUL

Mais par la faim au moins pourront estre finees
Et mes longues douleurs & mes longues annees.

LA PHITONISSE

O vous, ses serviteurs taschez à le flechir
Pour le faire chez moy quelque peu rafreschir.

SAUL

Celuy ne doit manger à qui la mort est douce.
Mais où est-ce qu'ainsi maugré moy lon me pousse.
(. . .)

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Victoria Bladen completed undergraduate studies in Arts and Law in Perth at the University of Western Australia. After practicing as a lawyer she subsequently obtained an M.Phil (Medieval and Renaissance Studies) also from UWA. She is currently completing a Ph.D at the University of Queensland with an interdisciplinary research project on arboreal symbolism in English Renaissance literature and its relation to early modern visual culture. She has published articles on Shakespeare and Andrew Marvell and presented papers arising from her research at conferences in Australia, New Zealand and France.

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