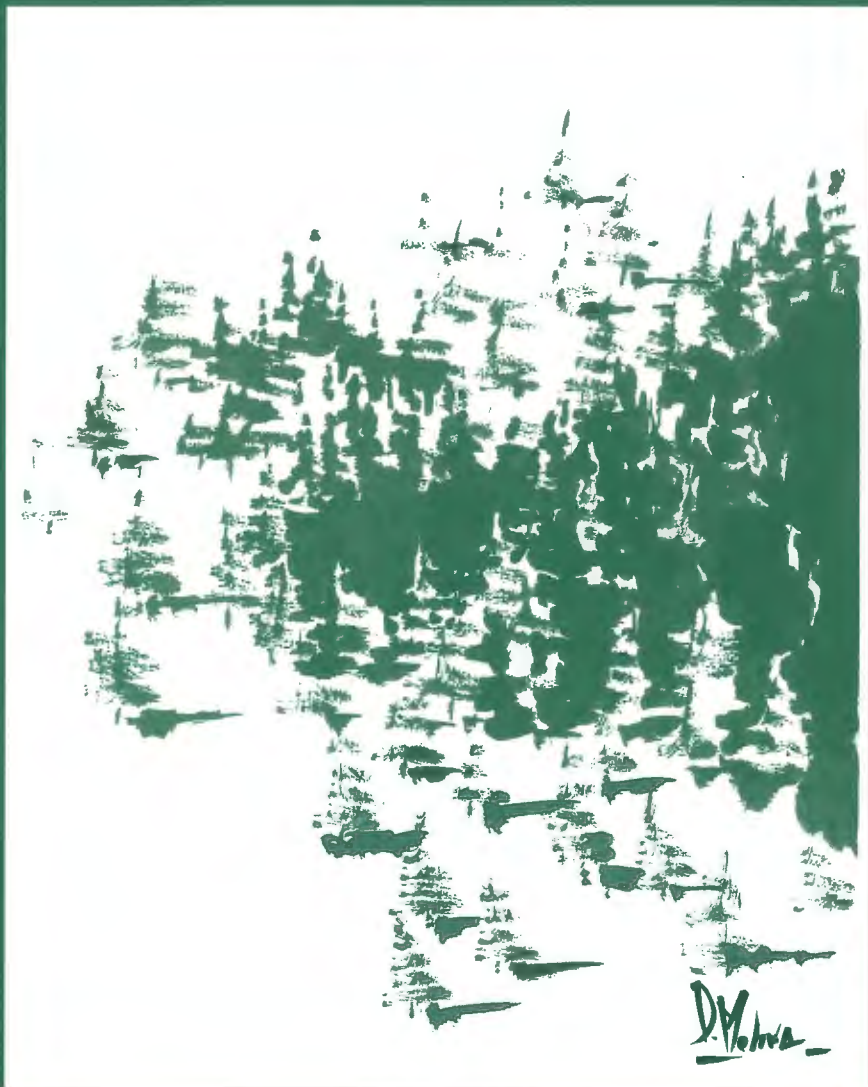


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J. López-Peláez
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THE GROVE, WORKING PAPERS ON ENGLISH STUDIES

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Foreword

The present issue of *The Grove. Working Papers on English Studies* is specifically (and uncharacteristically) devoted to just one topic, 'literature and identity,' and to one period, namely the Early Modern,' or, more generally speaking, the period ranging from 1485 to 1660. It contains a selection of works by scholars from different universities of the world dealing with a diversity of Early Modern works, attending to notions such as alterity, (proto)colonialism, racialism, or the question of the Other, and employing a diversity of critical approaches. Many of the works selected were initially presented as papers at the "1st Universidad de Jaén International Seminar on Literature and Identity: 'The Production of National Identity in English Literature of the 16th and 17th Centuries: Foreigners, Subjects and Aliens,'" and a few others were submitted as proposals for this special issue. Besides, and together with the traditional review of books (in this case dealing with the present topic) we have reinforced *The Grove's* regular presentation of creative writing by including both a selection of poetry by the Pakistani (Urdu) author Faiz Ahmed Faiz (translated into English by the late Professor and poet Daud Kamal), and a poetic contribution by Daud Kamal himself (selected by Prof. Ali S. Zaidi, from CUNY).

The editors of this special issue want to thank Prof. Carmelo Medina, General Editor of *The Grove. Working Papers on English Studies*, and the Editorial and Scientific Boards of this journal, for their kind offer to put up this volume which, as mentioned above and unlike most previous issues, deals monographically with one specific topic. We hope to have contributed to *The Grove's* increasing (and already high) standards of quality

The editors.

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INTRODUCTION

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That's he that was Othello. Here I am.

(Shakespeare, *Othello* -V,ii,290)

With these words, uttered by Othello himself towards the end of Shakespeare's play, the Venetian General manifests¹ awareness of his complex, hybrid, identity (to begin with, part Christian and part non-Christian: Muslim or 'pagan'), and of how it has been perversely brought to the surface in a twisted way by Iago's malevolent plotting. That *Othello* is a play about identity has only become clear in recent years, when much theorizing on subject formation has been produced and issues on ethnicity, alterity, difference and origins have been addressed. Thus, the seminal and pioneering work of (among others) Eldred Jones (1965), Stephen Greenblatt (1980), Elliot Tokson (1982), Anthony Barthelemy (1987), Dymphna Callaghan (1989), Emily Bartels (1990), Jack D'Amico (1991), or, more recently, Julia Lupton (1997) and Daniel Vitkus (1997), diverse in its scope and aims as it is, has read *Othello* very specifically under the light of the dynamic processes that lead to the formation of identity.

Now we know that the early modern period is an especially significant time in history to explore the operations of that fluid concept, 'identity', since it was then that various different notions directly connected with the formation of identity firstly appeared in a recognizable

¹ Among other things, as some of the essays presented here claim.

form: Europe (as a community of colour) and its others, whiteness and blackness (or ‘whites’ and ‘non-whites’), purity of blood and lineage, social belonging, gender adscription or the anxiety of origins, among others. In this context, the figures of the Muslim (‘Turk’, ‘Moor’, ‘Saracen’) and the Jew acquire an especially relevant role. As Metzger has argued “the problem of the Jew in Christian England intersected with an emerging ideology of race to affirm a notion of English identity in which color, religion, and class converged” (1998:53); and the same could be said about Muslims, who —although in fewer numbers— were also a reality in early modern England. Religious and ethnic conformity becomes a key element, all throughout Christian Europe, in the emergence of the first nation states. Deportations and repression of minorities are the two weapons that these nations (England, Spain, or Portugal) use in order to fulfil their national projects, namely the construction of the ‘national subject’ and of its Other. To be Jewish, pagan (black), or Muslim meant to be non-English or non-Spanish (incipiently, non-‘European’), and consequently these aliens were perceived as permanent threats to the production of Christian white identity.

Thus, we are persuaded that ethnic identity was already in the early modern period a particularly significant issue the appearance of which had much to do with the awareness of the existence of a world beyond the confines of Christianity. Proto-colonialist enterprises by the Portuguese and the Spanish, and later by the English, had discovered a sophisticated reality of racial, religious, and political others whose languages and discourses had to be translated, albeit in many cases these racial or political others had—in Greenblatt’s calibanesque terms— ‘learnt to curse’ in the language of the Christians. To some extent it may be suggested that this Christian approach already pursued the project that later Orientalism developed: “a certain will, or intention, to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world” (Said, 1995:12).

In this sense, the culturalist approach that, based on the work by Etienne Balibar about the existence of a “neo-racism”, states the possibility—both in the late modern and the early modern periods—of a “racism-without-races” is certainly worth considering (Balibar deals with Spanish 17th century *casticismo* although never mentioning it directly, 1991: 23) but it cannot hide the fact that this early modern project goes

beyond that. Indeed, it also addresses diverse forms of what we may call proto-racist, or racist, thinking: in other words, in all this evolution of national identities race *does* matter.

Yet it seems that, as Nabil Matar among others has demonstrated (1998), in the 16th and 17th centuries it was still difficult to delimitate the boundaries that allowed for the rigid separation of identities that the Orientalist project required, and more difficult still to impose a Christian pattern of description on those still defiantly powerful Muslim and pagan others. In 1578, right after the Battle of Lepanto (when Christians led by the Spanish general Don John of Austria actually defeated the fleet of the Ottoman Empire), the Portuguese king Dom Sebastian invaded the north of Africa with the intention of bringing that area back to the crown of Portugal. The enterprise, very poorly planned, ended with the total destruction of the Portuguese army at the hands of the Moroccan king Abd-al-Malik in the Battle of Alcazarquivir (August 4, 1578), where together with King Sebastian thousands of Portuguese soldiers, noblemen and conscripts died in one day. A contemporary account of the battle gives this vivid description of its tragic outcome and final image:

The dead [were] on top of the living and the living on top of the dead, all cut to pieces, Christians and Moors locked in each other's arms, crying and dying, some on top of the artillery, others dragging limbs and entrails, caught under horses or mangled on top of them...
(in Spence, 1985:50).

This image is especially significant for an approach to the issue of identity, with disembodied (and disembowelled) Christians and Moors setting a continuous formless mass in which, for the contemporary observer, there seems to be no longer Christian or Muslim, living or dead, human or animal. War and death have appropriately become the signposts of a boundary where opposites meet, the frontier of a semiosphere—we will return to this—that still allows for some form of translation between 'us' and 'them'. In fact, and for those still unwilling or reluctant to accept the existence of a protoracist or racist thinking in the early modern period it would be worth attending—among many others—to the writings of the Italian Jesuit Valignano on the peoples of India and Africa (Spence, 1985:41-4), to the Dutch traveller Van Linschoten's map of gradation of skin colours in the world (1597:40), to the Spanish 'limpieza' statutes about Jewish blood (Jewishness was

legally defined “not [as] a statement of faith or even a series of ethnic practices but [was given] a biological consideration”, Friedman, 1987:16) or to the many English pamphleteers writing on the genealogy of the Spaniards (Demetriou, 2004:71-75).

Here we intend to present a more complex view of identity in the early modern period than the one implied either in merely culturalist or in reductively racialist perspectives. In general terms the stages of origin and formation, those that eventually produce identity, are predicated upon the belief that human subjectivity is fragmented, and that origins themselves are not necessarily unitary, or uniculturally insular, but multiculturally diverse (Osagie, 2004:394-95). Fluidity becomes a central (for want of a better term) notion, and has to do with the multiplicity of expressions that migrations, exiles, the dynamics centre-periphery, or hybridity and miscegenation, produce. Alongside these reflections, we must ask about the importance of notions of class and gender on Christian or western perspectives of the culturally and ethnically different; how the politically and economically marginal perceive what the dominant culture signals as ‘other’; how different versions of this other (or of a fragmented subjectivity) are accommodated into comfortable categories; what is the relation between Orientalism and patriarchalism; or how all these categories relate to early modern geo-political conflict.

Ethnicity then should be understood as a claim not only to a particular culture (Cohen, 1993:197) but also to a specific racialized community. In fact, it develops the mechanism by means of which a certain group is in the world, and, above all, accounts for the way in which this group interprets the world and simultaneously makes itself meaningful. Of course, this entails not only setting some very specific characteristics for itself as a group but also—and very especially—it means distancing from others. However, we should not be misguided into a reductionist view of ethnicity as merely contrastive or tactic (Cohen, 1993:198) since it also involves a considerable degree of self-expression and self-awareness within its own symbolic space. Here Juri Lotman’s notion of the semiosphere (“the semiotic space necessary for the existence and functioning of languages”, 2001:123) is necessary to describe the kind of semiotic space that is generated by means of the ethnic and cultural self-description typical of early modern proto-states. Like in Lotman’s celebrated instance of the Roman Empire semiosphere, the space delimited by the kind of early modern community that is over-

sensitive to its cultural and ethnic identity (an identity that *is* its culture and its ethnicity) becomes its own semiosphere. And this semiosphere has a very special connotation: the community that it circumscribes does not merely intend to have a specific cultural and ethnic identity, but it predicates its conditions of existence, its mode of being in the world, on this particular and pretended identity.

This has to do with the uncertain way in which these communities (Elizabethan England or Habsburg Spain, for example) occupied a specific place in the world: their fears of crisis or their perception of external threats led them to a reinforcement of their semiospheric boundaries, which in its turn contributed to a fossilization of their adaptability, and turned their identities, which had been fluid, into something essential, rigidly monological, and eventually unable to translate the discourse of the Other.

Although the contexts are rather different, a brief reference to the condition of postcolonial identities might be in order. In the introduction to their book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (2001), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin describe the term ‘post-colonial’ as a tool “to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (2). Thus, the so-called postcolonial literatures originated out of the experience of colonization, and the identity of the colonized subject was, as a consequence of this, directly affected. Although language was a means to propagate the ethnocentric culture, that is, to place the ‘Empire’ over the ‘native’, in postcolonial societies the language of the colonizer is used to subvert and create a new cultural identity that ultimately appears to be affected by both cultural discourses. This eventually implies that the identity (cultural or otherwise) of the postcolonial subject is problematized, and this by means of the replacement of a binary structure —that of colonizer and colonized— for a complex one that incorporates the hybrid.

In his article “Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation” (1994), Homi Bhabha points out that the authority exercised through the written text (the “English Book”) allows the colonizer to control the potential aspirations of the colonized subject, and to transform the colonized experience into an ambivalence. The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized creates a hybrid

and liminal space where cultural differences are articulated and ultimately produces the construction of imagined national (proto-national in our period) identities:²

It is in this space of liminality, in the 'unbearable ordeal of the collapse of certainty' that we encounter once again the narcissist neuroses of the national discourse. The nation is no longer the sign of modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in the 'horizontal' view of society. The nation reveals, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, the ethnography of its own historicity and opens up the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference. (Bhabha, 1994:300)

The colonized subject, through a re-inscription of the written text, provokes a kind of subversion that ultimately creates a political insurgence. The nation, in this context, ceases being the modern sign under which cultural differences become homogeneous from an ahistorical perspective; on the contrary, other narratives are being produced within the same national space. This liminal space, and many of the conclusions at which Bhabha arrives for modern colonialism and the postcolonial project, are significantly similar to some of the notions introduced above: the semiospheric boundary, multicultural diversity and identities, ethnicity etc. Actually, Lotman's boundary is of course (and not only etymologically) a liminal space, and we eventually find the ambiguity, openness, and indeterminacy that inevitably shape the (re)production of identity in literature.

As we know, Bhabha's understanding of the role of writing within the nation differs from that of other critics. For them, writing is a tool for either colonial domination or resistance to that same colonial domination. Bhabha points out that writing is not binary but hybrid; thus, the role of the writer is placed between culture and system: the liminal space or boundary. Bhabha explains this process in the following way:

If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the production of hybridisation rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. The ambivalence at the source of traditional

² In *Imagined Communities* (1983) Benedict Anderson examines the concept of the nation, which is defined as: «an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign» (15).

discourses on authority enables a form of subversion, founded on the undecidability that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention. (Bhabha, 1994:112)

We share this view with Bhabha; yet, like Gayatri Spivak we do not necessarily agree with all that Bhabha states on the actual strength of the subordinate voice. Spivak has written that “the intellectual must avoid reconstructing the subaltern as merely another unproblematic field of knowing, so confining its effect to the very form of representation the project sought to evade and lay bare” (Spivak, 1988:27). For her, when reclaiming a cultural identity, the subordinate re-inscribes, as a matter of fact, their subordinate position within society since it implies an ethnocentric dependence. Consequently Western critics and intellectuals are responsible for creating the subordinate discourse and at the same time for provoking the ‘subaltern’s’ silence. Yet we believe that, with Lotman, this interstitial or liminal space accounts for the final dimension of identity, especially as appearing in literature, which is always in excess of the sum of the parts that signal the ‘difference’: race, class, religion or gender.

Identity is, simply put, the way(s) in which a person, or group, wishes to be known by others. This group may be represented in terms of a given (emblemized) culture (within which literary creation plays an important part) and this culture(s) works in order to aggregate rather than to integrate, consequently stressing difference rather similarity (Cohen, 1993:195-96). Within this scenario, memory has always played an essential role. In 1596 another Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, “taught the Chinese how to build a memory palace” (Spence 1985:1). His goal was to provide them with a way to store most of the concepts that made the sum of their knowledge, and consequently that made them what they were, that shaped their identities, and this by means of a mnemonic technique that assigned specific mental locations to these concepts. The mental building of a memory palace (frequent in the 15th and 16th centuries, and popular since classical antiquity) implied assigning an order to everything and later remembering it (the ‘order of things’) as a way to (among other things) control and domesticate the proliferation of meanings that creates diversity and difference. This certainly is in direct contrast with a notion of culture as an aggregate of differences, whereas on the other hand it reproduces the tension arising between inner sameness and external difference that identity (and ethnicity) tries to develop and exploit.

In this sense it may be suggested that identity can, either at group level or located within the individual, reduce diversity; in other words, the social process leading to identity formation eventually works towards the reduction of the multiplicity of identities to be found in all individuals (or even groups), as Jef Verschueren has convincingly argued (Verschueren, 2004:154-55). We began this introduction by referring to *Othello* (that most representative early modern text) as a play about identity, and also commented upon the multicultural and fluid diversity of the origins of identity formation. Obviously, from all we have seen, we have to conclude that *Othello* is not a play about identity but about identities, and more specifically about identities at war. Indeed, the different identities to be found within an individual (or a group) can be in conflict with each other, and this conflict may well end up destroying that individual if that discord cannot be translated and s/he cannot establish a dialogical relation with his/her various identities. This somehow explains the outcome of the national projects intending to establish homogeneous cultural, religious and ethnic identities for England or Spain (or Europe) in the early modern period and later.

As Verschueren explains, the novelist Amin Maalouf has written about his problems coping with his multiple (and often conflicting) identities as a Frenchman and a Lebanese, as a Christian and an Arab (2004:155). So does *Othello*: as a black man who is at times “far more fair than black”, as the ageing husband of a young and beautiful aristocratic lady, as the base Indian/Judean who threw away a pearl richer than all his tribe, or as a circumcized Christian. The impossibility to reconcile all these untranslatable and diverse *Othellos* leads to extreme conflict and self-destruction. Eventually, in the process of forming the identity of a European in the hybrid location of Cyprus, the co-existing pagan identities of *Othello* have to be repressed, taken by the throat, and smitten.

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ANTI-SLAVERY AND SENTIMENTALISM IN APHRA BEHN'S *OROONOKO*

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Abstract

Aphra Behn's Oroonoko (1688) has been sometimes considered an ambiguous novel as far as the transmission of anti-slavery messages is concerned. It is our contention here that the novel contains a clear indictment against slavery which subverts the necessity of 'europeanising' the native otherness of the slaves in order to make them socially acceptable within a white European background. Behn's politicised sentimentalism is aimed at dignifying African otherness in its own. A key feature of her sentimental discourse is the use of physiognomy. Physiognomy, based on the idea that body language communicates a sincerity before which alienating imperialist discourses resign, ignores the duality racial superiority/racial inferiority and bridges the dehumanised separation between white readers and black characters.

We can highlight the existence of a conspicuous duality concerning the literary depiction of the African slaves in seventeenth-century literature: on the one hand, the idealisation of the slave, who becomes an acceptable figure by virtue of his/her progressive 'europeanisation'. On the other hand, the legitimisation of his/her native ideas, qualities, and features. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) has been sometimes placed in an ambiguous position within this duality. The novel dramatises the story of an African slave who acquires heroic status within a white European background corrupted by materialism, a context where heroism seemed impossible. However, as Brown has argued, *Oroonoko's* heroism is not built on the basis of his distinctive *otherness*, but rather, on the

basis of a process of “reductive normalising” by which “the native ‘other’ is naturalised as a European aristocrat” (1987:47). That is, Oroonoko becomes a socially accepted hero because his “[...] alien figure [...] is textualised and contained by the imperialist observer” (49).

Our contention here is, by contrast, that *Oroonoko* is clearly linked with a politicised sentimental discourse which betrays Behn’s intentions of dignifying the figure of the slave in his/her distinctive *otherness*. Sentimental literature has been traditionally associated with *naïvete* and with excessive indulgence in the cult of superficial emotions. It has also been described as an imperfect stage in the evolution towards Romanticism.¹ Yet, the identification of sentimentalism with superficiality and *naïvete* is a simplistic overgeneralisation. Sentimentalism was a culture-changing phenomenon which not only transformed the history of literature, but also the history of ideas, the history of aesthetics, the history of religion, the history of political economy, the history of science, and the history of sexuality (Ellis, 1996:8).

Contradicting the ideas of a culturally central Augustan ethos of restraint, based on the belief that human nature is flawed and corrupt,² the sentimental philosophy welcomed the ‘forbidden fantasies’ of the period, namely the fantasy that human beings are innately benevolent and can therefore contribute to making a better society possible (1974:31). Sentimental literature settled the basis for a new political ideology which could be described as humanitarian, anti-authoritarian and compassionate. As Ellis has noted, “reading sentimental fiction entailed and active participation in the reform of society” (1996:129). The most scandalous example of inequality available to the emergent sentimental discourse was slavery trade, and sentimental novels became a unique and innovatory *locus* for the discussion of the dehumanised economics of slavery (51). Although the politicisation of sentimentalism reached

¹ For a thorough discussion on the attacks on sentimental literature, see chapter I in Ellis (1996). According to this critic “[...] in the words of contemporaries, the sentimental is consistently defined negatively, as the space between more extreme constructions, as a variety of weak thought that will not bear analysis, that escapes or evades discussion, that is not to be analysed by reason or rational debate” (7). The antipathy to sentimental styles was not only typical of the eighteenth century. McGann has denounced the existence of some historical “myopias [...] responsible for the evanishment of the poetries of sensibility and sentiment” (1996:8). He argues that the twentieth-century reader’s access to sentimental writing was short-circuited from the start. According to McGann, sentimental literature was “the deepest if not the most attractive legacy of the Age of Reason”. Yet “the resistance to such writing was raised from the beginning by eighteenth-century classicist figures [...] haunted with premonitory dreams of cultural Armageddon” (3). Knight (1999) has analysed the historical condemnation of sentimentality.

² Fussell (1965) provides a detailed description of the Augustan ethos.

its peak in the mid-eighteenth century we can find evidence for a mature politicised sentimental discourse in *Oroonoko*, published in a context in which Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1660) had institutionalised the ideal that slavery was a legitimate contract between the master and the slave, a contract which was the product of an original struggle or war where the 'loser', in order to save his or her life, promised obedience to the 'victor' in return for subsistence and corporal liberty. The significance and the intensity of *Oroonoko*'s anti-slavery message was perceived by Ignatius Sancho, an African slave born in 1729 aboard a slave ship sailing from Guinea Coast of West Africa to Cartagena. In 1731, aged two years, he was brought to England and educated by John Montagu. He desired to become an actor, applying himself to the role of Oroonoko. Sancho knew Behn's text in sufficient depth as to be able to know it by rote (Ellis, 1996:57),³ which implies that the novel had an important value for the slaves.

Oroonoko's sentimental contents are legion: the literaturisation of the natives' innocence (a favourite sentimental topic) and the sympathetic deconstruction of racial stereotypes, as when Aphra Behn asserts that "a Negro can change color [...] blush or look pale" (1993:1875) pervade the text. Yet, the most conspicuous feature of the sentimental discourse incorporated in *Oroonoko* is the use of physiognomy.⁴ As Benedict has noted, physiognomy (based on the ancient belief that faces show hearts) "[...] shares with sentimentalism a value for responsiveness, a disregard for social categories, and a faith in the sign", proclaiming "the unity of signifier and signified [...] appearance and reality" (1995:312). Consequently, physiognomy identifies "the ideal character, rather than the character determined by social circumstance" (314). It highlights "[...] the hero's purity of heart and his [/her] isolation from the world of social meanings" (327), which was one of the main aims of sentimental literature. Physiognomy ignores social circumstances and denies history

³ *The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, an African* were posthumously published in 1782. They became one of the most perfect examples of sentimental writing. As Ellis has noted, after reading Sancho's Letters, an anonymous reviewer in Ralph Griffith's *Monthly Review* "[...] aligned himself with the abolition movement (entering its most strident and active phase at this time), and concluded: 'Let it be no longer said, by half-informed philosophers, and superficial investigators of human nature, that Negroes, as they are vulgarly called, are inferior to any white nation in mental abilities'" (1996:81).

⁴ Physiognomy is intimately connected with the cult of body language advocated by sentimental literature. As Van Sant has noted, the literature of sensibility comprises "[...] both the subjective awareness of experience and the organic sensitivity through which that awareness occurs" (1993:91). In fact, sight and touch became the "philosophical senses" in the eighteenth century (84). For a detailed account of the significance of the body in sentimental literature, see Kelly & Von Mücke (1994).

and empowers readers to interpret their immediate society by their own observation, transcending social impositions (313-314). Reading physiognomy becomes, thus, “an exercise of imagination and empathy, an act of faith in human unity” (326). Physiognomy presupposes an undivided society and a unity between the observer (the British readers) and the observed (the African slaves) which deconstructs their radical social separation.⁵ It is the body rather than the word that conveys meaning in *Oroonoko*. The slaves’ bodies communicate a native sincerity which deceptive imperialist discourses reject.

Oroonoko is the story of an African prince who falls in love with the beautiful Imoinda. Unfortunately, his grandfather, the king, decides to take Imoinda as his wife. When the old king discovers that Imoinda and Oroonoko are in love she is sold as a slave and taken to Suriname, a territory in the West Indies which is under British rule. After Imoinda’s disappearance—Oroonoko thinks that she is dead—we find Oroonoko and his tribe working as suppliers for the slave trade, so they also play an active part in the ‘dirty mechanics’ of imperialist policy. One day, an English ship arrives and the captain invites prince Oroonoko to come aboard. However, the captain takes advantage of Oroonoko’s trust and takes him and his men prisoners. When the ship arrives at its destination, prince Oroonoko is sold to a British gentleman named Trefry. As is the practice with all slaves, Oroonoko is renamed as Caesar. He soon finds out that Imoinda, now Clemene, is a slave on the same plantation. After their emotive reunion, Imoinda gets pregnant and Oroonoko becomes obsessed with freeing his family because he does not want his children to be born into slavery. His request being denied, he leads a slave revolt but he is betrayed and badly beaten when he is caught. Finally, he decides to free his family by killing Imoinda and the unborn child. He also plans to kill himself but decides to first have his revenge on those who would not give him his freedom. Eventually he is caught and suffers an inhuman death.

As we have previously noted, within this story physiognomy becomes the most conspicuous sentimental trope and the most effective vehicle for the transmission of Behn’s anti-slavery ideology. In fact, it could be

⁵ As Benedict has noted, the hostility towards physiognomy started to develop at the end of the seventeenth century: the reliance on sensual apprehension denied the cultural centrality of rationalistic a priori systems and opposed the traditional hierarchy of mind over body and reason over passions (1995:314).

argued that *Oroonoko*'s plot is organised around key 'physiognomical moments' carefully designed to subvert imperialist notions such as the racial and cultural inferiority of the slaves and to promote the white readers' empathy towards them. The pervasive presence of politicised physiognomy in *Oroonoko* is aimed at constructing an alternative sentimental microcosm, liberating both for alienated readers and oppressed slaves. This independent microcosm subverts imperialist separations. Behn's readers were expected to transfer its validity to the imperialist macrocosm. *Oroonoko*'s liberating microcosm emerges as an environment hospitable to otherness, a *locus* where sentimental language, repeatedly described by Behn as 'silent', 'soft' and 'powerful' can be effective. 'Silent' because it is 'bodily' and non-verbal, 'soft', because it is purged of the aspirations to superiority characteristic of oppressive discourses and 'powerful' because it is the only vehicle facilitating the progress towards a better society.

The potential social validity of *Oroonoko*'s microcosm is threatened by the macro-presence of a materialist world in which Imoinda is sold as a slave and Oroonoko himself trades with slaves, a world revolving around the omnipresent symbols of English ships and plantations, a world in which both Oroonoko and Imoinda are forced to deny their native selves and adopt the 'civilised' identities of Caesar and Clemene. This world is not a hospitable environment for the soft language. Rather, it is ruled by the deceptive and grandiloquent language of imperialist discourses. *Oroonoko*'s ending is marked by an abrupt and bloody transition from this desirable microcosm to the reality of the imperialist macrocosm, a transition which contains the politicised sentimental teleology of the novel: dehumanised imperialism destroys the fantasy of innate benevolence and hinders the progress towards a better society. Put into physiognomical terms, the reader becomes the spectator of a painful transition: from the first sensual contemplation of Oroonoko as "the standard of true beauty" (1993:1871) to the horrible visual show of his quartered body.

The politicised sentimental moments in *Oroonoko*—that is, those conveying anti-slavery messages—are related to four different physiognomical categories: sensual physiognomy, legitimating physiognomy, clandestine physiognomy, and, finally, emancipating physiognomy. Let us begin by clarifying the notion of 'sensual physiognomy': Aphra Behn incorporates in *Oroonoko* the sensuality of

the fashionable aesthetics of exoticism. Yet, the premise of the imperialist beholder's superiority is missing in Behn's use of exoticism: she exploits its anti-imperialist sensual dimension to construct the slave as a "wonderful figure to behold" (1993:1868), thus promoting a pleasurable connection between readers and slaves. Behn displaces the standard ideal of beauty—which William Hogarth's would institutionalise in his eighteenth-century *Analysis of Beauty* (1753)—wresting it from the parameters of her white European context and associating it with dark otherness. The unattractive "reddish yellow" of the slaves' faces is sensually rewritten as "smooth, soft, and sleek" (1868). Oroonoko appears described as a prince with a face of "perfect ebony" (1870), and Imoinda as a "fair queen of night" or a "beautiful black Venus" (1871). This sensuality predisposes readers to accept the body of the slave as a suitable vehicle for the transmission of the most noble ideals of the sentimental philosophy. After her initial sensualist descriptions of the slaves, in their glorious habits and wreaths of feathers, Behn concludes that "they are nice of being touched" (1868). This bodily representation of the sentimental notion of empathy secures the identification between observer and observed without the interference of the imperialist duality "superior *versus* inferior". Aphra Behn might have considered that this initial sensual identification was necessary for the reader to welcome the more explicit anti-slavery ideals conveyed by legitimating, clandestine, and emancipating physiognomy.

'Legitimating' physiognomy contributes to dignifying the slaves' distinctive otherness. It de-stabilises both the stereotype of their inferiority and that of their dependence on European 'civilisation'. Legitimation is based on the idea that the slaves, when placed in their native environment, can master their own destinies by using a specimen of body language characterised by a sincerity and lyricism which is missing in the oppressive contexts and which, accordingly, reveals the cultural weaknesses of 'civilisation'. The social origin of the slaves, for example, is visually represented by the "[...] little flowers, or birds [carved] at the sides of the temples" (1993:1892). The slaves conduct themselves from love to war using their body language, a language whose significance is beyond comprehension for imperialist observers. Within their native environment the narrator has beheld "[...] a handsome young Indian dying for love of a very beautiful young Indian maid; but all his courtship was to fold his arms and pursue her with his eyes" (1868). When two men compete for generalship in war,

[...] being brought before the old judges [...] they are asked, What they dare do, to show they are worthy to lead an army? [...] He who is first asked, making no reply, cuts off his nose, and throws it contemptibly on the ground; and the other does something to himself that he thinks surpasses him, and perhaps deprives himself of lips and an eye: so they slash on till one gives out, and many have died in this debate [...]. (1899)

Whereas the previous physiognomical moments are contextualised in the native microcosms of the slaves, clandestine physiognomy emerges in oppressive contexts. Clandestine physiognomy is organised around the fact of “telling things with the eyes”, a sensualist sentimental trope endowed, at a surface level, with an innocent lyrical character. When Oroonoko met Imoinda “he told her with his eyes that he was not insensible of her charms; while Imoinda, who wished for nothing more than so glorious a conquest, was pleased to believe she understood that silent language of new-born love” (1871-72). After their emotive reunion in Suriname Oroonoko finds in Imoinda

[...] all that called forth his soul with joy at his eyes, and left his body destitute of almost life [...] They both a while beheld each other, without speaking; then snatched each other to their arms; then gazed again, as if they still doubted whether they possessed the blessing they grasped. (1891)

However, the trope of telling things with the eyes is not just an innocent element: it is also a visual emblem of resistance, a powerful language which becomes a strategy of survival for the slaves and highlights the impossibility of domesticating or normalising their native otherness. This language enables the slaves to retain their dignity in captivity. Eventually, they achieve heroism through the denial of the deceptive oral language used by the subjects actively involved in slave trade. The emancipating character of this clandestine language cannot be subjected to the dynamics of a materialist ideology which considers the slaves little more than merchandise. The slave owners cannot prevent Imoinda from dying by the hands of her own husband with a smile on her face. When the old King takes her as his wife, she manages to tell Oroonoko

[...] with her angry, but love-darting eyes, that she resented his coldness, and bemoaned her own miserable captivity. Nor were his eyes silent, but answered hers again, as much as eyes could do, instructed by the most tender and most passionate heart that ever

loved: and they spoke so well, and so effectually, as Imoinda no longer doubted but she was the only delight and darling of that soul [...]. And 'twas this powerful language alone that in an instant conveyed all the thoughts of their souls to each other [...]. (1875-76)

Similarly, when Oroonoko is seized on by the treacherous captain of the English ship, “being wholly unarmed and defenseless, so as it was in vain to make any resistance” he could still “beheld the captain with a look all fierce and disdainful, upbraiding him with eyes that forced blushes on his guilty cheeks” (1887). And after that, when he is being whipped, he was not “perceived to make any moan, or to alter his face, only to roll his eyes on the faithless Governor, and those he believed guilty, with fierceness and indignation” (1904). This clandestine language enables Oroonoko to retain his royal dignity within the oppressive environment where he has been placed: “the royal youth appeared in spite of the slave, and people could not help treating him after a different manner, without designing it. As soon as they approached him, they venerated and esteemed him; his eyes insensibly commanded respect [...]” (1888).

Let us finally discuss ‘emancipating physiognomy’. The physiognomical moments conveying messages of emancipation are related to ideas of bodily self-ownership, that is, to the conception of the body as an instrument of self-liberation from oppression and alienation. When Oroonoko gets to know that the old King has deprived him of Imoinda’s love he tries to “lay [. . .] violent hands on himself” (1874). After being taken as a prisoner by the captain of the English ship, the prince, “a lion taken in a toil” resented this indignity:

[...] but they had so wisely managed his fetters that he could not use a hand in his defense to quit himself of a life that would by no means endure slavery [...] So that being deprived of all other means, he resolved to perish for want of food [...] and sullenly resolved upon dying [...] refused all things that were brought him. (1885)

Oroonoko’s whipping symbolises loss of freedom and dignity, the impossibility of mastering his only vehicle for liberation. After being “whipped [...] in a most deplorable and inhuman manner, rending the very flesh from the [...] bones” (1904) Oroonoko resolves “not to survive his whipping” and we find him “ripp[ing] up his own belly” (1909), taking his bowels and pulling them out with what strength he could. Oroonoko had also resolved to kill Imoinda because “she m[ight] be first ravaged

by every brute; exposed first to their nasty lusts, and then a shameful death", so he cuts her throat and "sever[es] her yet smiling face from [her] delicate body" (1907).

The 'necessary killing' of this body, "pregnant as it was with the fruits of tenderest love" (1907) marks a narrative transition towards the motif of the destruction of the body, which symbolises the destruction of beauty, that is, of everything which is socially desirable in sentimental terms. The final "frightful spectacles of a mangled king" (1910) spoil the realm of physiognomical sensuality which the narrator had carefully constructed and mark the triumph of the dehumanised mechanics of slave trade: "they first cut off his members, and threw them into the fire; after that, with an ill-favored knife, they cut off his ears and his nose and burned them [...] then they hacked off one of his arms, and so, until "his head sunk [...] and he gave up the ghost" (1910). Finally "they cut Caesar in quarters, and sent them to several of the chief plantations" (1910).

Oroonoko's quartering also tears readers apart. They were used to a background of purity and sensuality where physiognomy had fused observer and observed as one, bringing them close together without the interference of any oppressive discourses. After the horrible visual show of Oroonoko's death, readers feel forcefully exiled from a refreshing alternative microcosm and, consequently, their anti-slavery consciousness is effectively raised.

At the end of *Oroonoko*, sensual and emancipating physiognomy have lost their power and their validity within the imperialist realm of the oppressors. But the most fierce attack on slavery and on the inhuman practices associated with it comes from the everlasting validity of legitimating and clandestine physiognomy, which appears concealed in two visual emblems: the difficult-to-understand smile of an agonising Imoinda, and the image of Oroonoko stoically smoking his pipe on the verge of the most horrible and cruel of deaths. These emblems cannot be rationalised according to 'civilised' logics. Neither the treacherous captain nor the governor can control the potentialities of marginalised otherness because they cannot understand its clandestine language. Aphra Behn eventually deconstructs Oroonoko's reductive normalising in order to highlight the irreducibility of unnaturally marginalised slaves. She throws the final message that the civilised world is ruled by a dehumanised 'elite' insensitive to the social benefits that non-oppressive contacts with foreign realities can afford.

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THRESHOLDS OF HOSPITALITY: *OTHELLO* AND THE 'QUESTION OF THE FOREIGNER'.

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Does hospitality consist in interrogating the new arrival? Does it begin with the question addressed to the newcomer [...]: What is your name? [...] Or else does hospitality begin with the unquestioning welcome, in a double effacement, the effacement of the question and the name?

Jacques Derrida, Of Hospitality

One of the sections of Caryl Phillips's *The Nature of Blood* foregrounds a black general who is clearly reminiscent of Shakespeare's Othello. He is a "man born of royal blood" who has moved "from the edge of the world to the centre", from the "dark margins" to the "very centre of [Venetian] empire" (107-8). While waiting to be pressed into service, he spends his time exploring "the strange regions of this enchanted city" (121), its labyrinthine streets and alleys. It is during one of his frequent lonely nightly wanderings that he comes across the walled ghetto where the Jews reside. The two guards marshalling its gates let him in. He visits the ghetto, and is clearly affected by this experience. He wonders: "Why they should choose to live in this manner defeated my understanding. Surely there was some other land or some other people among whom they might dwell in more tolerable conditions?" (131). As the novel develops, one fully realises the ironic import of this question. The question the black general asks about the Jews is a question that also applies to himself as an outsider with an insider's mask. He is an outsider ridden by a "desire to be accepted" (122) but who fails to assimilate. He repeatedly comments on the "dark margins" that reproduce themselves at the centre of the Venetian empire: "I had made no

friends among these people [...] Some among these people were teaching me to think of myself as a man less worthy than the person I knew myself to be" (119). Both the black general and the Jews are welcomed only for practical reasons: the Jews are allowed to practice usury, an activity forbidden to the Christian; the black general is employed to fight against the Turk, so as to prevent the "development of Venetian-born military dictatorship" (117). They are both, therefore, fundamentally *not* welcomed. They are "at the heart of the Venetian empire" (130) but as excluded terms. They are not quite *of* Venice.

By "writing back" to Shakespeare (explicitly in the case of *Othello*; more implicitly in the case of *The Merchant of Venice*), Caryl Phillips reminds us of the paradoxical predicament of the "foreign other" in Shakespeare's Venetian plays.¹ In this article I explore some of the figurations of alterity in *Othello*, and I do so mostly through an analysis of the ways in which the play articulates the intricate question of hospitality toward the stranger.

To start with, it is worth recalling Jacques Derrida's recent work on hospitality. According to the French philosopher, hospitality is "a self-contradictory concept and experience which can only self-destruct" ("Hospitality" 5). He explains the constitutive aporia of hospitality as follows:

Hospitality is [...] the greeting of the foreign other as a friend but on the condition that the host [...], the one who receives, lodges or *gives asylum* remains [...] the master of the household, on the condition that he maintains his own authority *in his own home* [...], and thereby affirms the law of hospitality as the law of the household, *oikonomia*, the law of his household, the law of a place (house, hotel, hospital, hospice, family, city, nation, language, etc.) [...], thus limiting the gift proffered and making of this limitation, namely, *the being-oneself in one's own home*, the condition of the gift and of hospitality. (4)

Thus, conditional hospitality —i.e., hospitality that operates "on the condition that [...]" — "violently imposes a contradiction on the very concept of hospitality" (4). Predicated upon the safeguarding of a series

¹ For an analysis of Phillips's novel as a "writing back" to Shakespeare, see Calbi, "The Ghosts of Strangers".

of boundaries (e.g. between home and away, self and other, proper and foreign), this kind of hospitality reveals its troubling proximity with what is often thought of as its opposite: hostility. Derrida goes as far as to coin a new word "hospitality" to begin to make sense of this uncanny conjunction of polarities.

The assertion (or reassertion) of the boundaries between the inherently patriarchal host and the foreign guest often takes the form of a question addressed to the foreigner. (This is one of the meanings Derrida attributes to the multi-layered expression "*question d'étranger*", an expression with which he opens one of his seminars on hospitality: there is no question of hospitality without a "*question d'étranger*") (*Of Hospitality* 3-4).² Thus, it is not by chance that in the council chamber scene Othello is repeatedly questioned. He is invited to speak over and over again: "What in your own part can you say to this?" (1.3.75); "But, Othello, speak: / Did you by indirect and forced courses / Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?" (111-3); "Say it, Othello" (128). Othello begins to deliver his "round unvarnished tale" (91) by recalling Brabantio's hospitality, an affectionate welcoming that is nonetheless strictly bound up with the questioning of the "foreign other":

Oth. Her father loved me, oft invited me:
Still *questioned me* the story of my life,
From year to year— the battles, sieges, fortunes,
That I have passed.
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,
To th' very moment that he bade me tell it. (129-34) (emphases added)

Therefore, Othello underlines that he has been repeatedly invited into Brabantio's house, and that he has been requested to tell "the story of [his] life" over and over again. He is not a sporadic guest. One might want to pause over these multiple reiterations. It is through repetition, and in the name of hospitality, that Brabantio's patriarchal mastery over his household is reaffirmed. It is through repetition that the fixity of the roles of host and guest—in short, "hospitality"—is rearticulated. This fixity is what Derrida would probably call the "essential coloniality

² *Question d'étranger* is the question that comes from afar, from a different geographical location; the question addressed to the foreigner; the foreigner as a question / problem, the question the foreigner poses even if only by means of his / her mute presence, and so on.

[...] of hospitality when the latter [...] auto-limits itself into a [conditional] law” (*Monolingualism* 25). Indeed, “coloniality” may be the most appropriate word, since Brabantio’s gift of hospitality is dependent upon Othello’s construction of himself not simply as a guest but as an *exotic* other.

How remote is this—poisoned—gift of hospitality from Iago and Roderigo’s utter hostility toward the stranger? At the beginning of the play Iago and Roderigo arouse Brabantio in the middle of the night. Significantly, they infringe the rules of hospitality, “the sense of all civility” (1.1.129), to warn him of the aberrant violation of hospitality that is taking place:

Rod. What ho! Brabantio, Signior Brabantio ho!
 Iago. Awake! what ho, Brabantio! thieves, thieves, thieves!
 Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags.
 Thieves, thieves [...]! Are your doors lock’d? (77-80; 84)

Iago employs a vocabulary of colour to weave lurid fantasies around the breaking down of the boundaries of the human.

Iago. Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul.
 Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
 Is tupping your white ewe! (86-88)

He carries on by drawing attention to an even more dreadful possibility: the emergence of a new breed of Venetians, a breed no Venetian household will ever be able to host:

Iago. [Y]ou’ll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse;
 you’ll have your nephews neigh to you; you’ll have
 coursers for cousins, and jennets for Germans! (109-12)

Brabantio notoriously reacts as follows: “This accident is not unlike my dream” (140). In dreams, where the logic of opposition does not hold, one knows that hospitality violates *itself* before being violated; that a welcoming of the other in one’s own terms cannot but re-present itself as the hostility *the other* perpetrates.

But one needs to re-examine repetition. On the one hand, as argued earlier, repetition is tantamount to a reassertion of the power of the master of the household. On the other, it triggers a process of infinite regression. It is through the reiteration of the tale up to “*th’very moment* that [Brabantio] bade [Othello] tell it” (my emphasis) that it (the tale)

uncannily begins to include Brabantio and Desdemona as characters who play a role within a scenario made of “most disastrous chances”, “moving accidents”, and “redemption” (1.3.135-6; 139). In this sense, Brabantio and Desdemona become Othello’s guests, the guest’s guests. They are “hosted” by the “travel’s history” of the guest.³ Rude is Othello in his speech but not quite. To an extent, he masters the master. As Derrida persuasively argues in *Monolingualism of the Other*, the master does not “possess exclusively, and *naturally*, what he calls his language, because [...] he cannot maintain any relations of property or identity that are natural, national, congenital, or ontological, with it” (23). In a sense, the Duke acknowledges Othello’s appropriation of the language of the host: “I think this tale would win my daughter too” (172). He asserts later on that the Moor is “far more fair than black” (291).⁴ Othello may not be the Moor of Venice. However, he is not quite a guest.⁵

Once in Cyprus, Othello attempts to finalise his project of “putt[ing] into circumscription and confine” his “unhoused free condition” (1.2. 26-7). He recasts himself as the new master of the household, a jealous host with a white mask. To an extent, he replaces Brabantio. Woken up in the middle of the night by what he calls a “barbarous brawl” (2.3.168), he appeals to the “propriety” of the island (172), in a way that recalls Brabantio’s reaction to Iago and Roderigo’s breach of Venetian decorum. (“This is Venice: / My house is not a grange”, 1.1.103-4). He marks his “Christian” distance from the Ottoman “other” who has just been vanquished by a providential storm: “Are we turned Turks?” (2.3.166). (Similarly, Brabantio stirs up the spectre of a takeover by “bond-slaves and pagans”) (1.2.99).

Starting with act three, as many critics have noted, the play maps the re-emergence of what Othello ostracises. It shows Othello’s progressive identification with the black pagan and / or the “Turk” he himself is in one chapter or other of his “travel’s history”. For instance, in an influential essay that successfully excavates the religious discourses

³ I am adopting here the Q reading.

⁴ This is not to argue that the Duke expresses a more “tolerant” attitude toward the stranger. The Duke’s politics of hospitality remains a Realpolitik, a politics of quota and limits, calculation and management, a politics of borders, including the border between “fair” and “black”. From this perspective, Othello can partially cross over to the positively connoted side of the opposition “fair” versus “black”, but the opposition itself remains intact.

⁵ “Being almost [...] but not quite”: My understanding of the question of the outsider’s mimicry is of course indebted to Homi Bhabha’s work (esp. 85-92).

in which the play is embedded, Julia Reinhard Lupton argues that Othello is not simply “*paganized*—made exotic, savage and barbaric;” he is also “*Islamicized* and *Judaized*, brought into contact with a law that should have been dissolved by the rite of baptism” (79). To Lupton, one thus needs carefully to distinguish between Othello as the royal black Gentile, “a blank slate more open to a transformative Christian reinscription” (74), and Othello as the more threatening and irredeemable “Turk” who bears on his body the indelible mark of circumcision, and whose religious allegiance is therefore “a kind of Judaism after the fact, a redoubling of Jewish intransigence in the face of Christian revelation” (79). In short, Othello’s is a *dual* rather than a multiple identity. For Daniel Vitkus, who does not draw such a clear-cut distinction between these two identities,⁶ Othello gradually “reverts to the identity of the black devil and exhibits the worst features of the stereotypical ‘cruel Moor’ or Turk—jealousy, frustrated lust, violence, mercilessness, faithlessness, lawlessness, despair” (106).

Iago’s “pestilence” (2.3.351) is of course instrumental in bringing back into the open the black and / or Islamic “guest” who clandestinely resides in Othello’s newly established household, the “guest” Othello “en-crypts” (i.e., keeps inside as an outsider).⁷ Iago continually, and successfully, undermines the image of Othello qua white host, first of all by raising doubts about the latter’s proficiency in the idiom of the host culture:

Iago. Look to your wife, observe her well with Cassio [...].
 I would not have your free and noble nature
 Out of self-bounty be abused: look to’t.
 I know our country disposition well—
 In Venice they do let Good see the pranks
 They dare not show their husbands. (3.3.200; 202-6)

Iago knows *his* “contry disposition well”. He is the “insider” whose position the Moor can only ever approximate. Othello seems to accept this interpretation, and refers to himself as “black” for the first time

⁶ Vitkus argues in fact that the “Moor” is not “to be identified with a specific, historically accurate racial category; rather he is a hybrid who might be associated with a whole set of related terms—Moor, Turk, Ottomite, Saracen, Mahometan, Egyptian, Judean, Indian—all constructed in opposition to Christian virtue” (90).

⁷ For the furtive incorporation—the putting into a “crypt”—of a part of the self that refuses to stay put, see Derrida, “Fors”.

precisely in this context, in a way that fits in with European constructions of black people as situated beyond the bounds of "civility":

Oth. This fellow's of exceeding honesty
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Oh human dealings....
Haply for I am black
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have. (3.3. 262-4; 267-9)

Thus, Iago seduces Othello into entertaining versions of himself as other than a white male host or a "noble Moor". As he continues to "pour [...] pestilence into his ear" (2.3.351), he persuades him to see himself as the "fixed" stereotypical "figure" (4.2.55) of the jealous Moor inexorably caught in a process of "appropriative madness": "She's gone, I am abused [...] . O curse of marriage / That we can call these creatures ours / And not their appetites" (3.3.271; 272-4).⁸ It is from this "jealous" position that Othello begins to observe—and judge—Desdemona. He goes along with Iago's innuendo that Desdemona's welcoming of Cassio, as well as her "strain[ing]" of "his entertainment / With [...] strong and vehement importunity" (254-5), may be nothing but signs of inappropriate hospitality. Desdemona's "liberality"—the fact that she is "fair, feeds well, loves company" (187), adduced at first as indication of "virtue" (189)—acquires the same pejorative connotation. Othello seems to focus on the bodily part that pre-eminently symbolizes the gesture of welcoming and the gift of hospitality: his wife's hand, which becomes a "moist" (3.4.36) and "liberal hand" (46), a sign of "fruitfulness and liberal heart" (38), a hand that can give hospitality only by transgressing the latter's patriarchal boundaries.

Jacques Derrida underlines that the model of hospitality we are heirs to is "conjugal [...], paternal and phallogocentric" (*Of Hospitality* 149). Shakespeare's play seems to bear witness to this. In Venice Desdemona is a "guest" in her father's house, some kind of "item" over which Brabantio exercises his—necessarily anxious—jealous "guardage" (1.2.70). She "devour[s] up" Othello's tale "with a greedy ear" (1.3.150-1) and, by doing so, she threateningly opens her father's household to the outside. In Cyprus, she cannot *properly* host. To Othello, she becomes

⁸ I take "appropriative madness" from Derrida, *Monolingualism*, 24. To Derrida, "appropriative madness" is the reverse side of the foreigner's appropriation of the language of the master.

Cassio's mistress, a mistress whose "essence" is doubleness and infidelity, in that she repeatedly welcomes Cassio through the back door of her lord's household. Her name becomes "begrimed and black / As [Othello's] own face" (3.3.390-1). She gradually turns into a "black weed" (4.2.68) and the "cunning whore of Venice" (91). Her "proper" domain—her *domus*—turns out to be that of hell, and it is Emilia, her bawd, who "keep[s] the gates" (94) and keys of this damning inhospitable quarter.

To sum up my argument so far: Othello moves from the position of the "noble" guest who hosts the story of his host(s) to that of a Christian white host, subsequently to turn, or revert back, into the position of an "extravagant and wheeling stranger" (1.1.134), a "foreign other" who is hosted by Iago's narratives. Act four brings to a climax Othello's transformation, in that it acutely exhibits the Moor's loss of the power to narrate, a power which had previously enabled him to "conquer" the language of the master. Before he falls in a trance, Othello's language breaks down: "Pish! Noses, ears, and lips. Is't possible? Confess! Handkerchief! O devil" (4.1.42-3). He is invited to "confine [himself] but in a patient list" (4.1.76) and "encave [himself]" (82); he is requested to play the role of a passive listener / onlooker who peeps through the keyhole into his own household, while the "tale" of Desdemona's supposed unfaithfulness is being told "anew" (85). This is a "tale" in which Bianca replaces Desdemona. It is also a tale, one might surmise, that symbolically displaces the "round unvarnished tale" Othello delivers before the senators: Othello's exploits are now Cassio's.

Arguably, *Othello* is a play whose central tropes are substitution and displacement. Iago incessantly stimulates Othello's "passion" (3.3.394), and regularly frustrates it. He repeatedly produces a series of arborescent and opaque signs—what he calls "imputation and strong circumstances" (3.3.409)—that do not simply occlude the "act of shame" (5.2.209) by deferring it *ad infinitum*, but *constitute* it as that which is by definition hidden from view and visible only in part.⁹

Iago. But, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on,
Behold her topped ...?
What shall I say? where's satisfaction?

⁹Among the many critics who have underlined the "ob-scene" off-stage scene that is simultaneously hidden and displayed in *Othello*, see especially Neill and Parker.

It is impossible you should see this,
 Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
 As salt as wolves in pride, and fools as gross
 As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
 If imputation and strong circumstances
 Which lead directly to the door of truth
 Will give you satisfaction, you may have't. (397-9; 404-11)

It is "impossible" for Othello to "behold [Desdemona] topped", and go across "the door of truth". What Iago offers instead is Cassio's dream, which is meant to "thicken other proofs" (432), and is arguably a transformation of Brabantio's dream in 1.1.:

Iago. I lay with Cassio lately
 And being troubled with a raging tooth
 I could not sleep ...
 In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
 Let us be wary, let us hide our loves,'
 And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
 Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard
 As if he plucked up kisses by the roots
 That grew upon my lips, lay his leg o'er my thigh,
 And sigh, and kiss, and then cry 'Cursed fate
 That gave thee to the Moor!' (3.3.416-8; 421-8)

Who speaks when Cassio speaks? Othello's notorious reaction is "O monstrous! monstrous!" (428). But "monstrous" is not simply what Iago's scenario hides and partially displays. Monstrous is also the fact that Othello cannot keep *himself* at a safe distance from the "act of shame". He cannot maintain a position of *absolute* exteriority in relation to it. Put differently, he cannot represent the dream *to himself* without re-presenting *himself* in the dream by means of an identificatory bond with Cassio. In the dream, Cassio takes Othello's place in bed with Iago who in turn takes the place of Desdemona. Othello, confined to the role of a voyeuristic guest who now sees himself as an outsider through Iago's eyes, phantasmatically crosses the threshold of this bedroom to occupy a place he has already occupied: the position of a Moor who has taken the place of one of "the wealthy, curled darlings" of the Venetian "nation" (1.2.68).

But it is not just Othello's "unconscious" that speaks when Cassio speaks. Iago's scenario implicitly and / or explicitly articulates a play of substitutions that is almost endless. It constitutes a fantasy scene in which, to paraphrase Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's psychoanalytic work on

identification, the “subject” never “avoids yielding to an identification and always confuses itself in some way with another (an alter ego—but one that is neither other nor self)” (21). This fantasy scene can be called a “primal scene” of “perverted” hospitality in which homoeroticism and heteroeroticism endlessly circulate and replace one another; a scene in which an endless series of partners alternate through multiple identifications. It is “tedious”, perhaps, to draw a list of these partners: Cassio and Desdemona, Othello and Desdemona, Othello and Iago, Cassio and Iago, Othello and Cassio, Iago and Desdemona, Othello and Emilia, Cassio and Emilia, and so on.

Derrida argues that as a reassertion of the boundaries of the self, home, and nation, hospitality “limits itself at its very beginning”. It “remains forever on the threshold of itself, it governs the threshold [...]. It becomes the threshold” (“Hospitality” 14). Iago identifies himself with the threshold on which hospitality unceasingly turns into hostility. He nonetheless offers a glimpse, from the perspective of the jealous guardian of boundaries who takes upon himself the task of regulating access to the body of Venice, of what *unconditional* hospitality might look like. For Derrida, unconditional hospitality is “hospitality of visitation”. In visitation, he argues, “there is no door”. In visitation “anyone can come at any time and can come in without needing a key for the door” (“Hospitality” 14). Unconditional hospitality is an infinite opening to the alterity of the other; an “other” who is not simply *one’s* other (i.e., what the self defines and therefore masters as “other”); a kind of *arrivant* who “surprises the host [...] enough to call into question [...] all the distinctive signs of a prior identity” (*Aporias* 34). For Iago, of course, this opening is nothing but a proliferation of forms of obscene and pornographic liaisons. But Iago repeatedly construes phantasmatic scenarios about what he so austere rejects, and implicates himself in them. This suggests that that in relation to which one defines himself as host may be already located at the heart of Venice as an excluded and disavowed term, but one that does not cease to haunt. (From this perspective, one such “other” may be nothing but Iago’s Venetian self, the oxymoronic “civil monster” he mentions in the first scene of the fourth act) (4.2.64).¹⁰ In other words, hospitality may be an anxious and oblique

¹⁰ Martin Orkin argues that Shakespeare’s play “reverses the associations attached to the colors white and black that are the consequences of racist stereotyping. It is Iago, the white man, who is

acknowledgement that the other is unbearably *proximate*. Othello may not be quite *of* Venice, but Venice is not properly and purely *itself*.

It is worth underlining the “deconstructive dynamics” the play develops—the process whereby each term of binary oppositions such as home and away, self and other, host and guest, is infiltrated by what it sets itself against, in a necessarily asymmetric way, which challenges the “propriety”, the presence to itself, of each of the terms of the binary—also in order to question interpretations of *Othello* that tend to equate Shakespeare’s play’s with Iago’s. Daniel Vitkus, for instance, as pointed out earlier, highlights the re-emergence of “a black, Muslim identity, an embodiment of the Europeans’ phobic fantasy”. But he also concludes that Othello *becomes* “the ugly stereotype” and “enacts his own punishment and damns himself by killing the Turk he has become” (106). His argument, that is, is Iago-centric. As I tried to stress, each of the positions Othello occupies does not fully erase the other. There is often more than one voice that speaks when Othello speaks.¹¹ In other words, and to refer to Homi Bhabha’s work on Frantz Fanon, Othello’s “black skin / white mask” is not “a neat division; it is a doubling, dissembling image of *being in at least two places at once*” (44) (my emphasis). Martin Orkin offers an argument that is implicitly in tune with the process of “deconstructive dynamics” I have tried to delineate. To Orkin, Othello’s suicide is “a violent act of partial self-abjection or self-abuse, an embittered and angry appropriation of the European reductive and ultimately murderous practice of ‘othering’” (*Local Shakespeares* 41).

To conclude, I want briefly to address Othello’s last speech, which uncannily presents itself as a kind of supplement to the play: “Soft you, a word or two before you go” (5.2.336). In this speech Othello addresses

portrayed as amoral and anti-Christian” (*Othello* 170). One could add that it is Iago who takes on the traits of the stereotypical Moor or the “cruel Turk”. He embodies deceit, duplicity, cruelty and lasciviousness. He can also be associated with almost everything else he claims the “other” to be. But does inversion fully displace the binary opposition self versus other?

¹¹ For instance, the position of the white male host is not incompatible with the position of the black Islamic guest. Both masks are predicated upon the belief in the duplicity of women. They are proximate positions. As Ania Loomba argues, “Othello is both the jealous African and the Venetian husband watching out for the ‘pranks’ that Venetian wives ‘dare not show their husbands’” (101). She persuasively argues that “English stories of patriarchal violence in Muslim cultures served both to define the incivility of these cultures and to offer models for domestic control of unruly women” (100). She adds that “the divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ mutates into a gender divide” (100). She also refers to Leo Africanus’s *History and Description of Africa* to remind us that in the discourses of the early modern period the Moor’s jealousy is not simply demonized but becomes, instead, “an index of political and cultural sophistication” (101). One may add that in Africanus’s treatise hospitality and jealousy are often juxtaposed: they are both signs of “liberality”.

the future more than once (“I pray you, in your letters, when you shall these unlucky deeds relate;” “Then you must speak;” “Set you down this”) (339; 341; 349), almost as if hospitality could only come from the future. He enjoins the present and future bystanders and readers to do him justice and to do justice to what *he is*: “Speak of me *as I am*. Nothing extenuate, / Nor set down aught in malice” (340-1) (my emphasis). Yet, by recalling a series of exoticised positions he hosts or has hosted (i.e., “the base Indian” or Judean, the Arabian, the “turbanned Turk”), he simultaneously displaces any sense of “essence”, of a homogeneous and coherent identity. He then draws attention to the fundamental split between “a Venetian” and “a turbanned Turk” (351-2). He materially enacts such a split on his own body by stabbing himself. This event, which is announced as yet another narrative supplement that addresses the future (“Set you down this, *And say beside*”, 349-50) (my emphasis), does not properly belong to the present. It takes place in the present but nonetheless re-marks the present as a repetition that inverts or disquietingly reiterates the past: Othello is now the “circumcised dog” (353) he stabbed in Aleppo; Othello is yet again the Venetian stabbing the “circumcised dog” he also is.

Perhaps one should pay more attention to the double aporetic bind in which the “foreign other” is caught. At the end of *Othello* the foreigner’s tragic “dis-location” in terms of time, space and identity is brought to a climax when he imprints his testament with his own blood and “con-signs” an unreadable body that exceeds categorization, in that it is both a Venetian body *and* the body of Venice’s demonized “other”.¹² Othello turns himself into a ghostly remainder that resists assimilation but nonetheless keeps on requesting “relation”, thus tragically re-opening the “question of the foreigner”. There is no “journey’s end”, no “butt” (265) or “period” (355) for such a remainder. Nor can it “be hid” (363). Tragic as it is, it is an opening toward the future that invites us to reconsider hospitality “beyond [...] the paralysis on the threshold which it is “(Derrida, “Hospitality”, 14); a threshold where the host persistently defers the encounter with an “other” he is nonetheless forced to bear within.

¹² Julia Reinhard Lupton similarly emphasises the aporia that governs Othello’s final speech and act. By stabbing himself, Othello exacerbates as much as redeems the scar of circumcision—circumcision being, to Lupton, the utmost sign of “otherness”. He performs “a martyrological baptism in blood” that functions as some kind of “re-conversion” of the Moor to Christianity. But, at one and the same time, Othello’s suicide “effects a circumcision according to the Judeo-Islamic [...] paradigm”, and thus locates him once again in a different non-Christian covenant (84).

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SYCORAX SPEAKS

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Invisible things are not necessarily not-there (Morrison, 1989:1).¹

“Go to hell, Sycorax!” is the playful treatment scholars of *The Tempest* give Sycorax and what K. C. King (1990) adds to the absent criticism of the character; S. Orgel (1987) argues that Sycorax’s name ‘has never been satisfactorily explained’² (1). In turn, King claims it is possible to find another “derivation [...] that relates it more organically [...] and contributes more provocatively to the play’s themes. This is the phrase *es kórakas* [...] [that] expresses the desire that the object of one’s anger, sometimes oneself, will self-destruct [...]” (1). King’s article calls attention to Sycorax and her text becomes a marker for past scholarly oversight. True, scholars have examined the male characters in *The Tempest* (1611, 1994), crediting them with figurative worth;³ however, the female characters remain obscured. My study remedies this omission by showing how Sycorax’s silence propels the play.

When exploring the male characters, critics assign them a political value. Specifically, Caliban has been allegorized repeatedly. In 1933 he became a symbol for Protestant heathenism,⁴ later he became a symbol for the indigenous American and the calibanesque Yankee.⁵ After the

¹ Toni Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature”. *Michigan Quarterly Review*. 28.1 1-34.

² The critic here quotes from Stephen Orgel’s edition, which, at the time of printing was the most recent. (Oxford, 1987:19). Katherine Callen King, “Go to hell, Sycorax (1990: 1-7).

³ The discussion surrounding Caliban relates to the colonial experience and by authors of colonial descent. Caliban is useful to scholars in other fields of study: O. Mannoni’s *Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* and A. T. Vaughan’s *Shakespeare’s Caliban: A Cultural History*.

⁴ E. B. Wagner sees Caliban as a representation of the Protestant. See: *The Tempest: An Allegorical Interpretation*. Her analysis is the first attempt by a woman critic.

initial symptoms of nationalistic upheaval in the American colonies, Caliban became a symbol of the hybrid and problematic consciousness of the colonial subject in the Americas. R. Fernández Retamar believes that Caliban is the best metaphor for the colonial subject's cultural predicament, as he argues that the character contains the history and culture of the mestizo:⁶ "De Túpac Amaru [...] a Pablo Neruda, Alejo Carpentier, Nicolás Guillén, Aimé Césaire [...] Violeta Parra y Franz Fanon, ¿qué es nuestra historia, qué es nuestra cultura, sino la historia, sino la cultura, de Calibán?"⁷ (1971:14), yet, he excludes peoples of African descent and most women.⁸ Other critics have remarked on Caliban's appropriation of language using the character's condemnation: "You taught me Language, and my Profit / on't / Is I know how to curse: the Red-plague rid you / For learning me your Language" (*The Tempest*, 3.2. 361-64). Thus, Caliban's discourse becomes the discourse of colonial identity.⁹

If Caliban signifies the colonial subject and if he owns enunciation, what becomes of women's access to discourse? How does a woman write her identity? The emphasis that critics place on Caliban's discourse makes the silences of the female characters more prominent. Could Sycorax and Miranda represent the condition of women writers of African descent?¹⁰ Can Sycorax's silence signify female colonial identity?

Silence is what Sycorax profiles in *The Tempest*. At first, the play seems determined by the theme of an antecedent usurpation of power and its ensuing restoration. These forces, which are of a profound significance to the work, can only be ascertained by a fresh examination

⁵ Seen as a savage, Caliban was a symbol of U.S. imperialist drive.

⁶ Retamar uses a positive metaphor for colonial peoples but the term is problematic for individuals stemming from African, Native American, and European areas.

⁷ Three Antillian writers in three different languages, Aimé Césaire, Edward Brathwaite, and Fernández Retamar himself adopt the character (1971:14).

⁸ Stoll reports that Caliban has undergone numerous interpretations and his image has been reversed from a monstrous sub-human brute to a figure with which authors identify. Stoll's study excludes the colonial woman.

⁹ G. A. Wilkes claims that the play can be a text that is complicit with colonial power. Prospero is the usurping invader, nervous about the legitimacy of his rule, and Caliban represents the subjugated race, his language lessons an attempt to eradicate his own culture, or to bring it under imperialistic control (1995:42).

¹⁰ I am referring to the self-acclaimed Afro-Caribbean author. Although most people accept African ancestry, some disavow it. In Cuba, dark people call themselves *afrocubanos* (Afro-Cuban). In Puerto Rico, *afropuertorriqueños* (Afro-Puerto Rican) does not exist: the term has not entered the language.

of that which is not articulated but, instead, *exhibited* throughout the work. Thus, a closer examination of *The Tempest* reveals a different usurpation, one in which the key players are not the Duke of Milan and his brother but Prospero—already divested of his titles, having become a negligible self-proclaimed sorcerer—and Sycorax, to whom the island truly belongs. Although a fresh reading verges on rewriting the play, M. Novy aptly points out, “[...] a twentieth-century writer who uses a Shakespearean reference always transforms it to some extent, since the modern context is so different” (2000:3). My study proposes that Prospero’s physical usurpation of Sycorax’s dominion is analogous to his usurpation of the maternal; it explores how Miranda’s portrayal is affected by said usurpation, and further, it advances that it directly breeds a character in search of a refractory mirror. I show how Ferdinand becomes a maternal replacement for Miranda as I examine the ubiquitous presence of Sycorax’s aqueous as the mirror that provides a refractory colonial identification.¹¹ Sycorax’s omnipresence gives way to two possibilities: the fictional portrayal of a Caribbean character that procures a self, and a more accurate portrayal of Caribbean colonial identity. Precisely, silence propels Sycorax’s pervasive presence throughout the drama and it is pivotal to the discovery of the colonial subject’s identity; like a palimpsest, it is part of the narrative and through Sycorax’s legacy (storms, music, mythical figures, etc.) the feminine finds a way to irrupt through the text.

The Tempest, when read as a drama that hinges upon themes of usurpation and restoration of power, textually betrays itself, as the following scene illustrates:

¹¹ Sycorax’s syndrome is an identificatory phenomenon in colonial identity. The subject occupies a tangential space in relation to Lacanian (European) subjectivity; she fronts a different medium, the aqueous, lateral to the Lacanian subject. This theory challenges J. Lacan’s “mirror” phase, the entrance to the Symbolic. Lacan’s mirror reflects the child’s first apprehension of self. I. M. Freeman states, “the action of mirrors depends on the fact that light hitting a surface is turned back into the space from which it comes” (108). Lacan’s mirror relies upon this criterion; colonial subjectivity needs refraction. Instead of looking in the “mirror,” the colonial subject sees herself in the aqueous that produces a continuous and unstable imago. Laws of refraction state, “if the surface is made of a transparent material, some of the light passes through into the second substance” (108). This passing through creates a third space (prism) that is indistinguishable from the backdrop of the subject; it becomes an intrinsic part at the moment of recognition. The mother becomes part of the aqueous that is refracted and she is forever incorporated. The colonial child refracts in the aqueous, standing at an acute or obtuse angle but never perpendicular. The Lacanian subject does not experience refractory obliqueness since he stands centered at a perpendicular angle of incidence from the mirror, conforming to reflection. See Chiclana y González, Arleen, *The Archeology of Sycorax and the Implosive Imaginary* (Ph.D. diss. University of Rochester. Rochester, NY: UR, 2001).

MIRANDA— Sweet Lord, you play

Me False.

FERDINAND— No, my dearest Love, I would not for
The World.

MIRANDA— Yes, for a score of Kingdoms you

Should wrangle, and I would call it Fair Play. (*The Tempest*,
5.1.172-74)

Presumably, Miranda refers to their game of chess; yet, could this passage be a metaphor for her complicity in her own subjugation? Miranda's accusation acts as a rupture in the play; the insertion of the chess game is telling and disruptive. Although Miranda and Ferdinand are antagonists engaged in a seemingly inoffensive game, the game itself is revealing; the play happens in an era when women already were commodities, items of exchange.¹² Miranda's access to a game of power that seeks control and flirts with usurpation is incongruous; chess requires an acute sense of political plotting. However, Miranda is alienated from her own society; her father and Caliban, the slave, are the only people she knows. Why does she play a game of kings? Can we interpret this as a slippage on the part of the dramatist? Has Shakespeare "shown his card" inadvertently?¹³ After all, the play also acts as a procession of masculine power, possibility, and fanfare: Prospero's capacity to rule—even if by mystical means—Caliban's proficient articulation, Ariel's ability to enchant, and Ferdinand's submission. Miranda, the only living female character, simply recedes, and her propensity to deny what she perceives is as pivotal to the resolution of *The Tempest* as the usurpation and restoration of power is.

The distrust that Miranda's reveals in the aforementioned passage is intriguing: she foretells her future. Although one cannot know what happens to Miranda once she leaves the island, her words betray her apprehension. Thus, Miranda's game of chess becomes a rehearsal of survival schemes by which she prepares as a future wife. More

¹² Jonathan Goldberg discusses the role of the family unit in the Jacobean era. He claims that the family goes from being a "productive" unit to one that is "reproductive" of ideologies: "the family functioned in Renaissance to reproduce society. [...] Biology is transformed, and the family serves to reproduce society. The body is inscribed in a social system" (1986:8-9).

¹³ Poststructuralist analyses discourage authorial intention. J. Lye explains: "How can we guarantee [...] that we are reading the text 'properly' as the author would have had us read it? [...] If it were clear what Shakespeare 'meant' [...] we wouldn't have hundreds of articles and books disagreeing with each other about it. [...] we do not, in fact, know what he 'meant', nor have we agreed on how we could find out" (1996:2000).

significantly, Miranda recognizes Ferdinand's treachery. At the outset, her position as contender in the game seems illogical since Ferdinand perfidiously swindles her. Yet, Miranda's willingness to accept his fraud and condone it is significant and later evoked in other female characters in Caribbean literature:¹⁴ numerous characters share in her naiveté and in her blindness, but more importantly, Caribbean characters share in her reluctance to apprehend herself as a subject in the Lacanian mirror.

Miranda, a product of her period, had been deprived of a maternal image with which to identify;¹⁵ she knows no other woman but herself: "I do not know / One of my Sex; no Woman's Face remember, / Save, from my Glass, mine own" (3.1.48-50). Nevertheless, the text is inconsistent:¹⁶ at an earlier moment, she admits that she could remember when she was three years old: "tis far off, / And rather like a Dream, than an Assurance / That my Remembrance warrants. Had I not / Four or five Women once, that tended me?" (1.2.44-47). Later, she assures Ferdinand that she never has seen another woman. Can one trust Miranda's recollection? Is what she remembers a pretense? The fluctuation in her memory reveals *slippage and resistance*: when confronting Prospero, Miranda is having her story told *to* her and she reclaims her memories as an attempt at self-definition. By recalling the women who tended her, she disavows any identification with the maternal qualities Prospero has usurped. By remembering the women, *she commemorates them* and she veils the surface of the mirror Prospero projects, rejecting it; she embraces with this gesture her oblique identity.

Despite resisting maternal identification with her father, when facing Ferdinand and looking at herself through him, she surrenders to the *visual* and disavows any past feminine connection: "I do not know / One of my Sex; no Woman's Face remember, / Save, from my Glass, mine own. Nor have I seen / More that I may call Men than you, good Friend," (3.1. 48-51). Miranda's reaction is derivative of her strong desire to identify with her lover; in Ferdinand, Miranda recognizes maternal

¹⁴ From J.Rheys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* to M. Warner-Vieyra's Juletane.

¹⁵ After all, "aristocratic mothers had relatively little to do with their children, who were lodged with wet nurses until the age of two or so and who then were brought up by servants and retainers." Robert ter Horst, note to author, March 2000.

¹⁶ Another inconsistency: Miranda claims never wanting to know more about herself claiming: "More to know / Did never meddle with my thoughts." (1.2.22-23). Yet later she states "You have often / Begun to tell me what I am, but stopped, / And left me to a bootless inquisition, / Concluding, 'Stay; not yet'" (1.2.34-36).

traces and she identifies with him. In other words, she tries to find her lost mother in her lover. For instance, Miranda needs Ferdinand to *reflect* her, and she relies on his assessment of her to construct her own self: “[...] I would not wish / Any Companion in the World but you. / Nor can Imagination form a Shape / Besides your self to like of.” (3.1. 54-57). At this junction, maternal identification—which calls for refraction to occur—are at work, and Miranda’s reaction results from having been deprived of a maternal image with which to bond.¹⁷ Because the only mother she knows is a surrogate, one that she detects in Prospero and refuses, Miranda favors identification through a different medium—thus rejecting Prospero’s mirror—and bringing about refraction: Ferdinand becomes the new maternal medium and fashioning a narcissistic maneuver, Miranda introjects him.

This is effective precisely because Ferdinand is a character charged with stereotypically womanlike qualities. From the beginning, he is depicted as frail and exquisite, qualities consistent with female representation. For example, Ariel describes Ferdinand: “[...] The King’s son, Ferdinand, / With Hair up-staring (then like Reeds, not Hair), / Was the first Man that leapt,¹⁸ cried, ‘Hell is empty, / And all the Divels are here’” (1.2. 212-15) and goes on to say: “The King’s Son have I landed by himself, / Whom I left cooling of the Air with Sighs / In an odd Angle of the Isle, and sitting / His Arms in this sad Knot” (1.2. 221-24). Save for the moment in which he is reunited with his shipmates, Ferdinand is vulnerable, helpless, and frail; textually, he is enveloped by images of femininity. Indeed, he has been utterly feminized in the sense that he has been depicted as fitting the stereotypical “damsel in distress” figure, more so than Miranda.

Often Ariel leads him, as the stage directions of the second scene in the first act show: “[Enter Ariel, invisible, playing and singing; Ferdinand following]”. Ferdinand is intermittently in the company of Miranda, sharing a feminine space, as the entire second scene of the third act

¹⁷ In “The Absent Mother in King Lear,” Kahn discusses the Renaissance family: “[...] the family is the first scene of individual development and the primary agent of socialization, it functions as a link between psychic and social structures and as the crucible in which gender identity is formed [...] from being mothered and fathered, we learn to be ourselves as men and women” (1986:35). All we know about Miranda’s mother is that she is chaste. Prospero must believe in her virtue if he is to believe he has an heir to his dukedom.

¹⁸ A ship’s captain is reluctant to leave his vessel showing his loyalty and his bravado. Women and children are expected to abandon it first while men wait.

shows, and Sycorax's pervasive forces (music, storms, water) consistently encircle him: "Where should this Music be? I' th' Air / or th' Earth? / It sounds no more: and sure it waits upon / Some God o' th' Island, sitting on a Bank" and "This Music crept by me upon the Waters, / Allaying both their Fury and my Passion / With its sweet Air: thence I have follow'd it" (1.2. 384-91). Ferdinand's femininity does not threaten Miranda's subjectivity because he is passive, malleable, and submissive. Ferdinand's femininity invokes maternal traces to which Miranda is inadvertently drawn and in so doing his resemblance helps Miranda achieve identification with the elusive mother—while fomenting her growth as a refracted subject. Thus, in order to accept him as the maternal semblance upon which she perceives herself—so as to achieve her own subjectivity—Miranda repudiates the memory of the women who managed her care before her exile.

And yet, Sycorax's silence has been articulated all along. According to C. Kahn:

Patriarchal structures loom obviously on the surface of many texts, structures of authority, control, force, logic, linearity, misogyny, male superiority. But beneath them, as in a palimpsest, we can find what I call 'the maternal subtext,' the imprint of mothering on the male psyche, the psychological presence of the mother whether or not mothers are literally represented as characters. (1982:35)

However, Prospero acts as a screen for Sycorax, concealing the maternal aqueous from Miranda; instead, he offers her a fixed and rigid Lacanian surface upon which she cannot find subjectivity. Since he has usurped the aqueous enclosure that Sycorax offers and he "silences" Sycorax by superimposing his own language, Miranda has difficulties distinguishing the ubiquitous maternal that Sycorax provides. For instance, Prospero too displays numerous feminine traits and these qualities signify the maternal—they exist in the imagery that surrounds him. Shakespeare repeatedly uses verbs like "begetting," "bearing," and others, thus depicting Prospero as almost feminine. The suppression of the maternal irrupts through the fissures in the narrative; thus, Sycorax's maternal representation secretes through the pseudo paternal character of Prospero—as through Ferdinand's femininity. It is as if the dramatist were not able totally to erase the mother; his "psychic resistance"¹⁹ to

¹⁹ See note 13.

depict the maternal brings about an excess of it throughout the play. The more the image of the mother is repressed, the stronger its presence is felt: it is the return of the repressed, the return of Sycorax.

Simultaneously, Shakespeare portrays Prospero as wanting paternal rule; yet, Prospero's veiled usurpation of the maternal makes his paternal role ambiguous and rather feminine. The following passages depict Prospero's representational ambiguity. At this juncture, Miranda and her father are reminiscing and Prospero reveals the events that led to their exile. When he recounts their ordeal, Prospero's language describes a feminine self: "Infused with a Fortitude from Heaven, / When I have deck'd the Sea with Drops full Salt, / Under my Burthen groan'd, which rais'd in me / An undergoing Stomach, to bear up / Against what should ensue" (1.2.155-59). The images evoked here are of childbirth but also sexual. The connotations of the passive verb such as rais'd and the infinitive to bear, are evocative of arousal and childbirth; also, his discourse mimics a copulative gesture. There is an undulation, a rhythmic oscillation produced by the evocation of the sea and the salt, insinuating an ambiance of copulation. One is torn between images of childbirth and labor—images of bearing down and pushing forth a creature—as well as with images of intercourse intimated by words like groaning, raising, and bearing up. Prospero's description of his vicissitudes evokes femininity, suggesting feminine receptacles and reproduction but also a deep sense of sexual negotiation. David Sundelson agrees: "the language hints at sexual uncertainties that underlie the conflict about power, at a fantasy that Duke Prospero was both mother and father, but doubly vulnerable rather than doubly strong"²⁰ (1983:105). Actually, Prospero's power depends upon these maternal qualities. His usurpation necessitates that he locate himself as embodying the maternal in order to rule, to control, and to effectively justify his positioning himself as a "mirror" for his daughter, which he does in a futile attempt to offer her a surface in which to apprehend herself as subject, a flat surface in which to seize her own identity. Still, Miranda resists identifying with Prospero's maternal; conceivably, because it is surrogate and usurped.

Consequently, Miranda is haunted by Sycorax's absence and she undergoes a contradiction, a branched subjectivity, a *refracted* self. On

²⁰ Sundelson, D. (1983) *Shakespeare's Restoration of the Father*. New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 105-106.

the one hand, because she disavows maternal identification through her father, she “forgets” the maternal—that compels her denial of the feminine when dealing with Ferdinand. At the same time, because she refuses to apprehend her subjectivity through her father’s usurpation of the maternal locus, she repudiates Prospero’s motherly traits, seeking them in Ferdinand. This is evident in her susceptibility to distraction, as Prospero repeatedly demands her attention. Despite her eagerness to learn more about her history, she is distracted and aloof, so much that Prospero demands that she: “Sit down, / For thou must now know farther,” and he continues, “I pray thee mark me [....]” and later, “Dost thou attend me? [....] Thou attend’st not? [....] Dost thou hear?” (*The Tempest* 1.2.32-105). Why is Miranda indifferent? Had she not insisted that her father provide her with her history? Her refusal to identify with the maternal reflection, found in her father, obliges her distraction.

I propose that Miranda reacts to Prospero’s interpretation of her story, and her aloofness vanishes when the story relates to their arrival to the island. Once Prospero recounts her story as *a subject on the island*, she pays attention; she dismisses the past that precedes Sycorax’s domain. Hence, she becomes a subject, even if a frail one, upon entering Sycorax’s maternal and her subjectivity is refracted upon the aqueous milieu belonging to Caliban’s dead mother. Instead of looking at herself in the Lacanian mirror, Miranda looks into Sycorax’s aqueous medium. Thus, Ferdinand’s maternal trace belongs to Sycorax—Miranda is drawn to his reflection, which is only refraction.

Thereupon, Miranda sees herself in Ferdinand and her reflection passes through his likeness creating the third space that becomes indistinguishable from her surroundings, and one that becomes an intrinsic part of her identity—and where she *recognizes herself as a self*. Sycorax is that third space as she is the aqueous medium the light is passing through—that causes refraction and refracted identities. This is evident when spellbound Ferdinand follows Ariel, who sings: “*Full Fathom five thy Father lies*”; and later “*Nothing of him that doth fade, / But doth suffer a Sea-change / Into something Rich, and Strange*” (1.2.394-99). Misguided by Ariel’s chant, Ferdinand concludes that his father has drowned. And yet, notwithstanding that this is only an illusion Ariel created—and one initially instigated by Prospero—it undergoes a transmutation: the paternal forces ceaselessly attempt to invade the maternal, usurping it. However, Sycorax’s aqueous survives the pater-

nal invasion. In this particular case, Alonso's phantasmagoric image suffers "a Sea-change into something Rich, and Strange" proving the paternal usurpation ephemeral and the maternal restoration perennial. Upon looking into this perennial maternal, Miranda sees herself rippled, contiguous, and as fluid as the surface upon which she looks; she becomes one with it, the trace of the maternal is incorporated forever.

The aqueous, Sycorax's impression, is further depicted by *Fortune*. For instance, when Prospero tells Miranda of their arrival and his own brother's treachery, he states: "[...] there they hoist us / To cry to th' Sea, that roar'd to us, to sigh / To th' Winds, whose Pity sighing back again / Did us but loving Wrong. (1.2. 143-51). The personification of the sea, the wind, and all the elements is fitting. The elements have taken pity of Prospero and his infant daughter; the sea delivers them to safe shores. Gonzalo might have provided for material necessities but the forces of Sycorax and her aqueous elements deliver the pair to safety. Later, when explaining the reasons "For raising this Sea-storm" Prospero calls her *Fortune*: "Know thus far forth: / By Accident most strange, bountiful Fortune / (Now my dear Lady) hath mine Enemies / Brought to this shore;" (1.2.178-81). This passage reveals Prospero's power as opportunistic and usurpatory. He relies on Sycorax's forces to deliver the ship to him and then, as it is continuously manifested in the text, he usurps and takes credit for his prowess. *Fortune* (Sycorax) enables him as a sorcerer. He seizes Sycorax's power and calls it his. Ironically, Prospero takes possession of the elements he finds on the island much in the same manner as his brother Antonio takes possession of Milan, as one can note when Caliban accuses him: "This Island's mine by Sycorax my Mother, / Which thou tak'st from me" (1.2. 330-31).

Moreover, Prospero's power is feminine, that is, he relies on the talents of female mythological figures; all of them are feminine. Except Ariel—an ambiguously gendered figure—that Prospero commands to conjure up a wondrous pageant: "[...] Go bring the Rabble, / (O'er whom I give thee Power) here to this Place; / Incite them to quick Motion, for I must / Bestow upon the Eyes of this young Couple / Some Vanity of mine Art: [...]" (4.1. 34-42). Soon a procession of goddesses and nymphs, all working for Ariel rather than Prospero appears: Iris, Ceres, Juno and the Naiads. Still, Prospero insists in taking credit for it: "Spirits, which by mine Art / I have from their Confines call'd to enact / My present Fancies (4.1. 120-24).

Prospero does not allow Ariel to be seen in any guise other than a non-masculine one; more importantly, Prospero persists in controlling the visual: “Go make thyself like a Nymph o’th’ Sea: / be subject / to no Sight but thine and mine, Invisible / To every Eye-ball else. Go take this Shape / And hither come in’t: go; hence with Diligence” (1.2.302-306). Prospero’s power relies upon spectacle and the specular, which is why he produces such a fanfare. Thus he says to Ariel: “Now come, my Ariel; bring a Corollary, / Rather than want a Spirit: appear, and pertly” and as Iris enters, he demands of the group gathered: “No tongue; all Eyes; be Silent” (4.1. 57-60).

Prospero’s tries to regulate the visible; he draws strength from the visual without having mystical powers of his own. This passage is fundamentally significant because it reveals that Prospero’s compulsion to command what others behold is only paralleled by his desire to control discourse itself and this passage reveals the crucial connection between discourse and the visible. Nevertheless, despite Prospero’s attempt to usurp language, Miranda takes possession of it:

MIRANDA— Abhorred slave,

 [...] I pitied thee,
 Took Pains to make thee speak, taught thee each Hour
 One thing or other: when thou didst not, Savage,
 Know thine own Meaning, [...]
 [...] I endowed thy Purposes
 With Words that made them known. (1.2. 349-56)

Conversely, Prospero repeatedly tries to silence Miranda: “Silence: one Word more / Shall make me chide thee, if not hate thee [...]” (1.2. 473-75). Shakespeare allows Miranda little discourse; in fact, Miranda utters just a few more lines as she is silenced after stating: “O Wonder! / How many goodly Creatures are there here? / How beauteous Mankind is? O brave new World / That has such People in’t” (5.1.180-82). It is important for Prospero to silence his daughter; the frail patriarchal configuration upon which the play is charted relies on her silence. However, the smothering of Miranda’s voice—the repression of the feminine—ultimately gives way to Sycorax’s restoration. Even if through Prospero the text offers a medium in which only the representable and visible corresponds to language, desire, which already is aligned with absence and silence fractures it. This explains the fissures in the text, and Miranda’s strikingly disruptive voice.

Thus, Miranda acquires a voice that depicts her, not as a subject of sameness but of difference. Aided by Sycorax's language, Miranda is able to find her subjectivity and to *name herself*. She will not find self-definition in Prospero's logical, linear language but from a transgressive act: she utters the forbidden, she proclaims her own name,

FERDINAND— What is your name?

MIRANDA— Miranda. O my Father.

I have broke your Hest to say so. (3.1. 36-38)

There is no textual explanation for Miranda's trepidation at speaking her name.²¹ As well, literary critics and theorists alike have overlooked this moment in the play. Why is Miranda afraid? Does she regret articulating her name? Her claim to equality by playing chess, her dismissal of her father's reconstruction of her history, and the last words she utters in the play, suggest that Miranda is the author of a new language that allows her to name her self. Her language, although born of Sycorax's silence is nurtured in Sycorax's elements: her music, her tempest, and her rage. Thus, the Miranda of the future no longer allows for her voice to be muffled; hers will be resounding and bold. Hers is the language of hybridity, of pioneering voices of multiple identities. Hers is the language the Caribbean woman writer that exclaims: "O brave new World / That has such People in't".

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²¹ Perhaps Prospero forbids Miranda to tell her name because it might betray his thus it could "make known their survival and bring on new attempts to kill them both" (Robert ter Horst, note to author, March 2000). Even so, one questions the power given to her and the significance of uttering her name: if Prospero's life depends upon her silence, her speech becomes twice as significant; by claiming her name, she is murdering the father.

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FEMALE MONSTROSITY, BESIEGED MASCULINITY, AND THE BOUNDS OF RACE IN ELIZABETH CARY'S *THE TRAGEDY OF MARIAM* (1613)

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Abstract

Elizabeth Cary's The Tragedy of Mariam (1613) has been the subject of much critical discussion as being a play that stages the tragic implications of women's submission in early modern society. Yet, as this paper contends, the play's manifold interest lies beyond the power of its protagonist, Queen Mariam, or the striking life of its author. A thorough analysis of the gender (femininity/masculinity) and race politics in Cary's play attempts to unravel the complex ways in which The Tragedy of Mariam portrays an embattled society, where the old, conventional social order of male, white privilege is under the attack of forces bent on change.

Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, has the honour of being the earliest known woman author of an original play. Catherine Belsey's *The Subject of Tragedy* caused critical attention to bear on the play in 1985, and led the way in feminist readings of this tragedy as one that "explores the limits of a dutiful wife's right to resist a tyrannical husband" (1985:171) and in pursuing the representation of a conflictive subjectivity in Mariam's language.¹ Interestingly, Belsey then raged concerning "the play's absence not only from the literary canon but from most histories of drama, and the lack of an accessible modern edition" (175). Now, roughly twenty years later, half a dozen scholarly editions are available, and the play is being included in most major anthologies of Renaissance

¹ See, for example, Raber 1995; Luis Martínez 1996; Miller 1997; and Bennett 2000 for elaborations on Belsey's earlier reading.

drama, both facts attesting to the work's indubitable quality as well as to the power of feminist criticism to redraw the boundaries of the literary canon in the intervening years.

Published in 1613 but surely composed a few years earlier, *The Tragedy of Mariam* tackles the relationship between the Queen of the Jews, Mariam, and her husband Herod, who has risen to this position solely through his marriage. Such biblical subject matter is hardly to be wondered at, both considering Lady Falkland's religious inclination and because, as Wendy Wall reminds us, "women were generally given more cultural license [...] to study religious works [...] Because of their guilty lineage from Eve, women were frequently exhorted to meditate, pray, and study the Bible" (1993:310). In its form, however, the play is clearly indebted to Senecan tragedy as developed in France and circulated in the Sidney coterie, to which Cary belonged. Barbara Lewalski has traced the features that Cary adapted from Senecan drama: "the primacy of speech over action; long rhetorical monologues; the prominence of women as heroines and villains; and a chorus which speaks from a limited rather than an authorized vantage point" (1993:191).² Lewalski has also been among the earliest critics to point out the commonalities between Cary's tragedy and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, both in the creation of a powerful female protagonist and in a domestic plot about "women who seek to control their own sexual choices, challenging the orthodox ideal of submission" (200). Moreover, critics have long been aware of a link with Shakespeare's *Othello* as regards the theme of male jealousy leading to a wife's death. Nevertheless, the biographical approach continues to predominate in literary appraisals of the play, with the spotlight on the figure of Mariam. One of the finest examples of this line of work is surely Margaret Ferguson's essay "The Spectre of Resistance" (1991), which reads Mariam's resistance proleptically, anticipating Elizabeth Cary's own challenge to her husband, her conversion to Catholicism and her abandonment of the family home many years later. Unfortunately, this kind of analysis, fascinating as it is, has worked to the detriment of a wider approach to the politics of gender and race in Cary's drama.

Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to engage in an in-depth examination of Cary's dramatic challenges to gender roles (both male

² For further connections between this play and other Jacobean tragedies, see for example Elizabeth Gruber 2003; Reina Green 2003; and Jennifer Heller 2005.

and female) and how they relate in turn to the politics of race. Our analytical tools will be brought to bear first, on all major women characters other than Mariam in order to get a full picture of the conditions of femininity, and next, on major male characters in order to thoroughly describe the pattern masculinity takes in the play. Finally, the category of race needs to be introduced so as to map out the ways in which race impinges on gender and state politics. In so doing, I subscribe to Dymphna Callaghan's observation that "to change the canon is more than simply a matter of changing texts—it is to change the conditions and practices of reading all texts, and such changes, at least if they lay claim to political effectivity, must include 'race' as a category of analysis" (1994:164).

Displacing men: women's rebellion in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

As Lewalski first established, the protagonism not just of Mariam, but of all women characters in Cary's play, is quite extraordinary. Not a single male character enters the stage until Act I scene 5, and the arrival of King Herod himself is delayed until Act IV. Cary was certainly breaking new ground by providing women with the opportunity to voice their views of ongoing events for four full scenes, and thus giving them the power to shape the reader's initial reactions. Such extraordinary female visibility is one of the telltale signs of domestic tragedy, and a clear indicator of the conflation of personal and political issues in the play's plot. At its beginning, King Herod has been called away by Octavius to render him an account of his alliance with the now defeated Marc Anthony. There are rumours that Octavius has put Herod to death for his treason, and as a result the kingdom lies in disarray. Resistance to Herod's tyranny has sprung from various sources in his absence. Most of all, such resistance appears to be coming from several women, who have launched an attack on the public realm. Herod's first wife Doris, whom he repudiated for Mariam, now re-enters the city with the secret aim of defending her son's rights to the crown; Herod's mother-in-law Alexandra has taken the reins of government away from Sohemus, and his sister Salome has decided to divorce her second husband in order to marry a third, a privilege only men had. Each of these three women is deeply involved in a struggle to defend her lineage that empowers them to break away from conventional codes of women's behaviour. All of them are

outspoken about their ends and the means they are going to use to achieve them.

Mariam's mother Alexandra is a case in point. From the beginning of the play, she upbraids her daughter for her lack of purpose and her fine sentiments, because they blind her as to those family interests that Alexandra takes good care to remind her of. Alexandra sees the world in black and white, those against and those in favour of her family, and she always acts accordingly. It was her who accused Herod before Caesar, and she who now takes government in her own hands. She is thus renewing control over her family's inheritance, since she sees in Herod only the usurper to her family's lineage. In her raging speech to bring Mariam back to duty, Alexandra consistently defines Herod as someone completely unworthy of the crown. First of all, Herod is described as a man of low birth because he is an Idumean, one descending from Esau, who sold his birthright to his younger brother Jacob: he is a "base Edomite, the damnèd Esau's heir" (1.2.6), a "vile wretch" (1.2.8), "a toad" (1.2.11), "Esau's issue, heir of hell" (1.2.22). Alexandra emphasizes the fact that his marriage to Mariam elevated Herod far above his expectations and merits. Secondly, Alexandra has contemptuous words for the use that he has made of the crown so far: Herod has a cruel nature "that made him me of sire and son deprive" (1.2.27), and the same accusation that "my father and my son he slew" (1.2.40) recurs. And thirdly, Alexandra questions his constancy to women:

ALEXANDRA

Was love the cause, can Mariam deem it true,
That Herod gave commandment for her death?
I know by fits, he showed some signs of love,
And yet not love, but raging lunacy,
And this his hate to thee may justly prove
That sure he hates Hircanus' family.
Who knows if he, unconstant wavering lord,
His love to Doris had renewed again
And that he might his bed to her afford?
Perchance he wished that Mariam might be slain? (1.2.43-52)

Alexandra's perception of the situation in Palestine is shaped by her family loyalty; love or hatred of "Hircanus' family" is the key issue in a potent combination of state, gender, and racial politics. Those who, like her own daughter Mariam, fail to prioritize family interests get no

pity from her, which may explain her “unnatural” behaviour in turning against her own daughter when Herod returns. Survival of the family should take precedence over any other consideration.

Another driven woman is Herod’s first wife Doris, still resentful for having been forsaken for a fairer woman.³ Nine years later, the exiled Doris returns to Jerusalem with her son Antipater (a name resounding with father-hatred), in order to ascertain the chances of having him named heir: “With thee sweet boy I came, and came to try/ If though, before his bastards, might be placed/ In Herod’s royal seat and dignity” (3.3.41-3). She thus becomes one more source of rebellion, discontent, and anarchy in the kingdom. Nevertheless, unlike Alexandra, Doris does not have the political alliances that might help her cause, and so she is reduced to plotting. Given her family loyalties, her revenge against Mariam is directed instead against her children, whom in Antipater’s words “might subverted be/ By poison’s drink, or else by murderous knife” (3.3.59-62). Although Salome’s own plot brings about Mariam’s fall without needing Doris’s participation, she gloats over the fate of her long-time enemy, and curses not just her, but more particularly her progeny: “And plague the mother much, the children worse./ Throw flaming fire upon the baseborn heads/ That were begotten in unlawful beds” (4.8. 92-4). Her behaviour is consistent with her characterization, which in Callaghan’s term is that of a “de-sexualized mother” (173).

Third in this triad of rebellious women is Herod’s sister Salome, who is certainly Mariam’s antagonist in many ways. She is jealous of Mariam’s pure blood and of her influence over her brother Herod, and she resents Mariam’s pride. Like Alexandra and Doris, she is determined and active where Mariam procrastinates and fails to do. She is articulate about her will to power, and she is fearless as to the consequences of her actions. Among such powerful actions stands out her decision to draw up a separating bill from her second husband in order to marry her new lover, an unprecedented undertaken in a society where this is a privilege that only men have:

³ “Fair” is a recurring adjective in the play, encoding the multilayered meanings of conventionally praised beauty (pale skin), conventional sanctioned behaviour (virtue and modesty), and conventionally valued rank (pure lineage). As such, it is consistently and universally used for Mariam, whereas it is used occasionally for Salome, and then only by her lover Silleus.

SALOME

Why should such privilege to men be given?
Or given to them, why barred from women then?
Are men than we in greater grace with heaven?
Or cannot women hate as well as men?
I'll be the custom-breaker, and begin
To show my sex the way to freedom's door. (4.1. 45-50)

Thus, Salome is the most active agent of disorder in the kingdom, the one who can bring about far-reaching and long-effecting changes. She is motivated not just by personal hatred of Mariam, but also by a combination of self-interest and family loyalty because Salome is particularly sensitive to Mariam's insults concerning her family's Idumean descentance:

MARIAM

Though I thy brother's face had never seen,
My birth thy baser birth so far excelled,
I had to both of you [Herod and Salome] the Princess been.
Thou parti-Jew, and parti-Edomite,
Thou mongrel, issued from rejected race!
Thy ancestors against the heavens did fight,
And thou like them wilt heavenly birth disgrace. (1.3. 16-22)

All of these characters are more articulate in claiming power and autonomy and in challenging Herod's government than Mariam herself is. Like Alexandra and Doris, Salome's self-empowerment and her entry into state politics is connected to her personal commitment to a lineage, a family, a race. Instead, and despite sporadic assertions of her high birth and protective remarks about her children, Mariam lacks any true commitment to rank and family, and as a result she fails to perform an effective course of action. As a matter of fact, her eloquence conveys self-doubt and lack of determination, and her actions should rather be called 'inactions'. When Herod returns, the man that she detests for commanding the assassinations of her brother and grandfather, she is content to announce that she will not continue to live with him as his wife. Although breaking away from her wifely duties should be taken as real insubordination, passive resistance rather than true initiative is her main feature. Later, as she is wrongly accused of conspiracy against Herod, she lets herself be meekly taken to the scaffold and summarily executed. Mariam's final soliloquy is self-deprecating in tone. She contends that she was lacking in humility, and that she was wrong to

consider herself safe from danger because she was beautiful, chaste, and beloved by Herod:

MARIAM

Had I but with humility been graced,
 As well as fair I might have proved me wise,
 But I did think because I knew me chaste,
 One virtue for a woman might suffice.
 That mind for glory of our sex might stand,
 Wherein humility and chastity
 Do march with equal paces hand in hand.
 But if one single seen, who setteth by?
 And I had singly one, but 'tis my joy,
 That I was ever innocent, though sour,
 And therefore can they but my life destroy;
 My soul is free from adversary's power.
 You princes great in power and high in birth,
 Be great and high, I envy not your hap.
 Your birth must be from dust, your power on earth,
 In heav'n shall Mariam sit in Sara's lap. (4.7.35-46)

Mariam's speech typifies her stoic renunciation to earthly power and her claim of spiritual, rather than material freedom. Mariam is an exemplar of those virtues enforced by patriarchal conduct books: chastity, humility, modesty. Her heroism emerges as a kind of saintly martyrdom, and her stance has been compared to that of "an early Christian martyr" (Beilin, 1987:170), and her path only leads to a scapegoat's death. Her passivity and lack of drive serve in the play to highlight the agentive power of the other, more deviant women. She is the catalyst of female deviancy, those true 'monsters' that enforce a combined challenge of the gendered, racialized state of Palestine.

Hegemonic masculinity under siege: male privilege in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

As compared to the women's formidable attack on the public realm, the male characters of *The Tragedy of Mariam* may appear puny and adrift, lacking willpower and direction, which might go some way towards explaining critics' fairly minor interest in them so far. Subversion in this field is fairly negligible: Herod's brother Pheroras has taken a wife other than the one the king had appointed; his brother in law

Constabarus has been hiding the sons of a known opponent to Herod's regime; his main counsellor Sohemus has refused to carry out Herod's orders that Mariam be put to death if he does not return.

The men's relative happiness and acquiescence with Herod's regime should not be wondered at. After all, they are the ones policing the borders and enjoying the privileges. They are largely part of the establishment and they stand to gain by remaining on the side of power, so they become the target of the women's rebellion rather than agents of disorder in their own right. Perhaps the only exception is Pheroras, whose wife-taking entails a higher risk than the passive resistance of the others. He has gone beyond rejecting his brother's choice, he has dared to make his own. But his challenge is short-lived. When the news of Herod's return reach him, he hastens to follow his sister Salome's instructions and promptly make accusations against Constabarus that may deflect the king's attention from his own disloyalty, thus proving that his weak mind is an easy subject for Salome's manipulation. Salome's new lover Silleus is an Arabian foreigner that seems to be beyond the political strife of the Jewish kingdom, but in any case his love for her make him susceptible to her plotting, and he is similar to Pheroras in that he readily accepts all her words at face value. He is a mere pawn, unable to take his own decisions. His love is easy for the audience to perceive as an incapacitating blindness to view her and their situation as they truly are, and thus, rather than admiration, Silleus deserves the audience's pity.

Out of all the male characters, only Constabarus stands out for his virtues. Salome's husband is a character of higher stature than Herod himself, as he is consistent in his speech and his actions throughout the play. He is the first one to realize the subversive potential of Salome's doings, which threaten the gender hierarchy of the kingdom by taking away men's privileges. These are his accusations when he hears that she is divorcing him:

CONSTABARUS

Are Hebrew women now transformed to men?

Why do you not as well our battles fight

And wear our armour? Suffer this, and then

Let all the world be topsy-turvé quite. (1.6.47-50)

Moreover, Constabarus seems to be an objective man, one who is not bent by family or self-interest, in clear contrast to the others. He is blinded neither by love (like Silleus or even like Pheroras), nor by jealousy

(like Herod). He can see through Salome's manipulations and to their effect on other men, with the kind of wisdom one gains from previous experiences. When Silleus comes spoiling for a fight, he at first declines to fight, and only does so when Silleus calls him a coward. Then while they fight, Constabarus attempts to convince him that Salome is unworthy of his love, and that he is bound to be replaced when she tires of him:

CONSTABARUS

For her, I pity thee enough already.

For her, I therefore will not mangle thee.

A woman with a heart so most unsteady,

Will of herself sufficient torture be.

I cannot envy you for so light a gain.

Her mind with such unconstancy doth run,

As with a word thou didst her love obtain,

So with a word she will from thee be won.

So light, as her possession's for most, day

Is her affections lost. To me 'tis known. (2.4.29-38)

Although Silleus proves stubbornly impervious to his warnings, Constabarus also candidly offers his help to the wounded man, to the extent that Salome's lover feels that "Had not my heart and tongue engaged me so,/ I would from thee no foe, but friend depart" (2.4.107-108), and Constabarus replies that he will "as friend, grieve for thy complaint" (2.4.114). It is perhaps this virtuous concern for other people, even those that he should count as his enemies, that makes Constabarus truly Mariam's counterpart, but like her, Constabarus is essentially passive, and his resistance to injustice or tyranny never takes a productive form. His tragic stature derives from the fact that, though not lacking in either virtue or honesty, he nevertheless falls prey to Salome's plot, very much like Mariam does. Thus, he is unable to protect himself from Herod's cruelty, and as he is led to his death he is as stoically virtuous as Mariam herself will later be, in a scene of high moral tone that prepares the audience for the scene of her sad death and the later discovery of her innocence. Like Mariam too, Constabarus embodies the fractures of conventional virtue, this time for the male gender. Even while being admirable for his honesty and plain dealing, he is a mouthpiece for the traditional values that support class privilege and gender inequality. It is an inescapable fact that, like the Chorus closing each Act, Constabarus is the one character to consistently voice the most

stereotypical denunciations of women's duplicitous and inherently evil nature:

CONSTABARUS

You [women] are to nothing constant but to ill,
 You are with nought but wickedness endued;
 Your loves are set on nothing but your will,
 And thus my censure I of you conclude:
 You are the least of goods, the worst of evils,
 Your best are worse than men, your worst than devils. (4.6.67-72)

His is a failed attempt to restore male privilege. Under women's joint attack in the play, men have become confused and gullible, unable to see things clearly. The best case in point is Herod himself, whose arrival is put off until Act IV, when he enters Jerusalem in a haze of love, only to find a disgruntling Mariam, dressed in dark clothes, that asks him to account for the murder of his relatives. The man who has successfully evaded Caesar's justice seems hardly able to face his wife's discontent. When he discovers the clumsy attempt to poison him, he immediately trusts the butler's accusation against Mariam. He does not require proof of her deceit and infidelity, but he jumps straight away to the wrong conclusions without anyone's assistance:⁴

HEROD

Now do I know thy falsehood, painted devil,
 Thou white enchantress. Oh thou art so foul,
 That Hyssop cannot cleanse thee, worst of evil.
 A beauteous body hides a loathsome soul.
 Your love, Sohemus, moved by his affection,
 Though he have ever heretofore been true,
 Did blab, forsooth, that I did give direction,
 If we were put to death to slaughter you.
 And you in black revenge attended now
 To add a murder to your breach of vow. (4.4.17-26)

Unlike Constabarus' steadiness, Herod is changeable and insecure, easily manipulated by his sister Salome. Having had Mariam committed to prison, he is unlikely to follow this through with the order for her

⁴ For further study of the implications of this epistemological flaw, see Gruber 2003. So close is the parallelism between Herod and Othello, that a full analysis of Herod's insecurity and vulnerability might well follow the guidelines of Ania Loomba's excellent analysis of Othello in chapter two of *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Delhi: Oxford UP, 1989), 38-64.

execution, so in a scene (4.7) that resounds with echoes of Shakespeare's *Othello*, Salome (like Iago) pushes Herod (like Othello) to take the decision he so fears to make. Herod's speech is full of dilatory moves, complaining, for example, that none of the methods of execution Salome suggests is right for his fair Mariam, to the point that his sister, tired of his shenanigans, finally undertakes to give the order herself. Herod then turns against his sister, calling her his "black tormentor" (4.7.157), and cancels the order twice, but finally he caves in and accepts Salome's injunction that Mariam must die. The king is not completely unaware that Salome has her own agenda and that she is Mariam's enemy, but he is unable to overcome his jealousy, the mere thought of her "wavering heart" making him rave. Here we find a portrait of the gullible husband moved by jealousy and by his own insecurities, like Othello. Eventually, when proof is found that Mariam was innocent of his charges, a careworn Herod must come to terms with his own failures and with the injustice of his decisions. At the end of the play he is a broken man, not the joyful, careless tyrant he arrived as, only one Act earlier. He now resigns himself to a lifetime of grief, and welcomes the thought of death:

HEROD

Happy day,

When thou at once shalt die and find a grave.

A stone upon the vault, someone shall lay,

Which monument shall an inscription have,

And these shall be the words it shall contain:

"Here Herod lies, that hath his Mariam slain." (5. 1.253-58)

As a result, no restoration of the original order appears to be feasible at the end of the play. The execution of Mariam has brought about nothing worthy of note, except giving her new life as a martyred saint. Instead, the sources of subversion and change seem to have survived unchallenged. Salome's actions go unpunished, and presumably she achieves her end all along, that is, marriage to Silleus. Alexandra too, appears to escape unscathed by placing herself on the side of Herod against her own daughter, although at one point Herod threatens to tarnish her reputation for her "unnatural" behaviour. No indication of Doris and her son's fate is given, though in Mariam's execution they too have triumphed. All in all, women's 'monstrous' behaviour seems to have won the day, and hegemonic masculinity lies in disarray. Those who might sustain the old structures of male privilege, like Constabarus, are dead.

The bounds of race: the complexity of identity in *The Tragedy of Mariam*.

As declared above, gender and rank are not the only categories in the play's complex staging of identity at critical junctures. One need add race, particularly since *The Tragedy of Mariam* is run through by the conflict between two Jewish lines of descent: Esau's and Jacob's. It should be noted at this point that there is a consistent connection between the kingdom and the queen. Mariam *is* Jerusalem, and other characters often utter their names in the same breath, or else variously link them, like Herod's joyous greeting to Jerusalem on his unexpected return in Act IV:

HEROD

Hail happy city! Happy in thy store,
Happy that thy buildings such we see;
More happy in the temple where w'adore
But most of all that Mariam lives in thee. (4.1.1-4)

This goes beyond a lover's hyperbolic assertion if one considers that it is Mariam who through her marriage legitimizes Herod's rule, he being a usurper by his Idumean ancestry, she by contrast being the bearer of a pure Jewish bloodline. The "Argument" that introduces the play's plot literally describes this event as Herod's "having *crept* into the Jewish monarchy" (my italics), a verb that suggests illegitimacy and duplicity. Alexandra's portrait of Herod, as seen above, emphasized such traits. Mariam stands then as the embodiment of the Jewish nation and of the city of Jerusalem, and as a powerful symbol of the embattled situation they are going through. From the very beginning of this play, then, race and rank are intimately associated by means of the kingdom and of this marriage of Othello-like unequals, as Callaghan explains:

Palestine provided an unusually suitable site for the depiction of male tyranny and female resistance, and for a protagonist who embodies an unstable mixture of antithetical elements—female virtue and rebellion. Both fantasized and actual, Palestine is a place where Cary can unbalance the polarized binarisms which constituted the category "woman". (169-70)

The terms used by Elizabeth Cary to depict the struggle come from a historically available source of binary oppositions such as white/black, fair/dark, virtuous/evil. Moreover, this battery of terms has been historically gendered as well. Callaghan has remarked that "Race' is

not self-explanatory: it is currently the site of intense cultural contestation. The term merits quotation marks because, historically, racial marking functions as a denigratory process of cultural othering rather than a positive mode of self-definition" (164). Therefore, it may come as no surprise that the most evident sign of such struggle is the consistent othering of Salome as the dark woman to Mariam's fairness. Mariam herself calls her a "mongrel" (1.3.20), just like Herod's designing her his "black" tormentor in 4.7 is clearly intended to recall both her darker hue and her bad acts. MacDonald has interpreted this persistent juxtaposition of a white heroine and a brown villain as yet another instance of an early modern text's singling out a racially marked woman for moral censure, as well as the writer's strategy in order to emphasize "the affiliation of their speaking voices with dominant racial cultures, even as they may be disputing the sway of dominant constructions of gender and sexuality" (64).

Yet, in foregrounding racial conflict in the play, one must not forget that it is consistently associated with strategies for empowerment. More often than not, the relationships in the play are couched in a language of elevation that reminds readers of the force of hierarchical structures as well as of some characters' efforts to break through them. Thus, Alexandra reminds Mariam that it was her father who "did lift this Idumean [Herod] from the dust" (1.2.18), while Salome questions the importance of birth, claiming that there is no difference between their ancestors and hers: "Both born of Adam, both were made of earth,/ And both did come from holy Abr'ham's line" (1.3.35-6). Yet she in turn later upbraids her husband Constabarus, whose "low estate" she deems to have upreared (1.6.23). Salome is demanding from her husband the kind of gratitude that Pheroras' chosen wife expresses when she admits that: "Your hand hath lifted me from lowest state/ To highest eminency, wondrous grace,/ And me, your hand-maid, have you made your mate,/ Though all but you alone do count me base" (2.1.57-60). But in choosing her, whose "brow's as white, her cheeks as red" (2.1.40) as Mariam's, Pheroras was certainly not unaware of racial categories. Doris herself, whom we may infer to be of Idumean descent like her estranged husband, is full of anger at the loss of status that came with her divorce, and in returning to Jerusalem she dreams of its inhabitants' renewed homage, so that "You royal buildings bow your lofty sides/ And stoop to her that is by right your Queen" (2.3.1-2). Whether it is marriage or kinship, all

interpersonal relations bear the imprint of both rank and an implicit colour hierarchy.

These are only some examples of the complex, manifold ways in which categories of race, class, and gender overlap in the play. As we have seen, they are constantly in flux, with some characters (women, particularly those of Idumean descent like Salome) trying to bring about change, while others (men like Constabarus) resist it and defend the benefits of conventional, compartmentalized society. Most strikingly, the tragic resolution fails to punish the deviant forces of change, whether it is women's stepping out into the public sphere or the Idumeans' equalizing efforts. The play's ending highlights the utter destruction of an old social order, with the unnecessary sacrifice of those two characters that stand out conspicuously for conventional virtue and submission to the law of the land: Mariam and Constabarus.

Thus, a biographical approach centred exclusively on the ambiguous figure of Mariam and on the politics of the writer's life cannot truly aspire to bring to light the complexity of Cary's take on issues of social citizenship, power, and privilege. On the contrary, by engaging in a thorough analysis of gender and race politics in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, one can see how Elizabeth Cary's play manages to break new ground in portraying early modern identity and belonging as a contested site, fraught with discrepancies and contradictions. Furthermore, *The Tragedy of Mariam* stages early modern society as the embattled ground where the categories of gender, class, and racial differences are acted out.

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FIERCER THAN THE POPE'S BULLS: JESUITS IN EARLY 17TH CENTURY ANTI-CATHOLIC, ANTI-SPANISH ENGLISH PAMPHLETS.

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Abstract

This present study analyses the vision of the members of the Society of Jesus at the beginning of the 17th century in English pamphlets. With the increase of anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic literature during the years of the negotiations of the Spanish Match (roughly 1617-1624), the Jesuit forms a figure in the literature of the time which shows how this body was despised and feared by the Protestant population. Not least of the reasons for this was that they were constantly linked to Spain, the King of Spain, the Pope and the Catholic Church in general. Apart from the characteristics conferred on them (eloquent murderers and tricksters who possessed a willpower of iron), they are presented as trying to help the King of Spain achieve a Universal Monarchy with the consequent spiritual danger which would be incurred on the Protestant population of England if the proposed match were to go ahead. In order to instil even great fear for the Catholic religion the pamphleteers generally equated the terms "Jesuit" and "Catholic". The propaganda produced effectively gave rise to an image of the Jesuits which was to survive for many years (although its origins are to be found in the previous century) and which served to alienate and encourage animosity towards this body and its collaborators; namely Spain, the King of Spain, the Spaniards, the Pope and the Catholic Church.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the seventeenth century readers of anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic English pamphlets had become accustomed to descriptions

of Jesuits which were none too flattering. Indeed, the build-up to such images had their root in the sixteenth century and events which followed were used to attest such ideas. However, in the years during and after the marriage negotiations between England and Spain to bring about the proposed marriage between Prince Charles of England and the Infanta María of Spain, a large number of pamphlets were particularly scathing. Fear for the so-called Spanish Match made Puritan pamphleteers such as Thomas Scott and John Reynolds shake in their shoes as they envisaged the possible apocalypse: an English prince, their Protestant prince, Charles, to be married to a Spanish princess, the Infanta María, a Catholic, daughter of Philip III of Spain, son of the instigator of the attack in 1588 of the Spanish Armada, the fearful Catholic King who answered to none other than the Pope, the personification for many Protestants of the dreaded Whore of Babylon. These anti-Spanish writers used all their strength, wit and eloquence to create literary propaganda with which to arouse their fellow countrymen to take heed and express their distaste before such a marriage. One of the literary images they used was the figure of the Jesuit, a member of the militant arm of the Catholic Church, a figure much despised and feared by those of the Reformed Church. This study aims to highlight the main literary characteristics the Jesuits were given by these pamphleteers in the period spanning roughly between 1617 and 1624. Furthermore, it attempts to put them in perspective and relate them to how they contributed to the propaganda against the Spanish Match, against the Spaniards and against the Catholic Church.

Just how and why do the English anti-Spanish pamphleteers relate the Jesuits to Spain? One must bear in mind that the negotiations for the Spanish Match aroused hostility in the hispanophobe section of English readers and pamphleteers and the propaganda against this marriage was extremely prolific in 1623, but generally spanned the years 1617-1624. These marriage negotiations reached their height in 1623 with the Prince of Wales' madcap journey to Spain and fell forlorn in 1624 as the young prince clamoured for war against this country instead of in favour of a marriage alliance. Added to English discontent was Spain's role in the Palatinate and the resulting detrimental circumstances of James I's son-in-law, Frederick, the Elector Palatine, and Prince Charles' sister, Elizabeth, Frederick's wife. The fact that the Spanish Habsburgs supported the Catholic League in Europe, a body

representing direct rivalry to Protestant aspirations on the continent, made the Catholics in England, especially the Jesuits, instantly equated with doom, destruction and deceit. It was therefore natural that anti-Spanish literature at the time was in large part dedicated to slander the Catholic religion and all its followers. Indeed, Catholics, be these Jesuits or not, and be they English, Spanish, French, Italian, Polish or of any other nationality, were all considered one dangerous body to be distrusted and fought. The Spanish Match formed the backdrop to such a scenario and the pamphleteers portrayed one particular kind of player, the Jesuit, as having one of the main supporting roles.¹

2. Spain, a peaceless nation

Thomas Scott and other contemporary tract writers alluded on countless occasions to the Spanish intervention in the Palatinate troubles when they wished to highlight the Spaniards' lack of ability for peace. An anonymous pamphleteer, probably Scott himself, warned his fellow countrymen: "it behoves vs [...] to look to our selves, when our next neighbours houses are on fire" (*Certain Reasons And Arguments Of Policie*, 1624: B2+1).² When it came to spiritual war, however, the Jesuits were pinpointed as the dreaded militants of the Catholic King's religious quests. Indeed, John Reynolds gave vivid examples of the Jesuits in France and the danger they had posed to the French nation in his much read pamphlet *Vox Caeli* (1624). Reynolds stated that Ignatius de Loyola, the Spanish founder of the Society of Jesus, was the Jesuits' "Semi-God" (1624:23) and that the Jesuits in France, for example, gaue faire words and actions to all the Spaniards in generall, and to the nobler and wiser sort of them in particular, they engaged themselues to keepe curious

¹ Needless to say, the most important example of a drama containing anti-Spanish and anti-Jesuit references throughout and which uses the Spanish Match negotiations as its backdrop is Middleton's *A Game at Chesse* (1624). The Black Bishop's pawn, a Jesuit, and the Fat Bishop, previously a Jesuit and the anachronic inclusion of the character of Ignatius de Loyola, the Spaniard who founded the Society of Jesus, all contribute to the desired effect. It should be noted that Middleton copied word for word from several pamphlets of the time, and most especially from Thomas Scott's *Vox Populi* (1620) and *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624).

² Most titles of the pamphlets used for this paper have been abbreviated. Their full titles are in the bibliography. In quoting pages from the pamphlets, instead of using the leaf gatherings with the markers A2r or A2v, for example, I have opted to use a system whereby the leaf marker is quoted if the citation appears on a page where a leaf gathering marker appears. If the quote is between this leaf marked page and another one, I indicate its location by adding "+" and the number of pages that one has to turn until the page of the actual quote. All pamphlets with normal pagination have the actual page numbers quoted.

correspondence with the Catholique King, to whom they affirmed and swore by their Semi-God and sole Patron Ignatius Loyola they would beare true obseruance as the Marigold doth the Sunne. (23)

3. Spain's worldwide Jesuit network

Here was the danger. Members of the Society of Jesus belonged to all nationalities; yet, they were all portrayed as potential traitors to their respective countries due to their alleged loyalty to the King of Spain and the Pope. In this same pamphlet Reynolds describes the French Jesuits as “the Firebrands and Incendiaries of the [French] State, [...] the Fistulaes and Botches of a State” (23). The Jesuit school in Paris, Clermont House, is said to “poison and corrupt the Youth and prime Wits of France” (25) as well as having “already corrupted the [French] Parliaments and Priuy Councell” (25). The French clergy are said to “recieue Lawes from the Popes Nuncio, and the Iesuites to whom they should giue them” (26). Reynolds then adds that “the greatnesse and generosity of France declynes, and [...] Rome and Spaine will shortly shuffle the cards so well, as it must needs bee made a Prouince to Spaine” (26). This was a direct allusion to the fact that it was thought that the King of Spain ventured to obtain a Universal Monarchy, thus enslaving countries which were hitherto not completely Catholic such as France, and evidently, England.

France was not the only example used by English pamphleteers to emphasise the King of Spain's use of the Jesuits abroad. In *An Oration or Speech* (1624) its anonymous author addresses the Princes of Poland as he states that Philip II of Spain had sent a great number of Jesuits to their country, Jesuits who had brought the whole world into uproar so that the King of Spain could control them (1624:D3+2).

Thomas Scott successfully plays on this idea in *Vox Populi* (1620) as his fictional Duke of Lerma boasts that Spain must be admired for her wisdom in only employing or trusting natives of Castile, Portugal or Aragon in matters concerning temporal war. He emphasises that in spiritual war “it imployes none but the Iesuites” (1620:6). Furthermore, he continues, the latter are known to be hispanophiles, no matter how far away they be from Spain, and irrespective of their nationality, be these Polish, English or French, or whether they live in their native

country or not (6). Lerma concludes that the result of having this Jesuit network favourable to them is that

our Catholique King must needs haue an invisible kingdome, & an unknown number of subjects in all dominions, who will shew themselves and their faithes by their works of disobedience [to their native countries] whensoever we shall haue occasion to use that Iesuiticall vertue of theirs [i.e. to favour the Spaniards' causes]. (6)

In *Vox Populi* (1620) Thomas Scott presents the Pope's Nuncio as "a Spaniard by birth" as well as "a Iesuite by profession" (1620:5), and adds that these are reasons for which the Duke of Lerma feels free to talk before him at the meeting of grandees in Spain. Lerma states in this pamphlet that the Society of Jesus is an order which has been created to accomplish the Spanish universal monarchy, a fact which makes all Jesuits "appropriate therunto, and as publike agents and privie Councillors to this end" (5). Another grandee of this same fictional meeting insists on the fact that the Spanish king could not rely on those English Catholics who were "not fully Iesuitied" (10).

4. Jesuits, Kings of Spain and Popes

Historically, since the failed Armada attack of 1588, the English had considered the Spanish kings as enemies to England. The habit of equating examples of scandalous deeds of the most Catholic King's nation to those of the Jesuits' soon became commonplace. Examples using Philip II's dealings with England were abundant, even during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, especially when reference was made to 1588. Furthermore, the English pamphleteers imply that the subsequent Philips of Spain are made of the same metal and are perhaps worse for their Jesuitical influence. The anonymous author of *Robert, Earl of Essex* (1624), for example, states that "although old king Phillip be dead, yet there is a young (Iesuitied) Phillip sprung from his loynes" (1624:11).³

In the same vein, the unknown author of *A Speech Made in the Lower House of Parlament* (1624) begins by stating that the Jesuits and

³ For a more detailed analysis of the portrayal of the "Philips" of Spain in English pamphlets, see Demetriou (2004a: 242-255).

Roman Catholic seminaries in England are “nourished” by the King of Spain (1624:1). He continues by warning that the English Catholics would spend their lives trying to make the Spanish King achieve his universal monarchy because “they [the English Catholics] haue profited [“so wel”] under their Masters the Iesuites, those faithfull Councillors of Spaine” (3).

The Pope, understandably, was also credited with the Jesuits’ seemingly unsavoury behaviour. The pamphleteers continually make allusions to how the Pope uses the Jesuits to spread and defend the Catholic religion. The anonymous author of *Tom Tell-Troath* (c.1622) claims that if James I had been a Catholic, “The Pope’s bulls, and his fiercer beasts, the Jesuits” (1744:434)⁴ would have continually been on Englishmen’s backs. Fernando de Texeda, the ex-Augustine monk who had converted to the Reformed Church, wrote in his *Texeda Retextus* (1623) that the Jesuits “would rather oppugne and euen wage warre with truth it selfe, then not humour the Pope” (1623:29). The Pope’s nuncio in *Vox Populi* (1620) is said to be both a Spaniard and a Jesuit (1620:5). And Gondomar, the infamous Spanish ambassador in charge of the Spanish Match negotiations in England, states in *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624) that he could procure help for the Jesuits either from the King of Spain or the Bishop of Rome (1624:55), a comment which proved to the anti-Catholic readers of England at the time that both these political heads of State shared the responsibility of leading the members of the Society of Jesus. However, in *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624) John Reynolds presents the relationship between the Pope and the Spanish king thus: “In *Italy* the king of *Spaine* is nailed to the Pope, as most of the Colledge of Cardinals and all the Iesuits are to him” (1624:10). He continues by saying that the King of Spain has the greatest and richest territories in Italy and therefore “he hath so incircled the Pope as hee is rather his Prisoner, then his spirituall Father” (10). Be it as it were, the Jesuits were thus irrevocably linked to Spain and the Pope, and Scott himself stated in *The Belgicke Pismire* (1622) that the Society of Jesus were “the extracted strength and quintessence” of Rome, Spain, Austria, Italy and Machiavel (1622: A4+1).

⁴ Although first published in 1622, I have been unable to locate a first edition and have used the facsimile copy in *The Harleian Miscellany* (eds. Oldys and Park:1744).

It is clearly established that English pamphleteers thought that Jesuits were linked to Spain and the Pope. One anonymous pamphleteer claims that they, together with the Catholic secular priests in England at the time, depended “no lesse vpon *Spaine* for temporall respects, then vpon *Rome* for sprituall” (*More Excellent Reasons*, 1624:A3+1).

5. Jesuits and the Spanish Match

Thus one cannot but assert that the pamphleteers presented the Jesuits working closely with and for the King of Spain and the Pope. Yet, how was this linked to the Spanish Match? Thomas Scott masterly kills six birds with the same stone as he discredits the King of Spain, his religion, the Pope, the Jesuits, the Spanish Match and the most hated Spanish ambassador in charge of the marriage negotiations in England, Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar. Scott cleverly presents Gondomar in a meeting with other Grandees of Spain in the pamphlet *Vox Populi* (1620) commenting on the Spanish Match negotiations. Gondomar is made to state that if the marriage were to take place, the Roman Catholics in England would soon “worke so far into the body of the state by buying Offices and the like” (1620:9). Furthermore, he claims that

with the helpe of the Iesuites, they would undermine them with mere wit (without gunpowder) and leave the King but a few subjects whose faithes hee might rely upon, whilst they were of a faith adverse to his. For what catholique body that is found at the hart, can abide a corrupt and hereticall head? (9)

Such trust of the English Jesuits on the Spaniards' part is reiterated in Scott's sequel to *Vox Populi*, *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624), but with the added bonus that the marriage negotiations had fallen through by this time and the Puritan author therefore wallowed in delight at the Spaniards' second fictitious meeting of grandees and how they tried to pick up the pieces of their failure. The threat of the Jesuits, however, appears to continue as Scott presents Gondomar reading a letter from the Jesuits of England asking him for advice about how “to escape present danger” (1624:54). Gondomar, or rather Thomas Scott, seems to equate the term “Catholic” with “Jesuit” throughout the pamphlet.⁵ Gondomar

⁵ This is most clearly seen in the mention of the royal proclamation of May 6th 1624 “Charging all Iesuites to depart the land”. In the pamphlet, instead of stating that the proclamation ordered all

states that the Jesuits would be treated harshly in the parliament underway at that time as it was “by their meanes wee vnderstood the secrets of their State, knew what they did, or spake in their Parliaments; in a word they were our onely instruments for any imploment, were it neuer so desperate” (30).

Gondomar instructs the Spanish parliament to write to their ambassador in England,

to giue notice to all our trustie well beloued the *Iesuites*, and secular *Priests*, with some of the best minded Catholikes towards vs, that they labour as much as in them lyeth to take away all aspersion, & whatsoeuer may tend to our dishonour (sic), & for this cause to giue vs notice of all scandalous (sic) Bookes, Pictures, Inuectiues, Pasquills, &c. that shall be printed against vs in *Holland*, England and other places. (51-52)

Indeed, the Spanish ambassador instructs the Jesuits in England to “labour where euer they liue, to educate and instruct their freinds (sic) Children in the Catholike Religion” (52), and to do this soon, so that they can send their sons to seminaries, their daughters to convents, and thus the Spaniards would have an abundant supply of novices, their treasuries would be full of money and they would have “freinds and instruments at all occations” (sic) (52).

In a letter to Gondomar, the Jesuits ask his advice about how to escape from their present persecution in England. Sarmiento de Acuña advises them to rely upon their “Arts and subtle sleights” (55) and gives a long list of possible deceitful means to obtain information and money for the Spanish cause. These would entail using great or eminent people that are on good terms with them “to sow dissention betwixt the Prince & people” (55-56). They could set villages on fire if they saw that they would have a chance to escape by hiding in the smoke, learn or invent a special code for writing messages, practise the profession of doctors of physic, or sell coloured oils, balsams, perfumed lozenges, receipts for tooth-ache, etc. (56). Gondomar continues by stating that if they send any youths to Spanish seminaries they should be sure they are “Sonnes

Jesuits to leave England, it is said that all Catholics have to leave England. Another protagonist of the pamphlet, the Count de Monterey, refers to these expelled “Catholics” when he asks if they will return to their colleges in Douai, Rheimes, Rome and Valladolid, indisputable proof that the “Catholics” in question were Jesuits.

of the richest and ablest men" (55), thus guaranteeing a place of retreat and money in case of danger. The list of advice on how they should survive and avoid persecution continues and he adds finally that they should also watch out for the publication of any anti-Spanish books or pictures, which in due turn they should "set some friends to buy them all vp, though you burne them forthwith, except some few, which faile not still but to send vs of every sort three at the least, for they will bee vnto vs of great vse" (57).

One may ask just how successful the Jesuits had been in propagating in England at the time of the negotiations. It appears both from the propaganda produced at the time and from historical facts that Jesuit presence in England had increased considerably. In *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624) Scott adds a note in the margin to say that the Jesuit colleges in Douai, Rhemes, Rome, Valladolid and other places were almost empty at the time (1624, 28-23 sic), and the reader cannot but presume that this is because their Jesuit members were concentrated in England. In the same pamphlet Gondomar is made to affirm that in the parliament which was underway the Jesuits were predictably going to be "proceeded against", one of the reasons being "by reason of their number, and dayly increase, whereby they became formidable to the State" (30).⁶

Indeed, one consequence of the marriage treaty negotiations was conveyed to the English readers as consisting of an enormous rise in population of the dreaded Jesuits and all that this could entail in the future for the country in terms of religion and dependence on Spain and Rome. Yet, why were they considered to be so formidable? What qualities did the Jesuits have that the Spanish and Catholics in general admired and the English dreaded so much? Through reading the pamphlets of the dates in question, three major traits emerge.

⁶ Here it is worth mentioning John Chamberlain's words in December 1623. He stated that, "the priests and jesuits swarm here [in London] extraordinarily" (Chamberlain's Letters, Vol. II, 1939:531). Edwards (1985:56) states that the number of Jesuits in England in 1623 was 248. Lockyer (1994:292) explains that the phenomenon concerning the increase in the number of Jesuits in England was a result of the action taken by James I in July 1623 to suspend the penal laws against the Catholics in England, as a sign that he was prepared to put the articles agreed on in the Match treaty into effect. Prince Charles was in Madrid at this time. In other pamphlets the rise of Catholic numbers in general is mentioned, not necessarily only Jesuit numbers.

6. Fearsome characteristics

Jesuits as murderers

The first of these is the Jesuits' ruthless ability to kill. Strange as it may seem today, the Jesuits were seen by the seventeenth century anti-Catholic pamphleteers as capable of anything, even murder. From a historical perspective, it appears that there were three main reasons for this. The first of these was the fact that in the late sixteenth century members of the Society of Jesus were accused of being involved in the so-called Catholic plots to kill Queen Elisabeth I. Indeed, historians such as Hume (1901:85) seem to trace the violent behaviour attributed to the Jesuits to Pope Pius V's Bull which excommunicated Queen Elisabeth from the Catholic Church. Hume states that extreme Jesuits, unlike other Catholics, saw the Bull as a warrant to be disloyal and that when the Society of Jesus began to lead the English Mission in 1580, "It was war to the death between Elisabeth and the Catholics" (85). In 1589, Edward Squire became known for having allegedly received a potent poison from the English Jesuit Richard Walpole in Spain which he smeared on the pommel of the Queen's saddle.⁷ She escaped from this lethal venom "miraculously" (Clancy, 1964:163).⁸

Secondly, in December 1594, a certain Jean Chastel attempted to stab Henry IV of France,⁹ and this crime was immediately associated with the Jesuits. Although their participation in this event was never proved, they were expelled from the kingdom, one of their members was executed and his body burned in public. This new "jesuiticall" crime soon became public knowledge in England through several newsbooks (Clancy, 1964:98-99). The anti-Catholic nobleman Sir Francis Hastings wrote a pamphlet entitled *A watch-word to all religious and true-hearted Englishmen* (1598) in which he recounted the above-mentioned incident,

⁷ Edwards (1985:23) explains that the sticky poison on the Queen's saddle would work once she had touched it with her hands, and then consequently the plan was that it should pass into her food.

⁸ Clancy (1964:160-167) makes interesting observations about the Elizabethan belief that both the Spaniards and the Italians were perceived as being sodomists, vengeful, deceitful, and using their trickery with poison. Therefore, could one say that more than a mere Black Legend of Spain, there existed a Latin Black Legend?

⁹ Henry IV (1553-1610) became King of Navarre in 1572, and due to his Protestant sympathies, was held at the Catholic French court from 1572 to 1576. Engaging in a religious civil war, he was crowned King of France in 1589 after converting to the Roman Catholic faith, a condition for him to fulfill in order to become king, but the fighting continued. He was named Henry the Great by protestant pamphleteers, and one of the main reasons for this was that he signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which offered freedom of worship to Protestants in France. A victim of the continuing religious and political tensions, he was assassinated in 1610.

among others, in order to prove that murder was part of the Catholic, and especially the Jesuit code. Robert Persons, the chief collaborator of his fellow Jesuit, William Allen, the head of a group of English Roman Catholic exiles first in Douai and then in Rheimes,¹⁰ answered Hastings' accusations through his pamphlet entitled *A Temperate ward-word, to the turbulent and seditious Wach-word (sic) of Sir Francis Hastings, Knight, who indeuoreth to slaunder the whole Catholique cause...by N.B.* (1599). Hastings was not idle and replied with another pamphlet called *An apologie or defence of the watch-word, against the virulent and seditious Ward-word published by an English-Spaniard lurking under the title of N.B. Devidid (sic) into eight seuerall Resistances according to his many Encounters, etc.* (1600).

Thirdly, the Jesuits' supposed intervention in the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 proved to be the incident that seemed to confirm the English pamphleteers' belief that the members of the Society of Jesus were a murderous religious group.¹¹ Indeed, Leonel Sharpe, in his pamphlet *A Looking-Glasse for the Pope* (1616), calls this historical event "the Iesuits treason" (1616:b3+1). The King of England was perhaps, understandably, one of the most fervent despisers of this religious institution. Indeed, as Tobío states (1987:74), for the English Monarch, the Jesuits were the Papist Puritans. The pamphlet war that followed the introduction of the subsequent recusant laws¹² and the controversial Oath of Allegiance¹³ was, one could say, dominated by the Jesuits. Members of the Society of Jesus had no qualms about speaking their minds and expressing what

¹⁰ This party of exiles has been called the political group, the Spanish party, the Jesuit party and also the Allen-Persons party (Clancy, 1964:4).

¹¹ The dramatic impact of the events of 1605 on the English population also had an equally dramatic consequence on the Jesuits' cause in England. Instead of endeavouring to reconvert England to the Roman Catholic Church, they now realised that it was only plausible to attempt to save what remained (Edwards, 1985:43).

¹² Clancy (1964:80) points out that this controversy did not flare up immediately after the Gunpowder Plot. Among the reasons he gives are that in the months following the treason it was difficult for the pamphleteers of Rome and the Low Countries to know what had really happened. Furthermore, the impact of the events of November 1605 in England were not fully appreciated by the country's exiles. Clancy states that it was only when Thomas Morton's *An Exact Discoverie of Romish Doctrine* (1605) and his *A true and Perfect Relation of the Whole Proceedings against the late most barbarous Traitors, Garnet a Jesuite, and his Confederats* (1606) called "all" Catholics disloyal and when Coke repeated the government version of the story at the Jesuit Garnet's trial in 1606 that an attempt was made to deny these accusations.

¹³ Pope Paul V denounced the Oath of Allegiance and instructed the English Catholics not to take it. Cardinal Bellarmine sent a letter to the archpriest Blackwell in England, who had already taken the oath, and urged him to become a martyr for the Catholic cause. King James consequently wrote to challenge Bellarmine's opposition to the oath in his *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* (1608), which was published anonymously. Bellarmine's subsequent *Responsio* was published under the name of the latter's chaplain, Matthew Tortus.

they thought was correct from their religious perspective.¹⁴ Hence, the fact that their writings went against the Oath of Allegiance and that in their pamphlets they did not outrightly condemn the doctrine of tyrannicide, or “the murdering of Kings,” as King James preferred to name it (Clancy, 1964:81), was one of the reasons that the Jesuit writings were so controversial at the time.¹⁵ Indeed, all three of the aforementioned events shared the characteristic of provoking a controversy concerning this doctrine of tyrannicide, which consisted of questioning whether it was correct to believe that princes, i.e. rulers, who had been excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, could be deposed or murdered by their subjects or anyone else.¹⁶

This is a summarised account of the historical background that gave rise to the literary depiction of the Jesuits as murderers.¹⁷ In order to explain what the literary image of the Jesuits as murderers consisted of, it is necessary to analyse the instances where the Jesuits are depicted as such. In *The Reformed Spaniard* (1621), for example, Nicholas & Sacharles portrays the Jesuits in a light that nowadays reminds one of

¹⁴ Clancy (1964:81) explains that there were three principal points discussed in these pamphlets: “first, whether national loyalty implied articulate allegiance to the king and adherence to the episcopal plan of church government; second, the problem of the papal deposing power and its implications for national sovereignty; third, the doctrine of tyrannicide”.

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that in 1610 the Holy See commissioned the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez to write his own pamphlet about papal prerogatives, and to take the edge off the controversy provoked by Cardinal Bellarmine’s pamphlets that had been directed at James I. Suárez, perhaps flattered by this challenge, according to Clancy (1964:103), or not at all happy with the charge, according to Tobío (1987:63), produced his *Defensio Fidei*, which was published in Coimbra in 1613. Unfortunately for the Catholics, a great uproar ensued as Suárez’s arguments did not differ much from Bellarmine’s, especially when it came to voicing his ideas about the killing of tyrants. One point that Suárez made crystal clear was his disagreement with the fact that the Oath of Allegiance obliged a Catholic priest to communicate any attempt against the King’s life that had been heard in private confession. What is more, the Spanish Jesuit stated that as for the matter of the killing of kings, he did not agree that one could make a private decision about this matter, and that this sanction should be reserved for the public authority. However, he did not state who this public authority could be (Tobío, 1987:63-64). In France, the reception of Suárez’s pamphlet dropped like a bomb and it was burned by a public executioner in Paris, just as it was burned at Paul’s Cross in England. The English took great pleasure in spreading the news that France, a Catholic country, had condemned a Jesuit author (Clancy, 1964:104).

¹⁶ See Clancy (1964:87-106) for details about the different views explained by different Jesuit writers on this topic.

¹⁷ This image continued to grow, worsen and even became commonplace. Hence it was not unusual for the English to find anti-Jesuit pamphlets that spoke of this murderous trait. Just one example of a pamphlet published towards the end of the century under study is the anonymous *The Jesuits Manner of Consecrating Both the Persons and Weapons Employ’d for the Murdering Kings and Princes by them accounted Hereticks, Being Matter of Fact*. Translated out of Hospinian’s History of the Jesuits, pag, 366. Printed at Zurich in the yeat 1670. London, Printed by T.S. in the year 1678. Edwards (1985:16 and 22) complains that the Jesuits were regarded as political assassins but that it has not been proved that any one of the murders that they were accused of was really perpetrated by them. In addition, he laments that even today, many mistakes are made in labelling certain well-known murderers as Jesuits.

Mafiosi. Yet, there is no connection of the events described to any concrete historical event. Indeed, although presented as an autobiographical tale, one must admit that this pamphlet is more of a pseudo-autobiography, and reads more like a novel or an anecdotal story.¹⁸ Nicholas & Sacharles introduces the French Jesuit, Rampala, as “a certain Iudaite (I should profane the most blessed name, if I should stile that sect by the name of Iesuite)” (1621:C3+3). He explains how Rampala had

employed a certaine Popish Swash-buckler, who before in the same City of Saint *Giles*, had slaine a man in the street. Him he suborned to doe me some notable affront: and accordingly this knaue taking a very sleight occasion, gaue me a blow on the eare in the open street. These are the concluding arguments of the *Iudaits*. (D2)¹⁹

Jesuits as deceivers

Their second biggest trait is that of being the most deceitful of all Catholics. This was one of the characteristics which went hand in hand with being spies for Spain. Indeed, in Scott's *A Tongue-Combat* (1623) the Protestant protagonist Tawny-Scarfe claims that Jesuits are wont to lurk “vnder a buffe Ieikin, a red scarfe and a feather” (1623:93). In *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624) Scott presents the English Jesuits confessing to Gondomar their difficulty in concealing themselves and their intentions (1624:53). Gondomar's advice to them that they should dress up as pedlars and roam the country in such a guise, or to exercise the medical profession adds more to their blankets of disguise. Gondomar's advice to them to rely upon their “Arts, and subtile sleights” (55) to survive is yet another insinuation to dissembling. In the anonymous *An Oration or Speech* (1624), Jesuits are said to use “Sun-shine-like deceits” (1624:D3+2). In *The Reformed Spaniard* (1621), the

¹⁸ For a more detailed analysis of this work and reference to its origins, see Demetriou (2004b:75-103).

¹⁹ In my doctoral thesis (see Demetriou, 2004a:124) I equated the term “Iudaite” to Judas, although I now rectify this and state that I believe that Nicholas & Sacharles was likening Jesuits to Jews. Indeed, Thomas Scott in his *A Tongue-Combat* (1623) quotes William of Orange as having quoted in his Apology (1580) how the Spaniards' apparent Jewish ancestry is “ingrafed” in their character, emphasising that the Jews betrayed Jesus by paying Judas money to deliver Jesus into their hands (1623:80). This theory holds even though Rampala is French as for the pamphleteer he was a Catholic, a term linked continually to Spain and the Jesuits. In either interpretation of the term “Iudaite” the emphasis remains on the characteristic of deceit.

Jesuit Rampala who calls the Huguenots “Infidels” is presented as a “valiant Actor” who gives his sermon “with the Theatrical Ornament, of clapping his hands one against the other” (1621:D), and the reader is at once persuaded that such a Jesuit could only be lying.

The Jesuits’ eloquence

Their third most important trait is that of their eloquence and learnedness. The English reader ascertains from the comments offered that perhaps these were the two most feared weapons of the Jesuits. In 1616, the pamphleteer Leonel Sharpe had claimed that Jesuit writings against the Oath of Allegiance and recusant laws in England were written in order to supply “by the goodnes of their style, [that] which is wanting in the goodnes of their cause” (1616:b+1). Thus it is understood why Nicholas & Sacharles, the anonymous author of *The Reformed Spaniard* (1621), should say that the Jesuit Rampala was “a man eloquent enough”. To counter such praise he adds that he was also “aboue measure clamorous and spitefull against those of the Reformed religion” (1621:C3+3). When the same Jesuit employs a “Popish Swash-buckler” to beat the Protestant protagonist on the ear, he adds “this is their open-handed rhetorique: this was their close fist of Logique. Nor must we thinke this strange in those who set forth cut throats for their Champions” (D2).

Another aspect of their learnedness is the fact that Jesuit schools both in England and abroad are depicted as the places where their corrupt nature was propagated. Thomas Scott complained in *A Tongve-Combat* (1623) that England’s spiritual trade had been damaged by the “Romish Locusts” or “Babylonish Merchants”, who had contributed to the “maintenance [...] towards [Catholic/Jesuit] Schooles and Seminaries in all Popish Countries euen out of England” (1623:70-71).

7. Conclusion

These historical incidents set the scene and the eloquent pamphleteers wove their own dramatisation of these protagonists. The back-drop was the Spanish Match and the storyline could be summarised thus: The King of Spain and the Pope used the Society of Jesus as their pawns, taking advantage of their unbending obedience to sow dissent

and to spread their religion in all countries where the Reformed religion had taken root, using any means they thought suitable, be these murder, deceit or treason. The Spanish Match was the pretext to counter the recusant laws and give a free rein to the Catholic religion in England. Ultimately, however, this pretext, which gave rise to an enormously high population of Jesuits in England who “swarmed” the land in disguise and even entered parliament, was really a means through which the Spanish King hoped to make England a province of Spain and make it form part of his much desired Universal Monarchy. Without a doubt, such characteristics made the Jesuits seem fearsome to English eyes: they represented deceitful spies and murderers and were constantly associated with acts of treason and tumult. In *The Second Part of Vox Populi* (1624) Gondomar is made to claim that the Jesuits “are the only engines and complots of all Treasons, authors of Tumults, and seditions within the land [England]” (31). Scott adds a note in the margin to reiterate that there is “no treason commonly without a Priest or Iesuit at one end of it” (31). Not only fierce, according to one anonymous pamphleteer, the Jesuits were “fiercer beasts than the Pope’s bulls” (*Tom Tell-Troath*, c.1622, 1744:434). Their increase in number made them appear all the more formidable. Indeed, once it was clear that the Prince of Wales had escaped the Spanish marriage and the fatal consequences that such a match would have brought England in terms of religion and the strength of the Spanish universal monarchy, Scott warns James I in *Vox Dei* (1624) that “There is nothing to feare but the Iesuits hand, let thy hand therefore fright them, and their adherents farre from thee, out of thy Dominions” (1624:84). Scott believed that they had grown odious even to their fellow Catholics (*The Second Part of Vox Populi*, 1624:23, sic) and Reynolds adds the epithet “it were better that all the Iesuits were hanged” (*Vox Caeli*, 1624:28).

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FROM FANTASY TO NIGHTMARE IN *OTHELLO*: SELF-FASHIONING AND THE POLITICS OF RECEPTION

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Abstract

With Renaissance Self-Fashioning, Stephen Greenblatt opened the path for a substantial and long-lasting avenue of criticism on the forces that shaped identity in Renaissance England. The programme for what he termed his “poetics of culture” was based on interpretive practices focused on three basic aspects which, he assumed, could be reflected in- and therefore extracted from-a text: the manifestation of the author’s behaviour, the expression of specific codes of behaviour, and the critic’s reflection on those codes. This programme, however, leaves out an important element, namely, the impact that the text had, or was intended by the author to have, on the behaviour of its readers or spectators. The purpose of the present essay is to redraw Greenblatt’s programme by adding considerations on the interpretive practices undertaken by the intended recipients of a text. To do so, I will focus on the possible response of those who were part of the audience during the performance of Shakespeare’s Othello in Shakespeare’s own time, particularly on their response to the manner in which the question of self-identity is addressed in the play. My thesis is that Shakespeare’s play aimed to contain the widely circulating notion that social mobility is a desirable goal for the individual, and that he did so by reshaping the fantasy of the desire fulfilled into the nightmare of the self destroyed. The message thus transmitted to the audience would thus be construed as a warning against such desires. However, Shakespeare’s message could only succeed if the audiences were willing to agree with the principles underlying his warning; and this, in turn, is only possible if they saw themselves

represented in, and were capable of empathizing with, Othello. Additional goals of this essay are therefore to analyze the ways in which empathy and identification could have been triggered and the circumstances that could permit it, and to consider the consequences that such effect could have on the audience's final response to the play. Ultimately, this essay aims to show how Shakespeare's awareness of the conditions of reception could determine the nature of his own ideological proposals.

The publication of Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* in 1980 opened the path for a long-lasting avenue of criticism. His contribution had two remarkable achievements within the field of English Renaissance Studies: on the one hand, he gave new centrality in the analysis of Renaissance culture to the manner in which personal identity was shaped by the forces at work in Renaissance society; on the other, he provided a new critical methodology, which eventually came to be known as New Historicism but at the time was defined in more general terms as a "programme" for a "poetics of culture" (1980:5). The programme was based on a set of interpretive practices with their focus on three basic aspects which, he assumed, could be reflected in—and therefore extracted from—a text: the manifestation of the author's behaviour, the expression of specific codes shaping behaviour (including the poet's as well as that of other individuals), and the reflection upon those codes (1980:4). Critical interpretation, asserted Greenblatt, must consider all three aspects in order to provide as full a panorama as possible of the ways in which those codes actuated in a literary text. However, this approach is essentially text-centred—or to be more precise, essentially text-targeted, since it is based on the manner in which the text is shaped (targeted) by external forces in order to turn it into a vehicle for the expression of specific value systems. His programme leaves out what, in my opinion, is another important aspect of literary communication: namely, the ways in which these codes operate *from* the text and attempt to condition the behaviour of its readers or spectators (the text's targets). To be fair, Greenblatt does not ignore this aspect, and does devote some space to discuss it in his analysis of specific literary texts; but he, like many other critics of different schools, is satisfied with defining only a text's overt or implicit message and is only

circumstantially concerned with the way in which that message is digested by its potential—or rather, intended—recipients.

In my opinion, Greenblatt's poetics can provide a much better perspective by adding considerations on the interpretive practices undertaken by those recipients. The first goal of the present essay is therefore to redraw and implement Greenblatt's general programme by adding a fourth aspect to it. Hopefully, this essay will show how the introduction of the reader or spectator in the general pattern can help better understand the ways in which literary texts interacted within their social environment in the dissemination of specific codes of behaviour and (following Dollimore's assertion that "ideology exists in, and as, the social practices which constitute people's lives," 1989:9) of their corresponding ideological foundations. It must be noted, too, that the changes I propose are essentially methodological, and do not challenge the ideological principles of Greenblatt's criticism—or for that matter, of new historicism and its cousin-german school, cultural materialism.

A suitable case study for this kind of approach is Shakespeare's *Othello*. The second goal of this essay will be to focus on those who were part of the audience during its performance in Shakespeare's own time, in order to discuss their possible response to the manner in which the question of self-identity is addressed in the play. The starting ground for my analysis is not remarkably different from that posited by Greenblatt. My thesis is that Shakespeare aimed to contain the widely circulating notion that social mobility is a desirable goal for the individual, and that he did so by reshaping the fantasy of the desire fulfilled into the nightmare of the self destroyed. Therefore it must be concluded that Shakespeare cooperated with the aristocratic forces that saw social mobility, particularly in the kind that evaded control by the established institutions, as a challenge to their traditional rule and *status quo*. The message Shakespeare transmitted to his audience would thus be construed as a warning against such desires. However, Shakespeare's message could only succeed if the audiences were willing to agree with the principles underlying his warning; and this, in turn, is only possible if they saw themselves represented in, and were capable of empathizing with, *Othello*. I will therefore analyze the ways in which empathetic identification could have been triggered and the circumstances that could both permit and require it, and will also consider the consequences that such effect could have on the audience's final response to the play.

Ultimately, this essay aims to show how Shakespeare's awareness of the conditions of reception could affect the nature of his own ideological proposals in a way which would, perhaps inevitably, force him to be carefully ambivalent and make room for resistant or dissident interpretations.

1. Defining *Othello's* audience

The main premise of this essay is that the full extent of Shakespeare's message in *Othello* can only be measured in terms of its acceptability by the audiences for whom it was intended. This leads to the question of who were the audience of Shakespeare's *Othello*, and to the seemingly inevitable acknowledgement that there is no certainty that can sustain an answer. Andrew Gurr's thorough study *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* attests to their complex heterogeneity. The elusiveness and scarcity of direct contemporary evidence about this topic can only make matters more difficult, particularly when it comes to defining playgoers not merely by class but above all by "mental composition," that is, by their response and their "mind-sets" (Gurr, 2004:96). But the question placed above presupposes a sociological approach that can only lead to a dead-end. In order to move forward, it would be necessary to focus not so much on who really were Shakespeare's audience but on who did Shakespeare have in mind as potential recipients. This is also highly elusive ground, and it brings us dangerously close to the much-derided concept of authorial intention (the intentional fallacy). However, I believe it is time to revive this concept, as reception theorists and literary pragmatists have done. This can be made possible if it is accepted that Shakespeare (like most if not all writers) was aware of two basic premises: in the first place, that his plays—*Othello* among them—were the vehicle for the transmission of a specific political or ideological message; and secondly, that in order to make his plays serve that purpose he had to consider his audiences believed in and what they could be willing to assimilate in their interaction with the play and its message. If so, a consequential third premise would be that he was also aware of the need to provide the means to make the message palatable in order to make it go through. This would especially be the case if he anticipated resistance to its acceptability. For critical purposes, the means or resources applied by a writer could be a suitable indicator to discern the

kind of response that the writer anticipated and therefore to identify the type of audience imagined.

These premises can be easily integrated within the perspective of new historicism. The idea of an audience interacting with a text and, through it, with its author might in principle not seem to be quite agreeable: as Greenblatt restricted his analysis of institutional influence in shaping modes of behaviour to its manifestation in the author's own behaviour and therefore in the modes of behaviour represented in his literary production, he gave the impression that those institutional forces operated hegemonically, and that there was no alternative for the recipients but to acquiesce. In this respect, the possibility of resistance or some other kind of initiative from the recipients would be futile as a critical argument.¹ This has led to criticism from people who could in principle sympathize with Greenblatt's postulates but found that new historicism theorized power as an unbreakable or monolithic system of containment (see Sinfield, 1992:35). To respond to these critics, Greenblatt has clarified that he views ideas flowing within society in a constant and ever-dynamic process of circulation and negotiation (1990:154-158). From the side of cultural materialism—which was also attacked for the same reasons— Sinfield has responded by putting forward the concept of dissidence to explain individual resistance to the ideas promoted by institutional power (1992:39-ff).

The problem with the concept of individual dissidence or resistance is that it may seem to lead again to a critical dead-end, especially if it presupposes the need to ascertain how an individual may react. Once it is accepted that an individual may respond on his or her own initiative, any kind of generalization is precluded. This, however, presupposes also that all individuals react—or may react—differently; and though this may largely be the case in the interaction of readers with their texts in our modern world, it may not necessarily be so in the case of spectators watching a play in the early-modern world.

In order to better understand how plays operated in Shakespeare's own time, it may be convenient to leave aside the image of the private reader and to bring to the fore terms such as "spectator" and "audience"—

¹ From this perspective, even the author's awareness of his role in the transmission of these modes may be put into question.

though, again, a further redefinition of their meaning is in order. Gurr laments that “there is no English term which acknowledges the full experience of both hearing and seeing the complete ‘action’ of a play” (2004:102) and that critics must therefore resort to two inadequate terms: “audience” implies a crowd of listening people, and “spectator” refers to an individual who watches. He argues that the former has prevailed due to the progressive stress on the aural elements in drama; but its inclusiveness of a plurality of individuals under one single collective entity must also be taken into consideration. If, as he explains, early-modern playwrights used the term “spectator” in a derogatory manner (2004:102-103), it was probably because they did not welcome the expression of individual response or, at least, not the kind which stood out among, or contrasted with, collective response. As Gurr acknowledges eventually, a “fundamental contrast” with present-day playgoers, who are “set up, by their physical and mental conditioning, to be solitary spectators,” is that “early modern playgoers were audiences, people gathered as crowds, forming what they called assemblies, gatherings, or companies” and clustered around the stage to better listen to—and I would add, to better interact with—the actors (2004:1). An even more fundamental difference between present-day “solitary spectators” and Shakespeare’s audiences is determined by one of the conditions of the Elizabethan and early Jacobean playhouses: while today’s spectators are concealed from the sight of both actors and fellow-spectators, Shakespeare’s were mostly visible. It is likely that this visibility did not only encourage a more dynamic interaction between actors and audiences: it also made the latter aware of the presence of other spectators, and in a manner of speaking forced them to suppress individuality and go together with the rest of the auditorium—or, in cases of disagreement, with one of the parties involved—in the explication of their responses to dramatic action. As Bridget Escolme argues, “the cracks and fissures in dominant thought that cultural materialism has sought in the early modern drama are to be found at moments when the illusion of a being face to face with fictional presences in the theatre is at its strongest, and that this illusion is produced ‘outwardly,’ in the encounter between performer and audience” (2005:11). A dramatist or an actor with sufficient knowledge of the situation could provide the means to ensure collective or, if necessary, groupal response to better fulfil his goals.

An audience could then be defined as a group of spectators who respond together to the events shown onstage, who were intended to be the direct recipients of a specific message and were expected to assimilate it and yet were capable of resisting the assimilation of certain ideas if the message contradicted their own set of values. An audience does not remain a passive recipient in the process of their relationship with the performance.² Reader- and audience-response criticism has remarked that their participation is essentially dynamic. Wolfgang Iser has asserted that readers and spectators are willing participants in a “game” that consists both in playing along and being played (1993:273-280); and Hans Robert Jauss has defined several modes of participation which depend on the particular ties or types of identification attached to specific characters. More recently, Kent Cartwright has applied two basic responsive concepts, engagement and detachment, to analyze audience response to Shakespearian tragedy. In his opinion, “the shifting pattern of spectatorial engagement and detachment—sometimes called ‘aesthetic distance’—constitutes dramatic response” (1991:10). Like most response-critics, Cartwright is interested in the analysis of the production of aesthetic effects; but their methodology can also serve to ascertain additional results. In fact, in my reading of Shakespeare’s plays, Cartwright’s “aesthetic distance” can, indeed must, be combined with “ideological distance” for a better understanding of the processes at work. In this respect, engagement can be defined as “the experience of being absorbed” in a communal “immediate, sympathetic response, physical and emotional” and, I would add, ideological, that audiences “make to character, acting, language or action” (1991:12). Detachment, on the other hand, involves a process of “liberation” (1991:15) or self-consciousness on the part of the spectators which is activated by “our sense of removal from the point of view of any single character, our contrasting of events or attitudes, our awareness of illusion, our moral or intellectual judgments as invited by the dramatic context, and even our hypotheses about ‘facts’” (1991:14). Remarkably, Cartwright adds that “new historicism, with its interest in whether or not Renaissance drama subverts dominant structures of social power, makes the investigation of detachment particularly timely” (1991:14). In my opinion, however,

² According to Gurr, at the time of the earliest productions of *Othello* a new theatrical mode fostered a “self-conscious” audience by “flaunting the artificiality of stage pretence with metatheatricality, and insisting that audiences became not spell-bound believers but sceptical judges” (2004:184).

engagement, and especially the balancing of engagement and detachment, play as important a part in the analysis of the manners in which subjects relate with power.

The question remains, however: what ideas could be shared by all, or at any rate by a majority of the people attending the performance of a play, if their ideological and social extraction was so heterogeneous? One answer is that there are indeed certain universally shared values and notions; for example, that virtue should prevail and evil should pay, that must be made operative in a play but are nevertheless not the core of any given message; and then, another answer is that an audience can be identified by certain specific *common ideological denominators*, and that these can be recognized by the issues raised in a play (or, even better, in a series of plays), and, more precisely, by the way in which these issues are presented, problematized, elaborated and resolved.

It stands as a more than reasonable assumption that one of the major topics in English Renaissance drama is the definition of the individual in terms of his or her relationship with the world. A traditional view of the Renaissance “new man” has fostered the image of the individual coming to terms with his own autonomous self-identity. Two essential principles were foregrounded: the right to individual agency and the right to seek personal improvement socially and economically as well as intellectually and morally. It is also reasonable to assume that a significant majority of Shakespeare’s spectators sympathized with these principles; an indication of his awareness is the recurrence with which they appear as topics in his plays—or for that matter, in many of the plays written in the Renaissance. However, the changes effected by this new *Weltanschauung* were regarded as deeply destabilizing for an already unstable society: the rise of a new class which defined itself by the adoption of these principles subverted the medieval *status quo* based on the coexistence of the three estates and a strongly hierarchical organization of society; their unrestrained application now threatened the fabric of the new society. It was therefore necessary to implement means that could allow the ruling institutions to channel in and control individual initiative. One of the means for control was the promotion of a need for a strong-ruling patriarchal hand, represented pre-eminently by the absolute monarch and by ideological postulates that survived since the Middle Ages. As Jonathan Dollimore asserts,

The ideology of the Elizabethan World Picture was built around the central tenet of teleological design: the divine plan in-formed the universe generally and society particularly, being manifested in both as Order and Degree [...] Critics who have rightly repudiated the claim that this world picture was unquestioned orthodoxy have tended also to give the misleading impression that it survived, if at all, only as a medieval anachronism clearly perceived as such by all Elizabethans. In fact, it survived in significant and complex ways—that is, as an amalgam of religious belief, aesthetic idealism and ideological myth. Thus at the same time that it was unthinkingly (and perhaps sincerely) invoked by the preacher it was being exploited by the state as a ‘creed of absolutism’.(1989:6)

One of the vehicles for the transmission of this message was drama. As Franco Moretti asserts,

The rebirth of the stage can take place only when the system of roles that constitutes [the medieval] status society begins to give way, and the solidity of political bonds come undone in the course of the long crisis of the fourteenth century. Absolutism [...] has its origin in the attempt to halt this process. The feudal hierarchy whose molecular organization was in a state of extreme disarray hoped to restore itself by concentrating power in the hands of the sovereign. (1982:20)

Absolutism required the formulation of power on the basis on the undisputable submission of individual agency to a higher power. And in order to achieve this submission, it was necessary to promote both the immanent sacredness of the monarch and the innate inadequacies of the individual to act righteously on his or her own initiative. The first concept is foregrounded in more overtly political drama, particularly in the history plays;³ the second is the more recurrent one in tragedies in which the problematization of individual self-identity is a major concern. Problematizing, however, is a very risky operation. It requires the explicit acknowledgement of the existence of more than one position regarding both the nature of the problem and its possible resolution; it therefore entails the verbalization of the voices which the ruling institutions want to repress or contain. It is particularly risky when these voices represent a numerical majority and they are to be replaced by ideas promoted by

³ For a thorough study of this topic, see Christopher Pye's *The Regal Phantasm* (1990).

a dominant minority. In order to be successful, this operation needs extreme subtlety and cunning. *Othello* is a very clear illustration.

2. *Othello*, from success to tragedy

There is abundant criticism on *Othello*, and much of it has been written from the perspective of new historicism and cultural materialism and other associate critical perspectives in the last two decades. But a rather neglected aspect of the play, and one that I would like to foreground, is that, before *Othello* starts, Othello's life is defined by success. He is an outsider, a man from the margins of civilization, who relinquishes his ties with his origins, becomes a Christian, and finds admission within the centre of the civilized world (Venice), where he reaches the topmost level of his fulfilling profession, is admitted within the close circles of the nobility, and is treated with respect if not with admiration. All of that, with no more than his military skills, as he has no education nor the manners of a courtier. He may have an added quality, which must be mentioned if only because it is hinted that it may have contributed to Desdemona's interest in him: a physique that sets him in contrast with the "wealthy curled darlings" (1.2.68) of Venice's palaces and marks him out as an attractive male.⁴ It must be noted that the colour of his skin is not a deterrent in this story of success; rather on the contrary, it is an inducement remarked by his exoticism. It would also signify how racial difference does not stand in the way and that the alien can be successfully integrated within Venetian society. Othello's story can thus illustrate paradigmatically how the dream of individual promotion can be fulfilled, under suitable conditions.

The confidence and trust placed by the Venetian Senate on him does, however, not run parallel with Othello's confidence in himself or his personal qualifications. The most obvious sign of fracture comes precisely with his marriage to Desdemona. It should have represented the culmination of his integration in the uppermost levels of Venetian society, as well as the sublimation of a personal dream: he is loved by a woman

⁴ This aspect must be taken into consideration from another perspective as well: the actor who played Othello in Shakespeare's time was Richard Burbage, and his imposing figure must have played an important part in shaping the audience's reactions to Othello's appearance on the stage, especially to his first appearance, in act 1 (see Prieto-Pablos 1997). For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Shakespeare and Burbage, see Holmes 1978, esp. 170-172.

who is beautiful, intelligent and rich, and she is willing to have him as her husband. An adjective that should naturally come together with the others is “virtuous,” but this is in fact the one that triggers his personal insecurity. Before their marriage, the conditions of their relationship are closely evocative of the ones represented in Petrarchan verse, with him as the unworthy suitor and her as the female ideal. The picture drawn by Brabantio in 1.2. of her as a tender maid shunning all contact with potential suitors foregrounds this notion:

Damned as thou art, thou hast enchanted her,
For I'll refer me to all things of sense,
If she in chains of magic were not bound,
Whether a maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation,
Would ever have, t'incur a general mock,
Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom
Of such a things as thou. (1.2.63-71)

In this context, requited love is practically impossible due to the social and moral differences that separate lover and beloved. Othello's conquest would therefore come as an extraordinary achievement. However, to him this is beyond his own expectations, and almost incomprehensible, unless there is some hidden flaw in Desdemona; hence his own meditations on his personal shortcomings (due to his race, his education and even his age) to explain the suspicions aroused by Iago in 3.3:

Haply for I am black,
And have not those soft parts of conversation
That chamberers have, or for I am declined
Into the vale of years—yet that's not much—
She's gone, I am abused, and my relief
Must be to loathe her. O curse of marriage,
That we can call these delicate creatures ours
and not their appetites! (3.3.265-272)

He should construe their marriage as representing the full recognition of his merits; yet at the same time he fears that Desdemona may have overstepped the limits of female decency and married him to satisfy her sexual needs. “Othello,” declares Novy, “cannot completely free himself from the conventional assumption that Desdemona's marriage to him is unnatural” (1984:126). Her own acknowledgement

of her desires only serves to encourage in him the suspicion that she is not virtuous. As Dymrna Callaghan observes,

[Desdemona's] wish to accompany him to Cyprus for the consummation of their marriage, "The rites for why I love him" (I.iii.257), [...] might well be read as demonstrating all the 'venery' to be expected in a young woman. Such a display of apparently insatiable female sexual appetite severely problematises Desdemona's characterisation as a virtuous woman. (141)

Sexual appetite is—or rather, progressively becomes—an important aspect of their relationship, and one that does indeed become a problem. Greenblatt refers to Christian orthodoxy to explain how desire ought to be avoided even within marriage, as it would turn the lovers into adulterers even within the bounds of matrimony (1980:247-250). Having assimilated this notion as a new-born Christian, Othello can only suspect desire and, if necessary, destroy its source. As Valerie Traub states, the play *Othello* shows how "male anxiety toward female erotic power is channelled into a strategy of containment" which entails the dramatic transformation of Desdemona's body into a corpse (1992:26). Othello's desire would thus echo the kind of love evinced by the male lover in Petrarchan verse, and confirm his own unworthiness; but at the same time, his assumption of Desdemona's impurity would show to what extent she is not like the idealized women of Petrarchan tradition. An obvious echo of the development of their relationship can in fact be found in Shakespeare's own Dark-Lady sonnets, in which Shakespeare distorts the typical Petrarchan pattern by presenting a love relationship marked by the male lover's intense suspicion of his lover's unfaithfulness. In the play, Othello's consideration of Desdemona as suspect of adultery with other men as well as with him, and therefore as someone deserving due punishment, leads tragically to a double execution—hers ("yet she must die, else she will betray more men," 5.2.6) and his own.

Othello's attitude has also been analyzed as evidence of the effects of ideological assimilation. As Edward Said declares, "the conversion of the outsider to the service of dominant culture is a crucial feature of the European encounter with other peoples" (1980:71). Accordingly, Othello's immersion in Venetian society has led him to discard his original self, determined by the manners and values of the land of his birth, and to adopt new ones. But among these new values is the notion that differences are graded hierarchically, so that, even if he has found

accommodation in Venice, he is still a foreigner at the service of the State and also naturally inferior to those who were born in the elite and rule hegemonically. As Potter comments, “Othello may serve Venice and be devoted to it, but he is not ‘of’ it” (1988:193). Given his condition, he assumes that by marrying Desdemona he has abused the confidence of those who welcomed him. His speech before the Senate in 1.3, to respond to the accusations proffered by Brabantio, attests to the extent of his ideological contamination, as he does in fact agree with Brabantio that he has “enchanted” her even if he seems to be willing to undermine his accusations:

I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
Of my whole course of love: what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration and what mighty magic—
For such proceedings I am charged withal—
I won his daughter. (1.3.88-94)

The conclusion of his “tale” also insinuates that the feelings he aroused in her could evince perhaps a kind of sympathetic attachment, which is derived from her pity (1.3.166-169) but not true love.

All of this might have come to no evil, however, if Iago had not stepped in. Iago manages to increase the fracture in Othello’s confidence and becomes the catalyst for the tragic dénouement. Greenblatt defines Iago’s attitude toward Othello as “colonial”, in that the former regards the latter as “a fertile field for exploitation” (1980:233). It must be remarked, however, that Iago is an outsider too, and one whose ambition and envy is unfettered by any moral or social restraints. Unlike Othello, he has not found the recognition he believes he deserves; and this offers him sufficient motivation to exact his revenge against Othello, the person who should have granted him a better position. But Iago’s revenge also affects Venetian society, as he uses Othello to kill Desdemona, the figure who symbolically represents that society. In the end, all the destruction caused in the play comes from two people who share the same condition, being born outside the world which adopted them. The main difference between them is that Othello assimilates his own blame, to the extent that, in a final act of service to Venice, he becomes his own executor.

It stands as a significant element in the play that Venetian society is free from any blame in the events. This is, in fact, a key element in the definition of the play’s dominant message. To its audiences, it is a

parable of the dangers inherent to excessive ambition in those individuals who have not been marked by birth for a privileged position within society. Like Othello and Iago, those who choose to change their status without the supervision of those above are bound to fail and bring destruction to themselves and to those around them.

3. Audience response and political engagement

In *Othello*, the question of individual agency is tightly bound with the question of individual mobility. All three central characters behave as if conditioned by an innate need to take action in order to change their status, each of them in their own particular world and in their own way. Of all three, Othello, the uncivilized alien, is the most remarkable example, since through his service for the Venetian State he has earned social recognition. In this respect, throughout much of the play Othello's story shows how success is possible and therefore illustrates how a man may find a suitable path for self promotion with the only merit of his own personal skills. In an audience seeking the fulfilment of similar hopes, Othello's success must have prompted admiration. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare seems to have aimed to have the audience engage with the Othello of acts 1 and 2, at the same time as they would detach themselves from a Iago whose behaviour gives sufficient evidence to understand why he has not merited promotion. In the process of assimilation of the manners and principles encouraged by society, Othello has proven to be a good learner, whereas Iago has merely concealed his unsocial manners behind his disguise of honesty. Othello would represent an inspiration for those who feel themselves outside the privileged circles of society; Iago, on the other hand, would be the negative model of behaviour. Othello's marriage to—and previous acceptance by—Desdemona would therefore represent the culmination of a shared fantasy in which social promotion blends with sexual fulfilment despite the obvious differences between both partners.

Considering the similarities and differences between Iago and Othello, it is an apparent paradox that Othello alone should be branded by his race and colour. His race marks him out as different from all others, and yet as someone successfully integrated within the privileged society of pre-eminently white people. In the context of Renaissance England, his blackness would not necessarily alienate him from the

spectators, either. The presence of people of colour was so minimal and their impact on daily matters so limited, that English people would not see blacks as immediately threatening, despite their common presuppositions about black people's wild nature and about the negative connotations attached to the word "black". Moreover, to Shakespeare's audience, Othello's difference could symbolically represent their own difference, as they too would regard themselves as outsiders with respect to the privileged world to which they aspired to belong.

However, as is often the case in tragedy, engagement and detachment do not stand as absolutely separate concepts but blend together, or alternatively come to the surface, in the construction of a character's identity. As Cartwright asserts, "Shakespearean tragedy can systematically appropriate this detachment from the fictional persona and engagement with the actor so as to heighten the emotional power and complicate the meaning of the play" (1991:1). So, even in the first half of the play, Othello's image is not absolutely positive. This is due mostly to Iago's insidious yet ultimately accurate comments about him; but the pervasiveness of Iago's picture of "the Moor" must also be regarded as the evidence of the audience's predisposition against Othello. In my analysis of act 1 of the play (Prieto-Pablos, 1997), I tried to show how the audience's racial prejudices are deliberately placed by Shakespeare in a continuous flux between confirmation and destabilization and how Shakespeare made his audiences aware of a dark side in Othello that lies lurking in the first half of the play and will come to the surface and dramatically shatter his positive image in the second half. But, at the same time, Shakespeare also wanted his audience to realize the extent of their own ideological contradictions: even if they would empathize with a successful Othello, they would still be prejudiced against someone like him. The impact of the audience's awareness of their ideological preconceptions would be further intensified by their realization that even if they try to detach themselves from Iago, they must find themselves reflected in his racial prejudices. Therefore, as Iago is the bringer of Othello's personal undoing, so they are also the vicarious agents of his destruction.

This is in fact the first step in a process which has as its goal the production of the audience's awareness of their own shortcomings. If they see themselves reflected in Iago, then an important part of the plan is brought to a successful end; but the main objective will be achieved

through their identification with Othello. Having assimilated what Othello stands for, the alien whose violent nature comes to the surface when moral or social restraints disappear, then the final *dénouement* must be regarded as the inevitable outcome. Yet, because of the particular combination of engagement and detachment, inevitability does not entail passive acceptance. David Farley-Hills argues that “the feeling of detachment [is not] sufficient to prompt the clarity of moral judgement that is characteristic of the kind of satirical alienation that we find in Jonson’s plays. At the end of the play no clear moral judgement of the hero emerges; this is largely because he is presented so much more as a victim than as an instigator of the tragedy” (1990:120).⁵ Therefore, as Nicholas Potter confesses, “the point of the plays is that we must see Othello as hopelessly wrong, yet wish he were right. It is not that the one might or ought to displace the other. Our pleasure in understanding consists in holding the two positions at once” (1988:201). In fact, Cartwright points out, Shakespeare seems to have taken care that the audience respond in this manner by deliberately delaying the confirmation of Desdemona’s death:

Following his murder of Desdemona, Othello’s focus darts away from and then back to her body four distinct times, wrenching the spectator’s gaze and feelings with him. The breaks in the audience’s attention intensify its anxiety for her [...]. The scene’s structure (Emilia’s interruptions, Othello’s repeated doubts) insists, to the spectator, on the possibility that Desdemona lives, an agonizing uncertainty. (1991:1-2)

The spectators really hope she is not dead because her survival would entail the possibility that Othello and Desdemona’s relationship may be restored to its wished-for order and then Othello may be exempted from responsibility in her murder. And this would also entail the spectators’ own exemption from responsibility, dramatically motivated by their identification with Othello.

Desdemona’s death brings all hopes down, and confirms what emblematic and proverbial tradition had asserted: an *Ethiop* cannot be

⁵ Farley-Hills contends also that “in Othello we sympathize with a man who is different from ourselves” and that this is “partly because the play presents Othello as an outsider and misunderstandings caused by his status as an outsider are a crucial element in his downfall” (1990:119). But this is true only to a certain extent, and only at the end of the play, when the audience must seek means to detach themselves from him.

washed white, and natural differences can only be disguised.⁶ The audience's recognition and acceptance of this maxim in order to understand both Othello's nature and their own should work as the trigger for tragic catharsis. Othello's death is the symbolic representation of the audience's own punishment; but he is the sacrificial scapegoat which allows the audience to cleanse themselves and leave the playhouse purified, having acknowledged their own flaws. As Cartwright declares, "[e]ngagement with acting translates into exactly enough detachment from the hero at the end to afford the spectator a contemplative and valorising distance, with the blemishes of the hero's personality submerged in virtuosic portrayal. The audience needs this transference, for it must loosen its emotional ties to the dying hero enough to leave the play and the theater psychologically whole and at rest" (1991:6).

The tragic ending can therefore be construed as the evidence that successful mobility and full integration are not possible—not in the dramatic world, nor in the real one, be it Venice or England. In many of Shakespeare's plays, a central premise is that there is an undefined force, a sort of semi-divine providence, that restores all to their natural order and punishes those who seek to move beyond their place.⁷ As Dollimore puts it, "establishment providentialism [...] aimed to provide a metaphysical ratification of the existing social order" (1989:87). This applies to *Othello*, and through him to all those in the real world who share Othello's hopes, so that tragic catharsis would entail the "purification" of the audience's hopes of unsupervised mobility. The audience's involvement (through Iago) and identification (with Iago and above all with Othello) is therefore the necessary means to better express Shakespeare's final message.

Only a caveat is introduced in this premise: that successful mobility is not possible—unless properly channelled and controlled by the suitable hands of those who rule the movements within society. What the play insinuates in this respect is that while Othello remained at the service of the Venetian State and obeyed their orders all was well, and rewards

⁶ For an analysis of this topic, see Gómez-Lara 1997.

⁷ This was particularly so in the history plays and in some of the tragedies, as providentialism was used as "an ideological underpinning for ideas of absolute monarchy and divine right" (Dollimore 1989:89). In Shakespeare, providentialism also took the shape of Natural Law (1989: 42). For a discussion on natural law and order, providentialism and anti-providentialism in Jacobean drama, see Dollimore 1989:36-40, 42-44, and 83-108.

were granted by those above him. When he took the initiative and sought the fulfilment of his personal goals, his own wild natural self, suddenly unfettered, took over and all started to go wrong. Othello's primary cause of his fall was to assume the initiative in his marriage to Desdemona; in so doing, he did not incur in any legal fault, but he stepped over the traditional principles that state that it is the right of the father to decide how the marriage of a daughter must proceed, and that it is the duty of a servant to await the master's orders. The same applies to Desdemona, as she chose to marry without her father's consent. And to Iago as well, as he sought his way upward as a soldier by dispatching away those who stood in his path. The providential force which restores order was clearly helped by their natural inadequacies to take control of their self-initiative.

4. Problematising containment

With this message, *Othello* did not doubt become an instrument for the containment of social mobility, and Shakespeare placed himself at the service of his own masters. A significant part of his intended audience, even if it was scarce in number and perhaps hardly ever attended the performance of his plays, were the people representing the institutions that regulated social mobility and who had an interest in restricting the circulation of ideas which could subvert social order: namely, his patrons and, through them, those with influence at the Court of Elizabeth I or James I. These people would be satisfied with the message transmitted by *Othello*. But Shakespeare must also have taken into consideration his larger audiences, and among these he must have expected a considerable number (according to Gurr, drawn from the gentry and the Inns of Court) who could as a matter of principle object to a message which undermines their expectations of a better future, if not their own personal experiences. It is for them in particular that he developed strategies of engagement that prompted them to an empathy with Othello which could facilitate the assimilation of the message. However, even then he must have been aware that still some his spectators could have rejected the premises on which the message was based. Among them, there would be those who had attended the performance of Marlowe's plays, where he proposed a "subversive identification with the alien" (Greenblatt 1980:203). In fact, it may not suffice with stating that Marlowe was defined by his radical and Shakespeare by his conservative ideology.

This would constitute excessive reductionism and would require ignoring a prevailing force in the general policy of drama: to make a play as successful as possible it must be made attractive to as many people as possible. Excluding resistant spectators would mean that Shakespeare (and the King's Company) would conform only with those people who were predisposed to agree with, or to accept, certain ideological postulates.

Greenblatt himself had to acknowledge, after concluding that Shakespeare advocates for the submission of the individual to the institutional ideology that holds society together (1980:253), that "it will sound forced and unconvincing" to present "Shakespeare as an unwavering, unquestioning apologist for Tudor ideology" (1980:254). In fact, he suggests,

If there are intimations in Shakespeare of a release from the complex narrative orders in which everyone is inscribed, these intimations do not arise from bristling resistance or strident denunciation. [...] They arise paradoxically from a peculiarly intense submission whose downright violence undermines everything it was meant to shore up. (1980:254)

The possibility of dissident reading cannot be discarded at all; not only because a person may individually decide to disagree, but also because the play itself may have suggested such a possibility. This would indeed be facilitated by a subtle revaluation of the play's events and of the participants involved in them. Two possible options are suggested here, both of them based on the permanence of the audience's engagement with *Othello*.

One of the keys for these alternative interpretations would be Iago and a "what-if" question: what if Iago did not meddle in the lives of the other characters? The answer must remain as a mere hypothesis, but it does help to place most, if not all, the responsibility for the fates of *Othello* and *Desdemona* on Iago's actions. In this respect, *Othello* becomes the relatively innocent victim, and while Iago still remains a paradigmatic example of the evil inherent in the nature of common people, *Othello* could stand as the example of what could have been a successful integration and would be a suitable model for those spectators still willing to hold to their dreams of a better social position.

Another alternative view, one which Greenblatt would defined as "Marlovian" and would satisfy the more radical spectators, would have

society itself as the key. As Nicholas Potter asserts, Venice “was regarded as prodigious, in its way” (1998:201). To many people it would probably represent an ideal: it was a self-made city built from virtually nothing by enterprising self-made men who started as plain sailors, became wealthy tradesmen and ended up creating a new nobility which could compete in sophistication and respectability with any other contemporary society. That Venetian society should prove capable of integrating outsiders must have been regarded as exemplary and probably as enviable. But behind its façade, Venetian openness to the outsider conceals a deeply elitist society. It provides no real means for the successful integration of outsiders or aliens; in fact, it uses them and places them at its service, having them do what their restrictive moral codes forbid the Venetian elite to do. In this respect, Othello and Iago evince the situation of the outsider adopted by Venice: they are mercenaries, and are employed to protect Venice from other outsiders and to kill them if that prove necessary for the well-being of Venice. Alternatively, if their role as mercenaries is not needed, they may be used for entertainment, to provide excitement to the parties organized by the Venetian elite. But, being soldiers, they are relinquished to the margins of society and can find no real accommodation within it. According to Potter, “Venice’s ‘pragmatism,’ ‘diplomatic’ or ‘negotiated relationships’ between sets of discourses, does not permit the growth of a fully intercursive relationship in which the possibilities of discussion and translation may be developed, but works actively to keep separate the differences it defines” (1998:197). One of those possibilities would have been represented by the successful marriage of Othello and Desdemona. Moreover, by restricting mobility among those who wish for it, Venice engenders, and consents to the existence of, disruptive forces like those represented by Iago. What Shakespeare’s play would insinuate for those predisposed to agree with him would be that damage Iago provokes is luckily restricted to the domestic world of Othello and Desdemona and its close environs; but that restriction is merely accidental, as the characters are placed in the secluded world of Cyprus and its Venetian fortress. In a less secluded world, the effects would be more far-reaching. And this would be Shakespeare’s implicit warning against restrictive ideological practices, if the “tension between the ‘idealists’ and the ‘real’ world of law and commerce and political expediency” (1998:204) is not resolved.

It is unfortunate that we lack evidence of the response elicited by *Othello* among the spectators of Shakespeare's time. Inevitably, we must base our reconstruction of those audiences on our own responses in the present, under different ideological conditions, and these responses prove to be multiple and contradictory. However, it can also be assumed that it is necessary to avoid "reductive generalizations," as Greenblatt asserts, and that this multiplicity evinces the subtlety with which Shakespeare encoded his ideological proposals. In this respect, it can be argued that Othello's fate attests to the need to ensure control of individual agency and to the submission of the individual to specific codes of behaviour; but at the same time it would be necessary to acknowledge the existence of ideological fractures that could justify resistance to these fashioning strategies.

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PHILIP MASSINGER: THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONCEPTS WHICH SHAPED HIS IDEA OF ENGLAND

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Abstract

Philip Massinger (1583-1639) lived during one of the most controversial periods in England and Europe from a political and a religious point of view. His plays reveal the religious direction in which he wanted western civilization to progress, with special emphasis laid on defining the political identity of his country.

In studying Massinger's time, we are dealing with a period of abrupt religious ambiguity and political uncertainty. Politically speaking, the rule of the Stuart kings was leaving a lot of very dissatisfied prominent politicians and citizens, for these monarchs tended to abuse their views on personal rule with utter disregard for the function of Parliament, especially in the case of Charles I (r. 1625-1649). To avoid the influence of Rome in religion and politics, Henry VIII (r. 1509-1547) had decided to place the English Crown as supreme head of the Anglican Church a century earlier, and both Edward VI (r. 1547-1553) and Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603) had been happy to follow suit, in spite of Mary Tudor (r. 1553-1558) and her efforts to restore Catholicism in England. But the Stuart kings regarded this circumstance as a great opportunity to gain control of the government and the institutions for themselves and for their friends. *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) presents us with the first clear protest by Massinger on this matter (Ball, 1939:3-25). By favouring his own people, James I (r. 1603-1625) had broken with the free trade that the new flourishing city of London was demanding. Moreover, his nepotism resembled the hated monopolistic practices that

the Spaniards were exerting in the New World, which were blocking the access of the English to the profits derived from the exploitation of those territories. The person who had profited the most from such patents granted by the Crown was Buckingham, the regent of England at the time in which *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* was first performed.¹ Clearly, in Massinger's view, commercial monopolies had to be avoided, as a way to provide England with a new and innovative economic identity, which would differentiate it from Spain. And whatever measures the country adopted, it should be through an agreement between the king and the Parliament. *The Roman Actor* (1626) posed an interesting political question in this sense, and it would be only another one of the many works in which Massinger questioned the king's absolute power. The image of the Roman Emperor as the ultimate tyrant, both in a religious and a political way, is essential to Massinger, for he identifies a similar problem in the attitude of the late James I, and it is my opinion that he writes this play as a means to provide some advice for Charles I, at that time recently appointed new king of England (Butler, 1985:139-170). Charles, as I have stated before, would later isolate himself from the Parliament even more so than his father, and his rule was practically autocratic. Massinger probably thought that the Spanish kings ruled Castile in a similar way as the Roman Emperors ruled their Empire.² But such is not the case, for the kings of Castile had to attend the two main Parliaments of Spain (Castile and Aragon) to ask for whatever funds the Crown might need, much as the outcome would often suit the monarch's needs (Maravall, 1984:258).³ In this sense, both monarchies epitomised what Cohen calls the "partial absolutism" of the modern State (Cohen, 1985:136), and both were finding it hard to cope with the demands of a society which required further changes to the economic and social spheres within their realm. Massinger, despite being an old time patrician supporter by birth, finally comes to recognize the commercial forces that are shaping the new face of England and which will eventually improve the prosperity of the state; this is particularly

¹ The central character of the play, Sir Giles Overreach, can be regarded as a caricature of Sir Giles Mompesson, a prominent monopolist who had a protégée of Buckingham in previous years before he finally fell in disgrace (Ball, 1939:5-13).

² Howard thinks that the absolutism of Charles I of England is a reflection of the absolutism of Philip II (r. 1556-1598) of Spain (Howard, 1985:132).

³ See Kamen (1984: 246). I believe that Charles' approach to the exertion of royal power in England was even more authoritarian than that of Philip II.

clear in *The City Madam* (1632), in which the new rich struggle to understand old time etiquette, decorum and social responsibility, but become the vital catalytic impulse that will eventually push the country to a better position in the world (Gross, 1967:341; cf. Butler, 1982:157-187).

Throughout Charles I's rule, increasingly scarce Parliamentary sessions and his own progressively authoritarian behaviour started to frustrate the people, and arbitrary taxation and nepotism became rife before the Civil War broke out in 1642. Massinger criticised this again in his lost play *The King and Subject* (1638) (Tricomi, 1989:187):

Monies! We'll raise supplies what way we please
And force you to suscribe to blanks, in which
We'll mulct you as we shall think fit [...]

Even though these words were supposedly uttered by Don Pedro, king of Spain rather than the English monarch (Heinemann, 1980:221), Charles I censored it himself by writing on this passage: "This is too insolent and to bee changed" (Adams, 1917:23). He perceived Massinger's undoubted critical intention despite the disguise of the royal authority under the identity of a foreign king, and was, therefore, able to interpret the message implied by the playwright.

Massinger and his protectors, the House of Pembroke, were anti-Spanish (Maxwell, 1966:174). For Massinger, England in the modern world had to necessarily undergo conflict with Spain, the big power in Europe at that time. *The Bondman* (1623) is the first of Massinger's plays that depicts what, in his opinion, England should be: an independent, proud island (represented by Sicily) which would not give in to the big Carthaginian power, clearly depicted as an allegory of Spain (Edwards, 1964:21-26). *The Unnatural Combat* (1624-25) exposes the need to assist Frederick V, the Elector Palatine and the leader of the Protestant Union, who also happened to be James' son in law; at that moment, he was suffering invasion from the Spanish imperial troops due to his election by Protestant noblemen (Edwards & Gibson, 1976, vol. 2:183-184). Other plays by Massinger, *The Maid of Honour* (1621-22) and *Believe as You List* (1631) can also be interpreted as an urge to the English kings and to the Parliament to commit themselves to the cause. On the other hand, Wellborne's words in the final scene of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) signify a general call to alleviate the Spanish

pressure on the Dutch army during the siege of Breda by Imperial troops (Edwards & Gibson, 1976, vol. 2:273-275).

Despite such definite ideas in the political domain, with special emphasis on hostility towards Spain, Massinger's religious attitude was somewhat less clear. Religious ambiguity in England at that time meant ambiguity in its drama. It had all begun with Henry VIII's religious fluctuations, since he did not do much to enforce a ritual which would differentiate his new Anglican Church from the old Romanist practices. Following the death of his only male son, Edward VI, Mary Tudor took too strong a cause in favour of Catholicism and religious persecution of Protestants began (Schama, 2000, vol. 1:325-329). With Elizabeth I, the country returned to its purposefully Anglican "via media" and this time it was the turn for the persecution of Catholics (Milford, 1917, vol. 1:50-51). When James I inherited the throne of England, he proved to be a king educated under the principles of Calvinism. But paradoxically, in his attempt to reject the influence of Presbyterian Scotland as well as Puritan political demands, he restored bishops within the Anglican Church, where they had been removed from their position of privilege by Elizabeth I (Trevelyan, 1965:54-55 & 73-75). In 1623, during a trip to Spain in the company of Buckingham, Prince Charles became acquainted with Corpus Christy festivals (Loftis, 1987:154), and he had also been impressed by the ways and etiquette of the Spanish court, which he would later enforce as king of England (Smuts, 1987:154-187). He allowed Archbishop Laud to enforce his doctrine comprising a complicated mass ritual within Anglicanism, thus upsetting many Englishmen of the time, and most notably among these, the Puritans (Trevelyan, 1965:148-164). Queen Henrietta Maria introduced Neo-Platonism in the court, as a direct result of her Catholic upbringing and beliefs (Shell, 1999:147-148). Massinger probably perceived that the formal differences between Catholicism and Protestantism were not yet very clear in England, despite the efforts of the more radical Anglicans and Puritans to define the domain of the Reformation; especially at a time when religious persecution did not only affect Romanists, but also new groups of Puritans who had to migrate to the new World at the threat of Laud's resolutions (Trevelyan, 1965:164-167). After all, Massinger's trade was exerted by people of not very clear religious tendencies. Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was an example of an author who had been using religion for subversive purposes (Dollimore, 1984:106), and he was once accused of

adoring the devil. A few doubts may also be cast over the nature of Shakespeare's (1564-1616) religious allegiance.⁴ Ben Jonson (1572-1637) had converted to Catholicism at one point of his life (Bush, 1946:104-105, n. 1). Several of Massinger's friends and patrons were Romanists (Ward, 1899, vol. 3:11). And Massinger's mother was a Catholic (Lawless, 1967:1-9). Some claim that Massinger did not complete his studies in Oxford after the death of his father due to his conversion to Catholicism; but, even though some of his most prominent biographers favour this opinion (Dunn, 1957:49-50), it is an almost impossible point to prove.⁵ It is my view that the English playwright was interested in religious matters from a general Christian scope, and hated fanaticism and persecution within the Christian world.⁶ But the ambiguities of his time were also reflected in his drama. Let us take *The Virgin Martyr* as an example. It was written in 1620 by Dekker and Massinger. This is a play with a Christian background, whose central characters fight the religious tyranny of the Roman Emperor Dioclesian. It can certainly be viewed within the tradition of martyrologies of the Western world (Ward 1899, vol. 3:13); it could even be inserted within the tradition of a Jesuit inspired sort of drama called *Tragedia Sacra*, which at one point had been so popular in Oxford (Clubb, 1964:103-121). However, Julia Gaspar remarks on the connections of the play with the Dutch Hussists who declared their independence from Spain in 1620, and therefore, reminds us of the strong links with Protestant symbols appearing in the play; it was also performed in the Red Bull theatre, allegedly a Protestant venue at the time (Gaspar, 1990:137-165). Thus, we can understand the complex ideological network which was providing the aforementioned sense of uncertainty on the English stage of that time, and which affected Massinger as well as other dramatists. Not only was he familiar with the Protestant issues of his day, but he was also familiar with certain aspects of the Catholic ritual; in *The Renegado* (1624), the Jesuit priest Francisco appears in the attire of a Bishop, which leads me to believe that Massinger was therefore not openly against King James' views on

⁴ It is possible that the impoverishment of his father, John Shakespeare, came as a direct consequence of his Catholic faith and the fines which recusants had to pay at the time (Halliday, 1976:31-32). Milford thinks that Shakespeare was familiar with Catholicism, and that he died a Popist (Milford 1917, vol. 1:53).

⁵ According to Heinemann, Henry Parker, Puritan Lawyer, M. P. and Parliamentary leader, wrote verses defending Massinger when the latter was attacked for religious reasons in 1633 (Heinemann, 1980:220, n. 33).

⁶ "Fanatic or bigot, he was not" (Coleridge, 1865:xxx, n. 2).

the restoration of Bishops in England. In *The Maid of Honour* (1621-22), Camiola decides, at the end of the play, to enter a convent; a quite unusual ending for English theatre at the time,⁷ which adds up to the ambiguity used by Massinger in his approach to drama. He was certainly acquainted with the ways of the Church of Rome, which he used for dramatic purposes, and not always to criticise them. For, in Massinger's mind, Catholicism and Spain did not have to necessarily go together (Loftis, 1984:246).

Having already offered a brief insight into Massinger's view of the religious problematic at home, it is now time to check his opinion on Christianity and Islam. In Ortega y Gasset's opinion, Europe in the Middle Ages was inseparable from the Islamic civilization with which it cohabited, sometimes in a positive way, sometimes in a negative way, within an area commonly influenced by Greco-Roman culture.⁸ This belief is crucial if we are to understand the attitude that Philip Massinger held towards the Muslim world, which is revealed in some of his plays.

It was Koeppel who first established the relationship between *Los baños de Argel* (1615) and *La historia del cautivo* (1st part of *Don Quijote*, 1605), both by Cervantes, and *The Renegado* (1624), by Philip Massinger (Koeppel, 1897:97-104). This German critic regarded the former as direct sources of the latter. It can safely be said that both playwrights share a similar opinion of the Islamic world, in the sense that there is a clear impression of an awareness of it in their writings;⁹ they both recognise the existence of Islam as "the other" culture which inhabits the borders of the Christian world, and sometimes penetrates it.

They both focus on the character of a renegade; a man who happens to live on the boundary between the Islamic and the Christian world. Instead of exploring it, both playwrights stigmatise the renegade who does not want to convert back to Christianity: they characterise him on the grounds of greed, decadence, and deprived behaviour. On the other

⁷ "[...] Nor it is probable than any but a Catholic would have designed the dénouement of *The Maid of Honour*" (Ward 1899, vol. 3:11, n. 1).

⁸ José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) was a prominent Spanish philosopher who developed his career throughout the first half of the 20th Century. See his prologue in Ibn Hazm (1996:12-14).

⁹ Massinger's religious concern and his awareness of the Turkish presence are reflected in his work; see Cruickshank (1920:9).

hand Hazen (*Los baños de Argel*) and Grimaldi (*The Renegado*) stand for the image of the good renegade, for both of them are happy to endure martyrdom if such is the price to pay for the return to their native faith. They repent and manage to obtain their pardon, which is a very Catholic trait (García Puertas, 1962:39).

We may still find stronger evidence in favour of Christianity against Islam if we focus on the problem of religious conversion, which is quite prominent in both writers.¹⁰ Muslim women have to convert to Christianity in order to be able to marry the Christian hero. It never happens the other way round. The conversion occurs in the Spanish play, in which Zahara becomes a Christian to become Don Lope's wife; and it also takes place in Massinger's play, when Donusa embraces Vitelli's Christian faith to be forever his. Both women convert to Catholicism go to marriage untouched, and their virginity (both physical and spiritual) is cherished by them in a traditional Christian way. It is true that Donusa gives herself to Vitelli in the first scenes of the English play. But she does so as a Muslim, not as the Christian which she is later to be.

While Cervantes' experience of the Muslim world is first hand (which thus enables him to focus his dialogistic scope from both a cultural and a personal ground), Massinger's view is second hand. He had certainly researched the theme when writing *The Renegado*, and he took good care to show in the play whatever practicalities of everyday life in Turkey he may have come across during this research (Rice, 1932:65-76). But the final image he presents of Tunisia (which was part of the Turkish Empire at that time) is different from the picture cast by Cervantes. Moreover, Massinger is more biased in his perception of Christianity and Islam than the Spanish writer.¹¹ For the English playwright, Islam is synonymous with decadence, corruption, greed and lust (D'Amico, 1991:119-120). The image of the Turk is roughly the image that millions of English and European people held at the time, that is: rather negative. In *The Renegado*, Gazet declares that there is nothing wrong with abusing a Turk:

¹⁰ This aspect is clearly revealed in Cervantes' *Los baños de Argel*, in which Christian values get the better over their Islamic counterparts in Zahara's heart (Zimic, 1992:148). For a general outlook on the issue of religious conversion in Cervantes, see Di Salvo (1989:142). In Massinger's case, see Boas (1946:304-306).

¹¹ Throughout Cervantes' work, there is a gradually increasing pessimism in his perception of the role of Spain within the domain of Christianity; see Moreno Báez (1973:223-237).

Gazet. I cannot find
 But to abuse a Turke
 [...] must bee thought
 a meritous worke.
 (*The Renegado*, I, i, 21-23)

In this sense, I do not think we could speak of dialogism in Massinger in a Bakhtinian way,¹² and especially not to the same degree as the aforementioned case of Cervantes. This does not mean that Massinger does not recognize the Muslim world; in fact, the action within the play takes place in Tunisia, and in *The Parliament of Love* (1624), one of his characters is acquainted with the “morisco tongue” (which was still spoken in Spain in the early years of the XVII century):

Clarindor. [...]. I desird
 To heare her speak in the Morisco tongue;
 Troath; it is a pretty language.
 (*The Parliament of Love*, II, iii, 30-32)

As we can see, Clarindor even remarks on the beauty of the language in question.¹³ But the images of pillaging and immoral behaviour arise again with the raid by Turkish pirates at the start of the third act of *A Very Woman* (1634). Even though the action is set in Sicily, this is a particularly painful vision for Massinger, since there were Englishmen who converted to Islam and became mercenaries to raid the very English Channel, seizing ships and slaves for the Great Turk (Trevelyan, 1965:174).

We should now focus on the image that Christianity is supposed to produce on Islam (therefore viewing the issue from the opposite perspective); in *The Renegado*, Asambeg tells Vitelli when he insists on keeping his faith despite all sort of pressure from his captors:

Asambeg. Yet Christian, in reward of thy brave courage
 Bee thy faith right, or wrong, receive this favour
 (*The Renegado*, IV, iii, 162-163)

¹² See Bakhtin (1989), as well as Kristeva (1969:143-173).

¹³ Moriscos were all those former Muslims who had decided to stay in Spain after the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Kings in 1492. They had been initially allowed to keep their faith and customs; however, with the accession of the House of Hapsburg to the Spanish throne, they were regarded with suspicion and persecutions against their faith started. Finally, in 1609, Philip III (r. 1598-1621) judged them a threat and decided to expel them from Spain. We should not necessarily interpret that the so called “morisco tongue” was exclusively Arabic; it was a mixed speech made up of Arabic and Castilian Romance. Its rich mixture made it a very useful instrument of communication in the borders between the Christian and the Islamic world, and it would later give way to the phenomenon of the jarchas (possibly, the earliest poetical manifestation of romance literature in Spanish).

This scene highlights Massinger's point: Christianity provides its followers with a sort of inner strength that amazes the Muslims. Here are two more examples of such an effect on the Islamic leaders:

- Mustapha. I never witnessed
 Of such invincible fortitude as this
 Christian shows in his suffering
 (*The Renegado*, IV, ii, 44-47)
- Asambeg. [...] He that hath stood
 The roughest battery, that captivity [...]
 Can spare enough of fortitude [...]
 Will not, Mustapha,
 Be altered in his soule for any torments
 We can afflict his body with!
 (*The Renegado*, V, iii, 16-17 & 24-26)

This obstinacy is very much the same obstinacy that the Spaniards in Cervantes' play showed, with regard to both their personal freedom and their faith:

- GUARDIÁN: Carahoja, ¿éste no es
 español?
- CARAHOJA: ¿Pues no está claro?
 ¿En su brío no lo ves?
- CADÍ: [...] mas si el perro es español
 No hay de qué admirarme deba
 (*Los Baños de Argel*, Jornada Primera, vv. 549-552,
 880-881)
- REY: Pues no te canses,
 Que es español y no podrán tus mañas,
 tus iras, tus castigos, tus promesas
 hacerle torcer su propósito
 (*Los baños de Argel*, Jornada Tercera, vv. 462-5)

Both authors are enhancing their Christian determination and incorruptibility, which contrasts with the decadence and loose ways of the Muslims. To avoid a potential conflict with the English public, Massinger refers to his characters as Christians (that is, as members of the Christian world) rather than Catholics; thus, the fact that Vitelli, Paulina, Francisco and Grimaldi are Venetians becomes irrelevant to

the purpose of the play. Obviously, Massinger's audience would find it easier to relate to these characters as Christians in their struggle against Islam, rather than witness their deeds as mere Romanists.

It is also true that both plays present the need to renounce to the old heroic language of the past (Romero Cambra, 2001:12, n. 18). In Cervantes' play, this can be detected through its main characters' uncertainty about the role of Spain as a leading power in the Occidental World: in the final scenes of *Los baños de Argel*, the captives witness the mirage of the ships that supposedly come in the rescue of the Spanish, which turns out to be an illusion (Cannavaggio, 1992:39). In the case of Massinger's *The Renegado*, his character Vitelli declares his social status and his code of behaviour when he declares:

I'll show in my revenge that I am noble
(*The Renegado*, I, i, 20)

Vitelli is furious about the kidnapping of his sister Paulina by Grimaldi, who has taken her to Asambeg, viceroy of Tunisia. His words are later corrected and rectified by Francisco, a priest who represents the traditional role of the humanist as an adviser in the Renaissance court (Brown, 1999:25). His stoicism echoes that of "el Viejo" in Cervantes' play, for both become advisors to the central characters of their respective plays at a moment of great inner doubt and personal danger, enforcing a stoical attitude on their friends.¹⁴ This frame of mind becomes necessary because, in the Spanish play, Francisquito is about to lose his life for sticking to his Christian faith, in exactly the same fashion as Vitelli and Donusa are threatened to lose theirs for refusing to convert to Islam at the near end of Massinger's play. This aspect reveals both playwrights' disagreement with the supposed intolerance of Islam. However, we should not forget that religious persecutions of some sort were rife all over Europe at that time. In any case, this abandonment of the old heroic language of past times comes as a consequence of the new political and economical demands that the occidental society was making at the time, and which the monarchy was not offering to full satisfaction. That is why writers sometimes enforced solutions on stage which were not

¹⁴ For an overall view of the influence of Stoicism in the Elizabethan and Stuart times, see López-Peláez Casellas (2004:93-115).

happening in real life (Butler, 1984:23). In Spain, Lope de Vega (1562-1535) announces the demise of the old world in his play *El caballero de Olmedo* despite his sympathy for it (Cohen, 1984:197), whereas in England, Massinger uses his drama to demand a conception of a more shared power between Crown and Parliament, and his aim to reconcile the old, chivalric world and the new, commercial one.¹⁵ A successful departure from the former would eventually allow England to profit both socially and economically, whereas the inability of Spain to follow the same process would lead it to inevitable decadence.

Both playwrights expose the difference in attitude which can be perceived amongst different people within the realm of the Christian world, and which can be illustrated by the opposition between lofty and lowly characters. The former are characterized by a lofty approach to religion and morals, whereas the latter cast a materialistic and selfish picture of inadequate principles. Thus, we can witness the strife between el Viejo and el Sacristán, in Cervantes' *Los baños de Argel*, and Francisco and Gazet in *The Renegado*:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| VIEJO: | Ya vos
Tenéis ancha la conciencia [...]
Ya coméis carne en los días
Vedados |
| SACRISTÁN: | ¡Qué niñerías!
Como aquello que me da
Mi amo. |
| VIEJO: | ¿Ya tropiezas?
Que no caigas plega al Cielo. |
| SACRISTÁN: | Eso no, porque en la fe
Soy de bronce
(<i>Los baños de Argel</i> , Jornada Segunda, vv. 279-281) |
| Vitelli. | You make no scruple of an oath, then? |
| Gazet. | Fie, sir
Tis out of my indentures, I am bond there
To sweare for my Master's profit [...]. |

¹⁵ This is particularly visible in Massinger's play *The City Madam* (1632). It shows the necessity to integrate the opposing worlds of old patriarchy and new trade; see Butler (1982:157-187). See Edwards (1986:187-188).

- Vitelli. I wonder, sirra,
What is your religion?
- Gazet. [...] I would not be of one that should command me
To feed upon poor John, when I see Pheasant
And Partridges on the table
Nor doe I like
The other that allowes us to eat flesh
[...] though it be rotten.
(*The Renegado*, I, i, 14-16 & 23-29)

El Sacristán and Gazet express their fondness for meat, and in the case of the Spanish play, el Viejo expresses his doubts as to the honesty of his partner's Christianity, for he is daring to eat such food during Easter. Gazet adopts a similar position, and remarks on the fact that he is of a religion that does not restrain him from consuming his beloved fowl. This kind of careless, uncompromising attitude born by lowly characters, which results in an inadequate and undignified image of Christianity, was often criticized in Erasmus' work, as well as the excess of theological issues which marred the sincere and simple devotion which was favoured by the Dutch humanist (Lorda, 1981:80).

Taking into account these elements, we could perhaps speak about a mild Christian fundamentalism in Massinger, which manifests itself in the events shown in the aforementioned play *The Virgin Martyr* (1620), where he clearly favours the Christian martyrs who refuse to give in to the Caesar's orders to adore the Roman gods. However, this position on the side of the English author does not blur his perception of Islam as the other culture that inhabits the surroundings of the European domain, both geographically and culturally.

As a result of all this, due to this period of religious ambiguity and confusion that was taking place in XVI and XVII century England, in Massinger's view Islam is going to become the common "enemy" which is going to tighten up Christian unity despite confrontations between Catholics and Protestants. Such strife would be best avoided, for it could undermine Christian unity, thus allowing the occidental world to become an easier prey to Islam. For the English playwright, as for many of his contemporaries, the world belonged to the western culture (D'Amico, 1991:31). This is why he dares place Francisco, the Jesuit in *The Renegado*, as the pivotal character of the play. Much in the same way as Cervantes, Massinger regards Islam as the rival culture to Christianity;

but, instead of trying to annihilate it, the Occidental World should attempt to be better than it, and to grow bigger. For this purpose, Christian religious missions in the New World proved essential. For once, there is not an ounce of resentment in Massinger as to the Spanish role in those;¹⁶ he expresses the belief that Christianity must be settled in America in the scene of the Indians in disguise, which belongs to his play *The City Madam* (1632):

Lord Lacy: [...] Receive these Indians, lately sent him from
 Virginia, into your house; and labour,
 at any rate, with the best of your endeavours,
 [...] to make them Christians.
 (*The City Madam*, III, iii, 73-77)

The religious zeal which Massinger displays in these lines can rightly be identified with the zest for an Empire which Massinger no doubt wanted for England (Butler, 1982:178).

To conclude, for Massinger, the Western World was the epicentre of civilization, and it was identified with Christianity, held in a firm and simple belief (much as Erasmus and other Humanists had claimed), despite the evident tensions which often marred the relations between Catholics and Protestants at the time; hence the need for religious tolerance within the realm of the Christian world. At the same time, Europe stood for the cultural, economic and religious colonization of the New World, and the possibility of keeping the Muslim world at bay, in the belief that Christianity was, nevertheless, more compact and less decadent than Islam. And England's identity, in particular, came as a consequence of opposing Spain and everything which it politically represented in the collective imagination of the English (Demetriou Demetriou, 2004). To overcome the influence of Spain, England had to expand its presence in Europe and the West Indies. Moreover, England should choose Parliament alongside royal authority (instead of personal rule), and free trade rather than monopolies (both in England and the New World); all of which could only be achieved through a successful transition between the old chivalric age and the new commercial one (Clark, 1993:9).

¹⁶ Walter Raleigh expressed sympathetic views on the hardships which the Spanish had to endure in the New World, and Bacon justified its conquest by the Spanish after hearing about the supposed "barbarism" of the Native Americans (Cawley, 1938:302 & n. 176). Let us not forget that Massinger and his protectors, the House of Pembroke, were pro-Raleigh (Maxwell, 1966:174).

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THE CYPRIOT VOYAGE AND THE COMPLICATIONS OF IDENTITY IN *OTHELLO* AND *EL AMANTE LIBERAL*¹

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Abstract

In Othello and El amante liberal, Cyprus symbolizes the contradictions of the soul. Through a journey of self-discovery, Othello and Ricardo arrive at a hybrid identity, a mestizaje, as they struggle against the “green-eyed monster” of sexual jealousy. The Cypriot voyage in Shakespeare and Cervantes is a return to a chastened social order and to a tragic self-knowledge.

Shakespeare's *Othello* and Cervantes' *El amante liberal* explore the theme of jealousy in terms of a voyage to Cyprus and a subsequent return to the region that is now Italy. In both works, the turbulence of natural phenomena and Turkish hordes objectify anarchic forces in conflict with civilization. The Cypriot voyage corresponds to the inner journey of self-discovery on the part of the protagonists of Cervantes and Shakespeare. The return voyage reestablishes the harmony of social order. Cyprus is a crossroads where firmly held convictions are lost among shifting perspectives. It is the destination of souls in captivity, a spiritual background that evokes ambiguity, contradiction and the monsters of the unknown.

Venice, the foremost commercial and naval power in the eastern Mediterranean during the fifteenth century, acquired Cyprus in 1489. Cyprus represented the limit of Venetian expansion, the frontier of its

¹ An earlier version of this essay appeared in the 1994-95 Modern Greek Studies Yearbook.

civilization. The fall of Cyprus to the Turks in 1571 overshadows the background of both *Othello* (1604) and *El amante liberal* (1613).

El amante liberal begins after the fall of Cyprus to the Turks. Cervantes served as a private in the armada that defeated the monumental Turkish armada in the battle of Lepanto in October 1571. Cervantes was severely wounded in the battle, losing the use of his left hand. Taken prisoner a few years later by corsairs, Cervantes was held for ransom in Algiers. At the time of Cervantes' captivity, Cyprus was a place where slaves were in transit as they were sold and bartered (Jennings, 1993:7).

El amante liberal opens with the exclamation of a Christian captive, Ricardo, as he contemplates the ruins of Nicosia:

O lamentables ruinas de la desdichada Nicosia, apenas enjutas de la sangre de vuestros valerosos y mal afortunados defensores [...] Si como carecéis de sentido le tuviérades ahora, en esta soledad donde estamos, pudiéramos lamentar juntas nuestras desgracias, y quizá el haber hallado compañía en ellas aliviara nuestro tormento [...] (137)

O lamentable ruins of the ill-fated Nicosia, still moist with the blood of your valorous and unfortunate defenders! Were you capable of feeling, we might jointly bewail our disasters in this solitude, and perhaps find some relief for our sorrows in mutually declaring them [...] (1960:8)

The ruins of Nicosia reflect the desolation of Ricardo. Américo Castro (1972:76) notes, in regard to Cervantes' characters, that: "El punto de vista de cada uno va expresando la forma de lo que se observa y sus varias facetas [...] la figura literaria percibirá aquella faceta a tono de su estado psíquico... el camino viene trazado por la psique". "The point of view of each one expresses the form of what is observed and its various facets [...] the literary character will perceive those facets according to the tone of one's psychological condition [...] the way is delineated by the psyche". The towers of Nicosia, demolished during the Turkish invasion of 1570, evoke the devastation caused by Ricardo's jealous rage. They express Ricardo's "miserable estrechez" (137) "wretched distress" (1960:8) as captive, reflecting the cemetery of the passions that once reigned in him.

The ambiguous, indeterminate character of Cyprus underscores the confusion and conflict within Ricardo. More than Constantinople or

Algiers, Cyprus suggests the uneasy coexistence of incongruous dimensions, of the confluences of Islam and Christianity, of the contradictions of the soul. Cyprus is associated with loss, displacement and irremediable changes of fortune. Mahamut, a renegade who has forsworn Christianity for Islam but who would like to be reconciled to Catholicism, describes it:

Bien tendrás que llorar [...] si en esas contemplaciones entras; porque los que vieron habrá dos años a esta nombrada y rica isla de Chipre en su tranquilidad y sosiego, gozando sus moradores en ella de todo aquello que la felicidad humana puede conceder a los hombres, y ahora los ve o contempla, o desterrados della o en ella cautivos y miserables, ¿cómo podrá dejar de no dolerse de su calamidad y desventura? (138)

Such a sight as that might well move you to tears... for any one who saw this famous and plenteous isle of Cyprus about two years ago, when its inhabitants enjoyed all the felicity that is granted to mortals, and who now sees them exiled from it, or captive and wretched, how would it be possible not to mourn over its calamity? (1960:8-9)

Cyprus retains this troubled identity to this day, divided into two parts, one Turkish, the other Greek, as a result of the 1974 partition of the island.

We learn of the events leading to Ricardo's captivity when Ricardo tells his story to Mahamut. Ricardo's captivity, as much a spiritual as a physical condition, is the consequence of his actions. Ricardo's anguish results from an unbalanced outlook which Cervantes describes as "propia condición de afligidos que llevados de sus imaginaciones, hacen y dicen cosas ajenas de toda razón y buen discurso" (137) "common habit with the afflicted, who, carried away by their imaginations, say and do things inconsistent with all sense and reason" (1960:8). Ricardo cannot yet unravel what he calls "el confuso laberinto de mis males" (140) "the confused labyrinth of my woes" (1960:10), but his pain has already begun the catharsis that leads to his spiritual freedom.

Recounting the events in Sicily that led to his captivity, Ricardo tells Mahamut how his love for Leonisa culminated in "la mayor y más cruel rabia de los celos" (143) "an infernal fury of jealousy" (1960:12). Ricardo hated Leonisa's intimacy with Cornelio, whom he calls a "mancebo galán, atildado, de blandas manos y rizos cabellos, de voz meliflua

y de amorosas palabras” (143) “spruce young gallant, point-de-vice in his attire, with white hands, curly locks, mellifluous voice, amorous discourse” (1960:12). He follows the couple to a garden by the sea, where they had gone with their relatives. There, Ricardo furiously assaults Cornelio who flees, and then attacks his relatives who proceed to defend themselves. At that moment, providence intervenes: Turkish pirates suddenly appear and, after bloody combat, capture Ricardo and Leonisa. Jennifer Lowe (1970-71:400-03) suggests that Ricardo’s violence and lack of self-control are responsible for his captivity and loss of free will.

Ricardo escapes hanging when Leonisa tells the Turks that he would bring a large ransom. The corsairs negotiate ransoms for Ricardo and Leonisa, but are forced to flee the coast of Sicily when enemy ships approach. Leonisa is separated from Ricardo when a Greek renegade, Yusuf, purchases her from the captain of the Turkish galley. As the galley bearing Ricardo draws away from the shore, a storm approaches and both Ricardo and Leonisa faint owing to their extreme distress. The storm breaks at this time: a terrible wind echoes Ricardo’s lamentations; its strength underscores the violence of his passion. Although he survives the storm, Ricardo becomes the slave of Hazán Bajá (Hassan Pasha), the governor of Tripoli, and goes to Cyprus when his master replaces Alí Bajá (Ali Pasha) as governor. Leonisa, whom Ricardo thought had perished in the storm, turns up during the transfer of power between governors, to be sold to the highest bidder. As Hazán Bajá and Alí Bajá try to outbid one another, both professing to want to send Leonisa to Constantinople as a gift to the Sultan, the qadi, or judge, intervenes as mediator, secretly scheming to keep Leonisa for himself. When the qadi leaves for Constantinople, two vessels attack his ship, one bearing the men of Hazán Bajá, the other those of Alí Bajá. In the ensuing fighting, most of the combatants are killed or wounded. Ricardo, Mahamut and several Greek Christian members of the crew take the opportunity to seize the vessels and return to Sicily.

In Cyprus, Ricardo broods over the cause of his captivity. Previously, Ricardo had exalted Leonisa with stock praises, describing her as “una por quien los poetas cantaban que tenía los cabellos de oro, y que eran sus ojos dos resplandecientes soles, y sus mejillas purpúreas rosas, sus dientes perlas, sus labios rubíes, su garganta alabastro” (142) “One, of whom the poets sang that she had hair of gold, that her eyes were two shining suns, her cheeks roses, her teeth pearls, her lips rubies, her

neck alabaster” (1960:11). Ricardo’s conversion of Leonisa into a precious object should be viewed in the light of Cervantes’ ironic commentary in the words of the protagonist of *El licenciado Vidriera*:

Otra vez le preguntaron qué era la causa de que los poetas, por la mayor parte, eran pobres. Respondió que porque ellos querían, pues estaba en su mano de ser ricos, si se sabían aprovechar de la ocasión que por momentos traían entre las manos, que eran las de sus damas, que todas eran riquísimas en extremo, pues tenían los cabellos de oro, frente de plata bruñida, los ojos de verdes esmeraldas, los dientes de marfil, los labios de coral y la garganta de cristal transparente [...]. (60)

On another occasion they asked him why it was that most poets were poor, and he replied that it was because they chose to be, since they had it in their power to be rich if they only knew how to make use of the wealth that lay in their hands at times— namely, that of their ladies, who were all exceedingly opulent in golden locks, brows of burnished silver, eyes that were green emeralds, teeth of ivory, coral lips, and throats of transparent crystal, while their tears were liquid pearls [...] (1950:101).

Cervantes conveys the absurdity of a language that obscures the essential humanity of a woman and converts her into an object of a man’s passion rather than the subject of her destiny.

What results from the journey into captivity in Cyprus is a sea change of the spirit, as Ricardo discovers what it is like to be treated like a slave and an object. Ricardo’s transformation takes place in the context of a violent society where people are bought and sold. He witnesses the corruption of justice in Turkish society, seeing love bartered and negotiated as with the qadi who competes with two governors for possession of Leonisa. He sees Halima, the qadi’s wife, contrive to keep “Mario” (Ricardo’s assumed name) for herself. Ricardo initially uses a false name so that Leonisa will not hear of him until he goes to her to plan their escape with the assistance of Mahamut. Ricardo’s false name reminds us of the hidden self that he nurtures as a counterweight to the mendacity and corruption around him. He sees the Turks change their dress and flag so as to better deceive one other.

In reaction to the degradation he witnesses, Ricardo learns how to defer gratification and how to love selflessly. Harry Sieber (1982:24-5)

notes that Ricardo learns to distinguish liberty from liberality, offering his wealth for the freedom of Leonisa and the rescuing of his soul. Sieber cites a definition of liberality by the famous seventeenth century lexicographer, Covarrubias: “[...] el que graciosamente, sin tener respeto a recompensa alguna, hace bien y merced a los menesterosos, guardando el modo debido para no dar en el extremo de pródigo; de donde se dijo liberalidad la gracia que se hace” “the one who freely, without consideration for any reward, is good and charitable to the needy, taking care to be so in such a way as not to fall into an extreme of prodigality; this kindness being known as liberality”. The voyage in the work of Cervantes is a purification rite (Rosales, 1985:320). When Ricardo returns to his native land, Sicily, he recognizes that he has no right to coerce Leonisa into marriage. He thus overcomes the inclinations of base nature, typified by the sordid intrigues of the Turkish characters. Although Leonisa had earlier rejected Ricardo for his arrogance and his possessiveness, she chooses him over Cornelio as her future spouse upon their return to Sicily, for she had seen Ricardo become a selfless and generous lover.

The time of action in *Othello* precedes the Turkish capture in 1522 of Rhodes, an important island fortress that lay between the Venetian strongholds of Crete and Cyprus. The designation of Othello to deal with the Turkish threat to Cyprus has a historical basis. The Venetian Council would appoint a Proveditor-General to take military control of Cyprus for two years whenever the Turks threatened to attack. The tragic events of *Othello* take place at Famagusta, the scene of slaughter and sorrow when the city fell to the Turks after a siege. The movement in the play, as in *El amante liberal*, is from what is now Italy to Cyprus and back again. This movement takes Othello, like Ricardo, into spiritual captivity as his consuming jealousy destroys his sense of justice.

Othello begins with the imminence of hostilities. The Venetian senators meet to discern the meaning behind Turkish naval movements, correctly guessing that the Turks are feigning movement towards Rhodes so as better to attack Cyprus, which is vulnerable. Embittered that Othello has passed him over for promotion in favor of Cassio, Iago also plans a subtle attack. Urging on Rodrigo, who had unsuccessfully courted Desdemona, Iago wakes up Brabantio by shouting that his daughter, Desdemona, has eloped with the Moor Othello, a mercenary at the service of Venice.

Brabantio is skeptical at first, believing himself secure in Venice where the rule of law and reason prevails. However, when he discovers that his daughter has indeed departed, he quickly takes up arms and gathers his followers. Although Brabantio confronts Othello, Brabantio's fellow senators quickly bring the situation under control, having discovered that Desdemona has eloped with Othello of her own free will in order to marry him. In Venice, institutions can cope with anarchic passions and rivalries, for as P. G. A. Pocock observes,

The *mito di Venezia* consists in the assertion that Venice possesses a set of regulations for decision-making which ensure the complete rationality of every decision and the complete virtue of every decision-maker. Venetians are not inherently more virtuous than other men, but they possess institutions which make them so. (Goldberg, 1989:76)

The calm certitude of the Venetian Senate contrasts with the confusion and deceit that Othello will encounter in Cyprus. There he will not have recourse to the measured opinions of elder statesmen, only to the force of his own authority and will. As Othello departs for Cyprus to counter the Turkish threat, Iago conjures a terrible plot that will destroy Othello, saying in the concluding lines of act I, "I have't! It is engendered! Hell and night / Must bring this monstrous birth to the world's light". (1.3.394-5). Disorder and evil are let loose on the world. Act II opens with news of the tremendous storm that destroys the Turkish fleet. The storm that delivers Cyprus is chaos released, a spiritual premonition of the fears and terrors that Othello will be forced to weather alone on the island. Alvin Kernan (1986:xxvii) describes Cyprus as a weakly defended outpost on the frontier between The City, symbolized by Venice, and barbarism. It is a place where passions become fatal and where collective life gives way to the interests of the individual.

Othello misreads his fellow men in Cyprus, telling Desdemona just after their arrival there, "I have found great love amongst them". (2.1.203). The tragic irony of his words is heightened as Iago plays on his fears. Iago's words about Othello recall both the feint of the Turks towards Rhodes in the first act of *Othello* and the manner in which the Turks change flags in *El amante liberal*: "Though I do hate him as I do hell-pains, / Yet, for necessity of present life / I must show out a flag and a sign of love, / Which is indeed but sign" (1.1.151-54). Iago alludes to his dark side when he tells Rodrigo "[...] I am not what I am". (1.1. 62),

and in his response to Desdemona, who scolds him for slandering women: “Nay it is true, or else I am a Turk” (2.1.113).

Iago discredits Cassio, Othello’s lieutenant, by instigating a brawl, while ingratiating himself to Othello. As a result, he distorts Othello’s perceptions of Cassio, whose good looks and polished manners resemble those of Cornelio in *El amante liberal*. Kernan notes that the result is one of estrangement, as social ties and loyalties are betrayed:

The General is set against his officer, husband against wife, Christian against Christian, servant against master [...] Manners disappear as the Moor strikes his wife publicly and treats her maid as a procuress. The brightly lighted Senate chamber is now replaced with a dark Cyprus street where Venetians cut one another down and men are murdered from behind. (1986:xxix)

This social dissolution is at the heart of the tragedy we witness, culminating in the strangling of Desdemona by Othello, who has become the very barbarian he was sent to fight. Othello is a man fallen from grace, a civilized savage reverting to his origins. Initially, the restraint of civilization prevails, as when Othello admonishes his brawling soldiers, Montano and Cassio: “Why, how now, ho? From whence ariseth this? / Are we turned Turks, and to ourselves do that / Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites? / For Christian shame put by this barbarous brawl!” (2.3.168-71). But Iago pushes Othello to the brink of madness. Othello conveys his growing identification with the Turk through a somber geography of the spirit, as when he compares his anger to the course of the Pontic (Black) Sea, a Turkish sea:

Iago.	Patience, I say. Your mind may change.
Othello.	Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic Sea, Whose icy current and compulsive course Nev’r keeps retiring ebb, but keeps due on To the Propontic and the Hellespont, Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace, Shall nev’r look back, nev’r ebb to humble love, (3.3.450-55)

After he discovers Iago’s treachery, wounds Iago and is disarmed, Othello is asked by Ludovico, a Venetian officer, how it came about that a good man had fallen to the practice of a slave. Like Ricardo in *El amante liberal*, Othello is made a slave by his consuming jealousy. As he stabs himself, Othello is both executioner and criminal, Christian and Turk, his identity as divided as that of Cyprus itself:

[...] Set you down this.
 And say besides that in Aleppo once,
 where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
 I took by th' throat the circumcised dog
 And smote him — thus. (5.2.348-52)

Ludovico makes the return voyage to Venice, where he relates Othello's tragedy to the Senate. The return is to a chastened social order, to a tragic self-knowledge.

In *El amante liberal*, Ricardo, like Othello, comes to embody the hybridity and contradictoriness of Cyprus, appearing, during captivity, to be a Turk but developing and keeping secret a separate system of values within. For Cervantes and Shakespeare, Cyprus is the graveyard of memory, the domain of uncertainty where the refinements of civilization are eclipsed by primal urges. It is that dark region of the soul where the line between one's enemies and oneself disappears. It is the place where, in the words of Matthew Arnold (1949:167), "ignorant armies clash by night".

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THE ILLUSORY FUTURE IN THE HENRY VIII PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE AND CALDERÓN

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Abstract

The characters of Henry VIII and La cisma de Inglaterra evoke the future in ways that subvert both their sense of destiny and orthodox religious perspectives on the English Reformation. The motif of failed pre-determinism undermines the notion of history as a redemptive process, revealing a schismatic world sundered from God. In these plays, the future interrogates the present to convey the imminence of social dissolution and the loss of unifying myths.

Alexander Leggatt (1990:216) observes that in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* "something is refracted in the dramatic idiom itself: the characters are realistically observed, yet show an awareness of the future that makes them creatures of theatrical artifice". This awareness also informs the characters of Calderón's *La cisma de Inglaterra*, who often unwittingly anticipate their historical fates. Evoking events beyond the dramatic scope of their plays, Shakespeare and Calderón represent the essential Renaissance experience that Jonas Barish describes: "Through repetition, through simultaneity, through its insistence on doing everything at once, it tried to keep us in touch [...] with everything that is, everything that has been, and everything that can be imagined to be all at one and the same time" (Alter, 1988:180). The slippage between historical contexts creates dramatic irony that subverts orthodox Protestant and Catholic perspectives on the English Reformation.

Henry VIII and *Cisma* dramatize the event that precipitated the English Reformation during the early sixteenth century: Henry VIII's

decision to leave Katherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. After the pope refused to annul his marriage to Katherine, Henry abolished papal jurisdiction altogether in England to become the supreme head of the Church of England. With the consent of parliament, Henry seized Church property and used the wealth to gain support for his religious reforms. English Protestants tended to view the political and religious conflict that accompanied Henry's separation from Katherine as a necessary precursor to the birth of the Church of England. Meanwhile, many English Catholics, including members of Shakespeare's own family, secretly adhered to traditional Catholic practices despite being forced to swear an oath recognizing their monarch as supreme head of the Church of England.

Cisma was first performed in 1627, during a war between England and Catholic Spain. By then, it was clear that England would not be reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church, despite the hopes raised earlier by the 1605 peace treaty between England and Spain and by the unsuccessful attempt by Prince Charles in 1623 to court a Spanish princess. Although *Cisma* concludes with María (Mary Tudor) triumphantly sworn in as Princess of Wales, Calderón's audience knew that Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn and Mary's half-sister, would ultimately rule over a Protestant England.¹

Cisma opens with a sense of foreboding. Asleep at his desk, Enrique (King Henry VIII) dreams that as he writes a defense of the sacraments, a shadow-woman appears and vows to erase his writing. After he awakens, Enrique identifies Ana (Anne Boleyn) as the shadow-woman who figuratively erases his mission to defend the Church (Stroud, 1997:258). Charles Oriel (1992:141) notes that when Enrique recounts his dream to Volseo (Cardinal Wolsey), it is the king's own left hand rather than a woman, which erases his writing, suggesting that the woman is a projection of his own unconscious.

Enrique casts the future in an aura of inevitability when he announces that he will leave his queen Catalina (Katherine of Aragon): "Pero donde es ley / es obedecer forzoso". Vaunting his learning and

¹ The historical Mary Tudor was compelled to recognize Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, as heir to the English throne. After Anne's execution, Parliament declared Elizabeth illegitimate. In 1547, Edward VI, Henry's son by Jane Seymour, succeeded his father as king. A regency council governed England as Protestant doctrines spread. Mary reintroduced Roman Catholicism as the state religion after Edward's death in 1553.

religious orthodoxy, Enrique uses the future subjunctive to warn his subjects: “Y el vasallo que sintiere / mal, advierta temeroso / que le quitare al instante / la cabeza de los hombros (576). As Jonathan Goldberg observes, “kings stand upon the stage as exemplars to their people, yet can only exemplify what they deny their people, the right to individual conscience” (1989:119).

In *Cisma*, characters blame their wrongdoing on ontological forces: Enrique claims that his errors are due to his passions (“que las pasiones del alma, / ni las gobierna el poder, / ni la majestad las manda”) (568); and Ana ascribes her betrayal of her ex-lover, Carlos, to her femininity (“Mujer he sido en dejar / que me venza el interés”) (572). Volseo sees his fate in the stars; he wants to be the Pope and interprets his horoscope accordingly: “Un astrólogo me dijo / que al Rey sirviese; que así / tan alto lugar tendría / que excediese a mi deseo” (560) (Oriel, 1992:133). Volseo will indeed attain a high place, not on the Pope’s throne, but on the cliff from which he hurls himself to his death.

The belief in predestination, which was associated with Protestant reformers during the Reformation, serves as Enrique’s excuse for his failure as a Christian king: “Esta fué mi desdicha, ésta mi estrella” (575). Enrique attempts to avoid responsibility for his actions, telling Ana, “mi albedrío / a quererte me fuerza” (573) (Oriel, 1992:133). However, the king’s own words, “Confieso que estoy loco y estoy ciego, / Pues la verdad que adoro, es la que niego” (574), confirm that he willfully rejects his religious faith and the right course of action. Enrique inverts the famous observation of Heraclitus when he believes, or wants to believe, that destiny is character.

The court jester Pasquín warns the king of his folly, but it is a servant, Dionis, rather than Enrique or his courtiers, who recognizes the prophetic gift of Pasquín, saying, “siempre anda adivinando” (563). Pasquín’s apparent madness, notes Francisco Ruiz Ramón (1984:74), is a stratagem that serves to expose the insanity of Enrique and his court. For Pasquín, madness permits an uncensored discourse: “si no digo lo que quiero, / ¿de qué me sirve ser loco?” (564). Insanity becomes a shield that allows him to tell the truth and even predict all under the guise of locura.

Through his jests, Pasquín reveals that kingship is but an illusion, and that, in the words of Jacques Lacan, “a madman who believes he is king is no more mad than a king who believes he is king” (Saltz, 2005:76c).

Pasquín's parable of a blind man who walked the streets holding lit straw is, in the words of Oriel, "a figurative representation of the dark and morally blinded atmosphere of *La cisma*" (1992:131). When asked why he needed light, the blind man explained that its purpose was not to help him see but to help him be seen. Pasquín extends the analogy to himself: "yo con mis locuras / soy ciego y alumbro a oscuras" (564), but his parable is lost on duplicitous courtesans and the king who, Pasquín hints, is a hypocritical "figura doble" (575).

One such "figura", Ana, conjures a false future when she promises to make Volseo chief minister but chooses her father instead, and she does so again when she pledges to love Carlos, only to leave him for the king. Catalina's faithful companion, Margarita Polo, sees Ana shimmer between her rise at court in the dramatic present and her doom in the historical future: "Con muy favorable estrella, / Bolena, en palacio entráis. / Ruego al Cielo que salgáis / (que es lo que importa) con ella" (567). Pasquín also sees Ana with a blurred double vision, and predicts that she will:

con aplauso lisonjero
subir, merecer, privar,
hasta poderos alzar
con todo el imperio inglés,
 viniendo a morir después
en el más alto lugar. (564)

Ana takes Pasquín's words as a good omen, believing "el más alto lugar" to be the royal throne, but her life will end, as Calderón's audience knew, on the scaffold.

We sense Catalina's tragic destiny when Margarita Polo plays on the dual sense of a *maravilla* as a marigold and a marvel, to sing of the destructive power of time:

Aprended, flores, de mí
lo que va de ayer a hoy,
que ayer maravilla fui,
y hoy sombra mía aun no soy. (582)

Catalina unconsciously evokes her impending death when she receives a letter from her estranged husband. She longs to open the letter from the husband she loves, but fears that it will confirm her separation:

Muerta estoy,
pues en albricias no doy
la vida a tanta alegría.
.....
que estoy tan agradecida,
y tan contenta en extremo,
que hoy aqueste gusto temo
que me ha de costar la vida. (583)

These words hold an ironic sense for Calderón's audience, which knows that Ana has poisoned Enrique's letter.

Cisma ends on a disquieting note. Having overheard Ana's amorous exchange with Carlos, Enrique grants María's demand for vengeance against Ana for Catalina's death. As Enrique's new heir, María looks to the future as she towers over Ana's decapitated corpse: "mis dichas serán eternas: / gloriosos triunfos me aguardan" (587). However, María's triumphant expectancy only deepens the despair in *Cisma*, for Calderón's audience knew that the five-year reign of the historical Mary had been a disaster. Like her dramatic counterpart in *Cisma*, Mary had to make compromises in order to assume power, such as allowing English nobles to keep confiscated church properties. For Calderón's audience, María's threat to heretics, "al que me jure, y faltare / a lo que mi ley profesa, / si no le quemaré vivo, / será porque se arrepienta" (588), recalled the executions of religious reformers during the reign of Mary, who failed to unite England. After Mary died childless in 1558, Elizabeth became queen, and Parliament again abolished papal authority in England.

Henry VIII was first performed around 1612, during the reign of James I.² Like *Cisma*, the play abounds in false futures that often take the form of suspect commissives and oaths. "By my troth and maidenhead, / I would not be a queen" swears Anne (2.3.23-4), whose historical counterpart was pregnant at her coronation, and who wanted to be queen (Shirley, 1979:150-51). "By my life, / This is against our pleasure" (1.2.67-8) vows Henry upon hearing that his subjects are in revolt against the heavy tax that his historical counterpart used to pay for his wars.

² Many critics used to attribute the seemingly disjunctive counterpoint in *Henry VIII* to coauthors Shakespeare and Fletcher working at cross-purposes. In recent decades, however, critics have come to view that counterpoint as integral to Shakespeare's design of the play. There is no external evidence to support the hypothesis of dual authorship (Rudnytsky, 1991: 43).

The future subverts the show of love between Henry and Francis, the King of France, at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Shakespeare's audience would have recognized their embrace as ultimately meaningless, for England and France resumed hostilities shortly after the festivities at the Field. The Duke of Norfolk can only hint at the royal hypocrisy: "Twas said they saw but one, and no discernor / Durst wag his tongue in censure" (1.1.32-33).

The martyrdom of Sir Thomas More looms in an unspoken future when Shakespeare, in a deliberate incongruity, places More in Anne Boleyn's coronation procession as the new Lord Chancellor. Historically, it was Thomas Audley who led Anne's procession as Lord Chancellor. The historical More resigned as Lord Chancellor when the English clergy recognized Henry as head of the Church of England, and was later executed for allegedly denying the royal supremacy.

Although the English Reformation underlies *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare alludes to it only obliquely. In the scene at Wolsey's mansion, two lords mock the Frenchmen whose vices were all the rage at the English court. Sir Thomas Lovell mentions Henry's proclamation for "The reformation of our traveled gallants [...] renouncing clean / The faith they have in tennis and tall stockings", to which Lord Sandys adds, "For sure there's no converting of 'em (1.3.19, 29-30, 43). However, the king proves a dubious reformer of English mores. Disguised as a masquer and pretending to be a French dignitary, Henry is smitten with Anne Boleyn, whose historical counterpart loved French fashion, having grown up at the French court.

In Shakespeare, Henry is not the Protestant icon whose image graced the title page of the Coverdale Bible, but a hypocritical monarch as in *Cisma*. We sense the irony when the king chides Wolsey for his lavish entertainment ("You hold a fair assembly. You do well, lord: / You are a churchman, or I'll tell you, Cardinal, / I should judge now unhappily") (1.4.87-89), for the historical Henry reveled in extravaganzas such as the Field of the Cloth of Gold and loved to dice and gamble with Frenchmen (Erickson, 1978: 31).

The characters of *Henry VIII* repeatedly misread the future. After his fall, Wolsey advises his secretary, Cromwell, to seek the king for safety (3.2.414-21), yet Shakespeare's audience knew that the historical Cromwell had been executed despite his service to the

Crown. Like Wolsey, Cromwell was of humble birth and enriched himself while strengthening his master. Both men served as scapegoats for Henry's unpopular policies after Henry's marriage to a niece of the Duke of Norfolk, who was the enemy first of Wolsey and later of Cromwell.

Shakespeare's Anne unconsciously evokes her own historical execution when she hears about Katherine:

O, God's will! Much better
She ne'er had known pomp: though't be temporal,
Yet if that quarrel and Fortune do divorce
It from the bearer, 'tis a sufferance panging
As soul and body's severing. (2.3.12-16)

Anne's "God's will" undercuts, rather than naturalizes, providential interpretations of Henry's separation. Anne's words again recall the fate of her historical counterpart when she learns that she has been made a marchioness: "Would I had no being / If this salute my blood a jot. It faints me / To think what follows" (2.3.102-4). Historically, what followed was that Anne would be beheaded, accused of adultery with five men, including her own brother. The lurid charges against Anne (whose motto was "The Happiest of Women") were probably fabricated. Henry had grown tired of Anne and, after she miscarried her second pregnancy, may have come to doubt her ability to give him a male heir (Williams, 1971:138, 150).

As William Hazlitt (1988:289) notes, Henry was most fatal to those he loved. The future eclipses the present when Katherine pleads on behalf of the hungry, rebellious textile workers. "Repeat your will and take it", Henry tells her (1.2.13), reminding us that soon Katherine will not be able to have her way (Noling, 1988:296). After Henry spurns Katherine, the dying queen dreams of heavenly happiness. "Spirits of peace, where are ye?" Katherine asks desolately (4.2.83), as she awakens and the celestial future dissipates.³

In the royal council scene, the historical future deconstructs the dramatic present when Stephen Gardiner, the bishop of Winchester,

³ Ann MacKenzie (1993:80-81) notes that Katherine's meditation on time, "Almost no grave allowed me, like the lily / That once was mistress of the field and flourished, / I'll hang my head and perish" (3.1.151-3) resembles Margarita Polo's song on the evanescent *maravilla*.

accuses Archbishop Cranmer of heresy.⁴ Even after the king reminds him that “Thy truth and thy integrity is rooted / In us, thy friend”, Cranmer insists that “the good I stand on is my truth and honesty” (5.1.114-15, 22). Tellingly, Cranmer is saved during his interrogation when he shows the king’s ring to the other council members. As he orders Gardiner to embrace Cranmer, Henry assures the council members: “As I have made ye one, lords, one remain / So I grow stronger, you more honour gain” (5.2.214-15). For Henry, honor lies not in personal integrity, but in servility to the king. The apparent reconciliation of Gardiner and Cranmer belies a historical future in which Cranmer was executed, after Mary became queen and appointed Gardiner as her chief minister.⁵

The ironic portrayal of the monarch by Shakespeare, whose family was persecuted for recusancy, highlights the subversive function of the illusory future in *Henry VIII*. Henry incriminates himself when he pronounces Buckingham guilty of treason on dubious grounds. The king’s verdict on the duke mirrors Henry’s descent into tyranny:

When these so noble benefits shall prove
Not well disposed, the mind growing once corrupt,
They turn to vicious forms, ten times more ugly
Than ever they were fair. This man so complete,
Who was enrolled ’mongst wonders [...] (1.2.115-119)

Renaissance tragedy, according to Timothy Reiss (1980:284), attempts to express the inexpressible, at once hiding and revealing what is unspoken in the order of discourse. As Calderon did through his “mad” character Pasquín, Shakespeare speaks the unspeakable in the words of a porter who harangues the crowd trying to witness the baptism of the infant princess Elizabeth:

[...] have we
some strange Indian with the great tool come to court,
the women so besiege us? Bless me, what a fry of
fornication is at door! On my Christian conscience, this

⁴ Despite their doctrinal differences, the historical Gardiner and Cranmer both served Henry well. Gardiner enjoined obedience to the king as the path to salvation in his 1535 *De Vera Obedientia*. Cranmer wrote a treatise on the legality of marriage with a deceased brother’s wife and later, as archbishop, annulled Henry’s marriage to Katherine. Cranmer also validated Henry’s marriage to Anne, but subsequently voided it because Anne had allegedly been engaged to another man and because her sister, Mary, had been Henry’s mistress.

⁵ At his execution, Cranmer exhorted those present to “obey your King and Queen, willingly and gladly” and also urged them, rather paradoxically, “to hurt no man” (Hutchinson, 1951:156). Gentle irony was the only way to reproach the monarch.

one christening will beget a thousand: here will be
father, godfather, and all together. (5.3.30-36)

In Shakespeare's terrible mirror, the "fry of fornication" reflects not just the dispossessed trying to look in on history (Dean, 1986:177), but also Elizabeth who was conceived out of wedlock. No mere figure of speech, the porter's "On my Christian conscience" mocks the religious expediency of a hypocritical monarch.

Shakespeare's alienating process culminates in the image of "the strange Indian with the great tool" which, since it comes after a gentleman's metaphor of Anne as the Indies, cannot but recall Henry (Cespedes, 1980:435):

Heaven bless thee!
Thou hast the sweetest fact I ever looked on.
Sir, as I have a soul, she is an angel.
Our King has all the Indies in his arms,
And more, and richer, when he strains that lady.
I cannot blame his conscience. (4.1.42-47)

Shakespeare burlesques a Reformation in which, according to Peter Rudnytsky "neither [Henry] nor his subjects can be sure to whom they are married" (1991:52), as when an anonymous gentleman describes the chaos at Anne's coronation:

Such joy
I never saw before. Great-bellied women
That had not half a week to go, like rams
In the old time of war, would shake the press
And make 'em reel before 'em. No man living
Could say 'this is my wife' there, all were woven
So strangely in one piece. (4.1.75-81)

The illusory future belies the joyous prophecy in the final act of *Henry VIII*, in which Cranmer foresees "a thousand thousand blessings" in Elizabeth's reign and a time in which "God shall be truly known" (5.4.19, 36). The prophecy is at once transcendental and historically naïve (Leggatt, 1985:131), like Gonzalo's evocation of the golden age in *The Tempest*. Cranmer's vision encompasses the reign of James, who became the patron of Shakespeare's company upon his accession in 1603 (Orgel, 1975:45). Much as Cranmer wants his prediction of Elizabeth's future reign to be understood as prophecy rather than as servility to the monarch "The words I utter / Let none think flattery, for they'll find 'em truth"

(5.5.15-16) so does Shakespeare want his audience to sense the truth concealed behind his seeming flattery of King James.

Like Henry VIII (and George W. Bush), James believed that he was divinely guided, fancying himself a uniter rather than a divider. James merged the kingdoms of Scotland and England in his royal person much as Henry had united the rival houses of Lancaster and York (Perry, 1997:155-56). Crammer encompasses James in his metahistorical vision, in which Elizabeth “shall be/ But few now living can behold that goodness/ A pattern to all princes living with her / And all that shall succeed” (5.4.22-23). This double entendre straddles the dramatic and historical presents: just as few of Henry’s subjects foresee the goodness arising from Elizabeth birth, so do few in Shakespeare’s audience find goodness in King James and his corrupt court.

In the epilogue, Shakespeare defers the play’s reception to “The merciful construction of good women, / For such a one we showed ’em” (Epilogue 10-11). Shakespeare’s use of the singular “such a one”, invites the audience to identify that good woman and thus fashion history out of its own judgment. In the spirit of the play’s subtitle, “All Is True”, the ambiguous, open-ended epilogue frustrates ideological designs and subverts Tudor mythology.

As Harold Pinter tells us, the elusive and contradictory truths of drama “challenge each other, recoil from each other, reflect each other, ignore each other, tease each other, are blind to each other” (2006:811). Such is the case in *Cisma* and *Henry VIII*, where the future interrogates the present to convey the imminence of social dissolution and the loss of efficacious unifying myths (Waage, 1975:307). In the illusory reconciliations and precarious restorations of social order, in the spurious unity of subjects strangely woven into one, we glimpse a violent and schismatic world that severs words from referents, oaths from the sacred, monarchs from their subjects, and the present from what is to come.

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Book reviews

**LÓPEZ-PELÁEZ CASELLAS, Jesús, David MALCOM´
& Pilar SÁNCHEZ CALLE (eds.) (2004). *Masquerades:
Disguise in Literature in English from the Middle Ages to
the Present*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo
Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.**

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Masquerades: Disguise in Literature in English from the Middle Ages to the Present is a collective volume edited by Jesús López-Peláez Casellas, David Malcolm, and Pilar Sánchez Calle which brings together, under many different perspectives, the recent research of a wide range of contributors engaged in a fruitful area of research: the analysis of disguise and its functions in literary texts in English. The volume under review makes excellent reading both for scholars specifically interested in the multifarious significations conveyed by the *motif* of disguise in literature and also for more general readers who may get a chance to become familiar with a fascinating phenomenon which, as the editors assert, “[...] involves a blurring of identity, both social and sexual” and is therefore “suggestive of a wider social, intellectual, and epistemological crisis” (9). Among many other interesting subjects, the volume provides full-length discussions of the ways in which masquerade and disguise “unhinge the long-established idea that gender and sexual identity are essential and given rather than constructed and even chosen” (10).

In the introduction, the editors proclaim that the collection—which is humbly characterised as a mere contribution to the current scholarly interest in this topic— makes no claim to be comprehensive. Yet, the successful exposition and analysis of the different ideological motivations for the use of disguise across literary history and the concretisation of

these motivations in the realms of power, identity, madness, and gender—the most important concepts with which disguise is normally associated—make the volume both an enriching and comprehensive source of information for understanding both current and future research on the matter which should become part of university syllabuses throughout the world.

The book, written with clarity and precision and carefully edited, is structured around four groups of essays, each of which provides a brief and accurate bibliography of the aspects studied. The first block of essays, entitled “Disguise and Power”, opens with John Simons’ analysis of disguise in Middle English romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—namely *Havelok the Dane* and *Sir Isumbras*. Simons’ essay conceals a challenging approach to the analysis of these literary works, since contrary to the traditional classification of romances by content, form and period the author daringly argues that they could be more accurately categorised by the presence or absence of their most important characteristic: disguise as a narrative function which signals “the ambivalence inherent in a ruling group that balanced a rigid sense of hierarchy with an ideology based on that most disturbing form of behaviour, war and conflict” (29). Jesús López-Peláez Casellas concentrates on the analysis of honour and disguising, exemplifying their complex relationship with William Shakespeare’s *Henry IV*. The code of honour was originally a secular ethic of aristocratic origin in conflict with Christianity which stressed individualism and social esteem. After successive attempts at domesticating its “dangerous independence” (39) by incorporating Christian virtue and disowning private authority in the Tudor period, disguise came to be considered “the inevitable outcome of a social code of conduct that imposed a certain behaviour on the ‘natural’ self” (39). López-Peláez brilliantly analyses the set of control mechanisms used by the man of honour, and discusses the ‘spectacular’ dimension of honour by exploiting the notion that, for the first time in history honour was considered “a material artefact that can be taken away, lost, substracted or bargained” (49) which became closely linked to power and the form of its representation.

The third essay in this group, by Diane Pescher, contextualises the relationship between disguise and power in the anti-Jesuit narratives of the mid-eighteenth century—meaningful antecedents of today’s hysterical narratives. These narratives, originated in response to the

increasing influence of Rome on the weakest in British society, were based on the widespread myth that the Church of Rome was going to gain dominion over the British people by the infiltration of their homes and their schools by Jesuits in disguise. The main value of the essay lies in the fact that Pescher deepens into the analysis of the especially problematic figure of the female Jesuit. By analysing *The Female Jesuit* (1853), by Jemima Luke, and *Father Fabian* (1875), by Emma Warboise, Pescher demonstrates how this figure was perceived as potentially 'dangerous' not only from a religious point of view, but also because it could activate the most 'uncontrollable' sides of feminine nature. The last essay in the first group, by Carolyn R. Maibor, concentrates on the discussion of racial power dynamics in Kipling's *Kim* (1901). As an Indian-born white, Kim exploits his chameleonism to pass freely between cultures. In this well-written essay, the paragraphs of which become lyrical at times, Maibor demonstrates that Kim's flexibility is not an innocent game, but a carefully designed strategy inspired by the cause of the Empire and aimed at learning the natives' secrets in order to rule and dominate.

The second group of essays, devoted to analysing "Disguise and Identity" opens with J.-A. George's attractive discussion of the figure of The Vice—a particularly popular character convention in the 1560s which adopts a series of disguises to bend others to his will—in John Pickering's *Horestes* (1567) and Francis Merbury's *The Marriage between Wit and Wisdom* (c.1571-1578). J.-A. George offers a fresh approach to the description of this character by drawing attention to the fact that he is "morally deficient but theatrically engaging" (85). Particularly interesting is the contribution by David Malcolm, which meaningfully contributes to de-stabilising the long-established notion that John Buchan's historical biographies, classified as the expression of the conservative imperial world of the pre-First World War and inter-war periods, should be considered pure glorifications "of bold white British men [which] defeat the sinister plots of black Africans, villainous Germans and dubious Central Europeans against order, decency, and England" (97). Malcolm concentrates on the analysis of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) to demonstrate that it is a novel full of anti-English motifs which undermine traditional certainties. Especially relevant is Malcolm's analysis of the notion of 'disguising that entails change': characters can become somebody else, someone alien, which suggests "instability, and an

uncertainty of identity and a shakiness of the power to know and understand things” (103). In his analysis of *The Three Hostages* (1924), Malcolm brilliantly contextualises the relationship between disguise and identity in the figure of the villains “embedded in the political and social establishment and unmasked only to a few” (109). Mary Lazar’s discussion of the function of disguising in the life and works of Jerzy Kosinski, which concludes part II, is, without any doubt, one of the most entertaining and ‘readable’ essays in the volume due to its mixture of tragic, comic and even anecdotic reflections. Lazar focuses on Kosinski—the creator of the term ‘autofiction’—to present disguise as a strategy of physical and emotional survival against the background of alienating historical circumstances represented by totalitarian Nazism and Communism.

Part III, entitled “Disguise and Madness”, opens with Diane Simmons’ interesting analysis of *Out of Africa* (1937). Simmons succeeds in exemplifying the complex relationships between disguise and narcissistic disorder in Karen Blixen’s novel. By turning her plantation in British East Africa as a medieval court of which she is a feudal lord, Blixen resorts to masquerade in order to construct “a grand and free aristocratic persona [...] at odds with her inner state” (131). In the second chapter, Carmen Méndez García provides an in-depth account of the schizophrenic creation of disguised selves in Samuel Beckett’s plays. Méndez García’s contribution is clearly differentiated from all the aforementioned essays, since it accurately takes reflections on disguise and madness to the linguistic realm. The authoress demonstrates how disguise can also be found in the schizophrenic’s distortion of a socially standard language, a distortion aimed at creating a personalised language more in accordance with the schizophrenic’s inner self. Comparative studies have also been incorporated in this rich volume of essays: the contribution by Esther Sánchez Pardo addresses the complex but attractive relationship between the metaphysical paintings of Giorgio de Chirico and the novels by Sylvia Plath. Sánchez Pardo demonstrates that a recurring artistic motif in both artists’ drama of the psyche is the recreation of the ‘dialectics mask/unmask’: both artists aspire to enable their autonomous true-selves (undisguised) to emerge from devastating psychological conditions—perfectly illustrated in the essay—which made it necessary to use disguise as a means to conceal their vulnerability.

Finally, part IV deals with “Disguise and Gender”. Robin Miskolcze discusses the importance of the cross-dressing female seafarer in American popular literature between 1815 and 1850. By discussing novels such as *The Female Marine* (1815), Miskolcze focuses his analysis on cross-dressed women’s concern with the process of nation-building. Miskolcze’s justification of the compatibility between retaining femininity and shifting identity for the love of loyalty and freedom is one of the most attractive points of this essay. In the second chapter, Lisa Fletcher turns to popular romance fiction to illustrate the politicisation of transvestism as the means to produce crisis of meanings which challenge the stability of traditional binary oppositions. Fletcher’s contribution sheds new light on the happy endings in these romances, which she describes as nothing but the triumph of an attempt at concealing disturbing textual elements. Pilar Sánchez Calle analyses the ‘passing-for-white’ motif in Jessie Fausset’s novels as an element hindering the development of a positive African-American identity and condemning black women to perpetual self-division as individuals. Sánchez Calle’s contribution is characterised by the authoress’ expertise in maintaining a perfect equilibrium between the discussion of the social and individual implications of ‘passing’. Gemma López Sánchez concludes this collection of essays by putting forward the notion that gender is nothing but a disguise. This idea is brilliantly supported by the meaningful evidence afforded by Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* (1967). López Sánchez deepens into the analysis of the process by which Melanie, the main character in the novel, constructs her femininity on the basis of male fantasies and stereotyped ‘Twiggies’.

Masquerades undoubtedly presents new and interesting insight into the study of disguise in literature in English. As a whole, this is a volume with much to offer in its impressively wide variety of approaches to the topic. In addition, the book is also recommendable from the point of view of its style: its organization makes the most of this variety of approaches and the volume is at once well-researched and elegantly written. Therefore, it constitutes an essential reading and an invaluable companion for everyone interested in the complex issue of disguise and its ideological implications.

PENAS, B., LÓPEZ SÁENZ, M. C. (2006).
Interculturalism: Between Identity and Diversity.
Oxford: Peter Lang.

Nancy Konvalinka
UNED

The twelve articles gathered in this volume address the issue of the relationship between identity and diversity and its consequences for the possibility of intercultural communication, albeit from different areas of knowledge, including philosophy, literature, women's studies and linguistics. The authors re-examine the positions of a broad range of thinkers, past and present, as points of departure for reflections focused on the problems of communication among people whose "identities" both place them close together in their shared features and separate them in their diversity.

The novelty and interest of this book lie in the way it brings academic thought from several fields to bear on a question of vital interest to each and every inhabitant of our troubled, present-day world: Is there any reason to hope that people from vastly different cultures will be able to engage in meaningful communication? Or does our diversity preclude it, propelling us inevitably towards misunderstanding and conflict?

The search for an answer to this pressing matter must begin with the elucidation of the terms used: identity, diversity and communication or discourse. The various authors build upon the foundations laid by eminent scholars from the Greeks through the Illustration and continuing to the present. In some cases, they draw general conclusions about the meanings of these terms, while, in others, they apply them to specific, familiar situations, such as domestic violence, domination of one culture by another, gender inequality and policy concerning the language of hate. Transmitting the simple idea that it is worth our while to listen to our professional philosophers and thinkers from many fields

because they can and do offer important insights for personal action and for policy-making in real life is quite a substantial achievement.

The texts are arranged in three groupings, according to the aspect of identity with which they deal. Part I, "Identity and Difference: The Self and the World", examines the meanings of self and identity, how they come to be and how they interact with a world of other diverse selves, that is, what common factors support this interaction. This first section provides the foundation for the articles that follow.

In the first article, María del Carmen López Sáenz draws on Merleau-Ponty to remind us that our lived-body is the starting point for understanding identity and diversity, terms which are each necessary to constitute the other. Identity and diversity are always relational, never absolute, concepts, which manifest themselves against a "relational background", as the author puts it. As in language, meaning can only exist through differentiation; acknowledgment of diversity is what allows communication.

Going back to the philosophers from the Illustration who set the course for later philosophical thought, Susan Purviance rejects Hume's and Reid's theories of self in favor of Shaftesbury's "practice conception of self". Shaftesbury offers a processual vision of self, in which our search for coherence with ourselves leads us to explore differences in perspective and to carry out a never-ending process of self-constitution.

A reminder that its origins in multicultural Greek society make philosophy the tool par excellence for inquiry into our subject comes from Javier San Martín. He returns to Husserl's concept of the life world, in which the world of will, the physical, experienced body, represents what people share, while the world of representation, culturally constructed, differentiates people. The basis for human communication must be sought, according to the author, in this world of will that is shared by all.

Karina Trilles follows Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, asking if an understanding of intersubjective communication will open perspectives on the possibility of intercultural communication. If we understand language as a gesture, says the author, rather than as something that holds meaning, then we see that, as Merleau-Ponty says, we "speak thoughts" and Others can communicate by building a common ground for these gestures. If Others can communicate on a one-to-one

level, different cultures also ought to be able to construct a common ground for communication.

This last article leads into the second part, “Identity and Diversity: Interculturalism”, which explores intra-group identity, inter-group diversity and the feasibility of mutual comprehension. Myth, relativism, tolerance, evaluative incommensurability, recognition and redistribution are some of the ideas discussed here.

Amin Asadollahi brings the Nietzschean treatment of truth and its construction by power to bear on the process of identity. We conceptualize ourselves in relation to the Myths and Truths that define our culture. Understanding that these Truths are, in fact, a cultural construct within which we define ourselves will, on one hand, allow us to realize that the intra-cultural diversity we perceive is actually based on the same defining Truths and, on the other, that, as cultures interact and the defining Myths and Truths are constructed on a broader basis, similarities will increase. The author suggests the practice of self-assertive identity in this situation.

The possibility of a common moral-normative framework for resolving value conflicts is the issue addressed by Jesús M. Díaz Álvarez. He criticizes the paradoxical nature of relativism and concludes that the only effective framework is that of reason, where ideas are discussed and accepted or rejected in the public forum and where one must always admit the possibility of being mistaken and be willing to listen to others.

The article by Kathrin Hönig combines the Habermasian concept of tolerance with the Davidson/Wong discussion about translatability and incommensurability, to conclude that translation is not only possible, but necessary, first, on the level of understanding existing differences between other and self and secondly, on the level of truly understanding the other. König calls for continued effort at communication.

The closing article of this section explains the use of identity rhetoric in the Metropolis Project in Canada. Author Jef Verschueren shows that group identity fails to acknowledge individual identity, that individual identities include group identities and that individual identity is multiple. He supports Bauman’s position a policy of recognition does not address inequality (and may actually reproduce it), while only a policy of redistribution can create an effective equality among diverse collectivities.

The third group of articles, entitled “Identity and Narrative: Discursive Identities”, takes a look at one of our main activities as human beings: discourse. The formation of identity through performance, literature as a place that reflects, creates and recreates cultural conceptions, narrative as interaction and negotiation, and difference and sameness as relational concepts are commented upon here.

Elvira Burgos follows Judith Butler’s line of thought on identity and agency, emphasizing the idea that gender identity, although it exists previously to the subject, does not rob the subject of agency. As a performative process, agency is vulnerable: the subject has agency to reproduce, not reproduce, and reshape this identity.

As our guide on a journey through literature, Ángeles de la Concha demonstrates how written narrative, as represented by widely-disseminated works, portrays women as body and claims that this is the natural state of affairs. The author also explores the efforts of contemporary writers to free themselves from this idea and to write about women from a position of minority that offers a chance for change.

Hume’s discussion of identity and diversity and their confusion, and Merleau-Ponty’s idea of truth provide the philosophical underpinnings for José Ángel García Landa’s approach to rereading, narrative, identity and interaction. Narrative is an interactive process which creates identity; as rereading, it constantly recreates the narrative. Each narrative is, then, a forum for communication and change.

In the final article, Beatriz Penas Ibáñez uses sociopragmatics to discuss diversity in language and identity formation. Meaning is created through interpersonal communication, and difference and similarity depend on point of view. Language and identity are relational and difference is natural; if what we have in common is our uniqueness, then the desire to make plurality our goal is a step towards coexistence.

As a whole, the text refocuses the identity-diversity debate through clear, direct application of philosophical thought to basic problems of coexistence have been brought to the forefront in our multicultural and globalized world. Both specialists in these fields and non-specialists with an interest in these issues will find the ideas stimulating and encouraging with respect to the possibility of intercultural communication.

Literary Contribution

POEMS BY DAUD KAMAL

(Selected and afterword by Ali Shehzad Zaidi)

THE REBEL

*They
stood him up
against an orchard wall
and shot him
at dawn.*

*Pandemonium of crows
and then
the empty horizon.*

*Hundreds of miles away
his mother
kneels in prayer –
in ignorance –
the ignorance of prayer.*

*Wheat ear on the stubble –
the blind earth
must be fed.*

ANNIVERSARY

*Cascading back
to the source
over a difficult terrain
but the heart remembers.
Wet stones
conscious of their lineage –
the chopped-up moon
in paddy-fields.
A fierce love has blurred my sight
and burnt the lines off
the palms of my hands.
I have drunk acrid milk.
I have heard the sound of clogs
in an ancient ruin.
How can the mind contend
with all this chaos –
this endless repetition
of thwarted lives?
Shelley asserts
that the deep truth
is imageless.
An invisible bird
perches on my shoulder
and speaks to me
in a language
I do not understand.
Ashes and dust.
I am only a word-smith.*

KINGFISHER

April
is the kingfisher's beak
which pierces
the river's glad torment.
Is this an image
of our love?
Carnage
in the rose-valleys
under the first light
of our wounds.

Clouds
detach themselves
from disconsolate trees.
The future
curves on another shore.
Tongues of water
cradle our startled dreams.
Moss-grown stepping-stones.
The stars burn fiercely.
They tell us what we are.

WINTER RAIN*Mist**suspended over a deep void:
translucent bridge
sculpted in fire –
in rock-crystal.**Memory,**someone says,
is a forest of mirrors.
Is this true?**Stone parapets
eroded by time.**Is death**the only exit?**The moon thaws**before your loveliness:
you are the breath of violets –**The vivacity**of a snow-fed stream.**Nightbound travelers –**you and me –**and this winter rain.*

Daud Kamal (1935-1987), Pakistan's most accomplished poet, taught English literature at Peshawar University for nearly three decades. His poems, which are in English, convey a sense of loss and spiritual displacement in the face of violence and cultural erasure. Kamal's first book, Reverberations (1970), consists of translations of the classical Urdu poet, Ghalib. His original poems in English appeared in Recognitions (1979), A Remote Beginning (1985), and in such posthumous volumes as Rivermist (1992), Before The Carnations Wither (1995) and A Selection of Verse (1997). Kamal's translations of the Urdu poets Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ahmed Nadeem Qasimi, Munir Niazi and Ahmed Faraz appeared in Four contemporary poets (1992).

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POEMS BY FAIZ AHMED FAIZ

(Translated from the Urdu by Daud Kamal. Selected and edited by Ali Shehzad Zaidi)

DEDICATION

*Abacus of suffering —
frost-edged fields
of withered flowers —
a wilderness of yellow leaves.
This is my land —
offal in narrow lanes.
I write
for the miserable —
clerks, postmen, coolies,
labourers with bent knees,
peasants in the blistering sun.
It is for the widows
I write —
for the orphans
and the unwed —
for the condemned
in their separate cells
and the stars
that will not last
through the night.*

CAPTIVITY

*What does it matter
if pen and paper have been snatched
from my hands?*

*I have dipped
my fingers
in the blood of my heart.*

*What does it matter
if my lips
have been sealed?*

*I have put
a tongue
in every mouth of my chain.*

A PRISON EVENING

*Night — enchanting princess — descends
the sky's jewelled staircase
one step at a time.
A cool breeze whispers words of love.
Gnarled and hunchbacked
trees in the prison compound
are embroidering exquisite designs
on the sky's blue silk shawl.
Moonlight penetrates my soul.
Green undulating shadows —
star-moisture — the poignancy of desire.
How precious is life!
But the tyrants
have injected their venom
into the veins of humanity.
They have slaughtered our joy.
Centuries of oppression, brutality, plunder.
And, yet, the moon shines
in all her splendour.
The lotus blooms.
Life is eternal.*

DISILLUSIONMENT

*Endeavour
has now been squeezed bone-dry
of possibility —
even the most intrepid eagle
cannot pierce
the sky's ultimate barrier.
All the stars have been lassoed
one by one
and the moon-goddess
strangled to death
by an unrepentant Othello.
No dewdrop of grace
trembles on the eye's periphery —
no diaphanous dream
soothes the heart.
Those ravishing lips are gone —
free hearts and illumined minds
have atrophied.
Love
you will moulder in your grave
and I in mine.
There is no antidote
to death's scorpion-sting.*

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