Journal
of Early Modern Studies

JOURNAL OF EARLY MODERN STUDIES

JOURNAL OF EARLY MODERN STUDIES

– 1 –

Volume One

On Authorship

edited by

Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti

Contents

APPENDIX

Editorial

In the introduction to his 1983 book *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Jerome McGann discusses the 'Introductory Statement' produced in 1977 by the MLA Center for Scholarly Editions. The Statement contained the basic recommendations of traditional textual criticism, such as the identification and choice of copy-text, the importance to be attributed to the author's complete manuscript (or, subordinately, to the first printed copy), the emendation of erroneous readings, the incorporation of genuine authorial revisions and so on. All these editorial practices are traditionally directed towards the reconstruction of a text which reflects the final (and genuine) intentions of its author. McGann remarks that implicit in the Statement 'are ideas about the nature of literary production and textual authority which so emphasize the autonomy of the isolated author as to distort our theoretical grasp of the "mode of existence of a literary work of art" (a mode of existence which is fundamentally social rather than personal)' (8). He then completes the comment and outlines his editorial view as follows: 'These ideas are grounded in a Romantic conception of literary production, and they have a number of practical consequences for the way scholars are urged to edit texts and critics are urged to interpret them'. They are indeed 'also widespread in our literary culture, and since they go largely unexamined …, they continue to operate at the level of ideology' (9). The project of his book, he thus declares, is 'to develop a fully elaborated argument for a socialized concept of authorship and textual authority' (8). These statements were at the time revolutionary, for they contested a whole time-honoured tradition of scholarly editing, both American and European, in a way which appeared incompatible both with those studies and with centuries of strenuous attempts at reconstructing texts that would reflect their author's *genuine intentions*; and they obviously impinged on the idea of Author and of Author-function in an almost unprecedented way. *Almost* unprecedented, for the concept of authorial intention had already come under attack in a different but contiguous field: that of literary theory. Already in 1954, W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley had dismantled that idea and exposed it as a 'fallacy': although not contesting the idea and ideology of authorship (an author is for them still an Author), they prepared the ground for American New Criticism and for the European *lignée* of theories which constituted one of the most controversial issues in twentieth-century literary, textual and philosophical theorizations. If, on the one hand, it is true that the twentieth-century theoretical drive has now exhausted its *élan vital* and remains as either a challenged or an embraced perspective in sophisticated critical essays, it is equally true that the issue of authorship, especially as regards particular cases, is once more gaining ground.

The preceding remarks, therefore, serve to explain why it was thought that a new interdisciplinary humanities journal should take its first steps by engaging in a discussion of authorship in general and by examining a number of different cases in which the issue of authorship is either problematic or particularly relevant in various fields: literature, the theatre, history, religious writing, the visual arts and certain practices of law-training.

The two essays which appear in the 'Theory and History' section of the present volume serve as an introduction to the general issue. Hans Gabler's contribution illustrates a textual scholar's point of view on the much debated problem of final authorial intentions and suggests an innovative perspective which shifts attention from the notion of 'Author' to that of 'Author function'; Dario Compagno's article deals with the same issue, but in a perspective which illustrates historically the important and intense philosophical debate which developed throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

The essays which appear in the 'Case Studies' sections are devoted to particular activities in various spheres of 'invention'. Although *JEMS* is a journal of early modern studies, it was soon clear that the topic to be debated in this first issue needed a temporal expansion. Indeed it appears that, although it was only late in the development of European thought that the theme of authorship received specific and continuous theoretical attention, it had surfaced much earlier either as an individual claim or as the claim of a group or trade. In many European contexts, for instance, writing in the vernacular, especially on lofty subjects, was perceived as an abasement of the writer's authority; thus, already in the late Middle Ages (our *terminus a quo*), the issue seems to have been present in the consciousness of those writers who wanted to reach a wide, and not only male, readership, as argued in the essay by Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti. In this case, the writer's status as author and his right to dispense spiritual advice were asserted textually, by means, that is, of certain strategies which entitled the author to use the vernacular without losing authority.

The *terminus ad quem* has also been expanded because we felt that at least one case that evolved during the period when Authorship was first explicitly affirmed, both ideally and legally, must be included among the contexts surveyed. The essay by Bianca Del Villano deals with mid-to-late eighteenth-century adaptation, an issue that is much in fashion today, but which, in most cases, is not discussed in connection with the idea of authorship and originality. Del Villano's contribution explores how authorship was affected when the Neoclassic ideal of art as imitation was replaced by the (pre)Romantic ideal of art as originality, one that advocated the cause of the Unique Author.

In other contexts and through other forms of expression, the acknowledgement of authorship was obtained on the grounds of the actual value of the object produced. The case discussed in this volume by Corinne Lucas Fiorato shows how such craftsmen-artists as Benvenuto Cellini and Giorgio Vasari

negotiated their status as Authors on the basis of the priceless and unique (*inestimabile*) quality of their works; and how they found, in the context in which they worked, the support of a rapidly evolving market. Market interests were obviously a powerful drive also in the composition of texts for the theatre, both in England and Italy. The article by Janet Clare illustrates the contradictory situation in which the English playwrights of Shakespeare's time produced their texts. Two of the major writers of Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre, Jonson and Shakespeare, arguably embody two different attitudes towards the issue of authorship: extreme self-consciousness in the case of Jonson and apparent non-involvement in the case of Shakespeare. Clare's essay also discusses the connection between authorship and responsibility by raising the problem of censorship. Again in the field of theatre and drama, both in England and in Italy, Paola Pugliatti discusses certain 'authorless' activities which were considered ancillary either to the writing of well-made plays or to their actual performance: the various 'enplotting' activities, that is, the devising of *fabulae* (the most notorious are the *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte*) as skeletons for further elaboration. 'Authorless' plot outlines, similar to the *scenari*, Carla Dente's essay argues, were also used as part of legal learning exercises in the Inns of Court. The essay, which endeavours to show mutual relationships between the practices of juridical training and theatre training, assumes that both practices, though belonging to different yet related discourses, adopted written 'scripts' and performance styles, which were meant to be used again on different occasions and with different aims. This hypothesis may open up, if further investigated, a new area of fruitful research.

The 'dispersal' and/or 'multiplication' of authorship is also observable in religious discourse, both Catholic and Protestant. Focusing on Italian and Spanish 'obedient writing', a widespread genre in the early modern Catholic world, Adelisa Malena's essay casts light on the complex relationships between the author/protagonist of the autobiographical report and the spiritual director who orders the report. Malena's conclusion questions the aptness of the contemporary concept of authorship as applied to early modern spiritual writings and argues for a more 'flexible' approach, one that combines and interconnects an *emic* and an *etic* perspective.

On similar lines, Donatella Pallotti's contribution draws attention to seventeenth-century English conversion narratives. After their first oral and public delivery, some of these reports were transcribed and published by the ministers of the church, who shaped them according to their own teaching and discipline. As the essay highlights, authorship in conversion narratives appears to be dispersed not only between the protagonist of the spiritual experience and the minister who re-presents it, but also within a close-knit community that influences their form and could eventually be held responsible for their contents.

The essays in the present collection, therefore, delve into models of authorship which involve different forms of collaboration. The discussion shows

how the construction and interpretation of authorship are closely related to a multiplicity of cultural and ideological factors. Power and commercial relationships, religious stance, 'systems of constraints', as well as practices of editorial and textual transmission, all contribute, in various forms and at various degrees, to the illustration of different ways in which historically authorship has been perceived and constructed. We hope that these essays will stimulate further treatment of such an important topic not only for our perception of our literary-artistic and cultural inheritance, but also for our understanding of new types of authorship associated with contemporary new media culture.

The 'Appendix' records some significant voices of writers and artists musing upon the construction of the authorial self, issues of poetics and, more generally, upon their creative endeavour.

As every author and/or editor knows, books can only be written, and collections of essays can only be compiled, with the help and encouragement of a community of friends and colleagues. We wish to thank the director of Biblioteca di Studi di Filologia Moderna, Beatrice Töttössy, for her unwavering commitment to making the creation of *JEMS* possible, and the Journal Manager, Arianna Antonielli, for her helpful cooperation, patience and good advice. We are also grateful to the students in the editorial team who assisted us in preparing the texts for publication. Special thanks go to Ilaria Sborgi and Margherita Versari for suggesting some engaging passages for the 'Authors on Authorship' section, and to John Denton for generously giving his time and attention.

Finally, the scholars whose essays appear in this first issue of *JEMS* have not only contributed insightful and nuanced studies but have been responsive and collegial throughout the process. Our thanks go to all of them.

Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti

Works Cited

McGann Jerome (1984), *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.
Wimsatt W.K. and Monroe Beardsley (1954), 'The Intentional Fallacy', in *The Verbal Icon*, Lexington, Kentucky University Press, 3-18.

PART ONE

Theory and History

Beyond Author-Centricity in Scholarly Editing

Hans Walter Gabler

University of Munich (gabler@anglistik.uni-muenchen.de)

Abstract

Authorship – authority – authorisation – the author – the author's will – the author's intention: these form a cluster of notions whose validity for scholarly editing I fundamentally question. Taking measure from a historical survey of the discipline's principles and practice from their institution under the dominance of stemmatics up to their main present-day 'author orientation' (Shillingsburg 1996), I see the need to split the terms 'author' and 'authorship' into a pragmatic versus a conceptual aspect. What textual scholarship engages with, directly and tangibly, is not authors but texts (and equally not works but texts), materially inscribed in transmissions. In the materiality and artifice of texts, 'authoriality' is accessible conceptually only, in a manner analogous to the Foucauldian 'author function'. Under such premises, as well, 'authority', 'authorisation' and 'authorial intention' become recognisable as exogenous to texts, not integral to them. Consequently, I propose to abandon 'authority', 'authorisation' and 'authorial intention' as overriding principles and arbiters in editorial scholarship. Scholarly editing instead should re-situate itself in relation to texts, to textual criticism, to literary criticism and to literary theory alike, and do so by re-focussing the methodology of its own practice. It should relinquish the external props termed 'authorised document', 'textual authority', or 'authorial intention' hitherto deferred to. Instead, it should revitalise skills fundamental to inherited editorial scholarship, namely those of critically assessing, and of editorially realising, textual validity. To re-embed editorial scholarship in literary criticism and theory, moreover, the interpretative and hermeneutic dimensions of textual criticism and scholarly editing will need to be freshly mapped.

Keywords: Author, Author Function, Authorship, Author's Intention, Hermeneutics of Scholarly Editing.

1. *Preliminary: Document – Text – Work*

Authorship and The Author are lode-stars of literary criticism. They are specifically, too, the habitual points of orientation for textual criticism and scholarly editing. Here, where materially the very foundations of literary studies are laid, we find aggregating around the notions and concepts of 'authorship' and 'author' further terms, such as: authority; authorisation; the author's will; the author's intention. These form a dense and particularly forceful cluster in this field because here critics and editors confront texts in their diverse instantiations in and on documents. Given documents, some form of authoriality is always assumed behind them. Indeed, we commonly construe the relationship by defining do-

cuments as derivates, and thus as functions, of 'authoriality'. Yet if we anchor the perspective in the materiality itself, the model may equally be reversed. Since it is from the materiality of the documents alone that the authoriality behind them may be discerned, we may legitimately declare 'authoriality' a function of the documents. The validity of such reversal, as well as its consequences in theory and practice, is what this essay attempts to explore.[1]

Documents constitute the ineluctably material supports for texts. Without the stone, clay, papyrus, parchment, or paper on which we find them inscribed, texts would have no material reality. Hence, in our age-old traditions of writing and the written, text and document live in a seemingly inseparable symbiosis, to the extent that we substitute one for the other in everyday speech, even in conception. Contracts, as well as wills, for instance, are formulated in language as texts. Yet it is customarily on the grounds that we possess and can show them as legal documents (signed, witnessed and sealed) that we declare them valid and binding. However, to define the material document as 'the contract' or 'the will' is a pragmatic shortcut, a negotiating of the everyday in a mode of speech-act symbolism. Logically, text and document are distinct and separable entities.[2]

To recognise that text and document are logically separable provides a basis for assessing or re-assessing the value and weight of the terms in our opening cluster from a point of view of textual criticism and editing. In practice, and in our cultural experience, admittedly, we never encounter texts other than inscribed on, and carried by documents. Or hardly ever: for a poem or a narrative recited from memory, or composed on the spur of the moment, may still exemplify to us the primal invention and transmission of a text independently of any encoding on, and into, a material support. This has repercussions for differentiating 'text' and 'work'. To paraphrase what I have developed at greater length elsewhere: works in language can be instantiated both materially and immaterially. As instantiated, we perceive works as texts. Any one given text instantiates the work. What binds the instantiations together is 'the work'. The work exists but immaterially, yet it is at the same time more than a mere notion. It possesses conceptual substance, for it constitutes the energizing centre of the entirety of its textual instantiations. Among the work's many textual instantiations belong, too, texts as established in editions. An edited text may in fact be an instantiation optimally representing the work, even while it is never more – though commonly nothing less – than one considered textual representation of the work; or, a representation editorially pre-considered before offered as a main textual foundation for a critical consideration of the work by interpreters and readers (Gabler 2010b).

2. *Author – Authorship – Authority and the Variable Text*

If in this manner the exercise ground for the thought and labour of the textual critic and editor lies in precincts of overlap between the immateriality of the

work and the materiality of its textual instantiations, textual critics and editors must have clear and well correlated conceptions of the forces here at play. A work is the outcome of its originator's creativity; and 'by default' we term its originator its author. An author, in the first instance, is, or was, an historical person, even though, in the second instance, a work may have originated with a team of authors, or else may be anonymous, since who created it has failed to be recorded.

In relation to both works and authors, notions of authorship need to be taken into consideration. If and when they are, we discover that there is a pragmatically real as well as a conceptually abstract side to 'authorship'. Authorship may be defined as the activity of real-world authors, singly or collectively. But in reverse, it may be defined from the perspective of a body of writing subsumed under the label of an author name. The Scandinavian languages possess the term 'författarskap' (Swedish), which translates into English most readily as 'oeuvre', or 'works', or into German as 'das Werk' signifying the body of works carrying the label because empirically originating with the author or authors supplying the labelling name. Although defined grammatically in the possessive case of the author name (Shakespeare's oeuvre, Goethes Werke, Strindbergs författarskap), the 'oeuvre', 'die Werke', the 'författarskap' most immediately yet comprises the (immaterial) works of these authors in the (material) manifestation of their texts.

Such lines of argument lead to conceiving clearly of the 'author' as not an historical personage merely. On closer reflection, our awareness is sharpened that the 'author' not only is, but has always been, too, a mental projection from the works under his or her name – such as they existed in the public realm as texts subsumed under the titles of these works. The works' guarantors were of old Ovid, or Horace, or Seneca, or Cicero, or Aristotle – with the name not so much designating the historical personage as metonymically extrapolated from the work. For invoking the guarantors – the authorities – a paraphrase was as good as a *verbatim* citation, provided it expressed and was considered true to the author's thought, such as it was by cultural consensus understood from his works. In such manner, a medieval writer (Geoffrey Chaucer, say) would cite an author from antiquity (Ovid) as his 'authority'. We have as a matter of fact to this day not abandoned treating authors' names in like manner: we read Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Henry James or Virginia Woolf, or indeed '*our* Shakespeare', '*our* Goethe', which emphasizes that we construct an author image subjectively ours from the works read.

Or, more precisely: in the reading of the author, we create the author image from the works through their texts. Such texts differ. Texts are, and have always been, variant. This is a fact of life, and is a consequence of the ineluctable materiality, as well as the ever-pervasive instincts of renewal, in the world we live in, as do our books and texts. The variability of texts

therefore may be destructive in nature: the result of corruption or material decay; or it may be constructive: the outcome of renewed creative input, be it through revision, or through participatory, emendational or conjectural, editing. One way or another: that texts are always variant is an ontological truth. Yet at the same time, it is a truth that has always been largely elided. Our cultural urge is for stable and immutable texts. Or, more cautiously put: our post-enlightenment urge is for stability and immutability as the sovereign qualities of texts. This has to do with a new cultural estimate, as well as a new self-estimate, of authors – a point to which I shall return.

It is worth following up, first, the circumstance that the ever-variability of texts has been elided, or else accepted, differently in different historical periods. From this follows, in turn, a reversal in the definition of 'authority'. If it is accurate to say, as suggested, that medieval writers and audiences would cite 'authority' by author name, and in faithful reference mainly to thought and idea of given works, it seems to be a fact also that, as medievalist scholarship sees it, scribes and *scriptoria* in the Middle Ages, for all their endeavours to transmit 'good' texts, lived quite happily, at the same time, with, and in, the variability of the works' texts, and indeed actively participated in spawning further their variability. Yet what, unbeknownst, these medieval agents of textual transmission also worked towards was the emergence of an idea of the *textus receptus* – historically, a humanist achievement (and culturally closely related, as it happens, to the medial shift from a manuscript-based to a print-based norm of communication and transmission). The establishment of the notion of the *textus receptus* marks a shift, too, from the canonising of works to a canonising of texts; or: of works as texts. This is the historical moment, furthermore, that marks the beginning of our own pervasive notion, or illusion, that in the shape of the text materially in our hands we have possession of the work, which yet this text can but represent, but can in truth not be.

It is at this point that the concept of 'authority' acquires a new definition. 'Authority' is no longer the author name that guarantees the genuineness of the thought and articulated ideas elicited from a reading memory of an author's works. It is now what is sought so as to authenticate the establishing of authors' texts with *literatim* accuracy. This is the view that textual criticism and editing still entertain today. It is, however, but seemingly self-evident. It subscribes to an understanding of 'authority' that is historically contingent and became fully codified only in the early nineteenth century. For even though the editing of surviving texts of works from classical antiquity had been carried forward in an unbroken tradition since the Age of Humanism, and a fresh tradition, moreover, of editing vernacular texts on the model of classical editing had latterly grown, it was only in the early nineteenth century that textual criticism and editing came into their own as scholarly disciplines.

3. *Historicism and Textual Scholarship*

For methods of analysis to impose on the patterns of presumptive relationships, a model was provided by enlightenment science. In the eighteenth century, the Swedish biologist Carl von Linné developed a binary-structured systematics of nature. This proved adaptable to the new text-critical thinking. Surviving texts differed between themselves as well as in relation to their lost antecedent states simply (it was assumed) in a binary fashion, by error or non-error. Under this assumption, they became relatable, moreover, in groupings apparently analogous to families, for which, consequently, family trees could be drawn. This move was the foundation of the stemmatic method in textual criticism.[3] (Incidentally, it anticipated, in a manner, Charles Darwin's genetically, hence historically, oriented adaptation of Carl von Linné's historically 'flat' taxonomies). As method, stemmatics is double-tiered. For the purposes of textual criticism, it operates on the historical givens, the documents and their texts. Critically analysed, the results from collating all extant document texts are schematised in a graph, the stemma. The process of collation thus strives to be inclusive. The ensuing operation of critical editing, by contrast, is predicated on exclusion. For on the grounds of reasoning that the stemma provides, every document text that fails to meet the validity criterion underlying the analysis of the collational variation can, for the labour of critically constituting the edited text, be left aside. This leaves, ideally, just one document text on which to build a critically edited text. Where this base text features what the analysis of variants has deemed to be an error, the erroneous reading gets emended by what has been critically assessed as a genuine reading from another document text; or else by a conjectural reading devised out of the editor's ingenuity. Else, all instances of variation from the body of collated document texts are recorded, if at all, in an apparatus (footnoted or appended).

The stemmatic method as a whole was (and, where practiced, still is) predicated on the assumption that family trees could be established: the very idea of family relationships meant that extant documents and their texts descended from an inferentially, if not materially, recoverable ancestry. This ancestry not only could, but positively had to be construed, if only just to make sense of the collation evidence from the extant documents and their texts. The fountainhead of a given text, admittedly, was on all accounts lost. To varying degrees, nonetheless, lost documents could be inferred by drawing logical conclusions from the variation between the texts of the extant ones. In fact, it was only by such inference that the missing links between the extant documents and their texts could be filled in, and thus the stemma as a graph of interconnections could be achieved at all. The lost documents were posited in terms of their presumptive texts: that is, they were furnished logically with text 'cloned' from the extant textual states. Ideally, a text could thus be diachronically reconstructed back to its very source, its (presumptive) *one* text

of origin. And if the ideal – imagined, say, as that fountainhead origin, the very first manuscript to come from the author's hand – proved irretrievable, a 'real' common ancestor of all extant derivative texts could rationally (that is, by critical assessment of the collations performed) still be arrived at: the archetype.

4. *Real Authors and Stable Texts*

The rationale of stemmatics came at a price. It made no allowance for the 'fact of life' that variability is a natural condition of texts. Behind this blind-spot lies the cultural assumption of a stable and finalised text. This notion in turn is rooted in the cultural role conceded the author. As the editing of texts in the vernacular increased through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries all over Europe, their authors came to be perceived no longer as abstract, even though nameable, 'authorities', as in earlier times. They were instead known to be, or to have been, real, historically situated individuals. Texts transmitted were both attributable to, and claimed by them. What is more, these texts came in bookprint editions of multiple copies. No longer was every copy of a text different from another, as throughout the eras before print. The public awareness of texts from real identifiable authors was thus that they were identical, and in practical terms invariant (at least throughout given book editions). The (printed) text in hand came therefore not only to stand in for, and materially to represent, the work (as is common understanding still today). It was (as it still is) taken to be the work. The underlying conception of 'the work', in other words, was, and is, one of a self-identical text manifestation, invariant and closed. The cultural notion of the invariant text published by an empirical author, furthermore, was seen to coincide with, and to reinforce, the earlier logical construct of (in stemmatic terms) an archetype, and *a fortiori* an original text ('Urtext'), constituting, as a posited material text, the work of the *auctor absconditus* of the distant past.

Authors of the present as of the past came to be seen, and indeed defined, as canonical authors. This view, too, emerged from the rise of historicism. Its finest flower was the perception of the artist, and for our purposes specifically of the author, as an original genius. This mode of appreciation carried a double aspect. It conferred upon the author a societal recognition. It reciprocally went into shaping an author's self-image and imbued the author with a sense of his or her public identity and role. Johann Wolfgang Goethe was probably Germany's most exalted exponent of the new author type. He became Johann Wolfgang *von* Goethe in fact precisely in recognition of his eminent public role. He was both seen and saw himself in canonical lines of the cultural tradition. From out of his self-image, he so also contributed to shaping his public image for his time and for posterity.[4] One means by which he did so that concerns us here was his editing, or his overseeing of the editing, of his work, that is: of his oeuvre.

Behind such editing stood Goethe's authority. Even allowing that this was to a significant degree the authority of the writer, it was yet fundamentally, too, the authority of the man, the citizen, the courtier, and the public figure.

Such standing of the historical personage in life raises for us the question: what relation does the empirical, real-life authority it confers bear to the concept of 'authority' in textual criticism and editing? The more immediate the real presence of authors has become to readers, as well as to societies, the stronger, naturally, has grown, on the one hand, their claim to authority over their work, together specifically with authority over the text(s) of that work; and, on the other hand, the readiness of society and the body politic to concede their claim. Such encompassing authority has in fact been legally codified. Real authors' copyrights and moral rights are protected today virtually throughout the world. Yet this laudable acceptance of real-life authors and their personal rights in the societies we live in obscures rather than clarifies or resolves the fundamental systemic problem of whether or how to relate the empiric and societal conceptions of 'authority' to the scholarly endeavour of securing the written cultural heritage of texts. In one respect, it must remain uncontested that authors can do whatever they wish with the material record of their authoring enterprises. Specifically, they can exercise practical authority over acts of copying and publication. Their wishes must carry weight in the endeavours of bringing their work as texts to their readers. Anywhere along the way, too, they are of course free to discard any amount of traces of their work, for instance throw away (or, in our digital age, attempt to erase) notes or drafts, or shred typescripts or marked-up proofs. In another light, however, any such pragmatics in real-life situations bear but obliquely on assessments of textual authority.

5. *The Fallacies of Document and Textual Authority*

But what kind of animal, we should pause to reflect, is 'textual *authority*' at all? In devising the methodology of stemmatics, and in particular in the endeavour of critical analysis of patterns of text relationships revealed through collation, the aim, as we have noted, was to establish textual validity against errors of transmission. The texts constructed for the inferred documents – the archetype or, exceptionally, the fountainhead original – could not meaningfully be seen as invested with authority, since they were mere retro-projections from their surviving descendants. Even less meaningfully could they so be seen, considering that there were not – not even for any possibly to be posited originals – any public or legal, or private, let alone any manifest writing acts of their authors' on record from which to infer, or by which to confer 'authority'. Such considerations should lead us to discerning the fallacy underlying the very concept of '*textual* authority'.[5]

To this end, we might profitably attempt to disentangle, at long last also for the benefit of textual criticism and scholarly editing, the real-life author

from the author function that, in terms of theory, texts both imply and indeed generate and constitute. If it can be said that Roland Barthes's 'death of the author' (1967) has, as a slogan, generally tended to overshadow Michel Foucault's significant elucidation of the 'author function' (1969), it would probably also be true that textual critics, and editors in particular, must be counted among those who still hold both tenets in scorn. (They will insist: 'The author is real: look, these manuscripts are incontrovertible proof that the author is not dead – or was not when he wrote them!'). Seen with a colder eye, however, the proof of the author that manuscripts provide in truth only evidences (alike to footprints in the sand) that an author once (or, as the case may be, repeatedly) traced his or her hand and writing implement over the manuscript page. The real-life author, consequently, cannot honestly be conceded more – though also no less – than an empirical and legal authority over the documents carrying the texts of his works. To concede him or her an overriding authority over those texts, and on top of that to consider those texts, as texts, themselves invested with an innate authority, amounts to performing an argumentative leap akin to what psychology terms a displacement. It is this that constitutes the fallacy suggested.

This brings us back, in passing, to our initial consideration of the contract and the will as legal documents. The validity of contracts and wills by civil and legal convention is attested by the material documents as such. Their texts are, as it were, by definition free from error,[6] and particularly so as, and when, they accord with formulaic conventions. Signature and seal, moreover, reinforce that the document vouches absolutely for the text it contains. It appears that from the formalisms characterising this pragmatic model of negotiating legal states of authority evolved the formalisations of authority and authorisation in the triangle relationship of text, document and author. Yet the purported analogy, for all that it has gone unquestioned for centuries, does not in truth hold. Texts in the cultural realms of transmission are by definition not faultless, but on the contrary prone to error. The documents that carry them are, in their great variety, 'formless', and they are private. As such, they exist outside societal conventions and laws. The creative subjectivity of authors, and indeed their freedom of will in making decisions, finally, cannot affect in their essence either documents or the texts they carry. Documents and texts are entities outside of authors as real-life individuals. Hence authors, even though they are pragmatically their agents, cannot themselves rise to a position of essential authority over them, so as to decree an authoritative status for documents and texts. At most, they can testify to, and attest their relative validity.

How the elision of the pragmatic and the essential came about can be historically retraced, too, in terms of the progression of a methodology for the emerging discipline of textual criticism and scholarly editing. Stemmatology was, as we have seen, the discipline's early choice of method for analysing and editing transmissions of texts from antiquity and the Middle Ages. These were

distinctly transmissions of texts. On top of that, they were transmissions spread over unique document exemplars, individually variant among each other. They were, by the technical term, radiating transmissions. The rules for regulating the correlation of the texts in a radiating stemma, even while text-centred, were at the same time influenced, admittedly, by the cultural ascendancy of the author in that age of historicism when the stemmatic method developed. For its *a priori* assumption was that of the past author's presumptively one and only original text (or the archetype as its prophet). This however did not deflect, but on the contrary strengthened, the text-critical and editorial procedures aimed at the validation of transmitted text. The concomitant strategies of radical disregard of manuscript texts critically adjudicated as inferior resulted in choosing one document text as the foundation for a critical text to represent a work.

Such choice by rational variant analysis, and thus from within the material of transmission itself, proved not feasible, however, with modern, and often actually contemporary, text situations and transmissions. Yet towards these the interest and engagement of textual criticism and editing increasingly turned. What they required were procedures to deal with a largely linear descent of texts in transmission, often combined, moreover, with processes of composition, and empirically controlled, moreover, by real-life authors insistently present. Under the authorial eye, the decision on which, and from which document and text to build a critical edition, was no longer felt to be the editor's responsibility alone. Though procedurally it remained the editor's, it was conceptually deferred to the author. An alternative methodology to stemmatics was thus devised to support an 'author-centric turn'. Method in textual criticism and editing turned from being indigenously based on a critically established validity of text, to being exogenously predicated on (authorial) authority.[7]

As basis for the procedures of scholarly editing, the new principles stipulated the 'authorised document'. The text it carried was declared to possess 'textual authority'. By embedding itself in cultural conventions, moreover, the method invested the real-life author with the power, the pragmatic authority, to declare both document authorisation and textual authority. Such, in outline, was the new methodological framework considered best suited to post-medieval textual and transmissional situations. They also re-situated the editor. Stemmatology, as said, had operated without a comparably encapsulating framework. Its methods, aimed at text validation, were essentially rooted in the editor's critical judgement. The notions of authorisation and textual authority, by contrast, constituted and constitute *a priori* regulatives for the establishing of edited texts.

6. *Author-Centricity versus the Author Function*

Founded mainly on empiric and societal convention, the author-centric framework to scholarly editing is arbitrary and, as indicated, exogenous to

texts. Its inherent difficulties, which are logical as well as methodological, have nonetheless been insistently elided, or (more generally) not even perceived. They can be made out, however, on at least two levels. Firstly, the empiric and arbitrary conferral of authority amounts to a set of vicarious gestures (on the part of real-life authors) and assumptions (on the part of textual critics and editors, not to mention the cultural environment at large). Secondly, and more essentially, that conferral depends on assumptions that texts represent not only finalised acts of will of authors, but are in themselves invariant, stable, (pre)determinant, and closed. Yet by present-day positions in theories of language and of literature, none of these *a priori* can in truth be upheld. Pivotal to today's notions instead is the insight that texts are variable and in principle always open. They are constant not in stability and closure, conferred by a finalising authorial *fiat*, but constant, if constant, only in being always capable of also being otherwise.

This recognition can be made operable, too, in terms of textual scholarship and editing; yet if so, it can be made operable from inside the material body of texts only. The key would seem to lie in the notion of the author function. As a theoretical tenet, it has amply proved its applicability to, for instance, the critical analysis of narrative. It can equally, I suggest, be utilised in analytically and critically dealing with texts and their materials of composition and transmission. If in an ontological sense it is in the nature of texts to be variable, and if at the same time texts are the creations of authors, then variability is the mark that texts carry of their authors' creativity, as well as of their own potential, as texts, for also always being capable of being otherwise.[8] Systemically, therefore, in terms of the autonomy of texts, their variability is an expression of the author function which is inscribed into them, and thus contributes to constituting texts as texts. Constituting texts in ways predicated on variability – the quality which is of their nature as it is of the nature of language, out of which texts are generated – is in terms of creativity the primary prerogative of authors. Secondarily, and in critical terms, such constituting should be acknowledged, too, as a goal of scholarly editing. From the perspective of today we should see it as incumbent on scholarly editions of the future not only to record variation of texts through their processes of past transmission. This is and will be, as it has hitherto been, the function of apparatus presentations of variants. Yet editions to come should equally endeavour to do justice to the variability in texts throughout the processes of their very creation. For this, as one may already dimly discern, it will not be sufficient to devise new formats for scholarly editions. The ways in which to embed textual criticism and scholarly editing in literary criticism and theory will themselves demand to be thought through with renewed attention. The reflections on authority (as conceded to real-life authors), on document authorisation, or on textual authority here entertained, with the suggestion of abandoning these concepts, may pave the way towards such re-thinking.

7. *The Author's Intention Rooted in Copy-Text Editing*

First, however, a concept that has become central yet needs to be broached, and to be recognised as the hindrance it is on paths of potential progression in theory as in pragmatics for textual criticism and scholarly editing, literary criticism and literary theory together. This is the author's intention. Invoking the author's intention as final arbiter for establishing scholarly editions is what gives the ultimate twist to that author-centred methodology which (as we have argued) today appears untenable, since predicated on texts' invariance, stability, (pre)determinacy, and closure. The notions herein of pre-determinacy and final intentions, in particular, disastrously reinforce each other. Not only do they imply that a text as achieved at the final point in time of its recorded development not merely represents, but positively constitutes the work. Over and above this mis-perception, they imply, too, a teleological model for creative writing still unreflectedly rooted in original-genius aesthetics.

The invocation of the author's intentions has played a dominant role particularly in Anglo-American textual criticism and editing throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century. Here, intentionalist editing was codified as a result of the generalisation of the methods of copy-text editing which originated in Shakespearean textual scholarship.[9]

For the larger part of the twentieth century, Shakespearean textual scholarship was driven by twin forces of select methodology. One was its submission to analytical and textual bibliography. The other, which concerns us here, was the transfer of the ways of text-critical treatment of the radial dispersion of texts in medieval manuscripts to the early post-Gutenberg transmissions of texts linearly from manuscript printers' copies to first and subsequent editions in book. The main precepts of method were developed by the eminent British textual scholar of the first half of the twentieth century, Williams Wilson Greg. Greg's strengths lay in the application of an all but unrivalled faculty of analytic logic to a rich archival observation and experience. They were rooted, moreover, in classical and medievalist methodologies of textual criticism. In his perception of texts and their transmission, he was at bottom a stemmatologist. Consequently, he understood how the extant earliest printings of Shakespeare's texts naturally derive from lost manuscripts. At the same time, he recognised how close they were to their state and shape in those antecedent, if lost, scribal, or even autograph, documents. From this understanding, he pronounced rules for copy-text editing by which to constitute edited texts by re-constituting a textual state and shape critically inferred for the lost documents. It was archetype-directed text-critical and editorial thinking that thus claimed to be recovering a maximum, with luck even an optimum, of original Shakespeare text from the derivative witnesses-in-print to these texts.

Not that this adaptation of a methodology originally devised for pre-Gutenberg manuscript transmissions did not have its pitfalls. For instance,

Greg disastrously misjudged the textual situation for William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Here were two first printings – a Quarto single-play edition and the play's rendering in the First Folio volume – that diverged widely. So strong was Greg's stemmatological bent that he apodictically refused to entertain the hypothesis that these two textual states reflected two distinct versions of the play. He held the variation between the two printings to be due to errors of transmission entirely. The alternative proposition is that the dramatist's progressive development of the play in composition and revision may be captured from the divergence in variation between the two printed versions. This is the hypothesis that in Shakespeare criticism and textual criticism has meanwhile been thoroughly tested and validated.[10]

Where Greg recognised the need for adjustment to the inherited methodology, however, was with respect to conditions of transmission due to printing technology which were naturally unprecedented in the pre-Gutenberg manuscript era. Texts published in first editions, or generally: in earlier editions, could be observed to have been modified by their authors after publication. Technically, the authors had been given the opportunity to mark revisions on the earlier editions' pages that were then worked in, in the printing house, into re-settings from those preceding editions. The existence of re-settings of earlier printings that yet in this manner contained authorial revisions puzzled Ronald Brunlees McKerrow in his *Prolegomena* of 1939 to a complete edition of Shakespeare he was preparing to edit, though he did not live to realise the edition. While conceding that derivative editions would not only perpetuate errors generated in setting the first editions, but would also be adding to them their own errors, McKerrow yet saw no alternative to choosing the texts from the derivative editions as his copy-texts. He thus took two generations of error into the bargain, since among these the genuine post-first-edition revisions would be contained. It was W.W. Greg who, posthumously for McKerrow, proposed a solution to the dilemma. By logically conceptualising materially evident text – printed text – under two aspects, an aspect of state (the text's 'substantive readings'; Greg 1950, 26) and an aspect of shape (its 'accidentals', i.e., spellings, punctuation and the like; 26), he devised rules for copy-text editing. They were published in 1950-1951 and triggered the so-called 'copy-text theory of editing', dominant in Anglo-American editorial scholarship from the 1960s onwards.

The rules stipulated that always the first-edition text, or otherwise earliest text, was to be chosen as copy-text for a scholarly, or critical, edition. This would ensure that the edited text came as close as possible to the lost manuscript printer's copy. It would do so anyhow in its substance of readings that remained invariant throughout first and subsequent editions, but equally, and most particularly, also in its accidentals, regardless of whether these remained constant or varied in subsequent editions. Considering that accidentals were in early hand-printing largely left to the discretion of printers'

compositors, it was only in first editions, if at all (so Greg's argument went), that the compositors might have followed copy and thus taken over its accidentals. In some cases that copy could actually be argued to have been an autograph. To this clear-cut ruling with regard to first-edition substantives and accidentals, there was, too, an important subsidiary. It stipulated that the (first-edition) copy-text was to be followed as well in cases of indifferent substantive variants. Such 'indifferent variants' naturally turned up among the body of substantive variants between first edition and revised edition. Since they were variants, they needed to be critically weighed whether or not they were revisions. If the assessment was inconclusive (indifferent) because they might easily be typesetters' errors, the revised-edition variant was not to be admitted to the edited text.

It was essential in terms of Greg's rulings, in other words, to isolate from the subsequent edition such readings as by their quality could be critically assessed as revisions. They, and they alone, were (text-)critically singled out from derivative but revised editions and were then editorially used to modify the copy-text into the critically edited text. Procedurally, the modification was done by way of emending the revisions into the copy-text. Within the texture of the (first-edition) copy-text the first-edition-state substantive readings were replaced by the corresponding substantive readings from the revised-state edition that had been critically assessed individually as revised readings.

This was the first time in Anglo-American scholarly editing that not only textual variation-in-transmission was scrutinized: that is, variation originating with agents other than the author (inferred for lost, or evident at extant, stages of transmissions). This was variation of an extraneous nature, and hence, virtually by definition, variation as 'error'. Now, by way of critically discerning and isolating revisions in (bibliographically, and thus transmissionally) derivative editions, variation in the progression of texts was taken account of, too – variation by definition not 'error', since integral to the text(s) of the work in question in its (their) evolution over time.[11] Interestingly though, as we have seen, Greg from out of his high analytical powers found a way of bending such new departures in the concerns of textual criticism back onto the inherited patterns of reaching out behind surviving manifestations of texts. The composite, critically eclectic edition text was the mirror image, as it were, of the successfully reconstructed archetype text. Gregian copy-text editing was thus still firmly modelled on archetype editing, even while paradoxically the infusion by emendation of post-copy-text revisions into the copy-text substratum for the edited text was allowed that had no imaginable – or rather, bore an imaginary relation only to a given text's pre-survival state, materially lost.

Greg's rules provided the foundation for the specifically Anglo-American mode of critical eclecticism in scholarly editing. Critical eclecticism to construct as edited text a composite of readings early and late in a textual development, and before as well as after its first material manifestation in the

state and shape of a public text, requires belief in a teleology of texts, coupled with confidence that telescoping a textual development over time into the one plane of the edited text is legitimate procedure. The adjective 'critical' is the important face-saver, forestalling the negative view that the procedure contaminates. It has of old in scholarly editing been branded as 'contamination' to implant readings from one historical instantiation, one version, of a text into another. For this reason, 'critical eclecticism' has been generally viewed with acute suspicion outside the Anglo-American sphere.

Greg's copy-text editing itself was rooted in origin-oriented textual criticism as inherited from stemmatology. Yet from assumptions of a teleology of texts, at the same time, it nodded towards author-centred textual criticism and editing. The author – William Shakespeare to boot – incontestably played a role in Greg's devising of rules. The lure was simply irresistible of an autograph fair copy, if not indeed the dramatist's so-called foul papers, underlying, at shortest transmissional distance, the surface of a play's first manifestation in print. But even with Greg's acute awareness of the author as factor and agent in the textual transmission, his text-critical procedures remained squarely bent on validating text. Even emending a first-edition text with the substantive revisions critically ascertained from a subsequent edition was understood as an editorial measure to validate authorial text for the work. The copy-text editing rules were not aimed at fulfilling authorial intentions.

Their acute potential for being precisely so transmuted, however, was soon perceived. Fredson Bowers, US textual scholar of the generation after Greg – it was Bowers who published Greg's 'Rationale of Copy-Text' in the 1950-1951 volume of the annual *Studies in Bibliography* that he had begun to edit – not only saw, but capitalised on the intentionalist implications of Greg's rules. The institution of these rules as the foundation for intention-oriented copy-text editing was Bowers's doing. The fusion came to be known as the 'Greg-Bowers theory of copy-text editing' – not a 'theory' strictly speaking, perhaps, but unquestionably a set of strong principles for scholarly editing. Their base was Greg's copy-text-editing rules generalised timelessly for the scholarly editing of texts (or at least of literary texts) of all kinds from all periods. Pragmatically, the generalisation was pivoted on procedures of analytical and textual bibliography. The superstructure devised for the Greg-Bowers principles was the tenet that it was the ultimate task and duty of the critically eclectic scholarly edition to fulfil the author's intentions, or the author's final intentions, or the author's latest intentions – by variant adjectives, the goal, as it was progressively argued, came to be variously modified.

What Bowers performed in thus giving an intentionalist turn to textual criticism and scholarly editing was something of a *coup-d'état*. For it was precisely at the intellectual moment in the course of the twentieth century when New Criticism culminated in literary theory of the Wimsatt-Beardsley persuasion, which resoundingly proclaimed the intentional fallacy (1954), that he defined

fulfilling the author's intention the ultimate goal of scholarly editing.[12] With New Criticism in decline, and the critical invocation of intention banned as a fallacy, it was now the textual scholar and editor who bore through the throng the 'well-wrought urn' of the single, pristine, perfect text in shape of the critically eclectic text fulfilling the author's intentions. The 'Urtext' and archetype of past conception became transubstantiated into the absolute text of ideal finality.

8. *Intentionalist Editing: some Problems of Hermeneutics*

Clearly, fulfilling the author's intentions constitutes a fulfilment, too, of the author-centric orientation and dependency of textual criticism and scholarly editing of the past two centuries that we have been discussing. It goes beyond – indeed, it transgresses – the foundation in materialities of transmissions that textual criticism and editing traditionally built, and relied, upon. For to realise authors' intentions means to establish text that is precisely not inscribed in any material document. More specifically still: since it is alone from material documents that written authorial text may be read, the procedure of arriving at text of the author's intention must involve declaring what is written as somehow in error. This may be trivial wherever, say, the mistake of a scribe, or a typist, or a printing-house compositor can be unambiguously made out and corrected – hardly an editorial measure, though, that were weighty enough to lay claim to fulfilling an authorial intention. Or the making-out of the written as in error involves deeper enquiry. In such cases the scrutiny of the text as documented turns genuinely interpretative.

    This ought to give rise to concerns about the role and expertise of the textual critic and editor. They have but seldom, it is true, been denied critical faculties; nor should they themselves ever abdicate them. The question however is in what modes they should opt to exercise and invest them. The analysis of documents or of collations of texts demands of textual critics and editors critical skills. Such skills, moreover, are absolutely called upon to validate texts and text readings for the purpose of accepting or rejecting them for the edited texts of scholarly editions. Even when under the ascendancy of the author an over-all responsibility for editorial decisions and results was increasingly delegated to authors, real-life authors to boot, and editors consequently tended rather to hide behind the author, their text-specific expertise and skills yet remained a (usually) sufficiently secure foundation for professionally executed scholarly editions. But when it was further imposed upon editions that they should aspire to fulfilling authors' intentions, not only was the question not explored what extension of expertise and skills this would entail. More fundamentally still, it appears that the intentionalist re-conception of textual criticism and scholarly editing was proposed unawares of the very nature of the imposition. Yet, if our critique holds, the Greg-Bowers principles clearly empower the editor not just, as by older dispensations of textual editing, to

assess and adjudicate, out of a specialised professionalism, the extant material record of given transmissions. In addition, the principles invest the editor with a hermeneutic dominance over the work. For if under teleological premises the author's final intentions enter integrally into configuring the meaning of a text (as expression of a work), then it follows that it is the author's final intentions as supplied editorially that provide the textual capstone to realising the work's ultimate meaning. This conundrum has a theory dimension which yet awaits a solution – unless it be a genuine alternative simply to abandon the intentionalist stance for editorial scholarship.

9. *Reconceptions*

Beyond the point at which it culminated in the intentionalism of twentieth-century Anglo-American textual criticism and editing, the author-centric trend in nineteenth and twentieth-century editorial scholarship began to recede. Spearheaded by some twenty years (the 1980s and 1990s) of invigorating theoretical debate in the Society for Textual Scholarship and its yearbook *TEXT*,[13] as well as by single studies such as J.J. McGann's *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983), a diversification of concepts for textual and editorial scholarship set in that Peter Shillingsburg has meanwhile found categorisable into the (formal) 'orientations' he specifies[14] alongside the 'authorial orientation' that we have singled out for our present reflections.

   At virtually the same time in editorial history when the fulfilling of authorial intention was proclaimed the ultimate goal of scholarly editing in the Anglo-American domain, authorial intention was within the German editorial school declared outright unfit to provide a base for editors' decisions towards establishing edition texts. The key pronouncement in the matter came from Hans Zeller, the Swiss-German Nestor (today) of German textual scholarship: 'A principle such as authorial intention cannot serve as a central criterion for the constitution of text [because it] remains a mere idea of the author on the part of the editor, and as such cannot be established reliably'. Though so published in English only in 1995, the verdict in the German original is of 1971 (1995, 24-25). At the same time, however, the landmark collection of German essays on textual criticism *Texte und Varianten* (Zeller and Martens, eds, 1971) adheres to, and embraces, what is present-day consensus still, namely the author-centric conceptions, attitudes and practices of inherited textual scholarship. The German variety of the discipline, it is true, has its own favourite problem areas, among which figure prominently the notion of the version ('Fassung') and the textual fault ('Textfehler'). Yet the fundamental critique of author-centricity proposed here should apply as much to German textual scholarship as it does to its Anglo-American near-relation.

   To return to Zeller's pronouncement on intention: his salient specification is that 'authorial intention cannot serve as a central criterion for the constitu-

tion of text' (1995, 24-25). It does thus not rule out critical investigations of authorial intentions, be they manifestly expressed or inferable, nor does it disallow consideration, or even observance, of authorial intentions in establishing edited texts. Yet what it categorically denies is the usefulness of authorial intention as ultimate arbiter and guide to editorial decision in the critical constitution of edited texts. To differentiate so precisely is a stance from which to arrive at positive criteria for establishing edited texts. A scholarly edition, if and when referring to authorial intention, could under exceptional (meaning: particularly clear-cut) circumstances, introduce authorially intended readings, as critically recognised, into the edited text itself, but would do this in the manner of conjectural emendation, strictly on the editor's responsibility. Yet commonly, an edition would present its editor's critical assessment of authorial intention discursively in an editorial introduction and/or textual note. This would be the textual critic's and editor's ground from which to share in the hermeneutical exploration of a work through its texts. Conversely, the establishment as such of the edited text for a work would remain firmly grounded in the document-supported material evidence for the composition, revision, and transmission of the work's text, or texts.

Renewed beginnings beyond author-centricity are possible and indeed conceivable for textual scholarship and critical editing. Summing up from what we have here considered and reflected upon, I would propose, simply, that texts themselves in their material manifestations in documents be again moved into the focus of textual criticism and scholarly editing. Here, the lode-star would no longer be 'authority' under the exogenous construction of authorisation and textual authority, super-structured moreover by deference to an authorial intention, in duty to be fulfilled by editors and editions. Textual criticism and scholarly editing will be well served to be again focused on textual validity, as erstwhile under the stemmatic dispensation. Ascertaining and establishing textual validity should thus constitute the core of a renewed methodology. Measures of textual validity would be gained from the author function. Pertaining ontologically to language composed as text, the author function is inscribed universally at any stage or moment of text composition or transmission.

This holds true even where real-life authors impinge most closely on textual traces, which is when we encounter them even physically (or at least in the mediate author-physicality of their handwriting or doodling) in documents of composition. Yet so distinctly, at the same time, is the author function as a compositional function present in drafts, that to edit writing from documents of composition means to edit from their material record not solely validated text as resulting from the acts of writing, but additionally a distinct authorship dimension emerging from the processes of that writing.

What this might mean should be as good a point of entry as any for sustained explorations of the hermeneutic dimension specific to textual criticism and scholarly editing. It is a question hitherto little considered. This

is paradoxical, seeing to what extent 'meaning' has demanded attention in recent theorizings of textual and editorial scholarship. Significantly, though, the need to reflect on 'meaning' has followed in the wake of explicating the notion of authorial intention,[15] and debates have correspondingly been enacted at a middle, or even a total, distance from texts as materially evidenced. The considerations are, and have been, stimulating; and in principle they concede to editorial scholarship an interpretative, and thus ultimately hermeneutic, dimension. What remains to be assessed, however, is the place and quality of interpretative criticism – the hermeneutic stance, in other words – as indissolubly tied back to the manifest materiality of texts and their transmissions.

As for texts as the materialisations of the authoring of works, what we believe to have sufficiently indicated is that the author dimension and perspective cannot, and must not be abandoned or sacrificed under renewed methodological tenets for the combined disciplines of textual criticism and editing. Yet here, in terms of text, 'the author' would cease to be an exogenous legislator and arbitrator, and instead be perceived from the inside, as it were, and thus as a systemically integrated text function within the body of the text-critical and editorial endeavour itself. In terms of textual transmission, the author would be definable as a function of the extant material documents. Simultaneously, though, it should go without saying that the existence of real-life authors would not be negated, nor would expressions of will of empirical authors, or closely critical considerations of authorial intention, by dint of method be anathemized. Text-critical investigations would continue to be directed towards them, and these would continue to be accounted for in introduction and commentary discourses of editions. In view, furthermore, of the future importance of editing distinct authorship dimensions for texts, considerations of authorial intention (which would similarly have their place in an edition's discourses collateral to the edited text) should be matched by assessments of authorial responses to self-performed acts of writing (texts, once in process of composition, will insist on 'talking back' to their authors – as anybody knows from everyday experience; and this basically dialogic situation of writing often enough leaves material traces in draft documents – which intrinsically is of both compositional and critical interest). A renewed methodology for textual criticism and scholarly editing, lastly, would as ever be geared towards closest scrutiny of transmissions for exogenous error. In validating text against error it would still draw all that can be gained from subsidiary methods such as analytical and textual bibliography, palaeography, paper analysis, or digital imaging in all its highly advanced forms. The digital medium, finally, should itself, as no doubt it will, become the future home and environment for the scholarly edition. This is a subject I have discussed elsewhere (see Gabler 2010a). The present article may be considered as contributing to reflecting on principles towards a praxis of editions ultimately to live as digital scholarly editions.

[1] What follows thus seeks to carry forward, and complement with propositions for the document-authoriality relationship, the argument begun with exploring the relationship between document and text in Gabler (2007).

[2] Hubert Best, international copyright lawyer, illuminatingly informs me (by private email) that 'under Common Law … the written contract is in fact only the evidence of the actual contract, which became a legally binding agreement when the parties entered into it. … [W]ills and deeds … require documentation and formalities (e.g. witnesses, in the case of a will)'. This reinforces my insistence on the logical distinction between document and text. At the same time, it exemplifies a cultural transition from the oral to the written. The legally binding agreement constituting a contract was by a performative speech act and handshake entered into by two living partners. A will such as we know it, by contrast, since it becomes meaningful only on the death of the person expressing the will, could not exist without the document 'will'. Importantly, nonetheless, it is essentially not the material document, but the text contained in the document that the person witnessing testifies to.

[3] Interestingly, the first known graph of a family-tree for documents and their texts is documented from Sweden (not fortuitously, perhaps, considering the Linné connection). It was drawn up by K.J. Schlyter, the country's most penetratingly modern textual scholar of his time, who visualised for his 1827 edition of a legal codex, *Westgötalagen*, the relationship of the texts from ten extant and four inferred documents in a stemma he names '*Schema Cognationis Codicum manusc*' (Holm 1972). The Swedish precedence in the development of stemmatology that soon was to gather momentum for nineteenth and twentieth century classical and medieval textual scholarship appears hitherto to have gone unnoticed in Germany and elsewhere, where Karl Lachmann is in the main credited with its invention. I owe knowledge and understanding of Swedish and Scandinavian scholarly editing traditions greatly to exchanges with Dr Paula Henrikson of Uppsala University, as well as to her conference contributions and other writings.

[4] Klaus Hurlebusch (1988) suggestively discusses the interaction between individual author and society in the forming of 'author images'.

[5] Shillingsburg (1996), by contrast, is, from its opening sentence in 'Part 1. Theory' onwards, wholly predicated on 'concepts of textual authority'.

[6] Hubert Best (see footnote 2) adds the legal specification: 'where the common law contract is merely evidence of the actual contract, if the document plainly does not conform with the actual agreement, it is set aside (doctrine of "mistake")'.

[7] Shillingsburg (1996) proposes, in 'Chapter Two: Forms', a set of 'orientations' for scholarly editing, among which is the 'authorial orientation'. My present argument is an attempt to give a historical depth perspective to Shillingsburg's formal, and thus 'flat' taxonomy.

[8] Such understanding provides the foundation for Roger Lüdeke's theory of revision, developed in Lüdeke (2002).

[9] Again, P.L. Shillingsburg (1996) may be cited here for its convenient overview, in the chapter 'Intention', 29-39 in the book's 'Part I. Theory', of the concept of authorial intention and its application to Anglo-American scholarly editing in the latter half of the twentieth century. Of greater complexity is Greetham (1999), chapter 4: 'Intention in the Text', 157-205.

[10] The late 1970s and the 1980s saw the liveliest debates of the fresh, and distinctly critically motivated views of the *Lear* question. Most diversified in its approaches is the book of essays, *The Division of the Kingdoms*, edited by G. Taylor and M. Warren.

[11] By contrast, landmark editions of German authors had already towards the end of the nineteenth century given scope to the textual evolution of works under their authors' hands; e.g. Friedrich Schiller, *Sämmtliche Werke*, edited by K. Goedeke.

[12] The range of Fredson Bowers's contributions to the forming of principles and practice of editorial scholarship in the second half of the twentieth century may be gauged from his 1975 collection. Of particular relevance to our discussion here are the essays 'Multiple Authority: New Concepts of Copy-Text', 447-487 (reprinted from *The Library*,

5th series, 27 [1972], 81-115) and 'Remarks on Eclectic Texts', 488-528 (reprinted from *Proof* 4 [1974], 13-58).

[13] *TEXT: An Interdisciplinary Annual of Textual Studies*. Published from 1984 (for 1981) to 2006, 16 volumes in all.

[14] The 'documentary, aesthetic, authorial, sociological, and bibliographic' orientations. Shillingsburg (1996), 16 ff.

[15] Representative samplings are to be found in Shillingsburg (1996), Greetham (1999) and Eggert (2009). Dario Compagno, 'Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century: an Overview' in the present volume, furthermore, helps to recognise how these investigations chime in with the main-stream arguments in hermeneutics and literary theory. Compagno's essay is a welcome partner to the present contribution. It helps admirably to sharpen the contours of my argument conducted specifically from the point of view of textual and editorial scholarship.

Works Cited

Barthes Roland (1978 [1967]), 'The Death of the Author', in *Image-Music-Text*, London, Allison and Busby, 142-148.

Bowers Fredson (1975), *Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing*, Charlottesville, Virginia University Press.

Compagno Dario (2012), 'Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century: an Overview', in this volume.

Eggert Paul (2009), *Securing The Past*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Foucault Michel (1984 [1969]), 'What is an Author?', in P. Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon, 101-120.

Gabler H.W. (2007), 'The Primacy of the Document in Editing', *Ecdotica* 4, 197-207; (French version: 'La prééminence du document dans l'édition', 2008, in F. Leriche and C. Maynard, eds, *De l'hypertexte au manuscrit. L'apport et les limites du numérique pour l'édition et la valorisation de manuscrits littéraires modernes*, Recherches & Travaux, 72, 39-51, Grenoble, ELLUG).

Gabler H.W. (2010a), 'Theorizing the Digital Scholarly Edition'. Online in: *Literature Compass* 7, 2, (special issue *Scholarly Editing in the Twenty-First Century*), 43-56. Downloadable at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2009.00675.x/full> ; *or via* <http://lmumunich.academia.edu/HansWalterGabler/Papers/142905/Theorizing_the_Digital_ScholarlyEdition>.

Gabler H.W. (2010b), 'Thoughts on Scholarly Editing.' (A Review Article Occasioned by Paul Eggert, *Securing The Past*, CUP, 2009) in *JLTOnline* 2011-09. Downloadable at <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0222-001542>, Reprinted in *Ecdotica* 7 (2010), 105-127.

Goedeke Karl, ed. (1867-1876), Friedrich Schiller, *Sämmtliche Werke. Historische kritische Ausgabe*, 10 volumes, Stuttgart, Cotta.

Greetham D.C. (1999), *Theories of the Text*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Greg W.W. (1950-1951), 'The Rationale of Copy-Text', *Studies in Bibliography* 3, 19-36; and *Collected Papers* (1966), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1966, 374-391.

Holm Gösta (1972), 'Carl Johan Schlyter and Textual Scholarship', *Saga och Sed. Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademiens årsbok*, 48-80.

Hurlebusch Klaus (1988), 'Conceptualisations for Procedures of Authorship', *Studies in Bibliography* 41, 100-135.

Lüdeke Roger (2002), *Wi(e)derlesen. Revisionspraxis und Autorschaft bei Henry James*, Tübingen, Stauffenburg.

McGann Jerome (1983), *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

McKerrow R.B. (1939), *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare. A Study in Editorial Method*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Shillingsburg P.L. (1996 [1986]), *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

Taylor Gary and Michael Warren, eds (1987 [1983]), *The Division of the Kingdoms*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Wimsatt W.K. and Monroe Beardsley (1954), 'The Intentional Fallacy' in *The Verbal Icon*, Lexington, Kentucky University Press, 3-18.

Zeller Hans (1995), 'Record and Interpretation', in H.W. Gabler, G. Bornstein, and G.B. Pierce, eds, *Contemporary German Editorial Theory*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 17-59. The original essay in German, 'Befund und Deutung', appeared in H. Zeller and G. Martens, eds (1971), *Texte und Varianten. Probleme ihrer Edition und Interpretation*, München, C.H. Beck, 45-89.

Zeller Hans and Gunter Martens, eds (1971), *Texte und Varianten. Probleme ihrer Edition und Interpretation*, München, C.H. Beck.

Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century. An Overview

Dario Compagno

University of Siena (dario_compagno@neomedia.it)

Abstract

This article discusses some of the most important theories about authorship and the author's intentions developed during the last century. It argues that initially Husserl, Croce and the New Criticism firmly divided private intentions on the one side and verbal meanings (constituting an ideal subject) on the other. Then, it introduces Derrida and Barthes who suggested a radical change in perspective by confuting the existence of an ideal conscious subject, of ideal meanings and of private intentions. Subsequently, Booth and Foucault looked for a surrogate of the author and found it in a discursive instance showing the reader a path to the author's intentions. Lastly, Anscombe and Eco formulated a new concept of public and open intention completely redefining the whole issue. This article, in conclusion, suggests that, in spite of all statements about the 'death of the author', it is precisely thanks to the twentieth-century debate that the author was born.

Keywords: Authorship, Intention, Interpretation, Theory, Twentieth Century.

> And regardless of the extent to which interpreters may decide not to be bound by what authors wanted to say about their artistic intention, or about their true or supposed aim (as many interpreters today claim to do), what they cannot do is get rid of the idea of intention, because without presupposing that idea, the text in question would not even exist; that is, it would not be a literary work.
>
> Carla Benedetti, *L'ombra lunga dell'autore*, 1999

> I can know what someone else is thinking, not what I am thinking.
> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953

1. *Preliminaries*

In the twentieth century the concept of author has undergone a radical redefinition, playing a pivotal role in the studies of language, writing and meaning. The increasing autonomy and importance of human sciences needed to better understand how people and words are related, and how the former can

control what they wish to say or write. Today some philosophers and literary critics simply *dismiss* the author and his or her capacity to manage meaning for a conscious end; they tend to pay attention to words alone, almost as if writing were an unintentional or unconscious activity, like dreaming. And it seems that the author's intentions – that is, what s/he really wanted to say with a text – has been plainly excluded by many philosophical and analytical disciplines (from phenomenology to hermeneutics, semiotics and literary theory). This also seems to be true for those disciplines not dealing with written texts (like art and cinema studies), but that entirely exclude all considerations about authorial intentions from their objects of study.

Throughout the century, a number of complex theories on subjectivity and its linguistic and semiotic expression have been elaborated. These have passed through *three main phases*, each one strongly critical about the preceding one. The specificity of each phase is often ignored, and very different positions like those of Husserl, Derrida and Foucault are believed to exclude the subject in the same way. In this article I wish to highlight and discuss the drastic differences characterizing some of the most important twentieth-century theories about subjectivity and meaning. We will see that, far from having disappeared, the author is today what *has to* be understood if we want to interpret texts.[1]

2. *Meanings are Not Intentions: the Intentional Fallacy and the Transcendental Subject*

In the first stage, literary theory on the one hand, and phenomenology on the other, set up a sharp divide between author and text – that is, between intentions and meaning. According to this perspective, it would be totally useless for readers to connect texts with their producers' will, because will is never really expressed, or it is unknowable, or the meaning and value of writing is unrelated to it. This *first phase* of research, which elaborated this first absolute denial of the author is exemplified by the notion of 'intentional fallacy' of William Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley (1954), major figures in American New Criticism.

For the two critics, intentions do not live along with texts, and texts alone constitute the proper object of literary studies. They famously claim that 'the design or intention of the author is neither *available* nor *desirable* as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art' (3; my emphasis). Thus, they make two assertions at the same time: one about the possibility of knowing the author's intentions and the other about the importance (or, rather, unimportance) of intentions for defining literary value. Theirs is the best-known formulation of contemporary anti-intentionalist criticism, focused on text analysis, and marginalizing biographical evidence, historical understanding and contextual analysis. For New Criticism, works of art are different from ordinary written messages. The intention behind them is fully

expressed, 'pure' in a certain sense: 'Poetry succeeds because all or most of what is said or implied is relevant; what is irrelevant has been excluded … In this respect poetry differs from practical messages, which are successful if and only if we correctly infer the intention' (4). The author's intention is *reduced* to the text, and the text only is a valuable object for the critic, also because all other intentions would be practically unreachable:

One must ask how a critic expects to get an answer to the question about intention. How is he to find out what the poet tried to do? If the poet succeeded in doing it, then the poem itself shows what he was trying to do. And if the poet did not succeed, then the poem is not adequate evidence, and the critic must go outside the poem for evidence of an intention that did not become effective in the poem. (4)

The only way to know more about intentions is through biographical evidence, but it would be a mistake for literary scholars to find literary meaning in biographical episodes and historical contexts (5). In fact, the result of writing can be much richer than what its producer had in mind while writing it. The value of literature lays in the formal configurations words produce by themselves, independently from subjective plans and associations *in the writer*. Literary value lays in language itself, and it can be reactivated at any moment by accurate formal analyses.

Before Wimsatt and Beardsley, Benedetto Croce had argued in favour of exactly the same idea: the mundane intentions (intenzioni mondane) of poets are different from aesthetic intuition (intuizione estetica; 1941, 306-307).[2] When reading a poem we need to focus only on *poetry*, on the core meaning that is worth appreciation, while avoiding what was contingently introduced by the poet (that is, what was due to the poet's practical intentions and not to the pure aesthetic idea): 'the intentions and ends of poets necessarily remain extraneous to poetry; it does not matter what the poet means, wants or believes s/he is doing, but only what s/he actually does, however unaware or in contrast with the professed end' (306; my translation).

We can find in *Logische Untersuchungen* by Edmund Husserl (1900) the theoretical grounds for this divide between texts and intentions. Husserl formulated an essential distinction: the experiences of those who speak and write are not the same thing as the meaning of the words used (1970, 187-189). Words have a meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*) that is autonomous from the speaker's intention (*Absicht* or *Intention*). Intentions are part of the speaker's experiences: they are the reasons why one speaks or writes, in view of reaching a practical end in a given situation. Intentions, for the philosopher, are private mental states, related to the contingent situation of utterance and they cannot be communicated to others. On the other hand, the meanings (*Bedeutungen*) of words and sentences are *ideal*: that is, autonomous from the private ends and feelings of those who use them,

and from the actual circumstances of use. A word like 'house' has an ideal meaning, independent of all personal associations that the speaker or writer can feel, and from any reference to concrete houses (that may, or may not, be in front of the person pronouncing the word). This ideal meaning gets communicated to others: whenever I hear or read the word 'house', I grasp its ideal meaning in the same way as the speaker or writer does (we share the same *Bedeutungsintention*; 194).

Later on, in his *Ideen* (1913), Husserl finds in this ideal dimension of meaning the most conscious and clear experience we have. We are perfectly aware of what we want to say in a given moment, and words themselves permit us to think clearly about objects and states of affairs: to see something as a 'house', means that it corresponds to the typical ideal house, and we recognize the occurrence thanks to our previous knowledge of the type. Our being awake and conscious of living a certain present, of thinking certain thoughts, is possible only thanks to the ideal meanings of words coming to our mind. Ideal meanings therefore *constitute* a conscious subject that has a full control of what s/he is and wants to say. The *transcendental subject* is an ideal speaker, with a perfectly clear will to speak; it has no private experiences and intentions, but thinks only pure concepts (*Bedeutungsintentionen*): 'I, the "transcendental ego", am who "precedes" anything worldly: as the Ego, that is to say, in whose life of consciousness the world, as an intentional unity, is constituted to begin with. Therefore I, the constituting Ego, am not identical with the Ego who is already worldly, not identical with myself as a psycho-physical reality' (1969, 238). Therefore Husserl 'builds up' the ideal speaker, perfectly logical and totally expressed in the words s/he uses. In this way, his philosophical analyses of language aim to grasp all that is *available* and all that is *important*: this is the same assertion defended by New Criticism for the analysis of literature.[3] To use the words of Paul Ricoeur, 'reduction is the philosophical act that permits the birth of a being for meaning' (1974, 246).

New Criticism focuses on literature (*literary language*), while Husserl writes about the subject and the possibility to communicate (*language*); two very different dimensions, that will continuously be kept together during the whole century. In short, for this first phase of research on subjectivity *intentions are private and contingent*: they are important for everyday life, because they are linked to feelings and to the contexts of utterance, but also impossible to communicate to others. Language allows a private mental state (in the utterer or writer) to set up a link with another private mental state (in the listener or reader) because *meanings are independent from private intentions*: meanings live in sentences and texts, and resist time. Only these meanings are the real 'will to say' of who speaks and writes; they are what a person is fully aware of communicating, and they are the only thing valuable for literary criticism and for the analysis of thought. Private intentions, on the other hand, play a residual and marginal role for theory. The subject of writing is therefore

an idealized instance, with an abstract will (*Bedeutungsintention*) capable of thinking *all and only* the ideal meanings.

3. *There are No Ideal Meanings: the Death of the Author and Deconstruction*

Let us focus on a radical change, reversing what we have seen until now. Protagonists of this *second phase* of theorization are Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. Around 1968, French critics receive the innovations proposed by New Criticism, but swiftly *overturn* their sense (while on the surface they are just radicalizing them). The 'text', for the Americans something that can undergo an objective analysis, becomes with Barthes the place for anarchical readings, rooted in linguistics, psychoanalysis and anthropology.[4] Barthes's reading practice has nothing in common with formal objective analyses. Apparently, Barthes (1967) restates that the author's intention should be kept away from the critic; actually, he begins a sort of analysis of the subject *in his or her writings*.

We should point out that Barthes's proper interest is *literature*: for Barthes contemporary works have to be read as if they did not have an author.[5] The author's intention is just an undue limit to the reader's freedom: 'To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing' (1977, 147). There is no reason to confine readings within what we suppose the author wanted to say. There is no need for a 'master of meaning', as Barthes writes, because literary value lays in its potential to stimulate creative thoughts in the reader: 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author' (147).

If we want to really understand Barthes's perspective, we need to use extreme care: Barthes's author is very different from the author depicted by New Criticism. Then, the author's intentions were the idiosyncratic variation against which one should look for an ideal and objective meaning; *now, the author is the ideal and objective meaning*, dull limit that has no value for criticism. So the word 'author' has completely changed sense, and Barthes's meanings are at odds with Husserl's. The latter looked for a perfectly objective, durable meaning, removing all subjective and contingent intentions, while Barthes looks for an ever-changing meaning, removing all well defined, organizing intentions.

The ideal stability Husserl and American criticism looked for is now considered fake and undesirable. What matters in critical readings are those details observed after passing over simple sense and moral, showing hidden aspects of the psyche or society. It is not the pure will of the *conscious* subject that is sought, but rather the traces of its *unconscious*. Unconscious that manifests itself in writing and society, because it is language that structures the unconscious. The ideal conscious subject constituted by Husserl and the objective meanings he should be fully aware of are 'dead'.

To say with Barthes that 'the author is dead' means *exactly the opposite* of raising a sharp distinction between meanings and intentions. The 'intentional fallacy' and phenomenology meant to divide objective meaning and private intentions: take the first and drop the rest. But if there are *no objective meanings* on the one side, we cannot even think of private intentions on the other. What was hidden *in* the individual – and above all *to* the individual – is now visible in texts. The result of writing is as messy as real thought. The 'death of the Author' is the end of an ideal consciousness that says only what it *wants to say*, and also all objective analyses of texts do 'die', because texts are not constituted by ideal meanings. How should we read, then? The critic follows traces and hints, reaching meanings and thoughts that *could* have been in the author. The most important thing is that the critic should never say s/he has found *the only* correct meaning (what Husserl and New Criticism actually aimed to do with their 'objective', formal analyses). Interpretation is mere guessing.

Derrida (1967) has a very similar insight and uses it within philosophical discourse to overturn phenomenology, attacking the essential distinction between ideal meanings and private intentions. For Derrida there is no ideal dimension of language – for example a house autonomous from the actual thoughts of the person saying the word 'house', and from the real houses in which we live. There are no ideal meanings: signs *tend* to stable meanings (the word 'house' tends towards a shared idea), but signs are made of empirical uses, with all their imperfections and variations due to the contingent situation of use. No matter how we try and purify linguistic use through repetition, we will never reach a totally ideal and detached dimension of meaning. Bernet writes: 'The entanglement (*Verflechtung*) of the expressive function and the indicative function [of ideal meaning and intentions] of the same sign is for Husserl only an accidental contamination … Derrida on the contrary holds this entanglement of the expressive and indicative function of signs to be essential' (1990, 253).

There are no ideal and objective meanings, and there is no ideal consciousness able to grasp them. The conscious subject is something very different from what Husserl thought. Signs build experience, and it is only thanks to their repetition in actual uses that we can think; therefore we humans live in balance between the ideal dimension of a pure consciousness (with an extremely clear insight on its 'will to say') and the real chaotic variation of unconscious drives, of the raw 'will' about which we do not know much. Husserl 'stepped out' of reality, setting an abstract standpoint from which he was able to partition ideal meanings (good) and lived intentions (bad). For Derrida we cannot make this 'step out', assuming the existence of ideal meanings from the start. Whenever we say or write the word 'house' we let our listener or reader access a net of links (deferments), connecting in a heterogeneous way memories, references and past uses. We cannot isolate an ideal dimension of meaning that excludes all contingent references, leaving only pure thought. Therefore, for Derrida *there are also no private intentions*, Husserl's lived residuals of ideal meanings.

If we cannot tell what an ideal 'house' is, we cannot even tell what private, idiosyncratic associations the speaker is living close to it: how can we tell what intentions are in the speaker but *not* in the ideal meaning of the word? How can we tell what shape the background has, without a standing figure?

Barthes and Derrida undermine phenomenology and New Criticism. Those ideal meanings that *had to exist* in order for an objective analysis of consciousness and texts to be possible, have been ruled out. And consequently there are no residual lived intentions 'in the author' that *had to exist and be subtracted* to obtain ideal meanings. The will to say escapes in an indefinite deferment. And so the practice of reading has changed accordingly: deconstruction is the never-ending quest for details giving access to new traits of the writer's unconscious. Passing from the first to the second phase of research we have passed from *the primacy of consciousness to that of the unconscious*. Formal analyses neglected all that was beyond the 'text' (maybe a revealing name or date, significant for the author's life); now Deconstruction neglects any stable core of meaning, what the author most clearly wanted to say, and puts on the same level of relevance what the author *did* want to write and what the reader adds by him- or herself: 'no longer reduced to a "single message", the text is opened to an unlimited variety of interpretations' (Burke 1998, 43).

4. *The Need for a Surrogate: the Implied Author and the Author-Function*

It would be a mistake to think that twentieth-century research on subjectivity and writing ended with the 'death of the Author'. Barthes and Derrida just opened the possibility of studying the author (Burke 1998; Benedetti 1999; Irwin 2002; Bennett 2005). We *can* study the author because intentions are not inaccessible experiences, but are actually expressed in language use. We *must* study the author because any analysis trying to do without it runs the risk of looking for an ideal meaning in vain. Husserl's argument was that, if private intentions are unattainable, then we should look for an ideal author; Derrida grounded the inverse argument: if ideal meanings are unattainable, then we should look for *an empirical, fallible author, with a will to say s/he does not fully control.*

As Sean Burke writes, the ideal, hypertrophic author has finally left room for *a human author*, with all its limits:

... what is put to question is the absolutely determinative hegemony of intention over the communicative act. Intention is to be recognized, and respected, but on the condition that we accept that its structures will not be fully and ideally homogeneous with what is said or written, that is not always and everywhere completely adequate to the communicative act. … Intention is within signification, and as a powerful and necessary agency, but it does not command this space in the manner of an organizing *telos*, or transcendental subjectivity. (1998, 140)

The matter seems then to be how *the author's intention emerges in texts*.

I will now rapidly highlight the way in which some scholars have searched for *a new concept of author*. In the first place we will look at Wayne Booth and Michel Foucault, who tried to define an *Ersatz* for the concept of author: a textual or discursive instance showing to the reader a path to the author's intention. Then I will look at two more radical thinkers, Elisabeth Anscombe and Umberto Eco, who completely redefined the very idea of *intention*.

Foucault (1969) makes a function of discourse out of the author. He recognizes the need of having a person next to the text. As a matter of fact, whenever we read something, we need to construct 'a certain unity of writing' (1984, 111) behind it. But the subject does not have an origin before language: consciousness has its historical conditions, and *the author is the result of cultural production and interpretation*. Text and people are built together in interpretation, step after step: 'The author's name serves to characterize a certain mode of being of discourse … that must be received in a certain mode' (107).[6]

For Foucault, it is important to stress that the author cannot be found simply *within the text*, but on the contrary any text needs to be linked to its particular cultural context, to certain definite historical practices of meaning production, only within which does it have sense. A word like 'house' has a meaning only with respect to certain social regularities of use. The so-called *author-function* is then the interface between a text and the system of other relevant texts in which it is produced. It would be useless to read a text detaching it from the culture in which it was produced: it would only apparently show its 'real meaning', while its words would actually not be worth much. A text has value as long as it is understood as an element of large cultural regularities (these regularities are what really interests Foucault). This is also why the single author should not be over-emphasized; texts 'have to be written' and their conditions of appearance are easier to understand by referring to larger social trends, than to the biography of a single man: 'In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject … of its role as originator, and of analysing the subject as a complex and variable function of discourse' (118).

Foucault stresses the role of the interpreter in constructing the author and the role of cultural regularities in shaping the subject itself, making of it just the superficial appearance of deeper social and historical processes of change. The author function 'does not develop spontaneously as the attribution of a discourse to an individual. It is, rather, the result of a complex operation which constructs a certain rational being that we call "author" ' (111). The main question is then: 'How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse?' (118). The author is again on the agenda, just a couple of years after Barthes's dismissal. What does it matter who is speaking? 'Foucault's answer is that, in fact, it matters very much who speaks, or who we think is speaking' (Bennett 2005, 19).

Foucault explains in this way the constraints on the author's will, but he does not focus on the means by which a person manages to take partial control over what s/he says or writes. It almost seems that *unintentional* social structures produce texts by themselves, without the real need of a conscious human being. But texts are *intentional* products: we cannot but read them as being so. Structure alone does not speak: without an effective author we could not give any meaning to texts. *The author-function is the sum of all constraints to writing*; for this reason it is only the 'negative half' of the human author.

Wayne Booth (1961) focuses instead on the 'positive half' of the author, elaborating on his masters' 'intentional fallacy'. Texts are intentional products, the results of series of *choices*: 'all art presupposes the artist's choice' (53). Therefore the author expresses a writing strategy whenever s/he produces a text, and readers need to reconstruct this strategy from the words and sentences used (otherwise they could even read pages in random order). If we read the word 'house', this is evidence that its author chose to use this and not another word, and more so 'the novelist who chooses to tell *this* story cannot at the same time tell *that* story' (78). While reading, we find a sense in what is written by attributing to words and sentences the nature of items that have been chosen *among alternatives*. According to the choices we find in the process of reading, we gradually attribute an intention to the author.

In this perspective, Booth defines the *implied author* as 'the sum of his own choices' (74)[7], whose effect is the text we are reading. The author we need for understanding a text is just this series of choices; but a choice cannot simply be found *within the text*. To buy an old Fiat Cinquecento today, or in the Sixties, are very different choices: today it is the decision of a connoisseur or collector, while in the sixties it would just have been an ordinary selection among other cars sold. The object Cinquecento remains the same with time, but its meaning (the meaning of choosing and buying it) changes depending on how we think of the strategy behind it, its reasons and ends. Words can be reiterated an indefinite number of times, but it is their place in a textual strategy that is most important.

In Booth's perspective, meaning is neither the ideal dimension described by Husserl (detached from any communicative and contingent aim), nor an unmanageable expression of the unconscious (language is not 'speaking us'). To speak and to write are conscious activities realized for some conscious end, however bound to cultural constraints. Most importantly, the intentions of an author can be seen in his or her works. Sheldon Sacks writes that 'in making each choice, his ethical commitments, intuitive or conscious, not merely were but *had* to be revealed' (1964, 254).

Thanks to Booth and Foucault, the author acquires a new silhouette. They begin to look for *a new concept of author*, an author on the border between consciousness and the unconscious. This is the beginning of the *third phase* in the research on subjectivity and language: now the aim is a synthesis of

the pure phenomenological consciousness and of the structural unconscious. But why do Foucault and Booth make use of the neologisms *author-function* and *implied author*, instead of referring simply to the author of a text? The two thinkers still appear reluctant to recognize for the subject in itself a fully linguistic and semiotic nature.[8] Foucault and Booth implicitly rely on another figure, hidden inside the individual: a 'real author' that analyses cannot reach. Expressions of subjectivity in language only have a derivative existence, while there is an 'original' subject that cannot be found in texts. They still imagine *a 'real author', an unexpressed intention beyond texts*. For this reason they look for surrogates: however far we go, we will never reach the person behind the work. The image of the author emerging from a text is *necessarily* different from what the author *really* is. The grounding idea of phenomenology surreptitiously resists: there is a private, immediate intuition that can be reached only 'from the inside', while it remains inaccessible to others. Words cannot express this intimate conception of oneself, this *private intention* (the 'real thought') preceding writing. This degree zero of subjectivity has escaped from all the attacks of theory, and becomes visible in sentences like 'this is not what I *really* meant', or 'her/his *real* intentions are lost'.

5. *The Public Nature of Intention*

Charles Sanders Peirce had written, about a century before (1868), that in man everything is sign. But if this is true, how then could intentions not be signs? The way in which we think and want depends on the public signs allowing us to do so. The last step in twentieth-century theories of subjectivity recognizes *the semiotic nature of intention*, the fact that even what is most intimate in man is made of signs, and therefore lives a public life. There is no hidden 'real author', no inaccessible subjectivity hidden from language and from others. *All of the man is in the work.*

Jacques Bouveresse calls the extremely diffused and persistent disposition 'to grant an exorbitant explicative power to some events that we say are interior, hidden, private, etc.' (1987, 694; my translation) the *myth of interiority*, a disposition that seems to have survived all of the attacks of the twentieth century. For Bouveresse, it is Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953, 1958) who first overcame the 'myth of interiority' and made the subject's intention completely public and sharable. Wittgenstein writes that: '*Intention* is neither an emotion, a mood, nor yet a sensation or image. It is *not* a state of consciousness' (1967, § 45). Intentions are formed within a human community that uses language and that has certain habits; we cannot want and act, except within 'enormously complicated tacit conventions' (Anscombe 1957, § 43). We are what we are because we are put into a certain form of life by language. And above all: 'Exactly like Peirce, Wittgenstein denies that the immediacy and the private nature of somebody's conscious contents can justify by themselves

the knowledge s/he has of these conscious contents … and *a fortiori* that this immediacy and this private nature must be considered as a criterion of all authentic knowledge' (Bouveresse 1987, 78, my translation). Wittgenstein, Bouveresse argues, is, for this reason, the 'anti-Husserl', subverting the priority of private intuition on public expression (22).

And it is Elisabeth Anscombe (1957), Wittgenstein's student, who grounds an explicit theory of action onto what is publicly done and interpreted. To Anscombe, if we want to understand the sense of an action – or of the product of an action, as a text – we need to ask *why* (for what ends) the agent acted in that certain way. Action is characterized by means-ends reasoning: we give meaning to actions because we are able to identify a red thread, a chain of consequential ends, towards which action is directed. And we *do* identify these ends, at every interpretation, without ever going 'inside the mind' of anyone. Anscombe puts intentions back at the core of action descriptions, giving to intentions an exclusively *public* nature. Intentions are not things, *res*, hidden in the individual and impossible to fully communicate with words or public acts. Intentions only exist *for someone*, in public acts, from a point of view and under a description: 'to call an action intentional is to say it is intentional under some description we give or could give of it' (§ 19). This is completely the opposite of what common sense and phenomenology say about intentions: private, immediately clear intuitions we have before acting, that necessarily remain in the mind and do not get communicated to others.

It would be misleading to think that there is an ultimate ground of our behaviour that cannot be explained to others. If there were one, how could we explain it to ourselves too? Everything that a person can reach from within, can also be reached from the outside, because what puts it into a conceivable form is language.[9] To understand ourselves and others, we need to find an *end* towards which one acts – end that lives in the acts we perform and not in the brain. The linguistic and semiotic nature of intentions makes them exist only 'at a certain distance', for people able to use the specific grammar of means and ends:

The only description that I clearly know of what I am doing may be of something that is at a distance from me. It is not the case that I clearly know the movements I make, and the intention is just a result which I calculate and hope will follow on these movements. (§ 30)

Oedipus kills Laius, and does not know that Laius is his father. Can we really accuse him of having intentionally *killed his father*? The agent's point of view is essential for attributing meaning to his or her actions and to the results of those actions: *why* did Oedipus kill Laius? The same applies to writing: to understand a text we need to give an intentional role to words, characters, events, reconstructing the writing act. The 'myth of interiority', the belief in

unknowable intentions, today should be refuted also in reading practices. We need to ask *why the author produced this text and not another*, understanding the reasons and constraints behind this choice. The teleological question *why* is the core of a new way of conceiving the author. *The author is a series of answers given to the question why*, asked about a text from many possible perspectives. Without this question a text would not be such – it would not be an intentional product (as Compagnon 1998 and Benedetti 1999 write).

6. *The Intentional and the Unintentional*

Theoretical simplifications in the nineteenth century attributed to the author either a precise conscious plan (well defined 'in the head' up to the smallest detail) or a messy net of idiosyncratic associations (over which s/he has no control). What emerged in the end is the need for an author, for a real person who could be held *responsible* for the sense of writing, and could therefore confute inappropriate interpretations. The author shows up in interpretation well before biographies and in genetic comparisons: it is a matter of seeing *the result of human action* in literary and artistic works.

As we have seen, the first phase of approaches to the author implicitly postulated a hidden, interior intention that could not be reached by analyses. The 'real intentions' of writing were confined to an unreachable subjectivity, and the public aspects of writing were consequently belittled, given that they could not point to the hidden 'real intention' in the author. But, actually, in interpretation anything is better than nothing, and some indications about the author's intention have been recognized to be available and needed. If this is true, then it is better to build up an author *as best as we can*. A pragmatic approach to the author recognizes the fallibility of interpretation, but values all clues that can help to understand *intentions in the act of writing itself*, and so to see alternatives and choices in the words and sentences actually used.

The twentieth-century hunting season for the author showed above all that a *minimal* meaning attributed to a *minimal* author is very hard to find and define. On the other hand, the ends of speakers and writers do emerge from the historical and communicative context: they are not unavoidably lost after the author's physical death, because they never lived inside the author in the first place. Authors live in their works. There was in Dante no hidden *res*, there was no private 'real intention'; if there were one, then we would be justified to stop looking for it (given its disappearance), and only concentrate on language. But intention is public, and lives in the acts performed: it does not disappear, or all meaning would also disappear at the same time.[10] Therefore, given (1) the need for an author, (2) the availability of intentions, (3) the difficulty in building a *minimal* author and meaning, then (4) we need to understand the author *as best as we can, by all means necessary*. Otherwise we would risk making the author say whatever we preferred. As a matter of fact,

whenever we build up a formal or minimal author, we are just projecting our intention into the text.[11] Referring to the author, on the other hand, permits us to evaluate the correctness of our interpretation.

Luigi Pareyson blamed Croce because for the latter the productive act had no value *per se*, and was only a means to express the universal idea behind the work. Pareyson had a very different theory about artistic creation: it is human action that gives artistic works their value, and 'it is necessary to consider art more as a "doing" than as an "expressing" or "contemplating" ' (1974, 7; my translation). *The artistic intention emerges in interpretation*, and the interpreter needs to reactivate the author's intention in order to understand the work. Intentions are formed along the creative process and persist in the work's form. The matter is then how to understand the intentions of an author that make a work of art out of wood, or a piece of paper and some ink.

Umberto Eco elaborates on Pareyson's theory. Eco looks for an intention also in those *open works* whose meaning apparently does not depend on their author's project, either because random processes of creation played a major role in their production, or because the author left in them an ample space for interpretative freedom. Eco's theory is far from Barthes's and Derrida's ideas. For Eco, we need to look for and find an intention in order to recognize a work of art as such. Art, in other words, is *always intentional*, although some relevant parts of its expression and/or meaning can be left open to the interpreter's freedom. The author of an open work 'wanted to provoke a feeling of suspension, of indeterminateness' (1989, 116). Not all works of art are open works; but there is also an author's intention in open works: the intention to make an open work, in a certain way and for a certain end. Any work, 'even before becoming a field of actualizable choices, is already a field of actualized choices', and 'the original gesture, fixed by and in the sign, is in itself a direction that will eventually lead us to the discovery of the author's intention' (101-103). To interpret is then a matter of *cooperating with the author's intention*, as it is put into form in the work (Eco 1979).

For Barthes and Derrida the author's intention was a dull limit that the critic had to avoid, while Eco looks for an intention that is public (*intentio operis*, as in Eco 1990), and not 'in the head' of the author, defined up to the smallest detail before even taking up the pen (*intentio auctoris*).[12] This public intention leaves *some freedom* to the interpreter, an open field of possibilities, but not *complete freedom*. It may happen that a work does really escape from the author's control and begins to produce meaning by itself, but in that case 'what remains then is no longer a field of possibilities but rather the indistinct, the primary, the indeterminate at its wildest – at once everything and nothing' (1989, 93).

Eco's intention is perfectly compatible and complementary with Anscombe's. Intentions are semiotic realities, existing only within our public interpretation of actions and texts. Without intentions we could not give form to acts and texts (that are both the result of *intentional* activities), and intentions

are neither hidden *res* in the brain nor private experiences accessible only to oneself. Moreover, intentions can be (and for the later Eco *always are*, at least in part) open; whenever we act, our end is never defined up to the smallest detail, 'because *the intention itself was open*, aiming at a plural communication' (102; my emphasis). Openness is a property of language and of thought, depriving the will-to-say of the conscious perfection wanted by Husserl, but granting a partially-conscious directive power to it. We are not fully conscious of what we mean, whenever we speak or write, but we are conscious of at least *some* of the sense effects we want to obtain by speaking and writing.

The consequences of writing are only partially foreseen, and writers try to understand at their best the ways in which interpreters will read their works. This indeterminacy does not make our intentions less legitimate: that of a perfectly defined, 'crystalline closed' intended meaning in the mind is a wrong idea. What we think is analogous to what we write, with all the uncertainties and blank spaces (intentionally or not) left to the reader. Anscombe and Eco show that *intentions are public and open, against the two phenomenological 'myths' of a hidden interiority and of a perfect definition*. Barthes and Derrida could not recognize that *something* in the text is intentional and *something else* is not, otherwise they would have had to admit that the (however polysemic) author's intention remains in the text and in its interpretation. Anscombe and Eco actively look for clues to better interpretations and, when doing so, find an intention *at work*.

Thus, the later developments of twentieth-century reflection on subjectivity and language completely overturned the original statements about an 'intentional fallacy'. Interpretation is a matter of recognizing *what is intentional*: where the work begins and ends, and what is planned within it. There is also the need to recognize *what is unintentional*, above and beyond the author's intention – otherwise the author would become a god-like entity with a perfect control over language and with an unrealistically clear idea of the ends and consequences of his or her actions. In practice, while interpreting a text, *we need to distribute intended and non-intended messages*: the way in which we realize this distribution determines the resulting meaning. For example, it is very different to understand a certain sentence as ironic or not; it depends on how we give shape to the author's intention, on the basis of all the data we manage to find and to our reasoning. Attributing or not-attributing an intentional ironic message to a sentence depends on *the hypothesis we make about the author* (while the sentence itself remains the same in both readings). For example, to talk about our friend's mismatched socks can be done intentionally or not: it is all important to understand what is the case, in order to interpret the actual sense and use of what we say. And this applies also in case of intentional ambiguity.

This is the exact opposite of asserting that the author's intention is 'neither available nor desirable', as New Criticism suggested. Intention is always *at stake* and *in discussion*. The author cannot be exhausted, fully understood, because interpretation (from a pragmatic standpoint) is a nearly never-ending activity.

But *intention remains the only limit to interpretation* and the only possibility to negotiate our proper reading with others on a public basis. Intention is actually the opposite of what Husserl and the New Critics thought: intention is an entirely public benchmark, to be defined according to textual and contextual evidence against which diverse interpretations can be compared. Intention is public and visible, and not something hidden within the author. To be an author (and also to simply communicate) is a matter of publicly expressing something, and not at all keeping it private for oneself. There is nothing unreachable in communication, and especially not the author's intention.

I hope I have given an adequate idea of the richness and complexity of the debate on authorship and interpretation as it developed throughout the whole of the twentieth century. The subject, initially marginal, took a long time to become visible and describable. And every new idea of the author has been accompanied by a new idea of *what a text is*, and of how it should be read: realization of ideal meanings under the control of a transcendental subject; agglomerate of citations under the drives of the unconscious; intentional product of an author with a partially conscious strategy in mind. Only this last idea needs an effective, 'useful' concept of author: a person writing for an end, even if s/he may not be able to foresee all the consequences of his or her choices. This makes a *human* out of the author. In this way the word 'author' can be pronounced again without prefixes or restrictive attributions, without seeing in it the residual *par excellence*, that about which it is not possible to talk. There is no hidden author. A scapegoat for an entire century, the author is actually its dearest son, a linking of consciousness and the unconscious.

It was only following the twentieth-century debate that *the author was born*.

---

[1] This article presents some of the results of my PhD thesis, discussed at the University of Siena in May, 2010.

[2] Wimsatt and Beardsley (1954, 6) completely misunderstood Croce's theory and in particular ignored his 'golden rule' of dividing mundane intentions from the pure aesthetic intuition (see also Benedetti 1999, 41). Croce did not attribute the original formulation of the 'golden rule' to himself, but to the Italian critic Francesco De Sanctis and to Pëtr Kropotkin. New Criticism gave resonance to an approach that was well-known and recognized in nineteenth-century Europe.

[3] Eric Hirsch proposes a form of intentionalism explicitly rooted in Husserl's phenomenology. Hirsch is only interested in meaning-intentions (*Bedeutungsintentionen*), and not in lived intentions (*Absichten*). From our perspective, Hirsch's position adds nothing to the 'intentional fallacy'. Hirsch's author is an ideal author (literary transposition of the transcendental subject), emptied of lived intentions, and fully aware of objective meanings independent from historical change: 'an unlimited number of intentional acts can intend the same verbal meaning' (1967, 38).

[4] Important sources for the 'death of the Author' proposed by Barthes, and for French post-structuralism in general, are Lacan (1966) and Benveniste (1966).

[5] Understanding the real extension of Barthes's 'death of the author' would require much more space than is allowed here. Let us simply say that it is not fully clear whether Barthes (1967) refers to *all* literary works, to all *contemporary* literary works, or to *some* contemporary literary works.

⁶ Foucault's move drastically changes the perspective in which we observe texts and authors. It is a matter of viewing authors as functions of texts, by which we 'build' and understand what we read. On the contrary, texts have been usually thought as 'signs' of the author's genius and creativity. As H.W. Gabler makes very clear in his contribution to the present volume, this revolution in perspective represents in a much better way how scholars actually deal with texts and promotes further effects in contemporary critical and interpretative practices. The concept of text itself emerges as a literate construction involving material documents on the one hand, and hypotheses about the author's work and will on the other.

⁷ Booth's author is *implied* and not *implicit*. Implied by the very existence of the text, as my coffee on the table implies that someone made it. Explicit and implicit messages are both to be referred to the author.

⁸ Actually, Foucault's position can be interpreted as saying that the ordinary concept of author has to be *substituted* by the author-function, meaning that there is no hidden 'real author' but only an effective semiotic figure built by discourses. This interpretation would imply that Foucault also held that the author function manifests *all of* the author's intention and 'interiority', as Elisabeth Anscombe more explicitly stated (see section 5).

⁹ Derrida (1967) complained that Husserl did not take the distinction between linguistic meaning and intuitive knowledge far enough. Language was important for Husserl (it shaped thought), but not important enough, and private intuition kept the ruling role. Wittgenstein and Anscombe, on the other hand, attributed overriding importance to language, and left no knowing capacity for private intuition. To know what I think, I need to listen to what I say: this idea is common to Derrida and Wittgenstein. There are many other analogies between the two thinkers (see Staten 1985).

¹⁰ Whenever we become unable to read an ancient language, we lose at the same time the texts' meaning and their authors' intentions.

¹¹ Eco (1990) calls this *intentio lectoris*. For example, if my wife tells me that she's going to buy some cigarettes, and I believe this to be a subliminal message and that she will never return, very often I am just reading in the words something that is not there. A reference to the situation of utterance, and to our life in general, would be the only way to guide interpretation (in fact, every sentence is *potentially* ambiguous, but not all are *intentionally* ambiguous; see Eco's *openness*).

¹² Compagnon (1998) believes that Eco's *intentio operis* is just another way of talking about texts (against the complete freedom accorded to the reader by deconstruction) without including their authors. But Eco's pragmatic theory of interpretation could not do without the author's *intentions, strategies and choices*. The *intentio operis* is Eco's proper way to define a purely semiotic intention, existing only *in operari* and not *in mentis*.

Works Cited

Anscombe Elisabeth (1957), *Intention*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Barthes Roland (1967), *La mort de l'auteur*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil. Engl. trans. 'The Death of the Author', in S. Heath, ed. (1977), *Image-Music-Text*, London, Mill and Wang, 142-148.

Benedetti Carla (1999), *L'ombra lunga dell'autore*, Milano, Feltrinelli.

Bennett Andrew (2005), *The Author*, London and New York, Routledge.

Benveniste Émile (1966), *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, Gallimard.

Bernet Rudolf (1990), 'Derrida et la voix de son maître', *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* CLXXX, 2, 147-168. Engl. trans., 'Derrida and His Master's Voice', in Z. Direk and L. Lawlor, eds (2002), *Jacques Derrida. Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. I, London and New York, Routledge, 250-266.

Booth Wayne (1961), *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Bouveresse Jacques (1987), *Le mythe de l'intériorité*, Paris, Minuit.

Burke Sean (1998 [1992]), *The Death and the Return of the Author*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Compagno Dario (2010), *Attorno alla 'morte dell'autore'. Indagine sulla soggettività nelle teorie semiotiche del Novecento*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Siena.

Compagnon Antoine (1998), *Le Démon de la théorie*, Paris, Seuil. Engl. trans. (2004), *Literature, Theory, and Common Sense*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Croce Benedetto (1941 [1936]), *La poesia*, Bari, Laterza.

Derrida Jacques (1967), *La voix et le phénomène*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

Eco Umberto (1962), *Opera aperta*, Milano, Bompiani. Engl. trans. (1989), *The Open Work*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Eco Umberto (1979), *Lector in Fabula*, Milano, Bompiani. Engl. trans. (1979), *The Role of the Reader, Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Eco Umberto (1990), *I limiti dell'interpretazione*, Milano, Bompiani. Engl. trans. (1991), *The Limits of Interpretation*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Foucault Michel (1969), 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie*, 63, 3, 73-104. Engl. trans., 'What is an Author?', in P. Rabinow, ed. (1984), *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon, 101-120.

Gabler H.W. (2012), 'Beyond Author-Centricity in Scholarly Editing', in this volume.

Hirsch Eric (1967), *Validity in Interpretation*, New Haven, Yale University Press.

Husserl Edmund (1900), *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. I, Leipzig, Veit. Engl. trans (1970), *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, London and New York, Routledge.

Husserl Edmund (1913), *Ideen zu einer reiner Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie*, Den Haag, Nijhoof. Engl. trans. (1982), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, The Hague, Nijhoff.

Husserl Edmund (1929), *Formale und transzendentale Logik*, Den Haag, Nijhoof. Engl. trans. (1969), *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, The Hague, Nijhoff.

Irwin William, ed. (2002), *The Death and Resurrection of the Author?*, Westport, Greenwood.

Lacan Jacques (1966), 'Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien', in id., *Écrits*, Paris, Seuil, 793-827.

Pareyson Luigi (1974 [1954]), *Estetica*, Firenze, Sansoni.

Peirce C.S. (1868), 'Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Men', *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 2, 103-114.

Ricoeur Paul (1969), *Le conflit des interprétations*, Paris, Seuil. Engl. trans. (1974), *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press.

Sacks Sheldon (1964), *Fiction and the Shape of Belief*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Staten Henry (1985), *Wittgenstein and Derrida*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Wimsatt W.K. and Monroe Beardsley (1954), 'The Intentional Fallacy', in *The Verbal Icon*, Lexington, Kentucky University Press, 3-18.

Wittgenstein Ludwig (1953), *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Wittgenstein Ludwig (1958), *The Blue and the Brown Book*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Wittgenstein Ludwig (1967), *Zettel*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Part Two

Case Studies

Religious Discourse

Vernacular Authorship
in Late Medieval Religious Discourse.
The Case of William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations*

Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti

University of Florence (gabriella.dellungo@alice.it)

Abstract

Despite the fact that the main topic of William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations* was a pivotal concern of late medieval spiritual literature and the treatise in letter form was widely circulated in both Latin and English, it has remained rather marginal to critical discourse. Neither epistolary space as the site of interaction author/audience nor the role of spiritual authorities in establishing themselves as real authors of religious texts as distinguished from compilers and scribes have been specifically investigated. The paper focuses on the dialogic construction of the authorial voice in William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations* through the analysis of the linguistic and discursive strategies used in the vernacular version of this work of spiritual advice. The most relevant strategy is the choice of the letter format to address a female audience as it allows to transfer authoritative religious discourse into English and to assert the writer's status of author of a text addressed to both religious women and the lay public. In addition, the paper aims at highlighting the relevance of stylistic analysis to delineate the construction of the textual vernacular author in the context of audience recognition. In addressing a non-academic public, the author of one of the English versions of *Remedies against Temptations* engages with Latin learning and asserts himself as the author of a vernacular theology text.

Keywords: Later Middle Ages, Religious Discourse, Stylistic Analysis, Vernacular Authorship.

1. *Introduction*

Medieval theories of authorship, found largely in academic glosses on canonical works, consistently identify authorship with authority, situating both in established traditions. A writer considered an *auctor* in the Middle Ages, such as Augustine or Virgil, possesses *auctoritas* because he composes a text and this text becomes authoritative in that it gains recognition as an exemplar, fashioning rules for language, form, or belief, or offering expertise, which medieval writers generally tried to incorporate rather than surpass (Steiner 2007, 143). Authorial control is thus not only vested in the author since in the manuscript matrix one cannot dictate the conditions of reception, any

more than one can guarantee uniformity of format. In late medieval England the so-called 'translation of authority' happened, that is, a shift in authoritative discourse and methodology from Latin intellectual culture towards the 'vulgar tongue'; this encompassed popular cultural beliefs and practices which engaged in complex relationships with those authorized by Church and State institutions (Minnis 2009, xi).

Late medieval authorship is not necessarily linked to writing, which is merely the medium of transmission of a text and, indeed, the making of a medieval text began long before a scribe put pen to parchment (on late medieval textuality see Del Lungo Camiciotti 2011). Recent approaches to textuality claim that there is no such thing as an author and that every text is a product of intertextuality, a tissue of allusions to and citations of other texts. This is especially true of medieval vernacular texts which appropriate, dispose, exploit, and indeed challenge learned Latin authority (Minnis 2009, 1). Yet, the question of authorial intention and its reception is pivotal in textual production, especially in religious texts. All in all, late medieval vernacular religious culture participates in the authoritative, and authority-conferring, methodologies of learned discourse, but also less academic textual forms are used as sites of appropriation or legitimization where authority emerges from the ongoing construction of the author/audience relationship.

Minnis (1988) has shown how the influence of Latin commentaries on secular authorities was pervasive and scholastic literary theory influenced vernacular writers of the later Middle Ages, in particular Chaucer and Gower. Wogan-Browne, Watson, Taylor, and Evans (1999) have highlighted the relevance of prologues as the site of negotiating authority with the audience and included religious texts in their overview. Yet, neither epistolary space as the site of interaction author/audience nor the role of spiritual authorities in establishing themselves as real authors of religious texts as distinguished from compilers and scribes have been specifically investigated. The article will focus on the dialogic construction of the authorial voice in William Flete's *Remedies against Temptations* through the analysis of the linguistic and discursive strategies used by the author of the vernacular version of this work of spiritual advice. In the treatise, written before he left England for Lecceto, near Siena, in 1359, Flete presents a programme of penitential psychology through the medium of a letter. The English version of his treatise is in fact addressed to a sister, who may be a literary fiction or a real recipient. The highly conscious choice of this form is pivotal in that it allows Flete to deploy the religious discourses of his time for lay readers and listeners with personal closeness in a domain – religious discourse – whose style is usually characterized by distance and wherein the speaking subject can assert himself as the author of an inter-text between a range of current vernacular theology. His claim to textual authority is based on exhortations and appeals to the audience which reinforce the bond author/addressee and

truth statements supported by citations from the Bible and other religious authorities, which however are not reported in Latin but summarised in English. The letter provides a fictive locus for the performance of the writer's didactic and pastoral intention as well as for a dialogic textual encounter which situates his claim to authority in the context of audience recognition.

The authorial *persona* of the *Remedies* is mainly produced through the dialogical interaction with the audience: Flete is present in the text as both authoritative advisor and confident linked to the addressee by a bond of friendship and confidentiality. His didactic and counselling intention is responsible for authoritatively illustrating doctrinal aspects in the context of homiletic address rich in affective elements. To assert his authorial *persona* he makes use of specific strategies and linguistic markers which highlight the way he tries to relate to his public. The main communicative intention of the treatise is to instruct and gain authority. Various linguistic devices are therefore deployed to assure the speaking voice's authority to counsel and admonish; from this perspective the addressee is constructed on an asymmetrical plane but the author tries to redress this imbalanced relationship by appealing to her co-operation and benevolence. Stylistic analysis will reveal some of the linguistic and rhetorical devices conductive to establish the author's credentials through the deployment of his pastoral intention and the exposition of his ideas in a friendly dialogue with the recipient of the epistle.

In this article I will make two points which seem relevant to contextualise and interpret the author's *persona* of *Remedies against Temptations* in the context of late medieval religious culture: Firstly, I will delineate the characteristics of the letter form and epistolary discourse in the Middle Ages; secondly, I will focus on some linguistic features which justify my claim that the author of the treatise chose the letter form as particularly apt to instruct a female audience and a lay readership in general and to establish his authorship of a vernacular religious text. I therefore assume that analysing the use of language in terms of the context, the social and institutional practices to which it relates, will enable us to reveal more clearly the textual construction of authorship.

2. *The Letter Form and Epistolary Discourse in the Middle Ages*

The author of *Remedies against Temptations* consciously positions his work in epistolary space. We may here posit an important question: what was a letter in the Middle Ages? A much more versatile document than the modern letter. In addition to real letters, actually sent to recipients to convey information, almost any material could be cast in the form of a letter if the writer chose to do so. Fictional letters comprise treatises in epistolary form which represent an important aspect of devotional literature, especially those addressed to women. I can mention, for instance, the *Ancrene Riwle*, written for three sisters wishing to live the life of recluses, and Aelred de Rieveaux's letter of spiritual counsel to his sister.

While intimacy, spontaneity, and privacy are now considered the essence of the epistolary genre, in the Middle Ages letters were for the most part self-conscious, quasi public literary documents, often written with an eye to future collection and publication (Constable 1976, 11). Besides, letters were often intended to be read by more than one person; they were therefore designed to be correct and elegant rather than original and spontaneous, and they often followed the epistolary conventions of model letters in formularies, the *artes dictaminis*, popular from the twelfth century. Even vernacular letters, both private and business or official letters, were constructed along certain very definite lines which comprise the division in sections and the use of the appropriate style though familiar letters – such as those written by the Cely family (Del Lungo Camiciotti 2010) or by the Paston women (Watt 2004) – may be rather informal and colloquial. Both real, public and private, and fictional letters are extant from the Middle Ages. Vernacular private letters were often written by women, but letters were also remarkably suited to express the public *persona* of women such as, for instance, Catherine of Siena because they were dictated to a secretary and so allowed women to bypass the need for formal education (Cherewatuk and Wiethaus 1993, 1).

In the Middle Ages the letter was linked to orality rather than writing since it was usually dictated to a scribe, read aloud to listeners and, most importantly, because it was regarded as half of a conversation between the sender and the addressee and it involved a quasi-presence and quasi speech between the two. In brief the epistolary situation, which was conceived as *dialogue in absentia*, was particularly suited to bridge the temporal as well as spatial gap between friends and strengthen the friendship or confidence bond between them. Given the importance of dialogue as medium of instruction in the Middle Ages, it was also suited to persuasive texts like sermons or polemical treatises in which the writer sought to appeal directly to the reader and establish his authority as author. Besides, the fact that the letter was intended to be read by a public wider than the intended addressee enabled the writer to extend his influence beyond the private conversation with friends to the network of sympathizers or supporters thus establishing his responsibility as author of the ideas contained in the letter. The authority of the writer was also reinforced, in letters addressed to pious women, by the fact that, in addition to being a means of self-presentation and social identification, corresponding with a female mystic conferred the status of the Written Word to the spiritual director's advice. To sum up, the epistolary form was a suitable medium for works of instruction and advice motivated by spiritual friendship particularly if addressed to a female audience.

The interplay between oral and written discourse considered typical of the letter required sustained attention to the status, identity and authority of the speaking subject and to the implied addressee. In addition, as epistolary discourse was often the only way to maintain or create ties at a distance, let-

ters were not only a token of friendship and confidentiality, but also a mark of honour and favour to the recipient. (A letter was a gift to the recipient, who was considered to own the text.) Epistolary discourse is distinguishable from other types of discourse by certain basic pronominal and predicative traits that taken together constitute what is unique to its language (Gurkin Altman 1982, 117): the *I/you* relationship and the present tense as reference point. According to Gurkin Altman 'Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of epistolary language is the extent to which it is coloured by not one but two persons and by the specific relationship existing between them' (118). The interpersonal bond structures meaning in letters: the *I* becomes defined relative to the *you* whom he/she addresses. In short, the *I/you* relationship that governs epistolary discourse is both a form of self-presentation and of dialogic interaction. The similarities of epistolary communication with real conversation has been often noted. Benveniste highlights the reference of *I/you* to the discursive dimension. As he writes the use of *I/you* refers only to locution, to discourse, never to objects. He writes: 'Je signifie "la personne qui énonce la présente instance de discours contenant je" … Par conséquent, en introduisant la situation d'"allocution", on obtient une définition symétrique pour tu, comme "l'individu allocuté dans la présente instance de discours contenant l'instance linguistique tu"' (1966, 252-253).

The second feature identifying epistolary discourse is temporal relativity. Epistolary discourse is governed by its moment of enunciation. The letter writer is highly conscious of writing in a specific present against which past and future are plotted. Both past and future are always relative to the discursive present of the epistolary communication. Letter narrative depends on reciprocality of writer/addressee and is charged with present-consciousness in both the temporal and the spatial sense. It is a language of gap-closing, of speaking to the addressee as if he/she were present. These features seem particularly suited to assert the independence of the vernacular author by enhancing his/her textual presence. Latin had an immense cultural authority, providing a fundamental intellectual formation for the medieval word. But in the late medieval period many writers confronted the cultural hegemony of Latin by writing in English and highlighting their authorial *personae* as vernacular writers. The construction of authorship is thus linked to translating and producing texts in English. The medieval author was not a clearly identified individual who is the sole creator of a text; medieval writers preferred to refer to a collaborative tradition, but in the late Middle Ages many writers insist on their personal intentions thus contributing to the formation of the authorial *persona*. The title of author was reserved for those who reshaped material in such a way as to take responsibility for it. In this model, authors are considered close to translators and compilers. It is authenticity and conformity with truth that confers authority on texts and authors. The translation of Latin *auctoritas* into English in religious discourse made the formation of

vernacular authority possible together with the many strategies developed by
a number of writers to excuse themselves for the selection of an inferior mode
of communication. In writing in English, religious authors reached beyond
their immediate circle to a potential readership that might ultimately include
the entire laity, women included.

The question of why the fictional letter was also a type of document
particularly suited to a female audience has not been sufficiently investigated.
Medieval writers often knew their intended readers personally and were thus
more likely to present their work as an ongoing conversation (Wogan-Browne,
Watson, Taylor, and Evans 1999, 13). Cherewatuk and Wiethaus (1993) ex-
plore letter writing by women in the Middle Ages; they claim that letters are
remarkably suited for self-expression and communication and, unlike learned
treatises, letters had long been accessible to women because of the directness
with which they convey ideas and emotions and because of the immediate
availability of audience. Women could transcend educational barriers as let-
ters were usually dictated to scribes and use them to teach, influence politics,
maintain familial ties, explore innermost emotions (1-2). In general, the
epistolary form was often used for apostolic works and for works of instruc-
tion and propaganda, when face-to-face persuasion was impossible (Constable
1976, 14). Yet some link across the epistolary gap was essential to the writing
of letters. It might have been the desire to instruct or to convert, but most
frequently it was friendship (15). I think that the choice of this textual type
by Flete may also be due to its linguistic and pragmatic characteristics. As the
analysis will show, the letter form is very useful to construct the identity of
both the textual author and the model pious recipient by establishing a closely
involved relationship between spiritual advisor and disciple in need of counsel
(on the close relationship between a pious woman and her confessor see Del
Lungo Camiciotti 2008). The distance – fictional or real – between corre-
spondents may be bridged by creating an epistolary bond and by addressing
directly both recipient and implied readers/listeners of the text. In addition,
in an essentially oral culture, the written word conferred great authority to
both sender and recipient, as letters were quasi public literary documents;
they are thus well suited to investigate the formation of an authorial *persona*
in connection with vernacular culture.

3. *William Flete in the Context of Late Medieval Penitential Psychology*

According to Hackett, William Flete 'was the only direct link between those
two great, so-called schools of medieval mysticism, the English and the Ital-
ian' (1992, 99). While a hermit in Lecceto near Siena, he was advisor to and
spiritual friend of the greatest Italian woman saint and mystic writer Catherine
of Siena and may have influenced her theological thought. Despite this, among
the many late medieval devotional treatises, his *Remedies against Temptations*

has remained rather marginal to critical discourse. Yet, its main topic, the profits of tribulations divinely sent or permitted, was a pivotal concern of late medieval spiritual literature as shown by the fact that this treatise, in common with most other spiritual classics of the fourteenth century, was copied and owned by a variety of pious readers, both secular and religious (Colledge and Chadwick 1968, 204).

William Flete was born about 1325 and was reading for the master of theology at Cambridge when in 1359 he begged his superiors' permission to leave England for Italy and retire to Lecceto or Selva di Lago near Siena, and live a recluse's life. The hermitage of Lecceto was one of the great centres of Augustinian piety at the time and there he entered a network of spiritually minded people. When William Flete arrived in Lecceto, in 1361 or 1362 according to Aubrey Gwynn (1940, 147), he was already an outstanding personality of late medieval English spirituality. In Lecceto he came into contact with Catherine of Siena (as proved by six letters by the great Italian mystic addressed to William Flete that are extant) and her *famiglia* or network of friends and supporters.

William Flete wrote his treatise on spiritual temptations *De Remediis contra Temptaciones* not later than the summer of 1359, when he left England. It became one of the popular spiritual manuals of the later Middle Ages in England as thirty-seven Latin and English manuscripts survive. At least three recensions of the English text have been identified, which indicated a wide circulation of the vernacular version. The analysis developed in this paper is based on the third English version edited by Colledge and Chadwick (1968), which may have been copied by nuns (Colledge and Chadwick 1968, 217).

As mentioned, the treatise is in letter form addressed to a sister, perhaps a fictional sister. Yet, Flete's instructional concern for a female audience is revealed by the real relationship between the hermit of Lecceto and a spiritual daughter such as St. Catherine of Siena. Besides, works of moral instruction and edification had been cast before in the form of a letter about spiritual problems addressed to the stock 'sister' figure (Hackett, Colledge, Chadwick, 1964, 249; on the *topos* of female audience see also Vulič 2008), but in addition to the sister, as the analysis will show, the treatise is addressed to anyone, lay people and solitaries, who despair of their salvation and need a spiritual director to instruct them in the profits of tribulation. This was quite a popular topic at the end of the Middle Ages and its rendering in the vernacular may have helped William Flete to establish his authorial *persona*. The short treatise survives in nine manuscripts comprising vernacular versions of the Latin original whose sections are arranged in slightly different ways; it reflects the spiritual attitude of its time and belongs to a network of vernacular texts stressing various aspects of the devotional life of men and women in the late Middle Ages (similarities have been indicated with contemporary treatises such as Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* and the *Chastising of God's Children*).

The treatise does not attempt to teach his readers how to make progress in spiritual life, unlike other devotional texts. It does not exhort his readers to embrace the religious profession: it may have been written for those already professed, perhaps nuns, though it was read and copied widely. The text is concerned with the conduct of the spiritual life of solitaries and spiritually oriented lay people and its author shows himself to be acquainted with the most modern literature of his age dealing with the fear of diabolical possession and temptation. The topic treatment is sober, sympathetic, and grounded on sound theological and psychological principles; this may indicate that the author knew that his main addressees were simple-minded women who should attempt to avoid the excessive manifestations of medieval spirituality and achieve a certain spiritual and emotional stability.

4. *Stylistic Analysis of* Remedies

Though the text does not contain the salutation and conclusion which define the formal letter, the treatise by Flete can be defined as a letter in that it is characterized by the linguistic features of epistolary discourse: the *I/you* relationship and the present of utterance as reference points. The picture that emerges from Flete's treatise is however more complex than the *I/you* epistolary situation in that also third person pronouns and inclusive *we* are used.

The author/addressee relationship is characterised by the higher frequency of second person pronouns (202; 151 *you* and related forms, 51 *thou* and related forms) than first person singular pronouns (76 *I* and related forms). Flete's *Remedies* is in fact a very *you*-oriented text from which the second-person clearly emerges as reciprocal voice in the dialogic construction of the authorial voice. Numbers however do not paint an accurate picture. It is more revealing to investigate the usage of pronouns as suggested by Wales (1996). In late Middle English the distinction between *thou* and *ye/you* forms is not completely lost from a social perspective though *thou* is increasingly restricted as the pronoun of address to God and power relations could be still marked (in the sixteenth century) by the choice of *thou* and *you* on a basis of either a reciprocal relationship or an unequal one (Smith 1999, 187; see also Burnley 2003).

In the *Remedies* both forms *thou* and *ye/you* are still used but the pronoun *thou* and its related forms are restricted to reference to God. The avoidance of *thou*, which expresses an unequal relationship, and the unmarked use of *ye/you* forms to address the recipient of the epistle seem to indicate that the interpersonal relation is established on the basis of a polite intercourse between social equals.

However, the author/addressee relationship is much more complex since the writer has more than one recipient in mind and positions his audience by subtly alternating an individual level, the *sister* mentioned in the text (example 1), with a more general one expressed by indefinite *man* (examples 8, 9), used, as pointed out in the text, for both men and women and in the interplay between singular and plural *you*, and *I, ye, we*.

1. And þerfore, **suster**, be not douteful ne hevy, for it schal neuere turne **ȝou** to perell, but it schal turne **ȝou** to gret profyte, for ther by **ȝe** schal wynne the crowne of worchip and þe palme of victorie, whiche schal ben to **ȝou** gret worchip and glorie in the blisse of heuene þouȝ þe þank þat **ȝe** schuln haue of oure lord god for **ȝoure** with stondynge of such temptacions and for your pacyens if **ȝe** taken it mekely, and to þe fend it schal turne to schame and confusion. (IV)

Since the letter format implies a dialogue, a prototypical *I/you*, the voices we hear are that of the writer and his correspondent, to whom a wider audience is added. The writer directly intrudes in the text with asides in the first person (example 2) and by the implied *I* of imperatives used to give advice and instruction.

2. As **I** seyde afore (VI), **I** am steryd to telle of oone of hem (IX), And **I** sey ȝou. (X)

The writer also uses inclusive *we* in invocations to God and to highlight participation in the group of associates (examples 3, 4, 5). *We* is used in its inclusive value to include writer, addressee and the wider audience so that the speaker presumes to speak on the addressee's behalf (examples 3, 4).

3. But god schilde, as **I** seyde afore, þat **ony creature** be the more recheles or bold to synne wilfully; but for þe mercy of god is so large, **we** owen to ben the more besy and diligent to loue and plese god, for þat he is so good and so ful of mercy. (IV)

4. treuly, and **we** token good keep of these wordes, **we** wolden be gladdere of his chastysyngis þan of alle the worldes cherysynges; and if **we** deden soo, alle diseses and trybulacions schulden turne to comfort and joye. (IX)

5. Þerfore **lete vs** alwey haue a good wil to wilne weel and to do wel, and god wil kepe **vs** and ȝeue **vs** the victorye, and þe fend schal ben confounded. (I)

The author is present in the text with a text organizing function (examples 2, 3), as advisor (example 2) and with an exhortative function (example 5). Yet, on the whole the text is mostly oriented towards the recipient who is individually addressed as the predominance of second person singular pronouns. However, there are at least two forms which are clearly plural, while others can be ambiguously intended (examples 6, 7).

6. But **alle ȝe** þat ben taryed þus of the feend with þese þouȝtes and sterynges, beleue hem not ne charge hem not, for alle þing þat is treuly groundyd in god, it pleseth god and not displeseth. (VII)

7. **ȝe childern of holy cherche**, þat haue for saken the world for helthe of youre soules, and principally to plesen god, comfort **ȝe** in hym whom **ȝe** haue chosen to loue and serue, for he wole ben to **ȝou** ful free and large, as **ȝe** may see be exaumple of Petir in the gospel. (X)

The reference to a plural audience is also manifested by the use of *they* and related forms when the antecedent is the indefinite or generic pronoun *man* or a specific category indicated by *tho* (examples 8, 9, 10).

8. But þough **a man or woman** haue or feele alle þe vycious sterynges and as many mo as ony herte kan þenke, aȝens **here** owne free wil, and alwey quan reson cometh to **hem, thei** ben myspayed with al, and fleen alwey to goddys mercy, it is to **hem** but preuynge and clensynge of synnes, þouȝ **thei** been often in the nyght and in the day now vp, now doun, as wrasteleris ben. (IV)

9. And **suche men þat** þus ben traueiled and taried with scharpe peynful þoughtes and sterynges, **thei** owen to taken the councel and techynge of wys men þat ben goode and discrete, and be no weye þat thei folwe here owne wielde fantasyes, for þat wold vttirly schende hem. (V)

10. And if it so be þat **ȝe** have consentid and fallen in ony temptacion, beth sory, and crieth god mercy þerof, and beth not discomforted þerfore. Þenke wel on the grete mercy of god, how he forgaf Dauid his grete synnes, and Petir and Maudeleyn, and not only hem but also **alle tho** þat haue be or mow be and schulen ben contrite for here synnes and cryen god mercy. (III)

In sum, the text is not just a dialogue between correspondents since, in addition to the *I/you* of writer and addressee, it includes a *you* which may be several, and may thus be displaced from the canonical speech situation into the wider reading or listening public. Moreover, there are third parties, which may be either widely disseminated as *any creature* or *they/tho* in ever larger contexts of situation or included in *we*, whose value is more than one of the same and implies the collective identity of a group that can speak as one speaker and share beliefs and views.

If we now turn to the second aspect of epistolary discourse, time relativity, we may note that again the text is more complex than a letter conveying information and news. The text is divided into short, easily comprehended sections each dealing with a specific theme. There are pieces of instruction addressed to a sister, but also prayers and some highly charged passages of affective piety: the treatise contains direct appeals to the recipient, passages of doctrinal exposition and invocations. The present locution of advice which is the central reference point of the text merges with the atemporal present of doctrinal exposition. Other linguistic features point to the language of the authoritative instructor, such as the use of imperatives (example 12), and the present of utterance is also charged with a sense of future anticipation since the text is interspersed not only with imperatives but also with the imposition of obligation/recommendation reinforcing the persuasive stance of the text (examples 11, 12).

11. And þough a cristen man were neuere so wikkyd ne so synful, and stood in the same sentens of hardest wordes þat ben wretyn, ȝet **he schulde trusten** to goddis

mercy, for if he wolde forsaken his synnes and 3iue hym to good liff, **he schulde haue grace** and for3euenesse, and the scharpe wordes of dampnacion **schulde turne** hym to mercy and sauacion. (IV)

12. Þerfore, sustir, **fle** to hym þat al mercy is jnne, and **aske** mercy, and 3e **shuln haue** mercy and forgeuenesse of alle goure synnes; and make you louly to þe sacramentis of holy cherche, and þanne 3e owen to beleuen trustily þat þei ben forgouen, and ge receyued into grace of god. (III)

The address term *sister* accompanied by the use of the pronoun *3e* and the avoidance of *thou* to refer to the addressee seem to indicate polite form and equal relationship as the use of the V-form is part of a value system which medieval people called *curtesie* (Burnley 2003, 35). The choice of the address terms *sister* and *children* to refer to his direct addressee and a network of sympathizers highlights the writer role of religious instructor linked by a friendship bond with his female addressees while his reference to the universal level represented by *man* and *woman*, *creature* highlights his intention to reach a wider public as author of a specific text. The language of the treatise is oriented towards the addressee's future behaviour influenced by the writer's advice. The writer is bound in a present preoccupied with the future and his intention to influence it persuasively.

To conclude *Remedies against Temptations* is an instructive text in letter form; as such it is also a highly interactive text where the audience and even their expectations are constantly observed by the author. Consequently, the discourse is a blend of religious language which is relevant to establishing the writer as authoritative counsellor through instructive devices pertaining to the need to make the message clear and accessible to a vernacular audience. The text abounds in imperative verb forms and the most frequent modal is *schulen* which suggests obligation but also appropriateness and assertion. The predominantly authoritative form of polite address represented by the use of imperatives and the modality of recommendation is softened by the affective stance of the author towards the recipients of his message addressed as *sister* or *children of God*. The usage of personal pronouns shows that while the voice of the author is clearly heard through pronominal first-person reference, the focus is on the addressee through the use of second-person pronouns and address terms. Flete's *Remedies* is thus a status and authority conferring work and a *you*-oriented text where reception mirrors the act of writing. Epistolary space is defined by the shared world of the writer and addressee underlying their dialogue.

5. *Concluding Observations*

The treatise on the *Remedies against Temptations* for solitaries is a text highlighting the authorial responsibility of the vernacular author vis-à-vis his lay public of readers and listeners. It gives practical and spiritual advice addressed

to a sister, but includes more than a single correspondent. It is composed with a second, larger, more permanent audience in mind. It was apparently written for open circulation or for someone in the network of friends and supporters who sympathized with Flete's ideas and devotional advice. If we now return to the initial question – why the letter form to address a sister in need of counsel? – we can try to propose some observations which are linked to the textual authority of the writer.

The epistolary medium facilitates the circulation of the text and gives centrality to the confidential relationship between religious director and spiritually minded people. In no other genre do recipients of a text figure so prominently within the world shared by the correspondents and in the generation of the text. In giving practical advice and doctrinal information, the spiritual counsellor shifts between a strongly persuasive stance as author responsible for the text content and an empathetic attitude towards the sister recipient of his text. Advice is authoritatively given through imperatives and the imposition of obligation, but this position is softened by the inclusion of both writer and addressee in a collective body sharing the same beliefs and ideas. The subjectivity and authority of the writer is balanced by a recipient-oriented interaction which renders the speech situation less asymmetrical. The presence of women in the text as the original recipients may justify the choice of the letter form as this allows reproduction of the confidential relationship that linked a spiritually minded woman to her confessor and to participate in an established tradition of devotional writing.

In addition, the text is the product of the writer's intention to assert his authorial *persona*; it reaches beyond the addressee, the sister in need of counsel; it moves between at least three inscribed audiences: the specific sister, spiritual friend and disciple the author may have had in mind, the network of his friends and supporters and the wider audience of God's children or *christen men*. As the stylistic analysis suggests epistolary discourse is particularly apt to express both the bond of confidentiality between writer and addressee and the persuasive aim of the author of a specific text whose authority is based on his credentials as vernacular religious author.

The language of the treatise is characterized by both the immediacy of the oral model – the here and now of a confidential present conversation between friends – and the intention to give authority and stability to the recommendations to the sister and to other solitaries by producing a written text. The immediacy of speech is counterbalanced by the status of the text as a written, tangible authoritative document. In brief, the temporal and spatial gap between the textual author and his readership, present and future, is bridged by the model of the letter exchange which combines reciprocity, confidentiality and authoritative status. It is a real act of transferring authoritative religious discourse into English by a writer who asserts his status as author of a text addressed to a vernacular public of both religious women and lay sympathizers.

Works Cited

Benveniste Émile (1966), *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris, Gallimard.

Burnley David (2003), 'The T/V Pronouns in Later Middle English Literature', in I. Taavitsainen and A.H. Jucker, eds, *Diachronic Perspectives on Address Term Systems*, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 27-45.

Cherewatuk Karen and Ulrike Wiethaus (1993), *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and Epistolary Genre*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Colledge Edmund and Noel Chadwick, eds (1968), ' "Remedies against Temptations". The third English Version of William Flete', *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 5, 201-240.

Constable Giles (1976), *Letters and Letters-Collections*, Turnhout, Éditions Brepols.

Del Lungo Camiciotti Gabriella, *"Rimedi contro le tentazioni" di William Flete*, <http://www.umilta.net/Fleteital.html>.

Del Lungo Camiciotti Gabriella (2008), 'Self-disclosure as Co-Constructed Discursive Activity in the Book of Margery Kempe', in J. Douthwaite and D. Pezzini, eds, *Words in Action: Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches to English Discourse. Studies in Honour of Ermanno Barisone*, Genova, Ecig, 18-29.

Del Lungo Camiciotti Gabriella (2010), ' "Sir, I wryte to you of aull thyngys, as well of japys as sad mattars": Letter Writing and News Spreading in Late Medieval England', in M. Cottone and E. Chiavetta, eds, *Letter Writing in Europe from the Middle Ages to Today: Genres, Models, and Transformations*, Acireale, Bonanno Editore, 281-291.

Del Lungo Camiciotti Gabriella (2011), 'Textuality in Late Medieval England: two Case Studies', in P. Pahta and H. Jucker, eds, *Communicating Early English Manuscripts*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 25-37.

Flete William (1968), ' "Remedies against Temptations". The third English Version of William Flete'. Ed. by E. Colledge and N. Chadwick, *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 5, 201-240.

Gurkin Altman Janet (1982), *Epistolarity. Approaches to a Form*, Columbus, Ohio State University Press.

Gwynn Aubrey (1940), *The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif*, London, Oxford University Press.

Hackett Benedict (1992), *William Flete, O.S.A., and Catherine of Siena: Masters of Fourteenth Century Spirituality*, Villanova, PA, Augustinian Press.

Hackett Benedict, Eric Colledge, and Noel Chadwick (1964), 'William Flete's "De Remediis contra Temptaciones" in its Latin and English Recensions: The Growth of a Text', *Mediaeval Studies* 26, 210-230.

Minnis Alastair (1988 [1984]), *Medieval Theory of Authorship. Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the later Middle Ages*, Aldershot, Willwood House.

Minnis Alastair and A.B. Scott (1988), *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100-c.1375. The Commentary-Tradition*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Minnis Alastair (2009), *Translations of Authority in Medieval English Literature. Valuing the Vernacular*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Smith J.J. (1999), *Essentials of Early English*, London and New York, Routledge.

Steiner Emily (2007), 'Authority', in P. Strohm, ed., *Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature. Middle English*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Vulič Kathryn (2008), 'Þe Pater Noster of Richard Ermyte and the *Topos* of the Female Audience, *Mystics Quarterly* 34, 1-43.

Wales Katie (1996), *Personal Pronouns in Present-Day English*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Watt Diane (2004), *The Paston Women: Selected Letters*, Cambridge, D.S. Brewer.

Wogan-Browne Jocelyn, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans, eds (1999), *The Idea of the Vernacular. An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press.

'out of their owne mouths'?
Conversion Narratives and English Radical Religious Practice in the Seventeenth Century

Donatella Pallotti
University of Florence (donatella.pallotti@unifi.it)

Abstract

This article focuses on a form of writing, the conversion narrative, which was familiar to mid-seventeenth-century godly readers. The purpose of the narrative, which was a prerequisite for admission to the Church of Visible Saints, was to give the congregation a spoken account of the experience of conversion and of the workings of Grace in the life of the regenerate individual. Some of these reports were transcribed, revised, and published by the ministers of the churches. By focusing on the complex relationships between the 'original' experience, its expression, and subsequent written transmission, the tension between individuality and conformity, and the various forms of editorial intervention adopted by the ministers, this study attempts to highlight the collaborative nature of the textual construction of the conversion narrative and to address some crucial issues concerning both the authenticity of the memory recorded and its 'true' author.

Keywords: Conversion Narratives, Editorial Methods, Revision, Spiritual Experience, Transcription.

> A man's whole life is but a conversion.
> James Fraser, *Memoirs*, 1738
>
> ... we might muster many Authors together to beare *testimony* to this truth.
> John Rogers, *Ohel, or Beth-shemesh*, 1653
>
> ... what you end up remembering isn't always the same as what you have witnessed.
> Julian Barnes, *The Sense of an Ending*, 2011

1. *Introduction*

In mid-seventeenth-century England, a number of accounts of spiritual experiences appeared almost simultaneously, collected and edited by the ministers of some gathered churches. Taken together, these collections alone brought more than a hundred first-person narratives to the public, most of them by laypeople raised in a Protestant milieu. The narratives record a great variety

of spiritual experiences and describe the circumstances of the reception of Christ's call, showing the centrality of conversion in the believer's life. Here conversion should be understood as an intensification of faith and a spiritual awakening within it.[1]

The purpose of the narratives, which qualified the individual for formal inclusion in the Church of Visible Saints, was to give the congregation a spoken, and convincing, account of the experience of conversion and the subsequent workings of Grace in the life of the regenerate individual: 'Every one to be *admitted*', the Independent minister John Rogers explained, 'gives out some *experimental* Evidences of the work of *grace* upon his *soul* (for the *Church* to judge of) whereby he (or she) is *convinced* that he is *regenerate* and *received* by God' (1653, 354).[2] The account had to be corroborated with testimonies by reliable witnesses as to the uprightness and blameless 'carriage' of the individual concerned.

For the ministers, who transcribed, revised, chose and published the narratives, the public testimony of a 'genuine' experience of conversion served to validate the 'true' church, as 'a free society or communion of visible Saints, embodyed and knit together, by a voluntary consent' (Bartlet 1647, C3r).[3] In contrast to the 'false and counterfeit' Church of England, to the 'superstitious' Church of Rome, and to all those churches formed on the parochial principle, the gathered churches believed that it was 'A Union of hearts rather than a vicinity of Houses … to make up a Congregation' (Cook 1647, 7). By publicly declaring the presence of Christ's redeeming power in the whole body of the Church, the testimonies also functioned as powerful 'reminder[s] of the community's basic values and goals' (Rambo 1993, 137).

The public delivery of one's conversion experience also responded to an evangelical concern: by 'power[ing] out their *Experiences*, and tell[ing] the *means*, and showi[ng] the *effects* of their *Call*' (Rogers 1653, 361), the Saints helped initiate others into a conversion experience. 'In their *Experiences*', John Rogers says, 'you shall heare how they are *changed*' (362), 'By their *Experiences* you will learne how various God is in his *wayes* and *workings*' (366). Furthermore, '*Experiences* declared do *oblige* others, and *allure* them exceedingly to relye upon God, and to *beleeve* in him' (367); they also help develop humility and tolerance in the congregation by teaching 'to *suspend* … *censures*', and by forbearing 'prejudicate *opinions*, or harsh *judgement* of such as *suspire* … and aspire under *lamentable soule-travel*, and heart-pangs' (364). All in all, 'by *observing* the *Saints* in their *Experience*', a person can 'learn the way to *live* in Christ' (366).[4] A conversion narrative generates further conversions.

The aims of the exposition of the story of one's conversion were thus manifold: the public delivery could be effectual in instructing, exhorting, comforting, teaching and edifying the believers who, by sharing their experiences, helped one another construct their (spiritual) identity as part of a close-knit community.[5]

In order to prove their godliness and the authenticity of their conversion, not only did believers have to tell the story of their conversion but they also had to submit themselves to the 'public' gaze. Through the converts' words as well as self-display, by their speaking and appearing, the assembly could ear-witness and eye-witness God's 'worke on the soule' and thus 'know (so far as may be *judged* by the *effects*) who are the *Elect* of God' (358).[6]

Seen in terms of speech events, rather than written texts, conversion narratives share with other 'cultural performances' a set of characteristic features. First of all, such events tend to be scheduled, set up and prepared in advance; they are temporally and spatially bound, that is they are enacted in a space (and time) that are symbolically marked off; they are also '*coordinated public* occasions, open to view by an audience and to collective participation' (Bauman 1989, 264). In sum, they are events that are 'situated, enacted, and rendered meaningful within socially defined situational contexts' (264):[7] the sense of the conversion narrative and the forms, manners and concrete circumstances of its delivery are inseparable.[8]

In 1653 two substantial collections of experiences were published.[9] *Spirituall Experiences of Sundry Beleevers* (most likely edited by the London Independent Henry Walker, and prefaced by the Baptist/Fifth Monarchist Vavasor Powell) contained sixty-one accounts 'wherein is wonderfully declared Gods' severall workings in the various conditions of his chosen ones' (taken from the title page). In the same year, the independent John Rogers published *Ohel or Beth-shemesh: A Tabernacle for the Sun*; it included thirty-eight testimonies from the members of his Dublin congregation.[10] Another small collection was published the following year (1654b) by the Independent Samuel Petto in *Roses from Sharon or Sweet Experiences Gathered up by some precious hearts, whilst they followed on to know the Lord*.[11]

2. 'Experience': Definitions

The emphasis on 'experience' is a characteristic of seventeenth-century England; the word itself appears in the title of Walker's and Petto's collections and frequently occurs in the adjectival form 'experimental' in all three collections. What the Puritans meant by 'experience' is well illustrated by Vavasor Powell in the epistle 'To the sober and spirituall Readers' which opens Walker's collection. '[A]mongst the various wayes of Gods teaching', says Powell,

Experience is one of the chiefest; for that is the inward sense and feeling, of what is outwardly read and heard; and the spirituall and powerfull enjoyment of what is believed. *Experience* is a Copy written by the Spirit of God upon the hearts of beleevers. It is one of *Faiths* handmaids, and attendants, and *Hopes* usher. (1653, A2r-A2v)

Jane Turner, who published a 'spiritual autobiography' in 1654, defines the 'true Christian experience' as 'truth brought home to the heart with life and

power' (1653, 202), and Samuel Petto describes it as 'entercourse and communion' between Christ and His people (1654b, O4r).

As these definitions highlight, the term 'experience' referred to something personal, to inner religiosity, a source of knowledge by which an individual is consciously affected; they also postulate, especially Powell's, that the doctrine 'read and heard' should be intimately 'felt' and emotionally 'lived', and then made known through narrative and testimony. 'Now to a poor soule', John Rogers stated, 'all such things as are in the soule, are made known by *experiences*; *experiences*, we say, *proves principles*' (1653, 355).

The emphasis on oral discourse, on verbal expression and public communication of the 'experience', is one of the reasons why so many reports have faded away after being spoken. Those preserved in the collections mentioned were transcribed, abridged, revised, chosen and published by the ministers of the gathered churches expressly for the benefit of 'many precious Christians' outside and inside the congregation, for, as Vavasor Powell puts it, in the collection, the readers 'maysee not only [their] owne hearts, but many hearts, and *heart-knowledge*' (1653, A3).

3. *Collections of Experiences*

Though the account of experiences is described by Rogers as a 'most *satisfactory testimony*, that comes from *within*' (1653, 290), the conversion narratives do not only voice the intimate experience of the 'conversion of the heart' (as opposed to 'formal' conversion) but they are also examples of a highly structured and codified discourse by which the converts record their progress towards 'sainthood'. Although these narratives vary in terms of local experience and theology (the three collections are shaped by the teaching and discipline of the minister who transcribed them; their appearance in print is therefore context specific), their basic structure shows an observable continuity with the applied theology of Perkins and other Elizabethan Puritans, who had provided a guide to help unregenerate individuals discover their prospects of salvation.[12] With little variation, the narratives follow a pattern – the so called 'morphology of conversion' – which detailed stages of sin, false confidence, doubt, conviction, faith, temptation and assurance, a pattern that gave a structure and chronology, therefore an interpretation, to a range of events and experiences; 'adherence to these conventions confirmed and valorised the godliness of the author' (Hinds 1995, 12). In order to be accepted as 'a genuine guarantee of salvation', the experience 'would have to fall within a specific pattern: otherwise the conversion might be a false one, and the sinner caught in the hypocrisy of a false confidence in their salvation' (Hobby 1988, 66). Puritan divines such as Perkins, Culverwell, Hildersam, Ames endeavoured to describe in detail the processes through which

God's free grace operates in the salvation of men. … They wished to trace the natural history of conversion in order to help men discover their prospects of salvation; and the result of their studies was to establish a morphology of conversion, in which each stage could be distinguished from the next, so that a man could check his eternal condition by a set of temporal and recognizable signs. (Morgan 1963, 66)

The narrative is thus constructed in relation to the 'collective' assumptions, genre conventions and cultural ideologies shared by the religious community the convert seeks affiliation to. If converts do not reveal what God has done for them, and/or if they do not do it according to the language and conventions of the church they wish to join, they cannot be recognized as 'new creatures' and thus cannot be counted among the elect in the Visible Church. In this sense, if not actualized in an act of speech, if not sealed with a public demonstration of the person's transformation and her/his new religious and social commitments, conversion remains 'ineffective'.[13] Thus the conversion experience is inseparable from the expression of the experience itself (see Payne 1998, 1-12).[14]

In a sense, the distance between the narrative and the expectations of the community has to be programmatically negligible: the 'truthfulness' and value of the spiritual experience and of the person who lived it are gauged by the degree of observance to a recognized, and sanctioned, model. The 'new birth' is indeed an experience of the heart, deeply personal and intimate, but it is also a process that is stimulated, nourished and directed by the assumptions and expectations of the religious community.

A fundamental problem concerns the conflict between the personal meaning, the individual living experience and the social and discursive conventions that are supposed to convey them; it regards how an experience, that was generally considered beyond expression, could be 'converted' into language and communicated to others, who, in turn, had to sanction it. The pressures to shape one's own life according to a dominant paradigm were likely to arouse anxious feelings in converts. In this respect, the following, oft-quoted remark by Richard Baxter is particularly illuminating: 'I could not' – says Baxter – 'distinctly trace the Workings of the Spirit upon my heart in that method which … Divines describe' (1696, 6); but then he 'at last' understands 'that God breaketh not all Mens hearts alike' (7).

The conversion narrative is the result of both a linguistic transformation and biographical reconstruction, processes that are never innocent from an ideological and psychological point of view. It is a retrospective account of what the convert thinks or wants others to think she or he has experienced; in this sense, the narrative explains and justifies the radical change that has affected the life of the individual and legitimizes the conversion; it asserts the difference of identity between a past, sinful 'I' and a present, godly 'I'. Not only is the narrative an interpretation and conceptualization of a significant experience of change and a justification for 'turning away from' past allegiances, but it is

also a self-interpretation in that the narrator describes how s/he became – out of what s/he was – what s/he presently is (see Starobinski 1980, 79).

Narrators shape their material; knowingly or unknowingly, they choose what to tell, they suppress and repress a great deal. What is recollected and told is not only filtered by affective factors, both emotional and psychological, but crucially, by a frame of reference and an axiology that are in tune with the ethos and goals of the religious community the regenerate individual has joined or wants to join. The cultural, social and religious expectations of the group shape to a great degree one's conversion story and biographical reconstruction; as Rambo puts it, 'learning to give one's testimony of conversion is often an integral part of the conversion process itself' (1993, 137, see also 118-121, 137-138).

In this context, it is important to recognize the role played by the editors of the collections in their reconstruction, revision and selection of the spoken accounts, the input they had, the constraints they imposed upon them, as well as the degree of (more or less conscious) self-censorship exercised. Such interference raises crucial issues concerning both the 'authenticity' of the memory recorded, and its 'true' author.

4. *Issues of Authorship*

As I have tried to show, the narratives of spiritual experiences contained in the 1653 and 1654 collections are highly 'mediated' texts, and they are 'mediated' at different levels.

The conversion story had to attest to the power of God's work, 'to bear witnesse', as Rogers maintained, 'to the world of the *workings* of *Gods Spirit*' (1653, 417). This claim immediately raises a major critical problem. It concerns the relationship between the original event, to which we do not have access, and the narrative that describes it, which is an available and observable piece of evidence. It involves the issue of representation in discourse, that is, how we translate into language, and describe to others, an experience such as conversion, that is ultimately mystical and ineffable, 'available only subjectively to the convert and beyond the power of language to objectify' (Payne 1998, 61).[15]

In *A Legacy for Saints*, the Fifth Monarchist prophetess Anna Trapnel pauses on the incommunicability of the experience of conversion, which she defines 'unexpressible':

oh how transcendently glorious is the true sealing of the Spirit! sure no tongue is able to speak it out, the pen of the readiest writer cannot write this, it may give some hints of this seal, but for depth, length, and breadth, who can give a full description or relation of it, it is a thing impossible to be published? (1654, 11)

The question of how to express such an experience and how to communicate it in such a way that others might be convinced of its 'authenticity' was

momentous for converts, since that was the key opening the door of the community of Visible Saints; an issue that Puritan divines and ministers were well aware of. 'As to that impression which the Holy Ghost leaves upon the heart of a man', the Independent minister Thomas Goodwin remarks, 'that man can never make the like impression on another; he may describe it to you, but he cannot convey the same image and impression upon the heart of any man else' (1862, 297).

The 'impression upon the heart' is the work of the Spirit of God, a work that Goodwin himself describes in terms of writing. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is an author that 'writes first all graces in us, and then teaches us to read his handwriting' (1636, 116). In order to make known to the 'world' 'the *workings of Gods Spirit*', and become a member of the Visible Church, the individual believer has to appropriate the socially sanctioned discourse (of conversion) that enables her/him to give a name to what has possessed no prior cultural reality. The language of the larger 'interpretive community' (Stanley Fish's expression) validates the individual experience and, in a sense, actually creates it. Thus, the ordinary believer becomes the focus of (public) attention not only as the teller and protagonist of her/his own story, but also as its 'author': 'telling a story', Roger Schank observed, 'isn't rehearsal, it is creation' (1995, 115). In order to be remembered, an experience must be told:

We need to tell someone else a story that describes our experience because the process of creating the story also creates the memory structure that will contain the gist of the story for the rest of our lives. Talking is remembering. (115)

Moreover, as Schank argues, listening to other people's stories shapes the memories we have of our experiences.[16]

The very action of telling her/his own story of conversion establishes, in a sense, a uniqueness of self, a self that is placed in the spotlight as 'author', a self who claims authority over her/his discourse on the basis of her/his own experience. This position, however, strongly collides with the experience of conversion itself, an experience that involves self-denial, even self-dissolution, in order to take place.[17]

The moment of the original 'performance', when the believer appears before the whole assembly to give her/his account, is inaccessible to us, its participatory and empathetic aspects being irremediably lost. All we have is but a *reconstructed account* of what was said, whose authorship appears problematic and 'dispersed' among several people.

Indeed, the ministers of the gathered churches who attended to the publication of the collections of the experiences, 'converted' the oral stories to written accounts, transcribed and framed them, and in so doing, not only transposed the 'real' words from one (anterior) context to another, but, more importantly, turned them into 'new' texts. The criteria they followed are only

sometimes, and partially, made explicit. On the contrary, what is apparent is that (presumably) the ministers were guided by intentions, and pursued goals, sensibly different from those of the believers who first gave the oral accounts. One may assume, for instance, that the compilers – who were also in charge of their respective congregations – endeavoured to portray the spiritual and social cohesion of their own church, a picture that could be conveyed by standardizing and homogenizing the texts chosen. The individual accounts were assembled and juxtaposed within a larger unity, the 'book' of experiences, which gave them an overall organization and provided a frame of interpretation. Put together, the experiences produce a cumulative effect and display 'the variety of [God's] dispensations in grace'. Furthermore, they show the regenerate nature of the true Church of Christ, as a 'fellowship of Saints', formed by individual 'competent Members', 'gathered into one body' (Rogers 1653, 417, 59, 61, 70).

An initial important consequence of the editors' intervention is that we cannot have a complete picture of the phenomenon of conversion, since the stories included in the collections always have a 'happy ending': they all involve the assurance of salvation, and imply sanctification. However, it is by virtue of their 'happy ending' that the narratives can reveal the 'dark side' of the converts' soul and personality: profane thoughts, disorderly and ungodly behaviour, conflictual relationships, negative feelings, (self-)destructive impulses, and all kinds of transgressions are taken up and become 'acceptable' subjects of the narratives, precisely because they herald renunciation and submission. Indeed, their disclosure, within the authorized discourse of the public testimony, signals the fact that they have been dominated and have already become part of the past (see Pallotti 2007, 33-54, 49, 54).

The collections also appear to establish, and belong to, an intertextual and interdiscursive context, not only because they rely on the framework of doctrine, but also because they make details of experience public and encourage an intense exchange amongst like-minded believers, both as speakers and hearers, and writers and readers.[18] The presentation in print of the 'fruits of experience' was – as Watkins remarks – 'an extension … of the obligation which all Puritans accepted to admonish and exhort one another up in the faith' (1972, 234).

In a passage reflecting on the aims of his collection, Rogers reveals that his endeavour has been to 'incite others to doe thus, *viz.* to *gather out* the *flowers* of their *garden*, to *present* them to the *Saints* in *other places*' (1653, 417), that is, to compile similar works, shaping them on his own collection. Rogers offers his collection as a model for other ministers to follow, one that allows them to overcome the tension between individuality and conformity in the narratives,

So that the *variety* of the *flowers*, and of the *colors*, and of the *natures*, and of the *formalities* of them, *gathered together into one*, give a *glorious lustre*, and like the *Rainbow of many colors*, signifie *fair weather for Ireland*. (417)

This move draws attention to Rogers's construction of the book and authorial role, eventually helping increase his own stature as a minister and enhancing the reputation of the Dublin congregation that he guides so authoritatively.

In the epistle to the reader in the second, enlarged, edition of *Spirituall Experiences*, Vavasor Powell refers to earlier publications, saying, 'What hath been Printed of this nature, hath both been acceptable and profitable, to many precious Christians' (1653, A3). While preparing his own collection, John Rogers says that he had the chance to see 'a little peace, tituled, *Spiritual experiences of Sundry Beleevers*, recommended by Mr. *Powel*'. He also wishes that

every *Church* appoint the *Pastor*, or some others to take up all the *experiences* which the *members* declare, and to bring the *best* & *choicest* of them into *publique light*, Oh how *beautifull* would they be abroad! … it is a *burning shame* they should lye *buried* alive, and not to be brought into the *light*, which are *given* in to all the *Churches* in this *age*, that are of *excellency* and *use*. (1653, 355, 450)[19]

'*Members* declare', 'the *Pastor*, or some others' 'take up … the *experiences*'. Two different roles are highlighted here: the first, attributed to the converts, is limited to exposition, the second, that of 'others', involves 'acquisition', selection and transmission. What is postulated is a re-creative practice on the part of 'the pastor or some others', aimed at the preservation and diffusion of what otherwise would 'lye buried', a practice that ultimately validates what has been previously 'declared'. 'Have them upon record', exhorts Samuel Petto, talking about experiences (1654a, 182).

The compiler's role, presenting the fruits of experiences, appears to be as prominent as that of the subject who has 'actually' lived and 'declared' them. The texts appear thus to be the work of multiple participants and involve a collaborative discourse; they are the product of a community acting on shared beliefs.

The collections as a whole contain at least two different points of view: that of the narrator of each story, the convert, that is in turn shaped by the cultural as well as discursive expectations of the community, and that of the compiler of the book, who 're-presents' the stories of conversion, using the direct speech form. The impression created is that the reporter exercises minimal control over the propositional content and the words used to utter that content: direct forms, linguists remind us, seem to evoke the original voice and help produce the effects of immediacy (see, among others, Short, Semino and Wynne 2002, 325-355). Though the effect of the direct speech form is that the account we read seems to be a word-by-word reproduction of the original with no apparent, external intrusion, reporters do intervene, and their interference cannot be underestimated. All transcription, it is often noted, 'involves subjective interpretation' (Culpeper and Kytö 2010, 79); by no means can we assume verbatim faithfulness to the original speech, even in the case of direct speech form.[20]

The most obvious instance of the compilers' mediation is shown by the presence of a heading preceding each account; the heading introduces a speaker in the third person, thus 'evoking' the voice of another speaker reporting the first person's discourse. A double process of enunciation is therefore linguistically signalled and made explicit through the relationship narratives establish between their headings and the text proper.

The transition from the third person of the heading to the first person of the text leads the readership from the public domain to a more private sphere. The print context of the testimonies, therefore, as Coolahan remarks, 'presents them simultaneously as individual narratives [they are written in the first person] and community texts' (2010, 235).

5. *Shaping 'Experience': the Editorial Work*

While introducing 'Examples of Experiences', John Rogers informs readers that he 'constructed' the testimonies 'as well as I can *collect* them out of the *Notes* which I took of [the converts] from their own *mouths*, when they were admitted into the *Church*' (1653, 391).[21] Then he makes clear that he selected the testimonies in order to 'present, as a sweet *posie* of some of the *chiefest-flowers* that I have met with this *spring-time* in the *Garden of the Lord*!' (391), therefore 'purposely omit[ing] many *experiences* of inferior glory, and lower appearance' (450). Though Rogers claims that he has 'dealt *faithfully* with all, as I finde them in my *Notes*, as near as I can to a *tittle*', taken out of their *owne mouths*' (417), he, in fact, reveals how he interfered with the converts' texts:

I shall premise this, for the godly *Readers* sake, that I must *contract* much their *experiences* as they were *taken*, least they be too *voluminous:* And although in the *choicest* and most *extraordinary* ones, I shall gather the *stalk longer*, least I hurt the *beauty* and *hide* the *excellency* of those *flowers*; yet without *hurt* to the rest, in those which are *ordinary*, I shall be very short, … I shall *gather* out the *flowers* only, and give you the *sum* of what they said, and so *tie* them up *together* for a *conclusion* of the *whole matter*.… a very great many more I might adde to them, … many more do lie *prepared* by me. (392)[22]

By signalling a division between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' experiences, Rogers highlights a distinctive feature of his ministry; it relates to the ways in which the workings of the Spirit can be known by converts. This could be done in an *ordinary* way, through preaching, praying, reading, writing, by the transforming effects of Grace on 'judgement, will, and affections'; and in an *extraordinary* way, by trances, '*dreams*, and *visions*, and voices' (354).

Not only did Rogers 'contract much', summarize, extract passages from the testimonies and organize them in a text of his own devising, but he also annotated them so that they would appear in print with directions in the margins, showing the reader particular points she/he should take note of, as

well as 'When? where? and how?' the conversion took place and 'the effects' it produced (392). In order to illustrate how annotation is part of the design of Rogers's text, I reproduce here Rebecca Rich's testimony (413).

30. *Experience of* Rebecca Rich.

I was wont (by Gods *providence*) to hear Mr. *Cradock* by whose *Ministry* the Lord *wrought* much upon me, and I thought I was the *person* that he particularly spoke to; and I lay long *afflicted* under the *sense* of my *naturall condition*, and under the *burthen* of a *wounded spirit*, and after that whilest I lived nigh *London*, I lived much upon *forme*, till God was pleased to *come in* by his *Spirit*, and then all was *nothing*; but *Christ* was all, and the *best of all*, and ever since I have *received Christ*, I have *loved* his ways, and *desired* the *society* of his society. Was much *comforted* and *confirmed* even last night in *Michaels* publique place, by that Ordinance of *prophecying one by one*, which the Church *kept* so *sweetly*, and I was very much *convinced* of your *walking together* in *love* and *unity* of spirit.

Captain *Rich's* Wife.
Called,
1. When, where.
2. How. Lived much on formes.
3. Effects.

Confirmed by that ordinance of prophecying

Rebecca Rich's testimony is a very short, and, presumably, summarized account. Here little space is given to the narrator's inner life. However, the testimony fulfils the requisites for conversion illustrated by Rogers himself and displayed in the marginal notes: 'When? where? and how? with the effects' (392). The marginal notes clearly point out the transition from one stage of spiritual progress to another, (externally) supplying a soteriological scheme, providing an interpretative framework through which the account should be read (and given), and the convert's life shaped. The typographical arrangement displays the dialogic structure of the text; it highlights the ongoing conversation between the main-block text, Rebecca Rich's *experience*, and the margin, Rogers's glosses, which draw the readers' attention to the points he thinks worth considering. The persistent repetition, with little variation, of the same items appears to be an instructional strategy on Rogers's part, a way of constantly reminding his audience about the essentials of a 'true', and convincing, conversion.

In the collection, marginal notes also function as annotations providing references, particularly to Scripture, in this function, shoring up the texts of the testimonies with Biblical authority. By and large, marginalia are used to control the reading process, becoming as William Slights suggests, an exercise in 'reader management' that led the reader to enter the text 'through what the marginalist, … deemed appropriate doorways' (1989, 683, 697-98). Drawing attention to the interpretative nature of editorial apparatuses, Evelyn Tribble argues that the margins of texts and the 'text proper' are in 'shifting relationships of authority':

the margin might affirm, summarize, underwrite the main text block and thus tend to stabilize meaning, but it might equally assume a contestatory or parodic relation to the text by which it stood. Nor is the margin consistently the site of the secondary, for the margins of texts were often central in their importance. (1993, 6)

Rebecca Rich's account casts some light on Rogers's general editorial method, a method that seems to reinforce, as Watkins observes, 'the tendency for the accounts to display a standard scheme of interpretation' (1972, 41). All the testimonies in Rogers's collection present a similar structure, containing the circumstances of conversion and its effects on the convert's life and attitudes and displaying the split self characteristic of 'autobiographical' writings; nearly all end with her/his determination to hold back from sin and serve God (see also Watkins 1972, 40-41). Rogers's own conversion narrative follows the same trajectory, his life story being edited and shaped in an analogous way. In a self-reflective passage that opens the account, he writes:

To give a *formall account* from year to year of my *life*, would make me *too tedious*, to you and my self; and I fear somewhat *offensive* to such as are to follow, though I may safely say in every year since I can *remember*, I have been *inriched* with so many and such remarkable *experiences*; … to tell you some few for the present, I shall *cite* some of the most *remarkable passages* which (to my present *remembrance*) I have met with in *former years* to this *day* … . (1653, 419)

Thus Rogers prunes his own story, and chooses to report only what he considers 'the most *remarkable*' pieces of information. What is 'tedious' here is, as Coolanhan observes, 'the comprehensive, detailed life; what is important is the trajectory towards conversion and assurance' (2010, 236).

The testimonies are numbered progressively and, as mentioned above, always preceded by a heading where the believer's name and, sometimes, the place where the account was first given, are spelled out. At times, and in the case of male converts, Rogers supplies information about the profession exercised, or the military rank held by the speaker. When the 'author' of the testimony is a woman, the compiler sometimes illuminates his readership about her ties of kinship. In the marginal notes, he glosses of Elizabeth Chambers, for instance, 'Her husband a Captain' (1653, 406); of Rebecca Rich, that she is 'Captain *Rich's* wife' (413).[23] According to Coolahan, these identifications 'locate the Cromwellian context for these texts' (2010, 235). They also lend authenticity and originality to the conformist pattern of the regenerate life.

This editorial practice enables the immediate identification of the speaker of the narrative, to whom, at least apparently, the responsibility for the discourse is attributed. At the same time, it makes explicit the editor's (intentional) choice of presenting information as a direct speech report. What emerges is that Rogers's reporting method in 'his' conversion narratives appears to foreground both the report and the attribution.[24]

Again, some headings exhibit comments revealing how Rogers dealt with particular accounts. In the case of Elizabeth Avery, for instance, he offers his readers 'A fuller Testimony' (1653, 402). The narrative of Adrian Strong, on the contrary, is accompanied by a caption reading: 'In short thus:' (9),[25] which highlights Rogers's editorial intervention. Another heading casts doubt on the reliability of Rogers himself as a 'faithful' reporter; the text reads: 'Experience of *Henry Johnson*, which is taken imperfectly, and very short' (408).

More revealing are those annotations where the minister exhibits his church connections by mentioning his 'spiritual associations', or lends authority to himself by drawing attention to his role as an instrument of God's will. Illuminating in this respect are the marginal notes next to Elizabeth Avery's and Elizabeth Chambers's accounts.

In the case of Elizabeth Avery, Rogers writes that 'Mr. *Parker* was her father, that able Divine that writ *De Eccles. Polit.* so largely; but she married Master *Avery* a Commissary in *Ireland*' (403). Avery's father, Robert Parker (*c.*1564-1614), was an important minister and preacher who, because of his nonconformist convictions, was suspended from his ministry and died in exile in the Netherlands. *De Politeia Ecclesiastica Christi et Hierarchica Opposita*, *libritres* (1616), published posthumously in Frankfurt, was Parker's most controversial work. Written in Latin, it was held in high regard by congregationalists, especially in New England; there, Parker was acclaimed father of the faith (see Sprunger 2004). In a significant way, by mentioning Parker, an authoritative writer, and his authoritative work, Rogers makes explicit his credentials as well as the religious and confessional context against which he knowingly endeavours to shape himself and his congregation.

Not only was Elizabeth Avery the daughter of such a revered 'Divine', but, more revealingly, she was herself a radical writer who, in 1647, had published three prophetic letters, under the title of *Scripture-Prophecies Opened*, which, for their radical and millenarian content, brought an accusation of heresy against her. In her book, Avery casts herself in the role of prophet and describes her writings as endued with a charismatic message which she must communicate on God's behalf: 'I finde the immediate acting of the Spirit in giving in, and … in carrying me forth to communicate it to others' (1647, A3). In order to defuse the suspicion of heresy, she posits herself as a mere instrument of God, a lack of agency that is reinforced by strategic conformity to the discourse of female inadequacy and by the traditional argument of negative capability, whereby God would choose an apparently inappropriate instrument to fulfil His designs. In *A Copy of a Letter … to his Sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Avery* (1650), her brother Thomas, minister of Newbury, Massachusetts, one of the few ministers in New England to hold Presbyterian views, strongly attacked her both on 'theological and patriarchal grounds' (Coolanhan 2010, 234).[26]

In her lengthy spiritual testimony, contained in Rogers's collection, Avery significantly recalls her activity as a 'writer', when she '*writ down* what *God*

had *done* for me, and *writ* down about to *my friends*' (Rogers 1653, 406); some of these letters constituted Avery's own tract, *Scripture-Prophecies Opened*, published before her reaching Ireland with her husband, 'Master Avery a Commissary' in that country (Baston 2004).

The biographical note next to Elizabeth Avery's account, which informs the reader about Elizabeth's family background and marital status, enables Rogers to advert to his confessional stand, and to provide a context for 'other women's testimonies' (Coolahan 2010, 234).[27]

While the annotation accompanying Avery's account attests Rogers's church connections, the gloss next to Chambers's text seems to represent an act of self-endorsement on his part. The note reads:

Her Husband a Captain. This Gentlewoman declared to several Church-Members, that before the Author came over, she had in a dream one night of her troubles, a vision of him so plainly, that after he was in *Dublin*, the first Serm. he preached, she told her friends this was the man that God had declared to her in a vision, should comfort her soul. (Rogers 1653, 406)

As the note claims, the arrival of Rogers in Ireland was 'extraordinarily' announced: it was revealed by divine inspiration. In her account, Chambers herself recollects that she 'was without *assurance*, and had no *full* and *clear satisfaction* all this while; until the *Lord*, who heareth prayers, sent over Mr. *Rogers* from the *Councel of State* to us' (407). Rogers fulfils the prophecy: he is an instrument sent by God to perform His divine will in the congregation.

The inclusion of the marginal note does not only represent a (self-)celebratory gesture on Rogers's part, but could also be seen as a move aimed to prevent possible criticism against his church policy and doctrine. Significantly, in the note, Rogers does not identify himself distinctively by name or title, but describes himself as 'the Author', the writer of 'this' book, who, by invoking a Saint's 'experience', claims authority over his own discourse and practice, an authority that ultimately derives from God. Being such an author, the implication is, his work must have the divine hallmark stamped on it.

Interestingly, in the collection, Elizabeth Chambers's testimony immediately follows Elizabeth Avery's, this sequence perhaps not being fortuitous. The notes next to the two testimonies exhibit two different standards of 'truth' that seem somehow reconcilable and to parallel the two ways of attaining Grace, 'ordinarily' and 'extraordinarily', that Rogers has conceived. In Avery's case, he offers biographical and bibliographical information that adds documentary objectivity to the testimony and its 'author'. The insertion of these factual details functions as an authenticating procedure that enables Rogers to show the sound doctrinal basis on which his church rests and from which it receives legitimation.

In the note next to Chambers's testimony, on the contrary, he gives more space to 'anecdotal' information that documents a 'truth' subjectively

experienced, a 'truth' that ultimately descends from God. This 'truth' concerns Rogers himself whose pastoral role and authority are thus shown to be sanctioned by divine power: he is the recognized minister of a vibrant and upright community of Visible Saints.

Though the explicit aim of ministers of the gathered churches was to bring 'into *publicke* view' the testimonies, in order to 'bear *witnesse* to the world of the workings of *Gods Spirit*' (417), the editorial approach they adopted does not necessarily imply conformity. On the contrary, each minister 'shapes' his collection according to his own teaching and discipline, elements that also influence the converts' delivery.

In order to give a glimpse of a different way of conceiving a 'book' of spiritual testimonies, I would like to expand the discussion and consider the other substantial collection of experiences published in 1653: *Spirituall Experiences of Sundry Beleevers*, probably edited by Henry Walker, an Independent minister who preached at the church of Martins Vintry in London.[28]

While Rogers's collection is incorporated into, and therefore is only a part of, a voluminous tract vindicating its author's personal perspective on Independency, Walker's testimonies constitute the body of the book, its content. In the second, enlarged edition, they are divided into two parts and introduced by a commendatory 'Epistle' addressed '*To the sober and spirituall Readers of this Booke*' by Vavasor Powell. The book also contains a short treatise on 'The Practise of the Gathered Churches', which is added, with its own title page, at the end of it.

The original conversion accounts are said to have been, as the title page reads, 'Held forth … at severall solemne meetings, and Conferences to that end', a phrase that highlights the public context in which the original testimonies took place. They were delivered before an audience purposely gathered to listen to them and evaluate the effectiveness of the convert's accomplishment.

The written narratives are all constructed according to a design that comprises three major elements. As Watkins describes them, they 'embody':

a brief account of the circumstances of conversion, the quotation of some texts that helped to bring peace to the troubled soul, and the enumeration of signs by which the believer was assured of his state of grace. (1972, 41)

At the end of each narrative, the signs of regeneration are 'listed by numbers' and 'correspond to those given in contemporary treatises' (41). By and large, the narratives tend to be longer than those contained in Rogers's *Ohel*, thus giving a little more space to the converts' personal life. The 'extraordinary' phenomena that figure so prominently in Rogers's collection are here toned down, whereas selected Biblical passages, and the same ones, recur constantly, a characteristic that constitutes a cohesive tie, highlighting a common per-

spective in the congregation.[29] Moreover, the accounts are all introduced by a heading, reading '*Experiences of*', followed by the speaker's initials only, which are also repeated at the end of each account. No marginal notes are present and therefore no annotations provide perspectives on the texts, their dialogic structure disappearing from view. In contrast to Rogers, who dwells, albeit briefly, on his editorial method, Walker devotes no space to comments on his own practice, leaving unexpressed the criteria adopted for the construction of his 'book'. Yet, he is far from being 'absent'.

Significantly, at the beginning of the volume, Walker provides "A Table of the Conversions of the severall Persons expressed in this Booke', where he gives a synopsis of each testimony, focusing attention on those aspects that, from his perspective, appear more pregnant. Generally speaking, the editor singles out events and/or persons that have been the catalysts of the process of regeneration, thus providing a guide for readers on how to interpret the texts published. The table also offers information about the believers' gender: through the use of third person pronouns and their derivatives, we are able to identify whether the original author is a man or woman. In order to show how the 'Table of the Conversions' is constructed, I quote here its first page:

T.A. Converted after three yeares terrour upon his Conscience, and then rowling himselfe on Christ …

T.P. The terrours of Hell laid hold on him, for offering wrong against the people of God, that he cryed out he was damned many yeares …

M.W. By a Sermon at *Liverpooll* and after great afflictions, with a piece of a Bible in a barne …

I.I. By waiting upon the ordinances …

E.C. After seven yeares temptation to kill her selfe, for neglecting to come to the ordinances, she threw her selfe upon Christ …

D.M. By a young infant, when she went to a Pond to drown her self …

While the 'Table of the Conversions' introduces the actors of the testimonies in the third person, the accounts are all first person narratives, that is, the editor 're-presents' them using the direct speech form, sometimes betraying the traces of their original enunciation.

In general, conversion narratives are retrospective accounts characterized, from a linguistic point of view, by the presence of a speaker, explicitly signalled by the first person pronoun *I*, and the use of the past tense that establishes a clear separation between the time of the narrated event and the time of the speech event. This construction contributes to reinforce the sense of distance between a past, ungodly *I*, and a present, regenerated *I*. While Rogers's testimonies are all constructed in this way, some of Walker's accounts introduce shifts in tense, from the past to the present and vice versa. Here are a few examples drawn from the '*Experiences* of M.K.', an account, given by a woman, which stands out because of length and high style.[30]

When I take a view of my life upon the stage of this world, I may very well compare it to a comicall Tragedy, or a tragical Comedy, or a labyrinth from one sin to another, from one affliction to another. I was indeed the daughter of very godly and honest parents, who diligently brought up their children in the feare of God. (1653, 161)

… I resolved there to commit the horrid act of murther upon his body, but God who watcheth over his, whether they sleepe or wake, and worketh by meanes, which way he pleaseth, at that time put an end to all my revengefull thoughts … (169)

… but marke, I pray you, the goodnesse of our God, who was with mee all this while, and I was not aware of it … (175)

But now, I beseech you godly Christians, to take notice of the wonderfull workings of our good God, whose judgements are unsearchable, and his waies past finding out, that hee had knocked many times at the door of my heart … (177)

As these few examples show, content and coding time are marked as simultaneous by the occurrence of present tenses. Moreover, the second person pronouns in the third and fourth passages signal the existence of another participant to whom the discourse is addressed. Thus the written text evokes a spoken context of utterance, it reproduces the interplay between the convert's oral performance and the assembly of believers purposefully gathered to witness it. Walker's choice to call forth the verbal dimension of the original account shows the importance that intense, verbal exchange had in his theological vision, an importance which reinforces the principle of reform that held that believers must be able to 'truly say' what was in their hearts.[31]

As mentioned above, Walker's collection opens with an 'Epistle' to '*To the sober and spirituall Readers of this Booke*', signed by the Welsh Baptist/Fifth Monarchist preacher Vavasor Powell who dwells on the meaning of 'Experience' and the role it has in Christian life. He also highlights the importance of 'experimental' discourse:

That Christian beleeves strongest, that hath Experience to backe his faith, and the Saint speakes sweetest and homest, that speakes experimentally; for that which cometh from one spirituall heart, reacheth another spirituall heart. (1653, A2v)

Moreover, Powell advertises the collection as 'worth [the readers'] buying, reading, and perusing'. Reading proves crucial in the conversion process, producing emotional response and '*heart-knowledge*', a knowledge that ultimately leads to a spiritual change and turns readers into narrators.[32] While the preface to *Spirituall Experiences* highlights the importance and function of 'Experience' in the converts' life, the treatise at the end of it instructs 'Those that enter into Church fellowship' (U2r) in church practice and duties. It also includes, as the title page reads, the text of 'a Covenant taken by each Member, And a

Confession of Faith, Professed', to which a short letter is added that testifies 'the putting out of a scandalous Member'.[33]

As mentioned above, Walker's collection as a whole focuses principally on the converts' 'experiences' – the main body of the book – an attention that is emphasised in the commendatory epistle by Powell. Little space is devoted to congregational polity, a choice that reveals where the pastoral interests of the minister lie.

Many factors concur in the experience of conversion and its representation. Regeneration is indeed an inner re-creating of the believer by the action of the Spirit of God, but it is also the result of a collaborative venture that involves the participation of individuals, who act with agency and motives in discursive, ideological and institutional environments. The study of the collections of spiritual testimonies shows both the dialogic nature of their discourse, which involves a 'dispersal' and/or multiplication of authorship, and the attempt to locate a 'working distinctiveness'[34] for the 'harmonizers' of voices. They consciously shape, order and publish works where these voices, otherwise destined to fade away, can be heard and find legitimation. By readapting – transcribing and arranging – existing, fleeting texts into another, 'stabler' medium, Rogers and Walker contributed to instance the fervent interaction taking place among members of independent religious communities. Their collections witness the importance of collaborative activity in non-literary texts, an activity that is strictly linked to the practices of textual transmission and the ways these practices are understood and represented in a particular historical situation.

[1] For intensification as 'revitalized commitment to a faith', see Rambo (1993, 12). This article is an expanded and modified version of a paper discussed at the XXV Conference of the Associazione Italiana di Anglistica (AIA), held in L'Aquila (15-17 September 2011). Since the theme of the conference was: 'Regenerating Communities, Territory, Voices. Memory and Vision', my paper was more focused on spiritual regeneration than authorship.

[2] When candidates for admission were 'very unable to speake in publicke … as some Maids, and others that are *bashful*, (or the like)', they related 'in private the account of Faith' to a member chosen by the church, who either wrote down the testimony and brought it into the church or else repeated it orally to the assembled congregation (Rogers 1653, 293).

[3] The same definition with slightly different wording is also found on 30. The question of allegiance to true church and true faith had become momentous with the Reformation and the establishment of the various Protestant churches. In England, the political context for conversion changed during the Elizabethan and early Stuart periods, so that conversion was conceived, 'at an ecclesiastical level, not principally in terms of Catholic versus Protestant … but in terms of internal Protestant schism' (Hindmarsh 2005, 34).

[4] Rogers points out that there is not only one way to conversion but several 'according to the *divers* complexions, *conditions*, constitutions, *dispositions*, or the like, that [God] hath to worke upon' (1653, 367).

[5] The sharing of experiences was, according to the Independent preacher Samuel Petto, 'usefull 1. For conviction unto unrenewed men ... 2. For direction and encouragement ... 3.

For provocation: when they see what progresse others have made in the wayes of God, and what communion with Christ they have injoyed herein; it giveth occasion unto their reflecting upon themselves, and may create shame for former negligence, and become a spur unto future diligence. 4. For confirmation and consolation …' (1654b, O5r.).

[6] It was emphasised, however, that only God could really know the truth about an individual's regeneration, 'as unto its *internal, real principle and state of the Souls of Men*'; the task of the church meeting was simply to assess 'its *evidences* and *fruits* in their external Demonstration, as unto a participation of the *outward Privileges* of a *Regenerate State*, and no farther' (Owen 1689, 4).

[7] According to Bauman, these aspects characterize 'all performance' as well as 'all communication' (1989, 264).

[8] Puritan verbal activity, Jagodzinski reminds us, 'is separated from its "popish" connections with set prayers and private, auricular confession and transformed into public performance: preaching, publication, and subjection to communal judgement and discipline. The Puritan imperative is not spiritual isolationism but communication of the divine wisdom to others' (1999, 65).

[9] Protestant conversion narratives began to appear in great number, both as single accounts and in collections, after the end of the Civil Wars. Radical Puritans were the first to publish their spiritual experiences in years marked by strong eschatological expectations and a widely held belief in Christ's second coming. Politically, these are the years that saw the war in Ireland between the forces of the English Parliament and the Irish Catholic army (1649-1652), the establishment of the Barebones Parliament (July-December 1653), whose dissolution ushered in the Protectorate of Cromwell.

[10] To these accounts, Rogers adds his own testimony 'given in two *Churches* in *England* and *Ireland*' (1653, 419-439) and that of John Osborne 'as was taken out of the Church Register word for word' (440-448). While Rogers's own testimony is a first person account; Osborne's is a third person narrative that contains passages in quoted ('direct') speech.

[11] Another popular collection, that was frequently reprinted in the early eighteenth century, was James Janeway, *A Token for Children* (1672; part II, 1673), which included thirteen 'exact' accounts of 'the Conversion, Holy and Exemplary Lives, and Joyful Deaths of several young Children' (taken from the subtitle), meant to save children from their 'miserable state by Nature' and from being 'thrown into Hell Fire' (1676 edn, A6v, A8r). At the turn of the seventeenth century, the Baptist 'comb-maker' Charles Doe edited *A Collection of Experience of the Work of Grace (Never before Printed.) Or The Spirit of God working upon the Souls of several Persons* (1700) that contained three narratives published, as the subtitle reads, 'Not to Applaud the Persons, but for the comfort of Saints' and in order to 'convince the Unregenerate that there is indeed such a thing as the working of the Spirit of God upon the Soul'. As Hindmarsh remarks, the narratives witness the great influence of Bunyan, whose work and name are mentioned in two of them (2005, 55).

[12] The concern with introspection and assurance, 'the consistent application of the law and the gospel to govern the narrative of conversion from a psychological state of … despair to one of peace and joy' (Hindmarsh 2005, 48) are aspects that mark a continuity with the applied theology of the Elizabethan Puritans; the new aspect of the mid-seventeenth-century narratives is, as Hindmarsh points out, in the very occasion that framed them: they are prerequisite for church membership (48).

[13] Both the texts by Puritan divines and ministers and the creeds and platforms of Congregationalism highlight the public dimension of the conversion narrative. In the Cambridge (Mass.) Platform of 1648, for instance, the conversion narrative is described as 'personall & publick'; 'personall', because it related the speaker's own inner experience 'of Gods manner of working upon the soul'; 'publick', because that experience had to be 'declared' before the entire congregation in order to be admitted to full membership. By delivering their reports 'personally with their own mouth', the believers submitted themselves to public 'examination' and 'trial', thus displaying their commitment to the new faith (Winslow ed., 1653, 16); see also Caldwell (1983, 50-51).

[14] Payne investigates conversion as discourse in Anglo-American evangelicalism in the period from 1740 to 1850, approximately. His approach, however, can be useful for early Puritan testimonies as well.

[15] In terms of genre, conversion narratives can be seen as instances of what Culpeper and Kytö have defined as 'speech-based' texts, that is texts 'that are based on an actual "real-life" speech event', texts that are, as far as the Early Modern period is concerned, 'reconstructions assisted by notes' (2010, 17). The reconstruction involves 'interpretation and editorial decisions' (52), that are partly determined by the effects that editors intend to produce on the readership as well as other contextual factors. The fact that conversion narratives are 'speech-based' texts justifies no assumption that they are exact copy of their spoken 'original'.

[16] This aspect was not unknown to Puritan divines and ministers; they strongly encouraged group activities that allowed believers to share their experiences As Watkins reminds us, believers would develop 'the skill and confidence' necessary for the public presentation of their experiences 'through years of family worship, repeating sermons, wrestling with Biblical interpretation, and participating in Church life in general' (1972, 234).

[17] Payne argues that giving testimony of one's own spiritual experience reinforces the selfhood of the speaker, both as subject (the 'I' who speaks) and object (the 'I' that is spoken about), a process that creates 'the paradox of the self' (1998, 33-49).

[18] In this regard, Samuel Petto admonishes: 'Christians know not what they loose, by burying their experiences: they disable themselves for strengthening the weake hands, and confirming the feeble knees of others: and it is a great disadvantage to themselves' (1654a, 182).

[19] According to Watkins, the exchange of experiences is one of the factors cooperating in the development of the spiritual autobiography (1972, 30-31).

[20] On the notion of 'faithfulness' in speech presentation, see Short, Semino and Wynne (1997 and 2002). In the 1997 study, Short, Semino, and Wynne suggest that we substitute this notion 'with that of the "evocation" of another's voice. The task would then be that of studying what practices and interpretative conventions are associated with different categories of discourse presentation in different contexts' (222).

[21] John Rogers was commissioned by the Council of State to preach in Ireland as part of a project to strengthen Puritanism after Cromwell's victory. He was in Dublin, where he preached to a congregation based at Christ Church cathedral, for a short time, from approximately August 1651 to the early months of 1652. He was back in England by March that year. Many of the members of his congregation were Cromwellian officers and their wives (see Coolahan 2010, 231, 232). Thus, the texts of the conversion narratives were produced in Ireland, and later printed in England.

[22] Rogers also remarks that he has 'taken summarily' 'the most *ordinary sort*' of testimonies (1653, 417). On another occasion Rogers's words betray the degree of (manipulative) power ministers may exercise on the converts' texts. While illustrating ways of dealing with believers who 'are very *imperfect* in *utterance*, and cannot express themselves as well as others', and therefore meet difficulties in relating their conversion stories in public, Rogers reveals that '[we] *get* what we can from them', and 'though they be but words dropping sweetness, and *savoring of grace*, yet put together, may make weight, and will signifie something *well-spelled*' (291), a practice that may imply a radical transformation of the spoken text: from broken words to an intelligible account. Coolahan suggests that Rogers's 'editorial principles are not aesthetic but reader-oriented, centring on novelty and an impulse to avoid duplication' (2010, 235).

[23] Many other women's testimonies, however, lack this kind of information.

[24] What I argue here is that the texts of the conversion narratives seem to be constructed, by and large, as if they were faithful reports of an anterior, spoken discourse and to be understood by readers as such.

[25] In Rogers's text, pagination is continuous up to page 412. A section with separate pagination, (1)-(11) follows, suggesting an addition to the 'original' text. After this section, pagination starts again from 413.

[26] In his letter, Thomas Parker admits that he has 'not seen' (1650, 10) his sister's book; yet he charges her with 'Heretical Opinions' (5) and 'Spiritual pride' (16), urging her to 'Return to [her] former Principles' (19). Revealingly, Parker censures Elizabeth for having published her book: 'your printing of a Book, beyond the Custom of your Sex, doth rankly smell' (13), and is 'an attempt above your gifts and Sex' (17).

[27] On the whole, in *Ohel*, Rogers offers a defence of Independency and gives voice to his millenarian beliefs. These convictions would soon lead him to embrace the Fifth Monarchist cause, though he never advocated the use of weapons against the government. For a brief biographical account of John Rogers, see Greaves (2004).

[28] *Spirituall Experiences of Sundry Beleevers* was partially translated into German by Theodor Undereyck in 1670. In 1698 Johann Heinrich Reizt included a German translation of several testimonies, drawn from Walker's collection, in his *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen* (see Malena 2010). For a study of the reception of English Puritan literature on German Pietism, see Damrau (2006).

[29] Watkins points out that the most quoted Biblical verses are, in order, Matthew 9:28, John 4:37 and Isaiah 55:1. The texts are often drawn from the Geneva translation (1972, 41).

[30] The '*Experiences* of M.K.' is found at the end of 'Part 1' (which constituted the first edition), a position suggesting that, probably, Walker valued it more than other accounts present in the collection.

[31] It should be noted that self-scrutiny for religious ends was not only a Protestant practice. The Catholic faith, too, encouraged self-examination and evaluation in written forms (see, for instance, Malena's essay in the present volume). Moreover, men who wanted to join the Jesuit order had to give a short account of their spiritual life, 'usually in a formulaic way comparable to that of the Protestant conversion narratives' (Booy 2002, 11-12). Foley (1877-1882) collects a number of these accounts where the candidate introduces himself with both first and last names, then information about age, place of birth, family, parents' religion, and education received are added.

[32] It is perhaps worth remembering that Augustine's conversion, as described in his *Confessions* 8.12.28, is linked with reading.

[33] The letter 'from a Church newly gathered' informs other 'Churches of Jesus Christ' about the expulsion of an obstinate sinner and the danger he represents. Interestingly, the document implicitly witnesses the possibility of 'subversive' infiltrations in the community.

[34] Gordon McMullan's phrase, quoted in Hirschfeld (2001, 619).

Works Cited

Primary Sources

Avery Elizabeth (1647), *Scripture-Prophecies Opened, Which are to be accomplished in these last Times, which do attend the Second Coming of Christ; In several Letters Written to Christian Friends*, London.

Bartlet William (1647), *Ichnographia. Or a Model of the Primitive Congregational Way*, London.

Baxter Richard (1696), *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, London.

Cook John (1647), *What the Independents Would Have*, London.

Doe Charles (1700), *A Collection of Experience of the Work of Grace (Never before Printed.) Or The Spirit of God Working upon the Souls of Several Persons,* London.

Foley Henry, ed. (1877-1882), *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, 7 volumes, London, Burns and Oates, vols 1-5.

Goodwin Thomas (1636), *Childe of Light*, London.

Goodwin Thomas (1862 [1681-1704]), *A Discourse of the Glory of the Gospel*, in J.C. Miller, ed. (1861-1866), *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, 12 volumes, Edinburgh, John Nichol, vol. 4, 227-346.

Janeway James (1676 [1672; part II, 1673]), *A Token for Children,* London.

Owen John (1689), *The True Nature of a Gospel Church*, London.

Parker Robert (1616), *De Politeia Ecclesiastica Christi et Hierarchica Opposita*, *libri tres*, Francofurti, apud GodefridumBasson.

Parker Thomas (1650), *A Copy of a Letter Written by Mr. Thomas Parker, Pastor of the Church of Newbury in New-England, to his Sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Avery*, London.

Petto Samuel (1654a), *The Voice of the Spirit*, London.

Petto Samuel (1654b), *Roses from Sharon. Or Sweet Experiences Gathered up by some precious hearts*, London (appended to *The Voice of the Spirit*).

Powell Vavasor (1653), 'To the Sober and Spirituall Readers of this Booke', in [H. Walker], *Spirituall Experiences, Of Sundry Beleevers*, London.

Reitz J.H. (1689), *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen*, Offenbach am Mayn, Druckts Bonaventura de Launoy.

Rogers John (1653), *Ohel or Beth-shemesh, A Tabernacle for the Sun*, London.

Trapnel Anna (1654), *A Legacy for Saints*, London.

Turner Jane (1653), *Choice Experiences of the Kind Dealings of God, before, in, and after Conversion*, London.

Untereyck Theodor (1670), *Christi Braut /Unter den Töchternzu Laodicea /Das ist / EinachnötigerTractat / In diesenletztenTagen*, Hanau, Ingebrand.

[Walker Henry] (1653), *Spirituall Experiences, of Sundry Beleevers*, London.

Winslow Edward, ed. (1653) *A Platform of Church-Discipline: Gathered out of the Word of God; and Agreed upon by the Elders: and Messengers of the Churches Assembled in the* Synod *at Cambridge in New England* (1648), London.

Secondary Sources

Baston Jane (2004), 'Avery, Elizabeth (*fl.* 1614-1653)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press; online edn, Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69074>, accessed 31 Aug 2011.

Bauman Richard (1989), 'Performance', in E. Barnouw, ed. (1989), *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, 4 volumes, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, vol. 3, 262-266.

Booy David (2002), 'General Introduction', in D. Booy, ed., *Personal Disclosures. An Anthology of Self-Writings from the Seventeenth Century*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 1-19.

Caldwell Patricia (1983), *The Puritan Conversion Narrative*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Coolahan Marie-Louise (2010), *Women, Writing and Language in Early Modern Ireland*, New York, Oxord University Press.

Culpeper Jonathan and Merja Kytö (2010), *Early Modern English Dialogues. Spoken Interaction as Dialogue*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Damrau Peter (2006), *The Reception of English Puritan Literature in Germany*, London, Maney Publishing for the Modern Humanities Research Association.

Greaves R.L. (2004), 'Rogers, John (*b.* 1627)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press; online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23983>, accessed 12 Aug 2011.

95

Hindmarsh D.B. (2005), *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative. Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Hinds Hilary (1996), *God's Englishwomen. Seventeenth-Century Radical Sectarian Writing and Feminist Criticism*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press.

Hirschfeld Heather (2001), 'Early Modern Collaboration and Theories of Authorship', *PMLA* 16, 609-622.

Hobby Elaine (1988), *Virtue of Necessity. English Women's Writing 1649-1688*, London, Virago.

Jagodzinski C.M. (1999), *Privacy and Print. Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England*, Charlotteville and London, University Press of Virginia.

Malena Adelisa (2010), 'Imparzialità confessionale e conversione come "rigenerazione" nel Pietismo radicale', in M.C. Pitassi and D. Solfaroli Camillocci, eds (2010), *Les modes de la conversion confessionnelle à l'époque moderne. Autobiographie, alterité et construction des identités religieuses*, Firenze, Olschki, 63-83.

Malena Adelisa (2012), 'Ego-Documents or "Plural Compositions"? Reflections on Women's Obedient Scriptures in the Early Modern Catholic World', in this volume.

Morgan E.S. (1963), *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Pallotti Donatella (2007), ' "My conversion was wonderful": testimonianze di conversione nelle chiese radicali inglesi della metà del XVII secolo', *Genesis* 6, 33-54.

Payne R.M. (1998), *The Self and the Sacred. Conversion and Autobiography in Early American Protestantism*, Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press.

Rambo L.R. (1993), *Understanding Religious Conversion*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

Schank Roger (1995), *Tell Me a Story. Narrative and Intelligence*, forward by G.S. Morson, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press (first published under the title, *Tell Me a Story. A New Look at Real and Artificial Memory*, New York, Scribner, 1990).

Short Michael, Elena Semino and Martin Wynne (1997), 'A (Free Direct) Reply to Paul Simpson's Discourse', *Journal of Literary Semantics* 26, 219-228.

Short Michael, Elena Semino and Martin Wynne (2002), 'Revisiting the Notion of Faithfulness in Discourse Presentation Using a Corpus Approach', *Language and Literature* 11, 325-355.

Slights W.W.E. (1989), 'The Edifying Margins of Renaissance English Books', *Renaissance Quarterly* 42, 682-716.

Sprunger K.L. (2004), 'Parker, Robert (*c.* 1564-1614)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press; online edn, Jan 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21334>, accessed 3 Dec 2011.

Starobinski Jean (1980 [1971]), 'The Style of Autobiography', in J. Olney, ed. (1980), *Autobiography. Essays Theoretical and Critical*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 73-83.

Tribble E.B. (1993), *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England*, Charlottesville and London, University Press of Virginia.

Watkins O.C. (1972), *The Puritan Experience*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Ego-documents or 'Plural Compositions'?
Reflections on Women's Obedient Scriptures
in the Early Modern Catholic World

Adelisa Malena
University of Venice Ca' Foscari (adelisa.malena@unive.it)

Abstract

This article focuses on a common textual genre in early modern Catholic Europe conceived and produced in the context of a close spiritual director/penitent relationship, variously defined as 'autobiografía por mandato', 'obedient writing', or 'autobiographical report', and so on. Starting out from the large number of studies of this text type, a number of considerations are made on two themes: 1) their specificity and the social practices underpinning them 2) the modalities and ways of partial or integral publication in print of some of them. An attempt will be made to highlight to what extent and how the intricate question of authorship(s) can be addressed. Special attention will be devoted to the somewhat widespread category (in comparison with 'autobiography') of the 'ego-document', meaning, by this term, any type of text in which an author or authoress, deliberately or unintentionally writes about his/her acts, thoughts and feelings.

Keywords: Early Modern Catholicism, Ego-Documents, Spiritual Autobiography, Spiritual Direction, Women's Religious Writing.

1. *Introduction*

Quisiera yo que, como me han mandado y dado larga licencia para que escriva el modo de oracion y las mercedes que el Señor me ha hecho, me la dieran para que muy por menudo y con claredad dijera mis grandes pecados y ruin vida. (Teresa de Avila 1982, 117)[1]

With these words, Teresa de Avila opened her *Libro de la vida* which, thanks to its publication in print, translations into diverse European languages and obviously its author's renown, is the best known example of a textual typology which was widespread in early modern Catholic Europe: the typology which historians have defined as 'autobiografía por mandato', 'obedient writing', 'autobiographical report', 'soul writing', 'spiritual autobiography', or 'spiritual diary'.[2] These definitions were coined in different geographical and linguistic contexts and are not all synonymous since each one emphasizes some of the characteristics of these writings and/or some of their modalities of production.

In the pages that follow, starting from increasingly numerous studies of texts of this kind, I intend to discuss their peculiarities and the social practices from which they originate, as well as the modalities and ways of the partial or integral publication in print of some of them. In doing this, I will also consider to what extent and in what way the thorny question of these texts' authorship (or multiple authorship) can be posed. In particular, I would like to discuss these texts taking into consideration the category of 'ego-document', a rather extensive category and much wider than that of 'autobiography', by which I mean any kind of text in which an author, either willingly or unwillingly, 'writes about his/her acts, thoughts and feelings' (Dekker 2002, 7).[3]

2. *Spiritual Direction and Writing*

We know that the dispositions on the sacrament of penitence dictated by the Council of Trent referred exclusively to the auricular forms of confession and that they insisted on its necessary secrecy. However, the Tridentine conception of confession, which was more and more meant as a spiritual accompaniment and a direction of conscience grounded in a consolidated and lasting relationship between the penitent and his/her confessor-director, actually represents the main premise for the writing practice generally defined as 'report of conscience'. The Jesuit practice, on the other hand, imposed a self-examination and daily account of one's drawbacks and progresses along the way to inner perfection by leaving a graphic mark. The practice of general confession, in turn, was meant as reflection on, and rethinking of, one's whole existence, aimed at interior conversion and rebirth. It is indeed very likely that these two practices were a stimulus to the use of writing strictly connected to the sacrament of penitence and either functional or complementary to it.[4] We have extensive evidence of this fact even in the writings of Loyola, in whose autobiography we read that every day he wrote down what happened to pass through his soul, so that, in the course of his existence he had collected 'a rather large packet of writings'. He added that he used to write 'while sleeping, by feeling that [his] hand was guided, not knowing what [he] was jotting, that is, ecstatic' (1991, 187). In the confessors' manuals written by Jesuit authors the practice of self-examination and general confession takes on a great importance: the instructions become explicit, precise and articulate and a similar importance is attributed to the constant reference to the function and role of the spiritual confessor-director. This is the main point which profoundly distinguishes Catholic practice from similar practices of other denominations.[5] This difference must therefore be taken into consideration if we want to establish a relationship with reports and spiritual autobiographies produced in other denominational contexts. In the Catholic world the practice of introspective analysis, daily account and inner improvement must not be initiated and performed in solitude, but under the guidance, advice and supervision of a director of conscience whose task was to

accompany the penitents and help them advance on the ways of the spirit, but also that of controlling, inspecting and scrutinizing.

Confessors/directors had to be experts in the arduous science of the so-called *discretio spirituum* which, in the course of the modern age, was more and more elaborated and refined by theologians. The directors of conscience were expected to be able to establish whether the motions of the penitent's soul, especially when they presented exceptional features, came from God, the devil or purely human factors (Zarri 1991, Malena and Solfaroli Camillocci 1998, Prosperi 1999, Sluhovsky 2007). Starting from the late Middle Ages and from the wave of visionary mysticism which spread over many urban contexts in different areas of Europe, involving men and especially women – some belonging to religious orders, but mainly lay persons – experts in the doctrine and practice of *discretio spirituum* sharpened their own theoretical, conceptual and methodological tools in view of testing and judging the diverse manifestations and expressions of mysticism, which became more and more suspect (Cabibbo 2010, Zarri 2010).

As many historians have remarked, between the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries a progressive change in the conception and practice of discernment of spirits was carried out. This tended more and more to become the inquisitors' instrument for unmasking, controlling and repressing the so-called simulation or pretence of holiness; in other words, spiritual 'hypocrisy' in all its expressions and facets. What was taken into consideration was not only the possible diabolic inspiration, but also – and ever more frequently – the exquisitely human aspects of deliberate pretence, of voluntary deceit as well as those much more subtle and elusive cases of self-deceit and self-suggestion (Zarri 1991, Schutte 2001a, 2001b, 2010).

Among the main instruments of discrimination we find – in theoretical treatises, but mainly in practice – the activity of self-report and, more precisely, written self-report. In his treatise *De ecstaticis mulieribus* (1616), Cardinal Federico Borromeo writes:

Un altro buon criterio per conoscere le persone è quello di interrogarle insistentemente sulla loro vita, mettendo per iscritto, secondo le circostanze e le occasioni, tutto quello che dicono. Così, in un secondo tempo non possono negare le cose dette. Se quelle persone continuassero a raccontare stupidità, o perché esse stesse ingannate o perché volessero prendere in giro gli altri, sarebbero in tal modo smascherate. (1616, 41)[6]

It should also be stressed that confessors and directors of conscience, when in the presence of penitents who showed exceptional charisma, had a further motive for inducing the 'holy man' or the 'holy woman' to write: the preparation and collection of materials which would one day serve for the man's or woman's posthumous cult and for the possible and wished for trial of beatification (and afterward canonization). Especially following the new norms on canonization (the early seventeenth-century decrees of Pope Urban VIII), the examination of

the writings of the potential male or female saint became a fundamental step in the long process which led to the altars and it could irremediably compromise the acknowledgement of sainthood if these writings raised doubts about their orthodoxy (see, on this topic, Prosperi 1996, Gotor 2004 and Boesch 2005). Furthermore, as Isabelle Poutrin has brilliantly shown by analyzing 113 cases of women's spiritual autobiographical writings in early modern Spain, in the hagiographies which were written – often by the same spiritual directors – after the death of the would be saint, several, even quite ample fragments were inserted in the saint's handwriting, or dictated by her, with a technique which Poutrin defines as 'coupure and collages', i.e., copy-and-paste (1995, 269). As Adriano Prosperi remarked, the circulation of many autobiographical texts by women who were candidates for sainthood 'through the filter of biographies written in view of beatification trials' was the fall-out of a conspicuous institutional transformation: 'that of the beatification trials, which were assimilated to the model of inquisitorial trials and therefore were obliged to investigate truth by means of the witnesses' examination and the analysis of their written texts' (1999, 359-360).

Thus, precisely thanks to the pervasive and continuous resort to written texts, many stories of men and women mystics of the early modern period have survived; and it is apt to recall that almost all of them were transmitted through either hagiographic or inquisitorial sources. These stories mostly illustrate cases of coveted, sought, imperfect, and in the end failed holiness – at least as far as official recognition was concerned. Such cases were dealt with by confessors, exorcists and physicians, but also by judges of the faith, since the 'pretence of holiness', starting from the end of the sixteenth century, acquired the status of inquisitorial crime, and it is precisely for this reason that the archives of the Inquisition kept both the writings of men and women who reached the glory of the altars and the cases of failed holiness mostly concerning women, both lay and religious, or belonging to a semi-clerical state like *bizzocche* and tertiaries, who were in many cases of humble origin and modest education. As I have argued elsewhere (Malena and Solfaroli Camillocci 2011), in recent times, mainly thanks to the opening of the Central Archive of the Roman Holy Office, a large quantity of writings of this kind, mainly produced more or less between the second half of the sixteenth century and our days, has surfaced. These belong for the most part to the Italian area and are of interest from different perspectives. To quote only a few, the strictly historical-religious ones, that of gender and women's history (especially meant as the history of women's subjectivity), of the history of writing (mainly of women's writing activity and that of the so-called semi-cultured people; see D'Achille 1994), as well as, obviously, the history of mysticism in the widest meaning of the word.

3. *Sources*

The texts I am dealing with vary conspicuously in length and, generally speaking, consist of a proper autobiographical narration (the 'spiritual autobiography'

strictu sensu which, in most cases, occupies the initial part of the text), reports of conscience which often appear in the guise of a 'spiritual diary' and deal with interior life, sins, temptations, torments, scruples, moments of spiritual barrenness and, more generally, all the soul's motions. They also deal with reports and descriptions of ecstasies, visions, interior locutions, and all those phenomena which are considered mystic gifts. It is however to be stressed that these are rough and simply indicative distinctions, since the various discursive layers are often interwoven, blended and overlapping, so as to undermine any schematic treatment. But, although each text has specific features, they all appear characterized by a strong dependence on well-established, stereotyped hagiographic models and therefore on the reading of devotional texts, either direct or mediated by the confessor. Theirs was indeed a journey which 'from certain texts landed on other texts' (Prosperi 1999, 354), in most cases by passing through 'real lives'. However, in spite of the seeming repetitiveness and standardization of these writings, it is interesting to highlight their deviations from the hagiographic stereotypes and analyze the ways in which the models of holiness which were suggested/imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities were received, as well as the possibilities of selecting and choosing among these models and the texts which transmitted them; in other words, the kind of relationship the devout women established with these texts, sometimes refashioning or re-reading them with results which were not always predictable.

Furthermore, those who arranged and collected the 'obedient writings' for future printing had the often overtly expressed intention to produce and offer an edifying and even model-creating text. In the famous *Prattica spirituale d'una serva di Dio*, a key-text in Italian sixteenth-century spiritual literature, which was published without the name of the authoress, the author of the 'Preface', Nicolò Sfondrati, Bishop of Cremona and future Pope Gregory XVI, affirmed his wish to offer to the nuns and to 'other spiritual persons of our town and diocese' true 'spiritual food' by means of an

operetta scritta a mano, e composta ... da una divota religiosa ben prattica di quello che ella ragiona, come l'istessa opera ne rende chiaro testimonio, ben ch'ella per humiltà, e per fuggir la iattantia non habbi voluto far manifesto il suo nome, anzi *dichi* d'haver fatta questa fatica per obbedire al suo padre confessore, il quale volle che ella mettesse in scritto i suoi essercitii spirituali, co i quali se n'andava caminando per acquistarsi il palio della superna vocatione. (Besozzi 1577, 6)[7]

The author, behind whose anonymity the famous, although controversial, name of the 'divine mother' Paola Antonia Negri was hidden, opens her work by professing indignity and humility and then declares she had started writing because she was

spinta e comandata dal mio confessore e padre spirituale, son sforzata a riferire tutte le Vostre [di Dio] misericordie, le quali non risguardando alla mia ingratitudine e infinita negligenza, pietosamente mi havete datto, dandomi vero et efficace desiderio

d'emendarmi, con un affetto e sentimento d'oratione, e vive lagrime, per poter ottener da voi tante gratie. (10)[8]

It was indeed mainly those on whom exceptional gifts and graces were bestowed that were asked to write down their experiences. As we have seen, writing was a fundamental step for those who wished their holiness to be acknowledged. On the other hand, for the confessors, directors and judges of faith it was the only way to attain such phenomena as the mystic experiences which were by definition invisible and unspeakable in order to examine them accurately with 'cool and detachment', discern their source and, finally, 'take decisions about the nature of the spirits which … troubled' their protagonists (Prosperi 1999, 355). It usually happened that the confessor, either on his own initiative or ordered by a superior authority, asked the penitent to write down the story of her life (something like a 'general confession', but in written form) and all the devotee experienced in her inner self. The order to write was addressed both to those penitents who could master writing – as in the case of the nun Teresa de Avila – and to women who scarcely knew how to read and write, or who could only read or could neither read nor write. These women took up this heavy task, which was often a source of unimaginable strain and frustration to fulfil their duty of obedience and often considered it as one of the instruments of penitence and ascesis. For example, the Chilean nun Ursula Suárez (1666-1749) asserts that she felt utter repugnance for this task. She defines the obligation to write as a 'torment' and repeatedly asks her confessor to inflict any other penitence on her (1984). Expressions recalling the duty of obedience (the only source of legitimation for communicating extraordinary graces and contacts with the divine, which otherwise could be deemed pride and vainglory and dangerous lack of humility), the strain and mental and physical suffering which the practice of writing involved are constantly repeated in these writings in rather stereotyped forms. As has been observed, these formulae are part of a distinct rhetorical and interpersonal strategy. Alison Weber, analyzing Teresa de Avila's texts, has discussed these womens' strategies as a 'rhetoric of femininity' aimed at justifying and legitimizing the communication of the mystical experience and the taking up of the word through repeated allusions to their position of subordination and marginality (1990). On the other hand, many of the expressions and stylistic features used refer to the empirical elements of a particular social practice, that of writing out of duty of obedience, which was widespread within Catholic spiritual direction starting from the early modern age.

Many of the women authors of these 'autobiographical reports' learned to write, so to speak, 'by writing'. Angela Mellini, a needlewoman (c. 1664-c. 1707) who was the protagonist, in mid-seventeenth-century Bologna, of an extraordinary case of spiritual motherhood, learned to write from her confessor in a rather elementary way. She received a sort of primer which consisted

of a number of plates containing a model alphabet and, starting from there, she had to drill by herself by finding phonetic parallels (which, being able to read, she already recognized in printed texts) and then learning to 'draw italics with all their ligatures and to actively connect those signs with the forms of her oral language, so different in the dialect from those she read in printed books' (Pozzi and Leonardi eds, 1988, 543).[9] In the *incipit* of her diary, addressing her confessor, she writes:

Vostra reverenza mi comanda che io scriva e sa che io non so scrivere e non posso se non commettere molti difetti e goffaggini, ma a me poco importa. Mi basta accontentare il mio Gesù. Sono contenta e diffido di me stessa, e confido tutto al mio Gesù e in Maria. (546)[10]

But she also revealed: 'Molto tempo è che mi sentiva inclinata di farlo, ma non aveva ardire' (545),[11] thus showing a tension which represents the characteristic feature of this and other similar texts, that is, the alternative strain of, on the one hand, the desire to express and communicate and, on the other, the limits imposed by the objective condition of one's own marginality and the duties of obedience.

The lay woman from Livorno Barbera Fivoli (1717-1764) who, by the middle of the eighteenth century, wrote a diary in several volumes which stretches for about four thousand pages, at the beginning of her enterprise could read but not write (Prosperi 1999, Bottoni 2000 and 2001). Every day her confessor handed her a folded sheet of paper, instructing her to fill in the four sides for the following day. With ever increasing fluency and constant regularity, the forty-year-old woman – whose progress in writing is, as in many other cases, described as miraculous – set in written form her thoughts, 'visioni e illuminazioni divine ..., lotte eroiche contro i demoni ..., digiuni e veglie, ... penitenze e mortificazioni, ... grazie e favori divini' (Bottoni 2000, 278),[12] producing a torrential diary which is the outcome of her relationship with her director. The director gathered the sheets which Barbera entrusted to him, reorganized them by assembling them into separate files, occasionally brought corrections, mainly in the orthography, but without modifying the flow of the woman's writing; indeed, her hand – as she herself says – was directed by God: 'tutto questo che io scrissi fin qui, fu il solo i Dio che guidò Lui la mia penna, imperoche io col mio intelletto, mi trovavo in quell'istante, nel cuore amoroso del mio Giesù e con molta chiarezza, mi dettava tutto ciò che io scrissi' (282);[13] up to the point that at times Barbera alleged that she wrote 'dormendo, con sentirsi guidare la mano, senza sapere ciò che annotava, cioè estatica' (282).[14] The director, on his part, wrote down notes and reports on the spiritual progress of the penitent, which he deemed to be authentic, and on the suggestions and directions which he imparted to her, thus bequeathing to us the precious witness of a point of view which was 'external' to the mystic

experience of the protagonist of the *Diario* and almost producing a sort of countermelody to her writings. This is one of the very few cases in which the social character of the auto-biographical text written for obedience acquires a higher complexity through the interweaving of two voices: those of the mystic and her director. As Jodi Bilinkoff has shown in her studies, in such cases, that is, when a relationship of mutual acknowledgement between the devotee and her director is established, the identity of both ended up by being strengthened: on the one hand, the charismatic, thanks to the approbation and support of her confessor, could rely on the institutional acknowledgement of her role as 'mother' and mystic, thus conquering an otherwise unthinkable liberty of expression and action; on the other, the confessor/director expected, as the result of this relationship, his own personal transformation and spiritual renewal, as well as the acquisition of new 'professional' skills and a confirmation of his pastoral role.

The relationship with the activity of writing of the Capuchin nun Veronica Giuliani (1660-1727, canonized in 1839) appears to have been greatly tormented and painful. Veronica was a 'reluctant graphomaniac' (Pozzi and Leonardi eds, 1988, 506) who wrote indefatigably for almost 25 years piling up more than 22.000 sheets by order of her confessors (as many as 39) who alternated as her directors and some of whom, far from supporting her, seemed to be moved by feelings of suspicion and diffidence. Her sheets are marked by, and become the instrument for expressing, the suffering and pain, by reluctance to write and the pleasure felt in even accepting this suffering as obedient penitence. The mental and physical pain of writing appears to mingle with the pain of communication, or better, the obstinate attempt, undertaken for obedience, to communicate the ineffable, to wish to say the Nothing, which was the abysmal centre of her mysticism: 'Dico e ridico e non dico niente' (508)[15] is her mark; and of divine love she says that 'più se ne dice, niente si dice, niente si può dire. Tutto ciò che si sa, è niente; nisuno pò penetrare cosa sia amore' (508).[16] The directors handed in to her one file at a time and the ecstatic had to compile them without either re-reading or correcting her writing and finally hand them back to them. She wrote at night, in the dark and in extremely uncomfortable positions. Although she shows remarkable argumentative originality and exceptional stylistic creativity, Veronica – as many other authoresses of 'obedient autobiography' – never acquired complete mastery of writing means. Her spelling often appears uncertain, punctuation and word-separation do not follow canonical usage. Her language is indeed marked by a very strong dependence on orality, even as far as vocabulary and syntax are concerned, even – paradoxically – when she expresses exceptionally lofty and complex concepts. The peculiar circumstances in which her *Diario* was written are – as in all other cases of 'obedient writing' – crucial in any attempt to understand these texts. As Giovanni Pozzi appropriately remarked, to approach the *Diario* of Veronica Giuliani, namely, the finished product, from the point of view of the reader inevitably means to approach

it from a false perspective, because it is 'not consistent with the one the saint experienced while writing' (508). It is indeed important to recall that Veronica 'had before her a file to fill in, which disappeared from her eyes forever once she had performed her task; that she wrote without the help of what she had written before and with no future plan, not knowing how long the task would last'. For these reasons, the reader should assume the perspective

of the page which is growing before her; indeed, if 'obedience' had ordered her to the contrary, the writer's hand would have stopped even before the following full stop (which was then not in use). Thus suspended, Veronica wrote in an absolute present, or in a past so near to the present that she felt obliged to stress the very slight distance with her usual 'it seems to me'. Her word is directly present in the event, is developed and interwoven in the knowledge of the event without the mediation of rhetoric, style, culture, without the guise of those oratorical models or models of spiritual writing which directed her edification. However, since that event is by definition unknowable, the word winds it up exceedingly, 'con modo senza modo' [in a way which is unrestrained], as she loves to say. (508)

These considerations and the approach they imply may also be applied to other analogous writings because they highlight some key-points which concern the peculiar character of all these texts. It is precisely starting from these critical reflections that I would like to make a few general comments.

4. *Whose Auto-bio-graphy Is This?*

In the first place, it is apt to stress again the inadequacy, for describing these texts, of the category of 'autobiography'. This category indeed involves an 'autobiographical pact' between writer and reader and leaves to the author the liberty of organizing his/her materials according to a unitary, organic and coherent narrative project. The perspective of someone who writes 'out of obedience' or 'under injunction' is evidently completely different and always determined by a relationship between two persons; a relationship in which either the marks of control and coercion, or those of collaboration and mutual legitimation and promotion may prevail, but whose final aim is never the 'neutral' transmission of a subjective point of view about past events. These texts are always the product of a 'narrative transaction' in which what is at stake needs each time to be specified on the basis of the kind of relationship which defines the transaction (see Davis 1987). Actors in this relationship – which is to be considered one of power – are obviously the mystic and her director or directors, but quite often also the inquisitors and all those who will have to, or could, examine her texts, the clerical hierarchy, the audience of believers and devotees of the 'holy woman' who would support her worship and, more generally, all the readers of her hagiography.

In a recent debate about the ego-documents and the *écrits du for privé*, commenting on the *autobiografías por mandato*, Alison Weber has aptly suggested that, apart from the binary relationship between penitent and confessor which is at the basis of these writings, scholars should also consider the 'wider "social life" of the text', a suggestion which Weber derives from the notion of 'social text' developed by Jerome McGann. According to McGann,

texts are produced and reproduced under specific social and institutional conditions, and ... every text, including those that may appear to be purely private, is a social text. This view entails a corollary understanding, that a 'text' is not a 'material thing' but a material event or set of events, a point in time (or a moment in space) where certain communicative interchanges are being practiced. (McGann 1991, 21; quoted in Weber 2005, 118)

The nature of 'social text' of the *autobiografías por mandato* concerns, according to Weber, both the origin of these texts and their circulation and fruition; in other words, the social exploitation of a text ('las diversas vidas de una "vida"', 118) which, although born as trial and exercise directed to one particular addressee, may end up by reaching – either in print or manuscript – a much wider audience.

When analyzing the so-called 'obedient writings', it seems to me that it would be important to describe in each case the nature and characteristics of the 'events' (to quote McGann), their time coordinates and the communicative exchanges which are at their basis, in an effort of contextualization which also includes the diverse functions and discursive levels which these texts present. Only by dealing with these texts in this perspective will we be able to unravel the problem of subjective writing and of the legitimacy to consider the 'obedient writings' as (also) writings which concern the self, or 'ego-documents'. In order to avoid a naïve, and essentially improper, use of this category, it seems to me that it would be more correct, when dealing with these sources, to speak of the possibility of tracing in them 'a certain amount of ego-content' (Pomata 2001, 331), but always keeping in mind a fundamental uncertainty which concerns precisely the issue of authorship: that is, that such individual and subjective elements may belong both to the author/protagonist of the autobiography and the director who orders the person concerned to write (see Bilinkoff 2005, 46-75).

According to some scholars, the perspective of the devotee who writes for obedience and the language she uses are wholly conformable with those of the ecclesiastical institution. As Adriano Prosperi writes, 'the woman who has learned to write in the context of a relationship of spiritual direction which relegates her to a subordinate position expresses, in her pages, the point of view of the ecclesiastical culture and makes use of the stylistic features of that culture' (Prosperi 1999, 364). This position certainly highlights the irrefutable 'main street' of Catholic Counter-Reformation pedagogy, namely, the transition – to use again an apt formula coined by the same author – from the era of the

'divine mothers' to that of 'spiritual fathers' (Prosperi 1986). However, I am of the opinion that, in point of fact, this evaluation may turn out to be restrictive in many ways. If one examines each of the 'communicative exchanges' trying to deconstruct these power and subordination relationships, in some cases the margins of this negotiation and the possible transactions are visible and even some traits of subjectivity can be discerned. The Ursuline nun Brigida Morello from Piacenza (1610-1679), for instance, subjecting herself, out of obedience, to the duty of writing which was imposed on her by her Jesuit directors, shows that she accepted the norms prescribed in a way which was rather selective and all but uncritical. Scornful, or at least indifferent to the rules of grammar, spelling and rhetoric, on many occasions Brigida engaged in ruthless negotiation with her directors about the language to be used in order to describe her mystic experience. Indeed, – as the pioneering studies by Giovanni Pozzi and the more systematic analysis by Guido Mongini have shown – (Pozzi and Leonardi eds, 1988, Mongini 1998 and 2004), once she reached, through writing and through the practice of introspection, a remarkable stage of self-consciousness and deep understanding of her own self, Brigida refused

The conceptual apparatus which was offered by theologians, starting from that terminology – even the most elementary – which defines the contemplative states and the types of graces. She does not want to use 'questo nome d'estasi, da me aborrito'; and uses, that and others, out of pure concession to her director: 'Per obedire a vostra riverenza che me l'ha ordinato, dirò schiettamente il nome di ratto, *ancor che io* abbi sempre avuto tanto timore e aborrimento a questo nome'. (Pozzi and Leonardi eds, 1988, 470)[17]

The obedience formulae and concessions to her confessor, several times stressed and repeated, only serve to point out the mystic's distancing from the language and conceptual store of theologians: 'In quelle cartucce che vidde vostra reverenza prima di partire, dove dicevo di quell'impeti d'amor di Dio, *già che vostra reverenza così vuole*, dico ch'erano ratti' (470).[18] So, as Giovanni Pozzi concludes, 'the linguistic difference between "outbursts of love" and "raptures" marks the boundary between what is for her acceptable and what is not: she accepts the experience and the words which designate it, but rejects the texts of the doctrine and its sources, which do not agree with her meaning' (470). Indeed, Brigida generally opted for the use of less theological terms which better expressed the experiential nature of her knowledge of the divine (for example, 'to enter in one's self' and 'to go out of one's self', 'to go up', 'to go down' and 'to sink down', etc.). Generally speaking, her linguistic and conceptual choices appear entirely conscious and all but passive with regard to her superiors' precepts. I am of the opinion that, in such cases, the autobiographical writings 'por mandato', accepted out of obedience towards the confessors and directors of conscience who had the task of examining and evaluating, could become real 'anatomies of the soul'. The practice of written self-analysis

could eventually become a form of 'anatomy of the self', thus representing, for the writing subject, a precious tool of introspection and – as remarked by Gabriella Zarri – of 'self-care' (2003, 138). In the folds of these narrations, of the ever recurring formulae and rhetorical models, and the stereotyped stylistic features, it is possible to single out some traces of subjectivity – some fragments of the self. Not necessarily, however, of one sole subjectivity and one sole self. This last observation is a necessary premise when considering these sources of 'plural composition' (although with the necessary cautionary attitude) as ego-documents. This problem calls into question the issue of these texts' authorship – or, better, of its deeply ambiguous nature.

Il y a plus d'un Autheur; il y en a deux, & l'un e l'autre étoient necessaires pour achever l'Ouvrage. Cette grande Servante de Dieu a travaillé elle-méme, & son fils a mis la derniere main, en sorte neanmoins qu'il n'y parle que comme un écho qui répond à ce qu'elle dit par ses propres paroles. (Martin 1677, *Préface*, aij v)[19]

Thus wrote the author of the *Préface* to the life of Marie de l'Incarnation, printed in Paris in 1677, highlighting the dilemma of authorship in such texts: 'Whose life is this anyway', as Bilinkoff says in the title of one chapter of her *Related Lives* (2005, 46-75). In other words, are we reading a biography or an autobiography? And whose autobiography? What is the role of the diverse authors of the work? The answer to these questions is not easy and one can only try to solve the thorny problem by considering and examining the specific features of each text. In the case of the *Vie* of Marie de l'Incarnation, for example, the issue is rather intricate. The second author is no one else but Claude Martin, Marie's son, whose role is much more complex than one of collector and editor of the writings of 'God's servant' in view of the beatification trial. Analyzing this work, Natalie Zemon Davis has highlighted the interaction between the two and the fallout of their complex relationship on the printed text by underlining the role of Claude who, as hagiographer and theologian, was worried about the doctrinal orthodoxy of his mother's writings. By comparing Marie's manuscripts with the printed text, Davis has highlighted that Claude's corrections are especially aimed at softening the most daring – and therefore dangerous – expressions of her mystical language and, more generally, at rendering Marie's words consistent with the dictates of the Holy Church. In short, also in this case it is important to define the roles, the boundaries and above all the complex and multifarious relationship between the two authors, the motivations which urged both to write, the manifestation of their personalities, the diverse agencies which come into play in the text and in its composition, but also in the text as final product.

To conclude, one might ask whether the very concepts of 'individual identity' and authorship are apt to be applied to sources like the 'obedient writings' and also, more generally, to all early modern spiritual writings. The

answer should be no if one considers the notion of authorship according to its present meaning. It seems to me, however, that the heuristic importance of such notions as personal identity and authorship may be seen if we use them, so to speak, in a 'flexible' way, by exploring diverse levels of analysis and different points of view, combining and interlocking an *emic* perspective, that is, one which is internal to the sign-system of the protagonists, and an *etic* one, that is, one which exploits notions which belong to different cultural systems (Pike 1967). Through the lenses of the individual ego and authorship it may well be possible to perceive the various voices and strategies pursued, with greater or lesser degrees of awareness, by the protagonists/authors of these narratives, their intersections, conflicts, the power relationships in the texts and therefore, to some extent, the dominant time component of these lives.

[1] 'Since I have been ordered and given ample freedom to write down the kind of prayers and the graces which have been bestowed upon me by the Lord, I would also like to be permitted to tell in detail and clearly the great sins of my mean life'. Translations of Italian and Spanish works not available in English are editorial.

[2] Lollini (1995), Poutrin (1995), Herpoel (1999), Prosperi (1996), Prosperi (1999), Bilinkoff (2005), Schutte (2005), Weber (2005), Malena (2007), Bottoni (2009), Bottoni (2010a).

[3] On ego-documents see Schulze (1996), von Greyerz and Medick (2001), Dekker ed. (2002).

[4] Stumpo (1995), Prosperi (1996), Prosperi (1999), Bottoni (2009). A different opinion is expressed by Lejeune (2003).

[5] On Protestant spiritual autobiography see Benedict (2005); on female spiritual autobiographies in German pietism see Kormann (2004).

[6] 'Another good way to know persons is to insistently question them on their life and write down, according to the circumstances and occasions, all they say. Thus, subsequently they will not be able to disclaim the things they have said. In case these persons insist on saying nonsense, either because they have been deceived or because they are willing to fool others, in this way they would be unmasked'.

[7] 'A little book, handwritten and composed … by a devout religious woman well practised in the things she speaks of, as her work clearly witnesses, although out of humility and to shun arrogance she has not made her name known and although she even says that she underwent this toil to obey her father confessor, who asked her to write down her spiritual exercises, which she kept performing in order to gain the prize of the supreme calling'.

[8] 'Encouraged and commanded by my confessor and spiritual father, I am forced to relate all Your [God's] mercies which you piteously bestowed on me in spite of all my ingratitude and infinite negligence, thus giving me true and effective desire to amend myself with an impulse and feeling toward prayer and eager tears, in order to obtain from you many graces'.

[9] On the otherwise unknown Angela Mellini and her writings, see Ciammitti (1979), Petrucci (1979), Pozzi and Leonardi (1988), Bottoni (2010a).

[10] 'Your reverence orders me to write and you know that I cannot write and I can but make many defects and blunders, but I do not care. I am satisfied if I make my Jesus content. I am happy and do not trust myself, but I entrust all to my Jesus and Mary'.

[11] 'Long since I started feeling an inclination to do it, but I could not dare'.

[12] 'Divine visions and illuminations … heroic struggles against the devils ... fastings and vigils, ... penitence and mortifications, … graces and divine favours'.

[13] 'All I have written up till now was only God to guide my pen, since in these moments I was with my mind inside the loving heart of my Jesus and he, very clearly, dictated all I wrote'.

[14] 'While sleeping, by feeling that my hand was guided, not knowing what I was jotting, that is, ecstatic'.

[15] 'I say and I say and I say nothing'.

[16] 'The more is said, nothing is said, nothing can be said. All we know is nothing. No one can deeply penetrate what love is'.

[17] 'This name of ecstasy, by me abhorred' … 'To obey your reverence that ordered me, I will say frankly the name of rapture, although I have always feared and abhorred this name'.

[18] 'In those little papers which your reverence saw before leaving, where I spoke of those outbursts of love for God, since your reverence thus wills, I will say they were raptures'.

[19] 'There is more than one Author; there are two, and both were necessary in order to complete the work. This great servant of God has worked by herself, and her son added the last touch; but, in such a way, that he appears to speak only as an echo which answers to what she says by his own words'.

Works Cited

Benedict Philip (2005), 'Producción y conservación de las "tecnologías del yo" ', *Cultura Escrita & Sociedad* 1, 40-41.

Besozzi G.P. (1577), *Prattica spirituale d'una serva di Dio, al cui essempio tuo qual-siuoglia monaca, ò persona spirituale essercitarsi, per piacer più a Giesu Christo sposo dell'anima sua. Molto utile et necessaria per rinouar lo spirito nell'osseruanza delle regole, et viuere spiritualle ne' monasteri et fuor d'essi*, Macerata, Marcellini.

Bilinkoff Jodi (2005), *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450-1750*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Boesch Sofia (2005), *La santità*, Roma e Bari, Laterza.

Borromeo Federico (1616), *De ecstaticis mulieribus et illusis libri quatuor*, Milano, Collegio Ambrosiano.

Bottoni Elena (2000), ' "Noi donne haviamo il capo addabbato per sognare". Scrittura mistica e direzione spirituale nel diario di Barbera Fivoli (1717-1764)', *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 13, 275-403.

Bottoni Elena (2001), 'Barbera Fivoli (1717-1764): una mistica livornese del Settecento candidata alla santità', in O. Vaccari, ed., *Donne livornesi*, Livorno, Debatte Editore, 59-66.

Bottoni Elena (2009), *Scritture dell'anima. Esperienze religiose femminili nella Toscana del Settecento*, Roma, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

Bottoni Elena (2010a), 'Diari di coscienza', in A. Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 volumes, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, vol. I, 475-477.

Bottoni Elena (2010b), 'Mellini Angela', in A. Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 volumes, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, vol. II, 1017-1018.

Cabibbo Sara (2010), 'Discretio spirituum', in A. Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 volumes, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, vol. I, 495-495.

Ciammitti Luisa (1979), 'Una santa di meno. Storia di Angela Mellini cucitrice bolognese (1667-17...)', *Quaderni storici* XIV, 603-639.

D'Achille Paolo (1994), 'L'italiano dei semicolti', in L. Serianni and P. Trifone, eds, *Storia della lingua italiana*, vol. II, *Scritto e parlato*, Torino, Einaudi, 41-79.

Davis N.Z. (1987), *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France*, Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Davis N.Z. (1995), *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Dekker Rudolf (2002), 'Introduction', in R. Dekker, ed., *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages*, Hilversum, Verloren, 7-20.

Dekker Rudolf, ed. (2002), *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context since the Middle Ages*, Hilversum, Verloren.

Gotor Miguel (2004), *Chiesa e santità nell'Italia moderna*, Roma e Bari, Laterza.

Greyerz Kaspar von, Hans Medick, Hans Veit, and Patrice Veit, eds (2001), *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich. Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500-1850)*, Köln, Weimar und Berlin, Böhlau Verlag.

Herpoel Sonia (1999), *A la zaga de Santa Teresa. Autobiografías por mandato*, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Rodopi.

Kormann Eva (2004), *Ich, Welt und Gott. Autobiographik im 17. Jahrhundert*, Köln, Böhlau.

Lejeune Philippe (2003), 'Les journaux spirituels en France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle', *Littérales* 33, 63-85.

Lollini Massimo (1995), 'Scrittura obbediente e mistica tridentina in Veronica Giuliani', *Annali d'Italianistica* 13, 351-369.

Loyola Ignacio de (1991 [1985]), *A Pilgrim's Journey*, ed. and trans. by J.N. Tylenda, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press.

Malena Adelisa (2007), 'Madri in spirito. Note di lettura su direzione spirituale e discorso autobiografico negli scritti di Paola Maria di Gesù Centurione (1586-1646) e Francesca Toccafondi (1638-1685)', in S. Boesch Gajano and E. Pace, eds, *Donne, poteri e saperi nella storia delle religioni*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 315-337.

Malena Adelisa and Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci (1998), 'La direzione spirituale delle donne in età moderna: percorsi della ricerca contemporanea', *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* XXIV, 439-460.

Malena Adelisa and Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci (2011), 'L'inquisizione romana e il controllo del misticismo femminile', in *Atti del Convegno, A dieci anni dall'apertura dell'Archivio della Congregazione per la dottrina della fede: storia e archivi dell'Inquisizione*, 21-23 febbraio 2008, Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

Martin Claude (1677), *La vie de la Vénérable Mère Marie de l'Incarnation Première Supérieure des Ursulines de la Nouvelle France*, Paris, Louis Billaine.

McGann Jerome (1991), *The Textual Condition*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Mongini Guido (1998), 'Scrittura mistica e direzione spirituale tra francescani e gesuiti nelle opere di Brigida Morello di Gesù (1610-1679)', *Annali dell'istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* XXIV, 479-530.

Mongini Guido (2004), 'Dall'obbedienza alla libertà dello spirito. Carismi, esperienza mistica e direzione spirituale nella vicenda di Brigida Morello di Gesù (1610-1679)', in M. Catto, ed., *La direzione spirituale tra medioevo ed età moderna. Percorsi di ricerca e contesti specifici*, Bologna, il Mulino, 105-159.

Petrucci Armando (1979), 'Nota sulla scrittura di Angela Mellini', *Quaderni storici* IX, 640-643.

Pike K.L. (1967), *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure of Human Behaviour*, The Hague and Paris, Mouton.

Pomata Gianna (2001), 'A Christian Utopia of the Renaissance. Elena Duglioli's Spiritual and Physical Motherhood (ca. 1510-1520)', in K. von Greyerz, H. Medick, and P. Veit, eds, *Von der dargestellten Person zum erinnerten Ich. Europäische Selbstzeugnisse als historische Quellen (1500-1850)*, Köln, Weimar und Berlin, Böhlau Verlag, 323-353.

Poutrin Isabelle (1995), *Le voile et la plume. Autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans l'Espagne moderne*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez.

Pozzi Giovanni and Claudio Leonardi, eds (1988), *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, Genova, Marietti.

Prosperi Adriano (1986), 'Dalle "divine madri" ai "padri spirituali" ', in E. Schulte van Kessel, ed., *Women and Men in spiritual culture, XIV-XVII centuries. A meeting of South and North*, The Hague, Netherlands Government Publishing Office, 71-90.

Prosperi Adriano (1996), *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari*, Torino, Einaudi.

Prosperi Adriano (1999), 'Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti. Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia', in A. Prosperi, *America e Apocalisse e altri saggi*, Pisa e Roma, Istituti editoriali poligrafici internazionali, 343-365.

Schulze Winfried, ed. (1996), *Ego-dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, Berlin, Akademie Verlag.

Schutte A.J. (2001a), *Aspiring Saints. Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618-1750*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Schutte A.J. (2001b), 'Pretense of Holiness in Italy: Investigations and Persecutions (1581-1876)', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* XXXVII, 299-321.

Schutte A.J. (2005), 'Escrituras de vida en colaboración / Collaborative Life-Writing', *Cultura Escrita & Sociedad* 1, 114-115.

Schutte A.J. (2010), 'Finzione di santità', in A. Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, vol. II, 601-604.

Sfondrati Nicolò (1577), 'Prefazione', in *Prattica spirituale d'una serva di Dio*, Macerata, S. Martellini.

Sluhovsky Moshe (2007), *Believe not Every Spirit. Possession, Mysticism & Discernment in Early Modern Catholicism*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.

Stumpo Enrico (1995), 'Introduzione', in F. Baldinucci, *Diario spirituale*, Firenze, Le Lettere.

Suárez Ursula (1984), *Relación Autobiográfica*, ed. by M. Ferreccio Podestà, Santiago de Chile, Biblioteca Antigua Chilena, Academia Chilena de la Historia.

Teresa de Avila (Teresa de Jesus) (1982 [1588]), *Libro de la vida*, ed. by D. Chicarro, Madrid, Cátedra.

Weber Alison (1990), *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Feminity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Weber Alison (2005), 'Autobiografías por mandato: ¿ego-documentos o textos sociales? / Autobiografías por mandato: Ego-documents or Social Texts?', *Cultura Escrita & Sociedad* 1, 116-118.

Zarri Gabriella (1991), *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna*, Torino, Rosenberg & Sellier.

Zarri Gabriella (2003), 'L'autobiografia religiosa in Camilla Battista da Varano: "La vita spirituale" (1491) e le "Istruzioni al discepolo" (1501)', in F. Bruni, ed., *"In quella parte del libro de la mia memoria". Verità e finzioni dell'"io" autobiografico*, Venezia, Giorgio Cini, 133-158.

Zarri Gabriella (2004), 'Dal *consilium* spirituale alla *discretio spirituum*. Teoria e pratica della direzione spirituale tra i secoli XIII e XV', in C. Casagrande, C. Crisciani, and S. Vecchio, eds, *Consilium. Teorie e pratiche del consigliare nella cultura medievale*, Firenze, Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo.

Zarri Gabriella (2010), 'Direzione spirituale', in A. Prosperi, ed., *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, 4 volumes, Pisa, Edizioni della Normale, vol. I, 484-487.

Drama, Stage and the Law

The Anonymous Plotter
in the Routines of Renaissance Theatre and Drama

Paola Pugliatti

University of Florence (paola.pugliatti@gmail.com)

Abstract

Renaissance theatre, both in England and Italy, was a commercial enterprise and, therefore, it utilized procedures of division of labour to meet the challenge of the market. One of these procedures was the compilation of preparatory texts of various kinds. But, while about one thousand *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte* (some anonymous, some with the author's name) survive, of the 'plots' compiled by the English 'plotters' in preparation of plays to be written only one incomplete specimen and a few fragments have been preserved; their nature, therefore, remains dubious. Furthermore, anonymous documents of a different nature, also confusingly called 'plots', but compiled as reminders for the actors' entrances during performance, have survived in six, mostly fragmentary, manuscripts. This article discusses these three kinds of preparatory texts in order to characterize their different nature and argues that, although suggestive, the idea of a derivation of the two kinds of English 'plots' from the *scenari* appears unconvincing; indeed, the compilation, in both contexts, of preparatory texts was simply an obvious and necessary measure in order to speed up procedures.

Keywords: Author Plots, England, Italy, Playhouse Plots, Scenarios.

> Sono sempre d'avviso
> che Shakespeare fosse una cooperativa.
> Eugenio Montale, 'Le storie letterarie', 1977[1]

1. *Preliminaries*

British Library manuscript Add 10449 contains five 'plots' presumably dating from the early 1590s to the early 1600s. These 'plots' are outlines of plays in performance, some fragmentary, which record little more than entrances – less frequently exits – (sometimes with the character's name, sometimes with the actor's, often with both) together with suggestions such as 'a dumb show', 'music', 'alarum', 'violls of blood', 'X speaks' (but without the content of the speech) and similar basic performance directions. A sixth 'plot' is held in the Archive of Dulwich College (MS XIX), the institution founded as 'God's Gift' by Edward Alleyn in 1619. The manuscript of a seventh 'plot' is not extant but the plot was transcribed by Steevens in his 1803 *Variorum*. All the plays

whose 'plots' are extant have been lost, except for *The Battell of Alcazar*, a play attributed to Peele and published in a 1594 quarto.

The presence of actors' names makes these texts especially useful as sources of information about the composition of companies and about Elizabethan and Jacobean casting practices; but, in spite of the critical attentions of a number of scholars, their exact nature remains somewhat mysterious.

However, the fact that these 'plots' are outlines of performances understandably suggests a resemblance to the *scenari* or *canovacci* of the *commedia dell'arte*. In some cases, explicit allusions have been made to possible derivation from Italian scripts, at least in the form of a transmission of routines and methods. In addition, the picture is made more complex by the presence, in the context of Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre, of another kind of preparatory text, also confusingly designated by the word 'plot'; from the information which we possess, it appears evident that these were much more detailed than the British Library and Dulwich outlines and structurally much more similar to the *scenari*, but functionally they differ from both. The British Library and Dulwich 'plots' were guides for performances, while the more detailed 'plots' were guides for the compositions of plays. The *scenari*, on the other hand, were the necessary pre-texts outlining an action whose details were to be 'improvised' and, therefore, they represented all that existed before the acted play and did not imply any further elaboration.

Although accepting what is now the prevailing opinion, that is, that in the context of English theatre the two kinds of 'plots' served entirely different purposes, I will discuss these texts historically and critically, with special attention to the issue of authorship. In conclusion, I will compare the basic structural characteristics of the two kinds of English 'plots' with those of the Italian *scenari* or *canovacci* and argue that in this instance no direct or indirect kind of communication with the procedures of the *commedia dell'arte* should be hypothesized: indeed, the Italian groups of *comici* no less than the English companies of players were commercial enterprises which needed to exploit collaborative routines in order to simplify and speed up procedures. The fact, therefore, that the Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre industry practised certain forms of schematization, either in preparation of the written texts or of their scenic rendition, only indicates that, like the *improvvisa*, it tended to maximize economic efficiency in responding to the requirements of a demanding and quickly-changing market.

2. *The Texts and the Facts*

A first account of the British Library and Dulwich 'plots' was given by W.W. Greg in his edition of the *Henslowe Papers*. Greg published the text of five of the extant plots and reproduced a sixth from the transcript made by Steevens (1907, 127-151).[2] Greg returned to these documents in 1931 in an extensive historical, bibliographical and critical study (1-171). Many of Greg's conclusions are still accepted, especially his assignment of the plays from which the

plots derived to an amalgamation of the Admiral's and Strange's Men (1931, 13), his dating and the function he attributed them as 'ephemeral documents' meant 'for the guidance of actors and others in the playhouse, to remind those concerned when and in what character they were to appear, what properties were required, and what noises were to be made behind the scenes' (3). That these sheets were prepared for 'the attention of the prompter or call-boy' (1907, 127) is suggested not only by their content but also by the fact that the sheets 'have a hole cut near the top' which, Greg argues, served to hang them 'on a peg in the playhouse' (129).[3]

In 1946 J.Q. Adams published a brief article on 'plots' in *The Library*. Quoting Greg's statement that the word 'plot' was also 'employed in the same theatrical circles to designate an author's "guide for the composition of a play"' (Adams 1946, 17; Greg 1931, 1), he adds that Greg was unable to give any example of another, quite distinct kind of plot, which he calls an 'author plot' in that at the time Greg wrote none was known to be in existence (Adams, 18). The 'example' found by Adams in a Folger Shakespeare Library manuscript is, Adams says, 'of a later age than the reign of Elizabeth' (17). It was published in his transcription with a reproduction of its physical layout but with no further comment on the text.[4] By comparing the documents published by Greg and the one reproduced by Adams, it is evident that the latter is of a completely different nature from the former.

The issue was, therefore, by then, fairly clear. The two scholars had established the existence, in the same historical context, of two kinds of text, both designated by the word 'plot' but different in nature, content and function: one (the Folger plot) served as a 'guide for the composition of a play' (and was therefore written either before or during the composition of the play) and the others (the British Library and Dulwich plots) were certainly written after the play had been completed and served as a skeleton guide for the performance and, in particular, for the actors' entrances. Neither kind of text, in turn, can be said to have performed a function similar to that of the *scenari*.

The case of the 'two plots', however, soon started to give rise to conflicting interpretations. Strange to say, it was Greg himself who inaugurated the confusion. As proof of the existence of plots which served 'as a guide *for the composition* of a play' (1931, 1; my emphasis), he rightly quoted two passages from Henslowe's *Papers* where 'books' or 'plots' compiled by playwrights (Ben Jonson in this case) before or during the composition of a play are mentioned:

lent vnto Bengemen Johnson the 3 of desembz 1597 vpon a boocke wch he showed the plotte vnto the company wch he promysed to dd vnto the company at cryssmas next the some of … xx s. (Foakes and Rickert, eds, 1961, 85)

Lent vnto Robart shawe & Jewbey the 23 of octobz 1598 to lend vnto m^{r} Chapmane one his playe boocke & ij ectes of A tragedie of bengemens plotte the some of … iij^{li}. (100)

Greg correctly comments the author plot of the kind mentioned in the second passage saying that such a text 'may have included, *though it can hardly have been confined to*, a list of scenes with the characters appearing in each' (1931, 1-2; my emphasis). *Ergo*, it must have been different from (and more detailed than) the playhouse plots: 'It is possible that the drawing up of such plots, as a recognized branch of the playwright's profession, may be implied in Nashe's claim of Greene as an excellent plotter and also in Mere's definition of Munday as "our best plotter" ' (1, n. 2). The two texts mentioned by Greg constitute the main evidence for the existence of author plots compiled by professional 'plotters' towards the composition of plays. Greg, however, undermines the evidential weight of these passages by saying that, by such expressions as 'our best plotter', 'it is unlikely than anything more is meant than that their plays were well constructed' (1, n. 2).

True, author plots which must have been compiled before a play was written or while it was being written – 'can hardly have been confined to' the scanty elements which appear in the playhouse plots: in other words, they must have been similar to the one published by Adams. And it must have been on account of their ability to produce similar outlines that, as we shall see, authors like Greene and Munday were singled out for praise.

The passages from Henslowe's *Papers* were again quoted by Adams in his 1946 article (an article, I suspect, more often cited in footnotes than read); but the misunderstandings continued in a series of books and articles which started appearing in the 1990s, when attention to the playhouse plots resumed.

Again confusing the two kinds of plot, T.J. King comments on the two Ben Jonson entries saying that ' "Bengemens plotte" was probably a list of scenes with the characters appearing in each' (1992, 7); he adds that, in compiling such plots, 'the author shows the actors that the casting requirements for his new play are suitable for their company' (7), thereby implying that plots (author? playhouse?) were (always?) constructed with the requirements and the casting resources of a certain company in mind. But King makes an even more adventurous guess, namely, that the playhouse plots as we know them were nothing other than author plots to which the bookkeeper added the actors' names: 'When parts were assigned to actors', he says, 'the book-keeper or playhouse scribe *took the plot the author had prepared when he first offered the play*, and to it the book-keeper added the name of the actor who played each part' (14; my emphasis). Since in the manuscripts of the six plots the actors' names are written *currente calamo*, by 'took the plot' King must mean that the plots were copied simply in order to add the actors' names: an untenable theory given that playhouse procedures tended to be extremely time-saving. David Bradley identifies the function of 'plotter' attributed to Munday with the activity of preparing 'the ground-plan of the action *to be performed*' and identifies this 'ground-plan' with the playhouse plots which we possess (1992, 2; my emphasis). Both he and King, therefore, entirely dismiss

the evidence for the existence of more detailed plots compiled as guides to the composition of plays.

More recently, discussing the six extant plots, Grace Ioppolo states that 'Greg's contention that there were two distinct kinds of plot ... may be incorrect' and argues that 'Henslowe may have used the word "plot" ... to denote a list of scenes and characters rather than a summary of the action' (2006, 55). She then argues that it may have been precisely on the basis of such lists of scenes and characters that plays were bought from their authors, who thus 'immediately contribute(d) to the production of the play by helping the actors to cast and stage it, rather than providing them with a general outline of the play' (55).

The latest voice to contribute to the debate is that of Tiffany Stern, who clearly distinguishes between the two kinds of plot. She calls 'plot-scenarios' those which, adopting Adams's definition, I have called 'author plots' and 'backstage plots' the outlines prepared for performances (my 'playhouse plots'). Stern argues convincingly that the 'plot scenario' was 'the first document written *towards the creation* of a play' (2009, 5; my emphasis) and distinguishes this from those she calls the 'backstage plots' which, she remarks, constituted 'another form of text called, confusingly, "plot"' and which were meant for use 'by the theatre personnel either before performance or during it' (201). Stern devotes to the two kinds of document two whole chapters of her book, thus making the distinction explicit and clear; she also produces important fresh documentation, especially regarding author plots. She accepts Greg's hypothesis about the function of the playhouse plots, but adds the suggestion that they accompanied the book, inside which they were folded (not all those manuscripts, however, present a folding mark).

As regards the function of the playhouse plots, most scholars have relied on Greg's interpretation. Foakes and Rickert, for instance, conclude with Greg that they were 'for the prompter's use' (1961, 326); others (for instance, King 1992) have embraced the same basic view, only suggesting refinements. Bernard Beckerman is interested in the implications of the system of entrances, but agrees on the function of the plot as 'a guide to memory' (1989, 109). David Bradley's interpretation of the way in which playhouse plots were used is partially different: they were not, he says, 'practical guides to actors, stage-hands, and other employees' but were used by 'the Plotter himself' (1992, 77) who, he argues, managed the casting and compiled the plot 'fitting the play to the company and the company to the play' (84). Surprisingly, many have been perplexed by the fact that in the backstage plots only a few exits are recorded – exit reminders would have obviously been out of place in sheets to be referred to only *before entering the stage*. Ioppolo, for instance, finds it striking that 'surviving plots note all character entrances, but exits are marked only when the character exits immediately after an entrance' (2006, 53): that is, when it can be supposed that an 'immediate' exit is to be memorized together with the entrance.

With Stern's extensive treatment, however, the whole story seems once again to have been cleared up and explained by sound arguments. But can we really say that the story of the Elizabethan 'plots' ends here?

3. *Sketching, Advertising and Selling Plays*

We know that plays were usually not sold to companies as finished books and that frequently a 'plot', which must necessarily have been sufficiently detailed to give an idea of the play's subject and development, was presented to the company in advance of the finished play. A letter such as the frequently quoted one written by Nathan Field to Henslowe before the end of June, 1613, illustrates this practice:

Mr Hinchlow,
M^r. Dawborn and J, haue spent a great deale of time in conference about this plott, w^{c}h will make as beneficiall a play as hath Come these seauen yeares, Jt is out of his loue he detaines it for vs; onely x^l. is desir'd in hand, for w^{c}h, wee will be bound to bring you in the play finish'd vpon the first day of August; wee would not loose it, wee haue so assured a hope of it, and, to my knowledge, M^r. Dauborne may haue his request of another Companie; pray, let us haue speedie answere, and effectuall, you know, the last money you disburs't was justly pay'd in, and wee are now in a way to pay you all so, vnlesse yor selfe, for want of small supplie, will put vs out of it, againe, pray, let vs know when wee shall speake w^{t}h you; Till when, and Euer, J rest
        yor louing and obedient Son: Nat: Field. (Greg, ed., 1907, 84)

What is Field communicating to Henslowe in this letter? It is evident, in the first place, that he has a divided interest in the affair. On the one hand he is supporting Robert Daborne and a certain plot (written by Daborne, but maybe in collaboration with the same Field); on the other, he is serving the interest of his company (the inclusive personal pronouns 'we' and 'us' which he uses in the letter refer alternately to the company and probably also to him and Daborne, whose interests are in this case coincident). He and Daborne, he says, have 'spent a great deale of time' (jotting down? perusing? revising?) 'in conference about this plott' (does the demonstrative mean that he has sent Henslowe the actual plot together with the message?). In any case, after careful consideration, he and Daborne have concluded that that plot prefigures a very good play (something which could never be imagined from such skeleton outlines as those we have in the six extant playhouse plots). Field is proposing to Henslowe the plot which Daborne, 'out of his loue … detaines … for vs', that is, for Field's company (in 1613, the Children of the Queen's Revels); however, in order to make the offer more readily acceptable, he is warning Henslowe that, if 'speedie answere' is not given, Daborne 'may haue his request of another Companie'. (This suggests that, at least in this case, the plot had not been written with a particular company's requirements and resources in

mind.) As appears from several letters from the same Daborne to Henslowe, it can also be argued that, after a play had been accepted in advance, probably on the basis of a 'plot' such as the one mentioned by Field, the finished acts were handed in by instalments. In his letters, Daborne both formulates promises and gives excuses to justify his lateness but asks for money all the same. The following letter appears to be a sort of contract:

Memorandum tis agreed between phillip hinchlow Esq. & Robert daborn gent, y^t ye sd Robert shall before ye end of this Easter Term deliver in his Tragoedy cald matchavill & ye divill into ye hands of ye said phillip for ye sum of xx^{ty} pounds, six pounds whereof ye sd Robert acknowledgeth to hav receaved in earnest of y^e sayd play this 17th of Aprill & must hav other four pound vpon delivery in of 3 acts, & other ten pound vpon delivery in of y^e last scean pfited. Jn witnes hearof the sd Robert daborn hearvunto hath set his hand this 17th of Aprill 1613
<div style="text-align:center">p me Rob: Daborne. (Greg, ed., 1907, 67)</div>

Daborne's play entitled *Machiavel and the Devil* is lost and we do not know on which basis Henslowe had decided to buy it. It may have been on the basis of a few scenes which the author had read to a company, on the basis of an oral report of the play's argument, or on the basis of a more or less diffuse written fable of the play's intended action (an author plot). In any case, it should be kept in mind that all plays were supervised by the Master of the Revels who acted as censor and that therefore the purchase of texts for performance was presumably made only when a good previous knowledge of the play's content, more detailed than the one contained in the playhouse plots, could be obtained.

4. *Our Best Plotters*

A different group of texts, which provides evidence for Adam's belief in the existence of author plots, concerns (at least) two writers (Anthony Munday and Robert Greene) who, in different contexts, were designated as 'plotters'. Even though the evidence is circumstantial, we might conclude that the authors defined as 'plotters' were among those who wrote author plots, that is, outlines of *fabulae* which would be developed (by themselves, alone or in collaboration with others, or by others) into well-made plays. Anthony Munday was a rather complex figure. He was an actor, a poet, probably an anti-catholic spy, a playwright and a miscellaneous writer. He was the chief pageant-writer for the City from 1605 to 1616. In Act I sc. i of Ben Jonson's comedy *The Case is Altered* Munday is presented satirically under the name of Antonio Balladino (i.e., a ballad-writer), of whom it is said that he is 'the best plotter' (1609, I.i.108); Balladino is a hack and is qualified as 'pageant poet to the city of Millaine (53-54)'. Another text from which we know that Munday

was a plotter – indeed, again 'our best plotter' – is Francis Meres's *Palladis Tamia*, where his name is included in a long list of what Meres thinks were 'the best for Comedy amongst us'. In the list, which comprises the cream of the playwrights and poets writing at the end of the 1590s, including Shakespeare, only two of the writers mentioned deserve special qualification: 'eloquent and wittie *John Lilly*' and '*Anthony Mundye* our best plotter' (Meres 1598, Oo3ᵛ).

Robert Greene was a playwright, a poet, an author of euphuistic romances, a pamphleteer and one of the first professional writers; one of the first, that is, to realize the potential of printed works as a means to make money. In a pamphlet thought to have been written when he was on his deathbed, Greene penned a confession: 'many things', he said, 'I haue wrote to make money' (1592, A4). His skill at play-plotting was acknowledged in a pamphlet thought to have been written shortly after his death by his friend Thomas Nashe, who defended his own excellence as a writer and Greene's skill as play-plotter against Gabriel Harvey's attacks. This is how Nashe rejected Harvey's charge of imitating Greene:

What truly might be spoken of *Greene*, I publisht, neither discommending him, nor too much flattering him (for I was nothing bound to him … None that euer had but an eye, with a pearle in it, but could discern the difference twixt him & me; while he liu'd (as some Stationers can witnes with me) hee subscribing to me in any thing but plotting Plaies, wherein he was his crafts master. (1596, sig. V3)

Nashe seems to be divided between the urge to defend himself as an original writer and, as such, not a plagiarist of Greene and the wish to preserve his dead friend's reputation; on the one hand, therefore, he must affirm that he was a better writer than Greene ('hee subscribing to me in anything') and, on the other, he must discern a motive for praising Greene above all other writers ('plotting Plaies, wherein he was his crafts master'). In making this last gesture, he is careful to point to what may be described as an ancillary activity as the one in which Greene might be said to have exceeded him. Play-plotting appears to be a sort of preliminary and subsidiary activity to playwrighting, although one which required a 'craft' and was, therefore, practised by experienced writers.

We do not know whether a plot was always compiled by a play-plotter before the actual five acts of the plays were written. But, as regards those cases in which an outline of the intended play was prepared as a guide to the author or authors, the question is: how far did this determine the nature of the finished work?

5. *Author Plots and the Authorship Question*

J. Dover Wilson's argument that Greene 'plotted' *1 Henry VI* from the chronicles was based on the fact that, as soon as he started editing the play, he 'saw Greene everywhere' (Wilson, ed., 1952, xxxviii). Wilson is evidently hypothesizing the existence of preparatory texts in which an author's (or plot-

ter's) 'style' can be detected. This hypothesis opens up a series of important authorship questions about the relationship between source and plot and, most interestingly, between plot and play and, consequently, between the role of plotter and that of playwright, especially when these are not the same person. Wilson was probably right, although his attribution was only the fruit of speculation by an experienced reader; he failed, however, to take his argument to its extreme, disquieting consequence. When we comment, say, on the structure of a Shakespeare historical play whose source is known and discuss the playwright's alterations of that source, certain brilliant modifications and remodulations of the sequence of events in the source (be it Holinshed, Hall or Plutarch) such as the sagacious use of post hoc to suggest the propter hoc of historical causation, how is the credit for such structural interventions to be attributed? In other words, what weight should we attribute to the hypothesis that somebody else devised the additions, the subtractions, the compression, the temporal displacements, and so on? In the final analysis, whose work are we commenting on?

Such considerations open up a new, and not simply theoretical, perspective on the myth of Sole Authorship and reconfigure the idea of collaboration and multiple authorship in a direction different from the traditional one which aims at discriminating the various hands whose individual styles can be detected, distinguished and isolated. A relevant question is, therefore, how important was a (well devised and detailed) plot to the actual composition of a play?

Writing in 1937, W.J. Lawrence stressed the importance of plot-writers and argued that authors' plots were commissioned by companies from dramatists 'well known for [their] skill in plot-writing' (101) and that 'so much stress was laid in the late sixteenth century on the necessity for good plotting that those who excelled in the work were patted on the back, gaining reputation for that sort of work alone' (102). Quoting the cases of Greene and Munday he claims that 'An engrossing story, if well schemed, was then half the battle' (101).[5] Lawrence then devotes the last pages of his chapter to Ben Jonson as 'scenario writer' and argues that for many of the plays in which he collaborated he was simply the author of the plot.

Lawrence may have reached part of his conclusions on the basis of speculation. He did, however, perceive the relevance of an aspect of Elizabethan theatre routines which was to be discussed from a new perspective starting in the late 1990s: the issue of collaboration. In the last two decades this issue has accompanied significant developments in the field of authorship studies. On the one hand, computational stylistics and stylometry now offer refined tools for identifying the peculiarities of a writer's style; on the other, it has been shown that collaboration was so intrinsically inherent in the practice of playwriting (in all the phases of the process) that individual style markers cannot be extracted from the 'finished' texts which we possess. The composition of plays, it is affirmed, was so 'patchy' that 'Modern critics, struggling to "discover" which of a handful

of collaborative authors wrote which passage of a play, are not always asking the right question' (Stern 2009, 30). More radically, Jeffrey Masten considers collaboration not as a 'more *multiple* version of authorship' but as involving a 'dispersal' of authorship and the authority that it assumes (1997, 19).

But there is yet another idea of 'collaboration' – let us call it 'influence', 'contagion', 'infection' – an idea which casts another light on the issue of authorship and deserves, therefore, to be discussed here, also because it touches on the issue of plots.

Reflecting on the fact that none of Shakespeare's manuscripts has been handed down to us, Edward Gordon Craig suggests that the loss was not accidental but was due to the fact that 'a glimpse of the manuscript of the plays would reveal a mass of corrections, additions, and cuts made in several handwritings', for Shakespeare's plays were created 'in close collaboration with the Manager of the Theatre and with the actors' who, Craig argues, 'were great improvisators'. Craig then comments on the 'naturalness' of Shakespeare's plays, on 'their grossnesses' and 'their popular appeal' and envisages a different, more immaterial form of collaboration: though not doubting that 'the poetry and beauty of some of the unique figures in the Plays were born of Shakespeare's imagination', he argues that Shakespeare's 'chief assistants were the actors', who were great improvisers and that Shakespeare's plays were created 'in close collaboration with … practically the whole of the company who invented, produced, and acted them'. But Craig has something to say also about the origin of the compositional method he hypothesizes for Shakespeare's plays:

The naturalness of the Dramas was, I believe, wafted to England from Italy. Italy had awakened just previous to the birth of Shakespeare to a new sense of Drama. It was red hot … spontaneous … natural … It was not a literary effort – quite the reverse. It was good talk, wonderful patter …

I claim that Shakespeare's works are the fruit of a poet's collaboration with this newly formed dramatic art. (1913-1914, 163-165)

It has been argued that, in European Renaissance theatre, 'the influence [of the *commedia dell'arte*] is at once self-evident and intangible' (McKee 1967, xvii); and it is probably this form of pervasiveness that Craig had in mind. Often, however, the idea of 'influence' has been treated as direct, recognizable derivation rather than as a form of *cultural dissemination* whose sources and whose means of absorption are not easily retrieved.

In the final sections of this article, I will discuss the tendency to assimilate Elizabethan (-Jacobean) 'plots' to the *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte*, a tendency which has also created terminological confusion among words which denote a range of phenomena and practices (the words are *plot*, *scenario*, *scene*).

6. *Pre-Texts: Scenes, Plots, Scenarios*

I apprehend that the greater portion of the dialogue, at least between the principal characters, was to a certain degree extemporaneous, and that this production and the three others of a similar kind, were got up as experiments in the nature of the *Commedie al improvise*, in which the actors invented, or were supposed to invent, the dialogue for the occasion. (Collier 1831, vol. III, 398)

Collier was the first to suggest that the playhouse plots which he was examining were similar to *scenari*, but his idea was confuted by subsequent commentators. Chambers sees an argument against Collier's view in the fact that 'one of them is for the extant *Battle of Alcazar*' (1923, vol. IV, 404) and that therefore those plots cannot have been written for impromptu performances. Greg, too, rightly objects that 'there is little resemblance between the Plots and the Italian *scenari*, which always provide not only an outline of the action but a summary of the dialogue as well' (1931, 3, n. 1).

Arguments comparing the playhouse plots to *commedia dell'arte* scripts, however, have recently been resumed. Robert Henke, discussing the *commedia dell'arte* as 'the perfect transnational machine appropriating a transnational language of gesture and acrobatic-style theater' (2008, 19), recalls that, after a temporary lapse of attention, documents which 'indicate a specifically technical interest' in the *improvvisa* start to reappear in England in the 1590s. Henke quotes various references to the *improvvisa* (in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and in *An Almond for a Parrat*, a pamphlet attributed to Nashe). As further proof of this revival of interest, Henke cites the playhouse plots and says that they 'resemble *commedia dell'arte* scenarios in some respects' (32; one of his arguments concerns the presence of a *Pantalone* in the plot of *The Dead Man's* Fortune). Andrew Grewar, on the other hand, although not excluding the possibility that the playhouse plots may have been 'used back-stage in extemporary performances', thereby creating a hypothetical link with the Italians' playing methods, concludes that 'these stage plots were not in fact the equivalents of *scenari*, as Collier thought' (1993, 18).[6]

I believe, however, that, as far as the outline of plots is concerned, the idea of a general kinship between the practices of Elizabethan-Jacobean theatre and those of the Italian *improvvisa* should be further explored and clarified. Grewar, who has written extensively about the transmigration of themes, materials and stock characters from the *commedia dell'arte* to the Elizabethan drama and theatre (with particular attention to Shakespeare's early comedies), draws an important and useful distinction between 'materials', that is, 'stock characters and stock situations' and 'techniques and methods' (1993, 21). That materials were widely circulated has been convincingly shown, especially in studies of the Italian *improvvisa*.[7] But can any similarities in techniques and methods be also attributed to some kind of (direct) influence? And, as

far as plots and scenarios are concerned, can the fact that both impromptu performances and well-written plays were preceded by preparatory texts be considered in the light of some recognizable derivation?

That in the context of the *improvvisa* there existed some other kind of preparatory written material apart from the *scenari* is well known. These were the *generici* of the various roles, repertories of set speeches, either as monologues or as dialogues, which provided the actors with speeches apt for all circumstances. At an early stage, the actors fed their treasury of impromptu speeches by assiduously reading books; in Pier Maria Cecchini's words, they were invited to 'una frequente lettura di libri continuatamente eleganti, poiché rimane a chi legge una tale impressura di amabilissima frase, la quale, ingannando chi ascolta, vien creduta figlia dell'ingegno di chi favella' (1628, 19).[8] At a later stage, the actors started to commission such repertories from writers employed for the purpose by the companies.

7. *Comparing the Texts*

Let us now go back to the Elizabethan-Jacobean plots and then cast a glimpse on the *commedia dell'arte* scenarios.

The author plot published by J.Q. Adams has characteristics which seem to show close kinship with the scenarios. It begins by giving details (indeed more than would have been necessary) about the locations of the action (Thrace and Macedon), including the names of their rivers and mountains; the plot proper opens with a list of characters in which a character's relationship to other characters is specified ('Philander King of Thrace. Suauina his sister'), or some particular characteristic is indicated ('Nimias an idle lover. Vasco a Captain'). Of the play (probably *Philander, King of Thrace*) all that is extant is the outline of the first three acts and of part of the fourth, all divided into scenes. For each scene a short indication of the content is given, in the following form:

<u>Act I</u>
　　Scæn: i.
Philander and his sister Suauina walke and conferre:
she greiues for ye warre.
　　Sc. 2.
Philander telleth Euphrastes ye cause why he will not
marry Suauina to any but a present K.
　　Sc: 3.
Aristocles and Suauina discouer theire passions and are
discouered by Phonops.
　　Sc: 4.
Philander doth banish Aristocles. (Adams 1946, 24)

Another specimen of an author plot is in the manuscript of a play dated about 1614, *The Faithful Friends*, in which Fletcher's hand (and Beaumont's?) has been hypothesized. The manuscript is in a neat (a scribe's) hand. The text runs smoothly until 4.4, after which a scene (4.5) is missing. On the verso of what is now fol. 68 (marked as 69) are the two final speeches of 4.4, a dialogue between Tullius and Philadelphia. Following these closing speeches, in the same page, is the summary plot of the missing scene:

~~The Plott of a Scene of mirth~~
to conclude this fourth Acte.
Enter sᵣ Pergamus the foolish Knight like a Bridegroome leading Flauia his Bride, Bellario the singing Soldier, Black Snout the Smith, Snipp the Tayler and Cauleskin the Shomaker. An Altar to be sett forth with the Image of Mars. Dindinus the Dwarfe bearing sᵣ Per: Launce and shield wch are hung up for trophees, and sᵣ Perg. Vowes for the loue of Flauia neuer to beare Armes agen, the like dos Bla: snout who hangs vp his sword and takes his hammer vowing to God Vulcan neuer to Vse other Weapon, The Taylor and the Shoomaker to vowe the like to God Mercury Then Bellario ~~t so~~ Sings a songe how they will fall to there old Trades, a clap of Thunder and all run of /
finis 4 Act. (Victoria and Albert Dyce MS 10, fol. 69)

Two loose sheets, now pasted in the right place, provide the dialogue for the scene in a different hand. This may show, as Stern hypothesizes, that the scene had been commissioned from an author different from the one responsible for the rest of the play (2009, 22) and that when the scribe copied the text he only had the plot as a guide to the content of what was missing and reproduced this instead of the fully developed scene, which was to be supplied later. The plot of the scene, however, may have been reconstructed from memory, as was probably also a passage in a manuscript of Fletcher's *Bonduca*:

Actus: Quintj: Scaena: priᵃ
~~Here should be A Scaene of the Solemnitye of~~
~~Paenius his ffunerall: mourned by Caracticus:~~
Here should A Scaene· be betwene Iunius ·& petillius: (Iunius mocking petillius for being in loue wᵗʰ Bonducas Daughter that Killd her Selfe: to them: Enterd Suetonius: (blameing petillius for the Death of paenius:

The next Scaene · the Solemnitye of paenius his ffuneral mournd by Caracticus:

The beginning of this following Scaene betweene petillius & Iunius is wanting. the occasion. why these are wanting here. the booke where ~~it~~ by it was first Acted from is lost: and this hath beene transcrib'd from the fowle papers of the Authors wᶜh were found: (British Library MS Add 36758, fol. 24)

Of this passage Greg says that it 'must have been written from memory, for the description of the missing scenes is incorrect' (1931, 5-6, n. 1). But what interests us here is mainly that, although with a different emphasis on character delineation and on scene setting, all these texts are predisposed for translation into dialogue and stage directions. 'Philander telleth Euphrastes yᵉ cause why he will not marry Suauina' gives the same basic information as 'sʳ Perg. Vowes for the loue of Flauia neuer to beare Armes agen' and the same instructions for the development of an actual dialogue.

If we turn to the playhouse plots, we immediately see that in these nothing is indicated about the argument of the scene and that the main emphasis is put on entrances and on the actors who impersonate the various characters. In other words, the information they contain only gives instructions for the dynamics of a particular performance of the scene. The following fragment is taken from the plot of *The Battell of Alcazar* and can be considered a typical example of the way in which playhouse plots were constructed:

Enter Portingall [to him] mʳ Rich: Allen to him
                    I Domb shew
Enter Muly Mahamett mʳ Ed: Allen, his sonne
Antho: Jeffes: moores attendant: mʳ Sam, mʳ Hunt
& w . Cartwright: ij Pages to attend the moore
mʳ Allens boy, mʳ Townes boy: to them 2
young bretheren: Dab: & Harry: : to them
Abdel[m]enen w Kendall: exeunt (British Library MS 10449)

On the left margin of this fragment is the indication: 'sound S[e]nnet'. As can be seen, the instructions only indicate the entrances of characters with the names of the actors impersonating each, the performance of a 'Domb Shew' but without its content and a sound element at the beginning of the scene. The end of the scene is marked by 'exeunt'. From these instructions it is impossible to gather the contents of the scene; indeed, as David Bradley says, it would be impossible to reconstruct the play's action 'if we did not possess the text of Peele's play' (1992, 124).

Let us now look at what instructions the *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte* present. The *scenari* or *canovacci* open with the following sections: Argomento (especially in Scala's printed texts), title of the play, often followed by an indication of the genre (eg. 'pastoral comedy', 'pastoral fable', etc.); a list of characters and a list of stage props ('Robbe') follow. The texts are divided into three acts and each act contains the entrances and exits of the various characters (occasionally the various doors are indicated as A, B, C, etc.), a summary of the content of each character's speech and, especially when a Zanni is onstage, the indication 'fa azzi' or 'lazzi', i.e., the character performs a brief mimic or spoken scene which interrupts the dialogue with comic effects. Often, the feeling of a character is briefly indicated.

The passage quoted below can be considered a typical fragment:

Lidia dalla strada C: d'esser fuggita dale mani del Satiro con l'inventione, cercar di Nespola per andare alla festa, che fanno le Ninfe; dice sopra l'amore di Filandro; in q.º
Florindo dalla strada B: scopre l'amor suo a Lidia; lei lo discaccia, non volendolo udire parte per la strada A. *Flor* resta disperandosi della crudeltà di Lidia, fa lamenti dolendosi delle sue miserie; per strada C.
Coviello dalla strada A, in habito di Ninfa fa azzi, dice volere andare alla festa delle Ninfe per trovar Lidia sua innamorata, et goderla; fa azzi del passeggiare, e parlare Ninfesco, che ha paura di trovare lo dio priapo che s'inamori di lui credendolo donna, ma che non si vorria trasformare in albero per che non saria bono se non per far legna; (Neri 1913, 49)[9]

The following is a fragment from Flaminio Scala's *Il cavadente* (*The dentist*):

Orazio va per far riverenza a Isabella, prima del suo partire; batte.
Isabella fuora; fanno scena amorosa; Isabella prega Orazio a mangiar alcune confezzioni che li manderà prima che parta. Orazio promette. Ella in casa; Orazio via.
Flavio da cavadenti, grida sotto la finestra di Pantalone. In quello
Pantalone fuora, lo bastona, credendolo Arlecchino cavadenti, poi entra. Flavio fugge via.
Capitano vestito come Pantalone. In quello
Flavio lo crede Pantalone, lo bastona ben bene, via tutti, e qui finisce l'atto secondo. (Testaverde, ed., 2007, 63)[10]

In none of the *scenari* the dialogue is developed; but not because it has not yet been written but because it is going to be 'improvised' by the actors. However, there is certainly some kind of kinship among all these texts: they are all constructed *with a view to a certain realization*; they all appear as *preparations* for some final goal yet to be completed: a well-made text, the reconstruction of a missing scene or the outline of a scene yet to be provided, the staging of a quickly-rehearsed production, or of an impromptu performance. But are the similarities between all those texts so striking as to allow us to hypothesize some direct influence? Are the gestures which motivated or even prescribed all these kinds of preparatory work so specific as to allow us to identify an initial, common impulse and origin? Or is some sort of preliminary work, in two theatrical contexts facing equally strong if different challenges from extremely demanding markets, the obvious means to survival? After all, division of labour was not an invention of industrialization and Renaissance theatre was, both in Italy and in England, a sort of mass production.

That in theatrical quarters there was a generalized need for preparatory materials is shown by a fragment in the dedicatory letter of Alessandro Piccolomini's astronomical treatise *La sfera del mondo*. In it, Piccolomini tells

the story of *una impresa* (an enterprise) to which he had been attending. He had outlined a number of roles suitable to be represented in comedies; to each role he had attributed various 'soliloquies' illustrating various situations and harmonizing with each role's decorum; finally, variously combining the diverse roles, he had constructed various plots. He had meant to jot down at least 500 of those 'scenes' to be used 'in diverse favole, con levar solo o aggiungere qualche cosetta' (in different fables, only by adding or subtracting something; 1573, 3); but, when he had composed 'only' 300 'scenes', the manuscript had been stolen from the chest in which it was kept. This fragment belongs to an early date, near to the dawning of the *commedia dell'arte*; and it is therefore often cited as marking a *terminus a quo* for the birth of the *scenari* and of the *generici*. Piccolomini, it is suggested, had probably invented the *ars combinatoria* which, in the following years, would permit the construction of innumerable *favole* by shifting and combining diverse subjects and roles. However suggestive this hypothesis may be (and the theft, someone has argued, was probably performed by the *comici* in need of plots), there is a different interpretation to be considered. His work, Piccolomini says, would have been 'utilissima a tutti coloro che sien per *fare Comedie*' (very useful to those who intend to make comedies; my emphasis). The point is that 'fare Comedie' may mean both to perform (impromptu) comedies and to write down well-made comedies.[11] Thus, those stolen sheets may have contained specimens of pre-scenarios and pre-*generici* (see, for instance, the allusion to the composition of 'soliloqui'), but also specimens of pre-plays comparable to the pre-plays constituted by the Elizabethan and Jacobean author plots. Whatever his final aim, Piccolomini is expressing the general need for some kind of 'plotting', a need which, as we have seen, was present, *mutatis mutandis*, also in the Elizabethan-Jacobean context. Are we to conclude that Piccolomini's stolen 'scenes' were the forefathers of a particular writing method which inspired or even directly influenced the methods of text-production in other contexts, or was not plotting an obvious way of easing the various stages in a collaborative commercial enterprise?

Whatever answer we give to this question, the one category that remains hazy is precisely that of Author. Although, as Lawrence argues, 'an engrossing story, if well schemed, was then half the battle' (1937, 101), we do not have, in the English context, a single authored plot. The plotter as author is absent; not in the Barthesian-Foucaultian sense of an author controlled by ideology or 'spoken' by a dominant discourse, but in the basic, factual sense that none of the plotters' names appears on the title-page of printed plays. Furthermore, most of the extant *scenari* are anonymous and when, in 1611, Flaminio Scala published his, he performed an unusual gesture, one which in a sense strained the very nature of the *improvvisa*, typically based as it was on 'the ghost of a text, always too easy to be assembled and therefore not requiring the skill of a Poet' (Tessari 1989, 76; my translation).

Renaissance theatre, both in England and in Italy, remains a unique example of collaboration and thus of authorial dispersal. It is therefore an enterprise to which a principle of unity can hardly be applied. We do not know how much of the 'impromptu' texts of the *improvvisa* contained verbatim literary quotations from the 'libri continuamente eleganti' (uniformly elegant books) whose reading Pier Maria Cecchini recommended to the *comici*, nor do we know how much improvisation there was in the staging of a Shakespeare play, how much, as Craig argued, the words of each 'part' were varied and reformulated by the players nor, consequently, how many of those variations remain in the carefully edited texts which we read.

At the end of her treatment of the various steps which constituted the early modern 'play-patching' in which she has given evidence of 'the constituent pieces that make up the whole' of a play, Stern formulates a few radical questions; the last of these, addressed 'to the theoretician', demands 'in a play that is at its roots fragmentary, how "authored" is each section, and what *is* the text?' (2009, 256).

It is perhaps by addressing this question that we should reconsider authorship in early modern drama.

<hr />

[1] 'I have ever been of the opinion / that Shakespeare was a cooperative'.

[2] The five 'plots' of MS Add 10449 are entitled: *The plotte of the deade mans fortune*, *The plott of Frederick & Basilea*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Plott of the Battell Of Alcazar* and *The Plott of the second Part of Fortunes tennis*. The Dulwich plot is entitled *The Platt of The Secound Parte of the Seuen Deadlie Sinns*; the seventh plot, now lost, is entitled *The plott of The First parte of Tamar Cam* and was reproduced by Greg in Steevens's transcript (Greg, ed., 1907, 145-148; G. Steevens and S. Johnson, eds, 1803, vol. III, 414). A digital version of the Dulwich MS XIX may be read in the Henslowe-Alleyn website: <http://henslowe-alleyn.org.uk/images/MSS-19/01r.html>, 1 Aug 2011. I owe the stimulus to study the Elizabethan 'plots' to Robert Henke.

[3] Owing to their fragmentary state, two of the manuscript plots (that of *Frederick & Basilea* and that of *Fortune's Tennis*) do not allow us to claim the presence of a hole; the generalization, therefore, has been made on the basis of the four plots in which holes are visible. Another inference (that the 'sheets' were hung in the backstage) has been made without considering that the 'sheet' of Alcazar only contains the first four acts. The manuscript folio is fully written and therefore the backstage memorandum cannot have been contained in a single sheet, as would have been apt for a quick consultation.

[4] Adams quotes the Folger MS as Catalogue 434, item 576.

[5] Similarly, Stern says that 'Plots were the backbone of a good play; they preceded plays, but were also visible within them' (2009, 35).

[6] Hamlet issues a verdict again improvisation when he instructs the First Player not to encourage a practice which belonged to the *zanni*: 'And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them ... That's villanous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it' (*Hamlet*, III.ii.37-44).

[7] See, among others, Neri (1913), Lea (1934), Clubb (1989), Grewar (1993 and 1996).

[8] 'Frequently to read uniformly elegant books, because in those who hear them remains such an impression of most pleasing sentences as, deceiving the hearer, they are believed to be the daughters of the speaker's wit'.

[9] 'Lidia from C: [says that] she has escaped from the hands of the Satyr by a trick, she is now looking for Nespola to go to the feast of the Nymphs; she speaks of her love to Filandro. Here, Florindo [enters] from B; discovers his love to Lidia; she drives him away and, refusing to hear him, exits from A. Florindo utters his despair for Lidia's cruelty and laments his misery; from C. Coviello from A, decked as a Nymph; he performs azzi, says that he wants to go to the Nymphs' feast to meet his lover Lidia and make love to her; performs azzi while walking and talking like a Nymph, he is afraid to find there the god Priapus who might fall in love with him believing he is a woman, but he does not want to be transformed into a tree, for then he would only serve as firewood'.

[10] 'Oratio enters to say farewell to Isabella before he leaves; he knocks on her door. Isabella comes out, and they play a love scene. Isabella asks Oratio to eat some candy, which she will give him before he leaves, and he promises to do so. She goes into the house and Oratio leaves. Flavio, dressed like a dentist, now appears and shouts under Pantalone's window. At that, Pantalone comes out and beats Flavio, thinking he is Arlecchino disguised as a dentist; he then goes back in, and Flavio runs off. The Captain, dressed as Pantalone, enters. Then, Flavio returns, and thinking the Captain is Pantalone, gives him a good beating. As they all run off, the second act ends' (Salerno, ed., 1967, 89).

[11] Piccolomini was the author of two well-made plays, *Alessandro* and *Amor costante*. Gloria Guidotti interprets the passage as referring to playwrighting: she speaks of 'dramaturgical creation' and 'advice to those who want to write comedies' (1999, 110). Indeed, what use would 'soliloquies' have been to the extremely schematic instructions which were all that was needed for impromptu playing?

Works Cited

Manuscripts
British Library MS Add 10449.
British Library MS Add 36758.
Dulwich College Archive MS XIX.
Victoria and Albert National Art Library Dyce MS 10.

Printed Primary Sources
Cecchini P.M. (1628), *Frutti delle moderne comedie ed auisi a chi le recita*, Padova.
Greene Robert (1592), *Greene's Vision*, London.
Jonson Ben (1609), *A Pleasant Comedy Called The Case is Altered*, London.
Meres Francis (1598), *Palladis Tamia*, London.
Nashe Thomas (1596), *Haue With You To Saffron-Walden, or, Gabriel Harueys Hunt is up*, London.
Peele George (1594), *The Battell of Alcazar*, London.
Piccolomini Alessandro (1573 [1561]), *De la sfera del Mondo*, Venezia.
Scala Flaminio (1611), *Il Teatro delle fauole rappresentatiue, ouero La ricreatione comica, boschereccia, e tragica*, Venezia.

Printed Secondary Sources
Adams J.Q. (1946), 'The Author-Plot of an Early Seventeenth Century Play', *The Library*, Series 4, 26, 17-25.
Beckerman Bernard (1989), 'Theatrical Plots And Elizabethan Stage Practice', in W.R. Elton and W.B. Long, eds, *Shakespeare and Dramatic Tradition. Essays in Honor of S.F. Johnson*, Cranbury and London, Associated University Presses, 109-124.

Bentley G.E. (1971), *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642*, Princeton, Princeton Univesity Press.

Bradley David (1992), *From Text yo Performance int the Elizabethan Theatre. Preparing the Play for the Stage*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cairn Christopher, ed. (1996), *Scenery, Set and Staging in the Italian Renaissance. Studies in the Practice of Theatre*, Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press.

Chambers E.K. (1923), *The Elizabethan Stage*, London, Clarendon Press, 4 volumes.

Clubb L.G. (1989), *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

Collier J.P. (1831), *History of Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Sheakspeare: And Annals of the Stage to the Restoration*, London, John Murray.

Craig E.G. (1913-1914), 'Shakespeare's Plays', *The Mask* 6, 163-168.

Elton W.R. and W.B. Long, eds (1989), *Shakespeare and Dramatic Tradition. Essays in Honor of S.F. Johnson*, Cranbury and London, Associated University Presses.

Foakes R.A. and R.T. Rickert, eds (1961), *Hensowe's Diary*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

George D.J. and C.J. Gossip, eds (1993), *Studies in the Commedia dell'Arte*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

Greg W.W., ed. (1907), *Henslowe Papers. Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe's Diary*, London, A.H. Bullen.

Greg W.W., ed. (1931), *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Grewar Andrew (1993), 'Shakespeare and the actors of the *commedia dell'arte*', in D.J. George and C.J. Gossip, eds, *Studies in the Commedia dell'Arte*, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 13-47.

Grewar Andrew (1996), 'The Old Man's Spectacles and Other Traces of the Commedia dell'arte in Early Shakespearean Comedy', in C. Cairn, ed., *Scenery, Set and Staging in the Italian Renaissance. Studies in the Practice of Theatre*, Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press, 289-317.

Guidotti Gloria (1999), 'Alessandro Piccolomini, di professione filosofo e la commedia', *Cuadernos de Filología Italiana* 6, 103-115.

Henke Robert (2008), 'Border-Crossing in the Commedia dell'arte', in R. Henke and E. Nicholson, eds, *Transnational Exchange in Early Modern Theater*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 19-34.

Hibbard G.R., ed. (1987), William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Ioppolo Grace (2006), *Dramatists and Their Manuscripts in the Age of Shakespeare, Jonson, Middleton and Heywood*, London, Routledge.

King T.J. (1992), *Casting Shakespeare's Plays: London Actors and Their Roles, 1590-1642*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Lawrence W.J. (1937), 'The Elizabethan Plotter', in id., *Speeding Up Shakespeare. Studies in the Bygone Theatre and Drama*, London, The Argonaut Press, 99-113.

Lea K.M. (1934), *Italian Popular Comedy. A Study in the Commedia dell'Arte, 1550-1620*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2 volumes.

Masten Jeffrey (1997), *Textual Intercourse. Collaboration, Authorship and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

McKee Kenneth (1967), 'Foreword', in H.F. Salerno, ed., *Flaminio Scala's Il Teatro delle favole rappresentative*, New York, New York University Press, xiii-xx.

Neri Ferdinando (1913), *Scenari delle Maschere in Arcadia*, Città di Castello, Casa Editrice S. Lapi.

Salerno H.F., ed. (1967), *Flaminio Scala's Il Teatro delle favole rappresentative*, New York, New York University Press. (Engl. trans. of Scala 1612). 'Foreword' by K. McKee.

Shakespeare William (1988), *The Complete Works*, ed. by S. Wells and G. Taylor, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Steevens George and Samuel Johnson, eds (1803 [1765]), *The Plays of William Shakespeare; To which are added notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens*. The fifth edition. Revised and augmented by I. Reed, London.

Stern Tiffany (2009), *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Tessari Roberto (1989), *Commedia dell'arte: la maschera e l'ombra*, Milano, Mursia.

Testaverde A.M., ed. (2007), *I canovacci della commedia dell'arte*, Torino, Einaudi.

Wilson J.D., ed. (1952), *The Second Part of King Henry VI*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Shakespeare and Paradigms of Early Modern Authorship

Janet Clare

University of Hull (J.Clare@hull.ac.uk)

Abstract

This essay examines current thinking on early modern authorship within the competitive economies of the theatre and publishing industries. In the wake of Foucault's seminal essay, 'What is an Author?', there has been much investigation of the status, the branding, the proprietary and moral rights of the author in the early modern period and claims made for the emergence and birth of the author. The essay argues that, while authors were increasingly alert to authorship being wrongly claimed, the late sixteenth to early seventeeth century was in England a moment of transition and uncertainty. Unlike Ben Jonson not all authors vigorously identified with and laid claim to their work. The author's emergence was a slow and fluctuating process.

Keywords: Authorship, Collaboration, Jonson, Plagiarism, Shakespeare.

At the end of *Poetaster*, first performed in 1601, Ben Jonson appended a scene in which he appears on the stage *in propria persona*. The scene, as Jonson tells the reader in the published text of 1602, was meant as 'an apology from the author' and censored. 'Apology' here, of course, carries the meaning of defence, and in the following exchange between the Author, the sound critic, Nasutus, and the malicious one, Polyposus, the author defends *Poetaster* against those who have accused him of libel and stakes out his professional authority.[1] Jonson affirms, disingenuously or not, that his intentions were innocent but the play 'had the fault to be called mine' (Jonson 1995, 265). In a competitive and envious theatrical marketplace, proprietary authorship leads to over-determined reading of a play. Plays are interpreted and censured not according to their text, but according to their author. Polyposus alerts the Author to other slights on his authorship: he is known too much for his satirical railing and, moreover, he is slow at composition, scarcely bringing forth a play a year. In his defence, Jonson aligns himself with classical satirists, Aristophanes, Persius, and Juvenal, names, he asserts, glorified in the schools or, he scoffs, it is so pretended. As for his tardy production of plays, this occasions Jonson's scorn of playwriting and the theatre. He composes so little for the theatre because he takes so little joy in writing for it. The only way this might change is if the 'scribes', the copyists and imitators, who produce plays might be 'proscribed' (272) from so doing. As on other occasions, as an author Jonson dissociates himself from hacks and other scribblers and uses the 'apologetical dialogue', as he describes it, to promote his own canonical sense of authorship.

I preface this essay with Jonson's authorial representation because it impinges on questions about the status, the branding, the proprietary and moral rights of early modern authorship explored here. The resurgence of interest in the concept of authorship in the early modern period has in part been generated by Michel Foucault's seminal essay, 'What is an Author?' (1969). There is no doubt that whether scholars have fundamentally adopted Foucault's premise of what he terms the 'author function', qualified or questioned his historical view or fiercely contested his anti-humanist stance, his ideas have been influential in setting some of the parameters for the authorship debate in our period. Here I would like first to extricate ideas in Foucault's essay which inform current thinking on authorship and then see how they might be used to stimulate our understanding of authorship in a period when many authors were not, like Jonson, vigorously identifying with and laying claim to their work.

Foucault, of course, had little to say about Renaissance authorship. Collapsing the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, he asserts that only then were literary discourses accepted when endowed with the author-function. This historical narrative, Foucault's epistemic shifts, have been questioned even by those working from an anti-essentialist premise of authorship, that is accepting the author function instead of admitting authorial individuality and intentionality into a reading of the text. Ample evidence has been cited to demonstrate that there never was 'a privileged moment of individualization' (Vickers 2002, 506-541). Briefly and simply, books have been accredited with authors since antiquity. Ovid was banished for his lascivious and scurrilous works. Authors' names were given in the Middle Ages, and, as Stephen Dobranski (2008) has argued with particular reference to Philip Sidney, the Romantic notion of the author as hero can be traced back to an earlier period. Commerce played its part. With the growth of the book trade in the later sixteenth century writers became even more visible. Publishers used names to sell their books.

At the same time, anonymity is not replaced by identity in a historical sequence (Griffin 1999; North 2003). Anonymity does not disappear with the emergence of the author from the collaborative process of material production. Apart for a brief period, from the Star Chamber Decree of 1637 to the Licensing Act of 1662, when law – frequently flouted – required the author's name on the title page, authors have the option of selecting what they sign (Griffin 1999, 887-888). Throughout the centuries authors have chosen for various reasons to hide their identities. The operative word here is, of course, 'choice'. Sixteenth-century anonymous dramatic publications, for example, may have been so published because they were very much communal or collaborative affairs and a publisher or printer was unaware to whom the text to which he had ownership should be attributed. The writers of the anti-episcopal Martin Marprelate tracts, on the other hand, concealed their

authorial identities because reprisal would certainly have followed if they had not (Black, ed., 2008, xxxiv-xlvi). However, when nineteenth-century novelists used pseudonyms in different contexts, as George Eliot and the Brontë sisters did to disguise their sex or, as in the case of Sir Walter Scott, because of the conflict between the social position of a writer and being an author of popular fiction (Griffin, 883-885), though the author's name is hidden, the use of the pseudonym indicates that a name is required. In short, there is no evolutionary theory of authorship.

One of the ideas in 'What is an Author?' which has had an enduring fascination is the connection of attribution with governmental needs to monitor transgressive writing. Speeches and books were assigned real authors, Foucault maintained, 'only when the author became subject to punishment and to the extent that his discourse was considered transgressive' (1988, 202). Jonson offers an interesting extension of this when he claims in the 'apological dialogue' of *Poetaster* that his play suffered through authorial association; *Poetaster* was indicted for libel because it was known as Jonson's work. There has been an attempt to apply the latter paradigm to Shakespeare. Douglas Brooks has ascertained that it was after the well-known controversy around *1 Henry IV* when Falstaff was originally named Oldcastle, thereby slighting the name of the influential house of Cobham, that Shakespeare's name first appeared on the title page of one of his plays (1998, 336; 2000, 71, 73, 80, 95, 103, 133). But Shakespeare's name and initials had appeared on title pages prior to *The Second Part of Henry IV* and as Lukas Erne has demonstrated there is no convincing evidence to link the objections to Shakespeare's injudicious naming of character with the emergence of his name on the title pages of his play books (2003, 57). The naming and branding of Shakespeare is more a commercial ploy, an indicator of a play that is the product of a successful playwright.

As has been increasingly recognized much early modern playwriting was collaborative in nature (see Masten 1997; Vickers 2002; Knapp 2005; Stern 2009). Shakespeare's texts have been disintegrated to argue for the contributions of co-authors. Henslowe's Diary illustrates many instances of payments to a consortium of playwrights. According to a frequently quoted remark of Thomas Heywood, he had a hand in over two hundred and twenty plays (1633, 'To the Reader', A3r). Authorship in this period may have been collaborative in nature, but this did not, *pace* Foucault, exclude punishment. At the same time it has to be said, with Foucault, that in such cases of collaboration it was possible to identify those involved and make them answerable. In the present context, we are talking about the playwright as author of a script. One play, in particular, exemplifies co-authorship, theatrical collaboration and punishment of transgressive writing. Following performances of *The Isle of Dogs* in 1597, the lodgings of Thomas Nashe, one of the writers associated with the play, were searched, presumably for a text of the play. Although the play is lost, its records are very revealing about the collaborative nature of theatre and how

this was viewed by the authorities. Nashe escaped to Great Yarmouth where he wrote *Lenten Stuffe*. In the preamble with the whimsical title 'The praise of the Red herring' Nashe evoked the 'generall rumour' spreading throughout England in the wake of the *Isle of Dogs*. Employing the familiar birthing metaphor for the travails of authorship, he comments: 'I was so terrified with my owne increase … that it was no sooner borne but I was glad to run from it'. In marginalia he blames the actors who created the last four acts 'which bred both their trouble and mine to' (Nashe 1958, 19). Jonson, referred to in a Privy Council brief to the intelligencer Richard Topcliff as 'the maker' of the play, was imprisoned with two actors in the Marshalsea prison. Indicative of the collaborative nature of dramatic practice, the actors were questioned about their part in devising the 'seditious matter'. Actors and dramatists suffered equally as the playhouses were closed for three months while investigations were underway (Clare 1999, 72-75).

Allegedly seditious writing in the early modern period was punished whether composed by single authors or a consortium. It is perhaps not surprising that Jonson with his 'bibliographical ego' clashed on more than one occasion with authority. Following the state reaction to *The Isle of Dogs* he was imprisoned again – this time with Chapman, one of his collaborators – after the performance of the satire of the Scots in *Eastward Ho* in 1605. On other occasions authors were singled out and questioned about their motives for allegedly seditious work as Jonson was for *Sejanus* in 1605, Daniel for *Philotas* in 1606 and Middleton for *A Game at Chess* in 1625. In each of these cases, authority identified an author with a text and to an extent judged that whether or not the writer was deemed manifest in the script or performance he was responsible and could be called to account. When a play about Richard II, probably by Shakespeare, was performed on the eve of the rebellion of the Earl of Essex and his aristocratic supporters, it was, however, the players and not the author of the play who were interrogated. Apparently, on this occasion, it was recognized that the author's intention was innocent, but that possibly did not extend to those who had assisted in the play's revival and appropriation.[2]

Collaboration – whether non-dramatic or dramatic – is a wide net, including the co-authoring of a script and a collaborative process of production. Dramatic collaboration includes authors, actors, an impresario like Philip Henslowe, book keepers, scribes and revisers. A published text is a collaborative act of author, publisher, printer, licenser and sometimes a patron. It is from these varied and intricate collaborations that the author's authority grew. Following John Wolfe's publication of John Hayward's *The Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII*, for example, the work was brought to the attention of the Attorney General and the Lord Chief Justice and scrutinized (Hayward 1991, 17-34). The Lord Chief Justice prepared a series of questions intended to expose the motives of the author and his political sympathies. Why did Hayward include a preface to the reader claiming

that his history might offer precepts and patterns of conduct? Clearly it was thought that Hayward had deliberately included anachronisms in writing about Richard II and Henry IV which would prompt the reader to view his account as a gloss on the present. When, for example, asked Lord Chief Justice Popham, were any forces sent to Ireland in Henry IV's time? Why did he say that some of the nobility were in disgrace for their service there? What moved him to claim that subjects were bound for their obedience to the State, and not to the person of the King? What moved him to maintain with arguments never mentioned in the history, that it might be lawful for the subject to depose the King? And the final accusation: What moved him to allow that it might be well for a common weal if the King was dead? The Attorney General's notes for the interrogation leave in no doubt that Hayward was granted intentionality and in the official view intended an attack on the government. Yet again, it was not only the author who was interrogated: the publisher, Wolfe, and the play's licenser, Samuel Harsnett, were examined. Wolfe was keen to stress how much money he had lost from the seizure and burning of the history; before its suppression 'no book', he claimed, 'had ever sold better', and he managed to convince his interrogators that his involvement with Hayward was only commercial. Wolfe suffered economically for publishing an allegedly seditious work but, unlike Hayward, he escaped imprisonment (29-30).

Another strand in Foucault's definition of the 'author' function is its relation to ownership of texts and the establishment of author's rights which Foucault locates at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Placed in a 'system of property', the writer restores danger to a writing 'now guaranteed the benefits of ownership' (Foucault 1988, 202). As has been said, there are numerous cases of authors writing transgressively independent of any legal rights in the work they produced. But the absence of pre-Enlightenment copyright does, of course, figure in assessments of authorship in the earlier period. It is commonly observed that early modern dramatists had no claim or proprietary interest in their plays. Playwrights wrote for the stage and once they handed over their plays – or part of a play in a case of collaboration – to a theatre company they ceded ownership voluntarily. Playwrights had no further moral claim or financial investment in their work. When plays reached print either they had been published surreptitiously, so a certain narrative goes, or, more generally, because the company had released them to a publisher. In this view of dramatic publication the author has no role and apparently little interest in the literary nature of his work. Certainly this accounts for a considerable number of Elizabethan plays, including *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* both re-imagined and re-constructed by Shakespeare. The plays were published anonymously with the names of their companies, respectively, Pembroke's Men and the Queen's Men, advertised on their title pages.

To identify the emergence of the author with the legal and economic protection of copyright is, however, to disregard a weight of evidence that suggests that long before copyright law authors did have a notion of their proprietary and moral rights and were sensitive to plagiarism. As a form of protection from unethical reproduction, allegations of plagiarism could be invoked. Joseph Lowenstein has traced the development of the rights of authors and publishers from the birth of the printing industry and in his study of what he terms the 'bibliographic ego' has produced an intricate study of early modern playwrights, foremost Jonson, in their struggle to control the presentation of their work (Lowenstein 2002b). Authorial property and charges of plagiarism are conceptually intertwined. Indeed, in the absence of authorial claim, there would have been no ground for a discourse of plagiarism. As Lowenstein has argued, boundaries between imitation and plagiarism were shifting (85-87). With print plagiarism became presumably a matter of mass culture or at any rate a more fully public issue than it could have been in most sections of manuscript culture. At the same time, it became possible for an author to appeal to a larger court of public opinion for adjudication. When in 1600 Nicholas Ling published the poetry miscellany *England's Helicon* he prefaced it with an appeal to the reader stating that if any of the poems had been wrongly attributed, the author, 'defrauded of any thing by him composed', he 'hath this benefit by this collection, freely to challenge his own in public, where else he might be robbed of his proper due' (A4r).[3] Whether or not this draws on ancient practice or indicates that authors were increasingly alert to authorship being wrongly claimed, Ling perfectly captures a moment of uncertainty and transition. He cannot be sure that all the poems have been correctly attributed, but he is sure that authors might wish '[their] proper due' to be publicly recorded and recognized.

There are scattered allusions to plagiarism in the work of early modern authors although, as Richard Terry has observed, plagiarism is not ahistorical (2010, 1-23) and even confining study of plagiarism allegations to the early modern period demonstrates changing attitudes to the practice of appropriation. The dominant idea of early modern plagiarism, originating from Martial, is the wholesale passing of the work of one author by another rather than an ethics of composition. One of the earliest references to Shakespeare as a playwright carries a taint of plagiarism as we might understand the term.[4] The much-cited and much contested passage appears in Robert Greene's epistle to gentleman acquaintances 'that spend their wits in making plays', appended to his *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) which is now thought to have been composed by Henry Chettle. Greene, allegedly, and on his deathbed, attacked the actors, 'those Anticks garnisht in our colours', for their disloyalty and singled out one, in particular, for turning from actor to playwright:

Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and beeing an absolute *Johannes fac totum*, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie. O that I might intreate your rare wits to be imployed in more profitable courses: and let those Apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions … for it is pittie men of such rare wits, should be subject to the pleasure of such rude groomes. (Carroll, ed., 1994, 84-85)[5]

In his general warning against the parasitic nature of actors and his advice to fellow writers to turn away from writing for the theatre, Greene alludes to Shakespeare in the misquotation of the line from *3 Henry VI*, 'O tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide' and, by means of the epithet 'upstart crow', accuses him, at best, of imitation, though bereft of the positive sense it has in Renaissance theory, at worst, of theft. In contrast to the image of the bees, which transformed nectar into honey, in classical and Renaissance theory the crow was a superficial imitator. Horace had alluded to the fable of Aesop in which the crow disguised himself in peacock's feathers in order to become part of the company of the more magnificent birds, only to be denuded and scorned by them (White 1935, 18). According to Greene, Shakespeare is an upstart playwright who displays no originality of interpretation, merely copying the blank verse of contemporaries. He is classed as a 'Johannes factotum', variously interpreted as a Jack of all trades and master of none, or a person of boundless conceit attempting many things beyond the reach of his real abilities (Carroll, ed., 1994, Appendix G). As Terry has argued allegations of plagiarism as speech acts are often part of a wider rhetoric of literary detraction (2010, 4). Personal animosity might have motivated the slight, for which Chettle was to make later an apology, but the imputation remains that as a young dramatist, sometime actor, Shakespeare was perceived as an imitator using, without originality, the materials of others.

A much less cited charge of plagiarism appears in Thomas Lodge's riposte to Stephen Gosson's anti-theatrical polemic *School of Abuse*. Lodge searches for ammunition to direct against his adversary. He cannot use Gosson's earlier playwriting career against him and charge him with hypocrisy, since Gosson had anticipated such criticism in *The School of Abuse* by insisting that he had turned his back on his former profession and since repented of it. Instead, Lodge alights on one of Gosson's plays performed at the Theatre, a lost play apparently dramatizing Catiline's conspiracy, and accuses Gosson of plagiarism:

Tell me Gosson was all your owne you wrote there? did you borrow nothing of your neighbours? Out of what booke patched you out Cicero's oration? Whence set you Catulin's Invective. This is one thing, alienam olet lucernam, non tuam'; so that your helper may wisely reply upon you with Virgil; I made those verses, others bear the name. (Lodge 1853, 28-29)

Lodge alludes to Virgil's protest against plagiarism cited by George Puttenham in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589, Book I, ch. 27, 44-45). Virgil attached an anonymous couplet in praise of Augustus to the palace gates which was appropriated by 'a sausie coutier'; Virgil retaliated by placing in the same place verse lines which were recalled by Lodge and other Renaissance writers, translated as 'I myself made the little verses, but someone else took away the prize' (Puttenham 2007, 143). Authorship is here closely associated with originality and this in its turn with uniqueness and primacy. It is from these notions at this juncture that authorial rights may be said to flow.

As others have argued, Foucault's notion of authorship as contingent on copyright is not borne out by the evidence of a pre-copyright discourse of possessive authorship and sensitivity to plagiarism. However, Foucault's idea of the author as made not born has had a far more pervasive effect. In recent works by Lukas Erne, Joseph Lowenstein, Jeffrey Masten, Douglas Brook, amongst others, authorship is a contingent rather than a natural process. Authorship is not in this view seen as simply an act of writing, but a complex role or function construed from a range of institutions. Although the supporting material invoked is quite different, Lukas Erne, in his study of Shakespeare's literary authorship, and Joseph Lowenstein, in his study of Jonson's possessive authorship, have both argued that institutional competition between printing house and playhouse converged with individual desires for literary as distinct from theatrical authorship.

Shakespeare and Jonson came to prominence in a market eager for named authors. Jonson, as is commonly acknowledged, took an active role in the publishing of his plays. He oversaw his 1616 *Works* and also the earlier publication of his Quarto texts. Jonson was not the first to publish an edition of his plays and poems; in 1601 Simon Waterstone published *The Works of Samuel Daniel*. Jonson however was the first to use the term works in relation to the author and so asserting authorial possession. Jonson claimed authorship in his theatrical works by – to use Lowenstein's phrase – 'editorial repossession' (2002b, 133-214). Thomas Heywood, on the other hand, professed indifference to publication. We do not know what Shakespeare might have done to promote his literary career. He was already recognized as a poet and dramatist in 1598 when Francis Meres recorded for posterity that in comedy and tragedy 'Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage' and then listed a number of his early plays (1598, 282). As Erne has commented *Palladis Tamia* is a 'fascinating attempt at the formation of an English literary canon *avant la lettre*' (2003, 65). At least before 1600 Shakespeare's plays were published at a fairly regular gap of two years and the print trade, keen to cash in on Shakespeare's growing reputation, exploited his name on title pages. Consolidating the work of earlier editors, Erne has inferred from the longer versions of published plays that Shakespeare purposively wrote for publication. Shorter stage versions of the plays which

did reach print are more communal texts emerging from the collaborative working practices in the playhouse.

In their address to the reader of the Shakespeare 1623 Folio the actors John Heminge and Henry Condell express regret that 'the author' had not lived 'to have set forth and overseen his own writings' (A3). Whether, as has been surmised, Shakespeare and the King's Men withheld many of his later plays for publication because they were anticipating publication of a collected edition must remain an open question. Unlike Jonson, who promoted the publication of his work and Thomas Hayward who apparently did not, there is little concrete evidence of Shakespeare's view of literary authorship. This apparent lack of a 'bibliographic ego' has led to interpretations of Shakespeare's plays which, it has been argued, allude to and thematize authorship. Shakespeare's very reticence about authorship is seen as indicative of his counter-laureate convictions. Beginning by ingeniously fixing on Prospero's image 'printless foot' used in Prospero's valediction to magic art as indicative of an 'invisible poetic authorship', Patrick Cheney argues that throughout Shakespeare's work there is a self-concealing counter authority to the claims of a poet such as Spenser (2008, 1-28). Through intertextual references Shakespeare presents himself in the company of Spenser, Virgil and Ovid and sets himself apart from them, thereby eschewing classical models of authorship. That Spenser, as Richard Helgerson has argued, attempted to model his authorial programme on that of Virgil is persuasive (1983, 85-100), but can we use this method and methodology for Shakespeare? Any such plans by Shakespeare seem scarcely formulated. He does not announce his career. Shakespeare certainly never attempted to establish such a chronology or genealogy for posterity. He died with only a few plays performed by the King's Men in print.

The varying history of Shakespeare's plays in publication indicates that writing for the theatre was in a transitional phase. Several of Shakespeare's plays, *Titus Andronicus* and *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, were published anonymously. Some of his plays, such as *1 Henry IV*, *Richard II and Richard III*, were popular enough to go into multiple editions under his name[6] while others, *The History of King John*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure* and *Macbeth*, for example, were not published at all in his lifetime. Erne and others have argued that Shakespeare was keen to present himself as a literary playwright, writing with publication half in mind. There is, however, still currency in the argument that as a company man, writing for the theatre was Shakespeare's priority. Shakespeare had no need to promote his career through publication and patronage. None of his plays that were published had dedicatees or letters of address appealing to the reader for an approving reception. Promoting a play, even those not by Shakespeare, as we shall see, was a publisher's ploy, but it was not the only way drama circulated in this period.

Foucault touches on alternatives to conceiving texts in terms of their author which are relevant here. After postulating how the author function arose, he states that we should move away from questions arising from authorship, authenticity and originality to ask new questions about the modes of existence of discourse, its origins, circulation and control. These terms seem to me intriguing in contexts where questions of authorship and attribution can never be fully resolved. In the final section of this essay, then, I will apply Foucault's putative methodological analysis to several anonymous plays which circulated contemporaneously with inter-dependent plays attributed to Shakespeare. For Foucault these questions should displace our preoccupation with the author. They may, on the other hand, lead to deeper insight into the existence of early modern authorship.

Three plays, *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), *The Troublesome Reign of John King of England* (1591) and *The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three daughters* (1606) served as dramatic templates for Shakespeare. All were published anonymously with authorship displaced by company auspices. Ownership, of course, had been ceded to the respective publishers. *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The History of King John* and *The Chronicle History of King Lear* were later published and attributed to Shakespeare. With the first two, so close are the narratives and dramatic effects, if not the language, that in the last two centuries some editors and critics have tried to claim Shakespearean authorship. Surely, it is implied, Shakespeare could not have been so unoriginal as to have composed so closely to another play? This idealized view of Shakespeare rules out such upfront borrowing.

According to the title page *The Troublesome Reign of King John* was performed by the Queen's Men, a company with whom Shakespeare may have acted. It was published by Sampson Clarke in 1591, the year the company disbanded, and in two parts, with the name of the company on both title pages. Copyright changed hands. It was reprinted in 1611 by Valentine Simmes for John Helme with the same details of performance on the title page, but this time with the addition that it was written by 'W.Sh'. Had Shakespeare been responsible for claiming this play as his, this might have constituted a case of plagiarism as it was then understood. It has been conjectured on and off over a century that the author of *The Troublesome Reign* was George Peele who, according to Francis Meres in *Palladis Tamia*, died in 1596. The play has now been published under his name. For a Jacobean reader Peele may have provoked little interest. Shakespeare on the other hand was a brand name for the English history play. Presumably Helme was cashing in on Shakespeare's reputation while depriving Peele of any recognition that might have been his due. A further reprint in 1621 by Augustine Mathewes for Thomas Dewer drops the name of the Queen's Men, obsolete for three decades, and states that the two parts were written by 'W. Shakespeare'.

Two years later another version of John's history dramaturgically similar to that represented in *The Troublesome Reign* appears in the Shakespeare Folio as *The Life and Death of King John*. Though there are no verbal parallels, it is clear that the plot lines are modelled on those of *The Troublesome Reign*. In brief, the conflict between John and Arthur is mediated primarily through their mothers and both plays give prominence to the fictional character of the Bastard. *The Troublesome Reign* is much more overtly anti-papal and anti-clerical, while both plays sustain a fiercely Protestant ideology. Editors have argued that *The Troublesome Reign* is a corrupted version of Shakespeare's *King John* or is derived from it.[7] Theories that Shakespeare's play pre-dates *The Troublesome Reign*, making him the originator and that the latter is a corrupted version of it, spring from the massive prejudice in favour of Shakespeare's originality and authorship and the reluctance to accept that he could produce such an evidently derivative work. Dating makes the thesis improbable. In order for Shakespeare to have written a play on King John from which *The Troublesome Reign* was composed and then published an exceptionally early date for the former must be posited. If, on the other hand, the anonymous play came first it is manifest that Shakespeare knew the text well, and it is not inconceivable that he may have acted in it or even contributed to it. Rather than being regarded as an inferior or corrupted version of Shakespeare's play *The Troublesome Reign* should be granted independent authorship, as the play's recent editor, C.R. Forker, firmly states (Peele 2011, 6-21).

What might we infer about early modern authorship from this brief account of the circulation and bibliographical history of the two *King John* plays? When the Queen's Men – one of the leading touring companies of the day – disbanded, a number of its plays passed into the hands of publishers (McMillin and Maclean 1998, 84-96). Publishers did not seek to promote sales by naming the author, but by naming a leading acting company. The Queen's Men were, after all, the most popular acting company of their day. In the early 1590s Shakespeare wrote a play on *King John* using the structure and material of *The Troublesome Reign*. We do not know which company per-formed the play. That Shakespeare was known as the author of a play on *King John* is attested to by Francis Meres's inclusion of the play in *Palladis Tamia* amongst the catalogue he gives in his commendation of Shakespeare. Meres must have been writing about a performance of the play or reputation rather than the text since Shakespeare's play was not published until 1623 or he could have read *The Troublesome Reign* and simply assumed that Shakespeare was its author. The naming of Shakespeare as the author of *The Troublesome Reign* in 1611 suggests opportunism and is an early indication of the branding of Shakespeare. By 1611 Shakespeare must have been recognized as the foremost writer of plays on English history even though he had not written an English history play for a decade. If the brand fitted, publishers did not scruple to misrepresent the author. That *The Troublesome Reign* was in circulation may

have precluded publishers' interest in the publication of Shakespeare's *The Life and Death of King John*. Erne, anxious to find reasons why Shakespeare did not publish more of his plays, suggests that Sampson Clarke would no doubt have considered any edition of *King John* to which he had not consented a breach of his rights (2003, 82-83). But, as Joseph Lowenstein has argued, in the early 1590s plays most popular on the stage were the focus of disorderly competition among stationers (2002b, 28). Abel Jeffes, for example, printed *Arden of Faversham* when Edward White had the copyright and White printed *The Spanish Tragedy* which belonged to Jeffes. Another explanation for the non-publication of Shakespeare's *King John* is that Shakespeare did not seek to publish a play so closely modelled on another work, and neither did the company even after if its author was dead. As we have seen, in the fractious world of the early modern theatre the discourse of plagiarism could be readily employed in an attempt to belittle another writer.

The relationship between the *The Taming of a Shrew* and Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* tells a similar story of authorship to that of the anonymous *King John* play and Shakespeare's version. *The Taming of a Shrew* was published anonymously in 1594 by Peter Short for Cuthbert Burby with a title page showing that it had been the property of Pembroke's Men. It was popular enough to be reprinted in 1596 and in 1607. By 1607 copyright belonged to Nicholas Ling for whom the play had been printed by Valentine Simmes. There was no attempt to attribute the play to Shakespeare or anyone else until a similar play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, was included amongst the comedies in Shakespeare's Folio. In 1607 Nicolas Ling transferred his publication rights in *The Taming of a Shrew* to one 'John Smythick'. No publication followed. When Smethwick eventually published the play in 1631 instead of the play in which he had copyright, that is *The Taming of a Shrew*, the text was that of *The Taming of the Shrew* with Shakespeare's authorship proclaimed on the title page. Smethwick was unlawfully claiming copyright of Shakespeare's play and exploiting his authorship. Again, this seems to be an illustration of branding. Shakespeare was identified with shrew baiting drama to such an extent that, at least in Smethwick's eyes, his play was the only one that mattered for readers.

A number of hypotheses have been advanced by editors and bibliographers to determine the inter-relationship of *The Taming of a Shrew* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, which was published nearly twenty years later. Again, Shakespeare's authorship has occluded a larger sense of stage traffic. In brief, *The Taming of a Shrew* was once regarded simply as a source for *The Taming of the Shrew*. Later *The Taming of a Shrew* came to be regarded as a badly reported or reconstructed version of an original Shakespearean text. In Greg's *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama* the two plays are regarded as composite. This view is retained, for example, in the reissued Penguin Shakespeare where the editor claims that the latter text is 'a very garbled version of the original, put together, probably by an actor or actors, from memory, eked out by ex-

tensive patches of verse culled from *Dr Faustus* and *Tamburlaine*' (Hibbard 2006, 113). There is a general reluctance to dissociate the provenance of *The Taming of a Shrew* from Shakespearean authorship leading to hypotheses of a lost Shakespeare original from which *A Shrew* is derived. Stanley Wells has suggested that the author of *A Shrew* borrows from *The Shrew* and that such a plagiarist 'could exercise independent inventiveness, even if of an order greatly inferior to Shakespeare's' (Wells and Taylor 1987, 367). In her edition of *The Taming of the Shrew* Ann Thompson acknowledges that *The Taming of a Shrew* may represent an earlier version of the play, but concludes that, in any case, Shakespeare must have been responsible for the complex structure and interweaving of material present in both plays (2003, 9).

An attempt to attribute Shakespearean authorship to *The Taming of a Shrew* has distorted - to quote Foucault - the 'modes of existence' and the manner of circulation of the two plays. Neither *A Shrew* or *The Shrew* seem to have been known much in their own times through their authors.[8] I have argued elsewhere that the two plays are distinct and circulated independently (Clare 2007). Both plays employ the same dramatic narratives of the Sly frame (complete in one text and incomplete in the other), the shrew baiting story, and the proxy wooing of the shrew's sister or sisters, but the idiom, tone and reception are quite different. Although there are critics who may wish he had not written such a shrew-baiting play, knowing that Shakespeare wrote *The Taming of the Shrew* has not helped a critical appreciation of *The Taming of a Shrew*. The latter has been eclipsed by the former. Again, we could conjecture that, as in the *King John* plays, the derivative nature of *The Shrew* precluded publication under the name of Shakespeare until Shakespeare's play had superseded in popular memory the anonymous shrew-baiting play.

There have been no attempts to attribute Shakespearean authorship to *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, a play published anonymously in 1605 by John Wright and printed by Simon Stafford. It was advertised as having been lately and sundry acted, although by 1605 the play must have been two decades old. The publication of *The True Chronicle History of King Leir* was timely for it served Shakespeare the following year with a template for a play to be performed before the King on St Stephen's Night. Two years later appeared *M William Shakespeare His True Chronicle History of the Life and Death of King Lear and his Three Daughters*. The play was printed by Nicholas Okes for John Busby and Nathaniel Butter. The title page insists on difference, and the use of 'his' is one of the first assertions of proprietary authorship. Shakespeare's reputation, at least on the part of the publishers, is such that besides his *King Lear* the earlier play is of no account. Indeed, the title replicates and duplicates the title of the earlier play, as if intent on obliviating the earlier work.

Unlike the previous cases of intertextual relations, editors and commentators of *King Lear* have not been troubled by the existence of another

play with the same material. The old Leir play is seen as folkloric and naïve, so unlike Shakespeare's searing tragedy to be altogether a different play. But would spectators have necessarily seen it this way? Taste is culturally variable (Rosenthal 1995, 323-325). Eighteenth-century audiences preferred Nahum Tate's adaptation of Shakespeare's play. The old *Leir* play was of sufficient interest to be resurrected for publication in 1605 and Shakespeare took more than plot lines from it. It has been suggested that the very long title page description of Shakespeare's *Lear* conveys doubt that his name alone was sufficient to distinguish it from *Leir*. We can, though, surely conjecture that by the time Shakespeare was established as the leading playwright of the King's Men his reputation was so high that there was enormous interest from audiences and readers in what he had done to the old play.

One of the premises of Foucault's 'What is an Author' is Beckett's rhetorical question 'What does it matter who is speaking?' (Beckett 1995, 109). It is difficult to imagine a scholarly, pedagogical or theatrical approach to Shakespeare and early modern drama where it doesn't matter who speaks. One could say cynically that there are too many vested interests in the attribution of Shakespearean authorship. An edition or performance of a play of uncertain authorship like *Edward III*, for example, will be more commercially viable if a case of attribution can be made for Shakespeare.[9] Despite the growth of interest in Shakespeare's collaborators, mostly the plays continue to be marketed under his name. Indeed, over the centuries the work attributed to Shakespeare has reached a position of such preeminence in English speaking countries and elsewhere that his unique status as an author seems impregnable. Nevertheless, this is a historical accretion at variance with the conditions prevailing in the theatre in his day, where a writer with the 'bibliographical ego' of Jonson was at pains to assert ownership over his writings. The author's emergence was a slow process. Plays continued to circulate via playing communities and communities of spectators. Playwrights borrowed and imitated with scant regard for possession of material. So much so that Foucault's speculative anticipation of a period when authorship will no longer matter might be projected back on to theatre traffic in the Elizabethan years. Then, he imagines, the traditional questions will no longer be asked, 'instead, there would be other questions like these: 'What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate, and who can appropriate it for himself?' (Foucault 1988, 210).

---

[1] The 'apologetical dialogue' was performed only once and not published until 1616.

[2] For all these cases of censorship see Clare (1999), 48-52, 86-87, 132-135, 139-145.

[3] Ling alleges that only when copy had been personally delivered did he place a man's name 'either at large, or in letters' (Ling, ed., 1600, A4r).

[4] For a discussion of the diversity and changes which accompany the use of plagiarism in the early modern period see Kewes, 2003. Kewes refers to 'translation' and 'imitation' as legitimate counterparts to plagiarism (4).

[5] See the 'Introduction' for discussion of authorship and the role played by Henry Chettle.

[6] There were six quartos of *Richard III* before the Folio. All but the first advertising Shakespeare's name, *Richard II* follows the same pattern with Shakespeare's name appearing on the title page of the second quarto in 1598. The second quarto of *1 Henry IV* was advertised misleadingly 'as newly corrected by W. Shakespeare' since there are very few differences between this and the first quarto.

[7] Notably Honigmann (1967 and 1982). The argument is refuted by Smallwood (1974) and Braunmuller (1989).

[8] Meres in 1598 does, however, include *The Taming of the Shrew* amongst Shakespeare's comedies.

[9] *Edward III*, edited by Giorgio Melchiori, was published in 1998 in the New Cambridge Shakespeare. Melchiori in his survey of authorship judged the play to be a collaborative work. It was performed by the RSC in 2002 at the Swan theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon and published as a 'Royal Shakespeare Company Classic' by Nick Hern Books, marketed by the publishers as 'officially attributed to Shakespeare only in 1998'.

Works Cited

Beckett Samuel (1995 [1954]), *Texts for Nothing 3*, ed. by S.E. Gontarski, New York, Grove Press.

Black J.L., ed. (2008), *The Martin Marprelate Tracts: A Modernized and Annotated Edition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Brooks D.A. (1998), 'Sir John Oldcastle and the Construction of Shakespeare's Authorship', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 38, 2, 333-361.

Brooks D.A. (2000), *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Braunmuller A.R., ed. (1989), *King John*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Carroll D.A., ed. (1994), *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit: Bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592). Attributed to Henry Chettle and Robert Greene. Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 114, Binghamton, NY, Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies.

Clare Janet (1999), '*Art Made Tongue-tied by Authority*': *Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship*, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Clare Janet (2007), ' "Better a Shrew than a Sheep": Intertextuality and Shrew Taming Plays', *Shakespeare Studies* 45, 26-44.

Cheney Patrick (2008), *Shakespeare's Literary Authorship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Dobranski S.B. (2008), 'The Birth of the Author: the Origins of Early Modern Printed Authority', *DQR Studies in Literature* 43, 23-45.

Erne Lukas (2003), *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Foucault Michel (1988 [1969]), 'What is an Author?', in D. Lodge and N. Wood, eds, *Modern Criticism and Theory*, London, Longman, 197-210.

Griffin R.J. (1999), 'Anonymity and Authorship', *New Literary History* 30, 4, 877-895.

Hayward John (1991 [1599]), *The First and Second Parts of John Hayward's The Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII*, ed. by J.J. Manning, London, Office of the Royal Historical Society.

Helgerson Richard (1983), *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System*, Berkeley, LA, University of California Press.

Heywood Thomas (1633), *The English Traveller*, London, printed by R. Raworth.

Hibbard G.R., ed. (2006), *The Taming of the Shrew*, introduced by M.J. Kidnie, London, Penguin.

Honigmann E.A.J., ed. (1967), *King John*, London, Methuen.

Honigmann E.A.J. (1982), *Shakespeare's Impact on his Contemporaries*, London, Macmillan.

Jonson Ben (1995 [1616]), *Poetaster*, ed. by T. Caine, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Kewes Paulina, ed. (2003), *Plagiarism in Early Modern England*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Knapp Jeffrey (2005), 'What is a Co-Author?', *Representations* 89, 1-29.

Ling Nicholas, ed. (1600), *England's Helicon*, London.

Lodge Thomas (1853 [1579-1580]), *A Reply to Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse in Defence of Poetry, Musick and Stage Plays*, London, Shakespeare Society.

Lowenstein Joseph (2002a), *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Lowenstein Joseph (2002b), *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Masten Jeffrey (1997), *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

McMillin Scott and S.B. MacLean (1998), *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Meres Francis (1598), *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury Being the Second part of Wit's Commonwealth*, London.

Nashe Thomas (1958 [1598]), *Lenten Stuffe*, in R.B. McKerrow, ed., *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 volumes; vol. 3, rev. F.P. Wilson, Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

North M.L. (2003), *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Peele George (2011 [1591]), *The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England*, ed. by C.R. Forker, Manchester, Manchester University Press.

Puttenham George (2007 [1589]), *The Art of English Poesy: A Critical Edition*, ed. by F. Whigham and W.A. Reborn, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Rosenthal Laura (1995), '(Re) Writing Lear: Literary Property and Dramatic Authorship', in J. Brewer and S. Staves, eds, *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, London, Routledge, 323-339.

Shakespeare William (1967), *King John*, ed. by E.A.J. Honigmann, London, Methuen.

Shakespeare William (1974), *King John*, ed. by R. Smallwood, Harmondsworth, Penguin.

Shakespeare William (1989), *King John*, ed. by A.R. Braunmuller, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Shakespeare William (1968), *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by G.R. Hibbard, introduced by M.J. Kidnie, London, Penguin.

Shakespeare William (2003), *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. by A. Thompson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Shakespeare William (1623), *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, London.

Smallwood R.L., ed. (1974), *King John*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.

Stern Tiffany (2009), *Documents of performance in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Terry Richard (2010), *The Plagiarism Allegation in English Literature from Butler to Sterne*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Thompson Ann, ed. (2003), *The Taming of the Shrew,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Vickers Brian (2002), *Shakespeare, Co-author*: *A Historical Study of Five Collaborative plays*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Vickers Brian (2007), 'Incomplete Shakespeare: Or, Denying Co-authorship' in *1 Henry VI*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 58, 3, 311-352.

Wells Stanley and Gary Taylor (1987), 'No Shrew, A Shrew, and the Shrew: Internal Revision in *The Taming of a Shrew*', in B. Fabien and K. Tetzeli von Rosador, eds, *Shakespeare, Text, Language, Criticism*: *Essays in Honour of Marvin Spevack*, Hildesheim, Olms-Weidmann, 351-370.

White H.O. (1935), *Plagiarism and Imitation During the English Renaissance: A Study in Critical Distinctions*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard Studies in English, Harvard University Press.

Rules and Textual Construction
of the Vocational Practices of Actors and Lawyers
in Early Modern England

Carla Dente
University of Pisa (dente@angl.unipi.it)

Abstract

This essay examines the interaction between the law and the theatre in early modern England. It argues that, although these represented different social actions and therefore two separate universes of discourse, they closely interacted in many ways (it is well known, for instance, that theatrical performances were one of the activities of the Inns of Court), thus creating opportunities of cross-fertilization. Furthermore, both the theatrical and the legal practice were divided between the comparative 'freedom' of oral performance and the equally comparative 'stability' of written texts. Indeed, both the actors' and the lawyers' training made use of written texts and performance styles and the written texts recorded for the lawyers' exercises closely resemble theatrical 'scripts' of various kinds. A further aim of this essay is to consider the written texts of the legal exercises in light of the issue of authorship. These, no less than the texts circulating in the theatre, were indeed collaborative texts, often constructed by combining plots and patches of various origin. The legal exercises were certainly a mandatory part of the law students' training and were perhaps meant to be used as library material in each of the Inns. Equally uncertain is whether their written versions were freely taken jottings or commissioned reports, reviewed by a reader or by each moot judge involved in the activity.

Keywords: Collective Authoship, Lawyers, Players, Text Construction, Training Exercises.

1. *Preliminary*

There is a sentence in *Hamlet* which might ideally be placed as a road sign at the beginning of that path which leads to an appreciation of the mutual relationships between the theatre and the law in the English Renaissance. It is a path along which I was led by Shakespeare's works and which is proving to be richer and more inspiring at every step. The sentence is spoken by Polonius at the end of the speech in which he introduces the players: 'For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men' (*Hamlet*, II.ii.399). Commentators have usually found this sentence difficult to explain, but most have interpreted it as meaning 'for plays composed according to the rules and

plays written in complete freedom from them' (Jenkins). But the meaning of the sentence may be different. It may be read as an apt definition of the actors' trade, divided as it is between written scripts and comparatively free performance styles, acquired through experience and practice. In the theatre, moreover, as time passed and the plays in the repertoire grew in number and complexity, one can imagine that the practice of rehearsing small scenes to adjust actors' timing in delivery or movements ('the liberty') became increasingly necessary, as did written notes, cues and lists of entrances for prompters (book keepers) and actors ('backstage plots' in the terminology of Stern 2009 and 'playhouse plots' in Pugliatti 2012, in this volume), which may be looked upon as part of 'the law of writ' and which were of help in the repetition of the theatrical event. But Polonius's words may also be read as an allusion to an actorial practice which developed impromptu techniques and therefore a high degree of 'liberty' which almost completely disregarded the written text, as actors of the *commedia dell'arte* did.

For the purposes of this article, however, I wish to suggest that the same kind of twofold activity, wavering between the comparative 'freedom' of an oral performance and the equally comparative 'stability' of a written text can be discerned in the legal learning exercises which were transformed from oral performances at the Inns of Court into written notes circulating among the students with the object of improving their future oral skills as lawyers. Both the theatrical and the legal practices, although representing different social actions, were divided between 'writ' and 'liberty', since both made use of written scripts and performance styles, and both were meant to be used again for different purposes on different occasions. I also wish to argue that in early modern England the law and the theatre were, in fact, two separate but certainly not unrelated universes of discourse; that both the training of actors and that of lawyers made use of written texts and performance styles and that the written texts in which the training exercises of lawyers are recorded closely resemble theatrical 'scripts' of various kinds. Furthermore, there was between these two areas a close interaction, which may well have created constant opportunities of cross-fertilization. My further aim is to consider the written texts that were used as legal exercises in the light of the issue of authorship. Here I shall try to answer a series of questions. Were they freely taken annotations? Were the written exercises a compulsory part of the training and therefore organized in their written form and reviewed by a reader or by each moot judge involved? Were they kept for consultation within the Inn or could they become the personal property of apprentice lawyers who might require them? From the small number of collections handed down to us it is my conjecture that, as happened with the 'patches' of theatrical scripts, they were meant to be used within the premises, in this case as library material.

2. *The Theatre and the Law*

We have documentary evidence that members of the legal profession were actually involved in theatre practice, and that the college halls belonging to the institutions forming the 'Third University' – the Inns of Court and the Inns of Chancery – often hosted performances.[1]

These institutions, which were initially devised to meet law students' needs for accommodation during the terms when the Courts of Westminster were in session, also devised and organised discussions and oral exercises in legal practice. These were regarded as a suitable training for the bar, for they dealt with civil law as opposed to the more philosophically oriented studies traditional at Oxford and Cambridge, based as they were on continental syllabuses.[2] It should be added that the Inns of Court also offered the same educational curriculum to gentlemen of the ruling classes, who mixed freely with the apprentice lawyers. R.R. Pearce, one of the first modern historians of the legal profession in England, while admitting that the Inns were established chiefly for the legal profession, pointed out that these colleges were also attended by 'the youth of riper years' of the nobility and gentry to whom necessary instruction in the principles of the Law was to be imparted. To support his assertion, Pearce quotes John Fortescue, a fifteenth-century lawyer, who, in his *De laudibus legum Angliae*, says:

So that for the endowment of virtue and abandoning of vice, knights and barons, with other states and noblemen of the realm, place their children in those inns, though they desire not to have them learned in the laws, nor to live by the practice thereof. (Fortescue 172)

More recently, A. Arlidge reports that in 1574 there were 176 practising barristers at the Inns, while 593 other gentlemen, who were not interested in the law as a profession, attended the four Inns and mixed with the barristers. Both groups had dealings with the theatre, both as spectators and as authors (2000, 28).

It is well-known that masques and plays were staged at the Inns. Hall's *Chronicle*, for instance, gives the first account of the reception of a masque performed in 1525, which caused controversy and exile for the main 'actor'. The mask had been written about twenty years earlier by John Roo, Sergeant at Law, and was performed at Gray's Inn, of which Hall was a member. Apparently the masque highly displeased Cardinal Wolsey, who found himself indirectly alluded to, though the masque had been written before he acquired influence at Court.[3] John Foxe reports the event and the consequence of the Cardinal's displeasure with Simon Fishe, then a gentleman of Gray's Inn who, being very critical of the Church of Rome, had volunteered to play the part that had offended the Cardinal and apparently paid the price for it:

... in which play partly was matter against the Cardinall Wolsey. And where none durst take upon them to play that part, which touched the sayd Cardinall, thys fore-said M. Fish tooke vpon him to do it, whereupon great displeasure ensued agaynst him, vpon the Cardinals part: In so much as being pursued by the sayd Cardinall, the same night that this Tragedie was playd, [he] was compelled of force to voyde his owne house, & so fled ouer the sea vnto Tyndall: vpon occasion wherof the next yeare folowyng this booke was made (beyng about the yeare 1527) and so not long after in the yeare (as I suppose) 1528. was sent ouer to the Lady Anne Bulleyne, who then lay at a place not farre from the Court. Which booke her brother seyng in her hand, tooke it and read it, & gaue it her agayne, willyng her earnestly to giue it to the kyng, which thing she so dyd. (Foxe 1576, 719)[4]

Throughout the Renaissance, the English theatre was closely connected with the Inns and many examples of fruitful cultural exchange between the theatre and the law might be quoted. On 28 February, 1587, for instance, an entertain-ment (probably a masque) with prominent metatheatrical and metajuridical characteristics was presented to the Queen by the people of Gray's Inn, at Greenwich Palace. The masque served as a sort of prologue to the staging of the tragedy *The Misfortunes of Arthur*; its contents survive in an Introduction 'penned by Nicholas Trotte'.[5] The subject of this entertainment was precisely the close relationship between the theatre and the law. In the heading, the initial situation is described as follows: 'Three Muses came vpon the Stage apparelled accordingly bringing fiue Gentlemen Students with them attyred in their vsuall garments, whom one of the Muses presented to her Maiestie as Captiues the cause whereof she deliuered by speach as followeth'. The Introduction presents Astrea, one of the three Muses who figure in the plot, defined as 'Shee that pronounceth Oracles of Lawes', in order to 'prepare fit seruants for her traine'. At first she scorns 'The noble skils of language and of Arts', that is, linguistic and stylistic skills which are the distinctive traits of the art of telling/representing stories, and only later realizes that they might also teach wisdom. Poesie, the second Muse in the masque, held in disdain by Astrea, is left confined to the 'scorned' place where Folly, the third, stands. Instead of 'The noble skils of language and of arts', Astrea can offer the students:

Forsooth some olde reports of altered lawes,
Clamors of Courts, and cauils vpon words,
Grounds without ground, supported by conceit,
And reasons of more subtiltie then sense,
What shall I say of Moote points straunge, and doubts
Still argued but neuer yet agreed?
And shee, that doth deride the Poets lawe,
Because he must his words in order place,
Forgets her formes of pleading more precise,
More bound to words then is the Poets lore ...

When the captive students realize how much they can profit from literary studies, they 'take the pen' and apparently have improved their style so much that they can be called Poets. One of the gentlemen takes his turn with a speech addressed to the Muses, specifying that

Each word of lawe, each circumstance of right,
They hold the grounds which time & vse hath sooth'd
(Though shallow sense conceiue them as conceits)
Presumptuous sense, whose ignorance dare iudge
Of things remou'd by reason from her reach.
One doubt in mootes by argument encrease'd
Clears many doubts, experience doth object.
The language she first chose, and still retaines,
Exhibites naked truth in aptest termes.
Our Industrie mantaineth vnimpeach't
Prerogatiue of Prince, respect to Peeres,
The Commons libertie, and each mans right:
Suppresseth mutin force, and practicke fraude.
Things that for worth our studious care deserue.
Yet neuer did we banish nor reiect
Those ornaments of knowledge nor of toungs.
That slander enuious ignorance did raise ...

The very fact that legal disputes were rendered in theatrical form as well as the content itself of the passages quoted above, where legal language is compared to poetic language, show the link that existed between the two distinct, though comparable, practices of juridical training and theatre training.

3. *Legal Exercises*

Readings, pleading exercises and moots were the collective activities which promoted and enhanced both professional competence in the legal profession and cultural competence in the education of the complete gentleman, who might become either a man of letters or a courtier with duties of governance.

Here it might be useful to describe briefly, as I have done elsewhere (2008), the structure of the collective learning exercises at the Inns that most closely recall the characteristics of theatre practice.[6]

In the Renaissance, a vital part of the activities consisted in the Readings, delivered in the Halls with great solemnity in the periods of the Lent and Summer vacations. These were a kind of seminar devised for the improvement of the apprentices but they were also attended by advanced professionals looking for guidance in their daily practice. The organization of the Readings was the responsibility of experienced judges, and their explicit aim was to maintain the high reputation of their respective Courts. These judges, living authori-

ties in the forensic profession, would select some important parts of a statute, analyse them in their relation to common law, and illustrate the arguments by reference to specific cases. In the history of the legal profession these readings were regarded as a useful means of showing what the common law was like before the enactment of the statute, which they explained in full detail to the students. The method was to explain the issues involved through brief cases which might have no more than two points, one at common law and another according to the statute. Qualities such as plainness and perspicuity in content and delivery were particularly appreciated in a Reader, whose task was also to clear the field of any specious interpretations of the statute. The manner of reading was rigidly codified into Orders, which suggests just how formal these occasions were considered to be. In time, however, they came to be accompanied by costly dinner entertainments that gradually became so important as to obscure the main aim of the meetings. This led to the suspension of the exercises, which had been so valuable and had earned so much academic respect for important jurists and judges and their respective institutions.

Pleadings were conflicting allegations which might be looked upon as evolutions of litigations, each concerned with a single issue. They were devised to set out some special grounds for not proceeding with the indictment. They were conducted in Law French *ore tenus* by a pleader in open court, after the abolition of original writs in personal actions. In the extant collections available each pleading exercise is reported with exchanges of speech allocated to different speakers as in a dialogue with alternate exchanges: the plea is followed by a replication, and sometimes by a rejoinder functioning as a retort, in a repeatable chain pattern. In the case of a plea the argumentation is carried to its final conclusion.

Moots, on the other hand, were the staging of an appeal case around a doubtful juridical issue, that might have different outcomes. The various ways in which the issue could be argued were raised hypothetically through a fictitious case and debated through conflicting opinions. In arguing the conflicting perspectives the mooters assumed that the relevant facts and evidence had already been made available by a first-degree judgement. What took place was essentially a game, based on the choice of the relevant system of law to be invoked and on the selection of relevant arguments. The *moot judge*, usually a barrister with at least ten years of teaching practice as a *reader*, was asked to pass judgement on juridical grounds with regard to the hypothetical appeal, but he also had to evaluate how convincingly the juridical issue had been argued and how the proposed moot question had been interpreted. In 1540, during the reign of Henry VIII, a report was prepared by Nicholas Bacon, Thomas Denton and Robert Cary on the constitution of the Inns of Court and the best kind of legal training for students. Bacon was called to the bar at Gray's Inn in 1533, where he was an 'ancient' from 1536, and became a bencher in 1550.

Thorne and Baker transcribed and translated from Law French the following description of a mooting activity:

[In the Lent and Summer vacations] every day at night, except Sunday, Saturday and some feast,[7] before three of the elders or benchers at least, is pleaded and declared in homely law-French by such as are young learners some doubtful matter or question in the law, which afterwards an utter barrister doth rehearse and doth argue and reason to it in the law French; and after him another utter barrister doth reason in the contrary part in law-French also; and then do the three benchers declare their minds in English; and this is it that they call mooting. And the same manner is observed in the term-time. (1990, Lx)

By digging into different collections of mootable cases located in a small number of libraries, law historians have so far found only a small number of copies of these collected exercises.[8] Their content consists of issues debated without any solution, and we can only suppose that the reason for committing them to writing was that they might be used in future supervised learning exercises.

These exercises present the smallest (possible) units of debatable legal points, and lead to the enactment of a line of legal reasoning and the attribution of arguments to different speakers who, through the conflicting parties, interpret the opposing rules or statutes. Each position is expressed in form of a summary, forming a text not dissimilar to the plot sketches (*scenari*) of the *commedia dell'arte*. The passage quoted below contextualises a dispute between two 'parceners' (i.e., partners or sharers) who have one tenant in common; one of them purchases both tenements (after the statute) and the problem (*Quaestio*) is: 'may her coparcener distrain [i.e. constrain to perform some obligation] and make a good avowry [i.e. advocacy]?'. The issue is debated and the report summarizes the discussion in the usual way: 'Some say that she may [distrain] on her coparcener, because the lordship is in both of them and one cannot defeat the right of the other … ' (Appendix IV, xxxiii), then the opposing view is examined introduced by '*Contra*'. Then the conclusion is introduced by the title '*Item*':

If three tenants hold of one lord by the services of three suits to his court every year, and one of the tenants purchases the tenements from whence the suit is due, the due is extinct. It is much stronger argument if two parceners have one tenant who holds of them by certain service, namely by suit, and one of them purchases the tenements from whence the suit is due, the suit is extinguished with respect to each of them (which is true)'. (Appendix IV, xxxv)

The passage is a comparatively unusual fragment with the insertion of notes and mnemonics by the apprentice lawyer taking notes on the moot case dealt with above, and reported in two other manuscripts in a different, less personalized version. The following passage, an issue concerning A. and R., is

contained in a Cambridge manuscript (MS. Mm. 1. 30 ff.7, 37 v) and it can be read as the 'Argument' to be developed from memory for further reflection:

A. tient de R. certayne tenementz a terme de vie … A. Porte bref dentrusion, *Quaestio* sil recovera encontre son fet demene?
A. tient de R. certayne tenementz e lese meme les tenementz a R. … A. Porte bref dentrusion *Quaestio* sil recovera encontr son fet demene?
Quaestio Si dues parceners eyent un tenant le quele dayt suit a lour court et lauter parcener achate le tenement de quell tenement la suit est du, ore est a demaunder si lun parcener puit destreyndre son parcener pur la suite? (1990, xxxiii)

This is an early example and is reported in two different collections, British Library MS Hargrave 297, fol. 108 and British Library MS Stowe 386, fol. 118, where it is exceptionally followed by a disputation, a fact which (and I would agree with Thorne and Baker on this point) seems to connect *moots* and *readings*, because, despite their different canonical forms, they have a similar educational function. The fact that we can find moots in different collections, reported in different ways, suggests a possible transmission through oral performance/tradition or different enactments of the same exercise by different mooters on separate occasions.

In MS Harley 1691 case n°. 71 is reported, in Thorne and Baker's translation: first it presents the juridical issue (the 'Argument') and then it gives a summary of the dialogue between two mooters:

[71] In a *praecipe* the tenant vouches himself to save the tail, and recovers in value. The question is: by his judgement, is the tenant to be called tenant in tail of the land which is in his hands [as compensation], without suing execution?

At this point the arguments of the opposing parties are reported, together with the names of the mooters, in indirect speech:

Baker said he is, because he has no means of suing execution of his land; for he cannot sue *extendi facias* or *habere facias advalenciam* against himself, and therefore it shall be said to be executed by the judgement without suing further.
Kebell to the contrary: the reason why someone may vouch himself is for the advantage of the issue and not for his own advantage, for it is all one to him whether he has the land in fee simple or in tail. As to what has been said that he may not sue execution against himself, that is not so; for he shall have a special writ upon the matter to extend the land and deliver in execution what should be delivered. Similarly … ; therefore he must [sue execution]. (II, 192)

Another case transcribed and translated from MS Hargrave 87 is of some interest since it both confirms the structure of the exercises (which opens with the exposition of an 'argument') and also presents again, among the participants, Kebell as one of the mooters:

[11] Two persons who are severally seised of two acres of land, namely each of one acre unto himself, or two tenants in common, make a lease for years or for life reserving 10s. rent

Grene, reader: the tenant shall pay 10s. to each of them.
Frwoyk : the rent shal be apportioned according to the intention et. However, in the case of an entire service, such as a sparrowhawk, each shall have the whole.
Brudenell : it is all one, because there are several reservations according to their estates etc.
Kebell : each shall have the entire rent as they have the reversion, for although the works are joint they shall be taken according to their interest in the reversion, and that is as if each had reserved the entire rent to himself … (II, 204)

We do not know for certain what parameters were used to evaluate the exercises, but it seems to me that most of the practices adopted nowadays in the training of Common Law jurists are not dissimilar from and not less 'theatrical' than those of the early modern period; furthermore, their relevance to any dramatic poet in any period could also be demonstrated.

The moot judge's attention might have been directed, as it would nowadays, towards the following elements:

content: juridical intuition and analysis of the sources, intrinsic relevance and fluidity in quoting them and the ability to sum up one's thesis so as to focus on and clarify most of the issues, whether social or personal, which can be present, for example, in the plot of a play;

strategy: the relevance of questions of strategy in the presentation of juridical arguments may also apply to the deployment of thematic motifs in the plot of a play;

ability to answer both the objections from the judge and the rejoinders of the other party amounts, in dramaturgical terms, to the ability to construct effective dialogues;

style: all questions of style – ability in argumentation and knowledge of the correct procedure, for example – might be usefully compared to the playwright's knowledge and practice of the different dramatic genres and their canonical rules. This aspect, however, was less decisive when judgements were given on mooting activities.

Readings were cancelled between 1642 and 1660, and it was practically impossible to revive them afterword despite some effort (1660-1676) in this direction. The practice of mooting was not completely interrupted during the Interregnum, but it was certainly neglected after the Restoration, which limited them to mere form, still relying on basic knowledge of forms of pleading and a sure competence of Law French. The Inner Temple was the last to abandon the practice of the exercises and everything ceased in the eighteenth century, under the severe blows of Sir William Blackstone. In a changed cultural ethos, attuned to more philosophically inclined times, and under the influence of the

Continental Enlightenment, which despised 'excessive' English pragmatism and vocationalism, mooting ceased to play any part in legal training, despite some individual attempts at reviving it. With the foundation of the Gray's Inn Moot Society, by Judge J.A. Russell, Q.C. (Queen's Counsel), a Bencher of the Inn, in 1875, the practice started again in the old spirit but didactically it was more carefully planned and graded. The minutes of the Society record the historical fact that, while at the beginning members of the other Inns of Court and Chancery argued with Gray's Inn members, in the first decades of the twentieth century the society was run only by Gray's Inn members, probably because of their excessive numbers (Atkin, ed., 1924, Foreword).

The resemblance of the moots to the *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte* is made more perceptible by the way they are arranged in the collections of exercises, for they are identified by a number and by the kind of legal action which can most appropriately describe the issue under discussion. The function of these specifications is similar to that of the 'Argomento', which in some cases is prefixed to the text of the *scenari*. Most of the *scenari,* moreover, bear under the title an indication of their genre, such as 'Commedia', 'Tragicommedia', or 'Commedia pastorale', which can also be easily kept in mind and found in a repertory. The classification of the exercises meets the need for easy consultation by lawyers and jurists, which is realized through numbers and the indication of the legal issue.

Moreover, the legal parlance, as recently observed also by Boyer, could offer would-be playwrights an example of the persuasive effects of language on decision making. They also depicted real, recognizable social frameworks that could be worked with on stage since they provided credible contexts for dramatic situations and ready-made mechanisms of action for theatre plots (2007, 20-37). The analogies between the two fields afford a better understanding of the circulation of social energy in a relevant aspect of the early modern cultural paradigm, as is clearly demonstrated in the following passage, taken from a contemporary satirical poem describing the lifestyle of the Templars:

'Heere may I sit, yet walke to Westminster
And heare Fitzherbert, Plowden, Brooke and Dyer
Canuas a law case: or if my dispose
Perswade me to a play I'le to the Rose
Or the Curtaine, to one of Plautus Comedies
Or the Pathethique Spaniard's Tragedies ...'
(Guilpin 1598, Satira Quinta, ll. 25-30)

4. *Moots, Scripts, Patched Texts and the Authorship Question*

In the field of Renaissance drama, the search for combinable units highlights a practice of composition based on the collection of suitable 'theatergrams'. L.G. Clubb shows that this procedure is characteristic of the routines of the

commedia dell'arte, where it was transmitted through performance practices and written down in the *scenari*, which can be seen as endlessly variable combinations of elements taken from a traditional repertory (see also Andrews, 1991, 21-51). Clubb, however, also argues that these procedures constitute, to some extent, principles of construction which represent 'an international movement of playmaking':

Years of reading Italian scripted plays and *canovacci* preceding or contemporary to Shakespeare have gradually shown me an international movement of playmaking recognizable as Renaissance Drama, a technology consciously developed by writers and actors in various ways from common principles of construction based on a Latin footprint and employing material from both classical and medieval narrative and drama, shaped into movable theatrical units, or theatergrams, which grew over time into a repertory of combinable parts that became the common property of the European stage. The collection of re-shufflable pieces included types of characters, of relationships between and among characters, of actions and speeches, and of thematic design. (2010, 4)

At the end of the seventeenth century Andrea Perrucci, in the preface to the second part of his treatise *Dell'arte rappresentativa premeditata e all'improvviso* explained, in the Rules that immediately follow this excerpt, that the 'comici'

… non ignudi affatto di qualche cosa premeditata devono esporsi al cimento, ma armati di certe composizioni generali, che si possono adattare ad ogni specie di commedia, sono come per l'innamorati, e donne di concetti, soliloqui e dialoghi; per li vecchi consigli, discorsi, saluti, bisquizzi, e qualche graziosità, e perché ogn'uno d'essi v'abbia qualche regola, andremo discorrendo d'ogni parte di essa in particolare, con darne qualche esempio, acciò che ogn'uno a suo capriccio se la vada poi formando, e se ne serva secondo l'occasione. (1699, 103)[9]

Clubb's idea seems to be compatible with that of Stern (2009), who examines a different form of modular construction, achieved by combining pre-prepared patches. This, Stern argues, was the regular procedure in the construction of plays in the Elizabethan and Jacobean professional theatre. She discusses at least two forms of 'patchy' construction: the first is what she calls 'plot scenarios', that is, the plot summaries which used to be jotted down before or during the composition of plays either by the main author of the finished play, or by other professionals, frequently alluded to as 'plotters' (see also Pugliatti in the present volume); the second concerns the very construction of what we see as finished plays, which, she argues, was in the final analysis a combination of separate texts such as actors' parts (see also Palfrey and Stern 2007), prologues and epilogues. These might change from one production to the next and thus may have been written by several hands and for several occasions: plays within; songs, often composed to well-known popular tunes so as to actively engage the audience; masques, which constituted another form of play within, etc. Texts – even well-made plays – are, Stern argues, the result

of such an *ars combinatoria*, as regards both subject matter and language, a procedure which recalls the way legal exercises were composed. Texts, as well as performed plays, are built up through an accumulation of parts, each of them with a '*physical* economy that facilitates not only intra-play but also inter-play references' (Palfrey and Stern 2007, 7). This forces us to reconsider the reciprocal intertextual relations of early modern plays. These were made up of loose sheets, commissioned, perhaps shuffled, but certainly always circulated in advance, before the full text reached the book keeper, who was in charge of the management of the performance as a collective event, even if he was invisible to the audience, unlike normal practice in the medieval drama, where the prompter was in full sight on stage. The close connection between dramatists and specific companies would also imply obvious casting practices such as the playwrights' writing specifically for individual actors, though it might seem odd that no actors' names are given to the *dramatis personae* in written plays. This may well have been caused by the fact that the publication of a play's text was considered a quite different activity from the staging of the same play: a possible indirect confirmation of this might be the evidence of a process of revision to which some plays were clearly subjected, with the result that minor collaborators such as plotters and patch-writers did not appear on the title page. The activity of text revision for publication, if in fact it was considered a separate activity from staging, may lend new support to some philological-critical conjectures formulated for particularly problematic texts (for a treatment of this issue, as regards the first *Hamlet* quarto, see the introductory essay in Serpieri 1997).

Collaborative textual construction, as Pugliatti argues in the present volume, clearly poses the problem of authorship.

The analogy, at least in terms of construction, with legal learning exercises is particularly striking if the *scenari* of the *commedia dell'arte* are taken into consideration. Flaminio Scala collected and arranged his *scenari* for publication (1611); his texts consist of a plot summary (*Argomento*), a title, an indication of genre (*commedia*, *commedia pastorale*, *tragicommedia*, etc.), a list of characters and a list of props or costumes (*robbe*); the dialogic pattern indicates which characters are speaking and gives a summary of what each has to say to carry the story forward. The texts of the *scenari* are divided into three acts, which are in turn divided into scenes. Each scene details the entrances and exits of the various characters and, for each character, a very brief summary of the content of the exchanges, expressed in indirect speech (X says that, Y complains that, X answers that), not unlike what happened in the texts of the legal exercises.

Here is a fragment taken from Scala's *Flavio tradito*:

FLAVIO

vede Pedrolino, lo chiama traditore. Pedrolino non parla e li dà una lettera, la quale va a Graziano, facendoli cenno, senza parlare, che si parta. Pedrolino rimane. In quello

ARLECCHINO
> domanda a Pedrolino la casa di Graziano. Pedrolino non parla. Arlecchino, ridendo, chiama l'oste.

BURATTINO
> li domanda se diede la lettera. Pedrolino non risponde. Loro se ne ridono. Arlecchino chiama il Capitano.

CAPITANO
> fuora, et intende Pedrolino esser quello che ebbe la lettera. Capitano li domnda ciò che ne fece. Pedrolino non risponde. Capitano lo squote, alla fine Pedrolino, come si svegliasse da un lungo letargo, tira un grido tanto forte che spaventa tutti, et entrano nell'osteria; e Pedrolino, come infuriato, si parte per strada, e finisce l'atto primo. (Testaverde, ed., 2007, 27)[10]

From my point of view the most interesting text is the one which appeared in Scala's 1611 collection under the title *Il marito* (*The husband*), as a few years later Scala used the *scenario*'s plot again to compose a regular comedy entitled *Il finto marito* (Scala 1618). This seems to be the final stage in a process which starts with the delineation of a stylized story which is carried forward by largely stereotyped characters, then improvised and subsequently further revised, till it reaches a complete written formulation, close to the modules of erudite comedy. In this and other similar cases, we do not know how much of the actors' 'improvised' speeches, when based on the *scenario,* was incorporated in its full-length version.[11]

The process is similar to that used ever since the Middle Ages, traces of which can be found as late as the eighteenth century. This process is outlined by Palfrey and Stern (see in particular 2007; chapters 1 and 2) in relation to individual acting parts, which were sometimes provided with indications for a correct performance, and distributed to the members of a company intending to stage a play. These separate parts may have been further elaborated by actors taking part in the performance after the main author had completed his task. When an author was working mainly for one company, the various parts were probably written for individual actors and might therefore have common characteristics. Stern has found in libraries in England, on the Continent, and in the USA material in support of this hypothesis: parts belonging to different works, stitched together in one new text, by the same main author. My comparison with the practices of legal education, then, applies to the last stage of the process, when an oral performance had already taken place in rehearsals and public entertainments, in the field of the theatre, and when moots had already been presented and discussed, in legal practice.

If Palfrey and Stern are right about the scripting and the distribution of parts for performance before the publication of the entire play was even planned, and if the scripting and the collecting were done in order to secure the possibility of further public performances, then an analogy can be drawn with the written records of collected mooting activities which were drawn up and kept for further study and elaboration in the field of legal education.

5. *Simulation for Educational Purposes*

A comedy bearing traces of a modular dialogic structure suggests that it may have derived from forms of non-scripted performance practice, from different rehearsed set pieces, that were functionally versatile enough to be employed for different stories and in different contexts of interpersonal relations. Therefore another type of relationship might be usefully hypothesised. That the Italian *commedie* were constructed by combining modules of both dialogue and plot is a fact. We do not know, however, whether – and to what extent– the dialogue actually performed onstage was derived from, or inspired by, written repertories (the speech repertories called *generici*, for instance) or whether it was the transcription of actual speeches and dialogues performed in various situations and contexts of interpersonal relations.

In the collections of legal exercises it seems that the only possible combination allowed was that of different sequences made up of mixed exercises which might have reflected either the personal mooting experience of their author, or some legal framework that was to be explored. This, at least, is what the few exercises which appear in two different collections seem to suggest.

As we have seen, an analogous manner of text construction by patches also entails new ways of conceiving and actuating theatre authorship in early modern England. Texts written in collaboration pose other radical questions about their authorship. Indeed, that collaboration – and not only in the construction of written texts – was the norm in Elizabethan and Jacobean plays is shown by several passages in Henslowe's papers and it is a fact acknowledged by critics and theatre historians. As G.E. Bentley says,

Collaboration is inevitably a common expedient in such a cooperative enterprise as the production of a play. Every performance in the commercial theatres from 1590 to 1642 was itself essentially a collaboration: it was the joint accomplishment of dramatists, actors, musicians, costumers, prompters (who made alterations in the original manuscript) and – at least in the later theatres – of managers. (1971, 197-198)

Stern takes the argument still further, arguing that when the dramatic text reached the stage of performance it was basically the result of a collection of scattered papers, notes and textual material of various origin, and probably composed by different hands.

Both legal and theatrical texts are incomplete: legal texts because the reports of the moot cases do not appear to be brought to any definite conclusion in respect of the legal issues involved, or they lack any judgment about the legal expertise of the apprentice lawyer; theatre texts because the theatre patches (theatergrams and *generici*, that is, the repertories of speeches suited to various situations) which constitute the *scenari* are prepared with a view to making up a complete plot and find their ultimate meanings (and judgement) only when actually staged.

As was mentioned above, all these texts pose the problem of authorship. The apprentice lawyers who were often the anonymous editors of the collections of exercises were scrupulous about giving details that asserted the authoritativeness of these exercises through the authority of the people involved in each moot (especially the authority of the moot judges explicitly mentioned). They were obviously less interested in giving details about specific occasions, unless these were noteworthy for some special reason. We should also add that the circulation of the collections was limited to members of the Inns, and, at this stage in the history of the Inns, they basically constituted material to be consulted at the Inns themselves. They represented the contemporary social body in that the arguments sprang from the manners and actions of society itself, in its functions and in its dysfunctions; they were also part of an ideal sharing of knowledge among a limited group of professionals, and ultimately, through the discussion of various cases, their aim was to ameliorate any defective rules and clarify any doubtful areas which were sometimes highlighted by the application of the statutes.

It is not clear who the author of the collected texts was, but some conjectures might be made. It is possible that the task of collecting orally performed material was entrusted on each occasion to one or other of the apprentices by the body of students or by the moot judges and that the purpose was simply to make this material available to all the apprentices for individual perusal and reflection in the libraries of the Inns of Court and of Chancery; but it is also possible that this group appointed a single person who was responsible for collecting and distributing the transcriptions.

I have already commented on the composite nature of the group using these collections of exercises. They must have been compiled, however, by a more limited group of people, who specifically intended to undertake the career of barrister. Judging by the importance attributed to these collective activities in the Orders of the various Inns, the editors of the collections may even have had specific interests of an academic nature, their aim being to consolidate the good performance of their own college in open conflict with the others.[12]

The authorship of the *canovacci* of the *commedia*, too, is mainly collective, although the authors of the *scenari* played a prominent authorial role in reshuffling the literary material, which necessarily derived from their own collective, oral performance practice, previous to writing and, through this, explicitly directed towards facilitating the repetition of subsequent performances.

All these practices also cast doubt on the authorship of full-length plays, both those that have come down to us anonymously in the form of playhouse promptbooks – whether in manuscript or in print – and those that are attributed to one or more authors. When at least some parts of the text are recognizable as set modules, these seem to be, even in Shakespeare's plays in some cases, the result of standard pieces being reused, or the final products of adaptations of previous material.

Legal vocational training is in its turn attested by the albeit limited dissemination of books and notes taken for practical reasons by common lawyers during the performance of collective oral exercises. As the circulation of this printed material became wider, it became less important for apprentices to share lodgings. At the same time the other gentlemen attending the Inns became acquainted with material that also lent itself to a different use. My point is that the collections of notes were regarded as 'common property', like the unpublished and possibly authorless 'common property' of playwrights and actors. Consequently, promptbooks and legal exercises went to the printing house for merely practical uses. In the case of moots, the idea of authorship needs to be explored in terms of group participation and the close interrelations between knowledge and power within the group, and the way in which these factors were expressed through the written notes circulating in the Inns of Court.

Simulation for educational purposes is what the legal learning exercises were all about. But there is a further link between legal performance and theatrical performance: simulation for the purpose of educating the audience could equally and legitimately have been what was practised, or at least intended, in the theatre. To affirm that theatre entertainment had an educational side – as some playwrights in England and many *comici* in Italy did in their defences – would indeed have greatly contributed, from the point of view of both authors and actors, to that acquisition of moral and cultural legitimization which the theatre sought to achieve in reaction to the fierce antitheatrical debate which started in the 1580s and culminated with the publication of Prynne's *Hystriomastix* (1632). The transposition of theatre practices to the field of the law, and *vice versa*, may have helped both audiences and authorities to achieve a better awareness of the need to acknowledge explicit didacticism as the recognized social function of the theatre.

[1] See the registers and manuscript collections of the four Inns, the Books of Rules, Orders and Regulations, primarily kept in the library of each Inn, and early authorities writing on the subject. Refer also to the Introduction to Thorne and Baker (1990), in the section 'Collections of mootable cases and the moot books', for a full account of manuscripts and their locations.

[2] In British Library MS Harl. 980, 153, as quoted by Pearce 1848, 143, a Law student at Lincoln's Inn, a certain Thomas Gibbons, reports that Attorney General Noy, in a reading at Lincoln's in 1632, stated that each Inn was a university in its own right and compared student curricula, giving the following useful details: at Oxford and Cambridge, 'after a short abidance' they got the title of Sophister, after four years that of Bachelor, after seven that of Master of Arts, after 14-19 that of Doctor; and comments: 'all being specious and swelling titles'. At the Inns, after five years, the students were awarded the title of Mootmen, after seven or more the title of Barrister, then single Reader, later Apprentice at Law and after three or four years more, Sergeant at Law.

[3] Wolsey's reaction makes it clear that the social danger which the theatre might constitute for those in power was perceived basically as occurring at the time of performance, when plays could attract and entertain full houses, thus becoming what today we would term 'mass communication media'.

[4] The book in question was certainly Simon Fishe's, *The Supplicacyion for the Beggars* (1529), against the monastic orders of the Church of Rome in England, which Henry VIII must have been pleased to receive. The booklet had entered the country secretly, and was cleverly handed on to King Henry VIII by Ann Boleyn, who had received it from her brother. John Foxe dates the arrival of Fish's pamphlet to February 2, 1529. When the king learned that he had fled from the realm for fear of the Cardinal, he treated him in a most friendly manner and gave him his signet to protect him from another Cardinal, this time Sir Thomas More. Foxe's report of the life of this martyr of the reformed Church of England in his *Acts and Monuments* seems to endorse the version of Fish's wife, after her husband's death from plague in 1531, namely that the king himself had wanted to meet Fish personally in order to rehabilitate him.

[5] Hughes (1587). In the facsimile edition of the text from which I quote pages are not numbered; therefore, no page number is going to be given after quotations.

[6] It might also be worthwhile to point out that all these structured activities originated in the mediaeval rhetorical exercises called *disputationes*. These consisted of an initial reading, which stated the case under discussion, an enunciation of the legal issue containing the elements to be taken into consideration, practical illustrations for a fuller understanding of the case subject and matter, and final questions to test the level of acquisition achieved by the prospective lawyers at the end of the exercise. These structured activities, however, became, as time passed, less and less interactive.

[7] These exceptions remind us of the periods when the theatres were closed and performances were forbidden in order to render to God what was owing to him in the form of prayers and ritual.

[8] See the Harvard MS HLS MS 33, the Cambridge CUL MS Hh. 2.8, ff 115-120, discussed in Thorne and Baker (1990). The sources to consult regarding juridical culture are: the Year Books (1270-1535), reports of the activity of the Court of Common Pleas classified by year of reign; Nominative Reports (1550-1790); reports of judicial decisions of High Courts of Common Law, classified by author and available at least in the library of each respective Institution. In addition, there is the invaluable work done by the same Thorne and Baker with their transcription and translation from Law French, and by the subsequent historical work done and published by Baker alone (1991, 1996, 2000).

[9] 'it is not by stripping oneself entirely of scripted materials that one should take up the challenge; rather, one should be armed with some general compositions that can be adapted to every kind of comedy, such as *concetti* (literary conceits), soliloquies, and dialogues for the male and female lovers; or speeches of advice, discourses, greetings, speeches with double meanings, and some gallantries for the old men. Since there are rules for each of these, we will discuss every role in detail, with examples, so that anyone can create his own composition at will and use them as appropriate' (Engl. trans., 2008, 103).

[10] 'Flavio At that, Flavio enters, sees Pedrolino, and calls him a traitor. Without a word, Pedrolino gives him the letter meant for Gratiano, and Flavio takes the letter and leaves.

Arlecchino Arlecchino comes out of the inn and asks Pedrolino where the house of Gratiano is. When Pedrolino does not answer, Arlecchino laughs at him and calls the host.

Burattino Burattino comes out and asks Pedrolino if he has delivered the letter, but Pedrolino does not answer. They joke around, and Arlecchino calls the Captain.

Capt. Spavento The Captain comes out and is told that Pedrolino is the one who was to deliver the letter. The Captain asks him what he did with the letter. Still Pedrolino does not answer. The Captain pinches him, and with that, Pedrolino gives such a loud bellow that he frightens all of them into rushing back into the inn. Pedrolino, infuriated, goes off up the street, and the first act ends' (Salerno, ed., 1967, 42).

[11] The interaction of orality and writing and the idea that 'At the heart of the commedia dell'arte was the structural tension between the linear, well-constructed plot based on a literary model and the centrifugal improvisations of the stand-up performer' is at the basis of Robert Henke's book (2002, 1).

[12] See the late example by William Hughes of Gray's Inn (1675).

Works Cited

Andrews Richard (1991), 'Scripted Theatre and the Commedia dell'Arte', in R. Mulryne and M. Shrewing, eds (1991), *Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance*, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 21-51.

Arlidge Anthony (2000), *Shakespeare and the Prince of Love*, London, Giles de la Mare Publisher.

Atkin James, ed., (1924) *The Moot Book of Gray's Inn*, London, Chiswick Press.

Baker J.H. (1978), *Catalogue of the Manuscript Yearbooks, Readings and Law Reports in Lincoln's Inn, The Bodleian Library and Gray's Inn*, Zug, Inter Documentation.

Baker J.H. (1991), *The Inner Temple*, London, The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple.

Baker J.H. (1996), *A Catalogue of English Legal Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library*, Woodbridge, Boydell Press.

Baker J.H. (2000), *Readers and Readings in the Inns of Court and Chancery*, London, Selden Society.

Bentley G.E. (1971), *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Boyer A.D. (2007), 'Drama, Law and Rhetoric in the Age of Coke and Shakespeare', in C. Jordan and K. Cunningham, eds, *The Law in Shakespeare,* Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan, 20-37.

Clubb L.G. (2010), 'Looking back on Shakespeare and Italian theater', *Renaissance Drama*, 36/37, 3-19.

Dente Carla (2006), 'Commedia dell'Arte, Shakespeare and Goldoni. Circulation of theatrical Energy Through the Re-Presentation of Oral Tradition', in R. Ferrari and L. Giovannelli, eds, *The Complete Consort*, Pisa, PLUS, 41-62.

Dente Carla (2008), 'The Impact of Theatre Practice on Renaissance Juridical Education. Simulation, Dialogue and Dialogism on Stage and in the Courtroom', *Textus* XXI, 581-610.

Fortescue John (1942 [?]), *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, critical edition of the Latin text, translation and notes by S.B. Chrimes, Cambridge, Cambridge Studies in English legal History.

Foxe John (1563, 1570, 1576, 1583), *Acts and Monuments*. Available online as *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or TAMO (1576 edition), Sheffield, HRI Online Publications, 2011, at <http://www.johnfoxe.org>, accessed 1 Jan 2012.

Guilpin Edward (1598), *Skialetheia. A Shadow of Truth in certain Epigrams and Satyrs*, London. Transcription by Risa S. Bear (2000) for Renaissance Editions, University of Oregon at <http://www.luminarium.org/renassance-editions/guilpin.html>, accessed 17 Feb 2012.

Hall Edward (1809 [1548 and 1550]), *Chronicle containing the History of England during the reign of Henry the Fourth and the succeeding monarchs to the reign of Henry the Eight … Carefully collated with the editions of 1548 and 1550*, London.

Henke Robert (2002), *Performance and Literature in the commedia dell'Arte*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hughes Thomas (1587), *Certaine Devises and Shewes presented to her Majestie by the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne, at her Highnesse Court in Greenwich, the twenty-eighth Day of Februarie, in the thirtieth Year of her Majesties most happy Raigne*, London. The book contains an Introduction in verse followed by the tragedy *The Misfortunes of Arthur*. The facsimile edition I am quoting from is available online for the Open Library at <http://www.archive.org/stream/misfotrunesof art00hughuoft#page/>, accessed 17 Feb 2012.

Hughes William of Gray's Inn (1675), *Hughes's Queries: or Choice Cases for Moots, Containing Several Points of Law, not Resolved in the Books…*, London.

Jenkins Harold, ed. (1982), *Hamlet*, London, Methuen.

Palfrey Simon and Tiffany Stern (2007), *Shakespeare in Parts*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Pearce R.R. (1848), *A History Of the Inns of Court And Chancery: With Notices Of Their Ancient Discipline, Rules, Orders, And Customs, Readings, Moots, Masques, Revels and Entertainments*, London, Richard Bentley.

Perrucci Andrea (1699), *Dell'arte rappresentativa premeditata et all'improvviso. Parti due. Giovevole non solo a chi si diletta di rappresentare, ma a' predicatori, oratori, accademici e curiosi*, Napoli, Mutio. Engl. trans. (2008), *A Treatise on Acting, From Memory and By Improvisation*, Lanham, MD, The Scarecrow Press. Bilingual edition.

Pugliatti Paola (2012), 'The Anonymous Plotter in the Routines of Renaissance Theatre and Drama', in this volume.

Salerno H.F., ed. (1967), *Flaminio Scala's Il Teatro delle favole rappresentative*, New York, New York University Press. (Engl trans. of Scala, 1612), Foreword by K. McKee.

Scala Flaminio (1611), *Il teatro delle Favole Rappresentative, ovvero la ricreazione comica, boscareccia e tragica, divisa in 50 giornate*, Venezia, Pulciani.

Scala Flaminio (1618), *Il finto marito*, Venezia.

Serpieri Alessandro (1997), *William Shakespeare. Il primo Amleto,* Venezia, Marsilio.

Shakespeare William (1982), *Hamlet*, ed. by H. Jenkins, London, Methuen.

Stern Tiffany (2009), *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Testaverde A.M. and Anna Evangelista, eds (2007), *I canovacci della commedia dell'arte*, Torino, Einaudi.

Thorne S.E., and J.H. Baker (1990), *Readings and Moots at the Inns of Court in the Fifteenth Century*, vol. II, *Moots and Readers' Cases*, London, Selden Society.

Dramatic Adaptation, Authorship and Cultural Identity in the Eighteenth Century.
The Case of Samuel Foote

Bianca Del Villano
University of Naples 'L'Orientale' (biancadelvillano@gmail.com)

Abstract

Literary adaptation flourished in eighteenth-century England in relation to drama. At the beginning of the century, Shakespearean and French rewritings were central to the critical debate on theatre and adapters boasted full authorial credentials, acquiring a dignified status. This condition dramatically changed in the second half of the century when the neoclassical concept of art as imitation was replaced by the development of the notion of creation as something original and unique. This paper aims at exploring the way authorship was affected by this reconfiguration through an analysis of the adapter and, in particular, through the analysis of Samuel Foote's *The Liar* (1762).

Keywords: Authorship, Drama Adaptation, Eighteenth Century, Genius, Samuel Foote.

1. *Adaptation and Eighteenth-Century Drama*

'Adapting' refers to a textual practice that formally and/or thematically transforms a text, re-contextualising it in another time, maybe in another culture or through another *medium*. The result is a palimpsest that, though new and different, still keeps a connection with the original. This link, that evidently recalls the question of how texts connect with one another, can be of various kinds and variously defined, finding a place in the broader twentieth-century debate on intertextuality, to put it with Julia Kristeva (1969), or of transtextuality, to recall Gérard Genette. Genette probably offered the most systematic classification of the phenomenon in *Palimpsests*, singling out a specific transtextual relation in which adaptation can be classified: 'By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary' (1997, 5). The present essay, however, will not limit itself to analysing the practice from a strictly textual perspective, but will also investigate the cultural process that determined its rise and diffusion and its role in the birth of the modern author. Compared to other contiguous forms of textuality, like free translation for instance, adaptation appears to be characterised by two elements: the assertion of authorship on the part of the adapter, and his/her use of prefaces, prologues, epilogues to explain

the kind of operation enacted on the hypotext. Evidently, then, adaptation emerges not only as a textual transformation *tout court* but also as a conscious authorial operation, whose reasons and conditions are essential to its analysis.

In England the practice of adaptation increased during the Restoration and mainly concerned drama, for well-known historical reasons. Charles II's return from exile inverted the *Interregnum*'s austere climate, favouring a sort of 'merry England' atmosphere: theatres reopened after the Puritan repression and for playwrights it was not easy to keep pace with their Continental colleagues. Adaptation seemed an ideal solution to find continuity with their own past and to experience the new ideas coming from the Continent. Pauline Kewes suggests that, after the Restoration, the emergence of the notion of literary property and the consequent fear of being accused of plagiarism, induced authors to openly declare the source of their texts. The result was the proliferation of prefatory comments, also aiming at elevating the quality-standard of plays and fuelling the development of a serious literary debate on the theatre.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the drama was established as a literary form with serious artistic claims; its cultural stature had solidified. That process led to, and was assisted by, first, the development of dramatic criticism; second, the publication of collected editions of both Renaissance and post-Restoration plays; and, third, the improvement in the economic situation of playwrights, whose literary ambitions found expression in substantial prefatory epistles and accounts of whose lives and works were being written and disseminated with increasing frequency. (2001, 1)[1]

Be it from Shakespeare or from classic and French drama (the main adapted subjects), adaptation was then complemented by substantial metatextual reflection, whose implications, however, require further explanations, going beyond the contingencies expressed in the quotation and involving a discussion on the aesthetic demands of the time. On the one hand, adaptation was motivated by the need to make foreign and pre-civil-war dramas understandable for the neo-bourgeois audience (who otherwise could hardly appreciate it); on the other, putting on stage the past with a scholarly contour was part of a broader process of appropriation of models, whose more or less latent aspiration was the reconfiguration of the English cultural identity in the aftermath of the Ancients vs Moderns *querelle*. The fracture produced by the *querelle* (that for the first time questioned the Western cultural heritage) doubled the historical trauma of the civil war and the execution of Charles I. This induced the formulation, on a literary level, of a position of compromise, whose social and political effects were those of reducing the distance between the Cavalier aristocracy and the Puritan middle-classes, whose contrast had been at the base of the civil war. As Giulio Marra underlines in his influential study on this period:

This attempt at compromise constitutes another distinctive element of English neoclassicism that therefore can be defined as the co-presence or convergence of two different cultural ideals: the Cavalier ideal, a version of classicism embodied by the educated courtesan, according to which man had to put his natural roughness right through classical elegance and scientific study …; and the Puritan ideal that was imbued with Christianity and grounded on a severe discipline. … In literature the Puritan ideal dictated contents reflecting middle class religion and morality, while the Cavalier model was tied to the necessity of formal perfection inspired by the knowledge and imitation of the classics. (1979, 39; my translation)

In other words, the Ancients versus Moderns opposition also recalled an internal division that needed to be solved and in whose resolution literature played a pivotal role.

The literary compromise accounted for the attempt to conciliate the severe observance of Aristotle's rules, mediated by French neoclassicism (in particular through Boileau) and the necessity to affirm the English literati's greatness and capacity to measure up with the classics. Adaptation proved a perfect arena in which to show this capacity, as it implied a direct, binary confrontation between texts, whose aim was not to create a literary culture on the ground of a heritage of commonly-established authority, but to show one's superiority over plays chosen precisely for their importance.

This is specifically the case of adaptations from French works which if, on the one hand, offered a moral and formal lesson welcome on the English stage – especially after the publication of Jeremy Collier's *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698) – on the other, could be further improved by adding new episodes and characters imbued with English qualities (common sense, reasonableness, etc.). It is worth recalling in this respect Richard Steele's *The Lying Lover* (1703), an adaptation of Pierre Corneille's *Le Menteur* (1642), in which the author smoothed down the original satirical and comical drive, inserting new episodes with didactical purposes. In the 'Premise', Steele states that

the Spark of this Play is introduced with as much Agility and Life, as he [Corneille] brought with him from France; and as much Humour as I could bestow upon him, in England. But he uses the Advantages of a learned Education, a ready Fancy, and a liberal Fortune, without the Circumspection and good Sense which should always attend the Pleasures of a Gentleman; that is to say, a reasonable Creature. (1766, 234)

Alternatively, the English adapters' purpose was to elevate modern culture to the same standards of formal order and *decorum* of the ancients, as happened with Shakespeare. Nahum Tate in the *Dedication* to his adaptation of *King Lear* (1681) defined the original: 'a heap of jewels, unstrung and unpolish' (1965, 203), while William Davenant, in the 'Prologue' to *The Tempest; or the Enchanted Island* (1667), adaptation of *The Tempest*, wrote: 'from old Shakespear's honour'd dust, this day / springs up and buds a new reviving play' (1965, 114).[2]

At least until the 1740s, adaptation was roughly motivated by these aesthetic/ethical reasons involving poetic justice, the Aristotelian rules, the moral function of drama, in the attempt to trace a continuity with the past (the classics), in which innovation could only be conceived as the final phase of a progressive process towards (formal) perfection. Neoclassicism conceived, in fact, originality as a form of imitation, an 'artistic imitation, then, in order to produce a more perfect work of art' (Marra 1979, 149; my translation). Furthermore, adaptations – with their apparatus of premises, prefaces, etc. – also served to illustrate and explain these intellectual efforts to the audience, so that the *ideal* spectators, addressees of the author/scholar, could somehow overlap with the *real* spectators, who needed a new cultural mediation to understand French theatre or Shakespeare. This feature represented the social aspect of the neoclassical compromise, i.e. the project of enlarging and forging an audience who could share the same set of values as the author, an intellectual who condensed Cavalier and Puritan qualities.

2. *Imitation vs Originality*

In the mid- and late eighteenth century, adaptation ceased claiming scholarly ambitions and became mere entertainment. The reasons are to be found in a general decline of the theatre after the spreading of the novel and after the passing of the Licensing Act in 1737.[3] The law limited political satire through a severe censorship and allowed performances only in the two traditionally patented playhouses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The consequence was a general decrease of new plays, under the menace of the censor, and the definitive annulment of any potential competition between the two theatres. Their structures became bigger and bigger to welcome an increasing number of spectators (Covent Garden counted 1400 seats in 1732, 3000 in 1792; Drury Lane arrived at 3600 seats in the same years [Hume 2005, 322]), so that performances assumed a more popular connotation. The neoclassic aspiration of opening the debate on drama to an ever-larger audience, first to educate and then represent a learned bourgeoisie, had to face the laws of the marketplace, a shift which led critics to consider adaptations as plays with little literary ambition. But there is more.
    The idea of art as imitation considerably changed in the second half of the century, going towards a new notion of creation as something unique and original, leading to

the growing valorization of creative originality. Subjectivity, uniqueness, and inspiration were certainly easier to achieve – and their lack more difficult to detect – in poetry, perhaps even in prose fiction, than in the drama. … The eighteenth century did not invent 'originality'. Yet it was in that period that originality, hitherto conceived as an attribute of the literary work, came to be defined in terms of the creative process that produced it. (13)

The Augustan conception of art, close to an idea of creation as a derivative product – the so-called *inventio* (from the Latin *invenire*, 'to find'), intended as finding and reassembling pieces of an already-existing tradition – gradually but markedly moved towards an idea of art as *invention* out of nothing, which would be definitively developed by the Romantics.[4] The ramblings of this turn can be traced back to mid-century works such as Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), William Duff's *An Essay on Original Genius* (1766), or Alexander Gerard's *Essay on Genius* (1776) which introduced originality and genius as the most important prerequisites of a work of art.[5] To some extent, these art views, though so different, may be seen as the two sides of the same coin, in that they might be considered as different reactions to the process of 'privatisation' of the book that started with the establishing of a literary marketplace and of a modern copyright and that led to the individualisation of the creative process.[6] The author had emerged as the only proprietor of his/her work at the end of the seventeenth century and the subsequent development of this process was his/her identification with an original creator, not indebted with other sources but his/her own imagination and inspiration.

Consequently, dramatic adaptation, whose source was clearly represented by the works of someone else, could no longer be aesthetically representative and, if part of the great amount of rewritings was due to the necessity to fill theatres or to escape censorship and did not deserve much critical discussion, it happened that even good-quality plays were neglected and sometimes even snubbed by critics as if unworthy of attention, just because they were non-original dramas:

Newspapers and journals, it is true, published reviews of newly premiered shows as well as revivals: however, those commentaries largely focused on performance, not literary quality. They customarily provided a plan or plot summary of the new offering, a convention that made the repetitive and derivative nature of modern playwriting all the more obvious. (13)

Adapters themselves seemed not to be particularly self-confident about their works. This change was registered in the two elements that characterise adaptation: the assertion of authorship and the use of paratexts. As Kewes shows, in the second half of the century we do not find exhaustive prefaces commenting on authorial textual operations but simple advertisements in which adapters briefly proclaim their debt to the original:

Where Restoration playwrights asserted authorship in their plays based on novels, romances, and history, as well as their adaptations of foreign and native drama, their eighteenth-century successors are a lot more cautious and modest. In their advertisements, they repeatedly style themselves editors and alterers rather than authors. (2)[7]

There was no pride in asserting the authorship of rewritings and the practice itself lost the literary prerogatives it earlier displayed, though it continued to be successful on stage.

This situation produced a short-circuit polarised around the figures of the critic, supporter of originality, and the manager, interested in producing commercially consolidated, expendable plays (adaptations in most cases). The dramatic author found him/herself coming to terms with these extremes, a position that is difficult to analyse, especially when the three roles happened to overlap (an author could be simultaneously a manager or a critic). A relevant example (brilliantly discussed by Kewes in her article) comes from George Colman the elder's *The Man of Business* (1774), which presents in the 'Prologue' an Author with a manuscript in his hands, complaining about the manager's refusal to stage his original play:

See here, good folks, how genius is abus'd!
A play of mine, the manager refus'd!
And why ?—I knew the reason well enough–
Only to introduce his own damn'd stuff.
Oh! he's an arrogant, invidious elf,
Who hates all wit, and has no wit himself!
As to the plays on which he builds his fame,
Boasting your praise, *we all know whence they came*.
...
His play to-night, like all he ever wrote,
Is pie-ball'd, piec'd, and patch'd, like Joseph's coat;
Made up of shreds from Plautus and Corneille,
Terence, Moliere, Voltaire, and Marmontel;
With rags of fifty others I might mention,
Which proves him dull and barren of invention:
But shall his nonsense hold the place of sense?
No, damn him! damn him, in your own defence!
Else on your mercy will the dwarf presume,
Nor e'er give giant Genius elbow-room. (42)

From this passage a pattern emerges which contrasts the original author with the 'derivative' author (also a manager), the one legitimised by the 'new' aesthetics of originality, the other by his commercial power and concern, driving him to refuse an original play. It is worth noticing how the epithet 'genius' is more than once called into question and directly attributed to the original author. The authorial configuration, despite the neat opposition, however, is far from appearing schematic and can be further explained by the epilogue of the same play, in which two more opinions are compared, the critic's and the spectator's. Echoing the author of the previous passage, the critic denounces appropriation to sanction the superiority of new plays:

What are the riff-raff of our modern plays?
Their native dullness all in books intrench;
Mere scavengers of Latin, Greek, and French,

Sweep up the learned rubbish, dirt, and dust,
Or from old iron try to sile the rust.
Give me the bard whose fiery disposition
Quickens at once, and learns by intuition;
Lifts up his head to think, and, in a minute,
Ideas make a hurly-burly in it;
Struggling for passage, there ferment and bubble,
And thence run over without further trouble
'Till out comes play or poem, as they feign
Minerva issued from her father's brain!
Be all original! struck out at once;
Who borrows, toils, or labours, is a dunce:
Genius, alas! is at the lowest ebb;
And none, like spiders, spin their own sine web.
What wonder, if with some success they strive
With wax and honey to enrich the hive,
If all within their compass they devour,
And, like the bee, steal sweets from ev'ry slow'r?
Old old books, old plays, old thoughts, will never do:
Originals for me, and something new! (220)

The critic simply despises appropriation, referring to art as something coming out of the creator's mind (embodied by the bard) as Minerva from Jove's brains. All the ingredients of the mid- and late eighteenth-century aesthetic recipe recalled so far are visible. *Inventio* proves anachronistic but the character's last words – 'Originals *for me*' (my emphasis) – might be read as an attempt on the part of Colman, whose production was largely made up of adaptations, to relativise originality, making it appear as an *opinion* of the critic, soon subverted by the female spectator's speech:

New? (cries the lady) Prithee, man, have done!
We know there's nothing new beneath the sun.
Weave, like the spider, from your proper brains,
And take at last a cobweb for your pains!
What is invention? 'Tis not thoughts innate;
Each head at first is but an empty pate.
'Tis but retailing from a wealthy hoard
The thoughts which observation long has stor'd,
Combining images with lucky hit,
Which sense and education first admit;
Who, borrowing little from the common store,
Mends what he takes, and from his own adds more,
He is original; or inspiration
Never fill'd bard of this, or other nation,
And Shakespeare's art is merely imitation.
For 'tis a truth long prov'd beyond all doubt,
Where nothing's in, there's nothing can come out. (222)

The female spectator is entrusted with the task of defending the idea of art as assemblage of pre-existing pieces (significantly called 'imitation' even in relation to Shakespeare), and implicitly the practice of adaptation,[8] allowing Colman to open a rift between the oriented taste promoted by criticism and the effective reception of the plays.

3. *Cultural Identity, French Adaptations and Samuel Foote's* The Liar *(1762)*

The emergence of the originality/genius theory also had some cultural conceptual motives: indeed, if behind neoclassical aesthetics there was what we could define as 'the project of compromise' whose political implication was that of condensing Puritan and Cavalier values (literarily and socially), what was the idea behind the aesthetic of originality? Let me suggest that the literary shift from imitation to originality was part of a complex ideological pattern, in which the British *political*, rather than literary identity was at stake. This is apparent in the way the critical attitude towards Shakespeare dramatically changed in the second half of the century. While critics were at first interested in 'improving' the Bard, in order to make him comparable with the classics, subsequently, Shakespeare became pivotal to a rhetorical construction that celebrated him as the 'national poet' and later as the 'universal poet' (see Golinelli 2003, 158-159). Shakespeare became the personification of the modern English State that, after the post-Restoration process of self-reconstruction, felt ready to export its new image on an international scenario. The claim of universality for Shakespeare and so for the British 'spirit', on the one hand, seemed to be (at least at an initial phase) in line with the cosmopolitan rhetoric of the Enlightenment, as it called on transnational values; on the other, it implied in fact that those values were essentially English, thus supporting a nationalist policy but projected on a world scale through colonialism (that was rapidly developing in those years). Not by chance, in that period, Shakespearian revivals became very celebrative with the presence of the character of Shakespeare's ghost on stage, while the adaptations of his works significantly diminished.

By contrast, the attitude towards the other great source of inspiration for adaptation, i.e. French theatre, became very controversial. The amount of French appropriations considerably grew, partly for commercial reasons (also to fill the gap of decreasing Shakespearean adaptations), partly because France had entered by now the collective imagination with great dramatic models, from Corneille to Molière. This element could appear surprising given the strong concern with the national question and confirmed the existence of a gap between literary criticism and theatrical practice, in relation to popular taste. Paris was the most fashionable destination for Grand Tours and people delighted in watching shows referring to French culture but authors almost felt obliged to apologise in prologues and epilogues for the recourse to French

material. And as Kinne makes it clear, '… these apologies were quite apt to be coupled with boasts of English material glory or Shakespeare's superiority' (1967, 13). For instance, Richard Cumberland, in the 'Prologue' to his play *The Brothers* (1769), wrote:

Various the shifts of authors now-a-days,
For operas, farces, pantomimes, and plays;
Some scour each alley of the town for wit,
Begging from door to door the offal bit;
…
Some, in our English classics deeply read,
Ransack the tombs of the illustrious dead;
Hackney the muse of Shakespear o'er and o'er,
From shoulder to the flank, all drench'd in gore.
Others, to foreign climes and kingdoms roam,
To search for what is better found at home:
The recreant bard, oh ! scandal to the age!
Gleams the vile refuse of the Gallic stage.
Not so our bard—To-night, lie bids me say,
You shall receive and judge an English play. (1808, 310)

At the same time, in February 1763 *The Monthly Review* reported the following comment: 'The custom of copying from the French appears to be so thoroughly established with our dramatic poets, that the best of them do not disdain to adopt the practice' (quoted in Kinne 1967, 13).

Adapters from French works, in other words, *had* to show consternation for using Gallic sources, which nonetheless they admired to the point of using them for their own plays. A further explanation of this ambivalent attitude towards French models may take into account the possibility that French adaptations responded to the national concern and to the aesthetic debate of the time playing on ambivalence itself and on French sources much more freely than was allowed with British texts.

An interesting example in this respect is offered by Samuel Foote, one of the most significant dramatists in respect to French adaptation and certainly a controversial figure of the eighteenth century. He wrote some thirty comedies, was the lead actor of his own company and manager of the Haymarket Theatre (a summer theatre for which he obtained the royal licence in 1766). At his time, he was famous for his pungent satire, often addressed to his own contemporaries (for which he was feared and disapproved of by other authors and critics), but also for being a brilliant mimic whose talent and stage charisma were not lessened by the accident that caused the amputation of his leg. His plays were not only put on stage at the Haymarket but some of them were regularly performed at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Even after his death in 1777 single and collected editions of his works were pub-

lished and sold out until the end of the nineteenth century. Yet, this figure was surrounded by a halo of moral and aesthetic disapproval, probably due to the popular nature of his theatre, and this prejudice resisted until the last decade of the twentieth century. Only recently critics have re-evaluated his works and, though the *corpus* of writings on him is very limited, he stands out as a significant character. As Susan Lamb puts it,

In the more thorough or recent studies, critics have addressed formal issues such as whether or not Foote is sentimental; performance and more strictly theatrical issues such as the function (as opposed to the fact) of Foote's mimicry, his experimental staging, and his theatre management; and, to a limited extent, how Foote's work fits into larger cultural trends. (1996, 245)

Implicitly, Lamb suggests the importance of investigating this last aspect, offering an interesting analysis of the way Foote was concerned with British national identity, an analysis that revises the xenophobic reputation of the dramatist.[9] Yet, though recognising that Foote's position was very sophisticated in this respect, she comes to the following conclusion:

Over the body of his work, Foote naturalizes certain things (French plays, French education) of 'foreign' origin by recasting them as British, while he depicts criminal or socially unacceptable behaviour as a 'foreign' (most often French or colonial) adulteration of essential national identity. (Lamb 1996, 250)

What I would like to stress here is that the crucial missing point in the discussions so far recalled is that Foote was essentially an adapter working on French sources, which further complicates the textual analysis of his plays.[10] If it is true that 'Foote's plays are intimately bound up in the contemporary collective re-imagining of national identity' (Lamb 1996, 246), it is also true that this re-imagining was imbued with foreign models and that these models fostered not only the redefinition but also the critique of British cultural and literary identity.

This is particularly evident in *The Liar* (1762), an adaptation of *Le Menteur* by Pierre Corneille. The story of the liar Dorante was certainly not new even when Corneille staged his play, being itself an adaptation of *La Verdad Sospechosa* (1630) by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón (a play erroneously attributed by Corneille to Lope de Vega). The protagonist of *Le Menteur* is a young man who meets two women in Paris, Lucrece and Clarice, and decides to woo the latter, thinking her name is Lucrece. When his father Geronte announces he has found him a wife (Clarice), the liar, believing it is Lucrece, pretends to be already married. After many incidents, the truth comes out and Dorante's lies are punished by a forced marriage with Lucrece, the woman he does not love; in the end, however, he quickly changes his mind and realises he is in love with her. Corneille reworks the Spanish baroque theme of confusion and instability but gives the play a classical structure, insisting on the comical ef-

fect rather than on the moral lesson quite explicit in Alarcón and making the ending more cohesive with the genre (indeed the final love twist functions as a solution and not a punishment).

Foote's *The Liar* is inspired by the French and not by the Spanish play, even though in the prologue the author wrote:

We bring tonight a stranger on the stage,
His sire De Vega; We confess the truth
Lest you mistake him for a British Youth.

And after a comical defence of his habit of ridiculing living persons, he forbids any one to see a caricature in this play in the following words:

But in the following group let no man dare
To claim a limb, nay, not a single hair.
What gallant Briton can be such a sot
To own the child a Spaniard has begot? (Foote 1830, 82)[11]

The reference to de Vega paradoxically makes it clear that Foote's source was Corneille as Mary Megie Belden underlines:

… if he was actually acquainted with the Spanish play that he means to have us believe his source, he made an odd mistake in ascribing it to the same wrong author that Pièrre [sic] Corneille had ascribed it to when he adapted it for the French theatre. … Since he never hits upon a variant that recalls this play, he must have known it only through the medium of Corneille's *Menteur*, to which he owes obvious debts. (1929, 188)[12]

By mentioning de Vega, Foote probably believed he had recognised his debt to the 'original' author, which was in line with the cultural trend of the time. In effect, his adaptation re-elaborates precisely the elements inserted by Corneille – the comical relationship between master and valet, the character of the valet itself, the presence of the city setting – and further modifies the ending, proposing a brilliant but quite ambiguous solution of the action. Needless to say, his aim is that of offering a satirical portrait of London and its inhabitants, and of the cultural climate of the period, through typified characters, plots and situations that the audience could easily recognise.

In Foote's text, the protagonist Jack Wilding arrives in London from Oxford, where he is a student, to have fun and amusement in the capital city, accompanied by his valet Papillon. The encounter with Miss Grantam and Miss Godfrey and the subsequent development of the action repeats Corneille's plot, but in the ending Old Wilding (Jack's father) and Miss Grantam arrange a sort of comical revenge/punishment, instructing the maid Kitty to act the role of young Wilding's imaginary wife (he had made up a brilliant lie to make

his father believe he was married). A character invented by the liar 'magically' turns into a person in flesh and blood, so that the confines between reality and imagination comically blur.

Though presented with a light touch, the main concerns of the play are the question of British/French identity, the state of literary criticism and the reference to the genius theory. These three major issues are developed from the starting point of Corneille's treatment of the seeming/being dichotomy (which in turn 'translate' Alarcón's baroque sense of uncertainty).

For example, in Act 1, Papillon gives an account of London manners, following Corneille's text in which Cliton is entrusted with the task of presenting Paris with its many types of people:

Pap. You must not expect, Sir, to find here, as at Oxford, men appearing in their real characters: everybody there, Sir, knows that Mr. Muffy is a fellow of Maudlin, and Tom Trifle a student of Christ-church; but this town is one great comedy, in which not only the principles, but frequently the persons, are feign'd. … In short, Sir, you will meet with lawyers who practice smuggling, and merchants who trade upon Hounslow-heath; reverend Atheists, right honourable sharpers, and Frenchmen from the county of York. (7-8)

However, while in Corneille's text the description of the city remains generic with a quick reference to deception as a consequence of the coexistence of people from many different places, in Foote's play, falseness of appearance (explicitly referred to identity and to the difficulty of interpreting people) is veined with a subtle awareness of social hypocrisy. Whereas Corneille immediately shifts on the battle between sexes (as the valet Cliton advices Dorante about women's dangerousness), Foote seems more concerned with unmasking duplicity. Yet, the author does not want to simplify the seeming/being opposition by separating the two terms; the final effect he seems to point at is the presentation of a complex reality, in which the problem of truth conveys a reflection on questions that are missing in the hypotext (like, for instance, the implications of the identification between truth and 'original' on a literary level). So, *The Liar* does not simply transpose the themes presented by Corneille by culturally 'translating' French vices; he uses the hypotext as a basic structure, which he modifies in order to discuss specific problems of his time. For example, the valet Cliton turns into the figure of Papillon (an Englishman who pretends to be French) who, though keeping the same task of advisor and offering the same kind of comical gags, has a new dramatic function: his disguise (one of Foote's original inventions) poses cultural questions we do not find in *Le Menteur*.

Y. Wild. But to the point: Why this disguise? Why renounce your country?
Pap. There, Sir, you make a little mistake; it was my country that renounced me (9).

When questioned by Wilding, Papillon tells his story starting when, after a proper education, he 'got recommended to the compiler of the Monthly Review' (9). His words emphasise Foote's provocative attitude towards criticism (at the time not benevolent and even snobbish towards his plays), which appears as a centre of power and privilege controlling knowledge and establishing whether a text is good or bad, independently from its true qualities:

Pap. The whole region of the belles lettres fell under my inspection; physic, divinity, and the mathematics, my mistress managed herself. There, Sir, like another Aristarch, I dealt out fame and damnation at pleasure. In obedience to the caprice and commands of my master, I have condemn'd books I never read; and applauded the fidelity of a translation, without understanding one syllable of the original.
Y. Wild. Ah! Why, I thought acuteness of discernment and depths of knowledge were necessary to accomplish a critic.
Pap. Yes, Sir; but not a monthly one. Our method is very concise. We copy the title-page of a new book; we never go any further. If we are ordered to praise it, we have at hand about ten words, which, scatter'd through as many periods, effectually does the business; as, 'laudable design, happy arrangement, spirited language, nervous language, nervous sentiment, elevation of thought, conclusive argument'. If we are to decry, then, we have, 'unconnected, flat, false, illiberal, stricture, reprehensible, unnatural'. And thus, Sir, we pepper the author and, soon rid our hands at his work. (9-10)

In this passage, stress shifts from falseness of appearance to falseness of judgment but, as Papillon explains later (providing a little revenge for Foote, whose plays were very successful), 'Notwithstanding what we say, people will judge for themselves: our work hung upon hand, and all I could get from the Publisher was four shillings a-week and my small beer' (10). It is difficult not to catch a parallelism here with Colman's critic/spectator dichotomy.

Claiming the freedom of art from critical theories (in many respects false and useless according to the playwright), Foote also condemns the privileged status of the critic, who is allowed to judge works he does not know. This is the prelude to Papillon's disclosure of the 'honest artifice' which would grant him many resources. After having uselessly looked for a job as a footman, he relates his occasional meeting with a friend of his, 'a Swiss genius', who advises him to act as a Frenchman: 'You will find all de doors dat was shut in your face as footman Anglois, vil fly open demselves to a French valet de chambre' (11).

Clearly, the old comic device of the disguise is here used to address questions that implicitly touch supposed British national cohesiveness: if, on the one hand, Foote criticises the Francophile attitude of many of his contemporaries (Papillon finds a job *as* Frenchman and for no other reason), on the other, he questions why the valet has to recur to such a stratagem to earn his living.

French culture does not emerge negatively or positively, as what is really discussed by Foote is the British idea/construction of France, evident in the exposition of the frequent French stereotypes on the stage. Papillon says: 'I am

either a teacher of tongues, a friseur, a dentist, or a dancing-master: these, sir, are hereditary professions to Frenchmen' (12). Later, Papillon is introduced by Wilding (to corroborate his lies) alternatively as an enemy and as a friend: 'This gentleman, though a Frenchman and an enemy, I had the fortune to deliver from the Mohawks, whose prisoner he had been for nine years' (19). This quotation presumably refers to the war rhetoric associated with the Seven Years' War, openly referring to French people as antagonist (a rhetoric that was followed by more friendly policies), while the following one evokes the image of a sophisticated and refined French aristocrat, whose acquaintance is considered as an honour: 'This gentleman … is the Marquis de Chatteau Brilliant, of an ancient house in Brittany; who, travelling through England, chose to make Oxford for some time the place of his residence, where I had the happiness of his acquaintance' (27).

From the examples discussed so far one can detect a textual pattern in which theatrical devices, disguise, identity misunderstandings and comical exposition of stereotypes problematise social reality: the interpretative problem of what is and what appears implies the awareness that society is internally stratified and open to influences from the outside (other cultures). From a textual perspective, the play itself seems to tend constantly towards what is beyond the stage, not only through references to living and recognisable characters that delighted the audience, but also through the use of irony and wit which opens language to double and multiple senses, dilating meaning and barring a single interpretation.

This is particularly true in relation to the third focus of discussion, the reference to the Genius, which in *The Liar* is constantly inserted in a parodist texture, associated above all with Wilding's capacity of inventing original lies, an ability which Papillon paints with literary tones: 'You have, Sir, a lively imagination, with a most happy turn for invention. … this talent of yours is the very soul and spirit of poetry; and why it should not be the same in prose, I can't for my life determine' (13). Or, dresses with ironic disappointment: '… he is as unembarrassed, easy, and fluent, all the time, as if he really believed what he said. Well, to be sure, he is a great master: it is a thousand pities his genius could not be converted to some public service' (14).

If we consider the aesthetics of the time, it may sound hazardous to presume that Foote was brazenly trying to lower the level of the aesthetic debate, but this is what some exchanges suggest:

Wild. Why, Papillon, you have but a poor, narrow, circumscribed genius.
Pap. I must own, Sir, I have not sublimity sufficient to relish the full fire of your Pindaric muse. (23)

Papillon, evoking the sublime and the muse, explicitly brings the seeming versus being theme on a literary level, again with a double purpose: popularising it and subtly laughing at critics' bombast and social attitude *à la mode*.

In conclusion, we can assert that, as an adaptation that reworks an 'original' source making it completely new, *The Liar*, through disguise, parody and ironic detachment, poses serious questions about truth and falseness, being and seeming, and about what, in social and literary terms, can be defined imitation or originality. Playing on the social and literary implications of lying, the play, on the one hand, condemns duplicity and hypocrisy providing an ending that repays the liar with the same coin (he falls victim of his own deceit); on the other, it problematises some aesthetic and cultural issues of the eighteenth century. By ironically suggesting a parallelism between lie and literary (original) creation, Foote challenges originality as an absolute value. At the same time, through the character of Papillon, the drama investigates and represents some aspects connected with the question of British cultural identity, as it stood in the mid-century. Then, the fact that literary originality and cultural identity are central to an adaptation whose purpose was supposed to be pure entertainment, not only shows how these two issues were crucial and deeply interconnected at the time, but also proves the documentary and literary relevance of Foote's text.

This relevance, however, can be fully understood only if framed into the wider cultural context of eighteenth-century drama, in which adaptation went through a sort of rise-and-fall oscillation, affected not only by aesthetic ideals (imitation in the first half of the century and originality in the second one), but also by ideological reasons connected with the nascent imperialist identity of Great Britain. Moreover, adaptation as a practice found itself imbricated with the emergence of a modern authorial figure/status. The shift from *inventio* to invention was possible only because any theory of creation was informed by a definite sense of both literary *property* and *propriety* (cf. MacFarlane 2007, 2-3): the awareness that authors were legally individual owners of their texts intermingled with the more difficult problem of how to deal with the texts of others and so with the tradition. Neoclassicism seemed to have found a solution through the compromise of art as imitation, in which adaptation played a leading role; later (preromantic) theories took the process of privatisation and individualisation of creation to extremes, proposing – or rather imposing – the idea of an imaginatively (and not only legally) Unique Author. This new approach to the idea of authorship was the cause of the depreciation of adaptation in the last decades of the century, a depreciation that, as this article has tried to demonstrate, needs to be reformulated and reconsidered.

---

[1] In this respect, Dustin Griffin writes: 'The period from 1660 to 1714 witnessed what might be called the birth of the modern English author. For it is during these years that there began to appear many of the features by which we define modern authorship: copyright legislation, widespread identification of the author on the title page, the "author by profession", bookselling as commercial enterprise, a literary "marketplace", the periodical essay and political journalism' (2005, 37). A shorter and differently oriented version of this article was presented

as a paper at the XXV Conference of the Associazione Italiana di Anglistica (AIA), which was held in L'Aquila (15-17 September, 2011).

[2] For further discussion on Shakespearean adaptations, see Bate (1989), Dobson (1992), Innocenti (2010).

[3] For further discussion on the reasons for the decline of drama see Hume (2005), 316-339 and Love (2005), 109-131.

[4] Robert MacFarlane analyses the terms of the opposition between *inventio* and invention in details (2007, 1-5).

[5] For further discussion on the philosophical debate developing around the idea of genius, see Franzini (1995, 93-114).

[6] Even though the Copyright Statute passed in 1710, the idea that the author was the legal proprietor of his/her work was already accepted at the end of the seventeenth century (Griffin 2005, 42-43).

[7] Kewes also gives other examples: Isaac Bickerstaffe commenting his play *The Sultan, or A Peep into the Seraglio* writes that it 'is taken from Marmontel'; Hannah More specifies that her tragedy *Percy* derives from 'The French Drama, founded on the famous old Story of Raoul de Coucy'; Elizabeth Griffith writes: 'The hint of [*The School for Rakes*] was taken from a much admired performance of Monsieur Beaumarchais, stiled Eugen' (2001, 2).

[8] Kewes (2001, 10) reads the spectator's speech as influenced by Locke's idea of *tabula rasa*.

[9] In particular, it is Gerald Newman that considers Foote an 'anti-Gallic' dramatist. See Newman (1987), 71-73.

[10] Foote's adaptations from French are numerous: *The Englishman in Paris* (1753) from De Boissy's *Le Français à Londres* (1727); its sequel *The Englishman returned from Paris* (1756); *The Liar* (1762) from Corneille's *Le Menteur* (1642); *The Devil upon Two Sticks* (1768) from Le Sage's *Le diable boiteux* (1707) and Molière's *Le malade imaginaire* (1673); its sequel *Doctor Last in his Chariot* (1769); *The Commissary* (1765) from Molière's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* (1679) and d'Ancourt's *La femme d'intrigues* (1692); *The Nabob* (1772) again from d'Ancourt's *Le femme d'intrigues*.

[11] Subsequent references to this edition will be given in brackets next to the quotation.
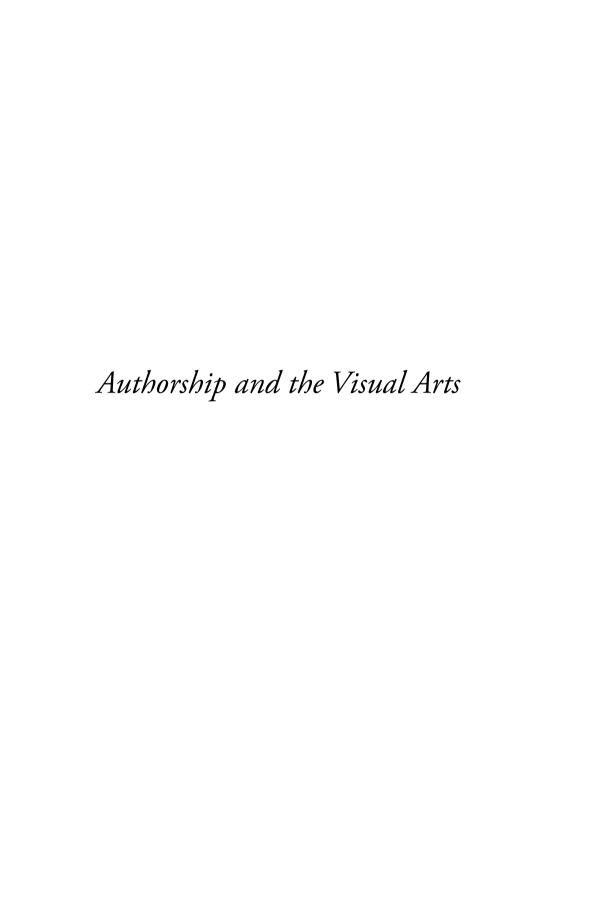
[12] As many critics underline, Foote knew both Steele's *The Lying Lover* (1703) and *The Mistaken Beauty* (1685), the anonymous translation of *Le Menteur* used by Steele as a guide for his adaptation (for a detailed discussion on this topic, see Genest 1832, 649; and Canfield 1904, 119-127). Nonetheless, the differences between *The Liar* and *The Lying Lover* are so substantial that, in my opinion, it is hardly likely that Foote reworked Steele's text; it is more plausible to think that he considered it as a model but did not use it as his direct source. The two adaptations are indeed complementary rather than similar: whereas Steele was interested in keeping all the classical formal elements, and especially a polite, decorous language, conveying an explicit moral lesson for the public, Foote resumed the satirical potential of Corneille's play which Steele had neglected. His dialogues are lively and far from Steele's sentimental tone. Moreover, Steele kept the formal division in 5 acts, keeping the same number of characters, while Foote considerably cut the characters and reduced the play to three acts, making it lighter and more comical, so that the general purpose was not to teach by *telling* right from wrong, but to entertain and *show* the effects of bad behaviour.

Works Cited

Bate Jonathan (1989), *Shakespearean Constitutions: Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730-1830*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Belden M.M. (1929), *The Dramatic Work of Samuel Foote*, New York, Yale University Press.

Canfield D.F. (1904), *Corneille and Racine in England: A Study of the English translations of the two Corneilles and Racine with Especial Reference to their Presentation on the English Stage*, New York, Macmillan.

Colman George (1774), *The Man of Business*, London, T. Beckett.

Cumberland Richard (1808 [1769]), *The Brothers*, in *The British Theatre; or, A Collection of Plays, which are acted at the Theatres Royal, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and Haymarket*, London, Longman.

Davenant William (1965 [1667]), *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island*, in C. Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.

Dobson Michael (1992), *The Making of the National Poet*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Foote Samuel (1830 [1762]), *The Liar*, in *The Works of Samuel Foote*, London, Sherwood Gilbert and Piper.

Franzini Elio (1995), *L'estetica del Settecento*, Bologna, Il Mulino.

Genest John (1832), *Some Account of the English Stage*, vol. IV, London, Carrington.

Genette, Gérard (1982), *Palimpsestes: littérature au second degré*, Paris, Seuil. Engl. trans. (1997), *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.

Golinelli Gilberta (2003), *La formazione del canone shakespeariano tra identità nazionale ed estetica. Inghilterra e Germania 1700-1770*, Bologna, Patron Editore.

Griffin Dustin (2005), 'The Social World of Authorship 1660-1714', in J. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660-1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 37-60.

Hume R.D. (2005), 'Drama and Theatre in the Mid and Later Eighteenth Century', in J. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660-1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 316-339.

Innocenti Loretta (2010 [1985]), *La scena trasformata. Adattamenti neoclassici di Shakespeare*, Pisa, Pacini.

Kewes Pauline (2001), ' "a Play which I Presume to Call Original": Appropriation, Creative Genius, and Eighteenth-Century Playwriting', *Studies in Literary Imagination* 34, 1-24.

Kinne W.A. (1967), *Revivals and Importations of French Comedies in England. 1749-1800*, New York, AMS Press.

Kristeva Julia (1969), *Semeiotikè. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil.

Lamb Susan (1996), 'The Popular Theater of Samuel Foote and British National Identity', *Comparative Drama* 30, 2, 245-265.

Love Harold (2005), 'Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Drama', in J. Richetti, ed., *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660-1780*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 109-131.

MacFarlane Robert (2007), *Original Copy. Plagiarism and Originality in Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Marra Giulio (1979), *Il neoclassicismo inglese. Tradizione e innovazione nel pensiero critico*, Brescia, Paideia Editrice.

Newman Gerald (1987), *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830*, New York, St. Martin's Press.

Steele Richard (1766 [1703]), *The Lying Lover*, in *The Dramatic Works of Sir Richard Steele*, London, Tonson.

Tate Nahum (1965 [1681]), *Dedication to* King Lear, in C. Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.

Authorship and the Visual Arts

The Birth of Artist-Authors and the *negozio dell'inestimabile*

Corinne Lucas Fiorato

Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3 (lucas.corinne@gmail.com)

Abstract

Already in the fourteenth century, poets such as Dante and Petrarch were unanimously considered Authors, while visual artists still had to strive hard, in the following century, to gain such recognition. While, on the one hand, they reshaped the nature of their work by bestowing a new identity on the objects they produced, on the other, they tried to redefine their relationship with their clients and patrons. If, on paper, Vasari's monumental *Vite* codified these new attitudes for the following centuries, in everyday reality they were little appreciated. The products which artists created, furthermore, were of a particular nature, in part material and in part spiritual. This fact implied a paradox, since the spiritual dimension of the art work imposed itself in the very moment in which the work became an extraordinary market object, thanks to the rise of collecting and patronage. The idea that a work of art is priceless arose precisely when they became very expensive commercial objects, acquiring an important function in the economy of the Italian States. Starting from the writings of Benvenuto Cellini and Vasari's *Ragionamenti*, this article discusses the tensions generated by the commercial exchange of the *inestimabile*.

Keywords: Art Objects, Artist-Authors, Cellini, Vasari.

1. *Introduction*

If, already by the fourteenth century, the authoritativeness of the poets who wrote in the vernacular did not pose any problems, as we can see from the biographies of Dante and Petrarch written shortly after the death of the former and, even before that of the latter (Bartuschat 2007), that of visual artists had, on the other hand, difficulty in coming to the fore. It was only in the mid-sixteenth century, with Vasari's monumental *Vite*, that the status of authorship was officially granted to those producing works of sculpture, painting, manuscript illumination or engraving. As many critics have emphasized, the fact of trying, through writing, to immortalize the artists and their works, shows the intellectual and social promotion of this socio-professional category in the sixteenth century (among others, see Wittkover and Wittkover 1963).

If a talented painter or sculptor can become famous, the fact of also using pen and ink undoubtedly increases his or her possibility of doing so, which partially explains the increasing number of artist-writers throughout the sixteenth century.

With regard to this subject, I will examine two cases: the first deals with Cellini and his *Vita*; the second with Vasari and his dialogue *Ragionamenti di Palazzo Vecchio*.

2. *Cellini*

Since Cellini was afraid, among other things, of what Vasari would write about him in the second edition of the *Vite*, between 1562 and 1566 he began to relate his own life. It is significant that one of the first episodes in which the young protagonist showed his talent is a competition whose reward was remuneration for the work of art produced. The competitors were Benvenuto and a goldsmith, his colleague Lucagnolo. The task to carry out was a goldsmith's work of art that could be freely designed and produced. Lucagnolo chose to make a big gold vase, while Benvenuto produced a piece of jewellery of small dimensions. The Pope, a patron of Lucagnolo, 'restò satisfatto benissimo, e subito lo fece pagare secondo l'uso de l'arte di tai grossi lavori'.[1] According to the author, Madonna Porzia, Benvenuto's patron, reacted in a different way:

… dicendomi che io domandassi delle fatiche mie tutto quel che mi piaceva, perché gli pareva che io meritassi tanto, che donandomi un castello, a pena gli parrebbe d'avermi sadisfatto; ma perché lei questo non poteva fare, ridendo mi disse che io domandassi quel che lei poteva fare. (Cellini 1985, vol. II, 53, 522)[2]

Cellini wanted to show that Lucagnolo had created an object whose monetary value is appraised according to the precious materials used in its making; Benvenuto, on the other hand, had carried out a work of art which is *inestimabile* in that it is spiritual (on this see Panovsky 1924, now considered a classic), it is a 'mental object', as Leonardo had written. We should note that *inestimabile* means a very high price and, above all, a price which is not regulated by 'l'uso de l'arte' (the usage of art dealings).

Further on in the text of his *Vita*, Benvenuto, by now an affirmed artist in France at the court of King Francis I, takes up the subject again when discussing the project of the *Perseo* with Duke Cosimo I de' Medici. He presents a model to Cosimo who, entirely satisfied with the proposal, all the same wants to discuss certain points. Cellini writes:

A questo fu non piccola contesa, perché il Duca sempre diceva che se ne intendeva benissimo e che sapeva appunto quello che si poteva fare. *A questo io gli dissi che l'opere mie deciderebbono quella quistione e quel suo dubbio*, e che certissimo io atterrei a Sua Eccellenzia molto più di quel che io gli promettevo, e che mi dessi pur le comodità che io potessi fare tal cosa, perché *sanza quelle comodità io non gli potrei attenere la gran cosa che io gli promettevo*. (Vol. II, 53, 522; my italics)[3]

Benvenuto, therefore, claims total freedom for the planning and realization of the project, in spite of the attempt, on the part of the patron, to influence his choices.

The personification of his future achievement ('l'opere mie deciderebbono' [my works will decide]), which becomes the subject of an action, could not express more clearly the rejection, by the sculptor, of the idea that his work produced mere objects. Moreover, critics have often underlined the fact that the artist called his works his 'figliuoli' (sons). If the work of art produced is 'inestimabile', all the same it needs important investments in order to turn out to be exceptional, as the sculptor again points out talking of 'comodità' (means). Elsewhere, and after the completion of the *Perseo*, he affirms such a necessity with a witticism that probably, already then, had become a *topos*.[4] Actually, in answer to Cellini's request for ten thousand *scudi* as payment for the *Perseo*, the Duke answered: 'le città e i gran palazzi si fanno, con dieci mila ducati' (cities and great palaces require ten thousand *ducati* for their construction). Benvenuto replied:

sua eccellenza troverebbe infiniti uomini che gli saprieno fare delle città e dei palazzi; ma che dei Persei ei non troverrebbe forse uomo al mondo, che gnele sapessi fare un tale. (Vol. II, 95, 609)[5]

The priceless value of the work of art, according to Cellini and according to the artists of the period, derives from its originality and uniqueness, repeatedly illustrated by the same artists. Neoplatonic philosophy translated into the vernacular by, among others, Marsilio Ficino, contributed to the transformation of the manufactured object into a 'work of art' in the present sense of the word.[6] According to Neoplatonism rendered into the vernacular, the work expresses the *idea* through the design (see Chastel 1996 and also Panovsky 1924). The design translates the project of the artist, intellectually conceived, which, thanks to the technical instrument, that is, to the hand, can be given a plastic form. In fact, Vasari clearly puts forward the 'mental' nature of the work of art in his Introduction to the *Vite*:

Perché il disegno, padre delle tre arti nostre architettura, scultura e pittura, procedendo dall'intelletto cava di molte cose un giudizio universale simile a una forma overo idea di tutte le cose della natura, la quale è singolarissima nelle sue misure, di qui è che non solo nei corpi umani e degl'animali, ma nelle piante ancora e nelle fabriche e sculture e pitture, cognosce la proporzione che ha il tutto con le parti e che hanno le parti fra loro e col tutto insieme; e perché da questa cognizione nasce un certo concetto e giudizio, che si forma nella mente quella tal cosa che poi espressa con le mani si chiama disegno, si può conchiudere che esso disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell'animo, e di quello che altri si è nella mente imaginato e fabricato nell'idea. (Vasari 1966-1987, vol. I, 15, 111)[7]

As numerous episodes in the autobiography show, in the narrative web of Cellini's *Vita*, drawing seems to be the magic key able to open many doors: this was already true with Andrea Cellini, one of the ancestors of the protagonist (1985, vol. I, 3), then with Benvenuto, at that time a young man, whose

drawings attracted the attention of Piero Torrigiani who asked him to work in England (I, 12). In Rome the drawings of Benvenuto introduced the young artist into the powerful Chigi family (I, 19) as well as the circle of the Roman goldsmiths (I, 28), and the ducal family at Mantua (I, 40).[8]

To be the author of a project, that is, of the planning of a work of art, ennobles both the artist and his/her work. On this point Cellini insists many times. In particular when the cardinal of Ferrara ordered Benvenuto to make him a saltcellar (II, 2). Two men of letters, one of whom, Luigi Alamanni, is well known, proposed a project. The cardinal, not knowing which one to choose, asks Benvenuto for his advice. The artist answers:

Però io ho grande amore ai miei figliuoli, che di questa mia professione partorisco: sì che 'l primo che vi mostrerrò, Monsignor reverendissimo mio padrone, sarà mia opera e mia invenzione; perché molte cose son belle da dire, che faccendole poi non s'accompagnano bene in opera. (411)[9]

Not only does Benvenuto refuse to share his own work of art with a scholar, as artists will be asked to do after the Council of Trent,[10] he even challenges this principle, explaining that an iconographic project and its realization must form part of a whole.[11] Cellini claims his intellectual space, not only in sculpture, but also in the goldsmith's art which was considered as belonging to a lower category than the fine arts and was excluded from the triad: architecture, sculpture and painting. Furthermore, there were very few, or hardly any, texts on the goldsmith's art and this trade, even though very useful to courts, had remained entirely restricted to the guilds and the sphere of the mechanical arts. Not only does Cellini enhance the value of the goldsmith's art, deeming it fit to be included in the arts of drawing, but he also wrote and published a treatise on the subject in 1568. He also tried to raise this art to the level of the other three, by proposing a coat of arms for the Accademia del Disegno in which, under the drawing of the Goddess of Nature, a line of hieroglyphs would represent the tools used by goldsmiths in their work. This proposal (which, obviously, was not accepted) aimed to give a place of honour to the goldsmith's art, making it the symbol of the Academy of all arts. Besides, the presence of tools next to the allegory of Nature also expressed the desire for a strong link between the project and its fulfilment and between intellectual and manual work.

The dialectic relationship between 'saying' and 'doing' is omnipresent in Cellini's work. It is significant that, in his *Poesie*, Cellini represents himself, symbolically and astrologically, in the shape of a crab:

voi sapete la natura del Granchio … quelle due che volgarmente si domandano bocche, sono due mane, e la sua bocca e' l'ha nel petto … rizzò in punta di piedi, e con quelli sua perversi occhi pur troppo arditamente con quelle mane in alto, e con quella sua diversa bocca si messe a parlare … (2001, 133)[12]

In this grotesque self-portrait, the inversion, a near confusion and superimposition of mouth and hands of what is said (or written) and what is done, of the spirituality of a project and the manual character of its execution is expressed.

The debate between what is said and what is done in artistic environments came to the fore, in this period, exactly because, in this context, both the arts and printing appeared to be indispensable instruments for the above principles. Some artists did not accept the fact that discourse on the arts came from those who were not 'intendenti' (experts) in the sphere of the skills under study (see, for a discussion of this issue, Lucas 1989). This is one of the reasons why artists wrote about themselves and their crafts in many biographies, autobiographies, poems, letters, treatises, dialogues, etc. Their authorial initiatives were, however, not always appreciated. It is enough to read what Vincenzo Borghini, counsellor of Cosimo I de' Medici wrote on the subject:

io mi sono un poco maravigliato di quegli uomini da bene (gli artisti), che avendo alle mani un'arte nella quale e' vagliono assai, anzi pur sono eccellenti e se ne possono maravigliosamente onorare, egli abbino cercato gloria per un'altra, nella quale egli hanno pochissima parte et hanno mal modo di onorarsene punto, hanno più presto dar cagione di ridere a chi legge quel che gli hanno scritto. (Borghini 1978, vol. III, 612)[13]

The mental reservation of certain spheres in giving voice to the artists, in particular when their writings have to do with the diverse forms of institutional authority, probably explains, in part, why many texts written by artists were not published in the authors' lifetime. The *Vita* by Cellini was printed for the first time in 1728; the *Trattato di pittura* by Leonardo in the seventeenth century; the *Rime* by Michelangelo and even the *Ragionamenti* by Vasari after the death of their authors. Cellini was able to see his *Trattati dell'oreficeria e della scultura* published, but at the price of changes and drastic cuts which we can observe when we compare the edition of the sixteenth century with the *codice marciano* of the same century, which was found and published in the nineteenth century by Carlo Milanesi.[14] The reasons why these works were not published when their authors were still alive obviously vary from one artist to the other, from one text to the other. Cellini tells us, in a passage from the *Trattati* which had been suppressed in the 1568 edition, that he himself had decided not to publish the *Vita* and to make it disappear, 'considerati poi quanto e' principi grandi hanno per male che un lor servo dolendosi dica la verità delle sue ragioni'.[15]

He found a solution for this and added: 'e tutti gli anni che io avevo servito il mio signore il duca Cosimo, quelli con gran passione, e non senza lacrime, io gli stracciai e gitta'gli al fuoco' (1857, 12, 89).[16] We know that this decision was not actually put into practice, but the ellipsis with which Cellini compares the years of his life to the pages of a book is significant. He perceives himself as an author with a double role: that of artist and writer.

Indeed, Cellini the goldsmith is probably among the first not only to consider, but also to affirm vigorously, that his works are part of himself and that they are his property. In this regard, it is enough to recall one episode. One day, in 1531, Clement VII ordered a golden chalice from him. In 1532, this work of art was not ready by the date in the contract. The Pope, displeased, wanted to collect the unfinished object, but Benvenuto vehemently refused to deliver it, saying:

se io dessi l'opera a sua Santità, io darei l'opera mia e non la sua: e per tanto l'opera mia io non gnene vo' dare: perché avendola condotta molto innanzi con le mia gran fatiche, non voglio che la vada in mano di qualche bestia ignorante, che con poca fatica me la guasti. (1985, vol. I, 60, 232)[17]

The artist considers that a part of his work cannot belong to the patron, whatever the agreement between the two. This untransferable part can only be offered, in no way bought. Cellini, by now, wants even the generosity of the artist to correspond to that of princes, because the work of an artist is not like any other work. The social statute of the work of art is, in such a way, ennobled in the same way as the social status of the famous artist tries to raise himself to the level of the cultured gentleman and courtier.

Nevertheless, deep down, in Cellini's *Vita*, various episodes are concerned with the impossibility for the maestro to carry out his works of art without the help of competent collaborators specialized in diverse fields related to his,[18] even if, on various occasions, he wants to show that, alone against everyone, only he can succeed to come out of difficult situations. It is, in fact, episodes like this that show that, in the text, a real tension existed between the Artist and the artisan-artists indispensable for the realization of a work of art.

3. *Vasari*

Other texts of famous artists try to show to what extent their visual works are not to be compared to luxurious objects and, instead, how much they are the result of a process and of intellectual reflection. Vasari is, obviously, one of these and I will foreground my main point starting from his *Ragionamenti*.

It was not unusual for a man of letters, a religious scholar, or chancellor, to act as tutor to a prince, but it was certainly very rare for an artist to assume such a function. And yet, this is the role that Vasari attributes to himself in the dialogue entitled *Ragionamenti*. We know of the existence of other antecedents: for example, the treatise on architecture by Filarete, *La Sforzinda* (1461-1464), which consists mostly of a conversation between the artist, the duke of Milan, Francesco I and Galeazzo Sforza. In the most famous section of this book, the author exposes to his prince his idea of a plan for an ideal city. Vasari, instead, offers Francesco, son of Cosimo de' Medici, a lesson on the

history of the State of Florence and Tuscany since its Roman origins, through his commentary on the frescoes painted by himself and his collaborators.

The *Ragionamenti*, the writing of which was started – if one takes into consideration some exchanges of letters – in 1558 (on this point see Tinagli Baxter 1985, 87), are a dialogue between two voices only, those of the painter-architect and Francesco, the son of Cosimo I. In 1564, the period in which the works for the rearrangement of the 'Sala grande' (called 'Salone de' Cinquecento' in the nineteenth century) were initiated, Francesco became head of State as regent on behalf of the father whom he succeeded with the title of Grand Duke of Florence and Tuscany, at the death of the latter. Published after the death of the author, the dialogue presents itself as a guided tour of Palazzo Vecchio when Vasari was in charge of radical alterations. The artist is the guide and Francesco the visitor, which might seem paradoxical for a prince who is in his own residence. The architect, painter and decorator, who is in charge of the project for the renovation of the palace, comments on the work in progress to the future head of State. At first glance he gives an account of what he is doing.

The dialogue, divided into three *Giornate*, consists, in the first two days, of comment on the architectural plans for the Palace and frescoes that cover the walls and ceilings of the private apartments of the Medici. The third day is devoted to the walls of the public spaces, i.e. the immense Sala Grande.

The whole pictorial project of the palace, although going back to mythology and, in a lesser measure, to religious themes, favours historical themes in the Sala Grande where the decorations consist of 48 frescoes centred on the history of the State of Florence and Tuscany. Therefore, in describing his work as a painter to the young prince, Vasari also has to act as a historian as well as commentator because he offers his own interpretation of history. One can, however, object that he is not the author of the project since the work of the historical and erudite research had been entrusted to two men of letters, Vincenzo Borghini and Cosimo Bartoli. Besides, it is well known that the Duke intervened personally on various points and was helped in doing so by his counsellors, Lelio Torelli and abbé Giusti (see Muccini 1995, 85).[19] In reality, the question which concerns Vasari's exact share of responsibility in the ideological choices of the representations is much discussed, but it is universally agreed that he was far from being simply an artistic instrument; it is enough to read the exchange of letters regarding the project of this hall between the artist, the Duke and Vincenzio Borghini. Above all, the *Ragionamenti* would have had no possibility of being written if Vasari had not assumed the responsibility for the works in their integrity. For this reason, Julian Kliemann rightfully argues that one can consider Vasari as an author *à part entière* of this formidable enterprise, since the initiatives and projects came from him (1993, 71). All the same, some adjustments were imposed, in particular, by the Duke and there were, sometimes, divergencies as one can

sense from the moments of discouragement, as well as sheer impatience, on the part of the painter, which appear in his correspondence (Muccini 1995, 85).[20] These, however were only the usual negotiations between artists and patrons. Nevertheless, even in its very conception, the dialogue reveals a certain ambiguity as regards the part played by each of the speakers.

Given the new ceremonial function attributed to the Sala Grande, the frescoes refer, on the one hand, to the important people of this world, (emperors, monarchs, popes, cardinals, etc.) and to their subordinates (ambassadors, etc.); on the other, to a more normal local public, the Florentine oligarchy, the representatives of the great families who participated, in a subordinate position, in the audiences, ceremonies, banquets and other festivities in that official setting. The didactic role which is generally attributed to images does not concern, therefore, in this case, an undifferentiated public. Vasari himself specifies this in a passage from the 'Giornata I' of the *Ragionamenti* when he writes that one of his aims was, through his pictorial work, to carry out research about what is 'utilissimo e necessario' (very useful and necessary) and he specifies that his paintings want to be 'come uno specchio che serviranno a chi le guarda a imparare a vivere, e massime a' principi, che tali storie non hanno a essere specchio da privati' (2007, 81).[21] The artist points out, without ambiguity, that his educational programme addresses those who govern. He confirms this by giving certain details: for example, when he states that he does his best to 'combattere co' vizi, della invidia, e della avarizia, e lussuria, e molti altri, ma ancora – he adds significantly – con le contrarietà de' giuochi della fortuna, che non son pochi'.[22] 'Fortuna', as we know, is the most tireless enemy of the Great, as the destinies of Cesare Borgia, Castruccio Castracani and many others, according to Machiavelli, teach us. According to Vasari, the subject includes also Alessandro de' Medici, now dead.

Did these frescoes, through the illustrations, stand also for a version of the *Principe*? It would be difficult to answer such a question. All the same, Vasari, 'pittore d'istoria' (painter of history), reveals his ambition to be considered also a 'storico tramite la pittura' (historian through painting). The fact that the interlocutor of his dialogue – who was 23 in 1563, when the decoration of the Sala started[23] – is launched towards the regency is eloquent in this regard; and this even more so in that this text was not supposed to remain buried and forgotten in some drawer because, in his printed works, mainly in *Le Vite*, the author announces its imminent publication.

The ordinary onlookers in the frescoes mostly consisted of eminent men from the Duchy of Florence and Tuscany whose ancestors, in various roles, had been representatives of the city's past; a group, therefore, who still remembered – individually or collectively – this Sala as the high seat of Florentine republican politics, arranged in a way, at the request of Savonarola, to welcome the members of the Great Council, the essential organ of the republican government, which he supported. Vasari's frescoes, therefore, aimed

at *re-educating*, rather than educating, the above mentioned audience. Up to 1529, this hall had, in fact, been perceived by many Florentines as the real symbolic place of freedom; and, since then, the decoration of the walls of the Sala Grande with illustrations presenting the Florentine military victories, had already been foreseen, as the cartoons of the battle of Anghiari by Leonardo and the battle of Cascina by Michelangelo can testify. But the project for the rule of the Medici by Vasari obviously had a completely different aim. One can measure the importance of the political reorientation of this place when one thinks that the Sala Grande was to be inaugurated in the autumn of 1565 to celebrate the marriage of Francesco, Vasari's interlocutor in the dialogue, to Joan of Austria.

The rearrangements required by Duke Cosimo and conceived by Vasari since 1555, therefore, mainly intended to adapt this place to its new functions as a precious container of princely magnificence. They confer a visible form to the change of regime set up in Florence from 1530 onwards.[24]

In the dialogue, Vasari, as its architect, insists many times on the fact that his reconstruction of Palazzo Vecchio consists of the exhaltation of the present through important novelties, without in any way repudiating the past. His project seems to be conceived in continuity with the past rather than in contrast with it. He deplores the absence of global coherence in the old structure of the Palazzo; he recalls 'questi fondamenti e mura vecchie, fatte a caso da que' primi cittadini, che non a pompa, ma solo per commodo loro le fabricorno' (2007, 11).[25] In this way, he acts, in the artistic field, in the same way as Cosimo I, who declared himself Prince of the Republic, acts in the political field. Then, he defines the transformations he had conceived by emphasizing his will to introduce grandeur and harmony 'in questi sassi' and in 'quelle ossa', 'in queste muraglie, le quali per esservi tante discordanze e bruttezza di stanzaccie vecchie, et in loro disunite, che mostrano la disunione de' governi passati' (10).[26] In his lexical analogies between architectural and political terminology, he increases the symbiosis between the work of the architect and that of the prince. For example, he greatly exploits the polysemy of the word *order*. In its stylistic and aesthetic meaning, this word can signify a harmonious and rational disposition; but it also has a political meaning as a synonym of institutions and it is also used in military language. Vasari often turns to analogies between his task and that of the prince which, in both cases, have consisted in building something new starting from old structures (1966-1987, 8).[27] If Vasari has in mind Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the relationships between *new orders* and *old orders* when he defines, through the transformations of the palace, the internal situation of the Duke de' Medici regarding the State of Florence,[28] he also uses *Il Principe* by the same Machiavelli to define the external situation of the Prince of Florence regarding a foreign population, as that of Pisa was considered in those days.

The similarities between architecture and politics embellish the whole dialogue and allow Vasari, through the use of *topoi* of Florentine political

discourse, to raise himself to the cultural level of the Prince and to present himself as an artist who counts among the creators of the Medici regime. It is significant that, in this dialogue, Vasari, through some apparently modest descriptive work, has the leisure and the idea to appoint himself tutor to the prince as well as historian of Tuscany through images.

The formulation which, in their written works, both Cellini and Vasari give to their activity, shows how the eminent artists of that period redefine the nature of their work; how they try to give a new identity to the products which they create and how they try to impose a new type of relationship with their patrons or customers. At the same time, it is difficult for them to obtain satisfaction and the not immediate pubblication of the *Vita* by Cellini is probably clear proof of this.

The monumental *Vite* by Vasari condenses in it the initiatives of all the artist-writers of that time and manages to codify for centuries the promotion of the artist as Author, that is, creator; creator of goods that seem material, but that in part are not, in that they contain a spiritual dimension by now clearly affirmed. Such an affirmation of the status of these works happens at the time when the arts are becoming a phenomenal market object thanks to patronage and the collection of objects. *L'art pour l'art*, that is, the idea that a work of art is *inestimabile*, an idea so well illustrated by Cellini in his autobiography, by Vasari in his *Vite* and by many other artists of the sixteenth century in their writings, sees the light just when works of art become very expensive commercial objects. One can talk of *negozio dell'inestimabile*; and, to continue with the apparent paradox, one can also point out that the artist as author of a unique work of art came into being exactly at the moment in which the techniques of engraving and other means of reproduction allow for an industrial diffusion of their works' shadow (that is, for example, their preparatory drawings) and for their diffusion.

Cellini's *Vita* and Vasari's *Le Vite* offer a classification of artistic excellence; in a certain sense, they have contributed to creating a hierarchy in the world of artistic production. They have, for centuries, put in the limelight some artists, leaving, as a result, many others aside. It is enough to recall that the *Torrentiniana* collects together about 135 biographies, but contains the names of about 1500 secondary artists or artisans who have, they as well, contributed to the progress of the arts (see Ciampaglia 2008). Behind hundreds of famous *artefici*, rendered more famous by Vasari even after their death, stand a productive mass of people, who have remained more or less obscure, but who benefit from the economic dynamism brought about by the gigantic art market. As we can see from the works of historians like Salvatore Settis, Richard Goldthwaite or Patrick Boucheron, the new image of the modern artist, as codified in the sixteenth century, hides a part of itself: that is, its important function in the mechanisms of the economy of the Italian states.

It is enough to read the correspondence of Buonarroti to have an idea of this. At first sight, this correspondence could appear to be the other side of the biographies that were written of him by Condivi or Vasari, in that behind the divine solitary Michelangelo, face to face with his figures, painted or sculptured, there appear in his letters so many workers who busy themselves and belong, more or less directly, to the artistic crafts. The letters of Buonarroti clearly highlight the entrepreneurial management of the artistic genius (Fiorato 2010). On the other hand, in his correspondence, Michelangelo shows an obsessive relationship with time, even if this is expressed in an existential way. It is not by chance that Cellini, even in his microanalysis of the verbal tenses of the *Vita*, expresses an existential relationship with temporality, grounded in the simultaneity of various actions carried out at the same time. We know that Vasari often boasted of working rapidly. It is enough to recall that for the diligence of his artistic performance, the decoration of the hall of the Chancellery in Rome was baptized 'Sala dei cento giorni' (Hall of the Hundred days). On the contrary, Leonardo claimed the right to work according to criteria which were not temporal, but rather linked to his interior rhythm, that is, his inspiration. In short, the attention given by the artists to the question of temporality is a clue, among many others, of the tension between *creation* and *production*, between an individual and a collective approach to the arts.[29]

[1] 'was completely satisfied and soon he provided for his payment according to custom for such important works'. This essay was originally written in Italian; all translations of passages from Italian primary sources are editorial.

[2] 'telling me to ask for my labour all that I desired, because it seemed to her that I deserved a lot, so much so that it seemed to her that, even giving me a castle would not be enough but, since she could not do this, laughingly, she told me to ask her what she could do'.

[3] 'There was quite a discussion because the Duke was always saying that he was a great expert and that he, therefore, knew what could be done. At this I told him that my works would put to rest this question and his doubt, and that most certainly I would hand over to his Excellency more than what I was promising him; and, therefore, to give me the means for carrying out such a project, because without those means I would not be able to create the important work I was promising him'.

[4] It is probable that Cellini adopted, for his case, a saying which was going round the artistic circles, since a different saying, but with the same meaning, concerns Titian and Charles V.

[5] 'your excellency would find an infinite number of men who would know how to construct cities and palaces, but as for Perseo, you would perhaps not find a single man in the world who could create such a one'.

[6] This transformation has been so powerful that nowadays we have almost forgotten that a masterpiece, in the Middle Ages, was simply a handmade article carried out by an artisan pupil or by an apprentice worker as an exam test.

[7] 'Because design, father of our three arts, architecture, sculpture and painting, coming as it does from the mind, obtains, for many things, a universal evaluation similar to a form, that

is, an idea, of all the things in nature, which is particular in its dimensions, not only as regards human and animal bodies, but also as regards plants and, through its being manufactured by sculpture and painting, knows the proportions that the whole has as regards the parts and that which the parts have among themselves and with the whole, and, since from this knowledge, a certain concept and evaluation is born which forms, in the mind, that certain thing that, when expressed by hand, is called design, one can conclude that this design is only an apparent expression and declaration of the concept that one has in one's soul, and of what others have imagined in their mind and manufactured through an idea'.

[8] According to M.L. Altieri Biagi (1972), Cellini has a practical, not a conceptual idea of drawing. If the plan turns out to be convincing when we consider all the works written by Cellini (*Vita*, *Trattati*, *Rime*), it would be better to tone it down when we examine exclusively his autobiography. Indeed, the sculptor and goldsmith, used to conceive his works in full relief, places more value particularly on the small models that allow him to plan a future work in a three dimensional way. On this, see Dubard de Gaillarbois (2009). See also, in the same volume, the article by T. Golsenne, that speaks about the 'pensiero volumetrico' (volumetric thought) of Cellini (2009, 9).

[9] 'I love my children very much and I give birth to them through my profession: so, the first that I shall show you, reverend Monsignor, will be my work of art and invented by me; because many things are beautiful in words, but it does not follow that they come out well when finished'.

[10] It is apt, though, to recall that Leon Battista Alberti, already in his 1435 treatise on drawing, aspired to the autonomy of the painter's invention, considering that he should be a man of culture and a man of letters.

[11] In Giovan Andrea Gilio's dialogue, some speakers express the need to get an artist to work under the intellectual guidance of a scholar: 'Tutto questo [l'errore] procede de l'ignoranza de' pittori, che, se fussero letterati, non errarebbono in cose così chiare e manifeste'. (All this [the mistake] is the result of the ignorance of the painters who, if they were men of letters, would not make such manifest mistakes. [1961, II, 33]).

[12] From 'Sogno fatto in nel sonnellin d'oro': 'you know the nature of the Crab … those two that are vulgarly thought to be mouths, are two hands, and his mouth is on his chest… he raised himself up on the tip of his feet, and with his perverse bold eyes, with his hands held up high, and with his other mouth, he started to talk'.

[13] 'I was a bit astonished by those gentlemen (the artists) who, possessing an art in which they are good, in fact they are excellent and can feel marvellously honoured, they search for glory in another art in which they play a very small part and cannot be honoured for it, but can be cause of laughter for those who read what they have written'.

[14] See the comparative analysis of the *Trattati* published in 1568 and the Marciana manuscript discussed by C. Milanesi (1857, XIV-XVII).

[15] 'considering how important princes take badly the fact that one of their servants, regretfully, tells the truth about his motives'.

[16] 'and all the years that I had served my Lord the Duke Cosimo, with great passion and not without tears, I tore up and threw into the fire'.

[17] 'if I gave the work of art to his Holiness, I would give him my work, not his: and so, I do not want to give you my work of art: because, having, with great fatigue, taken it a long way forward, I do not want it to fall in the hands of some ignorant beast, who with little fatigue, ruins it'.

[18] For example in recruiting in Paris competent collaborators and in the non positive exchanges with some 'vecchioni di quei maestri di Parigi' (old masters in Paris), vol. II, 18, 449, or else in the episode of the fusion of the *Perseo* (vol. II, 75, 567).

[19] The main artists who collaborated with Vasari were Battista Naldini, Giovanni Stradano and Jacopo Zucchi. Their portraits can be seen, together with that of Vasari, in the foreground of the fresco called Trionfo della guerra di Siena, in the Sala Grande.

[20] For example, one perceives a certain impatience regarding Cosimo's needs when Vasari writes to him saying: 'L'istoria che mancava alla sala di 39 [storie] che con l'ordine che quella approvò il Poggio [Poggio a Caiano] son fatte tutte, e l'ultima manca, che per finire di abbozzarla di colori vo sollecitando … e quantunque il Prior degli Innocenti [Borghini] abbi impazzato con M. Lelio [Torelli] e altri dotti sopra quel che V.E.I. desiderava, credo che forse avrà trovato il bisogno'. (The story that was missing in the Sala of 39 [stories] that, with the order accepted by Poggio [Poggio a Caiano] are all done, except for the last which is missing and for which I am requesting you for its colour sketching … and although the Prior of the Innocents [Borghini] was crazy about M. Lelio [Torelli] and other scholars ignoring what your Illustrious Excellence desired, I think that perhaps he may need you).

[21] 'Like a mirror so that they can help those who look at them to learn how to live, according to rules and principles, because such stories should not be private mirrors'. He also says: 'Io ho dipinto, Signor Principe mio, la vita d'Ercole in queste camere … e mi sono sempre ito immaginando che questi onorati pensieri e fatiche nascano, e tutto il giorno accaggiano a' principi grandi, i quali si affaticano a ogni ora, mentre vivono, governando per combattere co' vizi della invidia e della avarizia e lussuria e molti altri, ma ancora con le contrarietà de' giuochi della fortuna, che non son pochi. Dove infinitamente sono lodati coloro che con la virtù e valore dell'animo loro gli vincono, che ciò causa a questo mio pensiero un altro intendimento, il quale in questa mia opera è utilissimo e necessario, atteso che la vita di questo dio terrestre, e i sua gran fatti e le battaglie e le avversità che egli ebbe sono in queste mie pitture come uno specchio che serviranno a chi le guarda a imparare a vivere, e massime a' principi, che tali storie non hanno a essere specchio da privati'. (My Prince, I have painted the life of Hercules in these rooms … and I have always imagined that these honourable thoughts and hard work are born for, and all day long echo the great princes, who, at every hour, during their life, are busy governing to fight against the vices of envy, avarice, lust and many other vices, but also against the opposition of the games of fortune, which are many. Where those who with the virtue and the bravery of their hearts win over them are praised, and this gives another intention to my thought, which, in this work of mine is very useful and necessary, seeing that the life of this earthly god, as well as his great feats, battles and adversities, are present in these paintings of mine as a mirror so that they can serve who looks at them as a lesson on how to live according to maxims and principles, so that these stories do not serves only as a private mirror).

[22] See also the text in the preceeding note; 'fight the vices of envy, avarice, lust and many others, but again to fight also the misfortunes of the games of fortune, which are not few'.

[23] The contents of the dialogue show that the virtual visit takes place when the works of internal decoration of the palace were almost finished.

[24] It is, moreover, significant that, since 1542, Cosimo had ordered that the works of the architectural reorganization of the palace were to start with the 'gran salone'. The sculptor Baccio Bandinelli and the architect Battista del Tasso were the first artists chosen by the prince to renew the Palazzo. Vasari was their successor and, considering that the work already done was not grandiose enough, he had the roof done again, in particular, he had the ceiling of the Sala Grande built higher.

[25] 'these foundations and old walls built haphazardly by those first citizens, who built them for their own comfort and not for pomp'.

[26] 'These stones'; 'those bones'; 'these walls, being so discordant and having so many ugly and old rooms with no unity among them, show the lack of union of the past governments'.

[27] 'Anzi, si come subito che egli fu creato duca di questa repubblica conservò le leggi vecchie e sopra quelle altre ne fondò risguardanti il benessere de' suoi cittadini, così per lo medesimo rispetto queste mura vecchie sconsertate e scomposte volle ridurre con ordine e misura ponendovi, come vedete, questi vaghi ornamenti per far conoscere, anche nelle cose difficili et imperfette, che ha saputo usare la facilità e la perfezione et il buono uso dell'architettura; così come anche ha fatto nel modo del governo della città e del dominio. E merita,

Signor Principe mio, più lode chi trova un corpo d'una fabbrica disunita e da molte volontà fatto a caso e per uso di più famiglie, et alto di piani e bassi e con buona salita di scale piane per a' cavalli et a piè, e lo riduca senza rovinare molto e unito e capace alla comodità d'un principe, capo d'una repubblica, facendo un vecchio diventare giovane e un morto vivo, che sono i miracoli che fanno conoscere alle genti che cosa sia dall'impossibile al possibile e dal falso al vero, perché ogni ingegno mediocre arebbe saputo di nuovo fare qualcosa e saria stato bene, ma il racconciar le cose guaste senza rovina, in questo consiste maggiore ingegno'. (In fact, as soon as he was given the title of Duke of this Republic, he kept the old laws and issued others which regarded the well being of his citizens; in the same way, with the same respect, he wanted to give order and proportion to these old flaking and dismantled walls, placing, as you can see, these vague ornaments to make known that, even in difficult and imperfect things, he knew how to use the facility, the perfection and put architecture to good use; as he has done in his way of governing the city and his dominion. My Prince deserves more praise he who finds the skeleton of an uncoordinated building built by many people of good will for the use of families, with low and high floors and a good flight of stairs both for horses and people to climb and turns it, without causing ruin, into an organized and capacious place fit for the commodities than a prince, head of a Republic, turning an old man into a young one and a dead person into someone alive; these are the miracles which make people know what can be changed from impossible to possible, from false to true, because any person of mediocre intelligence would be able to construct something new which would turn out to be good, but real intelligence lies in repairing something damaged without ruining it).

[28] Machiavelli gives the following title to chapter 1, 25 of the *Discorsi*: 'Chi vuole riformare uno stato anticato in una città libera, ritenga almeno l'ombra de' modi antichi'. (Who wants to change an old state into a free state, must retain, at least, the shadow of old ways); and in the same chapter he points out: 'E questo si debbe osservare da tutti coloro che vogliono scancellare un antico vivere in una città, e ridurla a uno vivere nuovo e libero: perché alterando le cose nuove le menti degli uomini, ti debbi ingegnare che quelle alterazioni ritenghino più dell'antico sia possibile; e se i magistrati variano e di numero e d'autorità e di tempo, degli antichi che almeno ritenghino il nome'. (And this should be observed by all those who want to cancel an old way of living in a city, and reduce it to a new and free way of life: because when altering into new things and into men's new ways of thinking, one must do one's best for these alterations to retain as much as possible the old ways; and if the magistrates vary in number, authority and time, from the old ones, at least they should retain their name). Machiavelli 1968, vol. I, 25, 192-193.

[29] Another element of tension that should be studied, among others, in Vasari's *Vite*, is the relationship between the artist and his work. Sometimes it is the work that defines the biographical profile of a person; at times, instead, it is the contrary: the personality of the artist has an influence on the perception that Vasari has of the work of art. In this regard, see Lucas (2008).

Works Cited

Alberti L.B. (1547), *La pittura di Leonbattista Alberti tradotta per M. Lodovico Domenichi*, Vinegia, Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari.

Altieri Biagi M.L. (1972), 'La *Vita* del Cellini. Temi, Termini, Sintagmi', Roma, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 17-42.

Bartuschat Johannes (2007), *Les Vies de Dante, Pétrarque et Boccace en Italie (XIVe-XVe siècles). Contribution à l'histoire du genre biographique*, Ravenna, Longo.

Borghini Vincenzo (1978 [undated codex; c. end of sixteenth century]), 'Selva di notizie', in P. Barocchi, a cura di, *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, vol. III, Torino, Einaudi.

Cellini Benvenuto (1857 [1568]), *I trattati dell'oreficeria e della scultura di Benvenuto Cellini, novamente messi alle stampe secondo la originale dettatura del codice Marciano*, ed. by C. Milanesi, Firenze, Le Monnier.

Cellini Benvenuto (2001 [1806-1811]), *Rime*, ed. by V. Gatto, Roma, Archivio Guido Izzi.

Cellini Benvenuto (1985 [1728]), *Vita*, ed. by E. Camesasca, Milano, Rizzoli.

Chastel André (1996), *Marsile Ficin et l'art*, Genève, Droz.

Ciampaglia Margherita (2008), *Il libro di bottega segnato 'A' di Bernardo di Stefano Rosselli (15 giugno 1475-3 marzo 1500). Pittura a Firenze nel secondo Quattrocento*, unpublished PhD dissertation in Storia e Conservazione dell'Oggetto d'Arte e d'Architettura; tutor Prof. Alessandro Guidotti, Università degli Studi di Roma Tre.

Dubard de Gaillarbois Frédérique (2009), 'Le cagnaccio et le botolo: dialogue d'artistes ou portrait croisé de Cellini et de Vasari', in C. Lucas Fiorato and F. Dubard de Gaillarbois, eds.

Fiorato A.C. (2010), 'Introduction' in Michel-Ange, *Carteggio/Correspondance*, Édition bilingue italien-français, texte critique italien de G. Poggi, P. Barocchi, and R. Ristori, Présentation, traduction et notes de A.C. Fiorato, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2 volumes.

Gilio G.A. (1961 [1564]), 'Dialogo degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie', in P. Barocchi, ed., *Trattati d'arte del Cinquecento: fra manierismo e Controriforma*, vol. II, Bari, Laterza.

Golsenne Thomas (2009), 'L'homme qui sculptait à coups de canons. La pensée ornementale de Cellini', in C. Lucas Fiorato and F. Dubard de Gaillarbois, eds.

Kliemann Julian (1993), *Gesta dipinte. La grande decorazione nelle dimore italiane dal Quattrocento al Seicento*, Firenze, Silvana Editoriale.

Lucas Fiorato Corinne and Frédérique Dubard de Gaillarbois, eds (2009), *Cellini a tutto tondo, Actes de la Journée d'Etude organisée par le CIRRI/LECEMO de l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle*, l'ELCI (EA 1496) de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne et l'ENS de Paris (17 octobre 2009), *Chroniques italiennes*, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, série WEB n. 16.

Lucas Corinne (1989), 'L'artiste et l'écriture : il dire e il fare dans les écrits de Cellini', in A.C. Fiorato, ed., *Culture et professions en Italie (XVe-XVIIe siècles)*, *Cahiers de la Renaissance italienne* 2, Paris, Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 67-97.

Lucas Corinne (2008), 'Biographies vasariennes: des vies d'artistes à l'image de leurs œuvres', in C. Sensi, ed., *Per Marziano Guglielminetti dagli amici di Francia*, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 131-152.

Machiavelli Niccolò (1968), *Il Principe e Discorsi*, ed. by S. Bertelli, Milano, Feltrinelli.

Milanesi Carlo, ed. (1857), Benvenuto Cellini, *I trattati dell'oreficeria e della scultura di Benvenuto Cellini, novamente messi alle stampe secondo la originale dettatura del codice Marciano*, Firenze, Le Monnier.

Muccini Ugo (1995), *Palazzo Vecchio*, Firenze, Le Lettere.

Panofsky Erwin (1924), *Idea*, Leipzig and Berlin, G.B. Teubner.

Tinagli Baxter Paola (1985), 'Rileggendo i *Ragionamenti*', in G.C. Garfagnini, ed. by, *Giorgio Vasari, tra decorazione ambientale e storiografia artistica, Convegno di Studi* (Arezzo, 1981), Firenze, Olschki.

Vasari Giorgio (2007 [1588]), *Ragionamenti di Palazzo Vecchio/Entretiens du Palazzo Vecchio*; Introduction, translation and notes by R. Le Mollé; Text established by D. Canfora, Paris, Les Belles Lettres.

Vasari Giorgio (1966-1987), *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori: nelle redazioni del 1550 et 1568*; ed. by R. Bettarini, secular commentaries and indexes by P. Barocchi, Firenze, Sansoni (the first three volumes) and S.P.E.S. the following.

Wittkower Rudolf and Margot Wittkower (1963), *Born under Saturn*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

Authors on Authorship*

1. *Theatre and Drama*

Luigi Pirandello, from 'Prefazione', in *Sei personaggi in cerca di autore* ('Preface' in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*), 1925

What author will ever be able to say how and why a character was born in his fantasy? The mystery of artistic creation is like the mystery of birth. A woman who loves may wish to become a mother; but the desire alone, however intense, cannot suffice. One day she will find herself a mother without any precise consciousness when it began. In the same way an artist, while living, absorbs many germs of life and can never say how and why, at a given moment, one of these vital germs has implanted itself into his fantasy to become a living creature on a plane of life superior to that of the ephemeral daily existence.

   I can only say that, without being aware that I had sought them out, I found before me, alive – you could touch them and even hear them breathe – the six characters that you now see on the stage. And they were waiting there, in my presence, each with his secret torment and all bound together by the one common origin and mutual weaving of their cases, waiting for me to let them enter the world of art, constructing from their persons, their passions and their affairs a novel, a play, or at least a story.

   Born alive, they wished to live.

…

Creatures of my spirit, those six were already living a life which was their own and no longer mine, a life which it was not any more in my power to deny them.

   So much so that, while I persisted in my desire to drive them out of my mind, they, almost completely separated from every narrative support, characters from a novel miraculously rising from the pages of the book which contained them, went on living on their own; they chose certain moments of the day to reappear before me in the loneliness of my study and coming – now one, now the other, now two together – tempted me and proposed that I represented or described this scene or that, the effects that could be drawn from them, the new interest which a certain unusual situation could raise and so forth.

…

Why not, I then said to myself, present this highly new fact of an author who refuses to let some characters live though they have been born alive in his fantasy and the case of these characters who, having acquired life in their

veins, do not accept to remain excluded from the world of art? They are now separated from me; they have a life of their own; have acquired voice and movement; have indeed by themselves – in this struggle for existence that they have had to wage with me – already become dramatic characters, characters that can move and talk on their own initiative; already see themselves as such; have learned to defend themselves against me and so will know how to defend themselves against others. And so let them go where dramatic characters go to become living characters: on a stage. And let us see what will happen.

That's what I did. And, naturally, it happened what it had to happen: a mixture of tragic and comic, of fantastic and realistic, in a humorous situation that was altogether new and infinitely complex; a drama which, by itself and through its characters who, breathing speaking moving, carry that drama inwardly, seeks at all costs to be represented.

…

What I wanted was to represent six characters in search of an author. Their drama cannot be represented – precisely because the author whom they seek is missing. What is represented, instead, is the comedy of their vain attempt with all that it contains of tragedy because of the fact that these six characters have been rejected.

But can one represent characters while rejecting them? Obviously, to represent them one needs, on the contrary, to receive them into one's own fantasy and then express them. And I have indeed accepted and realized these six characters: I have, however, accepted and realized them as rejected: in search of another author.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Todo y nada', in *El hacedor* ('Everything and Nothing', in *The Maker*), 1960

There was no one in him; behind his face (which even through the bad paintings of those times resembles no other face) and his words, which were copious, fantastic and restless, there was only a bit of coldness, a dream dreamt by no one. At first he thought that all people were like him, but the surprise of a friend to whom he had begun to comment on this emptiness showed him his error and made him feel since then that individuals should not differ from their species. At times he thought that in books there was a cure for his illness and thus he learned the small Latin and less Greek a contemporary would speak of; later he considered that in an elementary rite of humanity might well be found what he sought and, during a long June afternoon, let himself be initiated by Anne Hathaway. At the age of twenty-odd years he went to London. Instinctively, he had already trained for the habit of simulating that he was someone, so that his condition as no one would not be discovered; in London he found the profession to which he was predestined, that of the actor

who, on a stage, plays at being another before a gathering of people who play at taking him for that other person. His histrionic tasks brought him a special satisfaction, perhaps the first he experienced; but, once the last line had been applauded and the last corpse withdrawn from the stage, the hated flavour of unreality returned to him. He ceased to be Ferrex or Tamburlaine and became no one again. Hounded, he began to imagine other heroes and other tragic fables. Thus, while his body fulfilled its destiny as body in the brothels and taverns of London, the soul that inhabited it was Caesar, who disregards the soothsayer's admonition, and Juliet who abhors the lark, and Macbeth, who converses on the plain with the witches who are also Fates. No one has ever been so many men as this man who, like the Egyptian Proteus, could exhaust all the semblances of being. At times he left a confession in some corner of his work, certain that it would not be deciphered; Richard affirms that in his person he plays the part of many and Iago claims with strange words *I am not what I am*. The fundamental identity of existing, dreaming and representing inspired famous passages of his.

For twenty years he persisted in that controlled hallucination, but one morning he was gripped by the revulsion and the horror of being so many kings who die by the sword and so many unfortunate lovers who converge, diverge and melodiously agonize. That very day he decided to sell his theatre. Within a week he returned to his native village, where he recovered the trees and river of his childhood and did not connect them to the others his muse had celebrated, illustrious with mythological allusions and Latin sounds. He had to be someone; he was a retired impresario who had made a fortune and is interested in loans, litigations and petty usury. In this character he dictated the arid testament known to us, from which he deliberately excluded all traces of pathos or literature. His friends from London would visit him in his retreat and for them he would resume his role as poet.

History adds that, before or after dying, he found himself in the presence of God and told Him: *I, who have been so many men in vain, want to be one and myself*. The voice of the Lord answered from a whirl: *Neither am I anyone; I dreamt the world as you dreamt your work, my Shakespeare, and among the forms of my dream are you, who like myself are many and no one.*

Eugenio Montale, 'Le storie letterarie', in *Quaderno di quattro anni* ('Literary Histories', in *Four Years' Copybook*), 1977

I have ever been of the opinion
that Shakespeare was a cooperative.
That for his buffooneries he availed himself
of buskers equal to him in genius
but indifferent to everything except money.

William Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV*, 1600 [?], Epilogue

First my fear, then my curtsy, last my speech
My fear, is your displeasure; my curtsy, my duty; and my speech, to beg your
pardons. If you look for a good speech now, you undo me; for what I have to
say is of mine own making; and what, indeed, I should say will, I doubt, prove
mine own marring. But to the purpose, and so to the venture. Be it known
to you, as it is very well, I was lately here in the end of a displeasing play, to
pray your patience for it and to promise you a better. I meant, indeed, to pay
you with this; which, if like an ill venture it come unluckily home, I break,
and you, my gentle creditors, lose. Here I promis'd you I would be, and here
I commit my body to your mercies. Bate me some, and I will pay you some,
and, as most debtors do, promise you infinitely; and so I kneel down before
you – but, indeed, to pray for the Queen.

    If my tongue cannot entreat you to acquit me, will you command me to use
my legs? And yet that were but light payment – to dance out of your debt. But a
good conscience will make any possible satisfaction, and so would I. All the gentle-
women here have forgiven me. If the gentlemen will not, then the gentlemen do
not agree with the gentlewomen, which was never seen before in such an assembly.

    One word more, I beseech you. If you be not too much cloy'd with fat
meat, our humble author will continue the story, with Sir John in it, and make
you merry with fair Katherine of France; where, for anything I know, Falstaff
shall die of a sweat, unless already a be killed with your hard opinions; for
Oldcastle died a martyr and this is not the man. My tongue is weary; when
my legs are too, I will bid you good night.

Carlo Goldoni, from *Mémoirs*, 1787

While I worked on certain old repertoires of the Italian Comedy and only
produced half-written and half-impromptu plays, they let me enjoy the ap-
plause of the audience, but as soon as I professed myself an author, an inven-
tor, a poet, spirits awoke from their lethargy and made me the object of their
attention and criticism.

    My fellow-countrymen, who had been used for such a long time to trivial
farces and to gigantic representations, became all of a sudden rigorous censors
of my productions; they made the names of Aristotle, Horace and Castelvetro
resound in intellectual circles and my works became the news of the day.
…
I needed to clear out and I went to Bologna, to join my players.

    As soon as I arrived in this city, I went into a coffee-house which is opposite
the church of San Petronio; I come in, no one recognises me; after a few minutes
a local gentleman arrives and, addressing a table where five or six people he knows

are sitting, tells them in good Bolognese: 'Do you know the news, my friends?'
He is asked what the news is. 'The news is that Goldoni is arriving.' 'I don't care',
one says, 'What is it to me?' another adds. The third answers more honestly: 'I
would be pleased to see him …'; 'Indeed, a fine thing to see', the first two say. 'He
is', the other answers, 'the author of these fine comedies …' He is interrupted by
a man who had not spoken up till then and who cries in a loud voice: 'Oh, yes,
a great author! A magnificent author who has disposed of the masks and stock
characters, who has spoiled Comedy …' At this point, Doctor Fiume arrives and
says, embracing me: 'Ah, my dear Goldoni, you are very welcome!' The one who
had expressed the wish to know me came close to me and the others slipped off.
…
I got into my stagecoach, resumed my route and, at night, arrived in Bolo-
gna. It was in this city, the mother of sciences and the Athens of Italy, that
a few years before they had complained about the fact that my reformation
tended to suppress the four stock characters of the Italian *Commedia*. People
in Bologna were more than others keen on that genre of comedies. There
were, among them, people of merit who delighted in composing *scenari* and
some very clever citizens played them skillfully and highly pleased the city.

The admirers of the old *Commedie*, seeing that the new comedy was rapidly
progressing, started to shout everywhere that it was unworthy of an Italian to
make an attempt against a genre of comedies in which Italy had excelled and
that no other nation had been able to imitate. But the thing which most highly
shocked those riotous spirits was the fact that my system seemed to threaten the
suppression of masks and stock characters. They said that those characters had
delighted Italy for two hundred years and that Italy should not be deprived of a
form of humour which she had invented and which she had so well promoted.
…
The mask cannot but damage the actor's action, either in representing joy or in
representing sorrow; whether he is in love, surly or agreeable, it is always the same
leather which is shown; he can gesture and change the tone of his voice as much as
he likes, but he will never be able to communicate, through the traits of his face,
which are the heart's interpreters, the different passions which agitate his soul.

Masks, in Greek and Roman theatre, were a sort of mouthpiece which
had been imagined so that the characters might be distinguished and heard
in the vast extension of the amphitheatre. Passions and feelings were not, in
those times, as refined as is required today; today an actor must have a soul
and a soul behind a mask is like the fire under the ashes.

This is why I had devised the project to reform the masks of the Italian
Commedia and replace farces with comedies.

But complaints increased day by day: the two parties had become disgusting
to me, and so I tried to please both. I complied to produce some plays based on
scenari, but did not stop staging my comedies of character. I used the masks in
the first and turned to noble and interesting comicity in the second; so all took

their own part of pleasure and, with time and patience, I made them all agree and I had the satisfaction of seeing myself authorized to follow my own taste which became, in a few years, the most general and the most popular in Italy.

2. *Poetry*

Isabella Andreini, *Rime di Isabella Andreini Padovana. Comica Gelosa* (*Rhymes of Isabella Andreini from Padua. Comica Gelosa*), 1601

Sonetto Primo

S'alcun fia mai, che i versi miei negletti
   Legga, non creda à questi finti ardori;
   Che ne le Scene imaginati amori
   Vsa à trattar con non leali affetti:
Con bugiardi non men con finti detti
   De le Muse spiegai gli alti furori:
   Talhor piangendo i falsi miei dolori,
   Talhor cantando i falsi miei diletti;
E come ne' Teatri hor Donna, ed hora
   Huom fei rappresentando in vario stile
   Quanto volle insegnar Natura, ed Arte.
Così la stella mia seguendo ancora
   Di fuggitiua età nel verde Aprile
   Vergai con vario stil ben mille carte.

[Should ever anyone my neglected lines read,/Don't believe these feigned passions,/for imagined loves on the Scene/I am used to playing with emotions /false no less than feigned words./Of the Muses the lofty frenzy/I showed sometimes bewailing/my untrue pains sometimes singing my untrue delights./ And, as in Theatres, in varied style,/now as Woman, now as Man,/I have played what Nature and Art would instruct/So once more following my star/ Of fleeting age in April green /did write in varied style well a thousand sheets.]

Sir Philip Sidney, from *The Defence of Poesie*, 1595

Among the Romans a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a Diuiner, Fore-seer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned wordes, *Vaticinium* & *Vaticinari,* is manifest; so heauenly a title did that excellent people bestow vpō this heart-rauishing knowledge. And so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chaunceable hitting vppon any such verses, great fore-tokens of their following fortunes were placed. VVhereupon grew the worde of *Sortes*

Virgilianæ, when by suddaine opening *Virgil's* booke, they lighted vpon any verse of hys making, whereof the histories of the Emperors liues are full: as of *Albinus,* the Gouernour of our Iland, who in his childe-hoode mette with this verse,

Arma amens capio, nec sat rationis in armis.

And in his age performed it, which although it were a very vaine, and godles superstition, as also it was to think that spirits were commaunded by such verses, whereupon this word charmes, deriued of *Carmina,* commeth, so yet serueth it to shew the great reuerence those wits were helde in. And altogether not without ground, since both the oracles of *Delphos* and *Sibyllas* prophecies, were wholly deliuered in verses. For that same exquisite obseruing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to haue some dyuine force in it. And may not I presume a little further, to shew the reasonablenes of this word *Vates*? And say that the holy *Dauids* Psalmes are a diuine Poem?

…

Poetrie is of all humane learning the most auncient, & and of most fatherly antiquitie, as frõ whence other learnings haue taken theyr beginnings: sith it is so uniuersall that no learned Nation dooth despise it, nor no barbarous Nation is without it: sith both Roman & Greek gaue diuine names vnto it: the one of prophecying, the other of making. And that indeede, that name of making is fit for him; considering, that where as other Arts retaine themselues within their subject, and receiue, as it were, their beeing from it: the Poet onely bringeth his owne stuffe, and dooth not learne a conceite out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceite: Sith neither his description, nor his ende, contayneth any euill, the thing described cannot be euil: Sith his effects be so good as to teach goodnes, and to delight the learners: Sith therein, (namely in morall doctrine, the chiefe of all knowledges,) hee dooth not onely farre passe the Historian, but for instructing, is well nigh comparable to the Philosopher, & for mouing, leaueth him behind him: Sith the holy scripture (wherein there is no vncleannes) hath whole parts in it poeticall. And that euen our Sauiour Christ vouchsafed, to vse the flowers of it: Sith all his kindes are not onlie in their vnited formes, but in their seuered dissections fully commendable, I think, (& think I thinke rightly,) the Lawrell crowne appointed for tryumphing Captaines, doth worthily (of all other learnings) honor the Poets tryumph.

Novalis, from *Fragmente und Studien* (*Fragments and Studies*), 1799-1800; fragment 671

The feeling for poetry has much to do with the feeling for mysticism. It is the sense of the original, the personal, the unknown, the uncanny, of what must

be revealed, of the fortuitous-necessary. It represents what is unrepresentable. It sees the invisible, feels what cannot be felt, etc. The criticism of poetry is an absurdity. It is even difficult to distinguish – and it is the only possible distinction – what is poetry and what is not. The poet is indeed deprived of all senses; but in him is everything: he represents, in the fullest sense, the subject-object – soul and world. Hence the infinity of good poetry, the eternity. The sense of poetry is much akin to that of prophecy and, more generally, to the religious sense, the sense of the diviner. The poet orders, unites, selects, invents, and he himself cannot understand why it is exactly thus and not otherwise.

Hugo von Hofmannstahl, from 'Der Dichter und diese Zeit' ('The poet and this time'), 1906

… the poet is where he does not appear to be and is always in a place which is different from where we think he is. Strangely, he lives in the house of time, under the stairs, where everyone passes by but no one sees him. He is like the pilgrim prince of the old legend, who was enjoined to leave his princely home, his wife and children and journey to the Holy Land; and he went back, but before he crossed the threshold, he was enjoined to enter his home under the guise of an unknown beggar and live in the place which the servants would assign him. The servants showed him the below stairs area, where at nights the dog sleeps. And there he lives and hears and sees his wife, his brothers, his children when they go up and down the stairs and speak of him as of one who has disappeared, even a dead man, and weep for him. But he is enjoined not to reveal himself and so he lives unacknowledged under the stairs of his own home. …
He is here and no one is obliged to notice his presence. He is here and silently visits one place and another and is nothing else than eyes and ears and assumes the colour of the things he sees. He is the spectator – no, the hidden companion, the silent brother of all things and the change of his colour is an inner torment; because he suffers for everything and, by suffering, rejoices in everything. This faculty to rejoice by suffering is the whole content of his life. He suffers for feeling things so intensely, suffers for a single thing and all things together; suffers for their singularity and connection; for the lofty and the ordinary; the sublime and vulgar; he suffers for their situations and thoughts; he suffers for pure mental objects, ghosts, and the immaterial parturitions of time, as though they were human beings. Because for him human beings, things, thoughts and dreams are one and the same thing: he only knows the shows which surface before him, which make him suffer and so make him happy. He sees and feels; his way of knowing is modulated like his way of feeling, his way of feeling is as penetrating as his way of knowing. He can omit nothing. He is not allowed to shut his eyes over any being, any thing, any ghost, any shadow of the human brain.

Eugenio Montale, 'Le parole', in *Satura* II, 1971

Words
if they awake again
reject the site
most propitious, the Fabriano
paper, the China
ink, the folder
leather or velvet
which keeps them secret;
words
when they wake up
lie down on the back
of invoices, on the margins
of lottery bills,
on wedding
or funeral cards;
words
only ask
the tangle of keys
on the Olivetti portable,
the dark of the waistcoat pocket, the bottom
of the wastebasket, there crumpled
in pellets;
words
are not at all happy
to be thrown out
like trollops and greeted
with cheers of applause
and disgrace;
words
like better the sleep
in the bottle than the derision
of being read, sold
embalmed, freezed;
words
belong to everyone and vainly
hide themselves in dictionaries
because there is always a rogue
who digs out the truffles,
the most fetid and rare;
words
after an eternal wait

renounce the hope
of being pronounced
once and for all
and then die
with their possessor.

Eugenio Montale, 'Non chiederci la parola' ('Don't ask us for the word'), in *Ossi di seppia* (*Cuttlefish Bones*), 1925

Don't ask us for the word which squares on every side
our formless spirit, and in letters of fire
proclaims it and glistens like a crocus
lost in the middle of a dusty field.

Ah the man who walks confident,
to others and himself a friend,
uncaring of his shadow which
high summer prints on the peeling wall!

Don't ask us for the formula that can open worlds,
just some crooked syllable and dry like a branch.
This only we can tell you today,
what we are *not*, what we do *not* want.

3. *The Artist and the Toil of Creation*

Michelangelo Buonarroti on the strain of painting the Sistina ceiling (1509-1510)

I' ho già fatto un gozzo in questo stento,
come fa l'acqua a' gatti in Lombardia
o ver d'altro paese che si sia
c'a forza 'l ventre appicca sotto 'l mento.
   La barba al cielo, e la memoria sento
in sullo scrigno, e 'l petto fo d'arpia,
e 'l pennel sopra 'l viso tuttavia
mel fa, gocciando, un ricco pavimento.
   E' lombi entrati mi son nella peccia,
e fo del cul per contrapeso groppa,
e' passi senza gli occhi muovo invano.
   Dinanzi mi s'allunga la corteccia,
e per piegarsi adietro si ragroppa,
e tendomi com'arco sorïano.

> Però fallace e strano
surge il iudizio che la mente porta,
ché mal si tra' per cerbottana torta.
>   La mia pittura morta
difendi orma', Giovanni, e 'l mio onore,
non sendo in loco bon, né io pittore.

[This heavy strain has given me a goitre/as water does to cats in Lombardy/or any other country whatsoever/forcing my belly tugged under my chin./Beard toward the sky, and my head I feel/against my hump, breast pigeoned like a harpy's,/the brush above drips ever on my face/and makes my front a richly-marbled floor./My loins I feel have sunk inside my gut,/my bum for counterpoise I've tucked tight in,/my strides I cannot see and walk in vain./In front of me my skin is all extended,/behind for bending it's all creased and wrinkled/and I am stretchéd like a Syrian bow./So, vain and strange/rises the judgement which my mind sets forth/for a twisted blowpipe badly shoots./My poor dead art/defend, Giovanni, and my honour too,/for I am badly set and cannot paint.]

Gustave Flaubert, from a letter to Louise Colet, written on December 23, 1853, at 2 AM

I must really love you if I write to you tonight, for I am exhausted. I have an iron helmet on my head. Since yesterday at two o'clock in the afternoon, except for about twenty-five minutes for dinner, I have been writing about Bovary. I am in the midst of a love scene: I am sweating and my throat is tight. This has been one of the rare days of my life passed in illusion, completely, from beginning to end. At six o'clock this evening, as I was writing the word 'hysterics,' I was so swept away, was bellowing so loudly and feeling so deeply what my little Bovary was going through, that I was afraid of having hysterics myself. I got up from my table and opened the window to calm myself. My head was spinning. Now I have great pains in my knees, in my back and in my head. I feel like a man who has fucked too much (forgive the expression), that is, in a kind of rapturous lassitude. And, since I am in the midst of love-making, it is only proper that I should not fall asleep before sending you a caress, a kiss, and whatever thoughts are left in me.

William Blake, from *Jerusalem*, 1804

Trembling I sit day and night, my friends are astonish'd at me,
Yet they forgive my wanderings. I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes

Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination.
O Saviour pour upon me thy Spirit of meekness & love!
Annihilate the Selfhood in me: be thou all my life!

Italo Svevo, from *Il vecchione* (*The old man*), 1929

I don't feel old, but I have a feeling of being rusty. I must think and write to feel alive because the life I lead, between so much virtue that I have and that is attributed to me and so many affections and duties which bind and paralyze me, deprives me of all freedom. I live with the same inertia as one who is dying. And I want to rouse myself, I want to wake up. This is why writing is going to be for me a hygienic gesture which I will perform every night shortly before taking a laxative. And I hope that my papers will contain also the words which I usually do not say, because only then will the therapy be successful.

Carlo Emilio Gadda, from *Lettere a Gianfranco Contini, 1934-1967 (Letters to Gianfranco Contini, 1934-1967)*, 1988

Those [stylistic] games are my novocaine, my opium, *mon alcool à moi*. Their biological and geminal meaning is the unconscious attempt to divert me from pain and harm.

4. *The Authorial Subject*

Gaspara Stampa, from *Rime* (*Poems*), 1554

Se così come sono abietta e vile
donna, posso portar sì alto foco,
perché non debbo aver almeno un poco
di ritraggerlo al mondo e vena e stile?
   S'amor con novo, insolito focile,
ov'io non potea gir, m'alzò a tal loco,
perché non può non con usato gioco
far la pena e la penna in me simìle?
   E, se non può per forza di natura,
puollo almen per miracolo, che spesso
vince, trapassa e rompe ogni misura.
   Come ciò sia non posso dir espresso;
io provo ben che per mia gran ventura
mi sento il cor di novo stile impresso.

[If as I am, an abject and vile woman,/I can in me bear such a lofty fire,/ Why should I not at least possess a little/Of mood and style to tell it to the world?/If love, with such a new, unusual blast/Lifted me up where I could never soar/Why cannot it, with an uncommon play/Make pen and pain be in myself alike?/And if it cannot by the force of nature/At least as by a miracle it may,/As often wins, beats and defeats all measure./How this can be I cannot surely say;/But yet I feel, because of my great fortune,/My heart affected with a whole new style.]

Michel de Montaigne, from 'Du repentir', *Essais*, Livre III, chap. 2 ('Of Repentance', *Essays*, Book III, chap. 2), 1595 ed.

Authors communicate themselves to people by some especial and extrinsic mark; I, the first, by my universal being; as Michel de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, a poet, or a jurist. If the world complains that I speak too much of myself, I complain that it does not think only of itself. But is it reason that, being so particular in my habits, I should claim to recommend myself for my knowledge? And is it also reason that I should produce to the world, where one's art and ways have so much credit and praise, crude and simple effects of nature, and indeed of a weak nature? Is it not like building a wall without stones, or some such thing, to compose books without learning? The fancies of music are performed by art, mine by chance. I have this, at least, according to discipline, that never any person treated of a subject he better understood and knew than I what I have undertaken; and that in this I am the most understanding man alive. Secondly, that never any person penetrated farther into his matter, nor more distinctly sifted the parts and sequences of it, nor more precisely and fully reached the end he proposed to himself. To achieve it, I only need to bring fidelity to the work; that is there, and it is the most pure and sincere that is to be found. I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare more and more as I grow older; for it seems that custom allows to age more liberty of prating and more indiscretion when talking of one's self. It cannot happen here what I often see elsewhere, that the work and its maker contradict one another: 'Can a man of such sound conversation have written so foolish a book?' Or: 'Do so learned writings proceed from a man of so weak conversation?' He who talks at a very ordinary rate and writes rare things, that is to say, that his capacity is borrowed and not his own. A learned man is not learned in all things: but a sufficient man is sufficient in all, even in ignorance.

Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own*, 1929

Hundreds of women began as their eighteenth century drew on to add to their pin money, or to come to the rescue of their families by making translations or writing the innumerable bad novels which have ceased to be recorded even

in text-books, but are to be picked up in the fourpenny boxes in the Charing Cross Road. The extreme activity of mind which showed itself in the later eighteenth century among women – the talking, and the meeting, the writing of essays on Shakespeare, the translating of the classics – was founded on the solid fact that women could make money by writing. Money dignifies what is frivolous if unpaid for. It might still be well to sneer at 'blue stocking with an itch for scribbling', but it could not be denied that they could put money in their purses. Thus, towards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write. For if *Pride and Prejudice* matters, and *Middlemarch* and *Villette* and *Wuthering Heights* matter, then it matters far more than I can prove in an hour's discourse that women generally, and not merely the lonely aristocrat shut up in her country house among her folios and her flatterers, took to writing. Without those forerunners, Jane Austen and the Brontës and George Eliot could no more have written than Shakespeare could have written without Marlowe, or Marlowe without Chaucer, or Chaucer without those forgotten poets who paved the ways and tamed the natural savagery of the tongue. For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice. Jane Austen should have laid a wreath upon the grave of Fanny Burney, George Eliot done homage to the robust shade of Eliza Carter – the valiant old woman who tied a bell to her bedstead in order that she might wake early to learn Greek. All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, which is, most scandalously but rather appropriately, in Westminster Abbey, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds. It is she – shady and amorous as she was – who makes it not quite fantastic for me to say to you tonight: Earn five hundred a year by your wits.

Jorge Luis Borges, 'Borges y yo', in *El hacedor* ('Borges and I', in *The Maker*), 1960

The other one, a certain Borges, is the one things happen to. I walk through the streets of Buenos Aires and stop for a moment, perhaps mechanically, to look at the arch of an entrance hall and the grillwork of the gate; I know of Borges from the mail and see his name on a list of professors or in a biographical dictionary. I like hourglasses, maps, eighteenth-century typography, etymologies, the taste of coffee and the prose of Stevenson; the other one shares these preferences, but in a vain way that turns them into the attributes of an actor. It would be an exaggeration to say that ours is a hostile relationship; I live,

I let myself go on living, so that Borges may weave his literature, and this literature justifies me. It is no effort for me to confess that he has achieved some valid pages, but those pages cannot save me, perhaps because what is good belongs to no one, not even to the other one, but to language and to tradition. Besides, I am destined to be lost, definitively, and only some instant of myself can survive in the other. Little by little, I am giving over everything to him, although I am aware of his perverse custom of falsifying and magnifying things. Spinoza realized that all things long to persist in their being; the stone eternally wants to be a stone and the tiger a tiger. I must remain in Borges, not in myself (if I am someone), but I recognize myself less in his books than in many others or in the laborious harping of a guitar. Years ago I tried to free myself from him and went from the mythologies of the suburbs to the games with time and infinity, but those games now belong to Borges and I shall have to envisage other things. Thus my life is a flight and I lose everything and everything belongs to oblivion, or to the other. I do not know which of us is writing this page.

5. *About Poetics*

Michelangelo Buonarroti, Letter to Messer Benedetto Varchi (Lettera a Messer Benedetto Varchi), Rome, 1549

A Messer Benedetto Varchi

Messer Benedetto. Perché e' paia pure che io abbia ricevuto, come ho, il vostro Libretto, risponderò qualche cosa a quel che e' mi domanda, benché ignorantemente. Io dico che la pittura mi pare più tenuta buona, quanto più va verso il rilievo, et il rilievo più tenuto cattivo, quanto più va verso la pittura: et però a me soleva parere che la scultura fussi la lanterna della pittura, et che dall'una all'altra fussi quella differenza ch'è dal sole alla luna. Ora, poi che io ho letto nel vostro Libretto, dove dite, che, parlando filosoficamente, quelle cose che ànno un medesimo fine, sono una medesima cosa; sono mutato d'oppinione: et dico, che se maggiore iudicio et difficultà, impedimento et fatica non fa maggiore nobiltà; che la pittura et scultura è una medesima cosa: et perché ella fussi tenuta così, non doverebbe ogni pittore far manco di scultura che di pittura; e 'l simile, lo scultore di pittura che di scultura. Io intendo scultura, quella che si fa per forza di levare: quella che si fa per via di porre, è simile alla pittura: basta, che venendo l'una e l'altra da una medesima intelligenza, cioè scultura et pittura, si può far fare loro una buona pace insieme, et lasciar tante dispute; perché vi va più tempo, che a far le figure. Colui che scrisse che la pittura era più nobile della scultura, s'egli avessi così bene inteso l'altre cose ch'egli ha scritte, le arebbe meglio scritte la mia fante. Infinite cose, et non più dette, ci sarebbe da dire di simili scienze; ma, come ho detto, vorrebbono troppo tempo, et io n'ho poco, perché non solo son

vechio, ma quasi nel numero de' morti: però priego mi abbiate per iscusato. E a voi mi racomando et vi ringrazio quanto so et posso del troppo onore che mi fate, et non conveniente a me.

Vostro Michelagniolo Buonarroti in Roma

[To Messer Benedetto Varchi

Messer Benedetto. Since it seems that I have received your booklet – and indeed I received it – I will answer something to what you are asking me, although ignorantly. I say that it seems to me that painting is deemed more admirable when it is closer to relief, and relief is deemed inferior when it is closer to painting: and therefore I used to think that sculpture was the lantern of painting and that between the two there was the difference which holds between the sun and the moon. But now, since I read in your booklet the passage where you say that, philosophically speaking, those things which have the same aim are one and the same thing, I have changed my mind: and I say that, if greater discernment and difficulty, impediments and exertion do not amount to greater nobility, then painting and sculpture are one and the same thing: and so that it might be deemed such, every painter should not make less sculpting than painting; and, similarly, every sculptor should not make less painting than sculpting. I mean sculpting that thing which is done by dint of taking off; the one which is done by dint of adding is similar to painting: and it is enough that, since both painting and sculpture come from the same intelligence, we can reconcile them and abandon such disputes; because more time is spent in these than in making figures. The person who wrote that painting is nobler than sculpture, if he had well understood the other things he wrote, indeed my maidservant would have written them better. An infinite number of things, which have not been said, might be said of such sciences; but, as I said, too much time would be necessary to tell them and I have little time, because I not only am old, but almost number myself among the dead; and therefore I pray you to excuse me. And I entrust myself to your good will and thank you as I am able for the undue honour you make me, which is not suited to me.

Yours Michelagniolo Buonarroti in Rome]

Carlo Goldoni, from Prefazione a *Opere* (Preface to *Works*), vol. I, Venezia, 1750

… the two books on which I have most meditated and which I will never repent having made use of were the World and the Theatre. The first shows me so many and various characters of persons and paints them in such a natural way that they seem to be purposefully contrived to supply me with a great variety of subjects for graceful and instructive Comedies: it represents the signs, the strength, the outcomes of all human passions; it provides me with

curious events: it informs me about present customs: it instructs me about the vices and flaws which are most common in our time and in our nation, which deserve the censure or the derision of the wise and, at the same time, it points out, in some virtuous Person, the means by which Virtue resists such corruptions; and therefore, from this book I gather – by incessantly browsing into it, or meditating about it, in whatever circumstance or action of my life I find myself – what is absolutely necessary to know for someone who wishes to carry on my profession. The second, that is, the book of the Theatre, while I manipulate it, teaches me by what colours each character, passion and event which can be read in the book of the World must be represented on the Stage; how each is to be shaded in order to put it into relief, what colours make each of them pleasant to the sensitive eyes of the spectators. In short, from the Theatre I learn to discern what things leave the deepest impression on souls, that rouse the greatest wonder or laughter, or that delectable tickle in the human heart which is especially born from finding, in the Comedy you are attending, naturally portrayed and urbanely set in their own perspective, the flaws and ridicule which we find in those whom we daily encounter, but in such a way as not to annoy or offend too much.

Guy de Maupassant, from 'Le roman' ('The Novel'), in *Pierre et Jean*, 1888

Whatever you want to say, there is only one word to express it, one verb to animate it, one adjective to qualify it. You must then look for that word, that verb, that adjective until you have found them and never be content with more or less, never resort to ruses, however happy, or to language tomfooleries, in order to avoid a difficulty.

One may convey and suggest the most subtle things by applying the following quote from Boileau:

D'un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir.

You don't need the extravagant, complicated, numerous and Chinese vocabulary which is today prescribed under the name of artistic writing in order to fix all the nuances of thought; but you do need to discern with extreme lucidity all the modifications of a word's meaning according to the place it occupies. Let us have less nouns, verbs and adjectives whose meaning is almost impossible to grasp and more different sentences, differently constructed, ingeniously cut, full of skilful sonorities and rhythms. Let us strive to be excellent stylists rather than collectors of rare terms.

It is indeed more difficult to manage a sentence at will, to make it say everything, even what it does not express, to fill it in with allusions, with secret and unexpressed intentions, than to invent new expressions or to retrieve, at

the bottom of old unknown books, all those expressions whose usage and meaning we have lost and which are for us like dead words.

Robert Louis Stevenson, from 'The Morality of the Profession of Letters', *Fortnightly Review* 157, April 1881

Those who write have to see that each man's knowledge is, as near as they can make it, answerable to the facts of life; that he shall not suppose himself an angel or a monster; nor take this world for a hell; nor be suffered to imagine that all rights are concentred in his own caste or country, or all veracities in his own parochial creed.
...
In all works of art, widely speaking, it is first of all the author's attitude that is narrated, though in the attitude there be implied a whole experience and a theory of life.

Robert Louis Stevenson, from 'Memories and Portraits', *A College Magazine*, Nov.-Dec. 1887

Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction in the style, I must sit down at once and set myself to ape that quality.

Christina G. Rossetti, from 'Madonna Innominata', in *A Pageant and Other Poems*, 1881

Beatrice, immortalised by 'altissimo poeta … cotanto amante'; Laura, celebrated by a great though an inferior bard – have alike paid the exceptional penalty of exceptional honour, and have come down to us resplendent with charms, but (at least, to my apprehension) scant of attractiveness.

These heroines of world-wide fame were preceded by a bevy of unnamed ladies, 'donne innominate', sung by a school of less conspicuous poets; and in that land and that period which gave simultaneous birth to Catholics, to Albigenses, and to Troubadours, one can imagine many a lady as sharing her lover's poetic aptitude, while the barrier between them might be one held sacred by both, yet not such as to render mutual love incompatible with mutual honour.

Had such a lady spoken for herself, the portrait left us might have appeared more tender, if less dignified, than any drawn even by a devoted friend. Or

had the Great Poetess of our own day and nation only been unhappy instead of happy, her circumstances would have invited her to bequeath to us, in lieu of the 'Portuguese Sonnets', an inimitable 'donna innominata' drawn not from fancy but from feeling, and worthy to occupy a niche beside Beatrice and Laura.

Giacomo Leopardi, from *Zibaldone*, 3 Nov. 1821; published posthumously in 1898

Rapidity and brevity of style are liked because they present to the soul a crowd of ideas which are either simultaneous or so rapidly following each other as to appear simultaneous and make the soul wave in such a wealth of thoughts, or of images and spiritual sensations, that the soul is either unable to embrace and fully comprehend them all, or has not the time to remain lazy and deprived of sensations. The strength of poetic style, which for the most part is one and the same thing as rapidity, is only pleasing thanks to these effects and only consists of these. The excitement of simultaneous ideas may derive from each isolated word, either literal or metaphorical, their location, turn of the sentence, and the very elimination of other words, etc. Why is Ovid's style weak and therefore not particularly pleasurable, although he is a most faithful painter of objects and a most obstinate and clever image-hunter? Because his images, in him, spring from a quantity of words and lines, which only generate the image after a long detour, and so there is nothing simultaneous, and indeed the spirit is led to see the objects little by little and in parts. Why is Dante's style the strongest imaginable and for this reason the most beautiful and pleasing possible? Because every word in him is an image, etc. etc. See my discourse on the romantics. Here I may refer to the essential weakness and the inward repletion of descriptive poetry (which is *per se* absurd) and the old precept that the poet (or writer) should not linger too long over descriptions. Here I may refer to Horace's style (very rapid and full of images in each word, or construction, or inversion, or meaning translation, etc.) and, as to thought, the style of Tacitus.

Italo Calvino, from 'Rapidità', in *Lezioni americane* ('Rapidity', in *American Lessons*); published posthumously in 1988

The horse, as an emblem of rapidity, even in the mental sense, marks the whole history of literature, foreshadowing the issues which characterize our technological horizon. The age of rapidity, as regards both transport and information, begins with one of the most beautiful essays in English literature, *The English Mail-Coach* by Thomas De Quincey who, in 1849, had already understood all we now know about the world of motors and motorways, including mortal crashes at high speed.

De Quincey describes a night journey on the box of a very quick mail-coach, beside a gigantic cabman who is deeply asleep. The technical perfection of the vehicle and the transformation of the driver into a blind inanimate object put the traveller at the mercy of the inexorable perfection of a machine. In the acuity of sensations provoked by a dose of laudanum, De Quincey realizes that the horses are running at a speed of thirteen miles per hour on the *right* side of the road. This means certain disaster, not for the extremely swift and robust mail-coach, but for the first hapless coach which will drive on that road on the opposte side! And indeed, at the bottom of the tree-lined road which resembles the nave of a cathedral, he spies a fragile wicker gig with a young couple, which proceeds at one mile per hour. 'Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half'. De Quincey lets out a scream. 'Mine had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God'.

The narration of these few seconds has remained unrivalled, even now, when the experience of high speed has become fundamental in human life:

Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more invisibly than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig.

De Quincey succeeds in giving the sense of an extremely brief time fraction which however may contain both the estimate of the technical inevitability of the crash and the imponderable, which is God's part, on whose account the two vehicles do not even brush one another.

The issue which interests us here is not physical rapidity, but the relationship between physical and mental rapidity. This relationship also fascinated a great Italian poet of De Quincey's generation. Giacomo Leopardi, in his extremely sedentary youth, used to experience one of his rare moments of joy when he wrote in his *Zibaldone*: 'Rapidity, for example in horses, either seen or experienced, that is, when they drive you, is very pleasant by itself, that is, for the vivacity, energy, strength of such a sensation. It really awakens a quasi-idea of infinity, sublimes the soul, fortifies it …' (27 October, 1821)

Thomas Mann, from 'Einführung der *Zeuberberg*' ('Introduction to *The Magic Mountain*'), 1939

When you conceive a work, this appears under a harmless, simple, practical light. It seems that the effort to realize it is not going to be great. My first novel, *The Buddenbrooks*, devised on the model of the Scandinavian stories about tradesmen or about a family, was imagined as a book of two hundred and fifty pages, and in the end the result was two big volumes. *Death in Venice* should have been a short story for the Munich magazine *Simplicissimus*. The same is

true for the Joseph novels, which at the start I imagined as short stories of more or less the size of *Death in Venice*. The case of *The Magic Mountain* was not different: this is, I believe, a necessary and productive kind of self-deception. If one had, from the start, the clear vision of all the possible difficulties of a work and if one were conscious of its autonomous volition, which is often quite different from the author's, maybe we would be discouraged and not even dare to start working. A work may sometimes have its own ambition, which even surpasses by far that of its author, and it is well that things are so. Indeed, the ambition should not be personal ambition, should not precede the work, but the work must produce it from its own bosom and compel the author to admit it. Thus, I believe, all great works are born; not from an ambition which, since the start, intended to create a great work.

Thomas Mann, from 'Richard Wagner und der *Ring des Nibelungen*' ('Richard Wagner and *The Ring of the Nibelung*'), 1938

From Zürich, or better from Albisbrunn, where he went on a trip, the important letter of 20 November 1851 was sent to Liszt, in which Wagner transmits and explains for the first time to his great Weimar friend and protector the plan of his gigantic enterprise: 'Know from this letter', he begins solemnly, 'the story, reported with absolute truth, of the artistic project to which I have been attending for some time and which direction it had necessarily to take'. Then, he narrates this extraordinary story, so surprising and happy for him. It is important to hear it told in his own words if we want to understand how little, at the beginning, an artist knows of his own work, how imperfectly he knows the obstinacy of the being he has started to deal with, how little he may predict what the work intends to be, what it – precisely as *his own* work – is bound to become; the work before which he finds himself in the mood which is expressed by the words '*This* I did not want, but now, may God help me, I *must*'. The livid ambition of the self is not what we find at the beginning of great works, it is not their origin: the ambition is not the artist's, but the work's, which wants itself much greater than the artist believed to be able to hope or be obliged to fear, and which imposes its own volition.

James Joyce, from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1914

A day of dappled seaborne clouds.

    The phrase and the day and the scene harmonized in a chord. Words. Was it their colours? He allowed them to glow and fade, hue after hue: sunrise gold, the russet and green of apple orchards, azure of waves, the grey-fringed fleece of clouds. No, it was not their colours: it was the poise and balance of

the period itself. Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their associations of legend and colour? Or was it that, being as weak of sight as he was shy of mind, he drew less pleasure from the reflection of the glowing sensible world through the prism of a language many-coloured and richly storied than from the contemplation of an inner world of individual emotions mirrored perfectly in a lucid supple periodic prose?

...

Even in literature, the highest and most spiritual art, the forms are often confused. The lyrical form is in fact the simplest verbal vesture of an instant of emotion a rhythmical cry such as ages ago cheered on the man who pulled at the oar or dragged stones up a slope. He who utters it is more conscious of the instant of emotion than of himself as feeling emotion. The simplest epical form is seen emerging out of lyrical literature when the artist prolongs and broods upon himself as the centre of an epical event and this form progresses till the centre of emotional gravity is equidistant from the artist himself and from others. The narrative is no longer purely personal. The personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea. This progress you will see easily in that old English ballad Turpin Hero which begins in the first person and ends in the third person. The dramatic form is reached when the vitality which has flowed and eddied round each person fills every person with such vital force that he or she assumes a proper and intangible esthetic life. The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak. The esthetic image in the dramatic form is life purified in and reprojected from the human imagination. The mystery of esthetic, like that of material creation, is accomplished. The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.

6. *Irony and Understatement*

Umberto Eco, from 'Postille a *Il nome della rosa*' ('Afterword to *The Name of the Rose*'), 1983

After writing, authors should die. Not to disturb the text's journey.

…

When authors say that they have worked following the raptus of inspiration, they lie. 'Genius is twenty per cent inspiration and eighty per cent perspiration'.

I don't remember regarding which of his poems, a famous one, Lamartine wrote that it had been born all of a sudden, in a tempestuous night in a wood. When he died the manuscripts of that poem were found and they presented corrections and variants: that particular poem was probably the most 'laboured' piece of writing of all French literature.

…

For the last two years I have refused to answer certain idle questions like: is yours an open work or not? What the devil do I know, it is your business, not mine. Or else: with which of your characters do you identify yourself? My god, with whom do authors identify themselves? Why, with adverbs, obviously.

Robert Louis Stevenson (as reported from his stepson Lloyd Osbourne after Stevenson's death)

I am not a man of any unusual talent, Lloyd; I started out with very moderate abilities; my success has been due to my very remarkable industry – to developing what I had in me to the extreme limit. When a man begins to sharpen one faculty, and keeps on sharpening it with tireless perseverance, he can achieve wonders. Everybody knows it; it's a commonplace; and yet how rare it is to find anybody doing it – I mean to the uttermost as I did. What genius I had for *work*!

…

A writer who amounts to anything is constantly dying and being re-born. I was reading *Virginibus* the other day, and it seemed to me extraordinarily good, but in a vein I could no more do now than I could fly. My work is profounder than it was; I can touch emotions that I then scarcely knew existed; but the Stevenson who wrote *Virginibus* is dead and buried, and has been for many a year.

Robert Louis Stevenson, from a letter to Mr W. Craibe Angus, November 1891

I am still a 'slow study', and sit for a long while silent on my eggs. Unconscious thought, there is the only method: macerate your subject, let it boil slow, then take the lid off and look in – and there your stuff is – good or bad.

Robert Louis Stevenson, from a letter to Bob Stevenson, 30 September 1883

There is but one art — to omit! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge. A man who knew how to omit would make an Iliad of a daily paper.

---

*All works originally not in English are presented in translation. Italian poems, as well as Michelangelo's letter to Messer Benedetto Varchi, are presented in the original and followed by a translation. We would have liked to reproduce the Italian version also of Montale's poems, but our repeated and insistent attempts to obtain permission from the publisher that holds Montale's rights (Mondadori) have remained unanswered. All translations are editorial.

Contributors

Janet Clare is professor of Renaissance Literature and Director of the Andrew Marvell Centre for Medieval to Early Modern Studies at the University of Hull, UK. Among her publications are *Art Made Tongue-tied by Authority: Elizabethan and Jacobean Dramatic Censorship* (second edition, 1999), *Drama of the English Republic, 1649-1660* (2005) and *Revenge Tragedies of the Renaissance* (2006). With Stephen O'Neill, she has co-edited *Shakespeare and the Irish Writer* (2010). She is currently working on Shakespeare and textual traffic.

Dario Compagno is an independent researcher and freelance consultant. His research focuses on intentions, actions and choices, from a perspective that merges Structural Semiotics and Analytic Philosophy of action. He obtained a PhD in Semiotics at the University of Siena in 2010, with a dissertation on the concepts of 'author' and 'intention' in twentieth-century philosophical and critical thought. He has published papers focusing both on theorethical issues and on applications, mainly to interactive media and in particular to computer games. In 2009, he has also co-edited with Patrick Coppock the 5th issue of the journal *EC*, <http://www.ec-aiss.it/>.

Gabriella Del Lungo Camiciotti is retired professor of English Language (University of Florence, Italy). Her main current research interest has focused on the pragmatics and discursive analysis of both narrative and academic/professional texts from a historical perspective spanning from the late Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. She has published many studies dealing with the history of the English language and the stylistic aspects of late Middle English texts with special reference to women's mystic discourse and saints' lives. She has also published articles and co-edited volumes on corpus-based studies of varieties of specialized discourse. She researched letter writing in the history of English.

Bianca Del Villano holds a PhD in English Literature from the University of Turin and currently teaches at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale'. Her main research interests focus on early modern studies as well as on twentieth-century literature. Her publications include a volume on the meaning of spectrality in contemporary anglophone novels, *Ghostly Alterities* (2007), and several essays on Shakespeare's plays (*Titus Andronicus*, *Macbeth* and *Winter's Tale*). She is currently working on eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare's plays and on the plays by Samuel Foote.

Carla Dente is professor of English at the University of Pisa. Her main field of interest is drama, both Renaissance and contemporary. On Shakespeare, she has published a monograph on *The Merchant of Venice* (*La Recita del Diritto*,

1995, 2nd ed.) and several essays on other plays. Alone or with others, she has edited the *Hamlet Promptbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (2002) in electronic format and the following books: *Conflict Zones. Actions Languages Mediations* (2004); *Proteus. The Languages of Metamorphosis* (2005); *Dibattito sul teatro. Voci opinioni interpretazioni* (2006); *Crossing Time and Space. Shakespeare Translations in Present-day Europe* (2008). She is member of the Executive Board of the International Shakespeare Association and the President of the Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies.

Hans Walter Gabler is professor of English Literature (retired) at the University of Munich, Germany, and Senior Research Fellow of the Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Study, London University. From 1996 to 2002 in Munich, he directed an interdisciplinary graduate programme on 'Textual Criticism as Foundation and Method of the Historical Disciplines'. He is editor-in-chief of the critical editions of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1984-1986), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Dubliners* (both 1993). His present main research interests are the writing processes in authors' draft manuscripts and their representation in the digital medium.

Corinne Lucas Fiorato is professor of Italian Studies at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3. Specialist in sixteenth-century studies, she heads the CIRRI (Centre de Recherche sur la Renaissance Italienne) and coheads the LECEMO (Cultures de l'Europe méditerranéenne face à la modernité). Her research is focused on tragedy, the *novella*, art literature and the relationship between text and images. Her latest publications are *Cellini a tutto tondo*, co-edited with Frédérique Dubard (2009); *Art et violence, XVIe-XVIIIe siècles en Europe*, co-edited with René Démoris and Florence Ferran (2012); *Entre violence et séduction: Judith et autres héroïnes bibliques en Europe (XIVe-XVIIIe siècles)*, edited with Marie-Madelaine Fragonard and Luciana Borsetto (forthcoming).

Adelisa Malena is a lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Venice Ca' Foscari. Her main fields of interest are: Women and Gender Studies, Cultural History and Religious History. She has been mainly working on the Roman Inquisition, the Catholic Spiritual Direction and Female Mysticism in the seventeenth century and is author of the volume *L'Eresia dei perfetti. Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano* (2003). Among her latest publications are: ' "Sectirische und begeisterte Weibes-Personen". On the Gynaeceum Haeretico Fanaticum by J.H. Feustking (1704)', (2009; on line at: <http://acrh.revues.org/index1402.html>) and 'I demoni di Alvisa. Il racconto autobiografico di Alvisa Zambelli alias Lea Gaon' (2011). She is currently involved in two projects concerning the seventeenth and the eighteenth century: conversions of women from Judaism to Catholicism in Venice and female agency and cultural transfers between German Pietism and Catholicism in confessional Europe.

Donatella Pallotti is associate professor of English Literature at the University of Florence. Her research interests focus primarily on Early Modern culture, Modernism, stylistics and literary pragmatics. She has written on the stylistics of poetry, Donne's poetry, Shakespeare's and Isabella Andreini's sonnets, psalm translation in verse, women's prophecy and spiritual testimonies, and on the moral debate on dance. She has also devoted attention to Joyce's *Giacomo Joyce* and *Ulysses*. She is currently working on seventeenth-century radical literature and on the representations of rape in Early Modern culture.

Paola Pugliatti has been professor of English Literature at the University of Florence and has also taught at the Universities of Messina, Bologna and Pisa. She has written extensively on Shakespeare and on the European Renaissance and has also devoted attention to the study of literary genres (drama and the novel in particular) both in a critical and in a theoretical perspective. Another field of interest is modernist literature and in particular James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Her latest book-length studies are *Beggary and Theatre in Early Modern England* (2003) and *Shakespeare and the Just War Tradition* (2010).