Shakespeare

dal testo alla scena

n. 18 n.s.

Shakespeare

dal testo alla scena

COMITATO SCIENTIFICO

Daniela Carpi, Mariacristina Cavecchi, Sarah Hatchuel, Michele Marrapodi, Alessandra Petrina, Michele Stanco, Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin.

La collana presenta percorsi di lettura dei singoli testi shakespeariani che si concludono con saggi dedicati al momento irrinunciabile della messa in scena.

Sir Thomas More, from Page to Stage

edited by
Anna Caterino, Mariacristina Cavecchi, Margaret Rose

Volume pubblicato col contributo dell'Associazione Iasems
(Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies)

Volume pubblicato in adesione al programma di licenza CC BY 4.0
(Creative Commons Attribuzione 4.0 Internazionale)
in modalità Open Access Gold

© 2023 Casa editrice Emil di Odoya srl
ISBN: 978-88-6680-342-3

Emil
via C. marx 21 – 06012 Città di Castello
www.ilibridiemil.it

INDICE

Mariacristina Cavecchi
'Imagine that you see the wretched strangers…' 7

Anna Caterino & Margaret Rose
Introduction 11

On the Page

Jan Sewell (Open University, UK)
The theatricality of Sir Thomas More*: playing Sir Thomas and Sir Thomas playing* 17

Davide Del Bello (Università degli Studi di Bergamo)
'Painted Days': Sir Thomas More *and the rhetoric of disobedience* 39

Michele De Benedictis (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale)
'I hear they mean to fire the Lombard's houses'. Italian immigrant communities and displacement of prejudice in Sir Thomas More 55

***Translating* Sir Thomas More**

Fabio Ciambella (Università degli Studi della Tuscia)
'The winding labyrinth of thy strange discourse': The Italian translations of Sir Thomas More 79

Iolanda Plescia (Università di Roma Sapienza)
Translating Sir Thomas More *for contemporary Italian readers* 103

On Stage
John Jowett (Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham)
Shakespeare, Sir Thomas More*, and the migrant crisis* 123

Roberta Mullini (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo):
The Book of Sir Thomas More *from page to stage:*
Two early performances in the 1990s 141

Otello Cenci & Giampiero Pizzol
Sir Thomas More*: a dangerous play* 167

Davide Novello (Università Degli Studi di Milano)
Blu 175

Bionotes 191

"IMAGINE THAT YOU SEE THE WRETCHED STRANGERS…"

Mariacristina Cavecchi

Cos'è la guerra sia che si svincia, sia che si perda? Merda, sangue, merda (*What is war whether we win or lose? Shit, blood, shit*). The incipit of Giovanni Testori's *Macbetto* is indelibly etched in my memory. I performed it as part of the Chorus for an audience of students and university lecturers at one of the many international conferences organised by Mariangela Tempera at Ferrara University under the aegis of the "Centro Shakespeariano di Ferrara" (1992-2015), a vitally important bridge linking the world of the university and the world of the school. On that unforgettable occasion, I experienced first-hand how acting in a Shakespearean play profoundly influences the way a performer feels and approaches the world, as well as offering a privileged vantage point for understanding Elizabethan theatre.

It is therefore a great honour for me to inaugurate the present cycle of "Tempera Seminars," dedicated to the memory of my very dear friend and colleague, Mariangela Tempera. In the wake of Mariangela's project devoted to the page-stage nexus in Shakespeare studies "Shakespeare dal testo alla scena", the new series aims to strengthen the link between academia and the stage.

Anna Caterino, Margaret Rose and I, curators of the present volume, consciously chose *Sir Thomas More*, as it struck us as particularly relevant today, dealing as it does with issues of migration, racism and prejudice in such a poignant way that it is almost impossible to believe that it was written more than 400 years ago. The iconic line uttered by More to the citizens of London in revolt – "Imagine that you see the wretched strangers" – became both the title of the international

conference we organised in 2019 and the starting point of the new play presented at Milan's Teatro Beccaria Puntozero at the end of our Shakespeare seminar.

The performance is the result of one of the workshops Margaret Rose and I have organized, on an annual basis, since 2016, with the Puntozero theatre company. The workshop involved a mixed group of twenty undergraduates in the humanities from Milan University (four males and sixteen females), two actresses from the Puntozero Theatre company, two actors who were on parole, and two inmates from Beccaria (young men aged sixteen to twenty). The Beccaria is one of seventeen Italian juvenile detention centres scattered over our peninsula.

The workshop included masterclasses by Arne Pohlmeier, the co-founder and co-artistic director of Two Gents Productions, a London based theatre company that explores migration & displacement in classical plays; by Theo Gavrielides, founder of Restorative Justice for All, an international institute, addressing power, abuse and poverty through the lens of restorative justice; by Luca Ciabarri, expert in demoethnoanthropology and co-curator of the volume focused on the phenomenon of migration via the Mediterranean route, *Dopo l'approdo. Un racconto per immagini e parole sui richiedenti asilo in Italia* (2019), and Angelo Pugliese, the coordinator of the "Il Seme", a community, hosting, providing guidance to, and helping integrate unaccompanied foreign minors.

The workshop leaders guided the mix group of students and inmates in exploring and turning the first part of the play into a new script. Considering the context in which the play was performed and the world we live in, the scene in which Thomas More is called to put down an anti-immigration riot (2.4) acquired not only a contemporary relevance, but also an incredible topicality given the place where the young prisoners live.

Under the guidance of Beppe Scutellà, co-founder and director of Puntozero, the theatre company that has had it base at the juvenile detention centre for the last twenty-seven years, rehearsals became the space where participants could reflect on their national, social and

cultural identities and on the various stereotypes that hinder dialogue and mutual understanding. In small mixed groups, the inmates worked with the students and tried to imagine and identify with the dilemma of the foreigners who arrived in 16th century London and were sometimes cruelly chased away. Today, the words of the great humanist Sir Thomas More undoubtedly make us think of the plight of the migrants landing on our shores. We might also recall that our continent was named after Europa, a young girl, whom Zeus, disguised as a bull, carried on his back from Phoenicia to Crete. We Europeans are none other than Europa's children. So, who is the foreigner?

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Rose, Anna Caterino

The present collection of essays, *Sir Thomas More, from Page to Stage*, devoted to this collaborative play, brings together contributors from Italy and the UK, who explore the work, from very different angles, throwing light on its deep significance in the Early Modern period, but also its continued relevance for critics, practitioners and audiences today. The present publication, divided into three main sections, reflecting these different perspectives, is the most recent in a series of critical essays, *From Page to Stage*, started by the late Prof. Mariangela Tempera; she was among a small minority of academics in late 20th century Italy, who believed that theatre studies, should combine a rigorous textual analysis of a play in its historical, social and political context, combined with careful study of the play in performance. This inspirational figure lives on in this critical collection, but also in all those people, who were her friends and colleagues, the students she taught at the University of Ferrara and in schools in and around the city.

Section One. On the Page

In the first part of the chapter, "The Theatricality of *Sir Thomas More*: Playing Sir Thomas and Sir Thomas Playing", Jan Sewell evaluates the degree and diverse forms of theatricality in *Sir Thomas More*, aspects which have often been questioned by critics and theatre practitioners alike. Instead, it is underscored how the play's disjointed structure may be viewed as one of its strengths, if it is considered as a number of small, interconnected plays, in which Sir Thomas More performs a variety of roles, often permeated by a definite meta-

theatricality. As Sewell claims, both the play and the protagonist are endowed with unity because, "it is the final sum of all these parts, which constitutes both his character and the play as a whole". The author goes on to single out several major UK stage productions of *Sir Thomas More*, examining how and why directors have sometimes cut, and in other instances, added new material to the playtext, while actors have offered audiences startlingly different interpretations of More's multifaceted persona. The positive critical assessment and audience reception of these productions point to the play's indubitable stageability, suggesting that further exciting productions of this ever-elusive work may still be in the offing.

Davide Del Bello's chapter, 'Painted days': *Sir Thomas More* and the Rhetoric of Disobedience", focuses on the now celebrated speech (Scene six), by Sir Thomas More, when in his role as Sheriff of London, he manages to quell a rioting crowd of Londoners, who are protesting against immigrants who have settled in the city. The author notes how the social media platforms, which have circulated, and made a significant contribution to the fame of this speech, have modified the original dialogue between More and some of the rioters, turning it into a monologue (probably for dramatic effects). In addition, we learn how numerous cuts and some lexical changes have been made, in a bid to make More's speech resonate loudly in the current refugee crisis. The author goes on to identify what he calls, 'discomfort zones' in the original script, which affirm that this complex play possesses terms which, according to one critic, "do not comfortably map into ours."

In the chapter "Italian Immigrant Communities and Displacement of Prejudice" in Sir Thomas More", Michele De Benedictis offers a perspicacious analysis of both the 'Lombard' characters who feature in *Sir Thomas More* and the mercantile community they were part of. By comparing Anthony Munday's first draft of the initial scenes, with the one which was amended by the Master of the Revels, Edmund Tilney, it is shown that Tilney's aim was to neutralize the friction between the host country and these wealthy migrants, so toning down the play's political message. The chapter also investigates the history of the Lombards in England, as well as Munday's use of Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles*.

Section two. Translating *Sir Thomas More*

In "'The Winding Labyrinth of Thy Strange Discourse': The Italian Translations of *Sir Thomas More",* Fabio Ciambella, explores three Italian translations of *Sir Thomas More* by Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli (1991), Edoardo Rialti (2014) and Edoardo Zuccato (2017), respectively. Ciambella's compared corpus analysis of keywords and collocational profiles, concerning migrant-related lexis in the first seven scenes of the play in translation suggests points of contacts and divergences in the three Italian translations. The writer also interviewed Rialti and Zuccato, who declared they had adopted a target-oriented approach and had aimed to update Melchiori and Gabrieli's language. Significantly, the compared corpus analysis shows that the two translators tend not to achieve what they envisaged in their interviews.

In "Translating *Sir Thomas More* for Contemporary Italian Readers", Iolanda Plescia focuses on her experience with collaborative translation. Here, she provides an overview of her work with Nadia Fusetti with whom she translated *Sir Thomas More* for Feltrinelli (2022). The chapter is divided in three different sections and each of them deals with one of the challenges or strategies that were implemented when translating Shakespeare's play into Italian. The first section discusses the format of the final product, that is to say a stand-alone volume rather than a collection of works, and the vantage offered by two different perspectives. The second, on the other hand, outlines three main cultural and linguistic issues. Lastly, the third and final part of the essay discusses localized and practical issues and highlights the attempt at preserving the syntactical arrangements that can be found in the original play.

Section Three. On Stage

"*Sir Thomas More* and the Migrant Crisis" by John Jowett highlights the importance and appeal of *Sir Thomas More* in light of recent events. Of course, both the migrant crisis and Brexit seem to provide the play with contemporary relevance even if, as Jowett suggests, the

political themes had already been highlighted by Sir Ian McKellen in his discussion of LGBTQ issues in the 1990s. Jowett focuses on the repeated use of the word "imagine" which, he argues, becomes a way to encourage the characters in the play and the audience to feel empathy for the "wretched strangers" mentioned in More's speech. While taking into account more conservative approaches by critics such as E. M. W. Tillyard, the final part the essay explores both the play's dynamism and Shakespeare's humane words, including their relationship with current political events.

The second essay in this section, "*Sir Thomas More* from Page to Stage: Two Early 1990s Performances" by Roberta Mullini, provides an exegesis of two productions belonging to the early 1990s. The first one by the Stage One Theatre Company and directed by Michael Walling, and the second, directed by Enzo Maria Caserta. The author offers her own observations on the two productions of *Sir Thomas More*, highlighting the directors' choices and critical reception. The essay focuses particularly on the changes made to the original text and to the stage directions, and particularly the addition of new scenes in the case of the 1993 Italian staging. Through this analysis and occasional rebuttal of contemporary criticism, Mullini highlights the play's relevance as well as its appeal for contemporary audiences.

In "*Sir Thomas More*, a Dangerous Play", Otello Cenci and Giampiero Pizzol discuss the creative process that led to the writing of their revisitation of *Sir Thomas More*: *Thomas More. L'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare*, directed by Cenci and first staged at the Teatro Ermete Novelli in Rimini in 2016. In the production, Cenci and Pizzol address the genesis of *Sir Thomas More*, here framed by an argument between Anthony Munday and William Shakespeare. Shakespeare believes it to be a play about a great man, while Munday considers it the means by which its authors will not only receive audiences' consensus but also achieve success. Moreover, the introduction of this fictional argument for dramatic reasons, allows Cenci and Pizzol to discuss and focus on different approaches to power and responsibility without simplifying, or idealizing, any of the issues.

On the Page

THE THEATRICALITY OF *SIR THOMAS MORE*: PLAYING SIR THOMAS AND SIR THOMAS PLAYING

JAN SEWELL

The first half of this essay explains why I have come to think of *Sir Thomas More* as a fundamentally theatrical, even meta-theatrical, play in its constant emphasis on role-playing and use of the imagination, and the second half looks briefly at recent professional productions and the ways in which they have interpreted and staged this theatricality.

Many years ago, when I was a student at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, I played Sir Thomas More myself. On Thursday evenings it was customary for students and staff to get together to read non-Shakespeare plays of the early modern period – everyone who was interested signed up and was cast more or less arbitrarily in the various roles. It was at a time when identification of the manuscript's writers was still tentative and the possibility of Shakespeare's contribution to the play not yet generally accepted – hence *Sir Thomas More* counted as a non-Shakespeare play. The young man who was supposed to play Sir Thomas failed to turn up and I was asked if I would read the part instead.

It was a play I did not know well, and my chief recollection of the evening was that Sir Thomas's part seemed extremely long. Apart from the length of the role though, it seemed quite a strange play and not at all what I was expecting. My previous experience of a dramatic representation of Sir Thomas More was Paul Scofield's saintly 'Man for All Seasons' in Fred Zinnemann's Oscar-winning film adaptation of the Robert Bolt play which focuses on Sir Thomas as a man of con-

science, a devout Catholic who refuses to compromise his religious convictions and recognise King Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church in England. The early modern play *Sir Thomas More* touches on these matters and does end with More going to the scaffold but the treatment of these events is curiously oblique and King Henry, who was such an ebullient onscreen presence as played by Robert Shaw, never appears onstage and is not even mentioned by name.

The play dramatizes a variety of episodes in More's life culminating in his death, but they appeared to me then to have been chosen at random and did not seem to relate to anything I knew about the historical figure of Thomas More. There was a curious episode with More befriending a cutpurse, another with More and a long-haired ruffian who refused to get his hair cut, a jokey scene with the humanist scholar Erasmus, another with the Lord Mayor and some players, and then there were the scenes of discontented Londoners complaining about the behaviour of foreigners with More quelling a riot. We were encouraged at the time to look out for the scenes and speeches believed to have been written by Shakespeare and, naturally, we all agreed they were the best things in the play!

Apart from this play and the film, More is most familiar through Holbein's portrait of him as Lord Chancellor, which shows a sombre, richly-dressed middle-aged man with a deeply penetrating, but somewhat troubled, gaze. There are also two sixteenth-century copies of Holbein's family portrait (the original was lost in a fire) which show More as the central figure in a large, prosperous, devout family. More's own writings include his *Merry Jest: How a Sergeant would learn to play a Friar* – a comic tale of role-playing which goes badly wrong; his *History of Richard III* a contentious, critical biography, and an important source for Shakespeare's play; his religious polemics and numerous letters as well as his satirical novel, *Utopia*. There are contemporary biographies, written by his son-in-law William Roper and by the scholar priest Nicholas Harpsfield which are in sharp contrast to the unflattering picture of More as a 'bloody tyrant' in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (1563) as well as several modern biographies. More

recently Hilary Mantel paints an unflattering portrait of More in her award-winning novel *Wolf Hall* (2009). He is known as a humanist and close friend of the great humanist scholar Erasmus, who wrote his satirical essay *Moriae encomium* (*In Praise of Folly*), with its punning secondary meaning, 'in praise of More' while staying at More's house in London.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to get to know the play a lot better about twenty years later when I worked on the *Collaborative Plays of Shakespeare* (2013), a modernised edition for the Royal Shakespeare Company of Tucker Brooke's so-called 'Shakespeare Apocrypha' (those plays which had been attributed to Shakespeare over the years but where the attribution was contentious and subject to scholarly debate). This edition included *Sir Thomas More* for which I wrote the textual commentary. By this time a great deal more was known about the play's composition, when it was written and the identities of the various authors as well as the complex nature of the surviving manuscript which includes at least six different writers. These are generally designated in editorial discussion by their contributions to the manuscript, as 'hands': Anthony Munday (known as Hand S) was responsible for the original text but there are additions by Henry Chettle (Hand A), Thomas Heywood (Hand B), William Shakespeare (Hand D), Thomas Dekker (Hand E) and the anonymous playhouse scribe who transcribed much of the play-text, designated Hand C, as well as the comments of Sir Henry Tilney, the Master of the Revels.

By the time I came to write my commentary, I was more experienced with plays of the period generally and understood their episodic structure better. I knew about the problems of censorship and why Henry VIII was not referred to directly and did not appear on stage in person. And yet, even given the number of contributors and the somewhat haphazard, piecemeal method of its creation, it still seemed a problematic play. It was not a comedy, although it was curiously comedic and light-hearted in places. It was hard to see how the various scenes related to each other or to envisage how they worked together as a whole. Moreover, the portrait it painted of Sir Thomas More was

not easy to make sense of – he seemed rather a slippery character, something of a chameleon, not easy to pin down. Plays are, by definition, theatrical constructs. This play, in view of its fragmented method of composition, with its separate distinct scenes and multiple authorship, seems to highlight its constructed quality, deliberately drawing attention to its theatricality in the constant emphasis on role-playing and the use of the imagination. The play's disjointed structure and emphatic theatricality were perhaps what had made it seem strange initially, but I gradually came to appreciate its strengths and the subtle virtues of its piecemeal composition.

Sir Thomas More is a play that celebrates play-acting, especially by More himself; he plays a constant succession of roles and, furthermore, he encourages and cultivates this power in himself and others at every turn. Shakespeare famously said, 'All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players' (*AYLI* 2.7.142-43) but he didn't originate the idea which can be traced back at least as far as ancient Rome to Juvenal's 3rd *Satire* and Petronius' *Satyricon*. In his *Praise of Folly* (1511) Erasmus says: 'For what else is the life of man but a kind of play in which men in various costumes perform until the director motions them off the stage', while More himself in his *History of King Richard III* (1557), says of political power: 'and so (the common people) said that these matters be king's games, as it were stage plays, and for the most part played upon scaffolds'. That seems to be exactly how this play works; each scene enacts its own little play in which More takes on a slightly different role, but it is finally the sum of all these parts which constitute both his character and the play as a whole.

The first time we meet Thomas More in Scene 2 is as a Sheriff at the London Assizes where to the audience's surprise he uses a petty thief, Lifter, to teach the pompous Justice Suresby a lesson, persuading Lifter to steal the judge's purse in order to make a point and promising to procure his pardon in return.

We next see him in Scene 5 advising the authorities to talk to the rebels to answer their grievances and calm them down. In the following scene, by the sheer force of his personal authority and eloquence

More persuades the discontented Londoners to lay down their arms and beg the authorities' forgiveness. He does this specifically by asking the rebels to use their imaginations and put themselves in the place of the foreign exiles and imagine their plight to be their own. He conjures a vivid mental picture of these strangers before them: 'Imagine', he commands the crowd,

> Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
> Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage
> Plodding to th'ports and coasts for transportation,
> And that you sit as kings in your desires,
> Authority quite silenced by your brawl,
> And you in ruff of your opinions clothed. (6.85-90)

He goes on to offer them a pardon if they will only submit themselves to the law and is knighted to general acclaim at the end of the scene as a reward for the success of his efforts and the brilliance of his performance.

In the soliloquy in Scene 8, More reflects with amazement on the rise in his fortunes in a passage attributed to Shakespeare, though not in his hand:

> Good God, good God,
> That I from such an humble bench of birth
> Should step, as 'twere, up to my country's head,
> And give the law out there; … (8.5-8)

Fearful of power's power to corrupt, More goes on to admonish himself and foresees the future unravelling of destiny, employing a metaphor of life as a clew or ball of thread which alludes to the classical notion of human fate as determined by three goddesses who spin, measure and cut the thread of life:

> to be great
> Is, when the thread of hazard is once spun,
> A bottom, great wound up, greatly undone. (8.19-21)

The scene continues with More staging a public trial of Erasmus (who, in the play, he has not yet met) and his ability to distinguish between himself and his manservant, dressed in the robes of the Lord Chancellor. Randall is so confident of his performance that he boasts that he will 'deserve a share [meaning a share in an acting company] for playing of your lordship well' (8.42-3). 'Act my part / With a firm boldness, and thou winn'st my heart' (8.45-6) More tells him. When Erasmus enters with Surrey they are greeted duly by Randall, but as soon as he is called upon to speak Latin, the servant is unable to maintain the charade. It seems that the point of the jest on More's part has been to demonstrate the way in which people are taken in by mere external shows:

> how far respect
> Waits often on the ceremonious train
> Of base illiterate wealth, whilst men of schools,
> Shrouded in poverty, are counted fools. (8.182-85)

In Scene 9 More entertains the Lord Mayor and his wife at his family home in Chelsea. A troupe of professional players are engaged to perform an interlude, *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* but, when they are short of an actor, More immediately steps into the breach to take the part of Good Counsel, apologising to the company: 'We'll not have our play marred for lack of a little good counsel. Till your fellow come I'll give him best counsel that I can' (9.263-64). More's performance is, naturally, much praised by the professional actors as well as the audience: 'In troth, my lord, it is as right to Luggins's part as can be' (9.271-72). Afterwards More's servingman tries to cheat the company of a fifth of their payment but the player of Wit has 'a trick' by which to expose him. More perceives the ingenuity of the device and applauds the player, who has, like himself, used his wits to extemporise and expose the thief, and dismisses his dishonest servant on the spot.

In Scene 13 More makes light of his, by then desperate, situation

by imagining himself to be taking part in a play, speaking of himself as if he were a character deciding how to deliver his lines: 'Now will I speak like More in melancholy' (13.53). He continues to perform as he enters the Tower, playfully offering the Porter his cap instead of his cloak, calling his execution a remedy for kidney stones and fearing that his failing memory will make him 'forget [his] head' (17.25). He asks the Hangman for help to climb the stair to the scaffold but jokes: 'As for my coming down, / Let me alone, I'll look to that myself' (17.56-57). Once on the scaffold he confesses that his offence 'makes me, of a state pleader, a stage player – though I am old and have a bad voice – to act this last scene of my tragedy' (17.75-77). But the question is: is that exactly what he has been all along – is More just a stage player, playing a variety of parts at different times as circumstance demanded?

If closer acquaintance with the play suggests Thomas More as a consummate actor, playing different parts, contingent on context and circumstance, it also enables the reader to understand how the separate scenes and events relate to each other within the play, creating intriguing echoes and parallels of characters and events to create a dramatic whole. Modern editions discuss the play's structure in detail.[1] Here in Milan you have two brilliant football teams, Inter and AC. I guess football is the most popular sport in Italy, as it is in the UK. A conventional phrase that commentators and pundits regularly use, often as an ironic joke, is that 'It's a game of two halves.' What Thomas More calls, 'my tragedy' is, a bit like a football match, a play of two halves. It appears to follow the conventional shape of providential tragedy's rise and fall of a great man, but completely subverts the usual pattern. Whereas such plays usually start slowly and build to a climax when events come rushing, tumbling headlong over each other to overwhelm the action and the actors, culminating in a devas-

[1] Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

tating finale that brings death and destruction to the protagonists, *Sir Thomas More* works in reverse. It is the opening scenes of his rise that come rushing and tumbling along while the later ones, by contrast, are slower and much more deliberate, leading quietly but inexorably to his death.

STRUCTURE OF *SIR THOMAS MORE*

RISE	**SUCCESS AND FALL**
Scene 1: Londoners complain about foreigners/Lincoln's bill of wrongs	Scene 8: More soliloquy/Randall/Falconer episode/Erasmus episode/Morris
Scene 2: More/Lifter/Justice Suresby	Scene 9: Lord Mayor +party/ Players/More plays Good Counsel/dishonest Servingman
Scene 3: Nobles consider Londoners' complaints/Lord Mayor threatened	Scene 10: Council/Articles/ More resigns
Scene 4: Londoners revolt	Scene 11: More tells family
Scene 5: Authorities discuss situation/	Scene 12: Rochester in the Tower
More suggests a parley	Scene 13: More arrested
Scene 6: Londoners riot/	Scene 14: Tower/Poor woman
More quells riot/is knighted	Scene 15: More's servants/his will
Scene 7: Lincoln hanged/others pardoned/	Scene 16: More – farewell to family

In a schematic breakdown of the plot, the first seven of the play's seventeen scenes relate to More's public rise. We see him engaging with, and defending, the poor, exercising his judicial function with competence and discretion, displaying humility, moral sensibility

and personal empathy with those less fortunate than himself. Scene 7 marks the zenith of More's apparently meteoric rise – the play takes many liberties with the historical timeframe by telescoping events that took place over nearly twenty years into a dramatic structure that appears to happen within a short, hectic space of time.

If the first half of the play shows More the public man in his rise to power, the second half is concerned with the personal, social aspects of More as father and friend – much of it taking place indoors in a quiet domestic setting. It tells a story of More's rapid advancement, brief success and equally rapid fall. The action is extremely dramatic, filled with character and incident but, despite this, there is no direct evidence of its staging in the early modern period, although the text, as we have it, has clearly been prepared for performance. The manuscript was read and corrected by Henry Tilney, the Master of the Revels; additions were commissioned and inserted presumably with the play's future performance in mind, but none was recorded until the twentieth century when the possibility of Shakespeare's contribution was first seriously mooted. Greater interest has been shown in it since the work of W.W. Greg in 1911 and the New Bibliographers' putative identification of Hand D and other additions in Hand C as by Shakespeare.

Major Productions of *Sir Thomas More*:

1922 Birkbeck College, University of London, amateur production, 8 – 9 December

1938 King's School, Canterbury, directed by Canon F. J. Shirley, 3 – 5 November

1954 Players' Centre, directed by Brian Wray, 22 – 25, 26 – 29 June

1964 Nottingham Playhouse, directed by Frank Dunlop, 10 June – 4 July

1972 Hoxton Hall Theatre, London directed by Michael Beint

1978 Otago University, New Zealand, directed by Jane Oakshott, 2 – 6 May

1981 Poor Players, Vandyck Theatre, Bristol and Young Vic, London, directed by Greg Doran, 23 – 25 April, 29 April – 2 May

1983 BBC Radio 3, directed by Martin Jenkins, 25 December

1984 Globe Playhouse, West Hollywood, directed by Phoebe Wray, 27 June – 26 August

1990 Stage One Theatre Company, Shaw Theatre, London, directed by Michael Walling 6 – 29 September

1993-4 Teatro Scientifico, Teatro Laboratorio, *Tommaso Moro*, directed by Enzo Maria Caserta (Cloister of San Zeno, Verona, 24 July 1993; Parma, Rome and Bari, spring 1994)

1996 Globe Education Centre, London, staged reading, co-ordinated by Greg Doran, 23 June

2001 Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, rehearsed reading by graduates, 11 March

2001 Globe Education Centre, staged reading, co-ordinated by James Wallace, 25 September

2005-6 Royal Shakespeare Company, directed by Robert Delamare, Stratford-upon-Avon, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, London, 9 March 2005 – 14 January 2006

There is very little archive material on the earliest amateur productions which seem to have been inspired by external events such as publication of editions of the play and More's canonisation in 1935. There are inevitably many more archival resources from later professional productions starting with Frank Dunlop's in 1964 at the Nottingham Playhouse in which Sir Ian McKellen played Thomas More.

All theatrical productions, however much they lay claim to veracity and authenticity, make cuts and adjustments to the text to suit their own particular version of the story. Perhaps because it has not been recognised as a traditional part of the Shakespeare canon, directors have felt exceptionally free to adapt and amend the text of *Sir Thomas More* as they saw fit, inserting deleted material such as the 'Prentice Boys scene and cutting other scenes they felt did not work. It is apparent that those scenes which had seemed 'strange' to me on a first reading are frequently the victims of such dramaturgical intervention. The Lifter episode generally survives as a stand-alone comic turn, but the Faulkner and Erasmus episodes in particular have proved problematic in production. Such interventions inevitably change the tone and effect of the production while not affecting the overall trajectory of the play.

Frank Dunlop in 1964 started with the view that it was not a 'well-made play' seeing it as 'rather a vaudeville about Sir Thomas More.'[2] The cuts he made included the whole of the Erasmus and Faulkner episodes so that More's soliloquy at the beginning of Scene 8 was followed immediately by a messenger bringing news of the visit of 'The Mayor of London / Accompanied with his lady and her train.' In the early scenes though Dunlop included the fragment of the 'Prentice Boys scene as a kind of 'dumb show' which he thought gave the play greater political edge (Act 2, scene 1 in Bate and Rasmussen (2013)/ OT1b in Appendix 1 of Jowett's edition).

Modern audience ignorance as to exactly what it was that More was refusing to sign was remedied by inclusion of a cut down version of the oath required by the Act of Succession (1534) in which subscribers are asked to 'swear to bear faith, truth, and obedience alonely to the king's majesty, and to his heirs of his body of his most dear and entirely beloved lawful wife Queen Anne'. In response More spoke

[2] Frank Dunlop, interviewed by Ronald Parr 'Dwarfed by Shakespeare', in *Plays and Players* (London: Hamson Books, 1964), 11.

an edited version of these words from William Roper's *Life of Saint Thomas More*:

> No man living is there, my lords, that would with better will do the thing that should be acceptable to the King's Highness than I, which must needs confess his manifold goodness and bountiful benefits most benignly bestowed on me. Howbeit, I verily hoped that I should never have heard of this matter more, considering that I have, from time to time, always from the beginning, so plainly and truly declared my mind unto His Grace, which His Highness to me ever seemed, like a most gracious Prince, very well to accept, never minding, as he said, to molest me more herewith; since which time any further thing that was able to move me to any change could I never find, and if I could, there is none in all the world that would have been gladder of it than I.[3]

It was played in period Tudor costume – McKellen himself said: 'I was too young but enjoyed trying to look like the real Sir Thomas'. He recalled that 1964 was the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and Nottingham Playhouse's contribution was 'to unearth this play containing a scene indisputably by Shakespeare … I relished embodying a Shakespeare hero in the first-ever professional production of the play. I have often recalled this production when speaking the More speech about "strangers" in my solo shows "Acting Shakespeare" and "A Knight Out."'[4] The critic Benedict Nightingale said of McKellen's performance:

> Ian McKellen's More is a strikingly interesting performance. Sometimes you think he's not much more than an affable curate just down from Oxford; sometimes the gangling do-gooder seems to lack, now maturity, now fire. But the interpretation is deliberate and intelligent

[3] Quoted in William Roper and Nicholas Harpsfield, *Lives of Saint Thomas More* (London: Dent, 1963).

[4] Ian McKellen Official Home Page: Stage, http://www.mckellen.com/stage/00027.htm, accessed 16 February 2022. See website for pictures.

> – the accent is on qualities more essential to goodness, humility, simplicity, and kindliness. Mr. McKellen's cleverly awkward movements emphasise this, and the last scene, where the lines suggest a kind of self-mocking saintliness justifies it. This is a performance of dignity, without a trace of mawkishness.[5]

Despite the production's simplification of the plot, McKellen seems to have captured something of the complexity and ambiguity of More's role which he reprised nearly 20 years later for the BBC Radio 3 production of 1983.

In the 1990 Stage One Theatre Company production at the Shaw Theatre in London, directed by Michael Walling, More was played by Ken Bones. Walling's stated intention, as disclosed to Kathleen Bradley in personal interview, was: 'to make it clearly a group of contemporary people who were telling the story.'[6] Costumes were deliberately 'blended', (i.e. an eclectic mix of modern and historical outfits) in order to create a sense of the production being 'a modern view of the Renaissance' and actors donned and removed their robes of office in front of the audience – emphasising the play's concern with the nature of power itself. As Bradley notes: 'The formal robes of office, ornate and Tudor in style, were clear indicators of the semiotics of power here.'[7] With a small cast and the play's many roles, there was inevitably a lot of doubling – some of it was made deliberately meaningful, as in the doubling of Lifter and the dishonest serving-man, for example.[8]

Michael Walling's reputation for creating 'political theatre' led to an emphasis on More as folk hero – a man of the people. Walling made two significant textual decisions: he cut the character Clown

[5] Benedict Nightingale, "Riotous Assemblies Ring a Bell", *The Times* (28 March 2005).

[6] Michael Walling in Kathleen Bradley, "A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*" [unpublished M. Phil. Thesis], (University of Birmingham, 2009), 84.

[7] Bradley, *A Performance History*, 84.

[8] Bradley, *A Performance History*, 81.

Betts and did not include the 'Prentice Boys scene which he believed diluted the political message of the revolt. The loss of Clown Betts, an Addition by Heywood, reverted to Munday's original script. Walling's rationale was that the addition of the Clown had been deliberately inserted in order to 'denigrate the otherwise sympathetic plebeian character' (Walling, 1989) of the rioters.

The production was not widely reviewed at the time, but John Henry James in the *Times Literary Supplement* described Bones's performance of More as 'an inwardly vain and passionate man rigorously curbing his nature'. He regarded this as a valid interpretation, nevertheless, of what he considered Munday's 'passionately anti-Catholic' authorial intent.[9] Bradley indicates the variety in his performance, describing how in Scene 9, for example:

> Ken Bones's More … switched from jovial host to business-like statesman, to furious employer, with a speed reflecting the many, and sometimes contradictory, elements of More's humanity, to which the text only subtly alludes.[10]

Greg Doran, the current Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company has had a continuing relationship with the play, having directed two productions – the first as a student in 1981 and the second, a staged reading for the Globe Education Centre in 1996. On this second occasion Doran took the major textual decision to 'weave together the excellent parts of both [*Sir Thomas More* and *Henry VIII*] to form a new play, presented under the title *All is True*' (Doran, 1996). In 2005, Robert Delamere directed the first professional production for the RSC as part of its Gunpowder Season of plays to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in which the historical attempt of Catholic rebels to blow up King James I and the Houses of Parliament was foiled. For the Royal Shakespeare Com-

[9] John Henry James, 'The Mighty Fallen', *Times Literary Supplement* (14-20 September 1990), 975.

[10] Bradley, *A Performance History*, 81.

pany, much of the play's interest and emphasis was focused on Shakespeare's contribution to the writing and it was inaccurately promoted as 'Shakespeare's banned play'. Our 2013 edition in *The Collaborative Plays* included Peter Kirwan's interviews with both Robert Delamere and Nigel Cooke who played More.

The play was simply called *Thomas More*, and emphasis throughout was on More as a local London hero. It was a fast-paced, gritty, unglamorous production. Delamere explained that he had chosen the play because he was fascinated by the idea of 'how you become who you are.' He recalls that he found the 'core ideas … quite filmic' which, he explains, was 'why we set it in a burned-out cinema.'[11] Bradley describes how:

> Having … taken their seats, as if perhaps to view some cinema newsreel reporting on the civil unrest responsible for the destruction surrounding them, members of the 22-strong company stepped forward in turn to present Sir Thomas More as a play within the play, illustrating their own interpretation of the life of a local hero.[12]

The production presented a microcosm of the problems inherent when differing cultures clash in a rapidly changing world. Bradley argues that:

> Violence, either explicit or implied, overshadowed any contact between the different social strata, as well as the clash of cultures, and More was presented as the only figure who could bridge those divisions.[13]

The play's topicality was controversially emphasised by using black actors as the 'alien strangers' and white actors as the rebels which added a different, and potentially explosive, political dimension to

[11] Quoted in Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others: Collaborative Plays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 767.

[12] Bradley, *A Performance History*, 107.

[13] Bradley, *A Performance History*, 112.

the production. The rioting Londoners were costumed like Eastern European migrants, an impression enhanced by the flavour of Ilona Sekacz's musical score. Cooke talks in the interview about his own view of More and how the riot scene worked:

> At heart he [More] was very much one of the people. He relates to them as equals, but the writing also distinguishes him from them. In that scene in particular he's got some great rhetoric, heightened language, which marks him out. But the instinct is as one of the people, and that's what allows him to take the opportunity to urge them to do unto others what you would have done unto you.[14]

He recalled the rehearsal process in which he was keen that 'it shouldn't all suddenly stop, that the rioters shouldn't suddenly and magically be pacified, that there was a genuine job of persuasion to do.'[15]

Nigel Cooke as Thomas More talking to rioting Londoners in the 2005 RSC production directed by Robert Delamere Photo Hugo Glendinning © RSC

[14] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 770.
[15] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 770.

It was a modern dress production in which everyone wore dark, sombre clothing with aristocrats and well-to-do figures wearing dinner jackets to signify their elevated social status. In the final scenes More wore a casual, open-necked white shirt which he removed prior to execution. Critical opinion was divided about the use of modern dress – some seeing it as bringing home the play's contemporary relevance while others (such as Michael Billington in *The Guardian*) felt it pre-empted 'our own awareness of the play's topicality' and 'longed to see it anchored in its period'. Billington was the only reviewer to link this production with a previous one, commenting that 'the play's contemporary resonance emerged just as strongly in a 1964 Nottingham Playhouse period revival.'[16] John Gross of *The Sunday Telegraph* shared his concern commenting that Delamere's decision to opt for modern dress 'makes More's lines about the refugees less remarkable, less ahead of their time.'[17]

Delamere had worked intensively on the play's script: 'Some scenes' he considered,

> almost indecipherable, such as the one with the players that is reminiscent of the Mechanicals in *A Midsummer Nights' Dream*. We turned [it] into a German cabaret scene, because we were having to test the comedy to ask what it was addressing, what was funny, what was the thematic importance to the whole piece? [18]

He went on to explain how:

> Other scenes, such as the Erasmus and Faulkner episodes, which have … important character purposes but don't necessarily contribute to the main narrative drive, got cut during the run. You have to dip in

[16] Michael Billington, 'Thomas More/A New Way to Please You', *Guardian* (26 March 2005), https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/mar/26/theatre, accessed 16 February 2022.

[17] John Gross, 'Keep Your Powder Dry', *Sunday Telegraph* (27 March 2005).

[18] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 764.

> and out of the play to find the unifying ideas and themes, and then a unifying aesthetic to create a bigger world for the production to exist within.[19]

A decision was taken not to spell out the exact nature of the articles that More refuses to sign. Delamere believed that,

> The audience knows what's happening and, because they're unspecified, it felt like if we absolutely hammered it historically into its appropriate dress, that those issues may sing out dangerously for the play and turn it into a pageant. That's one of the reasons Nigel [Cooke, who played More] was so good – he had the flintiness and attitude and backbone to make sense of why he would stand his ground, and he was able to inhabit the character's clarity of vision and humanity.[20]

Cooke's performance was subtle and understated. His manner quiet and unassuming, despite speaking 38% of the lines in the original play. These were heavily cut including his main soliloquy which was lost in the major textual cuts made mid-run – this unique insight into More's interior state was compensated for, to a certain extent, by an obvious discomfort with his new-found status and determined efforts to remain calm and light-hearted in the face of his impending fate.

In order to prepare for the role, Cooke says he

> pondered a fair bit on what effect … [More's] name had on him. Ripe for punning of course, was it also a spur to do more? Always go that bit further, and his death was the ultimate way to prove his faith?[21]

He claims he did not do a lot of research in advance but did read Peter Ackroyd's biography from which he understood 'the huge presence of religion' in the period which he thought made More, for all

[19] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 764.
[20] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 765.
[21] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 771.

his 'extraordinariness', seem normal. He had previously thought of More as a 'deeply contemplative, reflective sage' but reading accounts of his daily routine gave Cooke an insight into what he called More's 'massive energy – up praying before dawn, writing, praying, studying, teaching his children Latin and music, praying, teaching himself music, praying', apart from doing his day job. He decided he wanted to present More 'like a cheery milkman on his rounds at 04.00hrs, whistling, quipping with the odd passer-by. Busy, busy, busy doing his duty.'[22]

Cooke's acting theory is that 'the less you do in terms of sticking on bits of characterisation, the better … [so he] didn't try to make More too complex. Massive achievers [he argues] are not necessarily massively complex. They're hugely driven, but no more or less complex than the average milkman or Nigel …'[23] He saw More's humour as a 'defence mechanism', a potentially irritating way of dealing with the situation, explaining that it 'acted as a spur' to his thinking: 'don't be hanging around trying to get laughs here, there and everywhere, just crack on.'[24]

He talks about the final scene in some detail:

> The moment I think he's more More than ever, when he's most connected to himself and the event facing him, is just before he gets to the chopping block. He's been wisecracking with his guard, and he suddenly realises that this is the place. There's a half line there which I stretched out. I gave myself a massive pause. I thought – I'd pretty much rattled through the play, I hadn't hung around, and I consciously did that because it needed to be driven, there's no central antagonism, and it fitted with my take on More's energy. It had to keep moving until that moment, 'Is this the place?' I think that's a good bit of writing, and it certainly fired up my imagination. For all his bonhomie and joviality, there is a sense that it could have all been

[22] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 769.
[23] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 768.
[24] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 770.

> a bit of an act and that in all his zipping around and doing good and believing things, he hasn't really **really** taken stock of what or who he is, what he's doing, where he's going and why. So, the purposeful espresso-fuelled milkman becomes an indecisive dog circling its basket, not knowing the most comfortable way to lie down. I think that's his biggest moment of connection. It doesn't last long because he's quickly back into wisecracking with Surrey and Shrewsbury and then the hangman.[25]

Critics were divided, as much about the play as this production, which was generally warmly received, certainly on the nights I saw it. I found Cooke's understated Sir Thomas both convincing and moving. For me this production proved that *Sir Thomas More* is a play that repays closer attention, not just for the light it throws upon early modern playwriting practices and for extending the Shakespeare canon. Further study enables us to appreciate its intrinsic qualities as a subtle delineation of a complex, enigmatic individual whose personal conduct and beliefs brought him into conflict with authority. It challenges us to consider the role of the state and the place of the individual within it, but it also asks fundamental questions about what constitutes character, in Delamere's words 'how you become who you are' and how that can best be represented imaginatively on as well as off stage in the wider theatre of the world.

[25] Quoted in Bate and Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others*, 770.

Bibliography

Bate, Jonathan and Eric Rasmussen, *William Shakespeare & Others: Collaborative Plays*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Billington, Michael, 'Thomas More/A New Way to Please You', *Guardian* (26 March 2005), https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2005/mar/26/theatre, accessed 16 February 2022.

Bradley, Kathleen, 'A performance history of *Sir Thomas More*' [unpublished M. Phil. Thesis] (University of Birmingham, 2009).

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, *Sir Thomas More*, a rehearsed reading by graduates [Programme] (Bath Literary Festival: 11 March 2001).

Cronin, Lisa, *The Renaissance Drama Newsletter Supplement Seven – Professional Productions in the British Isles since 1880 of Plays by Tudor and Stuart Dramatists (excluding Shakespeare) – A Checklist*, J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring eds. (Graduate School of Renaissance Studies, University of Warwick: Summer 1989).

Doran, Greg, co-ordinator, *All is True*, staged reading, [Programme], (The Globe Education Theatre: 23 June 1996).

Dunlop, Frank, interviewed by Ronald Parr in 'Dwarfed by Shakespeare', in *Plays and Players*, July 1964 (London: Hansom Books, 1964), 8 – 13.

Erasmus, *In Praise of Folly* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1876).

Greg, W. W., ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).

Gross, John, 'Keep Your Powder Dry', *Sunday Telegraph* (27 March 2005).

Ian McKellen Official Home Page http://www.mckellen.com/stage/00027.htm, accessed 16 February 2022.

James, John Henry, 'The Mighty Fallen', *Times Literary Supplement* (14-20 September 1990), 975.

Jowett, John, *Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Lockey, Rowland, *Sir Thomas More, his father, his household and his descendants after Hans Holbein the Younger* [portrait] (oil on canvas: 1593) held in the National Portrait Gallery, London

Mantel, Hilary, *Wolf Hall* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009).

McMillan, Scott, 'The Book of Sir Thomas More: Dates and Acting Companies', in T.H. Howard-Hill, ed. *Shakespeare and Sir Thomas More: Essays on the Play and its Shakespearian Interest*, (Cambridge: Chicago University Press, 1989), pp. 57-76.

Melchiori, Giorgio and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Nightingale, Benedict, 'Riotous Assemblies Ring a Bell', *The Times* (28 March 2005).

Nottingham Playhouse, *Sir Thomas More*, directed by Frank Dunlop, [Prompt books, Nos. 1 and 2] (1964).

Nottingham Playhouse, *Sir Thomas More*, directed by Frank Dunlop, [Programme] (June-July 1964).

Oath of Allegiance to Henry VIII and his Successors, 1534, in translation from the Latin. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/, accessed 16 February 2022.

Roper, William and Nicholas Harpsfield, *Lives of Saint Thomas More* (London: Dent, 1963).

Steadman, Maire-Jean, '*Sir Thomas More* in Performance in the twentieth century' [unpublished MA Thesis] (University of Birmingham, 1989).

Sylvester, Richard, ed., *Sir Thomas More: Complete Works*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963 – 97).

Walling, Michael, ed., 'Introduction to Sir Thomas More: Acting Edition' (Stage One Theatre Company, 1989).

‘PAINTED DAYS’: *SIR THOMAS MORE* AND THE RHETORIC OF DISOBEDIENCE

DAVIDE DEL BELLO

In his scintillating address to the Oxford Union debating society (November 2017), Sir Ian McKellen gave a passionate speech on discrimination on grounds of sexuality. He hailed Britain and British culture for its ‘acceptance of difference’ and ‘celebration of diversity’ and concluded by delivering an impeccable rendering of the Strangers’ case appeal from *Sir Thomas More*, whose title role he had played in one of the very few professional performances of the play in 1964 at the Nottingham Playhouse. Nor was this the only time McKellen had summoned this relatively unknown passage by Shakespeare: he did the same at the *People Speak Event* in 2012, at the Cambridge Union Society in 2015 and perhaps most notably in a public address in Ekaterinburg, Russia, in 2016. McKellen’s efforts were picked up more recently, in a star-studded video clip produced in 2018 by the International Rescue Committee & Shakespeare’s Globe for #WorldRefugeeDay #StandWithRefugees aimed to publicise ‘Shakespeare’s rallying cry for humanity’.[1] It features a captivating chorus of voices that include *Sex-and-the City*’s Kim Cattrall, *Game-of-Thrones*’s Lena Headey, Afrobeat pop singer Yasmin Kadi, Hamilton start Jamael Westman and *How-To-Get-Away-With-Murder* actor Alfred Enoch. An accompanying 9-minute short film was also created for the occa-

[1] International Rescue Committee, *This Is Shakespeare’s Rallying Cry for Humanity*, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSouhVueZ4k&t=12s&ab_channel=InternationalRescueCommittee, accessed 20 February 2022.

sion, directed by Peter Trifunovich and starring Yorkshire-based actor Ibrahim Knight. The film was shot in a local pub in Harehills, inner-city Leeds, which local residents have notoriously described as 'a horrible place to live' since it is infested with rubbish, drug dealing, arson and vermin. Shakespeare's 400-year-old speech has thus gained unprecedented centre stage as an earnest, uncompromising call for the support of asylum-seekers and for tolerance at large.[2] 'More's pro-immigrant monologue', as incorrectly dubbed by the popular press, is unquestionably topical. It should come as no surprise, however, that there are the features of this speech (and obviously of the play), that such topical, or if we want presentist emphasis neglects, whether unconsciously or not. This paper looks at some of the issues which the circulation of Shakespeare's 'free-floating' More speech (to quote Sean Lawrence)[3] leaves out. I want then to abandon topicality and go back to the 'tropicality' of the play. And by way of provocation, I start with a crux, textual but I think also hermeneutical, that ends More's speech, a phrase that is made to resonate as a final echo of mixed voices in the 2018 clip: 'This is the strangers case/and this your mountainish inhumanity'. While it makes apparent sense to explain the sentence as referring to an 'overbearing' or 'huge' lack of humanity, the collocation 'mountainish inhumanity' remains, to say the least, unusual. In fact, it perpetuates what is a debatable emendation introduced by Alexander Dyce in the first (1844) edition of the play, where it replaces the obscure '*momtanish*.' Retaining Dyce's correction, John Jowett addressed the crux in his 2011 Arden edition of the play, in a long explanatory note that cited the only other known example of the adjective *mountainish*[4] and mentioned in passing Karl Wentersdorf's

[2] The Stranger's Case, *The Stranger's Case*, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaeDoTaYK5k&t=489s&abchannel=TheStrangers%27Case, accessed 20 February 2022.

[3] Sean Lawrence, 'Fear and the Other in Sir Thomas More', *Actes Des Congrès de La Société Française Shakespeare* 36 (2018), 2.

[4] Nicholas Byfield (1579-1622): 'The rule of faith, or, An exposition of the Apostles

take on this problematic word.[5] Wentersdorf's 2006 essay marshalled historical, cultural and textual evidence to do with 'the grim reputation of the Mohammedan Turks as mirrored widely in Elizabethan writings' and concluded, I believe, convincingly that the manuscript's *momtanish* should be read as the contraction of mahometanish. In his own words:

> By characterizing the inhumanity of the rebel apprentices as 'momtanish,' an expression applying literally only to foreigners whom the Elizabethans regarded as the very embodiment of extreme cruelty, More was using the ultimate censure. It expressed in unmistakable fashion his outrage at the mindless brutality of the mob and enabled him to conclude his eloquent warnings on a note of brilliant and biting satire.[6]

This proposed correction matters for at least two reasons. First it mars the notion, much cherished by the current cultural establishment in the UK, of Shakespeare as the unstained, trans-historical paragon of religious noncommittal and unconditional tolerance. And second it detracts from the celebration of More as 'modernity's diapason', to quote James Wood: what Wood pungently calls 'the clear, strong note of individual conscience, the note of the self, sounding against the authoritarian intolerance of the Early Modern state'.[7] In a sense, then, we would insist that there is more to More than meets YouTube. Quite literally, in fact, because the very speech so often rehearsed of recent, (to commendable civic ends, no doubt) omits

Creed so handled as it affordeth both milke for babes, and strong meat for such as are at full age' London Stephens and Meredith, 1626 'not long before hee had begun to feele & suffer his greatest ignominie and paine. Secondly, this mountainish place serued somewhat to awake the affections of the godly, to teach them to get as high'.

[5] Karl Wentersdorf, 'On 'Momtanish Inhumanyty' in Sir Thomas More,' *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006), 178–185.

[6] Wentersdorf, 'On 'Momtanish Inhumanyty' in Sir Thomas More,' 185.

[7] James Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief* (New York: Picador, 2010), 3.

a rather long section of More's entreaty to London's rioting apprentices. What is left out are not only the exchanges between More and some of the rioters (Doll, George Betts or Lincoln), an understandable omission for the sake of dramatic impact (even though it does turn More's dialogue into a monologue). The whole part of his speech that deals with obedience to authority on the basis of Scripture, and marks rebellion against God and the King as a sin, is also missing. Gone are, for instance, the 'unreverent knees', the invitation to 'kneel to be forgiven', the appeal to safeguard one's soul through obedience, and the notion that obedience itself is a necessary political ingredient even of rebellion. These are momentous omissions, and it is not my intention here to delve into the many questions, academic, political or cultural, that they raise. I mention them because I think they give us a clearer perception of *Sir Thomas More* as a difficult play, whose terms 'do not comfortably maps unto ours', as Sean Lawrence perceptively suggested in his essay on the play.[8] We should address some of these 'discomfort zones'.

Discomfitures

The first one has to do with biography. Following James Wood's remarks on Thomas More as a historical figure, I would start from the issue of *Sir Thomas More* as a stage biography. Wood polemically entitled his essay on *Sir Thomas More* 'A man for one season' and launched a scathing attack on the hagiographically tinged representation of More, which survives even in recent biographies (notably Ackroyd 2012).[9] He rejected what he called the 'drained, contemporary view of More, which admires not what he believed but how

[8] Sean Lawrence, 'Fear and the Other in Sir Thomas More', *Actes Des Congrès de La Société Française Shakespeare* 36 (2018), 1-13, 3.

[9] Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief.*

he believed—his "certainty."[10] This, Wood says, is a 'thinly secular' approach and represents nothing more than the retired religious yearning of a nonreligious age. In Wood's view, More was 'unscrupulous, greasy, quibblingly legalistic'[11] and again 'cruel in punishment, evasive in argument, lusty for power, and repressive in action'[12]. In sum, More is damned as the 'barrister of Catholic repression'[13]. Beyond the clearly partisan vitriol of its rhetoric, Wood's essay records legitimate misgivings about recent biographical representations of More, which are ill suited to the ambivalent dramatization given in the play. The exception may seem to be Hilary Mantel's 2009 'Wolf Hall', and its later BBC television adaptation, which downgraded More and upgraded his nemesis Thomas Cromwell, but that sort of revisionist biography has been shown to have axes to grind. The play *Sir Thomas More*, as I anticipated, is difficult, not so much because its collaborative nature makes it structurally incoherent (as some critics have claimed) but because it weaves a dense biographical tapestry of More. I would agree with Susannah Monta that 'the play is the most sophisticated stage biography of its age'[14] and welcome her insightful claim that the way More is portrayed in the play is based on a 'keen awareness of the interpretational problems in which its subject matter is implicated' and 'the subtle negotiations it undertakes between the controversial stances outlined in its sources and the conflicted views of its London audience'[15]. It makes sense, I think, to claim with her that the play reads as a balancing act 'between iconographic and iconoclastic traditions'[16], between the depiction of More as a martyr and the clandestine characterisation of More as a gluttonous dissem-

[10] Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief*, 4.

[11] Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief*, 9.

[12] Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief*, 15.

[13] Wood, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief*, 3.

[14] Susannah Brietz Monta, '"The Book of Sir Thomas More" and Laughter of the Heart', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34/1 (2003), 107–21, 116.

[15] Monta, '"The Book of Sir Thomas More",121.

[16] Monta, '"The Book of Sir Thomas More",121.

bler. Critical responses to the play have quite convincingly pursued either line of interpretation. Pace James Wood then, More does seem to come across as 'a man for all seasons'. Concern for conflicting representations of oneself and of others often crops up in the play. The issues of truth and falsehood, of inner merit and outward ceremony are brought up by More in more than one scene; for instance, in his contrived meeting with Erasmus (8.40-41), whose wisdom is tested via the 'painted barbarism' of dissimulation. (8.180). Erasmus urges Randall, his secretary, to 'act his part' (8.45) and 'dress his behaviour' (8.35), to wear the trappings of Lord Chancellor. Also, the play deploys to near exhaustion the punning potential of More's own name to produce a destabilizing portrait of the man as continually 'more than himself' (Moore More). Long noted by critics, wordplay of this kind in the play is ubiquitous and infectious. It insinuates itself, for instance, in the exchange between Justice Suresby and the thief, Lifter, who complains he has been charged with 'more than's true' (2.103). Suresby's reply elaborates on this initial 'more' to reflect on truth and felony, in a very effective 'more' tour de force:

> LIFTER.
> Sir, I am charged, as God shall be my comfort,
> With more than's true.
>
> SURESBY.
> Sir, sir, ye are indeed, with more than's true,
> For you are flatly charged with felony;
> You're charged with more than truth, and that is theft;
> More than a true man should be charged withal;
> Thou art a varlet, that's no more than true.
> Trifle not with me; do not, do not, sirrah;
> Confess but what thou knowest, I ask no more. (2.104-110)

And later, when More returns his purse to Suresby, he joins in with a 'fear nothing of More' (2.196).[17] More's name even crops up

[17] "MORE. Well, Master Suresby, there's your purse again,/And all your money: fear

toponymically, as the rioters deliberate whether to drag strangers to Moorfields for a sound thrashing (4.44)[18] Randall, impersonating More, claims that he is 'neither more nor less than merry Sir Thomas' (8.173)[19]. What I think this sort of dense punning does is to predicate, if you will, the exorbitant, eccentric reach of More's identity, which will not be pinned down to any one role (be it that of Justice, Chancellor, scholar, or simply man or husband). More is more than his representations, including his own self-representations. He seems to imply as much in his guarded assessment of his status (8.14-1):

> but, More, the more thou hast,
> Either of honor, office, wealth, and calling,
> Which might excite thee to embrace and hub them,
> The more doe thou in serpents' natures think them;
> Fear their gay skins with thought of their sharp state; (8.14-17)

Later, having been deprived of his status as Lord Chancellor, he will address his discomfited wife with quipping comments on the newly acquired leanness of his title, which now coincides with his name, it's 'only More' (11.70). [20]

> LADY MORE.
> Who's that, my lord?

nothing of More;
Wisdom still keeps the mean and locks the door." (2.195-197).

[18] "No, nor I neither; so may mine own house be burned for company./I'll tell ye what: we'll drag the strangers into More fields/Moorfields/Moorgate and there/bombast them till they stink again." (4.44-45).

[19] "SURREY. Oh good Erasmus, you must conceive his vain:/He's ever furnished with these conceits.
RANDALL. Yes, faith, my learned poet doth not lie for that matter: I am neither more nor less than merry Sir Thomas always." (8.171-174).

[20] "More now must march. Chelsea, adieu, adieu./Strange farewell: thou shalt ne'er more see More True, For I shall ne'er see thee more. /VICE. God a mercy, Wit!—Sir, you had a master Sir Thomas More more; but now we shall have more. LUGGINS. God bless him! I would there were more of his mind! (9.352-360) Thy head is for thy shoulders now more fit;/Thou hast less hair upon it, but more wit." (8.246-248).

MORE.
Still lord! the Lord Chancellor, wife.

LADY MORE.
That's you.

MORE.
Certain; but I have changed my life.
Am I not leaner than I was before?
The fat is gone; my title's only More.
Contented with one style, I'll live at rest:
They that have many names are not still best.
I have resigned mine office: count'st me not wise? (11.65-73)

He rephrases his fall from grace as a peaceful retreat from the shows of high office: 'More rest enjoys the subject meanly bred' (13.37). And true to his well-known sense of humour that surrounds the historical figure, Munday's Sir Thomas quite literally puns his way to the gallows:

HANGMAN.
My lord, I pray ye, put off your doublet.

MORE.
Speak not so coldly to me; I am hoarse already;
I would be loathe, good fellow, to take more.
Point me the block; I ne'er was here before. (17.115-118)

This brings us to a second cause for interpretative discomfiture. More's gallows humour does not square well with the earnestness of the strangers' case speech popularized by the media at the present time. The latter's urgency would be somewhat debased by the former's levity. And accustomed as they are to the divisive rhetoric of unwavering political and social commitment, current audiences may be left wondering whether it is at all reasonable. As they have done in the past, responses will vary. In the second half of the 16th century, More's wit was used to discredit his early reputation as a martyr for the Catholic cause. So, for instance John Foxe made it a point

to underline that More's martyrdom was mere show when compared to the true ordeal of Protestant martyrs.[21] And of course we need to keep that backdrop in mind as we read Munday's play. At present, critics or readers attuned to the 'woke' rhetoric of our times may find it sensible, instead, to embrace Mantel's revisionist portrait and read More's jesting as yet another instance of evasiveness and equivocation on the part of a ruthless manipulator, a Machiavellian character still enmeshed in the authoritarian framework of dark, medieval times. Cynics, on the other hand, may welcome jesting of that kind as a commendable mark of jaded detachment and unorthodox disillusion, up against the view of More as the canonised defender of Catholic orthodoxy. But even that would be a rather coarse reduction of More's complex political and religious persona. It has been noted that the ambivalent characterization of More may be tied to the ambivalence of Munday's public persona as a politically active playwright. The sparse biographical details we have on Anthony Munday (1560-1633) convey his duplicitous reputation as both a staunch persecutor and a secret supporter of Catholic recusants: a vein of duplicity that may well have seeped into Munday's treatment of More in the play.[22]

By recasting his own predicament (and later his own disobedience) in humorous terms More deploys to great effect the rhetorical device of 'asteysmus' in the definition of Puttenham 'the merry scoffe or the civill jest',[23] the sort of polite or genteel mockery where a speaker 'catches a certain word and throws it back to his interlocutors with an unexpected twist.'[24]. More does that repeatedly throughout the play,

[21] John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church (London: John Day, 1563). The issue is discussed by Jowett in his introduction to the Arden edition of the play*. See especially: 62-63.
[22] See Thomas Merriam's 'The Misunderstanding of Munday as Author of Sir Thomas More', *The Review of English Studies* 51/204 (2000), 540-81.
[23] George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie*, STC 20519, (London, 1589), 158.
[24] Silva Rhetoricae, v. *asteismus.* http://rhetoric.byu.edu/Figures/A/asteismus.htm, accessed 20 February 2022.

and intensifies this bewildering practice after he has disobeyed the king and his fate is sealed. Rhetorically speaking, More's humour is a classic instance of enthymematic wit. In an *enthymeme* (an incomplete syllogism) a speaker withholds the premises of his claims and lets the audience supply what is missing in a learning process of (self-revelation). As a sort of 'backhanded appeal to logos' tied to the Erasmian praise of folly, More's wit operates a clever reframing or reversal of circumstances which has the not-indifferent potential to change people's perspectives and attitudes.[25] More's civil jest gives voice to More's civil disobedience.[26] At the same time, More's urbane humour has the exhilarating effect of boosting his character's ethical status. In this sense, despite its ambivalence, the play actually strengthens More's ethos as a politician and as a martyr. And of course, More's disobedient witticism signals a serene detachment from the world which taps into a long-standing martyrological tradition. The pageants of office and of secular concerns are, by his own admission, but 'painted days' of which he was knowingly a patron.[27]

[25] Steve Sherwood, 'Intersections of Wit and Rhetoric: Humor as a Rhetorical Enterprise', *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas Humor and Culture* 29/1 (2013), 45–52.

[26] It should be noted that, from a philosophical point of view, disobedience has been described as a dialectic concept which 'includes the possibilities both to affirm and to reject'. See Jarno Hietalahti's 'Humor and Disobedience: Understanding Controversial Humor', Filosofiska Notiser 3, (2016), 23–44, 23.

Focusing on joyfulness and wit as markers of a martyr's conscience in both Protestant and Catholic martyrologies, Monta argues that SIR THOMAS MORE remains silent over the motives of More's faith and claims that More 'hides behind his jokes' in a move that supposedly refracts an early modern 'estrangement of surface from inner truth'. More specifically, 'the play uses joyfulness to hide the inwardness of its protagonist, and thus to conceal the religiously divisive reasons for More's death' (108). While I appreciate Monta's attention to the complexity of play, I disagree with her assessment of More's wit.

[27] Even a cursory glance at late 16th century books shows how frequently the word 'paynted/painted' occurred with reference to the ongoing Catholic/Protestant polemics, and especially in Protestant tracts attacking the 'paynted colours, and Sophisticall shewes' of bishops (Bancroft 1594), Popish 'paynted gods' (Aske, 1588) and the hypocrisy of the Roman seat with 'paynted colours of false ryght wysenesse' (Askew, 1547). Scriptural corroboration goes back, of course, to Christ's proscription of scribe and

Comic corrective

We could say that More's wit in the play acts as a 'comic corrective' to borrow a phrase from Kenneth Burke. That is, by adopting a stance that is 'neither wholly euphemistic, nor wholly debunking' with regard to the motives and the ends of his imprisonment, More makes 'assets outs of his liabilities'. He 'observes himself while acting' and by so doing is able to transcend himself by noting his own foibles'[28]. He deploys a series of performative acts of disobedience and humorous non-compliance which uses paradox to transcend expectations of religious (and political) conformity. Religious, I would underline, because that leads us to what is possibly one final area of interpretative unease. For Sir Thomas More must also touch upon the issue of religious affiliation. In his comments on Hand D passages of the play, the ones ascribed to Shakespeare, Jowett judiciously reminds us that Shakespeare 'is typically indirect in reference to doctrinal issues'. And we would do well to approach the 1990s resurgence of a fully formed Catholic Shakespeare with caution. But then Jowett adds that Shakespeare supposedly alludes to religion only to 'engage with issues closer to playmaking, such as the relation between art and nature' and concludes that the Hand D passages 'have nothing to do with religious doctrine beyond the political commonplace of divine right'. [29]

pharisees as 'paynted tumbes'(Bale, 1538). In analogous terms, the adjective served to dismiss the hypocrisy of the world, 'the places and dignities of this paynted world' and the 'paynted Peacocks of this worlde' (Babington, 1588). Among the most notable examples, Thomas Bilson's 1585 *The true difference betweene Christian subiection and unchristian rebellion explicitly links the paynted sophistry of Jesuits to Scriptural error, rebellion and heresy. On a different note, the reference to duplicitous hypocrisy the word 'painted' entails may have us reflect on the duplicitous reputation of Anthony Munday as both a secret supporter and staunch persecutor of Catholic recusants.* See Thomas Merriam's 'The Misunderstanding of Munday as Author of Sir Thomas More', *The Review of English Studies* 51/204 (2000), 540–81.

[28] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* 3 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 166.

[29] Jowett, John, *Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 19.

This view can be made to extend, I think, quite easily, from the authoritative passages by Shakespeare to the rest of the play, which is currently read along interpretative lines that eschew the import of religion and instead focus on politics, the 'materiality' of performance or a rather vague notion of early modern culture. But the issue remains contentious. In her dissident study on Catholicism and literary imagination, Catherine Shell has offered a challenging account of the academic bias that still surrounds discussions of the early modern Catholic cause, of its champions or its detractors.[30] And that of course is a matter for reflection that would apply equally well to Sir Thomas More above and beyond the platitudes of some current neoliberal readings of the play. Further research would, I think, bear fruit in this respect.

Let's hear it for Poesy

I have addressed what for me are some of the 'discomfort zones' in the play: textual cruxes, puns and loci of interpretative contention which, combined with wavering authorial voices, defy clear-cut readings of the play. Predictably, against recent, monolithic appropriations of its rhetoric, *Sir Thomas More* remains a refreshingly complex play. It engages biography to offer a dramatised reflection on More's life which is also, at one remove, a nuanced dramatization of issues--literary, political, religious—traversing the sketchy biographies of the play's authors. The enactment of More's life brings back to centre stage the troublesome repute of Munday and the fuzzy biography of Shakespeare: both the 'shrewd persecutor' and the 'literary genius' will

[30] Among other things, Shell reflects on the thorny issues surrounding the dramatic staging of the break with Rome in early modern theatre. She notes that 'the difficulty about mentioning either Catholic or Protestant tenets leaves a void at the centre of Sir Thomas More' and remarks that 'no-one has answered the question of how one of its co-authors could be a man so rabidly anti-Catholic; and the mystery seems destined to remain insoluble' in *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999) 221.

not be pigeonholed. The theatrical space of the play thus becomes a Petri dish for testing the subtle, yet formidable interactions between biography and autobiography, in the "comic" style of a Burkean corrective. In that same Burkean spirit, to those involved in the pursuit of literature, *Sir Thomas More* eventually bequeaths an inspiring word of comfort. Commended by Erasmus (8.191-2 08)[31] for his 'merry humour' as an antidote to melancholy and ill health, Thomas More turns to Surrey, whom he addresses as 'My noble poet'. Surrey objects to More's use of the title on the grounds that poets are charged with 'idleness' and thought 'unfit for state', lagging behind 'all mechanic sciences' (8.222): a predicament scholar in the humanities are surely all too familiar with in the present. More replies with a passionate defence of 'fair poesy' as 'the sweetest heraldry of art', an art that negotiates the differences between 'the tough sharp holly' (a well-known emblem of orthodox truth)[32] and the 'tender bay tree', the laurel of creative achievement.

> O, give not up fair poesy, sweet lord,
> To such contempt. That I may speak my heart,
> It is the sweetest heraldry of art
> That sets a difference 'tween the tough sharp holly

[31] "ERASMUS Your honour's merry humour is best physic/Unto your able body, for we learn,/Where melancholy chokes the passages/Of blood and breath, the erected spirit still /Lengthens our days with sportful exercise./Study should be the saddest time of life;/The rest a sport exempt from thought of strife. MORE Erasmus preacheth gospel against physic./My noble poet— SURREY Oh, my lord, you tax me/In that word 'poet' of much idleness./It is a study that makes poor our fate;/Poets were ever thought unfit for state. MORE O, give not up fair poesy, sweet lord,/To such contempt. That I may speak my heart,/ It is the sweetest heraldry of art/That sets a difference 'tween the tough sharp holly/ And tender bay tree. SURREY Yet, my lord, / It is become the very lag i'number/ To all mechanic sciences. MORE Why I'll show the reason/This is no age for poets." (8.188-208).

[32] As perpetuated for instance in the traditional British Christmas carol *The Holly and the Ivy.* See John Williamson's engaging examination of Holly symbolism in *The Oak King, the Holly King, and the Unicorn* (New York: HarperCollins, 1986), especially 62-68.

And tender bay tree. (8.215-219)

The poet's nobility lies in this fragile but essential balancing act between the harsh demands of intellectual integrity, coherence and rigour and the inspiring impetus of rhetoric and poetry. Once again, if we wish, a rather precarious but crucial balance between outright debunking and outright mystification. *Sir Thomas More* suggests it is a balance well worthy of our strife.

Bibliography

Aske, James, *Elizabetha Triumphans Conteyning the Dammed Practizes, That the Diuelish Popes of Rome Haue Vsed Euer Sithence Her Highnesse First Comming to the Crowne, by Mouing Her Wicked and Traiterous Subjects to Rebellion and Conspiracies, Thereby to Bereaue Her Maiestie Both of Her Lawfull Seate, and Happy Life. VVith a Declaration of the Manner How Her Excellency Was Entertained by Her Souldyers into Her Campe Royall at Tilbery in Essex: And of the Ouerthrow Had against the Spanish Fleete: Briefly, Truly, and Effectually Set Foorth. Declared, and Handled by I.A.* (London: Thomas Orwin, 1588).

Bale, John, *[A Comedy Concernynge Thre Lawes, of Nature Moses, & Christ, Corrupted by the Sodomytes. Pharysees and Papystes Compyled by Iohan Bale.]* (Wesel: Nicholaum Bamburgensem, 1538).

Bancroft, Richard, *A Suruay of the Pretended Holy Discipline. Contayning the Beginninges, Successe, Parts, Proceedings, Authority, and Doctrine of It: With Some of the Manifold, and Materiall Repugnances, Varieties and Vncertaineties, in That Behalfe* (London: John Wolfe, 1593).

Bilson, Thomas, *The True Difference Betweene Christian Subiection and Unchristian Rebellion Wherein the Princes Lawfull Power to Commaund for Trueth, and Indepriuable Right to Beare the Sword Are Defended against the Popes Censures and the Iesuits Sophismes Vttered in Their Apologie and Defence of English Catholikes: With a Demonstration That the Thinges Refourmed in the Church of England by the Lawes of This Realme Are Truely Catholike, notwithstanding the Vaine Shew Made to the Contrary in Their Late Rhemish Testament: By Thomas Bilson Warden of Winchester. Perused and Allowed Publike Authoritie* (London: Joseph Barnes 1585).

Burke, Kenneth, *Attitudes Toward History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

Foxe, John, *Actes and Monuments of these Latter and Perillous Days, Touching Matters of the Church* (London: John Day, 1563).

Hietalahti, Jarno, 'Humor and Disobedience: Understanding Controversial Humor', *Filosofiska Notiser* 3 (2016), 23–44.

International Rescue Committee, *This Is Shakespeare's Rallying Cry for Humanity,*

2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSouhVueZ4k&t=12s&ab_channel=InternationalRescueCommittee, accessed 20 February 2022.

Jowett, John, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

Lawrence, Sean, 'Fear and the Other in Sir Thomas More', *Actes Des Congrès de La Société Française Shakespeare* 36 (2018), 1-13.

Merriam, Thomas, 'The Misunderstanding of Munday as Author of Sir Thomas More', *The Review of English Studies* 51/204 (2000), 540–81.

Mantel, Hilary, *Wolf Hall* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009).

Melchiori, Giorgio and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Monta, Susannah Brietz, '"The Book of Sir Thomas More" and Laughter of the Heart', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34/1 (2003), 107–21.

Puttenham, George, *The Arte of English Poesie,* STC 20519 (London, 1589)

Shell, Alison, *Catholicism, Controversy, and the English Literary Imagination, 1558-1660* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Sherwood, Steve, 'Intersections of Wit and Rhetoric: Humor as a Rhetorical Enterprise', *Proteus: A Journal of Ideas Humor and Culture* 29/1 (2013), 45–52.

The Stranger's Case, *The Stranger's Case,* 2018 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YaeDoTaYK5k&t=489s&ab_channel=TheStrangers%27Case, accessed 20 February 2022.

Wentersdorf, Karl, 'On "Momtanish Inhumanyty" in Sir Thomas More', *Studies in Philology* 103.2 (2006), 178–85.

Wood, James, *The Broken Estate: Essays on Literature and Belief* (New York: Picador, 2010).

‘I HEAR THEY MEAN TO FIRE THE LOMBARDS’ HOUSES’: ITALIAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND DISPLACEMENT OF PREJUDICE IN *SIR THOMAS MORE*

MICHELE DE BENEDICTIS

The first scene of the collaborative play *Sir Thomas More* attempts to condense the motives and reasons behind the historical events that occurred on the eve of 1 May 1517 which caused angry Londoners to rebel against the abuses perpetrated by strangers in their home city. The dramatic exemplars featured in the script aiming to typify this attitude towards urban natives are two (partly fictional) characters, representative of the foreign community in early Tudor London: Francis de Barde and Cavaler, whose northern Italian origin is circumscribed by the supra-regional label “Lombard”, as when George Betts responds with intimidating scorn to de Barde’s provocations: “I tell thee Lombard, these words should cost thy best cap, were I not curbed by duty and obedience” (1.56-7). That is the only instance in Anthony Munday’s original manuscript of the term ‘Lombard’; the other entries derive from the ensuing additions or revisions to the first draft of the play.

When he bursts onto the scene, the haughty de Barde brazenly insists on harassing Doll Williamson, the carpenter’s wife and object of his desire, as he claims the self-assumed right to possess any Englishwoman for his pleasure, even the Lord Mayor’s wife, given the royal favour accorded to eminent strangers, taking for granted a condition of diplomatic and juridical immunity for their outrages. Doll, the unyielding English wife, claims that even after death she will be able to say “I died in scorn to be a stranger’s prey” (7.131), rather than sur-

render to such arrogant sexual advances. She not only resists the Lombard's impudence in order to preserve her decorum, but as a free-born citizen, she also reminds him of the territorial limitations he should be subjected to in the urban body politic as a foreign guest, regarding the right to acquisition and possession of English propriety.[1] "Whatsoever is mine scorns to stoop to a stranger" Doll proudly asserts, rejecting the idea of sharing the fate of Mistress Sherwin, the goldsmith's wife, already enticed and seized by the alien abductor de Barde, along with an unpaid plate sent from her husband, a cuckold twice usurped (1.6-14; 5.16-26). Sherwin's later appeal for justice against the Lombard's wrongdoings had proved fruitless, eventually backfiring on him. The influence of ambassadorial pressure on the king inverted their relative positions so that the defrauded goldsmith was imprisoned in de Barde's place for his unwise lawsuit against an eminent stranger. To add insult to injury, moreover, he was forced to pay for his wife's upkeep during her wanton stay with the Lombard. Cavaler's appearance onstage is no less irreverent: he boasts his superior rank by arbitrarily seizing a pair of doves recently purchased by Doll's husband at Cheapside, since he defiantly refuses to consider a vulgar London carpenter – whom he has already beaten off-stage – worthy of such a high-class delicacy.[2]

These hostile exchanges involving both Lombard characters take inspiration from the incidents triggering the notorious anti-alien insurrection of Ill May Day in 1517 as recounted in Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles*. Although Munday, as recognised author of the first scene, picks Cavaler's name – a merchant from Lucca – out of the group of strangers who supported de Barde's swaggering oath at King's Gallery about enjoying English wives, Williamson's doves were actually con-

[1] See also Jeffrey Masten, '*More* or Less: Editing the Collaborative', *Shakespeare Studies* 29 (2001), 117-18.

[2] Williamson justifies his fearful meekness (1.45-9), having already experienced Newgate prison for an ambassadorial complaint.

fiscated by an anonymous Frenchman in the historiographic source.[3] Munday's first choice for his theatrical adaptation in this way simplifies matters by focusing only on the negative examples of strangers' abuses by means of an anti-Italian bias. The dramatic counterparts of de Barde and Cavaler seem to mix with the multi-layered citizenry of London for their impudent incursions, but these wealthy Lombards basically belonged to a highborn elite of immigrants, gravitating around the court, which granted them special privileges and protection. Their (un)social distinction is more closely related to class conflict than foreign identity, but their problematic inclusion as immigrants into London's social fabric is symptomatic of the friction among different nationalities in the same area, the effects of which were mainly felt by the lower classes. [4]

Since the fourteenth century, for many alien merchants and tradesmen, of whom the earliest were Italian and Hanseatic, London represented a suitable hub to base their trade and monopolies, begun with the export of wool and the import of luxury artefacts. Mutual interests in agreement with local city guilds and craftsmen could work only as long as conflicting priorities did not emerge, frequently followed by grievances about unfair competition and financial speculations at the natives' expense. A long-standing overflow of petitions and bills of protest was regularly addressed by Livery Companies to the state authorities to preserve their priority rights as free native citizens, often climaxing with requests of expulsion, street brawls and anti-alien raids. Nevertheless, Tudor decrees were still ambiguously slippery, or endlessly modified, in defining and applying (together with its im-

[3] Tracey Hill, '"The Cittie is in an uproare": Staging London in *The Booke of Sir Thomas More*', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 11/1 (2005), 6-7. Holinshed attests how, in King's Gallery episode, an indignant city mercer replied to the foreign bystanders 'you whoreson Lombards'.

[4] Betts solicits 'the removing of the strangers, which cannot choose but much advantage the poor handicrafts of the City' (*Sir Thomas More*, 6.80-2). For de Barde's social characterization see Scott Oldenburg, *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 159-61.

plied restrictions) the legal status of immigrant businessmen or workers as non-free citizens.[5] Aliens were often subjected to oblique forms of denization, naturalization and citizenship, not officially recognized by law, but in fact tacitly authorized to circumvent those trade licences that would have prohibited their business.[6] As the young Lord Surrey complains in the play, these kinds of strangers had regularly repaid with brazen insolence the king's "princely clemency" and "tempered mercy" that had ensured their prosperity in England (3.9-13).

The history of the Italian merchant community settled in London dates back to the age of Edward III, when the expansion of commercial relationships allowed competitive traders from north-western Italy – Genoa and Tuscany included, but mostly identified as "Lombard", in a broader sense than the present region of Lombardy – to import Italian merchandise and know-how into England, while obtaining special safe-conducts for their trade in silk and luxury artefacts. The earliest vital heart of this cartel-like network in London, a regular meeting place for many merchants and brokers to carry out their profitable transactions in the same way as an Italian *piazza*, was Lombard Street, near Cornhill, a street named after the presence of goldsmiths from the north-west of Italy. The next step in this economic escalation consisted of investment of mercantile earnings in financial speculations. "Lombard" immigrant entrepreneurs on English soil, as in the case of de Barde's direct ancestors – a prominent family of long-established bankers from Florence – shortly gained favour with the court, together with the status of free London citizens, due to their position as financiers of the royal household to which they made significant loans. Walter de Bardi's family further legitimized its

[5] Cfr. Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 137-40.

[6] Lien Luu, '"Taking the bread out of our mouths": Xenophobia in Early Modern London', *Immigrants & Minorities* 19/2 (2000), 6-11.

titles in the 1360s by securing the licence for money changing and the exclusive rights on the office of the Royal Mint.[7]

By inheriting financial pre-eminence after the expulsion of the Jews in 1290, for almost three centuries Italian resident bankers became the leading intermediaries of foreign capital in England, and the term "Lombard" was proverbially linked to any activity promoting the circulation of credit among moneylenders, pawnbrokers and the Mounts of Piety. The prejudicial association with fraudulent profit and immoral usury was a corollary to this trend: locals routinely blamed Lombardy bankers for being Jews in disguise, a connection still resonant in the Stuart age found in the lexical compound, "Lombard-Jew."[8] Thus Lombard Street had endured in popular imagery as the quintessential centre of monetary dealings before it was replaced by the Royal Exchange in 1565. If Shakespeare's Antonio needed to find a moneylender in early Tudor London, critics agree he would have knocked at this address to find Shylock's corresponding counterpart, as foreign supplier of capital.[9] It was also the place where the real Francis de Barde in 1517 had seized a citizen's wife and had her husband unjustly arrested, as Holinshed attests; Lombard Street was his favourite hunting ground and, by implication, probably the most plausible setting for Munday's version of the first scene of the play.

The area around Lombard Street also represented one of the focal points of London civic pride being among those locations assigned for the official route of ceremonial pageantry and royal entries, as Munday's collaborators for the revised play-text of *Sir Thomas More* would have known. The mercantile community of residents from the north-west of Italy did not miss the opportunity to impress their legit-

[7] See T. F. Reddaway, 'The King's Mint and Exchange in London 1343-1543', *English History Review* 82 (1967), 4-9.

[8] G.K. Hunter, 'Elizabethans and Foreigners', *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964), 50.

[9] Cfr. Duncan Salkeld, 'Much Ado about Italians in Renaissance London', in Michele Marrapodi, ed., *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance: Appropriation, Transformation, Opposition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 311; and Masten, '*More* or Less', 110-11.

imate position, and reciprocal influence, on the incoming sovereigns whenever they visited the environs of Lombard Street for coronation pageants. The lavish tribute of two triumphal arches, financed by Genoese and Florentine dignitaries greeting Mary I's entry into London (1553), participated in this illustrious tradition and was still in vogue at the time of James I's coronation in 1603, as Thomas Dekker accurately testifies in his first-hand report, with a reverential pageant sponsored by Italian merchants, rich in allegorical motifs hailing His Majesty.[10]

When the rebel Falconbridge, in the second part of Thomas Heywood's chronicle play *Edward IV* (1599), plans to parade triumphantly through the London streets with his army of unruly artisans, taking in St. Paul's and Cheapside, Lombard Street is mapped as a symbolic place worth taking hold of. In the same play King Edward in disguise tries to lure the goldsmith's wife, Jane Shore, in Lombard Street, transnationally inheriting, as it were, Francis de Barde's licentious attitude towards female Londoners.[11] Apart from city comedy, the sexual incontinence of Italian merchant adventurers residing in England represented a long-term perception, frequently confirmed by historical facts and then re-fashioned within fictional frames. This Italian mercantile colony was, with few exceptions, a homosocial male community/enclave made up of exuberant bachelors and "worldly uncles", not inclined to intermarriage with English women, nor to bring to England their Italian wives and daughters.[12] They usually preferred, like de Barde in Scene 1, to harass local married women and serving-maids. Even an eminent banker and diplomatic agent for Elizabeth

[10] For Italian pageantry in London see: Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 102-103, 124; and Oldenburg, *Alien Albion*, 25-8.

[11] Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 49-51, 55.

[12] M. E. Bratchel, 'Regulation and Group-Consciousness in the Later History of London's Italian Merchant Colonies', *Journal of European Economic History* 19/3 (1980), 588-93.

I, the Genoese aristocrat Horatio Pallavicino, a knight and Anglican-convert, could not refrain from recurrent allusions to his penchant for fornication and whore-mongering, according to the depositions of panderers living in the Lombard Street area.[13]

Once they migrated to the London stage, the Italian merchant "fattened with the traffic of our country" becomes a stock character for Elizabethan comic drama, not exempt from stereotype and casual insults inspired by peculiar national traits (3.14). For instance, the greedy Mercadorus from Robert Wilson's allegorical comedy *The Three Ladies of London* (1584) openly proposes illegal bargains to the Vice character, Lady Lucre, by taking advantage of food shortages among locals and by unsettling domestic trade through fraud. Driven by his humiliating treatment, the abused Londoners plan to rob Mercadorus of his property, considering him personally responsible for their indigence, a situation not so far removed from the revengeful redress rumoured in *Sir Thomas More* Scene 4 by Lincoln and his enraged followers.[14] Fictional prose from the same period confirms these xenophobic assumptions and raises the stakes in Thomas Deloney's novel *Jack of Newbury* (1597), where Master Benedick, the typified lustful Italian merchant, tries to corrupt English wives and maidservants with opulent gifts. Benedick considers their honesty a negotiable item for sale, but he ends up bed-tricked with a sow. As a result, proud Berkshire wenches, idealistically siding with Doll from *Sir Thomas More*, can vaunt their patriotic moral primacy, claiming they 'will be no Italian strumpets'.[15] Deloney, a Londoner who had been trained as

[13] Salkeld, 'Much Ado about Italians', 311-12. In a commemorative volume, Pallavicino had been eulogized for reversing the *topos* of the Italianate English ('a devil incarnate') through his example of 'Italian Anglified' as 'Saint Angelified'; see Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*, 144-5.

[14] For Wilson's play see A. J. Hoenselaars, *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992) 44-8; and Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59-60, 68-73.

[15] Mihoko Suzuki, 'The London Apprentice Riots of the 1590s and the Fiction of

a silk-weaver, co-authored a harsh complaint in the summer of 1595 – followed by a revolt, for which he was imprisoned – on behalf of the Weavers' Company, in defence of London artisans against the abuses of immigrant traders, above all in their retail practices.

The three decades before 1595 had ended in a complicated period of crisis marked by famine, plague, inflation, tax increases, unemployment and a massive flow of Protestant refugees from the Continent, mainly French Huguenots and Dutch exiles, encouraged by Elizabeth I's policy of support for co-religionist allies. These potentially incendiary socio-economic junctures fostered periodic displays of resentment among distressed citizens against alien communities, often targeted as culprits, for broader issues with the city government and the crown.[16] Transcribed almost verbatim from Holinshed, Lincoln's bill of wrongs against strangers in *Sir Thomas More* voices long-standing dissatisfaction among commoners, according to whom "aliens and strangers eat the bread from the fatherless children, and take the living from all the artificers, and the intercourse from all the merchants" (1.123-6).

Several episodes of protest, disorder and periodic intimidations against French and Dutch refugees took place in London, although the unrest was short-lived and severely repressed by authorities, without physical injury to the strangers, even if some of their houses were set on fire and ransacked. The chief instigators of the disorder and violent acts – mainly young apprentices – were indicted for high treason as seditious criminals for contesting the queen's legal authority and criticizing her support of co-religionist immigrants. Since Henry V's statute, which Holinshed claims was announced by the Lord Chief Justice before the arraignment of the Ill May Day instigators, it was

Thomas Deloney', *Criticism* 38/2 (1996), 185-6, 195-6.

[16] Nigel Goose, '"Xenophobia" in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: An Epithet Too Far?' in Nigel Goose, and Lien Luu, eds., *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005) 119-20; Eric Griffin, 'Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger Crisis of the Early 1590s', in Ruben Espinosa, and David Ruiter, eds., *Shakespeare and Immigration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 13-14.

deemed a capital offence – punished by the ignominious penalty of being hanged, drawn and quartered – for any English subject to injure a stranger, in disregard of the monarch's diplomatic treaties with other nations. When Lincoln's dramatic counterpart is sent to the scaffold in Scene 7 as instigator of the Ill May Day rebellion, he seemingly repents his illicit attempt at self-appointed justice inside a greater (and more delicate) context than his trivial needs had represented. Before dying, he warns his followers not to "attempt the like/ 'Gainst any alien that repaireth hither", while Lord Surrey's final gloss on the rebels insubordination still emphasizes the connection between anti-aliens "unlawful riots" and "traitorous acts" when the "hand of private hate/ Maim your dear country with a public wound" (7.65-7, 162-6).

The Privy Council did not fail to impose restrictive measures in order to safeguard public order, and to monitor the subversive potential of city playhouses as accomplices of unauthorized assembly and social unrest. A direct consequence of the apprentices' uprising in Southwark (June 1592) was an official ban that enforced the closure of London's public theatres.[17] In May 1593, an anonymous poem in doggerel was posted on the wall of the Dutch churchyard. It spurred indignant Londoners either to expel immigrants, or to violent retaliation and bloodshed if unheard by authorities, as previous petitions and negotiations for new statutes had proved ineffective. This incendiary para-dramatic text, known as the Dutch Church Libel, featured apparent borrowings from Christopher Marlowe's most disruptive plays – it threatened to organize another "paris massacre" and was signed "Tamberlaine" [*sic*] – and provoked a series of investigative raids, arrests, and tortures by state officers in search of its authors as conspirators.[18] Amid the slanderous invective against the endemic presence of strangers, the impassioned libel explicitly compares the

[17] Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness*, 76-7.

[18] Thomas Kyd was repeatedly tortured to extort his confession of co-culpability, while his roommate Marlowe received an arrest warrant. See Griffin 'Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger', 22-3.

Italian-styled Machiavellian merchant to the Jewish *topos* of usury in cannibalizing the crucial resources of angry English commoners.

Within a more institutional context, less than two months earlier, during a heated debate in the House of Commons concerning the alleged abuses of alien retailers, the liberal Sir John Wolley, Latin secretary to Elizabeth I, pleaded the cause of foreign residents by claiming that "the Riches and Renown of [London] comes by entertaining strangers and giving liberty unto them". He also mentioned the illustrious example of cosmopolitan cities such as Venice or Antwerp for the benefits of porous integration and reciprocal profit in tune with alien communities.[19] On the opposite side of the dispute, Sir Walter Raleigh's arguments in defence of the prior claims of local city guilds at the expense of ravenous strangers – he claimed provocatively that no Englishman could find a compatriot barber in Milan, Lombardy's main city – proved to be less than persuasive, since the bill proposing to restrict foreigners' freedom to trade was definitively rejected by the House of Lords. This verdict is not at all surprising, if we consider how English noblemen and influential members of central government were, given their political and pecuniary interest, closely connected with the lobby of foreign financiers and entrepreneurs, whose network they directly sponsored on various occasions. Anti-alien resentment and pressures rose instead from the lower ranks – those opposed to the remote ruling elite – the modest middling sorts and working-classes dependent on city guilds. These segments of population were far more affected by economic instability and unfair competition, and often disappointed by the authorities' compliance with

[19] See Luu, '"Taking the bread out"', 14-15; and Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, '"This is the stranger's case": the Utopic Dissonance of Shakespeare's contribution to *Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2012), 239-40. Tudeau-Clayton finds a near-contemporary echo between Wolley's idea of synergy and Antonio's words in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (3.3.26-31) about the unlawful (and harmful) consequences of reducing strangers' privileges in Venice, 'Since that the trade and profit of the city / Consisteth of all nations.'

unfair practices or rules habitually circumvented, that favoured traders from abroad.

This background tension may explain the reasons behind Sir Edmund Tilney's political anxieties – he was Master of the Revels from 1578 to 1610 – when confronted by the contents of the original text of *Sir Thomas More* as it was submitted to him for licensing. A notorious historical event such as Ill May Day was still impressed on the collective memory for its dreadful consequences as a watchword or a taboo, a sombre reminder of controversial urban traditions. About 300 rioters had been arrested, and thirteen apprentices publicly hanged on 5 May 1517, but no victim was reported among the strangers during the uproar.[20] Tilney's pragmatic role as censor thus worked to regulate the play, while it ideally endeavoured to prevent (or at least contain) any topical parallel with more or less recent turbulence that might have revived anti-alien violence in the city. Contemporary relevance was a double-edged sword for dramatists, capitalizing on any immediate resonance with topical events, but at the same time attracting the intervention of the alarmed authorities.[21] Furthermore, Tilney was intimate with the court milieu and affairs of state as coordinator of dramatic entertainment for ambassadors and other influential foreign guests: it was part of his task to avert diplomatic incidents and to soften any allusion to current international friction.

The censor's ultimate response to the scenes of rebellion, on the first page of the manuscript, seems very heavy-handed in relation to the implied consequences of public performance. Tilney explicitly recommends the authors to "leave out the insurrection wholly with

[20] Cfr. Nina Levine, *Practicing the City: Early Modern London on Stage* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 50-7. Levine remarkably highlights how the 'play provocatively returns to the ground zero of sixteenth-century London's exclusionary politics, the May Day riots of 1517'.

[21] Sabine Schülting, '"What country, friends, is this?" The Performance of Conflict in Shakespeare's Drama of Migration', in Carla Dente, and Sara Soncini, eds., *Shakespeare and Conflict: A European Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 27-9.

the cause thereof" by condensing the excised revolt within a cursory account of the unstaged insurrection, in order to prevent any political resonance or emulatory aspiration to private justice. The xenophobic riot, in Tilney's rewording of this episode, should be specifically revised to "a mutiny against the Lombards – only by a short report and not otherwise, at your own perils".[22]

Elsewhere Tilney marks passages for omission (or emendation in kind) in view of future revisers, above all those sections bluntly alluding to the choleric fury of commoners who threaten a city in uproar, as Lord Surrey testifies:

> SURREY
> I fear me much, before their spleens be cooled,
> Some of these saucy aliens for their pride
> Will pay for't soundly, wheresoe'er it lights:
> This tide of rage, that with the eddy strives,
> I fear me much will drown too many lives. (3.59-63)[23]

Tilney's detailed interventions to the original text specifically concern those terms used to define national identities, aiming to delocalize the hostility of the insurrection mainly against an all-embracing Lombard faction, while the word "Lombard" featured only once in the unrevised script. Hence the Master of the Revels intervenes on Munday's fair copy in Scene 3 to point out the ethnic origin of those responsible for the doves' abduction, by replacing the hazardously generic term 'stranger' and the misguiding (but historically established) 'Frenchman' with a twin reference to a "Lombard" in Cavaler's case.

[22] *Sir Thomas More*, Tilney's introductory note, 1-6. The dash between 'Lombards' and 'only' has been added by the editor: Tilney's handwriting originally did not feature any punctuation. The removal of the dash would emphasize even more a Lombard-focused insurrection. See also Gillian Woods, '"Strange Discourse": The Controversial Subject of *Sir Thomas More*', *Renaissance Drama* 39 (2011), 11-12.

[23] See also 'these dangerous times … this frowning vulgar brow … [this] countenance of grief … in the displeased commons of the City' (3.3-7), marked for emendation as well.

De Barde's verbal bravado about the Lord Mayor's wife is played down by Tilney "in despite of any man" in place of the original "of any English", just to limit any national-hued form of mockery (3.37, 49, 53).[24] Hand C, the playhouse copyist and coordinator of the overall revisions made after the censor's remarks, adheres to Tilney's lexical policy because in Scene 5 – copied and revised in his handwriting – the crisis summit at the Guildhall mentions only a riot focused on Lombards as targets of London anger against strangers:

> MORE
> I hear that they are gone into St Martin's,
> Where they intend to offer violence
> To the amazed Lombards. (5.13-5)
>
> […]
> SURREY
> I hear they mean to fire the Lombards' houses.
> O power, what art thou in a madman's eyes!
> Thou mak'st the plodding idiot bloody-wise. (35-7)

Theoretically, these substitutions aimed to limit any compromising reference to recent events in the eyes of the hypothetical playgoers and vigilant city authorities by displacing the theatrical insurrection onto a more marginal group, demographically speaking. Italian immigrants represented less than five percent of foreign residents in London at the end of sixteenth century. A hardly troublesome or ill-tempered minority – by then already well-established and assimilated – if compared to the massive community of middle-class Franco-Dutch retailers and artisans, who had just landed on English shores because

[24] A reference to 'these hot Frenchmen' (3.44) seems to elude inconsistently Tilney's watchful policy of control on national epithets in Munday's fair copy, as well as Doll's 'nor French nor Dutch shall get a kiss of me' (7.129). Cfr. Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 83-7.

of religious persecution in their homelands.[25] The dramatic representation of the abuses perpetrated by a member of de Barde's family in London was clearly less risky than two centuries earlier, almost neutralized for its mimetic import if compared to the age when Francis's naturalized ancestors owned the office of the Royal Mint and other important licences.

The instructions from the Revels Office about Lombards were actually overlooked (or unread) by Hand B, putatively identified as Thomas Heywood, because the late additions concerning the foolish clown feature farcical mockery and rude threats explicitly addressed to French and Dutch immigrants**.** This is in clear contradiction of the censor's aim to divert attention from more contemporary migration, such as Huguenots or other asylum seekers, towards a less identifiable country like an obscure region of the Italian peninsula, politically split by supranational occupations and small city-states, whose community of denizens experienced an irreversible numerical decline in Elizabethan London.[26] The metonymic/umbrella label of 'Lombard' could have assured an elusively multifaceted reference in this usage, quite distant from recent immigration and strictly defined nationalities. Heywood may have purposely bypassed this anti-Italian bias in Scene 4 because he wished, on the contrary, to exploit the topical echo of more recent allusions for his theatrical version. Moreover, he could probably afford to include this at a later date, in a period of relative détente – for rudely threatening French and Dutch exiles onstage, when the influx of immigrants had dropped – if compared to Munday's first composition or Tilney's intervention. By this time James VI of Scotland had succeeded Elizabeth I and an early Stuart policy of

[25] Oldenburg, *Alien Albion*, 163-5.

[26] Likewise, in Scene 6 Shakespeare has no formal hesitation in employing the term 'stranger(s)' many times, despite the censor's approach, and when More lists the spots for the virtual landing of English asylum seekers (6.141-6), he does not mention any Italian state, among the nations 'that not adheres to England'.

ecumenical pacifism was in place.[27] In 1603 James arranged a reprint of his political treatise *Basilikon Doron* for his new English subjects, in which he advises his son Prince Henry to attract and encourage the traffic of merchant strangers in England, because they were a source of wealth, prestige and learned crafts for the kingdom. [28] For a decree establishing the legitimate naturalization of every child born to aliens on English soil, immigrants had to wait only until 1604.

Another way to lessen the dramatic impact of xenophobic motifs in *Sir Thomas More* consisted in deflecting the coherent reasons for the revolt through misconstrued or misleading associations to unrepresented cases, borderline ephemeral pretexts or non sequiturs. De Barde and Cavaler's speaking presence is, after all, quite peripheral to the development of the uprising that is played out over seven scenes: their provocations feature only, as explosive primers, in the first half of the first scene. No other foreign character interacts for the rest of the riot plot, and the tangible brutality against strangers' houses is inferred as an off-stage event. When Lincoln who himself acts as broker connected with securities, loans and money-changing on a small scale – and personally dependent on Lombard Street bankers – reads the bill of wrongs, he addresses his denunciation on behalf of native London citizens mainly on specific economic and labour terms, but neither de Barde nor Cavaler have mentioned their real activity or source of livelihood. Their conviction of superiority derives from a recognized class distinction rather than financial achievements, while their own sense of distinctive belonging is more linked to the remote court than to any chauvinistic reference to the Lombard enclave in London, or to Italy as their homeland. In the spurious list of strangers, the riot ringleader continues to utter hasty and erroneous associations, because he equates de Barde with immigrants from France

[27] Brian C. Lockey, 'The Elizabethan Legacy of *Sir Thomas More*: Sir John Harington, Anthony Munday, and the tentative rise of the ecumenical English Renaissance', *Moreana* 56 (2019), 29-30, 39-41.

[28] See Tudeau-Clayton, '"This is the stranger's case"', 252-3.

and the Low Countries, those "outlandish fugitives" for religious or political asylum, as if he were a nonconformist who had just escaped from Florence or Milan (4.25-8).[29]

In Henry VIII's lifetime Milan was renowned for its prosperity, luxury, and elegance, the capital of skilled engineers and armourers; nonetheless the image of Lombardy itself had progressively declined from the 'garden of fertility' praised in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* or Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*. The Spanish occupation of the dukedom of Milan, combined with the policy of surveillance of suspect Catholic recusants, contributed to refashion the perception of Lombards and Lombardy in late Tudor England through a more sinister filter. In that period the Cardinal of Milan, Carlo Borromeo, endeavoured to promote the dogmas of the Counter-Reformation throughout Europe and, in 1571, a Florentine banker resident in London, Roberto Ridolfi had organised a Catholic-oriented conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth I in favour of Mary Stuart.[30] In a complex network of chameleon-like undercover operations and cross-confessional ambiguities, Munday himself – the priest-impeacher, Richard Topcfliffe's personal pursuivant in detecting, prosecuting and denouncer of Catholic-sympathising dissidents abroad – was remembered as the 'best plotter' for his opportunistic and scheming aptitude. During his long sojourn in Italy in 1578, he was hosted at Borromeo's palace for Christmas as Messenger of the Queen's Chamber. Afterwards, he spent several months at the English College in Rome to uncover Jesuit propaganda among his countrymen, the same seminar where on the anniversary of Ill May Day, 1 May 1579, probably in Munday's presence, the Roman Church officially beatified Thomas More.[31]

During his lifetime, the real Thomas More could count on the friendship of eminent "Lombard" financiers such as the Genoese

[29] See also Levine, *Practicing the City*, 60-1.

[30] Richard Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 71-2, 77-8.

[31] Wilson, *Secret Shakespeare*, 80-2; Lockey, 'The Elizabethan Legacy', 30.

George Hardison ("Ardisono") and his faithful friend Alvise Bonvisi, an eminent banker and informer from Lucca, who supported More's exiled family after his tragic downfall. Many European sovereigns – such as Henry VIII in 1515 with Ardisono – had been indebted to this long-standing monetary network of bankers descended from northern Italian clans.[32] Both More and Bonvisi between 1523 and 1527 rented the prestigious company house belonging to de Bardi & Cavalcanti's trading company, a key hub for diplomatic negotiations among courtiers, artists, unofficial envoys and financial intermediaries.[33]

More's successful promotion in the king's service, obviously less rapid than the hasty anachronistic progress of the play, depended to a large extent on his role of mediator in diplomatic relations and embassies with foreign countries. Sforza's delegate in London expressed his gratitude for More's contribution in sponsoring the cause of the Duchy of Milan (allied with the German emperor against the French invader) at Henry VIII's court.[34] An echo of these relations resounds in *Sir Thomas More* Scene 10, conflating different historical events in non-chronological order. Lord Chancellor More, in the guise of pragmatic statesman rather than civic peacemaker, thus approves with the Privy Council an official decree to provide financial support and mercenary troops for the emperor's military campaign on the conti-

[32] According to Holinshed, in that period the king used to lose money in wagers on tennis and dice game, cunningly encouraged by his Lombard retinue. A 'Lombard' financial associate to More called Ardisono features in John Skelton's satire 'Agenst Garnesche' (1512) as victim of Garnish's clumsy attempts to ape Lombards in matter of fashion and in seducing wives.

[33] Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter*, 140-2. A bill discussed by the Lord Mayor in 1526 proposed to boycott any form of trade and financing with strangers, by naming expressly, among the others, Antonio Bonvisi, Antonio Cavaler, Francesco de Bardi and Tommaso Cavalcanti.

[34] Cfr. Germain Marc'hadour, 'The Devil and the Lombards: Two Merry Tales by Thomas More', *Cithara* 19/2 (1980), 8-10. The 'two merry tales' of the article are funny anecdotes about Lombards and their inborn pragmatism written by More in *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529).

nent against a mutual enemy of the "friendly league" (10.21-3, 54-8), the French army. In 1516 Henry VIII employed two London-based Italian bankers, Antonio Cavaler and Frescobaldi, as his agents for financing Maximilian I during the wars in northern Italy, but they failed in this monetary transaction and embezzled the sum for their personal profit.[35]

These elite Lombard emigrants were very different from the poor wretched refugees evoked by More's humanitarian eloquence to appease the rioters in Scene 6 through a powerful, moving speech, although Huguenot and Dutch exiles were utterly unhistorical in Henry VIII's time and More had a relatively marginal role in the Ill May Day climax.[36] Composed of lords and officials, the crisis unit of the play elects Sheriff More as mediator with the enraged mob, and not only for his learned dialectics. Being a Londoner himself, he could take advantage of his popular appeal and intimate tie with the city and its social milieu, using his influencing "favour with the people". His rhetorical abilities were to be applied in "gentle and persuasive speech", a condition absent from Lord Surrey's address, despite his attempts to introduce his exhortation with citizen-friendly terms as "Friends, masters, countrymen", but almost ignored by the noisy throng (3.85-90; 6.32-45).

Shakespeare's charismatic More tactfully refrains from mentioning wealthy aliens connected with the royal household – the court is something distant, at one remove in the play, King Henry VIII unseen and unnamed. More's rhetorical inversion of perspectives is successful in turning the arrogant abusers of the first scene into victims or scape-

[35] A merchant named Fryskiball – parodic malapropism for Frescobaldi – converts the anti-Italian stereotypes in the anonymous play *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602). Similarly, Dekker (collaborating with Webster) on the city comedy *Westward Ho!* (1604) redeems the Italian merchant Justiniano; see Hoenselaars, 'Images of Englishmen', 103-106, 114.

[36] See E. A. J. Honigmann, 'Shakespeare, *Sir Thomas More*, and Asylum Seekers', *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 226-7.

goats for the mutinous fury of a crowd of ignorant plunderers, the "lawless train" already introduced in Scene 5 which, in the heat of the tumult, had broken into city jails in order to release those imprisoned for debt together with "felons and notorious murderers" (5.9-12, 19-22).[37] Captain Lincoln and his unruly tribe of grotesque rebels are allusively depicted – throughout More's conciliatory discourse as well – as a silly and selfish brigade of reckless insubordinates, who do not consciously represent the civic needs of London corporative guilds, but naively wish to impose arbitrary violence and ethnic intolerance due to a down-to-earth form of autarchic interest.[38] The grievances cited in their (not unfounded) political agenda end up being ridiculed, above all in the late additions to Munday's text. The epitome of their confused sense of nationalist disdain thus consists in blaming foreign vegetables ("strange roots") such as parsnips – typically associated with Spain or France – here charged with importing palsy and of emasculating citizens' virility, a contamination of English dietary habits through infective hybridism (6.11-21).[39]

When he has to confront the mayhem of these simpleton rebels, Shakespeare's More insists on "urging obedience to authority" since any misalignment with royal provisions makes London citizens strangers in their homeland, an enemy within, alienated from the king's sympathy, and for this reason guilty of high treason against their own country (6.105-29). From this perspective, the pluralistic and apostolic empathy among different national identities which More preaches, ultimately turns out to support – on behalf of specific aliens to boot – the hegemonic conservatism of court policy and the king's divine right through the mutual benefit of inclusive submission. An instance of a collective agreement imposed by those authorities opposing any

[37] According to the historiographic sources, these prisoners had been actually condemned for injuries against aliens, unrelated to debt or murder.

[38] Hill, '"The Cittie is in an uproare"', 13-17. Cfr. *Sir Thomas More*, 5.42-9.

[39] For further details, see Joan Fitzpatrick 'Food and Foreignness in *Sir Thomas More*', *Early Theatre* 7/2 (2004), 34-6, 39-40.

anarchic claim for fragmented self-interest and disloyal dissent.[40] Even though this vision will be overturned by More himself in the second half of the play as he confronts his own religious dilemma, in Scene 7, just before his execution, Lincoln seems to understand the serious social import of this lesson. He stoically admits that "obedience is the best in each degree", as an instrument of class order falling back into the right social ranks without the illicit demands of private redress or self-imposed privileges (7.52-60).

The obedience a subject owes the monarch entails the general profit of the state and its strategy of reciprocity with other transnational (id)entities; the dreaded alternative posed in *Sir Thomas More*'s Ill May Day revival amounts to chaotic barbarism, a status of outcast exclusion from the standards of social and diplomatic reciprocity. The English kingdom could not afford to be "a nation of such barbarous temper", whose inhuman and uncivil isolation would have disowned the useful participation of strangers, either Lombards in Henry VIII's historical setting, or "French Fleming" for Elizabeth I and her successor (6.146-7, 4.71).[41]

[40] Levine, *Practicing the City*, 68-71.

[41] The very term 'Lombard' is etymologically akin to 'barbarian' since it derives from the compound 'long+beard' (recalling de Bardi's name), connected to the Germanic people occupying northern Italy in the sixth century.

Bibliography

Archer, Ian W., *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Bratchel, M. E., 'Regulation and Group-Consciousness in the Later History of London's Italian Merchant Colonies', *Journal of European Economic History* 19/3 (1980), 585-610.

Dillon, Janette, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Dutton, Richard, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991).

Fitzpatrick, Joan, 'Food and Foreignness in *Sir Thomas More*', *Early Theatre* 7/2 (2004), 33-47.

Goose, Nigel, '"Xenophobia" in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: An Epithet Too Far?' in Nigel Goose, and Lien Luu, eds., *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 110-29.

Griffin, Eric, 'Shakespeare, Marlowe, and the Stranger Crisis of the Early 1590s', in Ruben Espinosa, and David Ruiter, eds., *Shakespeare and Immigration* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 11-36.

Hill, Tracey, '"The Cittie is in an uproare": Staging London in *The Booke of Sir Thomas More*', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 11/1 (2005), 1-19.

Hoenselaars, A. J., *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1992).

Honigmann, E. A. J., 'Shakespeare, *Sir Thomas More*, and Asylum Seekers', *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 225-35.

Hunter, G. K., 'Elizabethans and Foreigners', *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964), 37-52.

Jowett, John ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

Kermode, Lloyd Edward, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Levine, Nina, *Practicing the City: Early Modern London on Stage* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

Lockey, Brian C., 'The Elizabethan Legacy of *Sir Thomas More*: Sir John Harington, Anthony Munday, and the tentative rise of the ecumenical English Renaissance', *Moreana* 56 (2019), 28-41.

Luu, Lien, '"Taking the bread out of our mouths": Xenophobia in Early Modern London', *Immigrants & Minorities* 19/2 (2000), 1-23.

Marc'hadour, Germain, 'The Devil and the Lombards: Two Merry Tales by Thomas More', *Cithara* 19/2 (1980), 5-19.

Masten, Jeffrey, '*More* or Less: Editing the Collaborative', *Shakespeare Studies* 29 (2001), 109-31.

Oldenburg, Scott, *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

Reddaway, T. F., 'The King's Mint and Exchange in London 1343-1543', *English History Review* 82 (1967), 1-23.

Salkeld, Duncan, 'Much Ado about Italians in Renaissance London', in Michele Marrapodi, ed., *Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance: Appropriation, Transformation, Opposition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 305-16.

Schülting, Sabine, '"What country, friends, is this?" The Performance of Conflict in Shakespeare's Drama of Migration', in Carla Dente, and Sara Soncini, eds., *Shakespeare and Conflict: A European Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 22-40.

Suzuki, Mihoko, 'The London Apprentice Riots of the 1590s and the Fiction of Thomas Deloney', *Criticism* 38/2 (1996), 181-217.

Tudeau-Clayton, Margaret, '"This is the stranger's case": the Utopic Dissonance of Shakespeare's contribution to *Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare Survey* 65 (2012), 239-54.

Wilson, Richard, *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

Woods, Gillian, '"Strange Discourse": The Controversial Subject of *Sir Thomas More*', *Renaissance Drama* 39 (2011), 3-35.

Wyatt, Michael, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Translating *Sir Thomas More*

‘THE WINDING LABYRINTH OF THY STRANGE DISCOURSE’: THE ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS OF *SIR THOMAS MORE*

FABIO CIAMBELLA

Sir Thomas More’s translations in Italy

When writing an article, I generally begin by emphasising the aims of my Ztual neighbourhood has been so animated in the last few decades, that it is impossible for me to add anything new or ground-breaking. Indeed, the circumstances of its composition and the six different hands[1] which contributed to shape the text as we know it today, together with Shakespeare’s alleged role in the creation of the play – a three-page contribution (ff. 8r, 8v, 9r, Harley MS 7368) which would represent the only extant literary manuscript written by the Bard – have attracted eminent critics.[2] Their philological, historical and literary competence

[1] *Sir Thomas More* is considered to be a collaborative work whose authors and revisers have been indicated by letters of the alphabet and then identified as follows by W. W. Greg in 1911 (see references): Hand M or S (Anthony Munday), Hand A (Henry Chettle), Hand B (Thomas Heywood), Hand C (an anonymous book-keeper), Hand D (William Shakespeare), Hand E (Thomas Dekker). A sixth hand is responsible for some marginalia and has been identified as Edmund Tilney’s, Master of the Revels from 1576 to 1610, who intervened in the manuscript with censorial annotations in the margin of some parts considered too offensive and dangerous for the Crown.

[2] See, i.a., Giorgio Melchiori, and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (London: Methuen, 2011); Jonathan Bates, Eric Rasmussen, Jan Sewell, and Will Sharpe, eds.,

has converged in establishing some well-known chronotopic coordinates for the attribution of the play to certain authors who wrote and revised it at some point during their respective careers.[3]

Taking into account (and for granted) the above-mentioned details about the genesis of *Sir Thomas More*, this article aims to compare and contrast the three Italian translations of the play published so far[4] with particular reference to the first seven scenes (or to the first two acts, depending on the edition[5]), corresponding to the 1517 Ill May Day riots in London and More's attempts to stop the citizens' xenophobic behaviour towards immigrants in England. The results of this corpus-based analysis will hopefully shed light on translational attitudes and the translators' sensitivity (in terms of lexical choices) towards issues of contemporary migration policies in Italy (from the 1990s to today) and encounters/clashes with the Other. After all, translation practices themselves are essentially attempts to bridge the gaps between different cultures, 'at a time when the encounter with other cultures is

The RSC Shakespeare. William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[3] For issues concerning the play's possible date of composition, see, among others, Melchiori and Gabrieli, *Sir Thomas More*, 11-12; John Jowett, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells, eds., *Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 813-42; John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 1-8, 424-33; Hugh Craig, 'The Date of *Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013); Gary Taylor, John Jowett, Terry Bourus, and Gabriel Egan, eds., *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Critical Reference Edition* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1108-11; John Jowett, *Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 15-19.

[4] A new collaborative translation has just been published by Feltrinelli (2022), edited by nadia Fusini and Iolanda Plescia, this latter among the contributors to this volume. Unfortunately, by the time I was writing this article, Fusini and Plescia's editiion had not been published yet; hence, their translation could not be part of my analysis.

[5] Melchiori and Gabrieli adopted Jenkins's 1953 division in acts and scenes, while Jowett's original text and both Lindau's and Bompiani's editions maintain Greg's division only in scenes, since his 1911 edition is still considered 'the most valuable single resource for the study of this manuscript and its complete text' (Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 464).

often perceived […] as a source of conflict'.[6] In such a political context, continues Carla Dente, 'the theory and practice of translation, with their focus on a crucial means of cultural transmission […], can work today to enhance the dialogue between cultures'.[7] Lastly, my analysis will consider some of the lexical choices adopted by the two twenty-first century Italian translators of *Sir Thomas More* in order to demonstrate that their translations, no matter how modernising and updating they purport to be, seem to hardly distance themselves from the dominating model offered by the first Italian translation, which I deal with presently.

In the wake of the English 1981 edition of *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Bari: Adriatica), re-edited in 1990 "after further research"[8] with the shorter title *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli published the first Italian translation of the play in 1991, in the ninth volume of William Shakespeare's *Teatro completo*, dedicated to the history plays, in the series *I Meridiani*, for the Italian publisher, Arnoldo Mondadori. Considering the division of this play into the canonical five acts proposed for the first time by Harold Jenkins in Charles J. Sisson's 1953 edition of *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Watford: Odhams Press Limited), Melchiori and Gabrieli's source and target texts are mainly based on "a radical re-examination of manuscript Harley 7368 in the British Library and on the palaeographical, bibliographical and historical materials in any way connected with its composition".[9] Given the two translators academic background, a precise and meticulous philological scrutiny guided Mondadori's *Il copione di sir Tommaso Moro*, which resulted in a source-oriented

[6] Carla Dente, 'All My Best Is Dressing Old Words New', in Carla Dente and Sara Soncini, eds., *Crossing Time and Space. Shakespeare Translations in Present-Day Europe* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2008), 10.

[7] Dente, 'All My Best Is Dressing Old Words New', 10.

[8] Melchiori and Gabrieli, *Sir Thomas More*, 90.

[9] Melchiori and Gabrieli, *Sir Thomas More*, 36.

version of the play that, according to Edoardo Zuccato, Bompiani's editor and translator of *Sir Thomas More*, 2017, would have sounded stylistically obsolete even to an Italian readership in the 1990s.

As Roberta Mullini suggests,[10] this first Italian translation was adopted and adapted in 1993 by Enzo Maria Caserta, who directed the first foreign-language production of the entire play in Verona, Italy. The title was *Tommaso Moro* and it was wrongly (or probably for judicious marketing-related reasons) attributed exclusively to Shakespeare. The performance took place on 24 July in the twelfth-century cloister of the church of San Zeno Maggiore and was acted in Italian by the Teatro scientifico. Teatro Laboratorio company, with Raf Vallone as the eponymous protagonist. After this first performance, Mullini informs us that "[t]he play went on a spring tour in 1994, touching Parma, Rome and Bari".[11]

In 2014, more than twenty years after the first Italian translation of *Sir Thomas More*, the Turin publisher Lindau entrusted translator Edoardo Rialti with a new Italian translation of *Sir Thomas More*, the only edition of this kind so far. The translation has no English-Italian parallel text and the play is attributed to William Shakespeare (whose name occupies a prominent position in the top part of the cover), Antony Munday, Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker and Thomas Heywood. The last four co-authors appear in a seemingly random order whose only criteria seem to be either the alphabetical order of their first names or the progressive chronological order of their date of birth (respectively 1553, 1564, 1572, and 1573). The introduction is by the English-born American writer and biographer Joseph Pearce (translated into Italian), author of *The Quest for Shakespeare: The Bard of Avon and the Church of Rome* (2008) and *Shakespeare on Love: Seeing*

[10] Roberta Mullini, '*The Book of Sir Thomas More* and Its Performance', in Michel Bitot, ed., *Divers toyes mengled: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture in Honor of André Lascombes* (Tours: Publication de l'Université François Rabelais, 1996).
[11] Mullini, '*The Book of Sir Thomas More and Its Performance*', 219.

the Catholic Presence in Romeo and Juliet (2013). Pierce's introduction was translated by Edoardo Rialti.

Lastly, the third and latest Italian translation was published by Bompiani in 2017, in the series *I classici della letteratura europea*, general editor Franco Marenco. The target text, edited and translated by university professor Edoardo Zuccato, is part of the third volume of Shakespeare's *Tutte le opere*, dedicated to the history plays, entitled *Il libro di sir Tommaso Moro*, although, as stated above, Melchiori rejected the idea of considering the word 'book' according to its contemporary primary meaning, and preferred to interpret it as 'script', in Italian 'copione', for etymological reasons.[12] Following the 2005 Oxford edition, Zuccato's introduction attributes *Sir Thomas More* to Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, with some revisions and additions by Thomas Dekker, William Shakespeare and Thomas Heywood. Unlike the Lindau edition Bompiani's text rightly avoids presenting Shakespeare as the play's main author; the fact that *Sir Thomas More* is included in an edition of Shakespeare's complete works somehow acknowledges the Bard's pivotal role in the genesis of the text, in the meantime establishing a connection between Bompiani's complete works and Melchiori and Gabrieli's 1991 undertaking.

From Melchiori to Zuccato (via Rialti): New migration flows in Italy

In recent years, the revival of interest, on the part of Italian publishers, in translating *Sir Thomas More* seems to be motivated by two important factors. On the one hand, the number of critically updated collective works and single editions of the play[13] has grown because

[12] Giorgio Melchiori, and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Il copione di sir Tommaso Moro*, in Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *Shakespeare. Teatro completo*, vol. 9: *I drammi storici* (Milano: Mondadori, 1991), 441.

[13] See, for instance, Bates's 2007 edition of the *RSC Shakespeare Complete Works*, Jowett's 2011 Arden edition or the NOS 2016-2017's *Complete Works* edited by Gary

of Hand D, 'which recent scholarship has shown with increasing clarity to have been penned by Shakespeare'.[14] On the other hand, the new interest in Italian translations is due to the abundantly discussed parallelism between the Shakespearean monologue delivered by More about sixteenth-century European refugees in London (6.83-99)[15] and the increasingly dramatic issue of migration flows in Italy.[16] In the light of a pervasive presentism, which is altogether unnatural according to Zuccato (see the next section devoted to interviews with the translators), it is in the context of ever new and more frequent arrivals of North African migrants to Italy aboard makeshift boats that new translations were needed, translations which could modernise Melchiori and Gabrieli's lexical choices in terms of the focus on and treatment of migrants in the first seven scenes of the play. This was exactly Lindau's purpose when he commissioned Rialti with the 2014 translation.[17]

Until 1990, the almost 500,000 migrants who had come to Italy were mostly from former Italian colonies in Africa (Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia) or were asylum seekers from Latin America and the former Soviet Union. No laws regulated their arrival and sojourn in Italy prior to the 1986 Legge Foschi, which dealt with the safeguarding of foreign workers in Italy, and the 1989 Legge Martelli, which aimed at regulating the number of immigrants to Italy. Therefore, when Mel-

Taylor et al.

[14] John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (London; Methuen, 2011), 15.

[15] In this article, Jowett's 2011 English edition of the text with its subdivision into scenes will be adopted.

[16] Albeit anachronistic, given the publication date of the translations dealt with in this article, it is worth mentioning here another astonishing (presentist) parallelism that can be drawn between the images evoked by More's famous monologue in 6.71-165 and the pictures and videos widespread in the media about the current migration flows from Afghanistan, after the so-called Fall of Kabul by the hand of the Taliban on August 15, 2021.

[17] I obtained this information in a private and informal conversation with the translator on June 3rd, 2019.

chiori and Gabrieli began to edit and translate *Sir Thomas More* in the 1980s, they encountered a limited resonance of migration-related issues in Italy at the time.[18] It is worth noting that the critical apparatus of Melchiori and Gabrieli's editions of *Sir Thomas More* makes no attempt to link the xenophobic events of the Ill May Day in the first part of the play to migration policies in late-twentieth-century Italy.

While several laws were being promulgated at the turn of the twenty-first century (e.g., a 1992 law about Italian citizenship, the 1998 Napolitano-Turco law, and the 2002 Bossi-Fini law), in 2001 a census was taken of over one million migrants from different areas worldwide. Yet, although a safety package and the Treaty on Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya was signed in Bengasi in 2008 to reduce migration flows from North Africa, it is well-known that after 2011, in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring, new boats brought refugees and asylum seekers to Italy since 2011, in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring. Without further analysing the consequences of migration flows on the precarious socio-political balance in Italy, this extremely brief excursus into legislative issues regarding migrants settling in Italy is aimed at better understanding Rialti's and Zuccato's translation choices and comparing and contrasting them with Melchiori and Gabrieli's 1991 Mondadori edition. Nevertheless, as illustrated below, the interviews I carried out with the two contemporary translators differ significantly in terms of intents and treatment of migration-related issues.

[18] By simply treating the archives of the two most popular Italian newspapers, *Il Corriere della Sera* (http://archivio.corriere.it/Archivio/interface/landing.html) and *La Repubblica* (https://ricerca.repubblica.it/), as two corpora, it is evident that in the 1990s migration-related issues were not that urgent in Italy. Indeed, by looking at words such as *immigra** both archives show that in the last few years articles concerning immigrants have been written and published almost daily, while in the 1990s such articles appeared almost weekly.

1. Interviews with the translators and considerations of their answers

Edoardo Rialti and Edoardo Zuccato kindly accepted to answer my questions via mail. The three questions were as follows:

1. Which source text did you adopt or receive from your publishing house?
2. How did you treat Melchiori and Gabrieli's translation? (Only Zuccato, for obvious chronological reasons, was also asked to explain his approach to Rialti's translation)
3. In terms of lexical/semantic choices, how did you manage to establish a parallelism between the first seven scenes of the play and the contemporary political situation in the Mediterranean area – provided you wanted and/or were asked to do so?

As previously mentioned, the answers of the two translators differed a great deal. As for the source text adopted or provided by their publishers, Rialti affirmed that he adopted Gabrieli and Melichiori's 1990 MUP edition as reference text, while Bompiani gave Zuccato the 2005 Oxford version, the second edition of *Shakespeare's Complete Works*.

Regarding the second question, Rialti admitted he felt constantly indebted to the model offered by Melchiori and Gabrieli while translating for Lindau. As my analysis will try to demonstrate, his version does not always succeed in modernising the migration-related lexical choices of the first translation. On the other hand, Zuccato affirmed that he attempted a brand-new translation, far from the deliberately obsolete style adopted by Melchiori and Gabrieli, which he believes to be antiquated even for an Italian readership in the 1990s, something

that translation criticism would define as a strategically archaized translation.[19] Nonetheless, I would argue that he sometimes makes questionable choices which contravene his declaration of intent. Moreover, when asked about Rialti's translation, Zuccato criticised the former's text by calling it 'a bit shaky'.

When answering question three, Rialti revealed that he was asked by his publisher to exaggerate lexical choices concerning migration issues in order to underline or create a kind of parallelism between the first seven scenes of the play and the contemporary political situation in the Mediterranean area. Whether he succeeded or not will be established in the following section of this article. Conversely, Zuccato considers any kind of parallelism a bit of a stretch, an avoidable mistake guided by a pervading presentism. More's monologue in Sc. 6 (71-165, with some interruptions by minor characters which comment on it), says Zuccato, 'is only the paraphrase of the evangelic proverb "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you". It is a distortion to interpret it as a forerunner of contemporary progressive lay humanitarianism, despite the numerous references that can be identified' (my translation). Having evaluated the above statements, we expect that the results of the corpus-based analysis demonstrate Rialti's accurate translation choices aimed at reinforcing the parallelism between early modern and contemporary xenophobia, on the one hand, and Zuccato's more neutral, objective style, on the other.

Methods and materials

As for the methodology adopted to compare the three translations of *Sir Thomas More*, available on the Italian market, I used a corpus-

[19] Robin Lefere, 'La traduction archaïsante: Cervantes d'après M. Molho', *Meta* 39/1 (1994).

based approach. Unlike the English source text whose electronic version is downloadable from the Web as a .txt file, Mondadori's, Lindau's and Bompiani's translations – in particular the first seven scenes of the play – were scanned manually and digitalised with the aid of specific free conversion websites in order to make them readable and analysable by corpus analysis software. In this specific case, I used the tool #LancsBox,[20] developed at the University of Lancaster, to examine the corpus thus created.

In order to conduct a thorough analysis of migration-related lexis in the play and its translational outputs, a bilingual parallel corpus of the first seven scenes of the play (and its three Italian translations) was created, aligned and automatically tagged.[21] The size of this corpus, in terms of types and tokens, is given in the following table:

[20] '#LancsBox is a new-generation software package for the analysis of language data and corpora developed at Lancaster University (by Vaclav Brezina [Project Lead], Richard Easty [Software Developer] and Tony McEnery [Adviser]). Main features of #LancsBox:

- Works with your own data or existing corpora.
- Can be used by linguists, language teachers, historians, sociologists, educators and anyone interested in language.
- Visualizes language data.
- Analyses data in any language […]
- Automatically annotates data for part-of-speech.
- Works with any major operating system (Windows, Mac, Linux).

[…] #LancsBox is very easy to use. Download #LancsBox, load data and start the analysis straightaway' (http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/lancsbox/).

[21] As far as POS (part of speech) tagging is concerned, #LancsBox automatically recognises parts of speech both in English and in Italian. On the other hand, semantic tagging, which will be dealt with when discussing topoi in paragraph 5, was achieved with the help of the USAS (UCREL Semantic Analysis System), 'a framework for undertaking the automatic semantic analysis of text' which is free and available online at http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/. USAS semantic tagging entails dividing the lexemes of any text into 21 major domains (semantic categories indicated by letters of the alphabet: e.g., A: General and Abstract Terms, B: The body and & the Individual, etc.). Each domain contains a maximum of four hierarchical levels of subdivisions indicated by progressive numbers (e.g., A.1.5.2 corresponds to the subcategory 'usefulness', where A means General and Abstract Terms, 1 indicates the first-level subdivision 'General', 5

	Types	Tokens
English version	1,849	8,667
Melchiori-Gabrieli (1991)	2,510	8,432
Rialti (2014)	2,374	8,327
Zuccato (2017)	2,429	8,554
Total	9,162	33,980

Table 1. Size of the corpus analysed in terms of types and tokens.

It is important to note that the four texts (or portions of them) do not present significant differences in terms of the number of types and tokens calculated and lexical density, with a TTR (type-token ratio) which varies from a minimum of somewhat more than 0.21 (English version) to a maximum of a little less than 0.3 (Melchiori-Gabrieli's Mondadori edition).[22]

Once uploaded on #LancsBox, the four texts were explored mainly with the help of the KWIC (Key Word In Context) and the GraphColl (Graphic Collocation) tools to study the lexical neighbourhood and collocations of recurring keywords related to the problematization of the Other both in the source text and in the three target texts.

With reference to the edition of the adopted source text, I considered Jowett's Arden publication, since, in addition to being considered the most philologically accurate, it is the most up-to-date and the richest in footnotes and critical insights. However, where necessary, I

indicates the second-level subdivision 'Use' and 2 indicates the third-level subdivision 'Usefulness'). The total amount of tags is 232 at the moment.

[22] TTR gives important information about the lexical richness of a text, or segments of it. Since it is the quotient obtained by the division of the number of types (unique words) by the number of tokens (total amount of words), the nearer to 1 this quotient is, the richer and more varied the lexis of a text is. In this case, the lexical richness of the four texts of our corpus can be considered medium, ranging from 0.21 to 0.3.

will refer to the editions adopted as source texts by Melchiori and Gabrieli, Rialti, and Zuccato in order to justify their translation choices.

As for both corpus analysis software programs used and the topics dealt with, my study was influenced by the RASIM (Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants) project developed at the University of Lancaster primarily between 2007 and 2010 (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/projects/rasim/). This project, whose complete title was 'Discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press, 1996-2006', was financed by the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and developed at the UCREL (University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language), Lancaster, UK. It aimed at applying corpus-linguistic methods to critical discourse analysis (CDA) in British broadsheet and tabloid articles dealing with refugees and asylum seekers in the period between 1996 and 2006. Although the corpus selected by Paul Baker and his co-investigators was completely different from the dataset I created for the purposes of the present analysis, the approach adopted, as well as the kind of analysis conducted and the organisation of the results obtained, gave me the opportunity to test a set of methodological choices from which I much benefited.

Analysis

The first part of my examination dealt with the original English text, focussing both on quantitative analysis and qualitative interpretation of the data provided by #LancsBox. A word list has been created and most recurring keywords identified. In particular, in addition to giving important information on the 'aboutness' of the text analysed,[23] the keyword extraction emphasised the lexemes which the Elizabethan playwrights used to identify the Lombards, foreign bank-

[23] Cfr. Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Zhonghua Xiao and Tony McEnery, 'Two Approaches to Genre Analysis: Three Genres in Modern American English', *Journal of English Linguistics* 33/1 (2005).

ers and employees who worked in Lombard Street, London and who were at the centre of the Ill May Day events of 1517 narrated in the first part of the play.

The table below shows a list of the lemmas used in the dataset to describe the migrants who were working in London when 'the most serious outbreak of violence against foreigners in the [sixteenth] century'[24] occurred.

Lexeme	Number of occurrences
Stranger	25
Alien	6
French(man)	6
Lombard	5[25]
Dutch	2
Fleming	2
Fugitives	1

Table 2. Most recurring terms used to identify immigrants and foreign workers in *Sir Thomas More*.

What emerges from the table above is that Shakespeare and his contemporaries identified migrants to England in the sixteenth century with adjectives (either substantivized or not) relating to both their otherness and their geographical origin, which in most cases corresponded to the Northern regions of Europe. Only in a single case are the foreigners defined using the pejorative hapax 'fugitives',

[24] Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 42.

[25] As Jowett explains (Sir Thomas More, 166) two of the occurrences of the lexeme Lombard are inserted by the censor Tilney to substitute 'straunger' and 'ffrenchemen', and so avoid the French ambassador's resentment. After all, when Sir Thomas More was written (between the late-sixteenth and the early-seventeenth centuries), the community of Lombard Street was a small minority when compared to the French and the Huguenot population.

in the noun phrase 'outlandish fugitives' uttered by the rebel leader Lincoln immediately before he gives orders to burn down the foreigners' houses in Sc. 4 (28).

As far as the Italian translations are concerned, the table below shows the occurrences of lemmas used to indicate immigrants:

	Fiammingo	Forestiero	Francese	Italiano	Lombardo	Olandese	Straniero
Melchiori-Gabrieli	2	3	7	**2**	0	2	30
Rialti	2	6	7	0	1	1	28
Zuccato	2	3	8	0	**5**	2	30

Table 3. Most recurring lemmas used to identify immigrants and foreign workers in the Italian translations of *Sir Thomas More* (my emphasis).

Therefore, the three Italian texts generally seem to adopt a source-oriented perspective when translating lexemes which define foreigners. Nevertheless, it is worth noting the use of the ethnic adjective *italiano* by Melchiori and Gabrieli on two occasions:

> I tell thee, Lombard, these words should cost thy best cap (1.56-7)
> Ed io ti dico, Italiano, che queste parole ti costerebbero la tua berretta migliore (1.1.51-2)
>
> Exeunt both (1.88)
> Escono i due [Italiani] (1.1.71)

As for the first example, one may think that 'Lombardo' was not perceived as a suitable translation by Melchiori and Gabrieli, probably because of the polysemy of this ethnic adjective. Indeed, to an Italian readership, the lexeme 'Lombardo' would not refer immedi-

ately to the sixteenth-century bankers who worked in Lombard Street, London,[26] but possibly to inhabitants of the Northern Italian region of Lombardia (where, coincidentally, Mondadori's headquarters are located) or to the Germanic tribe of the Lombards (or Longobards, who actually gave their name to the above-mentioned Italian region) who conquered our peninsula and ruled over it from the sixth to the eighth century CE.

Conversely, Zuccato's five occurrences of the adjective *Lombardo* show the translator's propensity for the use of such a lexeme as well as his 'fidelity' to the 2005 Oxford edition Bompiani had him adopt as a source text, which displays both Tilney's censorial interventions and the previous version he had modified:

> I tell thee, Lombard, these words should cost thy best cap (1.56-7)
> Ti dico, lombardo, che queste parole ti costerebbero il tuo berretto migliore (1.46-7)
>
> Some ~~stranger TLombardT now / Will take the victuals from him (3.49-50)~~
> Senza che qualche straniero lombardo[27] non gli porti via le provviste (3.39-40)
>
> Immediately a ~~Frenchman TLombardT took them / from him (3.52-53)~~
> Immediatamente un francese lombardo glieli ha portati via (3.41-2)
>
> They intend to offer violence / To the amazed Lombards (5.14-5)
> Minacciano di usare violenza ai lombardi terrorizzati (5.11-2)
>
> I hear they mean to fire the Lombards' houses (5.35)
> Ho sentito che vogliono dare fuoco alle case dei lombardi (5.29)

[26] Bates *et al.* also highlight that the Londoner Lombards were called after the people of Lombardy, Italy, which was 'famous for its banking' (*William Shakespeare and Others*, 349).

[27] By avoiding choosing between the original text and the English version revised by Tilney, Zuccato actually opts for a kind of amplification.

Before dealing with topoi and combinatory profiles, let us analyse the translation of the noun 'fugitives' which, as mentioned earlier, is the only negatively connotated lexeme per se[28] that appears in the original text. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, the lemma 'fugitive' entered the English vocabulary in the fourteenth century with the meaning of 'one who flees, a runaway, a fugitive from justice, an outlaw'. It derives from the Latin adjective *fugitivus*, which indicates 'a runaway, fugitive slave, deserter'. It is only in recent times that the lemma has acquired the more neutral meaning of 'a person who has escaped from captivity or is in hiding' (*OED*). While the three translations tend to maintain a source-oriented perspective when dealing with lexemes concerning migrants – except for the examples analysed above – in the case of 'fugitives' they opt for different terms. Melchiori and Gabrieli, on the one hand, and Zuccato on the other, chose rather 'neutral' words such as, respectively, 'espatriati' and 'emigrati', while Rialti's 'fuggiaschi' seems to reproduce the pejorative nuance of the original term. Indeed, according to the *Treccani* dictionary of the Italian language, the lemma 'fuggiasco' refers both to someone who escapes because s/he is driven away, chased or wanted, and to somebody who is forced to leave the place where s/he normally lives because of wars or natural calamities.[29]

However, it is the analysis of some topoi – namely the most frequently recurring themes a keyword is associated with – and KWIC/collocations that highlight translation styles and choices better. In or-

[28] The other lexemes analyzed assume a negative connotation only if inserted in collocational patterning and co-text.

[29] 'Fuggiasco agg. e s. m. [der. di fuggire] (pl. m. -chi). – 1. agg. Che va fuggendo qua e là, perché scacciato, inseguito, ricercato: le persecuzioni religiose costrinsero gran parte della popolazione ad andare f. in altre terre; dopo il delitto, errò f. per i monti; il carme Che allegrò l'ira al Ghibellin f. (Foscolo, con allusione a Dante). 2. s. m. (f. -a) Chi è costretto da eventi bellici o da altre calamità a lasciare il luogo dove abitualmente dimora, sinon. di profugo (usato soprattutto al plur.): arrivarono molti f. dai territorî invasi' (http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/fuggiasco/).

der to explore the combinatory profiles of the keywords introduced above, the results provided by #LancsBox KWIC (KeyWords In Context) tool[30] have been supported by the GraphColl tool which allows us to combine collocations of different keywords together (excluding, of course, function words), thus highlighting common themes (see, for instance, the figure below).

Fig.1. An example of the results GraphColl provided when combining collocations of stranger* and alien* in the part of the corpus concerning the original text. Function words have been omitted from the results.

Starting with the English source text, the results of this quantitative search allowed me to identify lexemes, multiword units and collocational patternings which collocate with the keywords selected, and to group them according to four broadly different topoi:

[30] In order to conduct my analysis, I set the KWIC tool so that it listed collocations for the keywords selected with a span of 5 words to the left and 5 to the right, with a minimum frequency of 1 occurrence.

Aggressive/ xenophobic behaviours/ feelings towards foreigners	beat them down, bid, butter their boxes, cut their throats, drag, hand(s) off, having beaten, jetted on, kill them, no mercy, offer violence to, put down, rage, removing, revenge, scorns, strike, tickle their turnips, worst
Food (deprivation)	bread, eat, food, provision, vittailes
Foreigners' (alleged) vexations towards Londoners	insolences, rule, stoop, suffer, take from, wrongs
Foreigners' superior attitude/condition:	audacious, dare, hot, pride, proud, saucy, take the wall,

Table 4. Textual neighbourhood of the keywords selected in the source text.

Therefore, what emerges from the analysis of these topoi and the information they provide on the 'aboutness' of the text under analysis is that the first seven scenes of *Sir Thomas More* mainly revolve around xenophobic attempts by Londoners to attack what they consider to be insolent, snobbish (and rich) foreigners who steal their food. Nevertheless, these reflections could be advanced even after a quick reading of the text, without bothering to consider corpus analysis tools. Hence, it is worth comparing and contrasting lexemes, multiword units and collocations concerning the above-mentioned topoi in the Italian translations of *Sir Thomas More*. Again, KWIC and GraphColl tools have been used to conduct the analysis whose results are shown in the table below:

	Melchiori-Gabrieli	**Rialti**	**Zuccato**
Aggressive/ xenophobic behaviours/ feelings towards foreigners	allontanamento, appiccar fuoco, battuto, colpire, disumanità, fare fuori, fetenti, *gli gonfieremo la faccia,* giù le mani, la pagheranno salata, non mostreremo clemenza, pettinata, scannarli, schiacciare, si ribella, *solleticheremo le chiappe*, tiriamoli fuori, torturare, trascineremo, uccidere, usar violenza, vendicarsi	abbattere, bruciate le case, cacciata, collera, contro, colpire, disumanità, facciamogli dei faccioni così, giù le zampe, *glielo infilziamo in quel posto*, impudenti, incendiare le case, meniamo, *mettiamogli il pepe al culo*, non avremo alcuna clemenza, non ho ceduto il passo, penetrino in casa, prendere le loro case, risoluzione, sconfitto, sprezzano, tagliar loro la gola, ti costerebbero, uccidere	barbara disumanità, bruciate le case, cafone, colpire, contro, dare fuoco alle case, furore, giù le mani, *imburriamogli la patata*, impadronirvi delle loro case, la pagheranno cara, mandar via, schiacciare, sconfitto, siano tirati fuori, *spacchiamogli le chiappe*, tagliargli la gola, ucciderli, usare violenza
Food (deprivation)	pane, provviste, spesa,	cibo, pane, spesa	cibo, provviste
Foreigners' (alleged) vexations towards Londoners	esser preda, insolenti, insolenze, piegarsi, portar via, provocazioni, soprusi impositivi, sopportare, subire, tolgono il pane di bocca agli orfani, tollereremo	calare le braghe, ingoiare i soprusi, insolenze, picchiato, preda, si mangiano il pane degli orfani, sfidati, soffia il cibo, soperchiati, sopportare, sottragga loro la spesa, tolleriamo, torti intimati	abusano, altezzosa, arroganza, cederei, frega il cibo, insolenti, insolenze, picchiandolo, porti via, preda, prepotenze, rovinare, sopportare, subito, tolgono il pane di bocca ai bambini, tollerare
Foreigners' superior attitude/ condition:	bollenti, galletti, lecito, osare, superbia, temerari	clemenza, galletti, in calore, presuntuosi, se la godano, vivano nella ricchezza	bollenti, godano di maggior privilegi, potete fare quel che vi pare, osano

5. Textual neighbourhood of the keywords selected in the three Italian target texts.

An examination of the table above shows that some qualitative considerations about the three Italian target texts can be made which seem to partially support the statements by Rialti and Zuccato in their interviews, although sometimes these contemporary translators barely succeed in detaching their work from the philologically-accurate model set up by Melchiori and Gabrieli. Whether it be an attempt to emphasise the brutal language used (now as then) against migrants – as Rialti declared was the aim of his translation – or an effort to modernise Melchiori and Gabrieli's obsolete style – as Zuccato said when speaking about the purpose of his translational process – it is not always evident that their adjustments succeed in adapting the academic, 'politically correct', and even moderate style which characterizes the 1991 Mondadori edition for the play's target readers in twenty-first-century Italy.

One of the few interesting examples showing this process of domestication – to use Venuti's terminology[31] – of the early-modern English text, and the best attempts by Rialti and Zuccato to make it more accessible to a contemporary Italian readership, might be their translations of Clown Betts's tirade against the Lombards at the beginning of Sc. 4 (attributed to Heywood). Betts's lines are imbued with culinary double meanings, such as 'we'll tickle their turnips' (4.1) and 'we'll butter their boxes' (4.2). In this case, Melchiori and Gabrieli's translations 'gli solleticheremo le chiappe' and 'gli gonfieremo la faccia' are probably too polite for the register adopted by Heywood in his addition (IIa) to the original text. Instead, they become 'mettiamogli il pepe al culo' and 'glielo infilziamo in quel posto' in Rialti's and 'spacchiamogli le chiappe' and 'imburriamogli la patata' in Zuccato's, the latter probably renders even better the association between food and sexual allusions contained in both the original expressions.[32]

[31] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[32] According to the *Urban Dictionary*, in contemporary English, 'to tickle one's turnip' indicates female masturbation (https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=tickled%20the%20turnip), a sex-related idiom which even in early modern England had the same meaning as today (Jowett 2011: 169). The idiom 'to butter one's

Conclusions

The compared corpus analysis of keywords and collocational profiles concerning migrant-related lexis in the first seven scenes of the three Italian translations of *Sir Thomas More* published to date has shown points of contacts and divergences among the three Italian versions. Despite Rialti's and Zuccato's target-oriented approaches and their intention to update Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli's language – as stated in their interviews – the two contemporary translators had to come to terms with the 1991 Mondadori edition. Indeed, as my analysis has tried to demonstrate, at least in terms of lexical choices concerning xenophobic episodes in the play, Rialti and Zuccato sometimes fail to modernise a language which, in the first case, is considered to be unrivalled, and in the second is perceived as somewhat archaic and archaizing – namely to be modernised.

As for lexical choices concerning negative and xenophobic attitudes towards foreigners and possible parallels with current migration-related issues in Italy, the analysis failed to fulfil our initial expectations. As a matter of fact, both keyword extraction and their co-textual neighbourhood have shown no palpable differences among the three Italian versions of *Sir Thomas More* concerning the abovementioned issues. This result seems to confirm Zuccato's interpretation of the play and of More's monologue in 6.71-165 in particular as a paraphrase of the biblical proverb 'Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you' (the so-called Golden Rule), rather than exploring it through the lens of presentism and looking for stylistic translational choices that may confirm a parallelism between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century xenophobic behaviours in England and twenty-first-century migration issues in Italy.

boxes', on the other hand, reproduces the sexual act in itself, with 'butter' alluding to semen and 'boxes' to the vagina. Cf. Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, vol. 1 (London and Atlantic Highlands: The Athlone Press, 1994), 141, 181.

Bibliography

Bates, Jonathan, Eric Rasmussen, Jan Sewell, and Will Sharpe, eds., *The RSC Shakespeare. William Shakespeare and Others: Collaborative Plays* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Colucci, Michele, *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai giorni nostri* (Roma: Carocci, 2018).

Craig, Hugh, 'The Date of *Sir Thomas More*', *Shakespeare Survey* 66 (2013), 38–54.

Dente, Carla, 'All My Best Is Dressing Old Words New', in Carla Dente, and Sara Soncini, eds., *Crossing Time and Space. Shakespeare Translations in Present-Day Europe* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2008), 9–18.

Fusini, Nadia, and Iolanda Plescia, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2022).

Greg, Walter Wilson, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (Oxford: Malone Society, 1911).

Jenkins, Harold, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, in Charles Jasper Sisson, ed., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Watford: Odhams Press, 1953), 1231–66.

Jowett, John, William Montgomery, Gary Taylor, and Stanley Wells, eds., *Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Jowett, John, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Lefere, Robin, 'La traduction archaïsante: Cervantes d'après M. Molho', *Meta* 39/1 (1994), 241–9.

Melchiori, Giorgio, ed., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Bari: Adriatica, 1981).

'The Contextualization of Source Material: The Play within the Play in *Sir Thomas More*', in Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *Le Forme del teatro*, vol. 3. (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1984), 59–94.

, and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Il copione di sir Tommaso Moro, in Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *Shakespeare. Teatro completo*, vol. 9: *I drammi storici* (Milano: Mondadori, 1991), 441–687.

Mullini, Roberta, '*The Book of Sir Thomas More* and Its Performance', in Michel Bitot, ed., *Divers toyes mengled: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture in Honor of André Lascombes* (Tours: Publication de l'Université François Rabelais, 1996), 211–28.

Rialti, Edoardo, ed., *Tommaso Moro* (Torino: Lindau, 2014).

Scott, Mike, *WordSmith Tools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Taylor, Gary, John Jowett, Terry Bourus, and Gabriel Egan, eds., *The New Oxford Shakespeare: Critical Reference Edition* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Venuti, Lawrence, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Williams, Gordon, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, vol. 1 (A-F) (London and Atlantic Highlands: The Athlone Press, 1994).

Xiao, Zhonghua, and Tony McEnery. 2005. 'Two Approaches to Genre Analysis: Three Genres in Modern American English', *Journal of English Linguistics* 33/1 (2005), 62–82.

Zuccato, Edoardo, ed., *Il libro di Sir Tommaso Moro*, in Franco Marenco, ed., *William Shakespeare. Tutte le opere*, vol. 3: *I drammi storici* (Milano: Bompiani, 2017), 2573–822.

TRANSLATING *SIR THOMAS MORE* FOR CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN READERS

IOLANDA PLESCIA

This brief essay deals with a personal and collaborative translation experience which I had with that most collaborative of playscripts that is *Sir Thomas More*. Looking back at the challenges that this thought-provoking play posed during my work on a new Italian edition, carried out with Feltrinelli's Shakespeare series general editor Nadia Fusini (Milan, 2022), I hope to show how thinking 'in between' languages can help us understand the source text in new, exciting ways. Translating an early modern text entails, as always, a negotiation between different linguistic and cultural systems, with the added layer of complexity that our temporal horizon has also radically changed with respect to the historical past in which the text was produced. Awareness of this fact exposes the processes of de-codification and re-codification we all go through as subjects experiencing language in time, as famously stressed by George Steiner:

> When we read or hear any language-statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate. Reader, actor, editor are translators of language out of time. The schematic model of translation is one in which a message from a source-language passes into a receptor-language via a transformational process. The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other, that an interpretative transfer, sometimes, albeit misleadingly, described as encoding and decoding, must occur so that the message 'gets through.' Exactly the same model—and this is what is rarely stressed—is operative within a single language. But here the barrier or distance between source and receptor is time.[1]

[1] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1975] 1998), 28-29.

I will here touch on issues which have become increasingly pressing when one plans a new translation. These involve the intended audience(s), material conditions and medium of publication (essentially the page in this case), rationale and translational stance, and some linguistic considerations relating to the relationship between early modern English and contemporary Italian. My approach to translation in general is practice-based, but informed to some extent by decisions taken in light of translation theory and its reflections on how to bridge the gaps in what may be called, following Steiner, 'historical/diachronic translation'. In this shared project with Nadia Fusini, our different emphasis on linguistic, literary and theatrical matters made for an interesting mix, which found its balance at the end of the process. It should be stressed that ultimately this is a 'scholarly' translation, meant to be read first and foremost. It is important to distinguish such work from stage translation, produced for a specific mise en scène, and also, out of respect, from that of professional translators who do not produce critical editions but serve the public in important ways. On the other hand, claiming a space for scholarly translation means preserving specialistic, contextual and linguistic knowledge that is peculiar to the researcher in early modern English. The main goal here, then, was to produce a translation that, while not forgetting the status of the text as 'playbook', can be read or studied with pleasure.

In fact, the Feltrinelli Shakespeare editions are conceived as translations mainly to be read, though they of course do not exclude performance, and this paradox in itself – reading rather than experiencing theatre – poses a problem. The general objection is that a play, when it is not translated with a production in mind, will be lacking in vitality and life, much like the original play-text itself when lifted off the stage. On this point, Susan Bassnett's position on the hierarchy of texts in theatrical translation, and the difficulty of defining and encoding performability in a translation, is still of great interest:

> In the history of translation studies, less has been written on problems

> of translating theatre texts than on translating any other text type. The generally accepted view on this absence of theoretical study is that the difficulty lies in the nature of the theatre text, which exists in a dialectical relationship with the performance of that same text and is therefore frequently read as something 'incomplete' or 'partially realized'.[2]

This premise moves from the position that 'real' translation takes place only on stage, but Bassnett goes on to think about performability in these terms:

> In the years that I have been involved both as a translator of theatre texts and as a theoretician, it has been this term that has consistently caused the most problems. It has never been clearly defined, and indeed does not exist in most languages other than English. Attempts to define the 'performability' inherent in a text never go further than generalized discussion about the need for fluent speech rhythms in the target text. What this amounts to in practice is that each translator decides on an entirely ad hoc basis what constitutes a speakable text for performers. There is no sound theoretical base for arguing that 'performability' can or does exist.[3]

And further:

> I have come to reject the notion of the encoded gestural subtext, perceiving it as a concept that belongs to a particular moment in time in western theatre history and which cannot be applied universally. What I would like to see developing in the future in this field are two main branches of investigation — a historiography of theatre translation on the one hand, that would bring our knowledge into line with work already undertaken and underway in the field of prose narrative and poetry, and further investigation into the linguistic structuring of extant theatre texts […].[4]

[2] Susan Bassnett, "Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability", *Languages and Cultures in Translation Theories*, 4/1 (1991), 99.
[3] Bassnett, *Translating for the Theatre*, 102.
[4] Bassnett, *Translating for the Theatre*, 111.

I refer to Bassnett here to endorse the case for reading theatre in the most basic sense, that is encountering the text on the page: after all, first encounters with Shakespeare in Italy almost always happen on the page, in school. The tradition of the Feltrinelli Shakespeare paperback editions (in the 'Classics' section of the 'Universale Economica' series), whose first general editor was Agostino Lombardo, has always been to offer scholarly but accessible editions of Shakespeare. Its target audience thus includes specialists of early modern drama, but also students and general readers. The volumes all contain an introduction and footnotes as well as a note on stage history, previous translations in Italian, bibliography and chronology. Publishing strategies have evolved over the years: the covers have recently been redesigned to appeal to the general readership; on the other hand, the number of pages devoted to critical materials has grown significantly. The original text is always drawn from well-established scholarly editions, so that the volumes seek to position themselves within the Italian Shakespeare studies panorama, not limiting themselves to providing accessible translations. The fact that these translations are offered in parallel to the original text is an important feature of the series, which, in the case of Sir Thomas More, has meant accepting that readers should be confronted with a more complex text than usual, with its gaps, bracketed conjectures, censorship interventions, and editorial decisions.

Rationale and translational 'stance'

Having described the wider context of the project, I will turn to the rationale which guided our work. In choosing *Sir Thomas More* as a play to be included in the Feltrinelli series, we felt that it could have an impact on a large Italian readership, in a moment of great political import for Italy and Europe. While the project started in 2018, well before we could ever have suspected we would be going through a pandemic and then a war would break out in Europe, the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean had made this play particularly relevant,

despite its being, as John Jowett has aptly put it, "perennially 'new' to the Shakespeare canon, yet perennially unconvincing as a Shakespeare play when ranked alongside the accepted *oeuvre*".[5] The turbulent beginning of this century has made it possible to reappreciate in particular the play's reflection on the fate of 'strangers': a number of international initiatives in support of refugee rights have used More's celebrated speech in defense of foreigners in scene 6, and have been widely shared by different media (traditional and social). For example, a post on the International Rescue Committee website[6] links to a stirring video of the speech, entitled 'The Strangers' Case – Shakespeare's rallying cry for humanity', produced at the Globe theatre in London (2018). The video features refugees from Syria, Sierra Leone and South Sudan alongside famous actors such as Kim Cattrall, Yasmin Kadi and Sophie Thompson.[7] Features have also been published by *The Guardian* and the *BBC*.[8]

[5] John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

[6] International Rescue Committee, https://www.rescue.org/article/400-years-ago-william-shakespeare-made-rallying-cry-humanity, accessed 15 December 2022.

[7] Shakespeare's Globe, *The Stranger's Case | Shakespeare's Rallying Cry for Humanity | Shakespeare's Globe*, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Bss2or4n74, accessed 15 December 2022.

[8] See: Mark Brown, 'William Shakespeare's Handwritten Plea for Refugees to Go Online' (15 March 2016) https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/15/william-shakespeare-handwritten-plea-for-refugees-online-sir-thomas-more-script-play-british-library-exhibition, accessed 15 December 2022; and BBC Newsnight, *Shakespeare's Take on Refugess, Performed by Harriet Walter*, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiLwv-G9COQ, accessed 15 December 2012. My interest in *Sir Thomas More* was, in fact, sparked at the theatre festival Festa di teatro Eco Logico di Stromboli – 2016, directed by Alessandro Fabrizi, where I was asked to translate the speech in defense of strangers to be performed at an immersive experience organized by Medici senza frontiere. In the experience, spectators were able to trace the steps of refugees by wearing a VR visor. See: Medici Senza Frontiere, #Milionidipassi: il racconto della campagna, https://www.medicisenzafrontiere.it/partecipa/campagne/milionidipassi-il-racconto-della-campagna/ accessed 15 December 2012; and Festa di Teatro Eco Logico, *Festa di Teatro Eco Logico 2016 – Shakespeare on the rocks*, 2017. https://www.

Still, for Feltrinelli, adding a lesser-known, collaborative play to its canonical Shakespeare collection was a bold step. The book was published at the end of September 2022 and the next few months will offer sales data which will help gauge the interest of Italian readers. It will be interesting to see how many buyers will choose specifically this text over, for example, volume 9 (tome 3 of the Historical drama subset) of Giorgio Melchiori's prestigious, and expensive, Mondadori edition, which includes the play alongside other history plays, in a translation carried out by Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli.[9] While the aim of a new translation can never be that of substituting a previous one, especially one that has enjoyed such prestige (Melchiori and Gabrieli also edited the play for Manchester University Press),[10] a new version sold as a stand-alone paperback text will help fill a gap in the market, as the Melchiori volume has also become somewhat rare. Another important translation, by Edoardo Zuccato, recently published in Franco Marenco's (general editor) scholarly edition of Shakespeare for Bompiani, is also included in a volume containing other history plays, which makes it more expensive than a single text edition.[11] There is of course the more readily available Italian edition by Edoardo Rialti, published by Landau edizioni: its merit is that it provides a single, affordable edition, but it lacks a parallel English text and is perhaps less sound from a scholarly point of view, reproducing for example an introduction by Joseph Pearce, who adheres to Thomas Merriam's contention that the play is almost entirely Shakespearean (a seriously flawed hypothesis, as so much scholarship has shown).[12] Consequent-

youtube.com/watch?v=Gryw5cAXZCM, accessed 15 December 2022.

[9] Giorgio Melchiori, and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Il copione di sir Tommaso Moro*, in Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *Shakespeare. Teatro completo*, vol. 9: *I drammi storici* (Milano: Mondadori, 1991).

[10] Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[11] Edoardo Zuccato ed., *Il libro di Sir Tommaso Moro*, in Franco Marenco ed., *William Shakespeare. Tutte le opere*, vol. 3: *I drammi storici* (Milan: Bompiani, 2017).

[12] Edoardo Rialti ed., *Tommaso Moro* (Turin: Lindau, 2014).

ly, there seems to be room in the marketplace for a new, single-text, philologically informed translation, and the reach of a publisher like Feltrinelli may convey critical reflection on collaboration and authorship to a wider public, as the back cover suggests: "What if the name 'Shakespeare' actually pointed, rather than to the solid identity of an undisputed genius, to a fabric of relationships and shared work?"

The fact that the translation was undertaken in collaboration also constitutes an interesting response to the collective nature of the source text. This is not a first for *Sir Thomas More* since we have the Gabrieli-Melchiori translation, but our edition is the first widely-available Italian paperback to include an explanation of the rationale for the collaborative translation in its accompanying critical essays and materials, with the explicit intent of involving a wider readership in the multifaceted history of the text. Nadia Fusini and I went through the entire text line by line rather than dividing up the text, but the mix of voices is still, I think, discernible, with interesting effects. The idea was in fact not to search for a completely homogenous style, nor, on the other hand, to attempt to reproduce an exact alternation of hands and revisions. We were interested in exploring collaborative translation not as a technique used, as is sometimes done is in the publishing world, to get a job done more quickly, but rather to see what different perspectives could add to the final result, even if that meant taking more time to discuss choices and make decisions.

As to the text used, we did not seek to re-establish a text from scratch, which would have been a daunting task. Feltrinelli was granted the rights to use John Jowett's Arden text, which was reproduced faithfully, with the addition of a key for Italian readers explaining Jowett's layout choices which make the different hands, insertions, and censor's interventions visible. This, too, was a bold choice considering the relationship with the reading public, as the edition does not seek to familiarize or smooth out textual problems, but rather puts readers in contact with the precarious and 'in the making' status of the English text. The translation, on the other hand, accepts a compromise regarding readability; particular textual difficulties are explained

in footnotes and not flagged in the text itself, so as to enhance the fluidity of the reading experience. The reader may thus choose to engage with the text in different ways, going back to the source text to deepen his/her knowledge of early modern theatre and the collaborative writing process, or enjoying the Italian text as a whole.

Strange roots: the question of linguistic identity

In the second part of this essay, due to limitations of space, I sketch out three of the main linguistic and cultural issues we faced as we worked on this translation. Many of these considerations may also be valid for other experiences with early modern English to Italian translation (in particular, I have previously translated *Troilus and Cressida* and *The Taming of the Shrew*). My approach to early modern English and diachronic translation in general is informed by Paula Blank's work on Shakespeare's English as a language that is close to ours from a structural point of view, but is also inherently alien from a cultural point of view.[13] Blank advocates that readers should be cognizant of the gap in time that has passed *within* the language, which brings about the need to translate between different stages of English, well before moving on to interlinguistic translation. Within this perspective, historical meanings are recovered and addressed, but possible interpretations which may be seen as modern misunderstandings of the text are not rejected as wrong but rather considered as potentially fruitful and re-signifying, an interesting by-product of intralingual diachronic translation.

The first challenge was thus to reconstruct the linguistic atmosphere of the play, and to take note of the concerns with language that are expressed in it. As scholars have increasingly shown with particular

[13] See in particular her argument in Paula Blank, *Shakesplish* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

reference to Shakespeare, the language of the early modern stage is not marked by purity but rather by a constant awareness of the state of 'interlinguicity' (i.e. the condition of being 'between languages')[14] that early modern English subjects lived in (indeed, Saenger adds, that we all live in). *Sir Thomas More* dramatizes a number of issues related to the linguistic anxieties of the age, such as the status of Latin as a prestige language (in scene 8) and the use of this learned tongue to exclude uneducated speakers and especially women from sophisticated conversation. Within this context, it is possible to re-read a scene like the sixth, in which the quintessential Londoner Lincoln complains that foreigners "bring in strange roots" (6.11), to imagine that those 'roots' are something more than a kind of food that the English fail to appreciate: the foreignness Lincoln is reacting against may be linguistic in essence, related to the roots of *words* – the culinary metaphor pointing to a larger issue of mixed linguistic identities.[15]

One specific instance of this concern is the reference, implied more than once but articulated fully in scene 4, to an opposition between national identities, which hints at the status of languages and the blending of borders: "simple English" is here pitted against "French/Fleming or Fleming/French". After the rioting English citizens have decided to hunt out the foreigners and burn their houses down, Clown Betts bursts on the scene and announces he has been unable to find any: "Nothing. Not a French Fleming nor a Fleming French to be found, but all fled, in plain English" (4.71.73). Jowett conjectures that these words may refer to actual linguistic expressions ("Fleming French: perhaps a word of French spoken in Flemish dialect"), and although one must be wary

[14] Michael Saenger ed., "Introduction", in Michael Saenger ed., *Interlinguicity, Internationality, and Shakespeare* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 3-20.

[15] I have expanded on this idea in: Iolanda Pleascia, "Strange Roots in Roman Shakespeare", in Laetitia Sansonetti and Rémi Vuillemin eds., *Language Commonality and Literary Communities in Early Modern England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 81-100.

of over-interpreting what may well be merely "comic nonsense",[16] to the modern scholar of the English Renaissance the enigmatic phrase cannot but evoke the famous inkhorn controversy. That is to say, the English 'questione della lingua' that arose when a number of scholars vehemently opposed foreign linguistic borrowings, which were entering the language at an astonishing speed, thanks to the work of translators and scholars, and were roundly rejected by 'purists' (among whom, Roger Ascham and John Cheke). This passage can thus be translated by emphasizing the opposition, and we opted for "inglese schietto" when translating "simple English", where the adjective "schietto" conveys a wider range of moral qualities such as honesty and reliability compared to the mere idea of simplicity – a scope of meanings that was crucial in the 'plain and simple English' ideology that was developing in certain circles, mostly attached to the Protestant world-view, as Tudeau-Clayton has recently shown.[17] In this case, sensitivity to the larger linguistic issues at stake in the early modern English world informed a specific translation choice.

Grammar and syntax in context

Moving on to more localized, practical issues, we can consider an example which has to do with imagery, grammar, and characterization. In our play, More is portrayed as a man of high moral and intellectual qualities who is, however, capable of speaking to the people. Even the potential distance between the plain English of the Londoners and the learned language of More and Erasmus is defused at one point by More's practical joke on his friend, in which his servant, Randall, greets Erasmus in disguise, pretending to be his own master More, and refusing to speak the language of scholars: "I have forsworn

[16] Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 174.
[17] Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, *Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

speaking of Latin, else, as I am true councillor, I'd tickle you with a speech" (8.163). Nowhere is More's ability to get his point across to the common people illustrated better than in his speech in defense of strangers: as a translator it is tempting to assign special value to this speech and treat it as a separate, exceptional piece of dramatic poetry. Throughout our collaboration, Fusini and I discussed ways in which we could create continuity of language and imagery that would enable readers to appreciate the play as a whole, but also to interpret the Shakespeare portions in the context of his canon, since the volume is part of a Shakespeare series. In the case of More's impassioned speech in scene 6, parallels with Ulysses' speech on 'degree' in *Troilus and Cressida* (1.3) are so striking that they have been considered as evidence for the identification of Hand D as Shakespeare's in the collaborative play. Degree is the foundation of the concept of obedience according to rank evoked by both Ulysses and More, albeit for different reasons: "Obedience is the best in each degree", 7.58, Lincoln concludes when he decides to surrender to the King's will and end his participation in the Londoners' revolt. But the similarities between the two speeches go beyond, and deeper than, this foundational idea to include syntactical patterns as well as metaphorical structures. In the table below, the initial imperative forms (Imagine… / Take but degree away) set up an alternative reality, a dystopia in which brutal force rules human society, with dire consequences. The rhythmical repetition of 'should' in the second conditional form resounds in both speeches to create a litany of woes that can only culminate in the same predatory metaphor – in More's speech, ravenous fishes, in Ulysses', a wolf, preying on all other living creatures (and, ultimately, on itself).

Our challenge here was therefore to reproduce a similar syntactical arrangement and repetitive effect, in order to help readers recognize the Shakespearean pattern that had been used in another 'political' play like *Troilus and Cressida*, but the Italian present conditional tense is lengthy and cumbersome ('vi attaccherebbero', 'si ciberebbero'), and seemed to us inadequate in our search for a faster-paced, forceful rhythm. We therefore decided to use the future tense throughout the

entire passage, a choice I had made in my 2015 translation in *Troilus and Cressida* for the same reasons.[18] This case was interesting in that our final decision, though dictated by our wish to convey continuity between the two passages, also ended up enhancing 'speakability', that most elusive of qualities in theatrical translation that Susan Bassnett argues is negotiated by translators in specific settings on an 'ad hoc' basis.

[18] Gabrieli and Melchiori use the conditional tense, which, we felt, slows down the rhythm somewhat: "in base a questo precedente e modello, / non uno di voi giungerebbe alla vecchiaia, / poiché altri furfanti, spinti dai loro capricci, / con identiche mani, identiche ragioni, e identico diritto, / vi deprederebbero, e gli uomini, come squali voraci, / si divorerebbero l'un l'altro" (Gabrieli and Melchiori, p. 521).

Sir Thomas More	*Troilus and Cressida*	*Translation*
Imagine that you see the wretched strangers, Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage […] And that you sit as kings in your desires, Authority quite silenced by your brawl, And you in ruff of your opinions clothed: **What had you got?** I'll tell you: you had taught How insolence and strong had **should** prevail, How order **should** be quelled. And by this pattern Not one of you **should** live an aged man: For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought, With selfsame hand, self reasons, and self right, **Would shark on you, and men, like ravenous fishes,** **Would feed on one another**. (*More*, 6.85-98)	**Take** but degree away, untune that string, **And, hark, what discord follows**! Each thing meets In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters **Should** lift their bosoms higher than the shores And make a sop of all this solid globe: Strength **should** be lord of imbecility, And the rude son should strike his father dead: Force **should** be right; or rather, right and wrong, Between whose endless jar justice resides, **Should** lose their names, and so **should** justice too. Then every thing includes itself in power, Power into will, will into appetite; And **appetite, an universal wolf,** **So doubly seconded with will and power,** **Must make perforce an universal prey,** **And last eat u**p himself. (*T&C*, 1.3.109-124)	**Immaginate** di vedere gli stranieri disgraziati, Coi bambini sulle spalle, i loro miseri bagagli […] E voi seduti in trono, sovrani dei vostri desideri, L'autorità soffocata dalle vostre risse, Voi, agghindati delle vostre opinioni, **Che cosa avrete ottenuto**? Ve lo dico io: **avrete insegnato** A far prevalere l'insolenza e il pugno forte, E come si annienta l'ordine. Ma secondo questo schema Nessuno di voi **arriverà** alla vecchiaia: Ché altri furfanti, in balìa delle loro fantasie, Con quello stesso pugno, le medesime ragioni, lo stesso diritto, Come squali vi **attaccheranno**, e gli uomini come pesci famelici Si **ciberanno** gli uni degli altri.

Foreignization versus domestication. Some closing notes

In closing, these few notes on the experience of translating *Sir Thomas More* collaboratively deal with the issues Nadia Fusini and I discussed most often, which mostly had to do with the level of 'comfort' we wanted to give the Italian readers that would decide to approach this highly complex text. Collaborative texts present inherent challenges, but we are learning more and more that this was one of the main ways in which plays were produced in early modern theatre. Our work as translators with distinct personalities, histories and voices also had to find a coherent structure. Fusini's voice was confident in exploring sometimes daring solutions in Italian, while I was passionate about conveying the rich historical layers of meaning that the source text offered. The result was an endlessly exciting search for balance between the source and target language, which often pulled us in different directions.[19]

The *vexata quaestio* of foreignization vs. domestication was the one we debated the most: Thomas More is universally known as Tommaso Moro in Italy, and the previous translations use the Italian name (in some cases with the association of his title 'Sir' to an Italianized surname). Our main approach to this text was, in some important respects, a foreignizing one: the play deals with London, and a very specific, fraught historical moment in the life of the city. In general, then, cultural specific elements, such as proper names, currencies, titles, were dealt with in such a way as to avoid excessively familiarizing alien elements ('alien' being a key word here). After much deliberation, we decided that the title of the Italian edition of the play should remain *Sir Thomas More*, not 'Moro': More is a man of London, the educated, urbane Londoner par excellence. The same decision was taken for most of the other characters' names.[20] The only exceptions

[19] I cannot conclude this essay without expressing my gratitude to Nadia Fusini for our joint translation venture, which has taught me much more than I can here express.
[20] For example, Gabrieli and Melchiori also translate the name *Jack Faulkner* (Jack Falconieri), and adapt the name of the Lombard Francis de Barde into Francesco de Bardi.

were so-called speaking names, which evoked character traits with comical effects: in the courtroom scene, for example, Lifter the swindler becomes Lesto, and the plaintiff (who is anything but!) Smart is Accorto, while the presiding judge, Suresby, is Certino in Italian (playing on assonance/consonance with 'Cretino'). Place names are mostly also left in English since they draw a precise topography of the early modern city, with its markets, public squares, and such recognizable monuments as London Bridge (the exception in our translation is the Tower, "la Torre": the Italian equivalent is as powerful and evocative as the English word). Terms of address are also left in English, with lord and sir often alternating to create some variety. We did not strive for strict uniformity in these choices, since Italian does not allow for persistent repetition.

While not strictly an issue of cultural familiarization, we might consider the general layout of the text, with its gaps and omissions which editors have been able to fill only by conjecture, as a problem that a translation can choose to 'solve' by inserting possible contents in keeping with the general meaning of the text. We mostly avoided this option, since it would have presented the Italian reader with a less problematic text. This was not our goal, as the introductory materials make clear by charting the complicated history of the play's composition and transmission: most of the gaps are thus preserved and marked clearly as such (sometimes with an accompanying explanatory footnote).

Flexibility in general was important to us, especially with some grammatical features of early modern English, like the Elizabethan *you/thou* distinction for example, in which second person singular pronouns are used with considerable variability when compared to the more rigid system with which contemporary Italian selects pronouns expressing intimacy and politeness. Once again, we did not seek to normalize such cases of variation in Italian – for example, More addressing his wife with the polite *you* form in the banquet scene, and then intimate *thou* after his arrest, as he explains his predicament to his family. The difference is purposefully preserved, even

though it is 'strange', and requires some getting used to on the part of the Italian reader.

By way of conclusion, I will recall what was perhaps the most difficult decision, again with respect to uniformity: which was how to deal with the rhyming couplets that appear so often in the text, especially in speech closings, which lend the play a moralizing, sometimes even sententious and stiff tone. We felt it was essential to preserve this feature, even when running the risk of an unnatural, alienating effect in Italian. (For the same reason we tried to preserve a rhyme scheme for the interlude *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*, which More requests a travelling troupe of actors to play for his guests). Not only were rhyming couplets often used in early modern theatre simply to signal the end of a speech as a cue to the other characters, which makes them a defining feature it would have been a pity to lose, but they contribute to the very atmosphere of this special 'moral drama', which seemed worth preserving: in every passage a moral lesson, whether great or small, is presented to the audience, and however alien this may be to our present-day mindset, we felt that our task was to immerse the reader in the play's world, on the play's own terms.

Bibliography

Bassnett, Susan, "Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability", *Languages and Cultures in Translation Theories*, 4/1 (1991), 99-111.

BBC Newsnight, *Shakespeare's Take on Refugess, Performed by Harriet Walter*, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiLwv-G9COQ, accessed 15 December 2012.

Blank, Paula, *Shakesplish* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018).

Brown, Mark, 'William Shakespeare's Handwritten Plea for Refugees to Go Online' (15 March 2016) https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/15/william-shakespeare-handwritten-plea-for-refugees-online-sir-thomas-more-script-play-british-library-exhibition, accessed 15 December 2022.

Festa di Teatro Eco Logico, *Festa di Teatro Eco Logico 2016 – Shakespeare on the rocks*, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gryw5cAXZCM, accessed 15 December 2022.

International Rescue Committee, https://www.rescue.org/article/400-years-ago-william-shakespeare-made-rallying-cry-humanity, accessed 15 December 2022.

Jowett, John, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, The Arden Shakespeare. Third Series (London: Methuen, 2011).

Medici Senza Frontiere, #Milionidipassi: il racconto della campagna, https://www.medicisenzafrontiere.it/partecipa/campagne/milionidipassi-il-racconto-della-campagna/ accessed 15 December 2012.

Melchiori, Giorgio and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Il copione di sir Tommaso Moro*, in Giorgio Melchiori, ed., *Shakespeare. Teatro completo*, vol. 9: *I drammi storici* (Milano: Mondadori, 1991).

Sir Thomas More (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Pleascia, Iolanda, "Strange Roots in Roman Shakespeare", in Laetitia Sansonetti and Rémi Vuillemin eds., *Language Commonality and Literary Communities in Early Modern England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022), 81-100.

Rialti, Edoardo, ed., *Tommaso Moro* (Turin: Lindau, 2014).

Saenger, Michael, ed., "Introduction", in Michael Saenger ed., *Interlinguicity, Internationality, and Shakespeare* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 3-20.

Shakespeare's Globe, *The Stranger's Case | Shakespeare's Rallying Cry for Humanity | Shakespeare's Globe*, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Bss2or4n74, accessed 15 December 2022.

Steiner, George, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1975] 1998).

Tudeau-Clayton, Margaret, *Shakespeare's Englishes: Against Englishness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Zuccato, Edoardo, ed., *Il libro di Sir Tommaso Moro*, in Franco Marenco ed., *William Shakespeare. Tutte le opere*, vol. 3: *I drammi storici* (Milan: Bompiani, 2017).

On Stage

SIR THOMAS MORE AND THE MIGRANT CRISIS

JOHN JOWETT

As *Sir Thomas More* survives in manuscript, the processes of censorship and revision are plain to see.[1] Shakespeare's main contribution, and the only passage written in his handwriting, is a revision of the scene in which More persuades London rioters against foreigners living in London to lay down their weapons and desist. More's speeches have deep resonance in the current era of Brexit, migration, and the pressure of migration on national politics. Since I completed my edition for the Arden Shakespeare, interest in this passage has grown considerably. It is the place of More's appeal to the rioting citizens in today's cultural landscape that I will consider today. I celebrate the fact that the passage is available to enlist the whole authority of Shakespeare in support of a humanitarian politics. However, the role of an academic is to question assumptions that might be made too easily, and to evolve an interpretative method that takes full account of the evidence. This will be my task.

Here are two extracts from the key passage:

> Grant them removed, and grant that this your noise
> Hath chid down all the majesty of England.
> Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
> Their babies at their backs, with their poor luggage,
> Plodding to th' ports and coasts for transportation,

[1] British Library, MS. Harley 7368. For further details on this and other aspects of the play including the evidence for authorship, see my Arden Shakespeare edition (London: Methuen, 2011). Quotations and line references are based on this edition.

And that you sit as kings in your desires,
Authority quite silenced by your brawl,
And you in ruff of your opinions clothed:
What had you got? I'll tell you: you had taught
How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
How order should be quelled. And by this pattern
Not one of you should live an aged man;
For other ruffians, as their fancies wrought,
With selfsame hand, self reasons, and self right,
Would shark on you, and men, like ravenous fishes,
Would feed on one another. (6.83-98)

You'll put down strangers,
Kill them, cut their throats, possess their houses,
And lead the majesty of law in lyam
To slip him like a hound. Alas, alas! Say now the King,
As he is clement if th'offender mourn,
Should so much come too short of your great trespass
As but to banish you: whither would you go?
What country, by the nature of your error,
Should give you harbour? Go you to France or Flanders,
To any German province, Spain or Portugal,
Nay, anywhere that not adheres to England:
Why, you must needs be strangers. Would you be pleased
To find a nation of such barbarous temper
That, breaking out in hideous violence,
Would not afford you an abode on earth,
Whet their detested knives against your throats,
Spurn you like dogs, and like as if that God
Owed not nor made not you, nor that the elements
Were not all appropriate to your comforts
But chartered unto them? What would you think
To be thus used? This is the strangers' case,
And this your mountainish inhumanity. (6.135-56)

I find two distinct strands of argument in More's words. One is what might be called a political materialist theory of kingship: social

order depends on a supreme state authority. This anticipates Thomas Hobbes's argument in *Leviathan* (1651) for a central government acting on behalf of its citizens by their consent: the alternative is that violent thugs take control. There's more of this hierarchical argument based on the exceptionality of the king elsewhere in the passage, and indeed a remarkable insistence on the repeated word 'obedience'. The other argument is a lateral, humanistic one. It says that to turn to violence against strangers is a kind of 'inhumanity'. Humans are all of one kind: this is what we realise when we consider what it would be like for us if we were in their shoes. As More insists when he suggests different possible states to which London citizens might flee if *they* were banished —'Go you to France or Flanders, / To any German province, Spain or Portugal'— his argument cuts across national regimes and the authority of a monarch over each one of them. Shakespeare imagines More as a citizen of Europe and the world: this is a universal issue that transcends national boundaries.

The second of these two arguments is the one that we hear and celebrate today. This is a presentist mode of response to Shakespeare, congenial to the social media, which has responded eagerly to these lines. We can, however, go a little further back to the time before the digital media were available. The main agent in transforming a passage from an obscure play that was until recently associated with Shakespeare only weakly into a central statement of Shakespeare's politics has undoubtedly been the actor Sir Ian McKellen. McKellen, a long-standing believer in the Shakespearian authenticity of the passage, delivered More's speech as part of his one-man shows 'A Knight Out' (1993-7) and elsewhere.[2] As its title suggests, 'A Knight Out', with its reference to McKellen himself as a knight of the realm, centred on his campaigning in support of LGBT rights. For McKellen it

[2] Ian McKellen, *Official Home Page*, https://www.mckellen.com/stage/index.htm accessed 16 February 2022.

was clear that the oppression of strangers, so eloquently opposed by Thomas More, had relevance to the political struggles of the 1990s.

Stephen O'Neill's YouTube blog recognises the importance of McKellen's readings and inscribes them within the digital media as an act of politically engaged scholarship. O'Neill sets out to 'track the speech's online afterlives and its association with the contemporary refugee crisis' from McKellen's original 1964 performance of the role at the Nottingham Playhouse onwards.[3] He documents a piece by Mark Brown published in The Guardian, 15 March 2016, that quotes British Library curator Zoe Wilcox saying: 'It is a really stirring piece of rhetoric... At its heart it is really about empathy. More is calling on the crowds to empathise with the immigrants or strangers as they are called in the text. He is asking them to imagine what it would be like if they went to Europe, if they went to Spain or Portugal, they would then be strangers. He is pleading with them against what he calls their 'mountainous inhumanity'. A few months later on 21 September 2016 journalist Anne Quito reported on 'The Banned 400-year-old Shakespearean Speech Being Used for Refugee's Rights Today.[4] Quito embeds into her blog a recording of McKellen delivering the speech. And on World Refuge Day 2018 Katie Brockaw linked the O'Neill blog to an Associated Press Twitter thread about US policy towards migrant children.[5] The triangulation of author, actor, and cause is irresistible.

Of the dramatists, it is Shakespeare who skilfully shifts the per-

[3] Stephen O'Neill, '"The Strangers' Case": *Sir Thomas More*, Social Media and the Refugee Crisis',
https://shakespeareonyoutube.com/2018/06/21/the-strangers-case-sir-thomas-more-social-media-and-the-refugee-crisis/ accessed 16 February 2022.

[4] Anne Quito, 'The Banned 400-Year-Old Shakespearean Speech Being Used for Refugee Rights Today', *Quartz*, 21 September 2016, https://qz.com/786163/the-banned-400-year-old-shakespearean-speech-being-used-for-refugee-rights-today/ accessed 16 February 2022.

[5] Katherine Brokaw, @Katiesteelebro, posting in '"The Stranger's Case"', 20 June 2018, linking to https://twitter.com/ap/status/1009252326593449985 accessed 16 February 2022.

spective of a collaboratively-written play that was originally hostile to 'strangers'. The very word 'strangers' that echoes around the play so insistently is used to dehumanize them in the earlier scenes:

> It is hard when Englishmen's patience must be thus jetted on by strangers, and they not dare to revenge their own wrongs. (1.26-9)

> I am ashamed that free-born Englishmen, having beaten strangers within their own bounds, should thus be braved and abused by them at home. (1.80-3)

What Shakespeare uses to break through this crude form of home-grown identity politics is the characteristic word 'imagine'. 'Imagine' is a word Shakespeare uses as adjectival 'imaginary' in *Henry V* when similarly getting the audience to see in their minds' eyes the things that are beyond representation on the stage: 'And let us, ciphers to this great account, / On your imaginary forces work' (Pro.17-18). But here in *Sir Thomas More* the act of imagining has the effect not of multiplying and expanding but of flipping the point of view round from one side to the other. The strangers are still not particularized as individuals, but More enables his audience and the play's audience to see then as human beings facing a particular situation, an awful plight. Like the news camera whose crew is able to film a mass of humanity and zoom into particular cases, More brings into view the telling detail: 'their children at their backs'. This is sophisticated political writing, and, although Shakespeare is often political in other ways, he is rarely empathetic to the members of a crowd in quite this way. To imagine is to pity, and as Toria Johnson has argued, in Shakespeare's works pity indicates a recognition that we are all vulnerable, all mortal, all capable of suffering, and our ability to understand this and to empathise separates humans from other animals.[6] Without pity, we

[6] Toria Johnson, '"To feel what wretches feel": Reformation and the Re-naming of English Compassion", in Katherine Ibbet and Kristine Steenbergh, eds., *Compassion in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 219-36.

would be 'men, like ravenous fishes' and we 'Would feed on one another' (6.97-8). Therefore, the sentiment is Shakespearian.

Whether it is distinctively or uniquely Shakespearian is another question. Our own need to hear *Shakespeare* saying this—not Anthony Munday the dramatist who wrote out the Original Text, not Henry Chettle his likely collaborator, not Anonymous—leads me to the attribution issue. At today's moment in history, with liberal humanism besieged from so many directions by authoritarian and populist politics, there is a strong desire for the sentiments expressed by More to have the highest cultural authority, the authority of Shakespeare himself. At the present time, the question of authorship and the moral and political issues surrounding immigrant communities therefore reinforce each other strongly. Now at least, humanities scholarship, in this case the work of attribution scholars, supports the political arguments of the so-called liberal elite.

Twenty years ago this would have seemed a dubious proposition. Academics were casting serious doubts on Shakespeare's authorship of the passage.[7] These critics saw the attribution as a product of our desire to have what is otherwise lost, the thrilling immediacy of the hand of Shakespeare marking words on paper in ink in the very act of literary composition. It seemed too good to be true. I mention this because here and now we indulge a parallel desire to see the hand of Shakespeare inscribing thoughts that we want him to have. Are we still in the realm of wishful thinking? But the more recent work on authorship attribution is clear and decisive in claiming that the passage is in Shakespeare's hand.[8] If we happen to be pleased with this

[7] See Jowett, ed., 458-60.

[8] Key studies include: MacDonald P. Jackson, 'The Date and Authorship of Hand D's Contribution to *Sir Thomas More*: Evidence from "Literature Online"', *Shakespeare Survey* 59 (2006), 69–78; Jackson, 'Is "Hand D" of *Sir Thomas More* Shakespeare's?: Thomas Bayes and the Elliott–Valenza Authorship Tests', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 12.3 (January 2007), http://purl.oclc.org/emls/12-3/jackbaye.htm accessed 16 February 2022; Timothy Irish Watt, 'The Authorship of the Hand-D Addition to *The Book of Sir Thomas More*', in Hugh Craig and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Shakespeare, Comput-*

outcome, our pleasure is not a product of wishful thinking, because the grounds for asserting Shakespeare's authorship are empirical and are not based on any assumptions about the consequences. The attribution of part of *Sir Thomas More* to Shakespeare was affirmed before the migrant crisis in its present form, and it was therefore developed with no immediate regard for its contribution to the current debate. Empirical study is an essential activity that pre-empts any accusation of 'fake news'.

It remains the case that the desire of the non-specialist to associate the words that More speaks with the authority of Shakespeare has been a powerful force in sweeping away the voices of the Shakespeare sceptics. This is certainly useful. Shakespeare gains, and the humanitarian cause gains. Nevertheless, there are further reasons to be concerned that the desire for the outcome might count for more than the attribution scholarship on which it is unobtrusively based.

Why? Because the same methodological lapse has the potential to produce an image of Shakespeare that serves authoritarian rather than liberal ends. This is not simply a theoretical postulate, or a postulate that applies to other scenes by Shakespeare. It has already been applied, demonstrably, to this very scene. In 1943 E.M.W. Tillyard wrote his wartime study of hierarchical thought *The Elizabethan World Picture*, a politically conservative piece of criticism that was hugely influential for many decades. Years before this publication, R.W. Chambers, contributing to Alfred W. Pollard's seminal study of the authorship of the Shakespearean revision, had explored similar ideas as expressed in Shakespeare and in Sc. 6 of *Sir Thomas More*. He was building on the view expressed by the early twentieth-century literary scholar and historian Sir Walter Raleigh that Shakespeare 'extols government with a fervour that suggests a real and ever-present fear of the breaking of the flood-gates'.[9] Chambers quoted these lines:

ers, and the Mystery of Authorship (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134–61.

[9] Sir Walter Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (London: MacMillan, 1907).

> To kneel to be forgiven
> Is safer wars than ever you can make
> Whose discipline is riot.
> In, in, to your obedience! Why, even your hurly
> Cannot proceed but by obedience (6.125-9)

...and compared their emphasis on natural hierarchy with Ulysses' speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida*:

> The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre,
> Observe degree, priority and place... (1.3.85-6)

To this general similarity of thought, Chambers adds examples of comparable detail in lines supporting the same idea. If disorder prevails, says More, 'Not one of you should live an aged man' (6.94); says Ulysses, similarly fearing for the elderly, 'the rude son should strike his father dead' (1.3.115).[10] Such comparisons underpin Chambers' argument that 'the expression of ideas' in *Sir Thomas More* Sc. 6 is Shakespearian in quality.

It is true that the word 'obedience' occurs four times in this one scene, and the word 'obey' three times: an extraordinary concentration unequalled anywhere in Shakespeare. There lies the rub: could it not be argued that the passage is actually atypical of Shakespeare on this account? For Chambers, the passage from *Sir Thomas More* supports his understanding of Shakespeare as a conservative, while the expression of ideas in the passage is argument for Shakespeare's authorship. The argument is circular. With hindsight it is easy to see this flaw in Chambers' argument. The problem is that the same meth-

[10] I add parenthetically that there is a shadow of this idea elsewhere in *Sir Thomas More in another passage attributed to Shakespeare, where More, reflecting on his new promotion to Lord Chancellor, notes that the natural order of things has been disturbed because now he takes 'prerogative and tithe of knees' from his father, and comments: 'sure these things, / Not physicked by respect, might turn our blood / To much corruption'* (8.9-14).

odological flaw might characterize the recent thinking about the same scene's lines on migration, unless the assumption as to authorship is firmly grounded in the underpinning scholarship without initial reference to the political Shakespeare we would like to find.

Furthermore, we need to confront an ambiguity in the scene's overall politics, or rather its depiction of More's politics. More's argument at some points seeks to persuade the rebels that insurrection is an offence against the King and therefore against God himself; at other points it appeals to the rioters' empathy with other people. One line of argument is vertical, hierarchical, authoritarian. The other line of argument is lateral, breaking down the tribal model of community in favour of a general model of shared humanity; fittingly, its antecedents are Utopian, and its descendants are found in the egalitarian transnational thinking of radical Christianity and socialist internationalism. We might rationalize the conflict between these political perspectives by supposing that More as a rhetorician is prepared to try out any argument in order to achieve a result. Or we might conclude that the author, Shakespeare, was not so strongly invested in his task of revising the play as to produce consistency.

The question of Shakespearian authenticity in the passage can be approached from another angle, one that retains Shakespeare's presence as author while complicating the picture of what dramatic authorship means, both in general terms and with reference to the example in question. Once we accept that Shakespeare's hand in present in the manuscript of *Sir Thomas More*, it is easy to forget that even this passage, though it so remarkably survives in his handwriting, is not of his sole authorship. I am not referring here to the presence of a second hand in this passage, the hand of the theatrical annotator known simply as Hand C. Instead, I am referring to the fact that the scene as it stands in the manuscript is a revision of an earlier version written by someone else: probably Anthony Munday who copied out the entire original text. Though the passage presents itself as the work of a single dramatist, there are actually two authorial voices to take into account.

Unfortunately, when Shakespeare added his two leaves to the man-

uscript the corresponding leaves that he had replaced were removed. However, Shakespeare's addition did not bring the scene to its conclusion, and, as would only be expected, the point at which Shakespeare's contribution finished did not perfectly coincide with the end of a leaf in the original manuscript. As a result we have a few lines in the original manuscript that overlap with the end of Shakespeare's passage. They have been crossed out, but they are mostly legible. These damaged lines read:[11]

> To persist in it, is present <deat>h. bu<t if> you yee<ld yourselues>, no doubt, what <punish>
> ment you (in simplicitie haue incurred, his highnesse in mercie will moste <graciously>
> pardon.

Or, as edited:

> To persist in it is present death. But if you yield yourselves, no doubt what punishment you in simplicity have incurred, his highness in mercy will most graciously pardon. (preceding 6.166)

Omitting the threat of death by execution, Shakespeare reworked this into:

> Submit you to these noble gentlemen,
> Entreat their mediation to the King,
> Give up yourself to form, obey the magistrate,
> And there's no doubt but mercy may be found
> If you so seek it. (6.161-5)

So we can say with certainty that in the original version of the scene, as it preceded Shakespeare's revision, the theme of obedience to authority, and indeed the word 'obey', were already present.

The sentiment in this passage is echoed throughout the Original

[11] Words and letters enclosed in angle brackets are illegible and therefore inferred from context.

Text of *Sir Thomas More*. Rioting is an act of 'high-crested insolence' towards the King (3.12), and must be quelled. The 'busy dangerous ruffian' Falconer (8.97) is forced to cut his unruly hair as a sign of is submission to authority. Where More recommends yielding to authority in Sc. 6, he will later decide that he himself will not yield to the authority of the King. The original dramatists clearly understood that this was the glue that bound together the otherwise loosely connected sections of the play.

Munday, unlike Shakespeare, was a civic dramatist. He later superseded John Stowe as chronicler of London, and wrote civic entertainments for the city mayor and aldermen. *Sir Thomas More* as a whole is city-focused, and earlier scenes are heavily partisan towards the London citizens who revolt against the privileged status of foreigners living in London. The later scenes praise More for his friendly support of London citizens. Munday therefore describes a tribal version of community politics. The King is recognised as a kind of feudal lord who should show concern for London's citizens rather than bestow privileges on foreigners. The courtier Palmer recognises that the citizens suffer 'vile disgrace oft cast into their teeth' (3.22). The play's tension between the unruliness of the underdog and the necessity of obedience is resolvable, in theory at least, by the presence of a paternal monarch. The fact that King Henry never appears on stage places the ideological tension beyond proper resolution. Nevertheless, the ideal society unites the civic community with the monarch, in a bond that strangers disrupt.

Clearly, and as is demonstrated by the overlapping lines at the end of Shakespeare's contribution, the words of the passage in his hand are his own. Equally clearly, ideas from the original text show through into Shakespeare's writing. My suggestion, therefore, is that, in terms of content, the lines inviting the Londoners to imagine the plight of homeless migrants are Shakespeare's most distinctive contribution. They are discontinuous with the communitarian politics expressed elsewhere in the play.

I would point out further that the scene is more coherent in its

development if the lines on God's authority are simply omitted. In the text as we have it we read:

> Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,
> One supposition, which if you will mark
> You shall perceive how horrible a shape
> Your innovation bears. First, 'tis a sin
> Which oft th'apostle did forewarn us of,
> Urging obedience to authority;
> And 'twere no error if I told you all
> You were in arms 'gainst God. Say now the King,
> As he is clement if th'offender mourn,
> Should so much come too short of your great trespass
> As but to banish you: whither would you go? (6.102-12)

The lines about the sin against God do not offer a 'supposition'; instead More offers an argument he describes as his 'First' one that is not obviously followed by a second one. This, I suggest, might be a sign of different stages of composition. If we omit the whole passage about God, the text reads:

> Let me set up before your thoughts, good friends,
> One supposition, which if you will mark
> You shall perceive how horrible a shape
> Your innovation bears. Say now the King,
> As he is clement if th'offender mourn,
> Should so much come too short of your great trespass
> As but to banish you: whither would you go?

Here the 'supposition' is developed in 'Say now…'. With the intervening lines cut out, the continuity is better. So I wonder whether Shakespeare first drafted the lines about the 'supposition' that that the Londoners might find themselves in the position of deported aliens without reference to Munday's original; he then worked this free-standing passage into the scene, rewriting Munday's lines about the divine authority of a king as he did so. There is every reason to believe

that the language of the entire passage is stylistically Shakespearian, but some of the ideas may be residues from Munday.

This is, of course, a very conjectural account. It is, however, empirical in its grounding in the lines of overlap at the end of Shakespeare's contribution. It recognises the collaborative aspect of revision, and affirms that the lines celebrated by McKellen and others are nevertheless truly Shakespearian in both literary style and ideation.

There is a further authorial layer to be added. As with all Shakespeare writing, we must take account of source material. Thomas More himself, in describing the effect of land enclosure, noted that:

> by one meanes therefore or by other either by hooke or by crooke they must needs depart away, poore, sillie [weak and innocent], wretched soules, men, women, husbands, wiues, fatherlesse children, widdowes, wofull mothers with their young babes, and the whole houshold small in substance, and much in number, as husbandry requireth many hands. Away they trudge, I say, out of their knowne and accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in.[12]

And Shakespeare had previously collaborated on a play, *Edward II*, in which (in a scene that is not attributed to Shakespeare) French citizens including a Frenchwoman and two children, carrying 'bag and baggage' enter, fleeing as refugees from the English army (5.0.SD; 5.4).

Neither of these analogues sets up the dramatic situation of a speaker using the image of the refugees to argue a point; so neither makes the appeal to 'imagine' what it would be like for you. The very specific detail of 'their babies at their backs' is unique to *Sir Thomas More*. Still, I am tempted by the thought that Shakespeare knew the passage in *Utopia*, and that the historical Thomas More himself as it were speaks through Shakespeare's representation of him. If this is right, we find Shakespeare treating More's account of the effects of

[12] Thomas More, *Utopia* (1551), sig. C7v.

land enclosure in much the same way that we relate the passage to our own crisis of migration. The idea is embraced, but the context is shifted.

With all this said, having negotiated the complexities of revision and collaboration we can return to a presentist reading, knowing that it is properly informed by historically oriented scholarship. It has been noted that the hierarchical appeal to the authority of God is conventional, that it belongs to the ideological texture of the original text of the play, and that it was inherent to the original text of the passage Shakespeare revised. Shakespeare probably just reworked Munday's writing in this respect. In contrast, the lines that are now related to the refugee crisis are disruptive and unconformable with the original text. Yet they provide the most dramatically arresting and memorable moments in the entire play, breaking its ideological containment and shifting into a mode of radical and empathetic imagining. They speak beyond the geographical confines of early modern London and appeal to a generous and universally shared vision of human experience. This disruption of the tribal boundary facilitates the disruption of time that is part and parcel of what we ourselves undertake when reading the passage in relation to the events of our time.

I therefore identify two kinds of energy flowing from these lines. The first lies in the outreaching and embracing universalism of their content. The second lies in their genesis, in Shakespeare's revision of the play as an activity that generates a creative instability. That instability begins a chain of reinterpretation. In other words, Shakespeare's revision of *Sir Thomas More*, though it took place only a few years at most after the original play was written, is itself an adaptation to meet the needs of Shakespeare's present moment. It gives the text a dynamic layering that propels it towards a second attempt to finish and stage the play, probably a few years after the first, probably under the new political regime of James I. What is often called textual instability can also be called textual dynamism. The play is re-energised at the points where Shakespeare and the other revisers added to it, and the particular energy of Shakespeare's writing is immediately recognisable. It is

this that propels the play towards our own moment in time. It is this that enables us to celebrate Shakespeare's humane words, words that speak to our concerns today.

Bibliography

Brokaw, Katherine, @Katiesteelebro, posting in '"The Stranger's Case"', 20 June 2018, discontinued; linking to https://twitter.com/ap/status/1009252326593449985, accessed 16 February 2022.

Chambers, R.W., 'The Expression of Ideas – Particularly Political Ideas – in the Three Pages and in Shakespeare', in Alfred W. Pollard, ed., *Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of Sir Thomas More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 142-87.

Jackson, MacDonald P. 'Is "Hand D" of Sir Thomas More Shakespeare's? Thomas Bayes and the Elliott–Valenza Authorship Tests.' *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12/3 (January, 2007) http://purl.oclc.org/emls/12-3/jackbaye.htm, accessed 16 February 2022.

Jackson, MacDonald P., 'The Date and Authorship of Hand D's Contribution to Sir Thomas More: Evidence from "Literature Online"', *Shakespeare Survey* 59 (2006), 69-78.

Johnson, Toria, '"To feel what wretches feel": Reformation and the Re-naming of English Compassion", in Katherine Ibbet and Kristine Steenbergh, eds. *Compassion in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 219-36.

Jowett, John, *Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

McKellen, Ian, Official Home Page, https://www.mckellen.com/stage/index.htm, accessed 16 February 2022.

O'Neill, Stephen, '"The Strangers' Case": Sir Thomas More, Social Media and the Refugee Crisis', https://shakespeareonyoutube.com/2018/06/21/the-strangers-case-sir-thomas-more-social-media-and-the-refugee-crisis, accessed 16 February 2022.

Quinto, Anne, 'The banned 400-Year-Old Shakespearean Speech Being Used for Refugee Rights Today', Quartz (21 September 2016), https://shakespeareonyoutube.com/2018/06/21/the-strangers-case-sir-thomas-more-social-media-and-the-refugee-crisis/, accessed 16 February 2022.

Raleigh, Sir Walter, Shakespeare (London: MacMillan, 1907).

Tillyard, E. M. V., The Elizabethan World Picture (London: Chatto & Windus, 1943).

Watt, T. I., 'The Authorship of the Hand-D Addition to The Book of Sir Thomas More', in Hugh Craign and Arthur F. Kinney, eds., *Shakespeare, Computers, and the Mystery of Authorship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 134-61.

SIR THOMAS MORE FROM PAGE TO STAGE: TWO PERFORMANCES IN THE EARLY 1990S

ROBERTA MULLINI

Introduction

In September 1990 I was in London for research at the British Library, then still at the British Museum. The now famous manuscript pages of *Sir Thomas More* attributed to William Shakespeare were being exhibited in enlarged photographic panels. Information was also available about a forthcoming performance of the play by the Stage One Theatre Company at the Shaw Theatre, 4-29 September. Even if nearly unknown to me at the time, the play had recently attracted my attention because of its metatheatrical dimension: it contains a Tudor interlude as a play-within-a-play, information concerning the players' company formed by 'four men and a boy' (these numbers are generally regarded by theatre historians as typical of early Tudor companies), and the funny remarks about a missing prop. I do not remember if playbills were available at the British Museum, or if I picked one up at the Shaw Theatre. However, I still have it (Fig. 1). The image, a head on a pole, ambiguously refers both to Thomas More's beheading, which does not take place during the play (but we know that More's head was exhibited on London Bridge for some weeks), and to a grotesque fool's bauble with a roughly cut and many-layered collar beneath the head. And this, as well, might refer to the play, namely to the 'Clown' during the riot sequence.

I saw the play on 5 September. It was a benefit performance to raise funds for the 'Save the Rose' campaign, which had started the previous year when the remains of the Rose Theatre were discovered

in Southwark. The playbill announced the show as "the first production of this neglected Elizabethan classic in a West End Theatre". *Shakespeare Survey* 45, listing the performance in its 'Professional Productions in the British Isles' section, comments that it was "Billed (inaccurately) as the first professional performance".[1] As can be noticed, *SS* is in itself 'inaccurate' since it misreads what the playbill states: Stage One Theatre Company wrote in their bill that theirs was the "first production […] in a West End Theatre", not the first one by a professional company.

Three years later, in 1993, the 'Estate teatrale veronese' (the Verona Summer Theatre Festival), devoted to the "Rediscovery of *Sir Thomas More* from Shakespeare", hosted a series of lectures by various scholars, among whom Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, the editors of the Italian 1981 and of the British 1990 edition of the play.[2] I gave a talk on 16 July, when I spoke about "*Tommaso Moro* e la sua rappresentazione" (TM and its performance). That evening I was admitted to a dress rehearsal, in the very location where it would have its première the following week, namely, the fascinating Cloister of San Zeno (Fig. 2). I must add that the two performances I saw drew on the same edition of the play: Gabrieli and Melchiori's Italian and English editions respectively, therefore both emerged from the same overall vision of the text, since John Jowett's edition appeared many years later.[3] At the Shaw Theatre spectators were given some written information about the company, historical notes concerning Thomas More and excerpts from More's works, a leaflet about the British Library exhibition, and a four-page contribution by Giorgio Melchiori on the play-text.

[1] Niky Rathbone, 'Professional Shakespeare Productions in the British Isles, January-December 1990', *Shakespeare Survey* 45 (1993), 145-58, 157.

[2] Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Bari: Adriatica, 1981); Giorgio Melchiori and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *Sir Thomas More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[3] John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (London: Methuen, 2011).

A couple of years after Verona I wrote a paper about the two performances I had seen (1996).[4] At this point I would like to remember Mariangela Tempera and her keen interest in the theatrical side of Shakespeare studies, before attempting to integrate that article of mine with some hopefully new information.

A Text Ready for Performance?

Critics have traced the composition and revision of the text back to different dates, but all of them agree that – as we have it now and from the available information – it was prepared for a performance which never took place. Hand C, the scribe who prepared the rough copy of the extant promptbook, has left many stage directions (SDs) that reveal a clear idea of performance and stage action, and can also prove illuminating for modern directors.

What information can be got from them is various and multifaceted.[5] The first clue to the performance, at the outset of Sc. 1, concerns the two doors of the stage: 'Enter at one end John [...] At the other end Francis', signalling the characters' arrival from two different places.[6] This same wording is also used with a similar function on other occasions, for example when Sc. 5 starts, whereas the adverb 'severally' is present, with the same meaning, at the beginning of Sc. 10. Many SDs indicate gestures: in Sc. 1 Francis enters 'haling her [Doll] by the arm'; in 2.SD126 there is the very simple '*action*', during the

[4] '*The Book of Sir Thomas More* and its Performance', in Michel Bitot, Roberta Mullini and Peter Happé, eds, '*Divers toyes mengled'. Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Tours: Publication de l'Université François Rabelais, 1996), 211-27. I thank the Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais for the permission to reuse parts of that article.

[5] Since this article deals with stage history, it gives no direct information about the plot and characters; events are only mentioned in so far as they contribute to localising action, stage direction and staging choices.

[6] Scene and line numbers are drawn from Jowett's edition of the play.

defendant's asides (he – his name is Lifter – is accused of pilfering as his speaking name suggests), which does not require any other indications since the words are a wonderful guide to his movements. While speaking, the actor must only mime the usual technique of lifters who embrace passers-by "thus, / Or thus, or thus, and, in kind compliment / Pretend acquaintance" (ll. 126-28).[7] Another SD comes soon after, but more explicitly, suggesting Justice Sureby's gesture when he questions the defendant 'Shrugging gladly' (2.SD129), as if to convey the Justice's certainty of his victory, whereas unbeknown to him he has just been the victim of Lifter who has pilfered his purse. He has done so to comply with Thomas More's request to perform this "merry jest" (2.75), thus exposing him to ridicule. Short SDs, likewise connected with gesture, are to be found in scenes 6 and 7 (containing respectively More's speech to the rebels – the now famous "Imagine that you see the wretched strangers" – and Lincoln's hanging). For example, to signal the quietening effect of the speech, the rebels have to 'lay by their weapons' (6.SD166), whereas 'he leaps off' (7.SD69) marks the moment when the actor playing Lincoln, is executed on the gallows.

The props necessary for the performance are mentioned in the text. After 1.14 doves are needed: 'Enter Caveler with a pair of doves'; very significant props must be onstage for Sc. 8 (it is More's first appearance on stage, after he has been knighted in Sc. 6): 'A table being covered with a green carpet, a state cushion on it, and the purse and mace lying thereon. Enter More'. The insignia on the state cushion, which will also 'perform' a role in 10.11, show More's power and authority as Chancellor. On stage there should also be torches (9.SD91), weapons (Sc. 4, 12 and 6.SD165), a ladder (7.SD122), a table (Sc. 8), chairs, stools, a urinal (16.23), halberds (Sc. 17), and a scaffold to allude to More's execution offstage (17.50). In 7.SD15 the text explains that officers 'set up the gibbet', since real gallows are needed for Lincoln's onstage hanging.

[7] For other implicit SDs see below.

The initial SD in Sc. 2 allows us to well understand how the Elizabethan theatre used the *inner stage* as a discovery place or as an extension of the normal acting area: 'An arras is drawn, and behind it, as in sessions, sit the lord Mayor, Justice Suresby, and other Justices [...] Smart is the plaintiff, Lifter the prisoner at the bar'. As John Jowett observes, "the position of "the bar" is uncertain";[8] this detailed SD, though, clearly defines the setting of events, i.e. a trial, with the court sitting in session, a plaintiff and a prisoner at a bar which might likely be on one side of the court.

As for costumes, at the beginning of Sc. 4 when armed rioters enter, Doll wears 'a shirt of mail, a headpiece, sword and buckler'. This is the regular uniform of a soldier, but it is peculiar that it is indicated for a female role ('a lusty woman', Sc. 1), whose strong and aggressive personality is thus well described. After 6.21, the SD reads 'Enter Sir Thomas More's man, attired like him': this also relates to costume and, while saying nothing about the garment's design, it indicates that the actor's costume must replicate the Lord Chancellor's state clothes. In Sc. 7 those who have attended Lincoln's hanging must wear caps which they fling into the air when they find out about the royal pardon for the other offenders (7.SD151). The Lady Mayoress is in scarlet, according to the City protocol (9.SD91). Costumes can also serve to locate an episode. Sc. 14 begins with the arrival of some 'Warders of the Tower with halberds': their costumes, even before they speak, tell the audience where the action takes place, i.e. no longer at More's house, but in the prison where the Chancellor is held. Other props include a shaggy long-haired wig (Sc. 8) and a beard (Sc. 9).

Besides explicit SDs, the playscript includes many clues to action, as mentioned above. For example, a staff of office presumably passes from Shrewsbury to More when the former declares he is there "to put this staff of honour in your hand" (6.228). In this case, the use of the deictic directly signals the object's onstage presence. In the same way,

[8] Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 149.

More's kneeling in front of the other character follows Shrewsbury's words "you must kneel" (6.221). The nobleman's words, "A knight's creation is this knightly steel" (6.222), have strong performative value and presuppose the availability of a sword and the coded gestures of the knighting ceremony.

SDs also indicate the use of sound and music. After Lincoln's hanging a pardon for the rebels is signalled by 'a great shout and noise' (7.SD131). The Lord Mayor's arrival is preceded by music in 9.SD91 ('The waits plays hautboys'), after which 'Enter lord Mayor, so many Alderman as may, [...] servants carrying lighted torches by them'. Here we find useful information about sundry procedures of the Elizabethan stage: hirelings were used ('so many Aldermen as may' refers to the size either of the stage or of the company's budget); artificial light was used to denote nocturnal scenes.

To discuss all the SDs in the text would be too long, but one more detail is worth stressing. In Sc. 9 More asks his servants to "Place me here some stools to set the ladies on" (9.26) and "Low stools" are introduced later (Sc. 13), when More meets his family for the last time after his disobedience to the king, suggesting that his wife should "sit [...] / Upon an humble seat" (13.2). It is obvious that a 'humble seat' is a metaphor for those who have fallen from the king's favour. Nevertheless, the hypothesis that the words might allude to a painting might also appeal to scholars' imagination. Both in the famous drawing Hans Holbein gave Erasmus as a token of his English friend (1527), and in the large canvas (now at the National Portrait Gallery) that Thomas More commissioned Rowland Lockey to paint in 1593, More is sitting on a high seat, while two of his daughters sit at their father's feet.[9]

[9] See also the Nostell painting (it is dated 1592; Nostell Priory, The St Oswald Collection, National Trust), which presents some variations in comparison with the National Portrait Gallery picture and is more similar to Holbein's drawing (*Study for the Family Portrait of Thomas More*, Kupferstichkabinett, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel). For an analysis of the relationship between Holbein's and Lockey's pictures of the More

The fact that the text of *Sir Thomas More* includes so many SDs and hints at a performance shows the authors' (and the scribe's) intentions to stage the play. These SDs can be considered a guide to interpret the stage action as it was envisaged by the authors and may contribute to modern productions.

The director's justifiable freedom was abundantly visible in the two productions I saw in the early 1990s. The Stage One Theatre Company, directed by Michael Walling, also included black actors, thus contravening tradition, but certainly alluding to contemporary issues. The Italian performance, directed by Enzo Maria Caserta, added literary material to the text, while cutting some episodes.

The Stage One Theatre Company Production

It is worth recalling that my original paper on the two productions was written well before Kathleen Bradley's dissertation 'A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*'.[10] Even after I read Bradley, nevertheless, I decided to stay true to my impressions at the time and only to corroborate them with this more recent research. I would also like to add that More's speech to the rioters was not particularly highlighted in either production, because migration issues were not so relevant at the time, thus demonstrating the mutable role of topicality in reception.

The Shaw theatre is located at 100-110 Euston Road, left of the present British Library (facing the entrance). In 1990 seating sloped steeply towards two sides of the stage (the theatre was refurbished in 1998). The set allowed the action to take place on two levels: Lincoln's hanging, which happened on an upper stage, was particularly effective

family see Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies', in John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Methuen, 1985), 166-90.

[10] MPhil thesis, University of Birmingham 2009. See this study for a thorough and detailed analysis of the Stage One production, especially 62-93.

and realistic, so that, due to the suspension of disbelief experienced by theatregoers, I was for a moment worried about the actor (Wilbert Johnson) swinging from the gallows until the end of the first part (the performance was divided into two parts, Fig. 3).[11] The first part ended with the speeches after Lincoln's execution. In the second part, we found More on stage ready for the initial monologue in Sc. 8.[12]

The company had eleven actors, thus resembling an average Elizabethan company. The fifty speaking parts in the dramatic text had been cut down to forty-two, but even so it is clear that doubling was absolutely necessary. Apart from Ken Bones and Anne White (More and Lady More, respectively), the other actors performed an average of four roles, up to a maximum of ten characters assigned to Tim Hudson, who had to rush from one role to another to change his costume. That his performance was less than satisfactory was noticed by Petronella Wyatt, the *Daily Telegraph* reviewer at the time, who disapprovingly wrote that the audience might be confused by too much doubling. She also disapproved of the incessant rushing around of actors compelled to play too many roles (although she assigned 'only' seven to Hudson, instead of the ten indicated in the programme).[13] Contrariwise, John Henry Jones (*Times Literary Supplement*) observed that, given the size of the company and the number of roles, the eleven actors 'manage[d] admirably'.[14] The problems arising from doubling are discussed by John Jowett, who writes that doubling "can be cru-

[11] At the time, for reproduction, I bought this and the other photographs from the Stage One Theatre Company. Unfortunately, the photographer's name is unknown.

[12] Evidently, Michael Walling – also the author of the acting script (Bradley, 'A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*', 71) – chose to split the play according to Jenkins's and Gabrieli-Melchiori's suggestions, i.e. all public events were grouped in the first part, while the second part started with the first domestic scene. See Harold Jenkins, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, in *William Shakespeare, The Complete Works*, ed. Charles Jasper Sisson (London: Odhams Press, 1954).

[13] Petronella Wyatt, 'When More Means Less', *The Daily Telegraph* (7 Sept. 1990).

[14] John Henry Jones, 'The Mighty Fallen', *Times Literary Supplement*, n. 4563 (Sept. 14-20, 1990).

cially helpful in dealing with the play's episodic fragmentation. It enables a small ensemble production to cohere around a shared practice of theatre-making. […] However, the techniques adopted by a small company can be conspicuous to audiences more familiar with larger groups of actors".[15] Certainly it may be difficult for today's spectators to discern *actors* from their *roles*, and audiences may also wonder why, without any consistent dramatic motivation, a particular *character* in one scene becomes another in a successive scene, and someone else later on. But doubling does not correspond to disguise and we can guess that audience members, who were directly addressed by any character who intended to disguise him/herself, were not taken in when a single actor played many roles in the same play.

Petronella Wyatt also criticized Ken Bones (Fig. 4) for always being "on the point of sinking into a comfy armchair with a pipe", and for making an "amiable uncle" of his role, instead of portraying the severe and staunch Catholic "who practiced self-flagellation and jeered at the execution of Protestants". An answer to these positions may be that the Stage One Theatre Company decided not to modify the dramatic text: More's personage as it comes out of the play is neither vituperative nor aggressive. He is serious when making the decision which leads to his death, and when talking to his family about his own moral consistency; he is playful during the merry moments, but his mirth comes from his moral depth and from a serenity which means he is also capable of joking with his executioner. More's strictness and harshness are not in the playtext: here More is reflexive, not polemical. We should not forget, furthermore, that polemics are purposely avoided in the play, since the main playwright, Anthony Munday, had Puritan sympathies and may have deliberately chosen not to make a martyr of Thomas More.

On the whole it seems to me that Wyatt expresses very dismissive views: she wrote, for example, that the idea "of unearthing" a forgot-

[15] Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, 111.

ten play was a good one, but that "it might have been better if their [the company's] latest find, the Elizabethan drama *Sir Thomas More*, had remained forgotten". She even disliked More's oration to the rioters, the author of which – despite its attribution to Shakespeare – "was Shakespeare with a bad hangover". At the end of her review, Wyatt – complaining especially about the lack of coherence in the plot – advised her readers and "lovers of good plays […] to stay at home in a comfy armchair with a pipe" instead of going to the theatre.

Costumes, designed after the early Tudor fashion, were clearly inspired by – especially for More's, his wife's and his daughters' – Lockey's painting. Black and red prevailed, to signify the protagonist's misfortune and fortune respectively.

As a spectator, and one familiar with recent criticism on cross-dressing and gender issues in the Elizabethan theatre, I waited for the moment when Lady Vanity (a 'boy' played by Paul Aves) had to kiss Wit (Tim Hudson) to gauge my own reactions and the audience's. But, transported by the story, I simply accepted the dramatic development of the interlude together with its conventions (Fig. 5). John Henry Jones commented that 'the production sparkles here'.[16]

According to this critic, moreover, the text, by silencing the real nature of More's rejection of the king, builds up a subtext which, while avoiding risky issues, lowers the tension and the complexity of the character, so that, in this reviewer's opinion, "It may well keep the play off the stage for another decade". In other words, Jones, too, did not like the performance very much, although he found some positive elements in it and recognized the unspoken religious tensions underpinning the play. It should be noted that Munday the Puritan, and the others, did not write a hagiographic text, but a biography of a person who becomes Lord Chancellor for his ability to quell a

[16] 'Four men and a boy', the famous answer of the actors to More's question 'How many are you?' (9.72), was adapted as '*Three* men and a boy', thus paradoxically changing the history of English theatre which always quotes this line as a witness of the number of actors in Tudor companies of strolling players.

riot and who, in order to be ideally consistent with his own tenets, rebels against his king. And this, together with the traits of the great and witty humanist, is what emerges from the play. Contemporary audiences should remember that the Thomas More in this play is not the homonymous character of Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons* (actually Walling hoped that his production would "remove the spectre of Paul Scofields" rendition of Thomas More both on stage and on screen, while Wyatt attributed to "post-Paul Scofield" actors the weakness of the title-role).[17] *Sir Thomas More* was written for Elizabethan London, for Protestant spectators, nearly at the same time as the "Second Proclamation against Players" issued in 1559 by Queen Elizabeth, which prohibited the performance of plays "wherin either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the common weale shalbe handled, or treated".[18]

The main result of the Stage One Theatre Company, in its faithfulness to the spirit of the text even if the latter was created by Walling thanks to cuts and additions from various editions of the play,[19] was the lively reproduction of an Elizabethan portrait of a protagonist of the Tudor era, of a man still fascinating to his near contemporaries, but no longer acceptable due to his religious position. There can be no controversy in the play because the Elizabethan censor did not allow it, but audience members could still admire the noble and witty humanist.

[17] From Bradley's interview to Walling in 'A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*', 87.

[18] 'Second Proclamation against Plays, 16th May 1559', in W.C. Hazlitt, ed., *The English Drama and Stage under the Tudor and Stuart Princes 1543-1664* (London: Roxburghe Library, 1869), 19. Edmund Tilney's censorious notes on the manuscript refer mainly to the handling of the riot in the play, silently accepting the general portrayal of the title role.

[19] See Bradley, 'A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*', 69-72.

The Teatro scientifico – Teatro Laboratorio Production

On the evening of 24 July 1993 there was the Italian première of *Tommaso Moro* (with the misleading indication "after Shakespeare" and no hint at the play being a collaborative text. The script was adapted from a translation by Giorgio Melchiori). It was the play's first ever performance in Italy. As mentioned, it took place in the Cloister of San Zeno, in Verona, Enzo Maria Caserta was the director, and the title role was played by Raf Vallone, then a famous film and TV actor, who also edited the script. The play toured in spring 1994, touching Parma, Rome and Bari (all these performances were played indoors).

The most striking feature of the adaptation was the total substitution of the original text of Sc. 8 (Erasmus' jocular visit to More) with a new scene during which Erasmus (played by Enzo Maria Caserta, Fig. 6)[20] and More discuss sundry issues raised by their humanist writings. Vallone, to whom I talked after the dress rehearsal, explained that he had personally invented the new scene because he felt the need to add depth and complexity to the characters of the two friends. He had studied the letters exchanged between the two, besides their major works, and from them he had drawn the sober, but culturally rich dialogue inserted into the added scene. All material was original, he insisted, meaning that his job had been limited to the selection of the topics and to the creation of links between them. The operation worked well for a late twentieth-century audience, since it explained why Erasmus and More were friends and touched points relevant for a contemporary audience. In my opinion, though, it was less effective, dramatically speaking, given its length and its non-consequentiality for the plot, even if the substituted episode (Falconer and More) alike does not weigh on the following events. Nevertheless, it contributes

[20] I am indebted to the late Enzo Maria Caserta for allowing the reproduction of some photographs of the performance, and to Jana Balkan for renewing the permission (2019).

to More's jestful personality which, because of this excision, came over as fairly pensive and brooding.

The Verona performances found an ideal setting in the Cloister of the medieval church of San Zeno. Artificial lighting was mainly used, both functionally and symbolically (for example, the play ended in complete gloom when More started to ascend the scaffold, thus hinting at the offstage execution, whereas a spotlight had previously focused on him till his final words). On the contrary, real torches, moving along the dark portico or brandished by the actors during the otherwise unlit riots were very striking (Figures 7, 8).

Costumes were simple long tunics, apart from those of minor characters; black for More, red for Lady More (Jana Balkan, who also played Doll in the first of the two parts of the play, in the role of a very convincing rebel). The only sign of power, indicating More's Chancellery was a golden chain around his neck. Richly coloured and silky costumes were reserved for the performance of the "four men and a boy", during whose play-within-a play the risk of confusing the audience with doubling was avoided by using masks (Fig. 9). The stage, a wooden platform just raised above the level of the ground at the centre of the cloister with the portico on three sides, had no fixed scenery: all the props (a table, some stools, the scaffold, the stage for the players) were portable and assembled together on the spot according to necessity.

Franco Quadri, in a review of the Veronese performance, wrote about the "amateur performance" of the actors in *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* (the play-within), forgetting, though, that on the contrary they were supposed to be an early sixteenth-century *professional* group of players. Overall, he was rather scathing about the show (and the text itself), accusing Caserta of exposing his actors to performing risks without having sufficient and convincing dramaturgical ideas of his own. In a way, Quadri salvaged Raf Vallone who, in this reviewer's

words, represented More as a "rational" and "intellectual believer", who "enjoyed himself as a child, despite his surface haughtiness".[21]

Aggeo Savioli, who was present at one of the Rome performances in March 1994, recognized the difficulty of the text for a contemporary audience: it is "episodic"; it has a "tragic tension" partly relieved by comic inserts (including More's "actorly" consciousness and the fool's part, the latter played by Isabella Caserta); it is fundamentally different from Robert Bolt's play (and especially from Fred Zinnemann's film).[22] In other words, it goes against the expectations a modern audience may have about the history of the main character as it has been portrayed by twentieth-century cinema and theatre, which is what also emerges – more or less silently – from reviewers of the English performance.

In fact, the Italian staging, even more than the English one, stressed the quiet title role, his inner doubts, the domestic peace of his home (the substitution of the Erasmus-More scene certainly added to this). The choice of costumes (hinting at a severe clerical life rather than the gorgeous Henrician court) suggested the meaning should be sought in the protagonist's moral and ethical struggle. Vallone's performance was "rationally measured",[23] such as to highlight the protagonist's "intellectual richness".[24] I agree with both reviewers on this point: Vallone was so fascinated by the figure of Thomas More that he strongly disagreed with a playscript that presents a subdued and necessarily partial portrait of Henry VIII's Chancellor, so much so that he felt the need to rewrite part of it. This is because he was conscious of the inner wealth and potential of a character who the Anglican and Puritan Elizabethan playwrights could not, or were afraid to, appreciate. Savioli defined Caserta as a "courageous director", and Vallone as an actor gifted with "generous openness". On this occasion, the lead actor and

21 Franco Quadri, 'Shakespeare proibito', *La Repubblica* (3 August 1993).
22 Aggeo Savioli, 'Ascesa e caduta di Tommaso Moro', *L'Unità* (6 March 1994).
23 Franco Quadri, 'Shakespeare proibito', *La Repubblica* (3 August 1993).
24 Aggeo Savioli, 'Ascesa e caduta di Tommaso Moro', *L'Unità* (6 March 1994).

director worked together on a "strange" and unknown play, difficult to appreciate not only by Italian spectators as mentioned above and decided to add their hands (especially Vallone's) to Hands A, B, C, D and E of the manuscript. They did it with Gabrieli and Melchiori's "indulgent consent", as Savioli wrote.

One could question whether a dramatic text like *Sir Thomas More* has only historical value today. Certainly, it is very different from twentieth-century audiences' ideas of what Elizabethan and Jacobean plays are about, with their fairly smooth narrative content. The episodic text offers, albeit in its imperfect form, an example of what was perhaps the trend of many other collaborative efforts in the period. Tastes are different now, but both the English and the Italian productions showed how the personage of Thomas More was perceived by the English when the play was written. Their interpretation of him may be at variance with ours, but so was – for certain – Shylock's or Othello's. Therefore the two 1990s' versions, with their theatrical merits and flaws, were welcome. They told us that Shakespeare, Jonson, Webster, were better than others on a dramatic and poetical level, but they also showed, at their best moments, how an average Elizabethan play could appeal to its contemporary audience, besides offering quite an interesting and unique example of collaboration between playwrights. This is particularly relevant today when issues of authorship are so widely discussed, and some topics have become extremely relevant.

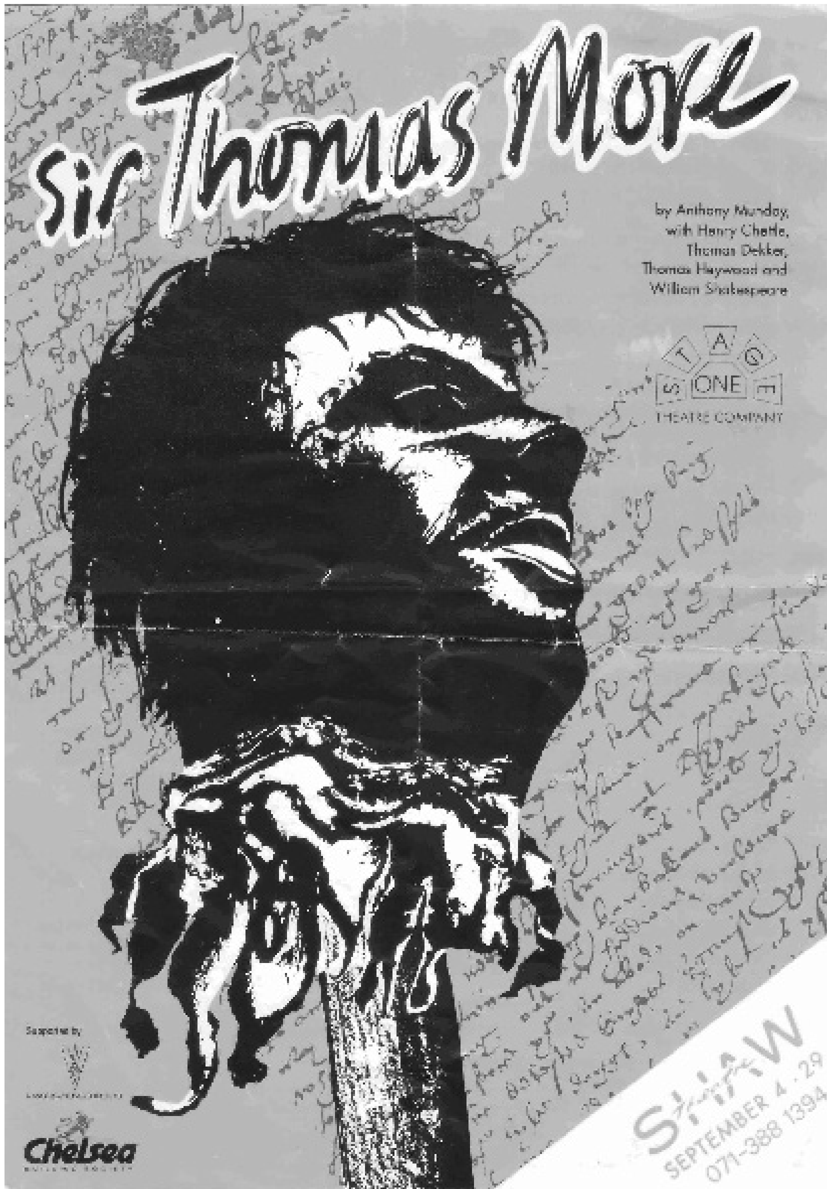

Figure 1. Playbill of the Stage One Theatre Company production.

Figure 2 The Cloister. Church of San Zeno, Verona.

Figure 3. Wilbert Johnson as Lincoln during Lincoln's hanging. Stage One Theatre Company.

Figure 4. Ken Bones as Thomas More. Stage One Theatre Company.

Figure 5. A moment of *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* (the play-within-a play). Stage One Theatre Company.

Figure 6. Enzo Maria Caserta as Erasmus (left) and Raf Vallorne as More (right) during their encounter.
Teatro scientifico – Teatro laboratorio. Photograph by Maurizio Brenzoni.

Figure 7. Jana Balkan as Doll during the riots. Teatro scientifico – Teatro laboratorio. Photo by Maurizio Brenzoni

Figure 8. The riots in the darkness. Teatro scientifico – Teatro laboratorio.
Photo by Maurizio Brenzoni

Figure 9. More talking to the interluders during *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*.
Teatro scientifico – Teatro laboratorio. Photograph by Maurizio Brenzoni.

Bibliography

Belsey, Catherine, 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies', in John Drakakis, ed., *Alternative Shakespeares* (London: Methuen, 1985), 166-90.

Bradley, Kathleen, 'A Performance History of *Sir Thomas More*', MPhil thesis (University of Birmingham, 2009).

Elizabeth I, 'Second Proclamation against Plays, 16th May 1559', in W.C. Hazlitt, ed., *The English Drama and Stage under the Tudor and Stuart Princes 1543-1664* (London: Roxburghe Library, 1869).

Jenkins, Harold, ed., *Sir Thomas More*, in William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. Charles Jasper Sisson (London: Odhams Press, 1954).

Jones, John Henry, 'The Mighty Fallen', *Times Literary Supplement*, n. 4563 (14-20 September 1990).

Jowett, John, *Shakespeare and the Text. Revised Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Melchiori, Giorgio and Vittorio Gabrieli, eds., *The Book of Sir Thomas More* (Bari: Adriatica, 1981).

Sir Thomas More (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Mullini, Roberta, '*The Book of Sir Thomas More* and its Performance', in Michel Bitot, Roberta Mullini and Peter Happé, eds., '*Divers toyes mengled'. Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Tours: Publication de l'Université François Rabelais, 1996)**,** 211-27.

Quadri, Franco, 'Shakespeare proibito', *La Repubblica* (3 August 1993).

Rathbone, Niky. 'Professional Shakespeare Productions in the British Isles, January-December 1990,' *Shakespeare Survey* 45 (1993), 145-58.

Savioli, Aggeo, 'Ascesa e caduta di Tommaso Moro', *L'Unità* (6 March 1994).

Wyatt, Petronella, 'When More Means Less', *The Daily Telegraph* (7 Sept. 1990).

SIR THOMAS MORE, A DANGEROUS PLAY

OTELLO CENCI AND GIAMPIERO PIZZOL

Why did William Shakespeare, author of many of the most famous plays in the Western canon, edit and contribute to an already existing manuscript of a play about Thomas More? To write a play about Thomas More must have been controversial as well as dangerous and would certainly have subjected a dramatist to censorship: Sir Thomas More never accepted the King's Supremacy nor Henry VIII's role as head of the Anglican Church. So why did William Shakespeare decide to write a part of the play? And what hides behind Shakespeare's collaboration with the other authors? What exactly led William Shakespeare to work on such a project? Was it his religious faith? Was it the political tensions and the possibility of political upheaval, given that the play was composed between 1595 and 1600, towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign? This is certainly one of the many mysteries and doubts that surround Shakespeare.

As playwrights and directors, we set ourselves a challenge: to deconstruct the play, *Sir Thomas More* and stage it. We also wished to include William Shakespeare as a character. Ultimately, we tried to imagine the collective writing process that led to this Elizabethan play. We also wanted to explore how Thomas More was depicted and highlight the play's modernity. Like today, in the world of the play *Sir Thomas More,* politics seem to have lost their meaning. Rewriting Shakespeare and his fellow writers proved a wonderful adventure, a comic and dramatic journey that connected quickly to our lives in the twenty-first century: for example, Thomas More's speech in defence of foreign immigrants or his humorous defence at his trial.

Our production of the play, *Thomas More. L'opera ritrovata di Wil-*

liam Shakespeare,[25] is not a simple staging of the source material, but rather a re-visitation of it that allows the audience to admire the genesis of the play, *Sir Thomas More*. We chose not to adapt the play as it came to us, but, rather, to open the curtains on the Mermaid Tavern, a place where theatre people met in Elizabethan times. So the tavern turned into a location where writers and actors could talk about the plays they were planning to stage, including *Sir Thomas More.* We imagined that two of Shakespeare's contemporaries and actors, Richard Burbage and Lawrence Fletcher, are rehearsing More's speech about immigrants, which manages to stop the rioters. Suddenly, William Shakespeare comes in and the three of them discuss the casting choices, censorship and the possible backlash they may face because of the play's controversial content. Anthony Munday's arrival livens the discussion and leads to talk about textual cuts and ideas regarding the staging of the trial and More's execution.

While our Shakespeare character shows he is ready to risk his life to put on stage a play about More, whom he considers a great man, Munday thinks about consensus and personal success. At the Mermaid Tavern-cum-theatre, our audience attends the performance of some scenes from the *Sir Thomas More* play and others invented by us which we imagined were probably censored in Shakespeare's day. We imagined a terrible quarrel between Munday and Shakespeare even if there is no historical foundation. We invented it for dramatic reasons, to make their relationship more theatrical and to outline their different approaches, to power and responsibility.

(Traduzione di Anna Caterino)

[25] *Thomas More. L'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare,* by Giampiero Pizzol e Otello Cenci, premiered at the Teatro Ermete Novelli, Rimini, 21 Agosto 2016, directed by Otello Cenci. With Giampiero Bartolini, Andrea Carabelli, Giampiero Pizzol, Isotta Ravaioli, Andrea Soffiantini.

Isotta Ravaioli as the waitress of the "Taverna della Sirena"; Giampiero Pizzol as Shakespeare; Andrea Carabelli as Lawrence Fletcher; Giampiero Bartolini as Antony Munday; and Andrea Soffiantini as Richard Burbage in *Thomas More. L'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare*. Photo by Michele Carloni.

Giampiero Pizzol as William Shakespeare; Andrea Carabelli as Lawrence Fletcher; and Andrea Soffiantini as Richard Burbage in *Thomas More. L'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare*. Photo by Michele Carloni.

Giampiero Pizzol as William Shakespeare, and Andrea Carabelli as Lawrence Fletcher in *Thomas More.*
L'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare. Photo by Michele Carloni.

Andrea Carabelli as Lawrence Fletcher, Andrea Soffiantini as Richard Burbage in *Thomas More, l'opera ritrovata di William Shakespeare*. Photo by Michele Carloni.

SIR THOMAS MORE
IMMAGINATE DI VEDERE STRANIERI DISGRAZIATI...
TEATRO PUNTOZERO | BECCARIA
M1, BISCEGLIE - VIA DEI CALCHI TAEGGI, 20
2 DICEMBRE 2019 - ORE 18.45
INGRESSO LIBERO

IMMAGINATE DI VEDERE STRANIERI DISGRAZIATI

coi bambini in spalla, e i poveri bagagli arrancare verso i porti e le coste dove verranno espulsi...

Con queste parole Shakespeare, come sempre attualissimo, ci invita a immedesimarci nel dilemma degli stranieri che nel Cinquecento arrivarono a Londra e che talvolta furono cacciati in malo modo. Oggi, le parole del grande umanista Sir Thomas More non possono non farci pensare alla situazione di quei migranti che sbarcano sulle nostre coste. Questa gente sradicata e disgraziata è più o meno straniera di noi? Anche il nostro continente è stato fondato da una giovane ragazza di nome Europa che Zeus, trasformato in toro, ha portato in groppa dalla Fenicia, sua terra natia, fino a Creta. Noi europei non siamo altro che i figli della giovane migrante Europa. Quindi, chi è lo straniero?

Concepito nel corso del laboratorio teatrale, lo spettacolo, un mosaico di frammenti di *Sir Thomas More* e di testi scritti da studenti universitari, ragazzi del Beccaria o in messa alla prova e giovani attori di Puntozero, è la nostra risposta a queste domande, le stesse che vogliamo rivolgere a voi questa sera!

PROGETTO *di Mariacristina Cavecchi, Lisa Mazoni, Margaret Rose, Giuseppe Scutellà*

PRODUZIONE Università Statale di Milano in collaborazione con Puntozero Teatro e con l'Istituto Penale Minorile "Cesare Beccaria" di Milano

REGIA Giuseppe Scutellà **TESTI** Bogaj Resmira, Sara Apruzzese, Gioele Mancino, Michela Paparella, Chiara Renna, Valentina Rossi, Alessia Toro **TESTO VINCITORE DEL CONCORSO "SCRIVERE PER IL TEATRO" 2019** *Blu* di Davide Novello **POESIA** *Resta con la tua dignità* di Suad Omar Sheikh Esahaq, Abdullahi Ahmed Abdullahi, Abdulaziz Ali Hassan **ATTORI** Sara Apruzzese, Veronica Berni, Elisa Colaiacovo, Alin Cristea, Sara Da Prato, Valeria Gatta, Elma Golloshi, Joseph Hazim, Riccardo Jori, Luca Litori, Giacomo Matelloni, Lisa Mazoni, Ilenia Pagani, Giulia Paladini, Emilia Piz, Camilla Ponti, Elena Rossi, Sara Ruggero, Enea Scutellà, Kristian Sefgjini, Alex Simbana, Aleksandra Smiljanic, Sara Sogaro, Emiliano Soro, Alex Stan **SCENOGRAFIA E COSTUMI** Resmira Bogaj, Stefania Dartizio, Serena Livio **FONICA** Mattia Gallistru **LUCI** Gianluca Telloli e Natanaele Alessandro Pogliaghi **MUSICHE** Gianluca Messina (Suoni Sonori) **DISEGNO, FOTOGRAFIA, GRAFICA** Tommaso Bezzi, Martina Ganna, Ioana Ivanov Ivanov **FOTOGRAFIE** di Giovanni Diffidenti, Alessio Genovese e Alessandro Sala- Progetto "*Dopo l'approdo*" **UFFICIO STAMPA** Virginia Conforto, Simone Nuzzo, Alice Strazzi, Luca Tacconelli, Franco Visigalli

UN RINGRAZIAMENTO PARTICOLARE A TUTTI COLORO CHE HANNO COLLABORATO CON NOI AL LABORATORIO TEATRALE: **LUCA CIABARRI** (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO), **BRUNO FORNASARI** (TEATRO FILODRAMMATICI, MILANO), **THEO GAVRIELIDES** (RESTORATIVE JUSTICE FOR ALL INSTITUTE, LONDON), **ARNE POHLMEIER** (TWO GENTS PRODUCTION, LONDON), **ANGELO PUGLIESE** (COMUNITÀ IL SEME, MILANO), **SILVANA VACCARO** (IPM BECCARIA, MILANO), **COMUNITÀ NUOVA COOPERATIVA SOCIALE** (MILANO).
UN GRAZIE INOLTRE A: **MARINA CARINI** (PRORETTORE A TERZA MISSIONE, TERRITORIO E ATTIVITÀ CULTURALI,) **MARINA BRAMBILLA** (PRORETTORE AI SERVIZI PER LA DIDATTICA E AGLI STUDENTI), **ANNA DE CENSI** (ASSESSORATO ALLO SPORT E TEMPO LIBERO, COMUNE DI MILANO), **ASSOCIAZIONE MARINAI D'ITALIA GRUPPO MILANO, CANOTTIERI OLONA.**
ESPRIMIAMO VIVA GRATITUDINE A: DIRETTORE IPM **COSIMA BUCCOLIERO**, COMANDANTE P.P. **MARCO CASELLI** E **PERSONALE TUTTO DEL IPM CESARE BECCARIA**
PROGETTO REALIZZATO GRAZIE AL CONTRIBUTO DEL **DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE** E AL **FONDO RETTORALE DELL'UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO.**

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

IASEMS
Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies

puntozero

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO
DIPARTIMENTO DI LINGUE E LETTERATURE STRANIERE

www.puntozeroteatro.org | info@puntozeroteatro.org |tel. 02 64 31 448

BLU

Davide Novello

Personaggi:
Azraq
Buluu-Dibi

Quella che appare una spiaggia. Rumore del mare.
Due bambini: uno gioca con una palla, l'altro con la sabbia. Si studiano a lungo, da lontano, con la curiosità infantile di chi riconosce una persona simile a sé. Uno dei due si avvicina all'altro.

Buluu-Dibi: Ciao.
Azraq: Ciao.
Buluu-Dibi: Io ho undici anni. Tu?
Azraq: Io ne ho solo otto.
Buluu-Dibi: Come ti chiami?
Azraq: (*dandogli le spalle di scatto, come se si ricordasse qualcosa all'improvviso*)
La mia mamma non vuole che dico il mio nome a chi non conosco.
Buluu-Dibi: Ma se me lo dici poi mi conosci.
Azraq continua a giocare, Buluu-Dibi lo fissa.
Buluu-Dibi: Guarda (*inizia a palleggiare con i piedi*). Tu lo sai fare?
Azraq: No.
Buluu-Dibi: È facile. Se vuoi ti insegno come si fa.
Azraq: Non posso parlare con te.
Buluu-Dibi: Perché?
Azraq: Perché non ti conosco.
Buluu-Dibi: Io sono Buluu-Dibi. Adesso devi dirmi il tuo nome.

Azraq: No, non devo. La mia mamma dice che le uniche cose che devo fare per forza

sono quelle che mi dicono lei e il mio papà.

Buluu-Dibi: Non diventerai mai grande se ascolti sempre tua mamma. Azraq: Cosa ne sai tu di come si cresce?

Pausa.

Buluu-Dibi: Cosa fai qui?

Azraq: Gioco con la sabbia. Buluu-Dibi: Intendo qui nel mare.

Azraq: Guarda che si dice *al* mare. Una vacanza con la mia mamma. Buluu-Dibi: Io non ho mai fatto una vacanza.

Azraq: Come no?

Buluu-Dibi: No, mai.

Azraq: Ma questo è un posto per le vacanze. È il mare! Buluu-Dibi: Sì, lo so. Io sono qui da un po'.

Azraq: Allora è come se tu sei sempre in vacanza. Buluu-Dibi: Ti piace il mare?

Azraq: Sì, mi piace tanto. Sono contento che la mia mamma mi ha portato qui. Tu lo vedi tutti i giorni il mare?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, io ci vivo da tanti anni. Azraq: Quanti?

Buluu-Dibi: Tanti.

Azraq: Tanti quanti?

Buluu-Dibi: Tantissimi.

Azraq: Dai, tantissimi quanti?

Buluu-Dibi: Tantissimissimi.

Azraq: Daiii. Quanti? Cento anni? Duecento?

Buluu-Dibi: Di più.

Azraq: Trecento anni?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, quasi trecento anni. Duecentocinquantotto. Però vivevo vicino al mare

anche prima, in una foresta vicino alla spiaggia.

Azraq: Che bello, che fortuna!

Buluu-Dibi: Ti piace il mare?

Azraq: Sì, mi piace tanto. Noi siamo partiti l'altro ieri... No, siamo partiti, mmhh...

l’altro-altro ieri, forse, e io non l’avevo mai visto il mare. Vicino alla mia casa c’è un fiume ma è un fiume piccolo, io lo chiamo Fiume Vipera perché è piccolo e stretto come una vipera, e la mia mamma mi ha detto che il mare è come dieci milioni di Fiumi Vipera tutti messi insieme. Io non ci credevo perché secondo me non esisteva però la mia mamma non le dice le bugie. E quando l’altro-altro ieri ho visto il mare io ho detto “Mamma ma questi sono ancora di più di dieci milioni di Fiumi Vipera!”. Per me il mare è come un serpente gigantesco grande così (*allarga le braccia per indicarne la dimensione*) .

Buluu-Dibi: Però l’acqua del mare non si può bere.

Azraq: Neanche quella del Fiume Vipera. Per questo l’ho chiamato così.

Buluu-Dibi: Non sai nuotare.

Azraq: No, io no. Ma il mio papà sì e ho deciso che mi insegna perché stare nel mare

mi piace. Tu sei capace a nuotare?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, mi aveva insegnato mio fratello grande. Diceva che ero come un

piccolo pesce. Lui è bravo a nuotare. Azraq: Quanti anni ha?

Buluu-Dibi: Diciassette. A dieci anni andava già a caccia e a pesca e nostro padre mi ha detto un segreto su di lui.

Azraq: Che segreto? Lo posso sapere? Per favore, ti prometto che non lo dico mai a nessuno.

Buluu-Dibi: Mi ha detto che mio fratello sarebbe diventato il capo del nostro villaggio perché era il più forte e il più bello di tutti. Però è passato tanto tempo adesso.

Azraq: Che bello avere il fratello capo del villaggio. Allora è proprio fortissimo! Buluu-Dibi: Sì. Io gli voglio bene anche se lo avevo fatto arrabbiare quando sono

arrivati.

Azraq: Chi sono arrivati?

Buluu-Dibi: Degli uomini tutti bianchi che ascoltavano un signore con la divisa e con la barba nera. Erano venuti a prenderci con

una nave grandissima. Però non una nave come quelle di adesso con le eliche e i motori: era una nave di quasi trecento anni fa, lunghissima, con gli alberi, le vele e le bandiere in alto.

Azraq: Come una nave dei pirati?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, proprio come una nave dei pirati. Però la stiva era piena di persone,

non c'erano tesori. E sul fianco c'era scritto "Sfrancis 1757". Azraq: Cosa vuol dire?

Buluu-Dibi: Non lo so.

Azraq: Forse era il nome della nave. O il nome del posto dove dovevate andare. Buluu-Dibi: No, gli uomini bianchi dicevano che dovevamo andare in un posto oltre il

mare. Lo chiamavano Merika o Nanapolis.

Azraq: Perché?

Buluu-Dibi: Non lo capivo, parlavano una lingua strana, come te. Ma era diverso: io ti capisco, loro non li capivo. Ci urlavano e ci mettevano delle corde alle braccia e ci trascinavano, anche se piangevamo. Mio fratello non piangeva e non è

salito sulla nave con me. Azraq: Perché no?

Buluu-Dibi: Non lo so, è rimasto nella capanna con la mamma e gli uomini del signore con la barba nera. Mentre mi portavano alla spiaggia, lui mi ha detto che se qualcosa non mi piaceva, mi bastava fare come i pesci e tornare da lui. Però gridava e questo mi ha fatto paura.

Azraq: Per questo sei qui?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, stare su quella nave non era bello: eravamo tanti e tutti gridavano o

piangevano perché c'erano delle corde o delle catene troppo pesanti, c'era

puzza e lui mi faceva delle cose che– Azraq: Lui chi?

Buluu-Dibi: Il signore con la barba nera. Sulla nave lo chiamavano "il nostro capitano".

Azraq: Allora hai nuotato tutto il tempo?

Buluu-Dibi: No. Ho iniziato a nuotare dopo due settimane sulla nave: ho aspettato la

luna grande così potevo vedere l'acqua che sennò era sempre nera. All'inizio era bello ma poi il mare era troppo freddo. Avevo freddo. (*Pausa*) E poi è così grande che adesso lo sto girando tutto per trovare mio fratello. Adesso sono lontano dalla mia casa.

Azraq: Anche io voglio girare nel mare per quasi trecento anni. E voglio nuotare come i pesci. E voglio anche io un fratello. La mia mamma ha detto che quando arriviamo da papà me ne regalano uno se mi comporto bene. Per questo io sto qui e cerco di comportarmi bene: perché voglio un fratello anche io. Adesso è a casa?

Buluu-Dibi: Chi?

Azraq: Tuo fratello.

Buluu-Dibi: No, non c'è.

Azraq: E dov'è andato?

Buluu-Dibi: Non lo so, non sono riuscito a trovarlo.

Azraq: Se lo avevi fatto arrabbiare troppo magari è andato via per colpa tua.

Pausa. Buluu-Dibi si porta le mani agli occhi, Azraq si avvicina.

Azraq: Piangi?

Buluu-Dibi: Non si può piangere nel mare.

Azraq: Perché no? Il mare è fatto di acqua salata, è come le lacrime di tutto il mondo

e se tu piangi diventa ancora più grande e più salato. (*Pausa. Si avvicina a Buluu-Dibi*) Secondo me non è vero che tuo fratello si è arrabbiato per colpa tua, non lo penso più.

Buluu-Dibi: Non puoi decidere di smettere di pensare qualcosa, non si può.

Azraq: Come no? Guarda: adesso smetto di pensare che sei triste e non sarai più triste.

Azraq chiude gli occhi e fa delle smorfie. Buluu-Dibi ride.

Azraq: Hai visto? Avevo ragione io anche se tu sei più grande e io

sono più piccolo. Buluu-Dibi: Perché prima non dicevi niente e adesso non smetti più di parlare?

Azraq: Scusa. La mia mamma mi insegna le cose della scuola ma me le insegna a casa

e io non so come si parla agli altri bambini. Non ho neanche un fratello. La tua

famiglia è tutta come te? Buluu-Dibi: Sì.

Azraq: Siete un po' strani. Ma non mi fate paura.

Buluu-Dibi: Grazie.

Azraq: Secondo me è perché c'è il sole forte. (*tira fuori un sacchetto e porge una*

biglia) Tieni, te la regalo. Buluu-Dibi: Ma è tua.

Azraq: Adesso è tua e io e te siamo diventati amici. La mia mamma mi aveva detto che avrei avuto tanti amici durante la nostra vacanza e allora ho deciso di portare le mie biglie e di regalare una biglia a tutti i miei nuovi amici. Questa è la prima.

Buluu-Dibi: Grazie.

Azraq: Ti piace il colore?

Buluu-Dibi: Sì, il blu è il mio colore preferito.

Azraq: Anche il mio perché il mio nome significa "blu". Ecco, adesso che siamo

amici te lo posso dire che mi chiamo Azraq, che significa "blu". E poi il blu è

bello anche perché è il colore del mare.

Buluu-Dibi: Ti piace il mare?

Azraq: Sì, mi piace tanto. Vorrei passarci dentro tutta la mia vita.

Buluu-Dibi: (*ride*) Ma non puoi vivere per sempre su una barca!

Azraq: No, non su una barca. E neanche sulla spiaggia. Con la barca stai *sul* mare e la

spiaggia è *vicino* al mare. Io vorrei passare la mia vita *nel* mare. Dentro l'acqua blu. Tanto io sono già blu. E con i pesci. (*allargando le braccia per indicarne la dimensione*) L'hai mai visto un pesce grande così?

Buluu-Dibi: Ma se tu non sai neanche nuotare! E perché, poi?

Azraq: Neanche la mia mamma, per questo aveva un po' paura quel giorno che il

signore con la barba si era arrabbiato con me.

Buluu-Dibi: I signori con la barba si arrabbiano sempre con chi è sulle navi. E adesso

dov'è?

Azraq: Lui è ancora sulla sua barca. Era il nostro... Com'era la parola che hai detto

tu? Co... Copi.. copitano. Buluu-Dibi: Capitano.

Azraq: Sì, il nostro Capitano! Lui è sulla barca.

Buluu-Dibi: No, dov'è la tua mamma?

Azraq: Dev'essere di là (*indica un punto in lontananza, leggermente verso l'alto*).

Quando io ho fatto il tuffo nel mare, la barca andava velocissima e sopra c'erano tanti che non volevano fare il bagno anche se gli altri erano già andati, come me. Adesso la barca dev'essere di là. Poi ho visto che anche altri venivano a fare il bagno nel mare, ma lontano da dove ero io e non vedevo bene. Dovevi vedere come si divertivano: sembrava che ballavano però senza la musica e l'acqua era diventata bianca perché si schizzavano tutto il tempo. Anche io volevo giocare con loro ma poi sono arrivato qui.

Buluu-Dibi: Azraq, dov'è la tua mamma?

Azraq: Non lo so ancora ma fa niente. È da trecento anni che tu sei al mare– Buluu-Dibi: *Nel* mare.

Azraq: ...e mi hai trovato subito. Io e la mia mamma siamo venuti qui insieme. Spero

che arriva anche lei tra un po' così continuiamo la nostra vacanza. Magari arriva da là sopra come me. Così te la faccio conoscere e lei è contenta di vedere che ho già regalato una delle mie biglie. Sì, il mare mi piace proprio tanto. Quando arriveranno anche altri bambini come noi, giocheremo tutti insieme al mare.

Buluu-Dibi: *Nel* mare.

BLUE

By Davide Novello translated by Claudio Favazza

Characters:
Azraq
Buluu-Dibi

A beach. The sound of the sea.
Two children: one plays with a ball, the other with the sand. They look at each other at a distance for a long time with the childish curiosity of those who meet someone who's like them. One of them approaches the other.

Buluu-Dibi: Hi.
Azraq: Hi.
Buluu-Dibi: I'm eleven. How old are you?
Azraq: I'm just eight.
Buluu-Dibi: What's your name?
Azraq: (*He turns his back on him, as if he has suddenly remembered something*) Mummy told me I shouldn't tell strangers my name.
Buluu-Dibi: If you tell me your name, I won't be a stranger anymore.
Azraq keeps playing, while Buluu-Dibi stares at him.
Buluu-Dibi: Look (he starts dribbling with his feet). Can you do this?
Azraq: I can't.
Buluu-Dibi: It's easy. Want me to show you how to do it?
Azraq: I can't talk to you.
Buluu-Dibi: Why?
Azraq: Cos I don't know you.
Buluu-Dibi: I'm Buluu-Dibi. Now you've got to tell me your name.
Azraq: No, I don't. Mummy says I've got to do only what she and daddy tell me.

Buluu-Dibi: You'll never grow up if you always listen to your mummy.
Azraq: What would you know about growing up?
Pause
Buluu-Dibi: What are you doing here?
Azraq: I'm playing with the sand.
Buluu-Dibi: I mean here in the sea.
Azraq: Pretty sure it's *at* sea.
Buluu-Dibi: I've never been on vacation.
Azraq: Haven't you?
Buluu-Dibi: No, never.
Azraq: This is a nice place for a vacation. It's the sea!
Buluu-Dibi: Yes, I know. I've been here for a while.
Azraq: Oh, so it's like you're always on vacation.
Buluu-Dibi: Do you like the sea?
Azraq: Yes, I really do. I'm so happy mummy brought me here. Can you be at sea every day?
Buluu-Dibi: I can. I've been living here for a few years now.
Azraq: How many?
Buluu-Dibi: Many.
Azraq: Yeah, but how many?
Buluu-Dibi: Too many.
Azraq: Too many, like…?
Buluu-Dibi: Soooo many.
Azraq: 'Cmon. How many? A hundred years? Two hundred?
Buluu-Dibi: More.
Azraq: Three hundred years?
Buluu-Dibi: Yeah, almost three hundred years. Two hundred and fifty-eight. I used to live by the sea, in a forest next to the beach.
Azraq: Cool, you're so lucky!
Buluu-Dibi: Do you like the sea?
Azraq: Yes, I really do. We left two days ago… No, we left, mmmh… three days ago, maybe, I'd never been at the seaside before. There's a river near my house, but it's very small, I call it Viper River, cos it's small and narrow like a snake, and mummy told

me the sea is as big as ten million Viper Rivers. At first, I didn't believe her, cos I thought it didn't exist, but mummy doesn't tell lies. Then, two days ago when I saw it, I said "Mummy, this is bigger than ten million Viper Rivers!". I think the sea is like a giant snake, it is this big (*he spreads his arms as if to measure it*).

Buluu-Dibi: You can't drink seawater though.

Azraq: And you can't drink the water in the Viper River. That's why I called it that.

Buluu-Dibi: You can't swim.

Azraq: No, I can't. But daddy can, and I decided he's going to teach me, cos I like being in the sea. Can you swim?

Buluu-Dibi: Yes. My big brother taught me. He used to say I was like a small fish. He's an amazing swimmer.

Azraq: How old is he?

Buluu-Dibi: He's seventeen. When he was ten, he used to go hunting and fishing. Daddy told me a secret about him.

Azraq: What secret? Can you tell me? Please, I promise I will never tell anyone.

Buluu-Dibi: He told me my brother would be the chief of our village cos he was the strongest and most good looking of us all. It's been a while now.

Azraq: It's so cool your brother is the chief of the village. He must be so strong!

Buluu-Dibi: He is. I love him, even if he got really angry at me when they arrived.

Azraq: Who?

Buluu-Dibi: Some white men led by a gentleman in a uniform with a black beard. They came and took us away on a huge ship. Not one of those modern ships with screws and engines, though. It was a three-hundred-years-old ship, super long, with masts, veils and flags flying high.

Azraq: Like a pirate ship?

Buluu-Dibi: Yes, exactly like a pirate ship. The ship's hold was loaded

with people though, and there were no treasure chests. There was something written on its side "Sfrancis 1757".

Azraq: What does that mean?

Buluu-Dibi: Dunno.

Azraq: Maybe, it was the ship's name, or the name of the place you were heading for.

Buluu-Dibi: No, it wasn't. The white men said we were going somewhere oversea. They called it Merika or Nanapolis.

Azraq: Why?

Buluu-Dibi: I don't know. They spoke a weird language, just like you. But that was different: I can understand you, but not them. They yelled at us, they tied some ropes around our wrists, and they dragged us around even if we were crying. My brother didn't cry, and he didn't get on the ship with me either.

Azraq: Why not?

Buluu-Dibi: I don't know. He stayed inside the hut with mummy and the men led by the black bearded bloke. As they were dragging me to the shore, he told me that if I didn't like something, I could always swim like a fish and come back to him. He was screaming though, and I was scared.

Azraq: That's why you're here?

Buluu-Dibi: Yes, being on that ship wasn't nice. There were many of us, and everybody was screaming or crying because the ropes and chains were so heavy, it was smelly, and he did things to us that…

Azraq: Who did?

Buluu-Dibi: Mr Blackbeard. On the ship, they called him "our captain".

Azraq: So, you've been swimming this whole time?

Buluu-Dibi: Not really. I started swimming two weeks after we left. I waited for a full moon, so I could see the water, or else it would have been too black. At first, it was nice, but then the water was too cold. I was cold. (*he stops*) And the sea is so big, I've been

wandering all around to find my brother. Now, I'm far from home.

Azraq: I too want to wander around the sea for almost three hundred years. And I want to swim like a fish. Mummy told me she and daddy are going to buy me one when we're all back together, but only if I behave myself. That's why I'm here, trying to be good, cos I want a brother too. Is he home now?

Buluu-Dibi: Who?

Azraq: Your brother.

Buluu-Dibi: No, he isn't.

Azraq: Where is he, then?

Buluu-Dibi: I don't know, I couldn't find him.

Azraq: If you've upset him, maybe it's your fault he left.

Pause. Buluu-Dibi covers his eyes with his hands. Azraq moves closer to him.

Azraq: Are you crying?

Buluu-Dibi: You can't cry in the sea.

Azraq: Why not? The sea is made of salt water, it's like the tears from all over the world and if you cry, it gets bigger and saltier. (*Pause. He moves closer to Buluu-Dibi*) It's not true your brother got angry because of you; I don't believe that anymore.

Buluu-Dibi: You can't decide to stop believing in something, you just can't.

Azraq: Why not? Look, now I'll stop believing you're sad, and you'll not be sad anymore.

Azraq closes his eyes and starts grimacing. Buluu-Dibi laughs.

Azraq: See? I was right, even if you're older and I'm younger than you.

Buluu-Dibi: Why were you so quiet earlier, and now you're talking so much?

Azraq: I'm sorry. Mummy teaches me what you learn at school, but I study at home, so I don't know how to talk to other kids. I don't even have a brother. Is all your family like you?

Buluu-Dibi: They are.

Azraq: You're a bit weird. But I'm not afraid of you.

Buluu-Dibi: Thank you.

Azraq: It must be because of the sun. (*he pulls out a bag of marbles and gives one to him*) Here you are, it's a gift.

Buluu-Dibi: But it's yours.

Azraq: Now it's yours, and we are friends. Mummy told me I would make many friends on vacation, so I decided to bring my marbles with me, and to give one to each new friend. This is the first one.

Buluu-Dibi: Thanks.

Azraq: Do you like the colour?

Buluu-Dibi: I do. Blue is my favourite colour.

Azraq: Mine too, cos my name means "blue". There, now we're friends I can tell you my name is Azraq, which means "blue". And then I also like blue cos it's the colour of the sea.

Buluu-Dibi: Do you like the sea?

Azraq: Yes, I really do. I want to spend my whole life in it.

Buluu-Dibi: (*laughs*) But you can't live forever on a boat!

Azraq: No, not on a boat. Or on a beach. Boats float *on* the sea, and beaches are *near* the sea. I would spend my life *in* the sea. In its blue waters. I'm already blue anyway. And with the fish. (*he spreads his arms to show their size*) Ever seen such a big fish?

Buluu-Dibi: But you can't even swim!

Azraq: Neither can my mother, that's why she got so scared when the bearded man got angry at me.

Buluu-Dibi: Bearded men always get angry at those who are on ships. Where is he now?

Azraq: He's still on the ship. He was our… What was that word you used? Co… Copi,,, Coptain.

Buluu-Dibi: Captain.

Azraq: Yes, our captain! He's on the boat.

Buluu-Dibi: And where's your mummy?

Azraq: She must be already there (*he points somewhere off in the distance, slightly upward*).

When I jumped into the water, the boat was going really fast and

many up there didn't want to have a swim, even if others had already jumped, like me. Now, the boat must already be there. Then, I saw that others were coming to have a swim in the sea, but they were far from me, and I couldn't see them well. You should've seen how much fun they were having. It looked like they were dancing, but with no music, and the water turned all white cos they were splashing about all the time. I wanted to play with them too, but then here I am.

Buluu-Dibi: Azraq, where's your mother?

Azraq: I still don't know, but it's okay. You've been at sea for three hundred years –

Buluu-Dibi: *In* the sea.

Azraq: … and you found me straightway. Mummy and me came here together. I hope she gets here soon, so we can continue enjoying our vacation. Maybe she'll get here from up there like I did. Then you can meet her, and she'll be happy to see I've already given somebody one of my marbles. Yes, I really do like the sea. When other children like us get here, we are all going to play together at sea.

Buluu-Dibi: *In* the sea.

BIONOTES

Anna Caterino
holds a BA and MA in Modern European and American Languages and Literatures. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Linguistic, Literary and Intercultural Studies at the University of Milan. She is the author of the essay "#TheySilencedThem: The Strange Case of *Supernatural*'s Queerbaiting" which is included in the upcoming collection *'Just Listen to Me!': Essays on Audience Reception and Television* edited by Gina Anderson-Lopex and Allison Budaj (McFarland, forthcoming).

Mariacristina Cavecchi
works as an Associate Professor at the University of Milan, where she teaches British Theatre Studies and English Literature. Her research interests include twentieth and twenty-first-century British drama and theatre, with a focus on visual/verbal intersections. She has also written extensively on contemporary appropriations of Shakespeare's plays for theatre and cinema (stage productions, adaptations, rewrites), on Shakespeare in contemporary popular culture and on Prison Shakespeare. She regularly co-leads theatre workshops at Milan's "Cesare Beccaria" juvenile detention centre, to which the volume *SceKspir al Bekka. Romeo Montecchi dietro le sbarre dell'Istituto Penale Minorile Beccaria* (2020), which she co-curated with Margaret Rose, is dedicated. *The Art Gallery on Stage. New Vistas on Contemporary British Theatre,* her latest book, is due out in 2023. She served on the board of the Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies (IASEMS), from 2012 to 2018.

Otello Cenci
is a theatre director, actor, writer and producer. He has been the artistic director of Meeting for Friendship Between the People of Rimini – an international "culture and theatre" festival since 1996. In 2001, Cenci founded MADE, a production company for arts and communication. He is also the founder and director of the Meeting Rimini Film Festival. As director, he has worked with Giancarlo Giannini, Lucrezia Lante della Rovere, Massimo Popolizio, Gigi Alberti, Alessandro Prezionis, Massimo Dapporto and Sandro Lombardi.

Cenci's multimedia theatre shows include works by G.K. Chesterton, T.S. Eliot, Albert Camus, Giacomo Leopardi, and O.V. Milosz.

Fabio Ciambella
is Researcher of English Language and Translation at Rome's Sapienza University. His privileged fields of research include the relationship between dance and early modern and Victorian literature and language, historical pragmatics, corpus linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition, topics about which he has published extensively. In 2013 he published a book about dance in nineteenth-century England (from Jane Austen's novels to Oscar Wilde's *Salome*). In 2016 his PhD thesis was given a special award by the Italian Association of English Studies (AIA) and his study about dance and the Copernican Revolution in Shakespeare's canon was published the following year. His latest book, *Dance Lexicon in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Routledge, 2021), is a corpus-based analysis of dance-related lexis in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Michele De Benedictis
holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from Cassino University (with a thesis on the theory of humours in Ben Jonson's comical satires). He teaches English Literature at secondary school level. His main research interests focus on Renaissance Drama, Court studies, Early Modern diplomacy, and interdisciplinary approaches to dramatic literature. Relevant publications include articles and chapters on ekphrasis in *The Winter's Tale*, Ben Jonson's masques, theatrical Ovidianism, and Fascist interpretations of *Julius Caesar*. Currently he is completing an article on Gascoigne's translation of Ariosto's comedy *I Suppositi* and a chapter on Joyce's relationship with Ben Jonson.

Davide Del Bello
teaches English literature at the University of Bergamo, Italy. He holds a PhD in English and Rhetoric from Northern Illinois University (US) and has written on English Literature, rhetoric and literary criticism. He published a monograph on the rhetorical interactions between allegory and etymology, *Forgotten Paths: Etymology and the Allegorical Mindset* (2007) and a volume on Shakespeare with Alessandra Marzola, *The Difference of Shakespeare* (2011). His study on the relation between poetry and politics in Elizabethan England (*The Rhetoric of Courtly Mystification*) appeared in a volume edited by Alessandra Petrina (2011). His current research interests include early modern drama,

the history and theory of rhetoric, literary translation and the rhetoric of early-modern religion. Having completed a book on Kenneth Burke, *Reading (with) Kenneth Burke* (2020), he is currently working on a long-term project on Late Shakespearean Drama and English Recusancy.

John Jowett

is Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham. He is a general editor of the New Oxford Shakespeare *Complete Works* (2016-17) and of the Arden Early Modern Drama series. He was an associate general editor of the Oxford *Collected Works* of Thomas Middleton (2007). He has prepared *Richard III* and *Timon of Athens* for the Oxford World's Classics series, and *Sir Thomas More* for the Arden Shakespeare, and is author of *Shakespeare and Text* (2007, revised edition 2019).

Roberta Mullini

formerly Professor of English Literature at Carlo Bo Urbino University, she has published widely on English Medieval and Shakespearean drama. She is also interested in theoretical issues connected to audience reception and to Shakespeare on screen; at university, she directed several student performances of English interludes. She has published articles in national and international journals and various full-length studies. Among the latter, two are devoted to WWI poetry (*Killed in Action*, 1977, and *Più del bronzo*, 2018), two to Shakespeare's fools (*Corruttore di parole,* 1983, and *Il fool in Shakespeare*, 1997), one to late medieval plays (*Dramma e teatro nel Medio Evo inglese*, 1992), one to John Heywood (*Mad merry Heywood*, 1997), one to David Lodge's novels (*Il demone della forma*, 2001), and another to the material culture of the theatre (*Introduzione allo studio del Teatro inglese,* 2003, with Romana Zacchi). She has published a volume on asides in Shakespeare's plays (*Parlare per non farsi sentire*, 2018). The book *Healing Words: The Printed Handbills of Early Modern London Quacks* (2015) deals mainly with linguistic aspects of the activities of medical practitioners as documented in their advertisements. In 2002 she edited *Tudor Theatre: For Laughs (?)*, an international collection of essays on comedy and laughter in early modern English theatre. From 2002 to 2021 she was editor-in-chief of *Linguæ &*, a journal devoted to modern languages and cultures.

Giampiero Pizzol

teaches theatre studies at Bologna's IEMT (Istituto Musicale e Culturale) and is the co-founder of the ensemble Teatro dell'Arca. He has written more than

fifty plays, for teenagers as well as theatre companies such as Accademia Perduta Romagna Teatri and Bjorne Teatret. He has authored several screenplays and adaptations. Pizzol won the Festival del Teatro Sacro twice: in 2009 with *Il Vangelo Visto da un Cieco*, and in 2011 with *Lazzaro Vieni Dentro*. In 2004 he won the Eli Teatro Giovani Award with *I Musicanti di Brema*, and the Festival di Porto San Elpidio with an operina entitled *Puck, Storia di Un Folletto*. He published five books of fables (Giunti), as well as several stories in verse and prose and librettos (Itacalibri, Mimep).

Iolanda Plescia
is an Associate Professor of English in the department of European, American and Intercultural Studies at Rome's Sapienza University and the current director of the MA degree in English and Anglo-American Studies. Her main interests have centred on Shakespeare's language and style, and on intersections between literary and scientific texts and scientific translation in early modern England. She has translated Henry VIII's Letters to Anne Boleyn into Italian (first Italian edition, Nutrimenti, 2013), and published new Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*
(Feltrinelli, 2015), *The Taming of the Shrew* (2019), *Sir Thomas More* (2022, with Nadia Fusini). She is currently President of the Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies (IASEMS).

Maggie Rose
held the Chair of British Theatre Studies and Performance at Milan University until November 2019. She currently teaches the MA programme in British Theatre Studies and Performance. She has published widely in the areas of contemporary British Theatre, Theatre Translation Studies, Shakespeare in Performance. She is a playwright and dramaturg, whose plays have been performed in Scotland and Italy. She is a member of the Scottish Society of Playwrights.

Jan Sewell
teaches Humanities at the Open University. She worked as Editorial Assistant on the RSC's *William Shakespeare: Complete Works* (2008), Chief Associate Editor of the RSC single volume Shakespeare plays (2008 – 2013), editor of *William Shakespeare & Others: Collaborative Plays* (2013); editor of *Plays of Shakespeare's Company* (forthcoming 2023), as well as co-editor on *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Women on Stage* (2019). She is currently writing *A Cultural History of Dramatis Personae*.

Finito di stampare
nel mese di Febbraio 2023
da GESP (Città di Castello)